

# DRAFT INISHOWEN PENINSULA DESTINATION AND EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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July 2022





This page: Malin Head, Co Donegal  
Cover: Fort Dunree, Buncrana, Co Donegal

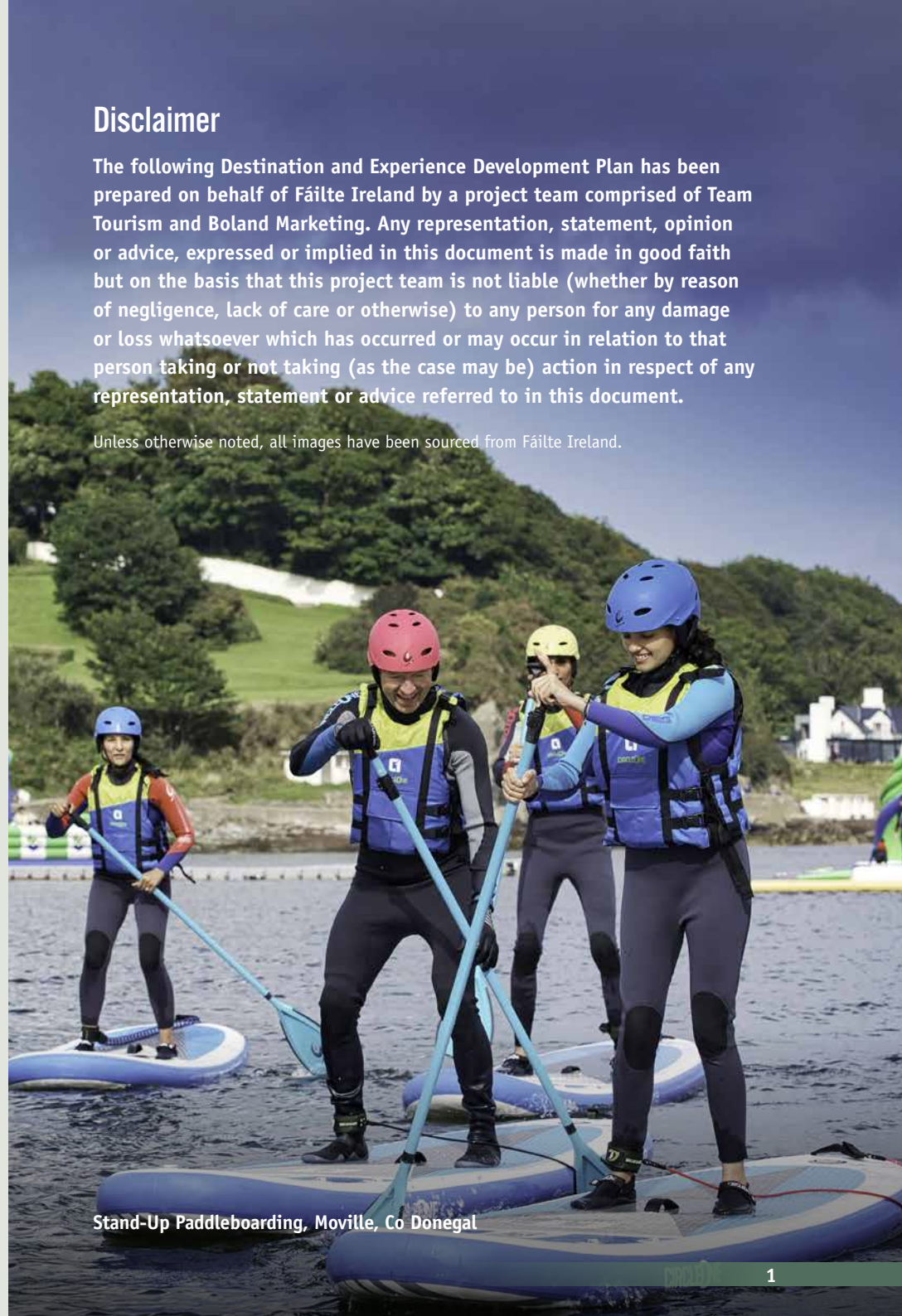
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## Disclaimer

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Stand-Up Paddleboarding, Moville, Co Donegal

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY Achoimre Feidhmiúcháin

## INISHOWEN PENINSULA DESTINATION AND EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

<b>VISION</b>	A destination recognised for our internationally significant marine ecosystem, our distinctive maritime and military heritage, our creative story and the opportunity to pursue adventure, health and well-being year-round.
<b>TARGET MARKETS</b>	Culturally Curious Great Escapers Social Energisers (secondary) Educational and scientific markets
<b>DESTINATION PROMISE</b>	Where ripple marks from tides of time tell our stories of land and sea... where the call of the wild unleashes our energy, stirs our passion and calms our soul... where the giants of the deep leave us mesmerised and reconnected with life around us.
<b>THEME</b>	Tides of Time
<b>HERO EXPERIENCE THEMES</b>	1. Maritime and Military Might 2. Inishowen's Creative Story 3. Wild Oasis

**The Inishowen Peninsula in Co. Donegal, Ireland's most northerly point, provides both a dramatic ending and an awe-inspiring beginning to the Wild Atlantic Way.** A peninsula surrounded by the waters of the Atlantic Ocean to the north, Lough Foyle to the east and Lough Swilly to the west, has its geological and cultural story shaped by the endless tides of time. The oldest rocks in Ireland lie to the north-east of Malin Head on Inishtrahull. The striking and windswept landscapes are dominated by *the solitary loveliness and bewitching grandeur* of Malin Head with its spectacular natural features and deep chasms; by the fortified coastal promontories that capture stories of defence down through the centuries; the estuarine waterways, tidal islands and sandy bays; the gentle lowlands and raised beaches marking progressive changes in sea level; and by Sliabh Sneacht and the peninsula's mountainous interior.

The landscape and the culture today are marked by the legacies of these tides of time. The dramatic stories of *maritime and military might*; the creativity that ties present-day artists and artisans back through the centuries to the creative energy

of bygone generations and eras; and the *wild oasis* that awaits the visitor with Inishowen's cherished viewsapes and internationally renowned ecological significance have the potential to provide an unforgettable experience.

Located on the border, Inishowen's identity is inextricably linked with its neighbours in Northern Ireland, and Derry/Londonderry is an integral part of the peninsula's story. The diversity of the marine environment recognises no boundaries, and the shipwrecks that rest on the ocean floor tie Inishowen to countries around the globe – all adding to the distinctive personality of Ireland's most northerly location.

This Plan focuses on identifying strategic directions for Inishowen Peninsula that will strengthen the visitor experience and elevate its story. It addresses infrastructural requirements, highlights actions that will build capacity, and promotes a community-led approach to establishing a destination with international appeal. It is a 5-year plan – recognising that many initiatives may take longer to come to full fruition.

CULTURALLY CURIOUS	GREAT ESCAPERS	SOCIAL ENERGISERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Want to learn about Irish culture and traditions</li> <li>▶ Looking for authentic local experiences and local food</li> <li>▶ Interested in history being brought to life by storytelling and re-enactment</li> <li>▶ Will venture off the beaten track – by hiking or biking</li> <li>▶ Curious to explore natural landscapes/seascapes, small towns, castles, ancient sites and historic houses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Feel connected to nature – travel in Autumn and/or Spring</li> <li>▶ Seek value for money</li> <li>▶ Rural touring holidays with a promise of local, authentic communities and activities</li> <li>▶ Meeting authentic local people to learn about Irish way of life</li> <li>▶ Little interest in formal cultural artefacts e.g. museums</li> <li>▶ Seek an urban-rural experience, but less interested in touristy parts of cities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Socially energetic; young at heart spanning all age groups</li> <li>▶ Seek fun, social interaction and excitement – looking for areas frequented by the locals and quirky, spontaneous 'unplanned' experiences</li> <li>▶ Want to visit the top attractions and activities, particularly if they are presented in an energetic, engaging and unusual way</li> <li>▶ Professionals with a busy life</li> </ul>

This Destination and Experience Development Plan is based on a comprehensive understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the destination and the tourism industry. Inishowen has a long history of hosting visitors and has significant local commitment to developing experiences that will portray the distinctive essence of the peninsula. This Plan will build on this enthusiasm, while seeking to gain further momentum through responding to its current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. These are summarised below.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Ireland’s most northerly point</li> <li>▶ Strong thematic story of time</li> <li>▶ Diversity of coastlines</li> <li>▶ Rich marine biodiversity</li> <li>▶ Diverse maritime and military heritage – Grianán of Aileach, O’Doherty castles, Fort Dunree, Malin Head; and wealth of sea wrecks</li> <li>▶ Exceptional stories associated with the peninsula’s creative heritage and resilience</li> <li>▶ New successful product; internationally acclaimed golf</li> <li>▶ Strong contemporary cultural sector</li> <li>▶ Land and marine-based adventure</li> <li>▶ Community festivals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ High level of seasonality/low length of stay</li> <li>▶ Low dwell time at key attractions</li> <li>▶ Peninsula is too easy to pass by</li> <li>▶ Weak linkages between agencies</li> <li>▶ Fragmented offering – appears to lack critical mass and cohesion – lack of coordination</li> <li>▶ Arts and craft sector lacks market identity</li> <li>▶ Large number of efforts that have limited visibility as tourism products</li> <li>▶ Weak domestic market prior to COVID-19</li> <li>▶ Examples of tired product</li> <li>▶ Land-ownership issues associated with potential trails development</li> <li>▶ Lower ratings on appearance/things to do</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Border location/proximity to Northern Ireland</li> <li>▶ Potential to create Ireland’s first marine national park</li> <li>▶ Improved visitor experience/connectivity of stories/site experiences through technology</li> <li>▶ Enhancing linkages between local agencies</li> <li>▶ Experience and site development proposals for Fort Dunree and Malin Head</li> <li>▶ Development of the North West Greenway</li> <li>▶ Potential to develop the Inishowen Blueway</li> <li>▶ Strengthening of ecotourism</li> <li>▶ Public realm enhancement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ External crises – recovery from COVID-19</li> <li>▶ Vulnerabilities of small businesses and inability to withstand economic downturns</li> <li>▶ Ongoing impact of Brexit</li> <li>▶ Rising insurance costs</li> <li>▶ Currency fluctuations</li> <li>▶ Sustainability of air connectivity</li> <li>▶ Climate change/loss of biodiversity</li> <li>▶ Traffic management if vehicular traffic increases</li> <li>▶ Potential of losing aesthetic characteristics through road improvements</li> </ul>

The way forward for Inishowen Peninsula is through working collaboratively to develop new experiences and to create a stronger enabling framework. To help achieve this, five Catalyst Projects have been identified along with a range of supporting recommendations.

## CATALYST PROJECTS:

1. Fort Dunree
2. Malin Head
3. North West Greenway Network
4. Creative Hubs
5. Inishowen Blueway

## DEVELOPMENT THEMES:

A series of actions relating to:

1. Implementing catalyst projects
2. Developing HERO experiences
3. Strengthening supportive infrastructure and sense of place
4. Building industry capacity and supporting services

## GOALS:

- To enrich our communities through sustainably growing and spreading the benefits of tourism across the peninsula year-round.
- To adopt new ways of working collaboratively to differentiate Inishowen and deliver compelling HERO experiences.
- To add value to our sense of place and to ensure that the integrity of our ecosystems, landscapes and traditions are respected.

# INTRODUCTION

## Réamhrá

Dear Old Inishowen...  
Neath Occidental skies;  
On the verge of the ocean, bleak and wild

*"The Schools' Collection, Volume 0621, Page 413" by Dúchas® National Folklore Collection, UCD*

Aurora Borealis over Lagg Church, Malin Head, Co Donegal

# INTRODUCTION Réamhrá

The Inishowen Peninsula in Co. Donegal, Ireland's most northerly point, provides both a dramatic ending and an awe-inspiring beginning to the Wild Atlantic Way. A peninsula surrounded by the waters of the Atlantic Ocean to the north, Lough Foyle to the east and Lough Swilly to the west, has its geological and cultural story shaped by the endless tides of time. The oldest rocks in Ireland lie to the north-east of Malin Head on Inishtrahull. The striking and windswept landscapes are dominated by *the solitary loveliness and bewitching grandeur* of Malin Head\* with its spectacular natural features and deep chasms, and by the fortified coastal promontories that capture stories of defence down through the centuries. The estuarine waterways, tidal islands and sandy bays, the gentle lowlands and the raised beaches that mark progressive changes in sea level as glaciers retreated add to the contrast of the rocky headlands and the mountainous interior.

The stories of past eras have left their marks across the intricate landscape. Defensive fortifications that date from prehistoric times through to the World Wars of last century offer a captivating experience for today's visitor. The interplay of the maritime and military themes comes to life at Fort Dunree, a site now undergoing a multi-million Euro transformation to create a world-class visitor attraction. The stories unfold elsewhere with Grianán of Aileach and Malin Head offering compelling experiences in spectacular settings of ancient and modern defence systems, while relics of warships and sunken vessels lying under the waves, and the ruins of castles and towers around the peninsula allow visitors to further imagine the strategic role that Inishowen has played through the centuries.

Daily life in recent centuries had both an insular feel and a strong connection to the world beyond. Inishowen's proximity to Derry/Londonderry underlay its global recognition for shirt making, while its colourful stories of poitín-making arose out of its seeming isolation. Its heritage of spinning and weaving, cottage craft and the annual fair are echoes of a self-reliant way of life that was captured in the poems recited and the songs sung around the fire place. And yet, the peninsula boasted one of Ireland's key nineteenth century gateways to the world, on par with Cobh, connecting freight and passengers to the shores of North America. Much of this past is still reflected and revered in the contemporary arts and craft.

\*Maghtochair, 1867, Inishowen: Its History, Traditions and Antiquities.



Today, adrenaline land and coastal-based activities are positioned alongside an expanding opportunity to appreciate the solace of nature. This border destination has retained its distinctive feel of wildness that supports the spectrum of nature-based tourism, from adventure to ecotourism. Many of its cherished landscapes, islands, ecosystems, birdlife and marine wildlife have international significance. Combining the wealth of these bio-cultural assets with a growing emphasis on local foods and well-being is giving the Inishowen Peninsula a distinctive positioning on the Wild Atlantic Way.

## Purpose of the Destination and Experience Development Plan

This five-year Plan has been written to assist you – whether you are an individual business, a cluster of businesses, a tourism group, a community organisation, a tourism-related agency, or whether you simply have an interest in understanding more about tourism. It is designed to give you fresh insight into what makes the Inishowen Peninsula stand out as a destination on the Wild Atlantic Way and reminds us of the stories that are an important part of our heritage and can be core to an unforgettable visitor experience. The Plan highlights the personality of the area through a narrative framework that helps to accentuate the strengths of the region and can be used to animate the destination in a cohesive and structured way. When there is a more ‘structured’ approach that seeks to build strategically on recognised strengths and responds to what the market is looking for – without compromising on local values – a destination can anticipate a greater degree of growth in the value of tourism to communities as a whole and to individual businesses.

The development of the Plan has been guided by a project Working Group and has been facilitated by Fáilte Ireland in alignment with their *Guidelines for Experience Development Plans*, which are based on a best-practice approach of collaboration, research, planning and activation.

## Aims and Objectives

The key objectives of the *Inishowen Destination and Experience Development Plan* are to develop compelling experiences for this stretch of the Wild Atlantic Way that will:

- ▶ Position Inishowen as a ‘must do’ destination and motivate visitors to **stay overnight and spend more**.
- ▶ **Extend the length of the season**.
- ▶ **Improve the overall economy of communities** through strengthening individual businesses, **creating new entrepreneurial opportunities, sustaining and increasing job creation** and increasing the attractiveness of the area for other forms of economic growth.
- ▶ Align to the Wild Atlantic Way **brand and target markets**.

- ▶ **Support community values and aspirations**, and strengthen **community appreciation of local culture and intangible heritage**.
- ▶ Support **sense of place enhancement**.
- ▶ Promote **collaboration and partnership**, support engagement of businesses and build lasting links between national and regional partners, local agencies and associations and local tourism experiences.
- ▶ **Protect the natural heritage and special environmental character** of the region.

The recommendations on implementation and monitoring will be critical to ensuring success in delivering the Plan and in assessing its impact.

## Key Performance Indicators

What will successful implementation look like? Fáilte Ireland will track progress through a series of performance indicators that will be monitored annually.

1. Increase bed-nights by 2% year over year ahead of national average from year 3 of implementation of this Destination and Experience Development Plan.
2. Increase revenue to attractions by 2% ahead of the national average from implementation.
3. Increase length of stay.
4. Increase in saleable product (5 new saleable experiences), improved experiences and better distribution.
5. Season extension: extend opening hours by 5% annually.
6. Increased visitor satisfaction – benchmarked through measures such as Net Promoter Score.



## How was the Plan Developed?

The planning process involved the following seven steps:

1. Formation of a Working Group – this group was put in place by Fáilte Ireland with representatives from all the key agencies and local tourism groups involved in influencing or delivering tourism.
2. Desk research to review the on-line presence of the destination; relevant best practices; and existing plans and strategies of stakeholders.
3. In-region mystery shop.
4. In-region consultation phase 1 – site visits; discussions with related operators; Working Group workshop; four community workshops to discuss the essence of place, the underlying stories and the opportunities; and a general appraisal of the overall area – followed by an analysis of the findings.
5. On-line series of eight themed workshops to review the findings of phase 1 and explore opportunities for destination and experience development.
6. In-depth online interviews with a cross-section of 39 stakeholders. In total, 146 stakeholders participated in the entire planning process.
7. Development of Plan and presentation to Working Group.



Greencastle Regatta, Co Donegal

# 1. SETTING THE SCENE

## Ag Leagan Amach an Radharc

Experiential Tourism is travel motivated by the desire to really connect with a place, its culture and people. It is less concerned with simply seeing or doing things, but rather with immersing oneself in the locale, interacting with people, engaging the senses and learning the history and stories of the place.

*Fáilte Ireland*

Culdaff Beach, Co Donegal

# THE EXPERIENCES OF IRELAND Eispéiris na hÉireann

## The Experience Brands of Ireland

Sitting underneath the Brand Ireland pillars are four key propositions (or experience brands) which represent the country's areas of strategic importance. These four areas are:



**Wild Atlantic Way** – “Experience one of the wildest, most enchanting 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.”



**Ireland's Ancient East** – “When you explore Ireland's Ancient East, you wander through 5,000 years of history. In these lush, green lands, tales of feuding dynasties hide behind crumbling Gothic architecture; ghostly tombs predate the pyramids; and knights, kings, monks and Vikings loom large in incredible stories.”



**Dublin** – “Dublin is the vibrant capital city bursting with a variety of surprising experiences – where city living thrives side by side with the natural outdoors.”



**Ireland's Hidden Heartlands** – “Explore the lush green heartlands of Ireland's natural rural beauty... where activity and relaxation are centred around rural communities and their lifestyles, that can be discovered across a lattice work of land and water trails showcased by the iconic River Shannon and the Beara-Breifne Way.

### What is an Experience Brand?

Ireland's *Experience Brands* are at the heart of how we communicate Ireland's unique offering to the visitor. They bring it to life, creating the motivation for visitors to come here by defining its diverse character in a way they can more easily understand. The Experience Brands provide the competitive advantage that separates us from our competitors.

An *Experience Brand* therefore must be unique enough to stand out in the international marketplace and stimulate demand. Each *Experience Brand* must have a clear proposition which ensures that a consistent approach is taken to the identification and development of memorable

tourism experiences within these brands. Each *Experience Brand* must be distinctive in the international marketplace and differentiate itself from other *Experience Brands* in Ireland and in other destinations.

An Experience Brand must:

- ▶ Be **grounded** in the consumer (travel values, social values, behaviours)
- ▶ Be **motivational** for international visitors
- ▶ Be **of scale** – made up of a critical mass of related attractions and supporting experiences which are purchasable and accessible – supported by appropriate tourism infrastructure

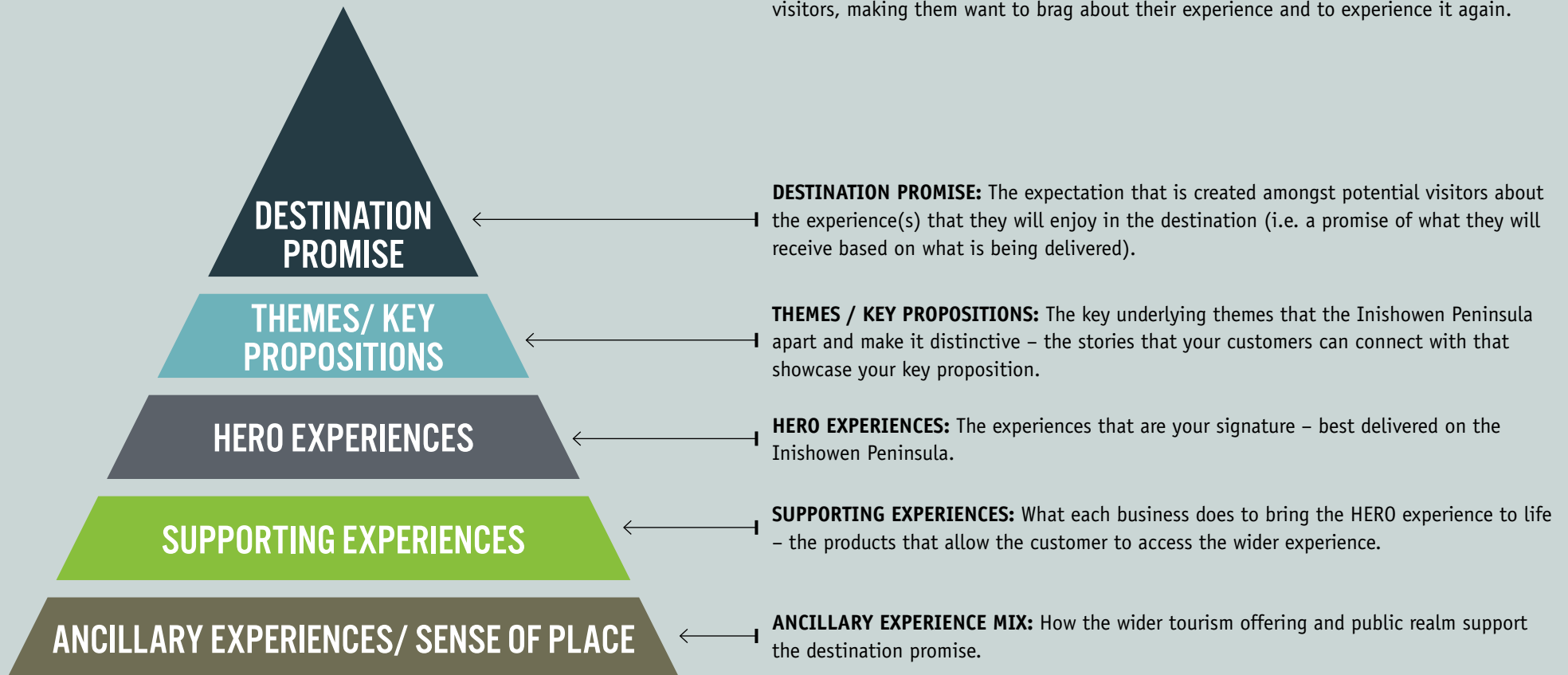
- ▶ Be **more than one experience**, and usually a combination of supporting experiences which underpin one or two lead experiences
- ▶ Be **unified by a compelling story** – one which has international relevance
- ▶ Be capable of **increasing dwell-time** and/or driving **economic benefit**
- ▶ Have a **consumer led** proposition, values, and theme(s)
- ▶ Be **market-led** and tested

# WHAT IS EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT? Cad is Forbairt Eispéiris ann?

*Developing an experience requires a shift away from the traditional product versus price mentality. It is about delivering life-changing moments that inspire visitors to not only share their experience with others, but also makes them want to return.*

It is the art and science of delivering a consistent message that inspires consumers throughout their travel experience – providing something that not only motivates visitors to become ambassadors for your destination, but also gives them the tools to help tell your message.

The concept of experience development extends beyond just simply providing an enjoyable experience for visitors. To achieve international cut-through in today's 'sharing economy', experiences need to utilise story techniques that evoke a positive emotional response in visitors, making them want to brag about their experience and to experience it again.



# 2. KEY INSIGHTS INFORMING OUR ACTIONS

## Léargais Thabhachtacha a Chuireann ár nGníomhaíochtaí in Iúl

People want to experience an off the beaten track experience that genuinely immerses them in multiple ways so that they feel stimulated, energised and uplifted.

*Wild Atlantic Way Operational Programme 2015-2019*

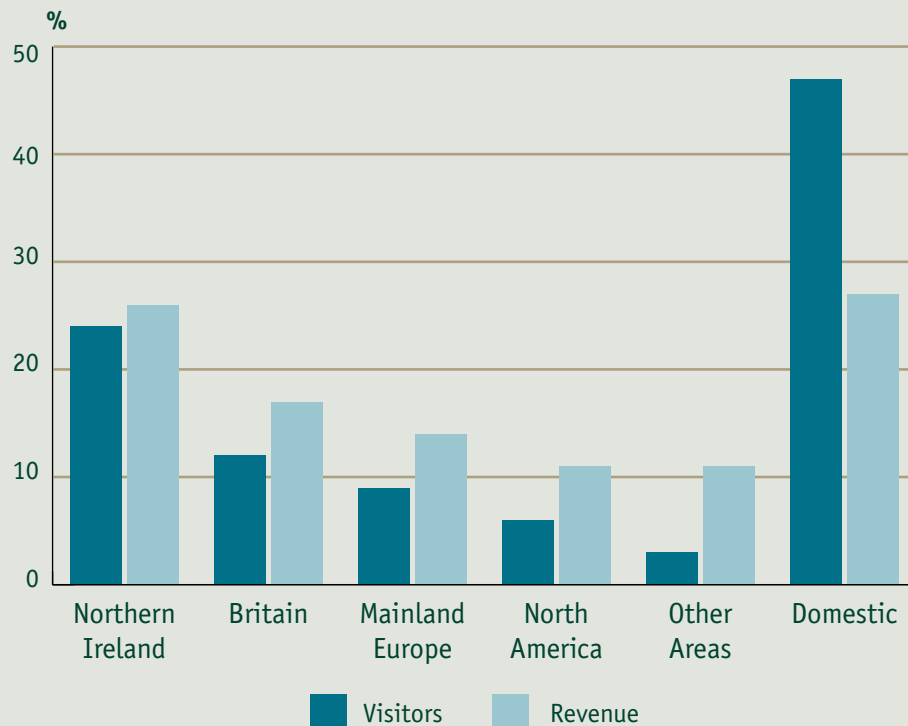


Stroove Lighthouse, Co Donegal

# WHERE ARE WE NOW? An Staid Reatha

While there has been considerable research on consumer sentiment during 2020/2021 and corresponding analysis of industry’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic, data relating to market performance pre-dates 2020. Recent data from Fáilte Ireland indicates that the Border region (Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Monaghan and Sligo) received 2.5 million visitors in 2019 (of which 30% are overseas) and €562 million in visitor spend (of which 53% is from overseas visitors).

## Market Size & Revenue, Border Region 2019



Fáilte Ireland, April 2021, Key Tourism Statistics Wild Atlantic Way, internal publication; March 2020, Key Tourism Facts 2019. Central Statistics Office – Household Travel Survey; Tourism Performance Jan to Dec 2019



The Northern Ireland market is particularly strong in this region, while the Mainland Europe and North American markets considerably under-perform compared to other areas along the Wild Atlantic Way. When international travel resumes, consideration needs to be given to identifying ways of growing the overseas market share. By comparison, 53% of the total market to the West region (Galway, Mayo and Roscommon) is from overseas markets.



However, in the immediate post-COVID-19 recovery period, the strength of the domestic and the Northern Ireland markets is fortuitous at a time when these markets will be key to the recovery of the industry.

## Donegal – baseline indicators

The following indicators are for Co. Donegal. Equivalent data is not available for the Inishowen Peninsula.

- ▶ Just over 354,000 overseas visitors in 2019 – representing 10% of overseas visitors to the Wild Atlantic Way.
- ▶ 445,000 domestic trips in 2019 – representing 9% of domestic trips to the Wild Atlantic Way.
  - Average length of stay was 3.1 nights representing the second highest level of stay in any county (national average in 2019 was 2.5)
- ▶ €117 million expenditure from overseas visitors in 2019 – representing 6% of overseas spend along the Wild Atlantic Way.
- ▶ €97 million from domestic visitors in 2019 – representing 10% of domestic spend along the Wild Atlantic Way.
- ▶ Total expenditure from tourists in 2019 amounted to €214 million – representing 7.4% of total spend.
- ▶ Overseas spend per visitor in Co. Donegal is estimated to be €330 – well below the average spend of €559/overseas visitor for the Wild Atlantic Way.
  - Overseas €s per 10,000 population in County Donegal - €5.15m (ranked 15th out of 26 counties) (IBEC Local Economic Indicators 2018).
- ▶ Domestic spend per visitor to County Donegal is estimated to be €229 – a higher level of spend than the €203 per domestic visitor for the West region.
- ▶ The average spend per visitor from Northern Ireland to the Border counties is estimated to be €255. This market spends an average of €307/visitor to the Wild Atlantic Way.

# THE EXPERIENCES OUR VISITORS ARE SEEKING Na hEispéiris atá á Lorg ag ár gCuirteoirí

**Having a detailed understanding of what motivates visitors to travel to Ireland can help to grow market share through more effective experience development and targeted marketing.**

Recognising the benefits of global consumer market segmentation, Fáilte Ireland has undertaken significant research on the country's key consumer segments, including their travel motivations, lifestyle, values, interests and travel information sources.

Through this research, two primary market segments have been identified for the Wild

Atlantic Way – the **Culturally Curious** and the **Great Escapers**. As an appreciation for Inishowen's activity tourism grows, there is increasing potential to attract **Social Energisers** as a secondary market. In addition to these leisure segments, the peninsula has the potential to attract an educational market with an interest in the marine environment and ecotourism.

The following tables highlights what the three leisure segments are seeking from a holiday in Ireland, together with key attributes of youth travel (as a key element of the educational market):

## LEISURE SEGMENTS

### Culturally Curious

are very independently minded and are interested in places of historic and cultural interest.

- ▶ Want to learn about Irish culture, customs and traditions
- ▶ Looking for authentic local experiences
- ▶ Interested in history being brought to life by storytelling and re-enactment
- ▶ Seek to venture off the beaten track – often by hiking, walking or biking
- ▶ Curious to explore natural landscapes and seascapes, small towns and villages, castles, ancient sites and historic houses
- ▶ Seek quality, fresh, well-prepared local food
- ▶ They want to hear the insider perspective through local stories

### Great Escapers

want to get away from it all, renewing family bonds and spending time together in a beautiful place.

- ▶ Feel connected to nature – travel in Autumn and/or Spring when nature is going through a transformative phase
- ▶ Seek value for money
- ▶ Rural touring holidays with a promise of local, authentic communities and activities
- ▶ Meeting authentic local people to learn about the Irish way of life
- ▶ Little interest in formal cultural artefacts e.g. museums
- ▶ Seek an urban-rural experience, but will want to experience the less touristy parts of the cities

### Social Energisers

have a passion to experience new things – the more unique and exciting, the better.

- ▶ Socially energetic; young at heart spanning all age groups
- ▶ Seek fun, social interaction and excitement and want to engage fully with the destination – looking for areas frequented by the locals and quirky, spontaneous 'unplanned' experiences
- ▶ Want to visit the top attractions and activities, particularly if they are presented in an energetic, engaging and unusual way
- ▶ Professionals with a busy life – can be a more lucrative segment than others

### Educational-Youth Travel

do not consider travel as a luxury – but as part of their lifestyle – they 'collect experiences'

- ▶ Mix travel ambitions with study, work, volunteering or adventure while often seeking to support career aspirations
- ▶ Seek 'novel' and engaging experiences that go beyond leisure – want to engage in a country's culture
- ▶ Tend to travel light with ipad/laptop – Wi-Fi is essential
- ▶ 40% is group travel
- ▶ Keen interest in water-based activities
- ▶ Prefer budget accommodation, such as hostels – economise on accommodation/ transport to optimise on cultural immersion
- ▶ Trend setters and influencers
- ▶ Likely to return

# STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

## Láidreachtaí, Laigeachtaí, Deiseanna agus Bagairtí

A successful Destination and Experience Development Plan should not only be aligned to the Wild Atlantic Way brand and its target markets, but it should also seek to address the underlying challenges and threats facing the destination, while building on core strengths and finding ways of leveraging new opportunities.

The key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as identified in community discussions and site visits are presented below. This SWOT analysis has been used to guide the direction of the strategic initiatives outlined in the Action Plan.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Ireland's most northerly point</li> <li>▶ Strong thematic story of time</li> <li>▶ Diversity of coastlines – from the wildness of Malin Head to estuaries and Blue Flag sandy beaches</li> <li>▶ Biodiversity – rich marine wild life, and migratory and resident bird life</li> <li>▶ Heritage of early Christianity</li> <li>▶ Diverse maritime and military heritage – strong physical assets – Grianán of Aileach, O'Doherty castles, Fort Dunree, Malin Head, wealth of shipwrecks</li> <li>▶ Exceptional stories associated with the peninsula's creative heritage</li> <li>▶ Experiences and stories that highlight resilience: Famine Village, emigration story</li> <li>▶ New successful product and internationally acclaimed golf</li> <li>▶ Strong contemporary artisan sector</li> <li>▶ Significant strengths in music</li> <li>▶ Amazing Grace story</li> <li>▶ Land and marine-based hard and soft adventure</li> <li>▶ Community festivals</li> <li>▶ Growing culinary strengths</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ High level of seasonality and low length of stay</li> <li>▶ Low dwell time at key attractions</li> <li>▶ Peninsula is too easy to pass by</li> <li>▶ Weak linkages between agencies</li> <li>▶ Fragmented offering – appears to lack critical mass and cohesion – lack of coordination</li> <li>▶ Arts and craft sector lacks clear market identity</li> <li>▶ Large number of local efforts that have limited visibility as tourism products</li> <li>▶ Weak domestic market prior to COVID-19</li> <li>▶ Examples of tired product and interpretive signage</li> <li>▶ Challenges with potential trails development</li> <li>▶ Concern over growing congestion at Malin Head</li> <li>▶ Weak evening economy</li> <li>▶ Lower international ratings on visual appearance and things to do</li> <li>▶ Low awareness of value of tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Location/proximity to N. Ireland</li> <li>▶ Potential to develop unifying story themes that will create a stronger peninsular identity</li> <li>▶ Improved visitor experience, connectivity of stories and site experiences through technology</li> <li>▶ Enhancing linkages between local agencies to promote synergies</li> <li>▶ Experience and site development proposals for Fort Dunree and Malin Head</li> <li>▶ Development of the North West Greenway – initial stages and as a longer-term active travel initiative linking Inishowen with Co. Derry</li> <li>▶ Potential to create staging areas for wider peninsular experiences</li> <li>▶ Potential to develop the Inishowen Blueway</li> <li>▶ Potential to promote a community led approach to destination development and stewardship</li> <li>▶ Strengthening of ecotourism</li> <li>▶ Public realm enhancement</li> <li>▶ Potential to develop well-being tourism, including culinary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ External crises – recovery from COVID-19</li> <li>▶ Weak labour market/supply</li> <li>▶ Vulnerabilities of small businesses and inability to withstand economic downturns</li> <li>▶ Ongoing impact of Brexit</li> <li>▶ Growing inflation and reduction in disposable income</li> <li>▶ Impact of global geo-politics</li> <li>▶ Rising insurance costs</li> <li>▶ Currency fluctuations</li> <li>▶ Sustainability of air connectivity to Donegal and Derry Airports</li> <li>▶ Climate change</li> <li>▶ Loss of biodiversity – land and marine species</li> <li>▶ Wastewater discharge in estuarine and river waters</li> <li>▶ Need for traffic management if vehicular traffic increases</li> <li>▶ Potential of losing aesthetic and cultural integrity through road improvements</li> </ul>



# ASPIRATIONS Spriocanna

## Regional Aspirations

A plan that aligns with the aspirations of communities has a much greater likelihood of making a difference and achieving longer term success. On the basis of consultation, tourism businesses and related stakeholders indicated a desire for a tourism focus that:

- ▶ **Maintains scenic values of the peninsula** – particularly its ‘rawness’ and ‘ruggedness’ and the attributes that elicit a sense of going back in time.
- ▶ **Focuses on a development approach that is regarded as sustainable** with an emphasis on a scale that is appropriate to preserving a sense of intimacy with landscape and people.
- ▶ **Creates a new narrative** that raises the profile of the maritime and military story, elevates the artistic sector and highlights the opportunities for outdoor adventure and personal well-being.
- ▶ **Contributes to the preservation of traditional skills.**
- ▶ **Reduces seasonality and disperses the visitors** in a way that spreads the benefits.
- ▶ **Provides employment opportunities** that will retain the younger working population.
- ▶ **Improves supporting infrastructure and services**, including enhanced public transportation services; cycling and walking connectivity between visitor sites, towns and villages; improved internet services; and a growth in evening activities.

- ▶ **Offers new all-weather experiences.**
- ▶ **Generates a greater appreciation in the value of the industry** within the wider community.
- ▶ **Supports a cohesive and collaborative approach** that leverages the richness of local resources and assets more effectively and raises the profile of the peninsula and its surrounding waters in terms of its ecological significance.

Undiscovered  
Conduit of information  
Last port of call  
Shared story with Derry  
Uncomplicated & friendly  
Big stories – small place

Marine adventure  
Continuous story through time  
Maritime & military heritage  
Rich artistic heritage – music, arts, craft, literary  
Spirituality

Artistic presence of ancient times  
Resilience of people  
"unique beyond unique"  
Audacious moments in history – 'Poitín Republic'

Remote & unspoilt – wildness  
Surrounded by sea  
Borderland  
Oasis  
Creative

*Descriptors of Inishowen – community sessions 2020*



Ross Head Harbour, Malin Head, Co Donegal

# ASPIRATIONS Spriocanna

## County Context

In addition to the aspiration of Inishowen communities and tourism businesses, progress on the strategic priorities of Donegal County Council will facilitate the implementation of the Plan and will be supported by its implementation. Donegal County Council plays a significant role in the development of tourism and envisions the county as *a primary destination on the Wild Atlantic Way offering an extremely attractive total visitor experience unique to Donegal – one where excellence and value are paramount.* (Donegal County Council Tourism Strategy 2017-2020 – currently in the process of being updated). The County Council is taking the lead in a number of the catalyst projects outlined in this document (particularly the North West Greenway, Fort Dunree and Malin Head). This Plan reinforces the synergies between regional aspirations and county-led projects.

## National Context – Our Shared Future

The national policy context\* is increasingly raising the need for a shift in focus when looking at building the country's future – a shift that recognises the defining moment of today and the urgency of addressing climate change and supporting biodiversity as Ireland seeks to recover from COVID-19. The opportunity is regarded as unprecedented in rural areas. It is seen as one that needs to build on the talent and creativity of people living in rural communities, while reinforcing the importance of vibrant and lived-in rural places and sustaining an environment shared by all. The renewed emphasis on active travel and greenway development, the commitment to the protection of marine ecosystems and the focus on cross-border collaboration are all policy themes that have particular relevance for Inishowen. This Destination and Experience Development Plan seeks to support community and county-wide aspirations, while firmly aligning with existing and forthcoming national policy.

\*As outlined in policy statements such as *Programme for Government – Our Shared Future* (2020) and *Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025* (2021).



Malin Head, Co Donegal

# 3. INISHOWEN – OVERVIEW OF PLAN AND DESTINATION THEMES

## Inis Eoghain – Forbhreathnú ar Téamaí Plean agus Ceann Scribe

IMAGINE a peninsula...

Where ripple marks from tides of time tell our stories of land and sea;  
Where past and present are intertwined on our hills and in our songs;  
Where kings and chiefs and garrisons proudly defended our shores;  
Where saints traversed and our sons and siblings sailed forth;  
Where cherished traditions of times gone by infuse our lives and our creative expressions today;  
Where the call of the wild unleashes our energy, stirs our passion and calms our soul;  
And, where our giants of the deep leave us mesmerised and reconnected with life around us  
... this is INISHOWEN – Ireland's most northerly point.

*Michael Chambers, Newport*

*Extract from his poem – Treasures by the Sea*

Pollan Bay, Ballyliffin, Co Donegal

# OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN Forléargas ar an bPlean

## OUR VISION

A destination recognised for our internationally significant marine ecosystem, our distinctive maritime and military heritage, our creative story and the opportunity it offers to pursue adventure, health and well-being year-round.

## OUR PROMISE

Where ripple marks from tides of time tell our stories of land and sea... where the call of the wild unleashes our energy, stirs our passion and calms our soul...where the giants of the deep leave us mesmerised and reconnected with life around us.

## OUR GOALS

- ▶ To enrich our communities through sustainably growing and spreading the benefits of tourism across the peninsula year round.
- ▶ To adopt new ways of working collaboratively to differentiate Inishowen and deliver compelling HERO experiences.
- ▶ To add value to our sense of place and to ensure that the integrity of our ecosystems, landscapes and traditions are respected.

## OUR STRATEGIC AREAS OF ACTION

- ▶ Implementing Catalyst Projects to accelerate momentum.
- ▶ Developing HERO experiences.
- ▶ Strengthening supportive infrastructure and sense of place.
- ▶ Building industry capacity and supporting services.



The **THREE THEMES** reflect the strengths and personality of Inishowen – ‘Maritime and Military Might’; ‘Inishowen’s Creative Story’; and ‘Wild Oasis’.

An overview of the themes is presented in the following page and outlined in greater detail in Appendix A1.

Appendix A2 highlights the key planning considerations associated with each theme. Taken together, **the themes play an important role in shaping experience development priorities, particularly the catalyst projects and they underpin the direction of the entire plan.**

# THE 'STORY' OF INISHOWEN – ITS HERO EXPERIENCE THEMES

## 'Scéal' Inis Eoghain - Téamaí Eispéiris HERO na Leithinse

**The story of Inishowen is a story of time.** It is a story that can shape the HERO experiences and can be used to differentiate the peninsula. It provides the basis for identifying experiential themes that in turn, can provide a sense of cohesion to the

destination experience. These themes are reflected in the catalyst projects and in the remaining actions that focus specifically on product and experience development.

### Inishowen

*– where ripple marks from tides of time tell our stories of land and sea.... where the call of the wild unleashes our energy, stirs our passion and calms our soul... where the giants of the deep leave us mesmerised and reconnected with life around us.*

#### Maritime and Military Might

The maritime and military heritage of Inishowen is unrivalled along the Wild Atlantic Way. Key chapters of Ireland's history unfolded on Inishowen. Visitors to Inishowen can explore sites that reveal the legacies and stories in defending the peninsula from threats near and far, down through the centuries.

#### Inishowen's Creative Story

Creativity is a theme that resonates along the Wild Atlantic Way, but nowhere is its story so strongly etched into the land and culturescape, as on Inishowen. The opportunity to explore art and artistic traditions from Neolithic times through to the present and to engage in immersive experiences is on offer across the peninsula.

#### Wild Oasis

Whether today's visitor is looking for elemental wildness or peace and serenity, both can be readily found on Inishowen. Against a backdrop of natural heritage that has potential world acclaim, the visitor can pursue adrenaline-filled coastal adventure or can slow down in a landscape that promises an enhanced sense of well-being.



Ballyliffin Golf Course, Co Donegal

# 4. THE ACTION PLAN

## An Plean Gníomhaíochta

**OUR VISION:** A destination recognised for our internationally significant marine ecosystem, our distinctive maritime and military heritage, our creative story and the opportunity it offers to pursue adventure, health and well-being year round.



Grianán of Aileach, Co Donegal

# ACTION PLAN Plean Gníomhaíochta

## Introduction to the Action Plan

### A Unique Eco-Cultural Region

The Vision statement highlights the significant eco-cultural heritage of Inishowen. Elevating this distinctive identity lies at the core of this Destination and Experience Development Plan. To work towards realising the vision will require a collaborative approach that brings the diverse community of interests together – including agency representatives, community groups with ecological and cultural heritage aspirations and businesses. This approach is outlined in further detail in Section 4 and has the potential to play a pivotal role in the ongoing development and promotion of Inishowen Peninsula as a unique bio-cultural region on the Wild Atlantic Way.

### The Structure of the Action Plan

The Action Plan is presented in four sections:

1. **Catalyst Projects**
2. **Developing HERO Experiences** – these are additional experiences that will strengthen Inishowen as a destination
3. **Strengthening Supportive Infrastructure and Sense of Place**
4. **Building Industry Capacity and Supporting Services**

The alignment of the Catalyst Projects and HERO Experiences with the three themes is illustrated in the table – (darker check marks indicate primary themes and lighter check marks indicate secondary themes).

The **Catalyst Projects** presented in **Section 1** are all initiatives designed to generate significant momentum across the region. It is anticipated that they will strengthen the positioning of the Inishowen Peninsula as a visitor destination and will act as a stimulant for both local and regional sustainable economic growth.

### SUMMARY: Catalyst Projects and HERO Experiences by Theme

CATALYST PROJECTS	MARITIME & MILITARY MIGHT	INISHOWEN'S CREATIVE STORY	WILD OASIS
Fort Dunree	✓	✓	✓
Malin Head	✓		✓
North West Greenway Network	✓		✓
Creative Hubs		✓	
Inishowen Blueway	✓		✓
SUPPORTING HERO EXPERIENCES			
Grianán of Aileach	✓		
Inishowen Maritime Museum & Planetarium	✓	✓	✓
Inch Wildfowl Reserve			✓
Inishtrahull Island			✓
Heritage Sites – the O'Doherty Story	✓		
Adventure Activities			✓
Dark Skies			✓
Marine Ecotourism	✓		✓
Well-being from Nature		✓	✓
Inishowen's Culinary Experience		✓	✓

# ACTION PLAN Plean Gníomhaíochta

In the case of Fort Dunree, Malin Head and the North West Greenway, considerable progress has already been made and this Plan seeks to build on the strategic significance of these projects.

**Section 2** proposes a series of additional product and experience development actions. These initiatives are designed to complement the Catalyst Projects and to further elevate the region's eco-cultural identity. Taken together, they will generate new interest from the key international markets (Culturally Curious, Great Escapers and Social Energisers) and will assist in growing an educational and scientific research market.

In **Section 3**, the emphasis is on enhancing competitiveness through improvements to infrastructure and sense of place. These actions will support the development and delivery of experiences and are essential for the longer-term sustainable growth of tourism in the Inishowen Peninsula.

**Section 4** highlights the importance of building capacity within the industry and ensuring that adequate supporting services are in place. As noted, a priority initiative is the establishment of a new framework that will raise industry and community awareness of the eco-cultural significance of Inishowen Peninsula and will generate ongoing dialogue and innovative thinking across the region on how to realise the vision.

Taken together, the strategic priorities and actions outlined in this Plan will strengthen the competitiveness of the destination and the industry and will generate a more cohesive approach to destination development, management and marketing.

**Sustainability remains a core guiding principle throughout and the Plan reflects all elements of the VICE model: Visitor, Industry, Community and Environment.**

Each strategic priority highlights the key partners involved in implementation and an indication of the timeline. **Partners in bold font are regarded as the lead partners. Other partners identified, have a supportive role.**

The Plan is supported by a series of **Appendices** relating to:

- ▶ An overview of each experiential theme.
- ▶ Considerations that need to be addressed in elevating these themes.
- ▶ A description of each locality, its HERO products and supporting experiences and the theme-based stories; and,
- ▶ Environmental considerations.

**The focus of this Plan is ultimately on encouraging visitors to stay longer and spend more and to develop a new appreciation for the unique values of Inishowen and its people.**

An **Implementation Group** will be brought together by Fáilte Ireland to oversee the implementation of this Plan and to ensure that partners with a specified role in initiating actions are making progress.





# ACTION PLAN Plean Gníomhaíochta

## SECTION 1: CATALYST PROJECTS

CATALYST PROJECTS			
1. FORT DUNREE		PARTNERS	TIMING
1	<p>Fort Dunree has the potential to be a significant attractor and has the capacity to offer a range of experiences that will appeal to a spectrum of audiences. In June 2021, the existing attraction was awarded almost €12.5 million under Fáilte Ireland's Platform for Growth programme to transform the site into a world-class attraction – thereby enabling it to become a lead attraction in Donegal and the entire north west of the island of Ireland. The Fort Dunree Business Case prepared for the funding application) provides an initial guiding document.</p> <p><b>PRIMARY HERO THEME: Maritime &amp; Military Might; SECONDARY THEMES: Wild Oasis; Inishowen's Creative Story</b></p>		
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Secure professional engineering design services to design and deliver/manage all the consultancy services required to develop the proposed funicular, the Lough Swilly glass walkway and the upgrades to existing buildings and heritage artefacts. Commence development on these initiatives.</li> </ul>	<b>DCC, Fort Dunree Board</b>	Short term / ongoing
1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Develop a comprehensive <b>visitor management plan</b> based on the funding proposal to support the longer-term management of the visitor site.</li> </ul>	<b>DCC, Fort Dunree Board</b>	Short term
1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Proceed with the animation of the entire site through enhanced interpretation</b> that includes elements of augmented and virtual reality, live performances in the Marching Square, guided themed tours and special events. Facilitate ease of movement through clear signage.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Integrate the virtual experience that will be an output of the EU TIDE project</b> and highlight the thematic linkages with the Tower Museum in Derry/Londonderry, Greencastle Maritime Museum and Fanad Lighthouse, in addition to Burtonport and Killybegs.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>DCC, Fort Dunree Board</b> FI, activity/ local tour operators	Short to medium term
1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Establish Fort Dunree as an experiential hub for a range of offerings that tie all three HERO themes together</b> – including ecotourism and wildlife-watching, marine-based adventure and artistic experiences. The immediate coastline, the proposed glass walkway and the high fort with its watchtowers will provide exceptional viewing of this part of the peninsula and the surrounding waters, which can be complemented by the proposed Northern Skies glass box within the museum and the viewing points at the lighthouse.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Leverage the visitor's interest by promoting complementary experiences and qualified operators/guides.</li> <li>– Promote local produce and products in the café and retail area.</li> <li>– Utilise performance areas for a wide range of performing arts offered by the wider arts community and develop a calendar of events.</li> <li>– Develop an interpretive programme that focuses on the marine ecosystem and include events that promote the ecological distinctiveness of the peninsula and the Fort Dunree area.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>DCC, Fort Dunree Board</b> FI, activity/ local tour operators	Medium to longer term

# ACTION PLAN Plean Gníomhaíochta

## SECTION 1: CATALYST PROJECTS

1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Work with partners to develop safe active travel options, and public transportation</b> particularly from Buncrana to Fort Dunree, that will assist in reducing car travel. Consider incentivising this form of travel through a discount voucher.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provide bicycle facilities that will allow for secure parking of bikes.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>DCC, Fort Dunree Board</b>  Local Link	Medium term
1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Develop a strategic and sustainable approach when working with coach tour operators.</b> Focus on implementing tactics that will encourage overnight visitation on Inishowen through preferential pricing strategies.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Monitor the level of coach traffic and consider a tiered discounting strategy, with a reduction in discount to day coaches that have limited economic impact elsewhere on Inishowen.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>DCC, Fort Dunree Board</b>  Coach tour operations	Medium term
1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Work with partners who attract educational markets to <b>explore opportunities to integrate Fort Dunree into any potential educational programming</b> that is focused on the eco-cultural heritage of the peninsula.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Assess the suitability of developing laboratory or classroom facilities on site.</li> <li>– Work with schools in the regional catchment to develop a programme of study that supports the school curriculum – both in Ireland and in Northern Ireland.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Fort Dunree Board</b>  FI, Local businesses, schools	Longer term

2. MALIN HEAD		PARTNERS	TIMING
2	<p>As Ireland’s most northerly point and the first (or last) Signature Discovery Point on the Wild Atlantic Way, Malin Head has been growing in popularity as a destination. It is the focal area of many of Inishowen’s maritime and military stories and offers the best land-based viewing location for the marine wildlife and outstanding scenery for walking. A <i>Visitor Management Plan</i> has been completed for Malin Head, although has yet to be fully adopted.</p> <p><b>PRIMARY HERO THEME: <i>Wild Oasis; Maritime &amp; Military Might</i></b></p>		

# ACTION PLAN Plean Gníomhaíochta

## SECTION 1: CATALYST PROJECTS

2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Work towards implementing the Management Plan.</b> This may need to be undertaken in a series of phased steps.</li> <li>▶ <b>Focus initially on traffic management.</b> A hub and shuttle service has been proposed and should be advanced as a priority to reduce congestion at Malin Head. Ideally, <b>a hub based in Malin village</b> will assist in strengthening the local village economy and could act as a stronger staging area for related guided experiences and activities.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Develop the proposed shuttle service with a series of hop-on, hop-off stops</b> at sites of interest and business outlets to assist in dispersing the visitor and reducing vehicular traffic.</li> <li>– Explore the role of new technologies to <b>provide real-time information on shuttle availability</b> and schedule.</li> <li>– <b>Continue to assess the road network in relation to cycling opportunities.</b> Identify preferred routes and implement safety measures, including enhanced signage, speed restrictions and off-road options.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ <b>Continue to advance the preferred infrastructural projects that are designed to bring the Malin Head story to life.</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>DCC</b></p> <p>FI, LA, FLAG, IDP, NPWS, local landowners, local community groups</p>	<p>Short to medium term</p>
2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Reassess the importance of Malin Head from a marine-ecological perspective.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Continue to explore opportunities for developing a facility that has a strong marine focus</b> and a mandate to work with a range of audiences.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>EXAMPLE: Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre, situated in a remote location on the west coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia, offers unparalleled access to unique coastal, marine and rainforest habitats and exceptional species diversity. It was developed in 1972 and provides world-class research infrastructure for marine and coastal scientists from the five member universities and from other Canadian and International institutes. The Centre offers a range of in-residence programmes to various audiences, including schools and provides training for graduate students, post-doctoral fellows and technicians in practical aspects of marine and coastal research. The research facility has 12 vessels and a dive centre and is internationally renowned for its underwater naturalists. The facility has total aquaria space of 800m<sup>2</sup>, a conference centre, major research facilities and offers food services and accommodation.</p>	<p><b>IBSSG, NPWS</b></p> <p>IDP, FI, LA, FLAG, local landowners</p>	<p>Medium to longer term</p>

# ACTION PLAN Plean Gníomhaíochta

## SECTION 1: CATALYST PROJECTS

3. NORTH WEST GREENWAY NETWORK		PARTNERS	TIMING
3	<p>This cross-border initiative is well underway and will ultimately create an active travel corridor between Derry/Londonderry and the Inishowen Peninsula. It is one of a number of greenway projects that are currently under consideration in Donegal. While the North West Greenway Network is positioned as a modal shift project primarily designed to change local travel behaviour, it will have a major impact on the destination's visitor experience. Within the Network, the Inishowen Greenway concept in its entirety envisages a circular route that will provide connectivity between Derry/Londonderry, Buncrana, Carndonagh, Moville, Quigley's Point, Muff and back to Derry/Londonderry, with the potential for the development of spurs and linkages to key sites and existing walking trails. Ultimately there are plans to link through to Lifford and Strabane via the Foyle Valley Greenway and to an expanding greenway network in Northern Ireland. Both the Inishowen Greenway and the Foyle Valley Greenway are two of a range of greenways highlighted in the <i>National Development Plan 2021-2030</i>, as part of the Government's commitment to strengthening opportunities for active travel.</p> <p>Although completion of a circular greenway route on Inishowen will take time, its potential to connect a series of attractions and communities to a cycle and walking market that is rapidly growing, is substantial and needs to be continually explored as development moves forward. The Inishowen Greenway will play a critical role in elevating the three experiential themes and telling the story of Inishowen, while being a HERO experience in its own right and a vital new route for active travel.</p> <p>The initial routes to be constructed are between Derry/Londonderry and Buncrana via Inch (32.5km) and between Derry/Londonderry and Muff (10.5kms). The section through Muff was completed in June 2022.</p> <p><b>PRIMARY HERO THEME: <i>Wild Oasis</i></b></p>		
3.1	<p>► <b>Establish a multi-departmental approach to developing this project within Donegal County Council.</b> Promote regular dialogue between Roads and Transportation and the Community, Enterprise and Planning Directorate and the Economic Development Unit to ensure a holistic approach to its ongoing development.</p>	DCC	Short term
3.2	<p>► <b>Establish a communications and consultation strategy</b> to engage relevant businesses that are adjacent to the proposed Greenway to explore opportunities on benefitting commercially from the development. Consider the potential for new supporting businesses such as cycle hire.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Undertake user research in the initial years. Preliminary forecasting reports produced for Donegal County Council for the Derry/Londonderry to Buncrana section highlight user levels of up to 250,000 within 2 years, with visitors making up at least one-fifth of this demand. Communicating this research will be of value in stimulating business development.</li> <li>- Continue to maintain communications with landowners and communities as progress advances. Communications should be tailored to meet the needs of different audiences.</li> </ul>	DCC FI, landowners, community groups, business associations, user groups	Short to medium term

# ACTION PLAN Plean Gníomhaíochta

## SECTION 1: CATALYST PROJECTS

3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Work collaboratively to review signage and interpretation requirements, location of viewpoints and general greenway infrastructure.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Consider creating an interpretation storyboard for the entire Inishowen Greenway and work towards developing a phased Greenway Interpretation plan. Its implementation would move forward as the greenway project progresses.</li> <li>– Continue to assess the location and requirements of visitor access points, including parking requirements, public toilets and information needs. Consider the potential to develop service points at important locations, such as Inch, Burnfoot and Fahan Marina.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>FI</b> DCC, IDP, community heritage groups</p>	<p>Medium to longer term</p>
3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Assess opportunities to connect with visitor experiences within the vicinity of the proposed Inishowen Greenway</b> and identify actions required to improve access from the greenway route to sites and attractions of interest to visitors. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Where sites can be accessed, review bike parking facilities and begin to work with relevant site managers to address forthcoming requirements.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>FI</b> Business operators</p>	<p>Ongoing with development</p>
3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>As the Inishowen Greenway develops, encourage the improvement of cycling infrastructure within hub communities, particularly Bunrana and Carndonagh.</b> Ensure ease of safe access from the greenway corridor into towns through the development of connecting cycle-lanes and ensure that town centres have sufficient bike parking facilities. This will encourage cyclists to stop and spend time in communities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>FI, DCC</b> Community groups, business associations</p>	<p>Ongoing with development</p>
3.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Support the advancement of stage two of the Inishowen Greenway development</b> – funding is already in place to begin assessing opportunities to extend both arms – one to Carndonagh and the other to Quigley’s Point. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– When considering route options to Carndonagh, focus on ensuring good connectivity with Drumfries, Clonmany and Ballyliffin – this will support the growth of tourism-related business clusters in these settlements.</li> <li>– Encourage ongoing revitalisation of communities that lie within the proposed Greenway route.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ <b>Pursue funding for the remaining development phases that will eventually create a full circuit.</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>DCC</b> FI, landowners, community groups, business associations, user groups</p>	<p>Longer term</p>

# ACTION PLAN Plean Gníomhaíochta

## SECTION 1: CATALYST PROJECTS

4. CREATIVE HUBS		PARTNERS	TIMING
4	<p>The creativity found within the Inishowen Peninsula today has a long history and remains a key hallmark of the peninsula. However, like many rural areas, it is a fragmented sector and market awareness of the collective offering is low. The concept of a creative hub is aimed at fostering growth in the local and regional creative economy. It can take on different formats and can be established for different purposes, with the focus generally being on smaller providers. This strategic priority has identified two potential hubs – the Market House in Clonmany and the proposed Creative Maker’s Hub in Carndonagh. Each creative hub concept is distinctive in its own right and when taken together they add significant value to the creative sector and to tourism. Both have the potential to act as staging areas to engage the visitor further in <i>Inishowen’s Creative Story</i>.</p> <p><b>PRIMARY: <i>Inishowen’s Creative Story</i> – with the potential to support the other two themes through the arts</b></p>		
4.1	<p>▶ <b>Continue to explore repurposing the use of The Market House in Clonmany in association with the Clonmany Enterprise Development Association (trading as Clonmany Festival) and the Clonmany Community Centre.</b> The proposed concept has an emphasis on traditional crafting skills with tentative plans to display artefacts and to offer demonstrations of traditional skills and opportunities for visitors to engage in immersive learning experiences. This facility, combined with Clonmany’s existing community centre programme of traditional crafts would give Clonmany a strong position as the learning centre for these traditional skills.</p>	CDA, CCC FI, art groups, community heritage groups	Short term
4.2	<p>▶ <b>Move forward with the establishment of the Creative Maker’s Hub</b> for artists and artisans through the TÚS Nua Regeneration Project in Carndonagh.</p>	Spraoi agus Spórt, CTA	Short term
4.3	<p>▶ Where a creative hub has <b>potential to function as a staging area</b> and to play a role in encouraging visitors to discover further studios within Inishowen and participate in organised guided activities, expand relevant business or development plans to determine the nature of this potential. Consideration should be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Working with community groups such as the Lands of Éogain, to facilitate the offering of themed guided natural and cultural heritage experiences.</b> This group in particular has delivered experiences in the past that strongly align with this Plan – logistical support through a creative hub would be of significant benefit in delivering a programme of experiences.</li> <li>– <b>Exploring opportunities to develop a poitín guided hiking experience in the Urris Hills.</b> This could be staged from a creative hub and/or developed in partnership with the Doagh Famine Village.</li> <li>– <b>Partnering with artisans to offer on-site learning experiences</b> and establish programme of experiences that can be administered through the hubs.</li> <li>– <b>Assessing the possibility of using a creative hub to host cultural heritage events and forums.</b> This is particularly relevant to the Market House initiative, where there is a community field that can be used for outdoor events.</li> </ul>	FI, Explore Inishowen Private social enterprises, community art groups, community heritage groups	Ongoing as hub initiatives move forward
4.4	<p>▶ <b>Work with larger arts and crafts providers to develop new and enhance existing visitor experiences in their location.</b> The combination of strong stand-alone experiences and the creative hubs will give Inishowen significant presence in Ireland’s creative economy.</p>	FI Artisan businesses	Ongoing

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## SECTION 1: CATALYST PROJECTS

5. INISHOWEN BLUEWAY		PARTNERS	TIMING
5	<p>The peninsula offers a range of water-based activities and has become well recognised regionally for the activities offered at Moville and Fort Dunree. However, it has no strong stand-out water-based experience that would compel international markets or domestic markets from further afield. The concept of an Inishowen Blueway would meet that requirement and would strengthen the marine ecotourism offering.</p> <p><b>PRIMARY HERO THEME: <i>Wild Oasis</i>; SECONDARY THEME: <i>Maritime &amp; Military Might</i></b></p>		
5.1	<p>► <b>Develop international recognition for kayaking through establishing a Marine Blueway</b> that incorporates the East Inishowen Sea Kayak Trail from Lifford to Moville (developed by the Loughs Agency) and extend this trail around Malin Head and into Lough Swilly – with the potential of going to Letterkenny.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Work towards extending the existing East Inishowen Sea Kayak Trail guide to include the route from Moville to Malin Head and the western side of the peninsula.</li> <li>– <b>Identify all access points</b> and assess suitability for launching a kayak or small craft.</li> <li>– <b>Identify suitable overnight stops</b> and work with local stakeholders to identify sites for building bothies and areas where small-scale camping can occur.</li> <li>– <b>Explore the opportunity to develop an online Inishowen Blueway information tool for trip planning.</b> This has the potential to be developed as a pilot for roll-out on a much larger scale.</li> </ul> <p><b>EXAMPLE: <a href="#">BC Marine Trails</a></b> has established a series of west coast marine trails with an online interactive map planning tool. The map shows campsites, emergency pullouts, launch sites, day-use sites and photographs. Members have additional tools, such as a ruler to measure distance between paddling locations and a downloads tool that enables users to download GPS coordinates for campsites, access points and day use sites for use in either Google Earth (kml file) or in PS software/unit (GPX file). Each mapped coordinate has a series of notes suited to the needs of paddlers – which can relate to the nature of the swell, exposure to winds, availability of drinking water etc. Paddlers are actively involved in a marine trails’ stewardship programme.</p>	<p><b>LA, User groups,</b> IDP, FLAG, boat operators, marine activity operators</p>	Medium term
5.2	<p>► <b>Work with Donegal County Council and select user groups and businesses to identify preferred locations for basic beach service facilities</b> that would include showers and could be used on a shared basis by Blueway kayakers. Potential locations to review include Culdaff (would also service surfers), Malin Head, Bunagee, the area of Dunaff Head, Buncrana and near Rockstown.</p>	<p><b>LA, DCC,</b> FI, IDP, boat operators, marine activity operators</p>	Medium to longer term

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## SECTION 2: DEVELOPING HERO EXPERIENCES

This section looks at a range of potential experiences that can be enhanced through improving the existing on-site experience or developed through creating new experiences. It is not exhaustive, as there are areas of product development that are addressed in subsequent sections, particularly when the focus is primarily on infrastructure, capacity building or supporting services.

DEVELOPING HERO EXPERIENCES			
6. GRIANÁN OF AILEACH		PARTNERS	TIMING
6	<p>This Bronze Age hillfort became the seat of power for the Cenél nÉogain and a site for royal ceremonies. The iconic location provides a dramatic visual starting point for revealing the story of <i>maritime and military might</i>. A Conservation Management Plan was completed in September 2020 for the Office of Public Works and provides a clear set of actions that need to be undertaken to maintain the site’s significance. A number of these actions directly support this Destination and Experience Development Plan and should be regarded as a priority from the perspective of destination development. This Plan supports the implementation of the various site management actions. In particular, the following have been highlighted:</p> <p><b>PRIMARY HERO THEME: <i>Maritime &amp; Military Might</i>; SECONDARY THEMES: <i>Wild Oasis; Inishowen’s Creative Story</i></b></p>		
6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Work collaboratively to form a sustainable management and visitor experience stakeholder group</b> to review elements of the visitor experience, including signage and interpretive requirements.</li> </ul>	OPW, FI, DCC	Short term
6.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Assess signage and interpretive requirements.</b> Where signage and onsite interpretation is required, ensure that it is both robust and sensitive to the setting.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Support storytelling and interpretation through new technologies with an emphasis on virtual and augmented reality</b> that can bring the history of the site to life. Assist the visitor in understanding the wider historical context and the role of this hillfort within different historical and prehistoric eras.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	OPW, FI DCC	Short to medium term
6.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Use the location to orient the visitor to the peninsula</b>, its geography in relation to Lough Foyle, Lough Swilly, Derry/Londonderry and the landscapes beyond. Through digital interpretation, highlight the interplay between the three experiential themes.</li> </ul>	FI, DCC OPW, landowners	Short to medium term
6.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Work with An Grianán Hotel to leverage the interpretive value of the Old Church exhibition</b> and the role of the centre in the overall experience.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Explore opportunities to develop a trail from the hotel to Grianán of Aileach.</b> The combination of a trail head and <b>establishing the hotel car park as a staging area</b> for a guided shuttle service would create a strong connection between the two sites and would provide an opportunity for the hotel to address the gap in food and drink services at the site.</li> <li>– <b>Explore developing a shuttle mini-bus service from An Grianán Hotel</b> for visitors arriving by larger coaches to minimise issues associated with coaches trying to access the site.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	An Grianán Hotel  OPW, FI, DCC, IDP, landowners	Medium term



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## SECTION 2: DEVELOPING HERO EXPERIENCES

6.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Address the opportunity to develop a guided tour programme during the peak season.</b> This will involve working with local tour guides to establish a bookable service and to offer enhanced packaged experiences. Tours could be scheduled on select days or could be part of a wider programme of guided events on Inishowen.</li> </ul>	OPW, FI Tour guides	Ongoing
6.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Work with partners and stakeholders to carefully manage the use of the Grianán of Aileach for events.</b> It has been a venue in the past and should continue to be used in an appropriate manner for events that contribute to the significance of its story. Site and visitor management and size of event will all play a critical role in the sustainable use of the hillfort for this form of activity and will require establishing clear parameters.</li> </ul>	OPW, FI IDP	Ongoing

7. INISHOWEN MARITIME MUSEUM AND PLANETARIUM		PARTNERS	TIMING
7	<p>The Inishowen Maritime Museum in Greencastle offers an important element of the overall maritime and military story and is ideally located to reveal the significance of the Foyle side of the peninsula.</p> <p><b>PRIMARY HERO THEME: <i>Maritime &amp; Military Might</i>; SECONDARY THEME: <i>Wild Oasis</i></b></p>		
7.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Reassess the narrative positioning of the Museum</b> and continue to identify ways of delivering a compelling visitor experience that will give the Museum a stronger profile. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Continue discussions with the National Museum of Northern Ireland</b> to secure the artefacts from La Trinidad Valencera for an extended loan and develop a new display area to house the exhibition.</li> <li>– <b>Work with Fort Dunree and Fanad Head to develop the virtual or augmented reality experience that will be a significant output from the EU TIDE project.</b> The Maritime Museum experience will offer a maritime experience of Inishowen and will provide valuable context for La Trinidad Valencera exhibition. The virtual experience in the form of recreating the ascent of a kite balloon from a World War 1 Atlantic convoy escort ship, will tie together many aspects of the maritime and military story through time and will greatly assist the visitor in understanding how the Napoleonic, Spanish Armada and World War stories fit together. In addition, it will provide a unique opportunity to engage with the story of the shipwrecks through virtual and augmented reality. The experience will also link to the Spanish Armada shipwrecks in Grange, Co. Sligo and La Girona in Co. Antrim.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Inishowen Maritime Museum LA, FLAG	Short term
7.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Improve directional signage to the Museum and explore the potential to enhance the use of the space to the front of the building.</b> This will assist in creating a stronger connection between the building and the harbour area.</li> </ul>	IMM LA, FLAG	Short to medium term
7.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Continue to build a strong partnership and association with the Tower Museum in Derry/Londonderry.</b> The TIDE project will look at the story of emigration to the United States, Canada and Scotland, which will provide an opportunity to tie storytelling at the Maritime Museum and sites of commemoration such as the Fid sculpture at Moville. (The story of emigration will also be told in Burtonport and will highlight the links between Arranmore and Beaver Island Great Lakes, Chicago).</li> </ul>	IMM Tower Museum	Ongoing
7.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Refresh the Museum website</b> to strengthen its appeal and capacity to motivate visitation.</li> </ul>	IMM	Short term

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## SECTION 2: DEVELOPING HERO EXPERIENCES

7.5	▶ <b>Support the ongoing building of international partnerships that relate to the various Museum themes</b> , including the Norwegian partnership and relations with the east coast of Canada.	IMM	Ongoing
7.6	▶ <b>Explore further opportunities to utilise the Planetarium more effectively for a programme of events.</b> The facility has the potential to support a range of initiatives identified in this Plan, including underwater filming of the marine wildlife and the Dark Skies proposal (Action 13).	IMM IDP	Ongoing

8. INCH WILDFOWL RESERVE		PARTNERS	TIMING
8	<p>Inch Wildfowl Reserve has grown rapidly from a site with few visitors to an area that now attracts 120,000 visitors per annum. The site is owned by the Grianán Estate and managed by the NPWS. It attracts over 13,000 wintering geese and waders, in addition to the 4,000 wildfowl on the adjacent farm and its popularity has increased substantially since the addition of the bird hides and the development of paths and the looped walkway – highlighting the growing interest in ecotourism experiences.</p> <p>This site is key to developing ecotourism as a niche sector on Inishowen and strengthening the <i>Wild Oasis</i> theme.</p> <p><b>PRIMARY HERO THEME: <i>Wild Oasis</i></b></p>		
8.1	▶ <b>Continue to explore options for developing additional visitor infrastructure</b> – particularly toilets and the feasibility of providing café facilities.	NPWS	Short term
8.2	<p>▶ <b>Work with Donegal County Council to review site management implications that will arise if and when the proposed North West Greenway links into the site</b> and clearly define the level of co-responsibility that will need to be put in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Review the scoping project that was previously carried out for a visitor centre and assess how visitor facilities can be improved to meet the new demand that will be generated by the Greenway.</li> <li>– Implement the recommendations arising from the environmental assessment of the Greenway’s impact on the Reserve, including improving screening and determining ways to prevent undue disturbance of wildlife. The potential for disturbance could arise from excessive cyclist circumnavigation of Inch Lake and mitigating measures will need to be identified.</li> <li>– Build on the learnings and data emerging from the <b>EU TrailGazers project</b>, to improve overall understanding of usage, visitor needs and management implications.</li> </ul>	NPWS DCC, landowners	Short to medium term
8.3	<p>▶ <b>Continue to develop visitor interpretation at Inch Wildfowl Reserve</b>, keeping in mind the way in which the messaging will integrate with interpretation on the North West Greenway and the wider marine environment. Interpretation should not only look at the ecological importance of the site, but also the story of nineteenth century land reclamation and the cultural heritage that dates back centuries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– This work will involve launching and maintaining the TrailGazer app.</li> </ul>	NPWS DCC, FI, landowners	Medium term

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## SECTION 2: DEVELOPING HERO EXPERIENCES

9. INISHTRAHULL ISLAND		PARTNERS	TIMING
9	<p>This island is both a SPA and SAC and has significant international ecological value for a wide variety of habitats and species. The island is owned by the Commissioners of Irish Lights and while it is relatively inaccessible and subject to permission for landing, a level of inappropriate visitor activity is occurring to the detriment of the island's ecology, with no management mechanisms in place to address the issues. A strategic approach to the longer-term management of the island is essential to maintain its environmental integrity and to benefit from the research opportunities that it offers.</p> <p><b>PRIMARY HERO THEME: <i>Wild Oasis</i></b></p>		
9.1	<p>► <b>Support the NPWS proposal to establish a long-term lease from Irish Lights with the intention of managing the site as a Nature Reserve.</b></p>	<p><b>NPWS</b> Irish Lights</p>	Short term
9.2	<p>► <b>Develop an integrated conservation and visitor management plan for Inishtrahull.</b></p>	<p><b>NPWS</b> Irish Lights</p>	Short to medium term

10. HERITAGE SITES – THE O'DOHERTY STORY		PARTNERS	TIMING
10	<p>The O'Doherty clan has allegedly descended from Niall of the Nine Hostages. The stories of this clan are told all across Inishowen where they maintained rule for several centuries and stood until Sir Cahir O'Dogherty became the last remaining Gaelic chieftain in all of Ireland. There are over 20 medieval castles and fortresses located around Inishowen that tell the stories of this great clan – stories that resonate particularly with the diaspora and contribute significantly to the maritime and military theme.</p> <p><b>PRIMARY HERO THEME: <i>Maritime and Military Might</i></b></p>		
10.1	<p>► <b>Maintain a level of support for local initiatives</b> that are seeking to elevate stories and experiences relating to the O'Doherty castles and work towards raising the profile of this era of history.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Review all related historic sites</b> that offer public access and assess each site in terms of potential restoration requirements, access and visitor experience opportunities. Identify actions required and prioritise as funding becomes available.</li> </ul>	<p><b>OPW</b> DCC, FI, National Monument Service, O'Doherty's Keep Development Group</p>	Medium to long term

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## SECTION 2: DEVELOPING HERO EXPERIENCES

11. ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES		PARTNERS	TIMING
11	<p>Inishowen has a small number of well qualified activity operators that offer excellent guided/supervised adventure activities, including climbing, coasteering, hiking, kayaking, paddle-boarding, surfing and sailing. However, the market profiling of this sector is fragmented and potential visitors with no knowledge of the area, will be relatively challenged to find a list of activities.</p> <p><b>PRIMARY HERO THEME: <i>Wild Oasis</i></b></p>		
11.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Strengthen the profile of this sector through an enhanced and consolidated online presence</b> that highlights the activities, qualified operators and activity clubs.</li> <li>▶ <b>Work with activity providers and organisations to actively support adventure events</b> such as Crana Canoe Weekend and Climbfest and explore ways of further leveraging the profile of these events.</li> <li>▶ Continue to work with the adventure sector <b>to assess staffing and training</b> needs and to assist with addressing these needs.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Explore Inishowen</b></p> <p>IDP, Training institutions, FI, DCC,</p>	Short to medium term
11.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Assess the need for enhanced infrastructure and operators to service diving.</b> The diving opportunities are technical rather than recreational and there are no Inishowen-based operators. The demand is largely serviced by businesses that are based outside the peninsula.</li> </ul>	Activity operators	Medium term

12. DARK SKIES		PARTNERS	TIMING
12	<p>Designation of areas within the peninsula as a Dark Sky Preserve will strengthen the significance of ecotourism and well-being on Inishowen. The Planetarium at the Maritime Museum is an important asset and the ability to view the Aurora Borealis (under the right conditions) is of particular value to a Dark Sky offering.</p> <p><b>PRIMARY HERO THEME: <i>Wild Oasis</i></b></p>		
12.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Establish a Working Group of interested stakeholders to look at the concept of Dark Skies on Inishowen</b> and the level of commitment to pursuing international accreditation                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Review the certification process, identify the Dark Skies area, indicate interest</b> in the programme and category for designation and request initial assessment of site eligibility from the International Dark Sky Association. If the proposal has merit, <b>proceed with developing the application.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>FI, Dark Skies Working Group</b></p> <p>IMM</p>	Medium term
12.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Explore opportunities to develop Dark Skies experiences</b> and build into existing experience offerings.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Work with qualified guides to develop Dark Skies experiences</b> and partner with businesses that can add value to a night-time experience – which could include the add-on of a cultural experience such as poetry readings or storytelling.</li> <li>– Work with accommodation providers to explore ways of enhancing the experience through the <b>introduction of new accommodation options</b> – for example, glamping pods with see-through roof covering.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>FI, Dark Skies Working Group</b></p>	Medium to longer term

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## SECTION 2: DEVELOPING HERO EXPERIENCES

13. MARINE ECOTOURISM		PARTNERS	TIMING
13	<p>The Malin Waters have global ecological significance, and the biodiversity of the marine environment is being monitored through a range of EU Interreg programmes: the Wildsea Europe initiative, the COMPASS Project, the MarPAMM project and the Sea Monitor project and through the work of the Inishowen Basking Shark Study Group. This work will contribute to the anticipated expansion of designated Marine Protected Areas and related marine management plans to meet Ireland’s international commitments on protecting marine biodiversity.</p> <p>From the perspective of further elevating the eco-cultural strengths of the Inishowen Peninsula and exploring the potential to build a stronger marine ecotourism experience, particularly around the global importance of these waters for basking sharks, there is a need to support ongoing discussions on appropriate land and marine designations and related experience development.</p> <p><b>PRIMARY HERO THEME: <i>Wild Oasis</i>; SECONDARY THEME: <i>Maritime and Military Might</i></b></p>		
13.1	<p>► <b>Support ongoing dialogue on marine biodiversity and how this can be promoted through strategic initiatives such as formal designation.</b> To date, discussions have considered options such as a marine National Park, UNESCO Biosphere designation, a regional ‘Shark Park’ and a cross-border Peace Park. (Note: currently there are no marine National Parks in Ireland, although there is growing interest in the development of such designations. Advancing this opportunity is likely to require a national assessment of suitable locations).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Assist with promoting the <b>development of scientific partnerships with research institutions</b> and explore national and international opportunities to <b>strengthen educational tourism</b> and the development of eco-cultural programmes and experiences for this market.</li> </ul>	<p><b>NPWS</b> IBSSG, LA, FI, fishing sector, academic partners</p>	Ongoing
13.2	<p>► Work with national, regional and local partners on the <b>development of a regional marine leisure and ecotourism plan</b>, including the commercial fishing sector. This plan should provide an overview of the potential for marine ecotourism and needs to identify specific ways of addressing infrastructural and capacity building issues. Many of these issues and related actions are raised in Sections 2 and 3 of this Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Explore ways of integrating the <i>Maritime and Military Might</i> theme into the marine ecotourism offering.</li> </ul>	<p><b>FI</b> NPWS, DCC, IBSSG, Fishing sector</p>	Medium term

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## SECTION 2: DEVELOPING HERO EXPERIENCES

14. WELL-BEING FROM NATURE		PARTNERS	TIMING
14	<p>The healing qualities of the Inishowen landscape are well recognised by therapy practitioners on the peninsula. The connectivity between landscape, creativity and wildlife are increasingly blending together to differentiate the peninsula as a place that offers wellness. With the lifestyle changes that have emerged since the onset of COVID-19, Inishowen is strongly positioned to leverage the growing interest in well-being from nature. The underlying thread of spirituality adds a further dimension that can be integrated or offered as a stand-alone experience.</p> <p><b>PRIMARY HERO THEME: <i>Wild Oasis</i></b></p>		
14.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Support the ‘Well-Being from Nature’ project</b> and the exchange of knowledge between the international partners – West Finland and the Maltese island of Gozo, on ‘green care’ and nature-induced well-being.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Work with stakeholders to raise the profile of this project and the value of strengthening this well-being positioning within the wider eco-cultural identity of Inishowen. This will involve assisting the emerging sector group in developing effective partnerships and packages.</li> <li>– Encourage dialogue and dissemination of knowledge on the <b>linkages between creativity, landscape and well-being.</b></li> <li>– <b>Expand on related existing community events</b> such as the Feel-Good Fortnight and identify new opportunities to build on the well-being theme as an attractor for visitors.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>IDP</b></p> <p>FI, well-being/ health sector, Community groups</p>	Medium term
14.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Explore ways of integrating the spiritual themes and experiences with the concept of well-being.</b> The story of Colmcille, the concept of pilgrimage, the Celtic High Crosses and the monastic theme can all be presented in the context of a wider offering and in a way that will increase visitor interest. Sites such as the IOSAS Centre and Celtic Prayer Garden, can be tied into a holistic experience that embraces additional elements, including the concept of Celtic landscapes and the story of Wild Ireland, an attraction near Burnfoot.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Community groups</b></p> <p>Lands of Éogain group</p>	Medium term
14.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ In developing online resources, ensure that there is a <b>well-being travel filter that promotes well-being experiences</b>, local foods, sites and activities related to spirituality and related practitioners.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Highlight and reinforce the importance of sustainability as a core principle for developing Inishowen as a destination. Consumers are increasingly looking at wellness and well-being from multiple perspectives.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Explore Inishowen</b></p>	Ongoing

# ACTION PLAN Plean Gníomhaíochta

## SECTION 2: DEVELOPING HERO EXPERIENCES

15. INISHOWEN'S CULINARY EXPERIENCE		PARTNERS	TIMING
15	<p>While the peninsula has an emerging food culture, it generally lacks recognition as a 'foodie' destination, with a few noteworthy exceptions. There is very limited restaurant or food producer representation on the Donegal Food Coast membership list.</p> <p><b>PRIMARY HERO THEME: <i>Wild Oasis</i></b></p>		
15.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Bring together key Inishowen champions that represent chefs, restaurants and producers and explore how the distinctive eco-cultural identity of Inishowen could be used to differentiate and raise the profile of the food offering.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Identify ways of developing and positioning the food offering that speaks to 'Our Biodiversity, Our Food, Our Health' –</b> (the theme of the International Day for Biological Diversity 2019). This would give the concept of 'local' a different emphasis to elsewhere and would align with the focus on well-being, creativity, landscapes and ecosystems.</li> <li>– Continue to work with the <b>Food Coast Donegal</b> to leverage the county-wide initiative.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Local culinary and food producer champions</b></p> <p>IDP, FI, Food Coast Donegal</p>	Ongoing

# ACTION PLAN Plean Gníomhaíochta

## SECTION 3: STRENGTHENING SUPPORTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SENSE OF PLACE

**Strengthening Supportive Infrastructure and Sense of Place** relates to capital assets that are needed to improve the destination experience, open up new opportunities and facilitate ease of access. It encompasses a spectrum of hard infrastructure (trails, transportation etc.) while soft infrastructure, such as technology is dealt with in Section 4, Building Industry Capacity and Supporting Services. The recommendations outlined, address challenges that were raised in the planning discussions and/or related reports and strategies.

16. IMPROVING ACCESS WITHIN THE INISHOWEN PENINSULA		PARTNERS	TIMING
16	An integrated transportation system is a core requirement in the dispersal of visitors, reduction of vehicles and as a complement to improved active transportation systems. Rural areas face particular problems in facilitating effective transportation services and the focus should initially be on the peak season.		
16.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Maintain and if feasible, extend the ferry services</b> from Greencastle to Magilligan and from Bunrana to Rathmullan. These ferry services can play a critical role in developing stronger continuity between the Wild Atlantic Way and the Causeway Coastal Route and in improving opportunities for creating cycling loops.</li> <li>– Maintain ferry terminal visitor facilities/public toilets to high standard. The terminals represent exit and entry points and are important ‘touch-points’ in the visitor experience.</li> <li>– If traffic volume increases, introduce an online reservation system and a dedicated embarkation lane (if feasible). An additional fee could be levied for the booking.</li> </ul>	<b>Ferry operators</b> FI, DCC	Ongoing
16.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Review road signage</b> and improve the visibility of Inishowen as a destination through enhanced signage and through highlighting the connectivity between the Wild Atlantic Way and the Causeway Coast.</li> <li>– Work with the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council to improve visibility of the Magilligan ferry service.</li> </ul>	<b>FI</b>	Short to medium term
16.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Work towards minimising the environmental impact of public transportation</b> through electrification of buses or the use of alternative fuels and ensure adequate electrical charging points for private vehicles.</li> </ul>	<b>Bus Éireann, Local Link</b> DCC	Ongoing
16.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Review access from both Donegal Airport and City of Derry Airport to the Inishowen Peninsula.</b> Work with Bus Éireann, Translink and Local Link to ensure adequate public transportation connections between the airports and Inishowen.</li> </ul>	<b>Airports Bus service providers</b>	Short to medium



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## SECTION 3: STRENGTHENING SUPPORTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SENSE OF PLACE

17. IMPROVING INFRASTRUCTURE AND POLICY FOR MARINE TOURISM		PARTNERS	TIMING
17	Inishowen has excellent potential to develop a strong marine tourism offering and ecotourism experience – see Action 13. However, a significant constraint to developing marine tourism, is the limited national budget for developing and maintaining marine infrastructure and a national policy framework that does not sufficiently enable strategic development of the leisure marine sector. This Plan recognises the challenges of this policy context and seeks to establish a state of readiness should funding opportunities arise, while identifying priorities that can be addressed by stakeholders in the shorter term.		
17.1	<p>► <b>Support Donegal County Council and the Loughs Agency in conducting an assessment of marine tourism opportunities and in identifying the infrastructural projects required</b> to improve the peninsula’s positioning as an axis point to the whole North Atlantic and as a marine destination. <b>Consolidate the findings in the proposed marine leisure and ecotourism plan for the Inishowen Peninsula</b> (see Action 13). Areas of consideration include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Undertake a specific assessment of current harbour and marina facilities for visiting yachts</b> that will provide safe haven.</li> <li>– <b>Assess harbours that have benefitted from new infrastructure</b> such as pontoon developments and pier and breakwater improvements in locations such as Fort Dunree, Bunagee and Greencastle and review the potential and <b>management of these harbours for marine leisure tourism</b>. This review should consider the commercial fishing versus leisure use of moorage and appropriate spatial delineation; the adequacy of facilities during storms; safety issues related to informal use of harbour waters for swimming; and parking requirements for visitors engaging in a marine experience all need to be evaluated further, with priorities identified for each harbour depending on identified strategic use. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signage and community/stakeholder education and dialogue are likely to be needed to establish and/or reinforce strategic priorities.</li> <li>• Any assessment of infrastructure should take event opportunities into consideration. In this respect, Greencastle will be well located for events, including events that tie in with the Foyle Port Marina.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	FI DCC, LA, boat operators	Short to medium term
17.2	► <b>Complete the development of the harbour breakwater infrastructure at Greencastle</b> , increase the harbour area and provide new berthage through the recently announced funding programme from the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine. This will give Greencastle a pre-eminent position as a safe haven for visiting yachts and as the gateway to the north west.	DCC	Short to medium term
17.3	► <b>Continue to advocate for a streamlined and timely approach to foreshore licensing and leasing</b> through the proposed Maritime Area Regulatory Authority that will create a more favourable environment for investment in coastal infrastructure and for maintaining and improving existing facilities.	Local communities and related interest groups	Ongoing/ medium term

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## SECTION 3: STRENGTHENING SUPPORTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SENSE OF PLACE

17.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Advocate for dual licensing of select boat operators.</b> This will be essential in strengthening marine ecotourism and helping to off-set the significant reduction in fish quotas arising from Brexit. For example, current research on sunlight and surfacing behaviour of basking sharks offers the opportunity to predict fishing versus ecotourism potential at any given time. Dual licenses need to be in place to take advantage of ideal viewing conditions and to implement marine environment strategies of this nature that will support the development of sea angling and marine ecotourism in general.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– There are challenging bureaucratic issues for any new operator seeking to secure a passenger license, particularly if the intent is to travel beyond 3km from the coast. Where there is an opportunity to advocate for streamlined processes, it should be supported.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Boat operators, IBSSG	Short term
17.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Continue to advocate for acceptable solutions to the treatment of wastewater</b> around the peninsula and work with Irish Water on the implementation of relevant projects.</li> </ul>	Local communities	Ongoing

18. DEVELOPING A TRAIL NETWORK		PARTNERS	TIMING
18	<p>Inishowen offers approximately 125km of walks of differing grades, with 70km of these trails waymarked and 11.6km registered as Sport Ireland Approved Trails (Inishowen Head Loop Walk, Malin Head Trail Loop Walk, Glenevin Waterfall Walk and Lenan Loop Walk). In addition to these trails, the peninsula offers a number of unmarked hill walks. Almost all access is permissive access.</p> <p>In the context of the forthcoming National Outdoor Recreation Strategy and the forthcoming Outdoor Recreation Strategy for Donegal, it is anticipated that <b>Donegal County Council will be leading out on the development of a Community Trails Plan for the county</b> and will be working with a cross-section of stakeholders to consider all aspects of creating a connected path network across Donegal, including Inishowen. The following actions will support this county-wide focus on trails development.</p>		
18.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Given the importance of trails and hill walking to the development of ecotourism, it is <b>recommended that a full audit of all trails and walking sites is undertaken</b> within the trails network planning process to assess trail head requirements relating to signage and parking and the potential to connect or extend existing trails.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Include all community trails and trails developed by agencies such as NPWS and Coillte.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	DCC DLDC, NWCD, NPWS, Coillte	Medium term

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## SECTION 3: STRENGTHENING SUPPORTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SENSE OF PLACE

18.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Where feasible, encourage a community driven approach to trails development.</b> Given sufficient local interest and potential for trails development, support the establishment of local-based trails development groups and work with these groups to identify possible routes.</li> <li>– <b>Develop a much stronger commitment to facilitating community consultation and discussions with landowners before promoting any trail concepts.</b> Supporting a local person in initiating discussions with landowners should be considered. There can be conflicting perspectives and it is important to nurture strong relationships and positive dialogue.</li> <li>– Review <b>previous unsuccessful initiatives to establish trails and assess the local interest in re-engaging</b> in related initiatives.</li> <li>– <b>Focus on developing clusters of trails where there is strong support.</b> The work of the Sliabh Sneacht Community Centre in establishing the new centre as a focal point for telling local heritage stories and a base for outdoor activities (walking, hill walking/trekking, cycling, fishing, bird watching, boating and photography) is exemplary. The Centre offers toilets, showers and café facilities and will become an important hub for outdoor activities.</li> </ul>	DLDC NWDC, DCC, landowners	Ongoing
18.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Assess the opportunity to use old bog roads in further trails development in the uplands.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Work with the Inishowen Uplands European Innovation Partnership</b> and explore the opportunity to expand the Partnership initiative to include upland recreational access and trails development.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>EXAMPLE: The Wicklow Uplands Council oversees the Sustainable Uplands Agri-environment Scheme (SUAS) pilot project for the Wicklow/Dublin uplands (one of the EU EIP projects). The key objective is to develop practical and innovative solutions that will address the complex agricultural, environmental and socio-economic challenges associated with the land management of commonages and hill farms in the Wicklow/Dublin uplands. Maintaining recreational access is a key component of the project and will be developed further by integrating environmental management, farming and related uses of the uplands into a single management plan. The Wicklow Uplands Council plays an important role in the management of upland recreation.</p>	DLDC NWDC, DCC, landowners	Ongoing
18.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Develop a visitor-oriented searchable database of trails</b> that classifies trails by surface and accessibility, degree of difficulty and length. Include the Slí na Sláinte walks. Ensure that the type of trail usage is clearly clarified for each trail system. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Where feasible, encourage further participation in Sport Ireland’s national trail accreditation scheme.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>EXAMPLE: <a href="#">Shuswap Trails</a> in British Columbia (includes geo-referenced pdf maps).</p>	Sports Ireland <b>Outdoors</b> DLDC, NWDC	Long term
18.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Work collaboratively to strengthen the enabling environment for trails and hill walking, including:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Advocate and support a <b>national indemnity scheme</b> to safeguard all stakeholder interests.</li> <li>– Advocate and support <b>farm subsidies to facilitate the management of permissive trails.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	DLDC, DCC  Related stakeholders	Ongoing

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## SECTION 3: STRENGTHENING SUPPORTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SENSE OF PLACE

18.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Continue to assess the viability of developing a coastal trail</b> that can be integrated into national efforts to create a Wild Atlantic Way coastal walking/hiking trail. Informal work has been completed in the past identifying various options that will circumnavigate land ownership issues and should be reviewed.</li> </ul>	<b>FI</b> Landowners	Long Term
18.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Explore the concept of developing a sustainable mountain bike park</b> in an appropriate location. Work collaboratively to assess potential areas for trails development.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– If there is potential to advance the concept, undertake a feasibility study.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>DCC, FI, Coillte</b> IDP, NWDC, Donegal Mountain Biking Club	Long term

19. PROMOTING INVESTMENT IN ACCOMMODATION		PARTNERS	TIMING
19	Maintaining a range of quality accommodation options that meet the needs of the targeted market segments is essential to establishing a competitive destination. This includes working with operators to assist in ensuring viability of offerings and advising on market/product ‘fit’.		
19.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Encourage the creation of conditions that will promote investment in developing and/or improving diverse categories of bed stock in the accommodation sector</b>, while also encouraging new levels of innovation in accommodation delivery e.g., glamping and enhancement of quality.</li> </ul>	FI, LEO	Ongoing
19.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Promote the development of hostel accommodation suitable for the education market.</b> Inishowen has the potential to attract a range of overseas students from Europe and North America to study marine ecology, ecotourism, upland farming and related topics.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Explore the feasibility of the concept of combining accommodation with a field-study centre. The peninsula would benefit from <b>developing research laboratory facilities</b> as envisaged in the original IBSSG concept document for the Malin Head Ocean Centre, Marine Park and Biosphere Fishing Area. With facilities in place, the potential to attract post graduate researchers to Inishowen will be significantly enhanced.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>FI, LEO</b> Private sector, related interest groups	Medium to longer term
19.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Work with Donegal County Council to implement the findings of the <i>Caravan Camping and Camper Van Study</i></b> (December 2021). Consideration needs to be given to the following on Inishowen:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ensuring adequate provision of well managed facilities that meet the needs of this user group through attracting further private investment into this sector.</li> <li>– Reducing or eliminating wild camping and unmanaged free camping to minimise environmental impact, preserve the integrity of the Wild Atlantic Way and to create alternative business opportunities for the private sector. This will require working with landowners to identify suitable locations for new camping sites.                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There may be a rationale for permitting wild camping in select locations – for example, coastal locations for kayakers. This can still be managed through an online permitting system.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>DCC</b>	Short to medium term

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## SECTION 3: STRENGTHENING SUPPORTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SENSE OF PLACE

20. STRENGTHENING SENSE OF PLACE AND COMMUNITY HUBS		PARTNERS	TIMING
20	A strong sense of place and welcome at the local community level is an important element of the overall destination experience. Fáilte Ireland's <i>Destination Town</i> toolkit highlights the significance of sense of place and provides guidelines on assessing a community and strengthening its look and feel.		
20.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Develop a much stronger sense of arrival at the starting and/or finishing point of the Wild Atlantic Way in Muff.</b> Whether this is innovative signage or a distinctive art installation, the approach taken at both ends of the Wild Atlantic Way in Muff and Kinsale should have some degree of continuity.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Work with the community of Muff to leverage business opportunities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	FI DCC	Short to medium term
20.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Review opportunities to improve sense of place through:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Working with partners such as Leave No Trace Ireland to <b>promote litter management policies</b> across the region and within communities.</li> <li>– <b>Promoting participation in the Tidy Towns Competition.</b></li> <li>– <b>Assessing the provision of basic visitor infrastructure along the Wild Atlantic Way</b> and facilitating improvements to toilet facilities, litter receptacles, viewpoints, signage, picnic facilities and parking in a manner that is sensitive to the environmental context.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>FI, Town and village groups</b>  DCC, Leave No Trace Ireland	Ongoing
20.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>BUNCRANA – Develop a masterplan for the entire shorefront area</b> that includes enhancing the pier area and creating a new harbour district, which could be dedicated to active travel and promoting local products – in time, becoming a key gathering place on the peninsula and a cycle hub for the Greenway. This will allow Bunrana to capitalise on its Lough Swilly location in a way that it has failed to do in the past. This is in keeping with the 2020 report: <i>Strategic Strengths and Future Strategic Direction of Bunrana, County Donegal</i>.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Implement the 'Empowering Bunrana' interventions</b> announced in January 2022 to strengthen the shore front and improve connectivity with Main Street, including the pedestrian bridge over the Mill River.</li> <li>– Pursue the plans to <b>redevelop the Bunrana Leisure Centre.</b></li> <li>– Explore the potential for <b>small craft berthing in the shore front area.</b></li> <li>– Assess the feasibility to <b>improve connectivity</b> between the shore, the town and Fort Dunree.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	DCC  Community interest groups, FI	Medium to longer term

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## SECTION 3: STRENGTHENING SUPPORTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SENSE OF PLACE

20.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>CARNDONAGH – Support the implementation of the Carndonagh Tús Nua Regeneration Project.</b> In restoring the stone outbuilding as a Creative Maker’s Hub, explore the <b>potential to present the story of shirt-making</b> in Carndonagh and the history of the two factories.</li> <li>▶ <b>Undertake the development of a local tourism plan for Carndonagh.</b> The <i>Seven Strategic Towns Local Area Plan 2018-2024</i> includes Carndonagh but makes no significant reference to tourism. Aside from strengthening the town through the Regeneration Project, there is <b>a need to more fully assess its role as a stronger visitor hub</b>. Areas of consideration include safe connectivity between Carndonagh and Malin for cyclists, the town’s monastic heritage and (as highlighted) its role in <i>Inishowen’s Creative Story</i>.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Carndonagh Traders’ Association, Spraoi agus Spórt</b> FI, DCC</p>	Ongoing
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## SECTION 4: BUILDING INDUSTRY CAPACITY AND SUPPORTING SERVICES

**Building Industry Capacity and Supporting Services** is a crucial element of destination management that needs to occur if the Inishowen Peninsula is to build a strong economy based on tourism and the elevation of its natural and cultural assets. At the core of the vision for Inishowen is the need to develop a new approach to working collaboratively. With this in place, the implementation of the various recommendations in this section will gain significant momentum and the overall approach to developing sustainable tourism within Inishowen Peninsula will become community-driven in a new and catalytic manner.

To be successful, there will need to be an ongoing emphasis on collaboration to build on localised community enthusiasm and to create new synergies between this enthusiasm and public sector initiatives. It will require a focus on establishing a strong knowledge base and pride in the distinctive natural and cultural attributes of the peninsula and its marine environment; and an emphasis on coordination, quality assurance and delivering exceptional experiences. This represents a holistic approach to developing tourism as a sector that integrates with all other aspects of community and environmental well-being.

21. ESTABLISHING A NEW APPROACH TO DIALOGUE AND LEADERSHIP		PARTNERS	TIMING
21	Currently Inishowen does not have a strong collective voice that looks at the concept of destination stewardship and the sustainable development of tourism. There are local committees and community groups, but no framework for discussing the opportunities to grow tourism from a regional perspective, or ways in which the peninsula's eco-cultural attributes could be brought to the fore in a more strategic manner. Establishing a new network and think-tank that is tasked to explore emerging ideas, concepts and opportunities for the peninsula will provide the basis for a transformative approach to collaboration, coordination, envisioning and community-driven sustainable growth. It will support the integration of tourism into the wider conversation of community and environmental well-being and will set the stage for Inishowen to be more proactive in discussing tourism in the context of global concerns relating to biodiversity, climate change and the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.		
21.1	<p>► <b>Support the establishment of an Inishowen Eco-Cultural Partnership.</b> The scope of this Partnership is to maintain and develop the region's natural and cultural heritage through ecotourism and cultural heritage initiatives that contribute to the sustainable growth of local communities across Inishowen. It will involve bringing together stakeholders who have not traditionally worked together in the past and is likely to be a leadership structure that will evolve as confidence in its capacity to generate meaningful dialogue grows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Review the vision and goals of this Plan <b>and identify key stakeholders that are likely to have a high level of interest in elements of the Plan.</b> Initiate discussions with a core group of and conduct a working session to <b>map stakeholder groups and to identify potential participants.</b></li> <li>– Host a wider workshop and <b>define initial outcomes</b> to be gained from working in a collaborative network. These outcomes will reflect the strategic directions of this Plan.</li> <li>– <b>Identify the best means of engagement</b> – frequency of discussions, potential role of project-specific working groups, exchange of dialogue with the wider Partnership and the community at large.</li> <li>– <b>Works towards establishing a governance model</b> that will strengthen the group's leadership capacity and role in sustaining the eco-cultural heritage as a basis for regional identity and sustainable tourism.</li> </ul>	<p><b>FI, IDP</b></p> <p>Cross-section of eco-cultural interests, relevant agencies and partners that can facilitate the strategic development of the Partnership</p>	Short term/ongoing

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## SECTION 4: BUILDING INDUSTRY CAPACITY AND SUPPORTING SERVICES

22. DEVELOPING INDUSTRY CAPACITY AND PROMOTING QUALITY ASSURANCE		PARTNERS	TIMING
22	<p>Developing the Catalyst Projects and working towards establishing a stronger eco-cultural identity creates new opportunities for business development and for ensuring that the positioning of Inishowen Peninsula reflects its vision and underlying values. Differentiating Inishowen in this way and working with the business community will require a focus on business mentorship and training to ensure the delivery of quality experiences that stand out and highlight the unique attributes of Inishowen.</p>		
22.1	<p>► <b>Create a business support programme for Inishowen</b> that focuses on existing tourism businesses and potential new businesses and reflects the commitment to implementing sustainable business practices. This will include deepening the general understanding of the region’s eco-cultural heritage and working with stakeholders to assist in the development of innovative theme-based visitor experiences in line with this Plan. Core areas should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understanding the underlying stories of Inishowen and the themes presented in this Plan</li> <li>- Creating saleable experiences, including the development of experiences that will extend the season (potentially through a mentorship programme)</li> <li>- Selling online and delivering to the international market – engaging businesses in adopting online booking systems and online distribution will strengthen the distribution of experiences</li> <li>- Yield management</li> <li>- Telling ‘your story’ online and offline</li> <li>- Contracting at trade fairs</li> <li>- Service excellence</li> <li>- Customer service</li> <li>- Market diversification</li> </ul>	<b>FI</b>	Short term/ ongoing



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## SECTION 4: BUILDING INDUSTRY CAPACITY AND SUPPORTING SERVICES

22.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Develop a programme to strengthen the capacity to deliver guided services and immersive experiences</b> in an authentic and safe manner. While Inishowen has a number of well qualified guides and activity operators, there is potential to expand the number of operators and to ensure that all meet minimum criteria.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Review existing training options and work with potential providers such as Letterkenny Institute of Technology to customise the content and to deliver within Inishowen.</b> Where feasible, explore options for offering an accredited training programme. The Certificate in Regional Guiding delivered by LYIT would benefit from the integration of regional components on the biocultural diversity of Inishowen.                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the Instructor and Leader Award programmes offered by Mountaineering Ireland for a range of outdoor activities including the Lowland Leader Award and the Hill and Moorland Leader Award.</li> <li>• Ensure that training programmes include building an understanding of Inishowen’s natural and cultural heritage.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities to work with Leave No Trace Ireland to promote the importance of responsible environmental behaviour.</li> <li>• Focus on promoting qualified activity operators.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FI</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">IDP, LYIT, Mountaineering Ireland, Leave No Trace Ireland</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Medium term</p>
22.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Review the specified needs of sectors that are diversifying into tourism</b>, including the commercial fishing sector, the farming sector and the well-being sector. Individuals looking to diversify into tourism will benefit from an introductory overview of tourism and visitor expectations.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Develop diversification mentorship training for the commercial fishing sector</b> to provide guidance on diversifying into marine ecotourism. This should include working with boat operators to identify new opportunities to explore Inishowen from the ocean and to highlight the maritime and military themes and the biodiversity of the waters and the coastline.</li> <li>– Expand existing agri-tourism support systems to look at new diversification opportunities arising from the strategic direction of this Plan.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FI,</b> IDP</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Short to medium term</p>

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## SECTION 4: BUILDING INDUSTRY CAPACITY AND SUPPORTING SERVICES

23. BUILDING THE ECO-CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE BASE AND STRENGTHENING THE ASSETS		PARTNERS	TIMING
23	<p>The vision of this Plan and the core emphasis on building recognition for the distinctive eco-cultural attributes of the region raises the need to strengthen awareness of what makes the Inishowen Peninsula and its surrounding marine environment distinctive as a place to live and as a place to visit. Through building a knowledge base, there will also be opportunities to identify initiatives that will strengthen the natural and cultural assets. Creating a better understanding of how nature, culture and place today are inextricably linked will assist in building a community of ambassadors and will highlight the value of maintaining the integrity of Inishowen.</p> <p>Action 23 provides a starting point for discussing the implementation of this Action. It is anticipated that the following steps will require coordinating inputs from a wide range of stakeholder interests.</p>		
23.1	<p>► <b>Develop a database of all community organisations</b> with an active interest in protecting natural and cultural sites and in stimulating grass-roots guardianship. The process of bringing together existing initiatives will highlight the common direction that many communities are pursuing.</p>	<b>FI, IDP</b>	Short term
23.2	<p>► <b>Initiate a process of participatory mapping.</b> This involves engaging community members in compiling a map and database of local assets. This work can build on existing participatory processes such as the Inch Heritage project and should include the various groups across the peninsula that have specific interests and are custodians of a substantial knowledge base. A process of this nature contributes to collective learning and identifies what local residents regard as special.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Explore the opportunity to develop a mapped database that identifies natural and cultural assets</b> and has the potential to house related text, visual and audio materials. The mapping resources developed for this Plan provide a base for commencing this project. The EU Sustainable Heritage Areas: Partnerships for Ecotourism (SHAPE) initiative has produced valuable insights and guidelines for this activity: <a href="#">Mapping and Managing Natural and Cultural Assets</a> (2018) and includes a range of case-studies on approaches, tools and techniques and the use of mapping to inform visitor and resource management. (In developing a map for visitors, not all content has to be visitor-facing).</li> </ul> <p>EXAMPLE: <i>The Cuilcagh to Cleenish – A Great Place</i>. This project highlights the rich heritage in south-west Fermanagh. The area is well known for the Cuilcagh Lakelands Global Geopark (formerly known as Marble Arch Caves UNESCO Global Geopark) and the National Trust property at Florence Court House, with many other sites and attractions often overlooked. The project has created a <a href="#">memory map</a> that identifies a range of natural and cultural sites, together with text and audio and visual materials. Local community groups played a key role in collecting the materials.</p> <p>EXAMPLE: The Vjosa/Aoos River Ecomuseum has developed thematic routes and a virtual tour across a cross-border region of 3,540km<sup>2</sup>. The Ecomuseum seeks to profile and protect the area’s natural and cultural heritage on both sides of the Greek-Albanian border and has developed a <a href="#">visually interactive map</a> that allows the web visitor to engage in 360° views of the landscape across a wide selection of points on the map.</p>	<b>Eco-Cultural Network</b>  Community groups	Short to medium term

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## SECTION 4: BUILDING INDUSTRY CAPACITY AND SUPPORTING SERVICES

23.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Continue to explore and support initiatives that are designed to strengthen the conservation of the peninsula's intangible cultural heritage.</b> This is particularly important in preserving traditional skills that are a key element of <i>Inishowen's Creative Story</i>.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Highlight the significance of projects such as the Inishowen Song Project and position these projects within the context of conserving Inishowen's cultural biodiversity.</li> <li>– <b>Explore and encourage opportunities to maintain traditional skills</b> that are an important element of the region's identity such as loom building and weaving and currach/Drontheim boat building through working with community organisations such as the Men's Sheds.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>IDP</b> Community groups, Inishowen Rivers' Trust, IMM, IBSSG	Ongoing
23.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Continue to strengthen links with international partners to explore ways of promoting and preserving rural and maritime heritage.</b> Recent initiatives include the Inishowen Maritime Museum's Norwegian partnership in traditional boat building and the linkages with New Brunswick and Newfoundland associated with emigration from Moville.</li> </ul>	<b>IMM</b>	Ongoing
23.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Encourage ongoing citizen participation in programmes and projects that focus on the conservation of natural and biocultural diversity.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Local initiatives</b> that have the potential to contribute to the regional emphasis on the eco-cultural distinctiveness of Inishowen and could be highlighted through customised experiences for niche visitors include the work of the Inishowen Rivers Trust, the IDP's programme on beekeeping and the activities of ECO Carn with its goal of conducting a local biodiversity audit and preparing a Biodiversity Action Plan.</li> <li>– Work with partners such as the Inishowen Maritime Museum and the Inishowen Basking Shark Study Group <b>to build outreach programmes into the schools</b> that focus on the peninsula's natural and biocultural diversity. Extend this work into Derry.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Eco-Cultural Network</b> IBSSG, NPWS, Eco Carn, Inishowen Rivers' Trust	Ongoing
23.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Scope the potential of developing a regional/community-focused portal to promote the eco-cultural distinctiveness of the peninsula</b> in a way that complements the traditional online marketing.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Generate discussion and participation through social media and online forums.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>IDP, Eco-Cultural Network</b>	Medium term
23.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Promote the research activities that are currently underway on Inishowen and support initiatives that are designed to build partnerships with Irish and overseas academic and research institutions.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Work with the Inishowen Basking Shark Study Group to raise the profile of their research and community engagement activities. Informal linkages exist with a growing number of universities in Ireland, the UK and in North America. Strengthening these relationships will be of value in building an international profile for Inishowen as a leader in marine ecology and shark research.</li> <li>– Promote awareness of the research that is being facilitated through <b>the COMPASS Project, the MarPAMM project and the Sea Monitor project.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>IDP, FI</b> IBSSG, LA, partner academic institutions, NPWS	Ongoing

# ACTION PLAN Plean Gníomhaíochta

## SECTION 4: BUILDING INDUSTRY CAPACITY AND SUPPORTING SERVICES

23.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Promote the Inishowen Uplands European Innovation Partnership project</b> which is a new initiative that is looking at sustainable farming practices in the uplands. Twenty-five farmers are participating in a range of sustainable measures designed to enhance productivity while lowering carbon emissions and improving biodiversity and water quality.</li> <li>- <b>Work with the farmers to attract visitors to the demonstration farms.</b> Develop a customised extended stay itinerary that looks at other aspects of sustainability and ecotourism on the peninsula and highlights the linkages between agriculture and the wider community.</li> <li>- Continue to explore the opportunity to rewet the uplands through this project.</li> </ul>	<b>Inishowen Uplands EIP</b>  FI	Medium term
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24. PROMOTING THEMATIC EVENTS		PARTNERS	TIMING
24	<p>Building a coordinated programme of events that support the three experiential themes will enrich the destination experience and will strengthen various sectors. Currently events range from being highly successful with a strong international appeal, such as the Clonmany Festival, to being small bespoke events with significant market potential but a concerning lack of presence in the marketplace. Raising the profile of the latter and working as a region to develop the events sector will improve the viability of many community initiatives and will strengthen the role of these events in attracting extended lengths of stay.</p>		
24.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Work collaboratively to develop a programme and regional calendar of events and experiences</b> that includes existing events and new experiences. The sustainability of these events is dependent on creating a highly visible and dynamic regional calendar of events that is well promoted.</li> <li>- <b>Within the cultural heritage sector, identify all existing and recently hosted events and group experiences</b>, including those no longer currently offered. There is a diverse range of events that highlight the cultural identity of Inishowen including the various heritage events (e.g., the Colgan Heritage Weekend, the McClinchey Summer School and the West Inishowen Heritage and History Society events); themed events (e.g. The Amazing Grace Festival, the May the Fourth Festival); and music/performance events, literary events and community festivals.</li> <li>• <b>Assess the viability of continuing to host the various events and identify key constraints.</b> If feasible, evaluate the option of hosting smaller events on a rotational basis, thereby reducing strain on volunteers.</li> <li>- <b>Explore the opportunity to host smaller bespoke events around the peninsula</b>, such as themed literary or song evenings.</li> </ul> <p>EXAMPLE: <a href="#">Meadowlark Nature Festival</a> in the South Okanagan, British Columbia is a 5-day series of bookable events around the region encompassing guided hiking, cycling, canoeing, bird watching and photography events, together with heritage tours, night sky viewings, art walks, film screenings, writing sessions and Indigenous story-telling. Events on sustainable buildings and landscapes, climate resilience and ecosystems management add an additional dimension and the programme generally sells out well in advance.</p>	<b>Explore Inishowen, FI</b>  IDP, Art Link, community heritage and arts groups, Creative Inishowen	Short term/ongoing

# ACTION PLAN Plean Gníomhaíochta

## SECTION 4: BUILDING INDUSTRY CAPACITY AND SUPPORTING SERVICES

24.2	▶ Create <b>regular dialogue/networking events</b> that are used to brainstorm new ideas, inform participants of planned or proposed events and identify options to build on existing initiatives. (This could be conducted under the scope of the proposed Inishowen Eco-Cultural Partnership). The focus should be on discussing ways of strengthening a more regional approach to developing and promoting events.	<b>Eco-Cultural Partnership</b> FI, Explore Inishowen	Short term/ ongoing
24.3	▶ <b>Work collaboratively to strengthen the arts and artisans' sector through establishing a 'Meet the Maker' trail event.</b> This could be on specified days to ensure that all businesses and studios are open and would benefit from a sense of critical mass.	<b>Explore Inishowen</b>	Medium term
24.4	▶ <b>Work with Donegal County Council to develop a schedule of small craft markets</b> (similar in concept to farmers markets) in a rotating range of locations such as Bunrana pier/waterfront, or the area in front of the Inishowen Maritime Museum.	<b>Explore Inishowen</b> DCC	Medium term
24.5	▶ <b>Review each theme on an ongoing basis to determine how special events can animate the theme</b> and raise the profile of each USP (unique selling proposition). For example, <b>adventure events</b> such as Crana Canoe Weekend and Climbfest, play an important role in raising the visibility of Inishowen as a destination for outdoor land and water-based adventure.	<b>FI</b> Event organisers	Short term/ ongoing

25. UTILISING TECHNOLOGY TO ENRICH AND JOIN UP HERO EXPERIENCES		PARTNERS	TIMING
25	Technology has significant potential to animate the experiential themes, particularly <i>Maritime and Military Might</i> . The planning process identified examples where technology has taken existing assets and repurposed them entirely into a new experience capable of attracting new markets. <a href="#">Liberation Route Europe</a> is an example of this approach.		
25.1	▶ <b>Work with partners to determine how technology can encourage visitor dispersion and strengthen existing experiences.</b> This will become particularly relevant as the North West Greenway is developed and visitors are looking for 'slow' discoveries.	<b>FI</b> DCC, OPW, NPWS	Medium term

# ACTION PLAN Plean Gníomhaíochta

## SECTION 4: BUILDING INDUSTRY CAPACITY AND SUPPORTING SERVICES

26. ENHANCING VISITOR AWARENESS OF HERO EXPERIENCES ON INISHOWEN		PARTNERS	TIMING
26	Working collaboratively and aligning all promotional communications with this Plan will be important in building an identity around the three themes and in elevating the HERO experiences to domestic and international markets.		
26.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Work with Fáilte Ireland</b> to profile key HERO experiences on the Discover Ireland platform and ensure that the positioning of the Inishowen Peninsula on this platform is in line with this Plan. Highlight the types of experiences that will differentiate the region and encourage increased visitation and interest.</li> </ul>	<b>FI</b> Explore Inishowen, DCC	Ongoing
26.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Work collaboratively with partners on both sides of the border to highlight the connectivity between the Wild Atlantic Way and the Causeway Coast.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Explore new opportunities to develop cross-border coastal packages and highlight positioning of Inishowen as a base to explore Derry/Londonderry and the Causeway Coast – creating circular tours via the Foyle Bridge and/or the Magilligan Ferry service.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>FI</b> Explore Inishowen, DCC N. Ireland LGDs	Short to medium term
26.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Work with marketing partners and local stakeholders</b> to ensure that messaging and visual material relating to Inishowen are aligned with the Wild Atlantic Way and the direction of this Plan.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Continue to develop an accessible image library to support marketing initiatives.</b> Ensure that the search criteria enhance usage and that the images support the experiential themes.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>FI</b> Explore Inishowen, DCC	Ongoing
26.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Work with the industry to host familiarisation visits</b> to various sites and attractions as part of networking in the off-season.</li> </ul>	<b>Explore Inishowen</b>	Ongoing

## SECTION 5: OVERSEEING IMPLEMENTATION

27. IMPLEMENTATION		PARTNERS	TIMING
27	<b>Fáilte Ireland will facilitate the formation of an Implementation Group</b> with representatives from key agencies and tourism groups with a direct role in implementation. (Progress on implementing the Plan will be further accelerated through the establishment and evolution of the Inishowen Eco-Cultural Partnership (Action 23)).		
27.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Set up an inclusive stakeholder Implementation Group with independent co-chairs.</li> </ul>	<b>FI</b>	Short term
27.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Develop annual work plans</b> with actions, timelines and clearly identified outputs and work with local government and national or local agencies to promote implementation of projects that fall within their remit.</li> </ul>		Ongoing

# ACRONYMS Acrainmneacha

## Partner Acronyms

**CTA** – Carndonagh Traders’ Association

**CCGBC** – Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

**CCC** – Clonmany Community Centre

**CDA** – Clonmany Development Association

**DCC** – Donegal County Council

**DLDC** – Donegal Local Development Company

**EIP** – European Innovation Partnership

**EPA** – Environmental Protection Agency

**FI** – Fáilte Ireland

**HSE** – Health Service Executive

**IBSSG** – Inishowen Basking Shark Study Group

**IDP** – Inishowen Development Partnership

**IUEIP** – Inishowen Uplands European Innovation Partnership

**IFA** – Irish Farmers’ Association

**LA** – The Loughs Agency

**LEO** – Local Enterprise Office

**LGD** – Local Government Districts

**LYIT** – Letterkenny Institute of Technology

**NWCD** – North West Community Development

**NPWS** – National Parks and Wildlife Service

**OPW** – Office of Public Works

**SAC** – Special Areas of Conservation

**SPA** – Special Protection Area

**UNESCO** – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

## Timing of Actions

**Short term** – Year 1

**Medium-term** – Years 2 and 3

**Long-term** – Year 4+

**Ongoing**

Reference made to projects in this Plan does not guarantee funding, but where funding is available, it will be in alignment with this Plan. While funding is provided to certain projects, Fáilte Ireland is not the developer. Developers are required to comply with relevant legislation and the provisions of Statutory Policies, Strategies, Plans and Programmes, including those relating to environment and planning.



Malin Head, Co Donegal

# 5. APPENDICES

## Aguisíní

### Carndonagh

Last night I had a pleasant dream,  
That filled my heart with joy -  
I dreamt I stood by a mountain stream,  
Where often as a boy  
I fished, in ford and placid pool,  
And watched the brown trout play  
Those were the happy days in "Carn",  
Carndonagh far away.

I saw the hills of Malin  
Stretching East to Bunagee  
To the West the sands of Pollin  
Gently sloping to the sea;  
I saw Culdaff and Lagg's fair strand,  
Close to Trawbrega Bay,  
And I knew I was in "Carn",  
Carndonagh far away.

'I saw a little graveyard  
Where my kindred's bones are laid,  
And the homely little chapel  
Where I often knelt and prayed;  
The "Angelus" was ringing.  
And the people stopped to pray -  
I was home again in "Carn",  
Carndonagh far away.

I am tired of the city,  
And I'm longing to return,  
Though it's fair to see and pretty,  
When the light all brightly burn.  
Ah, dear home of my boyhood.  
How I'm longing for the day  
That will bring me back to "Carn",  
Carndonagh far away.

Fred Kearney, Carndonagh Poet and Songwriter

Moville Pottery, Co Donegal



# A1 THE HERO EXPERIENCE THEMES Téamaí Eispéiris atá bunaithe ar Laochra

## MARITIME AND MILITARY MIGHT

The maritime and military heritage of Inishowen is unrivalled along the Wild Atlantic Way. Fortification sites date back to ancient times, with Grianán of Aileach having particular renown for its multi-period significance as a royal site and strategic hill fort. Key chapters of Ireland's history unfolded on Inishowen. Visitors to Inishowen can explore sites that reveal the legacies of the Uí Néill dynasties through to the O'Doherty's. The final days of the Flight of the Earls; the capture of Wolfe Tone; the Martello Towers of the Napoleonic era; the First World War enhancement of Fort Dunree and Lenan Head as defensive gun-forts and the role of Lough Swilly as a staging point for Atlantic convoys; the global significance of Malin Head in transatlantic communications; and the strategic impact of Lough Foyle on the Second World War are all stories that highlight the drama of past centuries. Today, visitors can imagine the bustle of Moville as a key emigration port. They can discover the *maritime and military* might of the past at the Inishowen Maritime Museum and Fort Dunree and can stand at Banba's Crown and contemplate the immensity of Marconi's accomplishments. They can gaze out from any shoreline and reflect on the vast array of shipwrecks that lie beneath the waves and the stories of those that make their livelihood from the ocean.

## INISHOWEN'S CREATIVE STORY

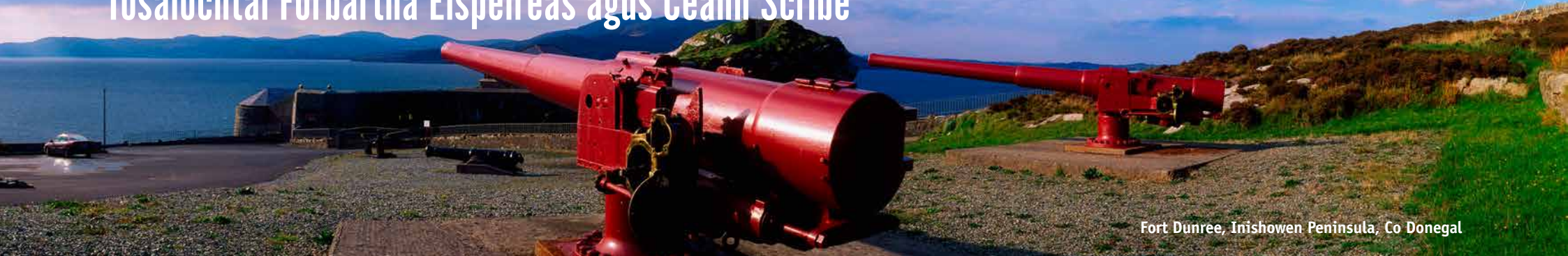
Creativity is a theme that resonates along the Wild Atlantic Way, but nowhere is its story so strongly etched into the land and culturescape, as on Inishowen. Ancient cup and ring rock art has been identified across a number of sites, particularly on the Isle of Doagh – providing inspiration for today's artists and artisans. With time, engravings found on standing stones merged into the blend of Celtic and Christian symbolism that can still be discovered on Inishowen's High Crosses. As centuries passed, this innate creativity was expressed through factory and cottage textile industries and the region gained global fame for shirt making and widespread recognition for its rich heritage in spinning, weaving and knitting. Spirits were bolstered through the illegal (and creative) distillation of poitín, with geography enabling this area to become the centre of Ireland's illicit industry – a story that finally played out in the Urris Hills. Retelling these tales has been going on for centuries, with many expressed through poem, song and narrative. Today, community events – choral and traditional singing, drama, screen art, heritage symposiums and family fun activities mark various historic happenings. These events, together with the opportunity to explore arts and crafts studios and engage in immersive artistic experiences, highlight the essence of *Inishowen's creative story* today.

## WILD OASIS

Whether today's visitor is looking for elemental wildness or peace and serenity, both can be readily found on Inishowen. For some, the motivation for travel to the peninsula is the adrenalin of coastal adventure sport or golf; while for others, it is the revitalisation that comes from slowing down and absorbing the beauty of the moment, or the day on the beach. Nowhere is the concept of *wild oasis* more relevant than looking out over the waters that surround the peninsula. In particular, the waters beyond Malin Head are of global significance in terms of their marine biodiversity and offer one of the best sites worldwide to view basking sharks. For those that explore the depths, they have the unique experience of potentially discovering Spanish Armada galleons, colonial traders, emigrant ships, Atlantic liners, warships and U-boats all in their final resting place – the largest number of coastal wrecks in Ireland. The distinctive post-glacial landscapes, the chance to observe thousands of wintering wildfowl at Inch Wildfowl Reserve or harbour seals at Trawbreaga Bay and the viewsapes from Slieve Sneacht, all underline the significance of the natural heritage – which is further reflected in the large number of Natura 2000 sites. The local food and the community atmosphere deepen the sense of well-being that can be enjoyed in the Inishowen Peninsula.

# A2 EXPERIENCE AND DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

## Tosaíochtaí Forbartha Eispéireas agus Ceann Scribe



Fort Dunree, Inishowen Peninsula, Co Donegal

### MARITIME & MILITARY MIGHT

- ▶ While the maritime and military heritage of Inishowen has the potential to be an outstanding theme on the Wild Atlantic Way, the story is fragmented and the existing visitor sites are not presented in a way that elevates the significance of the broader theme. Throughout time, there has been a strategic approach to defending the peninsula – while the reasons and purposes have varied and the fortifications have changed, the emphasis on defence has not. Each site tells part of the story – together the narrative is compelling and distinctive. The challenge now is to create an appreciation of the critical mass and to identify new ways of presenting this aspect of the peninsula’s heritage more cohesively. This in turn should promote a deeper understanding of how the story unfolds and an increased level of interest in visiting related sites.
- ▶ The narrative associated with key HERO product at sites such as Fort Dunree and Malin Head is multi-faceted and has strong potential to highlight other experiential themes. Developing a broader range of themed visitor experiences at these sites will increase their market appeal and will be important in strengthening the overall competitiveness of Inishowen.
- ▶ There are well progressed visitor management and development plans in place for Fort Dunree and Malin Head that are designed to increase the length of stay. The advancement of these plans needs to be pursued in close alignment with community aspirations and in a way that will ensure a form of tourism that is appropriate for Inishowen.
- ▶ Improving connectivity on the ground between sites through public transportation, the development of the proposed North West Greenway and related spur trails and supporting services will raise the profile of the various sites and the overall maritime and military story.
- ▶ There is a significant opportunity to develop new and expand existing opportunities to experience this theme from the water. The East Inishowen Sea Kayak Trail is an example of an existing experience that can be strengthened and repositioned more effectively.
  - Underlying regulatory issues that constrain the growth of marine-based tours and the potential for diversification within the local fishing sector need to be addressed.
- ▶ The role of technology and its potential to enhance storytelling, trip planning and the development of personalised itineraries is currently underutilised and presents considerable opportunity for elevating this theme. The EU Interreg TIDE project has potential to reveal the story of shipwrecks and what lies under the water in a new and dramatic way, while also strengthening linkages between key sites (Inishowen Maritime Museum, Fort Dunree and Fanad Head, on the other side of Lough Swilly).
- ▶ The maritime theme ties in the story of emigration and boat building and offers a range of opportunities to continue building on existing linkages with New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Boston, Scotland, Norway and Iceland.
- ▶ The City of Derry/Londonderry is integral to Inishowen’s maritime and military story and vice versa – the linkages need to be further leveraged.
- ▶ There is an opportunity to enrich existing experiences through integrating the peninsula’s deep traditions of storytelling through poetry, song and the visual arts.

# A2 EXPERIENCE AND DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

## Tosaíochtaí Forbartha Eispéireas agus Ceann Scribe

Mamore Gap, Clonmany, Co Donegal

### INISHOWEN'S CREATIVE STORY

- ▶ The creative sector today and the story of creativity on Inishowen have the potential to be a significant motivating factor for travel to this part of Donegal. The stories are distinctive and again there are strong linkages with Derry/Londonderry. However, in reality, this experiential theme has a relatively low market presence and related businesses, and community groups struggle with the level of fragmentation, lack of brand concept and a limited ability to get sufficient exposure for unique community events and experiences. Groups such as Creative Inishowen play an important role in building collaboration, but there remains a need for an ongoing focus on establishing effective dialogue and a more strategic approach to developing this sector.
- ▶ A strong overlap exists between this theme and the theme of *Wild Oasis*. It ties in particularly well with the concept of well-being and with assisting visitors in developing an enhanced appreciation of the landscape aesthetics.
- ▶ The peninsula has no single base that could play a role in unifying the sector, telling the creative story and acting as a staging area for curated experiences and for encouraging visitors to visit studios and engage in existing artistic experiences outside of the centre. A physical base has the capacity to become a living heritage centre. It would be influential in galvanising the wider sector and promoting dialogue and a greater sense of regional identity, while also offering an alternative year-round all-weather facility.
  - Building mechanisms for dialogue and exchange of creative thinking will be fundamental in developing this theme and in bringing new ideas forward as potential experiences. Mechanisms of this nature can assist in providing a greater understanding of existing experiences.
- ▶ There is potential to expand the role of arts and craft through new venues such as craft markets, themed trails, on-site events, branding etc.
- ▶ It will be important to explore ways of retaining and building up traditional skills and passing on knowledge to ensure that traditions are not lost.
- ▶ Considerable enthusiasm and creative passion exist at the community level for all forms of artistic expression. There are a large number of local-based events and forums in heritage and the arts, but effective promotion of these as visitor experiences has often been challenged by either a lack of funds or capacity. An approach to developing this theme that supports dialogue, exchange of information and coordination is needed in building a dynamic calendar of events and in developing new trip planning tools for the visitor.
- ▶ Initiatives have been established to collect and collate stories of past traditions, including the recent Inch Heritage timeline project and the Inishowen Song Project. There is scope to expand on initiatives of this nature and to work towards developing a more centralised knowledge bank for the entire peninsula.
  - Attractions such as the Doagh Famine Village are crucial in communicating many of the region's stories and traditional ways of life.
- ▶ There is potential to strengthen the role of the hotel sector in promoting this theme – particularly in terms of providing up-to-date information, encouraging participation in local experiences and developing packages.
- ▶ Opportunity exists to explore re-purposing/re-usage of digital materials that were created for past events or other communication channels.

# A2 EXPERIENCE AND DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

## Tosaíochtaí Forbartha Eispéireas agus Ceann Scribe



Inishowen Yoga, Inishowen Peninsula, Co Donegal

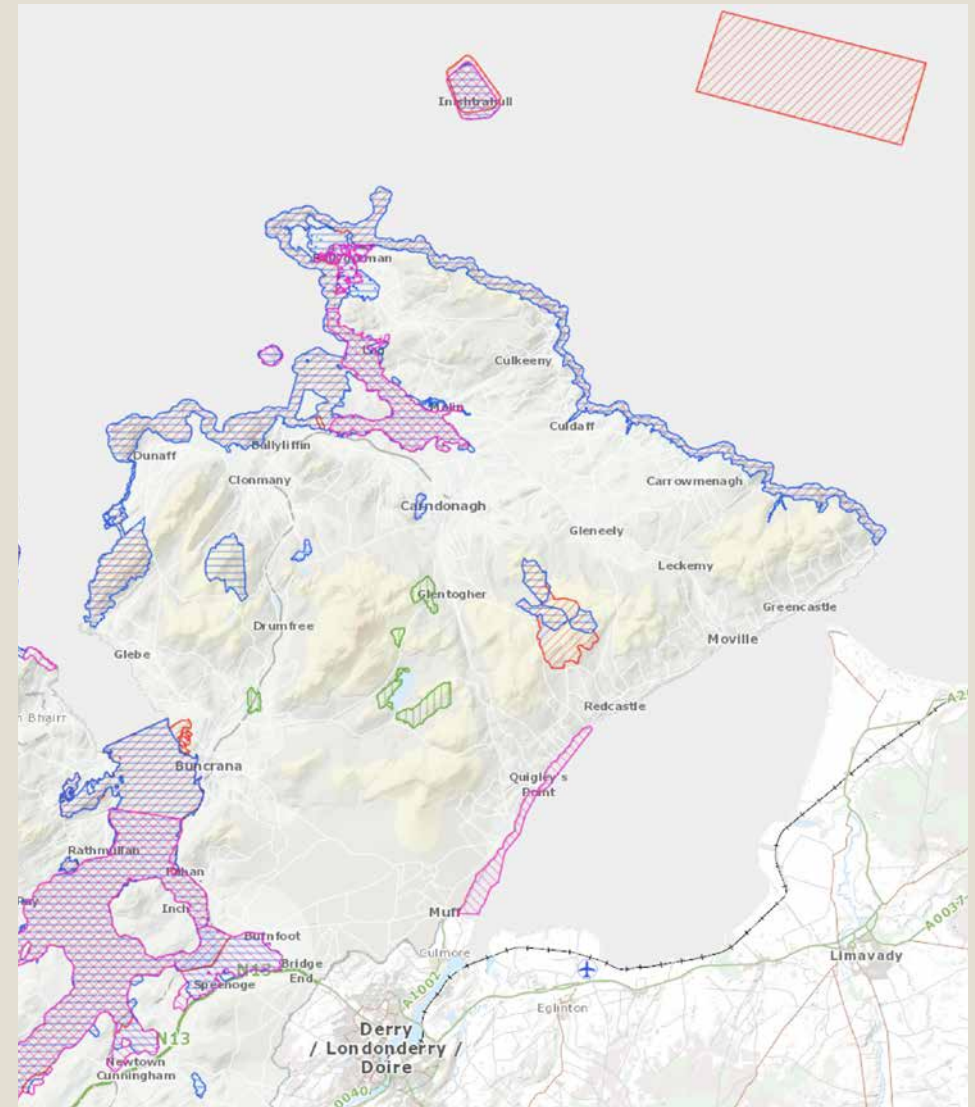
### WILD OASIS

- ▶ The landscape of Inishowen Peninsula is of international significance with most of the coastline designated as Special Protected Areas (SPAs) under the EU Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds and as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) established under the EU Habitats Directive to provide conservation measures for species and habitats of European significance. In many cases, these areas are also designated as Natural Heritage Areas or proposed NHAs under Irish law. Areas of designation are also found in the uplands, on Inishtrahull and out to sea (Hempton's Turbot Bank SAC). These designations highlight the ecological importance of the peninsula, particularly the coastal areas and the potential of developing a strong ecotourism offering. Equally, the designations highlight the sensitivity of these sites and the need for appropriate forms of tourism and visitor management.
  - Inch Wildfowl Reserve has gone from a site with virtually no visitation to one that now attracts 120,000 per annum following installation of the trail and the bird hides. This highlights both the potential interest in ecotourism and the need to balance demand with the site's ecological capacity. With the anticipated intersection of the proposed North West Greenway with the Reserve, careful consideration will need to be given to visitor management issues.
  - Inishtrahull presents a similar and critical need to balance visitation, albeit on a very different scale, with the conservation of a particularly fragile ecosystem.
  - Wild Ireland, a new attraction, allows the visitor to look back in time and identify changes that have already taken place over the centuries.
- ▶ The global significance of the waters off Malin Head has been a subject of considerable scientific interest for some time and the concept of a marine park and Biosphere Fishing Area has been promoted over recent years by the Inishowen Basking Shark Study Group and supported by global experts. The biodiversity of this marine environment and its world prominence as a potential site to view basking sharks is being carefully monitored through a range of EU Interreg programmes, including the Wildsea Europe initiative, the COMPASS Project, the MarPAMM project and the Sea Monitor project. The work is cross-border involving a range of partners and will contribute to the anticipated expansion of designated Marine Protected Areas and related marine management plans to meet Ireland's international commitments on protecting marine biodiversity.
- ▶ The opportunity to leverage the national focus on marine biodiversity needs to be discussed at community level. This conversation has been taking place but would benefit from a wider and more strategic emphasis on the benefits to be gained from pursuing designated status, including the potential to substantially raise the profile of Inishowen as an ecotourism destination and to provide a framework for a community-focused approach to destination development.
  - Initiatives such as the TIDE project will strengthen any proposed concept.
  - Moving in this direction will require an assessment of interpretation priorities relating to marine biodiversity and conservation and an identification of new opportunities for pesca-tourism that will assist in supporting the fishing sector.

# A2 EXPERIENCE AND DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

## Tosaíochtaí Forbartha Eispéireas agus Ceann Scribe

- ▶ While public access on Inishowen has expanded and there are local groups strongly committed to encouraging access and developing trails, there are underlying land ownership issues that need to be recognised. Any emphasis on expanding the trails network will have to be approached sensitively and ideally should be led through local champions. A framework to support the strategic assessment of new opportunities, such as the use of bog roads and the expansion of supporting infrastructure needs to be in place, in addition to guidelines for ongoing management.
- ▶ The proposed development of the North West Greenway concept over coming years will add a valuable new way of accessing sites around the peninsula and will play a key role in the development of all three experiential themes and in enhancing the overall competitiveness of Inishowen. The connectivity with Derry/Londonderry will strengthen the thematic linkages with the city, in addition to expanding market demand for 'slow tourism' experiences.
- ▶ The launch of the international Well-Being from Nature project on Inishowen in 2021 will strengthen stakeholders' awareness of this growing niche sector and the opportunities that exist to reposition existing products and experiences, including local food, to attract this market. Linkages between well-being and nature will be highlighted and businesses such as Wild Alpaca Way are already promoting well-being as a destination experience.
- ▶ Marine ecotourism and coastal recreation are important elements of the current Inishowen visitor experience. The further expansion of coastal activities will require an emphasis on identifying and addressing infrastructural requirements and constraints and advocating for structural changes to the underlying national regulatory and funding environment.
- ▶ Capacity building and the need for new forms of training are strongly associated with the *Wild Oasis* theme, although all aspects of the visitor experience will benefit from a greater focus on training.



Designated ecosystems on Inishowen

Source: NPWS Protected sites map-viewer – <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites>



Glenevin Waterfall, Clonmany, Co Donegal

# A3 LOCALITIES: BUNCRANA, BURNFOOT, DUNREE

## Achoimre Dúiche: Bun Chranncha, Bun na hAbhann, An Dún Riabhach

Leaving the N13 on the west side of the peninsula takes the visitor through Burnfoot and past unusually flat land – one of the largest organic farms in Ireland located on land that was reclaimed from Lough Swilly at the end of the 19th Century. Inch Island lies to the west – connected by a causeway road. This island, otherwise known as Inis na nOsirí – has its name derived from ‘Island of the Oysters’. Buncrana, the historic home of the O’Doherty clan, is the largest town on the peninsula and the second largest in the county, with a colourful history of defence, textiles and tourism. To the north west, Fort Dunree is renowned for its stunning natural beauty and wildlife, in addition to its defence role through history and the World Wars. Today, visitors have the opportunity to see one of the best collections of coast artillery guns in the world.



Victoria Bridge, Buncrana, Co Donegal

### Hero Products

#### ► Wild Atlantic Way Discovery Points -

Dunree Head, Lisfannon Beach, Inch Island, Grianán of Aileach, Manorcunningham View

#### ► Beach Trail:

- Lisfannon Strand
- Luddan Beach
- Lady’s Bay (Shore Front Beach)
- Porthaw Beach
- Stragill Beach
- Port Bán (Dunree Head)

#### ► Heritage Trail:

- St. Mura’s Cross, Fahan Graveyard
- Grianán of Aileach
- O’Doherty’s Keep

#### ► Walking Trail:

- Fort Dunree Walking Trail
- Buncrana Shore Path
- Inch Wildfowl Reserve

#### ► Arts & Crafts Trail:

- Eilis Galbraith (Homewares & Interiors)

- Bernie Murphy Irish Designer
- Adam Rory Porter, The Northern Light Gallery & Studio
- Old Schoolhouse Quilts
- The Fennel Shed
- Donegal Ogham Stones
- Orla Vera Accessories

### Hero Products

- Inishowen 100 route
- The Busy Brush
- Wild Ireland
- Fort Dunree Military Museum
- Inish Adventures at Fort Dunree
- Artlink Residency at Fort Dunree
- Amazing Grace Country
- Bulaba Trail
- Inch Island Wildfowl Reserve
- Northern Lights/Aurora Borealis
- Féile na hInse, Traditional Music Festival - Inishowen Traditional Music Project (ITMP)
- Inish International Folk Song & Ballad

- Reel Irish Music Tours
- Amazing Grace Yacht Charters
- Swilly Tours and Charters
- Buncrana Music Festival
- Crana Fest
- Earagail Arts Festival
- Northern Exposure
- Wainfest
- Donegal Atlantic Way Ultra 555
- Darkness into Light
- Laurentic Forum - Donegal Diaspora Project

### Supporting Experiences

- Inishowen Surf School
- Inishowen Quad Biking
- Ned’s Point Fort
- Buncrana Castle/O’Doherty Keep
- Crana Stables
- Swan Park
- Father Hegarty Rock
- Inishowen Tourist Office
- North West Golf Club

- Buncrana Golf Club
- Lough Swilly Marina
- Lough Swilly Ferry
- Halfway Karting
- Wains World
- Buncrana Festival Play Park
- Buncrana Park Run
- Crana Bridge
- Live and traditional music venues
- Quality local eateries, cafés and pubs
- Choice of local accommodation with family run hotels
- Local shops and services

### Experience Gaps

- O’Doherty’s Keep and Inch Castle - indoor historical and cultural heritage experiences
- Accessible and curated ecology experiences
- Weak nighttime economy
- Public transportation across the region
- Visitor services and facilities i.e., public toilets

# A3 LOCALITIES: BALLYLIFFIN & CLONMANY

## Achoimre Dúiche: Baile Lifín & Cluain Maine

Approaching Clonmany through the Urris Hills and the Mamore Gap, the visitor can get a feel for the distinctive geography that allowed the area to become the centre of the illegal distillation of poitín. Today the area offers a wide range of outdoor activities and attractions – from hill walking, to swimming, surfing, horse-riding or strolling along an array of beaches. Whether the visitor is looking for hidden waterfalls or Ballyliffin’s world renowned golf course that hosted the 2018 Dubai Duty Free Irish Open, or whether someone’s interests lie in prehistoric rock art, ancient, raised beaches and diverse wildlife – these experiences can all be found in this part of the peninsula. Arts, crafts, festivals and agricultural shows all tie the contemporary to the past, while the opportunity to stay in a range of quality accommodation awaits at the end of the day.



Doagh Famine Village, Ballyliffin, Co Donegal

### Hero Products

- ▶ **Wild Atlantic Way Discovery Points -**
  - Pollan Bay, Tullagh Bay, Gap of Mamore
- ▶ Inishowen 100
- ▶ Gap of Mamore/The Magic Road
- ▶ Northern Lights/Aurora Borealis
- ▶ Ballyliffin Golf Club – the Old Links and Glashedy Links
- ▶ Isle of Doagh pre-historic rock art
- ▶ Doagh Famine Village
- ▶ Glenevin Waterfall
- ▶ Nancy’s Barn award-winning seafood chowder
- ▶ **Beach Trail:**
  - Leenan Beach
  - Tullagh Bay
  - Pollan Strand
  - Lagacurry Beach
- ▶ **Heritage Trail:**
  - Carrickabraghy Castle

- ▶ **Walking Trail:**
  - Pollan Bay Walk
  - Waterfall Walk
  - Butler’s Glen Loop
  - Urris Lakes Loop
- ▶ Binnion Mountain Peak Trail
- ▶ Leenan Loop Walks
- ▶ North West Walking and Hiking

### Hero Experiences

- ▶ **Arts & Crafts Trail:**
  - Mary Crowley’s Artist Studio & Gallery
  - Clonmany Fabrics & Crafts
  - Glendowen Craft Shop
  - Photos from Ireland
- ▶ Clonmany Agricultural Show – now in its 53rd year
- ▶ Clonmany Festival
- ▶ Inishowen Traditional Singers Circle
- ▶ Disappear Here Film Festival
- ▶ Herron Scarecrow Festival
- ▶ Lapland Village

- ▶ Féile na hInse, Traditional Music Festival - Inishowen Traditional Music Project (ITMP)
- ▶ Inish International Folk Song & Ballad Seminar
- ▶ Seamus Grant Weekend
- ▶ The Lands of Éoghain
- ▶ Irish Traditional Music Archive and the Inishowen Song Project
- ▶ Ballyliffin International Coastal Challenge

### Supporting Experiences

- ▶ Clonmany Genealogy
- ▶ Tullagh Bay Equestrian Centre
- ▶ Wild Atlantic Adventure Centre – kayaking, rock-climbing, archery, surfing, horse-riding
- ▶ Inishowen Surf School
- ▶ Choice of well-being, therapies and spa facilities
- ▶ Donegal Climbing
- ▶ Yoga with Elma
- ▶ Clonmany Community Centre

- ▶ 16th Century O’Doherty Castle, Isle of Doagh
- ▶ Amma Inishowen Centre
- ▶ Rose Cottage Craft Shop
- ▶ Pollan Pebbles
- ▶ Blue Room Art Gallery
- ▶ Mamore Café
- ▶ Bikes ‘n Toys
- ▶ Northern Exposure
- ▶ Wainfest
- ▶ Donegal Atlantic Way Ultra 555
- ▶ Live and traditional music venues
- ▶ Ballyliffin Beach playground
- ▶ Quality local eateries, cafés and pubs
- ▶ Choice of local accommodation with family run hotels
- ▶ Local shops and services

### Experience Gaps

- ▶ Curated ecology experiences
- ▶ Accessible experiences such as the Tide Project
- ▶ Public transportation and connectivity across the region



# A3 LOCALITIES: CARNDONAGH & CULDAFF

## Achoimre Dúiche: Carn Domhnach & Cúil Dabhcha

“St. Patrick’s Bed is an historic place, and the legends claim that when the Patron Saint visited Inishowen, he came to Carndonagh and said to his followers: ‘If I sleep in peace this night, I shall build my Church on this site.’ So the night passed, St. Patrick slept peacefully and, as he promised, he built his Church”.  
Folklore Museum, UCD. Carndonagh and Culdaff are a treasure trove of monastic and spiritual heritage with high crosses a particular speciality. They are both sited at key gateway locations to Malin Head, with Carndonagh surrounded by hills and Slieve Sneacht to the south west and Trawbreaga Bay to the north west and, Culdaff famous for its Blue Flag beach and water based activities. Creativity characterises the area, with art and craft studios close by and music, poetry and singing part of its cultural legacy.



Woodturner, Carndonagh, Co Donegal

### Hero Products

- ▶ Wild Atlantic Way Discovery Point – Culdaff Beach
- ▶ Inishowen 100
- ▶ **Beach Trail:**
  - Culdaff Beach Blue Flag
- ▶ **Heritage Trail:**
  - St. Columba’s Church
  - Donagh Cross
  - Bocan Stone Circle
  - Temple of Deen
  - Cloncha High Cross
  - Carrowmore High Cross
- ▶ **Walking Trail:**
  - Culdaff River and Estuary Slí na Slainte
- ▶ **Arts & Crafts Trail:**
  - Rockwell Ornaments
  - Ben Holmes Art
  - Inishowen Bogwood Sculptures
  - Silver Birch Gallery & Studio

- ▶ Carndonagh ‘Cathedral’ – the Church of the Sacred Heart
- ▶ Donagh Church and the ‘Marigold Stone’
- ▶ Northern Lights/Aurora Borealis

### Hero Experiences

- ▶ Féile na hInse, Traditional Music Festival - Inishowen Traditional Music Project (ITMP)
- ▶ Inish International Folk Song & Ballad Seminar
- ▶ Slieve Sneacht
- ▶ Inishowen boating: dolphin and whale watching, fishing and angling, Inishtrahull boat trips
- ▶ Surfing
- ▶ Cnoc an Uininn – spitfire memorial and viewing point
- ▶ Colgan Heritage Weekend

### Supporting Experiences

- ▶ Barrack Hill Park and Community Gardens – walks with unique flora and fauna, children’s playground and outdoor gym
- ▶ Inishowen Yoga
- ▶ Sliabh Sneacht Heritage Centre
- ▶ Colgan Hall community and entertainment events
- ▶ Spraoí agus Sport
- ▶ Oak Woodland and Mass Rock
- ▶ Bike hire
- ▶ Wildwoods Wilderness Living Academy
- ▶ Culdaff Beach playground
- ▶ Northern Exposure
- ▶ Wainfest
- ▶ Donegal Atlantic Way Ultra 555
- ▶ Darkness into Light
- ▶ Live and traditional music venues

- ▶ Quality local eateries, cafés and pubs
- ▶ Choice of local accommodation with family run hotels
- ▶ Local shops and services

### Experience Gaps

- ▶ Signage on roads
- ▶ Weak nighttime economy
- ▶ Curated ecology experiences
- ▶ Accessible experiences
- ▶ Public transportation and connectivity across the region
- ▶ Access to local stories – not gathered or curated

# A3 LOCALITIES: MALIN HEAD

## Achoimre Dúiche: Cionn Mhálanna

Ireland's most northerly point is stunningly wild and rugged and is one of the 15 Signature Discovery Points along the Wild Atlantic Way. From Banba's Crown the visitor can see as far as Scotland, with Inishtrahull Island to the north east and the mouth of Lough Swilly and Fanad Lighthouse to the south west. Malin Head abounds with maritime stories relating to shipwrecks, Marconi communications and weather forecasts. The ecological diversity of the surrounding waters and the coastline are internationally significant; the coastal cliffs offer exceptional climbing opportunities; and local legends and rock formations – 'Hell's Hole' and 'Devil's Bridge' hold a fascination for visitors. The town of Malin is a 17th Century plantation village with a triangular green and Ireland's second longest stone bridge spanning ten arches.



Malin Head, Co Donegal

### Hero Products

- ▶ Wild Atlantic Way Signature Discovery Point – Malin Head
- ▶ Inishowen 100
- ▶ Trawbreaga Bay
- ▶ **Beach Trail:**
  - Five Finger Strand
- ▶ **Heritage Trail:**
  - Wee House of Malin
- ▶ **Walking Trail:**
  - Malin Head Trail
- ▶ **Arts & Crafts Trail:**
  - Ballagh Studio
- ▶ Banba's Crown and 'The Tower'
- ▶ Ballyhillion Raised Beach
- ▶ Malin Head hiking trails including Hell's Hole and Devil's Bridge
- ▶ Knockamany Bends
- ▶ Wild Alpaca Way

- ▶ Northern Lights/Aurora Borealis
- ▶ Féile na hInse, Traditional Music Festival - Inishowen Traditional Music Project (ITMP)
- ▶ Inish International Folk Song & Ballad Seminar

### Hero Products

- ▶ Bird watching
- ▶ Inishtrahull – virtual access to its National Nature Reserve and Bird Observatory
- ▶ Donegal Climbing:
  - Malin Head heritage and Star Wars Episode VIII movie tour
  - Malin Head rock climbing
  - Ultimate adventure climb, abseil, cave and explore challenge
  - Donegal Photography Tours

### Supporting Experiences

- ▶ Farran's Bar – Ireland's most northerly bar
- ▶ Malin Stables
- ▶ Northern Exposure
- ▶ Wainfest
- ▶ Donegal Atlantic Way Ultra 555
- ▶ Live and traditional music venues
- ▶ Quality local eateries, cafés and pubs
- ▶ Choice of local accommodation
- ▶ Local shops and services

### Experience Gaps

- ▶ Curated ecology experiences
- ▶ Accessible experiences
- ▶ Extension of Wee Greenway Initiative across region
- ▶ Music
- ▶ Weak nighttime economy
- ▶ Public transportation and connectivity across the region
- ▶ Inishtrahull conservation experience, creating managed and limited access to the island for its conservation and protection; curated boat tours around island
- ▶ Access to local stories – not gathered or curated
- ▶ A Malin Head visitor centre

# A3 LOCALITIES: Greencastle, Moville & Muff

## Achoimre Dúiche: An Caisleán Nua, Bun an Phobail, Magh

The eastern shores of Inishowen along Lough Foyle continue with many maritime stories of shipwrecks, smuggling, trade and emigration. Moville was once a major port on par with Cobh in Co. Cork, with large trading ships and transatlantic liners regularly dropping anchor in its deep waters. Today, the ties with Boston, Newfoundland and New Brunswick are still strong and much of Moville's former glory is still reflected in the architecture, but life is now much quieter and trade across the ocean has ceased. The ties to the sea are now stronger in Greencastle with its commercial fishing port and ferry service to Magilligan. A trail linking the two towns gives visitors the opportunity to explore the Foyle coastline by foot. Muff marks the start/finish of the Wild Atlantic Way and will shortly be connected to Derry/Londonderry by the North West Greenway.



Greencastle, Co Donegal

### Hero Products

- ▶ Muff – start and finish of the Wild Atlantic Way
- ▶ Wild Atlantic Way Discovery Point – Inishowen Head, Magilligan Point View and Kinnagoe Bay
- ▶ Inishowen 100
- ▶ **Beach Trail:**
  - Stroove Beach (Blue Flag)
  - Kinnagoe Bay
- ▶ **Heritage Trail:**
  - The Cooley Cross and Skull House
  - Northburg Castle
  - Morton God Dolmen
- ▶ **Walking Trail:**
  - Moville Shore Path Slí na Slainte
  - Inishowen Head Loop
- ▶ **Arts & Crafts Trail:**
  - Moville Pottery
- ▶ East Inishowen Kayak Trail
- ▶ Greencastle Marina Blue Flag

- ▶ Inishowen Maritime Museum & Planetarium
- ▶ Northern Lights/Aurora Borealis
- ▶ Greencastle Regatta
- ▶ Moville Regatta
- ▶ Inishowen Sea Symposium
- ▶ Féile na hInse, Traditional Music Festival – Inishowen Traditional Music Project (ITMP)
- ▶ Inish International Folk Song & Ballad Seminar

### Hero Experiences

- ▶ Inish Adventures – Adventure Waterpark, kayaking, sailing, white water rafting, archery, gorge walking, orienteering
- ▶ Extreme North – Quadrathon Challenge and Tuff Inish Adventure Race
- ▶ Donegal Atlantic Way Ultra 555
- ▶ Cooley Equestrian Centre
- ▶ Lenamore Stables

### Supporting Experiences

- ▶ The IOSAS Centre
- ▶ Greencastle Golf Club
- ▶ Redcastle Hotel Golf Course
- ▶ Muff Community Park
- ▶ Far and Wild
- ▶ Cooley Pitch & Putt
- ▶ Redcastle Leisureland
- ▶ Boghopper Brewery
- ▶ Scenic Lough Foyle Ferry
- ▶ Greencastle Ferry Port
- ▶ Foyle Rowing Club
- ▶ Muff Festival
- ▶ Northern Exposure
- ▶ Wainfest
- ▶ Donegal Atlantic Way Ultra 555
- ▶ Live and traditional music venues
- ▶ Quality local eateries, cafés and pubs
- ▶ Choice of local accommodation with family run hotels
- ▶ Local shops and services

### Experience Gaps

- ▶ Experience at the Beginning / Finish point of the Wild Atlantic Way in Muff
- ▶ Curated ecology experiences
- ▶ Accessible experiences
- ▶ Music
- ▶ Weak nighttime economy
- ▶ Public transportation and connectivity across the region
- ▶ Lack of seafood restaurants
- ▶ Access to local stories – not gathered or curated
- ▶ Local Link around the peninsula or Inishowen 100
- ▶ Marine ecotourism

# A4 THE STORIES Na Sceálta

## BUNCRANA, BURNFOOT, DUNREE

### MARITIME AND MILITARY MIGHT

- ▶ Fort Dunree
- ▶ Grianán of Aileach – Bronze Age, before Pyramids, clan wars, ancient Irish warriors (high kingship of Ireland)
- ▶ Cahir O’Doherty – O’Doherty’s Keep (1587-1608). The last Gaelic Chief of the Clan O’Doherty and Lord of Inishowen – noted loyalist
- ▶ Inch Castle – built as part of a network of O’Doherty castles designed to ward off anyone who threatened their lordship
- ▶ World War I and World War II – the strategic role of Lough Swilly – 4 forts
- ▶ Operation Deadlight – scuttling of 116 German U-boats
- ▶ Shipwrecks
- ▶ Vikings
- ▶ Spanish Armada
- ▶ Wolfe Tone and the Flight of the Earls
- ▶ Bunrana heron fisheries
- ▶ Significance of fish during the Great Famine – sustained the population
- ▶ The history and timelines of Inch Island

- ▶ The King’s Grave, Inch Island – “it is said that Fergus McRoy, King of Ulster and chief of the Red Branch of Knights is buried under the huge stones”
- ▶ Inch Fort 1813
- ▶ The Island of Inch Masonic Lodge Number 589 was constituted in 1781 and is one of the oldest continuously active lodges in Ireland
- ▶ Siege of Derry 1689 – Kirke’s forces garrisoned on Inch Island
- ▶ Inch’s 18th Century fishing history

### INISHOWEN’S CREATIVE STORY

- ▶ History of mining – gold, silver and bronze
- ▶ Harry Swann – industrialist and antiquarian
- ▶ The Derry Air
- ▶ Amazing Grace – John Newton
- ▶ The Irish Linen Industry – Inch Island was ideal for growing flax and the remains of 6 mills have been recorded by the Inch Island timeline
- ▶ Inch House – set location for ITV’s filming of Agnes Jones
- ▶ Shirt making story of Bunrana

### WILD OASIS

- ▶ Ireland’s earliest inhabitants – Mesolithic people - nomadic hunter-gatherers
- ▶ Links with California gold rush
- ▶ Fahan Mura, St. Mura’s Cross, 7th Century – only cross in Ireland with Greek inscription
- ▶ The baptism of Eoghan by St. Patrick at Grianan of Aileach in the 5th Century
- ▶ Dunfinn Fairy Fort, Inch Island
- ▶ Inch House 1730 – “During the early stages of the Peace Process Inch House played a part by hosting several meetings between politicians and clergy. One of the finest events was a lunch attended by senior clergy with guest of honour, Mr John Hume. The house became a focal point for American visitors throughout the Peace Process with many visiting privately. Famous amongst these was Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives
- ▶ Inishowen River Guardians Programme
- ▶ Story of establishing Wild Ireland

## BALLYLIFFIN AND CLONMANY

### MARITIME AND MILITARY MIGHT

- ▶ Significance of fish during the Great Famine – sustained the population
- ▶ Trawbreaga Bay – ‘lying strand’
- ▶ Shipwrecks:
  - The ‘Twilight’ at Five Fingers Strand 1889
  - The Daniel Morris 1876
- ▶ WWII Plane crash site
- ▶ Carrickabraghy Castle, Isle of Doagh goes back to Mesolithic times

### INISHOWEN’S CREATIVE STORY

- ▶ Poitín Republic – Urris Hills
- ▶ Pre-historic rock art
- ▶ History of mining – gold, silver and bronze
- ▶ Storyteller Charles McGlinchey
- ▶ Individual crafters' stories of the region

### WILD OASIS

- ▶ Isle of Doagh Famine Village
- ▶ The Castles
- ▶ Glashedy Island

# A4 THE STORIES Na Sceálta

## CARNDONAGH AND CULDAFF

### MARITIME AND MILITARY MIGHT

- ▶ Significance of fish during the Great Famine – sustained the population
- ▶ Thomas D'Arcy McGee
- ▶ Culdaff House – Plantation House
- ▶ Lieutenant Colonel John Pitt Kennedy (1796-1879) born in Carndonagh and joined the Royal Engineers in 1815 – sent to Malta, Corfu and India where he superintended the building of roads, canals, quays and lighthouses.
- ▶ The Cowboy from Carn – Captain Jack Crawford was born in Carndonagh in 1847. He became Chief Scout of the United States Army and reported on Custer's Last Stand. He was also an entertainer in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show.
- ▶ Cnoc an Uininn – Spitfire memorial

### INISHOWEN'S CREATIVE STORY

- ▶ Textile-making heritage
- ▶ Shirt making story of Cardonagh
- ▶ Tweed story
- ▶ History of mining – gold, silver and bronze
- ▶ Fred Kearney – poet and songwriter
- ▶ John Colgan – (1592-1658) – Franciscan friar and noted hagiographer and historian. He became head of the Louvain School of History. He wrote the Acta Sanctorum Hiberniae and Triadis Thaumaturgae
- ▶ Mary Robinson, Ireland's first female President (1990-1997) – her mother was an O'Donnell from Bridge Street
- ▶ Tommy Tiernan, comedian
- ▶ Keith Mc Erlean, theatre, television and film
- ▶ Gary Doherty, Irish international footballer

### WILD OASIS

- ▶ Bocan Stone Circle
- ▶ Carndonagh 'Cathedral'
- ▶ Carndonagh High Cross
- ▶ Clonca Monastic Site and High Cross
- ▶ Carrowmore High Crosses
- ▶ Donagh Church, the 'Marigold Stone' and church bell
- ▶ Coptic Christianity – visited by early Egyptian Coptic Christians before St. Patrick
- ▶ High Crosses and Celtic Crosses
- ▶ Mass Rock
- ▶ Slieve Sneacht pilgrimage at Lughnasa and Tobar na Súil ('Well of the Eyes') said to cure blindness
- ▶ Slieve Sneacht – 1825 was used as a base for mapping Ireland – Ordnance Survey's Principal Triangulation

## MALIN HEAD

### MARITIME AND MILITARY MIGHT

- ▶ Inishtrahull 'farmed' turbot to liners
- ▶ Marconi – the story of communications – oldest coastal wireless station in the world
- ▶ 'Ship to shore stories' e.g., Lincoln's assassination, story of the Titanic shipwrecks: HMS Saldanha 1811; The Cambria 1870; HMS Audacious 1914; HMS Raccoon 1918; SS Laurentic 1917; SS Laurentic II 1940; The Havildar and Transylvania 1940; Atlantic U-boat fleet – WW2
- ▶ '80 Éire'
- ▶ Significance of fish during the Great Famine – sustained the population
- ▶ Malin Head National Weather Station
- ▶ Don'yrishe castle and O'Doherty fortification of Malin
- ▶ Sir Arthur Chichester, Lord Deputy of Ireland/Marquis of Donegal
- ▶ Mac an Meirge O'Dohertys of Keenagh, Chichester and the Harvey family
- ▶ Malin town courthouse

- ▶ Cloncha - the site of many historical battles against rival Celts (Irish and Scottish), Vikings and the English
- ▶ Evidence of Viking invasions found in Old Norse location names at Malin Head – e.g., Ineuran Bay (translates as 'small, sheltered harbour') and Scheidrén (translates as 'shield'). The Scheldrín are the impressive sea stacks located at the north western tip of the headland
- ▶ Economic migration – bonfires on the headlands as a send-off for loved ones
- ▶ William Elder (1823-1882) - elected to the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick
- ▶ Daniel Doherty, Ballyhillion – Donegal Association of Boston
- ▶ Inishowen emigrants in Boston
- ▶ Smuggling – tobacco and rum

### INISHOWEN'S CREATIVE STORY

- ▶ Star Wars VIII
- ▶ History of mining – gold, silver and bronze
- ▶ Malin pebbles

- ▶ Devil's Bridge and Hell's Hole
- ▶ Inishtrahull poitin distilling

### WILD OASIS

- ▶ Banba's Crown – the mystic queen
- ▶ St. Columba Colmcille
- ▶ Wee House of Malin – St. Muirdhealach (d.1088)
- ▶ St. Maher's Church
- ▶ Hiding of Bonnie Prince Charlie
- ▶ Ballyhillion Raised Beach
- ▶ The 'saint's chair'
- ▶ Malin Well Fair
- ▶ Geology and ornithology of Inishtrahull
- ▶ The Legend of Inishtrahull
- ▶ The Holy Stone of Malin
- ▶ Hedge schools of Inishowen
- ▶ Umgal – allegedly the burial place of Ossian, pre-eminent poet of pagan Ireland and son of Fionn MacCumhaill'
- ▶ Inis Trá Fola – Island of the Strand of Blood

# A4 THE STORIES Na Sceálta

## GREENCastle, MOVILLE, MUFF

### MARITIME AND MILITARY MIGHT

- ▶ Emigration story of Moville and Greencastle
- ▶ Boat builders of Inishowen – the McDonalds are the last remaining family of boat builders
- ▶ Regattas, traditional boats, story of fishing
- ▶ Significance of fish during the Great Famine – sustained the population
- ▶ World War I and World War II – the strategic role of Lough Foyle
- ▶ Spanish Armada – Kinnagoe Bay and La Trinidad Valencera
- ▶ Sinking of German boats after war
- ▶ The Greencastle yawl / Drontheim boat
- ▶ Sinking of the Mary Snow
- ▶ Moville – last port of call for Lloyds shipping to Americas

- ▶ Emigration – the ships to America that went from Moville
- ▶ Shipping trade – Foyle pilots
- ▶ Roots/connections with England and northern influence
- ▶ Field Marshall Bernard Law Montgomery
- ▶ Captain Cochrane, Redcastle
- ▶ Carey Family, Redcastle
- ▶ Isle of Eoghain – Niall of Nine Hostages, Iskakeen, Muff
- ▶ Manannán Mac Lir – Celtic Sea God

### INISHOWEN'S CREATIVE STORY

- ▶ Moville Pottery
- ▶ Chef Brian McDermott
- ▶ History of mining – gold, silver and bronze

- ▶ Joyce Carey, Anglo Irish novelist, 1888
- ▶ Renowned Irish playwright Brian Friel
- ▶ Patsy Kavanagh song writer of Greencastle
- ▶ Shirt making story of Moville

### WILD OASIS

- ▶ Kinnagoe Bay – fields above the bay never suffered from the blight – blight spores blew over
- ▶ The Cooley Cross and Skull House, Moville
- ▶ Morton God Dolmen
- ▶ Whiskey Lane, Moville
- ▶ Bishop Montgomery and Bath Green
- ▶ St. Colmcille's departure from Ireland at Inishowen Head

# A5 ENVIRONMENTAL & SUSTAINABLE CONSIDERATIONS Cúrsaí Comhshaoil & Inbhuanaithe

## Sustainable Tourism

Fáilte Ireland recognises that it has never been more important that the safeguarding and successful growth of Ireland's tourism sector is based on a sustainable and balanced approach. Environmental protection, economic competitiveness, community & visitor awareness and involvement, all play a part in successfully achieving and benefiting from this approach.

This Destination and Experience Development Plan (DEDP) provides an opportunity to ensure that all existing and future tourism projects and initiatives within the Inishowen DEDP area are planned, developed and managed in a sustainable and integrated manner. The Plan has full consideration for the following:

- ▶ The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) goals and specifically the implementation of policies to promote sustainable tourism
- ▶ The Sustainable Tourism Working Group – Guiding Principles and
- ▶ The VICE (Visitor, Industry, Community and Environment) Model for Sustainable Tourism

The VICE Model has been integrated into this Plan in the following way:

- ▶ The delivery of exciting and motivating tourism experience that is easy to find, access and navigate and exceeds their expectations as **visitors**,
- ▶ Building and unlocking capacity in the local tourism sector, increasing employment levels in tourism and supporting the development of the required skills in the **industry**,
- ▶ Spreading the economic and social benefits of tourism more widely to **communities** that currently do not derive significant benefits from tourism; and
- ▶ Valuing, promoting protecting and enhancing the **environment** and heritage as the cornerstone of Irish tourism.

This Plan will enable and motivate stakeholders and industry in the area to amplify their local tourism offering. The plan aims to increase visits, dwell time and spend in the locality in a sustainable manner. The key objectives and aspirations of this Plan is creating, maintaining and enhancing sustainable tourism for the Inishowen region.

The implementation of the following guiding principles is key to the success of the Plan.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SUSTAINABLE AND RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

- ▶ Assess the feasibility of developing and implementing visitor management plans where relevant.
- ▶ Encourage the adoption of a responsible tourism approach with ongoing monitoring of environmental impacts.
- ▶ Increase awareness and appreciation of the Inishowen region's unique landscape and environment.
- ▶ Increase environmental performance among tourism businesses.
- ▶ Encourage sustainable modes of transport and ensure they are accessible to tourists.
- ▶ Introduce and implement minimum sustainable standards for tour guides.
- ▶ Increase and promote environmental protection and enhancement when progressing actions derived from this plan.
- ▶ Ensure the EPA's Environmental Sensitivity Mapping Webtool is consulted when implementing projects resulting from this plan.
- ▶ Ensure the Plan contributes towards delivering on Ireland's Climate Action Plan 2021.
- ▶ Monitor the quality of visitor experiences and local social/cultural impact at key sites.
- ▶ Ensure Inishowen visitor experiences are accessible to all where possible.
- ▶ Support voluntary and community-led environmental protection projects, which in turn benefit tourism.
- ▶ Advocate for the protection of key environmental and tourism assets.
- ▶ Improve tourist management, particularly in mature and established tourist areas.
- ▶ Encourage tourism related businesses to engage in the Leave No Trace Programme.
- ▶ Ensure crucial infrastructure including water and wastewater services are in place and adequate.
- ▶ Harness the importance of ecosystem services and protected sites to encourage sustainable levels of ecotourism growth and awareness.
- ▶ Ensure invasive species management is in place through the promotion of effective biosecurity measures.

# A5 ENVIRONMENTAL & SUSTAINABLE CONSIDERATIONS Cúrsaí Comhshaoil & Inbhuanaithe

## Environmental Considerations

Fáilte Ireland recognises the need to integrate environmental considerations into this plan in a way that responds to the sensitivities and requirements of the wider natural environment. Environmental considerations including inland and coastal water quality and amenity, climate change, traffic, biodiversity, built and cultural heritage, landscape, critical infrastructure and communities, all play a vital part in our tourism sector.

The protection, enhancement and promotion of our most important tourism asset – the natural environment – has been an integral part of the formation of this plan as is evidenced in the following:

- ▶ A firm commitment to ensuring sustainable and responsible tourism principles are practiced, (as mentioned in the previous section)
- ▶ Environmental assessments and resulting measuring and monitoring,
- ▶ Compliance with statutory decision making and consent granting at Plan implementation stage and
- ▶ Integrating requirements for environmental protection and management.

## Environmental Assessment

Consideration has been given to the requirement to undertake environmental assessment of this plan in order to ensure full legal compliance and to further integrate protection, enhancement and promotion of the environment in developing and implementing the Plan. The following sets out the two types of environmental assessments that were considered.

### 1. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The Plan was examined for the need to undertake Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). On initial examination of the plan, it was determined that full SEA would be required. The assessment process was completed having full regard to SEA Directive 2001/42/EU and to Statutory Instrument No. 435/2004 as amended. The outcome of this process can be referenced in the relevant environmental documents that accompany this plan.

### 2. Appropriate Assessment (AA)

The Plan was examined for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment (AA). On initial examination of the Plan and in completing screening for AA, it was determined that Stage 2 AA would be required. The assessment process was undertaken having full regard to the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC and to Statutory Instrument No. 477/2011. The output and outcome of this process can be referenced in the relevant environmental documents that accompany this plan.



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## Key Findings of the SEA and AA Process for the Plan

Having completed full SEA and AA on the Inishowen Peninsula DEDP it is evident that these processes have had a positive influence on the evolution of the Plan and will also continue to have a positive environmental influence as the Plan enters its implementation phase. The outcome of completing the above environmental assessments has resulted in the following:

- ▶ Identifying and mitigating where relevant potential environmental impacts resulting from the plan.
- ▶ Identifying relevant positive environmental impacts arising from the Plan and ensuring the implementation of actions that result in environmental protection, enhancement and promotion e.g., visitor management actions, environmental and sustainable education.
- ▶ Developing a suite of mitigatory actions to ensure that any negative environmental impacts are reduced or eliminated at Plan implementation stage.

This suite of mitigatory actions includes:

- ▶ The requirement to establish the status of the DEDP and its interrelationship with statutory decision-making and consent-granting frameworks.
- ▶ Integrating the requirements for Environmental Compliance into the Plan. Particular emphasis is placed on the following:
  - Requirements for lower-tier environmental assessment,
  - The *Donegal County Development Plan 2018-2024* (as varied),
  - The *Climate Action Plan 2021*,
  - Visitor management,
  - Consideration for infrastructural capacity and green infrastructure and
  - Ecosystem services.

Development and execution of an Environmental Monitoring Programme for the Plan during implementation and operation.

- ▶ The SEA Directive requires that the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes are monitored. Section A5a details the measures that have been selected in order to monitor the likely significant effects of implementing this plan.
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Environmental monitoring will be based around indicators that allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Strategic Environmental Objectives.
- ▶ A variety of sources of information will be used to run the Environmental Monitoring Programme.
- ▶ Environmental monitoring will be executed by Fáilte Ireland and will run concurrent with the implementation phase of the Plan itself. It will be reported on to the Plan's implementation group on an annual basis where relevant information sources allow, and the findings of the monitoring will influence the actions of the Plan as it progresses. The monitoring will be linked directly to the Plan's KPI's, including monitoring of visitor numbers where relevant.
- ▶ Environmental monitoring for the Destination and Experience Development Plan and other existing/future Fáilte Ireland plans, programmes, etc. may be undertaken and reported on at the same time.
- ▶ Appendix 5A sets out the indicators that will be used in the operation of this Environmental Monitoring Programme.

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## Implementation and Consent

This DEDP is situated alongside a hierarchy of statutory documents setting out public policy for land use development, tourism, infrastructure, sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management. These include the National Planning Framework (NPF), Regional Spatial and Economic (RSEs) and lower tier Development Plans and Local Area Plans.

Implementing the Inishowen Peninsula DEDP 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 DEDP does not provide consent, establish a framework for granting consent or contribute towards a framework for granting consent.

In order to be realised, projects included in this plan will have to comply, as relevant, with the various provisions of 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 this plan is not part and does not contribute towards.

Further detail on requirements in this respect are set out in Section 9.2 of the accompanying SEA Environmental Report.

## Integrating Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management into the Plan

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

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

In order to achieve funding (including promotion) for land use or infrastructural development or land use activities from Fáilte Ireland, Fáilte Ireland's stakeholders shall be required to demonstrate 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 DEDP (in a similar way to other projects from any other sector) will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework, of which the DEDP is not part and does not contribute towards. Such legislation, policies, plans and programmes include:

- ▶ Requirements for lower-tier environmental assessment, including EIA and AA;
- ▶ Statutory land use plans that form part of the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework (e.g., Development Plans, such as the Donegal County Development Plan and Local Area Plans) and that have undergone environmental assessment, as appropriate, including various provisions relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management; and
- ▶ *The Climate Action Plan 2021* and *the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework 2018* (and any subsequent versions).

## Infrastructure Capacity

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.

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Fáilte Ireland will follow National Planning Framework guidelines and liaise with relevant planning authorities to ensure any proposed developments are adequately provided for in terms of critical service infrastructure.

This consideration and associated mitigation shall take into account the need to provide for climate resilience.

The promotion of developing visitor-friendly infrastructure where it is required will also be encouraged.

Any proposed site management and maintenance guidelines produced by Fáilte Ireland will encourage site owners and operators to consider environmentally sustainable solutions and compliance with the Water Framework Directive.

## Visitor Management

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 Services

Those receiving funding shall contribute towards the maintenance of existing green infrastructure and its ecosystem services while 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.

Where possible, extension of existing greenways and future development of new greenways and blueways should complement and integrate rather than replace existing green infrastructure. Stakeholders considering the development of greenways and blueways should have regard to the Fáilte Ireland publication *Greenway - Visitor Experience & Interpretation Toolkit and Connecting with Nature for Health and Wellbeing* EPA Research Report 2020.



Five Fingers Strand, Co Donegal

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## SELECTED ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS, TARGETS AND MONITORING SOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPONENT	INDICATORS	TARGETS	SOURCE AND (WHERE AVAILABLE) FREQUENCY
<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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Documentation demonstrating compliance with “Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management”</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 the Plan	B2: No significant ecological networks or parts thereof which provide functional connectivity to be lost without remediation resulting from the Plan	
	<p>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</p> <p>B3ii: Number of significant impacts on the protection of listed species</p>	<p>B3i: Avoid significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in designated sites including Wildlife Sites resulting from the Plan</p> <p>B3ii: No significant impacts on the protection of listed species resulting from the Plan</p>	
<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 of the Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Documentation demonstrating compliance with “Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management”</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>

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ENVIRONMENTAL COMPONENT	INDICATORS	TARGETS	SOURCE AND (WHERE AVAILABLE) FREQUENCY
<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"</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>
<b>Water</b>	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Documentation demonstrating compliance with "Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management"</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 The Quality of Bathing Water in Ireland 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>
	W2: Interactions with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC resulting from development adhering to the Plan	W2: Not to affect the ability of groundwaters to comply with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC, subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the WFD	
	W3: Compliance of relevant lower tier assessments and decision making with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines	W3: For lower tier assessments and decision making to comply with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines	

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ENVIRONMENTAL COMPONENT	INDICATORS	TARGETS	SOURCE AND (WHERE AVAILABLE) FREQUENCY
<b>Air and Climatic Factors</b>	AC1: Demonstration of compliance with provisions relating to climate adaptation and mitigation have been integrated into the Plan	AC1: To maximise the number of measures relating to climate adaptation and mitigation being implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Documentation demonstrating compliance with “Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management”</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>	M1: Number of instances whereby the potential impact on existing infrastructure (with respect to infrastructural capacity, including drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) as well as the potential environmental effects of a likely increase in tourism-related traffic volumes along any routes resulting from the relevant initiative are not considered and mitigated as appropriate, where relevant	M1: No instances whereby the potential impact on existing infrastructure (with respect to infrastructural capacity, including drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) as well as the potential environmental effects of a likely increase in tourism-related traffic volumes along any routes resulting from the relevant initiative are not considered and mitigated as appropriate, where relevant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Documentation demonstrating compliance with “Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management”</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 Donegal County Council</li> <li>▶ Input from any other existing or replacement Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes</li> </ul>
	M2: Number of significant adverse effects on the use of or access to public assets and infrastructure	M2: No significant adverse effects on the use of or access to public assets and infrastructure	
	M3: Preparation and implementation of construction and environmental management plans	M3: For construction and environmental management plans to be prepared and implemented for relevant projects	

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ENVIRONMENTAL COMPONENT	INDICATORS	TARGETS	SOURCE AND (WHERE AVAILABLE) FREQUENCY
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	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"> <li>▶ Documentation demonstrating compliance with “Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management”</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>
	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”</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 plan of Donegal County Council	L1: No unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in the land use plan of Donegal County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Documentation demonstrating compliance with “Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management”</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>



Banba's Crown, Malin Head, Co Donegal

