BALLYHOURA COUNTRY DESTINATION & EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING AND NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

This is the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (AASR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the *Ballyhoura Country Destination & Experience Development Plan* (hereafter referred to as "Ballyhoura DEDP").

A Destination & Experience Development Plan (DEDP) is a five-year commercial destination and experience development plan prepared for an area.

The Plan has identified a range of key initiatives that are designed to raise awareness of the destination, increase the length of stay in the area, expand the range and quality of visitor experiences, strengthen the value of tourism to local communities and protect the quality, character and distinctiveness of the local environment, heritage and culture. The Ireland's Hidden Heartlands *Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027*, Fáilte Ireland's corporate strategy 2026-2029 and the Tourism Policy Framework 2025-2030 together provide an overarching strategic framework for the Ballyhoura DEDP.

This document comprises an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (AASR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS), prepared in order to support the Appropriate Assessment for the Ballyhoura DEDP in line with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive and Article 42 of the European Communities (Birds and Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended (the Habitats regulations).

The potential impacts on European sites (also known as Natura 2000 sites), both as a result of the Ballyhoura DEDP and in-combination with other plans and projects, are appraised in this report.

This report should be read in conjunction with the Ballyhoura DEDP itself, and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) – Environmental Report prepared by Brady Shipman Martin (2026).

1.2 Expertise and Qualifications

This document has been prepared by Jade Schanen, Environmental Consultant at Brady Shipman Martin. She holds of BA (Mod.) in Environmental Science from Trinity College Dublin. She is a graduate member of the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management. Jade has been working professionally in the field for the last two years and has experience preparing EIA, SEA and AA screenings.

A technical review of this document has been completed by Senior Ecologist and Associate, Matthew Hague BSc MSc Adv. Dip. Plan. & Env. Law CEnv MCIEEM. Matthew is a highly experienced and qualified ecologist, with a master's degree in Ecosystem Conservation and Landscape Management. He has over 20 years of experience in ecological and environmental consultancy, across a wide range of sectors. Matthew is a Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) and a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM). Matthew has also completed an Advanced Diploma in Planning and Environmental Law, at King's Inns and is a member of the Irish Environmental Law Association (IELA).

1.3 Legal requirement for Appropriate Assessment

European sites make up a network of sites designated for nature conservation under Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the "Habitats Directive") and Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (the "Birds Directive"). The requirements for Appropriate Assessment are set out under *Article 6 of the Habitats Directive*, transposed into Irish law by the *European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended)* (the "Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations") and the *Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended)* (the "Planning Acts") as well as Section 202 of the Planning and Development Act 2024 as amended.

European sites are also known as Natura 2000 Sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)). As defined in section 177R of the Planning Acts "European site" means:

(a) a candidate site of Community importance,

(b) a site of Community importance,

(ba) a candidate special area of conservation,

(c) a special area of conservation,

(d) a candidate special protection area and

(e) a special protection area.

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states that:

> *"(3) Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public."*

The first test is to establish whether, in relation to a particular plan or project, appropriate assessment is required. Article 42(1) of the Habitats Regulations requires that the AA screening test must be applied to the Plan, as follows:

> *42. (1) Subject to Regulation 42A, a screening for Appropriate Assessment of a plan or project for which an application for consent is received, or which a public authority wishes to undertake or adopt, and which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site as a European Site, shall be carried out by the public authority to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge and in view of the conservation objectives of the site, if that plan or project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects is likely to have a significant effect on the European site.*

An appropriate assessment is required if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the development (plan or project), individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.

1.3.1 Stages in the Appropriate Assessment Process

European Commission guidance (2021)[1] sets out the principles on how to undertake decision making in applying the Habitats Directive. The requirements of the Habitats Directive comprise three distinct stages":

Stage One: Screening - The first part of the procedure consists of a pre-assessment stage ('screening') to ascertain whether the plan or project is directly connected with, or necessary to, the management of a Natura 2000 site, and, if this is not the case, then whether it is likely to have a significant effect on the site (7) (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) in view of the site's conservation objectives. Stage one is governed by the first part of the first sentence of Article 6(3).

Stage Two: The Appropriate Assessment - If likely significant effects cannot be excluded, the next stage of the procedure involves assessing the impact of the plan or project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) against the site's conservation objectives and ascertaining whether it will affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 site, taking into account any mitigation measures. It will be for the competent authorities to decide whether or not to approve the plan or project in light of the findings of the appropriate assessment. Stage two is governed by the second part of the first sentence and the second sentence of Article 6(3).

Stage Three: Derogation from Article 6(3) under certain conditions - The third stage of the procedure governed by Article 6(4). It only comes into play if, despite a negative assessment, the developer considers that the plan or project should still be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest. This is only possible if there are no alternative solutions, the imperative reasons of overriding public interest are duly justified, and if suitable compensatory measures are adopted to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected.

1.4 Baseline data collection

This report takes the following guidance documents into account:

- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine, September 2018, updated in September 2019 (V1.1), April 2022 (V1.2) and September 2024 (V1.3).
- Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) (2010a). Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities.
- DoEHLG (2010b). Circular NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10: Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities.
- European Commission (2021). Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites-Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.
- European Commission (2018). Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.
- Directorate – General for Environment (European Commission), (2021). Guidance document on the strict protection of animal species of Community Interest under the Habitats Directive.

[1] *Assessment of Plans and Projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission Environment Directorate-General, September 2021)*

- National Roads Authority (NRA)[2] (2009). Guidelines for Assessment of Ecological Impacts of National Road Schemes.
- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) (2021). Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management.
- National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) (2021). Guidance for Public authorities on the Application of Articles 12 and 16 of the EU Habitats Directive to development/works undertaken by or on behalf of a public authority.

Information was collated from the organisations and websites listed below:

- Data on European sites and rare and protected plant and animal species contained in the following databases:
  - The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (www.NPWS.ie).
  - The National Biodiversity Data Centre (NDBC) (www.biodiversityireland.ie).
  - BirdWatch Ireland (www.birdwatchireland.ie).
  - Bat Conservation Ireland (www.batconservatioNISeland.org).
- Information on land-use zoning from the online mapping of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (http://www.myplan.ie/en/index.html).
- Recent and historical OSi mapping and aerial photography, including www.geohive.ie.
- Information on local watercourses from www.catchments.ie.
- Information on water quality in the area (www.epa.ie).
- Information on soils, geology and hydrogeology in the area (www.gsi.ie).
- Information on the Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland (Article 17 report) (NPWS, 2025).
- Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030 (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage).
- Fingal Development Plan 2023 – 2029 and the accompanying reports.
- Fingal Biodiversity Action Plan 2023 – 2030.

The report takes full account of the details of the Ballyhoura DEDP and a detailed examination of all relevant elements was undertaken.

A desk-based assessment of the receiving environment was undertaken and this focussed on habitats and species that are listed as Qualifying Interests (QI) (in the case of SACs) and Special Conservation Interests (SCI) (in the case of SPAs) for European sites. An assessment of habitat suitability for species with links to European sites was undertaken, in order to appraise the potential for *ex-situ* effects on European sites.

[2] Now Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII).

2 Description of the Proposed Ballyhoura Destination Experience Development Plan

2.1 Background and Outline

The Ballyhoura Country Destination and Experience Development Plan (DEDP) is a five-year sustainable tourism plan for east County Limerick and northeast County Cork up to the border with Tipperary. The plan is centred around the Ballyhoura mountains and builds upon the Hidden Heartlands Regional Experience Development Strategy.

The Ballyhoura area is predominantly rural with key towns includes Mitchelstown, Kilmallock and Charleville. Because of the rural nature, several tourist experiences and local businesses are invisible online and have limited advertisement. The Plan aims to improve the overall awareness of the experiences available.

The region is a sprawling combination of woodlands, hills, mountains and pastures. It builds on predominantly outdoor experiences including kayaking, fishing, mountain biking, horse riding and hiking.

The Ballyhoura Destination Experience Development Plan builds on a previous tourism plan for the Ballyhoura area as established in 1986, which was Ireland's first rural tourism strategy. The area now I managed by two community-led organisations, Ballyhoura CLG and Ballyhoura Fáilte DAC. These organisations work cross-county often in collaboration with local stakeholders and government agencies including Fáilte Ireland to grow and promote tourism to the Ballyhoura area.

The topography of the area is defined by the Ballyhoura Mountains, Galtee Mountains, Slieve Felim Mountains and Lough Gur, which lends itself well to slow adventure activities and sports tourism, in particular mountain biking and walking trails. Key attractions in the area include the Ballyhoura Way (part of the Beara-Breifne Way), Ballyhass Activity Centre, Ballyhoura Mountain Bike Trails, Mitchelstown Caves, Doneraile Court and Kilfinane Outdoor Education & Training Centre. The activities are provided by a wide range of locals to the Ballyhoura area.

The National Tourism Policy Statement (December 2025) introduced five strategic pillars for tourism development which have shaped the Ballyhoura DEDP;

1. Delivering the Best Visitor Experiences
2. Promoting a Vibrant and Creative Tourism Enterprise Sector
3. Empowering Communities
4. Growing a Sustainable Future
5. Implementing and Data

The Ireland's Hidden Heartlands *Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027* introduces the principle of regenerative tourism and places it at the heart of the strategy. In the context of an evolving global focus on sustainability and climate action, a regenerative approach to tourism ensures community and place are at the centre of the tourism model, collectively working towards delivering a net positive benefit for all stakeholders – Visitor, Industry, Community and the Environment. A regenerative approach encourages tourism to give back more than it takes through engaging the visitor and industry in protecting and enhancing nature and its habitats, the host communities and local places.

Nature will be central to destination development with the environment and sustainability front of mind in all future decision making.

2.2 Vision

The vision for the Ballyhoura Destination and Experience Development Plan sets a vision for 2036:

> *"It's 2036 and Ballyhoura has established a reputation as one of Ireland's leading basecamps for outdoor recreation and rural exploration, with a focus on walking and cycling. Decades of community-based tourism have added a unique flavour to outdoor recreation here, rooted in authentic community engagement and participative events.*
>
> *As a pioneering sustainable tourism destination, our commitment to regenerative tourism places our community, our stories and our inspiring landscapes are at the heart of the Ballyhoura experience. Local stories are embedded into every visitor experience from our food provenance, linked to generations of producers and our rich farming landscapes, to how we connect the story of place with our trails, attractions and outdoor activities.*
>
> *Implementation of the Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan is well underway, developing a strong network of walking and cycling trails throughout the destination. The mountain-biking trails and the Beara Breifne Way (Ballyhoura Way) have gained a reputation internationally. There are lots of ways for visitors to easily connect with locals in welcoming, authentic and vibrant market towns and villages.*
>
> *The overall appeal of Ballyhoura has been widened through the development of the destination' heritage, cultural and food-based visitor experiences which complement its outdoor activities.*
>
> *Tourism businesses are highly networked and the accommodation base in the destination has been expanded, with accommodation types that meet the needs of our visitors. Every key business has a professional, bookable, and measurable online presence, with all of these businesses cross-promoting digitally.*
>
> *Ballyhoura has become renowned for its sustainability credentials, and the businesses have reduced their carbon footprint in line with national targets."*

2.3 Strategic Objectives

The Plan is structured around the following strategic objectives and are closely aligned to the Strategic Objectives that are set out for the wider Hidden Heartlands region in the *Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027*:

Strategic Objective 1: To grow market recognition and visitor awareness of the Ballyhoura destination.
Goal: To increase market awareness and recognition of Ballyhoura as a sustainable tourism destination differentiated by its outdoor activity offering, its authentic community tourism story and by placing locals at the centre of all communications. Strategic Goals: a) Grow the capabilities of Ballyhoura tourism industry, networks and tourism clusters to increase visitor awareness of Ballyhoura.

b) Increase the Ballyhoura tourism industry's engagement with the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands and Ballyhoura Country brands to collectively grow awareness and recognition of the regional brand to grow its share of the domestic and international market.
c) Increase the profile of Ballyhoura as a leading outdoor activity destination and grow its appeal in the family market.
d) Differentiate the destinations approach to marketing by placing local people, telling the local story, at the core of destination communications.
e) Maximize the potential of festivals and sport tourism events for marketing impact.
f) Work with the tourism industry in neighbouring urban destinations such as Limerick and Cork City to encourage visitor flows into the area from the main accommodation hubs.
g) Promote access into the Ballyhoura destination from existing and future transport infrastructure such as the M20.

Strategic Objective 2: To establish Ballyhoura as a leading outdoor activity destination, supported by a well-connected series of cultural and heritage-based visitor experiences telling the story of the people and their place.

Goal: To implement the Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan, placing a focus on outdoor adventure and exploration and slow tourism with a strong community flavour, in particular community-walking festivals; to expand the overall appeal of the destination by developing a series of heritage, culture and food-based experiences through the destination to help increase dwell-time, and to foster greater north-south connectivity within the destination.

Strategic Objectives:

h) Implement the Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan to unlock the outdoor activity potential of Ballyhoura.
i) Delivery the Ballyhoura elements of the Beata Breifne Way to maximise the opportunity presented by the international walking route.
j) Grow the level of accessibility between trails and local communities and the creation of community basecamps with a focus on the Ballyhoura Mountains, Galtee Mountains and Slieve Felim.
k) Strengthen the appeal of indoor visitor attractions in Ballyhoura through the enhancement of their visitor experiences and approaches to demand generation.
l) Develop the appeal of Ballyhoura as an off-road cycling destination.
m) Grow the year-round appeal of Ballyhoura as an outdoor activity destination through sport tourism participation events and festivals.
n) Develop Ballyhoura as water-based activity destination to include locations such as Ballyhass, Castleconnell and locations on the River Awbeg and River Maigue and future experience links with the River Blackwater.
o) Develop Ballyhoura as 'learn to' activity destination where visitors can access activities that appeal to all abilities and levels of interest in the outdoors.
p) Adopt a heritage attractions cluster approach to highlight the range of heritage experiences across Ballyhoura.
q) Build on the food and agricultural heritage of Ballyhoura and the Golden Vale and grow the value of food tourism experiences for Ballyhoura and its role in developing the nighttime economy.
r) Develop the leisure tourism potential of golf and equestrian experiences in Ballyhoura.

Strategic Objective 3: To grow the economic impact of tourism by building the capacity and capability of tourism businesses.

Goal: To ensure that businesses are supported to increase their capacity and capability, including the creation of more saleable experiences and improving their online presence.

Strategic Objectives:

s) Grow the demand generation capabilities of the Ballyhoura tourism industry based on understanding the needs and motivations of visitors aligned with the Fáilte Ireland Visitor Motivations Framework and Tourism Ireland's visitor segmentation.
t) Improve the digital capabilities of the tourism industry to increase the online visibility of the destination.
u) Increase the number of saleable Ballyhoura visitor experiences aligned with achieving the destination's tourism vision and focus on the outdoors, rural exploration, nature, culture and heritage.
v) Grow the number of rural tourism experiences linked to food, gardens, biodiversity, 'meet the makers' and agri/farm experiences.
w) Implement a tourism cluster approach for capability building and new experience development.
x) Develop the tourism potential of the urban hubs to grow the value of the day and evening time economy to include Kilmallock, Mitchelstown and Charleville.
y) Ensure all education and training agencies align tourism industry training with ongoing and future investment in Ballyhoura.

Strategic Objective 4: To establish Ballyhoura as a leading sustainable and regenerative tourism destination.

Goal: To ensure Ballyhoura continues to be recognised as a national pioneer in community-led tourism development and achieves international recognition in sustainable/regenerative tourism. As such, the destination will be developed to deliver net-positive benefits for communities and for nature and satisfy a greater demand among visitors for more responsible tourism choices.

Strategic Objectives:

z) Implement the Ballyhoura Sustainability Action Plan to guide the development of Ballyhoura as a leading sustainable tourism destination.
aa) Grow the tourism industry's adoption of sustainable tourism practices reflected in their daily operations and commitment to sustainability.
bb) Develop the capacity of the tourism industry and community tourism groups to develop sustainable visitor experiences, profiling the destination's commitment to sustainability and embracing the regenerative approach to tourism as a platform for innovation.
cc) Build on the success of Ballyhoura regenerative tourism training programmes to grow the capabilities of the community tourism sector and realise the socio-economic potential of tourism for their community.
dd) Work with Ballyhoura communities to prepare them for emerging tourism opportunities arising from the Ballyhoura DEDP and planned investment in the destination.
ee) Grow the agri and rural tourism opportunity for Ballyhoura through the delivery of farm, meet the maker and food-based experiences.

ff) Ensure responsible visitor engagement with all trails and nature-based amenities through visitor education and in destination awareness building of responsible tourism.
gg) Collectively achieve the reduction in carbon targets identified through the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Regional Tourism and Development Strategy as part of the destination's ambition to become a leading sustainable tourism destination.

Strategic Objective 5: To build success through new levels of collaboration and partnership approach

Goal: To build on exiting levels of collaboration among businesses to improve cross-promotion and cross-selling (particularly online) by leveraging existing networks, ad to strengthen existing stakeholder partnerships, including linkages with Munster Vales, Limerick.ie, Cork County Council and Pure Cork.

Strategic Objectives:

hh) Grow participation in the Ballyhoura tourism network and strengthen the collective approach to developing the tourism opportunity for the area.
ii) Deliver a co-ordinated marketing approach in partnership with Ballyhoura Fáilte, Pure Cork, Cork County Council, Limerick City and County Council and Munster Vales to ensure a coherent destination message is communicated to domestic and international visitors.
jj) Adopt a partnership approach to future event and product development funding opportunities for the Ballyhoura destination.
kk) Adopt a multiagency approach in the delivery of catalyst project that will grow the profile of the area as a leading outdoor activity destination e.g. Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan, Ballyhoura Mountain Bike Trail Centre, Beara Breifne Way.
ll) Implement a sustainable model to resource the development of community tourism and grow destination network participation.
mm) Ensure Local Authority participation in the development of the Ballyhoura destination to include Limerick City and County Council, Cork County Council and Tipperary County Council.
nn) Adopt a collective stakeholder approach to facilitate the growth of the accommodation product base in Ballyhoura.
oo) Grow the level of access and transport options for Ballyhoura working with existing providers such as Local Link to enhance visitor access to local communities, attractions and activities.
pp) Develop a destination wide approach to ensure future placemaking activity in Ballyhoura towns and villages is aligned with the community vision for how the Ballyhoura story is told at every visitor touchpoint e.g. public realm projects, town and village enhancements.
qq) Align with regional projects or tourism development opportunities such as food and connectivity with the themes of other DEDPs and tourism plans in Cork and Limerick.

2.4 Destination Catalyst Overview

To achieve the above strategic objectives, the Ballyhoura DEDP focuses on a number of 'destination catalyst projects' and 'destination supporting projects'. The catalyst projects and their aims are as follows:

Catalyst Project 1.1: Build Awareness (Marketing & Publicity)

Aim: Increase market awareness and recognition of Ballyhoura as a year-round sustainable tourism destination in domestic and international markets.

Catalyst Project 2.1: Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan including Mountain Bike Centre & Beara Breifne Way

Aim: Deliver the first phase of projects within the Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan to grow the appeal of Ballyhoura as an outdoor activity destination.

Catalyst Project 2.2: Heritage Attractions Cluster

Aim: Grow the capabilities of visitor attractions in the destination to enhance their visitor experience and achieve incremental growth n visitor numbers.

Catalyst Project 2.3: Golden Vale Food Tourism Cluster

Aim: Grow the potential food tourism by increasing the number of saleable food experiences in Ballyhoura and the creation of a destination food trail.

Catalyst Project 4.1: R512- Tourism Route

Aim: Create a tourism to influence visitor flow into and around the destination and connect with local communities.

The catalyst initiatives detailed above will be supported through a significant number of destination supporting projects, which are individually listed in the DEDP Action Plan (Appendix 1).

The complete list of destination catalysts and destination supporting projects are provided and are assessed in Appendix 1 of the Environmental Report.

3 Stage 1: Screening for Appropriate Assessment

3.1 Introduction

The first part of the Appropriate Assessment process is the Screening phase. Screening identifies the likely effects of the Ballyhoura DEDP on European sites that could arise, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects and considers whether these impacts are likely to have a significant effect on the European site in view of the site's conservation objectives.

As per Section 1.3 and in accordance with Article 42 of the Habitats Regulations, screening for appropriate assessment must be carried out. Screening must be undertaken without the inclusion of mitigation, and it is in this context that this AA Screening Report is prepared.

Following screening therefore, if there is a possibility of a significant effect on a European site, this will generate the need for an appropriate assessment for the purposes of compliance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. This means that if the conclusions at the end of the screening exercise are that significant effects on any European sites, as a result of the implementation of the Ballyhoura DEDP, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, are likely, uncertain or unknown, then an Appropriate Assessment must be carried out. This is in accordance with established precedent and case law.

3.2 Potential Zone of Influence

This assessment is based on the source-pathway-receptor model, which dictates that, for an effect to occur, there must be a 'source' (such as a construction site); a 'receptor' (such as a designated site for nature conservation); and a 'pathway' between the two (such as a watercourse). A construction site or completed development may also create a barrier to movement, for example, by preventing the migration of fauna along a river corridor, or by obstructing the migration of birds.

Identification of a potential effect means that there is a possibility of ecological or environmental damage occurring, with the level and significance of the impact depending upon the nature and exposure to the potential effect and the characteristics of the receptor. Although there may be a risk of an impact, it may not necessarily occur, and if it does occur, it may not be significant.

There are no set recommended distances for projects to consider European sites as being relevant for assessment. DoEHLG (2010a, pp. 31 – 32) states that:

"The approach to screening is likely to differ somewhat for plans and projects, depending on scale and on the likely effects, but the following should be included:

1. *Any Natura 2000 sites within or adjacent to the plan or project area*
2. *Any Natura 2000 sites within the likely zone of impact of the plan or project. A distance of 15km is currently recommended in the case of plans, and derives from UK guidance (Scott Wilson et al., 2006). For projects, the distance could be much less than 15km, and in some cases less than 100m, but this must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with reference to the nature, size and location of the project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, and the potential for in combination effects*
3. *Natura 2000 sites that are more than 15km from the plan or project area depending on the likely impacts of the plan or project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, bearing in*

mind the precautionary principle. In the cases of sites with water dependent habitats or species, and a plan or project that could affect water quality or quantity, for example, it may be necessary to consider the full extent of the upstream and/or downstream catchment."

The 2021 OPR guidelines, *Practice Note PN01: Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management*, state that the Zone of Influence *"should be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor framework and not by arbitrary distances (such as 15 km)"* (p. 8).

Therefore, considering the nature, scale and location of the Ballyhoura DEDP, and in accordance with the source-pathway-receptor model, the potential Zone of Influence for the Ballyhoura DEDP includes any site to which there is a potential for impacts, as set out in the following sections.

3.3 Description of the Receiving Environment and the Potential Zone of Influence

The description of the receiving environment presented in this section has been based on a desktop study of relevant available information.

Biodiversity plays a significant role in the provision of clean air, water, healthy soils and food as well as visually contributing to a plan area with its natural beauty and heritage. The natural heritage of the Ballyhoura region is an important asset and a unique resource.

Ballyhoura Country includes a large, predominantly rural, area in Limerick and Cork. The area's key towns include Mitchelstown, Kilmallock and Charleville. The topography of Ballyhoura Country is the main draw for tourism, hosting Ballyhoura Mountains, Galtee Mountains, Slieve Felim Mountains and Lough Gur, which cater to slow adventure activities and sport tourism. The region's outdoor experiences include kayaking, fishing, mountain biking, horse riding and hiking with notable attractions such as the Ballyhoura Way (part of the Beara-Breifne Way), Ballyhass Activity Centre, Ballyhoura Mountain Bike Trails, Mitchelstown Caves, Doneraile Court and Kilfinane Outdoor Education & Training Centre.

3.3.1 Designated European Sites

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive recognises the importance of ecological networks as corridors and stepping stones for wildlife, including for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species of flora and fauna. The Directive requires that ecological connectivity and areas of ecological value outside the Natura 2000 network of designated ecological sites are maintained and it recognises the need for the management of these areas through land use planning and development policies.

Sites designated for protection under the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) form a European network of important ecological sites known as the Natura 2000 Network. These include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), which are legally protected under the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and are selected for the conservation of Annex I habitats and Annex II species, and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), which are protected under the European Union Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds 2009/147/EC. In Ireland, SACs and SPAs are known as European sites.

Within the study area, there are a number of areas designated for protection under the Natura 2000 network. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are legally protected under the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and are selected for the conservation of Annex I habitats and Annex II species. Special

Protection Areas are protected under the European Union Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds 2009/147/EC.

All designated Natura 2000 Sites located within the study area and within the potential zone of influence (20km) are shown in **Figure 3.1** and listed in **Table 3.1**.

Conservation objectives for SACs and SPAs have been set for the habitats and species for which the sites have been selected. Site specific detailed conservation objectives are available on the NPWS website[3].

Table 3.1 European Sites located within the DEDP area and within the *potential* Zone of Influence[4]

European Sites within the DEDP area			
Site Code	**Special Areas of Conservation**	**Site Code**	**Special Protection Areas**
000439	Tory Hill SAC	004095	Kilcolman Bog SPA
000646	Galtee Mountains SAC	004165	Slievefelim to Silvermines Mountains SPA
000930	Clare Glen SAC		
001430	Glen Bog SAC		
001432	Glenstal Wood SAC		
002036	Ballyhoura Mountains SAC		
002037	Carrigeenamronety Hill SAC		
002165	Lower River Shannon SAC		
002170	Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC		
European Sites within the potential zone of influence of the DEDP area			
Site Code	**Special Areas of Conservation**	**Site Code**	**Special Protection Areas**
000030	Danes Hole, Poulnalecka SAC	004094	Blackwater Callows SPA
000174	Curraghchase Woods SAC	004161	Stack's to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle SPA
000939	Silvermine Mountains SAC	004168	Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA
001013	Glenomra Wood SAC	004077	River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA
001197	Keeper Hill SAC	004058	Lough Derg (Shannon) SPA
001847	Philipston Marsh SAC		

[3] NPWS website 2025: https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/conservation-management-planning/conservation-objectives
[4] EPA AA Maps (2026).

European Sites within the DEDP area			
Site Code	Special Areas of Conservation	Site Code	Special Protection Areas
002124	Bolingbrook Hill SAC		
002125	Anglesey Road SAC		
002137	Lower River Suir SAC		
002257	Moanour Mountain SAC		
002258	Silvermines Mountains West SAC		
002279	Askeaton Fen Complex SAC		
002312	Slieve Bernagh Bog SAC		
002316	Ratty River Cave SAC		
002319	Kilkishen House SAC		

3.3.2 Nationally Designated Sites

Nationally Designated Sites include Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) which are legally protected areas that are considered important for their habitats, or which hold species of plants and animals whose habitat needs protection, including geological/geomorphological sites in need of protection through NHA designation. While not statutorily designated proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) are also of significance for wildlife and habitats and are generally protected in the County Development plan. This network of NHAs and pNHAs provides supporting or stepping stone functions to the SAC and SPA network, in particular for species that move outside of SAC and SPA boundaries.

Under the Wildlife Amendment Act (2000) NHAs are legally protected from damage from the date they are formally proposed for designation[5]. The designation of these sites is the responsibility of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). Further protection can be afforded to these areas by including appropriate protective measures in the Plan.

Refer to **Table 3.2** and **Figure 3.2** below for the pHNAs located within the Plan Area and in the potential Zone of Influence.

Table 3.2 Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) located in the Plan Area and within the potential Zone of Influence of the Ballyhoura DEDP area

Proposed Natural Heritage Areas within the DEDP Area			
Site Code	Proposed Natural Heritage Areas	Site Code	Proposed Natural Heritage Areas
000439	Tory Hill	001996	Skoolhill
002088	Mountrussell Wood	000437	Lough Gur

[5] NPWS (2026). *Protected Sites*.

Proposed Natural Heritage Areas within the DEDP Area			
000961	Knockanavar Wood	000092	Kilcolman Bog
000436	Herbertstown Fen	001432	Glenstal Wood
002035	Glenacurrane River Valley	001430	Glen Bog
000646	Galtee Mountains	001049	Eagle Lough
001850	Dromsallagh Bog	000930	Clare Glen
002090	Castleoliver Woods	000433	Castleconnell (Domestic Dwelling, Occupied)
002037	Carrigeenamronety Hill	001169	Brown's Farm, Togher Cross Roads
001851	Bilboa And Gortnageragh River Valleys	001849	Ballyvorheen Bog
002089	Ballyroe Hill & Mortlestown Hill	002087	Ballynacourty Wood
002036	Ballyhoura Mountains	000012	Ballinvonear Pond
002086	Ballintlea Wood	000899	Ballindangan Marsh
000074	Awbeg Valley (Below Doneraile)	000075	Awbeg Valley (Above Doneraile)
Proposed Natural Heritage Areas in the vicinity of the DEDP Area			
Site Code	**Proposed Natural Heritage Areas**	**Site Code**	**Proposed Natural Heritage Areas**
000011	Lough Derg	000030	Danes Hole, Poulnalecka
000028	Cloonlara House	000073	Blackwater River Callows
000072	Blackwater River And Estuary	000085	Glanworth Ponds
000079	Bride/Bunaglanna Valley	000239	Castle Lake
000174	Curraghchase Woods	000430	Ardagh Church, Newcastlewest (Disused)
000429	Adare Woodlands	000438	Loughmore Common Turlough
000435	Inner Shannon Estuary - South Shore	000639	Annacarty Wetlands
000649	Knockavilla National School, Dundrum	000651	Mitchelstown Caves
000667	Lismore Woods	000670	Tallow (Disused Church)
000931	Derrygareen Heath	000939	Silvermine Mountains
000945	Ardmayle Pond	000947	Cahir Park Woodland
000948	Aughnaglanny Valley	000950	Dundrum Sanctuary
000956	Inchinsquillib And Dowlings Woods	000964	Knockroe Fox Covert
000971	Scaragh Wood	000972	Shanbally Wood
001010	Fin Lough (Clare)	001012	Garrannon Wood
001013	Glenomra Wood	001017	Lough Cullaunyheeda

Proposed Natural Heritage Areas within the DEDP Area			
001019	Lough O'Grady	001029	Araglin Valley
001030	Dromore & Bleach Loughs	001036	Banteer Ponds
001072	Priory Wood, Lismire	001080	Blackwater Valley (Killavullen)
001133	Nenagh River Gorge	001178	Killavalla Wood
001197	Keeper Hill	001425	Ballymorrisheen Marsh
001427	Ballinvirick Marsh	001429	Cappagh Fen
001431	Glenastar Wood	001433	Gorteennamrock
001434	Heathfield Wood	001526	Quarryford Bridge
001561	Awbeg Valley (Castletownroche)	001793	Blackwater Valley (Ballincurrig Wood)
001794	Blackwater Valley (Kilcummer)	001795	Blackwater Valley (Killathy Wood)
001796	Blackwater Valley (Cregg)	001797	Blackwater Valley (The Beech Wood)
001829	Ballinaltig Beg Pond	001844	Ballydonagh Marsh
001845	Doonoor Marsh	001846	Ballyneill Marsh
001847	Philipston Marsh	001848	Kilbeg Marsh
001933	Glenmore Wood	001984	Greenane Marsh
002001	Knockalisheen Marsh	002043	Bansha Wood
002048	Fergus Estuary And Inner Shannon, North Shore	002050	Cregg Castle
002054	Rosroe Lough	002095	Glencairn
002096	Dundrum	002097	Convamore, Ballyhooly (Near Fermoy)

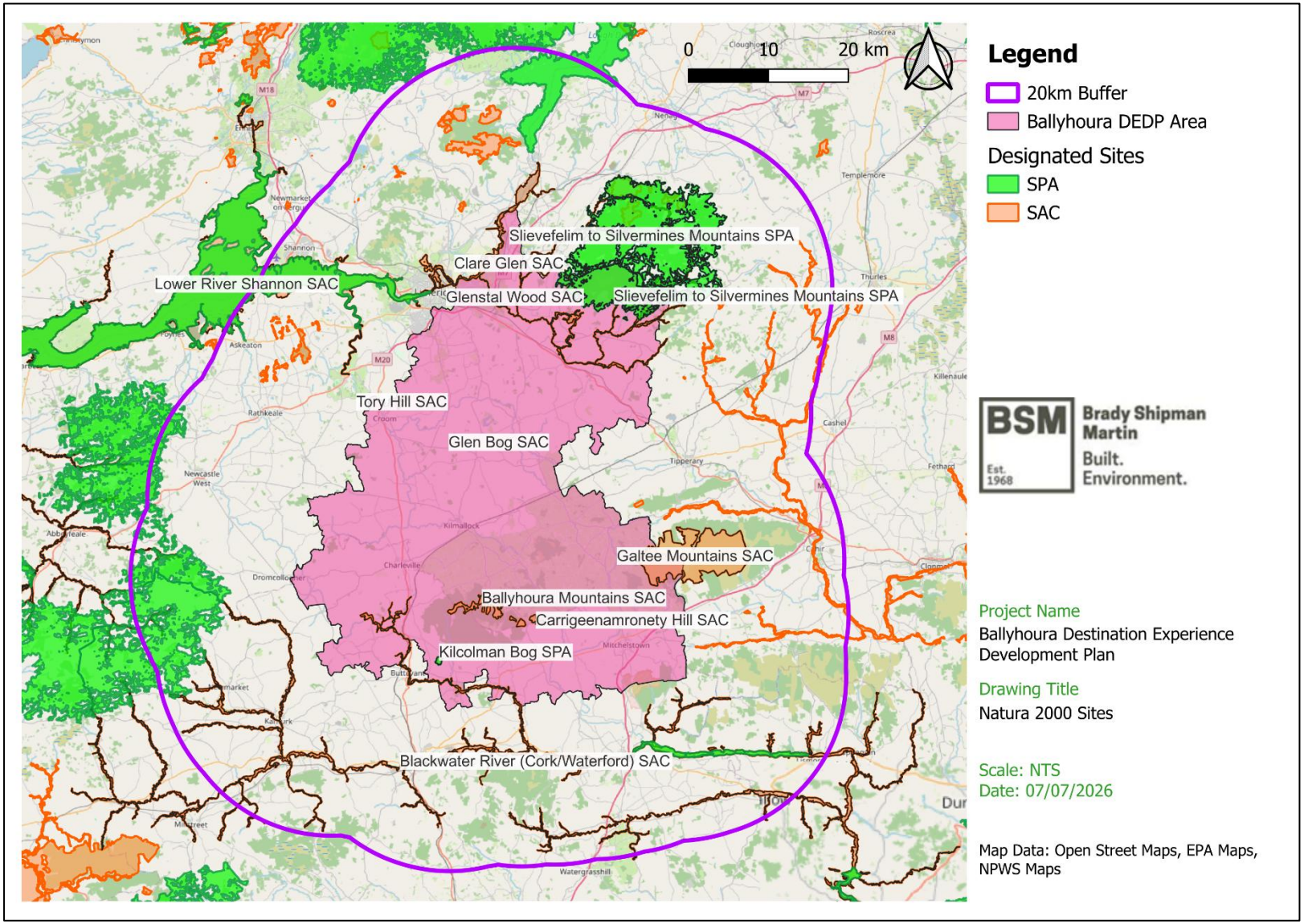


Figure 3.1 European Sites in the potential zone of influence

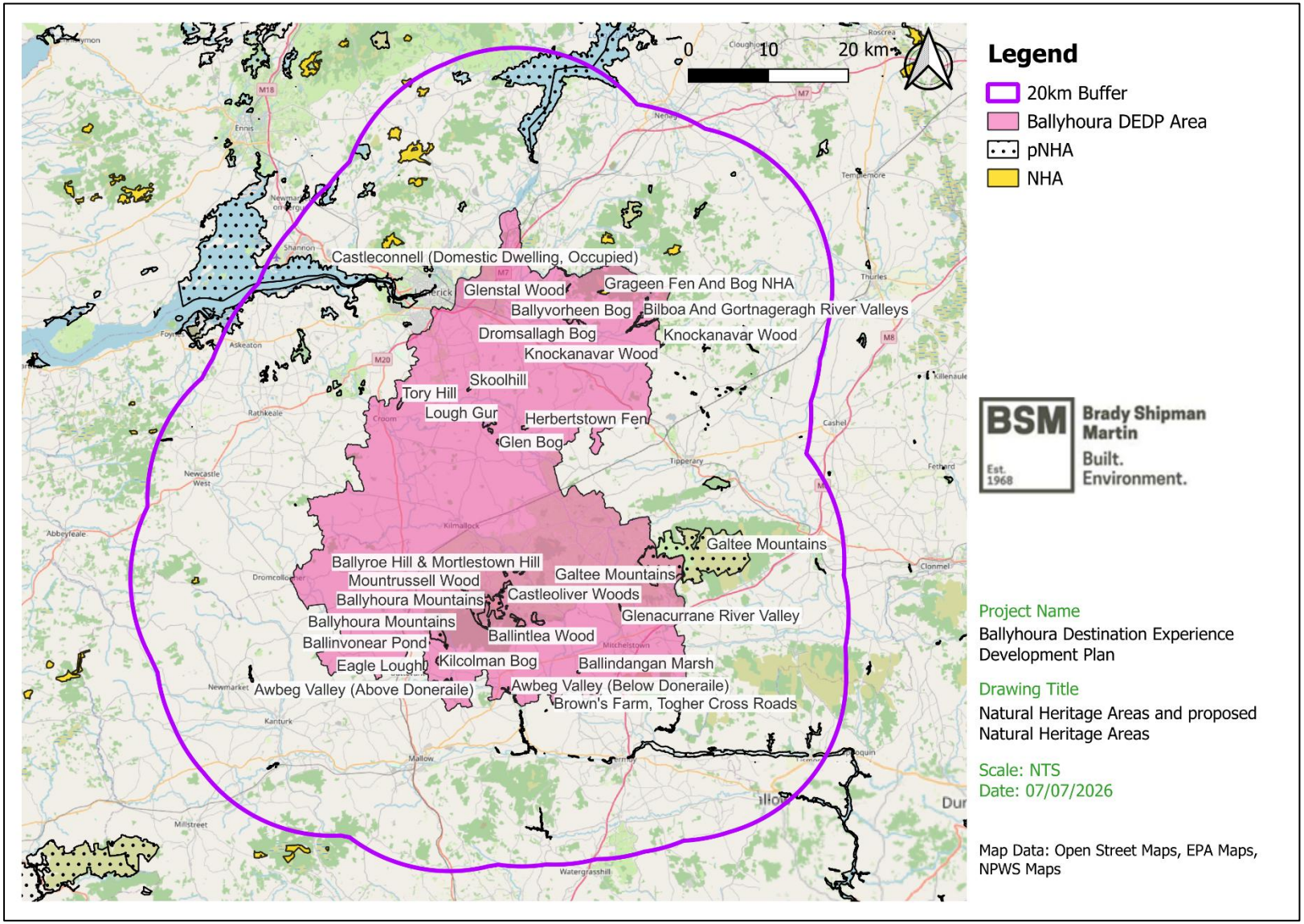


Figure 3.2 Other Designated Sites in the potential zone of influence

3.3.3 Hydrology

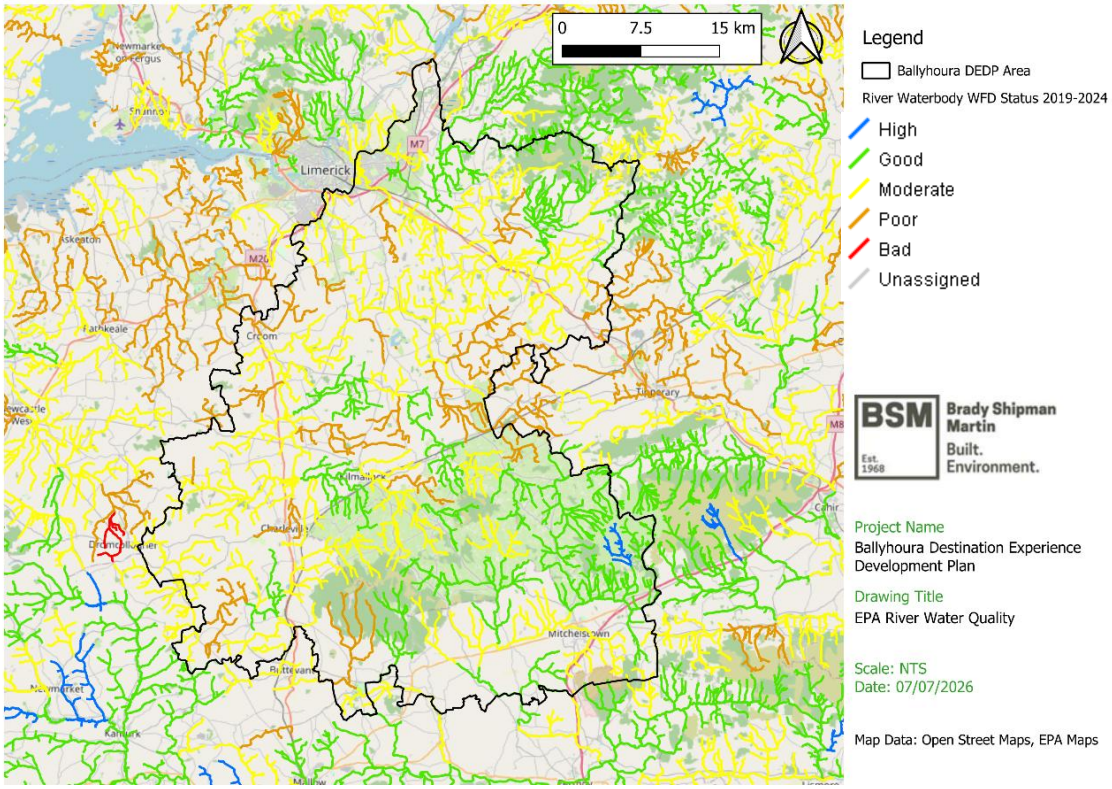
The latest *Water Quality in Ireland* report 2019-2024[6] was published by the EPA in October 2025. This report provides an assessment of the condition of Ireland's waters (rivers, lakes, canals, groundwaters, transitional (estuaries) and coastal waters) against the objectives and standards set out in the Water Framework Directive and Ireland's River Basin Management Plan (Water Action Plan 2024). The assessments are made using data collected from over 4000 surface water bodies and 514 ground water bodies between 2019 and 2024. Comparisons are made between the results from this period and those before to give insight into trends in the condition of our waters over time.

The Plan area covers the following WFD catchments – Blackwater(Munster) (18), Shannon Estuary South (24), Lower Shannon (25D) and Suir (16).

The latest Water Quality in Ireland report 2016-2021 was published by the EPA in 2022. This report contains the most up-to-date and comprehensive assessment of the ecological health of Ireland's groundwater, rivers, lakes, canals, transitional waters and coastal waters following the completion of the first six-year cycle of the WFD. The results show that a considerable amount of work is still required to meet the environmental objectives of the WFD.

The status of the **river waterbodies** within the study area ranges from '*poor*' to '*high*'. The WFD water quality status of the river waterbodies in the study area is shown in **Figure 3.3** below. The status of the **lake waterbody** within the study area is *'poor'*, and the **transitional waterbody** quality is also *'poor'* as shown in **Figure 3.4** below. There are no canal waterbodies within the study area.

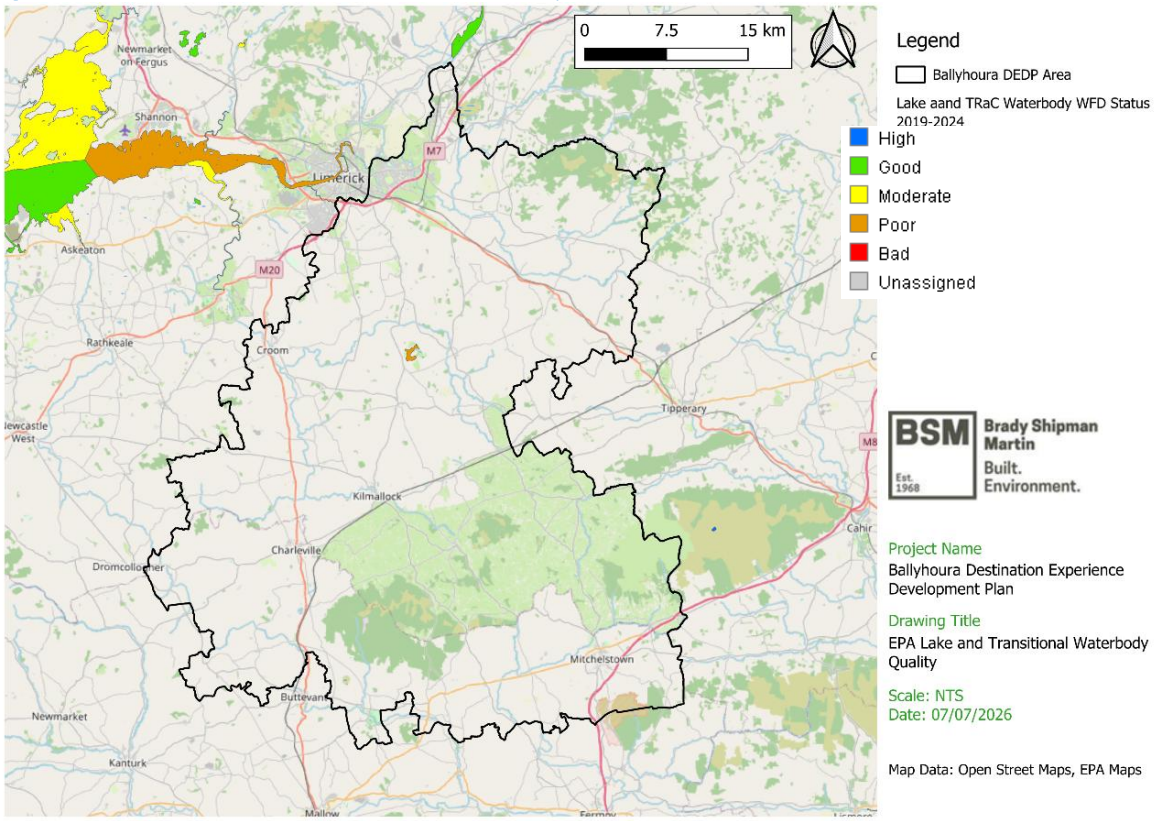
Figure 3.3 WFD River Waterbody Status 2019-2024[7]



[6] Water Quality In Ireland 2019-2024 - https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/freshwater--marine/water-quality-in-ireland-2019-2024.php

[7] https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/

Figure 3.4 WFD Lake and Transitional Waterbody Status 2019-2024[8]



3.3.3.1 Designated Shellfish Waters

The *EU Shellfish Waters Directive* (2006/113/EC) aims to protect and improve shellfish waters in order to support shellfish life and growth.

Pollution reduction programmes are in operation for these areas. The identified pressures on these designated waters include urban wastewater systems, on-site wastewater treatment systems and port activities. The coastal waters provide an important resource, supporting and generating employment and recreational activities and must be protected.

There is no area of Shellfish waters within the study area. The closest ones are Cork Great Island North Channel, c. 35.5 km south and West Shannon Ballylongford, c. 43.9 km west of the Plan area.

3.3.4 Salmonid Waters

The *Salmonid Regulations* (S.I. No. 293 of 1988) designate the waters capable of supporting salmon (Salmo *salar*), trout (*Salmo trutta*), char *(Salvelinus*) and whitefish (*Coregonu*s) as protected. Thirty-four rivers, tributaries and lakes are listed and protected under these Regulations that prescribe quality standards for salmonid waters, sampling programmes and methods of analysis and inspection to be used by local authorities to determine compliance with the standards.

There is one designated Salmonid Water under the EU Freshwater Fish Directive within the plan area. The Aherlow River crosses into the Plan area on the Limerick and Tipperary border north of the Carrigeen Mountain.

[8] https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/

3.3.5 Invasive Species

Invasive species constitute a threat to biodiversity and ecosystems and can have economic costs. In Ireland, there are currently 377 no. recorded non-native species and 342 no. non-native '*potential Invaders'*, 66% are considered to have a low impact risk, 21% to have a medium impact risk and 13% have a high impact risk. Most invasive species in Ireland are plants, however, there is potential for rising trends of invasive vertebrate and invertebrate species[9].

Invasive alien species can negatively impact on native species, transform habitats and threaten whole ecosystems causing serious problems to the environment and the economy. They may in certain cases pose a threat to human safety. There is potential for the spread of invasive species during excavation and construction works.

3.3.6 Other Designations

3.3.6.1 RAMSAR Sites

Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention. Wetlands are important ecosystems, which improve water quality, provide storm protection, flood mitigation, stabilise shorelines, maintain biodiversity, and provide natural products such as fish and shellfish. Ireland presently has 45no. RAMSAR sites. Relevant authorities are expected to manage their Ramsar Sites so as to maintain their ecological character and retain their essential functions and values for future generations. There are no Ramsar sites within the Plan area.

3.3.6.2 Wildfowl Sanctuaries

Wildfowl sanctuaries are areas that have been excluded from the 'Open Season Order' so that game birds can rest and feed undisturbed. There are 68no. sanctuaries in the State[10]. Shooting of game birds is not allowed in these sanctuaries. County Cork has five wildfowl sanctuaries; (1) WFS-08 Ballynamona – Shannagarry, (2) WFS-09 Kilcolman Bog, (3) WFS-10 Lough Aderry, (4) WFS-11 The Lee reservoir and (5) WFS-12 The Lough, Cork. Limerick has two wildfowl sanctuaries; WFS-33 Lough Gur and WFS-34 City of Limerick (part).

WFS-09 Kilcolman Bog and WFS-33 Lough Gur are located within the Plan area.

3.3.6.3 Nature Reserves

Other nature conservation designations are *Statutory Nature Reserves*, which are protected under Ministerial order. The Kilcolman Bog Nature Reserve is located within the Ballyhoura DEDP area, see **Figure 3.5.**

3.3.6.4 *Margaritifera* Sensitive Area

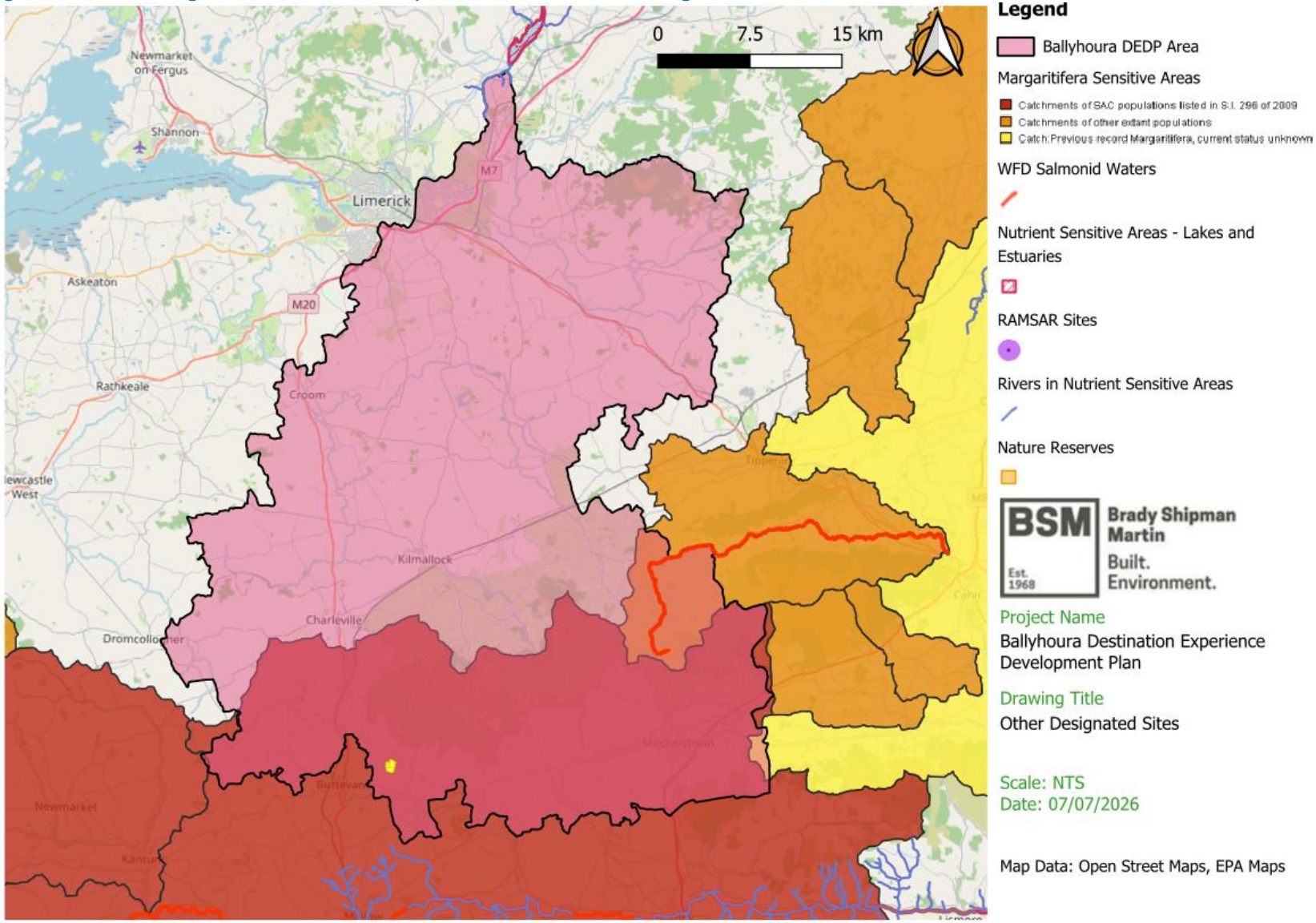
Freshwater pearl mussel is a globally threatened, long-lived and extremely sensitive species that can be impacted by many forms of pollution, particularly sediment and nutrient pollution and by hydrological and morphological changes, which may arise from developments, activities or changes in any part of the catchment. There are two species of freshwater pearl mussel in Ireland (*Margaritifera margaritifera* and *Margaritifera durrovensis*) and both are protected under Annex II and Annex V of the EU Habitats

[9] O'Flynn, C., Kelly,J. and Lysaght,L. (2014).
[10] NPWS (2021).

Directive. Within the study area the *Margaritifera* Sensitive Areas are found within the following – Munster Blackwater, Suir – Aherlow, Suir – Tar and Suir.

Refer to **Figure 3.5**.

Figure 3.5 Other Designated Sites within study area and in the surrounding area



3.4 Potential for likely significant effects on European sites

The SEA Directive requires that *'the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.'* Given the position of the Ballyhoura DEDP beneath the *Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028* and the *Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028* in the land use planning hierarchy, the measures identified in the SEA for the Development Plans have also been considered in this assessment, with some modification where appropriate.

A series of Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) have been prepared in line with current guidance and also with specific reference to the SEA for the Ballyhoura DEDP (refer to Table 3.3). Those of primary relevance to this report are those related to Biodiversity (Flora & Fauna) and Water Quality.

Table 3.3 Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) for Ballyhoura DEDP

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
Biodiversity (Flora & Fauna) (B)	B_1	Ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of Natura 2000 Sites and Annex habitats and species[11] and no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function.
	B_2	Preserve, protect, maintain and where appropriate enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, including internationally, EU and nationally designated sites, habitats and protected species.
	B_3	Ensure the Ballyhoura DEDP does not contradict biodiversity protection, restoration and rehabilitation objectives in the *Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028* and *Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028.*
Population & Human Health (PHH)	PHH_1	Promote sustainable high-quality tourism within the area that supports economic development and maximises potential for employment and investment.
	PHH_2	Improve health and wellbeing by provision of recreational and tourism-related activities.
Land, Soils & Geology (LSG)	LSG_1	Minimise green field development and protect land and soil resources from pollution and degradation.
Water Quality (WQ)	WQ_1	Protect, maintain and where necessary improve water quality and the management of watercourses, groundwater and the marine environment, in compliance with the requirements of the WFD objectives and measures.
	WQ_2	Implement and comply with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management and Sustainable Drainage Systems Guidelines to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding.
Air Quality, Noise & Climate (ANC)	ANC_1	Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality and noise emissions through the reduction of emissions.

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

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
	ANC_2	Contribute towards climate adaptation and mitigation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with National targets, including Ireland's commitment to realising a climate neutral economy by 2050.
Material Assets (MA)	MA_1	To contribute towards the protection of public assets and infrastructure, ensure new developments are served with adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure with sufficient capacity (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) that does not present a danger to human health.
	MA_2	Promote sustainable waste management, minimisation and recovery.
	MA_3	Promote sustainable transportation including increased use of public transport and active travel measures.
Cultural Heritage (CH)	CH_1	Protect, conserve and avoid impact on places, features and landscapes of cultural and archaeological importance, including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and Sites and Monuments Record (SMR).
	CH_2	Protect, conserve and avoid impact on places, features, buildings and landscapes of architectural heritage, (including entries to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAHs)).
Landscape & Visual (LV)	LV_1	To protect landscape character, minimise the loss of historic landscape features such as mature trees and hedgerows and scenic views.
	LV_2	Avoid impacts on the statutory landscape & visual designations as identified in the *Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028* and *Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028.*

The effects that could arise from the implementation of the Ballyhoura DEDP have been examined in the context of several factors that could potentially result in a likely significant effect on any European site, see Table 3.4 below.

Table 3.4 Potential for significant effects on designated sites in the potential Zone of Influence

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of July 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
European sites *within* Ballyhoura Destination Experience Development Plan area			
Tory Hill SAC (000439)	▪ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) [6210] ▪ Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae [7210] ▪ Alkaline fens [7230] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 3 August 2018), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is within the Ballyhoura DEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	**Yes**
Galtee Mountains SAC (000646)	▪ Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix [4010] ▪ European dry heaths [4030] ▪ Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] ▪ Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) [6230] ▪ Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130]	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is within the Ballyhoura DEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts and	**Yes**

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of July 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	▪ Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (Androsacetalia alpinae and Galeopsietalia ladani) [8110] ▪ Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210] ▪ Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 31 August 2016), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	
Clare Glen SAC (000930)	▪ Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0] ▪ Vandenboschia speciosa (Killarney Fern) [6985] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 16 May 2018), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is within the Ballyhoura DEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	Yes

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of July 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
Glen Bog SAC (001430)	▪ Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 28 November 2017), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is within the Ballyhoura DEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	Yes
Glenstal Wood SAC (001432)	▪ Vandenboschia speciosa (Killarney Fern) [6985] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 15 May 2018), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is within the Ballyhoura DEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	Yes
Ballyhoura Mountains SAC (002036)	▪ Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix [4010]	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts	Yes

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of July 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	▪ European dry heaths [4030] ▪ Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 18 August 2016), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is within the Ballyhoura DEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	
Carrigeenamronety Hill SAC (002037)	▪ European dry heaths [4030] ▪ Vandenboschia speciosa (Killarney Fern) [6985] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 12 Feb 2021), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is within the Ballyhoura DEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	**Yes**
Lower River Shannon SAC (002165)	▪ Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time [1110] ▪ Estuaries [1130]	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased	**Yes**

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of July 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	▪ Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] ▪ Coastal lagoons [1150] ▪ Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] ▪ Reefs [1170] ▪ Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] ▪ Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] ▪ Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] ▪ Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) [1330] ▪ Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410] ▪ Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation [3260] ▪ Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) [6410] ▪ Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior	risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is within the Ballyhoura DEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of July 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	(Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0] ▪ Margaritifera margaritifera (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029] ▪ Petromyzon marinus (Sea Lamprey) [1095] ▪ Lampetra planeri (Brook Lamprey) [1096] ▪ Lampetra fluviatilis (River Lamprey) [1099] ▪ Salmo salar (Salmon) [1106] ▪ Tursiops truncatus (Common Bottlenose Dolphin) [1349] ▪ Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 7 August 2012 for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.		
Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC (002170)	▪ Estuaries [1130] ▪ Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] ▪ Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.	**Yes**

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of July 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	▪ Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] ▪ Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) [1330] ▪ Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410] ▪ Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation [3260] ▪ Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0] ▪ Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0] ▪ Margaritifera margaritifera (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029] ▪ Austropotamobius pallipes (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092] ▪ Petromyzon marinus (Sea Lamprey) [1095] ▪ Lampetra planeri (Brook Lamprey) [1096] ▪ Lampetra fluviatilis (River Lamprey) [1099]	This Natura 2000 Site is within the Ballyhoura DEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of July 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	▪ Alosa fallax fallax (Twaite Shad) [1103] ▪ Salmo salar (Salmon) [1106] ▪ Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355] ▪ Vandenboschia speciosa (Killarney Fern) [6985] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 31 July 2012 for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.		
Kilcolman Bog SPA (004095)	▪ Whooper Swan (Cygnus cygnus) [A038] ▪ Teal (Anas crecca) [A052] ▪ Shoveler (Spatula clypeata) [A857] ▪ Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 24 January 2025) for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is within the Ballyhoura DEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	**Yes**
Slievefelim to Silvermines Mountains SPA (004165)	▪ Hen Harrier (Circus cyaneus) [A082]	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via demolition and construction, habitat	**Yes**

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of July 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 23 September 2022) for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potentially disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is within the Ballyhoura DEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	
European sites *within* the proposed zone of influence of the Ballyhoura Destination Experience Development Plan area			
Danes Hole, Poulnalecka SAC (000030), c.13.3km to the west	▪ Caves not open to the public [8310] ▪ Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0] ▪ Rhinolophus hipposideros (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 24 July 2018) for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is c. 13.3km to the west of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	No

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of July 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
Curraghchase Woods SAC (000174), c. 9.0km to the west	▪ Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0] ▪ Taxus baccata woods of the British Isles [91J0] ▪ Vertigo moulinsiana (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail) [1016] ▪ Rhinolophus hipposideros (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 20 January 2023) for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is c. 9.0km to the west of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	No
Silvermine Mountains SAC (000939), c. 8.2km to the north	▪ Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix [4010] ▪ Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) [6230] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 5 July 2018) for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is c. 9.0km to the north of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts	No

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of July 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	
Glenomra Wood SAC (001013), c.4.6 to the west	▪ Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 19 June 2018) for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is c. 4.6km to the west of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	No
Keeper Hill SAC (001197), c. 4.7km to the north	▪ Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix [4010] ▪ Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 17 October 2017) for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is c. 4.7km to the north of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts	No

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of July 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
		and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	
Philipston Marsh SAC (001847), c. 3.8km to the east	▪ Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 12 January 2018) for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is c. 3.8km to the east of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	No
Bolingbrook Hill SAC (002124), c. 9.4km to the north	▪ Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix [4010] ▪ European dry heaths [4030] ▪ Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) [6230] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 5 July 2018) for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is c. 9.4km to the north of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts	No

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of July 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	
Anglesey Road SAC (002125), c. 6.3 km to the east	▪ Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) [6230] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 3 December 2021) for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is c. 6.3km to the east of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	No
Lower River Suir SAC (002137), c. 1.7 km to the east	▪ Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) [1330] ▪ Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation [3260] ▪ Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels [6430] ▪ Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0]	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is c. 1.7km to the east of the study area and there is a hydrological connectivity via the River Duag and River Lissanarror. There is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination	Yes

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of July 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	▪ Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0] ▪ Taxus baccata woods of the British Isles [91J0] ▪ Margaritifera margaritifera (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029] ▪ Austropotamobius pallipes (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092] ▪ Petromyzon marinus (Sea Lamprey) [1095] ▪ Lampetra planeri (Brook Lamprey) [1096] ▪ Lampetra fluviatilis (River Lamprey) [1099] ▪ Alosa fallax fallax (Twaite Shad) [1103] ▪ Salmo salar (Salmon) [1106] ▪ Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 28 March 2017) for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	catalysts and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of July 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
Moanour Mountain SAC (002257), c. 1.3km to the east	▪ Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix [4010] ▪ European dry heaths [4030] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 29 April 2019) for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is c. 1.3km to the east of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	No
Silvermines Mountains West SAC (002258), c. 8.1km to the north	▪ Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix [4010] ▪ European dry heaths [4030] ▪ Calaminarian grasslands of the Violetalia calaminariae [6130] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 10 November 2017) for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is c. 8.1km to the north of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	No

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of July 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
Askeaton Fen Complex SAC (002279), c.11.0km to the west	▪ Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae [7210] ▪ Alkaline fens [7230] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 18 May 2018) for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is c. 11.0km to the west of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	No
Slieve Bernagh Bog SAC (002312), c.6.9km northwest	▪ Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix [4010] ▪ European dry heaths [4030] ▪ Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 18 August 2016) for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is c. 6.9km to the northwest of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	No

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of July 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
Ratty River Cave SAC (002316), c. 15.9km to the west	▪ Caves not open to the public [8310] ▪ Rhinolophus hipposideros (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 30 July 2018) for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is c. 15.9km to the west of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	No
Kilkishen House SAC (002319), c.18.2 to the northwest	▪ Rhinolophus hipposideros (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 31 July 2018) for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is c. 18.2km to the northwest of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	No

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of July 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
Blackwater Callows SPA (004094), c. 6.6km to the southeast	▪ Whooper Swan (Cygnus cygnus) [A038] ▪ Teal (Anas crecca) [A052] ▪ Black-tailed Godwit (Limosa limosa) [A156] ▪ Wigeon (Mareca penelope) [A855] ▪ Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 26 March 2024) for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is c. 6.6km to the southeast of the study area and there is a hydrological connectivity via the River Funshion and River Blackwater [Munster]. There is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	Yes
Stack's to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle SPA (004161), c. 7.8km to the west	▪ Hen Harrier (Circus cyaneus) [A082] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 23 September 2022) for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is c. 7.8 to the west of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	No

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of July 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA (004168), c. 19.6km to the north	▪ Hen Harrier (Circus cyaneus) [A082] ▪ Merlin (Falco columbarius) [A098] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 20 December 2022) for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is c. 19.6 to the north of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	No
River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA (004077), c. 1.7km to the northwest	▪ Cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo) [A017] ▪ Whooper Swan (Cygnus cygnus) [A038] ▪ Light-bellied Brent Goose (Branta bernicla hrota) [A046] ▪ Shelduck (Tadorna tadorna) [A048] ▪ Teal (Anas crecca) [A052] ▪ Pintail (Anas acuta) [A054] ▪ Scaup (Aythya marila) [A062] ▪ Ringed Plover (Charadrius hiaticula) [A137]	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is c. 1.7km to the northwest of the study area and there is a hydrological connectivity via the River Barnakyle and River Ballynaclogh. There is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	Yes

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of July 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	▪ Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) [A140] ▪ Grey Plover (Pluvialis squatarola) [A141] ▪ Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus) [A142] ▪ Knot (Calidris canutus) [A143] ▪ Dunlin (Calidris alpina) [A149] ▪ Black-tailed Godwit (Limosa limosa) [A156] ▪ Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica) [A157] ▪ Curlew (Numenius arquata) [A160] ▪ Redshank (Tringa totanus) [A162] ▪ Greenshank (Tringa nebularia) [A164] ▪ Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A179] ▪ Wigeon (Mareca penelope) [A855] ▪ Shoveler (Spatula clypeata) [A857] ▪ Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 17 September 2012) for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the		

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of July 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.		
Lough Derg (Shannon) SPA (004058), c. 7.7km to the north	▪ Cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo) [A017] ▪ Tufted Duck (Aythya fuligula) [A061] ▪ Goldeneye (Bucephala clangula) [A067] ▪ Common Tern (Sterna hirundo) [A193] ▪ Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 27 August 2024) for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species or habitat listed.	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. This Natura 2000 Site is c. 7.7 to the north of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives, destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives proposed under the Ballyhoura DEDP.	No

3.5 Screening for Appropriate Assessment - Summary

According to the draft Guidance published by the European Commission (*Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*, 21st November 2018) the "*integrity of a site*" relates to the site's conservation objectives. For example, it is possible that a plan or project will adversely affect the site only in a visual sense or only affect habitat types or species other than those listed in Annex I or Annex II. In such cases, the effects do not amount to an adverse effect for the purposes of Article 6(3). If none of the habitat types or species for which the site has been designated is significantly affected, then the site's integrity cannot be considered to be adversely affected.

In addition, plans or projects or applications for developments which have "*no appreciable effect*" on the protected site are excluded from the requirement to proceed to appropriate assessment[12] (Opinion of Advocate General Sharpston in *Sweetman*, para. 48).

In other words, if, following Screening, there is a possibility of there being a significant effect on a European site, this will generate the need for an appropriate assessment for the purposes of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

European sites with no connection/pathway to the Ballyhoura DEDP area can be screened out (Appropriate Assessment Screening) and they are not considered any further in this report. By virtue of their locations, and the presence of potential pathways, of the 41 European sites listed in Table 3.1 there is the possibility of there being a significant effect on a total of 14 no. sites (these are described in Table 3.4) as a result of the implementation of the Ballyhoura DEDP. This results in a requirement for an appropriate assessment for the purposes of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. The sites screened in are:

- Tory Hill SAC
- Galtee Mountains SAC
- Clare Glen SAC
- Glen Bog SAC
- Glenstal Wood SAC
- Ballyhoura Mountains SAC
- Carrigeenamronety Hill SAC
- Lower River Shannon SAC
- Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC
- Kilcolman Bog SPA
- Slievefelim to Silvermines Mountains SPA
- River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA
- Blackwater Callows SPA
- Lower River Suir SAC

There is potential for significant effects (at least, the potential for significant effects cannot be excluded) as a result of:

- Habitat loss and/or fragmentation.
- Impacts to habitat structure.

[12] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A62011CC0258

- Disturbance to species of conservation concern.
- Emissions to air.
- Emissions to water/reduction in water quality.

Despite its positive intent there is the possibility that the implementation the Ballyhoura Destination Experience Development Plan could result in significant effects on 14 no. European sites. Applying the precautionary principle therefore, and in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is required.

4 Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment

4.1 Introduction

As set out in Section 3.5, the implementation of the Ballyhoura DEDP has the potential to impact on 14 no. European sites. Given this conclusion, which is based on the Precautionary Principle, it is necessary to undertake Appropriate Assessment.

At this stage it is necessary to determine whether the implementation of the Ballyhoura DEDP would result in *significant adverse impacts on the integrity of any European site* with respect to the site's structure, function, and/or conservation objectives.

These potential adverse effects may arise either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

The Ballyhoura DEDP is a five-year sustainable tourism plan for east County Limerick and northeast County Cork. The plan aims to identify a range of key initiatives that are designed to raise awareness of the destination, increase the length of stay in the area, expand the range and quality of visitor experiences, strengthen the value of tourism to local communities and protect the quality, character and distinctiveness of the local environment, heritage and culture.

Nevertheless, as set out in the preceding sections, there is the potential that the implementation of certain elements of the Ballyhoura DEDP could lead to impacts on these European sites. This is particularly the case for actions that will result in construction or other development, and/or their ancillary infrastructure.

Albeit unlikely, there is the possibility of a reduction of habitat area, or a loss of habitat within European sites in the potential Zone of Influence as a result of the implementation of certain actions within the Ballyhoura DEDP. Any development works, no matter how minor, adjacent to watercourses have the potential to cause habitat loss or a reduction in habitat / water quality, with indirect effects on the European sites themselves. Similarly works within any European sites could lead to fragmentation (breakup) of habitats, resulting in impacts on site integrity or cause degradation to, any habitats associated with any European site.

There is the possibility of disturbance to key species arising as a result of the implementation of certain actions within the Ballyhoura DEDP. The Qualifying Interests (QIs) and Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of the European sites are sensitive to disturbance from noise, light, vibration and other construction activities including inappropriately timed works, as well as from recreational and amenity activity (human disturbance). Rivers, lakes and coastal sites are prone to contamination risk due to surface water runoff during construction. Any works near or within these sensitive sites could lead to disturbance of these species.

There is the possibility of changes to key indicators of conservation value arising as a result of the implementation of the Ballyhoura DEDP. This could arise via pollution, siltation or other run-off to watercourses that could ultimately discharge to the European sites. Any pollution-related impacts on the QIs/SCIs of any European site could adversely affect the integrity of the sites.

4.2 Potential impacts from the implementation of the Ballyhoura DEDP, including in-combinations effects

4.2.1 Is the Ballyhoura DEDP necessary for the management of European sites?

As set out in the Habitats Directive (Article 6(3)), plans that are directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site do not require Appropriate Assessment. Management in this context means management for nature conservation and the qualifying interests of the European site, specifically the conservation objectives – to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the habitats and species for which the site has been selected.

While the Ballyhoura DEDP has been developed with sustainability as core elements its purpose is to deliver and promote enhanced tourism experience within the Counties of Limerick and Cork. Therefore, the Ballyhoura DEDP is not considered to be directly connected with or necessary to the management of European designated sites.

4.2.2 Are there elements of the Ballyhoura DEDP with potential to give rise to significant effects on European sites

The elements/actions of the Ballyhoura DEDP have potential to give rise to significant effects on European sites during the construction and operational phases. Any development of existing and new infrastructure located within the potential zone of influence of any European site has the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, for example via demolition and construction, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water and, potentially, disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. During the operational phase, there is potential for uncertain effects due to the new developments and their ancillary infrastructure and increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.

The Ballyhoura DEDP, once implemented, is expected to enhance the visitor experience, promote tourism and support economic growth. Despite its positive intent, the Ballyhoura DEDP has the potential to give rise to effects on European sites within its potential zone of influence under the following scenarios:

- Any Action that could directly or indirectly affect water quality, flow and/or morphology and potentially affect the European sites, protected habitats and species;
- Any Action that could directly or indirectly increase risk of flooding and potentially affect the European sites, protected habitats and species;
- Any Action that could directly or indirectly affect groundwater quality or supply and potentially affect the European sites, protected habitats and species;
- Any Action that could directly or indirectly affect air quality due to emissions and affect the European sites, protected habitats and species;
- Any risk of habitat loss, fragmentation or degradation to European sites or network supporting European sites, protected habitats and species, including via increased visitor numbers and human activity;
- Any potential for a risk of direct or indirect disturbance to European site habitats and/or species, e.g. development at coastal sites /along rivers/within bogs, noise disturbance due to construction, light pollution etc.;

- Any Action that could risk a reduction in ecological connectivity between European sites and/or the ecological networks supporting them.

4.2.3 Appraisal of the Strategic Objectives of the Ballyhoura Destination Experience Development Plan

The finding of the environmental assessment of the overall Vision and Strategic Objectives of the Ballyhoura DEDP is presented in Table 4.1

Table 4.1 Appraisal of the Strategic Objectives of the Ballyhoura DEDP

Strategic Objectives	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the potential Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
Vision The vision for the Ballyhoura DEDP is as follows: *"It's 2036 and Ballyhoura has established a reputation as one of Ireland's leading basecamps for outdoor recreation and rural exploration, with a focus on walking and cycling. Decades of community-based tourism have added a unique flavour to outdoor recreation here, rooted in authentic community engagement and participative events* *As a pioneer sustainable tourism destination, our commitment to regenerative tourism places our community, our stories and our inspiring landscapes are at the heart of the Ballyhoura experience. Local stories are embedded into every visitor experience from our food provenance, linked to generations of producers and our rich farming landscapes, to how we connect the story of place with our trails, attractions and outdoor activities.* *Implementation of the Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan is well underway, developing a strong network of walking and cycling trails throughout the destination. The mountain-biking trails and he Beara Breifne Way (Ballyhoura Way) have gained a reputation internationally. There are lots of ways for visitors to easily connect with locals in welcoming, authentic and vibrant market towns and villages.*	This vision statement sets an overall context for destination experience and tourism in Ballyhoura. This will support and underpin the local tourism economy, industry and associated workers. No specific projects are associated with the statement, and therefore the effect on the remaining environmental themes and SEOs will be neutral.	No

Strategic Objectives	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the potential Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
The overall appeal of Ballyhoura has been widened through the development of the destination's heritage, cultural and food-based visitor experiences which complement its outdoor activities. *Tourism businesses are highly networked and the accommodation base in the destination has been expanded, with accommodation types that meet the needs of our visitors. Every key business has a professional, bookable and measurable online presence, with all of these businesses cross-promoting digitally.* *Ballyhoura has become renowned for its sustainability credentials, and the businesses have reduced their carbon footprint with national targets."*		
2. Grow the capabilities of Ballyhoura tourism industry, networks and tourism cluster to increase visitor awareness of Ballyhoura.	This goal is focused on increase visitor awareness of Ballyhoura as a destination but does not propose any projects. As such, no environmental impacts are anticipated.	No
3. Increase the Ballyhoura tourism industry's engagement with the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands and Ballyhoura Country brands to collectively grow awareness and recognition of the regional brand to grow its share of the domestic and international market.	This goal seeks to increase the awareness and economic potential of Ballyhoura as a tourism destination within the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands brand. Positive impacts on population and human health objectives are anticipated. No other environmental impacts are likely.	No
4. Increase the profile of Ballyhoura as a leading outdoor activity destination and grow its appeal in the family market.	This goal is focused on increase visitor awareness of Ballyhoura as a destination but does not propose any projects. As such, no environmental impacts are anticipated.	No

Strategic Objectives	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the potential Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
5. Differentiate the destinations approach to marketing by placing local people, telling the local story, at the core of destination communication.	This goal is focused on the marketing approach of Ballyhoura as a destination but does not propose any projects. As such, no environmental impacts are anticipated.	No
6. Maximise the potential of festivals and sport tourism events for marketing impact.	This objective will increase tourism potential for events to draw in new visitors. Positive impacts on population and human health objectives are anticipated. No other environmental impacts are likely.	No
7. Work with the tourism industry in neighbouring urban destinations such as Limerick and Cork City to encourage visitor flows into the area from the main accommodation hubs.	This objective will increase tourism potential by coordinating with neighbouring destinations. However, in the absence of mitigation, the objective could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect for biodiversity and Natura 2000 Sites. Increased tourism in these sensitive locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. The development could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.	Yes
8. Promote access into the Ballyhoura destination from existing and future transport infrastructure such as the M20.	This objective aims to increase footfall and through traffic to the Ballyhoura region. However, in the absence of mitigation, the objective could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect for biodiversity and Natura 2000 Sites. Increased tourism in these sensitive locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. The development could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.	Yes
Implement the Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan to unlock the outdoor activity potential of Ballyhoura.	This goal relates to the implementation of a plan that has already been approved in 2024 and is being managed by the Balyhours CLG. Any plans or projects under the Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan will be subject to individual environmental planning processes. As such, this objective is expected to have positive impacts on the population and human health objectives, however no other environmental impacts are expected.	No
9. Deliver the Ballyhoura elements of the Beara Breifne Way to maximise the opportunity presented by the international walking route.	This goal will continue the developing of the Beara Breifne Way waking trails. This objective is expected to have positive impacts on the population and human health objectives. However, in the absence of mitigation, the objective could have the potential to	Yes

Strategic Objectives	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the potential Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
	result in uncertain environmental effect for biodiversity and Natura 2000 Sites. Increased tourism in these sensitive locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. The development could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.	
Grow the level of accessibility between trails and local communities and the creation of community basecamps with a focus on the Ballyhoura Mountains, Galtee Mountains and Slieve Felim.	This goal will expand walking and camping opportunities in Ballyhoura Country. There are potential positive impacts on population and human health. However, in the absence of mitigation, both the construction and operation of new interventions could have the potential to result in negative or uncertain environmental effect for biodiversity and Natura 2000 Sites. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. Increased tourism in these sensitive locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.	Yes
Strengthen the appeal of indoor visitor attractions in Ballyhoura through the enhancement of their visitor experiences and approaches to demand generation.	This goal is focused on the marketing approach of Ballyhoura as a destination but does not propose any projects. Any plans or projects proposed to enhance the visitor experiences will be subject to individual environmental planning processes. As such, positive impacts on population and human health are expected objectives. No other environmental impacts are expected.	No
Develop the appeal of Ballyhoura as an off road cycling destination.	This goal is focused on the marketing approach of Ballyhoura as a destination but does not propose any projects. As such, no environmental impacts are anticipated.	No
Grow the year round appeal of Ballyhoura as an outdoor activity destination through sport tourism participation events and festivals.	This objective will increase tourism potential for events to draw in new visitors. Positive impacts on population and human health objectives are anticipated. No other environmental impacts are likely.	No
Develop Ballyhoura as water-based activity destination to include locations such as Ballyhass, Castleconnell and locations on the River Awbeg and	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience. The development of water-based tourism has the potential to	Yes

Strategic Objectives	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the potential Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
River Maigue and future experience links with the River Blackwater.	contribute to better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefiting various environmental components at certain locations. However, in the absence of mitigation, the objective could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on cultural heritage, land, soils, geology and biodiversity. Increased tourism in these sensitive locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. The development could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.	
Develop Ballyhoura as 'learn to' activity destination where visitors can access activities that appeal to all abilities and levels of interest in the outdoors.	This objective will result in positive impacts for population and human health by encouraging active lifestyles for all visitors. However, in the absence of mitigation, the objective could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect for biodiversity and Natura 2000 Sites. Increased tourism in these sensitive locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. The development could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.	Yes
Adopt a heritage attractions cluster approach to highlight the range of heritage experiences across Ballyhoura.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health. However, in the absence of mitigation, both the construction and operation of new experiences could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect for biodiversity and Natura 2000 Sites. Increased tourism in these sensitive locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.	Yes
Build on the food and agricultural heritage of Ballyhoura and the Golden Vale and grow the value of food tourism experiences for Ballyhoura and its role in developing the night time economy.	This objective will expand the night time scene in Ballyhoura through existing food tourism offerings. Positive impacts on population and human health objectives are anticipated. No other environmental impacts are likely.	No
Develop the leisure tourism potential of golf and equestrian experiences in Ballyhoura.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health. However, in the absence of mitigation, both the construction and operation of new experiences could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect for	Yes

Strategic Objectives	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the potential Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
	biodiversity and Natura 2000 Sites. Increased tourism in these sensitive locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.	
Growing the demand generation capabilities of the Ballyhoura tourism industry based on understanding the needs and motivations of visitors aligned with the Fáilte Ireland Visitor Motivations Framework and Tourism Ireland's visitor segmentation.	This objective would result in positive effects for tourism industry and will not result in adverse environmental consequences.	No
Improve the digital capabilities of the tourism industry to increase the online visibility of the destination.	This objective would result in positive effects for tourism industry and will not result in adverse environmental consequences.	No
Increase the number of saleable Ballyhoura visitor experiences aligned with achieving the destination's tourism vision and focus on the outdoors, rural exploration, nature, culture and heritage.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health. However, in the absence of mitigation, both the construction and operation of new experiences could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect for biodiversity and Natura 2000 Sites. Increased tourism in these sensitive locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.	Yes
Grow the number of rural tourism experiences linked to food, gardens, biodiversity, 'meet the makers' and agri / farm experiences.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health. However, in the absence of mitigation, both the construction and operation of new experiences could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect for biodiversity and Natura 2000 Sites. Increased tourism in these sensitive locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.	Yes
10. Implement a tourism cluster approach for capability building and new experience development.	This objective would result in positive effects for tourism industry and will not result in adverse environmental consequences.	No
Develop the tourism potential of the urban hubs to grow the value of the day and evening time	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health. However, in the absence of mitigation, both the construction and operation of new experiences could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect for	Yes

Strategic Objectives	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the potential Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
economy to include Kilmallock, Mitchelstown and Charleville.	biodiversity and Natura 2000 Sites. Increased tourism in these sensitive locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.	
Ensure all education and training agencies align tourism industry training with ongoing and future investment in Ballyhoura.	This objective would result in positive effects for tourism industry and will not result in adverse environmental consequences.	No
Implement the Ballyhoura Sustainability Action Plan to guide the development of Ballyhoura as a leading sustainable tourism destination.	This objective would result in positive effects for tourism industry and for the environmental objectives.	No
Grow the tourism industry's adoption of sustainable tourism practices reflected in their daily operations and commitment to sustainability.	This objective would result in positive effects for tourism industry and for the environmental objectives.	No
Develop the capacity of the tourism industry and community tourism groups to develop sustainable visitor experiences, profiling the destination's commitment to sustainability and embracing the regenerative approach to tourism as a platform for innovation.	This objective would result in positive effects for tourism industry and for the environmental objectives.	No
Build on the success of Ballyhoura regenerative tourism training programmes to grow the capabilities of the community tourism sector and realise the socio-economic potential of tourism for their community.	This objective would result in positive effects for tourism industry and for the environmental objectives.	No
Work with Ballyhoura communities to prepare them for emerging tourism opportunities arising from the	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health. The development of new and existing experiences might give rise to uncertain environmental effects on European sites within the potential Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated,	Yes

Strategic Objectives	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the potential Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
Ballyhoura DEDP and planned investment in the destination.	have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. This could also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management which has potential to effect the receiving environment.	
Grow the agri and rural tourism opportunity for Ballyhoura through the delivery of farm, meet the maker and food based experiences.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health. However, in the absence of mitigation, both the construction and operation of new experiences could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect for biodiversity and Natura 2000 Sites. Increased tourism in these sensitive locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.	Yes
Ensure the responsible visitor engagement with all trails and nature-based amenities through visitor education and in destination awareness building of responsible tourism.	This objective would result in positive effects for tourism industry and for the environmental objectives.	No
Collectively achieve the reduction in carbon targets identified throughout the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Regional Tourism and Development Strategy as part of the destination's ambition to become a leading sustainable tourism destination.	This objective would result in positive effects for tourism industry and for the environmental objectives.	No
Grow participation in the Ballyhoura tourism network and strengthen the collective approach to developing the tourism opportunity for the area.	This objective will support in the tourism network and also provide economic benefits to the Ballyhoura area population. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	No
Deliver a co-ordinated marketing approach in partnership with Ballyhoura Fáilte, Pure Cork, Cork County Council, Limerick City and County Council and Munster Vale to ensure a coherent destination	This objective will support the branding of Ballyhoura as a community-led destination. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	No

Strategic Objectives	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the potential Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
message is communicated to domestic and international visitors.		
Adopt a partnership approach to future event and product development funding opportunities for the Ballyhoura destination.	This objective will support in the tourism network and also provide economic benefits to the Ballyhoura area population. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	No
Adopt a multiagency approach in the delivery of catalyst projects that will grow the profile of the area as a leading outdoor activity destination e.g. Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan, Ballyhoura Mountain Bike Trail Centre, Beara Breifne Way.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health. However, in the absence of mitigation, the objective could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect for biodiversity and Natura 2000 Sites. Increased tourism in these sensitive locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. The development could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.	Yes
Implement a sustainable model to resource the development of community tourism and grow destination network participation.	This objective would result in positive effects for tourism industry and for the environmental objectives.	No
Ensure Local Authority participation in the development of the Ballyhoura destination to include Limerick City and County Council, Cork County Council and Tipperary County Council.	This objective will support in the tourism network of the Ballyhoura area population. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	No
Adopt a collective stakeholder approach to facilitate the growth of the accommodation product base in Ballyhoura.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health. However, the development of new or existing accommodation facilities presents potential uncertain environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect for biodiversity and Natura 2000 Sites. Increased tourism in these sensitive locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.	Yes

Strategic Objectives	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the potential Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required? Yes / No
Grow the level of access and transport options for Ballyhoura working with existing providers such as Local Link to enhance visitor access to local communities, attractions and activities.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health. However, the development of new or existing infrastructure presents potential uncertain environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect for biodiversity and Natura 2000 Sites. Increased tourism in these sensitive locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.	Yes
Develop a destination wide approach to ensure future placemaking activity in Ballyhoura towns and villages is aligned with the community vision for how the Ballyhoura story is told at every visitor touchpoint e.g. public realm projects, town and village enhancements.	This objective will support the branding of Ballyhoura as a community-led destination. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	No
Align with regional projects or tourism development opportunities such as food and connectivity with the themes of other DEDPs and tourism plans in Cork and Limerick.	This objective will support in the tourism connectivity to the wider DEDP network. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	No

4.2.4 Appraisal of the Ballyhoura Destination & Experience Development Plan Action Plan

The Ballyhoura DEDP includes a list of destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives which will be delivered to support the above strategic objectives of the DEDP. The environmental assessment of the effects of the destination catalysts and destination enabling initiatives is detailed in **Table 4.2** below.

There are 5no. destination catalysts initiatives, 7no. supporting projects and 36no. destination projects in total. Projects where there is a requirement for development of existing and new infrastructure might give rise to uncertain effects on European sites within the potential Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.

Where potential negative or uncertain effects on European sites have been identified appropriate mitigation has been provided. See **Section 4.4** of this Report.

Table 4.2 Appraisal of the Ballyhoura DEDP Action Plan

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
Strategic Objective 1 - *Market recognition and visitor awareness of the Ballyhoura Destination*				
1	Catalyst Project: Build Awareness (Marketing & Publicity)		No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	No
1.1	IHH Brand Adoption and Education Programme	Deliver an IHH brand adoption and education programme for the Ballyhoura tourism industry partners to ensure a collective understanding of the regional brand opportunity and how to leverage it for sustainable growth in tourism. This will also include a focus on increased use of the Ballyhoura brand.		
1.2	Growing Domestic Tourism- Demand Generation	Grow the capabilities of Ballyhoura tourism industry to implement a commercial approach to marketing and sales generation for their business and collectively increase the level of destination recognition in the domestic market.		
1.3	International Profile Development	Work with the Ballyhoura tourism industry to implement a phased approach to marketing and demand generation to grow destination awareness in international markets. This will include B2B sales training, sales task force identification, preparation for sales events and leveraging the opportunities that arise in the Ballyhoura DEDP.		
1.4	Grow the Digital Profile of Ballyhoura	Convene stakeholders to review the findings of the Digital Survey conducted by Fáilte Ireland as part of the DEDP process, with a focus on addressing digital infrastructure gaps and training needs, exploring AI's role in community tourism, and identifying opportunities to enhance Ballyhoura's online presence through digital supports, social commerce, and AI-driven search.		
1.5	AI and Digital Skills Capability Building	Undertake a co-ordinated programme of training and capability building focusing on digital skills development, enhancing Ballyhoura's digital infrastructure and the opportunities presented by AI for Tourism & Hospitality.		

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
1.6	**Ballyhoura Content Creation**	Undertake tourism industry training on content creation to align destination marketing and communications with the character of the place and the essence of the Ballyhoura destination I.e. local people, communities and local stories.		
1.7	**Co-ordinated Marketing Approach**	Commit to a co-ordinated marketing planning approach in partnership with Ballyhoura Fáilte, Pure Cork, Cork County Council, Limerick City & County Council and Munster Vales to ensure consistency in delivering the destination message to domestic and international audiences.		
Strategic Objective 2 – *Establish Ballyhoura as a leading outdoor activity destination, supported by a well-connected series of visitor experiences that help tell the story of the people and their place.*				
2	**Catalyst Project: Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan, including Mountain Bike Centre & Beara Breifne Way**		These actions will enhance visitor experience and promote tourism resulting in overall positive on population and human health objectives. However, in the absence of mitigation, upgrades to trails including new amenities and rebuilding of trail sections may have uncertain or negative effects on other environmental SEOs from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast	Yes
2.1	**Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan Implementation**	Work with all relevant agencies, local communities and the tourism industry to implement the Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan. This will include the enhancement and development of the trails network and the sustainable development of: Community rails, Activity hubs and Signature clusters. (Actions below are included in Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan).		
2.2	**Seefin Summit Path**	Promote the sustainable and environmentally sensitive development of the Ballyhoura Uplands to grow the trails connectivity and links to the Beara Breifne Way and bike trail. This will include re-building sections of trail sections near the summit of Seefin East, maintaining and re-routing sections of trail giving utmost consideration to environmental sensitivities and engaging with the NPWS, Coillte and Mountaineering Ireland to adopt an integrated approach to management of access in upland areas.		
2.3	**Beara Breifne Way**	Deliver the Ballyhoura components of the Beara Breifne Way, supported by an activation programme that enables the tourism		

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
		industry to engage with the opportunity and ensures strong integration with the wider Ballyhoura trails experience.	and could also result in increased visitor numbers and pressure in the vicinity of European sites. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.	
2.4	**Mountain Bike Trail Centre Visitor Experience**	Develop Visitor Facilities at the mountain bike Trail Head, inclusive of toilets, showers, shop, pump tracks. The approach will enhance the visitor experience on the mountain biking trails to establish Ballyhoura as an international mountain biking destination. Support this ambition by assessing the feasibility of installing cycling amenities such as pump tracks, enhancing the quality of trails and delivering a quality visitor experience in the trail head centre.		
2.5	**Developing Cycling Amenities – Pump Tracks**	Undertake a scoping and identification project into potential sites for developing additional cycling pump tracks in local communities across Ballyhoura.		
3	**Catalyst Project: Heritage Attractions Cluster**		No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	**No**
2.6	**Doneraile House & Gardens Visitor Experience**	Promote the OPW cluster development of Doneraile House and Gardens and Anne's Grove to reflect their promotional and developmental interdependencies. This will include enhancing the visitor experience at Doneraile House & Gardens to become a signature indoor attraction for Ballyhoura and to optimise the promotion of the Changing Places.		
2.7	**Anne's Grove Gardens Development Plan**	Implement the Anne's Grove Gardens development plan to include the restoration of further historic structures (e.g. the house) and visitor facilities (e.g. pathways, café, toilets). Support he cluster development and interdependencies with Doneraile House and Gardens to also include demand generation.		
2.8	**Lough Gur Masterplan**	Develop a comprehensive Masterplan for Lough Gur that integrates the Visitor Centre, surrounding heritage assets such as Grange Stone Circle, and planned enhancements including the Lough Gur Walkway and Bird Hide projects, with the objective of creating a coherent and enriched visitor proposition for Lough Gur.		

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
2.9	**Kilmallock Merchant House / Stone Mansion Development Plan**	Undertake a development plan for the Merchant House / Stone Mansion project to create a viable multifunctional space that will include: 1. Building restoration requirements 2. Community spaces and uses and 3. Tourism role combining the interpretation of the local heritage story and ability to signpost visitors to experiences across the destination.		
2.10	**Mitchelstown Georgian Quarter**	Develop a visitor proposition for the Georgian Quarter and experience development plan to maximise the impact of future town regeneration investment and enhancement of Mitchelstown as a planned Georgian town. This will include a focus on day and evening time visitor experience development linked to the theme of the Georgian Quarter and maximising the role of heritage and cultural assets such as the Saint George's Arts & Heritage Centre.		
3	**Catalyst Project: Heritage Attractions Cluster**		No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	**No**
2.11	**Ballyhoura / Golden Vale Food in Tourism Cluster**	Develop a cluster of Ballyhoura food experiences that will contribute to Cork's ambition to become a World Region of Gastronomy by 2030. The cluster will be the focus for a food tourism visitor experience development programme and will evolve into a Ballyhoura Food Experience Trail linking to day and evening time activity based around food.		
2.12	**Food Tourism Experience Development**	Implement a 'food in tourism' saleable experience development programme to grow the number of food and drink experiences in Ballyhoura.		
2.13	**Ballyhoura Food Experience Trail**	Explore the potential for Ballyhoura Food Experience trail showcasing food and drink experiences.		
2.14	**Food & Drink in Destination Events**	Examine opportunities to incorporate food and drink experiences into existing and future Ballyhoura festivals and events.		
2.15	**Agri Tourism and Food Experiences**	Host an 'introduction to tourism programme' linked to agri-tourism opportunities followed by saleable experience development		

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
		supports. This will include exploring opportunities such as farm visits, meet the maker and food experiences.		
2.16	**Kilfinane Market House Feasibility Study**	Assess the opportunities to be considered for the Kilfinane Market House to include its use as an enterprise hub that will include a visitor experience e.g. food or the inclusion of alternative accommodation options. In preparation for a Category 1 RRDF application develop a brief that scopes out the range of opportunities to be considered.		
	Supporting Projects: Ballyhoura Community Hubs – Activity Basecamp Hubs		These actions will enhance visitor experience and promote tourism resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs. The development of these projects, however, may result in uncertain effects on biodiversity and Natura 2000 sites that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have the potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. These works could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.	Yes
2.17	**Ballyhoura Community Hubs – Outdoor Activity Basecamp Pilot Site**	Develop a 'Community Hub / Basecamp' roadmap and development action plan to develop a visitor services hub / trail head in local communities linked to the uplands areas. The assessment will identify one location in the short term to be developed as the Ballyhoura pilot Basecamp to layer onto existing local community facilities, social enterprises and / or private sector involvement. The roadmap will incorporate the learnings of the Fáilte Ireland basecamp development pilot programme.		
2.18	**Water Activity Hubs – Water Activity Basecamps**	Build on the destinations community hub and activity basecamp positioning to create a pilot water activity basecamp in Ballyhass Adventure Centre as part of the enhancement of their learning and development experience. The learnings from this pilot will be used to develop the water activity opportunity in other locations across Ballyhoura.		
2.19	**Developing Ballyhoura Activity Hubs as 'Learn to Experience' Destinations**	Leveraging the opportunity for the community hub / activity basecamps to positions themselves as 'learn to' destinations for all abilities and interests i.e. introduction to outdoor and ecotourism activities e.g. on foot, bike, water or horse. This will build on existing outdoor education experiences in Ballyhoura.		

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
	Supporting Project: Outdoor Destination Experiences		These actions will enhance visitor experience and promote tourism resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs. In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potential uncertain effects on European sites within the potential Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast and could also result in increased visitor numbers and pressure in the vicinity of European sites. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.	Yes
2.20	**Galtee Mountains Masterplan Review and Roadmap**	Undertake an audit / assessment of previous plans relating to the Galtee Mountains. The outputs of the audit process will be used to create a Galtee Mountains experience development roadmap identifying the actions and emerging opportunities required to enhance the Galtee Mountains as a signature visitor experience for the Munster Vales and Ballyhoura Country, the roadmap will include the implementation of the key actions identified in Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan.		
2.21	**Cycling / Walking Route – M20 Corridor**	Deliver a safe cycling / walking route linked to the development of the M20 corridor and following agreed mapping in the M20 masterplan.		
2.22	**Greenway – Limerick to Montpelier**	Assess the feasibility of developing a Greenway from Limerick to Montpelier.		
2.23	**Golf Tourism**	Develop the leisure tourism potential of golf in Ballyhoura by creating a cluster of golf courses to maximise the opportunities presented by the hosting of the Junior Ryder Cup in Ballyneety Gold Cub.		
2.24	**Ballyhoura Water Trail Feasibility**	Asses the feasibility of developing an accessible water based trail in the Ballyhoura destination based on the Sport Ireland water trail guidelines.		
2.25	**Clare Glens Trails & Slieve Felim**	Assess the trails upgrade requirements for the Clare Glens and Slieve Felim. (Pending: confirmation subject to meeting with Tipperary County Council).		
2.26	**Rural Tourism Experiences**	Deliver a rural tourism saleable experience programme to grow the number of saleable rural tourism experiences in Ballyhoura and examining agri-tourism opportunities such as Open Farms and the Farm Diversification Training Programme.		
	Supporting Projects: Ballyhoura Events & Festivals			Yes

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
2.27	**Ballyhoura Walking Festival**	Create an event development plan to grow the economic impact of the Ballyhoura Walking Festival as a signature event for the destination.	These actions will enhance visitor experience and promote tourism experience opportunities. However, the development of new or existing infrastructure needed to host large scale festivals and outdoor series presents potential uncertain environmental effects. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast and could also result in increased visitor numbers and pressure in the vicinity of European sites. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.	
2.28	**Ballyhoura Series – Outdoor Events**	Identify the requirements on how to attract a festival / event organiser or create local capacity to deliver the Ballyhoura Active Series over a 3-5 year timeframe and subject to securing funding.		
2.29	**Ballyhoura Event Development Opportunities**	Explore all available funding and festival event opportunities for Ballyhoura to include seasonal, outdoor events or partnerships with bid organisations to attract events to Ballyhoura aligned with the destination commitment to sustainability.		
		Destination Projects		
2.30	**Network Development & Sustainable Tourism**	Develop and grow participation in the Ballyhoura Tourism Network with an increased emphasis within the network on developing new sustainable tourism experiences.	These actions will enhance visitor experience and promote tourism resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs. The development of these projects might result in negative environmental effects on all European sites within the potential Zone of Influence that would,	Yes
2.31	**Murroe Sports Complex**	Assess the community space opportunity for Murroe Sports Complex to operate as a future community basecamp providing access to visitor facilities linked to local trails.		
2.32	**Kilmallock Medieval Town – Walled Town Walkways**	Develop the medieval visitor proposition through the development of animated walkways and necklace of trails with points of interest extending to the West Wall Walkway		

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
2.33	**Charleville Moatville House**	Assess the outputs of the feasibility analysis of redeveloping Moatville House in Charleville into a sustainable community space and visitor experience / facilities.	if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the coastal and transitional waters. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. The development of these projects could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.	
2.34	**Charleville Schoolyard Theatre**	Assess the feasibility of developing the second floor of the Schoolyard Theatre building in Charleville into a cultural space.		
2.35	**Knocklong Railway Heritage Project**	Assess the feasibility of the Knocklong Railway Heritage Project.		
2.36	**Diaspora Tourism**	Create a Ballyhoura Diaspora Tourism Development Roadmap to leverage existing diaspora events, international networks and local heritage centre experiences. This will include maximising the profile of bi-annual diaspora events such as the Ballyhoura Robinson Homecoming Event, Canada Ireland 180, and the Rose Kennedy Autumn School as the basis for future development.		
2.37	**Diaspora Centre**	Examine the feasibility of developing a diaspora centre or enhanced diaspora visitor experience in Ballyhoura		
2.38	**Thomas Fitzgerald Centre**	Review the visitor experience at the Thomas Fitzgerald Centre in Bruff and develop a visitor experience plan to support its development as a destination attraction.		
2.39	**Ballyhoura Outdoor Recreation Destination**	Support the development of Ballyhoura as an outdoor recreation destination through the delivery of the Ballyhoura Masterplan, Limerick County Outdoor Recreation Plan and the Cork County Council Recreation and Amenity Policy to enhance the outdoor amenity base and positively impact on the visitor experience.		
2.40	**Trail Maintenance**	Assess he requirements and funding gaps for annual trails maintenance and establish strategic partnerships to manage and maintain local trails.		
2.41	**Accessible Activity Destination**	Undertake a review of existing trails and activities across Ballyhoura to assess future accessibility requirements to ensure Ballyhoura is a best-in-class accessible outdoor destination.		

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
2.42	**Griston Bog Conservation Management Plan**	Support the delivery of the Griston Bog Conservation Management Plan.		
2.43	**Ballyhoura Visitor services Gap Analysis**	Undertake a destination gap analysis on existing tourism and visitor infrastructure to understand the current levels of provision of visitor services and ancillary services that are expected from a well performing tourism destination (e.g. food and beverage, non-product elements such as universal toilets).		
2.44	**Kilmallock Cycle Hub**	Review Kilmallock Cycle Hub route signposting and clean existing and replace missing signage. (Pending: confirmation subject to meeting with Limerick City & County Council).		
Strategic Objective 3 – *Grow economic impact through supporting capacity and capability development*				
	Supporting Project: Accommodation		These actions will enhance visitor experience and promote tourism resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs. However, the development of these projects might result in negative environmental effects on all European sites within the potential Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually	Yes
3.1	**Accommodation Development**	Build on Fáilte Ireland's Supply and Pipeline review to ensure that the Ballyhoura destination avails of any potential public or private capital opportunities over the duration of the DEDP.		
3.2	**Growing Alternative Accommodation Supply**	Support the sustainable provision of alternative forms of accommodation in Ballyhoura to include options such as camping, Glamping and Agri-tourism based accommodation.		
3.3	**RV / Campervan Site Assessment**	Identify potential sites for sustainable RV / Camper accommodation development in Ballyhoura.		
3.4	**Accommodation Workshop**	Host a half day workshop for accommodation providers and potential new businesses based on investigating the opportunity to develop accommodation in Ballyhoura.		
3.5	**Destination Hubs Cluster Development**	Create a number of tourism clusters in key destination towns to strengthen their role as year round visitor hubs for Ballyhoura with a focus on day and evening time opportunities and itinerary development.		

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
3.6	**Ballyhoura at Night – Evening Economy Experience Development**	Create a 'Ballyhoura at Night' evening time pilot programme in the destination hubs to grow the value of the nighttime economy across Ballyhoura. Host a workshop to support a pilot initiative to focus on creating a calendar of evening events with individual venues hosting evening activity on a weekly or monthly basis to grow the overall Ballyhoura at Night schedule. This will include cultural programming, traditional music, rambling houses and use of event venues for evening time activity as part of the local visitor experience.	sensitive areas adjacent to the coastal and transitional waters. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. The development of these projects could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.	
Destination Projects				
3.7	**Visitor Itineraries**	Work with the tourism industry in neighbouring urban destinations such as Limerick City and Cork City to develop Ballyhoura itineraries and influence visitor flows into Ballyhoura from the main accommodation hubs. This will include family focused and special interest itineraries i.e. outdoor activities, food, heritage.	No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	**No**
3.8	**Resourcing Destination Activation – Exploring Funding Options**	Explore potential funding models that could support an activator-type role in the delivery of the Ballyhoura DEDP, drawing on models and lessons learned from other DEDPs and initiatives country wide.		
3.9	**Creative and Cultural Sector Linkages**	Design and pilot an initiative to increase the linkages between visitors to the area and local cultural, craft and creative services and product providers collaborating to optimise visitor economic and social impact.		
3.10	**Creative and Cultural Visitor Experiences**	Promote creative and cultural opportunities and experiences linked to tourism development in Ballyhoura that include linking to cultural spaces and venues ad integrating with the development of the night time economy across the destination.		
5	**Catalyst Project: R512 – Tourism Route**			**No**

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
4.1	**R512 – Tourism Route**	Undertake feasibility analysis into the development of the R512 as a tourism and orientation route for Ballyhoura. This will include the scoping of a tourism route concept using the R512 as the spine of destination and marketing platform with links to local communities, attractions, experiences and the platform for destination marketing.	No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	
	Supporting Project: Sustainable Tourism Network Development		No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	**No**
4.2	**Ballyhoura Sustainable Tourism Network**	Grow the level of participation in the Ballyhoura tourism network through targeted training and engagement programmes to strengthen the collective approach to sustainable and regenerative tourism for the area.		
Destination Projects			No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	**No**
4.3	**Ballyhoura Sustainability Action Plan**	Implement the Ballyhoura Sustainability Action Plan to guide the development of Ballyhoura as a sustainable tourism destination.		
4.4	**Fáilte Ireland Climate Action Programme**	Promote participation in the Fáilte Ireland Climate Action Programme by hotels and visitor attractions across the destination.		
4.5	**Carbon Reduction**	Work with Ireland's Hidden Heartlands to achieve the reduction in caron targets identified in the IHH Regional Tourism and Development Strategy.		
4.6	**E-Charging Network**	Undertake an audit of the existing e-charging network to become a baseline for the destination and supporting targeted growth of the network of e-charging points for bicycles and cars to meet future demand. This will include examining both public and private provision and future needs.		
4.7	**Sustainability Training**	Deliver annual sustainability training to grow the number and capability of tourism businesses to become more sustainable and act as regenerative tourism ambassadors within and for the Ballyhoura destinations.		
4.8	**Kilcolman Nature Reserve**	Support Birdwatch in the delivery of a feasibility study for developing the Kilcolman Nature Reserve at the house and outbuildings on the original site.		

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
4.9	**Agri-tourism Development**	Support the sustainable development of Agri-tourism, rural tourism and rural wellbeing experiences and exploring opportunities through initiatives such as the Farm Diversification Training Programme and other available opportunities with Teagasc, LEADER and LEO.		
4.10	**'Towards a Green and Just Transition in Ballyhoura' Plan**	Implement the actions in the 'Towards a Green and Just Transition in Ballyhoura' plan to develop Ballyhoura as a leading sustainable tourism destination.		
4.11	**Business Events – Regenerative Impact**	Explore niche business events related tourism opportunities with the Shannon Region Conference Bureau and Visit Cork to encourage business tourism groups visiting Limerick and Cork to engage with regenerative tourism experiences and 'giving back to nature' experiences as part of their ESG programmes.		
4.12	**Regenerative Tourism & EU Projects**	Engage with Third Level Research Centres with a focus on Regenerative Tourism and build collaborative research and development proposals and projects with EU partner regions.		
4.13	**Regenerative Tourism Living Lab**	Develop a broad stakeholder Living Lab focused on Regenerative Tourism to engage as a pilot region to test innovative solutions that can improve the quality of the visitor experience across the Ballyhoura area.		
4.14	**Local Guide Training**	Work with training agencies to deliver guide training programmes to grow the number of local people delivering 'meet the local' guided walking, hiking and biking experiences in Ballyhoura.		
4.15	**Community Tourism Awareness Development Programme**	Deliver a tourism awareness programme with existing and emerging community groups to enable them to contribute to and leverage the IHH regional brand opportunity for the benefit of their community.		
4.16	**Community Tourism Experience Development**	Draw on the Community Tourism Toolkit to deliver a community tourism pilot programme with existing and emerging community groups as the basis for developing future community tourism training. This will		

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
		a) Deliver a regenerative approach among local community groups interested in pursuing tourism opportunities. b) Ensure that new and existing community tourism enterprises are equipped with knowledge and capabilities around commerciality and effective, sustainable governance.		
4.17	**Discover Science Outdoor Classrooms**	Create an outdoor classroom cluster and build capabilities to market the range of Discover Science Outdoor Classrooms across the Ballyhoura area.		
Strategic Objective 5 – *Success through new levels of collaboration and a partnership approach*				
Supporting Project: Transport & Access				
5.1	**Public Transport Access**	Work with Local Link to improve visitor access to and within the Ballyhoura region linked to destination hubs, attractions and activity basecamps.	These actions will enhance visitor experience and promote tourism resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs. However, the development of new or existing infrastructure may result in uncertain effects on biodiversity and Natura 2000 sites that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have the potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. These works could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor	Yes
5.2	**Ballyhoura Sustainable Transport Network**	Examine the requirements to maximise the potential of TFI's national sustainable travel development plans for tourism across the destination.		
5.3	**Active Travel**	Leverage Active Travel investment in the Ballyhoura destination hubs to grow the sustainable travel connectivity across the destination. This will also include consideration of how to increase connectivity between trails / outdoor amenities and local communities, addressing the 'last mile' local connectivity challenge.		
5.4	**Destination Signage and Visitor Orientation**	Develop a consistent destination wide approach to placemaking, signage, public realm and visitor orientation and use of the opportunity to raise the profile of the destination brand.		
5.5	**M20 Access**	Promote access and erection of signage to the Ballyhoura destination from existing and future transport infrastructure investment such as the M20 to ensure ease of access off future motorway projects.		

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
			numbers in the vicinity of European sites.	
Destination Projects				
5.6	**Community Tourism Impact Measurement System**	Scope and design a community tourism impact measurement model to measure the impact of tourism in Ballyhoura	No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	**No**
5.7	**Destination Collaborations**	Build on the learnings from the Shared Island collaboration between Ballyhoura and Cuilcagh Geopark to foster destination development and alliances with other areas within the IHH region.		

4.2.5 Direct, indirect or secondary effects?

None of the Actions of the Ballyhoura DEDP have any resource requirements from any European site as a result of any of the actions contained therein.

Any pollution could adversely affect the habitats and species listed as qualifying interests in any of the European sites, many of which rely on good water quality. Also, during construction works there is potential for an increase in run-off, for example due to compaction of the soil which will in turn reduce the infiltration capacity and increase the rate and volume of surface water run-off. This can increase surface water run-off and sediment loading which has potential to impact the local drainage and in turn on the European sites.

In addition to the habitats and species associated with the European sites, bird species may be sensitive to disturbances arising as a result of any proposed development. Construction works have the potential for indirect impacts on the Natura 2000 sites and their qualifying features of interest. Potential impacts include habitat degradation as well as disturbance to habitats, species and ecosystem dynamics due to noise, vibration, air quality, and disturbance due to human activities. In addition there is a potential risk to flora and fauna arising from dust deposition, which in extreme cases can inhibit photosynthesis in plants and can increase turbidity in watercourses.

During the operational phase, there is potential for uncertain effects due to any new development and its ancillary infrastructure and increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.

4.2.6 In-combination / Cumulative effects with other plans and programmes

It is a requirement of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive that when considering whether a plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of a European site the assessment must take into account in-combination effects with other current or reasonably foreseeable plans and projects.

If it can be clearly demonstrated that the plan or project will not result in any impact on the integrity of a European site then the plan or project should proceed without considering the in-combination test; further, if there are identified effects arising from the plan or project even if they are perceived as minor and not likely to have an impact on the integrity of a European site alone, then any such impacts must be considered 'in-combination' with the effects arising from other plans and projects.

The Actions listed within the Ballyhoura DEDP will be required to comply with the relevant international, national and regional policies, plans and programmes and also undertaken individual environmental assessments for Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and any other relevant processes as appropriate.

The Ballyhoura DEDP could have a relationship with other plans and programmes. However, these plans and programmes will also been subject to environmental assessment, including SEA and AA, for the purpose of preventing and mitigating potential negative environmental effects. Table 4.3 lists the relevant plans and programmes that have potential for cumulative effects with the Ballyhoura DEDP.

The assessment of cumulative effects above focused on national, regional and local plans, programmes, strategy and policy documents that have the potential to affect the same receiving environment that could be affected by the Ballyhoura DEDP.

The Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 and the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 set out policies and objectives for land use, settlement strategy, sustainable development, transport, infrastructure, environmental protection, and management, cultural heritage, climate change, etc. for the counties. Other higher-level international, national and regional plans are integrated within the County Development Plans and have been assessed as such. The Ballyhoura DEDP will comply with the provisions set within the aforementioned County Development Plans which themselves have been subject to standalone environmental assessment (SEA, NIS, etc.).

The assessment of cumulative effects concludes that the implementation of the Ballyhoura DEDP will not result in direct, indirect or cumulative impacts which would have the potential to adversely affect the environment. Indeed the implementation of the Ballyhoura DEDP has the potential for positive cumulative interactions in delivering on policies and objectives of higher level plans in relation to increased economic activity and employment and greater appreciation and understanding or natural heritage, cultural heritage and landscape.

Table 4.2 Potential Cumulative Effects with other Plans and Programmes

Plan, Programme etc.	Potential Cumulative effect	Likely Cumulative Effect
National Planning Framework (NPF) Project 2040 National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030 (*As part of Project Ireland 2040 the National Development Plan sets out the Government's over-arching investment strategy and budget for the period 2021-2030*)	The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the National Planning Framework have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the plan have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy	The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the RSES have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the RSES have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
National CFRAMS Programme Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study	Catchment-based Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Studies and their product – Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) – are at the core of national policy for flood risk management and the strategy for its implementation. These studies are required by The Floods Directive [2007/60/EC], which is being implemented in Ireland through the European Communities (Assessment and Management of Flood Risks) Regulations 2010 [S.I.122/2010]. Each FRMP is accompanied by an associated SEA Environmental Report and Natura Impact Statement. The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the FRMP have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the FRMP	No

Plan, Programme etc.	Potential Cumulative effect	Likely Cumulative Effect
	have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	
National 4th Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030	The Biodiversity Action notes the requirements and purposes of AA and SEA and the vision of the plan to conserve and restored for the benefit of all sectors of society.	No
National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022)	The policy sets a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel and public transport to support Ireland's overall requirement to achieve a 51% reduction in carbon emissions by the end of this decade. The projects which will be implemented as a result of this national policy will be subject to their individual environmental impact assessment and appropriate assessment processes (as appropriate) and hence there would be no potential adverse effects on the overall receiving environment.	No
River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for Ireland 2022-2027	The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the RBMP have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Plan have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
County Development Plans (Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029, Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028, Waterford City & County Development Plan 2022-2028 and Kerry County Development Plan 2022-2028)	The County Development Plan (CDP) provides the principal planning strategy document for the development of a local authority area over the statutory time period of the plan. Each of the CDP with Zone of Influence of the study area has been subject to SEA and AA processes to ensure that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Plan have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
Regional Tourism Development Strategies 2023-2027 – Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027	The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the Strategy have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Strategy have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No

4.3 Conservation objectives, threats and vulnerabilities of the European Sites

A key aim of the Habitats Directive is to '*maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of habitats and species of community interest*'. Site-specific conservation objectives aim to define favourable conservation condition for particular habitats or species within a European site.

The integrity of a site is the coherence of its ecological structure and function, across its whole area, which enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/or the levels of populations of the species for which it was classified.

Site specific conservation objectives for each of the 14 European sites under appraisal in the NIS have been published by NPWS. For every SAC the conservation objectives are to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of each of the Qualifying Interests (habitats), as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.

For every SPA the conservation objectives are to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of each of the Special Conservation Interests (the bird species and the wetland habitat), as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.

4.4 Mitigation measures

The findings set out in Section 4.2 of this Natura Impact Statement confirm that, if unmitigated, a number of the actions of the Ballyhoura DEDP have potential for adverse effects on the integrity of a total of 14 no. European sites.

This Plan sits at the lower level of the hierarchy and must comply with relevant higher-level strategic actions / plans. These documents include plans and programmes, which have also been subject to their own environmental assessment processes, as relevant.

The 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. The Plan includes requirements for environmental protection and management including the ones set out in the ***Regional Tourism Development Strategies 2023-2027*** especially the ***Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027***. As stated in the Ballyhoura DEDP these include:

- Infrastructure Management - With respect to infrastructure (including drinking water, wastewater, surface water, waste and transport) consideration must be given to the available capacity and the potential impact on existing infrastructure, as well as the potential environmental effects arising from the provision of new infrastructure and / or from a likely increase in tourism-related pressures. Any such environmental effects will be appropriately mitigated. The promotion of developing visitor friendly infrastructure where it is required is encouraged.
- Visitor Management - Those receiving funding will be requested 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 located at a suitable setback from ecological sensitivities.
  Research by Fáilte Ireland has shown improved environmental outcomes (including improved attainment of conservation objectives) in areas operating appropriate 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, 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; the enhancement, protection and management of biodiversity; protection of cultural heritage; and protection of landscape sensitivities.

Consideration and implementation for all environmental mitigation measures as set out in Irelands Hidden Heartlands Regional Tourism Development Strategy will also be considered a requirement as appropriate.

The majority of the mitigation measures are achieved through the detailed environmental protective policies and objectives as set out in the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 and Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028. The Development Plans provides for sustainable planning and management control of all development in the study area– including the delivery of Destination & Experience Development Plans through continued collaboration with Fáilte Ireland.

Proposals for development within the Ballyhoura DEDP area must comply as appropriate with the relevant provisions included within the *Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028* and *Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028.* Given that the Ballyhoura DEDP sits within and at a lower level in the planning hierarchy, the measures contained within the Development Plans, and in their Natura Impact Statement (NIS), SEA Environmental Report / SEA Statement and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) are applicable to the Ballyhoura DEDP.

Therefore, the key environmental protection measures included in the ***Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028*** and ***Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028*** provide for appropriate and detailed mitigation of potential uncertain environmental effects of the Ballyhoura DEDP. These measures include the following selected policies / objectives:

Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 protective policies/ objectives are as follows:

- ***BE 15-2*** *– a) Protect all natural heritage sites which are designated or proposed for designation under European legislation, National legislation and International Agreements. Maintain and where possible enhance appropriate ecological linkages between these. This includes Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Marine Protected Areas, Natural Heritage Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Statutory Nature Reserves, Refuges for Fauna and Ramsar Sites. These sites are listed in Volume 2 of the Plan. b) Provide protection to species listed in the Flora Protection Order 2015, to Annexes of the Habitats and Birds Directives, and to animal species protected under the Wildlife Acts in accordance with relevant legal requirements. These species are listed in Volume 2 of the Plan. c) Protect and where possible enhance areas of local biodiversity value, ecological corridors and habitats that are features of the County's ecological network. This includes rivers, lakes, streams and ponds, peatland and other wetland habitats, woodlands, hedgerows, tree lines, veteran trees, natural and semi-natural grasslands as well as coastal and marine habitats. It particularly includes habitats of special conservation significance in Cork as listed in Volume 2 of the Plan. d) Recognise the value of protecting geological heritage sites of local and national interest, as they become notified to the local authority, and protect them from inappropriate development e) Encourage, pursuant to Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, the protection and enhancement of features of the landscape, such as traditional field boundaries, important for the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.*
- ***BE 15-6*** *– Provide for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in the development management process and when licensing or permitting other activities by: a) Providing ongoing support and guidance to developers on incorporating biodiversity considerations into new*

development through preplanning communications and the Council's guidance document 'Biodiversity and the Planning Process – guidance for developments on the management of biodiversity issues during the planning process' and any updated versions of this advice; b) Encouraging the retention and integration of existing trees, hedgerows and other features of high natural value within new developments; c) Requiring the incorporation of primarily native tree and other plant species, particularly pollinator friendly species in the landscaping of new developments; d) Fulfilling Appropriate Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment obligations and carrying out Ecological Impact Assessment in relation to development and activities, as appropriate; e) Ensuring that an appropriate level of assessment is completed in relation to wetland habitats subject to proposals which would involve drainage or reclamation. This includes lakes and ponds, watercourses, springs and swamps, marshes, heath, peatlands, some woodlands as well as some coastal and marine habitats; f) Ensuring that the implementation of appropriate mitigation (including habitat enhancement, new planting or other habitat creation initiatives) is incorporated into new development, where the implementation of such development would result in unavoidable impacts on biodiversity - supporting the principle of biodiversity net gain.

- ***BE 15-7*** *– Implement best practice to minimise the risk of spread of invasive alien species, on Council owned or managed land, and require the development and implementation of Invasive Alien Species Management Plans for new developments where required.*

Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 protective policies/ objectives are as follows:

- ***Policy EH P1*** *– It is a policy of the Council to: a) Protect and conserve Limerick's natural heritage and biodiversity, in particular, areas designated as part of the European Sites Natura 2000 network, such as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservations (SACs), in accordance with relevant EU Directives and national legislation and guidelines. b) Maintain the conservation value of all Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) for the benefit of existing and future generations.*
- ***Policy EH P2*** *– It is a policy of the Council to ensure the sustainable management and conservation of areas of natural environmental and geological value within Limerick and to protect, enhance, create and connect, where ecologically suitable, natural heritage, green spaces and high-quality amenity areas for the benefit of biodiversity.*
- ***Objective EH O1*** *– It is an objective of the Council to ensure that projects/plans likely to have significant effects on European Sites (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) are subject to an appropriate assessment and will not be permitted under the Plan unless they comply with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. The Council, will through the planning enforcement process where applicable, seek to restore the ecological functions of designated sites, where they have been damaged through inappropriate development.*
- ***Objective EH O3*** *– It is an objective of the Council to require all developments where there are species of conservation concern, to submit an ecological assessment of the effects of the development on the site and nearby designated sites, suggesting appropriate mitigation measures and establishing, in particular, the presence or absence of the following species: Otter, badger, bats, lamprey and protected plant species such as the Triangular Club Rush, Opposite Leaved Pond Weed and Flora Protection Order Species generally.*

4.5 Summary and Conclusion

This Natura Impact Statement has considered the potential impacts of the implementation of the Ballyhoura Destination & Experience Development Plan on the integrity of the relevant European sites.

This report concludes on the best scientific evidence that it can be clearly demonstrated that no elements of the Ballyhoura DEDP will result in any impact on the integrity or Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests of any relevant European site, either on their own or in-combination with other plans or projects, in light of their conservation objectives, provided mitigation measures are implemented.

5 References

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Brady Shipman Martin

DUBLIN
Mountpleasant Business Centre
Mountpleasant Avenue Upper
Ranelagh
Dublin 6

CORK
Penrose Wharf Business Centre
Penrose Wharf
Cork

+353 1 208 1900
mail@bradyshipmanmartin.com
www.bradyshipmanmartin.com

AA Screening Determination

further to the main AA Natura Impact Statement

under the
European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (as amended) for the
Draft Ballyhoura Country Destination and Experience Development Plan

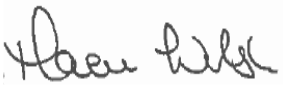
Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening

This ancillary determination is ancillary to both:

- Fáilte Ireland's AA Natura Impact Statement; and
- Fáilte Ireland's AA determination that is made in advance of finalisation of the Ballyhoura Country Destination and Experience Development Plan.

In making the determination that AA is required, the information on the potential effects on European Sites arising from the Ballyhoura Country Destination and Experience Development Plan is taken into account (this information is reproduced in the AA Natura Impact Statement).

That information has been carefully considered and its reasoning and conclusion agreed with and adopted – allowing the AA Natura Impact Statement to conclude at the end of Section 3 "Screening for Appropriate Assessment" of the Natura Impact Statement that Stage 2 AA is required. It has been determined that the Ballyhoura Country Destination and Experience Development Plan may have effects on a number of European Sites - therefore, Stage 2 AA (including the preparation of the Natura Impact Statement) is required for the Plan (see Natura Impact Statement subsection 3.4 "AA Screening Conclusion").

Signed on behalf of Fáilte Ireland:  **Dated: July 2026**