

# SEA ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

## APPENDIX III – NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

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FOR

### THE THREE PENINSULAS WEST CORK AND KERRY VISITOR EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

**for: Fáilte Ireland**  
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## **Section 1 Introduction and Terms of Reference**

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

### **What is an SEA?**

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

### **Why is it needed?**

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

### **How does it work?**

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

The SEA was scoped in consultation with designated environmental authorities.

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

The Environmental Report contains the following information:

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

### **Difficulties Encountered during the SEA process**

No significant difficulties were encountered in undertaking the assessment.

### **What happens at the end of the process?**

An SEA Statement is prepared which summarises, inter alia, how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan.

## Section 2 The Plan

### 2.1 Overview

The area to which the Plan relates covers, from north to south, Beara Peninsula (partially within both County Kerry and County Cork), Sheep's Head Peninsula (County Cork) and Mizen Head Peninsula (County Cork).

The **focus** of the Three Peninsulas<sup>1</sup> Visitor Experience Development Plan (VEDP) is on strengthening the value of tourism to the local economy. The area's **Destination Promise** is:

*"A haven of absolute beauty and rest that draws you in from the moment you arrive where you can discover kinship, sense empowerment, and absorb creative energy."*

The Plan's **Vision** is as follows:

*Extend the season, increase overnight visitation and visitor spend, and attract visitors to engage with the true essence and story of the peninsulas and islands of the Three Peninsulas without compromising the environment or culture of the region.*

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

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

To help achieve the Plan's Vision and Objectives, **Catalyst Projects** have been identified, along with a range of **Supporting Actions** and **Enablers of Success**.

The thirteen **Catalyst Projects** identified by the Plan as follows:

1. Develop the concept of a Twilight Series of weekend evening food and cultural events within the region
2. Establish a year round venue for the West Cork Music Festival
3. Develop the proposed Bonane Heritage & Interpretation Centre
4. Restore the Boathouse on Innacullin / Garinish Island
5. Work towards including the Mizen Head Signal Station in the Great Lighthouses of Ireland tourism initiative.
6. Complete the restoration of Lonehart Battery on Bere Island
7. Progress the Schull Harbour development
8. Develop and improve moorings at Castletownbere for leisure vessels
9. Implement the Beara Breifne Masterplan and develop connectivity between the between the Beara Way, Sheep's Head Way and the Kerry Way
10. Support the development of O'Daly Bardic School project
11. Work toward opening the disused copper mine at Allihies for pre booked guided tours
12. Develop the two car aerial tramway system to Dursey Island, the visitor centre and related visitor facilities
13. Improve the tourism offering of Bantry through its 'Destination Town' designation

Note: for the above when proposals are progressed to feasibility stage consultation with relevant interested parties will take place.

All of the Experiences identified by the Plan are aligned to two Themes:

- **Cultural Fusion** (with Hero Themes of Flavours of Fusion, Artistic Encounters and Celestial Sanctuary); and
- **Vibrant Resilience** (with Hero Themes of Harmonious Confrontation, Kith Kin and Clan and Marginal Livelihoods).

The Plan identifies a series of actions for **Enablers of Success** relating to:

1. Governance
2. Destination Development
3. Improving Access to and within the Region
4. Strengthening Supporting Infrastructure
5. Building Capacity and Awareness
6. Enhancing Visitor Awareness of Hero Experiences in the Three Peninsulas
7. Animating the Destination
8. Environmental Enhancement

<sup>1</sup> The Three Heads encompasses Mizen Head, Sheep's Head, Beara Peninsula and associated islands.  
CAAS for Fáilte Ireland

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.

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 compliance<sup>2</sup> with measures relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management contained within the following Fáilte Ireland published documents:

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

## 2.2 Relationship with other relevant Plans and Programmes

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

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

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<sup>2</sup> Demonstration of compliance may be supported by monitoring undertaken by the beneficiary.

## Section 3 The Environmental Baseline

### 3.1 Introduction

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

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

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

### 3.3 Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna

Key ecological sensitivities comprise:

- The blanket peat bog areas – occurring extensively on the Beara Peninsula and parts of Mizen Head Peninsula;
- Aquatic and riverine ecology associated with the VEDP area's various streams, rivers and lakes – including Rathruane, Croanshagh, Glengarriff, Sheen, Adrigole, Coomhola, Bawnaknockane, Fourmile Water, Croanshagh, Owenshagh, and Drumoghty; and
- Coastal areas and marine waters and associated aquatic ecology.

Land cover types for the Plan area shown on Figure 3.2.

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

- Special Areas of Conservation<sup>3</sup> (SACs), including candidate SACs; and
- Special Protection Areas<sup>4</sup> (SPAs).

There are number of SACs designated within and adjacent to the Three Peninsulas including Kenmare River SAC, Cleanderry Woods SAC, Glanmore Bog SAC, Caha Mountains SAC, Glengarriff Harbour and Woodland SAC, Cloonee and Inchiquin Loughs, Uragh Woods SAC, Moulagowna Bog SAC, Derryclogher (Knockboy) Bog SAC, Glanalough Woods SAC, Mucksna Woods SAC, Kilgarvan Ice House SAC, Sheep's Head SAC, Farranamanagh Lough SAC, Reen Point Shingle SAC, Dunbeacon Shingle SAC, Three Castle Head to Mizen Head SAC, Barley Cove to Ballyrisode Point SAC and Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC.

There are number of SPAs designated within and adjacent to the Three Peninsulas including The Bull and the Cow Rocks SPA, Beara Peninsula SPA and Sheep's Head to Toe Head SPA.

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

<sup>3</sup> 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.

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

### **Existing Fáilte Ireland Environmental Monitoring**

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

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

## **3.4 Population and Human Health**

Using the 2016 Census data, the population of the Three Peninsulas to which the Plan relates was estimated to be 20,000 persons. The population of the biggest settlements in the area to which the Plan relates was: 2,722 in Bantry; 2,376 in Kenmare; 860 in Castletownbere; and 700 in Schull.

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

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

## **3.5 Soil**

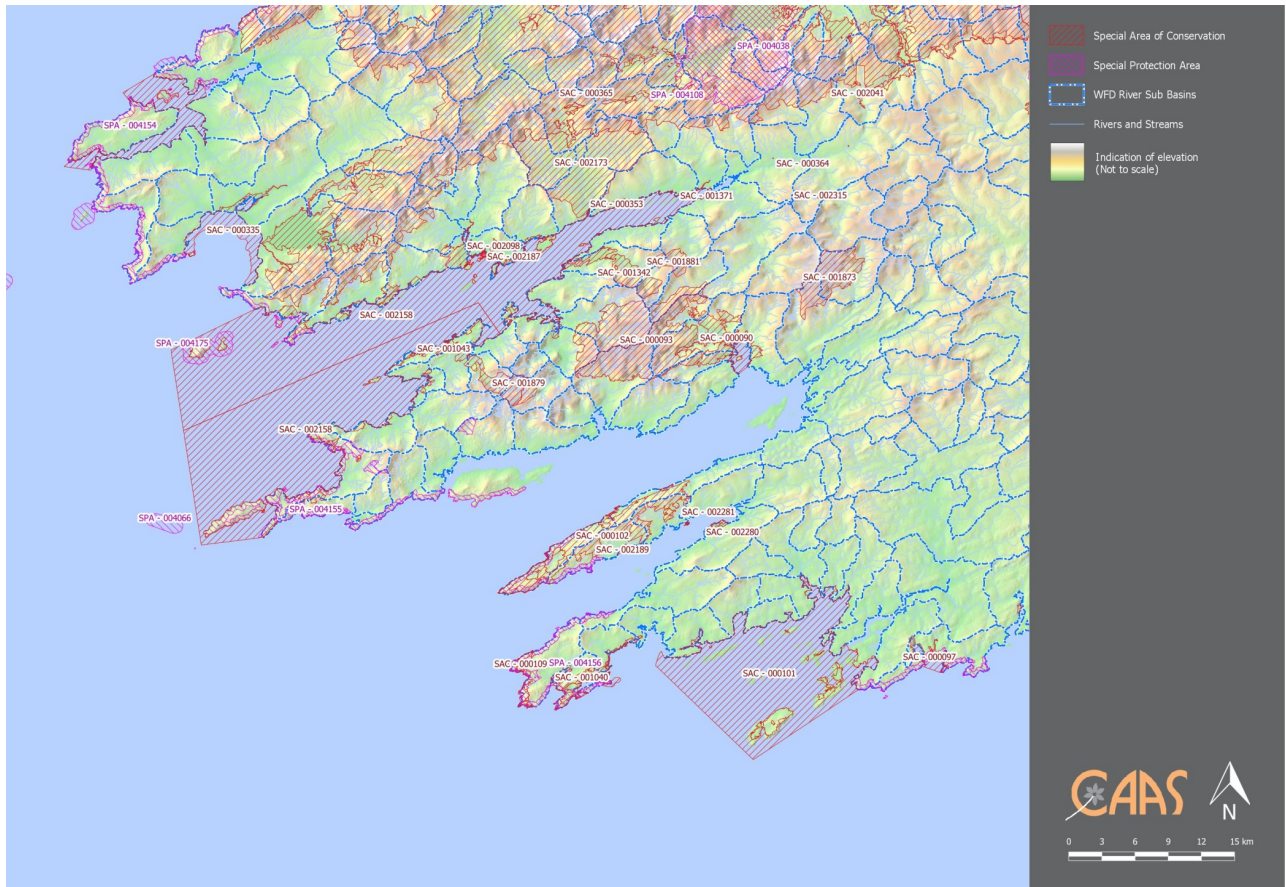
Rain fed peat soils and lithosols are two of the most dominant soils across the Three Peninsulas. Much of the peat soils areas are subject to ecological designations. Outcropping rock is identified in a number of upland locations.

There are number of County Geological Sites across the area to which the Plan relates. The greatest concentrations of County Geological Sites across the Three Peninsulas occur in upland and coastal areas.

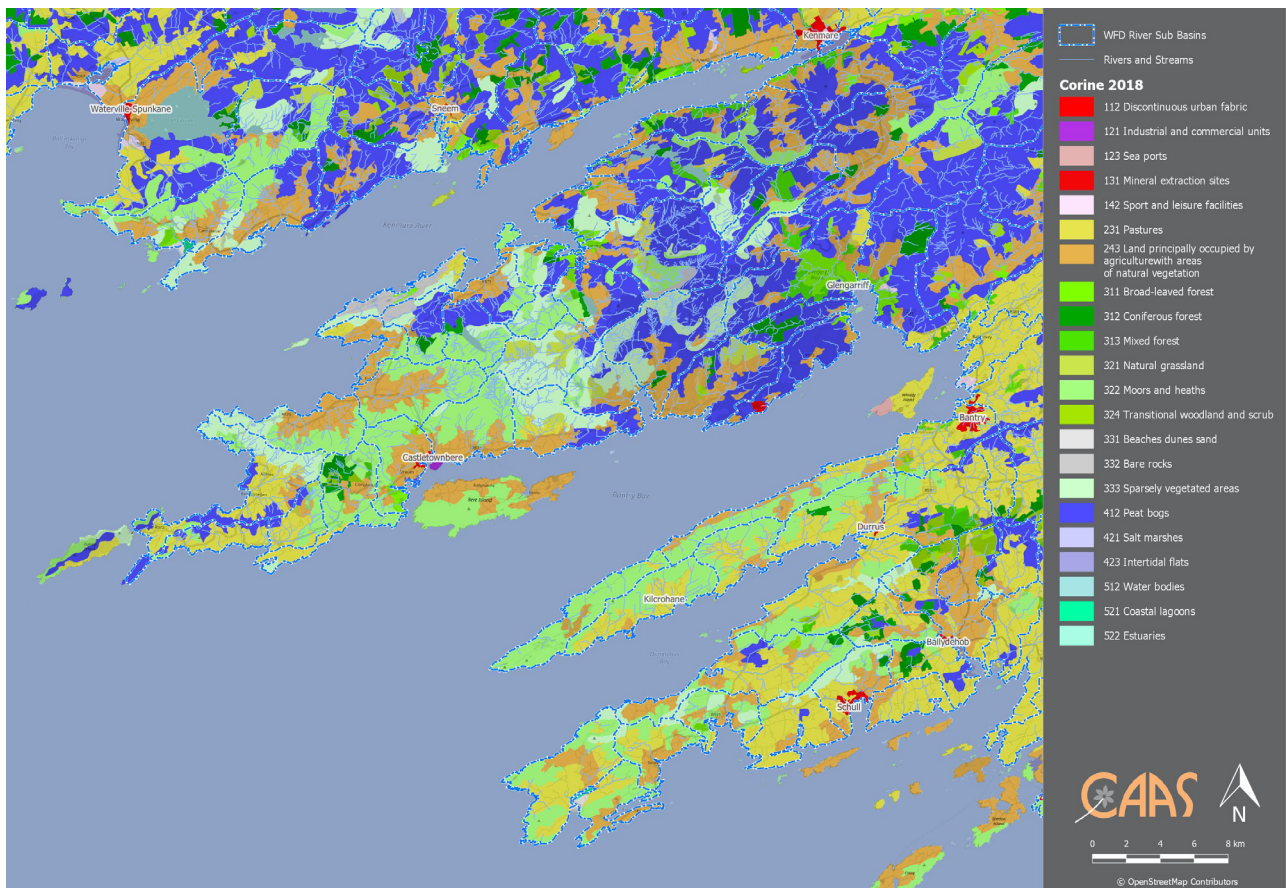
The Plan area has several locations with a history of multiple landslide events. These events occur mainly in upland areas and include Kilkinnikin West (1983) and Gortavallig (2009). The GSI have identified various upland and coastal areas across the Three Peninsulas that are of high and moderately high levels of landslide susceptibility.

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





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



**Figure 3.2 CORINE Land Cover Mapping 2018**



## 3.6 Water

### Surface and Ground Water Status

Rivers are generally of high or good status. However, the Glan Stream and Clonee River are identified as being of moderate status. In addition, there are a number of unassigned rivers and streams across the Three Peninsulas. To the north of the Beara Peninsula and to the south of the Mizen Head Peninsula the status of the coastal water is identified as good. The status of the coastal water of Outer Bantry Bay is identified as high. The coastal waters of South Western Atlantic Seaboard and Dunmanus Bay are identified as unassigned. The surface water status (2010-2015) of rivers, lakes, coastal and transitional waters, within and surrounding the area to which the Plan relates is shown on Figure 3.3.

The status (2010-2015) of groundwater underlying the area to which the Plan relates is identified as being of *good* status, meeting the objectives of the WFD. There is a small area of poor status to the north-east of the Mizen Head Peninsula, underlying the Waste Facility (Licence Number: W0089-02).

### Aquifer Vulnerability and Productivity

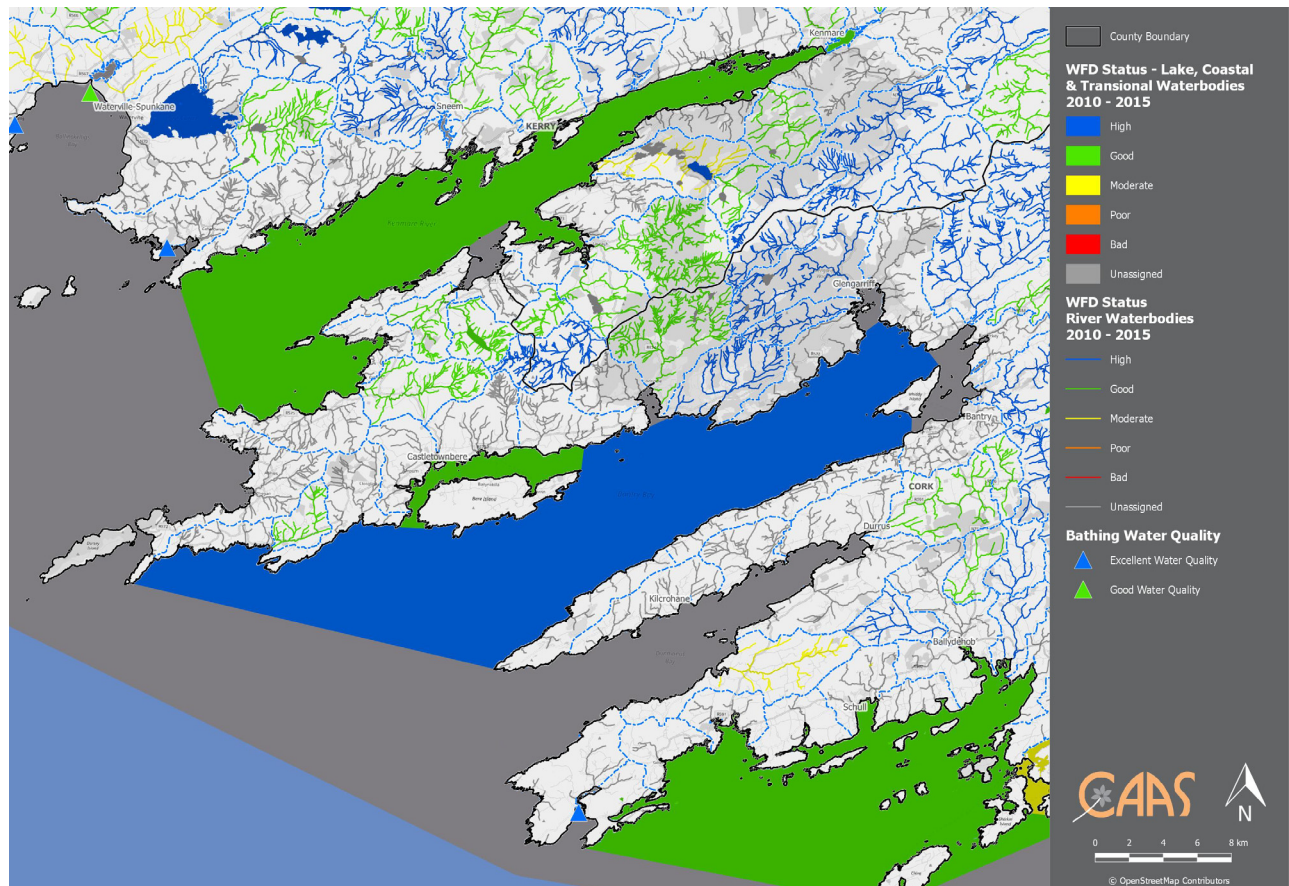
The area to which the plan relates is mainly underlain by a poor bedrock aquifer (unproductive except for local zones) with locally important aquifer - bedrock (moderately productive only in local zones) along the coastal areas. Aquifer vulnerability refers to the ease with which pollutants of various 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*.

### Bathing Waters

The most recent available data from the EPA (2018) shows that bathing waters within the Three Peninsulas reported on are of *Excellent* water quality.

### Flooding

Certain areas across the area to which the Plan relates are at risk from coastal and fluvial flooding. Historical flooding is documented at several locations across the peninsulas, including Castletownbere, Adrigole, Glengariff – Drumdour, Bantry, Shull, Ballydehob and Crookhaven.



**Figure 3.3 Surface Water Status (2010-2015)**

### 3.7 Air and Climatic Factors

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

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

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

Total emissions of greenhouse gases by humans come from various sectors including transport, agriculture, energy industries, manufacturing combustion, industrial processes, residential developments, commercial services developments, waste management processes and fluorinated gases equipment (such as refrigeration and fire protection systems). Ireland's National Policy position is to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> 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.

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 current<sup>5</sup> air quality in the Rural West Air Quality Region is identified by the EPA as being *good*.

### 3.8 Material Assets

#### Waste Water

There are four urban areas in County Kerry listed currently as priority areas and 25 areas in County Cork, where improvements are required to resolve urgent environmental issues.

Waste Water Treatment Plants serving the area to which the Plan relates are not currently listed as priority areas, where improvements are required to resolve urgent environmental issues.

Settlements and rural areas across the Three Peninsulas are served by a combined sewer network, including septic tanks and sewerage treatment schemes.

Irish Water in conjunction with Cork County Council are planning for new waste water treatment plants in Coachford, Innishannon, Ballyvourney/ Ballymakeera and Dripsey. This project will provide new plants in each of the four areas, as well as additional associated infrastructure required to connect the new plants

<sup>5</sup> 27/11/2019 (<http://www.epa.ie/air/quality/>)  
CAAS for Fáilte Ireland

into the existing waste water infrastructure in these villages. Waste water treatment upgrades are also planned in Castletownbere and Bantry to prevent from discharging untreated waste water to Bantry Bay.

Since 2015, Irish Water, working in partnership with Kerry County Council, has upgraded the waste water treatment plants in Ballylongford, Tarbert, Kilgarvan and Ardfert. Significant improvements have also been made at Dingle, Cahersiveen, Killarney and Tralee, with further improvements also planned for Tralee and Kenmare. Further capacity improvements will help to support new development in these areas, including tourism related development.

### **Water Supply**

The most recent available EPA Remedial Action List (RAL Q2 of 2019) identifies that:

- four Kerry drinking water supplies with high levels of Trihalomethanes, which are a by-product of the disinfection process; two have inadequate treatment for cryptosporidium and one has excessive levels of aluminium in the treated water; and
- eight Cork drinking water supplies with high levels of Trihalomethanes, which are a by-product of the disinfection process; two have inadequate treatment for cryptosporidium.

RAL Q2 of 2019 lists four water schemes in County Cork that supply the area to which the Plan relates including Durrus, Glengarriff, Schull and Whiddy Island.

### **Public Assets and Infrastructure**

The biggest settlements across the Three Peninsulas include Kenmare (in County Kerry) and Bantry (in County Cork).

The Three Peninsulas is served by rail, bus and regional and strategic roads. The N40, in particular, is identified as a critical national road artery serving Cork City and connections to Cork Airport, Port of Cork, Ringaskiddy, Cork Science Park, West Cork and South Kerry. Many regional roads form important link routes between National Roads and the larger towns and villages. Many routes carry also important public transport services.

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.

### **Waste Management**

Waste management across the Plan and surrounding areas 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.

## **3.9 Cultural Heritage**

### **Archaeological Heritage**

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

There are various recorded monuments provided with protection across the area to which the Plan relates. Clusters of these monuments can be found within existing urban centres, along the coastline and in certain upland and lowland areas.

The archaeology of the Kenmare area and the Beara Peninsula is dominated by stone circles, with over 20 extant examples or sites of circles recorded stone alignments, standing stones and wedge tombs with significant numbers of burnt mounds.<sup>6</sup> These monuments are mapped on Figure 3.4.

<sup>6</sup> *Kerry County Development Plan 2015-2021, Chapter 11: Built and Cultural Heritage*  
CAAS for Fáilte Ireland

### Architectural Heritage

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

Protected structures designated across the Three Peninsulas area are mapped on Figure 3.4.

In addition to Protected Structures, the Planning and Development Act, 2000 provides the legislative basis for the protection of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs). The ACA designation requires that planning permission must be obtained before significant works can be carried out to the exterior of a structure in the ACA that might alter the character of the structure or the ACA.

There are five ACAs designated across the area to which the Plan relates: one in Kenmare town (to the north of Beara Peninsula), three in Bantry (to the north of Sheep's Head Peninsula) and one in Ballydehob (south-east of the Mizen Head Peninsula).

## 3.10 Landscape

The area to which the Plan relates<sup>7</sup> is identified as being situated within one Landscape Character Type in County Cork: No. 4, Rugged Ridge Peninsulas - this landscape type is classified as 'very high value', 'very high sensitivity' and 'national importance'.

Landscape Character Types which have a very 'high' or 'high landscape' value and 'high' or 'very high' landscape sensitivity and are of 'county' or 'national importance' are considered to be the most valuable landscapes.

Part of the north-east of the Beara Peninsula is located within County Kerry and is identified as being situated within three Landscape Character Areas: LCA 40 - Kenmare River Valley; LCA 41 - Upper Sheen River Valley; and LCA 42 - Glanmore River Valley and Lough Inchiquin.

There are also two archaeological landscapes designated within/partially within these areas as mapped: No.17 – Drombohilly Upper and Lower/ Uragh; and No.18 Dromagorteen/ Crinagort/ Curragraigue/ Erneen.<sup>8</sup>

Homesteads and settlements, field boundaries and field patterns, buildings and monuments, demesnes, planted woodlands, cut bogs, roads, quarries, mines and factories all attest to the imprint of people on the landscape and give distinctive character to different places across the Three Peninsulas.

The Three Peninsulas contain many sites, areas and vantage points from which views over areas of great natural beauty, local landmarks, historic landscapes, may be obtained.

There are 35 scenic routes identified within Rugged Ridge Peninsulas Landscape Character Type in Cork County Development Plan.

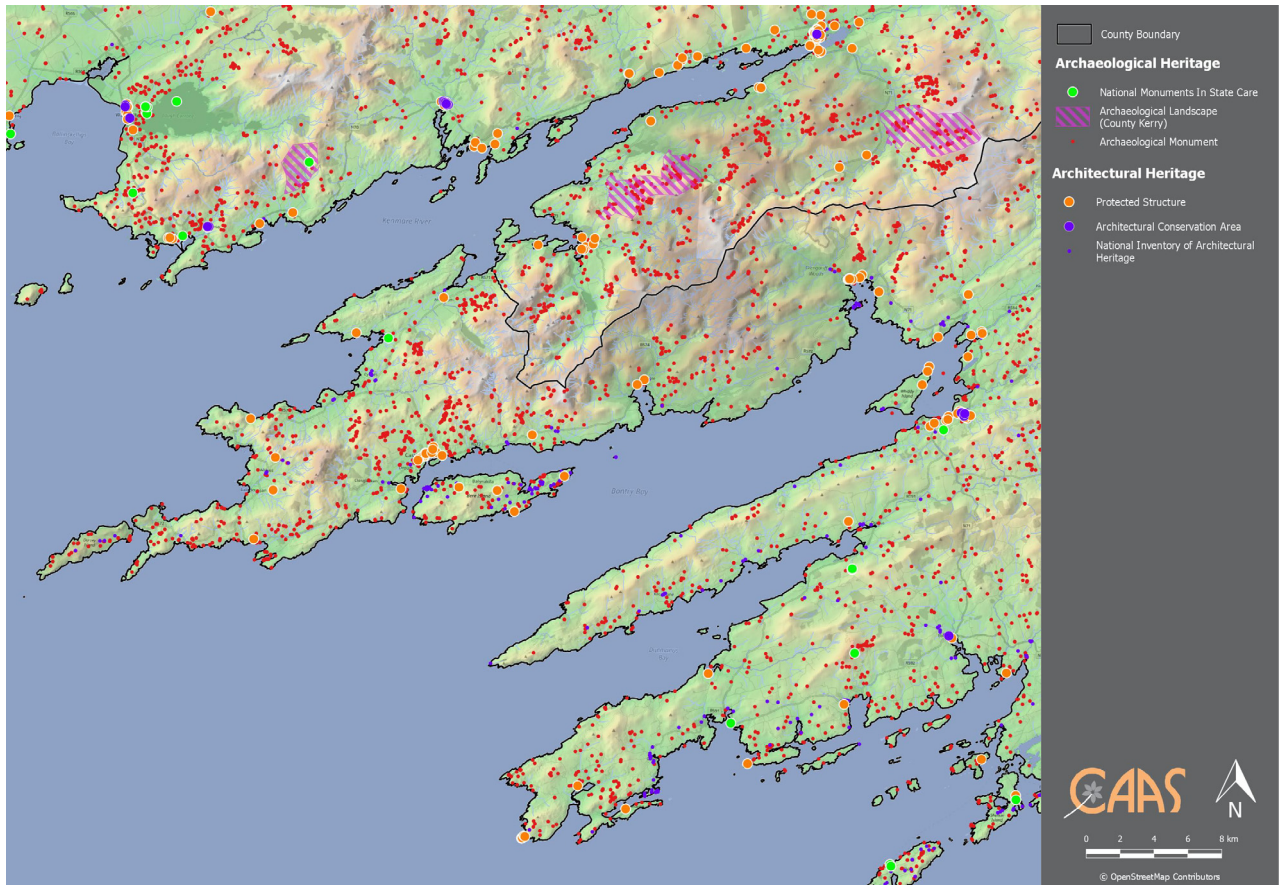
In addition to scenic routes in County Cork, there are also important prospects as identified in Kerry County Development Plan.

Landscape areas and protected views, prospects and routes are mapped on Figure 3.5

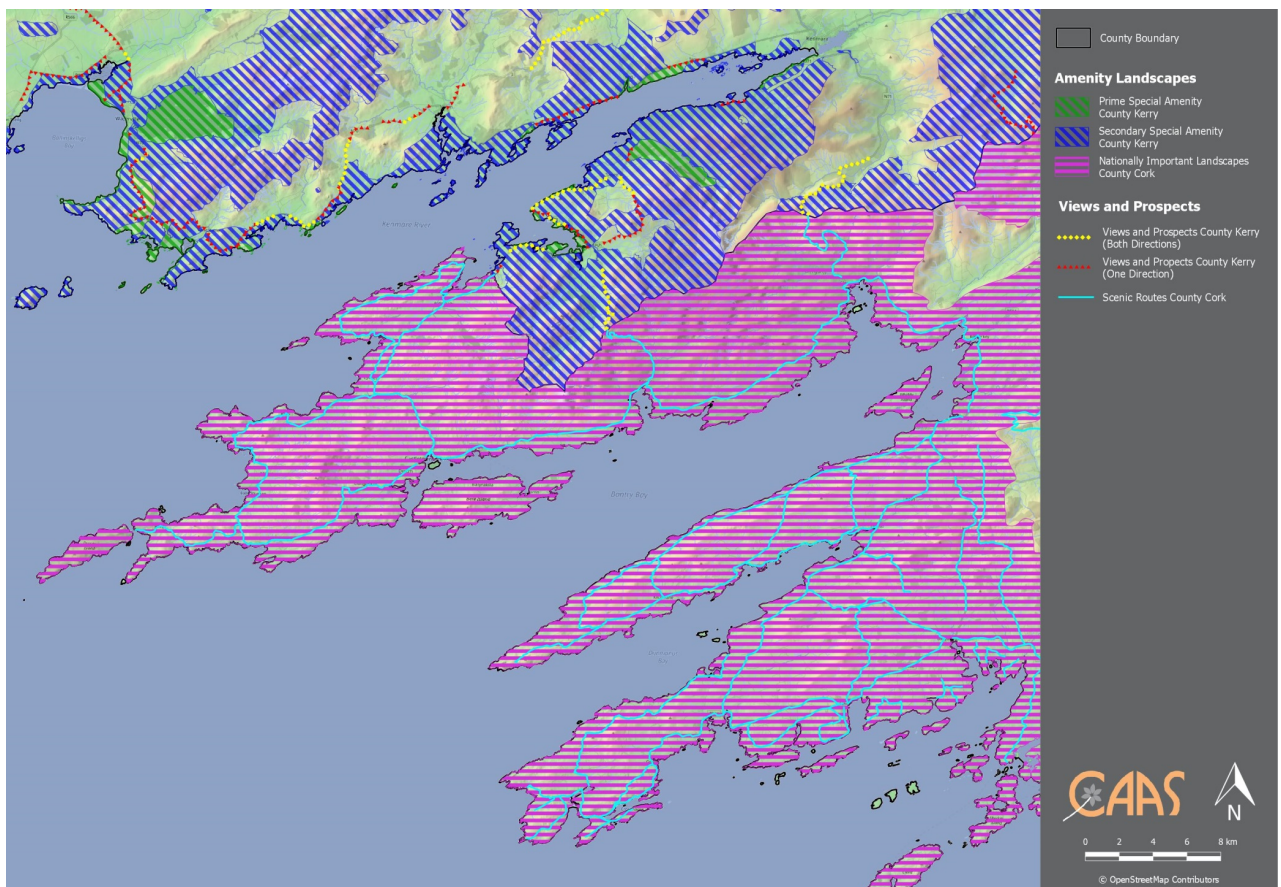
<sup>7</sup> The Beara Peninsula is located partially within counties Kerry and Cork while Sheep's Head and Mizen Head are located wholly within County Cork.

<sup>8</sup> *Landscape Character Assessment prepared for the Renewable Energy Strategy 2012 & Adopted/ Proposed Archaeological Landscapes*, Kerry County Council (2012).





**Figure 3.4 Archaeological and Architectural Heritage**



**Figure 3.5 Landscape Designations**

### 3.11 Strategic Environmental Objectives

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

**Table 3.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives**

<b>Environmental Component</b>	<b>SEO Code</b>	<b>Strategic Environmental Objectives</b>
<b>Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna</b>	<b>B1</b>	To contribute towards compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of European Sites and Annexed habitats and species <sup>9</sup>
	<b>B2</b>	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
	<b>B3</b>	To contribute towards avoidance of significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites <sup>10</sup> 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
<b>Population and Human Health</b>	<b>PHH1</b>	To contribute towards the protection of populations and human health from exposure to incompatible landuses
<b>Soil</b>	<b>S1</b>	To minimise land take and loss to extent of soil resource
<b>Water</b>	<b>W1</b>	To contribute towards the maintenance and improvement, where possible, of the quality and status of surface waters
	<b>W2</b>	To contribute towards maintaining and improving, where possible, the chemical and quantitative status of groundwaters
	<b>W3</b>	To contribute towards compliance with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines
<b>Air and Climatic Factors</b>	<b>AC1</b>	To contribute towards climate adaptation and mitigation
<b>Material Assets</b>	<b>M1</b>	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
	<b>M2</b>	To contribute towards the protection of public assets and infrastructure, including that relating to recreation and leisure, transport, utilities and marine areas and fisheries
	<b>M3</b>	To reduce waste volumes, minimise waste to landfill and increase recycling and reuse
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	<b>CH1</b>	To contribute towards the protection of archaeological heritage including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and/or their context
	<b>CH2</b>	To contribute towards the protection of architectural heritage including entries to the Records of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context
<b>Landscape</b>	<b>L1</b>	To avoid conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in the land use plans of Cork and Kerry County Councils

<sup>9</sup> 'Annexed habitats and species' refer to those listed under Annex I, II & IV of the EU Habitats Directive and Annex I of the EU Birds Directive.

<sup>10</sup> The definition of a 'wildlife site' provided by the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, includes Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed NHAs.

## Section 4 Alternatives

### 4.1 Description of Alternatives

#### **Alternative 1: Business as Usual**

Strengths in the arts, a strong food culture and a rich cultural heritage are experienced by tourists to the Three Peninsulas. There are a number of existing challenges to the tourism product (and associated value of tourism to the local economy) in the Three Peninsulas area including:

- Increase in visitor numbers with potential to disturb or damage the natural environment;
- High level of seasonality;
- Visitors are primarily day trippers;
- Few experiences designed to promote overnight stays;
- New accommodation options required to better service the more rural areas and long-distance trails;
- Preservation of key heritage sites such as Dunboy Castle;
- Lack of cohesive approach; and
- Lack of resources to coordinate and develop experiences and events.

This current situation presents **Alternative 1 (Business as Usual)** to be considered by the SEA. Numbers of visitors (and associated day-trip journeys) would be likely to continue to increase under this scenario – consistent with the development of tourism over many decades.

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

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

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

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

Under Alternative 2 there are two separate alternatives:

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

Fáilte Ireland provides funding sustainable tourism projects including land use and infrastructural development and land use activities. In order to achieve funding (including promotion) for land use or infrastructural development or land use activities from Fáilte Ireland, **Alternative 2A** would require Fáilte Ireland's stakeholders to demonstrate



compliance with measures relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management contained within the following Fáilte Ireland published documents:

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

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

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

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

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

## **4.2 Detailed Consideration of Alternatives**

### **Alternative 1: Business as Usual**

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

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

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

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

There would be one layer of mitigation under Alternative 1, 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), which are provided under all alternatives, and

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

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

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

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

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

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

Although a Plan would help to improve the seasonal and geographic spread of visitors, a Plan's objective would be to increase the number of visitors to the Three Peninsulas. Although this would be likely to happen without a Plan, a Plan would have the potential to increase numbers of tourists – and associated potential adverse effects – to a greater degree than would be the case if there was no plan. This would be likely to contribute towards in an increase in travel related greenhouse gas and other emissions to air, including from aviation. These increases would be mitigated by the wider planning framework.

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

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

**Table 4.1 Comparative Evaluation of Alternatives against SEOs**

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

### 4.3 Selected Alternative for the Plan

Taking into account the environmental effects detailed above and the challenges and opportunities present for tourism across the Three Peninsulas, Fáilte Ireland have proceeded with Alternative 2A “A Plan with Additional Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management”.

## Section 5 Summary of Effects arising from Plan

**Table 5.1 Overall Findings – Environmental Effects arising from Plan Provisions**

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework <sup>11</sup>		
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potential Significant Adverse Effect, if unmitigated	Residual Adverse Non-Significant Effects
<b>Biodiversity and flora and fauna</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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"> <li>Visitor management strategies; and</li> <li>VEDP requirements for environmental protection and management.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Contributes towards the maintenance of existing green infrastructure and its ecosystem services.</li> <li>Contribution towards protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna as a result of contributing towards the protection of environmental vectors, air, water and soil.</li> </ul>	<p>Arising from both construction and operation of tourism related development/activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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;</li> <li>Habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration, including patch size and edge effects; and</li> <li>Disturbance (e.g. due to noise and lighting along transport corridors) and displacement of protected species such as birds and bats.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>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)</li> </ul>
<b>Population and human health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribution towards the protection of human health including through VEDP requirements for environmental protection and management.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>Contribution towards the protection amenity usage and access.</li> <li>Contribution towards the sustainable growth of tourism and associated sustenance and growth of communities across the Three Peninsulas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential interactions if effects upon environmental vectors such as water are not mitigated.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>

<sup>11</sup> 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 <sup>11</sup>		
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potential Significant Adverse Effect, if unmitigated	Residual Adverse Non-Significant Effects
<b>Soil</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Contribution towards the protection of the environment from contamination.</li> <li>Contributes towards protection of designated sites of geological heritage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adverse impacts upon the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource.</li> <li>Adverse effects on designated geological heritage sites.</li> <li>Potential for increase in coastal /river bank erosion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>
<b>Water</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Contribution towards flood risk management and appropriate drainage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Increase in flood risk.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased loadings as a result of development to comply with River Basin Management Plan.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>
<b>Air and climatic factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribution towards climate adaptation and mitigation through measures relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walking and cycling; and</li> <li>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.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Potential conflicts between transport movements, including car movements, and air quality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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).</li> <li>Risks remain due to uncertainty with regard to climate and interactions with issues including flooding and material assets.</li> </ul>
<b>Material Assets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributes towards protection and allows for continued use of public assets and infrastructure.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>Contribution towards compliance with national and regional water services and waste management policies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased number of visitors have the potential to increase traffic levels.</li> <li>The need to provide adequate and appropriate water services (it is the function of Irish Water to provide for such needs).</li> <li>Increases in waste levels and residual wastes from visitors and construction of developments.</li> <li>Potential impacts upon public assets and infrastructure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residual wastes to be disposed of in line with higher level waste management policies.</li> <li>Increased loading on critical infrastructure (drinking water, waste water, waste and transport) where no significant problems have been identified with this infrastructure.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>Any impacts upon public assets and infrastructure to comply with statutory planning/consent-granting framework.</li> </ul>

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework <sup>11</sup>		
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potential Significant Adverse Effect, if unmitigated	Residual Adverse Non-Significant Effects
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential effects on designated and unknown archaeological heritage.</li> <li>Potential effects on architectural heritage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential alteration to the context and setting of architectural heritage however, these will occur in compliance with legislation.</li> <li>Potential alteration to the context and setting of archaeological heritage however, this will occur in compliance with legislation.</li> <li>Potential loss of unknown archaeology however, this loss will be mitigated by measures integrated into the Plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Changes in the appearance of the landscape.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residual visual effects (these would comply with landscape designation provisions).</li> </ul>

## Section 6 Mitigation and Monitoring Measures

### 6.1 Mitigation

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

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

- The potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan are avoided, reduced or offset; and
- The beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan are maximised.

Mitigation was achieved through the following:

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

The SEA 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.

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 compliance<sup>12</sup> 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 framework, 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 Kerry and Cork 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).

<sup>12</sup> Demonstration of compliance may be supported by monitoring undertaken by the beneficiary.



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

## 6.2 Monitoring

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

### Sources

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

Other existing monitoring sources will be used, including:

- Information gathered through existing Fáilte Ireland environmental monitoring programmes (and any subsequent replacements), including the Monitoring Programme for the Wild Atlantic Way, a sub-programme of which will be extended to/reported on for the Plan area in order to monitor any effects of visitors;
- Sources maintained by Kerry and Cork 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.

### 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.

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

**Table 6.1 Selected Indicators, Targets and Monitoring Sources**

<b>Environmental Component</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Targets</b>	<b>Source and (where available) Frequency</b>
<b>Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna</b>	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 <sup>13</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 6.1</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> <li>• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)</li> <li>• 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)</li> <li>• Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's National Monitoring Report for the Birds Directive under Article 12 (every 3 years)</li> <li>• Consultations with the NPWS</li> <li>• CORINE mapping resurvey (every c. 5 years)</li> <li>• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes</li> </ul>
	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  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	
<b>Population and Human Health</b>	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"> <li>• Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 6.1</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> <li>• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)</li> <li>• Consultations with the HSE and EPA</li> <li>• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes</li> </ul>
<b>Soil</b>	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"> <li>• Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" see Section 6.1</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> <li>• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)</li> <li>• CORINE mapping resurvey (every c. 5 years)</li> <li>• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes</li> </ul>

<sup>13</sup> 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.

SEA Environmental Report Appendix III: Non-Technical Summary

Environmental Component	Indicators	Targets	Source and (where available) Frequency
<b>Water</b>	<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"> <li>• Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 6.1</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> <li>• Data issued under the Water Framework Directive Monitoring Programme for Ireland (multi-annual)</li> <li>• EPA <i>The Quality of Bathing Water in Ireland</i> reports</li> <li>• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)</li> <li>• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes</li> </ul>
<b>Air and Climatic Factors</b>	<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"> <li>• Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 6.1</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> <li>• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)</li> <li>• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes</li> </ul>
<b>Material Assets</b>	<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 areas in the Plan area where adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity that does not present a danger to human health are unavailable</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"> <li>• Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 6.1</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> <li>• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)</li> <li>• Consultations with the partners such as the EPA, Irish Water and/or Cork/Kerry County Councils</li> <li>• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	<p>CH1: Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan</p>	<p>CH1: No unauthorised adverse effects on archaeological heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 6.1</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> <li>• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)</li> <li>• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes</li> </ul>

SEA Environmental Report Appendix III: Non-Technical Summary

Environmental Component	Indicators	Targets	Source and (where available) Frequency
	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"> <li>• Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 6.1</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> <li>• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)</li> <li>• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape</b>	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 Cork and Kerry 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 Cork and Kerry County Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management" – see Section 6.1</li> <li>• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities</li> <li>• SEA Monitoring Programme reports for the land use plans of relevant local authorities (as required, monitoring reports published on various timescales and frequencies)</li> <li>• Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes</li> </ul>