

SEA ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

FOR THE

BURREN AND CLIFFS OF MOHER VISITOR EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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List of Abbreviations

AA	Appropriate Assessment
AT	An Teagasc
ACA	Architectural Conservation Area
BEN	Burren Ecotourism Network
CFRAM	Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management
CCC	Clare County Council
CLDC	Clare Local Development Company
CT	Clare Tourism
CoM	Cliffs of Moher
DEHLG	Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
DCHG	Department of Culture, Heritage, and Gaeltacht
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EU	European Union
FI	Fáilte Ireland
GSI	Geological Survey of Ireland
GEOPARK	Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark
IFA	Irish Farmer's Association
LEO	Local Enterprise Office
LEs	Local Enterprises
LTGs	Local Tourism Groups
pNHA	Proposed Natural Heritage Area
NHA	Natural Heritage Area
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
OPW	Office of Public Works
RMP	Record of Monuments and Places
RPA	Register of Protected Areas
RPS	Record of Protected Structures
RBMP	River Basin Management Plan
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEO	Strategic Environmental Objective
SI No.	Statutory Instrument Number
SPA	Special Protection Area
WFD	Water Framework Directive

Glossary

Appropriate Assessment

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

Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna

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

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

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

Environmental Problems

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

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

Environmental Vectors

Environmental vectors are environmental components, such as air, water or soil, through which contaminants or pollutants, which have the potential to cause harm, can be transported so that they come into contact with human beings.

Mitigate

To make or become less severe or harsh.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures are measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any significant adverse impacts on the environment of implementing a human action, be it a plan, programme or project. Mitigation involves ameliorating significant negative effects. Where there are significant negative effects, consideration should be given in the first instance to preventing such effects or, where this is not possible, to lessening or offsetting those effects. Mitigation measures can be roughly divided into those that: avoid effects; reduce the magnitude or extent, probability and/or severity of effects; repair effects after they have occurred; and compensate for effects, balancing out negative impacts with other positive ones.

Protected Structure

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

Recorded Monument

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

Scoping

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

Strategic Actions

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

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

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

Strategic Environmental Objective (SEO)

Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) are methodological measures developed from policies which generally govern environmental protection objectives established at international, Community or Member State level and are used as standards against which the provisions of the Plan and the alternatives can be evaluated in order to help identify which provisions would be likely to result in significant environmental effects and where such effects would be likely to occur, if - in the case of adverse effects - unmitigated.

Section 1 SEA Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction and Terms of Reference

This is the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report for the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience Development Plan (hereafter referred to as 'the Plan'). It has been undertaken by CAAS Ltd. on behalf of Fáilte Ireland.

1.2 SEA Definition

Environmental assessment is a procedure that ensures that the environmental implications of decisions are taken into account before such decisions are made. *Environmental Impact Assessment*, or EIA, is generally used for describing the process of environmental assessment for individual projects, while *Strategic Environmental Assessment* or SEA is the term that has been given to the environmental assessment of plans and programmes, which help determine the nature and location of individual projects taking place. SEA is a systematic process of predicting and evaluating the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a proposed plan or programme, in order to ensure that these effects are adequately addressed at the earliest appropriate stages of decision-making in tandem with economic, social and other considerations.

1.3 SEA Directive and its transposition into Irish Law

Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of Ministers, of 27th June 2001, on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment, referred to hereafter as the SEA Directive, introduced the requirement that SEA be carried out on plans and programmes which

¹ Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011, on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (codification)

are prepared for a number of sectors, including tourism.

The SEA Directive was transposed into Irish Law through the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (Statutory Instrument Number (SI No. 435 of 2004) and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 436 of 2004). Both sets of Regulations became operational on 21st July 2004. The Regulations have been amended by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 200 of 2011) and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 201 of 2011).

1.4 Implications for the Plan

Article 3 para. 2 of the SEA Directive, introduced the requirement that SEA be carried out on plans and programmes, or modifications to these:

- a) which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive¹, or
- b) which, in view of the likely effect on sites, have been determined to require an assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive² i.e. the Directive requires that SEA is undertaken where Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (AA)³ is being undertaken on plans, programmes etc.

² Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

³ AA is provided for by the Habitats Directive and is a focused and detailed impact assessment of the implications of a strategic action or project, alone and in combination

The tourism sector Plan does not contribute towards the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive and does not contain provisions or define rules that must be complied with when administrative consent of other projects is being granted.

The Plan does, however, fall under the definition of a "plan" contained within the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011 (as amended) and therefore must be screened for the need to undertake AA. The Screening for AA has found that the Plan has the potential, if unmitigated, to affect the ecological integrity of European Sites and that measures to ensure that potential effects are avoided are required. Taking into account the requirements of the Habitats Directive and recent case law (including, European Court of Justice Judgement C323-17), Stage 2 AA was therefore carried out for the Plan. As Stage 2 AA was undertaken on the Plan, SEA was also undertaken for - see requirement at b) above. An SEA Determination is provided at Appendix I.

This SEA Environmental Report provides the findings of the SEA and should be read in conjunction with the Plan. An earlier version of this report was placed on public display and has been altered in order to take account of recommendations contained in submissions. Fáilte Ireland has taken into account the findings of this report and other related SEA output during their consideration of the Plan and before it is finalised. On finalisation of the Plan, an SEA Statement is prepared that summarises, inter alia, how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan.

with other strategic actions and projects, on the integrity of a European Site in view of its conservation objectives.

Section 2 The Plan

2.1 Overview

The Visitor Experience Development Plan's (VEDP's) **vision** is to: *'Increase dwell time and inspire visitors and the next generation to become custodians of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher.'*

The VEDP has been developed in recognition of the need for improved development and promotion of the area's unique features to achieve increased international cut through. The VEDP also recognises that *"With the extensive increase in visitor numbers during peak season to the Burren and Cliffs of Moher, visitor management and identifying total capacity numbers is required to ensure that the FIT (Free and Independent Traveller) visitor experience is improved and to protect and sustain the values and communities that created a profoundly unique tourist destination for Ireland."*

The VEDP recommends **guiding principles** and future measures of success including:

- Increase environmental protection and enhancement through sustainable tourism;
- Build community support for tourism through events and local-buy programmes;
- Boost the visitor connection with the Burren and overall visitor satisfaction;
- Maximise the economic and social of tourism to the destination; and
- Implement measures for visitor management that will help to improve the overall visitor experience as well as retain (and in some cases improve) the region's unique natural heritage and cultural assets.

The **key objectives** of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher VEDP are to develop hero, supporting and ancillary experiences for the region that will:

- Motivate visitors to stay longer and spend more;
- Extend the length of the season;
- Align to relevant brand, target markets and segments;

- Sustain and increase job creation in the local area; and
- Protect the special environmental character of the region.

It is the **aim** of the VEDP to:

- Encourage and engage businesses and local partners;
- Maintain business engagement beyond the project lifetime; and
- Build lasting links between national partners and local tourism experiences.

The Burren and Cliffs of Moher area is under the **Wild Atlantic Way key proposition**, which is to "Experience one of the wildest, most enhancing and culturally rich coastal touring routes in the world. Wherever you travel along the Wild Atlantic Way you'll find magic, adventure, history and beauty in abundance".

The VEDP identifies seven **Hero Experiences** (stories that customers can connect with that showcase the Wild Atlantic Way key proposition) that are supported by various **Hero Products** (the customer accesses these experiences through the Hero Products) and **Supporting Experiences** (what each business does to bring the hero products to life) and **Ancillary Experiences** (how the wider tourism offering supports the regional themes).

Central to the VEDP is the **Action Plan** that arranges various **recommendations** (including nine **Catalyst Projects** and **other Actions**) under seven **Hero Experiences** and four **Enablers of Success**.

Catalyst Projects recommended are as follows:

1. Develop and implement an Integrated Traffic and Transport Strategy for the Burren and Cliffs of Moher.
2. Upgrade 2km of the Cliff Walk (1km either side of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre) through a partnership with land owners and National Parks to develop a management plan and future funding model that supports the land owners and allows for reinvestment and a sustainable walking infrastructure.
3. Develop a winter Burren Music, Dance & Story Trail connecting visitors with music, dance, stories and traditions of the place – people and villages.
4. Create a 'Wellness the Wild Atlantic Way' programme and dedicated section on the Fáilte

- Ireland website that looks at the broader definition of 'wellness' including connection, time in nature, and the need to sleep well, as well as the traditional, relaxation, healthy food and exercise elements.
5. Develop the Burren Discovery Trail to assist in dispersing independent travellers eastward to the Burren Lowlands and provide interpretive content to interpret the landscape and reveal the underlying stories.
 6. Support farmers keen to diversify their business to include tourism with a business support programme and guidance on insurance and planning requirements and investment in sustainable tourism experiences.
 7. Be a Custodian for a day - join the Geopark to experience what is involved in managing a Global Geopark.
 8. Facilitate workshop(s) to assist in further developing and promoting a series of cultural events that encourage year-round visitation through dedicated timely funding.
 9. Encourage the establishment of new eco-friendly, responsible adventure experiences such as new cycling experiences along the green roads including mountain-biking and the 'edge' experience.

Hero Experiences are as follows:

1. Walk on the Edge of the World along the Cliffs of Moher.
2. Adventure On and Under in the Burren: diving, surfing, caving – 'the Edge'.
3. Walk the Burren Way through the Living Landscape shaped by 360 million years of water and Thousands of Years of Farming Traditions.
4. See Life shaped by the Ancient Farming Landscape of the Burren to see the Ancient Traditions Continue.
5. Experience Wellness the Wild Atlantic Way through Immersion of the Senses
6. Savour the Unique Local Flavours of the Burren.
7. Immerse yourself in the Music and Dance of the Burren and see the Lineage of Stories, Songs & Sounds of the Sea.

Enablers of Success recommended are as follows:

1. Visitor Management and Dispersal.
2. Better Collaboration Between Groups.
3. Inspire and Create Confidence in Sharing Stories.
4. Effective Marketing and Promotion.

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

framework for granting consent or contribute towards a framework for granting consent.

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

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

In order to achieve funding (including promotion) for land use or infrastructural development or land use activities from Fáilte Ireland, Fáilte Ireland's stakeholders shall be required to demonstrate compliance⁴ 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

⁴ Demonstration of compliance may be supported by monitoring undertaken by the beneficiary.

management. These documents include plans and programmes such as those detailed in Appendix II ⁵ (see also, Section 4 "Section 4", Section 5 "Strategic Environmental Objectives", Section 6 "Description of Alternatives and Section 9 "Mitigation Measures"). 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 RSESs for the Southern Region and the Northern and Western Region set 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 dwell times; developing walking and cycling trails, opening greater accessibility to the marine and countryside environment by sustainable modes; and facilitating appropriate tourism development, including that relating to greenways, blueways and peatlands. When adopted, the 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, RSESs 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.

⁵ Appendix II is not intended to be a full and comprehensive review of EU Directives, the transposing regulations or the regulatory framework for environmental protection and

management. The information is not exhaustive and it is recommended to consult the Directive, Regulation, Plan or Programme to become familiar with the full details of each.

Section 3 SEA Methodology

3.1 Introduction to the Iterative Approach

Figure 3.1 provides an overview of the integrated Plan preparation, SEA and Appropriate Assessment (AA) processes. The preparation of the Plan, SEA and AA have taken place concurrently and the findings of the SEA and AA have informed the Plan.

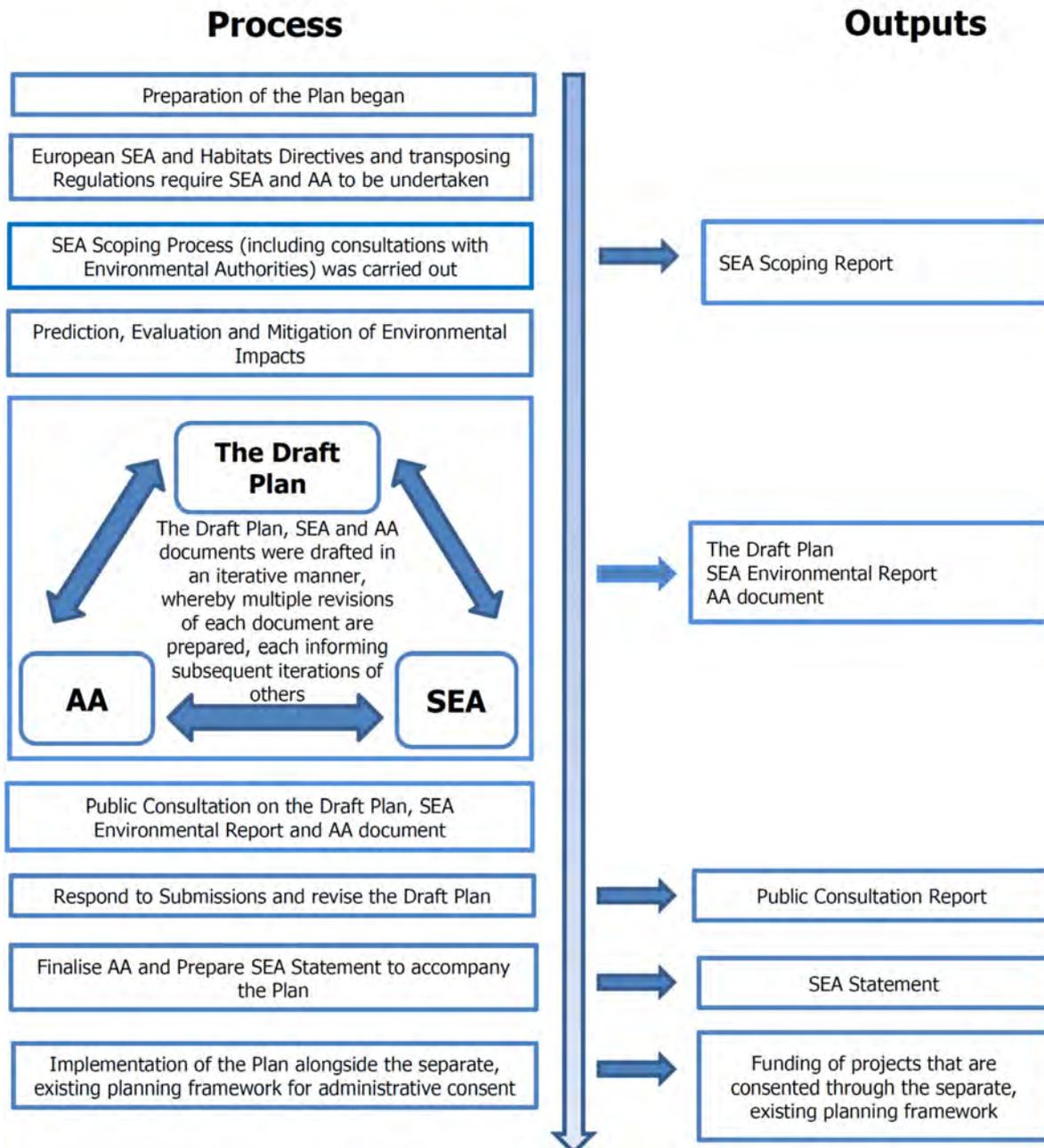


Figure 3.1 Overview of the SEA/AA/Plan-preparation Processes

3.2 Appropriate Assessment and Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment

3.2.1 Appropriate Assessment

Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (AA) has been undertaken alongside preparation of the Plan. The requirement for AA is provided under the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 1992/43/EEC).

The conclusion of the AA is that the Plan will not affect the integrity of the European Sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

The preparation of the Plan, SEA and AA has taken place concurrently and the findings of the AA have informed the SEA.

3.2.2 Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment

Many elements of Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment as detailed in the EPA's (2013) Practitioner's Manual have been aligned with in the undertaking of the SEA for the Plan. These include:

Scoping

- Biodiversity-relevant issues were identified for consideration at scoping stage and these are now detailed in Section 4.
- Reference to a zone of influence is provided at Section 4.

Baseline

- Biodiversity data sources relevant for this local level assessment have been identified and datasets collated/gathered.
- The biodiversity baseline addresses designated sites and other habitats and species of ecological value.
- AA information has been incorporated into the SEA baseline.

Alternatives

- Impacts upon biodiversity are considered under each of the alternatives and potential conflicts can be mitigated.

⁶ These components comprise biodiversity, fauna, flora, population, human health, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.

Impact assessment

- Effects on biodiversity are identified and assessed and the AA considers the interrelationship between biodiversity and potential effects on European Sites.

Mitigation and monitoring

- Taking into account all measures contained within the Plan, all the proposed mitigation measures deriving from the various processes were generally consistent and compatible.
- Indicators and associated targets have been included in SEA for monitoring European Sites.

Reporting

- This SEA ER addresses all biodiversity-related considerations relevant for this level of assessment.
- This SEA ER contains all biodiversity-relevant information, data, figures and maps relevant for this level of assessment.
- This SEA ER has been informed by the AA findings.

Communication and consultation

- Submissions received have been taken on board.
- The preparation of the Plan, SEA and AA have taken place concurrently and the findings of the AA have informed the SEA.

3.3 Scoping

3.3.1 Introduction

The scope of environmental issues to be dealt with by the SEA together with the level of detail to which they are addressed was broadly decided upon taking into account the collection of environmental baseline data and input from environmental authorities. Scoping allowed the SEA to become focused upon key issues relevant to the environmental components that are specified under the SEA Directive⁶.

As the Plan is not likely to have significant effects on the environment in another Member State, transboundary consultations as provided for by Article 7 of the SEA Directive were not undertaken.

3.3.2 Scoping Notices

Relevant environmental authorities⁷ identified under the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations, as amended, were sent SEA scoping notices by Fáilte Ireland indicating that submissions or observations in

⁷ The following authorities were notified: The Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

relation to the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the environmental report could be made to Fáilte Ireland.

3.3.3 Scoping Submissions

Submissions from the following environmental authorities were made during the SEA Scoping process:

- Environmental Protection Agency;
- Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine;
- Department of Communication, Climate Action and Environment; and
- Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

These submissions were taken into account during preparation of the SEA and informed the various SEA recommendations that have been integrated into the Plan (see Section 9).

3.4 Alternatives

The SEA Directive requires that reasonable alternatives (taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme) are identified, described and evaluated for their likely significant effects on the environment. In accordance with this requirement, alternatives for the Plan are examined in Section 7.

3.5 Environmental Report

In this SEA Environmental Report, an earlier version of which was placed on public display alongside the Draft Plan, the likely environmental effects of the Plan and the alternatives are predicted and their significance evaluated.

The Environmental Report provides Fáilte Ireland, stakeholders and the public with a clear understanding of the likely environmental consequences of implementing the Plan.

Mitigation measures to prevent or reduce significant adverse effects posed by the Plan are identified in Section 9 - these have been integrated into the Plan.

This Environmental Report has been updated in order to take account of recommendations contained in submissions.

This Environmental Report contains the information specified in Schedule 2 of the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 435 of 2004) as amended (see Table 3.1).

3.6 The SEA Statement

On finalisation of the Plan by Fáilte Ireland, an SEA Statement is prepared which will include information on:

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

3.7 Difficulties Encountered

No significant difficulties were encountered in undertaking the assessment.

Table 3.1 Checklist of Information included in this Environmental Report

Information Required to be included in the Environmental Report	Corresponding Section of this Report
(A) Outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan or programme, and of its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	Sections 2, 5 and 8
(B) Description of relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the evolution of that environment without implementation of the plan or programme	Section 4
(C) Description of the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected	Sections 4, 7 and 8
(D) Identification of any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme, particularly those relating to European Sites	Section 4
(E) List environmental protection objectives, established at international, EU or National level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and describe how those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account when preparing the Plan	Sections 5, 7, 8 and 9
(F) Describe the likely significant effects on the environment	Sections 7 and 8
(G) Describe any measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse environmental effects of implementing the plan or programme	Section 9
(H) Give an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives considered, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken (including any difficulties)	Sections 3, 6, 7 and 8
(I) A description of proposed monitoring measures	Section 10
(J) A non-technical summary of the above information	Non-Technical Summary
(K) Interrelationships between each environmental topic	Addressed as it arises within each Section

Section 4 Environmental Baseline

4.1 Introduction

Reflecting the specifications in the SEA Directive, the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment for the following environmental components are identified in this section:

- Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna;
- Population and Human Health;
- Material Assets;
- Water;
- Air and Climatic Factors;
- Landscape;
- Cultural Heritage;
- Soil; and
- The interrelationship between the above factors.

Information which is relevant to planning and project development and associated environmental assessments and administrative consent of projects is identified (note that Article 5 of the SEA Directive, in accordance with the established European principle of subsidiarity, requires that the Environmental Report includes the information that may reasonably be required taking into account, inter alia, the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process in order to avoid duplication of the assessment).

4.2 Geographical Scope of the Assessment

The area to which the Plan relates covers part of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area in Counties Clare and Galway (see Figure 4.1).

4.3 National Reporting on the Environment

The EPA's "*Ireland's Environment - An Assessment 2016*" report provides an integrated assessment of the overall quality of Ireland's environment, the pressures being placed on it and the societal responses to current and emerging environmental issues. This report has informed various parts of the environmental baseline provided below. The

key environmental challenges or messages identified by the report are:

Environment and Health and Wellbeing

Recognising the benefits of a good quality environment to health and wellbeing.

Climate Change

Accelerating mitigation actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and implement adaptation measures to increase resilience in dealing with adverse climate impacts.

Implementation of Legislation

Improving the tracking of plans and policies and the implementation and enforcement of environmental legislation to protect the environment.

Restore and Protect Water Quality

Implementing measures that achieve ongoing improvement in the environmental status of water bodies from source to the sea.

Sustainable Economic Activities

Integrating environmental sustainability ideas and performance accounting across economic sectors and sectoral plans should be a key policy for growth.

Nature and Wild Places

Protecting pristine and wild places that act as biodiversity hubs, contributing to health and wellbeing, and providing tourism opportunities

Community Engagement

Informing, engaging and supporting communities in the protection and improvement of the environment.

The report highlights that high quality green and blue spaces are not just for nature but are for peoples' health and wellbeing, particularly in the context of an increasingly urban society and increasing settlement densities.

4.4 Sustainable Development Goals

Implementation of the Plan will contribute towards efforts to achieve a number of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which were adopted by world leaders in 2015 at a United Nations Summit and came into force in 2016. These Goals include:

- Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
- Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

- Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
- Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
- Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
- Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
- Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
- Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

4.5 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) under Section 7.



Figure 4.1 Area to which the Plan relates (Figure 1 from the VEDP)

4.6 Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna

4.6.1 Overview

Information on biodiversity and flora and fauna which is relevant to project planning and development and associated environmental assessment and administrative consent of projects includes available information on designated ecological sites and protected species, ecological connectivity (including stepping stones and corridors) and non-designated habitats.

Ecological designations include:

- Special Areas of Conservation⁸ (SACs) and Special Protection Areas⁹ (SPAs);

- Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs)¹⁰;
- Nature Reserves;
- National Parks;
- Ramsar Sites¹¹;
- Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)¹²;
- Salmonid Waters¹³;
- Shellfish Waters¹⁴;
- Freshwater Pearl Mussel catchments;
- Flora Protection Order¹⁵ sites;
- Certain entries to the Water Framework Directive Register of Protected Areas¹⁶;
- Wildfowl Sanctuaries (see S.I. 192 of 1979)¹⁷;
- Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)¹⁸;
- Ecological connectivity and networks;
- EPA Ecological Network Classes¹⁹;

⁸ 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) by the DECLG 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.

⁹ 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 - by the DECLG due to their conservation value for birds of importance in the European Union.

¹⁰ pNHAs were published on a non-statutory basis in 1995, but have not since been statutorily proposed or designated. These sites are of significance for wildlife and habitats.

¹¹ Ramsar Sites are designated and protected under the Convention of Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Water Fowl Habitat, which was established at Ramsar in 1971 and ratified by Ireland in 1984. Ireland presently has 45 sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance, with surface areas of 66,994 hectares. The objective of a Ramsar Site is the conservation of wetlands for wildfowl. While Ireland ratified the Ramsar Convention in 1984 there is no legal backing for Ramsar sites unless they are also Nature Reserves or SPAs and as such are protected by the Wildlife Acts 1976 and 2000 or the Birds or Habitats Directives. There are no Ramsar Sites located within the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area. The closest Ramsar Sites to the area are: Ballyallia Lough (to the south-east of the area), Coole Lough and Garryland Wood (to the north-east of the area) and Inner Galway Bay (to the north of the area).

¹² Under the OSPAR Convention to Protect the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic, Ireland committed to establishing marine protected areas to protect biodiversity (OSPAR MPAs). Ireland established a number of its SACs as OSPAR MPAs for marine habitats. There is one OSPAR MPA located within the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Plan area: Galway Bay Complex OSPAR MPA. Boundaries of this OSPAR MPA are aligned with Galway Bay Complex SAC (000268).

¹³ Salmonid waters are designated and protected as under the European Communities (Quality of Salmonid Waters) Regulations 1988 (SI No. 293 of 1988). Designated Salmonid Waters are capable of supporting salmon (*Salmo salar*), trout (*Salmo trutta*), char (*Salvelinus*) and whitefish (*Coregonus*).

¹⁴ In order to protect existing shellfish waters and to ensure the future protection of these areas, the European Union introduced the Shellfish Waters Directive (2006/113/EC). The purpose of this Directive is to put in place concrete measures to protect waters, including shellfish waters, against pollution and to safeguard certain shellfish populations from various harmful consequences, resulting from the discharge of pollutant substances into the sea. The Directive applies to the aquatic habitat of bivalve and gastropod molluscs only (includes oysters, mussels, cockles, scallops and clams). It does not include crustaceans such as lobsters, crabs and crayfish.

¹⁵ The current list of plant species protected by Section 21 of the Wildlife Act, 1976 is set out in the Flora (Protection) Order, 1999.

¹⁶ In response to the requirements of the Water Framework Directive a number of water bodies or parts of water bodies which must have extra controls on their quality by virtue of how their waters are used by wildlife have been listed on Registers of Protected Areas (RPAs). RPAs include those for Protected Habitats or Species, Shellfish, Salmonid, Nutrient Sensitive Areas, Recreational Waters and Drinking Water.

¹⁷ Wildfowl Sanctuaries are areas that have been excluded from the 'Open Season Order' so that game birds can rest and feed undisturbed. There are 68 sanctuaries in the State. Shooting of game birds is not allowed in these sanctuaries. There are two Wildfowl Sanctuaries, one located within the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area, Inagh River (part of), and one to the southeast of the area, Ballyallia Lough.

¹⁸ TPOs are a planning mechanism whereby individual trees or groups of trees can be identified as important and protected by a TPO.

¹⁹ This is an EPA dataset identifying a national spread of Ecological Network Classes which have been informed by CORINE land cover data. The study developed criteria to classify the relative importance of different areas within an Ecological Network. Five Classes of areas were defined on the basis of naturalness.

- CORINE Landcover²⁰.
- Watercourses, wetlands and peatlands; and
- Other sites of high biodiversity value or ecological importance, e.g. BirdWatch Ireland's 'Important Bird Areas' (Crowe et al., 2009).

4.6.2 Key Ecological Sensitivities

Key ecological sensitivities comprise:

- Rare limestone habitats including orchid-rich calcareous grasslands (supporting a high diversity of plants and animals)²¹;
- Extensive network of wetlands and associated aquatic and riverine ecology;
- Coastal areas and associated marine and ecology; and
- Habitats associated with geological features, including bare rock pavements, cliffed and terraced hills and caves.

The sensitive receptors – both habitats and species – identified for European designations that cover much of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area (see Section 4.6.4 below) are likely to be indicative of the key sensitive features surrounding the area.

4.6.3 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 research characterises visitor movements at each site while examining the ecological features and sensitives present. A detailed assessment of the site facilities and management actions on site is also undertaken. From this data, impacts to ecological features are quantified in a systematic way and management recommendations are made. Over the first 4 years of the monitoring, the data has shown that visitors themselves cause low-level effects, and high-level effects are predominantly caused by the mismanagement of sites. As well as the site-specific data being collected, the monitoring program collates and interprets existing national environmental indicator data compiling the results into annual macro monitoring reports. The WAW monitoring research is guided by an independent working group that steers the research and develops the program as the data is collected. This working group comprises of members from the EPA, NPWS, the Environmental Pillar and a representative from each of the County Councils along the WAW.

Each year the results are refined and published online in the form of Visitor Observation Reports, Ecological Impact Reports and the Macro Monitoring Reports. The reports are then dissected and detailed reports containing all relevant site-specific information are sent to each of the County Councils along the WAW; as well as any site management teams at sites not under the management of the County Council. This ensures that the research can be harnessed on site by those responsible while contributing towards informed management plans and guidelines created by Fáilte.

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. Ecological impacts observed comprise:

- Destruction of structures, vegetation or fauna;
- Trampling of herbaceous vegetation;
- Disturbance of wildlife;
- Heavy littering or dumping quantities of waste;
- Addition/alteration of site features, transient emissions, noise;

²⁰ Land cover is the observed physical cover, as seen from the ground or through remote sensing, including for example natural or planted vegetation, water and human constructions which cover the earth's surface.

²¹ Seven of the nine bat species and 28 of Ireland's 30 butterfly species are found in the Burren, and over 70 species of land snails (<http://www.burrengeopark.ie/learn-engage/geology-of-the-burren/flora-and-fauna/>).

- Harvesting of large quantities of shells from beach sites;
- Fishing activities;
- Removal and throwing of large rocks; and
- Unrestricted dogs causing disturbances to wildlife.

It is assumed that visitor interactions within the Plan area will be consistent with the trends, activities and effects recorded in this dataset.

The Monitoring Programme has identified that dunes, machair, maritime grasslands and upland habitats such as heathlands are the most sensitive/vulnerable to visitor effects. Therefore, the management of visitor movements within these habitats is key for the avoidance of potential effects.

4.6.4 European Sites

A significant portion of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area, its coastline and its surrounding waters are designated as European Sites (see Section 4.6.4 below). 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 Conservation²² (SACs), including candidate SACs; and
- Special Protection Areas²³ (SPAs).

The SEA uses the same zone of influence cited in the AA: a 15 km buffer around the area to

²² 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.

²³ 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.

²⁴ Sensitive features include: fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes), alpine and subalpine

heaths, orchid-rich calcareous grassland and petrifying springs.

which the Plan relates (see sites within this zone listed on Table 4.1 and mapped on Figure 4.2). The AA review of all sites within this zone has allowed a determination to be made that in the absence of significant hydrological links the characteristics of the VEDP will not impose effects beyond the 15 km buffer.

There are number of SACs designated within and adjacent to the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area including Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex SAC²⁴, Moneen Mountain SAC²⁵, Inagh River Estuary SAC²⁶, Galway Bay Complex SAC²⁷, East Burren Complex SAC²⁸, Ballyvaughan Turlough SAC²⁹, Ballyteige (Clare) SAC³⁰.

There are number of SPAs designated within and adjacent to the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area including Inner Galway Bay SPA³¹, Cliffs of Moher SPA³², Corofin Wetlands SPA³³, Coole-Garryland SPA³⁴ and Mid-Clare Coast SPA³⁵.

Table 4.1 European Sites within and adjacent to the area to which the Plan relates

European Sites		
Designation	Code	Site Name
SAC	000014	Ballyallia Lake
	000016	Ballycullinan Lake
	000019	Ballyogan Lough
	000020	Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex
	000032	Dromore Woods And Loughs
	000036	Inagh River Estuary
	000037	Pouladatig Cave

heaths, orchid-rich calcareous grassland and petrifying springs.

²⁵ Sensitive features include: turloughs, orchid-rich calcareous grassland, marsh fritillary and lesser horseshoe bat.

²⁶ Sensitive features include: salicornia mud, Atlantic and Mediterranean salt meadows, marram dunes and fixed dunes.

²⁷ Sensitive features include: tidal mudflats and sandflats, coastal lagoons, turloughs, orchid-rich calcareous grassland, alkaline fens, otter and common (harbour) seal.

²⁸ Sensitive features include: hard water lakes, turloughs, floating river vegetation, petrifying springs, orchid-rich calcareous grassland and lesser horseshoe bat.

²⁹ Sensitive features include: turloughs.

³⁰ Sensitive features include: *molinia* meadows.

³¹ Sensitive features include: cormorant, grey heron, light-bellied brent goose, dunlin, curlew and redshank.

³² Sensitive features include: fulmar, kittiwake, guillemot, razorbill, puffin and cough.

³³ Sensitive features include: little grebe, whooper swan, wigeon, teal and black-tailed godwit.

³⁴ Sensitive features include: whooper swan.

³⁵ Sensitive features include: cormorant, barnacle goose, ringed plover, sanderling, purple sandpiper, dunlin and turnstone.

	000054	Moneen Mountain
	000057	Moyree River System
	000212	Inishmaan Island
	000238	Caherglassaun Turlough
	000242	Castletaylor Complex
	000252	Coole-Garryland Complex
	000268	Galway Bay Complex
	000286	Kiltartan Cave (Coole)
	000297	Lough Corrib
	000299	Lough Cutra
	000318	Peterswell Turlough
SAC	000322	Rahasane Turlough
	000606	Lough Fingall Complex
	000994	Ballyteige (Clare)
	000996	Ballyvaughan Turlough
	001021	Carrowmore Point To Spanish Point And Islands
	001275	Inisheer Island
	001285	Kiltiernan Turlough
	001321	Termon Lough
	001926	East Burren Complex
	002034	Connemara Bog Complex
	002117	Lough Coy
	002165	Lower River Shannon
	002180	Gortacarnaun Wood
	002180	Drummin Wood
	002244	Ardrahan Grassland
	002245	Old Farm Buildings, Ballymacrogan
	002246	Ballycullinan, Old Domestic Building
	002247	Toonagh Estate
	002250	Carrowmore Dunes
	002293	Carrowbaun, Newhall and Ballylee Turloughs
002294	Cahermore Turlough	
002295	Ballinduff Turlough	
002317	Cregg House Stables, Crusheen	
SPA	004005	Cliffs of Moher
	004031	Inner Galway Bay
	004041	Ballyallia Lough
	004042	Lough Corrib
	004056	Lough Cutra
	004089	Rahasane Turlough
	004107	Coole-Garryland
	004142	Cregganna Marsh
	004168	Slieve Aughty Mountains
	004181	Connemara Bog Complex
	004182	Mid-Clare Coast
	004220	Corofin Wetlands

For more detail on European Sites please refer to the AA document that accompanies the Plan and this SEA Environmental Report.

4.6.5 Natural Heritage Areas and Proposed Natural Heritage Areas

Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) are designated due to their national conservation value for ecological and/or geological/geomorphological heritage. They cover nationally important semi-natural and natural habitats, landforms or geomorphological features, wildlife plant and animal species or a diversity of these natural attributes. NHAs are designated under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000. Proposed NHAs (pNHAs) were published on a non-statutory basis in 1995, but have not since been statutorily proposed or designated.

There are number of pNHAs designated within and adjacent to the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area and NHAs in surrounding areas including those listed on Table 4.2 and mapped on Figure 4.3.

Table 4.2 NHAs and pNHAs within and adjacent to the area to which the Plan relates

Proposed Natural Heritage Areas			
Designation	Code	Site Name	
NHA	000253	Cregganna Marsh	
	002364	Moycullen Bogs	
	002367	Lough Naminna Bog	
	002397	Slievecallan Mountain Bog	
	002400	Cragnashingaun Bogs	
	002421	Lough Acrow Bogs	
	002439	Oysterman'S Marsh	
	pNHA	000014	Ballyallia Lake
		000016	Ballycullinan Lake
000019		Ballyyogan Lough	
000020		Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex	
000026		Cliffs Of Moher	
000032		Dromore Woods And Loughs	
000036		Inagh River Estuary	
000037		Pouladatig Cave	
000038		Inchicronan Lough	
000048		Lough Goller	
000054		Moneen Mountain	
000057		Moyree River System	
000071		Turloughnagullaun	
000212		Inishmaan Island	
000238		Caherglassaun Turlough	
000242		Castletaylor Complex	
000252		Coole-Garryland Complex	
000268		Galway Bay Complex	
000286		Kiltartan Cave (Coole)	
000287		Kiltullagh Turlough	

Proposed Natural Heritage Areas		
	000297	Lough Corrib
	000299	Lough Cutra
	000318	Peterswell Turlough
	000320	Pollduagh Cave, Gort
	000322	Rahasane Turlough
	000606	Lough Fingall Complex
	000994	Ballyteige (Clare)
	000996	Ballyvaughan Turlough
	001001	Cahircalla Wood
	001007	White Strand/Carrowmore Marsh
	001021	Carrowmore Point To Spanish Point And Islands
	001024	Caherkinallia Wood
	001267	Furbogh Wood
	001275	Inisheer Island
	001285	Kiltiernan Turlough
	001321	Termon Lough
	001331	Lough Cleggan
	001926	East Burren Complex
	002034	Connemara Bog Complex

4.6.6 Land Cover Mapping

CORINE³⁶ land cover mapping for the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area is shown on Figure 4.4. The most dominant land cover types are pastures, agricultural lands and peat bogs.

Categories from CORINE mapping that may indicate areas likely to contain Annex I habitats, in the area to which the Plan relates, include:

- Peat bogs;
- Natural grassland;
- Water bodies;
- Coastal lagoons;
- Mixed forests;
- Coniferous forest;
- Moors and heaths;
- Intertidal flats;
- Beaches dunes sand;
- Inland marshes;
- Sparsely vegetated areas;
- Salt marshes;
- Transitional woodland and scrub; and
- Land principally occupied by agriculture with areas of natural vegetation.

³⁶ The CORINE (Coordinated Information on the Environment) land cover data series was devised as a means of compiling geo-spatial environmental information in a standardised and comparable manner. CORINE has become a key data source for informing environmental and planning policy on a national and European level. The main land cover type in Ireland is agricultural land including

4.6.7 Register of Protected Areas

In response to the requirements of the Water Framework Directive a number of water bodies or parts of water bodies that must have extra controls on their quality by virtue of how their waters are used by people and by wildlife have been listed on Registers of Protected Areas (RPAs).

The groundwater underlying the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area is part of the wider groundwater area relating to drinking water sources.

There are number of water bodies in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher and surrounding area that are included on the RPA for drinking water: rivers Caher (Clare); Fergus; and Inagh (Ennistymon); and lake Lickeen.

The Fergus River is also listed on RPA for Salmonid Waters capable of supporting salmon (*Salmo salar*), trout (*Salmo trutta*), char (*Salvelinus*) and whitefish (*Coregonus*).

Ballyvaughan/Poul-na-clough Bay, the Bay at Aughinish and Clarinbridge/Kinvara Bay are listed on the RPA for shellfish areas.

The number of bathing locations around the Burren and Cliffs of Moher and surrounding areas are also included on the RPA for bathing waters: Lahinch; Fanore; Bishopsquarter; Traught (Kinavara); and Trá Inis Oirr (Main Beach).

4.6.8 Other Designations

Other designations mapped on Figure 4.3 include National Park, Nature Reserves and Freshwater Pearl Mussel catchments.

National Parks are specially designated protected areas of unspoilt beauty and there are six located in Ireland. The primary purpose of the National Parks is the conservation of biodiversity and landscape, however they also provide for recreational space for locals and visitors. The Burren National Park is located in

forestry, which accounts for two-thirds of the national landmass. Most of this is permanent grassland pastures. Peatlands and wetlands are the second most widespread land cover type, covering almost one-fifth of the country. While forested areas cover about one-tenth of the country. Despite rapid development in the past two decades, Ireland's landscape is predominantly rural and agricultural.

in the southeastern corner of the Burren area. It contains examples of all the major habitats within the Burren: Limestone Pavement, Calcareous grassland, hazel scrub, ash/hazel woodland, turloughs, lakes, petrifying springs, cliffs and fens.

Nature Reserves are areas of importance to wildlife, which is protected under Ministerial order. There are currently 78 Statutory Nature Reserves in Ireland. Most are owned by the State but some are owned by organisations or private landowners. There are number of Nature Reserves designated within or adjacent to the Burren and Cliffs of Moher and surrounding areas: Ballyteigue; Keelhilla/Sleve Carron; Ballynastaig Wood; Coole Garyland; Cahermurphy and Dromore.

Freshwater Pearl Mussel is a globally threatened, long-lived and extremely sensitive species that can be impacted by many forms of pollution, particularly sediment and nutrient pollution and by hydrological and morphological changes, which may arise from developments, activities or changes in any part of the catchment. There are three Fresh Pearl Mussel catchments identified within or adjacent to the Burren and Cliffs of Moher and surrounding areas (see Figure 4.3):

- Catchments of SAC populations listed in S.I. 296 of 2009;
- Catchments of other extant populations; and
- Catchments with previous records of *Margaritifera*, but current status unknown.

4.6.9 Existing Problems

The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's Article 17 report on the Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland (2013) identifies many Irish habitats to be of unfavourable status and many to be still declining, although it also identifies that a range of positive actions are underway. The report identifies that the majority of EU-protected species are, however, in "Favourable" status in Ireland, and stable, although a small number are considered to be in "Bad" status and continue to require concerted efforts to protect them.

The Plan includes robust measures to contribute towards the protection of

biodiversity and flora and fauna and associated ecosystem services.

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.

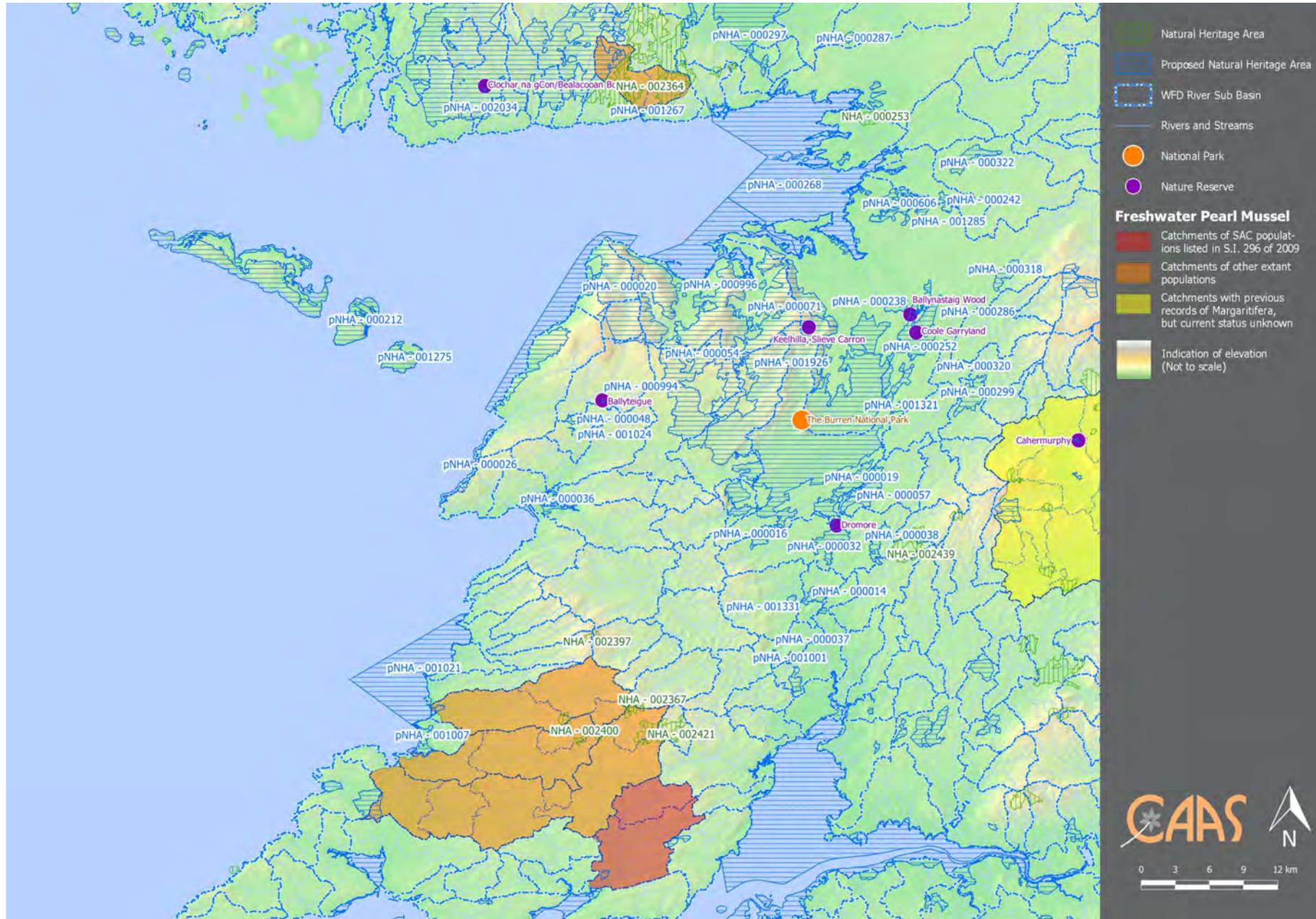


Figure 4.3 Other Ecological Designations within and adjacent to the area to which the Plan relates

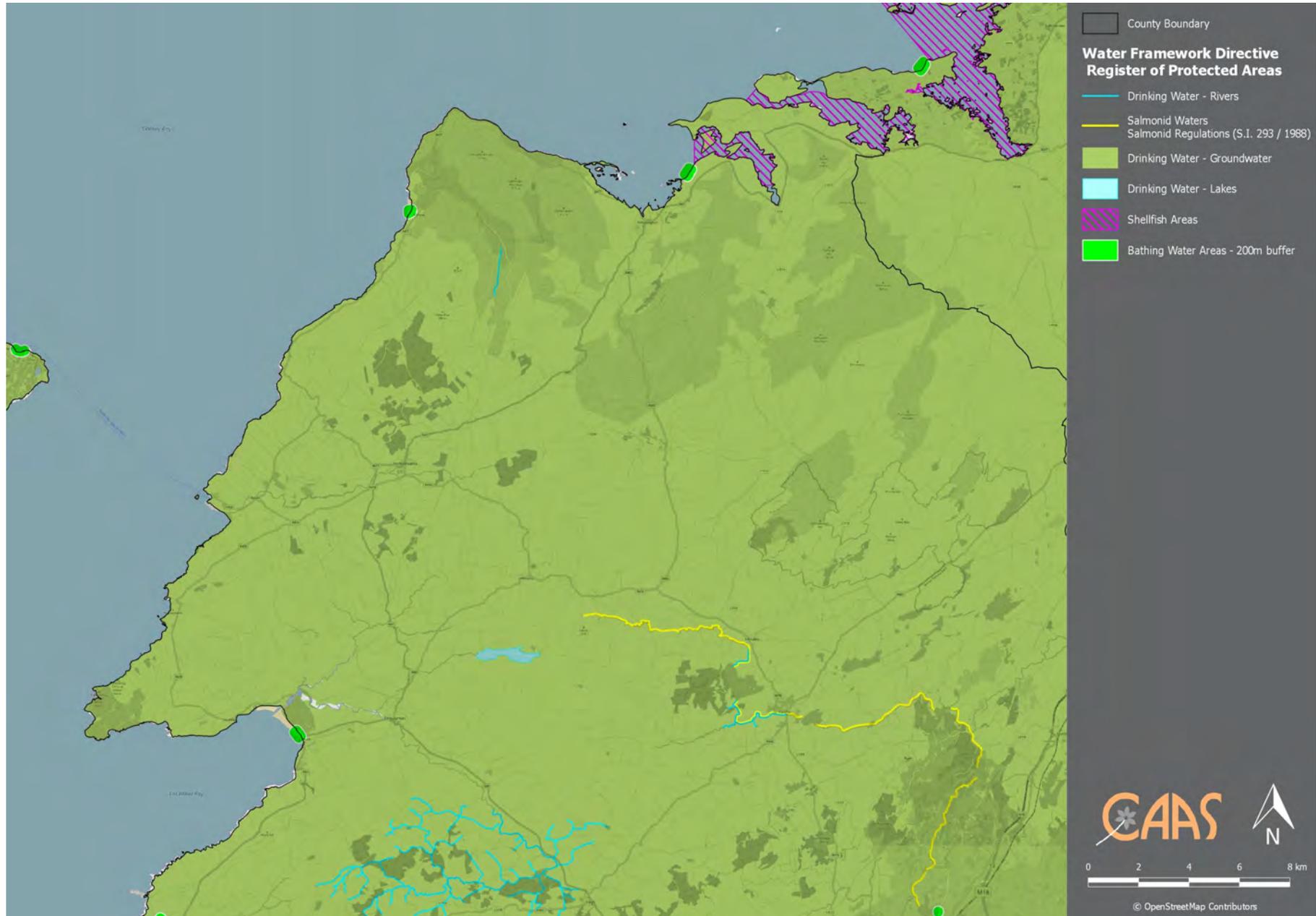


Figure 4.5 WFD Register of Protected Areas

4.7 Population and Human Health

4.7.1 Population

Using the 2016 Census data, the population of the Electoral Divisions in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher and surrounding areas was estimated to be 15,572 persons³⁷. The population of the biggest settlements in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area was 1,045 persons in Ennistymon; 829 persons in Lisdoovarna; 734 in Kinavara; and 638 in Lahinch.

Population has the potential to interact with various environmental components. Potential interactions include:

- Interactions with landslides (see Section 4.8.5);
- Recreational and development pressure on habitats and landscapes (see Section 4.6);
- Contribution towards increase in demand for waste water treatment at the municipal level (see Section 4.11);
- Contribution towards increase in demand for water supply and associated potential impact of water abstraction (see Section 4.11);
- Potential interactions in flood-sensitive area (see Section 4.9.9); and
- Potential effects on water quality (see Section 4.9).

4.7.2 Human Health

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

³⁷ Total population was estimated using the interactive Census 2016 mapping tool for Small Area Population Statistics (SAPMAP) for the following Electoral Divisions: Abbey, Carran, Noughaval/Castletown, Derreen, Drumcreehy, Gleninagh, Lisdoovarna, Mountelva, Oughmama, Rathborne, Glenroe/Ballyeigher, Boston, Corrofin, Killinaboy, Kiltoragh, Rath, Ballagh, Ballyea,

each environmental component; and the identification and evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan.

4.7.3 Existing Problems

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. It accounts for more than half of the total radiation dose received by the Irish population. As a known carcinogen, in the same category as tobacco smoke and asbestos it is a cause of lung cancer. Exposure to radon for long periods or at high concentrations can lead to lung cancer.

Both Counties Clare and Galway include a number of High Radon Area, as identified by the EPA – High Radon Areas are identified by the EPA within most counties across the country³⁸.

Also refer to the other sections of this report referred to above with respect interactions with other environmental components.

4.8 Soil

4.8.1 Introduction

Soil is the top layer of the earth's crust. It is formed by mineral particles, organic matter, water, air and living organisms. Soil can be considered as a non-renewable natural resource because it develops over very long timescales. It is an extremely complex, variable and living medium and performs many vital functions including: food and other biomass production, storage, filtration and transformation of many substances including water, carbon, and nitrogen. Soil has a role as a habitat and gene pool, serves as a platform for human activities, landscape and heritage and acts as a provider of raw materials. Such functions of soil are worthy of protection because of their socio-economic as well as environmental importance. Soils in any area are the result of the interaction of various factors,

Ballysteen, Cloghaun, Clooney, Ennistimon, Kilfenora, Killaspuglonane, Killilagh, Kilshanny, Lisacannor, Lurraga, Magherareagh, Moy, Smithstown, Doorus, Killinny and Kinvarra.

³⁸ Mapping available at <http://www.epa.ie/radiation/radonmap>

such as parent material, climate, vegetation and human action.

To date, there is no legislation that is specific to the protection of soil resources. However, there is currently an EU Thematic Strategy on the protection of soil that includes a proposal for a Soil Framework Directive that proposes common principles for protecting soils across the EU.

4.8.2 Soil Types

Very shallow soils are found over much of the area, especially where the geology is exposed. Much of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher and surrounding areas comprises bare limestone pavement with some soil in the valleys of the area and in enclosed depressions in the karst geology.

Surface water gleys and minerotrophic (groundwater-fed peat systems) are the two most dominant soils across the Burren and Cliffs of Moher and surrounding areas (see Figure 4.6). Much of the peat soils areas are subject to ecological designations (see Section 4.6). Other soils identified across the area to which the Plan relates include:

- Luvisols³⁹ occurring in the north-west of the Burren area;
- Rendzinas⁴⁰ found throughout some of the north of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area;
- Brown earths⁴¹ occurring to the north, south and west of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area;
- Alluvial soils⁴² occurring in the flood plains of the rivers and streams; and
- Ombrotrophic, rain-fed peat soils associated with the groundwater-fed peat systems in the Burren area.

There are three types of solid geological formations occurring in the area of Burren and Cliffs of Moher: Upper Carboniferous shales and

sandstones in the south, Clare shales in the central part and carboniferous limestone in the north of the area⁴³. Outcropping rock is identified in a number of upland locations

4.8.3 County Geological Sites

There are number of County Geological Sites across the area to which the Plan relates. These Sites do not receive statutory protection like Natural Heritage Areas but receive an effective protection from their inclusion in the planning system.

The greatest concentrations of County Geological Sites across the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area occur in upland and coastal areas⁴⁴, and almost all of them occur within UNESCO Global Geopark (see Figure 4.7).

4.8.4 UNESCO Global Geopark

Geological heritage is significant across the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area, which was designated United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Global Geopark in 2011⁴⁵. UNESCO Global Geoparks are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance, managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development. They strive to raise awareness of geodiversity and promote protection, education and tourism best practices. There are two other UNESCO Geoparks on the island of Ireland, the Copper Coast in County Waterford and the Marble Arch Caves in Northern Ireland.

The geological landscape of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher is one of glacially smoothed Carboniferous fossil-rich limestone hills; dramatic sea cliffs; seasonal lakes; and vast networks of subterranean caves. This physical landscape hosts rare natural habitats and unique floral assemblages not found anywhere else on Earth, as well as abundant legacies of

³⁹ Luvisol soils are generally fertile, widely used for agriculture and associated with significant accumulation of clay.

⁴⁰ Rendzina soils are very shallow soils over bedrock, liable to drought.

⁴¹ Brown earths are well drained mineral soils, associated with high levels of natural fertility.

⁴² These are associated with alluvial (clay, silt or sand) river deposits.

⁴³ An Foras Taluntais (1971) *Soils of County Clare Soil (Survey Bulletin No. 23)*

⁴⁴ County Geological Sites include: Doolin to Hags Head (Cliffs of Moher); Doolin Green Holes; Doolin Cave;

Poulsallagh; Pol an Ionain; Coolagh River Cave; St. Brendan's/Poulnagollum; Black Head; Aillwee Hill; Corranroo Springs; Kinvara Springs; Pollbehan; Pollaloughabo; Cappacasheen Epikarst; Gort - Kinvara Lowlands; Moran's Cave; Pollnadirk; Mullaghmore/Slieveoe/Knockanes; Carran enclosed depression; Sheshymore; Glencurran Cave; Rinnamona; Turkenagh; Ballykinnacorra North; Vigo Cave; Crossard; Elmvale and Fergus River Cave.

⁴⁵ There are currently 147 UNESCO Global Geoparks in 41 countries.

human settlement dating back over 6,000 years.⁴⁶

4.8.5 Landslides

The term "landslide" describes a wide variety of processes that result in the downward and outward movement of materials such as rock, debris, earth, mud and peat under the force of gravity. Issues such as existing ground conditions, slope stability and storage of excavated material have the potential to influence susceptibility to landslides/bog bursts. The potential impacts of landslides include loss of human life/injury, flooding, pollution of watercourses and impacts upon aquatic biodiversity.

There are several locations identified within the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area with a history of multiple landslide events⁴⁷. These events occur in upland and coastal areas and include Doonnagore (2011) and Ballaghline (1990). The GSI have identified various upland and coastal areas across the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area that are of high and moderately high levels of landslide susceptibility.

4.8.6 Existing Problems

Legislative objectives governing soil were not identified as being conflicted with.

⁴⁶ www.unesco.org (2019)

⁴⁷ Over 2,500 landslide events are recorded in the National Landslides Database available from GSI (www.gsi.ie). This dataset also includes Landslide Susceptibility Mapping to assist in the identification of areas that are likely to experience land sliding.

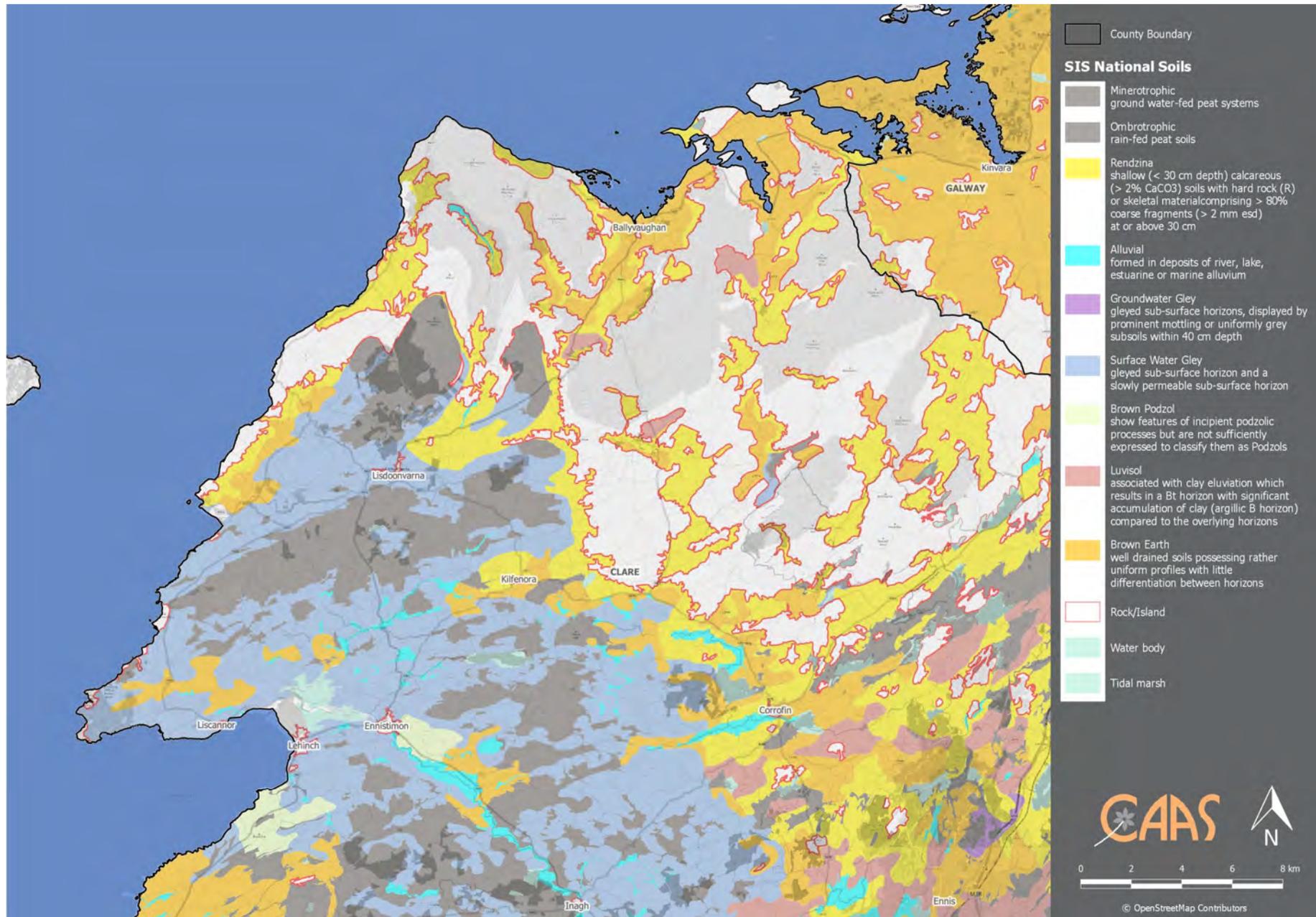


Figure 4.6 Soils

CAAS for Fáilte Ireland

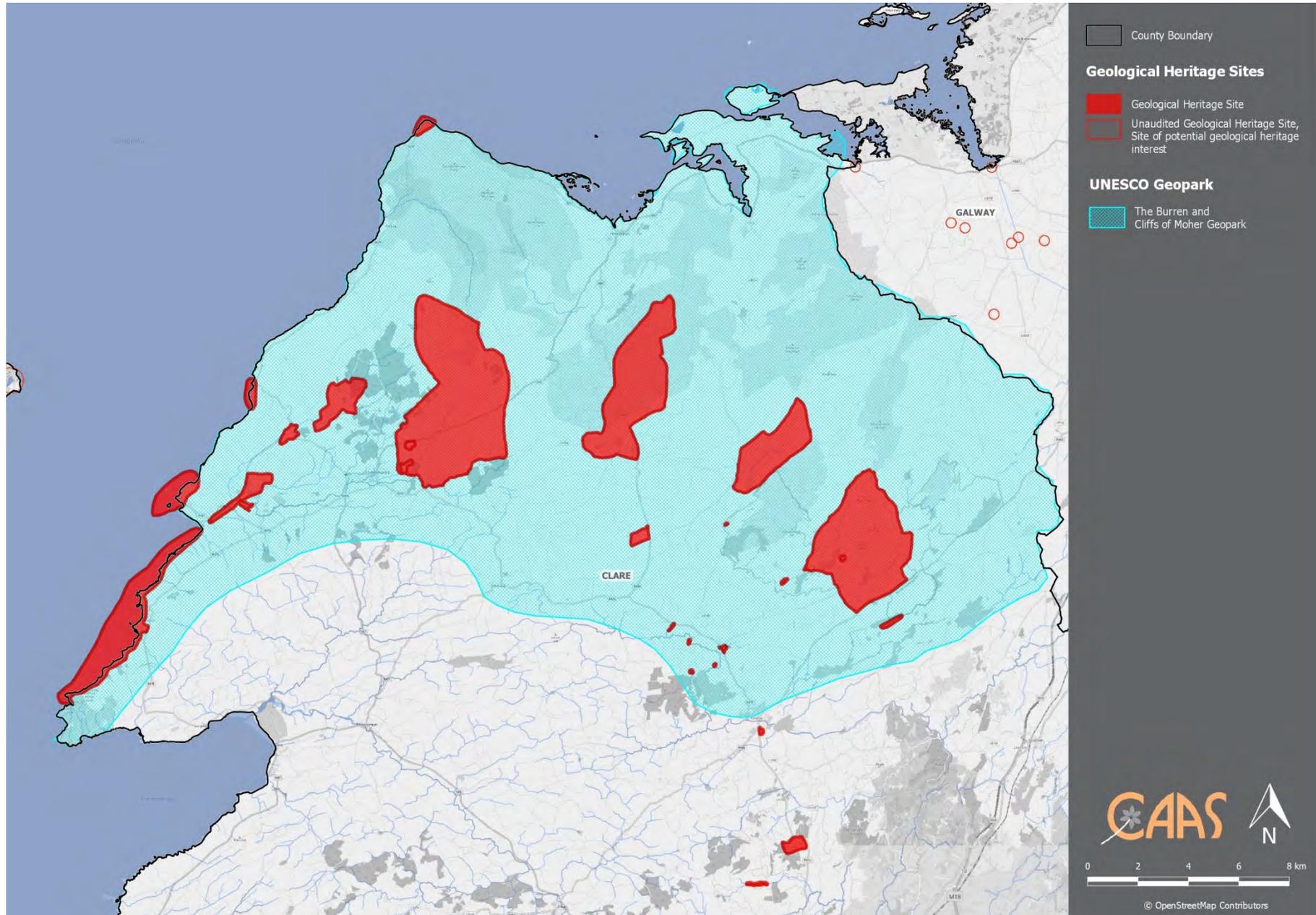


Figure 4.7 Geological Heritage

4.9 Water

4.9.1 The Water Framework Directive

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*.

Article 4 of the WFD sets out various exemptions for deterioration in status caused as a result of certain physical modifications to water bodies. This is provided: all practicable mitigation measures are taken; there are reasons of overriding public interest or the benefits to human health, safety or sustainable development outweigh the benefits in achieving the WFD objective; there are no better alternatives; and the reasons for the physical modification are explained in the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP).

The EU's Common Implementation Strategy Guidance Documents No. 20 and 36 provide guidance on exemptions to the environmental objectives of the WFD.

For the purpose of assessment, reporting and management, water is divided into groundwater, rivers, lakes, estuarine waters and coastal waters that are in turn divided into specific, clearly defined water bodies.

⁴⁸ This catchment encompasses an area adjacent to most of County Clare's coastline and is underlain by sandstones and shales except for a small part of the catchment north of Lisdoonvearna which is underlain by highly karstified Burren limestone. In this northern region, nearly all rainfall enters the bedrock aquifer, flowing either to the sea or re-emerging as surface streams when it reaches the impermeable shale and sandstone rocks to the south. Surface drainage in this catchment is dominated by a series of westerly flowing rivers that drain to the Atlantic coast.

⁴⁹ The catchment drains an area stretching from the southern tip of the Loop Head Peninsula, eastwards to the Slieve Bearnagh Hills and northwards nearly to Ballyvaughan, including much of the central and southern

4.9.2 Zone of Influence

The Zone of Influence of the Plan beyond the area to which the Plan relates, with respect to impacts upon waters can be estimated to be all bodies of groundwater and all surface waters downstream areas of catchments which drain the area to which the plan relates.

4.9.3 Surface Water Drainage

A catchment is an area of land contributing to a waterbody, with all the water ultimately running off to a single outlet. The WFD requires water quality management to be based on natural river catchments i.e. by reference to the natural, environmental unit rather than by reference to administrative or legal boundaries, which often fragment river catchments.

The main rivers in the area are the Fergus River, Caher River, Ailee River, Cooleen River, Kilchrest River, Moyree River, Delagh River and Gleninagh South River.

The surface water from the area to which the Plan relates drains into three catchments (see Figure 4.8): Mal Bay⁴⁸ to the west of the area; Shannon Estuary North⁴⁹ to the east; and Galway Bay South East to the north⁵⁰.

4.9.4 Surface Water Status

The WFD defines 'overall surface water status' as the general expression of the status of a body of surface water, determined by the poorer of its ecological status and its chemical status. Thus, in order to achieve 'good surface water status' both the ecological status and the chemical status of a surface water body need to be at least 'good'.

Ecological status is an expression of the structure and functioning of aquatic ecosystems

parts of The Burren. The central part of the catchment is entirely underlain by highly karstified limestones and the surface water drainage network is either virtually absent or highly connected to the groundwater system in much of this area.

⁵⁰ This catchment is predominantly underlain by karstified limestone, including the northern part of the Burren in County Clare, and the groundwater and surface water systems in the area are closely interlinked. In this area virtually all rainfall in the area enters the bedrock aquifer and makes its way underground via a number of groundwater flow routes towards the coast at Ballyvaughan or Kinvarra.

associated with surface waters. Such waters are classified as of 'good ecological status' when they meet Directive requirements.

Chemical Status is a pass/fail assignment with a failure defined by a face-value exceedance of an Environmental Quality Standards (EQS) for one or more Priority Action Substances (PAS) listed in Annex X of the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The EQS values for individual PAS substances are set at European level. Good surface water chemical status means that concentrations of pollutants in the water body do not exceed the environmental limit values specified in the Directive.

The WFD surface water status (2010-2015) of rivers, lakes, coastal and transitional waters, within and surrounding the area to which the Plan relates as shown on Figure 4.8.

Rivers and their tributaries are generally identified as being of *good* (Caher, upstream Fergus, Delagh, Kilmore North) or *moderate* (Aille, Cooleen, Moyree, downstream Fergus) status. However, the rivers Clooneen, Ballymacravan and upstream Aille are identified as being of *poor* status. Lakes are mostly identified as being of *high* (Muckanagh) and *good* (Cullaun, Bunny, Dromore) status. However, lakes Inchiquin and Atedaun are identified as being of *moderate* status and lake Licken (in the south of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area) is identified as being of *bad* status. In addition, there are a number of *unassigned*⁵¹ rivers and lakes across the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area.

There are number of significant pressures impacting on status of the rivers and lakes in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area, with agriculture being the most dominant.⁵² The issues related to farming are diffuse phosphate loss to surface waters mainly in areas of poorly draining soils and direct discharges from farmyards, resulting in excess nutrients (elevated phosphate and ammonia) in surface waters. Lake water bodies are also affected by agricultural pressures with contributing elements including areas of poorly draining soils combined with large dairy farms which results in elevated nutrients and enrichment. In some areas, the karst landscape facilitates groundwater contribution of nutrients and the

transport of nutrients from pressures that are some distance from the lakes⁵³.

The status of coastal waters adjacent to the Burren and Cliffs of Moher to the west is currently *unassigned*, while the status of the coastal waters in Outer Galway Bay to the north-west of the area is identified as *high*. Transitional waters in Kinvarra Bay are identified as *moderate*.

4.9.5 Groundwater Status

Groundwater is stored in the void spaces in underground layers of rock, or aquifers. These aquifers are permeable, allowing both the infiltration of water from the soils above them and the yielding of water to surface and coastal waters. Groundwater is the part of the subsurface water that is in the saturated zone - the zone below the water table, the uppermost level of saturation in an aquifer at which the pressure is atmospheric, in which all pores and fissures are full of water.

For groundwater bodies, the approach to classification is different from that for surface water. For each body of groundwater, both the chemical status and the quantitative must be determined. Both have to be classed as either *good* or *poor*. The WFD sets out a series of criteria that must be met for a body to be classed as good chemical and quantitative status.

The WFD status (2010-2015) of all groundwater underlying the area to which the Plan relates is identified as being of *good status*, meeting the objectives of the WFD. There is an area of *poor* groundwater status located to the west of the Burren area at Caherglassaun Turlough.

4.9.6 Aquifer Vulnerability and Productivity

The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) rates groundwaters according to both their productivity and vulnerability to pollution. The Burren area is underlain by a regionally important karstified bedrock aquifer, while the Cliffs of Moher area is underlain by locally important bedrock aquifer (moderately productive only in local zones).

⁵¹ There is a data gap relating to WFD surface water status data. Overall status is currently not assigned and the term "unassigned status" applies in respect of these waterbodies.

⁵² Other significant pressures include: domestic waste water, forestry, hydromorphology and diffuse urban.

⁵³ www.catchments.ie

Aquifer vulnerability refers to the ease with which pollutants of various kinds can enter into groundwater. The aquifers underlying most the Plan area are generally classified as being of *high vulnerability* and *extreme vulnerability* and *rock at or near surface or Karst* (see Figure 4.9).

4.9.7 WFD Registers of Protected Areas

The WFD requires that Registers of Protected Areas (RPAs) are compiled for a number of water bodies or part of water bodies which must have extra controls on their quality by virtue of how their waters are used by people and by wildlife.

The WFD requires that these RPAs contain: areas from which waters are taken for public or private water supply schemes; designated shellfish production areas; bathing waters; areas which are affected by high levels of substances most commonly found in fertilizers, animal and human wastes - these areas are considered nutrient sensitive; areas designated for the protection of habitats or species e.g. Salmonid areas; Special Areas of Conservation (SACs); and, Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

Please see Section 4.6.7 for more details on RPAs in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area.

4.9.8 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 EPA⁵⁴ shows that all bathing waters within the Burren and Cliffs of Moher reported on are of *excellent* water quality.

Further to this information on bathing water quality, the Blue Flag award is given to beaches and marinas that have excellent water quality and maintain other standards including effective and appropriate management to ensure the protection of the natural environment and safety standards. The Burren and Cliffs of Moher bathing locations at Lahinch and Fanore were awarded with the Blue Flag in 2019.

4.9.9 Flooding

Certain areas across the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area are at risk from coastal, fluvial and groundwater flooding.

Historical flooding is documented at locations including at Doolin, Lahinch, Killeany, Muckinish Lough, Kinvarra, Knocknagroach and Ballyvaughan.

Predictive flood risk mapping is available from the Office of Public Works (OPW) for coastal areas at Kinvarra.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) as required by the 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (OPW and DEHLG, 2009) is relevant to project planning and development and associated environmental assessment and administrative consent of projects.

4.9.10 Existing Problems

Subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the WFD, based on available water data, certain surface and groundwater bodies will need improvement in order to comply with the objectives of the WFD.

There is historic and predictive evidence of elevated levels of flood risk from coastal, fluvial and groundwater sources at various locations across the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area.

⁵⁴ EPA Report on *Bathing Water Quality in Ireland 2018*

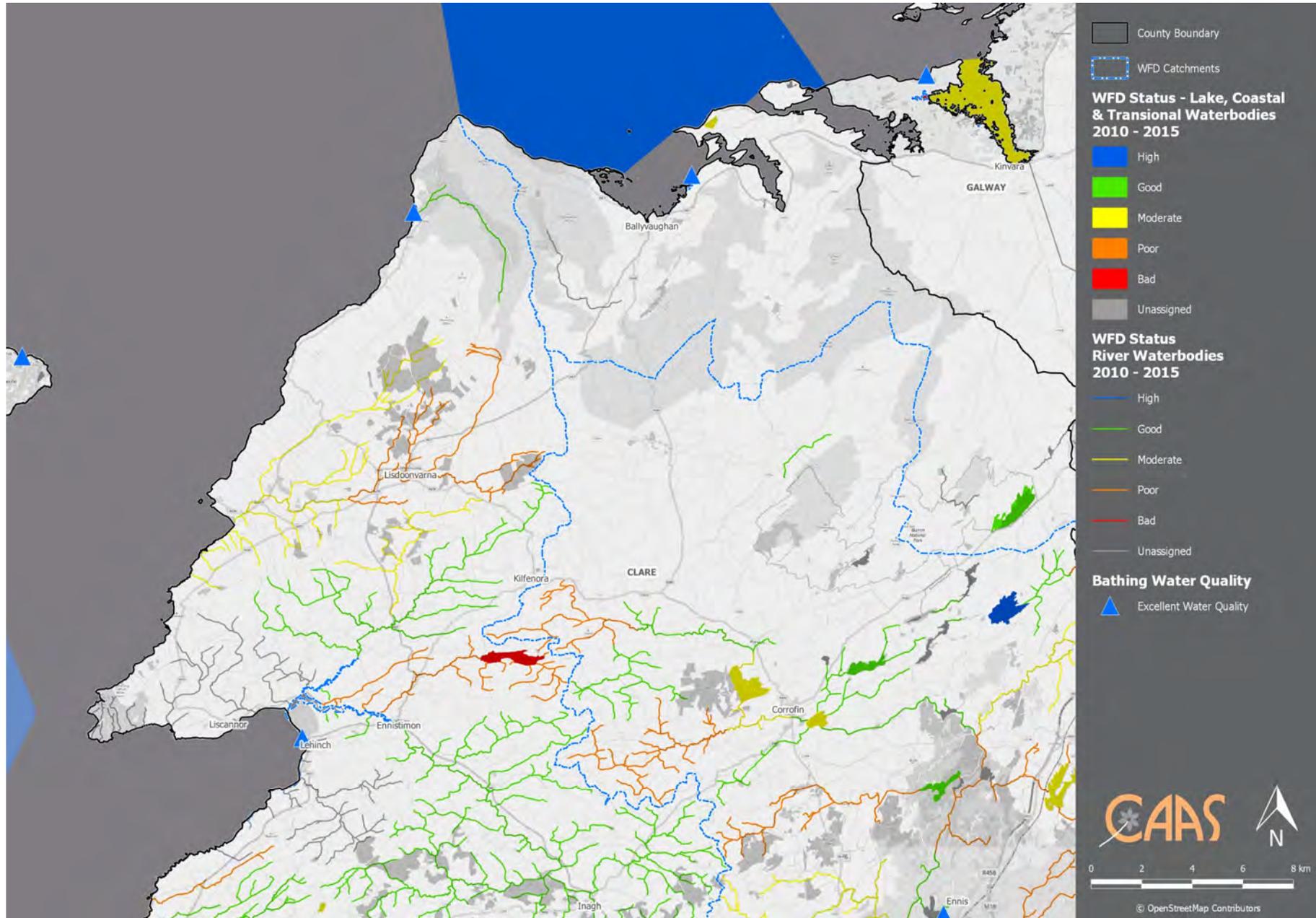


Figure 4.8 Surface Water Status (2010-2015)

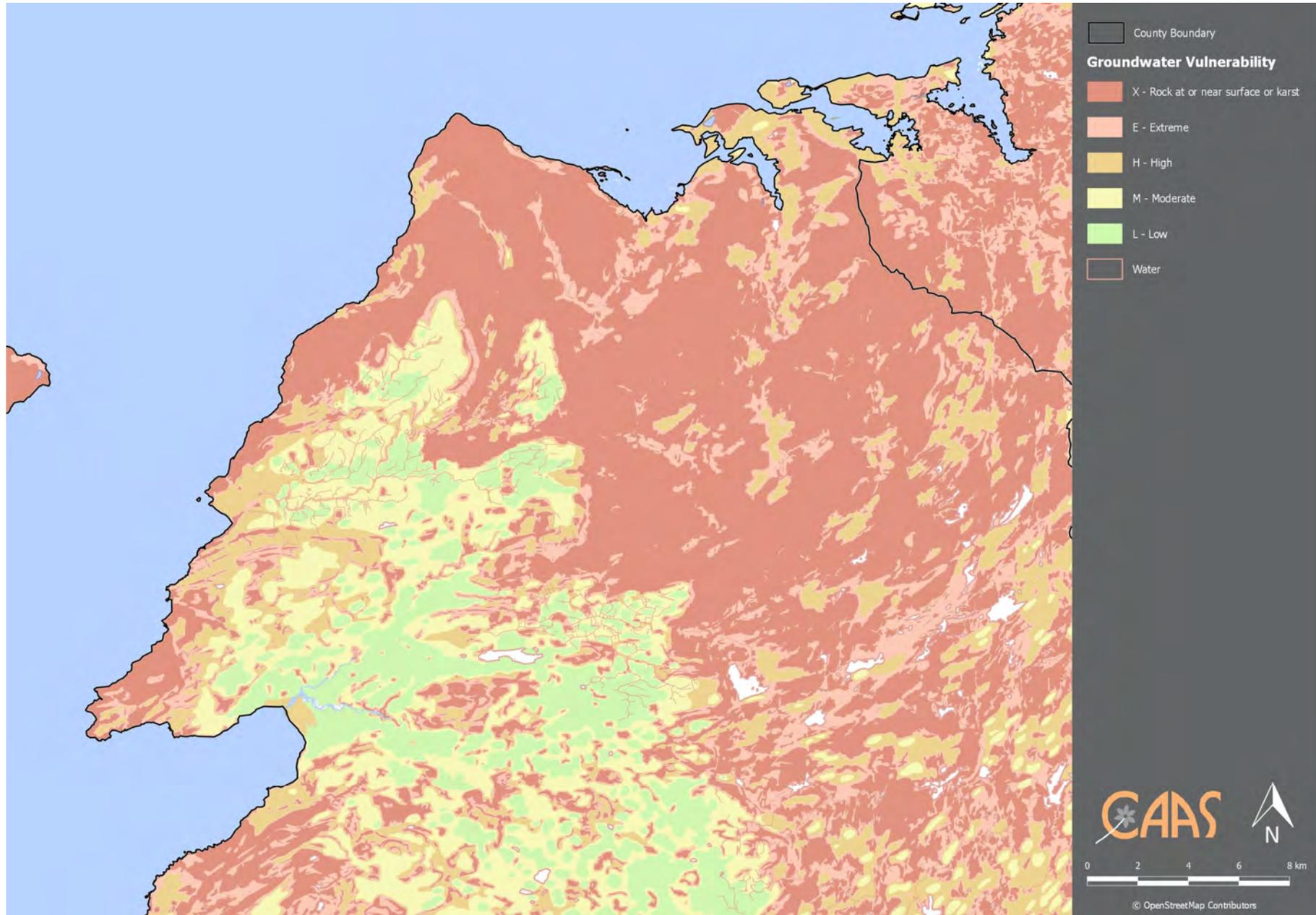


Figure 4.9 Groundwater Vulnerability

4.10 Air and Climatic Factors

4.10.1 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 (for more detail refer to Section 9):

- 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 4.9).

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 Provisional Greenhouse Gas Emissions 1990-2017 (EPA, 2018) details provisional estimates of greenhouse gas emissions for the period 1990-2017. For 2017, total national greenhouse gas emissions are estimated to be 60.75 million tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent (Mt CO₂eq). This is 0.9% lower (0.53 Mt CO₂eq) than emissions in 2016.

The EPA 2018 publication *Ireland's Greenhouse Gas Emission Projections 2017-2035* provides an assessment of Ireland's progress towards achieving its emission reduction targets set down under the EU Effort Sharing Decision (Decision No 406/2009/EC) for the years 2013-2020 and a longer-term assessment based on current projections. Ireland's 2020 target is to achieve a 20% reduction of non-Emission Trading Scheme (non-ETS) sector emissions (i.e. agriculture, transport, the built environment, waste and non-energy intensive industry) on 2005 levels with annual limits set

for each year over the period 2013-2020. Key Insights identified as part of the report's package of documents are that:

- Latest EPA greenhouse gas emissions projections indicate an overall increase in greenhouse gas emissions from most sectors. The projected growth in emissions is largely underpinned by projected strong economic growth and relatively low fuel prices leading to increasing energy demand over the period.
- The positive impact on emissions of existing and planned policies and measures is tempered by the strong economic outlook and associated increase in energy demand.
- Ireland is not projected to meet 2020 emissions reduction targets and is not on the right trajectory to meet longer term EU and national emission reduction commitments.
- Fossil fuels such as coal and peat continue to be key contributors to emissions from the power generation sector and the extent of their use will be a key determinant in influencing future emissions trends from this sector.
- A strong growth in emissions projections from the transport sector is attributed to a rise in fuel consumption particularly for diesel cars and diesel freight up to 2025. A projected accelerated deployment of electric vehicles between 2025 and 2030 does however result in a projected decline in emissions during this period.
- Agriculture emissions are projected to continue to grow steadily over the period. This is based on an updated outlook that sees an increase in animal numbers particularly for the dairy herd.
- The gap between the two scenarios – With Existing Measures and With Additional Measures – is narrowing over the period to 2020 indicating that mitigation options in the short-term are largely established.
- These projections do not consider the impact of policies and measures that form part of the recently announced National Development Plan or the full impact of policies and measures included in the National Mitigation Plan. It is anticipated that additional impact will be provided to the EPA by relevant Government Departments and

Agencies and included in the 2019 Emission Projections.

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 are rising, making achievement of long-term goals more difficult.

The Government's 2019 Climate Action Plan reflects the central priority that climate change will have in Ireland's political and administrative systems into the future, setting out governance arrangements including the carbon-proofing of government policies, the establishment of carbon budgets, the strengthening of the Climate Change Advisory Council and providing greater accountability to the Oireachtas.

The National Mitigation Plan (Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, 2017), represents an initial step to set Ireland on a pathway to achieve the level of decarbonisation required. It is a whole-of-Government Plan, reflecting in particular the central roles of the key Ministers responsible for the sectors covered by the Plan – Electricity Generation, the Built Environment, Transport and Agriculture, as well as drawing on the perspectives and responsibilities of a range of other Government Departments.

The National Adaptation Framework (Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, 2018), sets out the national strategy to reduce the vulnerability of the country to the negative effects of climate change and to avail of positive impacts. The National Adaptation Framework outlines a whole of government and society approach to climate adaptation. Under the Framework, a number of Government Departments will be required to prepare sectoral adaptation plans in relation to a priority area that they are responsible for.

The use of alternative fuels, including electricity, forms a significant part of government policy to reduce emissions, including from transport. Greater use of alternative fuels, including renewable energy, has the potential to further contribute towards energy security.

4.10.2 Ambient Air Quality

In order to protect human health, vegetation and ecosystems, EU Directives set down air quality standards in Ireland and the other Member States for a wide variety of pollutants. These pollutants are generated through fuel combustion, in space heating, traffic, electricity generation and industry and, in sufficient amounts, could affect the well-being of the areas inhabitants. The EU Directives include details regarding how ambient air quality should be monitored, assessed and managed.

The principles to this European approach are set out in the Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/50/EC) (which replaces the earlier Air Quality Framework Directive 1996 and the first, second and third *Daughter Directives*; the fourth *Daughter Directive* will be included in CAFE at a later stage).

In order to comply with the directives mentioned above, the EPA measures the levels of a number of atmospheric pollutants. For the purposes of monitoring in Ireland, four zones are defined in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2002 (SI No. 271 of 2002).

The EPA's (2018) *Air Quality in Ireland 2017* identifies that:

- No levels above the EU limit value were recorded at any of the ambient air quality network monitoring sites in Ireland in 2017;
- The tighter World Health Organisation (WHO) guideline values were exceeded at a number of monitoring sites for particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}), ozone and NO₂; and
- 2017 dioxin survey shows that concentrations of dioxins and similar pollutants remain at a consistently low level in the Irish environment.

In order to apply with European Directives relating to air quality, the EPA manages the National Ambient Air Quality Network and measures the levels of a number of atmospheric pollutants at locations across the country. The current⁵⁵ air quality in the Rural West Air Quality Region is identified by the EPA as being *Good*.

⁵⁵ 27/08/2019 (<http://www.epa.ie/air/quality/>)

4.10.3 Noise

Noise is unwanted sound. The Noise Directive - Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise - is part of an EU strategy setting out to reduce the number of people affected by noise in the longer term and to provide a framework for developing existing EU policy on noise reduction from source. The Directive requires competent authorities in Member States to:

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

In compliance with the Directive and transposing Environmental Noise Regulations (SI No. 140 of 2006), Noise Action Plans have been prepared for each local authority area within the country. These action plans address the agglomeration of Dublin and major roads, railways and airports. The Action Plans include noise mapping and are required to include measures to manage noise issues and effects, including noise reduction if necessary.

4.10.4 Existing Problems

The Climate Change Advisory Council's Annual Review 2018 has identified that Ireland will miss 2020 and 2030 emissions reduction targets unless urgent action that leads to tangible and substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions is taken. The Plan will, in combination with various plans and programmes, contribute towards reducing/limiting increases in greenhouse gas emissions and moving in the direction of these targets.

4.11 Material Assets

4.11.1 Water Services

4.11.1.1 Waste Water

The EPA's 2018 report '*Urban Waste Water Treatment in 2017*' identified that:

- Waste water treatment at 28 of Ireland's 179 large urban areas did not meet relevant standards and improvements are needed at 148 urban areas;
- Raw sewage is released into the environment from 38 urban areas; and
- Significant capital investment to upgrade deficient waste water treatment systems is required to comply with EU standards, improve water quality, and prevent pollution of rivers, lakes and bathing water and to protect shellfish and pearl mussel habitats.

Based on the EPA's assessment of monitoring information provided by Irish Water and the enforcement activities carried out by the EPA, this report identifies urban areas with the most important environmental issues that must be addressed.

There are nine urban areas in County Clare and ten urban areas in County Galway listed currently as priority areas where improvements are required to resolve urgent environmental issues.

The area to which the Plan relates is served by a number of Urban Waste Water Treatment Plants located at: Lisdoonvarna, Ballyvaughan, Kinavara, Corofin, Ennistymon, Lahinch and Liscannor. The most recent EPA reports on Waste Water Discharge Licence Audits show that most of these facilities have satisfactory operational and environmental performance and are in compliance with the discharge licence limit values.

Some of the Waste Water Treatment Plants serving the area to which the Plan relates (at Ballyvaughan, Lahinch and Liscannor) are currently listed as priority areas, where improvements are required to resolve urgent environmental issues.

Settlements and rural areas across the Burren and Cliffs of Moher are served by a combined

sewer network, including septic tanks and sewerage treatment schemes serving agglomerations under 500 P.E.

Since 2015, Irish Water, working in partnership with Clare County Council and Galway County Council, to upgrade the waste water treatment plants. There are number of projects currently planned to be undertaken including at the priority areas of Ballyvaughan and Liscannor. Capacity improvements will help to support new development in these areas, including tourism related development.

4.11.1.2 Water Supply

Drinking water supply in the area to which the Plan relates is provided by domestic water wells and private/public water supply schemes. 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 recent EPA Remedial Action List (Q2 of 2019) identifies three drinking water supplies in County Clare that supply the area to which the Plan relates: West Clare RWS with high levels of Trihalomethanes, which are a by-product of the disinfection process; and two with treatments and management issues identified by the EPA.

4.11.2 Public Assets and Infrastructure

Settlements within the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area include Ennistymon and Lahinch, which are designated by the Clare County Development Plan as service towns (large settlements that provide a range of services to the towns, villages and rural areas in their catchments).

Shannon International Airport (located to the south of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area) is a key hub both for national and international air travel.

The Wild Atlantic Way touring route traverses coastal areas along the west of the Plan area.

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

Various provisions relating to material assets 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 Critical Infrastructure and the Mitigation of Traffic (for more detail refer to Section 9).

4.11.3 Waste Management

Waste management across the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area is guided by the Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021. The Southern Waste Region comprises the 10 local authority areas of Carlow, Clare, Cork County, Cork City, Limerick City and County, Kerry, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford City and County and Wexford. The Plan provides a framework for the prevention and management of waste in a sustainable manner.

4.11.4 Existing Problems

The provisions of the Plan will contribute towards protection of the environment with regard to impacts arising from material assets.

The provisions of infrastructure and supporting services for development, particularly water and waste water 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. Public Water Supply Schemes in the Burren and Cliffs of

Moher area were also under pressure during this extended period of dry weather⁵⁶.

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 VEDP 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 (for more detail refer to Section 9).

⁵⁶ Information from Irish Water's website www.water.ie

4.12 Cultural Heritage

4.12.1 Archaeological Heritage

Archaeology is the study of past societies through the material remains left by those societies and the evidence of their environment. Archaeological sites and monuments vary greatly in form and date; examples include earthworks of different types and periods, (e.g. early historic ringforts and prehistoric burial mounds), megalithic tombs from the Prehistoric period, medieval buildings, urban archaeological deposits and underwater features.

The European Convention on Protection of the Archaeological Heritage known as the Valletta Convention of 1992. This was ratified by Ireland in 1997 and requires that appropriate consideration be given to archaeological issues at all stages of the planning and development process.

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. It is available from the National Monuments Service and at archaeology.ie.

The term 'monument' includes all man-made structures of whatever form or date except buildings habitually used for ecclesiastical purposes. All monuments in existence before 1700 A.D. are automatically considered to be historic monuments within the meaning of the Acts. Monuments of architectural and historical interest also come within the scope of the Acts. Monuments include: any artificial or partly artificial building, structure or erection or group of such buildings, structures or erections; any cave, stone or other natural product, whether or not forming part of the ground, that has been artificially carved, sculptured or worked upon or which (where it does not form part of the place

where it is) appears to have been purposely put or arranged in position; any, or any part of any, prehistoric or ancient tomb, grave or burial deposit, or, ritual, industrial or habitation site; and any place comprising the remains or traces of any such building, structure or erection, any such cave, stone or natural product or any such tomb, grave, burial deposit or ritual, industrial or habitation site, situated on land or in the territorial waters of the State', but excludes 'any building or part of any building, that is habitually used for ecclesiastical purposes' (National Monuments Acts 1930-2004).

A recorded monument is a monument included in the list and marked on the map, which comprises the RMP set out county by county under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994 by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland. The definition includes Zones of Archaeological Potential in towns and all other monuments of archaeological interest, which have so far been identified.

Some parts of the Burren have remained relatively unchanged since the impact of the first farmers some 6,000 years ago. Many of archaeological sites in the Burren area are of international importance, with 300 of recorded Fulacht Fiaidh (early cooking places) and 450 ring forts⁵⁷.

The Burren area contains 80 wedge tombs and represents the densest concentration of this type of megalithic tomb in Ireland⁵⁸. Poulabrone Dolmen (located south of Ballyvaughan), a portal tomb from the Neolithic period situated on bare upland limestone, is one of Ireland's most important archaeological monuments, designated a National Monument in State Care. These monuments are mapped on Figure 4.10.

The Underwater Archaeology Unit was established within the National Monuments Service to manage and protect Ireland's underwater cultural heritage, including the quantification of the underwater resource and assessing development impacts in order to manage and protect this aspect of Ireland's heritage. The Shipwreck Inventory is principally a desktop survey with information gathered from a broad range of cartographic, archaeological and historical sources, both documentary and pictorial. Wrecks over 100

⁵⁷ Clare County Council (<https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/planning/architectural-conservation/archaeology/>)

⁵⁸ Burren Geopark (<http://www.burrengeopark.ie/learn-engage/geology-of-the-burren/archaeology/>)

years old and archaeological objects found underwater are protected under the National Monuments (Amendment) Acts 1987 and 1994. Significant wrecks less than 100 years old can be designated by Underwater Heritage Order on account of their historical, archaeological or artistic importance. Such Orders can also be used to designate areas of seabed or land covered by water to more clearly define and protect wreck sites and archaeological objects. There are a number of historically recorded shipwrecking events located in vicinity of the Cliffs of Moher. Coastal waters, tidal estuaries and rivers within and surrounding the area to which the Plan relates, may contain many features and finds associated with maritime/riverine heritage such as shipwrecks, piers, quay walls, fords, stepping stones and associated archaeological objects and features.

4.12.2 Architectural Heritage

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

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.

In relation to a protected structure or proposed protected structure, the following are encompassed:

- (i) The interior of the structure;
- (ii) The land lying within the curtilage⁵⁹ of the structure;

⁵⁹ Curtilage is normally taken to be the parcel of ground immediately associated with the Protected Structure, or in use for the purposes of the structure. Protection extends to the buildings and land lying within the curtilage. While the curtilage sometimes coincides with the present property boundary, it can originally have included lands, features or

- (iii) Any other structures lying within that curtilage and their interiors; and,
- (iv) All fixtures and features that form part of the interior or exterior of any structure or structures referred to in subparagraph (i) or (iii).

Clusters of architectural heritage across the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area are concentrated within already developed villages, urban and suburban areas. The architectural heritage of the area includes: great stone forts and cahers (such as Caherballykinvarga, Cahercommaun, Cahermore, Caherconail); early church sites (such as Oughtmama, Killinaboy and Kilfenora); tower houses (such as Gleninagh, Ballynalackan, Newton and Donnagore); and the Cistercian abbey of Corcomroe. Protected structures designated across the Burren and Cliffs of Moher are mapped on Figure 4.10.

In addition to Protected Structures, the Planning and Development Act, 2000 provides the legislative basis for the protection of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs). An ACA is a place, area or group of structures or townscape that is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or value, or contributes to the appreciation of protected structures, whose character it is an objective to preserve in a development plan. 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 six ACAs designated in the area of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher, as shown on Figure 4.10: Ballyvaughan Village Centre; Ballyvaughan Auxiliary Workhouse; Corofin; Lidoonvarna; Kilfenora; and Ennistymon.

4.12.3 Existing Problems

The context of archaeological and architectural heritage has changed over time however no existing conflicts with legislative objectives governing archaeological and architectural heritage have been identified.

even buildings now in separate ownership, e.g. the lodge of a former country house, or the garden features located in land subsequently sold off. Such lands are described as being attendant grounds, and the protection extends to them just as if they were still within the curtilage of the Protected Structure.

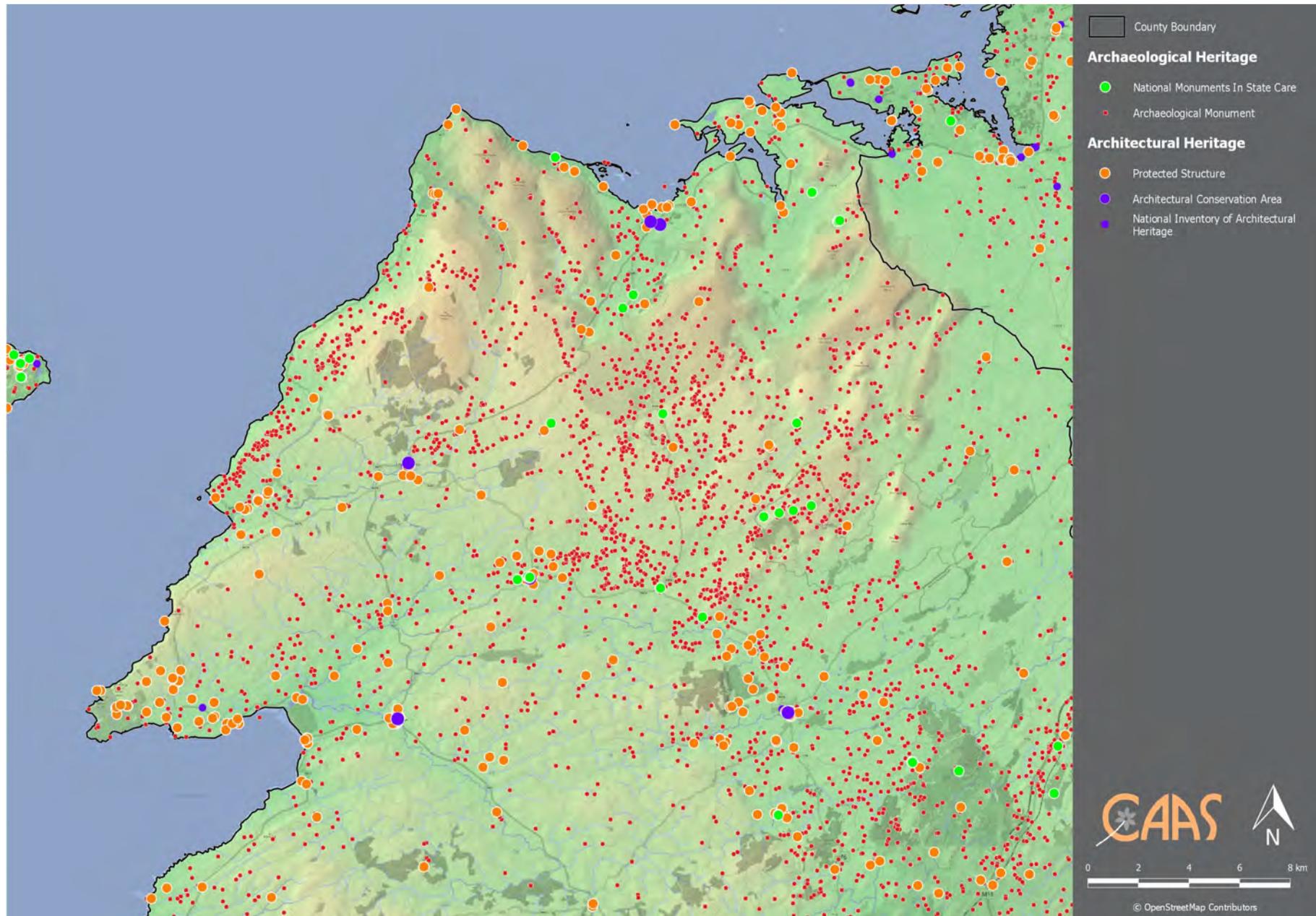


Figure 4.10 Archaeological and Architectural Heritage

4.13 Landscape

4.13.1 UNESCO Global Geopark

The Burren and Cliffs of Moher area was designated a UNESCO Global Geopark in 2011. UNESCO Global Geoparks are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance, managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development. They strive to raise awareness of geodiversity and promote protection, education and tourism best practices.

The geological landscape of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher is one of glacially smoothed Carboniferous fossil-rich limestone hills; dramatic sea cliffs; seasonal lakes; and vast networks of subterranean caves. This physical landscape hosts rare natural habitats and unique floral assemblages not found anywhere else on Earth, as well as abundant legacies of human settlement dating back over 6,000 years.⁶⁰

4.13.2 Topography

The Burren and Cliffs of Moher are located on the west coast of Ireland, bounded by Atlantic coastal cliffs (10 - 200 m high) to the west, the Gort lowlands to the east and by low hilly terrain to the south. Much of the land is at an elevation of 100 - 200 m above sea level; the highest point is Slieve Elva at 344 m.

4.13.3 Wild Atlantic Way

The Wild Atlantic Way touring route traverses coastal areas along the west of the Plan area and the Cliffs of Moher is one of seventeen 'Signature Discovery Points'⁶¹ on this route.

4.13.4 Landscape Character Assessment

Most of the area to which the Plan relates is situated within County Clare. A smaller area that includes the town of Kinvarra is situated in County Galway.

The Landscape Character Assessment of County Clare identifies 21 Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). The area to which the Plan relates within County Clare is located across five of these areas as listed below:

- LCA 1: Burren Uplands;
- LCA 2: Low Burren;
- LCA 3: Cliffs of Moher and Lahinch;
- LCA 4: Fergus Loughlands; and
- LCA 15: Kilnamona High Drumlin Farmland.

There are two Heritage Landscapes designated within/partially within these LCAs, 'The Burren' and 'The Coast' – these Heritage Landscapes are mapped on Figure 4.11. Heritage Landscapes are areas, identified by the Clare County Development Plan, where natural and cultural heritage are given priority and where development is not precluded but happens more slowly and carefully. Heritage Landscapes contain significant concentrations of National Monuments.

The Clare County Development Plan also identifies two types of Working Landscapes, areas with pockets of concentrated development or a unique natural resource. The area to which the Plan relates is partially located within the Western Corridor Working Landscape.

The Landscape Character Assessment of County Galway identifies 25 LCAs. The area to which the Plan relates is located across two of these areas as listed below:

- LCA 8: Lower Burren (County Galway portion); and
- LCA 13: East Galway Bay (Oranmore to Kinavarra Bay and inland to N18 road).

The Landscape Character Assessment for County Galway also classifies landscapes according to their sensitivity (their ability to accommodate change or intervention without suffering unacceptable effects to character and values). The most sensitive landscapes are 'Class 5 - Unique', 'Class 4 - Special' and 'Class 3 - High' while landscapes of lesser sensitivity are 'Class 2 - Moderate' and 'Class 1 - Low'. The sensitivity of a landscape to development and therefore to change will vary according to its character and to the importance which is attached to any combination of landscape

⁶⁰ www.unesco.org (2019)

⁶¹ Signature Discovery Points have been identified as the most scenic and high-amenity areas along the route.

values. The landscape in the area to which the Plan relates in County Galway is classified as being of 'Unique' (Lower Burren LCA) and 'High' (East Galway Bay LCA) sensitivity.

4.13.5 Protected Views and Prospects

Protected views contain areas and vantage points from which views over areas of great natural beauty, local landmarks, historic landscapes, may be obtained. Important prospects are prominent landscapes or areas of special amenity value or special interest that are visible from the surrounding area.

The Clare County Development Plan identifies a number of valuable views and prospects within the Designated Scenic Routes, as shown on Figure 4.11. The Galway County Development Plan also identifies many important focal points from which views and vistas of great natural beauty may be viewed. These focal points and views have a very important amenity, tourism, economic and cultural value for the County.

4.13.6 Existing Problems

Legislative objectives governing landscape and visual appearance were not identified as being conflicted with.

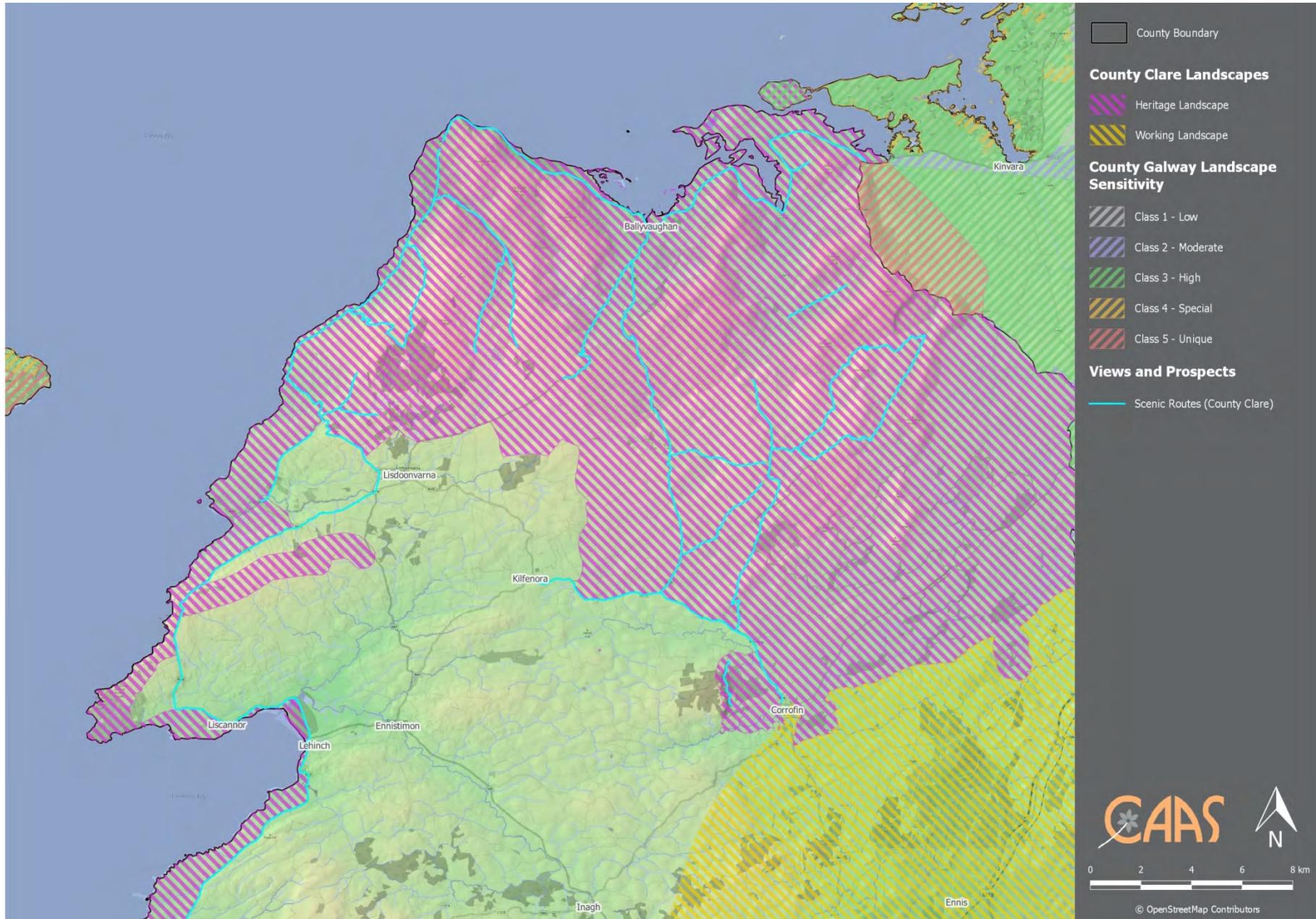


Figure 4.11 Landscape Designations

Section 5 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.

The SEOs are linked to indicators that can facilitate monitoring the environmental effects of the Plan as well identifying targets that the Plan can help work towards.

All SEOs, indicators and targets are provided on Table 5.1 overleaf.

Further detail on legislation, plans and programmes are provided under Section 2 (and associated Appendix II "Relationship with Legislation and Other Plans and Programmes") and Section 4.

Table 5.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives, Indicators and Targets

Environmental Component	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicators	Targets
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 ⁶²	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 ⁶³
	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	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
	B3: To contribute towards avoidance of significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites ⁶⁴ 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	B3i: Number of significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites resulting from the Plan B3ii: Number of significant impacts on the protection of listed species	B3i: Avoid significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites resulting from the Plan B3ii: No significant impacts on the protection of listed species resulting from the Plan
Population and Human Health	PHH1: To contribute towards the protection of populations and human health from exposure to incompatible landuses	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
Soil	S1: To minimise land take and loss to extent of soil resource	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%."
Water	W1: To contribute towards the maintenance and improvement, where possible, of the quality and status of surface waters	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) W1ii: Mandatory and Guide values as set by the EU Bathing Water Directive and transposing Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008)	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 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

⁶² '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.

⁶³ 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.

⁶⁴ The definition of a 'wildlife site' provided by the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, includes Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed NHAs.

Environmental Component	Strategic Environmental Objectives	Indicators	Targets
	W2: To contribute towards maintaining and improving, where possible, the chemical and quantitative status of groundwaters	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: To contribute towards compliance with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines	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: To contribute towards climate adaptation and mitigation	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
Material Assets	M1: For development to be served with adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity (drinking water, waste water, waste and transport) that does not present a danger to human health	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 specific locations in instances where significant problems with critical infrastructure have been identified (drinking water, wastewater, waste, transport), by stakeholders such as the EPA, Irish Water, Clare County Council and/or Galway County Council.
	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	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: To reduce waste volumes, minimise waste to landfill and increase recycling and reuse	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
Cultural Heritage	CH1: To contribute towards the protection of archaeological heritage including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and/or their context	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
	CH2: To contribute towards the protection of architectural heritage including entries to the Records of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context	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
Landscape	L1: To avoid conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in the land use plans of Clare and Galway County Councils	L1: Number of unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in the land use plans of Clare and Galway County Councils	L1: No unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in the land use plans of Clare and Galway County Councils

Section 6 Description of Alternatives

6.1 Introduction

As per the requirements of the SEA Directive, this SEA considers reasonable alternatives, which are capable of being implemented for Plan, taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the Plan.

6.2 Current Situation (Alternative 1: Business as Usual)

The Cliffs of Moher is Ireland's second top fee-paying attraction, with over 1.5 m visitors. The pace of growth in day visitation, with the accompanying visitor management concerns, and the overall low visitor spend in the area arising from the nature of visitation are the key challenges underlying this VEDP. The area is of outstanding beauty and international significance, which provides a strong basis to address the issues and realise new opportunities.

Challenges to the sustainable development of tourism in the area include:

- One of the lowest spend returns from international visitors – very large number based in for the Cliffs of Moher without further engagement in the area – over reliance on day visitors;
- Traffic management issues and visitor management concerns – high concentration of visitors and need for dispersal;
- Promotional activities limited overseas;
- Few online packages;
- Limited accommodation capacity in destination;
- Fragmented communication in region between local groups and links with Clare Tourism fragmented;
- Infrastructure and lack of visitor services; and
- Traffic concerns for cyclists – potential to undermine the experience.

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

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

The challenges posed by the current situation (see Section 6.2) establish a potential need for a plan that seeks to better manage tourism in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher 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.

The way forward for the Burren and Cliffs of Moher would be through partnerships, connectivity of products, development of new experiences and a focus on getting the story to the customer – inspiring them to travel off-season, stay longer and enjoy the essence of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher.

Opportunities to be considered in the preparation of such a Plan (in combination with the wider and extensive policy and wider and extensive policy and planning framework planning framework) would be:

- Introduction of a Visitor Management Plan to disperse visitors throughout the area and greater use of capacity management principles;
- Redesigning and managing the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk to become a walk of Global significance with managed access and extended value;
- Amplifying recognition of the Burren as an internationally significant landscape recognised by UNESCO;
- Promoting exceptional experiences relating to Burren adventure, wellness and education;
- Creating all year round visitor experiences to capture Great Escapers and winter travellers from Germany, France, UK, US, Australia and New Zealand, extending the season and sustaining employment;
- Strengthening the partnerships between local organisations and creating a stronger coordinated proactive marketing alliance;
- Improving accommodation options; and
- Creating premier niche eco-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.

Section 7 Evaluation of Alternatives

7.1 Introduction

This section provides a comparative evaluation of the environmental effects of implementing the alternatives that are detailed under Section 6. This determination sought to understand whether each alternative was likely to improve, conflict with or have a neutral interaction with environmental components.

7.2 Methodology

The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (see Section 4) and the Strategic Environmental Objectives (see Section 5 and Table 7.1) are used in the evaluation of alternatives.

The alternatives are evaluated using compatibility criteria (see Table 7.2 below) in order to determine how they would be likely to affect the status of the SEOs. The SEOs and the alternatives are arrayed against each other to identify which interactions - if any - would cause effects on specific components of the environment. Where the appraisal identifies a likely conflict with the status of an SEO the relevant SEO code is entered into the conflict column - e.g. B1 which stands for the SEO likely to be affected - in this instance 'To contribute towards compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of European Sites and Annexed habitats and species⁶⁵'.

The interactions identified are reflective of likely significant environmental effects⁶⁶.

The degree to which effects can be fully determined at this level of decision-making is limited, as the Plan will be implemented alongside planning and project development and associated environmental assessments and administrative consent of projects. Nonetheless, a comparative evaluation of the various alternatives can be provided.

⁶⁵ '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.

⁶⁶ These effects include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects.

Table 7.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives⁶⁷

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 ⁶⁸
	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 ⁶⁹ 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	M1: For development to be served with adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity (drinking water, waste water, waste and transport) that does not present a danger to human health
	M2	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 the land use plans of Clare and Galway County Councils

Table 7.2 Criteria for appraising the effect of Alternatives on 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 a Moderate degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Greater degree	

⁶⁷ See Section 5 for a description of Strategic Environmental Objectives.

⁶⁸ '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.

⁶⁹ The definition of a 'wildlife site' provided by the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, includes Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed NHAs.

7.3 Cumulative Effects

Cumulative effects are one of the types of effects that have been considered by the assessment of the alternatives. Cumulative effects can be described as the addition of many small impacts to create one larger, more significant, impact.

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

- Potential *intra-Plan* cumulative effects - these arise from the interactions between different types of potential environmental effects resulting from a plan, programme, etc. Where there are elevated levels of environmental sensitivities (such as those identified under Section 4), future development could result in environmental conflicts and lead to a deterioration in environmental integrity. The interrelationships between environmental components that help determine these potential effects are identified on Table 8.4 in Section 8 e.g. interrelationships between: human health and water quality; human health and air quality; human health and flood risk; and ecology and water quality.
- Potential *inter-Plan* cumulative effects - these arise when the effects of the implementation of one plan occur in combination with those of other plans, programmes, developments, etc.

In considering the relationship with legislation and other plans and programmes it is important to note that the Plan will form part of a wider and extensive policy and planning framework that covers sectors including tourism, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications and land use planning (see Section 2, 4 and 5 and Appendix II) for a range of sectors at a range of levels (e.g. National, Regional, County and Local). Legislation, plans and programmes from these other sectors also take into account demands from both residents and tourists when considering infrastructure and service needs. These plans, in turn, are also subject to their own SEA and AA requirements and include their own requirements relating to environmental protection and management. In this way, the environment is protected in a holistic manner so that the interactions of other uses and their associated plans and programmes are taken into account. Where they exist, the SEA recognises the existence of other environmental assessments with a view to avoid duplication of assessment, in compliance with the SEA Directive.

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

Implementation of the Plan shall be consistent with and conform with the NPF, RSEs and lower-tier land use plans, including provisions relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management that have been integrated into these documents including through SEA and AA processes. In order to be realised, projects included in the Plan (in a similar way to other projects from any other sector) will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework, of which the Plan is not part and does not contribute towards. These provisions are in addition to those that have been integrated into the Plan that will contribute towards sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management (see Section 9).

Effects⁷⁰ that may arise as a result of implementing the Plan, in combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework, have been mitigated to the extent that the only residual adverse effects likely to occur as a result of implementation of the Plan are those that are identified under Table 8.3.

Cumulative effects that have been considered include those resulting from the Plan in-combination with the following:

- Land use policy, plans and programmes (e.g. the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, Development Plans and Local Area Plans);
- Water services, waste management, transport and energy infrastructure plans (e.g. Irish Water's Water Services Strategic Plan and associated Capital Investment Plan, Regional Waste Management Plans, Transportation Policies and Strategies, Grid25 and associated Implementation Programme) and the Local Economic and Community Plans; and
- Environmental protection and management plans (e.g. River Basin Management Plans, National Mitigation Plan, National Adaptation Framework, and Flood Risk Management Plans).

Potential cumulative effects include the following arising from the alternatives in combination with the plans etc. detailed above (note that potential adverse cumulative effects will be mitigated by provisions that have been integrated into the Plan - see Section 9):

- Contribution towards sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management – various provisions for which are provided for in the aforementioned plans (**Alternatives 1, 2A and 2B**).
- Need for and use of services, infrastructure and other development (to service development, including tourism), including those related to water services, transport, access or accommodation, that are planned for and consented through the statutory framework – and associated potential adverse environmental effects on various environmental components including biodiversity and flora and fauna, the status of waters, human health, soil, emissions, cultural heritage and landscape (**Alternatives 1, 2A and 2B**).
- Contribution towards climate adaptation and mitigation through measures such as those relating to walking and cycling, charging infrastructure, flood risk management and resilience (**Alternatives 1, 2A and 2B**).
- Contribution towards travel related greenhouse gas and other emissions to air as a result of increases in tourist numbers (**Alternatives 1, 2A and 2B**).
- Helps to minimise likelihood of exceeding capacity in material assets as a result of not directing additional tourists towards specific locations in instances where significant problems with critical infrastructure (drinking water, waste water, waste and transport) have been identified (**Alternative 2A**). This would positively impact upon the protection and management of environmental components such as human health, water, soil, air and climatic factors.
- 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) through visitor management strategies (**Alternative 2A and to a lesser degree Alternative 2B**).
- In combination with plans and programmes from all sectors potential adverse effects on all environmental components arising from all development in greenfield and brownfield areas (e.g. infrastructural, residential, accommodation, economic, forestry, agricultural etc.). The type of these effects are consistent with those described on Table 7.3. These plans and programmes from other sectors undergo SEA and comply with environmental legislation while projects are subject to EIA and AA, as relevant (**Alternatives 1, 2A and 2B**).

⁷⁰ Effects include in-combination effects – those arising from services and infrastructure (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 9 of this report.

7.4 Detailed Consideration of Alternatives

Table 7.3 below describes effects common to all Alternatives (1, 2A and 2B).

Table 7.3 Effects Common to All Alternatives

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects from all Alternatives, in combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework ⁷¹	
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potential Significant Adverse Effect, if unmitigated
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) Contribution 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.
Population and human health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution towards the protection of human health. Contribution towards the protection amenity usage and access. Contribution towards the sustainable growth of tourism and associated sustenance and growth of communities in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher 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, waste water, waste and transport) have been identified.
Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution towards minimising 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.
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. 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.
Air and climatic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution towards climate adaptation and mitigation 	<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.

⁷¹ 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. Effects would be to varying degrees – refer to Table 7.4 for comparative evaluation.

	Environmental Effects from all Alternatives, in combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework⁷²	
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potential Significant Adverse Effect, if unmitigated
Material Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributes towards protection and allows for continued use of public assets and infrastructure. 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.
Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution towards the long-term protection of archaeological and architectural heritage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential effects on designated and unknown archaeological heritage. Potential effects on architectural heritage.
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution towards the protection of landscape designations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occurrence of adverse visual impacts, especially in marine, 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.

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 (see Table 7.3).

Tourism related development would continue to be planned for and consented through the existing statutory planning and consent framework. Potential adverse effects (see Table 7.3) would continue to be mitigated through that process.

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

Contributions towards an increase in travel related greenhouse gas and other emissions to air, including from aviation, would not occur as a result of seeking 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 (and associated effects - see Table 7.3), which are provided under all alternatives, and measures relating to seasonality (all year round visitor experiences), regionality (dispersal of visitors throughout the area and greater use of capacity management principles) and visitor management strategies, provided for by this alternative and Alternative 2B, this alternative would provide additional requirements for environmental protection and management, including those taken

⁷² 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. Effects would be to varying degrees – refer to Table 7.4 for comparative evaluation.

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 (see Table 7.3) would continue to be mitigated through that process.

Although a Plan would help to improve the seasonal and geographic spread of visitors, a Plan's objective would be to increase the number of visitors to the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area. Although this would be likely to happen without a Plan, a Plan would have the potential to increase numbers of tourists – and associated potential adverse effects – to a greater degree than would be the case if there was no Plan. This would be likely to contribute towards an increase in travel related greenhouse gas and other emissions to air, including from aviation. These increases will be mitigated by provisions that have been integrated into the Plan, including those relating to sustainable mobility and compliance with the Climate Action Plan 2019, the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2018 and any subsequent versions) and the National Mitigation Plan (2017 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 (and associated effects - see Table 7.3), which are provided under all alternatives, this Alternative (2B) would provide measures to improve seasonality (all year round visitor experiences) and regionality (dispersal of visitors throughout the area and greater use of capacity management principles) – Alternative 2A would provide this also. Seasonality and regionality provide a greater spread of tourists throughout the year and across the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area thereby reducing potential environmental effects and peak load additions on various infrastructure in particular locations/at particular times. Alternative 2B would also contribute towards the protection and management of biodiversity and flora and fauna through a degree of visitor management – although not as much as Alternative 2A.

Tourism related development would continue to be planned for and consented through the existing statutory planning and consent framework. Potential adverse effects (see Table 7.3) would continue to be mitigated through that process.

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

This would be likely to contribute towards an increase in travel related greenhouse gas and other emissions to air, including from aviation. These increases 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 two layers of mitigation, through:

- The existing statutory planning and consent framework; and
- A degree of visitor management.

A comparative assessment of all three alternatives against SEOs is provided on Table 7.4 overleaf.

7.5 Selected Alternative for the Plan

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

Table 7.4 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 a Moderate degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Greater degree	
Alternative 1: Business as Usual			B1 B2 B3 PHH1 S1 W1 W2 W3 AC1 M1 M2 M3 CH1 CH2 L1 Sustainable development, environmental management and environmental protection 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 (see Table 7.3).		B1 B2 B3 PHH1 S1 W1 W2 W3 AC1 M1 M2 M3 CH1 CH2 L1 Tourism related development would continue to be planned for and consented through the existing statutory planning and consent framework. Potential adverse effects (see Table 7.3) would continue to be mitigated through that process. B1 B2 B3 PHH1 S1 W1 W2 W3 AC1 M1 M2 M3 CH1 CH2 L1 In the absence of a Plan, there would likely to be a continuing increase in tourist numbers – consistent with the development of tourism over many decades. The most popular locations in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area would be likely to see the largest increases in visitors, which would be likely to occur during the peak season. This would be likely to 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.	
Alternative 2A: A Plan with Additional Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management	B1 B2 B3 PHH1 S1 W1 W2 W3 AC1 M1 M2 M3 CH1 CH2 L1 In addition to the measures relating to sustainable development, environmental protection, environmental management (and associated effects - see Table 7.3) and measures relating to seasonality, regionality and visitor management strategies , provided for by this alternative and Alternative 2B, this Alternative (2A) would provide additional requirements for environmental protection and management .			B1 B2 B3 PHH1 S1 W1 W2 W3 AC1 M1 M2 M3 CH1 CH2 L1 Tourism related development would continue to be planned for and consented through the existing statutory planning and consent framework. Potential adverse effects (see Table 7.3) would continue to be mitigated through that process. B1 B2 B3 PHH1 S1 W1 W2 W3 AC1 M1 M2 M3 CH1 CH2 L1 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 Burren and Cliffs of Moher 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. 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 these issues, there would be three layers of mitigation, through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing statutory planning and consent framework; • Visitor management strategies; and • Additional environmental requirements for environmental protection and management, under this alternative. 		

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	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 a Moderate degree	to a Lesser degree	to a Moderate degree	to a Greater degree	
Alternative 2B: A Plan without Additional Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management		<p>B1 B2 B3 PHH1 S1 W1 W2 W3 AC1 M1 M2 M3 CH1 CH2 L1</p> <p>In addition to the measures relating to sustainable development, environmental management and environmental protection (and associated effects - see Table 7.3), this alternative would provide measures relating to seasonality, regionality and a degree of visitor management – such measures would also be provided for by Alternative 2A.</p>			<p>B1 B2 B3 PHH1 S1 W1 W2 W3 AC1 M1 M2 M3 CH1 CH2 L1</p> <p>Tourism related development would continue to be planned for and consented through the existing statutory planning and consent framework. Potential adverse effects (see Table 7.3) would continue to be mitigated through that process.</p> <p>B1 B2 B3 PHH1 S1 W1 W2 W3 AC1 M1 M2 M3 CH1 CH2 L1</p> <p>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 Burren and Cliffs of Moher 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Notwithstanding this, there would be two layers of mitigation, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing statutory planning and consent framework; and • Visitor management strategies. 	

Section 8 Evaluation of Plan Provisions

8.1 Introduction

The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (see Section 4) and the Strategic Environmental Objectives (see Section 5 and Table 8.1) are used in the assessment of the Plan.

The provisions are evaluated using compatibility criteria (see Table 8.2) in order to determine how they would be likely to affect the status of the SEOs. The SEOs and the Plan provisions are arrayed against each other to identify which interactions - if any - would cause effects on specific components of the environment. Where the appraisal identifies a likely conflict with the status of an SEO the relevant SEO code is entered into the conflict column - e.g. B1 which stands for the SEO likely to be affected - in this instance 'To contribute towards compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of European Sites and Annexed habitats and species'⁷³.

The interactions identified are reflective of likely significant environmental effects⁷⁴:

1. Interactions that would be likely to improve the status of a particular SEO would be likely to result in a significant positive effect on the environmental component to which the SEO relates.
2. Interactions that would potentially conflict with the status of an SEO and would be likely to be mitigated would be likely to result in potential significant negative effects however these effects will be mitigated by measures which have been integrated into the Plan (see Section 9).
3. Interactions that would probably conflict with the status of an SEO and would be unlikely to be mitigated would be likely to result in a significant negative effect on the environmental component to which the SEO relates.

The degree to which effects can be fully determined at this level of decision-making is limited, as the Plan will be implemented alongside planning and project development and associated environmental assessments and administrative consent of projects. More detailed environmental measures may emanate from such assessments, further facilitating the mitigation of adverse effects.

⁷³ '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.

⁷⁴ These effects include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects.

Table 8.1 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 ⁷⁵
	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 ⁷⁶ 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, waste water, 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 the land use plans of Clare and Galway County Councils

Table 8.2 Criteria for appraising the effect of Plan provisions on SEOs

Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs- likely to be mitigated	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs- unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
-----------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------

⁷⁵ '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.

⁷⁶ The definition of a 'wildlife site' provided by the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, includes Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed NHAs.

8.2 Overall Findings

The overall findings of the SEA are that:

- **The Plan contributes towards Compliance with Environmental Legislation and Guidelines**

Fáilte Ireland are integrating all recommendations arising from the SEA and AA processes into the Plan (see Section 9 of this report), facilitating compliance of the Plan with various European and National legislation and Guidelines relating to the sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management.

Implementation of the Plan will contribute towards efforts to achieve a number of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals⁷⁷ of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which were adopted by world leaders in 2015 at a United Nations Summit and came into force in 2016.

- **The Plan provides for Environmental Protection and Management**

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

In order to achieve funding (including promotion) for land use or infrastructural development or land use activities from Fáilte Ireland, Fáilte Ireland's stakeholders shall be required to demonstrate compliance⁷⁸ 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) will have to comply, 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. Such legislation, policies, plans and programmes include:

- Requirements for lower-tier environmental assessment, including EIA and AA;
- The Clare and Galway County Development Plans, including various provisions relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management; and
- The Climate Action Plan 2019, the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2018 and any subsequent versions) and the National Mitigation Plan (2017 and any subsequent versions).

⁷⁷ Including: Goal 3 Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages; Goal 6 Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all; Goal 7 Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all; Goal 8 Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; Goal 9 Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation; Goal 11 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; Goal 12 Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns; Goal 13 Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; Goal 15 Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

⁷⁸ Demonstration of compliance may be supported by monitoring undertaken by the beneficiary.

Further requirements have been integrated into the Plan under the headings of “Infrastructure Capacity”, “Visitor Management” and “Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services” – see Section 0 of this Environmental Report.

- **The Plan is likely to contribute towards, in combination with other governmental policies, plans etc., an increase in greenhouse gas emissions – although such increases will be mitigated**

The Plan seeks to lengthen dwell time and grow visitor numbers to the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area and would, in combination with other governmental policies, plans etc., 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, the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2018 and any subsequent versions) and the National Mitigation Plan (2017 and any subsequent versions).

Furthermore, as identified in the Climate Action Plan (Government of Ireland, 2019):

"Since 2012, greenhouse gas emissions associated with flights operating in the European Economic Area (EEA), including domestic flights as well as those to and from third countries, are covered by the EU ETS⁷⁹. Airlines are required to monitor, report and verify their emissions, and to surrender allowances against those emissions. Airlines receive tradable allowances covering a certain level of emissions from their flights per year and must purchase allowances to cover any shortfall between their allocated sum of free emissions allowances and their actual emissions, as reported annually.

To support the planned development of a global Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), the EU agreed in 2014 to limit the scope of aviation in the EU ETS to flights within the EEA. CORSIA will come into effect in 2021 and aims to stabilise global aviation emissions at 2020 levels by requiring airlines to offset any emissions growth after 2020 by purchasing eligible emission units generated by projects that reduce emissions in other sectors. As Ireland is a member of ICAO, Irish aircraft operators will have to offset any emissions growth after 2020 by purchasing eligible emission units, i.e. pay full carbon price."

- **The Plan is Consistent with the existing Statutory Decision-Making and Consent-Granting Framework**

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

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

The National Planning Framework (NPF) sets out Ireland’s planning policy direction for the next 22 years. The NPF is to be implemented through Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSEs) and lower tier Development Plans and Local Area Plans. The RSEs for the Southern Region and the Northern and Western Region set 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 dwell times;

⁷⁹ Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS)

developing walking and cycling trails, opening greater accessibility to the marine and countryside environment by sustainable modes; and facilitating appropriate tourism development, including that relating to greenways, blueways and peatlands. When adopted, the RSEs will inform the review of existing, assessed lower-tier Development Plans and Local Area Plans, which already include various provisions relating to land use, tourism and infrastructure. Such reviews will also be subject to environmental assessments.

Implementation of the Plan shall be consistent with and conform with the NPF, RSEs and lower-tier land use plans, including provisions relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management that have been integrated into these documents, including through SEA and AA processes. In order to be realised, projects included in the VEDPs (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.

- **Potentially Significant Adverse Effects to be mitigated**

Potentially significant adverse environmental effects arising from the Plan, in combination with the existing statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework, are detailed on Table 8.3. These effects will be mitigated by the various provisions that have been integrated into the Plan including those that have arisen through the SEA and AA processes (see Section 9).

Table 8.3 details the various types of environmental effects likely to arise with respect to the Plan (as developed from the selected alternatives – see Section 7) as a direct result of activities under the Plan and in combination with the existing statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework. By complying with appropriate mitigation measures - including those that have been integrated into the Plan - potentially significant adverse environmental effects which could arise as a result of implementing the Plan would be likely to be avoided, reduced or offset.

Table 8.3 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 ⁸⁰			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 VEDP 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 VEDP 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, waste water, 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 in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher 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, waste water, 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

⁸⁰ 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 9 of this report.

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework ⁸⁰			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; The provision of charging infrastructure; 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, the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2018 and any subsequent versions) and the National Mitigation Plan (2017 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, waste water, 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, waste water, 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 ⁸⁰			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, 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

8.3 Appropriate Assessment

Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (AA) has been undertaken alongside preparation of the Plan. The requirement for AA is provided under the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 1992/43/EEC).

The conclusion of the AA is that the Plan will not affect the integrity of the European Sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

The preparation of the Plan, SEA and AA has taken place concurrently and the findings of the AA have informed the SEA. Various content has been integrated into the Plan through the SEA and AA processes (see Section 9).

8.4 Interrelationship between Environmental Components

The SEA Directive requires the Environmental Report to include information on the likely significant effects on the environment, on issues such as biodiversity, fauna, flora, population, human health, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.

Likely significant effects on environmental components that are identified include those that are interrelated; implementation of the Plan will not affect the interrelationships between these components. The presence of significant interrelationships between environmental components is identified on Table 8.4.

Table 8.4 Potential for Interrelationships between Environmental Components

Component	Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Population and human health	Soil	Water	Air and Climatic factors	Material assets	Cultural heritage	Landscape
Biodiversity, flora and fauna		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Population and human health			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Soil				Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Water					Yes	Yes	No	No
Air and Climatic factors						Yes	No	No
Material assets							Yes	Yes
Cultural heritage								Yes
Landscape								

8.5 More Detailed Assessment of Plan Provisions

8.5.1 Vision, Aims and Objectives

	Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs- likely to be mitigated	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs- unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
<p>The Visitor Experience Development Plan's (VEDP's) Vision is to: <i>'Increase dwell time and inspire visitors and the next generation to become custodians of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher'.</i></p> <p>The VEDP recommends guiding principles and future measures of success including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase environmental protection and enhancement through sustainable tourism; • Build community support for tourism through events and local-buy programmes; • Boost the visitor connection with the Burren and overall visitor satisfaction; • Maximise the economic and social of tourism to the destination; and • Implement measures for visitor management that will help to improve the overall visitor experience as well as retain (and in some cases improve) the region's unique natural heritage and cultural assets. <p>The key objectives of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher VEDP are to develop hero, supporting and ancillary experiences for the region that will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivate visitors to stay longer and spend more; • Extend the length of the season; • Align to relevant brand, target markets and segments; • Sustain and increase job creation in the local area; and • Protect the special environmental character of the region. <p>It is the aim of the VEDP to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and engage businesses and local partners; • Maintain business engagement beyond the project lifetime; and • Build lasting links between national partners and local tourism experiences. <p>The Burren and Cliffs of Moher area is under the Wild Atlantic Way key proposition, which is to "Experience one of the wildest, most enhancing and culturally rich coastal touring routes in the world. Wherever you travel along the Wild Atlantic Way you'll find magic, adventure, history and beauty in abundance".</p> <p>The VEDP identifies seven Hero Experiences (stories that customers can connect with that showcase the Wild Atlantic Way key proposition) that are supported by various Hero Products (the customer accesses these experiences through the Hero Products) and Supporting Experiences (what each business does to bring the hero products to life) and Ancillary Experiences (how the wider tourism offering supports the regional themes). These are detailed in full in the main VEDP document.</p>	<p>B1 B2 B3 PHH1 S1 W1 W2 W3 AC1 M1 M2 M3 CH1 CH2 L1</p>	<p>B1 B2 B3 PHH1 S1 W1 W2 W3 AC1 M1 M2 M3 CH1 CH2 L1</p>		
<p>SEA Commentary:</p> <p><i>The assessment of the Plan's Vision, Aims and Objectives against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs B1, B2, B3, PHH1, S1, W1, W2, W3, AC1, M1, M2, M3, CH1, CH2 and L1) is consistent with the:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.4; and</i> • <i>Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report.</i> <p><i>Implementing the VEDP 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 VEDP does not provide consent, establish a framework for granting consent or contribute towards a framework for granting consent. The VEDP is situated alongside a hierarchy of statutory documents setting out public policy for, among other things, land use development, tourism,</i></p>				

infrastructure, sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management. These other existing policies, plans etc. have been subject to their own environmental assessment processes, as relevant, and form the decision-making and consent-granting framework.

The SEA process that has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Plan has brought about various changes to the emerging Plan through an iterative process. These measures are reproduced under Section 9 "Mitigation Measures" of this SEA Environmental Report. By integrating all SEA 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.*

Sustainability and the environment have been integrated into these provisions:

- Guiding principle: "Increase environmental conservation through sustainable tourism"*
- Guiding principle: "Implement measures for visitor management that will help to improve the overall visitor experience as well as retain (and in some cases improve) the region's unique natural heritage and cultural assets."*
- Objective: "Protect the special environmental character of the region."*

8.5.2 Action Plan Recommendations: Hero Experiences

Central to the VEDP is the **Action Plan** that arranges various **recommendations** (including nine **Catalyst Projects** and **other Actions**) under seven **Hero Experiences** and four **Enablers of Success**.

For each action a timeframe for implementation is indicated: short (year 1 of Plan implementation), medium (years 2 and 3 of implementation) and long (year 4 of implementation onwards) term. Lead agencies for each action are also identified, comprising:

- An Teagasc (AT);
- Burren Ecotourism Network (BEN);
- Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark (GEOPARK);
- Clare County Council (CCC);
- Clare Local Development Company (CLDC);
- Clare Tourism (CT);
- Cliffs of Moher (CoM);
- Department of Culture, Heritage, and Gaeltacht (DCHG);
- Fáilte Ireland (FI);
- Irish Farmer's Association (IFA);
- Local Enterprise Office (LEO);
- Local Enterprises (LEs);
- Local Tourism Groups (LTGs);
- National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS); and
- Office of Public Works (OPW).

Action Plan Recommendations			Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs- likely to be mitigated	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs- unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
Hero Experience 1: Walk on the Edge of the World along the Cliffs of Moher.			B1 B2 B3 PHH1 S1 W1 W2 W3 AC1 M1 M2 M3 CH1 CH2 L1	B1 B2 B3 PHH1 S1 W1 W2 W3 AC1 M1 M2 M3 CH1 CH2 L1		
Actions	Timeframe	Lead				
1.1 CATALYST 2: Upgrade 2km of the Cliff Walk (1km either side of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre) through a partnership with land owners and National Parks to develop a management plan and future funding model that supports the land owners and allows for reinvestment, sustainable walking infrastructure.	Short-Term / Medium-Term	CCC, COM, CLDC				
1.2 Improve the Visitor experience through on-site visitor management and interpretation along the Cliffs of Moher (within the Cliffs boundary) during peak season to help better manage visitor flows during these periods and work with land owners.	Short-Term / Medium-Term	FI, CCC/COM				
Hero Experience 2: Adventure On and Under in the Burren: diving, surfing, caving – ‘the Edge’.						
Actions	Timeframe	Lead				
2.1 CATALYST 9: Encourage the establishment of new Eco-friendly, Responsible Adventure experiences such as new cycling experiences along the green roads and the ‘edge’ experience. Investigate the feasibility of a leisure Bike Trail along the old Green roads (similar to Lough Avalla and Rocky Road). De-zone the Green roads for safety.	Medium-Term	CCC, CLDC, FI				
2.2 Create a Caving experience in the region that will once again bring new adventurers to the region.	Medium-Term	Aillwee Cave, Doolin Cave, BEN				
2.3 Research and identify Off-road Cycling trails through the Burren Highlands and Lowlands.	Medium-Term	CLDC				
2.4 Identify a Blueway for Kinvara Bay, The Flaggy Shore, Ballyvaughan Bay and the River Inagh – Ennistymon to Lahinch.	Medium-Term	CCC, CLDC, LTGs				
2.5 Elevate and promote the Rock Climbing experiences of the Burren where interest and demand for climbing outdoors has grown (already attracting foreign climbers, especially from the US).	Short-Term	FI, CCC, CLDC, LEs, LTGs				
Hero Experience 3: Walk the Burren Way through the Living Landscape shaped by 360 million years of water and Thousands of Years of Farming Traditions.						
Actions	Timeframe	Lead				
3.1 Consolidate the position and brand of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark as a landscape of international significance.	Short-Term	CCC				
3.2 Develop a ‘Burren Guides’ training programme for all guides and bus drivers including an accreditation programme similar to that used in other UNESCO sites (Uluru, Galapagos, Antarctica, Savannah Guides). This should be a prerequisite to getting a bus license/stop approval and would ensure that proper respect is given to these significant sites.	Short-Term	CCC/ GEOPARK				
3.3 Work with OPW/DCHG and CCC to review and redesign the approach and experience at Poul nabrone to create a greater sense of arrival and revise the interpretation to reflect the new findings from the archaeology that explains the international significance of the site (over 1000 years of use of the same portal tomb).	Medium-Term	OPW/ DCHG, CCC				
3.4 Reinvigorate the Wildflower Walk Season with local walking guides to share this iconic May experience with visitors.	Short-Term	BEN				

3.5	Continue to collate information about the walking and cycle routes in the region and encourage visitors to get off the beaten track through Guided Experiences with Local Guides whose knowledge of the Holy Wells, sacred sites, and natural phenomenon are core to the Wild Atlantic Way's principle theme of Connectedness.	Short-Term	GEOPARK, BEN, CLDC				
Hero Experience 4: See Life shaped by the Ancient Farming Landscape of the Burren to see the Ancient Traditions Continue.							
Actions		Timefram	Lead				
4.1	CATALYST 6: Support Farmers keen to Diversify their business to include tourism with a business support programme and guidance on insurance, planning requirements and investment in sustainable tourism experiences that will create future hero experiences. Create an Agri-Tourism Farm Diversification programme for the Burren farmers and landowners to enable them to sustain their "Living Landscape" through new opportunities in visitor experiences, access to heritage sites, food produce, accommodation, etc.	Short-Term	IFA, AT, CLDC				
4.2	CATALYST 7: Be a Custodian for a day – join the Geopark to 'clean-up' a site or fix a dry-stone wall. Discover what is involved in managing a Global Geopark.	Short-Term	CCC /GEOPARK				
4.3	Create an International Educational-tourism Cluster of Products that can actively promote the region and its links to farming, conservation, sustainable best practice and sustainable tourism.	Medium-Term	GEOPARK				
4.4	Due to the synergy between the Burren, Cliffs of Moher and Aran Islands, it will be important to have regard to other plans, programmes and policies for the Aran Islands and/or Connemara when seeking to deliver a more sustainable and holistic visitor experience in connecting the stories, activities and experiences of both destinations.	Short-Term	FI				
Hero Experience 5: Experience Wellness the Wild Atlantic Way through Immersion of the Senses.							
Actions		Timefram	Lead				
5.1	CATALYST 4: Create a 'Wellness the Wild Atlantic Way' programme and dedicated section on the Fáilte Ireland website that looks at the broader definition of 'wellness' including connection, time in nature, and the need to sleep well, as well as the traditional relaxation, healthy food and exercise.	Short-Term	FI, BEN				
5.2	Collective bundling and marketing of the Burren Wellness Experiences connecting the villages and businesses within the Burren.	Short-Term	BEN, CT, FI				
5.3	A locally Guided Holy Sites Experience to be developed for sites that are deemed suitable for visitation. The guided experience would include a set of visitor guidelines for visiting the sites including an instruction not to leave objects at the sites.	Short-Term	CCC/ GEOPARK, BEN				
Hero Experience 6: Savour the Unique Local Flavours of the Burren.							
Actions		Timeframe	Lead				
6.1	CATALYST 6: Support Farmers keen to Diversify their business to include food tourism initiatives to expand the immersive food experiences of the Burren Food Trail creating future hero experiences.	Short-Term	CCC/ GEOPARK, CLDC				
6.2	Expand the Burren Food Trail through encouragement of the benefits of participation and membership to non-BEN members, and adoption of the Geopark Code of Practice for Sustainable Tourism.	Short-Term	BEN				

Hero Experience 7: Immerse yourself in the Music and Dance of the Burren and see the Lineage of Stories, Songs & Sounds of the Sea.					
Actions	Timeframe	Lead			
7.1 CATALYST 3: Develop a winter Burren Music, Dance and Story Trail connecting visitors with music, dance, stories and traditions of the place – people and villages. This trail has the potential to become a world class experience as it builds on the authenticity and quality of Clare musicians and their stories.	Short-Term	CCC/ GEOPARK, BEN			
7.2 Establish a Retail Experience Mentoring programme using existing enterprises that have high quality and Burren connected retail.	Medium-Term	BEN, LEO			
7.3 Create the "Where To Go Next" Connection in each village and town , and at each iconic location which will guide visitors to less well-known experiences and locations encouraging them to slow down, stay and /or extend their stay. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connecting the inspiration of the Burren with famous artists, authors and poets John O'Donohue, W.B.Yeats and George Bernard Shaw who carved their names into the autograph tree in Coole Park, north of Gort. 	Short-Term	FI, CCC			
7.4 CATALYST 8: Facilitate workshop(s) to assist in further developing and promoting a series of Cultural Events that encourage Year-Round visitation through dedicated timely funding, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Music Festivals and Events (Teach Ceoil, Kilfenora Music Festival, Russell Bros, etc.) Taste the Burren Food Trail and Events, Burren Slow Food Festival and Burren Food Fayre Festival of Finn Burren in Bloom Burren Rocks Seabirds Festival at the Cliffs of Moher Crinniu na mBád Burren Heritage Week Walks Father Ted Festival Lisdoonvarna Matchmaking Festival Winterage Festival 	Ongoing	FI, CCC			

SEA Commentary:

The assessment of the Plan's Hero Experiences and associated Catalyst Projects and other Actions against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs B1, B2, B3, PHH1, S1, W1, W2, W3, AC1, M1, M2, M3, CH1, CH2 and L1) is consistent with the:

- Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.4; and*
- Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report.*

Implementing the VEDP 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 VEDP does not provide consent, establish a framework for granting consent or contribute towards a framework for granting consent. The VEDP is situated alongside a hierarchy of statutory documents setting out public policy for, among other things, land use development, tourism, infrastructure, sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management. These other existing policies, plans etc. have been subject to their own environmental assessment processes, as relevant, and form the decision-making and consent-granting framework.

The SEA process that has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Plan has brought about various changes to the emerging Plan through an iterative process. These measures are reproduced under Section 9 "Mitigation Measures" of this SEA Environmental Report. By integrating all SEA 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.*

These actions will contribute towards positive environmental effects (see Table 8.3) through:

- *Sustainable development, environmental protection, environmental management (e.g. Hero Experience 2, Action 2.1, Catalyst 9 "Encourage the establishment of new Eco-friendly, Responsible Adventure experiences...");*
- *Seasonality (more evenly spreading visitors over time by promoting all year round visitor experiences (e.g. Hero Experience 7, Catalyst 8, Action 7.4 "Facilitate workshop(s) to assist in further developing and promoting a series of Cultural Events that encourage Year-Round visitation through dedicated timely funding"; Catalyst 3, Action 7.1, "Develop a winter Burren Music, Dance and Story Trail..."; Hero Experience 3, Action 3.4, "Reinvigorate the Wildflower Walk Season with local walking guides to share this iconic May experience with visitors");*
- *Regionality (dispersal of visitors throughout the area and greater use of capacity management principles, including Hero Experiences 2 through to 7 and associated Catalyst Projects and actions); and*
- *Visitor management (e.g. Hero Experience 1: Action 1.2 "Improve the Visitor experience through on-site visitor management and interpretation along the Cliffs of Moher (within the Cliffs boundary) during peak season to help better manage visitor flows during these periods and work with land owners").*

The actions will also contribute towards the promotion of new experiences – including those relating to land use activities and developments – and would be likely to contribute towards an increase in the number and dwell time of visitors (and associated potential adverse effects – see Table 8.3) to the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area. New built developments and increases in the number and dwell time of visitors would continue to be planned for, mitigated and consented through the existing statutory planning and consent framework. The mitigation of potential adverse effects arising (see Table 8.3) would also be contributed towards by additional VEDP measures, including those relating to infrastructure capacity, visitor management and green infrastructure and ecosystem services. Any amendment to the VEDP or integration of VEDP provisions into other Plans, Programmes etc. would have to be subject to Screening for SEA and AA processes and full assessments as relevant.

8.5.3 Action Plan Recommendations: Enablers of Success

Central to the VEDP is the **Action Plan** that arranges various **recommendations** (including nine **Catalyst Projects** and **other Actions**) under seven **Hero Experiences** and four **Enablers of Success**.

For each action a timeframe for implementation is indicated: short (year 1 of Plan implementation), medium (years 2 and 3 of implementation) and long (year 4 of implementation onwards) term. Lead agencies for each action are also identified, comprising:

- An Teagasc (AT);
- Burren Ecotourism Network (BEN);
- Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark (GEOPARK);
- Clare County Council (CCC);
- Clare Local Development Company (CLDC);
- Clare Tourism (CT);
- Cliffs of Moher (CoM);
- Department of Culture, Heritage, and Gaeltacht (DCHG);
- Fáilte Ireland (FI);
- Irish Farmer's Association (IFA);
- Local Enterprise Office (LEO);
- Local Enterprises (LEs);
- Local Tourism Groups (LTGs);
- National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS); and
- Office of Public Works (OPW).

Action Plan Recommendations			Likely to Improve status of SEOs	Potential Conflict with status of SEOs- likely to be mitigated	Probable Conflict with status of SEOs- unlikely to be mitigated	No Likely interaction with status of SEOs
<p>Enabler 1: Visitor Management and Dispersal</p> <p>A key issue for both the Burren and Cliffs of Moher is the environmental pressures that are already being witnessed during peak periods. To help ensure the future sustainability of the region's natural and cultural assets and communities, it will be imperative that an appropriately resourced visitor management, traffic and transport strategy is developed and delivered.</p>			B1 B2 B3 PHH1 S1 W1 W2 W3 AC1 M1 M2 M3 CH1 CH2 L1	B1 B2 B3 PHH1 S1 W1 W2 W3 AC1 M1 M2 M3 CH1 CH2 L1		
Actions	Timeframe	Lead				
1.1 CATALYST 2: Upgrade 2km of the Cliff Walk (1km either side of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre) through a partnership with land owners and National Parks to develop a management plan and future funding model that supports the land owners and allows for reinvestment, sustainable walking infrastructure.	Short-Term / Medium-Term	CCC, COM, CLDC				
1.2 Improve the Visitor experience through on-site visitor management and interpretation along the Cliffs of Moher (within the Cliffs boundary) during peak season to help better manage visitor flows during these periods and work with land owners.	Short-Term / Medium-Term	FI, CCC/COM				
E1.1 CATALYST 1: Develop and implement an Integrated Traffic and Transport Strategy for the Burren and Cliffs of Moher, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop alternative itineraries for bus operators from Dublin and Galway that include overnight stops in County Clare. Regulate buses stopping at sacred sites, including Poul nabrone, to require respectful interpretation of these sites and a visitor contribution to their conservation. Through the Cliffs of Moher engagement with the bus companies, give preference to buses staying overnight in County Clare. Implement the recommendations of the Doolin Masterplan to reduce the impact of bus traffic on the village and provide adequate enforcement in the village. Upgrade the Cliffs of Moher carpark and establish the operation of formal park and ride facilities in Doolin and Liscannor. Review of suitable bus size (many are too big and wide now) and frequency on the coast road (via Fanore), and revisit the idea of making the coastal drive a one-way system. Investigate the feasibility of using 'intelligent transportation systems', the de-zoning of minor roads (particularly green roads), and the reduction of speed limits on select roads. Encourage dispersal of FIT traffic to quieter locations such as Kilfenora, the Burren Lowlands and South Clare through the renovation and updating of existing attractions and the creation of new products and experiences (e.g. Holy Island, Scattery Island, Loop Head). Extend the 'Tourism for Conservation' Geopark programme to introduce a Visitor Code of Practice with the visitor management and active conservation programmes. Investigate the cost and potential revenue of applying a differential rate levy to fund new sustainable transport options such as Local Link Clare. Investigate the application of an Environmental Management Charge for group tour visitors to high volume sacred sites across Ireland to reinvest in maintenance and site management. Work with Galway County Council on a joint strategy for the Burren with a third of the Burren in County Galway. Review of the number of bus licenses issued, itinerary routes and the stop locations in the Burren. Ensure that the routes do not use minor roads. Enforcement of the Integrated Visitor Management, Traffic & Transport Strategy will be required on the ground. 	Short-Term	FI, CCC, NPWS CoM				

E1.2	Establish the Burren as an internationally important location through the Geoparks programme with ongoing work in each community and development of a ' Burren Guides' training programme.	Short-Term	CCC/GEOPARK				
E1.3	Development and implementation of the Cliffs of Moher Strategy.	Short-Term	CCC, COM				
E1.4	Present the transport challenges and Masterplan solutions for Doolin.	Short-Term	CCC, FI				
E1.5	Give preference to tour operators that include an Overnight Stay in the region in packaging and distribution arrangements at the Cliffs of Moher.	Short-Term	COM				
E1.6	CATALYST 5: Develop the Burren Discovery Trail to assist in dispersing independent travellers eastward to the Burren Lowlands and provide interpretive content to interpret the landscape and reveal the underlying stories. Use the Drive to generate interest in alternative geosites and attractions.	Short-Term	FI, CCC, GCC				
E1.7	Investigate the feasibility of Public Toilets in high-use areas such as Fanore and Doolin and review the facilities, traffic management, interpretation, signage, etc. at all hero products.	Short-Term	CCC				
E1.8	Position the Burren Geopark to drive the Research, Monitoring and Experience Development activities of the region.	Short-Term	CCC/GEOPARK				
E1.9	Develop a Yearly Action Plan for the Geopark.	Ongoing	CCC/GEOPARK Oversight Committee				
E1.10	Undertake an analysis of the accommodation facilities and work to attract inward investment for new facilities. Strengthen incentives to improve and upgrade existing accommodation businesses.	Ongoing	CCC, FI				
E1.11	Continue to raise awareness that the Geopark is primarily a landscape in private ownership – promote appropriate visitor behaviour relating to littering, parking and respect for farm infrastructure.	Ongoing	CCC/Geopark				

Actions		Timeframe	Lead				
E2.1	<p>Establish links between Clare Tourism, The Burren & Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark and the Local Tourism Organisations and Groups to promote the region as a premium destination for overnight stays. This Plan recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Burren Geopark takes the lead for the delivery of the VEDP for Clare County Council. Clare County Council needs to establish an oversight committee, chaired by the Geopark to include the Cliffs of Moher, Planning, Transport, and other key sections of the Council, together with Fáilte Ireland, CLDC, OPW/ DCHG, NPWS, LCG's, BEN, CT, LEO, Coillte, LEO, CETB, Burrenbeo Trust, Burren Programme, UCG, UCD, (and others as agreed) to meet on a quarterly basis to review progress of the plan and work plan. This Committee would create a central point for identifying and providing the guidelines for infrastructural development, funding opportunities, business regulations, supports, etc. For Clare Tourism to include the Geopark in decision making and to ensure the right skills are in place for the marketing of the Burren. This should include expanding the range of partners involved in Clare Tourism (similar to those partnering with Donegal Tourism) to deliver a more seamless experience from marketing to visitor engagement on the ground. Collectively promote the region to tour/bus operators for overnight stays. Elevate the promotion of the experience of the Burren as a premium special destination, with dedicated promotion of the unique experiences best suited to Free and Independent Travelers (FITs). Facilitate the development of local community tourism groups in Liscannor, Lahinch, Ennistymon and Kilfenora (Kinvara too if none in place) and provide ongoing support to BEN and existing groups to create an integrated network of all the villages in the region to support a collective "roadmap", collective marketing and promotion for the region. This can then feed into the Visit Clare promotional platforms. Implement the branded signage as developed by the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark. 	Short-Term	CCC/ GEOPARK				

E2.2	Improve the pre-trip planning information provided about the Burren on key websites and enroute planning in key brochures and guide books to reflect the main messages and hero experiences including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New photography and drone footage required to bring the Burren story to life with more outdoor, active and inspiring footage. • Elevate the experience of the Burren as a premium special destination, collectively promoting the Burren through its FIT experiences. Change the messaging to the theme of 'Connectedness' where meeting the locals and / or visiting the landscape with local guides is the true experience. • A guided walk of each town provided via a 'tear off' town / village walking map available in local shops to encourage customer engagement in the hero experience by locals. • Create a new section on the Wild Atlantic Way on wellness presenting remarkable experiences from yoga to healthy food showcasing the Burren. • Increase the use of social media by local groups through aligning the efforts of each community under the guidance of Clare Tourism. • Work with Shannon Group on developing a showcase of local produce and artisan crafts from the Burren at Shannon Airport along with messages about the Burren Experience. 	On-going	FI, CCC/ GEOPARK, BEN, CT																			
E2.3	Support the ongoing role of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark to continue to raise the international recognition of the environmental significance of the area.	Short-Term	CCC, FI																			
E2.4	Support the aims of the Geopark in its ongoing work with the local communities who are integral to them experience.	Short-Term	CCC/ GEOPARK, BEN																			
<p>Enabler 3: Inspire and Create Confidence in Sharing Stories To ensure the region takes a unified approach in sharing the Burren and Cliffs of Moher story, the development and implementation of an integrated marketing programme that is supported by capacity building and experience development programmes and tools are required. This will not only help to boost industry confidence, but will also generate destination Ambassadors that resonate with the global tourist market.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Actions</th> <th>Timeframe</th> <th>Lead</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>E3.1 Implement Business Support programmes through local and regional agencies to help deliver the Visitor Experience Development Plan. Assist businesses in understanding how they can enhance the overall delivery of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher story.</td> <td>Short-Term</td> <td>FI, CCC/ GEOPARK, LEO</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E3.2 Identify and support the next wave of Wild Atlantic Way Champions in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher region.</td> <td>Short-Term</td> <td>FI, CCC/ GEOPARK</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Enabler 4: Effective Marketing and Promotion In order to grow seasonal and sustainable tourism to the Burren and Cliffs of Moher, increased marketing and promotion of the region will be required to achieve cut-through, particularly in high-value markets, and in supporting markets such as business and incentive travel.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Actions</th> <th>Timeframe</th> <th>Lead</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>E4.1 Develop a 'Burren Marketing' training and upskill programme through the Geopark for all business owners, staff and local communities, to know their villages, towns, region and landscape and to be on "message".</td> <td>Short-Term</td> <td>FI, BEN</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>								Actions	Timeframe	Lead	E3.1 Implement Business Support programmes through local and regional agencies to help deliver the Visitor Experience Development Plan. Assist businesses in understanding how they can enhance the overall delivery of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher story.	Short-Term	FI, CCC/ GEOPARK, LEO	E3.2 Identify and support the next wave of Wild Atlantic Way Champions in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher region.	Short-Term	FI, CCC/ GEOPARK	Actions	Timeframe	Lead	E4.1 Develop a ' Burren Marketing' training and upskill programme through the Geopark for all business owners, staff and local communities, to know their villages, towns, region and landscape and to be on "message".	Short-Term	FI, BEN
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E4.2	Fáilte Ireland and Cliffs of Moher to actively promote alternative experiences in the region to reduce the pressure on the Cliffs and promote overnight stays.	Short-Term	FI, CoM				
E4.3	Create a niche Premier Eco Conference and Incentive programme building on the success of Burren College of Art programmes.	Mid/Long-Term	BEN, CCC/ GEOPARK				
E4.4	Develop a Joint Ticketing initiative to cross-sell visitor experiences, increase dwell time in the Burren and increase season extension. Ensure that the initiative is promoted in-destination and is integrated into any trip planning tools.	Short-Term	CCC/ GEOPARK, BEN				

SEA Commentary:

The assessment of the Plan's Enablers and associated Catalyst Projects and other Actions against Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs B1, B2, B3, PHH1, S1, W1, W2, W3, AC1, M1, M2, M3, CH1, CH2 and L1) is consistent with the:

- Environmental effects detailed under subsections 8.2 to 8.4; and
- Assessments of the selected alternatives for the Plan provided at Section 7 of this report.

Implementing the VEDP 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 VEDP does not provide consent, establish a framework for granting consent or contribute towards a framework for granting consent. The VEDP is situated alongside a hierarchy of statutory documents setting out public policy for, among other things, land use development, tourism, infrastructure, sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management. These other existing policies, plans etc. have been subject to their own environmental assessment processes, as relevant, and form the decision-making and consent-granting framework.

The SEA process that has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the Plan has brought about various changes to the emerging Plan through an iterative process. These measures are reproduced under Section 9 "Mitigation Measures" of this SEA Environmental Report. By integrating all SEA 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.

These actions will contribute towards positive environmental effects (see Table 8.3) through:

- Sustainable development, environmental protection, environmental management (e.g. Enabler 2: Better Collaboration Between Groups, Action E2.3 "Support the ongoing role of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark to continue to raise the international recognition of the environmental significance of the area");
- Seasonality (more evenly spreading visitors over time by promoting all year round visitor experiences e.g. Enabler 4: Effective Marketing and Promotion, Action E4.4 "...increase season extension ...");
- Regionality (Enabler 1: Visitor Management and Dispersal, Catalyst 1, Action E1.1 "Develop alternative itineraries for bus operators from Dublin and Galway that include overnight stops in County Clare...Encourage dispersal of FIT traffic to quieter locations"); and
- Visitor management (e.g. Enabler 1: Visitor Management and Dispersal, Action 1.2 "Improve the Visitor experience through on-site visitor management and interpretation along the Cliffs of Moher..." and Catalyst 1, Action E1.1 "Develop and implement an Integrated Traffic and Transport Strategy for the Burren and Cliffs of Moher...").

The actions will also contribute towards the promotion of new experiences – including those relating to land use activities and developments – and would be likely to contribute towards an increase in the number and dwell time of visitors (and associated potential adverse effects – see Table 8.3) to the Burren and Cliffs of Moher area. New built developments and increases in the number and dwell time of visitors would continue to be planned for, mitigated and consented through the existing statutory planning and consent framework. The mitigation of potential adverse effects arising (see Table 8.3) would also be contributed towards by additional VEDP measures, including those relating to infrastructure capacity, visitor management and green infrastructure and ecosystem services. Any amendment to the VEDP or integration of VEDP provisions into other Plans, Programmes etc. would have to be subject to Screening for SEA and AA processes and full assessments as relevant.

Section 9 Mitigation Measures

9.1 Introduction

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 Plan⁸¹, 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 Framework⁸²; and
- Integrating Requirements for Environmental Compliance into the Plan⁸³.

9.2 Establishing the status of the Plan and its interrelationship with the Statutory Decision-Making and Consent-Granting Framework⁸⁴

The SEA team worked with the Plan-preparation team at Fáilte Ireland in order to help establish the status of the Plan and its interrelationship with the Statutory Decision-Making and Consent-Granting Framework.

Implementing the VEDP 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 VEDP does not provide consent, establish a framework for granting consent or contribute towards a framework for granting consent.**

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

The National Planning Framework (NPF) sets out Ireland's planning policy direction for the next 22 years. The NPF is to be implemented through Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSEs) and lower tier Development Plans and Local Area Plans. The RSEs for the Southern Region and the Northern and Western Region set 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 dwell times; developing walking and cycling trails,

⁸¹ All recommendations made by the SEA and AA processes have been integrated into the Plan.

⁸² This framework includes various environmental requirements.

⁸³ These requirements include those that have arisen through the SEA and/or AA processes.

⁸⁴ This framework includes various environmental requirements.

opening greater accessibility to the marine and countryside environment by sustainable modes; and facilitating appropriate tourism development, including that relating to greenways, blueways and peatlands. When adopted, the RSEs will inform the review of existing, assessed lower-tier 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 VEDP shall be consistent with and conform with the NPF, RSEs and lower-tier land use plans, including provisions relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management that have been integrated into these documents including through SEA and AA processes. In order to be realised, projects included in the VEDP (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 VEDP is not part and does not contribute towards.

Figure 9.1 provides a schematic of the relationship between Visitor Experience Development Plans and the existing Statutory Decision-Making and Consent-Granting Framework. Also indicated is the hierarchy of accompanying environmental assessment in force. Note that the Overall Findings of this SEA are provided under Section 8.2 of this SEA Environmental Report.

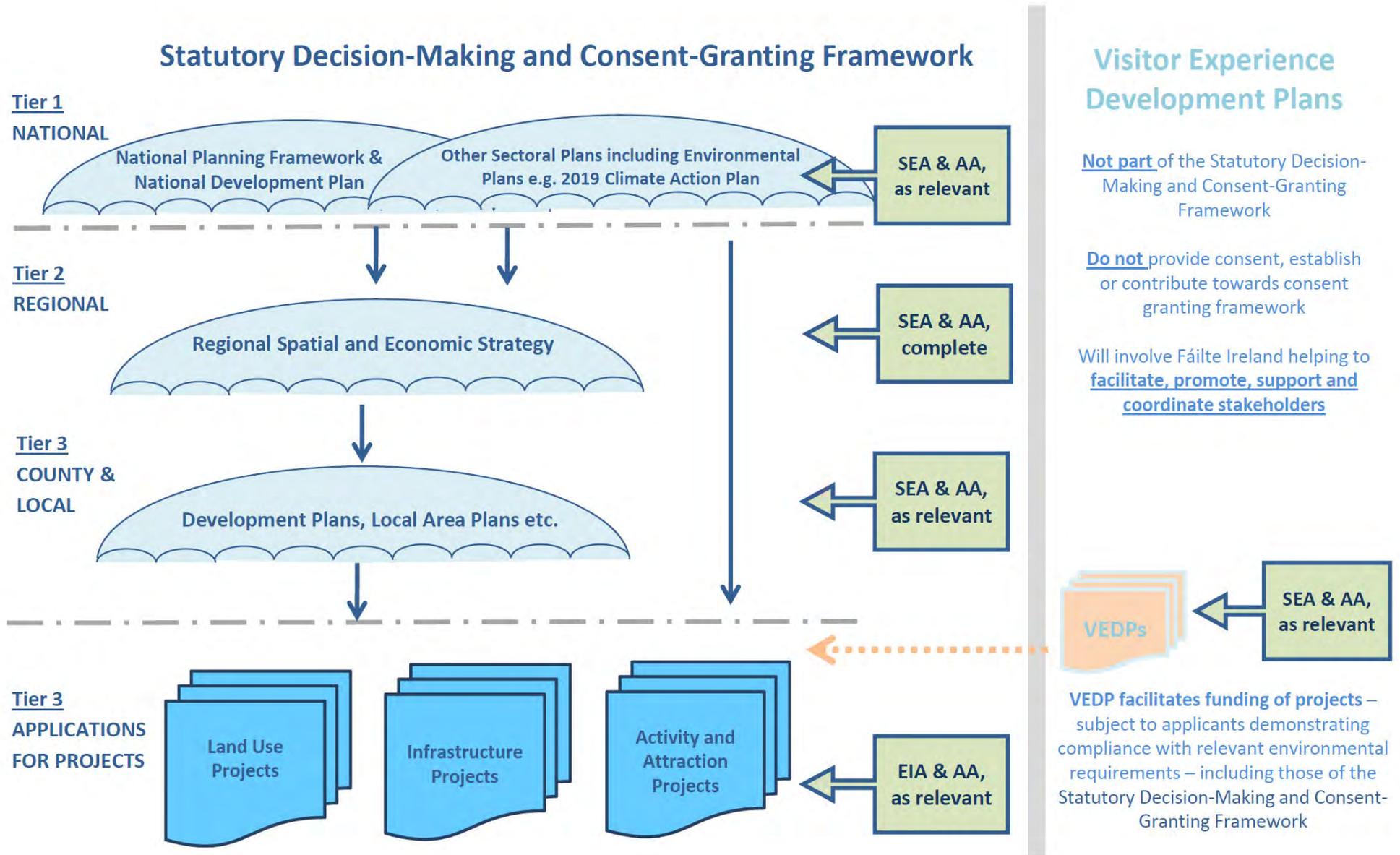


Figure 9.1 Statutory Decision-Making and Consent-Granting Framework, VEDPs and Environmental Assessment Requirements

9.3 Integrating Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management into the Plan⁸⁵

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 compliance⁸⁶ 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 VEDP (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 framework⁸⁷, of which the VEDP 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;
- The Clare and Galway County Development Plans, including various provisions relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management⁸⁸; and
- The Climate Action Plan 2019, the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2018 and any subsequent versions) and the National Mitigation Plan (2017 and any subsequent versions)⁸⁹.

Infrastructure Capacity⁹⁰

With respect to infrastructural capacity (including drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) the potential impact on existing infrastructure as well as the potential environmental effects of a likely increase in tourism-related traffic volumes along any routes resulting from the relevant initiative shall be considered and mitigated as appropriate, where relevant. The promotion of developing visitor friendly infrastructure where it is required will also be encouraged.

⁸⁵ These requirements include those that have arisen through the SEA and/or AA processes.

⁸⁶ Demonstration of compliance may be supported by monitoring undertaken by the beneficiary.

⁸⁷ This framework includes various environmental requirements.

⁸⁸ For more information please refer to Appendix II of this report or the website of the relevant public authority.

⁸⁹ For more information please refer to Section 4.10 and/or

Appendix II of this report or the website of the relevant public authority.

⁹⁰ This requirement has arisen through the SEA and/or AA processes.

Visitor Management⁹¹

Those receiving funding shall seek to manage any increase in visitor numbers and/or any change in visitor behaviour in order to avoid significant effects including loss of habitat and disturbance, including ensuring that new projects are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities.

Extensive research by Fáilte Ireland has shown improved environmental outcomes (including improved attainment of conservation objectives) in areas with visitor management strategies. Visitor management strategies will be required for proposed plans, programmes and projects that are to receive funding as relevant and appropriate.

Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services⁹²

Those receiving funding shall contribute towards the maintenance of existing green infrastructure and its ecosystem services, taking into account the output of the Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystem Services project being undertaken by the NPWS. Proposals for the development of any green infrastructure should demonstrate the synergies that can be achieved with regard to the: provision of open space amenities; sustainable management of water; protection and management of biodiversity; protection of cultural heritage; and protection of protected landscape sensitivities.

⁹¹ This requirement has arisen through the SEA and/or AA processes.

⁹² This requirement has arisen through the SEA and/or AA processes.

Section 10 Monitoring Measures

10.1 Introduction

The SEA Directive requires that the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes are monitored. This section details the measures that have been selected in order to monitor the likely significant effects of implementing relevant Fáilte Ireland Plans, Programmes, etc.

Monitoring can demonstrate the positive effects facilitated by the Plan and can enable, at an early stage, the identification of unforeseen adverse effects and the undertaking of appropriate remedial action.

The occurrence of persistent significant adverse environmental effects which are directly attributable to tourism would necessitate consideration of the effects in the context of the Plan and a possible review of part(s) of the Plan.

10.2 Indicators and Targets

Monitoring is based around indicators that allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Strategic Environmental Objectives identified in Section 5 and used in the evaluation. Each indicator to be monitored is accompanied by the target(s) that were identified with regard to the relevant strategic actions.

Table 10.1 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.

Monitoring is an ongoing process and the programme allows for flexibility and further refinement of indicators and targets.

10.3 Sources

Confirmation of compliance with relevant environmental measures (see Section 9) 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 upon for the Burren and Cliffs of Moher VEDP area⁹³ in order to monitor any effects of visitors (see Section 4.6.3);
- Sources maintained by Clare and Galway County Councils (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.

10.4 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 VEDP 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.

⁹³ This sub-programme will include locations along the Burren Discovery Trail.

Table 10.1 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 ⁹⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 9 • 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 Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht report of the implementation of the measures contained in the Habitats Directive - as required by Article 17 of the Directive (every 6 years) • Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's 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 9 • 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 9 • 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

⁹⁴ 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.

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Environmental Component	Indicators	Targets	Source and (where available) Frequency
Water	<p>W1i: Classification of Overall Status (comprised of ecological and chemical status) under the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (SI No. 272 of 2009)</p> <p>W1ii: Mandatory and Guide values as set by the EU Bathing Water Directive and transposing Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008)</p> <p>W2: Interactions with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC resulting from development adhering to the Plan</p> <p>W3: Compliance of relevant lower tier assessments and decision making with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines</p>	<p>W1i: No deterioration in the status of any surface water or adverse effect upon the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good status' as a result of the Plan</p> <p>W1ii: No deterioration in the value of bathing waters or adverse effect upon the ability of any bathing water to achieve Mandatory values and, where possible, Guide values as a result of the Plan</p> <p>W2: Not to affect the ability of groundwaters to comply with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC, subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the WFD</p> <p>W3: For lower tier assessments and decision making to comply with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 9 • 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
Air and Climatic Factors	<p>AC1: Demonstration of compliance with provisions relating to climate adaptation and mitigation have been integrated into the Plan.</p>	<p>C1: To maximise the amount of measures relating to climate adaptation and mitigation being implemented</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 9 • 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	<p>M1: Number of instances whereby additional tourists are directed by beneficiaries of funding towards areas in the Plan area where adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity is unavailable</p> <p>M2: Number of significant adverse effects on the use of or access to public assets and infrastructure</p> <p>M3: Preparation and implementation of construction and environmental management plans</p>	<p>M1: No instances whereby additional tourists are directed by beneficiaries of funding towards specific locations in instances where significant problems with critical infrastructure have been identified (drinking water, wastewater, waste, transport), by stakeholders such as the EPA, Irish Water, Clare County Council and/or Galway County Council.</p> <p>M2: No significant adverse effects on the use of or access to public assets and infrastructure</p> <p>M3: For construction and environmental management plans to be prepared and implemented for relevant projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 9 • 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, Clare County Council and/or Galway County Council • Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes

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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 9 • 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 9 • 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 the land use plans of Clare and Galway County Councils	L1: No unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in the land use plans of Clare and Galway County Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 9 • 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

Appendix I SEA Determination

SEA Determination

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Determination

for the:

Draft Burren and Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience Development Plan

Article 3 para. 2 of the SEA Directive¹, introduced the requirement that SEA be carried out on plans and programmes, or modifications to these:

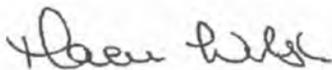
- a) which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive², or
- b) which, in view of the likely effect on sites, have been determined to require an assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive³ i.e. the Directive requires that SEA is undertaken where Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (AA)⁴ is being undertaken on plans, programmes etc.

The tourism sector Plan does not contribute towards the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive and does not contain provisions or define rules that must be complied with when administrative consent of other projects is being granted.

The Plan does, however, fall under the definition of a "plan" contained within the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011 (as amended) and therefore must be screened for the need to undertake AA. The Screening for AA has found that the Plan has the potential, if unmitigated, to affect the ecological integrity European Sites and that measures to ensure that potential effects are avoided are required. Taking into account the requirements of the Habitats Directive and recent case law (including, European Court of Justice Judgement C323-17), Stage 2 AA must therefore be carried out for the Plan. As Stage 2 AA is being undertaken on the Plan, SEA must also be undertaken for this Plan - see requirement at b) above.

This determination has been made having regard to the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (Statutory Instrument Number (SI No. 435 of 2004), as amended by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 200 of 2011).

Signatory:



Date: 30th September 2019

¹ Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of Ministers, of 27th June 2001, on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment

² Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011, on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (codification), as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU

³ Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

⁴ AA is provided for by the Habitats Directive and is a focused and detailed impact assessment of the implications of a strategic action or project, alone and in combination with other strategic actions and projects, on the integrity of a European Site in view of its conservation objectives.

Appendix II Relationship with Legislation and Other Plans and Programmes

This appendix is not intended to be a full and comprehensive review of EU Directives, the transposing regulations or the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. The information is not exhaustive and it is recommended to consult the Directive, Regulation, Plan or Programme to become familiar with the full details of each.

Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
European Level			
SEA Directive (2001/42/EC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development. Provide for a high level of protection of the environment by carrying out an environmental assessment of plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out an environmental assessment for plans or programmes referred to in Articles 2 to 4 of the Directive. Prepare an environmental report which identifies, describes and evaluates the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme and reasonable alternatives that consider the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme. Consult with relevant authorities, stakeholders and public allowing sufficient time to make a submission. Consult other Member States where the implementation of a plan or programme is likely to have transboundary environmental effects. Inform relevant authorities and stakeholders on the decision to implement the plan or programme. Issue a statement to include requirements detailed in Article 9 of the Directive. Monitor and mitigate significant environmental effects identified by the assessment. 	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
EIA Directive (2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires the assessment of the environmental effects of public and private projects which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. Aims to assess and implement avoidance or mitigation measures to eliminate environmental effects, before consent is given of projects likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue, inter alia, of their nature, size or location are made subject to a requirement for development consent and an assessment with regard to their effects. Those projects are defined in Article 4. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All projects listed in Annex I are considered as having significant effects on the environment and require an EIA. For projects listed in Annex II, a "screening procedure" is required to determine the effects of projects on the basis of thresholds/criteria or a case by case examination. This should take into account Annex III. The environmental impact assessment shall identify, describe and assess in an appropriate manner, in the light of each individual case and in accordance with Articles 4 to 12, the direct and indirect effects of a project on the following factors: human beings, fauna and flora, soil, water, air, climate and the landscape, material assets and the cultural heritage, the interaction between each factor. Consult with relevant authorities, stakeholders and public allowing sufficient time to make a submission before a decision is made. 	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the preservation, protection and improvement of the quality of the environment, including the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. Contribute towards ensuring biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Propose and protect sites of importance to habitats, plant and animal species. Establish a network of European sites hosting the natural habitat types listed in Annex I and habitats of the species listed in Annex II, to enable the natural habitat types and the species' habitats concerned to be maintained or, where 	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the

SEA Environmental Report for the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience Development Plan

Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain or restore to favourable conservation status, natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora of community interest. Promote the maintenance of biodiversity, taking account of economic, social, cultural and regional requirements. 	<p>appropriate, restored at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out comprehensive assessment of habitat types and species present. Establish a system of strict protection for the animal species and plant species listed in Annex IV. 	<p>regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conserve all species of naturally occurring birds in the wild state including their eggs, nests and habitats. Protect, manage and control these species and comply with regulations relating to their exploitation. The species included in Annex I shall be the subject of special conservation measures concerning their habitat in order to ensure their survival and reproduction in their area of distribution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserve, maintain or re-establish a sufficient diversity and area of habitats for all the species of birds referred to in Annex 1. Preserve, maintain and establish biotopes and habitats to include the creation of protected areas (Special Protection Areas). Ensure the upkeep and management in accordance with the ecological needs of habitats inside and outside the protected zones, re-establish destroyed biotopes and creation of biotopes. Measures for regularly occurring migratory species not listed in Annex I is required as regards their breeding, moulting and wintering areas and staging posts along their migration routes. The protection of wetlands and particularly wetlands of international importance. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
EU Nitrates Directive (91/676/EC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing water pollution caused or induced by nitrates from agricultural sources and - preventing further such pollution. 	<p>Ireland's Nitrates Action Programme is designed to prevent pollution of surface waters and ground water from agricultural sources and to protect and improve water quality. Ireland's third NAP came into operation in 2014. Each Member State's NAP must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a limit on the amount of livestock manure applied to the land each year set periods when land spreading is prohibited due to risk set capacity levels for the storage of livestock manure 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
EU Integrated Pollution Prevention Control Directive (2008/1/EC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The purpose of this Directive is to achieve integrated prevention and control of pollution arising from the activities listed in Annex I. It lays down measures designed to prevent or, where that is not practicable, to reduce emissions in the air, water and land from the abovementioned activities, including measures concerning waste, in order to achieve a high level of protection of the environment taken as a whole, without prejudice to Directive 85/337/EEC and other relevant Community provisions. 	<p>The IPPC Directive is based on several principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an integrated approach best available techniques, flexibility; and public participation 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
EU Plant Protection (products) Directive 2009/127/EC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Directive aims at reducing the risks and impacts of pesticide use on human health and the environment by introducing different targets, tools and measures such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) or National Action Plans (NAPs). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Framework Directive applies to pesticides which are plant protection products. Regarding pesticide application equipment already in professional use, the Framework Directive introduces requirements for the inspection and maintenance to be carried out on such equipment. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for</p>

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Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
EU Renewables Directive (2009/28/EC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Renewable Energy Directive establishes an overall policy for the production and promotion of energy from renewable sources in the EU. It requires the EU to fulfil at least 20% of its total energy needs with renewables by 2020 – to be achieved through the attainment of individual national targets. All EU countries must also ensure that at least 10% of their transport fuels come from renewable sources by 2020. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Directive promotes cooperation amongst EU countries (and with countries outside the EU) to help them meet their renewable energy targets. The Directive specifies national renewable energy targets for each country, taking into account its starting point and overall potential for renewables. EU countries set out how they plan to meet these targets and the general course of their renewable energy policy in national renewable energy action plans. Progress towards national targets is measured every two years when EU countries publish national renewable energy progress reports. 	<p>environmental protection and management.</p> <p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
Indirect Land Use Change Directive (2012/0288(COD))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Article 3(4) of Directive 2009/28/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (3) requires Member States to ensure that the share of energy from renewable energy sources in all forms of transport in 2020 is at least 10 % of their final energy consumption. The blending of biofuels is one of the methods available for Member States to meet this target, and is expected to be the main contributor. Other methods available to meet the target are the reduction of energy consumption, which is imperative because a mandatory percentage target for energy from renewable sources is likely to become increasingly difficult to achieve sustainably if overall demand for energy for transport continues to rise, and the use of electricity from renewable energy sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit the contribution that conventional biofuels (with a risk of ILUC emissions) make towards attainment of the targets in the Renewable Energy Directive; Improve the greenhouse gas performance of biofuel production processes (reducing associated emissions) by raising the greenhouse gas saving threshold for new installations subject to protecting installations already in operation on 1st July 2014; Encourage a greater market penetration of advanced (low-ILUC) biofuels by allowing such fuels to contribute more to the targets in the Renewable Energy Directive than conventional biofuels; Improve the reporting of greenhouse gas emissions by obliging Member States and fuel suppliers to report the estimated indirect land-use change emissions of biofuels. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive (2014/94/EU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Directive establishes a common framework of measures for the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure in the Union in order to minimise dependence on oil and to mitigate the environmental impact of transport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Directive sets out minimum requirements for the building-up of alternative fuels infrastructure, including recharging points for electric vehicles and refuelling points for natural gas (LNG and CNG) and hydrogen, to be implemented by means of Member States' national policy frameworks, as well as common technical specifications for such recharging and refuelling points, and user information requirements. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
EU Energy Efficiency Directive (2012/27/EU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes a set of binding measures to help the EU reach its 20% energy efficiency target by 2020. Under the Directive, all EU countries are required to use energy more efficiently at all stages of the energy chain, from production to final consumption. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy distributors or retail energy sales companies have to achieve 1.5% energy savings per year through the implementation of energy efficiency measures EU countries can opt to achieve the same level of savings through other means, such as improving the efficiency of heating systems, installing double glazed windows or insulating roofs The public sector in EU countries should purchase energy efficient buildings, products and services 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>

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Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every year, governments in EU countries must carry out energy efficient renovations on at least 3% (by floor area) of the buildings they own and occupy • Energy consumers should be empowered to better manage consumption. This includes easy and free access to data on consumption through individual metering • National incentives for SMEs to undergo energy audits • Large companies will make audits of their energy consumption to help them identify ways to reduce it • Monitoring efficiency levels in new energy generation capacities. 	
EU Seveso Directive (2012/18/EU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Directive lays down rules for the prevention of major accidents which involve dangerous substances, and the limitation of their consequences for human health and the environment, with a view to ensuring a high level of protection throughout the Union in a consistent and effective manner. 	<p>The Seveso Directive is well integrated with other EU policies, thus avoiding double regulation or other administrative burden. This includes the following related policy areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classification, labelling and packaging of chemicals; • The Union's Civil Protection Mechanism; • The Security Union Agenda including CBRN-E and Protection of critical infrastructure; • Policy on environmental liability and on the protection of the environment through criminal law; • Safety of offshore oil and gas operations. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
European Union Biodiversity Strategy to 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims to halt or reverse biodiversity loss and speed up the EU's transition towards a resource efficient and green economy. • Halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020, and restoring them in so far as feasible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines six targets and twenty actions to aid European Union in halting the loss to biodiversity and eco-system services. • The six targets cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Full implementation of EU nature legislation to protect biodiversity ◦ Maintaining, enhancing and protecting for ecosystems, and green infrastructure ◦ Ensuring sustainable agriculture, and forestry ◦ Sustainable management of fish stocks ◦ Reducing invasive alien species ◦ Addressing the global need to contribute towards averting global biodiversity loss 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
EU Green Infrastructure Strategy	<p>Aims to create a robust enabling framework in order to promote and facilitate Green Infrastructure (GI) projects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting GI in the main EU policy areas. • Supporting EU-level GI projects. • Improving access to finance for GI projects. • Improving information and promoting innovation. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
UN Kyoto Protocol (2nd Kyoto Period), the Second European Climate Change Programme (ECCP II), Paris climate conference (COP21) 2015 (Paris Agreement)	<p>The UN Kyoto Protocol set of policy measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>The Second European Climate Change Programme (ECCP II) aims to identify and develop all the necessary elements of an EU strategy to implement the Kyoto Protocol.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kyoto Protocol is implemented through the European Climate Change Programme (ECCP II). • EU member states implement measures to improve on or compliment the specified measures and policies arising from the ECCP. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the</p>

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Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
	<p>At the Paris climate conference (COP21) in December 2015, 195 countries adopted the first-ever universal, legally binding global climate deal. The agreement sets out a global action plan to put the world on track to avoid dangerous climate change by limiting global warming to well below 2°C.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under COP21, governments agreed to come together every 5 years to set more ambitious targets as required by science; report to each other and the public on how well they are doing to implement their targets; track progress towards the long-term goal through a robust transparency and accountability system. 	<p>achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>EU 2020 Climate and Energy Package</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Binding legislation which aims to ensure the European Union meets its climate and energy targets for 2020. Aims to achieve a 20% reduction in EU greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels. Aims to raise the share of EU energy consumption produced from renewable resources to 20%. Achieve a 20% improvement in the EU's energy efficiency. 	<p>Four pieces of complimentary legislation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reform of the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) to include a cap on emission allowances in addition to existing system of national caps. Member States have agreed national targets for non-EU ETS emissions from countries outside the EU. Meet the national renewable energy targets of 16% for Ireland by 2020. Preparing a legal framework for technologies in carbon capture and storage. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>EU 2030 Framework for Climate and Energy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A 2030 Framework for climate and energy, including EU-wide targets and policy objectives for the period between 2020 and 2030 that has been agreed by European countries. Targets include a 40% cut in greenhouse gas emissions compared to 1990 levels, at least a 27% share of renewable energy consumption and at least 27% energy savings compared with the business-as-usual scenario. 	<p>To meet the targets, the European Commission has proposed the following policies for 2030:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A reformed EU emissions trading scheme (ETS). New indicators for the competitiveness and security of the energy system, such as price differences with major trading partners, diversification of supply, and interconnection capacity between EU countries. First ideas for a new governance system based on national plans for competitive, secure, and sustainable energy. These plans will follow a common EU approach. They will ensure stronger investor certainty, greater transparency, enhanced policy coherence and improved coordination across the EU. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>The Clean Air for Europe Directive (2008/50/EC) (EU Air Framework Directive)</p> <p>Fourth Daughter Directive (2004/107/EC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CAFE Directive merges existing legislation into a single directive (except for the fourth daughter directive). Sets new air quality objectives for PM_{2.5} (fine particles) including the limit value and exposure related objectives. Accounts for the possibility to discount natural sources of pollution when assessing compliance against limit values. Allows the possibility for time extensions of three years (PM₁₀) or up to five years (NO₂, benzene) for complying with limit values, based on conditions and the assessment by the European Commission. The Fourth Daughter Directive lists pollutants, target values and monitoring requirements for the following: arsenic, cadmium, mercury, nickel and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in ambient air. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets objectives for ambient air quality designed to avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole. Aims to assess the ambient air quality in Member States on the basis of common methods and criteria. Obtains information on ambient air quality in order to help combat air pollution and nuisance and to monitor long-term trends and improvements resulting from national and community measures. Ensures that such information on ambient air quality is made available to the public. Aims to maintain air quality where it is good and improving it in other cases. Aims to promote increased cooperation between the Member States in reducing air pollution. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>

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Legislation, Plan, etc.	Summary of high level aim/ purpose/ objective	Summary of lower level objectives, actions etc.	Relevance to the Plan
Noise Directive (2002/49/EC)	The Noise Directive - Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise - is part of an EU strategy setting out to reduce the number of people affected by noise in the longer term and to provide a framework for developing existing Community policy on noise reduction from source.	The Directive requires competent authorities in Member States to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw up strategic noise maps for major roads, railways, airports and agglomerations, using harmonised noise indicators and use these maps to assess the number of people which may be impacted upon as a result of excessive noise levels; • Draw up action plans to reduce noise where necessary and maintain environmental noise quality where it is good; and • Inform and consult the public about noise exposure, its effects, and the measures considered to address noise. The Directive does not set any limit value, nor does it prescribe the measures to be used in the action plans, which remain at the discretion of the competent authorities.	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Floods Directive (2007/60/EC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes a framework for the assessment and management of flood risks • Reduce adverse consequences for human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity associated with floods in the Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess all water courses and coast lines at risk from flooding through Flood Risk Assessment • Prepare flood hazard maps and flood risk maps outlining the extent or potential of flooding and assets and humans at risk in these areas at River Basin District level (Article 3(2) (b)) and areas covered by Article 5(1) and Article 13(1) (b) in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3. • Implement flood risk management plans and take adequate and coordinated measures to reduce flood risk for the areas covered by the Articles listed above. • Inform the public and allow the public to participate in planning process. 	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a framework for the protection of water bodies to include inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater and their dependent wildlife and habitats. • Preserve and prevent the deterioration of water status and where necessary improve and maintain “good status” of water bodies. • Promote sustainable water usage. • The Water Framework Directive repealed the following Directives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Drinking Water Abstraction Directive ○ Sampling Drinking Water Directive ○ Exchange of Information on Quality of Surface Freshwater Directive ○ Shellfish Directive ○ Freshwater Fish Directive ○ Groundwater (Dangerous Substances) Directive ○ Dangerous Substances Directive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect, enhance and restore all water bodies and meet the environmental objectives outlined in Article 4 of the Directive. • Achieve "good status" for all waters. • Manage water bodies based on identifying and establishing river basins districts. • Involve the public and streamline legislation. • Prepare and implement a River Basin Management Plan for each river basin districts identified and a Register of Protected Areas. • Establish a programme of monitoring for surface water status, groundwater status and protected areas. • Recover costs for water services. 	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect, control and conserve groundwater. • Prevent the deterioration of the status of all bodies of groundwater. • Implements measures to prevent and control groundwater pollution, including criteria for assessing good groundwater chemical status and criteria for the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet minimum groundwater standards listed in Annex 1 of Directive. • Meet threshold values adopted by national legislation for the pollutants, groups of pollutants and indicators of pollution which have been identified as contributing to the characterisation of bodies or groups of bodies of 	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the

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	<p>identification of significant and sustained upward trends and for the definition of starting points for trend reversals.</p>	<p>groundwater as being at risk, also taking into account Part B of Annex II.</p>	<p>achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Drinking Water Directive (98/83/EC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve and maintain the quality of water intended for human consumption. • Protect human health from the adverse effects of any contamination of water intended for human consumption by ensuring that it is wholesome and clean. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set values applicable to water intended for human consumption for the parameters set out in Annex I. • Set values for additional parameters not included in Annex I, where the protection of human health within national territory or part of it so requires. The values set should, as a minimum, satisfy the requirements of Article 4(1) (a). • Implement all measures necessary to ensure that regular monitoring of the quality of water intended for human consumption is carried out, in order to check that the water available to consumers meets the requirements of this Directive and in particular the parametric values set in accordance with Article 5. • Ensure that any failure to meet the parametric values set in accordance with Article 5 is immediately investigated in order to identify the cause. • Ensure that the necessary remedial action is taken as soon as possible to restore its quality and shall give priority to their enforcement action. • Undertake remedial action to restore the quality of the water where necessary to protect human health. • Notify consumers when remedial action is being undertaken except where the competent authorities consider the non-compliance with the parametric value to be trivial. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Directive concerns the collection, treatment and discharge of urban waste water and the treatment and discharge of waste water from certain industrial sectors. • The objective of the Directive is to protect the environment from the adverse effects of waste water discharges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban waste water entering collecting systems shall before discharge, be subject to secondary treatment. • Annex II requires the designation of areas sensitive to eutrophication which receive water discharges. • Establishes minimum requirements for urban waste water collection and treatment systems in specified agglomerations to include special requirements for sensitive areas and certain industrial sectors. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC) as amended by Directive 2006/21/EC, Directive 2009/31/EC and Directive 2013/30/EU</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a framework of environmental liability based on the 'polluter-pays' principle, to prevent and remedy environmental damage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relates to environmental damage caused by any of the occupational activities listed in Annex III, and to any imminent threat of such damage occurring by reason of any of those activities; damage to protected species and natural habitats caused by any occupational activities other than those listed in Annex III, and to any imminent threat of such damage occurring by reason of any of those activities, whenever the operator has been at fault or negligent. • Where environmental damage has not yet occurred but there is an imminent threat of such damage occurring, the operator shall, without delay, take the necessary preventive measures. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where environmental damage has occurred the operator shall, without delay, inform the competent authority of all relevant aspects of the situation and take all practicable steps to immediately control, contain, remove or otherwise manage the relevant contaminants and/or any other damage factors in order to limit or to prevent further environmental damage and adverse effects on human health or further impairment of services and the necessary remedial measures, in accordance with Article 7. The operator shall bear the costs for the preventive and remedial actions taken pursuant to this Directive. The competent authority shall be entitled to initiate cost recovery proceedings against the operator. The operator may be required to provide financial security guarantees to ensure their responsibilities under the directive are met. The Environmental Liability Directive has been amended through a number of Directives that are not of significant relevance to the SEA for the Guidelines. Implementation of the Environmental Liability Directive is contributed towards by a Multi-Annual Work Programme (MAWP) 'Making the Environmental Liability Directive more fit for purpose' that is updated annually to changing developments, growing knowledge and new needs. 	
<p>European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valletta 1992)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The aim of this (revised) Convention is to protect the archaeological heritage as a source of the European collective memory and as an instrument for historical and scientific study. 	<p>The Valletta Convention makes the conservation and enhancement of the archaeological heritage one of the goals of urban and regional planning policies. The Convention sets guidelines for the funding of excavation and research work and publication of research findings. It also deals with public access, in particular to archaeological sites, and educational actions to be undertaken to develop public awareness of the value of the archaeological heritage. It also constitutes an institutional framework for pan-European co-operation on the archaeological heritage, entailing a systematic exchange of experience and experts among the various States.</p>	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Convention of the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada 1995)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main purpose of the Convention is to reinforce and promote policies for the conservation and enhancement of Europe's heritage. It also affirms the need for European solidarity with regard to heritage conservation and is designed to foster practical co-operation among the Parties. It establishes the principles of "European co-ordination of conservation policies" including consultations regarding the thrust of the policies to be implemented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reinforcement and promotion of policies for protecting and enhancing the heritage within the territories of the parties. The affirmation of European solidarity with regard to the protection of the heritage and the fostering of practical co-operation between states and regions. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro 2005)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural heritage is a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise that rights relating to cultural heritage are inherent in the right to participate in cultural life, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Recognise individual and collective responsibility towards cultural heritage. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and</p>

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	<p>resulting from the interaction between people and places through time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A heritage community consists of people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasise that the conservation of cultural heritage and its sustainable use have human development and quality of life as their goal. Take the necessary steps to apply the provisions of this Convention concerning the role of cultural heritage in the construction of a peaceful and democratic society. Greater synergy of competencies among all the public, institutional and private actors concerned. 	<p>bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
European Landscape Convention 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The developments in agriculture, forestry, industrial and mineral production techniques, together with the practices followed in town and country planning, transport, networks, tourism and recreation, and at a more general level, changes in the world economy, have in many cases accelerated the transformation of landscapes. The Convention expresses a concern to achieve sustainable development based on a balanced and harmonious relationship between social needs, economic activity and the environment. It aims to respond to the public's wish to enjoy high quality landscapes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote protection, management and planning of landscapes. Organise European co-operation on landscape issues. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
The Seventh Environmental Action Programme (EAP) of the European Community (2013-2020)	<p>It identifies three key objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to protect, conserve and enhance the Union's natural capital to turn the Union into a resource-efficient, green, and competitive low-carbon economy to safeguard the Union's citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and wellbeing 	<p>Four so called "enablers" will help Europe deliver on these objectives (goals):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better implementation of legislation. Better information by improving the knowledge base. More and wiser investment for environment and climate policy. Full integration of environmental requirements and considerations into other policies. <p>Two additional horizontal priority objectives complete the programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To make the Union's cities more sustainable. To help the Union address international environmental and climate challenges more effectively. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
Bern Convention (Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats)	<p>The convention has three main aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats to promote cooperation between states to give particular attention to endangered and vulnerable species including endangered and vulnerable migratory species 	<p>The Parties under the convention recognise the intrinsic value of nature, which needs to be preserved and passed to future generations, they also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek to ensure the conservation of nature in their countries, paying particular attention to planning and development policies and pollution control. Look at implementing the Bern Convention in central Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. Take account of the potential impact on natural heritage by other policies. Promote education and information of the public, ensuring the need to conserve species is understood and acted upon. Develop an extensive number of species action plans, codes of conducts, and guidelines, at their own initiative or in co-operation with other organisations. Created the Emerald Network, an ecological network made up of Areas of Special Conservation Interest. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>

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Bali Road Map (2007)	<p>The overall goals of the project are twofold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase national capacity to co-ordinate ministerial views, participate in the UNFCCC process, and negotiate positions within the timeframe of the Bali Action Plan; and To assess investment and financial flows to address climate change for up to three key sectors and/or economic activities. 	<p>The Bali Action Plan is centred on four main building Blocks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mitigation adaptation technology financing 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
Cancun Agreements (2010)	<p>Set of decisions taken at the COP 16 Conference in Cancun in 2010 which addresses a series of key issues in the fight against climate change. Cancun Agreements' main objectives cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitigation Transparency of actions Technology Finance Adaptation Forests Capacity building 	<p>Among the most prominent agreements is the establishment of a Green Climate Fund to transfer money from the developed to developing world to tackle the impacts of climate change.</p>	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
Doha Climate Gateway (2012)	<p>Set of decisions taken at the COP 18 meeting in Doha in 2012 which pave the way for a new agreement in Paris in 2015.</p>	<p>The following actions were committed to by governments at this conference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set out a timetable to adopt a universal climate agreement by 2015 (to come into effect in 2020); Complete the work under Bali Action Plan and to focus on new completing new targets; Strengthen the aim to cut greenhouse gases and help vulnerable countries to adapt; Amend Kyoto Protocol to include a new commitment period for cutting down the greenhouse gases emissions; and Provide the financial and technology support and new institutions to allow clean energy investment and sustainable growth in developing countries. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
EU Common Agricultural Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve agricultural productivity, so that consumers have a stable supply of affordable food; and To ensure that EU farmers can make a reasonable living. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring viable food production that will contribute to feeding the world's population, which is expected to rise considerably in the future; Climate change and sustainable management of natural resources; Looking after the countryside across the EU and keeping the rural economy alive. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
EU REACH Regulation (EC 1907/2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aims to improve the protection of human health and the environment through the better and earlier identification of the intrinsic properties of chemical substances. 	<p>The aims are achieved by applying REACH, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation; and Restriction of chemicals. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and</p>

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		REACH also aims to enhance innovation and competitiveness of the EU chemicals industry.	bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Stockholm Convention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The objective of the Stockholm Convention is to protect human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prohibit and/or eliminate the production and use, as well as the import and export, of the intentionally produced POPs that are listed in Annex A to the Convention Restrict the production and use, as well as the import and export, of the intentionally produced POPs that are listed in Annex B to the Convention Reduce or eliminate releases from unintentionally produced POPs that are listed in Annex C to the Convention Ensure that stockpiles and wastes consisting of, containing or contaminated with POPs are managed safely and in an environmentally sound manner To target additional POPs Other provisions of the Convention relate to the development of implementation plans, information exchange, public information, awareness and education, research, development and monitoring, technical assistance, financial resources and mechanisms, reporting, effectiveness evaluation and non-compliance 	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Ramsar Convention	The Convention’s mission is “the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world”.	Under the “three pillars” of the Convention, the Contracting Parties commit to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work towards the wise use of all their wetlands; Designate suitable wetlands for the list of Wetlands of International Importance (the “Ramsar List”) and ensure their effective management; Cooperate internationally on transboundary wetlands, shared wetland systems and shared species. 	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
OSPAR Convention	The mission of OSPAR is to conserve marine ecosystems and safeguard human health in the North-East Atlantic by preventing and eliminating pollution; by protecting the marine environment from the adverse effects of human activities; and by contributing to the sustainable use of the seas.	OSPAR’s work is organised under six strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity and Ecosystem Strategy Eutrophication Strategy Hazardous Substances Strategy Offshore Industry Strategy Radioactive Substances Strategy Strategy for the Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme These six strategies fit together to underpin the ecosystem approach. For each strategy a programme of work is designed and implemented annually.	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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European 2020 Strategy for Growth	<p>Europe 2020 sets out a vision of Europe's social market economy for the 21st century and puts forward three mutually reinforcing priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart growth: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation; • Sustainable growth: promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy; • Inclusive growth: fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion. 	<p>In order to reach these priorities, the Commission proposes five quantitative targets to fulfil by 2020:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 75 % of the population aged 20-64 should be employed; 2. 3% of the EU's GDP should be invested in R&D; 3. the "20/20/20" climate/energy targets should be met (including an increase to 30% of emissions reduction if the conditions are right); 4. the share of early school leavers should be under 10% and at least 40% of the younger generation should have a tertiary degree; 5. 20 million less people should be at risk of poverty. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
National Level			
Ireland 2040 - Our Plan, the National Planning Framework, (replacing the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020) and the National Development Plan (2018-2027)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Planning Framework is the Government's high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of to the year 2040. It is a framework to guide public and private investment, to create and promote opportunities for people, and to protect and enhance the environment - from villages to cities, and everything around and in between. • The National Development Plan sets out the investment priorities that will underpin the successful implementation of the new National Planning Framework. This will guide national, regional and local planning and investment decisions in Ireland over the next two decades, to cater for an expected population increase of over 1 million people. 	<p>The National Planning Framework published alongside the National Development Plan yields ten National Strategic Outcomes as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compact Growth 2. Enhanced Regional Accessibility 3. Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities 4. Sustainable Mobility 5. A Strong Economy, supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills 6. High-Quality International Connectivity 7. Enhanced Amenity and Heritage 8. Transition to a Low-Carbon and Climate-Resilient Society 9. Sustainable Management of Water and other Environmental Resources 10. Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
Planning, Land Use and Transport Outlook 2040 (in preparation)	<p>The PLUTO will take account of forecasted future economic and demographic scenarios, affordability considerations and relevant Government policies and will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quantify in broad terms the appropriate scale of financial investment in land transport over the long term; 2. Consider how fiscal, environmental and technological developments might impact on this investment; and, 3. Identify strategic priorities for future investment to ensure land transport infrastructure provision facilitates the objectives of Project Ireland 2040. 	<p>In preparation</p>	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The core principal objectives of this Act are to amend the Planning Acts of 2000 – 2009 with specific regard given to supporting economic renewal and sustainable development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development, with certain exceptions, is subject to development control under the Planning Acts and the local authorities grant or refuse planning permission for development, including ones within protected areas. • There are, however, a range of exemptions from the planning system. Use of land for agriculture, peat extraction and afforestation, subject to certain thresholds, is generally exempt from the requirement to obtain planning permission. • Additionally, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required for a range of classes and large scale projects. • Under planning legislation, Development Plans must include mandatory objectives for the conservation of the natural 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>

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European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (S.I. 435 of 2004), as amended by S.I. 200 of 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The purpose of these Regulations is to transpose into Irish law Directive 2001/42/EC of 27 June 2001 (O.J. No. L 197, 21 July 2001) on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment — commonly known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive. 	<p>heritage and for the conservation of European sites and any other sites which may be prescribed. There are also discretionary powers to set objectives for the conservation of a variety of other elements of the natural heritage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Regulations cover plans and programmes in all of the sectors listed in article 3(2) of the Directive except land-use planning. These Regulations also amend certain provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 to provide the statutory basis for the transposition of the Directive in respect of land-use planning. Transposition in respect of the land-use planning sector is contained in the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 436 of 2004). 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477 of 2011, as amended)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These Regulations provide a new for the implementation in Ireland of Council Directive 92/43/EEC on habitats and protection of wild fauna and flora (as amended) and for the implementation of Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of wild birds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They provide, among other things, for: the appointment and functions of authorized officers; identification, classification and other procedures relative to the designation of Community sites. The Regulations have been prepared to address several judgments of the 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. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
Waste Management Act 1996, as amended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To make provision in relation to the prevention, management and control of waste; to give effect to provisions of certain acts adopted by institutions of the European communities in respect of those matters; to amend the Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1992, and to repeal certain enactments and to provide for related matters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Waste Management Act contains a number of key legal obligations, including requirements for waste management planning, waste collection and movement, the authorisation of waste facilities, measures to reduce the production of waste and/or promote its recovery. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
European Communities Environmental Objectives (FPM) Regulations 2009 (S.I. 296 of 2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The purpose of these Regulations is to support the achievement of favourable conservation status for freshwater pearl mussels 	<p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set environmental quality objectives for the habitats of the freshwater pearl mussel populations named in the First Schedule to these Regulations that are within the boundaries of a site notified in a candidate list of European sites, or designated as a Special Area of Conservation, under the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997 (S.I. No. 94/1997). Require the production of sub-basin management plans with programmes of measures to achieve these objectives. Set out the duties of public authorities in respect of the sub-basin management plans and programmes of measure 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>

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<p>European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations 2010 (S.I. 9 of 2010), as amended (S.I. No. 366 of 2016)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To amend the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations 2010 (S.I. No. 9 of 2010) to make further provision to implement Commission Directive 2014/80/EU of 20 June 2014 amending Annex II to Directive 2006/118/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration. 	<p>The substances and threshold values set out in Schedule 5 to S.I. No. 9 of 2010 have been reviewed and amended where necessary, based on existing monitoring information and international guidelines on appropriate threshold values.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part A of Schedule 6 has been amended to include changes to the rules governing the determination of background levels for the purposes of establishing threshold values for groundwater pollutants and indicators of pollution. Part B of Schedule 6 has been amended to include nitrites and phosphorus (total) / phosphates among the minimum list of pollutants and their indicators which the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) must consider when establishing threshold values Part C of Schedule 6 amends the information to be provided to the Minister by the EPA with regard to the pollutants and their indicators for which threshold values have been established 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2014 (S.I. No. 31 of 2014)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These Regulations, which give effect to Ireland's 3rd Nitrates Action Programme, provide statutory support for good agricultural practice to protect waters against pollution from agricultural sources 	<p>The Regulations include measures such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Periods when land application of fertilisers is prohibited Limits on the land application of fertilisers Storage requirements for livestock manure; and Monitoring of the effectiveness of the measures in terms of agricultural practice and impact on water quality. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Act to provide for the approval of plans by the Government in relation to climate change for the purpose of pursuing the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy. 	<p>When considering a plan or framework, for approval, the Government shall endeavour to achieve the national transition objective within the period to which the objective relates and shall, in endeavouring to achieve that objective, ensure that such objective is achieved by the implementation of measures that are cost effective and shall, for that purpose, have regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ultimate objective specified in Article 2 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change done at New York on 9 May 1992 and any mitigation commitment entered into by the European Union in response or otherwise in relation to that objective, The policy of the Government on climate change, Climate justice, Any existing obligation of the State under the law of the European Union or any international agreement referred to in section 2; and The most recent national greenhouse gas emissions inventory and projection of future greenhouse gas emissions, prepared by the Agency. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>

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<p>The Sustainable Development Goals National Implementation Plan (2018 – 2020)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Implementation Plan 2018 - 2020 is in direct response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and provides a whole-of-government approach to implement the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Plan provides a 'SDG Matrix' which identifies the responsible Government Departments for each of the 169 targets. It also includes a 'SDG Policy Map' indicating the relevant national policies for each of the targets. 	<p>The Plan identifies four strategic priorities to guide implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness: raise public awareness of the SDGs; Participation: provide stakeholders opportunities to engage and contribute to follow-up and review processes, and further develop national implementation of the Goals; Support: encourage and support efforts of communities and organisations to contribute towards meeting the SDGs, and foster public participation; and Policy alignment: develop alignment of national policy with the SDGs and identify opportunities for policy coherence. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Infrastructure and Capital Investment Plan (2016-2021)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> €27 billion multi-annual Exchequer Capital Investment Plan, which is supported by a programme of capital investment in the wider State sector, and which over the period 2016 to 2021 will help to lay the foundations for continued growth in Ireland. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Capital Plan reflects the Government's commitment to supporting strong and sustainable economic growth and raising welfare and living standards for all. It includes allocations for new projects across a number of key areas and funding to ensure that the present stock of national infrastructure is refreshed and maintained. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Aquaculture Acts 1997 to 2006 : (Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006 (8/2006), s. 1(3))</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fisheries (Amendment) Act 1997 (23/1997) Fisheries and Foreshore (Amendment) Act 1998 (54/1998), ss. 2, 3 and 4 Fisheries (Amendment) Act 2001 (40/2001) Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006 (8/2006), s. 101 	<p>The Aquaculture and Foreshore Management Division ensures the efficient and effective management of Aquaculture licensing and Foreshore licensing in respect of Aquaculture and Sea Fishery related activities.</p>	<p>The Strategic Objectives of the Aquaculture & Foreshore Management Division are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to develop and manage an efficient and effective regulatory framework in respect of Aquaculture licensing and Foreshore licensing of Aquaculture and Sea Fishery related activities; to secure a fair financial return from the State's foreshore estate in the context of Aquaculture licensing and Foreshore licensing in respect of Aquaculture and Sea Fishery related activities; to progressively reduce arrears in the clearing of licence applications. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Foreshore Acts 1933 to 2011</p>	<p>The Foreshore Acts require that a lease or licence must be obtained from the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government for the carrying out of works or placing structures or material on, or for the occupation of or removal of material from, State-owned foreshore, which represents the greater part of the foreshore. Construction of permanent structures on privately owned foreshore also required the prior permission of the Minister under the Foreshore Act.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developments on the foreshore require planning permission in addition to a Foreshore Lease/Licence/Permission. All Foreshore Leases, Licences and Permissions are without prejudice to the powers of the local planning authority. Applicants should, therefore, consult initially with the local planning authority regarding their proposal. In the case of developments on foreshore for, by or on behalf of a Local Authority where an EIS is required, applications should be made to An Bord Pleanála under Part XV, Planning and Development Act 2000. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>

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<p>European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Sea-Fisheries) Regulations 2013 (S.I. 290 of 2013)</p>	<p>These regulations have been drafted to implement the responsibilities of the Minister for Agriculture Food and the Marine in relation to sea fisheries in Natura 2000 sites, in accordance with the Habitats and Birds Directives as transposed by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477 of 2011).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulation 3 provides for the submission of a Fisheries Natura Plan in relation to planned fisheries; • Regulation 4 provides for a screening of a Fisheries Natura Plan to determine whether or not an appropriate assessment is required; • Regulation 5 provides for an appropriate assessment of a Fisheries Natura Plan and also provides for public and statutory consultation; • Regulation 6 provides for the Minister to make a determination to adopt a Fisheries Natura Plan. The Minister may amend, withdraw or revoke a plan; • Regulation 7 provides for publication of the adopted Fisheries Natura Plan; • Regulation 8 provides for a Risk Assessment of unplanned fisheries and also provides for public and statutory consultation on the assessment; • Regulation 9 provides for the issue of a Natura Declaration to prohibit, restrict including restricting by permit, control, etc. of sea fishing activities; • Regulation 10 provides for Natura Permits to be issued where required by Natura Declarations; and • Regulations 11 to 31 deal with functions of authorised officers and related matters, offences, etc. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>National Seafood Operational Programme (20104-2020)</p>	<p>The Operational Programme (OP) supported by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) in Ireland aims at achieving key national development priorities along with the EU's "Europe 2020" objectives. The OP supports the general reform of the EU's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and the development of its Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) in Ireland.</p> <p>The OP strategy is designed around the Irish national priorities in the agri-food sector: 'Act Smart' by encouraging knowledge and innovation, 'Think Green' through a responsible and sustainable use of resources, 'Achieve Growth' in order to maintain and create jobs.</p>	<p>e Irish OP is organised around the following priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Union Priority 1 (UP1): €67 million (28% of the total allocation) aim at assuring the sustainable development of fishing activities, while protecting the marine environment • Union Priority 2 (UP2): €30 million (12% of the total allocation) will support the Irish National Strategic Plan for Aquaculture that aims at boosting the competitiveness of the aquaculture sector. • Union Priority 3 (UP3): €84.8 million (35.4% of the total allocation) will go towards compliance with CFP rules regarding control and data collection. • Union Priority 4 (UP4): €12 million (5% of the total allocation) will support local development initiatives – a substantial, eleven-fold increase compared to the 2007-2013 funding period. • Union Priority 5 (UP5): €33 million (13.8% of the total allocation) will go towards creating scale in the Irish marketing and processing sectors, starting from the base of very small-scale businesses. • Union Priority 6 (UP6): €10.6 million (4% of the total allocation) will be used on measures to improve the knowledge on the state of the marine environment and the level of protection of marine areas 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth: An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland 2012</p>	<p>Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth is an Integrated Marine Plan (IMP), setting out a roadmap for the Government's vision, high-level goals and integrated actions across policy, governance and business to enable our marine potential to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable economic growth of marine/ maritime sectors; • Increase the contribution to the national GDP; 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in</p>

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	<p>be realised. Implementation of this Plan will see Ireland evolve an integrated system of policy and programme planning for our marine affairs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a business friendly yet robust governance, policy and planning framework; • Protect and conserve our rich marine biodiversity and ecosystems; • Manage our living and non-living resources in harmony with the ecosystem; • Implement and comply with environmental legislation; • Building on our maritime heritage, strengthen our maritime identity; • Increase our awareness of the value, opportunities and societal benefits; and • Engagement and participation by all. 	<p>combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Ireland's National Renewable Energy Action Plan 2010 (Irish Government submission to the European Commission)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP) sets out the Government's strategic approach and concrete measures to deliver on Ireland's 16% target under Directive 2009/28/EC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NREAP sets out the Member State's national targets for the share of energy from renewable sources to be consumed in transport, electricity and heating and cooling in 2020, and demonstrates how the Member State will meet its overall national target established under the Directive. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Strategy for Renewable Energy (2012-2020)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government's overarching strategic objective is to make renewable energy an increasingly significant component of Ireland's energy supply by 2020, so that at a minimum it will achieve its legally binding 2020 target in the most cost efficient manner for consumers. • Of critical importance is the role which the renewable energy sector plays in job creation and economic activity as part of the Government's action plan for jobs. 	<p>This document sets out five strategic goals, reflecting the key dimensions of the renewable energy challenge to 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing on and offshore wind, • Building a sustainable bioenergy sector, • Fostering R&D in renewables such as wave & tidal, • Growing sustainable transport; and • Building out robust and efficient networks. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>National Climate Mitigation Plan 2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Plan represents an initial step to set Ireland on a pathway to achieve the deep decarbonisation required in Ireland by mid-century in line with the Government's policy objectives. 	<p>The National Mitigation Plan focuses on the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Action Policy Framework • Decarbonising Electricity Generation • Decarbonising the Built Environment • Decarbonising Transport • An Approach to Carbon Neutrality for Agriculture, Forest and Land Use Sectors 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>National Policy Position on Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (2014)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Policy Position provides a high-level policy direction for the adoption and implementation by Government of plans to enable the State to move to a low carbon economy by 2050. • Statutory authority for the plans is set out in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015. 	<p>National climate policy in Ireland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognises the threat of climate change for humanity; • Anticipates and supports mobilisation of a comprehensive international response to climate change, and global transition to a low-carbon future; • Recognises the challenges and opportunities of the broad transition agenda for society; and 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aims, as a fundamental national objective, to achieve transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050. 	environmental protection and management.
National Clean Air Strategy (in preparation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Clean Air Strategy will provide the strategic policy framework necessary to identify and promote integrated measures across government policy that are required to reduce air pollution and promote cleaner air while delivering on wider national objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having a National Strategy will provide a policy framework by which Ireland can develop the necessary policies and measures to comply with new and emerging EU legislation. The Strategy should also help tackle climate change. The Strategy will consider a wider range of national policies that are relevant to clean air policy such as transport, energy, home heating and agriculture. In any discussion relating to clean air policy, the issue of people's health is paramount and this will be a strong theme of the Strategy. 	Implementation of the Plan need to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Eirgrid's Grid25 Strategy and associated Grid25 Implementation Programme 2011 -2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eirgrid's mission is to develop, maintain and operate a safe, secure, reliable, economical and efficient transmission system for Ireland. <i>"Our vision is of a grid developed to match future needs, so it can safely and reliably carry power all over the country to the major towns and cities and onwards to every home, farm and business where the electricity is consumed and so it can meet the needs of consumers and generators in a sustainable way."</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grid25, EirGrid's roadmap to uprate the electricity transmission grid by 2025, continues to be implemented so as to increase the capacity of the grid, to satisfy future demand, and to help Ireland meet its target of 40 per cent of electricity from renewable energy by 2020. 	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The objective of this Strategy is to assist in the strategic development of nationally and regionally significant Greenways in appropriate locations constructed to an appropriate standard in order to deliver a quality experience for all Greenways users. It also aims to increase the number and geographical spread of Greenways of scale and quality around the country over the next 10 years with a consequent significant increase in the number of people using Greenways as a visitor experience and as a recreational amenity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Strategic Greenway network of national and regional routes, with a number of high capacity flagship routes that can be extended and/or link with local Greenways and other cycling and walking infrastructure; Greenways of scale and appropriate standard that have significant potential to deliver an increase in activity tourism to Ireland and are regularly used by overseas visitors, domestic visitors and locals thereby contributing to a healthier society through increased physical activity; Greenways that provide a substantially segregated offroad experience linking places of interest, recreation and leisure in areas with beautiful scenery of different types with plenty to see and do; and Greenways that provide opportunities for the development of local businesses and economies, and Greenways that are developed with all relevant stakeholders in line with an agreed code of practice. 	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Water Resources Plan (in preparation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NWRP is a plan on how to provide a safe, secure and reliable water supply to customers for the next 25 years, without causing adverse impact on the environment. The objective of the NWRP is to set out how we intend to maintain the supply and demand for drinking water over the short, medium and long term whilst minimising the impact on the environment. 	<p>The key objectives of the plan are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify areas where there are current and future potential water supply shortfalls, taking into account normal and extreme weather conditions Assess the current and future water demand from homes, businesses, farms, and industry Consider the impacts of climate change on Ireland's water resources Develop a drought plan advising measures to be taken before and during drought events 	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a plan detailing how we deal with the material that is produced as a result of treating drinking water • Identify, develop and assess options to help meet potential shortfalls in water supplies • Assess the water resources available at a national level including lakes, rivers and groundwater 	
<p>National Strategic Plan for Aquaculture Development (2014-2020)</p>	<p>Vision: <i>"Aquaculture in RC is economically, socially and ecologically sustainable, with a developed infrastructure, strong human potentials and an organized market. The consumption of aquaculture products is equal or above EU average, while the technological development of the sector is among the best in the EU."</i></p>	<p>General development and growth objectives of marine and freshwater aquaculture (2014 – 2020):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the social, business and administrative environment for aquaculture development • Increase in the total production to 24,050 tonnes while adhering to the principles of economic, social and ecological sustainability • Improvement of the perception and increase in the national consumption of National products 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Construction 2020, A Strategy for a Renewed Construction Sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction 2020 sets out a package of measures agreed by the Government and is aimed at stimulating activity in the building industry. • The Strategy aims both to increase the capacity of the sector to create and maintain jobs, and to deliver a sustainable sector, operating at an appropriate level. It seeks to learn the lessons of the past and to ensure that the right structures and mechanisms are in place so that they are not repeated. 	<p>This Strategy therefore addresses issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategic approach to the provision of housing, based on real and measured needs, with mechanisms in place to detect and act when things are going wrong; • Continuing improvement of the planning process, striking the right balance between current and future requirements; • The availability of financing for viable and worthwhile projects; • Access to mortgage finance on reasonable and sustainable terms; • Ensuring we have the tools we need to monitor and regulate the sector in a way that underpins public confidence and worker safety; • Ensuring a fit for purpose sector supported by a highly skilled workforce achieving high quality and standards; and • Ensuring opportunities are provided to unemployed former construction workers to contribute to the recovery of the sector. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland (1997)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall aim of this Strategy is to ensure that economy and society in Ireland can develop to their full potential within a well-protected environment, without compromising the quality of that environment, and with responsibility towards present and future generations and the wider international community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategy addresses all areas of Government policy, and of economic and societal activity, which impact on the environment. It seeks to re-orientate policies as necessary to ensure that the strong growth Ireland enjoys and seeks to maintain will be environmentally sustainable. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025 and National Landscape Character Assessment (pending preparation)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Landscape Strategy will be used to ensure compliance with the European Landscape Convention and to establish principles for protecting and enhancing the landscape while positively managing its change. It will provide a high level policy framework to achieve balance between the protection, 	<p>The objectives of the National Landscape Strategy are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the European Landscape Convention by integrating landscape into the approach to sustainable development; • Establish and embed a public process of gathering, sharing and interpreting scientific, technical and cultural information 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the</p>

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	<p>management and planning of the landscape by way of supporting actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscape Strategy Vision: <i>"Our landscape reflects and embodies our cultural values and our shared natural heritage and contributes to the well-being of our society, environment and economy. We have an obligation to ourselves and to future generations to promote its sustainable protection, management and planning."</i> 	<p>in order to carry out evidence-based identification and description of the character, resources and processes of the landscape;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a policy framework, which will put in place measures at national, sectoral - including agriculture, tourism, energy, transport and marine - and local level, together with civil society, to protect, manage and properly plan through high quality design for the sustainable stewardship of the landscape; Ensure that we take advantage of opportunities to implement policies relating to landscape use that are complementary and mutually reinforcing and that conflicting policy objectives are avoided in as far as possible. 	<p>achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>National Hazardous Waste Management Plan (EPA) 2014-2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Plan sets out the priorities to be pursued over the next six years and beyond to improve the management of hazardous waste, taking into account the progress made since the previous plan and the waste policy and legislative changes that have occurred since the previous plan was published. <p>Section 26 of the Waste Management Act 1996 as amended, sets out the overarching objectives for the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan. In this context, the following objectives are included as priorities for the revised Plan period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prevent and reduce the generation of hazardous waste by industry and society generally; To maximise the collection of hazardous waste with a view to reducing the environmental and health impacts of any unregulated waste; To strive for increased self-sufficiency in the management of hazardous waste and to minimise hazardous waste export; To minimise the environmental, health, social and economic impacts of hazardous waste generation and management. 	<p>The revised Plan makes 27 recommendations under the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevention Collection Self-sufficiency Regulation Legacy issues North-south cooperation Guidance and awareness Implementation 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Ministerial Guidelines such as Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines and Flood Risk Management Guidelines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department produces a range of guidelines designed to help planning authorities, An Bord Pleanála, developers and the general public and cover a wide range of issues amongst others, architectural heritage, child care facilities, landscape, quarries and residential density. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Minister issues statutory guidelines under Section 28 of the Act which planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála are obliged to have regard to in the performance of their planning functions. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>HSE Healthy Ireland Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The vision is: <i>"A Healthy Ireland, where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone's responsibility."</i> 	<p>These four goals are interlinked, interdependent and mutually supportive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goal 1: Increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life Goal 2: Reduce health inequalities 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal 3: Protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing • Goal 4: Create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland 	bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
<p>Our Sustainable Future: A framework for Sustainable Development for Ireland 2012</p>	<p>A medium to long term framework for advancing sustainable development and the green economy in Ireland. It identifies spatial planning as a key challenge for sustainable development and sets a series of measures to address these challenges.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets out the challenges facing us and how we might address them in making sure that quality of life and general wellbeing can be improved and sustained in the decades to come. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future – A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009 – 2020 (2009)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines a policy for how a sustainable travel and transport system can be achieved. • Sets out five key goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To reduce overall travel demand. ○ To maximise the efficiency of the transport network. ○ To reduce reliance on fossil fuels. ○ To reduce transport emissions. ○ To improve accessibility to transport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Others lower level aims include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ reduce distance travelled by private car and encourage smarter travel, including focusing population growth in areas of employment and to encourage people to live in close proximity to places of employment ○ ensuring that alternatives to the car are more widely available, mainly through a radically improved public transport service and through investment in cycling and walking ○ improving the fuel efficiency of motorised transport through improved fleet structure, energy efficient driving and alternative technologies ○ strengthening institutional arrangements to deliver the targets 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Investing in our Future: A Strategic Framework for Investment in Land Transport (SFILT) – Department of Transport, Tourism And Sport</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SFILT sets out a set of priorities to guide the allocation of the State’s investment to best develop and manage Ireland’s land transport network over the coming decades. 	<p>The three priorities stated in SFILT are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority 1: Achieve steady state maintenance (meaning that the maintenance and renewal of the existing transport system is at a sufficient level to maintain the system in an adequate condition); • Priority 2: Address urban congestion; and • Priority 3: Maximise the value of the road network. <p>In delivering on the steady state maintenance objective set out in SFILT, the Plan includes for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned replacement programme for the bus fleet operated under Public Service Obligation (“PSO”) contracts; • Tram refurbishment and asset renewal in the case of light rail; and • To the extent within the Authority’ remit, support for the operation of the existing rail network within the GDA. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland – The Energy Policy Framework 2007 – 2020 (2007)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White paper setting out a framework for delivering a sustainable energy future in Ireland. • Outlines strategic Goals for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Security of Supply ○ Sustainability of Energy 	<p>The underpinning Strategic Goals are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that electricity supply consistently meets demand • Ensuring the physical security and reliability of gas supplies to Ireland • Enhancing the diversity of fuels used for power generation 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Competitiveness of Energy Supply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering electricity and gas to homes and businesses over efficient, reliable and secure networks • Creating a stable attractive environment for hydrocarbon exploration and production • Being prepared for energy supply disruptions 	<p>bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>National Adaptation Framework (NAF) 2018 and forthcoming regional, local and sectoral adaptation plans (including marine)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAF specifies the national strategy for the application of adaptation measures in different sectors and by local authorities in their administrative areas in order to reduce the vulnerability of the State to the negative effects of climate change and to avail of any positive effects that may occur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptation under this Framework should seek to minimise costs and maximise the opportunities arising from climate change. • Adaptation actions range from building adaptive capacity (e.g. increasing awareness, sharing information and targeted training) through to policy and finance based actions. • Adaptation actions must be risk based, informed by existing vulnerabilities of our society and systems and an understanding of projected climate change. • Adaptation actions taken to increase climate resilience must also consider impacts on other sectors and levels of governance 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Governments White Paper 'Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future' (2015 – 2030)</p>	<p>The White Paper sets out a vision and a framework to guide Irish energy policy between now and 2030. A complete energy policy update informed by the vision to transform Ireland into a low carbon society and economy by 2050.</p>	<p>2030 will represent a significant milestone, meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced GHG emissions from the energy sector by between 80% and 95% • Ensuring that secure supplies of competitive and affordable energy remain available to citizens and businesses. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>National Renewable Energy Action Plan (2010)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets out the Member State's national targets for the share of energy from renewable sources to be consumed in transport, electricity and heating and cooling in 2020, and demonstrates how the Member State will meet its overall national target established under the Directive. 	<p>Including Ireland's 16% target of gross final consumption to come from renewables by 2020.</p>	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>National Energy Efficiency Action Plan for Ireland (2009 – 2020)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is the second National Energy Efficiency Action Plan for Ireland. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Plan reviews the original 90 actions outlined in the first Plan and updates/renews/removes them as appropriate. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>

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<p>Wildlife Act of 1976</p> <p>Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The act provides protection and conservation of wild flora and fauna. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides protection for certain species, their habitats and important ecosystems Give statutory protection to NHAs Enhances wildlife species and their habitats Includes more species for protection 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Actions for Biodiversity (2017-2021) Ireland's National Biodiversity Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets out strategic objectives, targets and actions to conserve and restore Ireland's biodiversity and to prevent and reduce the loss of biodiversity in Ireland and globally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To mainstream biodiversity in the decision-making process across all sectors. To substantially strengthen the knowledge base for conservation, management and sustainable use of biodiversity. To increase awareness and appreciation of biodiversity and ecosystem services. To conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider countryside. To conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the marine environment. To expand and improve on the management of protected areas and legally protected species. To substantially strengthen the effectiveness of international governance for biodiversity and ecosystem services. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>National Broadband Plan (2012)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets out the strategy to deliver high speed broadband throughout Ireland. 	<p>The Plan sets out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clear statement of Government policy on the delivery of High Speed Broadband. Specific targets for the delivery and rollout of high speed broadband and the speeds to be delivered. The strategy and interventions that will underpin the successful implementation of these targets. A series of specific complementary measures to promote implementation of Government policy in this area. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets out comprehensive mechanisms for the incorporation of flood risk identification, assessment and management into the planning process. Ensures flood risk is a key consideration in preparing land use plans and in the assessment of planning applications. Implementation of the Guidelines is through actions at national, regional, local authority and site-specific levels. Planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála are required to have regard to the Guidelines in carrying out their functions under the Planning Acts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding. Avoid new developments increasing flood risk elsewhere, including that which may arise from surface water run-off. Ensure effective management of residual risks for development permitted in floodplains. Avoid unnecessary restriction of national, regional or local economic and social growth. Improve the understanding of flood risk among relevant stakeholders. Ensure that the requirements of EU and national law in relation to the natural environment and nature conservation are complied with at all stages of flood risk management. <p>The 2009 Flood Risk Management Guidelines were amended by Circular PL 2/2014 (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government) that provides advice on the use of OPW</p>	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>

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<p>European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations of 2003 (SI 722 of 2003)</p> <p>European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations of 2003 (SI 350 of 2014)</p> <p>European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface waters) Regulations of 2009 (SI 272 of 2009)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transpose the Water Framework Directive into legislation. • Outlines the general duty of public authorities in relation to water. • Identifies the competent authorities in charge of water policy (amended to Irish Water in 2013) and gives EPA and the CER the authority to regulate and supervise their actions. 	<p>flood mapping in assessing planning applications and clarifies some advice from the 2009 Guidelines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implements River basin districts and characterisation of RBDs and River Basin Management Plans. • Requires the public to be informed and consulted on the Plan and for progress reports to be published on RBDs. • Implements a Register of protected areas, Classification systems and Monitoring programmes for water bodies. • Allows the competent authority to recover the cost of damage/destruction of status of water body. • Outlines environmental objectives and programme of measures and environmental quality standards for priority substances. • Outlines criteria for assessment of groundwater. • Outlines environmental objectives to be achieved for surface water bodies. • Outlines surface water quality standards. • Establishes threshold values for the classification and protection of surface waters against pollution and deterioration in quality. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations of 2010 (SI 9 of 2010)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transpose the requirements of the Groundwater Directive 2006/118/EC into Irish Legislation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines environmental objectives to be achieved for groundwater bodies of groundwater against pollution and deterioration in quality. • Sets groundwater quality standards. • Outlines threshold values for the classification and protection of groundwater. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Water Pollution Acts 1977 to 1990</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Water Pollution Acts allow Local Authorities the authority regulate and supervise actions relating to water in their division. 	<p>The Water Pollution Acts enable local authorities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prosecute for water pollution offences. • Attach appropriate pollution control conditions in the licensing of effluent discharges from industry, etc., made to waters. • Issue notices ("section 12 notices") to farmers, etc., specifying measures to be taken within a prescribed period to prevent water pollution. • issue notices requiring a person to cease the pollution of waters and requiring the mitigation or remedying of any effects of the pollution in the manner and within the period specified in such notices; • Seek court orders, including High Court injunctions, to prevent, terminate, mitigate or remedy pollution/its effects. • Prepare water quality management plans for any waters in or adjoining their functional areas. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>

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<p>Water Services Act 2007</p> <p>Water Services (Amendment) Act 2012</p> <p>Water Services Act (No. 2) 2013</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides the water services infrastructure. Outlines the responsibilities involved in delivering and managing water services. Identifies the authority in charge of provision of water and waste water supply. Irish Water was given the responsibility of the provision of water and wastewater services in the amendment act during 2013, therefore these services are no longer the responsibility of the 34 Local Authorities in Ireland. 	<p>Key strategic objectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring Irish Water delivers infrastructural projects that meet key public health, environmental and economic objectives in the water services sector. Ensuring the provision of adequate water and sewerage services in the gateways and hubs listed in the National Spatial Strategy, and in other locations where services need to be enhanced. Ensuring good quality drinking water is available to all consumers of public and group water supplies, in compliance with national and EU drinking water standards Ensuring the provision of the remaining infrastructure needed to provide secondary wastewater treatment, for compliance with the requirements of the EU Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive. Promoting water conservation through Irish Water's Capital Investment Plan, the Rural Water Programme and other measures. Monitoring the on-going implementation of septic tanks inspection regime and the National Inspection Plan for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems. Ensuring a fair funding model to deliver water services. Overseeing the establishment of an economic regulation function under the CER. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan will need to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Irish Water's Water Services Strategic Plan 2015 and associated Proposed Capital Investment Plan (2014-2016)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Water Services Strategic Plan sets out strategic objectives for the delivery of water services over the next 25 years up to 2040. It details current and future challenges which affect the provision of water services and identifies the priorities to be tackled in the short and medium term. 	<p>Six strategic objectives as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet Customer Expectations. Ensure a Safe and Reliable Water Supply. Provide Effective Management of Wastewater. Protect and Enhance the Environment. Support Social and Economic Growth. Invest in the Future. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Raised Bog SAC Management Plan and Review of Raised Bog Natural Heritage Areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aims to meet nature conservation obligations while having regard to national and local economic, social and cultural needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the implications of management choices for water levels, quantity and quality are fully explored, understood and factored into policy making and land use planning. Review the current raised bog NHA network in terms of its contribution to the national conservation objective for raised bog habitats and determine the most suitable sites to replace the losses of active raised bog habitat and high bog areas within the SAC network and to enhance the national network of NHAs. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Food Harvest 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Harvest 2020 is a roadmap for the Irish food industry, as it seeks to innovate and expand in response to increased global demand for quality foods. It sets out a vision for the potential growth in agricultural output after the removal of milk quotas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeks for the improvement of all agricultural sectors at all levels in terms of sustainability, environmental consideration and marketing development. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and</p>

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			bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Agri-vision 2015 Action Plan	Outlines the vision for agricultural industry to improve competitiveness and response to market demand while respecting and enhancing the environment	not applicable	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Rural Environmental Protection Scheme (REPS) Agri-Environmental Options Scheme (AEOS) Green, Low-Carbon, Agri-environment Scheme (GLAS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agri-environmental funding schemes aimed at rural development for the environmental enhancement and protection. • GLAS is the new replacement for REPS and AEOS which are both expiring. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish best practice farming methods and production methods in order to protect landscapes and maximise conservation. • Protect biodiversity, endangered species of flora and fauna and wildlife habitats. • Ensure food is produced with the highest regard to the environment. • Implement nutrient management plans and grassland management plans. • Protect and maintain water bodies, wetlands and cultural heritage. 	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Rural Development Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Rural Development Programme, prepared by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, sets out a national programme based on the EU framework for rural development and prioritises improving the competitiveness of agriculture, improving the environment and improving the quality of life in rural areas 	<p>At a more detailed level, the programme also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports structural change at farm level including training young farmers and encouraging early retirement, support for restructuring, development and innovation; • Aims to improve the environment, biodiversity and the amenity value of the countryside by support for land management through funds such as Natura 2000 payments etc.; and • Aims to improve quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of economic activity through the implementation of local development strategies such as non-agricultural activities 	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Forestry Programme (2014-2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represents Ireland’s proposals for 100% State aid funding for a new Forestry Programme for the period 2014 – 2020. 	<p>Measures include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afforestation and Creation of Woodland • NeighbourWood Scheme • Forest Roads • Reconstitution Scheme • Woodland Improvement Scheme • Native Woodland Conservation Scheme • Knowledge Transfer and Information Actions • Producer Groups • Innovative Forest Technology 	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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River Basin Management Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> River Basin Management Plans set out the measures planned to maintain and improve the status of waters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forest Genetic Reproductive Material Forest Management Plans Aim to protect and enhance all water bodies in the RBD and meet the environmental objectives outlined in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive. Identify and manages water bodies in the RBD. Establish a programme of measures for monitoring and improving water quality in the RBD. Involve the public through consultations. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
National Peatlands Strategy (2015-2025)	<p>This Strategy aims to provide a long-term framework within which all of the peatlands within the State can be managed responsibly in order to optimise their social, environmental and economic contribution to the well-being of this and future generations.</p>	<p>Objectives of the Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To give direction to Ireland’s approach to peatland management. To apply to all peatlands, including peat soils. To ensure that the relevant State authorities and state owned companies that influence such decisions contribute to meeting cross-cutting objectives and obligations in their policies and actions. To ensure that Ireland’s peatlands are sustainably managed so that their benefits can be enjoyed responsibly. To inform appropriate regulatory systems to facilitate good decision making in support of responsible use. To inform the provision of appropriate incentives, financial supports and disincentives where required. To provide a framework for determining and ensuring the most appropriate future use of cutover and cutaway bogs. <p>To ensure that specific actions necessary for the achievement of its objectives are clearly identified and delivered by those involved in or responsible for peatlands management or for decisions affecting their management.</p>	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
Flood Risk Management Plans arising from National Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The national Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) programme commenced in Ireland in 2011 and is being overseen by the Office of Public Works. The CFRAM Programme is intended to deliver on core components of the National Flood Policy, adopted in 2004, and on the requirements of the EU Floods Directive. 	<p>CFRAM Studies have been undertaken for all River Basin Districts. The studies are focusing on areas known to have experienced flooding in the past and areas that may be subject to flooding in the future either due to development pressures or climate change. Flood Risk and Hazard mapping, including Flood Extent Mapping, was finalised in 2017. The final outputs from the studies are the CFRAM Plans, finalised in 2018. The Plans define the current and future flood risk in the River Basin Districts and set out how this risk can be managed.</p>	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
Draft National Bioenergy Plan 2014 - 2020	<p>The Draft Bioenergy Plan sets out a vision as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bioenergy resources contributing to economic development and sustainable growth, generating jobs for citizens, supported by coherent policy, planning and regulation, and managed in an integrated manner. 	<p>Three high level goals, of equal importance, based on the concept of sustainable development are identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To harness the market opportunities presented by bioenergy in order to achieve economic development, growth and jobs. To increase awareness of the value, opportunities and societal benefits of developing bioenergy. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that bioenergy developments do not adversely impact the environment and its living and non-living resources. 	achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Draft Renewable Electricity Policy and Development Framework (DCCAE)	Goal: To optimise the opportunities in Ireland for renewable electricity development on land at significant scale, to serve both the All Island Single Electricity Market and any future regional market within the European Union, in accordance with European and Irish law, including Directive 2009/28/EC: On the promotion of the use of energy from renewable resources.	Objective: To develop a Policy and Development Framework for renewable electricity generation on land to serve both the All Island Single Electricity Market and any future regional market within the European Union, with particular focus on large scale projects for indigenous renewable electricity generation. This will, inter alia, provide guidance for planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála.	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for the Transport Sector (DTTAS) 2017- 2030	This Framework sets targets to achieve an appropriate level of alternative fuels infrastructure for transport, which is relative to national policy and Irish market needs. Non-infrastructure-based incentives to support the use of the infrastructure and the uptake of alternative fuels are also included within the scope of the Framework.	Targets for alternative fuel infrastructure include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AFV forecasts Electricity targets Natural gas (CNG, LNG) targets Hydrogen targets Biofuels targets LPG targets Synthetic and paraffinic fuels targets 	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Food Wise 2025 (DAFM)	Food Wise 2025 sets out a ten year plan for the agri-food sector. It underlines the sector's unique and special position within the Irish economy, and it illustrates the potential which exists for this sector to grow even further.	Food Wise 2025 identifies ambitious and challenging growth projections for the industry over the next ten years including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 85% increase in exports to €19 billion. 70% increase in value added to €13 billion. 60% increase in primary production to €10 billion. The creation of 23,000 additional jobs all along the supply chain from producer level to high end value added product development. 	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
National Cycle Network Scoping Study 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outlines objectives and actions aimed at developing a strong cycle network in Ireland Sets out 19 specific objectives, and details the 109 actions, aimed at ensuring that a cycling culture is developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets a target where 10% of all journeys will be made by bike by 2020 Proposes the planning, infrastructure, communication, education and stakeholder participations measures required to implement the initiative 	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.

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<p>National Policy Framework for Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for Transport in Ireland 2017 to 2030</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This National Policy Framework on Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for Transport represents the first step in communicating our longer term national vision for decarbonising transport by 2050, the cornerstone of which is our ambition that by 2030 all new cars and vans sold in Ireland will be zero-emissions capable. By 2030 it is envisaged that the movement in Ireland to electrically-fuelled cars and commuter rail will be well underway, with natural gas and biofuels developing as major alternatives in the freight and bus sectors. 	<p>This policy set out to achieve five key goals in transport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce overall travel demand Maximise the efficiency of the transport network Reduce reliance on fossil fuels Reduce transport emissions Improve accessibility to transport <p>These goals remain the cornerstone of transport policy and are fully aligned to the objectives of this National Policy Framework.</p>	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Tourism Action Plan 2019-2021</p>	<p>The Tourism Action Plan 2019-2021 sets out actions that the Tourism Leadership Group has identified as priorities to be progressed until 2021 in order to maintain sustainable growth in overseas tourism revenue and employment. Each action involves specific tourism stakeholders, both in the public and private sectors, all of whom we expect to proactively work towards the completion of actions within the specified timeframe.</p>	<p>The Plan contains 27 actions focusing on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy Context Marketing Ireland as a Visitor Destination Enhancing the Visitor Experience Research in the Irish Tourism Sector Supporting Local Communities in Tourism Wider Government Policy International Context Co-ordination Structures 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Tourism Policy Statement: People, Place and Policy – Growing Tourism to 2025</p>	<p>The main goal of this policy statement is to have a vibrant, attractive tourism sector that makes a significant contribution to employment across the country; is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable; helps promote a positive image of Ireland overseas, and is a sector in which people want to work.</p>	<p>The Tourism Policy Statement sets three headline targets to be achieved by 2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overseas tourism revenue of €5 billion per year net of inflation excluding carrier receipts; 250,000 people employed in tourism; and 10 million overseas visitors to Ireland per year. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
<p>Tourism Development and Innovation – A Strategy for Investment 2016 - 2022</p>	<p>It is intention that this strategy will fund truly innovative projects that will transform visitor experiences for Ireland’s target markets, especially for international visitors. The strategy is in itself innovative, providing an investment framework that is not too prescriptive, and that is flexible enough to stimulate and support innovation in the sector.</p>	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To successfully and consistently deliver a world class visitor experience; To support a tourism sector that is profitable and achieves sustainable levels of growth and delivers jobs; To facilitate communities to play an enhanced role in developing tourism in their locality, thereby strengthening and enriching local communities; and To recognise, value and enhance Ireland’s natural environment as the cornerstone of Irish tourism. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.</p>
Regional/ County/Local Level			
<p>Northern and Western Region and Southern Region Regional Economic Spatial Strategies 2019</p>	<p>Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) provide long-term strategic planning frameworks and will be replaced by Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSEs).</p> <p>The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies will provide a long-term regional level strategic planning and economic framework in support of the implementation of the National Planning Framework.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RPGs gave regional effect to the National Spatial Strategy. RSEs give regional effect to the National Planning Framework. Account is being taken in the drafting of RSEs of the proposed spatial plans (i.e. Development Plans) and economic plans (i.e. Local, Economic, Community Plans) of local authorities to ensure that the RSEs are informed by identified local and regional needs. 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for</p>

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Integrated Implementation Plan 2019-2024	The Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035, which established an overall framework for transport investment over the next two decades and was subject to full SEA and Stage 2 AA, is a key policy shaping the six-year Integrated Infrastructure Plan. The priorities in the Integrated Infrastructure Plan align with the objectives and priorities set out in the Transport Strategy, focused on improving public and sustainable transport.	The Implementation Plan identifies investment proposals for a number of areas including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus; • Light Rail; • Heavy Rai; • Integration Measures and Sustainable Transport Investment; • Integrated Service Plan; and • Integration and Accessibility. 	environmental protection and management. Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
NPWS Conservation Plans and/or Conservation Objectives for SACs and SPAs	Management planning for nature conservation sites has a number of aims. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify and evaluate the features of interest for a site • To set clear objectives for the conservation of the features of interest • To describe the site and its management • To identify issues (both positive and negative) that might influence the site • To set out appropriate strategies/management actions to achieve the objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation objectives for SACs and SPAs (i.e. sites within the Natura 2000 network) have to be set for the habitats and species for which the sites are selected. • These objectives are used when carrying out appropriate assessments for plans and projects that might impact on these sites. 	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Groundwater Protection Schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Groundwater Protection Scheme provides guidelines for the planning and licensing authorities in carrying out their functions, and a framework to assist in decision-making on the location, nature and control of developments and activities in order to protect groundwater. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Groundwater Protection Scheme aims to maintain the quantity and quality of groundwater, and in some cases improve it, by applying a risk assessment-based approach to groundwater protection and sustainable development. 	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Clare Local Economic and Community Plans 2016-2021 and Galway Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overarching vision for each LECP is: <i>"to promote the well-being and quality of life of citizens and communities"</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose of the LECP, as provided for in the Local Government Reform Act 2014, is to set out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of the relevant local authority area, both by itself directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders. 	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Clare County Development Plan 2015-2021 and Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline planning objectives for land use development (including transport objectives). • Strategic framework for planning and sustainable development including those set out in National Planning Framework and Regional Economic and Spatial Strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify future infrastructure, development and zoning required. • Protect and enhances amenities and environment. • Guide planning authority in assessing proposals. • Aim to guide development in the area and the amount of nature of the planned development. • Aim to promote sustainable development. 	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set out the policies and proposals to guide development in the specific Local Authority area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide for economic development and protect natural environmental, heritage. 	regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Galway County Heritage and Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aims to protect, conserve, enhance and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services across all spectrums. Aims to highlight the importance of heritage at a strategic level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outlines the status of biodiversity and identifies species of importance. Outlines objectives and targets to be met to maintain and improve biodiversity. Aims to increase awareness. Manages and promotes heritage as well as increase awareness. Aims to conserve and protect heritage. 	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
County Clare Heritage Plan 2011-2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aims to highlight the importance of heritage at a strategic level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manages and promotes heritage as well as increase awareness. Aims to conserve and protect heritage. 	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
County Clare County Landscape Character Assessment 2014 and County Galway Landscape Character Assessment 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Characterises the geographical dimension of the landscape. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies the quality, value, sensitivity and capacity of the landscape area. Guides strategies and guidelines for the future development of the landscape. 	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Connacht-Ulster and Southern Region Waste Management Plans 2015-2021	These plans give effect to national and EU waste policy, and address waste prevention and management (including generation, collection and treatment) over the period 2015-2021.	To manage wastes in a safe and compliant manner, a clear strategy, policies and actions are required.	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management.
Clare County Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019 - 2024	This strategy outlines the proposed Adaptation Strategy that Clare County Council will implement to adapt to the effects of climate change and to safeguard the biophysical infrastructure and well being of the people and communities of County Clare. The strategy sets out the high level vision on how we will transition to a low carbon climate resilient future by adapting a wide range of actions across the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate Change adaptation considerations are mainstreamed and integrated successfully into all functions and activities of the local authority ensuring operational protocols, procedures and policies implement an appropriate response in addressing the diversity of impacts associated with climate change. 	Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the

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	<p>different Directorates to adapt to the challenges of climate change. The strategy will be dynamic and flexible to respond quickly to the threats and opportunities that will face the local authority in the coming years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased capacity for climate resilient structural infrastructure is centred around the effective management of climate risk, informed investment decisions and positive contribution towards a low carbon society. • Sustainable policies and measures are devised influencing positive behavioural changes, supporting climate adaptation actions and endorsing approaches for successful transition to low carbon and climate resilient society. • Create understanding of risks and consequences of flooding and successful management of a co-ordinated approach to drainage and flooding • Fostering meaningful approaches to protecting natural and key cultural assets through an appreciation for the adaptive capacity of the natural environment to absorb the impacts of climate change. • Empowered and cohesive communities with strong understanding of climate risks, increased resilience to impacts of climate change with capacity to champion climate action at local level. 	<p>regulatory framework for environmental protection.</p>
<p>Clare County Council Noise Action Plan 2019</p>	<p>The Noise Action Plans are prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Noise Regulations 2006, Statutory Instrument 140 of 2006. These Regulations give effect to the EU Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise. This Directive sets out a process for managing environmental noise in a consistent manner across the EU and the Noise Regulations set out the approach to meeting the requirements of the Directive in Ireland.</p>	<p>The main purpose of the Noise Action Plan is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform and consult the public about noise exposure, its effects and the measures which may be considered to address noise problems • Address strategic noise issues by requiring competent authorities to draw up action plans to manage noise issues and their effects • Reduce noise, where possible, and maintain the environmental acoustic quality where it is good 	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection.</p>
<p>Wild Atlantic Way Operational Programme 2015-2019</p>	<p>The vision for the Wild Atlantic Way brand is: To create a world class, sustainable and un-missable experience brand that engages and energises the visitor so that they become powerful advocates and leaves them wanting to return for more.</p>	<p>The goals and outcomes of the Wild Atlantic Way are presented here under the headings of the 'VICE' model, a recognised tourism model for sustainable development and which considers the four key and interdependent elements of Visitor, Industry, Community and Environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that the Wild Atlantic Way brand is compelling to our target market segments and that the Wild Atlantic Way itself becomes a world-class visitor experience. • To ensure that the Wild Atlantic Way delivers balanced and sustainable revenue and jobs growth with greater geographic and seasonal spread • To ensure that the Wild Atlantic Way delivers benefits to local communities in the west of Ireland and contributes to a better place to live for everyone. <p>To ensure that the implementation of the Wild Atlantic Way Operational Programme facilitates the protection and enhancement of the environment of the west of Ireland – as the fundamental asset that is the basis of the Wild Atlantic Way – in association with other key stakeholders.</p>	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection.</p>

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<p>Fáilte Ireland plans, strategies etc. relating to the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East or other brands or initiatives</p>	<p>Fáilte Ireland's work includes preparing various plans and strategies for the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East and other brands and initiatives. These plans include other Visitor Experience Development Plans and Signage Schemes (such as the Burren Discovery Trail Signage Scheme) and are subject to their own environmental assessment processes. Any project arising is required to be consistent with and conform with the provisions of all adopted/approved Statutory Policies, Strategies, Plans and Programmes, including provisions for the protection and management of the environment.</p>	<p>Some of Fáilte Ireland's plans and strategies include various projects relating to land use and infrastructural development, including those relating to development of land or on land and the carrying out of land use activities. Many of these projects exist already while some are not currently in existence. The Statutory Policies, Strategies, Plans and Programmes that provide for different projects undergo a variety of environmental assessments. These assessments ensure that environmental effects are considered, including: those arising from new and intensified uses and activities; and those arising from various sectors such as tourism.</p>	<p>Implementation of the Plan needs to comply with all environmental legislation and align with and cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies and their plans etc. – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection.</p>