

Wild Mayo Destination & Experience Development Plan (DEDP)

Consolidated Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report

April 2026



Table of Contents

Glossary	1
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Overview	1
1.2 Destination & Experience Development Plans (DEDP)	1
1.3 Strategic Environmental Assessment	1
1.4 The Requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment of the DEDP	2
2 Overview of the Wild Mayo DEDP	2
3 Strategic Environmental Assessment Process	5
3.1 Legal Context.....	5
3.2 Guidance.....	6
3.3 SEA Stages & Process	7
3.3.1 Screening- WMDEDP.....	10
3.3.2 Scoping - WMDEDP	11
3.3.3 Environmental Report.....	15
3.3.4 Data Gaps and Difficulties Encountered	15
3.3.5 SEA Statement	15
3.4 Integration of SEA with Appropriate Assessment	16
4 Relationship with other Plans & Programmes.....	16
4.1 National Planning Framework.....	17
4.2 A National Tourism Policy Statement – A New Era for Irish Tourism	17
4.3 Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.....	17
4.4 Wild Atlantic Way Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027	18
4.5 Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028.....	19
4.6 Other Relevant Plans & Programmes	19
5 Current State of the Receiving Environment.....	21
5.1 Introduction	21
5.2 Evolution of the Environment in the Absence of the Plan.....	22
5.3 State of Environment Report 2024	22
5.4 Nature Capital & Ecosystem Services	24
5.5 Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	24
5.5.1 Designated European Sites.....	25
5.5.2 Nationally Designated Sites	27
5.5.3 Salmonid Waters	29
5.5.4 Designated Shellfish Waters	29
5.5.5 Margaritifera Sensitive Areas	30
5.5.6 Other Designations.....	30
5.5.7 Ecological Networks & Connectivity.....	30

5.5.8	National Biodiversity Action Plan	31
5.5.9	Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna - Existing Threats & Pressures.....	31
5.6	Population & Human Health	32
5.6.1	Population.....	32
5.6.2	Socio- Economic Trends -Tourism.....	33
5.6.3	Human Health.....	33
5.6.4	Population & Human Health -Existing Threats & Pressures	33
5.7	Lands, Soils & Geology	34
5.7.1	Land Use	34
5.7.2	Soils	35
5.7.3	Geology & Geological Heritage	36
5.7.4	Landslides & Coastal Erosion	37
5.8	Lands, Soil & Geology – Existing Threats & Pressures	38
5.9	Air Quality, Noise & Climate.....	38
5.9.1	Air Quality	38
5.9.2	Noise	39
5.9.3	Climate	39
5.9.4	Air Quality, Noise & Climate – Existing Threats & Pressures.....	40
5.10	Material Assets	40
5.10.1	Natural Assets	41
5.10.2	Public Infrastructure	41
5.10.3	Material Assets – Existing Threats & Pressures	43
5.11	Architectural, Archaeological & Cultural Heritage.....	43
5.11.1	Archaeological Heritage	44
5.11.2	Architectural Heritage.....	44
5.11.3	Underwater Archaeology.....	44
5.11.4	Architectural, Archaeological &Cultural Heritage – Existing Issues & Pressures	45
5.12	Water.....	45
5.12.1	Surface Waterbodies.....	46
5.12.2	Surface Water Quality	47
5.12.3	Groundwater	48
5.12.4	Flooding	49
5.12.5	Water – Existing Threats & Pressures	50
5.13	Landscape & Visual	51
5.13.1	Landscape & Visuals – Existing Pressures & Threats	54
6	Strategic Environmental Objectives	54
7	Assessment of Alternatives	55
7.1	Description of Alternatives	55
7.1.1	Alternative 1: Do-nothing.....	56
7.1.2	Alternative 2A: Prepare a plan without environmental consideration.....	56

7.1.3	Alternative 2B: Prepare a plan with environmental consideration.....	56
7.2	Assessment Methodology.....	57
7.3	Preferred Alternative	58
8	Assessment of the Wild Mayo DEDP	59
8.1	Assessment Methodology.....	59
8.2	Overall Findings	98
8.3	Interrelationship Between Environmental Factors	103
8.4	Potential Cumulative Effects	103
8.5	Summary.....	105
9	Mitigation	105
9.1	Level of Mitigation	105
9.2	Plan Mitigation	106
9.2.1	Infrastructure Capacity	106
9.2.2	Visitor Management.....	106
9.2.3	Control and Management of Invasive Species.....	106
9.2.4	Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services.....	107
9.3	Requirements for Environmental Protection & Management	107
10	Monitoring	113
10.1	Indicators & Targets	113
10.2	Reporting & Responsibility.....	113
11	Next Steps.....	121
	Appendix 1 – SEA Screening Determination	122

Table of Figures

Figure 2.1	Geographical Location the WMDEDP	3
Figure 2.2	Strategic Framework of the WMDEDP (Source: WMDEDP, 2026)	4
Figure 3.1	Overview of SEA Process (EPA SEA Process Flow, 2021)	9
Figure 5.1	Ireland's Environmental Scorecard (Source: EPA, 2024).....	23
Figure 5.2	European Sites located within the Plan area and potential zone of influence (Source ROD AA Screening Report 2025)	26
Figure 5.3	Nationally Designated Sites within the Plan area and potential zone of influence (Base Map Source epa.ie)	29
Figure 5.4	Population changes for County Mayo between 2016-2022.....	32
Figure 5.5	Corrine Mapping of Land Use for the Plan area, 2018.	35
Figure 5.6	Soil Types in the Plan area (Source: EPA Maps, 2025)	36
Figure 5.7	Bedrock Geology of the Plan Area, (GSI, 2025).....	36
Figure 5.8	Geological Heritage Sites in the Plan area (source: GSI, 2025)	37
Figure 5.9	Landslide Susceptibility & Landslide Events in the Plan area (Source GSI, 2025)	38
Figure 5.10	Public Transport network in Plan area (Source: TFI, 2025).....	42
Figure 5.11	Architectural Heritage Sites in the Plan area (NIAH, 2025)	44

Figure 5.12 Known Underwater Archaeological Sites in the Plan Area (National Monuments Service: Wreck Viewer, 2025).....	45
Figure 5.13 Surface Waterbodies and WFD Status located in the Plan area (Source, EPA, 2025).....	47
Figure 5.14 Surface Waterbodies and WFD Status located in the Plan area (Source, EPA, 2025).....	48
Figure 5.15 Aquifer Classifications in the Plan area (GSI, 2025).....	49
Figure 5.16 Aquifer Vulnerability in the Plan area.....	49
Figure 5.17 Past Flood Events in the Plan area (CFRAMS, OPW, 2025)	50
Figure 5.18 Visually Vulnerable Features in the Plan area (Source: Mayo Landscape Appraisal.....	52
Figure 5.19 Scenic Routes & Protected Views in the Plan area (Source: Mayo Landscape Appraisal)	52
Figure 5.20 Slopes & Ridges in the Plan area (Source: Mayo Landscape Appraisal)	53
Figure 5.21 Sensitive Landscapes in the Plan area (Source: Mayo Landscape Appraisal)	53

List of Tables

Table 3.1 Outline of the SEA Process	7
Table 3.2 SEA Screening of the WMDEDP	10
Table 3.3 Scoping Responses Received from Environmental Authorities	12
Table 3.4 Information Required under Annex I of the SEA Directive	15
Table 4.1 Relevant National Planning Policies.....	17
Table 4.2 Relevant Regional Policy Objectives	18
Table 4.3 Strategic Objectives of the Wild Atlantic Way Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023 – 2027	18
Table 4.4 Legislative Framework	19
Table 4.5 National & Regional Programmes	20
Table 4.6 Local Plans & Programmes	21
Table 5.1 Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services that are relevant to this SEA & Plan	24
Table 5.2 European Sites located within the Plan area	25
Table 5.3 Ramsar Sites located in and around the Plan Area.....	30
Table 5.4 Geological Heritage Sites in the Plan area (source: GSI, 2025).....	36
Table 5.5 WFD Catchments & Sub- Catchments located Wholly and/or partially within the Plan area	46
Table 6.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEO's) for the WMDEDP	54
Table 7.1 Assessment of Alternatives for the WMDEDP.....	57
Table 8.1 Assessment Questions	59
Table 8.2 Assessment of WMDEDP – Vision	61
Table 8.3 Assessment of WMDEDP – Objectives.....	62
Table 8.4 Assessment of WMDEDP – Target Outcomes	63
Table 8.5 Assessment of WMDEDP -Our Wild Adventure - Catalyst Projects – The Ceide Coastal Path & Downpatrick Head & Supporting Actions.....	64

Table 8.6 Assessment of WMDEDP -Our Wild Adventure - Catalyst Projects – The Western Way & North Mayo Trails Network & Supporting Actions	67
Table 8.7 Assessment of WMDEDP -Our Wild Adventure -Supporting Initiatives	70
Table 8.8 Assessment of WMDEDP - Our Heritage of Life Land and Sea - Catalyst Project- The Gaeltacht & Associated Actions	74
Table 8.9 Assessment of WMDEDP - Our Heritage of Life Land and Sea - Catalyst Project- Ballina Town & Associated Actions	78
Table 8.10 Assessment of WMDEDP - Our Heritage of Life Land and Sea - Catalyst Project- Killala Town & Associated Actions	82
Table 8.11 Assessment of WMDEDP - Our Heritage of Life Land and Sea - Supporting Initiatives.....	85
Table 8.12 Assessment of WMDEDP -Our Vibrant & Connected Destination - Catalyst Project- Accommodation	92
Table 8.13 Assessment of WMDEDP -Our Vibrant & Connected Destination - Catalyst Project- Building Capacity	94
Table 8.14 Assessment of WMDEDP -Our Vibrant & Connected Destination -Supporting Initiatives ..	96
Table 8.15 Overall Findings – Environmental Effects arising from Plan Provisions	99
Table 8.16 Interactions between Environmental Factors	103
Table 8.17 Potential Cumulative Effects with other Plans and Programmes	104
Table 9.1 Environmental Protection & Management Compliance Requirements	107
Table 10.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives	113
Table 10.2 Proposed SEA Monitoring Programme	115

Glossary

Appropriate Assessment	An assessment of the potential adverse effects of a plan or project (in combination with other plans or projects) on Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA), as designated under EU and national law.
Birds Directive	Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds.
Catchment	A catchment is an area where water is collected by the natural landscape and flows from source through river, lakes and groundwater to the sea.
Development	The carrying out of any works on, in, over or under any land or the making of any material change in the use of any structures or other land in accordance with the Section 3 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended.
Environmental Impact Assessment	The process of carrying out an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as required by Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU on assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment.
Ecosystem services	The direct and indirect benefits that ecosystems can provide for human health and wellbeing.
Blue and green infrastructure	Strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem service.
Habitats Directive	Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.
Habitats Regulations	The European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011 (S. I. No. 477 of 2011) transpose the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive. The 2011 Regulations were amended by: • S.I. No. 290 of 2013 • S.I. No. 499 of 2013 • S.I. No. 355 of 2015 • Planning, Heritage and Broadcasting (Amendment) Act 2021 (no.11 of 2021), Chapter 4 • S.I. No. 293 of 2021
Natura 2000	A network of core breeding and resting sites for rare and threatened species, and some rare natural habitat types which are protected.
Nature-based Solutions (NbS)	Nature-based solutions are actions to protect, conserve, restore, sustainably use and manage natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems which address social, economic and environmental challenges effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously providing human well-being, ecosystem services, resilience and biodiversity benefits.
Nitrates Directive	Council Directive 91/676/EEC concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources.
Plans	A plan is one which sets out how it is proposed to carry out or implement a scheme or a policy. This could include, for example, land use plans setting out how land is to be developed or laying down rules or guidance as to the kind of development which might be appropriate or permissible in particular areas or giving criteria which should be taken into account in designing new development.
Projects	Any development or activity for which development consent may be required. This includes the execution of construction works or of other installations or schemes and interventions in the natural surroundings and landscape including those involving the extraction of mineral resources.
SEA Directive	Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment - requires that an environmental assessment be carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	A process for the formal, systematic evaluation used to identify and assess the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt the plan or programme. It is intended to lead to a high level of protection of the environment and promotion of sustainable development as required by the SEA Directive.
Strategic Environmental Objective (SEO)	Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) are strategic environmental protection objectives which set the desired environmental outcome for the assessment of the WDEDP. These have been formulated with reference to the environmental protection objectives/policies at International, European, and local level.
Water Framework Directive	Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for the Community action in the field of water policy.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Overview

This is the Environmental Report of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Wild Mayo Destination Experience Development Plan (hereafter referred to the 'Plan' or the 'WMDEDP').

This Environmental Report, which should be read in conjunction with the WMDEDP, has been prepared by Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority.

1.2 Destination & Experience Development Plans (DEDP)

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

The WMDEDP is a five-year sustainable tourism development plan for the North Mayo region that stretches from the Mullet Peninsula to Ballina and Foxford. It has been developed through a programme of desk research, on-site appraisals; and extensive consultation incorporating the views of the tourism industry, local communities, local government, state and regional agencies. The plan has been prepared within the context of the wider tourism and sustainability policy environment and has given consideration to relevant national and international best practices.

1.3 Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) stems from Directive 2001/42/EC¹ (the 'SEA Directive') of the European Parliament and of the Council of Ministers on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. Article 1 of the Directive states that:

"The objective of this directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment."

In effect, SEA comprises a systematic assessment process of predicting and evaluating the 'likely significant environmental effects' of implementing a proposed plan or programme, before a decision is made to adopt the plan or programme. The overall aim of SEA is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.

The SEA Directive was transposed into Irish law through two Statutory Instruments (S.I.):

- S.I. No. 435 of 2004 The European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011 The European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011; and
- S.I. No. 436 of 2004 Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011 The Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.

The former regulations, (S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011), relate to SEA as it applies to plans or programmes prepared for "agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport,

¹ eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN

waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism and town and country planning or land use”, and these provisions are applicable to the CDEDP as a tourism sector plan.

The latter regulations (S.I. No. 436 of 2004 as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011) relate to SEA as it applies to plans or programmes where the context requires, “a development plan, a variation of a development plan, a local area plan (or an amendment thereto), regional planning guidelines or a planning scheme”, and are not applicable to the CDEDP.

1.4 The Requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment of the DEDP

Article 3(2) of the SEA Directive, introduced the requirement that SEA be carried out on plans and programmes:

- a) which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in *Annexes I and II* to the EIA Directive², or
- b) which, in view of the likely effect on sites, have been determined to require an assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7 of the 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive)³ i.e. requires that SEA is undertaken where Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is being undertaken on the plan or programme.

The WMDEDP is a non-statutory tourism sector plan that does not set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive and does not contain provisions or define rules that must be complied with when consent of other projects is being granted. Therefore, SEA of the WMDEDP is not required under Article 3(2)(a) above of the SEA Directive.

The Plan does, however, fall under the definition of a “plan” contained within the *Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011 (as amended)* and therefore, must be screened for the requirement to undertake Appropriate Assessment (AA) in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EC). The Screening for AA (ROD, 2025) has found that the Plan has the potential, if unmitigated, to affect the ecological integrity of European sites and that measures to ensure that potential effects are avoided are required. Therefore, in accordance with Article 3(2)(b) above and guidance provided in SEA Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08⁴, a SEA of the WMDEDP has been undertaken.

This Environmental Report provides the findings of the SEA and takes account of recommendations contained in submissions from the Environmental Authorities. On finalisation of the Plan, an SEA Statement will be prepared, summarising, *inter alia*, how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan.

2 Overview of the Wild Mayo DEDP

The Wild Mayo Destination and Experience Development Plan (WMDEDP) is a five-year sustainable tourism development plan for the North Mayo region that stretches from the Mullet Peninsula to Ballina and Foxford as illustrated in Figure 2.1.

²

Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, *on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment*

³ Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

⁴ [Microsoft Word - NPWS 1of08 Appropriate Assessment of plans 15-02-08.doc](#)



Figure 2.1 Geographical Location the WMDEDP

It has been developed through a programme of desk research, on-site appraisals; and extensive consultation incorporating the views of the tourism industry, local communities, local government, state and regional agencies. The plan has been prepared within the context of the wider tourism and sustainability policy environment and has given consideration to relevant national and international best practices.

Tourism is a significant component of the county's economy. In 2023 the sector generated €261 million from international and domestic visitors. This DEDP aims to provide strategic direction on further developing a sustainable tourism sector within North Mayo and leveraging the area's growing appeal as a destination offering a unique combination of adrenalin and quietude, adventure and wilderness.

It will underpin the anticipated growth in the value of tourism while being focused on maintaining the environmental, social, and cultural integrity of the region. The proposed actions are grounded in the principles and policies of sustainability and the VICE model, thereby ensuring that full consideration is given to a balanced and synergistic approach that delivers on four key pillars: the Visitor experience, Industry growth, Community benefit, and Environmental protection. The model applies to all aspects of tourism planning, destination management, and policy making.

Figure 2.2 clearly sets out the structure and overall content of the WMDEDP. For further details please refer to the WMDEDP itself.

Executive Summary – Strategic Framework

VISION FÍS

Wild Mayo: A place that captivates the soul, Wild Mayo is recognised as a spectacular outdoors destination offering immersive wilderness and adventure for all. From its stunning coastlines to its rugged boglands, the region offers a landscape that inspires creativity and invites exploration. Rich in history, heritage, and culture, Wild Mayo brings its stories to life through immersive trails, vibrant communities, and celebrated traditions. The Irish language is protected and proudly spoken, adding depth and authenticity to every experience. Whether walking ancient paths, connecting with local craftspeople, or simply breathing in the wild Atlantic air, visitors leave with a sense of wonder, and a longing to return.

Destination Development Themes *Téamaí Forbartha Ceann Scribe*



**Our wild
adventure**



**Our heritage of
life, land and sea**



**Our vibrant
and connected
destination**

Catalyst Projects

The Céide Coast • The Gaeltacht • The Western Way and North Mayo Trails Network
• Ballina Town • Killala Town • Accommodation • Building Capacity

Supporting Initiatives

Infrastructure to Support Water-Based Activities • Initiatives to Support Angling
• Lough Conn and Lough Cullin • Networking Storytelling and Visitor Interpretive Centres
• Strengthening Emerging Sectors • Accessibility

Figure 2.2 Strategic Framework of the WMDEDP (Source: WMDEDP, 2026)

3 Strategic Environmental Assessment Process

3.1 Legal Context

SEA is a process for evaluating, at the earliest appropriate stage, the environmental quality and consequences of Plans or Programmes (P/Ps). The purpose is to ensure that the environmental consequences of P/Ps are assessed both during their preparation and prior to their adoption. The SEA process also gives specified environmental authorities, interested parties and the general public, an opportunity to comment on the environmental impacts of the proposed P/P and to be kept informed during the decision-making process.

*Directive 2001/42/EC*⁵ on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (the 'SEA Directive') requires EU Member States to assess the 'likely significant environmental effects' of plans and programmes prior to their adoption. This provides for the assessment of strategic environmental considerations at an early stage in the decision-making process.

Article 1 of the SEA Directive states that:

"The objective of this directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment."

The SEA Directive was transposed into Irish law through:

- Statutory Instrument (S.I.) No. 435 of 2004 (the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004), as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011 (the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011); and
- S.I. No. 436 of 2004 (the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2004), as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011 (the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011).

S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, relates to SEA as it applies to plans or programmes prepared for *"agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism and town and country planning or land use, and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive."*⁶

S.I. No. 436 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011, relates to SEA as it applies to plans or programmes where the context requires, *"a development plan, a variation of a development plan, a local area plan (or an amendment thereto), regional planning guidelines or a planning scheme"*⁷.

Given the nature of the Plan, the SEA for the CDEDP is being prepared under the requirements of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011.

The SEA process is designed to ensure that significant environmental effects arising from plans are:

- Properly identified and assessed.
- Subject to public participation.
- Taken into account by decision makers; and
- Regularly monitored.

⁵ eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN

⁶ See Section 9(1)(a)

⁷ Section 5(c)

The SEA Directive and SEA Regulations require that competent authorities determine whether the implementation of plans or programmes, or modifications thereof, will be likely to have significant effects on the environment. This determination process is referred to as an Environmental

Assessment and defined as:

“...the preparation of an environmental report, the carrying out of consultations, the taking into account of the environmental report and the results of the consultations in decision-making and the provision of information on the decision...”⁸

3.2 Guidance

This ER has been prepared having regard to the following guidance documents and resources:

- *SEA of Local Authority Land Use Plans EPA Recommendations and Resources* (2024) Environmental Protection Agency.
- *SEA Spatial Information Sources* (2024) Environmental Protection Agency.
- *SEA Pack* (January 2024) Environmental Protection Agency.
- *Good practice guidance on SEA for the Tourism Sector* (2023) Environmental Protection Agency.
- *Guidance on SEA Statements and Monitoring* (2023) Environmental Protection Agency.
- *SEA Guidelines for Regional Assemblies and Planning Authorities* (2022) Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
- *SEA Screening Good Practice 2021* (2021) Environmental Protection Agency.
- *Tiering of Environmental Assessment – The Influence of Strategic Environmental Assessment on Project-level Environmental Impact Assessment* (2021) Environmental Protection Agency.
- *Second Review of Strategic Environmental Assessment Effectiveness in Ireland* (2020) Environmental Protection Agency.
- *Integrating Climatic Factors into SEA In Ireland A Guidance Note* (EPA, 2019)
- *Developing and Assessing Alternatives in SEA* Research Report No.157, (EPA, 2015),
- *Good Practice Guidance on Cumulative Effects Assessment in Strategic Environmental Assessment* (2020) Environmental Protection Agency.
- *Integrating Climatic Factors into the Strategic Environmental Assessment Process in Ireland – A Guidance Note* (updated June 2019) Environmental Protection Agency.
- *GISEA Manual – Improving the Evidence Base in SEA* (2017) EPA.
- *SEA and Climate Change, Integrating Climate Change into SEA in Ireland, A Guidance Note* (2015) EPA.
- *SEA Resource Manual for Local and Regional Planning Authorities – Integration of SEA Legislation and Procedures for Land use Plans* (2013) Environmental Protection Agency & Mid-West Regional Authority.
- *Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment – Streamlining AA, SEA and EIA Processes: Practitioner’s Manual* (2013) Environmental Protection Agency.
- *Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment Streamlining AA, SEA and EIA Processes, Best Practice Guidance* (2012) EPA, Strive Programme 2007-2013.
- *Developing and Assessing Alternatives in Strategic Environmental Assessment* (2015) Environmental Protection Agency.

⁸ Article 2(b) of Directive 2001/42/EC, European Union, Article 2 (3) of EC (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 S.I No. 435 of 2004

3.3 SEA Stages & Process

The key focus of SEA is to take environmental issues, and in particular '*likely significant environmental effects*' of a P / P, into consideration during the plan or programme making process. The key stages in the SEA process as they relate to the CDEDP are outlined in Table 3.1 and Figure 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Outline of the SEA Process

SEA Stage	Description	Status
Screening	The requirement to undertake a SEA is mandatory for certain Plan / Programme (P / P). Where SEA is not a mandatory requirement, the P / Ps is subject to a 'Screening process', to consider if it is <i>likely to have significant effects</i> on the environment, and therefore, if SEA is required. The preparation of the Draft Plan has been screened for Appropriate Assessment (AA), and it has been concluded that potential for effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded beyond all reasonable scientific doubt and is required to undergo Appropriate Assessment. Therefore, in accordance with <i>Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08</i> the <i>Draft CDEDP</i> is also required to undergo a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with <i>Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment</i> (known as the SEA Directive).	Completed 
Scoping	Preparation of a SEA Scoping Report highlighting that the Environmental Report is required to include: • methods of assessment. • contents and level of detail in the Plan / Programme. • the stage in the Plan or Programme-making process; and • the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in the decision-making process in order to avoid duplication of environmental assessment. Scoping provides for consultation with the Environmental Authorities specified in Article 13 of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011, and the process allows for incorporation of the views of the environmental authorities within the P / P and the SEA Environmental Report.	Completed 
Environmental Report	Preparation of a systemic identification and evaluation of alternatives and assessment of the <i>likely significant environmental effects</i> of implementing the P / P. The findings of the assessment, which is carried out at various stages in the P / P making (e.g. Draft, Amended Draft etc.), are provided in the SEA Environmental Report in accordance with Article 12 (including Schedule 2) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011. The output from this stage is an Environmental Report which accompanies the draft P / P required for public consultation.	Current Stage
Public Consultation	In accordance with Article 13 (1) of S.I. No 435 OF 2004, as amended, the draft plan under assessment along with relevant environmental assessment documents must be available for review and comment by the relevant environmental authorities and the general public. Sufficient public notice must be given, and a timeline of not less than 4 weeks must be given for the receipt of submissions.	Next Stage

SEA Stage	Description	Status
	Subsequent to this stage and further to review of submissions possible changes might be made to the draft Plan and this needs to be considered in the sea process before finalising.	
SEA Statement	Completion / adoption of the Final Plan, taking account of <i>likely significant environmental effects</i>, any submissions or observations received from consultations and integration of mitigation and monitoring measures within the Plan. The Environmental Report is concluded, and an SEA Statement is prepared in accordance with Article 16(2)(b) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011, summarising: • how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan / Programme. • how the environmental report, and any submissions/observations or consultations have been taken into account in the preparation of the Plan / Programme. • the reasons for choosing the Plan / Programme in light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and • the measures decided for monitoring the significant environmental effects of implementation of the Plan / Programme.	Future Stage
Monitoring	There is a requirement to undertake monitoring of the Plan during implementation. This should reflect the monitoring programme set out in the environmental report.	Future Stage

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT Process Overview

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a systematic process for identifying, reporting, proposing mitigation measures and monitoring environmental effects of plans, programmes and strategies. It aims to ensure that environmental issues are taken into account at every stage in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and review of plans, programmes and strategies of a public nature.

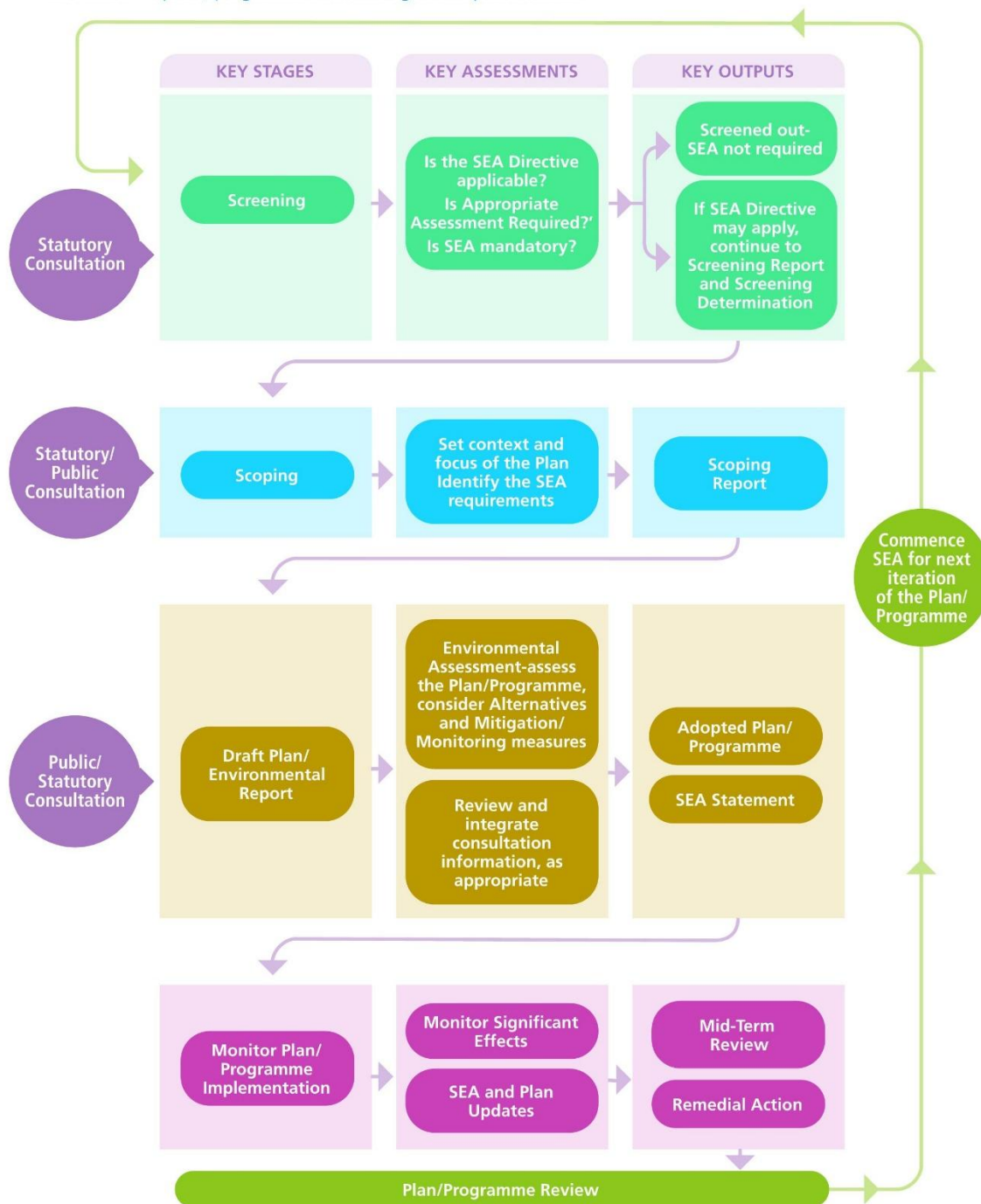


Figure 3.1 Overview of SEA Process (EPA SEA Process Flow, 2021⁹)

⁹ <https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/assessment/strategic-environmental-assessment/the-sea-process/>

3.3.1 Screening- WMDEDP

The WMDEDP was screened to determine if full SEA was required. Set out below are a summary of findings and a conclusion. For more detailed information please refer to the Draft Wild Mayo DEDP SEA Screening & Scoping Report, August 2025.

Table 3.2 SEA Screening of the WMDEDP

Section 1: General Details	
Type and Title of P/P:	Draft Wild Mayo Destination & Development Plan (DEDP)
Name of P/P Maker:	Fáilte Ireland
Date: 29.05.25	01/08/25
Section 2: Status of the P/P Maker	
Is the P/P prepared and/or adopted by an authority at national, regional or local level or prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? Clarify who will prepare the P/P, if they are affiliated to any authority and if the P/P will be adopted through any legislative provision.	Answer: No The Plan is being prepared by Fáilte Ireland the National Tourism Development Authority; however, the plan is not being prepared under any legislative provision.
Is the P/P required by legislative, regulatory, or administrative provisions?	Answer: No
Section 3: Nature of the P/P	
Is the P/P prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism , town and country planning or land use?	Answer: Yes The Plan is being prepared by Fáilte Ireland the National Tourism Development Authority as a tourism plan
Does the P/P provide a framework for the development consent for projects listed in the EIA Directive?	Answer: No The Plan sets out strategic objectives and forms a basis for working partners to further develop tourism related experiences, visitor movement, engagement with the industry and protection of the natural environment. This is set out through a number of actions within the plan.
Is the P/P likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site which leads to a requirement for Article 6 or 7 assessments?	Answer: Yes Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) has been undertaken, and it has been determined that it cannot be ruled out that there is the possibility of likely significant effect to the Natura 2000 Network arising from the implementation of the draft Wild Mayo DEDP, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects Refer to accompanying Appropriate Assessment Screening Report for further details.
Section 4: Conclusion	
Summarise the relevant information informing the assessment and the main reasons the P/P does or does not fall within the scope of the SEA Directive	The Wild Mayo DEDP does not explicitly provide a framework for future development consent nor is it being prepared under any legislative provision. However, it does fall into the tourism sector covered by the Directive and if unmitigated is likely to have the potential for significant effect on the Natura 2000 Network. Full Appropriate assessment under the Habitats Directive is required. Therefore, in accordance with the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08 and Article 9 (b) of SI

	435 2011, as amended, the draft Wild Mayo DEDP has been screened in for SEA. The draft Plan must undergo SEA in accordance with Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (known as the SEA Directive).
--	--

3.3.2 Scoping - WMDEDP

A Scoping request was issued on the 23rd of June to the following Environmental Authorities:

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
- Development Applications Unit, Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage
- The Department of Climate, Environment & Energy
- The Department for Agriculture, Food and the Marine; and
- The Department for Enterprise, Tourism & Employment

Submissions and observations on the scoping of the Environmental Report were received from some of these authorities. These are set out in Table 3.3 along with a response as to how this will be considered further in the assessment of the draft Plan.

For more detailed information please refer to the Draft Wild Mayo DEDP SEA Screening & Scoping Report, August 2025.

Table 3.3 Scoping Responses Received from Environmental Authorities

Environmental Authority	Summary of Submission Received	Fáilte Ireland Response
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Received 8th July 2025 Note: The EPA submission consisted of two parts Part 1 - Consideration for environmental issues in preparing the Plan and SEA Part 2 - Specific considerations for SEA and Scoping	Part 1 - SEA Good Practice It is recommended that scoping reports are provided to statutory authorities as part of SEA best practice. This assists statutory authorities in the review process.	Noted – this screening & scoping report will be provided to all environmental authorities along with the SEA environmental report and Natura Impact Statement as part of consultation. The information provided has informed the preparation of the draft Plan and the SEA Environmental Report.
	Part 1 - Governance & Implementation The Plan should clearly set out the implementation arrangements and governance structures. Consultation and consideration for adjoining local authorities and other plans will be important to consider the potential zone of influence of the Plan, and in considering potential for cumulative effects. It is recommend including schematics in the Plan and SEA Environmental Report, showing the links and key inter-relationships with other key relevant national, regional and local plans of relevance	Noted -The environmental report has been prepared in accordance with relevant and most recent planning policy on national, regional and local levels. The synergies between these plans and polices and the draft Plan have been identified and documented in Section 4 of the environmental report.
	Part 1 - Integration of the SEA & the Plan The integration of the SEA process into the Draft Plan should be clearly explained. The EPA recommends using summary tables in the ER and the Draft Plan to highlight links between the identified environmental impacts and monitoring/mitigation measures proposed as a result of the SEA process.	Noted – The SEA team has included in this environmental report summary tables linking impacts of the draft Plan and their respective mitigation and monitoring measures in the environmental report as appropriate.
	Part 1 - State of the Environment Report The SEA ER should incorporate and consider as appropriate, the findings of the EPA's State of the Environment Report 2024.	Noted – the findings of the State of the Environment Report 2024 have informed the SEAs team in developing the environmental report.

Environmental Authority	Summary of Submission Received	Fáilte Ireland Response
	Part 2 – Scope of the SEA The SEA should clearly set out the scope, remit and implementation related elements of the Plan. There may be merit in including a matrix in the SEA environmental report to show the interrelationships between the various topics.	Noted – The SEA environmental report sets out the scope, remit and implementation related elements of the Plan and provides a matrix setting out interrelationships between various topics.
	Part 2 – Data & Knowledge Gaps The Plan should identify any significant data and knowledge gaps	Noted – The environmental reports set out any significant data and knowledge gaps encountered.
	Part 2 – Range of Effects The SEA Environmental Report should refer to the full range of effects and of the area likely to be affected in line with relevant guidance.	Noted- Section x of the environmental report refers to the full range of effects and of the area likely to be affected where possible.
	Part 2 – Monitoring, Implementation & Reporting The SEA environmental report should include a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring.	Noted – Section 10 of the environmental report sets out the proposed monitoring measures to be undertaken.
	Part 2 – SEA Statement In accordance with Article 16 of the SEA Regulations Fáilte Ireland is required to publish a SEA Statement alongside the adopted Plan.	Noted – A SEA Statement will be provided at the end of the SEA process in line with the requirements of Article 16.
Department for Enterprise, Tourism & Employment (DETE) Received 23 rd June 2025	Acknowledgement letter for receipt of Scoping Request. No further correspondence was made.	Noted and acknowledged
Development Applications Unit, Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage Received 24 th June 2025	Acknowledgement letter for receipt of Scoping Request, starting normal turnaround times for responses are six weeks. No further correspondence was made.	Noted and acknowledged

Environmental Authority	Summary of Submission Received	Fáilte Ireland Response
Development Applications Unit (DAU), Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage Received 10th September 2025	Archaeology • An Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) is to be scoped into the EIA process as part of the overall Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment (CHIA) of the proposed development should be carried out, to incorporate a detailed desktop study and field inspection. • Details on the importance of the Plan area in terms of archaeology were set out. • The CHIA should include an assessment of the possible effects of the proposal on the wider archaeological landscape. • The Department advises that in addition to a robust desk-study supported by a comprehensive field inspection the CHIA should incorporate a visual impact assessment (to assist in identifying any possible impacts to the setting of sites or monuments). • The Department advises that the following are also carried out as part of the overall CHIA to ensure a comprehensive assessment of the proposed development: • Targeted non-intrusive advance geophysical survey or prospection (such as Ground Penetrating Radar Surveys) • Targeted advance archaeological test excavation • Any and all intrusive advance investigations (such as, but not limited to, ground investigations for soils/geology/hydrogeology) carried out as part of the EIA or design process should be subject to a programme of archaeological monitoring by a suitably qualified archaeologist	Noted The SEA Team will complete full assessment on the cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage for the Plan area in line with legislative requirements and relevant guidance. The scope of heritage designations that will be considered will include the following: • Record of Monuments & Places (RMP) • National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) • Record of Protected Structures (RPS) • Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) • UNESCO World Heritage Sites • Historic Monuments under State care It is noted that the Department advises that an archaeological impact assessment is completed and that in addition to a robust desk-study supported by a comprehensive field inspection the CHIA should incorporate a visual impact assessment. It sets out detailed targeted onsite investigations that might be considered. It should be noted that this level of assessment will not form part of the SEA environmental report as the SEA team believe this level of assessment is suited to and appropriate at a project level rather than Plan and therefore suited to lower-level assessment such as environmental impact assessment (EIA). Visual concerns will be appropriately assessed under the landscape section of the environmental report.

3.3.3 Environmental Report

The current stage of the SEA process (Stage 3) involves the preparation of the Environmental Report for the identification, description, evaluation and mitigation of the potential environmental impacts associated with the WMDEDP and the alternatives taking account of the geographical scope of the Plan.

Article 5(1) and Annex I of the *SEA Directive* provide detail on the information to be included in an Environmental Report. Table 3.4 provides a checklist of the information referred to in Article 5(1) with a confirmation of where the relevant information is contained within the SEA.

The SEA Environmental Report will be placed on public display, together with the WMDEDP and for comment from statutory bodies, the public and interested parties.

Table 3.4 Information Required under Annex I of the SEA Directive

Information Referred to in Article 5 (1)	Environmental Report Section
(a) an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes.	Section 2 & 4
(b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme.	Section 5
(c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.	Section 5
(d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.	Section 5
(e) 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.	Section 6
(f) the likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.	Section 8
(g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme.	Section 9
(h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information.	Section 7
(i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10	Section 10
(j) a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings	Refer to Non-Technical Summary Report

3.3.4 Data Gaps and Difficulties Encountered

The SEA process requires collating currently available and relevant environmental data; it does not require major new research. Data deficiencies, gaps or difficulties were not encountered while undertaking this assessment.

3.3.5 SEA Statement

Following approval of the WMDEDP, an SEA Statement (Stage 4) will be prepared which includes information on:

- How environmental considerations have been integrated into the CDEDP, highlighting the main changes to the CDEDP which resulted from the SEA process.

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

3.4 Integration of SEA with Appropriate Assessment

The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) requires an Appropriate Assessment (AA) to be carried out where a plan or project is *likely to have a significant impact* on a Natura 2000 site. Natura 2000 sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA).

Stage 1 is to establish whether AA is required for the particular plan or project. This stage is referred to as 'screening for the requirement for AA', and its purpose is to determine, on the basis of a preliminary assessment and objective criteria, whether a plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, could have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site, in view of the site's conservation objectives.

As set out in Department Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/0814 (15 February 2008), Screening for AA is of relevance to SEA screening in that *"where following screening, it is found that the draft plan or amendment may have an impact on the conservation status of a Natura 2000 site or that such an impact cannot be ruled out, adopting the precautionary approach:*

An AA of the plan must be carried out, and

In any case where SEA would not otherwise be required, it must also be carried out.

Hence, where a plan requires AA, it shall also require SEA.

A Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (AA) and the preparation of a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) have been undertaken alongside the preparation of the WMDEDP and the SEA Environmental Report. The AA/NIS has concluded that the WMDEDP will not affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.

4 Relationship with other Plans & Programmes

The development of the Plan and this SEA is informed and carried out in the context of a hierarchy of legislation, plans and programmes. The Plan is a non-statutory plan and does not form a framework for development consent.

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

This section further explores the WMDEDP in the context of National, Regional and Local Plans and Programmes.

Implementation of the WMDEDP shall be consistent with and conform with the NPF, RSES and lower-tier land use plans, including provisions relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management that have been integrated into these documents including through SEA and AA processes. In order to be realised, projects included in the WMDEDP (in a similar way to other projects from any other sector) will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact

Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework, of which the WMDEDP is not part and does not contribute towards.

4.1 National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) sets out Ireland's planning policy direction up to 2040. The NPF is to be implemented through Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSEs) and lower-tier Development Plans and Local Area Plans (refer to following sections).

The National Planning Framework (NPF), published in 2018 has been revised most recently in April 2025. It is a framework to guide public and private investment to create and promote opportunities, and to protect and enhance the environment.

the NPF identifies a suite of National Policy Objectives (NPOs) with some having relevance to the WMDEDP as set out in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Relevant National Planning Policies

NP0 34	Continue to facilitate tourism development and in particular the Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways, and a Blueways and Peatways Strategy, which prioritises: • A coordinated approach to the sustainable management of outdoor recreation sites. • Projects on the basis of their environmental sustainability, achieving maximum impact and connectivity at national and regional level while ensuring their development is compliant with the National Biodiversity Action Plan, the national climate change objective and requirements for environmental assessments.
NP0 52	Ensure that Ireland's coastal resource is managed to sustain its physical character and environmental quality.
NP0 63	Support the coordination and promotion of all-island tourism initiatives through continued co-operation between the relevant tourism agencies and Tourism Ireland, pursue the further development of sport, and invest in the diverse heritage, arts and cultural and linguistic traditions of the island.
NP0 82	Integrated planning for Green and Blue Infrastructure will be incorporated into the preparation of statutory land use plans while maintaining ecosystem services and ecosystem functions and conserving and/or restoring biodiversity.
NP0 89	NPO 89: Protect, conserve and enhance the rich qualities of natural, cultural and built heritage of Ireland in a manner appropriate to their cultural and environmental significance.
NP0 92	NPO 92: Ensure the alignment of planned growth with the efficient and sustainable use and development of water resources and water services infrastructure, in order to manage and conserve water resources in a manner that supports a healthy society, economic development requirements and a cleaner environment.

4.2 A National Tourism Policy Statement – A New Era for Irish Tourism

A new National Tourism Policy Statement was published in December 2025 by the Department of Enterprise, Tourism. This policy sets the course for the next five years. It prioritises support for tourism SMEs, recognising their contribution to employment and balanced regional development. It also aligns tourism with broader national objectives: climate action, digital transformation, competitiveness, and inclusive growth.

Section 6 of the Statement is dedicated to growing a sustainable future and looks at climate adaption, carbon emissions, protecting biodiversity & habitats, addressing transport emissions, waste prevention and consultation.

4.3 Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

The RSES provides a high-level development framework for the Northern and Western Region that supports the implementation of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the relevant economic

policies and objectives of Government. They set out various objectives relating tourism development and activities that have been subject to environmental assessment. The RSESs have informed, and continue to inform, the preparation of lower-tier Development Plans and Local Area Plans, which also set out various objectives relating tourism development and activities that have been subject to environmental assessment.

The RSES was subjected to separate assessments under the SEA Directive (SEA) and the Habitats and Birds Directives (AA) and the results of those assessments have been considered in the preparation of this SEA.

The sustainable development and promotion of a successful well managed tourism industry is critical to the economy of this region. This strategy takes note of the overall Government policy, as set out in People, Place and Policy: Growing Tourism to 2025. In particular, it takes note of the policy proposal that consideration be given to the contribution that sustainable tourism can make to the protection of heritage assets.

Further, the Regional Policy Objectives states as set out in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Relevant Regional Policy Objectives

RPO 4.1	To support working with relevant landholders and recreational/tourism agencies to increase access to the countryside and our coastal areas, and to ensure maintenance and access to the existing network of trails, paths, ways etc.
RPO 4.2	To support the maintenance of, and enhanced access to state lands, such as National Parks, Forest Parks, Waterways together with Monuments and Historic Properties, for recreation and tourism purposes.
RPO 4.3	To support the preparation and implementation of Visitor Experience Development Plans (VEDPs) within the Northern and Western Region, to underpin the overarching regional tourism benefits and to promote the natural and cultural assets of the region.

4.4 Wild Atlantic Way Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027

Regional Tourism Development Strategies (2023-2027) have been developed for each of Fáilte Ireland's four Regional Experience Brands (Ireland's Ancient East, Dublin, Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands). The purpose of the Regional Tourism Strategies is to identify sustainable tourism development priorities that will unlock the commercial potential of the region and generate socioeconomic benefits for all local stakeholders and the tourism industry. These plans provide the strategic framework for the development of the WMDEDP.

The Wild Atlantic Way Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023 - 2027 identifies six strategic objectives to develop the tourism economy in the region. The projects outlined in the WMDEDP align to these overall regional objectives. The strategic objectives are set out in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Strategic Objectives of the Wild Atlantic Way Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023 – 2027

Strategic Objective 1	Year-Round Appeal: Grow the year-round appeal of the Wild Atlantic Way domestically and internationally ensuring we attract and disperse high-value visitors into and throughout the region.
Strategic Objective 2	International Profile: Raise the international profile of the northern half of the Wild Atlantic Way to increase visitation and revenue.
Strategic Objective 3	Revenue, Dispersion & Extension: Increase tourism revenue, visitor dispersion and season extension across the southern half of the Wild Atlantic Way.
Strategic Objective 4	Authenticity & Wildness: Protect the cultural authenticity and "wildness" of the Wild Atlantic Way.
Strategic Objective 5	Capacity & Capability: Enable and assist the industry to grow its capacity and capability so that it can thrive over the period of this strategy
Strategic Objective 6	Industry & Stakeholder: Foster strong coalitions of industry and stakeholders with a common purpose in creating flourishing destinations and thriving communities while also building a sustainable model of destination development across the Wild Atlantic Way.

The Regional Tourism Development Strategy for the Wild Atlantic Way provides a new context for how all existing and future tourism projects and initiatives are planned, developed and managed in a sustainable and integrated manner. The wildness of the landscape is at the heart of the Wild Atlantic Way offering. It is crucial that the quality, character and distinctiveness of these natural assets are protected.

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

The Wild Atlantic Way Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023 - 2027 has been subject of separate assessments under the SEA Directive (SEA) and the Habitats and Birds Directives (AA) and the results of those assessments have been considered in the preparation of this SEA.

4.5 Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028

The County Development Plan has an emphasis on providing an attractive destination and supporting strong and vibrant sustainable communities, whilst ensuring a transition to a low carbon and climate resilient county characterised by high environmental quality.

Chapter 5 of the Development Plan sets out the strategic aim of tourism and recreation as follows:

“The strategic aim of this chapter is to promote and facilitate a sustainable and well- managed year-round, high-quality tourism industry that generates economic benefits to all areas of the county, thereby contributing to the wider tourism industry of the region.”

A broad number of tourism policies and objectives are also set out under this chapter.

While there are many elements of the County Development Plan that will support the WMDEDP, the strategic aims for the Natural Environment are as follows:

“Continue to protect and enhance the county’s natural heritage and biodiversity and ensure that networks of green and blue infrastructure are identified, created, protected and enhanced to provide a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits to communities; To also improve the knowledge and understanding of the county’s landscape and coast, and enhance the overall characteristics, qualities and diversity of landscape character, its sense of place and local distinctiveness in recognition of the amenity potential of the county.”

4.6 Other Relevant Plans & Programmes

There is a legislative framework for the protection of the environment and our natural resources relevant to the WMDEDP. Table 4.4 below provides a list of the principle legislative framework.

Table 4.5 and Table 4.6 below provide a working list of the principal plans and programmes influencing the formulation of the WMDEDP and the Environmental Report, either directly or through European, National and / or County level policy. The relationship with other plans and programmes is discussed, as appropriate, under the Current State of the Environment in Section 5 of this Report.

Table 4.4 Legislative Framework

Legislative Framework	
Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended	Environmental Noise Directive (2002/49/EC)
Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended	Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC)
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EEC)	Fourth Daughter Directive (2004/107/EC)

Legislative Framework	
Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2011/92/EU) as amended by (2014/52/EU)	Renewable Energy Directive (2018/2001/EU) as amended by (EU/2023 /2413)
Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)	European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations) 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011) (as amended)
Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) on the Conservation of Wild Birds, 1979	Renewable Energies in the 21 st Century: Building a More Sustainable Future
Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000/60/EC)	EU 2020 climate and energy package
Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC)	EU Renewable Energy Road Map
Flood Directive (2007/60/EC)	European Landscape Convention 2000
Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC)	Wildlife Acts 1976-2024
Shellfish Waters Directive (2006/113/EC)	The Water Services Act 2017-2023
Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC)	Foreshore Act 1933-2024
Urban Wastewater Directive (91/271/EEC)	Aquaculture Act 1997-2006
Drinking Water Directive (98/83/EC)	Sea Fisheries & Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006
Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC)	The National Monuments Act 1930-2014
EU Landfill Directive (1999/31/EC)	Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023
Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC)	Roads Act 1993, as amended
European Green Deal 2020	European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Sea Fisheries) Regulations 2013
Surface Water Directive (75/440/EEC)	Drinking Water Directive (98/83/EC), Drinking Water Directive Recast (2020/2184)
Sewage Sludge Directive (86/278/EEC)	Floods Directive (2007/60/EC)
Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021	

Table 4.5 National & Regional Programmes

National and Regional Plans and Programmes	
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	National Policy Position on Climate Action and Low Carbon Development
Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework (NPF)	National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030
First Revision - National Planning Framework Updated Draft (April 2025)	National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022)
Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022	Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (2012)
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the North-western Region	The Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (2014)
Ireland's Environment - An Integrated Assessment 2020	Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022-2042
National Mitigation Plan 2017	Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2019)
Our Sustainable Future - A Framework for Sustainable Development for Ireland (2012)	Ireland's First National Cycle Policy Framework 2009
Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland (2021)	National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy 2024 - 2030
Planning Design Standards for Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2025)	The National Renewable Energy Action Plan
4 th Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030	National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2017-2020
Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth an Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland 2012	Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways 2018
National Strategic Plan for Aquaculture Development 2014- 2020	The National Broadband Plan 2020
The National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development 2030	National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025

National and Regional Plans and Programmes	
National CFRAMS Programme	Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011)
River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027	Heritage Ireland 2030
Water Action Plan 2024, A River Basin Management Plan for Ireland	Built Vernacular Strategy (2021)
Built and Archaeological Heritage, Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan (2019)	Places for People, National Policy on Architecture (2022)
The Planning System and Flood Risk Management (2009)	Food Harvest 2020
People, Place and Policy Growing Tourism to 2025	National Adaptation Framework Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland 2018 and Review of the National Adaptation Framework 2022
Fáilte Ireland Corporate Plan	Climate Action Plan 2025
Tourism Action Plan 2019 – 2021	Water Services Strategic Plan / Capital Investment Programme (Uisce Éireann)
Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways 2018	Regional Tourism Development Strategies (2023-2027) & Ireland Ancient East Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023 - 2027
National Physical Activity Plan 2013 – 2025	Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021 – 2025
Ireland's State of the Environment Report 2024	Actions to Promote Sustainable Tourism Practices 2021-2023
Fáilte Ireland Corporate Plan and Regional Tourism Development Strategies (2023-2027)	All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021 - 2025
Tourism Action Plan 2019-2021	Tourism Policy Framework 2025-2030
National Physical Activity Plan 2013-2025	

Table 4.6 Local Plans & Programmes

Local Plans and Programmes	
Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028	Mayo County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029
County Mayo Heritage and Biodiversity Strategy 2024-2030	Mayo Cultural and Creativity Strategy 2023-2027
Community plans, such as the Killala Town Centre First Plan & local biodiversity action plans	The forthcoming Mayo Outdoor Recreation Plan

5 Current State of the Receiving Environment

5.1 Introduction

The SEA Directive requires that the information on the baseline environment is focused upon the relevant aspects of the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected and the likely evolution of the current environment in the absence of the WMDEDP. Being consistent with the strategic provisions of the WMDEDP, this section provides a strategic description of aspects of environmental components which have the greatest potential to be affected by implementation of the WMDEDP, if unmitigated. The WMDEDP is focused on the geographical area as illustrated in Figure 2.1.

Much of the baseline has been compiled with reference to the latest iteration of the EPA '*Ireland's State of the Environment Report 2024*', as well as other up-to-date resources and datasets reference throughout.

5.2 Evolution of the Environment in the Absence of the Plan

It is a requirement of the SEA Directive to consider – ‘the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme.’ In the absence of the WMDEDP it is envisaged that the baseline environment would primarily evolve in line with the policies and objectives of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 and associated documents. The County Development Plans detail policies and objectives specific to tourism, however, the standalone WMDEDP provides significant opportunities for specific set of tourism related mitigation measures and the associated likely positive environmental effects.

Therefore, while higher level environmental protection objectives – such as those of County Development Plans and various EU Directives and transposing Irish Regulations – would still apply, the absence of the WMDEDP would mean that new development would be less coordinated and controlled. Less coordinated and controlled development would be less certain to result in the positive effects provided for by the WMDEDP.

5.3 State of Environment Report 2024

In October 2024, the EPA published its latest *Ireland's State of the Environment Report 2024*. Some of the key messages from the report include delivering a national policy position on the environment, driving policy implementation, transforming our systems, scaling up investment in infrastructure and protecting the environment to protect our health.

The report states that the overall quality of Ireland's environment is not what it should be, and the outlook is not optimistic with challenges affecting multiple environmental factors. Challenges include the protection of ecosystems, reduction of harmful emissions, and the over exploitation of natural resources.

The report highlights that the scale of improvements that were made between 2020 and 2024 are insufficient to meet national environmental objectives. Figure 5.1 has been sourced from the report and highlights some of the environmental indicators assessing them and looking to the future. This figure has relevance for the WMDEDP for the following reasons:

Climate: North Mayo's natural and built heritage, as well as the strong agricultural/ food industry are vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Air Quality & Emissions: The Plan outlines objectives to promote good air quality throughout the county. The contribution that tourism has on air quality particularly from the transportation is a key factor to consider in promotional activities. It will be important that the actions in the Plan maintain or do not worsen the current outlook regarding air quality and emissions.

Nature: The Plan includes actions which rely on maximising the opportunity posed by natural environment to support and drive tourism. The development of any projects will be required to align with EU and national policies including but not limited to the restoration, improvement and protection of all species and habitats that may be affected by tourists and tourism development.

Water: The Plan includes numerous actions relating to the use of waterbodies including coastal waters, rivers and islands for the promotion of tourism. It will be important for the development of any projects to be developed in accordance with EU and national policies and objectives relating to water quality. The ability for these natural assets to continue to draw tourism going forward will be dependent on the maintenance and improvement of water quality for the future.

Waste & the Circular Economy: A growing tourism sector could result in increased waste generation. EU and national policy and objectives towards the development reduction of waste and supporting the circular economy including is likely to continue to influence all sectors including the tourism sector.

Table 5.1 contains the EPA current assessment and outlook scorecard for Ireland across key environmental policy areas for some of the environmental factors and identifies the relevance to the WMDEDP.

INDICATOR	CURRENT ASSESSMENT	OUTLOOK	NOTES
Climate			While there has been progress in terms of beginning to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and in strengthening adaptation governance structures and support services, overall current assessment for climate is 'poor' (a slight improvement from 'very poor' in 2020). Full implementation of actions set out in the Climate Action Plan and additional actions are needed if Ireland is to meet its 2030 and 2050 climate targets.
Air quality and emissions to air			The overall current assessment for air is 'moderate' (the same as in 2020). Ireland is compliant with current air quality standards for many air pollutants. However, Ireland is not meeting the guidelines set by WHO for multiple pollutants, including PM _{2.5} , and Ireland is non-compliant with the EU reduction target for ammonia and will remain so in the short term. Achieving the ambitions of the Clean Air Strategy and complying with the limit values of the proposed EU Air Quality Directive from 2030 onwards will be challenging, but will have a significant and positive impact on health.
Nature			The overall current assessment for nature is 'very poor' (the same as in 2020). Deteriorating trends dominate, especially for protected habitats and bird populations, and Ireland is not on track to achieve policy objectives for nature. While the recent expansion of marine protected areas is welcome, additional far-reaching measures are needed to address the declines in nature and biodiversity.
Water			Overall current assessment for water is 'poor' (the same as in 2020). Trends remain mixed, with no net improvement in river or lake water quality in recent years, a sharp decline in the number of monitored estuaries in satisfactory ecological condition and continued direct discharges of raw or inadequately treated sewage to water from 19 agglomerations. Significant challenges remain for achieving full compliance with relevant EU obligations and national policy objectives.
Circular economy and waste			The overall current assessment for the circular economy and waste is poor (the same as in 2020) but progress is being made in a number of areas to improve performance. Waste generation continues to grow, in absolute and per capita terms, and Ireland remains overly reliant on export markets for recycling and for treating municipal residual waste. Recycling rates for municipal and plastic packaging waste streams are at risk and need to increase urgently to achieve 2025 targets. Recent interventions, such as the Deposit Return Scheme, statutory roll-out of the organic waste collection service, recovery levy and national end-of waste and by-product decisions, are positive developments but the effects of these remain to be seen. The circular material use rates remains very low by comparison to the European average and Ireland needs to address specific sectoral challenges to accelerate moving from a linear to a circular economy.
SUMMARY OF CURRENT ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE, POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION IN IRELAND			
	Very poor – significant environmental and/or compliance challenges to address		
	Poor – environmental and/or compliance challenges to address		
	Moderate – on track generally/local or occasional challenges		
	Good – mainly achieving objectives		
	Very good – full achieving objectives.		
OUTLOOK OF CURRENT PROSPECTS OF MEETING POLICY OBJECTIVES AND/OR TARGETS			
	Largely not on track to meet policy objectives and targets. Significant challenges to achieving full compliance remain. Systemic and transformative change needed.		
	Partially on track to achieving full compliance or measures in place or planned that will improve the situation. Outlook is dependent on existing and planned actions, measures and plans being fully implemented and effective.		
	Trajectory improving but not yet on track to achieving full compliance. Measures in place and planned provide possibility of meeting policy objectives and targets.		

Figure 5.1 Irelands Environmental Scorecard (Source: EPA, 2024)

5.4 Nature Capital & Ecosystem Services

Natural capital comprises renewable and non-renewable resources (e.g. plants, animals, air, water, soils, minerals) that combine to yield a flow of ecosystem services that provide benefits to people. These benefits can include clean air and water, a stable climate, protection from floods, food, resources for fuel, building materials, clothes and medicines, recreation. Managing natural capital so that it can continue to deliver the ecosystem services that give us these benefits is important in order to ensure sustainable development.

Unmanaged natural capital risks the continued degradation and depletion of these assets, and in turn, of their capacity to provide the economy and society with the ecosystem benefits that they depend on. These services also regulate climate, water flows (e.g. through wetlands and forests), sequester and store carbon in peatlands and improve soil quality for crops.

There are four main types: provisioning, regulating, supporting and cultural services.

- **Provisioning Services:** are the products obtained from ecosystems such as food, fresh water, wood, fibre, genetic resources and medicines.
- **Regulating Services** are defined as the benefits obtained from the regulation of ecosystem processes such as climate regulation, natural hazard regulation, water purification and waste management, pollination or pest control.
- **Support Services:** highlight the importance of ecosystems to provide habitat for migratory species and to maintain the viability of genepools.
- **Cultural Services:** include non-material benefits that people obtain from ecosystems such as spiritual enrichment, intellectual development, recreation and aesthetic values.

In completing this SEA and in implementing the WMDEDP the output of the Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystem Services project being undertaken by the NPWS has been and should be consulted.

Table 5.1 sets out the natural capital and ecosystem services issues that are relevant to this SEA and have been taken into account in the provisions of the Plan.

Table 5.1 Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services that are relevant to this SEA & Plan

Air quality.	Noise pollution.
Light pollution.	Soil and vegetation carbon, which helps to regulate greenhouse gas emissions.
Water quality and river basin management including interactions with soil.	Soil/geological storage of water, contributing towards flood control;
Land supporting food production;	Natural resources supporting energy production and recreation.

5.5 Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna

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 biodiversity within the study area underpins important economic sectors such as agriculture, tourism and recreation and is a core component of the green infrastructure. A number of areas in study area have been identified as being of exceptional importance for biodiversity at a national and/or international level and are protected through national and European legislation.

Key ecological sensitivities across the area to which the Plan relates include rare species and habitats, aquatic and riverine ecology, peatlands, coastal areas and marine waters and locally important habitats (e.g. woodlands, parklands, degrows stone walls etc.)

5.5.1 Designated 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 (SPAs) are protected under the European Union Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds 2009/147/EC.

When considering the number of designated sites within the study area a 15 km buffer beyond the boundary of the Plan area was included. This is called the potential zone of influence (ZoI) and has been cited directly from the Appropriate Assessment also being completed on this plan.

A total of 44 designated sites has been identified in this area and are listed in Table 5.2 and illustrated in Figure 5.2

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 website¹⁵. Any potential for impact on European Sites has been fully addressed as part of the Appropriate Assessment (AA) process which has also been completed and accompanies the WMDEDP and SEA Environment Report.

Table 5.2 European Sites located within the Plan area

Site Code	Site Name
Special Protection Area	
004004	Inishkea Islands SPA
004036	Killala Bay/Moy Estuary SPA
004052	Carrowmore Lake SPA
004072	Stags of Broad Haven SPA
004074	Illanmaster SPA
004084	Inishglora and Inishkeeragh SPA
004093	Termoncarragh Lake and Annagh Machair SPA
004098	Owenduff/Nephrin Complex SPA
004111	Duvillaun Islands SPA
004227	Mullet Peninsula SPA
004228	Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA
004235	Doogort Machair SPA
004037	Blacksod Bay/Broad Haven SPA
Special Area of Conservation	
000458	Killala Bay/Moy Estuary SAC
000463	Balla Turlough SAC
000466	Bellacorick Iron Flush SAC
000470	Mullet/Blacksod Bay Complex SAC
000472	Broadhaven Bay SAC
000476	Carrowmore Lake Complex SAC
000495	Duvillaun Islands SAC
000500	Glenamoy Bog Complex SAC

Site Code	Site Name
000507	Inishkea Islands SAC
000516	Lackan Saltmarsh and Kilcummin Head SAC
000522	Lough Gall Bog SAC
000534	Owenduff/Nephin Complex SAC
00542	Slieve Fyagh Bog SAC
00633	Lough Hoe Bog SAC
00634	Lough Nabrickkeagh Bog SAC
001482	Clew Bay Complex SAC
001497	Doogort Machair/Lough Doo SAC
001501	Erris Head SAC
001513	Keel Machair/Menaun Cliffs SAC
001669	Knockalongy and Knockachree Cliffs SAC
001898	Unshin River SAC
001922	Bellacorick Bog Complex SAC
001955	Croaghaun/Slievemore SAC
002005	Bellacragher Saltmarsh SAC
002006	Ox Mountains Bogs SAC
002081	Ballinafad SAC
002144	Newport River SAC
002177	Lough Dahybaun SAC
002268	Achill Head SAC
002298	River Moy SAC
002998	West Connacht Coast SAC



Figure 5.2 European Sites located within the Plan area and potential zone of influence (Source ROD AA Screening Report 2025)

5.5.2 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 holds species of plants and animals whose habitat needs protection. Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) are also of significance for wildlife and habitats but have not yet been statutorily designated. However, under the Wildlife Amendment Act (2000) NHAs are legally protected from damage from the date they are formally proposed for designation¹⁰.

Refer to Tables 5.4 and 5.5 and Figure 5.3 below for the NHAs and pNHAs within the Plan area and within the zone of influence of the study area.

Table 5.3 Natural Heritage Areas (NHA's) & Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within the Plan area and potential zone of influence

Site Code	Site Name
Natural Heritage Areas	
001567	Tullaghan Bay And Bog NHA
001473	Bangor Erris Bog NHA
001566	Tristia Bog NHA
002446	Ederglen Bog NHA
002419	Glenturk More Bog NHA
001548	Pollatomish Bog NHA
002391	Inagh Bog NHA
001570	Ummerantarry Bog NHA
002432	Forrew Bog NHA
002381	Doogort East Bog NHA
002403	Sraheens Bog NHA
002383	Croaghmoyle Mountain NHA
002420	Cunnagher More Bog NHA
Proposed Natural Heritage Areas	
000507	Inishkea Islands
000495	Duvillaun Islands
000470	Mullet/Blacksod Bay Complex
001501	Erris Head
001500	Eagle Island
000506	Inishglora & Inishkeeragh
000472	Broadhaven Bay
000546	Stags Of Broadhaven
000500	Glenamoy Bog Complex
000494	Downpatrick Head
000482	Creevagh Head
000516	Lackan Saltmarsh And Kilcummin Head
000458	Killala Bay/Moy Estuary

¹⁰ [Natural Heritage Areas \(NHA\) | National Parks & Wildlife Service](#)

000633	Lough Hoe Bog
000519	Lough Conn And Lough Cullin
002078	Moy Valley
001922	Bellacorick Bog Complex
000534	Owenduff/Nephin Complex
000459	Altaconey Bog
000542	Slieve Fyagh Bog
000476	Carrowmore Lake Complex
001488	Corraun Point Machair/Dooreel Creek
001485	Cloonagh Lough (Mayo)
001527	Lough Alick
001955	Croaghaun/Slievemore
001497	Doogort Machair/Lough Doo
001488	Corraun Point Machair/Dooreel Creek
001513	Keel Machair/Menaun Cliffs
001967	Inishgalloon
000522	Lough Gall Bog
001482	Clew Bay Complex
001491	Dambaduff Lough
001492	Carrowmore Lough Shore
000463	Balla Turlough
000511	Killaturly Turlough
001657	Cloongoonagh Bog
000634	Lough Nabrickkeagh Bog
002006	Ox Mountains Bogs
001665	Easky River

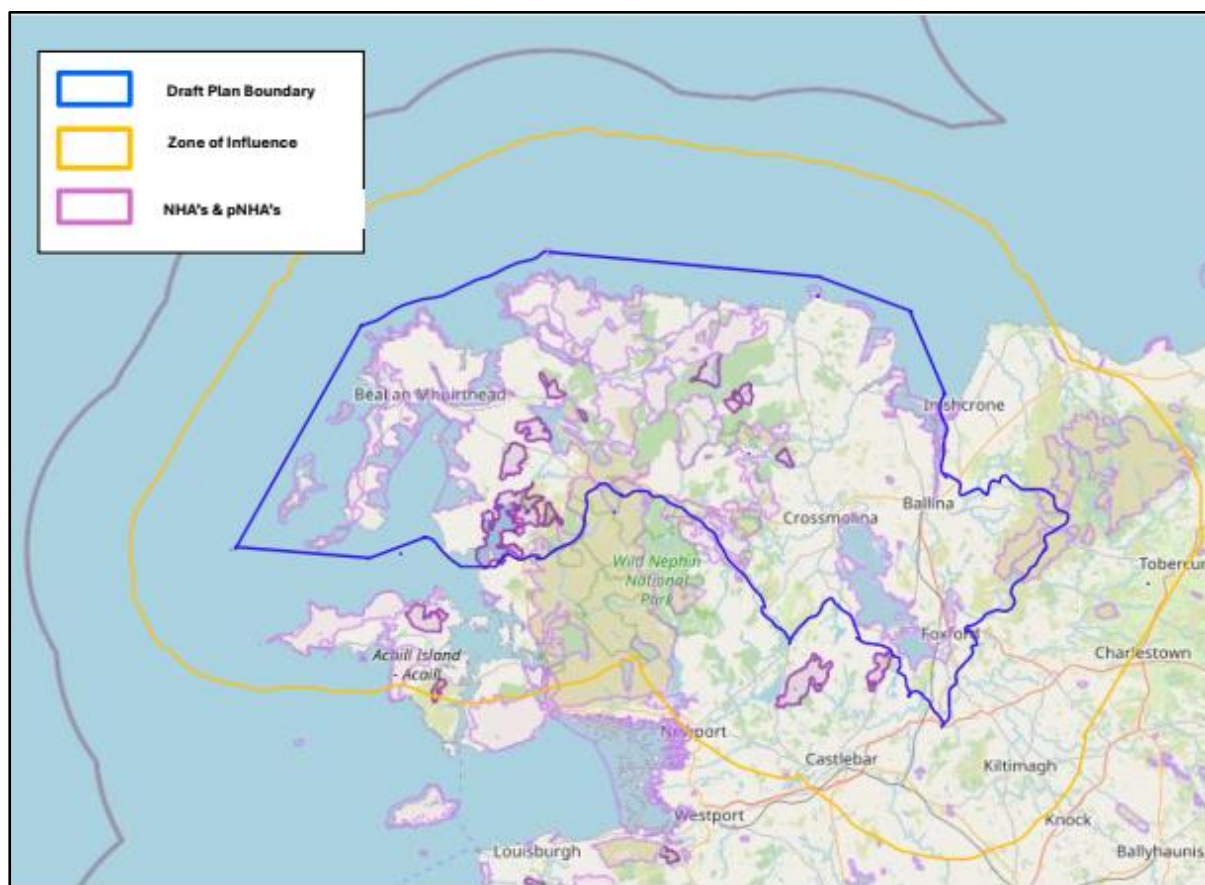


Figure 5.3 Nationally Designated Sites within the Plan area and potential zone of influence (Base Map Source epa.ie)

5.5.3 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 (*Coregonus*) 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.

The following rivers within the plan area are designated Salmonid Waters:

- The Deel
- The Moy (and associated tributaries)
- The Castlebar (and associated tributaries)

5.5.4 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.

The following are designated Shellfish Waters within the Plan area:

- Blacksod Bay
- Clew Bay
- Killala Bay
- Achill Sound North

5.5.5 Margaritifera Sensitive Areas

Margaritifera Sensitive Areas are protected under Annex II and Annex V of the Habitats Directive. Freshwater Pearl Mussel is an extremely sensitive species that is on the verge of extinction due to poor water quality and habitat damage. The following Margaritifera Sensitive Areas within the plan area and associated potential zone of influences are as follows:

- Moy- Deel
- Newport
- Moy- Tobergal
- Easky -Moy

5.5.6 Other Designations

Ramsar Sites: Wetlands in Ireland range from small freshwater springs to large bog and river habitats. They provide an important ecological function and create a transitional zone between terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Table 5.3 sets out the Ramsar sites located in and around the Plan area.

Table 5.3 Ramsar Sites located in and around the Plan Area

Site Code	Site Name
843	Killala Bay/ Moy Estuary
471	Easky Bog
852	Lough Gara
372	Knockmoyle/ Sheskin
371	Owenboy
336	Owenduff catchment
844	Blacksod Bay and Broadhaven

National Parks, Nature Reserves & Wildfowl Sanctuaries:

There is one national park located in County Mayo – Wild Nephin. This park is located to the south of the plan area. There are two nature reserves located in the area including Knockmoyle Sheskin and Owenboy- as nature reserves these locations enjoy protection under ministerial order. There are two wildfowl sanctuaries: Iniskeas Islands and Carrowmore Lake.

Nutrient Sensitive Areas: are those water bodies which contain a sensitive area, as designated by the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC), or areas designated as vulnerable zones by the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC). In the latest cycle no nutrient sensitive areas were identified in the plan area.

5.5.7 Ecological Networks & Connectivity

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. Ecological networks

are important in connecting areas of local biodiversity with each other and with nearby designated sites so as to prevent islands of habitat from being isolated entities. They are composed of linear features, such as treelines, hedgerows and rivers / streams which provide corridors or stepping stones for wildlife species moving within their normal range.

Ecological corridors are important for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species, particularly for mammals, bats and small birds and facilitate linkages both between and within designated ecological sites, non-designated surrounding countryside and the more urban areas of the study area.

Hedgerows contribute significantly to biodiversity and landscape character. They have an important farming function, they are wildlife habitats, and corridors, between habitats, and they also have historical significance as townland and field boundaries. The rivers provide a rich landscape setting for the towns and village of the Plan area.

Wetlands include a wide range of habitats including watercourses, marshes, fens, bogs, turloughs, wet woodlands and estuaries. They support a variety of habitats and species, function in the protection of water quality and flood control, are important carbon stores contributing to climate resilience, and provide open space and recreational opportunities.

5.5.8 National Biodiversity Action Plan

Ireland's fourth National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) sets national biodiversity agenda for the period 2023-2030. The Plan's vision for Ireland in 2050 is as follows:

Biodiversity in Ireland is valued, conserved, restored and sustainably used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people.

The key objectives of the NBAP are as follows:

- Adopt a Whole-of Government, Whole of-Society Approach to Biodiversity.
- Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs.
- Secure Nature's Contribution to People.
- Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity.
- Strengthen Ireland's Contribution to International Biodiversity Initiatives.

5.5.9 Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna - Existing Threats & Pressures

The EPA states that most habitats in Ireland are experiencing a decline in biodiversity. Pressure to biodiversity arises primarily from factors such as agriculture, forestry, urbanisation, recreational use, and the presence of invasive species. These pressures and threats are also more pronounced for protected species. Tourism activities and the development of associated infrastructure close to ecologically sensitive areas can give rise to additional pressure on the biodiversity of these areas.

The key pressures resulting from tourism and recreation in relation to biodiversity include:

- Direct habitat loss within European Sites e.g. developments occurring on undeveloped sites, recreational activity works.
- Indirect effects on the ecological networks supporting European Sites e.g. linear developments forming barriers to movements of mobile species or loss of sites that support an overall population of species.
- Construction and use of commercial and recreational infrastructure and areas. For example, development within watercourses.
- Indirect threat to water quality including changes to surface and groundwater quality and volumes.

- Direct / indirect disturbance of sensitive habitats / species e.g. recreation at harbour or coastal sites, riverside walkways, pressure from increased visitor numbers etc.
- Direct / indirect threats to European Sites by invasive species.
- Direct / indirect threats to native flora and fauna from pathogens / diseases.
- Invasive Species and problematic species - continued control and management of invasive species. For example, the loss of biodiversity as native species are shaded out, but also diseases and pathogens.

5.6 Population & Human Health

5.6.1 Population

Referring to summary results for Census 2022 the CSO reported the following:

“.... the population of Mayo grew by 6% to 137,970, which means the number of people in the county rose by 7,463 between April 2016 and April 2022. Over the same period, Ireland's population grew by 8% from 4,761,865 to 5,149,139.”¹¹

Refer to Figure 5.4 below for the overall population change for the county between 2016 to 2022.

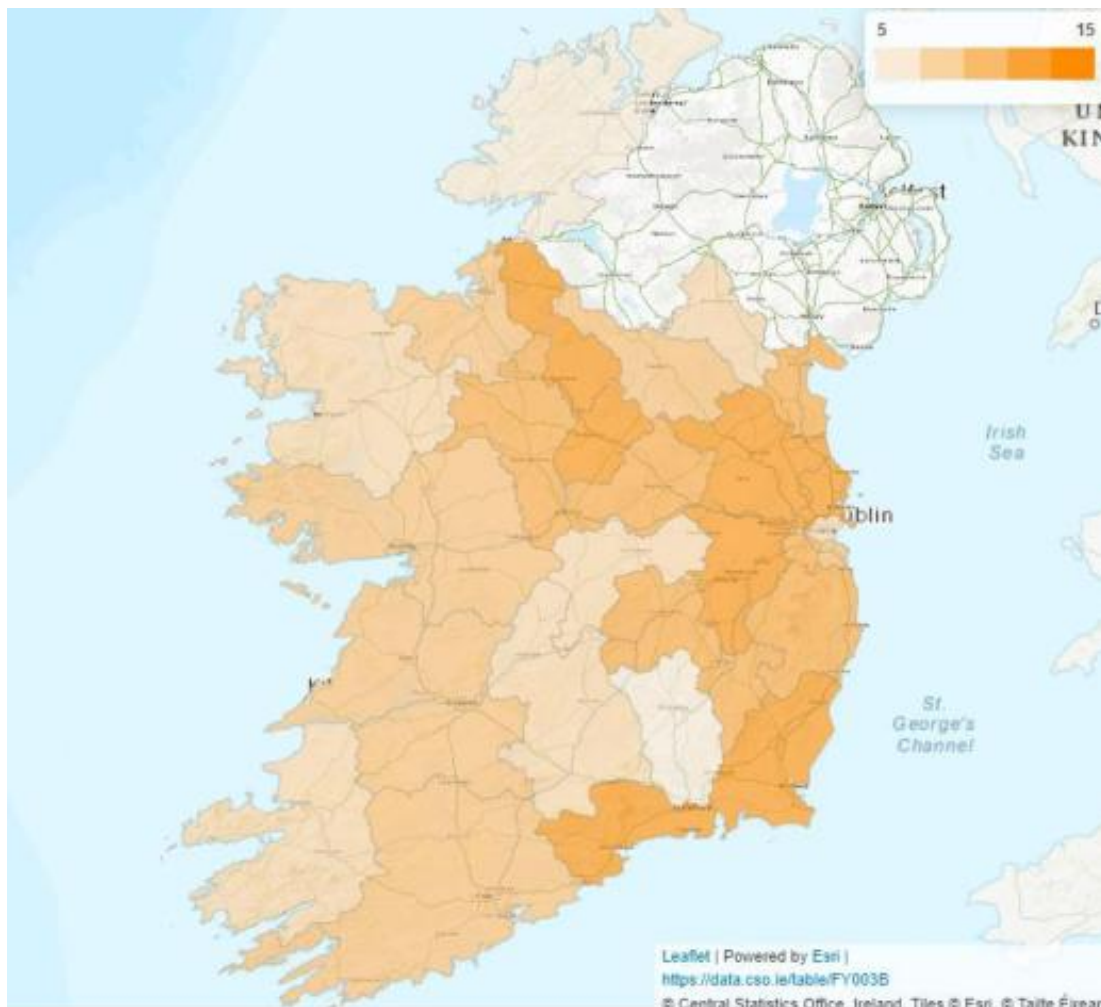


Figure 5.4 Population changes for County Mayo between 2016-2022

¹¹ <https://www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/pressreleases/2023pressreleases/pressstatementcensusofpopulation2022-summaryresultsmayo/>

Specific to the north of the county and the Plan area the population of the local electoral divisions of Ballina and Belmullet collectively had a population of 38,54.

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

- Interactions with landslides
- Recreational and development pressure on habitats and landscapes
- Contribution towards increase in demand for wastewater treatment at the municipal level
- Contribution towards increase in demand for water supply and associated potential impact of water abstraction
- Potential interactions in flood-sensitive area; and
- Potential effects on water quality

5.6.2 Socio- Economic Trends -Tourism

The 2022 Census set out that for the entire county with a population of 111,600 that 58,300 people were in the work force, an increase of over 13% on those reported working in the 2016 census. The manufacturing sector accounted for the biggest sector of employment followed by wholesale and retail.

There are no specific figures released by the 2022 census relating specifically to numbers directly employed in the tourism sector for the plan area.

The tourism industry has long been recognised as an important economic driver for the economy of the State. Tourism is particularly important in that it can assist in providing business and employment opportunities across regions and leads to jobs across the spectrum of skills requirements. The potential for tourism in the Plan area is particularly strong in relation to its rich heritage, quality rural landscape and towns and villages, meaning the area has a lot to offer as a tourist destination. The development plan for north County Mayo promotes the development and strengthening of the overall value of tourism in this region as previously stated. These areas have an objective to enhance the potential for economic development in the tourism sector.

5.6.3 Human Health

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

Radon - The greatest health risk from radiation in Ireland is caused by radon. The presence of radon gas, a naturally occurring radioactive gas that originates from the decay of uranium in rocks and soils, occurs across the country. It accounts for more than half of the total radiation dose received by the Irish population. As a known carcinogen, in the same category as tobacco smoke and asbestos it is a cause of lung cancer. Exposure to radon for long periods or at high concentrations can lead to lung cancer.

The number of homes within the area to which the Plan relates with radon levels above the reference level is within the normal range experienced in other locations across the country.

The 2022 Census indicates the majority of self-reported health in County Mayo that self-reported as having very good health was 51.4% which is down on a figure of 56% from the response received in 2016.

5.6.4 Population & Human Health -Existing Threats & Pressures

The EPA State of the Environment Report highlights the key pressures and problems in relation to population and human health, which include radon exposure, noise pollution, air quality, drinking water quality, wastewater management, and the effects of climate change, including the increase of extreme weather events, sea level rise, flood risk and coastal erosion. Air quality and Climate are discussed in Section 5.6 of this report. The tourism sector and associated infrastructure, including water and wastewater management, is discussed in more detail in the material assets (section 5.7) section of this ER. The following are the main broad existing pressures that exist for human population and health:

- Effects to residential and visitor accommodation (availability and affordability).
- Effects to populations in high radon areas.
- Effects due to flood events and landslide events (refer to Section 5.5).
- Pressure on critical infrastructure if not planned and managed appropriately (refer to Section 5.7 Material Assets).
- Exacerbating effects of climate change (refer to Section 5.6).
- Effects on all other environmental factors depending on the nature of tourism activity e.g. water environment, air quality, land use change, etc.

The tourism industry offers potential positive opportunities for social and economic benefits, including supporting and diversifying the rural economy, communities and ecosystem services.

5.7 Lands, Soils & Geology

Consideration of land and soil management is essential to sustainable development as these resources support the built environment, food production processes, water, resources for development and other ecosystem services. Given the long-term processes governing the development of soils, sustainable management of soil assets within the Plan area is critical to the continued economic development and health of the population and ecological life.

To date, there is no legislation which is specific to the protection of soil resources. However, the EU Soil Strategy for 2030 sets out a framework and concrete measures to protect and restore soils and ensure that they are used sustainably. It sets a vision and objectives to achieve healthy soils by 2050, with concrete actions by 2030. It also announces a new Soil Health Law by 2023 to ensure a high-level of environmental and health protection.

The GSI (Geological Survey of Ireland) have a suite of data sources available that would be useful in planning and assessing individual projects with regard to the environmental topic(s) of soil and/or material assets. These include:

- Aggregate Potential Mapping.
- Bedrock mapping.
- Quaternary and Physiographic mapping; and
- National Aquifer and Recharge mapping.

5.7.1 Land Use

Land use describes the use land has been put to from a human perspective. The CORINE 2018 land cover survey of County Mayo is illustrated in Figure 5.5. The county's land cover is predominately composed of Peat lands. Other common land cover type in the county includes agricultural, conifer plantation, forest and semi natural areas, moors and heathlands, intertidal flats, waterbodies and very small areas of industrial and urban cover.

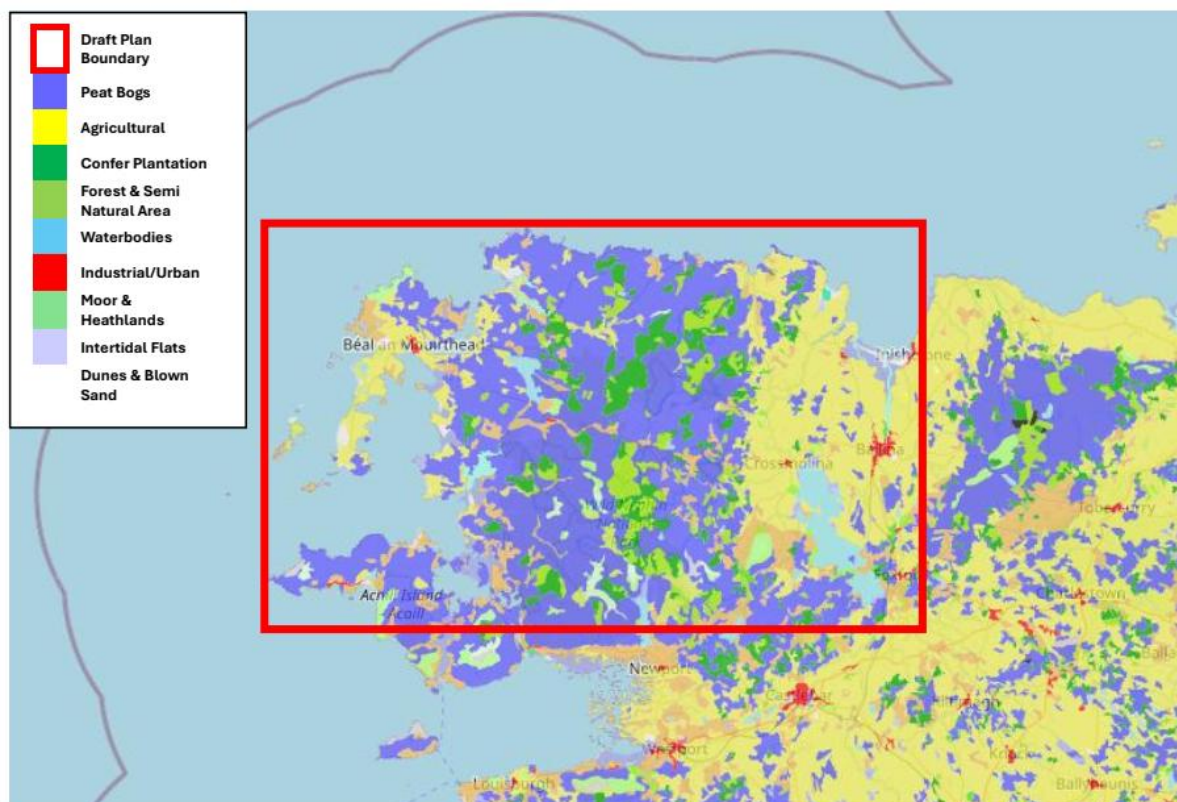


Figure 5.5 Corrine Mapping of Land Use for the Plan area, 2018.

5.7.2 Soils

The most dominant soils in the Plan area are peat. In the eastern part of the Plan area there are brown earths and well drained mineral soils and river alluvium. To the far west of the plan area there is substantial amounts of dunes or blown sand and dotted throughout the area in pockets are well drained acid mineral soils. Refer to Figure 5.6 for further details.

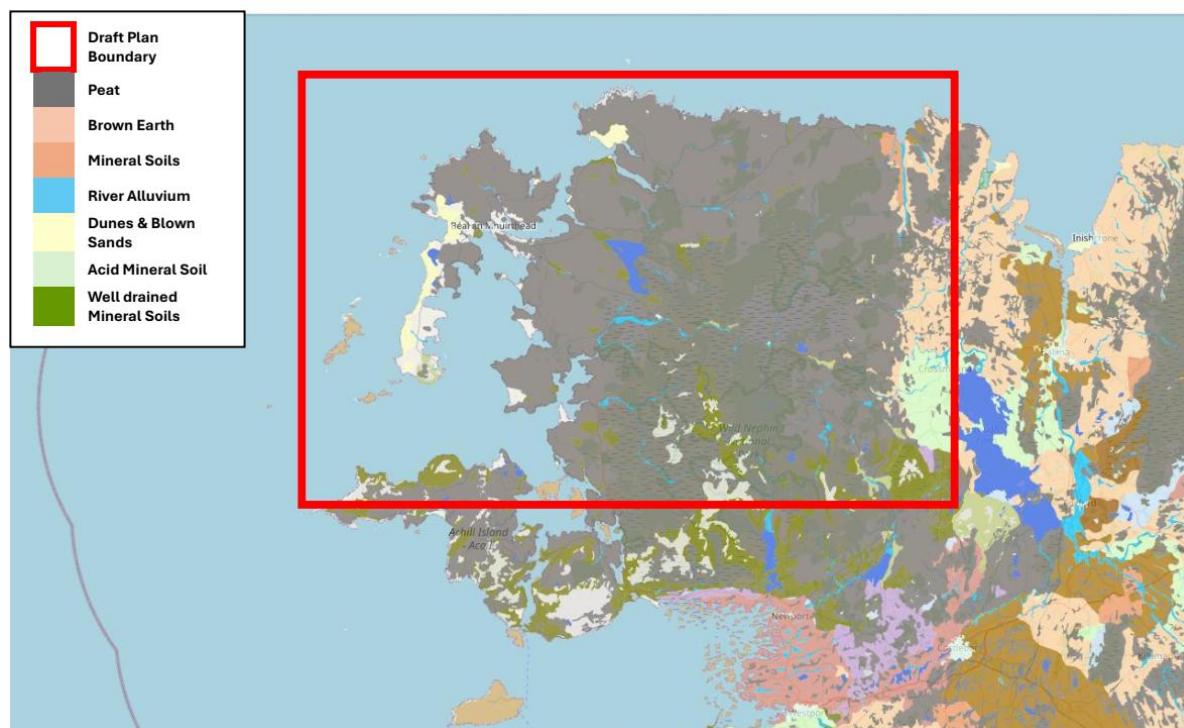
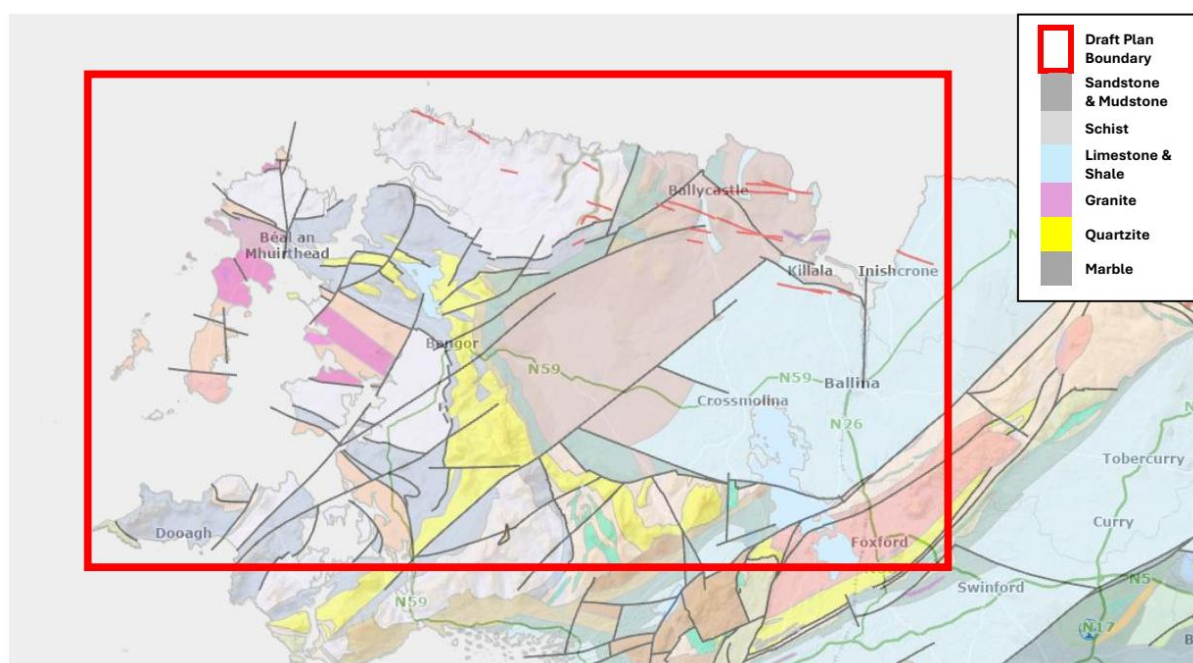


Figure 5.6 Soil Types in the Plan area (Source: EPA Maps, 2025)**5.7.3 Geology & Geological Heritage**

The *Geological Survey of Ireland* (GSI) provides information available on bedrock and subsoil, aquifer classifications and vulnerability. More information is available on aquifer classifications and vulnerability in Section 5.11.

GSI has assessed the geological heritage of the study area and identified sites of geological and geomorphological importance. The bedrock foundation, with hundreds of millions of years in the formation and shaping, and the more recent history of geomorphological processes involving river channels and glaciers are what have created the underlying geological diversity, or geodiversity. The study area has a range of such natural and man-made sites.

The study area is underlain by numerous different types of geological formations with some of the larger extends of land underlain by schist, sandstone & mudstone, limestone & calcareous shale, granite, quartzite and marble. On the western edges of the Plan area there a diverse array of geological types including granites, schist and bedrock faults. Refer to Figure 5.7 for further details.

**Figure 5.7 Bedrock Geology of the Plan Area, (GSI, 2025)**

The identified geological sites within the study area which are important Irish Geological Heritage (IGH) sites are shown below in Figure 5.8. Geological Sites do not receive statutory protection like Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) but receive an effective protection from their inclusion in the planning system. The geological heritage sites within the Plan area are listed in Table 5.6.

Table 5.4 Geological Heritage Sites in the Plan area (source: GSI, 2025)

Site Code	Site Name
MO018	Broad Haven
MO082	NW Erris (Stags of Broadhaven southwards)
MO051	Dun na Mo (Oirreas)
MO004	Annagh Head (Mullet Peninsula)
MO038	Cross Point (Mullet Peninsula)
MO061	Inishkea Islands
MO012	Blacksod Bay
MO017	Briska (North Mayo)
MO068	Killala Area
MO081	Nepin Beg Range

MO007	Bartragh Island
MO089	River Moy
MO086	Pontoon Bridge
MO011	Bellacorick
MO008	Belderg (Copper)
MO009	Belderg Harbour
MO059	Glenulra and Port Glenloss Point
MO096	Stella Maris
MO050	Downpatrick Head
MO065	Kilcummin Head

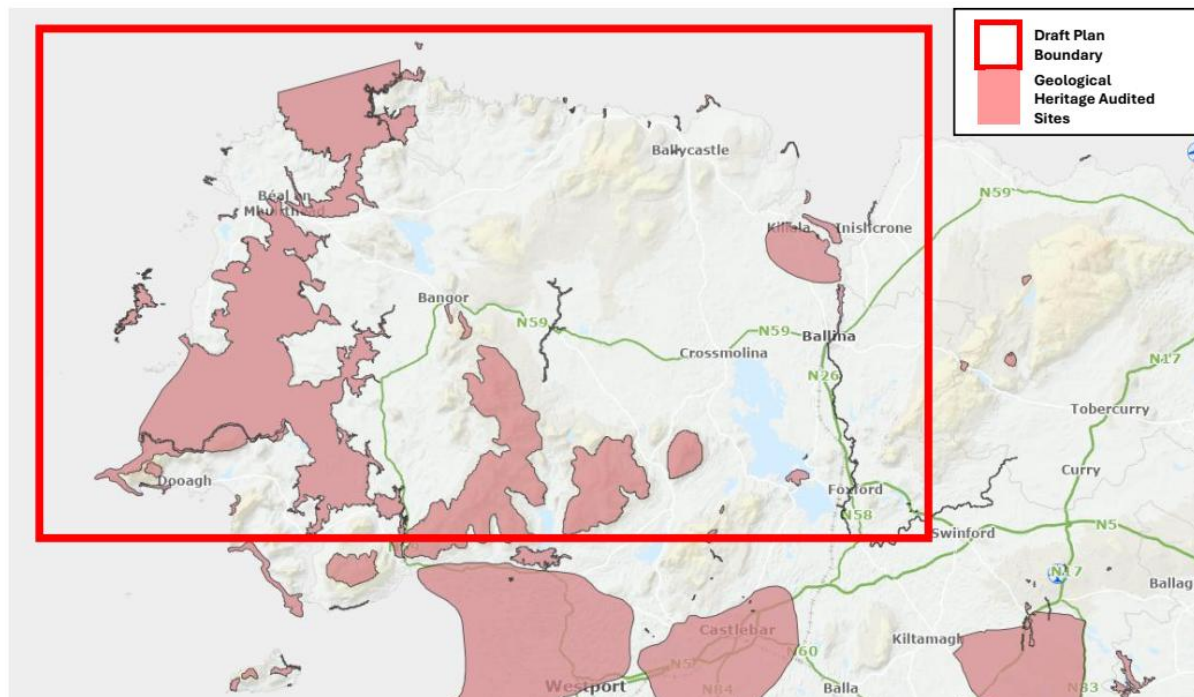


Figure 5.8 Geological Heritage Sites in the Plan area (source: GSI, 2025)

5.7.4 Landslides & Coastal Erosion

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

The area to which the Plan relates has numerous locations with a history of landslide events (refer to Figure 5.9) and many of these events are associated with the peatland and upland areas. The GSI have identified much of the north coastal and middle inland part of the Plan area as having moderate to high susceptibility to landslides.

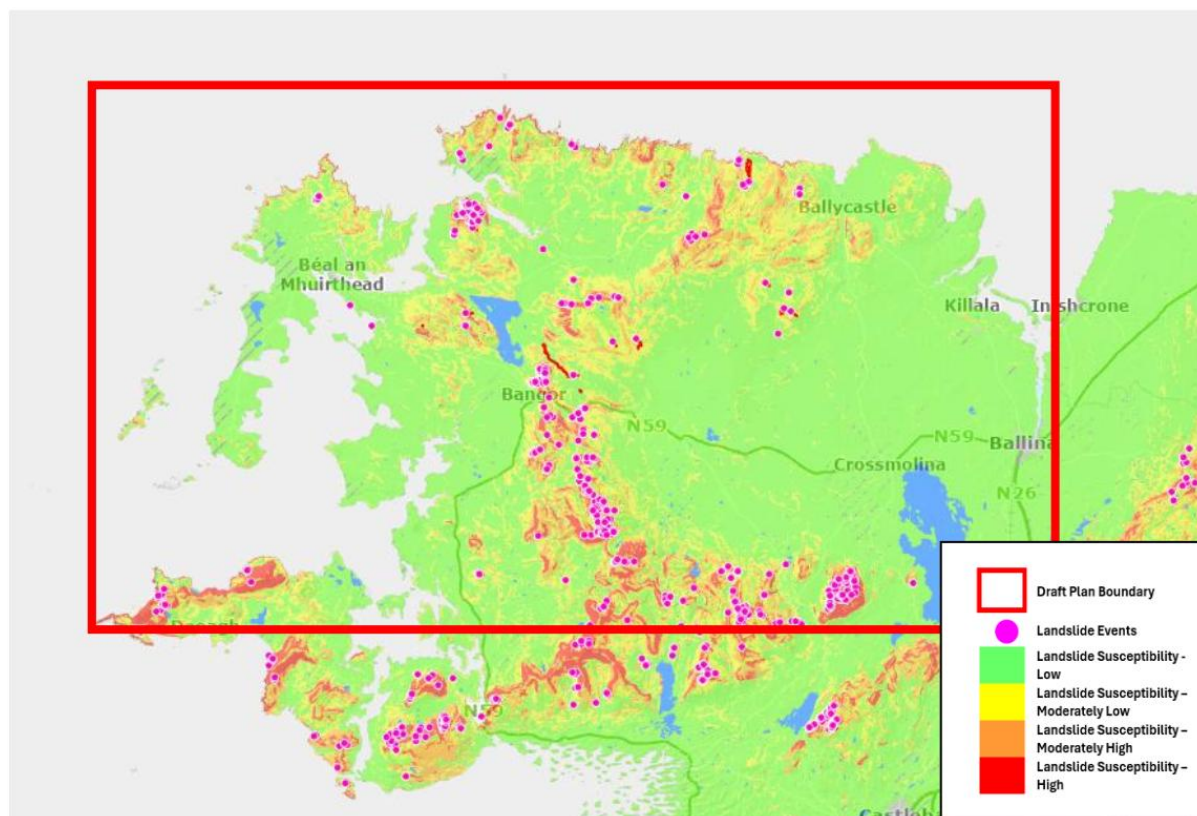


Figure 5.9 Landslide Susceptibility & Landslide Events in the Plan area (Source GSI, 2025)

5.8 Lands, Soil & Geology – Existing Threats & Pressures

The dominant pressures on land and soils include soil sealing, erosion, organic matter decline, compaction, salination and landslides. Tourism can create pressure on land and soils due to direct land use change, creating soil sealing and/or impacting geological heritage sites.

5.9 Air Quality, Noise & Climate

5.9.1 Air Quality

Air quality legislation¹² in Ireland highlights the need ‘to avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole’. In addition, it requires that Local Authorities where appropriate ‘shall preserve through appropriate measures the best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development’.

EU legislation on air quality requires that Member States divide their territory into zones for the assessment and management of air quality. The EPA manages the national ambient air quality monitoring network and measures the levels of a number of atmospheric pollutants. The current trends in air quality in Ireland are reported in the EPA publication ‘Air Quality in Ireland Report 2023’ which is currently the most up to date analysis of air quality data for Ireland. Four national air quality zones have been designated in Ireland, these are:

- Zone A is the Dublin conurbation.
- Zone B is the Cork conurbation.
- Zone C comprises of 24 large towns in Ireland

¹² S.I. No. 739/2022 – Ambient Air Quality Standards Regulations 2022 - <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2022/si/739/made/en/print>

- Zone D (Rural Ireland) is the remaining area of Ireland (this is the zone in which the plan area falls)

The study area is located largely within Zone D. The designated zones have been defined to meet the criteria for air quality monitoring, assessment and management as defined in the aforementioned regulations. There is one air quality monitoring site in the Plan area located in Ballina.

The air quality index for health (AQIH) regions is calculated on an hourly basis at various locations around Ireland. The AQIH is based on measurements of air pollutants which can harm health. The five pollutants are:

- Ozone gas.
- Nitrogen dioxide gas.
- Sulphur dioxide gas.
- PM_{2.5} particles; and
- PM₁₀ particles.

Air Quality Map show whether air quality is 'good', 'fair', 'poor' or 'very poor' in each region. The current air quality across the study area is 'good'. Monitoring is done using continuous monitors for ozone and nitrogen oxides in various locations around Ireland. The pollutants of most concern are those whose main source is traffic such as Particulate Matter (PM) and Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). There is need to protect and improve (as appropriate), air quality in the study area, particularly in areas zoned for increased urban and transport related development.

5.9.2 Noise

The *Environmental Noise Directive* (2002/49/EC) requires that member states assess noise pollution levels and act to manage it. This is transposed into Irish Law as the *Environmental Noise Regulations 2018, S.I. No. 549 of 2018 and the (Environmental Noise) (Amendment) Regulations 2021, S.I. No. 663/2021* which requires the production of noise maps for agglomerations, roads, railways and airports; and for local authorities to prepare a Noise Action Plan every 5 years with the aim of reducing noise exposure levels measured in noise maps. The main source of environmental noise within Ireland and in the region of the Plan is from road traffic.

The *Mayo County Council Noise Action Plan 2024-2028* (Mayo County Council, 2024) identifies major roads in the county as noise sources, including the N5 from Westport to east of Swinford and the N17 from Claremorris south to the Galway County boundary. These roads are major national and regional roads that connect major urban centres within Mayo and to neighbouring counties. These road stretches do not fall within the Plan area. Under this plan there are currently no "Quiet Areas"¹³ identified in County Mayo.

5.9.3 Climate

While many greenhouse gases (GHG) occur naturally, human activities including transport, agriculture and land use change are increasing concentrations of some GHG creating the greenhouse effect resulting in changes to the climate. EU Member States have collectively agreed to aim to keep global warming to below a 2°C increase from pre-industrial levels, under the Paris Agreement. These changes are directly and indirectly impacting Ireland's climate evidenced by changes in rainfall events, an increased frequency of storm events, sea level rise affecting coastal areas, as well as changes to air and soil temperature.

Future changes in climate and associated impacts on sea level, rainfall patterns/intensity and river flow will influence flooding frequency and extent in the future. Local Authorities in compliance with the

¹³ <https://www.mayo.ie/environment/pollution-control/noise> - . A quiet area in open country is defined as an area delimited by the Action Planning Authority following consultation with the agency and approval by the Minister, that is undisturbed by noise from traffic, industry, or recreational activities

Regional Planning Guidelines are attempting to adopt sustainable flood risk strategies in areas likely to be at risk of flooding in the future in the context of climate change and changing weather patterns. Changes to climate could lead to an increase in flooding events in Ireland.

The following are important policies, legislative instruments and agreements that help shape our national and regional approach to climate change and adaption, including in the tourism sector.

International

- Paris Agreement (UNFCCC, 2015)
- European Green Deal, published by the European Commission in December 2019
- European Union (EU) Regulation (EU) 2021/1119 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 June 2021, (establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulations (EC) No 401/2009)
- Roadmap for National Tourism Organisations Towards Climate Action in Tourism Destinations – Climate Action Planning Framework”, (The European Travel Commission (ETC))
- the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism:

National

- Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021
- The Climate Action Plan 2025 (CAP25)
- National Adaptation Framework (NAF)
- The Tourism Policy Framework-2030
- Fáilte Ireland Climate Action Programme

Regional

Mayo County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 (MCCCAP) – This Plan sets out the need for a climate action plan in the context of adaption, mitigation and risk assessment for the county. A number of strategic goals and associated actions are found in the plan with a number associated with the tourism sector.

5.9.4 Air Quality, Noise & Climate – Existing Threats & Pressures

Concern has clearly shifted to a range of pollutants associated with road traffic which may be considered relatively new in the context of air quality control. The most important of these pollutants are NO₂, particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM₁₀), carbon monoxide (CO) and a wide variety of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), including carcinogens such as benzene. Therefore, it is important that a good quality road infrastructure is provided and alternatives to the private car are encouraged as much as possible.

In terms of climate tourists contribute to greenhouse gas emissions across the same sources/sectors as local and national populations, e.g. transport, heating and electricity, agriculture/food production and waste generation.

The potential effects of climate change resulting in an increase in the frequency and severity of weather events, including flooding, storms, heavy snowfall, and variation in temperature. Severe rainfall events, or very cold events with or without snowfall could adversely impact upon towns and people in the Plan area leading to water shortages, residential flooding and disruption to infrastructure and to movement. Therefore, it will be important to improve resilience of existing and planned critical infrastructure, systems and procedures to the effects and variability of climate change.

5.10 Material Assets

Material assets are resources that are valued and intrinsic to a development and the surrounding area. Material assets may be of either natural or human origin and the value may arise for economic or cultural reasons. Material assets include water supply, wastewater treatment infrastructure, waste disposal,

transport infrastructure, energy, telecommunications and utilities infrastructure. The sustainable growth of the Plan area is dependent on the provision of services and infrastructure.

5.10.1 Natural Assets

Green Infrastructure

Open areas, parks, greenways and blueways can provide recreational facilities for health and wellbeing and a range of habitats for various species. Green infrastructure is also a crucial component in building resilient communities capable of adapting to the consequences of climate change with trees, woodlands and wetlands providing carbon capture and slowing water flows while improving air quality.

Peatlands

Peatlands cover an extensive area of the Plan area. They provide a valuable natural and archaeological resource. Peatlands are also important controllers of water levels in river catchments, providing a source of water in dry conditions and soaking up excess water during wetter periods; they actively capture and hold carbon and are an important natural resource in combatting climate change. Cutaway bogs have the potential to facilitate land uses such as employment, renewable energy generation, waste management, industrial, and tourism and recreation.

Coastline

The Plan area has an extensive coastline. The coastline and coastal erosion are topics with relevance to various environmental components. Coastlines can be amongst the most sensitive and valuable resources, in terms of natural and cultural heritage, scenic beauty and recreation. The coast is also an important economic resource - particularly for the fishing, aquaculture, leisure and tourism industries. Some of the settlements within the area to which the Plan relates have developed along or near the coast.

Afforestation and Woodlands

A substantial part of the Plan area has been planted with conifer trees – while providing economic benefit to the area they also provide recreational opportunities. Woodlands which are not as numerous in the area are a valuable resource in terms of biodiversity, recreation and tourism, and also important as links in the green infrastructure network.

5.10.2 Public Infrastructure

Water & Wastewater

The existing public assets of the Plan area include public utilities such as electrical, water and wastewater infrastructure. Public spaces within the region have potential to be drivers of tourism, and the supporting infrastructure and services can impact the quality of the experience for visitors.

The latest EPA *Drinking Water Quality in Public Supplies 2024*¹⁴ provides a summary of assessment of drinking water quality in public supplies and public group water schemes in Ireland during 2024. The Plan Area did not have any schemes or supplies on the remedial action list (RAL), i.e. those requiring immediate attention nor did any have boil water notices or another notices issued.

Uisce Eireann published results for wastewater treatment plants in the Plan area for 2024. There are eight treatment plants (<500 PE) in the area, and all have capacity. Two of these plants failed compliance on nitrogen discharge.

In un-serviced areas and outside the main settlements, the main method of sewage disposal is by means of individual septic tanks and proprietary wastewater treatment systems. The requirements for

¹⁴

https://www.epa.ie/publications/compliance--enforcement/drinking-water/annual-drinking-water-reports/FINAL-EPA_DrinkingWaterQualityinPublicSupplies2024-v1.4.pdf

these systems are set out in the EPA *Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment Systems and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses*¹⁵.

Waste Management

Waste management across the area to which the Plan relates is guided by the National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy in 2024. This plan focus is on creating a circular economy by coordinating messaging, increasing awareness, and implementing policies to prevent waste generation.

In the plan area there are three active waste licence holders- one for quarry activities, one for peat deposition and a landfill licence.

Transport

Mayo's transport plan focuses on promoting sustainable transport through strengthening public transport and active travel (walking and cycling) and is guided by the Mayo County Development Plan 2021-2027 and local plans like the Ballina Local Transport Plan 2023. Key objectives include improving public transport infrastructure for safety and efficiency, ensuring new developments are located with good access to public transport and active travel routes, and developing safe walking and cycling routes to local amenities.

Road travel is the main form of transport in the plan area, and the following are the main road arteries servicing the area:

- N26: Swinford → Ballina (key route for North Mayo)
- N59: Sligo → Westport via Newport (serves western Mayo, connects to Ballina)
- R314: Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet) → Ballycastle → Ballina (critical for Erris Peninsula)
- R313: Bangor → Blacksod (serves the Mullet Peninsula)
- R315: Pontoon → Crossmolina → Ballycastle (connects inland to coastal areas)

Figure 5.10 illustrate the network of public transport in the Plan area.

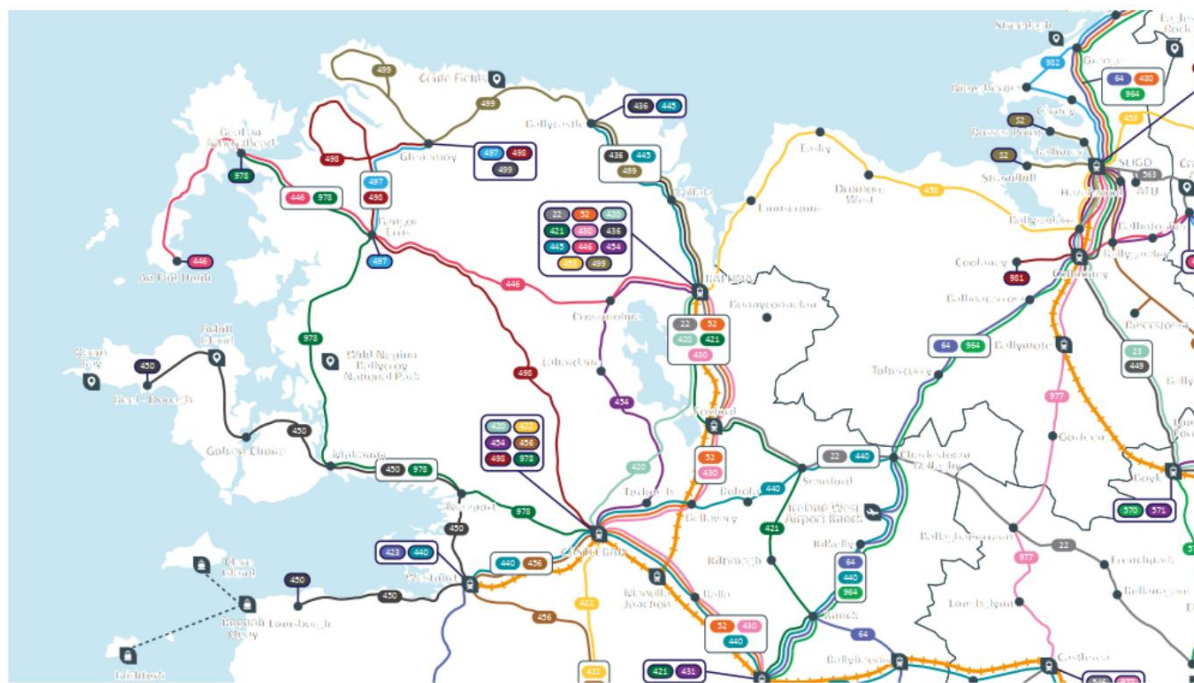


Figure 5.10 Public Transport network in Plan area (Source: TFI, 2025)

Telecommunications

¹⁵ [Code of Practice for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems](#)

High-speed broadband and telecommunications are core to competitiveness. The National Broadband Plan 201939 (NBP) sets out the strategy to deliver high speed broadband throughout Ireland. Ireland has made significant progress in recent years in terms of broadband connectivity at all levels: international connectivity, backhaul networks.

Work continues in County Mayo to roll out the National Broad Band Plan to the entire county. Areas around Ballina have already benefited from upgrades.

Energy & Utilities

Mayo County Council is in the process of developing a new Renewable Energy Strategy. The Strategy will set out a vision for the future Renewable Energy Development of Mayo and contain objectives to achieve the vision. While the county and Plan area have high potential for consideration of renewable energy forms an important aim will be to ensure a balance between facilitating the development of the county whilst protecting the environment for future generations.

Gas and electricity are the energy utilities which have traditionally supported homes and businesses across the Country. ESB Networks and EirGrid are the utility providers responsible for the electricity distribution and transmission systems. EirGrid manages the higher capacity electricity network which supplies power to industry and businesses that use large amounts of energy and electricity, whilst the ESB manages and operates the distribution network supplying electricity to homes, businesses, schools and institutions. Gas Networks Ireland (GNI) are the utility provider responsible for the supply, transmission and distribution of natural gas.

5.10.3 Material Assets – Existing Threats & Pressures

An increase in tourism could result in increasing demand for water, wastewater treatment, waste management, transport infrastructure / links and energy and telecommunications services.

Existing material assets issues / pressures within the study area, include:

- Water Supply and Wastewater Services - increased tourist numbers will generate pressure on existing water and wastewater sources to meet demands. Inadequate infrastructure, including inadequate capacity, contribute to the contamination of receiving surface water and groundwater waterbodies.
- Transport - the movement of people is key to the success of new development and areas, where adequate transport infrastructure (i.e. road, rail, cycle and pedestrian routes) to these developments and accessibility throughout the development / area (safe footpath and cycle paths) is fundamental to the development of tourism in the study area. Sustainable development of blueways and greenways is essential to promote recreation and tourism.
- Waste - increased tourist numbers will pose challenge in providing sustainable recycling infrastructure and will put pressure on the local authorities to provide better waste management and access to waste services.

5.11 Architectural, Archaeological & Cultural Heritage

Ireland is rich in architectural, archaeological, and cultural heritage with an abundance of heritage sites located throughout the country. Heritage sites by nature are usually invaluable and irreplaceable. These assets are under pressure from competing land uses across all sectors. Cultural heritage encompasses the ways in which communities have developed and how customs, practices, places, objects, traditions, and values were passed on from generation to generation. Ireland's heritage legislation and policy sit within a broad range of international and EU conventions, legislation, policy and programmes.

North County Mayo contains the renowned Ceide Fields Archaeological Site of prehistoric field systems, as well as the Belderg field systems and megalithic tombs. The coastal areas (including the islands of Inishglora and the Inishkeas) are abundant in archaeological sites and monuments, while the upland areas and bogland are also archaeologically significant. All Recorded Monuments, are subject to

statutory protection in the Record of Monuments and Places, established under section 12 of the National Monuments Act 1930-2014.

5.11.1 Archaeological Heritage

The archaeological heritage of an area includes structures, constructions, groups of buildings, developed sites, moveable objects, monuments of other types as well as their context, whether situated on or under land or water. North Mayo has a rich archaeological heritage.

The *National Monuments Acts 1930-2014* provide for the protection of archaeological heritage. The *Record of Monuments and Places* (RMP) was established under *Section 12* of the *National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994* and structures, features, objects or sites listed in this Record are known as Recorded Monuments.

The Plan area has an extensive amount of such records which can be viewed on mapping in full at : <https://heritagedata.maps>

5.11.2 Architectural Heritage

The term architectural heritage is defined in the *Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments Act 1999* as meaning all structures and buildings together with their settings and attendant grounds, fixtures and fittings; groups of structures and buildings; and sites which are of technical, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social, or technical interest. Refer to Figure 5.11.

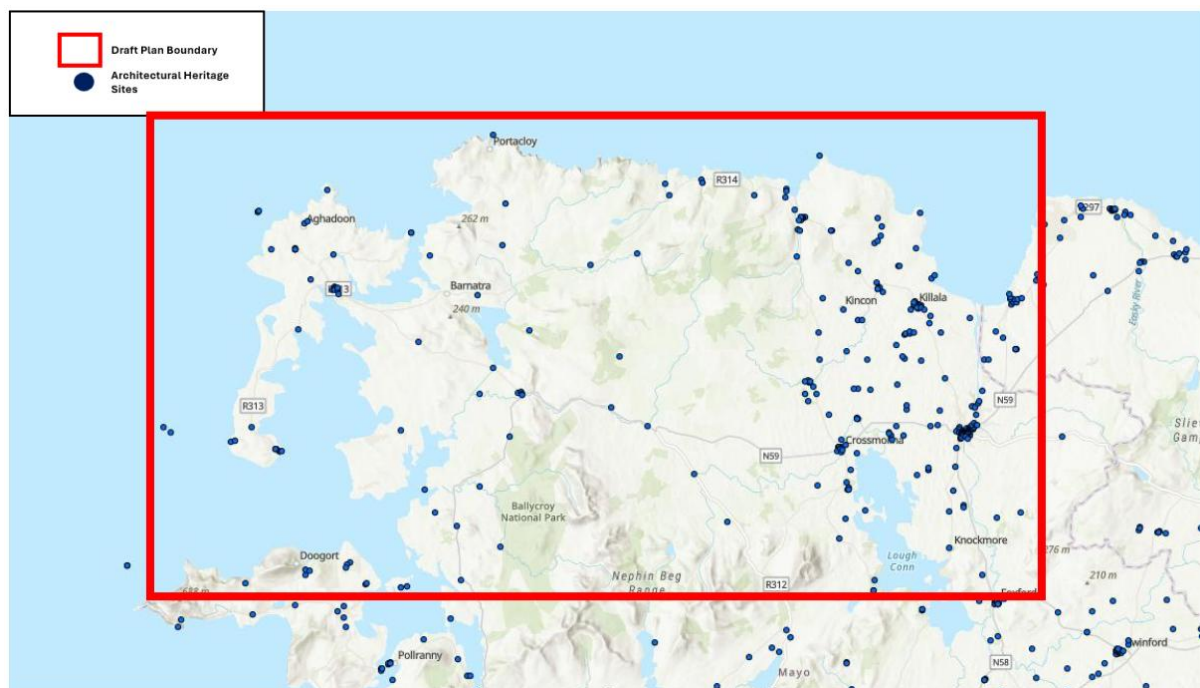


Figure 5.11 Architectural Heritage Sites in the Plan area (NIAH, 2025)

5.11.3 Underwater Archaeology

The Underwater Archaeology Unit was established within the National Monuments Service to manage and protect Ireland's underwater cultural heritage, including the quantification of the underwater resource and assessing development impacts in order to manage and protect this aspect of Ireland's heritage.

Lakes, rivers, estuaries, coastal and transitional waters within and surrounding the area to which the Plan relates, may contain many features and finds associated with maritime/riverine heritage such as shipwrecks, piers, quay walls, fords, stepping stones and associated archaeological objects and features.

There are 12 known wrecks located around the coast and in rivers in the Plan area as recorded by the National monument wreck viewer – refer to Figure 5.12.

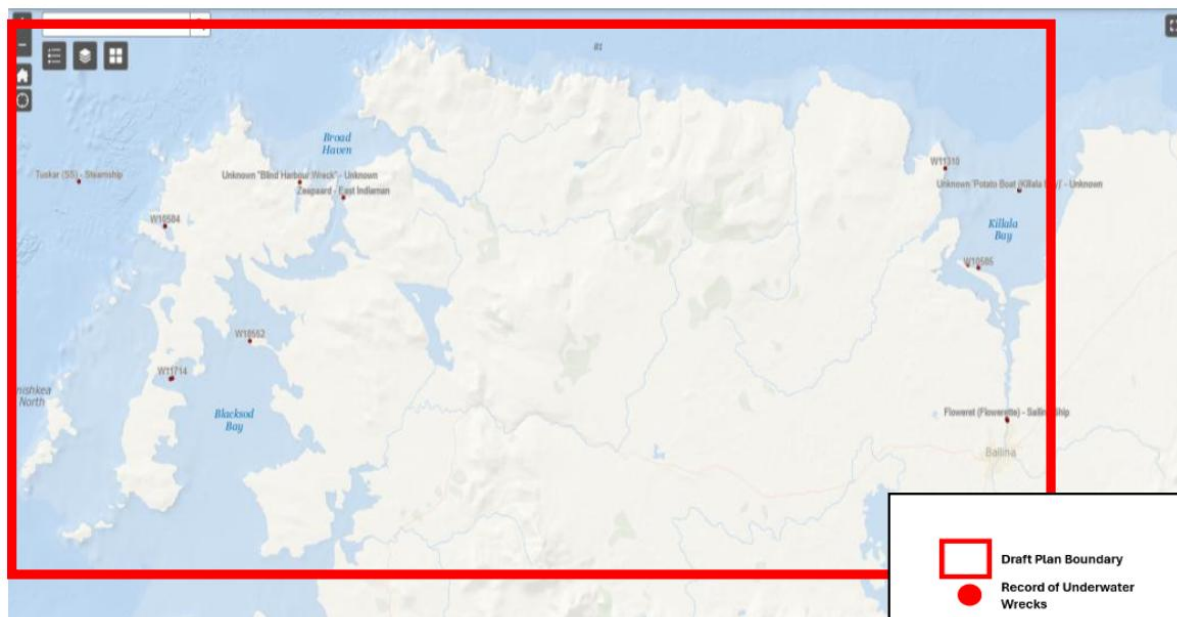


Figure 5.12 Known Underwater Archaeological Sites in the Plan Area (National Monuments Service: Wreck Viewer, 2025)

5.11.4 Architectural, Archaeological & Cultural Heritage – Existing Issues & Pressures

In 2019, the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht published the *Built & Archaeological Heritage Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan* (Prepared under the National Adaptation Framework). The adaptation strategy and accompanying action plan presented in the document aim to:

- Build adaptive capacity within the sector
- Reduce the vulnerability of built and archaeological heritage to climate change
- Identify and capitalise on the various potential opportunities for the sector.

Development is the greatest threat to archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage. Sites and features of historical and cultural significance can be lost through development on, or adjacent to, sites or their setting impacted.

Climate change also poses a direct and indirect threat to these historic sites. The increased frequency and severity of flooding and rising sea levels have the potential to damage or destroy sites, particularly in coastal areas or along watercourses. Increased levels of tourists can also lead to damage to sensitive structures or sites. The *Built & Archaeological Heritage Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan* (Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2019) aims to;

- Build adaptive capacity within the sector
- Reduce the vulnerability of built and archaeological heritage to climate change
- Identify and capitalise on the various potential opportunities for the sector.

5.12 Water

Water is fundamental to all life, for humans, plants and animals alike. It is also critical in economic terms in generating and sustaining wealth in a number of key areas such as agriculture, fishing, aquaculture, power generation, industry, transport and tourism. However, it is also a fragile resource requiring

continued protection. In general terms Ireland's waters are of good quality, however, preserving the high standard of water is essential for human health and the natural environment.

For the purposes of this section, the water environment is taken to include natural features such as lakes, rivers, streams and groundwater waterbodies. In addition, specifically designated waters and flooding are also dealt with in this section.

Wastewater treatment, drinking water and waters specifically designated (e.g. salmonid, Margaritifera and Shellfish) are discussed under Section 5.5.

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

5.12.1 Surface Waterbodies

Surface waterbodies, as defined by the EPA, include rivers, lakes, transitional and coastal waters. These waterbodies are used for a variety of services such as drinking water abstraction, fishing, aquaculture, bathing, wastewater treatment, agricultural uses, and recreational or amenity uses. Surface waterbodies are illustrated in Figure 5.13.

The Plan area includes for two WFD catchments and 19 associated sub catchments as detailed in Table 5.5

Table 5.5 WFD Catchments & Sub- Catchments located Wholly and/or partially within the Plan area

WFD Catchment	WFD Sub- Catchment (wholly and/or partially in Plan area)
Blacksod- Broadhaven	Tóin an Mhása
	Glencastle
	Owenmore -010
	Owenmore -020
	Owenmore -030
	Munhin
	Glenamoy
	Belderg
	Glencullin
	Owenduff
Moy and Killa Bay	Deel -010
	Deel -020
	Cloonaghmore
	Abbeytown
	Addergoole
	Moy-080
	Moy-090
	Moy-100
	Glenree

(Source EPA, 2025)

The *European Bathing Waters Directive (76/160/EC)* establishes provision for the monitoring and classification of bathing water quality, the management of bathing water quality, and the provision of information to the public on bathing water quality. Bathing waters have historically been an asset for their ability to attract tourists and for this reason, their management and maintenance are of significance to the Plan.

Bathing water locations have been identified under the *Bathing Water Quality Regulations 2008 (as amended)*.

The EPA assess water quality information provided by local authorities for the beaches that they manage. Each year, local authorities take samples of bathing waters just before and during the bathing water season. In Ireland, the season runs from the 1st of June to the 15th of September each year. The bathing waters include beaches and lakes and can be classified as 'excellent', 'good', 'sufficient', or 'poor'.

The Plan area has four designated bathing water area all classified by the EPA in 2024 as excellent.

5.12.2 Surface Water Quality

The latest Water Quality in Ireland report 2019-2024 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 shows that a considerable amount of work is still required to meet the environmental objectives of the WFD.

The majority of the river catchments monitored were of high and good status with fewer being moderate and four sub catchments were rated as poor. In terms of lake status there were a mix of high and good with one lake Cross being rated as moderate. Coastal waters were for the most part high with Killala Bay and Broadhaven bay being rated as good and of the three transitional water bodies identified in the Plan area two were of good status and one was moderate.

Further to this the WFD has rated water bodies in the Plan area at being at risk – these are illustrated in Figure 5.14.

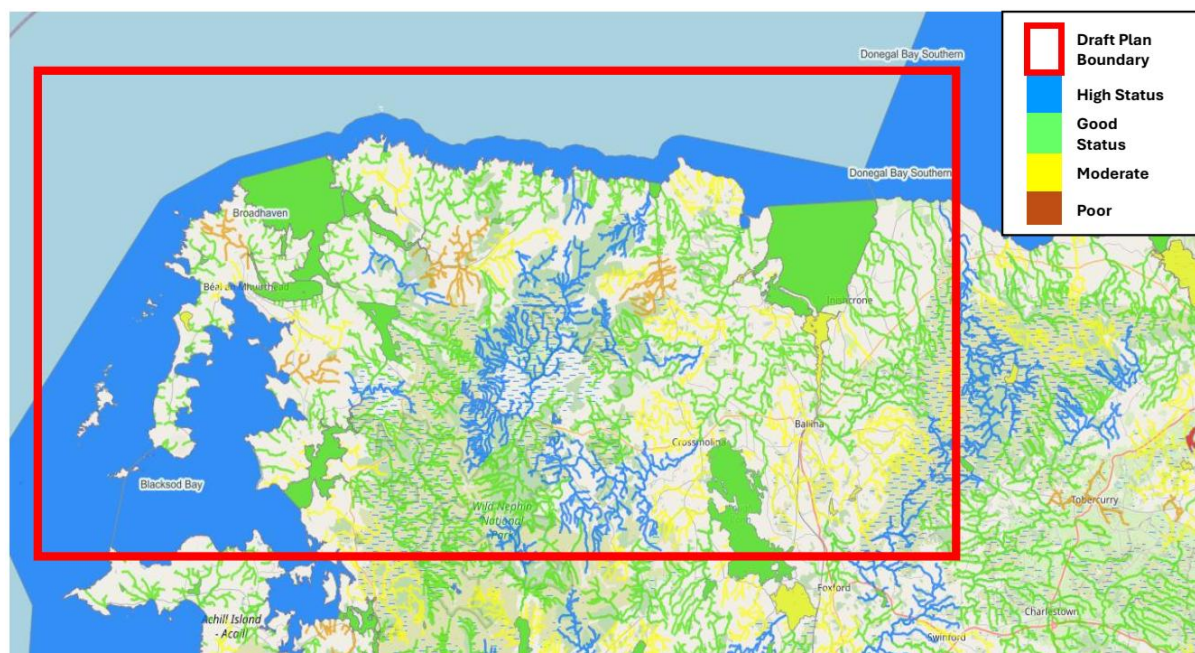


Figure 5.13 Surface Waterbodies and WFD Status located in the Plan area (Source, EPA, 2025)

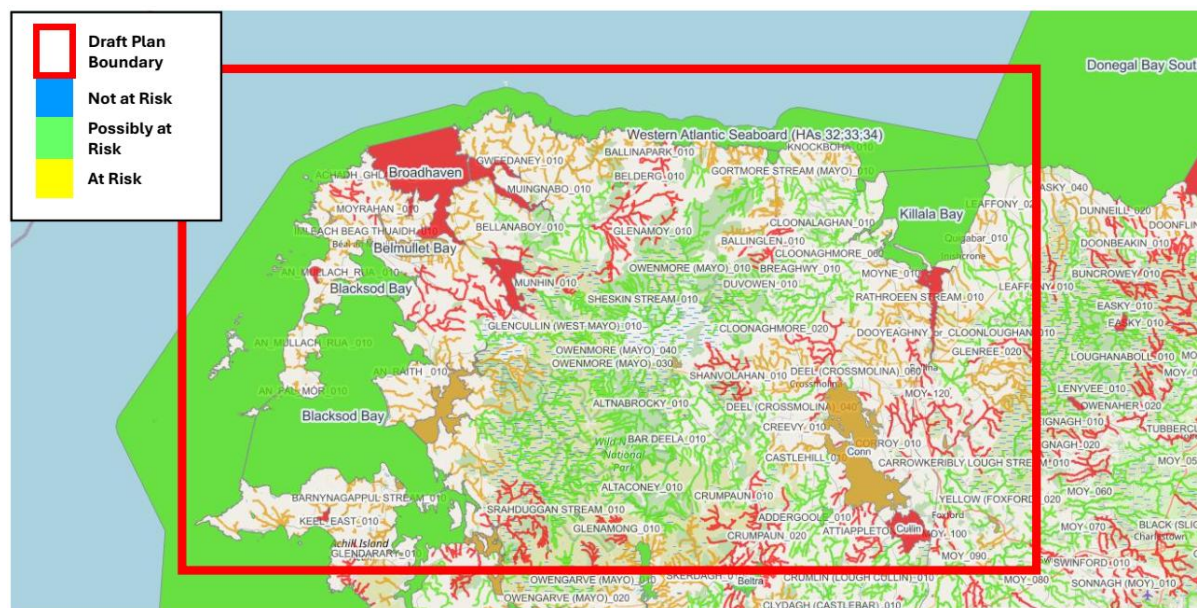


Figure 5.14 Surface Waterbodies and WFD Status located in the Plan area (Source, EPA, 2025)

5.12.3 Groundwater

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

Groundwater is used to supply some water supply schemes and can be used by households who are dependent on private wells. Underground aquifers are exploited commercially for bottled water, which can be a significant economic resource. Groundwater also contributes to the river system.

In the Plan area, the majority of underlying aquifer is classified as poor which means it is generally unproductive. There is one regional important aquifer and a number of locally important aquifers. Refer to Figure 5.15 for further details. The ground water quality for the Plan area has been classified under the WFD as good.

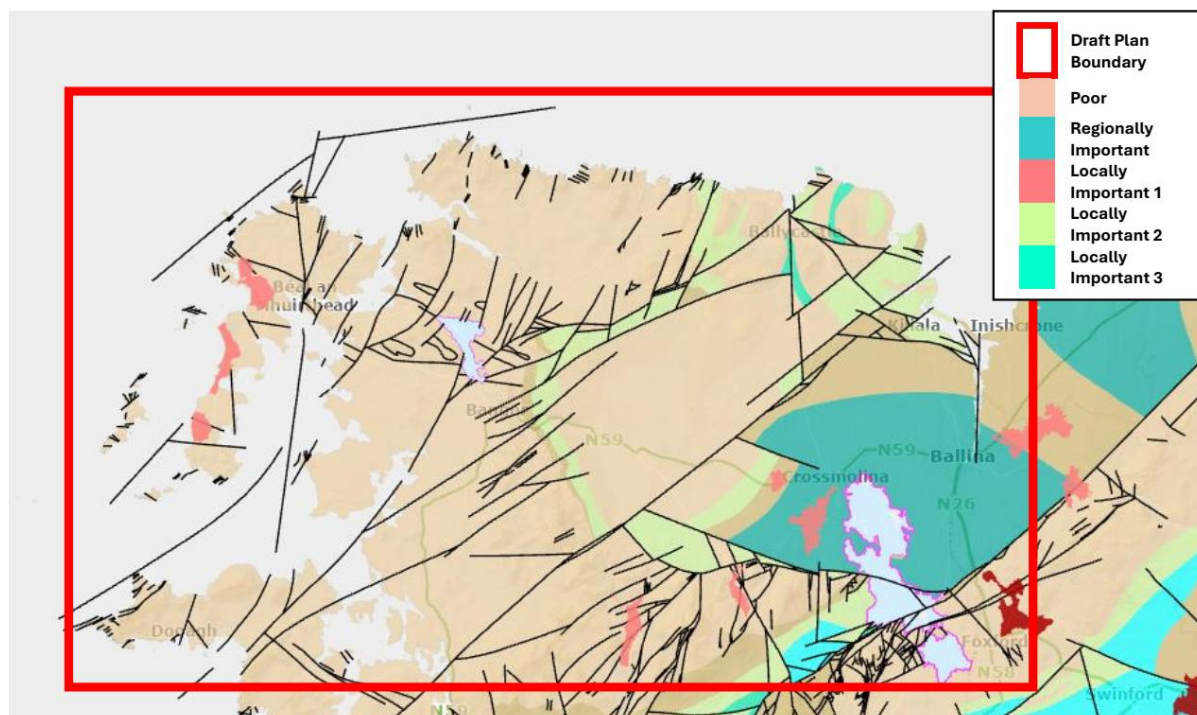


Figure 5.15 Aquifer Classifications in the Plan area (GSI, 2025)

Aquifer Vulnerability and Productivity Aquifer Vulnerability is a term used to represent the natural ground characteristics that determine the ease with which groundwater may be contaminated by human activities. Figure 5.16 sets out aquifer or groundwater vulnerability in the Plan area.

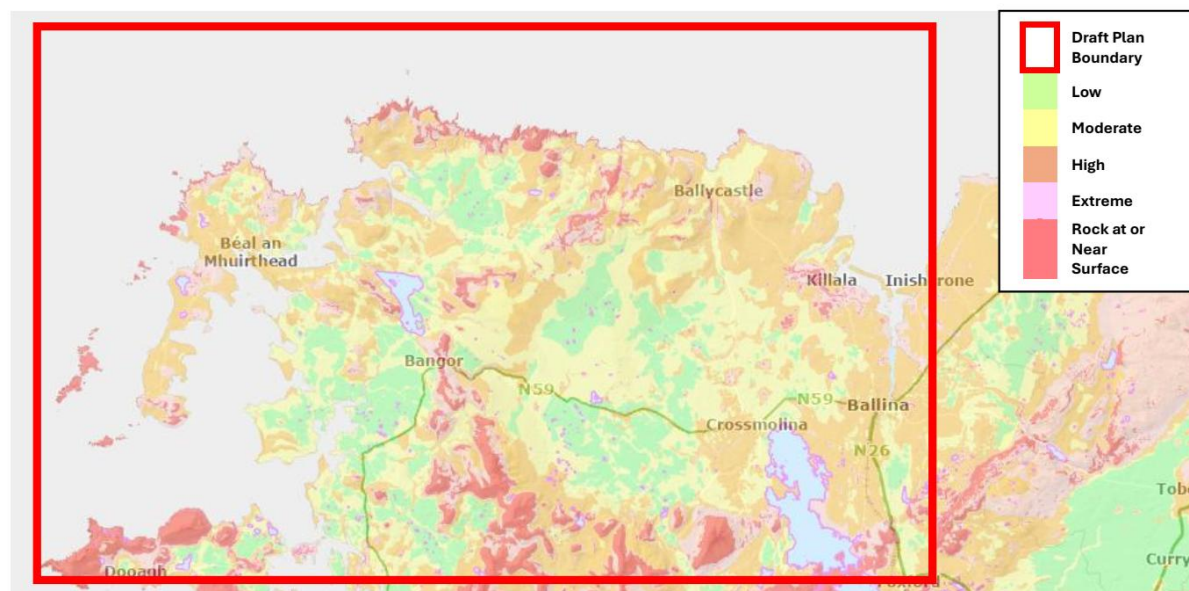


Figure 5.16 Aquifer Vulnerability in the Plan area.

5.12.4 Flooding

The underlying causes of flooding, heavy rain and high sea levels are, essentially uncontrollable. Floods are usually caused by a combination of events including overflowing riverbanks, heavy rains, coastal storms or blocked or overloaded drainage systems and an increase in development and impermeable surfacing.

The Office of Public Works (OPW) is the lead State body for flood risk management. Mayo County Council have also generated a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) which identifies the different sources of flooding and looks at a number of locations throughout the county, the majority urban in nature at the type of flooding and possible mitigation required. Both the River Deel at Crossmolina and the Moy at Ballina had had flood relief schemes completed.

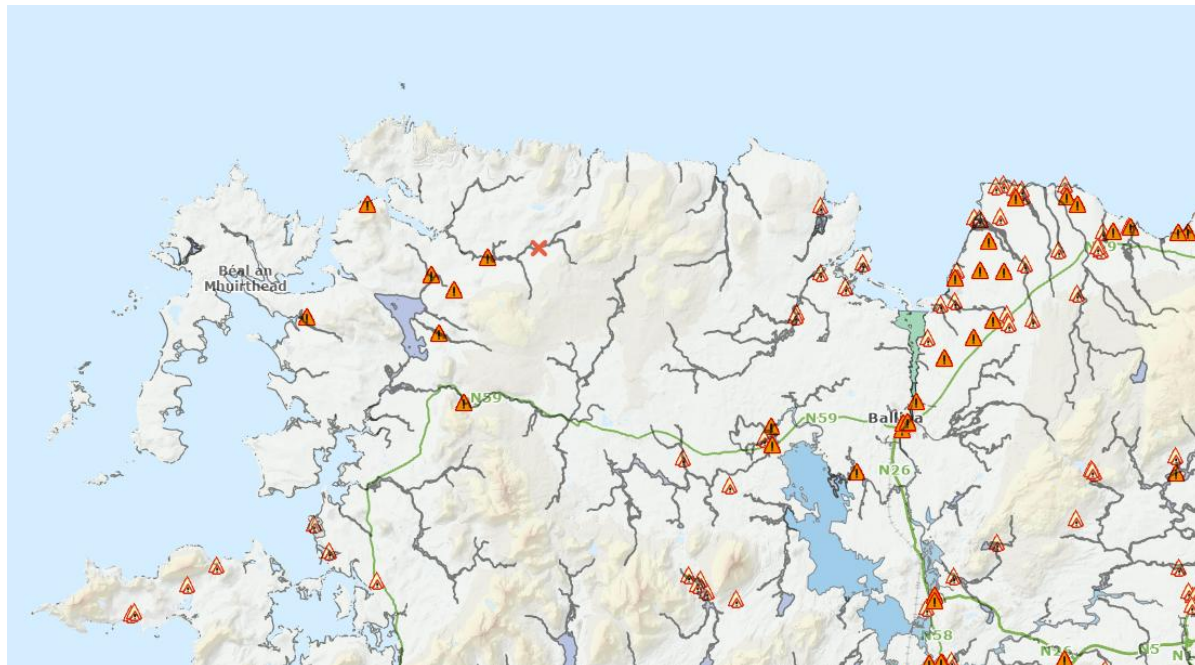


Figure 5.17 Past Flood Events in the Plan area (CFRAMS, OPW, 2025)

Any proposal that is considered acceptable in principle should demonstrate the use of the sequential approach in terms of the site layout and design and, in satisfying the Justification Test (where required), the proposal will demonstrate that appropriate mitigation and management measures are put in place to safeguard against future or additional flooding.

5.12.5 Water – Existing Threats & Pressures

The principal threat to water is pollution which can adversely impact on all parts of the water cycle from groundwater to rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters. The Plan must comply with the requirements of the WFD and the Groundwater Directive and aim to drive improvement to water quality in both the short and long-term. Existing water quality issues / pressures with environmental considerations include:

- Water – some of the surface waterbodies in North County Mayo need to be improved from moderate to achieve good or high by 2027
- Water - pressure on water sources include excessive nutrient enrichment which leads to eutrophication.
- Water - pressure on water sources also comes from land-use changes, water-based recreational sports, erosion, industry and urbanisation.
- Sustainable management of waterways and water-based recreation activities to ensure a balance between tourism development and conservation of natural resources and heritage areas.
- Water - water contamination arising through poor working practices, leakages or accidental spillage of materials if efficient pollution control measures are not fully implemented and maintained.
- Surface, ground & transitional waters - are at risk of pollution from septic tanks and wastewater treatment systems in the vicinity of waterbodies, potential pressures and impacts on water body

status, water usage and flood risk from the construction projects i.e. increased sedimentation, groundwater recharge and accidental spillages.

- There is growing pressures from increasing population and increasing and sometimes conflicting social, economic and recreational uses.
- Flooding - flood risk to be considered as a key environmental criterion.

5.13 Landscape & Visual

The landscape Appraisal for County Mayo is divided into six policy area which relate to the protection and capacity to absorb development.

The Plan area is located over five of these areas as follows:

- Area B- Northwest Coastal Moorland
- Area C – Northwest Coastal Bog
- Area D – North Coastal Plateaux
- Area E- North Mayo Mountain Moorland
- Area G: North Mayo Drumlins

The Plan area also has a number of vulnerable features as identified under this appraisal. This relates to visually vulnerable features including skylines and vulnerable areas including coastlines, riverbanks and lakeshores. Figure 5.18 illustrates the visually vulnerable entities identified in the Plan area. The appraisal also sets out scenic routes and protected views as well as slopes and ridge lines and sensitive landscapes.

The Plan area has a number of vulnerable features, scenic routes, protected views and slopes and ridges. It is also designed for the most part under sensitive landscape types including peat bogs, moors and heathlands, beaches, dunes, sands and natural grasslands.

Figure 5.18- 5.21 illustrate these landscape designations.

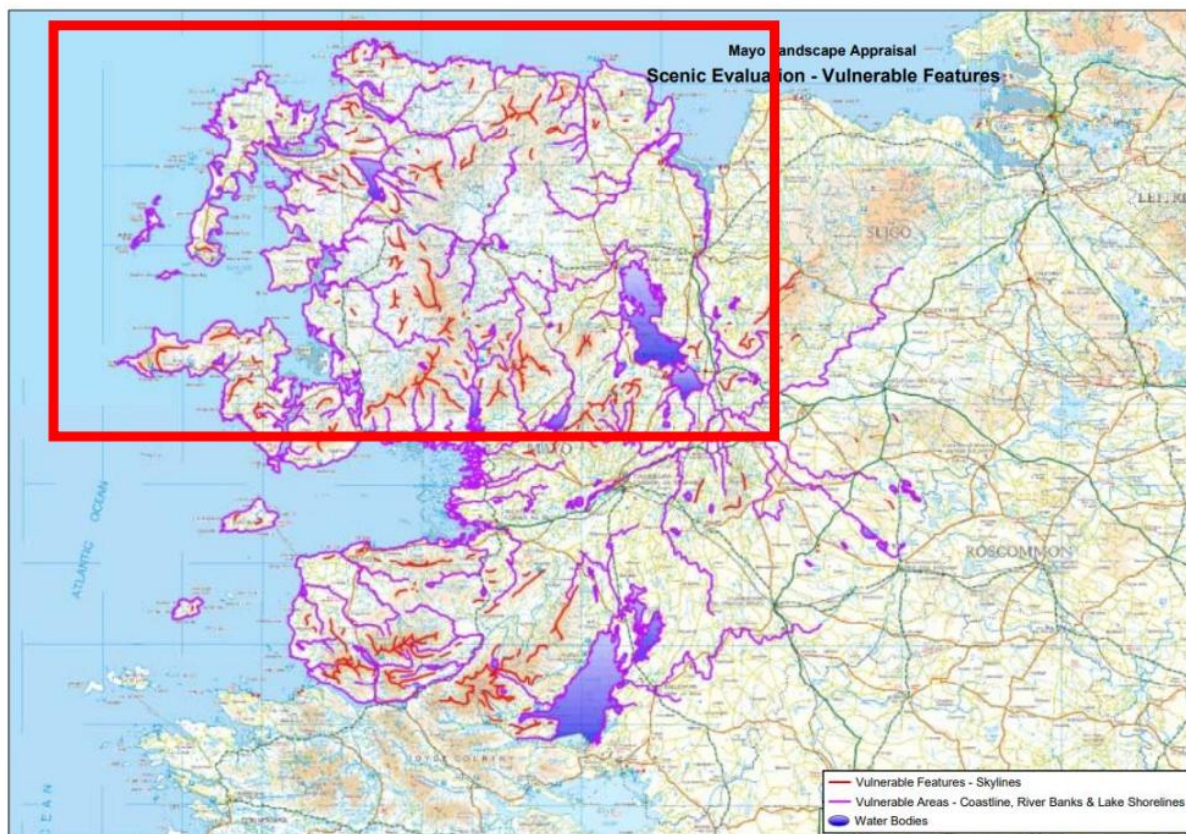


Figure 5.18 Visually Vulnerable Features in the Plan area (Source: Mayo Landscape Appraisal)

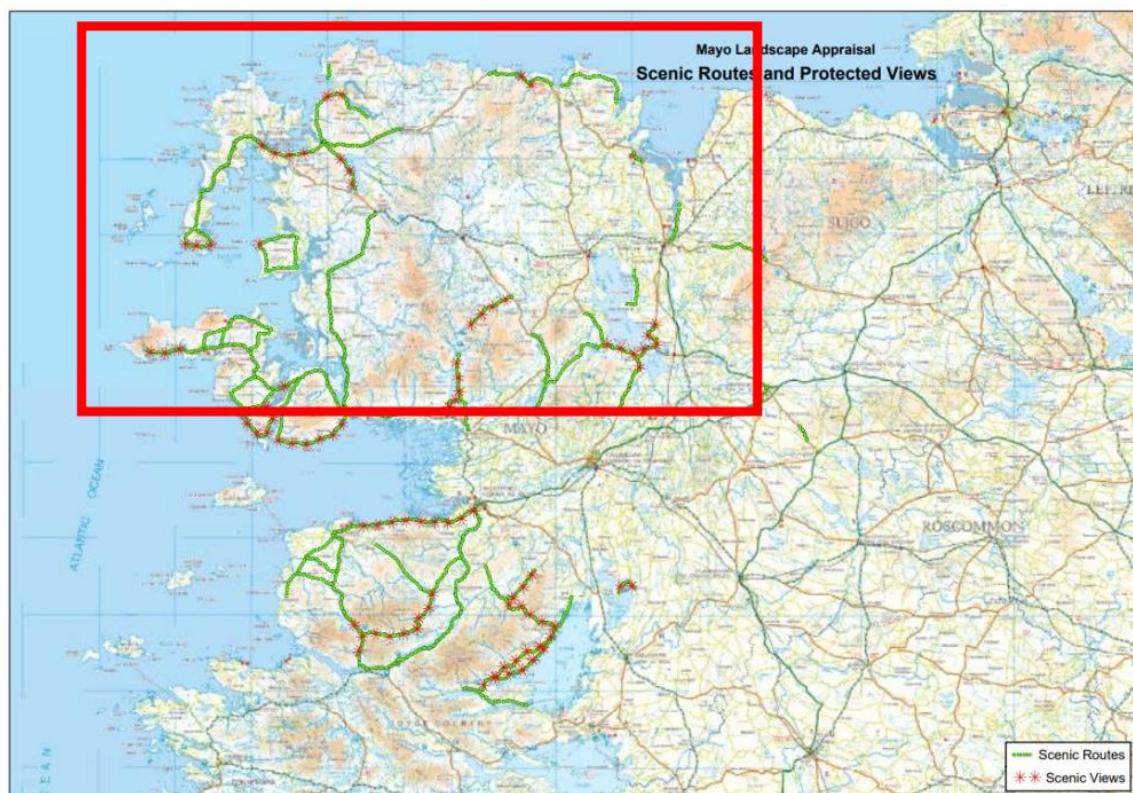


Figure 5.19 Scenic Routes & Protected Views in the Plan area (Source: Mayo Landscape Appraisal)

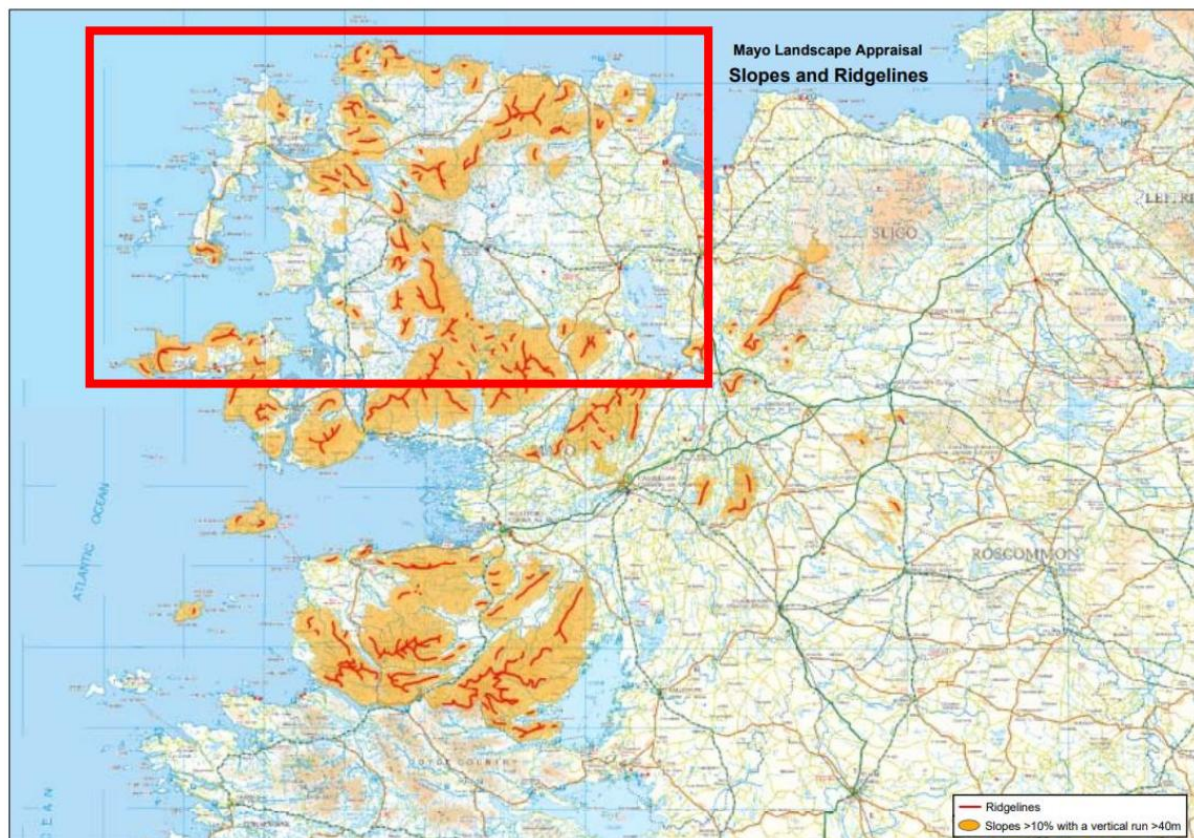


Figure 5.20 Slopes & Ridges in the Plan area (Source: Mayo Landscape Appraisal)

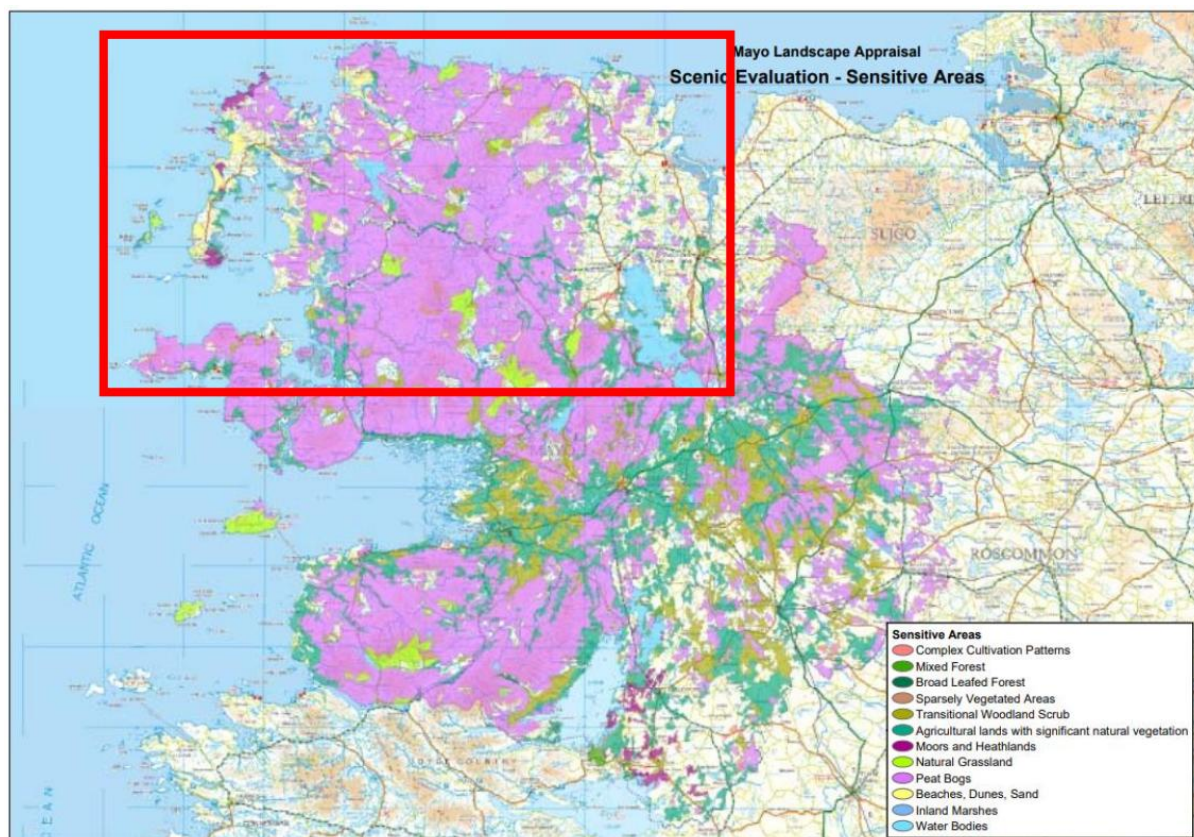


Figure 5.21 Sensitive Landscapes in the Plan area (Source: Mayo Landscape Appraisal)

5.13.1 Landscape & Visuals – Existing Pressures & Threats

Development, including tourism development, has the potential to change the landscape character of a Plan areas distinct landscapes. Developments, in a manner which is inconsistent with the landscape character or type, can impact the sensitivity of these landscapes and in turn, can impact tourism. Impacts to landscapes can come in many forms such as housing development, industry such as quarrying, wind farms (onshore and offshore), or any land use changes.

Areas of high landscape sensitivity, including scenic views, are particularly vulnerable to landscape changes and are likely to be the most attractive locations for development pressure. Balancing the pressure for development in unique landscapes, including in areas containing features of note (such as heritage sites), will remain a challenge.

6 Strategic Environmental Objectives

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.’ Are set out in the environmental report given the position of the WMDEDP beneath the Mayo County 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 WMDEDP (refer to Table 6.1). The SEOs provide a basis for the assessment of the environmental effects of the WMDEDP and are framed in such a manner as to enable the WMDEDP to be fully assessed in environmental terms.

SEOs are distinct from the strategic objectives within the WMDEDP, although they often overlap and are developed from international, national and regional policies which generally govern environmental protection objectives. These high-level SEOs are paired with specific targets which can be monitored using indicators (see Section 10 of this Report).

Table 6.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEO's) for the WMDEDP

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna (B)	B1	Ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of Natura 2000 Sites and Annex habitats and species ¹⁶ and no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function.
	B2	Preserve, protect, maintain and where appropriate enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, including internationally, EU and nationally designated sites, habitats and protected species
	B3	Ensure WMDEDP does not contradict biodiversity protection, restoration and rehabilitation objectives in the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028.
Population & Human Health (PHH)	PHH1	Promote sustainable high-quality tourism within the plan area that supports economic development and maximises potential for employment and investment.
	PHH2	Improve health and wellbeing by provision of recreational and tourism related activities.

¹⁶ ‘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
Lands, Soils & Geology (LSG)	LSG1	Minimise green field development and protect land and soil resources from pollution and degradation.
Air Quality, Noise & Climate) ANC)	ANC1	Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality and noise emissions through the reduction of emissions.
	ANC2	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)	MA1	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.
	MA2	Promote sustainable waste management, minimisation and recovery.
	MA3	Promote sustainable transportation including increased use of public transport and active travel measures.
Architectural, Archaeological & Cultural Heritage (AACH)	AACH1	Protect and avoid impact on places, features and landscapes of cultural and archaeological importance, including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP).
	AACH2	Protect 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)).
Water (W)	W1	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.
	W2	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.
Landscape & Visuals (LV)	LV1	To protect landscape character, minimise the loss of historic landscape features such as mature trees and hedgerows and scenic views.
	LV2	Avoid impacts on the statutory landscape & visual designations as identified in the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028.

7 Assessment of Alternatives

In accordance with *Schedule 2 of S.I.435 of 2004 (as amended)*, the ER is required to provide: “an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information. “This section presents the environmental assessment of the alternatives considered in the development of the WMDEDP.

7.1 Description of Alternatives

Alternatives are required to be reasonable, realistic and capable of implementation. They are required to be set at the appropriate level at which the Plan will be implemented, operating within the planning hierarchy i.e., the higher the level, the more strategic the options are likely to be. Reasonable alternatives were considered by Fáilte Ireland, taking into account the objectives and geographic scope of the WMDEDP.

The alternatives considered by Fáilte Ireland are:

1. Alternative 1 – Do Nothing: Continue without the development of a plan.
2. Alternative 2A - Do-Something: Prepare a plan **without** environmental consideration.
3. Alternative 2B - Do-Something: Prepare a plan **with** environmental consideration.

7.1.1 Alternative 1: Do-nothing

Under this option tourism in the area would continue to operate as at present outside of a plan. This option continues to support and realise the tourism objectives set out in the *Mayo County Development Plan*, but neglects to address the environmental impacts of the implementation of these plans.

Tourism-related development would continue in a business-as-usual approach, with planning and consent obtained through existing statutory planning and consent framework under the local authority development plan process. Potential negative impacts on environmental factors would continue to be mitigated through that process.

7.1.2 Alternative 2A: Prepare a plan without environmental consideration

The do-something option, preparation of a plan without specific environmental considerations, involves implementing some changes to tourism planning in the WMDEDP region. This alternative would result in the development of a tourism plan involving coordination with various stakeholders, including local authorities, government agencies, tourism operators, communities and visitors, to better manage and plan for tourism in the plan area.

A Plan would help to promote new experiences, relieving some pressure from existing sites but leading to land use changes as a result of such developments which would not be strategically assessed in advance of being proposed. Notwithstanding this, the existing statutory planning and consent framework would address this issue, however, the promotion of tourism experiences without adequately considering the environment in advance of the planning consent process could lead to delays in projects.

Alternative 2A details the development of tourism across the plan area and towards the objectives of the Plan without specific inclusion of environmental mitigation as part of the plan making process. Alternative 2A would therefore, not offer any environmental mitigation strategies outside of consent-granting framework requirements.

7.1.3 Alternative 2B: Prepare a plan with environmental consideration

Alternative 2B includes the consideration of environmental mitigation as part of the Plan. Under this option, Fáilte Ireland would require stakeholders to develop projects in a coordinated manner considering environmental protection, environmental management, and sustainable development from the outset. Environmental requirements would include requirements under existing legislation, plans and policies but would also consider the assessment of existing environmental pressures and threats which in turn informs the development of the Plan and specific projects.

This alternative would have a more robust procedure where the Plan is developed to consider environmental protection and sustainability in a holistic manner and from the outset. Projects would be developed in a coordinated approach to ensure adequate environmental considerations and mitigation is applied, where necessary, including those outside of the planning system. These include:

- Embedded mitigation (changes to the plan/text itself).
- Development of visitor management strategies.
- Integration of blue and green infrastructure and ecosystem services.

7.2 Assessment Methodology

The assessment of the alternatives described in Section 7.1 was undertaken with regard to the SEOs from Section 6 and the baseline established in Section 5. The environmental assessment accounts for all potential significant effects across all environmental factors. The assessment is to identify and compare the likely significant effects on the environment of each alternative, identify which alternative has the greatest potential to have negative and/or positive impacts on the environment while also achieving the plan objectives.

The implementation of each alternative will be assessed alongside associated environmental assessments and consent applications for relevant plans and projects, limiting the degree to which impacts can be predicted at this stage. Therefore, the impacts on all SEOs are considered together. The environmental assessment of the alternatives is undertaken for all SEOs in Table 7.1.

The potential effects of the reasonable alternatives on the SEOs categorised as follows:

- Potential Positive Environmental Impact (indicated by '+')
- Potential Negative Environmental Impact (indicated by '-')
- Potential Positive and Negative Environmental Impacts (indicated by '+/-').
- Uncertain Environmental Impact ((indicated by '?').
- Neutral, No or Insignificant Environmental Impact (indicated by '0')

Table 7.1 Assessment of Alternatives for the WMDEDP

Alternative	Description	Environmental Assessment of All SEOs	Environmental Evaluation
Alternative 1: Do-nothing	No plan is developed; tourism development would continue business as usual. Tourism development would follow the County Mayo Development Plan.	+/-	This alternative would lead to uncoordinated tourism development across the county. With no plan, the objectives of the Plan and the full economic potential for tourism across the county and throughout the year would likely not be realised. Furthermore, the potential environmental effects of this alternative are expected to result in more negative environmental effects than positive.
Alternative 2A: Prepare a plan without Environmental Consideration	Tourism in the Plan area will be actioned through the preparation of a plan, without environmental considerations.	+/- ?	Alternative 2A will deliver on many aspects of the Plan objectives, especially those related to expanding regional tourism, creating new experiences and opportunities for visitors, and encouraging longer stays. This alternative may also give rise to unexpected environmental effects, uncertainty, positive, or negative effects from a lack of environmental consideration. It is likely this Alternative will have more negative effects on the environment than the other alternatives and/or result in delays to new proposals in areas that may not be suitable or prepared for development without mitigation.
Alternative 2B: Prepare a plan with Environmental Consideration	Tourism in the Plan area will be actioned through the preparation of a plan, with environmental considerations.	+/-	Alternative 2B supports the objectives of the Plan by encouraging the sustainable growth of tourism and economic potential of the Plan area. It is anticipated that Alternative 2B will result in more positive than negative environmental effects. This is due to the considerations of environmental effects as

Alternative	Description	Environmental Assessment of All SEOs	Environmental Evaluation
			part of the preparation of the Plan and opportunity for mitigation and monitoring of effects. Alternative 2B is the preferred option from an environmental perspective and delivery of the Plan objectives.

7.3 Preferred Alternative

It is likely that Alternative 1 will have more negative environmental effects than positive and so, Alternative 1 does not deliver positive benefits for tourism in the Plan area.

Alternative 2A will deliver effective benefit and response for tourism in the Plan area, but without ensuring environmental protection.

Alternative 2B will deliver effective benefit and response for tourism in the Plan area, whilst at the same providing for sustainable development and environmental protection.

Given the tourism and environmental benefits, Alternative 2B is selected as the preferred approach.

8 Assessment of the Wild Mayo DEDP

The WMDEDP has been subject to an assessment for potential effects arising from the implementation of the Plan on the baseline environment as characterised and described in Section 5 of this Report. The assessment is carried out having regard to the Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) established for the aspects of the baseline environment which have potential to be impacted by the WMDEDP. These Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) are detailed in Section 6 of this Report.

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

8.1 Assessment Methodology

The assessment is undertaken using an assessment matrix with a commentary provided under the assessment to aid the reader in understanding the rationale for assigning the potential effects.

Table 8.1 sets out the assessment criteria or questions used as guidance for the assessment team. The assessment criteria, in the form of questions, can assist in identifying the potential significant effects of the Plan on each environmental factor.

Table 8.1 Assessment Questions

SEOs	Assessment Criteria/Questions
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	Is there potential to result in significant or adverse effects (direct or indirect) on: • European; (Natura 2000) or species protected in Annex II and IV of Habitats Directive and Annex I of Birds Directive? • Nationally designated sites NHA's and pNHAs? • Local, county or national biodiversity including Biodiversity Action Plan objectives? • Is there potential to improve /increase biodiversity protection? • Is there potential for construction works that may impact biodiversity?
Population and Human Health	Is there potential to: • Affect public health and quality of life in terms of improved access to tourism, recreational, amenity facilities/resources (shops, retail etc) and other community facilities? • Reduce journey time to above facilities? • Improve access to tourists to rural locations / populations? • Improve quality of travel and access to information for visitors? • Raise public awareness of opportunities for more sustainable transport or more active travel to tourist destinations? • Increase impacts on local populations including public health and wellbeing from increased tourist related effects i.e. pressure on the availability of permanent accommodation for locals/workforce, traffic congestion levels, noise and air quality emissions? • Support local economic development for employment and community facilities? • Support and enhance access and development of tourism and recreation (including water-based recreation)? • Improve the tourism offering and disperse the benefits of tourism to new areas?
Water	Is there potential for: • Deterioration of waterbody status or conflict with or contribute to potential to achieve WFD objectives for achieving "Good" status (groundwater and surface water and transitional water bodies)? • Increased flood risk or result in loss of flood plain?

SEOs	Assessment Criteria/Questions
	- Improvements of blue infrastructure and nature-based solutions - Improvement in water quality in areas impacted by tourism activities (e.g. beaches, coastal areas, river-based activities)
Air Quality	Is there potential to: - Contribute to improvements to air quality or to increase air pollution? - Breach air quality standards?
Climate (adaption and mitigation)	Is there potential to: - Significantly increase the level of construction and/or operational carbon emissions? - Contribute to reducing emissions and meeting future emission reduction targets? - Increase vulnerability to climate change of the environment to climate change? - Increase resilience and adaptation of the environment to climate change?
Land and Soils	Is there potential for: - Impacts on designated geological heritage sites/features? - Impact on valuable greenfield sites/ valuable soils or geological resources? - Remediation of contaminated land or reuse of brownfield sites? - Impacts on land use zoning?
Material Assets	Is there potential for: - Pressure on critical infrastructure (water, wastewater, transportation networks/services, energy, internet capacity)? - Impacts on existing tourism assets, businesses or agricultural land? - The increase and/or avoidance/minimisation of resource consumption (i.e. does it support the circular economy)?
Architectural, Archaeological and Cultural Heritage	Is there potential to: - Cause direct damage to, or detract from the setting of, designated cultural heritage assets, or does this contribute to protecting them (including marine based archaeology, protected bridges and railway corridors and/ or undiscovered archaeology)? - Increase connectivity and appreciation of cultural heritage assets?
Landscape	Is there potential to: - Affect sensitive landscapes such as seascapes, townscape and river views or visual amenity, for example are there impacts to landscape protection zones or scenic views or routes? - Cause any significant landscape changes or new viewpoints made available?

The outline and structure of the plan can be referenced in Figure 2.1. The next section of this report looks further at assessing the Vision, Objectives and Destination Development Themes through their corresponding catalyst projects and supporting initiatives. These are assessed against the SEOs as set out in Chapter 6.

Table 8.2 Assessment of WMDEDP – Vision

Vision	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
<i>"A place that captivates the soul, Wild Mayo is recognised as a spectacular outdoors destination offering immersive wilderness and adventure for all. From its stunning coastlines to its rugged boglands, the region offers a landscape that inspires creativity and invites exploration. Rich in history, heritage, and culture, Wild Mayo brings its stories to life through immersive trails, vibrant communities, and celebrated traditions. The Irish language is protected and proudly spoken, adding depth and authenticity to every experience. Whether walking ancient paths, connecting with local craftspeople, or simply breathing in the wild Atlantic air, visitors leave with a sense of wonder, and a longing to return."</i>	PHH1, PHH2			B1, B2, B3, LSG1, W1, W2, ANC1, ANC2, MA1 MA2, MA3, CH1, CH2, LV1, LV2	No
Commentary/Potential Environmental Effects This vision statement sets a target objective for destination experience and tourism in the Plan region. 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.					

Table 8.3 Assessment of WMDEDP – Objectives

Objectives	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
Destination Positioning & Identity - Strengthen the 'Wild Mayo' proposition through cohesive stakeholder messaging, positioning North Mayo as a leading wild adventure destination. Extend the Tourism Season - Leverage existing visitor attractions and develop new experiences to encourage year-round exploration of North Mayo. Towns and Villages as Visitor Hubs - Enhance the tourism value of towns and villages by developing them as vibrant, well-serviced hubs that encourage dwell time, exploration, and year-round use. Environment, Heritage & Sustainable Tourism - Celebrate the environment and heritage by fostering appreciation of North Mayo's natural and cultural legacy, while championing sustainable and slow tourism models. Gaeltacht & Living Cultural Heritage - Elevate the Gaeltacht by supporting the development of immersive Irish language experiences, positioning it as a cornerstone of living cultural heritage. Tourism Infrastructure & Amenities - Create strong tourism infrastructure and well-serviced amenities around North Mayo's natural assets to meet the needs of both visitors and local communities. Strategic & Policy Alignment - Align delivery with the National Tourism Policy Statement and the Wild Atlantic Way Regional Tourism Strategy objectives.	PHH1, PHH2			B1, B2, B3, LSG1, W1, W2, ANC1, ANC2, MA1 MA2, MA3, CH1, CH2, LV1, LV2	No
Commentary/ Potential Environmental Effects The objectives reference how the Vision will be delivered. Notably, increasing tourists to the plan area has the potential to negatively affect these sites, However, the objectives may also promote the protection, preservation and enhancement of these sites. There is the potential for positive and/or negative significant effects on a variety of environmental elements. However, recognition of County Mayo as an outdoor activity destination may integrate biodiversity initiatives and management, increasing awareness of local biodiversity and as a result, also promote/enhance biodiversity. The support for and proposed increase in international tourists is likely to have negative effects on air quality and climate due to the increase in greenhouse gases (GHGs) from international travel and current overreliance on private car travel. These objectives are more appropriately assessed in the detail of the plan. No specific projects are associated with the statement, and therefore no mitigation is suggested.					

Table 8.4 Assessment of WMDEDP – Target Outcomes

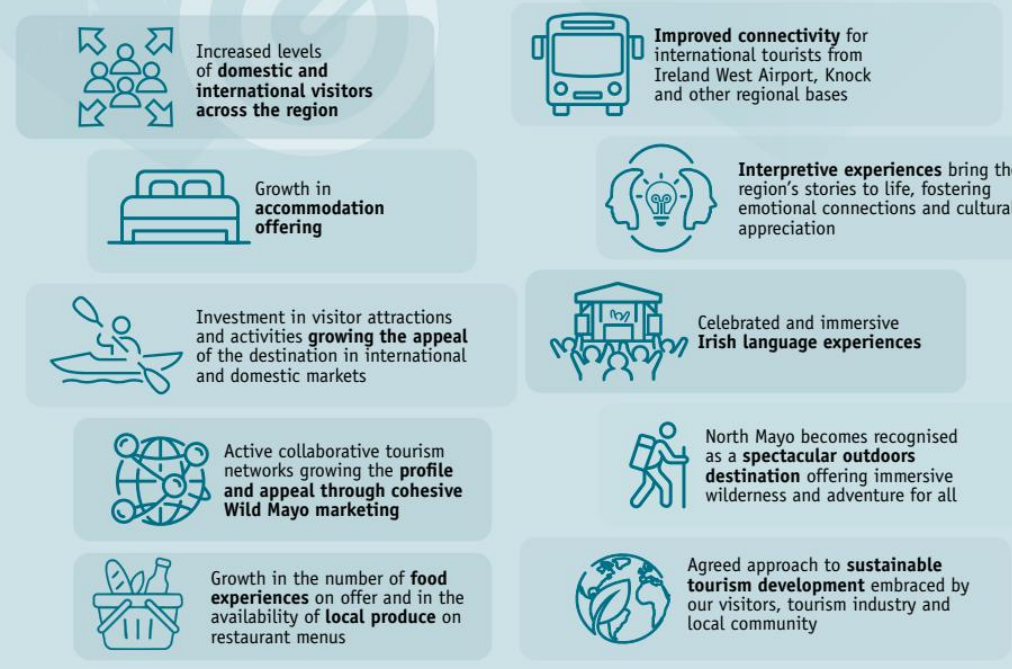
Target Outcomes	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
Target Outcomes Torthaí Sprioc 	PHH1, PHH2			B1, B2, B3, LSG1, W1, W2, ANC1, ANC2, MA1 MA2, MA3, CH1, CH2, LV1, LV2	No
Commentary/ Potential Environmental Effects The target outcomes reference how the successful the Plan is intended to be. Notably, increasing tourists to the plan area has the potential to negatively affect the environment, However, the target outcomes may also promote the protection, preservation and enhancement of the area. There is the potential for positive and/or negative significant effects on a variety of environmental elements. However, recognition of County Mayo as an outdoor activity destination may integrate biodiversity initiatives and management, increasing awareness of local biodiversity and as a result, also promote/enhance biodiversity. The support for and proposed increase in international tourists is likely to have negative effects on air quality and climate due to the increase in greenhouse gases (GHGs) from international travel and current overreliance on private car travel. These objectives are more appropriately assessed in the detail of the plan. No specific projects are associated with the statment, and therefore no mitigation is suggested.					

Table 8.5 Assessment of WMDEDP -Our Wild Adventure - Catalyst Projects – The Ceide Coastal Path & Downpatrick Head & Supporting Actions

Catalyst Projects – The Ceide Coastal Path & Downpatrick Head & Supporting Actions	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
The Céide Coastal Path: The initiative has been granted Part 8 planning approval and initial funding to begin the development of the trail. It will provide a new opportunity to access a series of key geological sites, including the Glenurla Valley Waterfall, the Polladarky Blow Hole, the Léam Giant Stepping Stones, the Doonfeeney Sea Arch, and Ballynacashlan Castle ruins. Funding is in place to commence the initial phase of development. • Work towards securing the necessary capital funding and continue to liaise with the Fáilte Ireland WAW Coastal Trails team on the initiative. Proceed with the installation of the eleven footbridges and the associated trail infrastructure that are required along the route – including the installation of trailheads, trailhead signage, safety and way marker signage, safety fencing, gates and stiles and boardwalks (where required). • Continue to work closely with the land owners to develop the management model for the path.	PHH1, PHH2, B1, B2, B3, AACH1, AACH2, ANC1, ANC2, MA1, MA3, LSG1	B1, B2, B3, AACH1, AACH2, W1, W2, LSG1	LV1, LV2		Yes
Commentary/ Potential Environmental Effects The influence of increased tourism movement and investment, as well as outdoor activities and facilities at this location has the potential to both positively and negatively influence all environmental factors to some degree or another. The development of new and existing coastal pathways has the potential to contribute to sustainable mobility and a better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefiting various environmental components including habitats at certain locations. There is potential for positive effects through connecting and promoting cultural heritage assets and natural assets through green infrastructure. While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions could have negative or uncertain effects for biodiversity, water, land & soils, landscape and visual, material assets and air & noise. The development of this project might result in negative environmental effects 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 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 locations would also require adequate provision of critical infrastructure. Mitigation measures in the form of proper planning, assessment at project level, implementation of visitor management and monitoring for same will be required.					

Contd.
Overleaf

Catalyst Projects – The Ceide Coastal Path & Downpatrick Head & Supporting Actions	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
- Address the trampling issues and the development of informal paths identified in the 2024 Fáilte Ireland Downpatrick Head Report undertaken as part of the National Environmental Monitoring programme, through options such as a formal path linking the car park and points of interest across the headland, and the development of marked pathways. Board walk sections may be required in more sensitive habitat zones. - Conduct an audit of existing signage, and address the current deficiencies in interpretive and safety/instructional signage, including directional signage in from the R314. In addition to the geological features and stunning cliff line, the Signature Discovery Point has the remnants of the 'Eire 64' markings, the ruins of a church building and a statue of St. Patrick. The interpretive messaging should support the wider St. Patrick story and ecclesiastical theme. - Establish a suitable cleaning and maintenance regime for the Spirit of Place installation at the 'Poll na Seantainne' blowhole. - During periods of high visitation, assess the potential to develop a park and ride system from Ballycastle. A proactive approach will reduce site management issues that may well arise as visitor numbers grow, and a shuttle service to Ballycastle will be needed to facilitate transportation back to the Céide Fields car park for those arriving by the Céide Coast Path. - Complement this through exploring/supporting a cycling hub in Ballycastle with drop off/collection points at Downpatrick Head and Céide Fields car park to allow greater flexibility to explore the area. In relation to Ballycastle and its development as a service centre, use the master-planning process to build on the village's potential to be a strategic service centre for the Céide Coast and a viable base for outdoor adventure. - Identify a strategy to improve the delivery of visitor information services and the provision of toilet facilities, food and drink, and retail. Continue to work with the Céide Coast Eco Campus and other potential venues to assess suitable location for visitor services, and ways of developing new synergies with existing activities. - Work with the community to develop a self-guided walk within the village that will highlight its history and areas of cultural significance, such as 'The Shambles'. - Work with existing businesses, including the Ballinglen Gallery and local artisans to ensure that the masterplan elevates the importance of the creative arts to Ballycastle and the strong linkages between landscape and the arts. - Position Ballycastle as a northern access point to the Mayo Dark Sky Park. Undertake discussions on following Newport's lead to become an International Dark Sky Community. This will involve preparing a lighting policy and retrofitting publicly owned lighting within five years. Work with the Dark Sky partners to highlight the coastal dark skies – particularly at Downpatrick Head.	PHH1, PHH2, B1, B2, B3, AACH1, AACH2, ANC1, ANC2, MA1, MA2, MA3, LSG1	B1, B2, B3, AACH1, AACH2, W1, W2, LSG1			Yes
Commentary/ Potential Environmental Effects The development and execution of this masterplan will result in positive effects on population and human health. It will also provide other environmental benefits and positive effects through visitor management, education, interpretation and sustainable travel measures and provision of critical infrastructure. However, it should also be noted that there is the possibility for negative impacts resulting from construction and in providing additional visitor facilities, the increase in visitor numbers to such areas can also have unintended negative impacts on landscape, biodiversity etc. Mitigation measures in the form of proper planning, assessment at project level, implementation of visitor management and monitoring for same will be required.					

Table 8.6 Assessment of WMDEDP -Our Wild Adventure - Catalyst Projects – The Western Way & North Mayo Trails Network & Supporting Actions

Catalyst Projects – The Western Way & North Mayo Trails Network & Supporting Actions	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
The Western Way - Continue to progress the strategic development of The Western Way within North Mayo. Identify locations where connections with existing trails are required and where additional work is needed to establish new off-road sections. Identify where further feasibility analysis is needed to determine the projected route. - Continue to assess directional and interpretive signage, accommodation options, trail infrastructure, naming protocols in areas where it connects with existing recreational trails, and branding for the proposed 300 km+ trail. - Assess the feasibility of installing a new suspension bridge where the trail approaches Ballycastle. This would open up a viewpoint towards Downpatrick Head and would create visual connection with the Céide Coastal Path. - Continue working collaboratively to upgrade the trail through Wild Nephin National Park and reroute through Oweninny. Explore options for linking through Bellacorick via an off-road section. - Address requirements for cyclists, including removing board walk sections where necessary. - Continue to explore and pursue relevant options for the development of accommodation that can meet the requirements of different trail users. - Work with National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) to advance the development of the string of bothies (overnight shelters left unlocked) across the Nephin Beg Range and establish a model for the care and maintenance of these structures - Continue to assess the feasibility of creating hostel accommodation in existing disused buildings that are located in close proximity to the trail, including the barracks building at Bellacorick. - Work with existing accommodation businesses to identify options representing different levels of comfort, and the capacity of these businesses to transfer luggage for visitors.		PHH1, PHH2, B1, B2, B3, AACH1, AACH2, W1, W2, LSG1, L1, L2, MA1, MA3,			Yes
Commentary/ Potential Environmental Effects The continued development of the Western Way (linking existing greenways, trails and walking and cycling routes, including those within and between existing destinations and developing new sections with associated infrastructure and accommodation), has the potential to contribute to sustainable mobility, reduction in emissions and a better management of visitor movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefiting various environmental components including habitats at certain locations. It would also have positive impact on the human population. The development of this project, however, may result in uncertain environmental effects 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 sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. More detail at project assessment would be required to further clarify. Therefore mitigation measures are required. Mitigation measures in the form of proper planning, assessment at project level, implementation of visitor management and monitoring for same will be required.					

Catalyst Projects – The Western Way & North Mayo Trails Network & Supporting Actions	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
North Mayo Trails Consider developing a county-wide trails strategy as a policy document that will align with and support the implementation of the forthcoming Mayo Outdoor Recreation Plan. Establish a North Mayo trails forum/working group that will work with Mayo County Council on an ongoing basis to determine strategic priorities in developing, managing and leveraging recreational trails and greenways. Use the forum and the county-wide strategy planning process to identify all existing trails networks, proposed projects and aspirational initiatives, including route options for the Western Way and work towards identifying priorities and development opportunities in a way that can leverage local commitment and use the proposed outdoor recreation knowledge hubs to streamline grant applications and related development studies. • Erris/Mullet looped trails: proceed with the recommendations outlined in the Erris Coastal Walks 2023 Site Assessment Report, including work on a full feasibility study. The report outlines a series of recommendations relating to stiles and gates, and the establishment of trail heads; evaluation of traffic volumes; ensuring that the road surface is suitable in bog areas and extending boardwalks where necessary; appropriate waymarking and information boards; evaluating and addressing safety concerns at the blowhole, and the need for a management and maintenance plan. - Work with the Comhar Dún Chaocháin Teo to establish Carrowteige – An tSeanscoil as a prominent staging area for the looped trails in Cill Chomáin. The Sliabh Sneacht Centre in Inishowen provides a model for a rural-based staging area, offering a base for hill-walking and hiking, bird-watching, photography, washrooms, food and drink, and retail; while also acting as a community resource and heritage centre. • Bangor Trail / Bangor Erris trail head: explore options to strengthen the role of Bangor Erris as a hub within a wider trail network through assessing opportunities to develop a trail system westwards to Geesala and eastwards to the Western Way. This would enhance the wider adventure experience in the Bangor Erris and Carrowmore Lake area. • Céide Coastal Path extensions: explore the opportunity to extend the Céide Coastal Path. • Crossmolina to Enniscoe cycle trail: this initiative is part of a longer trail project that would connect Crossmolina with Keenagh. It has the capacity to strengthen the role of Crossmolina as a hub to explore Enniscoe and Lough Conn. With further extensions of the trail system beyond Keenagh, there is the potential to ultimately connect Crossmolina to Nephin Beg and the wider wilderness area, which is much in keeping with the community's vision of its role as a 'gateway' to the mountain.	PHH1, PHH2, B1, B2, B3, ANC1, ANC2, MA1, MA3,	B1, B2, B3, AACH1, AACH2, W1, W2, LSG1 L1, L2			Yes Contd. Overleaf

Catalyst Projects – The Western Way & North Mayo Trails Network & Supporting Actions	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
• Pontoon to Knockmore: the proposition for a trail along the shores of Lough Conn and Lough Cullin has been at the proposal stage for some time. It is a project that has faced issues arising from the conservation values of the Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA. Ideally, the potential to move forward or not, should be clearly determined through a facilitated discussion with all stakeholders. Its location vis-à-vis the proposed intra-urban cycle network, the prospective development at the site of the former Healy's Hotel and the Pontoon Bridge Hotel (contracted to the State at present), and its capacity to link with other trail systems and activity bases should all be carefully considered in the decision making. Currently, the road is regarded as too dangerous as an alternative walking option. - Assist the local community with further environmental studies if this is required. • Foxford trails: strengthen the profile of the Ox Mountain trails. These trails are favoured by cyclists but are not promoted to this activity group. The Foxford area is likely to increase in its cycling appeal with the development of the proposed National Cycle Network corridor through Co. Mayo (the route of the intraurban greenway). Passing through or close to Foxford, provides the community with new opportunities to develop and promote looped spurs and to position the town as a cycling destination. • Killala to Ballina – the Monasteries of the Moy recreational trail: this 14 km trail is well advanced. Continue to identify options to deliver a complete off-road experience. This trail is of particular importance given its strategic route between the two towns via two of the monasteries and through Belleek Woods. In time it will become part of the Western Way as it connects through to the Sligo Way.. - Explore ways of extending the trail westwards to link through to the Céide Coastal Path. • Ballina to Enniscrone – continue to progress the development of the proposed recreational trail between the two communities through advancing the implementation of the 2022 feasibility study.	PHH1, PHH2, B1, B2, B3, ANC1, ANC2, MA1, MA3,	B1, B2, B3, AACH1, AACH2, W1, W2, LSG1 L1, L2			Yes
Commentary/ Potential Environmental Effects The development of a trails strategy would offer a planned and structured way to help ensure that there is proper planning, stakeholder engagement and environmental protection integrated into this trails network. Opportunity to link such trails could be of benefit to biodiversity, human health, air quality and climate alike enhancing green infrastructure, ecosystem services and sustainable transport. The development of this project, however, may result in uncertain environmental effects 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 sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. More detail at project assessment would be required to further clarify. Therefore mitigation measures would be required.					

[illegible]

Our Wild Adventure – Supporting Initiatives-Water Based Activities	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
Kilcummin Pier Kilcummin is increasingly recognised as a base for surfing, kayaking, swimming, fishing, diving, snorkeling, and has hosted national events in water sports. The pier offers easy access to deep, clear water year-round and does not require boats to facilitate access to these waters (unlike Killala and Ballina). • Address immediate maintenance issues relating to cleaning the steps and the slipway. • Develop a change facility at the pier to meet the growing needs of the outdoor adventure sector, and to strengthen the positioning of North Mayo as an adventure hub. Killerduff, Rathlackan, Ballycastle • Address immediate safety and maintenance issues to facilitate the outdoor sector and to service ongoing needs relating to fishing, and search and rescue. • Continue to work with the Céide Coast Community Company to assess the feasibility of developing a tidal pool at Killerduff, and to advance the concept accordingly. In addition to the importance of addressing pier and slipway related issues, there are wider coastal issues that need to be given consideration. Ross Beach • Implement the upgrades to toilet facilities with the recently acquired funds to prevent the current problems arising from over-use and limited tank capacity. • Undertake a feasibility study on a proposed coastal walkway or alternative water-based connectivity between Killala and Ross Beach. This will strengthen the appeal of Killala as a coastal base for walking and will reduce vehicular traffic. Rinroe Beach • Undertake an assessment of the environmental impact of wild camping in commonage areas. This is a growing issue since the Covid pandemic. Identify appropriate actions to mitigate impact.	PHH1, PHH2, MA1, MA2, MA3	B1, B2, B3, AACH1, AACH2, W1, W2, LSG1, L1, L2, ANC1, ANC2			Yes
Commentary/ Potential Environmental Effects An assessment and action list for upgrade of all piers in the Plan area would certainly be of benefit and have positive impacts for the human population. This would improve safety, open up coastal waters to water based activities and potentially increase visitor numbers which would benefit tourism. In addition for some sites the upgrade of existing wastewater facilities would have somewhat of a positive impact on water quality and associated environmental benefits. However for the majority of the piers and sites and proposed works listed above they may result in uncertain environmental effects, that would if unmitigated, have potential to arise from both construction and operation. The majority of these sites are located in highly environmentally sensitive marine locations and increasing visitor numbers could have impacts on biodiversity, water quality, landscape, cultural heritage, spread of invasive species etc. Therefore mitigation measures are required. Mitigation measures in the form of proper					

Our Wild Adventure – Supporting Initiatives-Water Based Activities	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
planning, assessment at project level, implementation of visitor management and monitoring for same will be required. In some instance carry capacity for some sites such as island sites will need to be implemented and working with conservation projects at such sites is vital to ensure conservation of such sites is a priority.					
Initiatives to Support Angling					
- Work with IFI to heighten the tourism industry's awareness of the importance of this sector, and the needs of the visitor who comes to North Mayo for an angling trip, including a good drying room, access to a freezer, flexibility regarding meals, packed lunches, and angling material. Highlight core resources, including the County Mayo Game Angling Guide, and ensure that businesses servicing this sector have a good working knowledge of game angling in North Mayo. - Support angling through developing new imagery of the activity. The anglers fly-fishing in the centre of Ballina is a unique image that highlights the presence of 'our wild adventure' even within an urban context. - Work with IFI develop a strategy that will encourage the return of operators to the charter business. Changes to national policy and insurance requirements have caused this sector to shrink, and sea angling has become under utilised as a base for angling in North Mayo. - Continue to highlight the impressive number of species that can be caught at sea. - Continue to improve the angling experience and public awareness of related issues of sustainability: - Work with local angling clubs, community groups and the IFI to identify infrastructural improvements that are required to improve access to the experience and the quality of it – such as bush clearance, the erection of stiles and footbridges, and provision for wheelchair access. Clubs, such as the Bangor Erris Angling Club, have been very active in this regard with the recent development of the marina on Carrowmore Lake. - Assist the Cill Chomáin community to develop angling platforms at Portacloy and Rinroe. - Similarly, work collaboratively to highlight where habitat enhancement projects, such as the need to improve rivers in terms of spawning, and identify steps required to undertake projects. Use such situations to review opportunities for regenerative tourism, where visitors could get actively involved in restoration projects. - Work with IFI and tourism operators to assist IFI in developing packages, such as events that focus on attracting women, and continue promoting community events that celebrate the angling sector. - Work with the IFI to further develop the concept of the salmon tours of the weir, and workable solutions for delivering the experience on a regular basis.	PHH1, PHH2, MA1, MA2, MA3, W1, W2, B1, B2, B3	B1, B2, B3, AACH1, AACH2 L1, L2,		LSG1, ANC1, ANC2	
Commentary/ Potential Environmental Effects Initiatives to support angling in the Plan area would have a positive effect on human population and material assets with the investment in providing upgraded angling infrastructure and opportunity. This would also benefit local tourism economy. There is opportunity for education through angling and recreation to highlight the importance of having excellent quality water bodies. This would also have benefits for biodiversity in the aquatic environment where there would be a requirement for excellent water quality to sustain such fish life. However, there are also potential for negative environmental effects where beyond the aquatic environment, other sensitive sites and biodiversity may be impacted e.g. clearing					

Our Wild Adventure – Supporting Initiatives-Water Based Activities	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
bushes, erecting foot bridges and potentially altering sensitive landscapes and cultural heritage, invasive species. Mitigation measures would therefore be required to ensure all proposals are planned, assessed and implemented with all environmental receptors in mind.					
Initiatives to strengthen Lough Conn and Lough Cullen water trail and eco-adventure					
- Establish a cross-community stakeholder group, inclusive of NPWS, farming groups, land owners, Fáilte Ireland, and relevant activity operators to engage in preliminary discussions. - Build on the recent Council proposal to develop a LIFE project in Pontoon to explore opportunities for the lakes and Drummin Woods. - Review the 2021 Crossmolina to Foxford 'Blueway' initiative, and determine what prevented this initiative from maintaining a position in the marketplace. - Explore the potential to develop an appropriate water-based experience with associated elements of land-based activities, taking into account the camping facilities at Gortnor Abbey Pier, the potential to develop additional facilities at the pier, and the NPWS proposed concept for a reserve and a rare breeds base at Enniscoe House. - Use the planning process to identify a location for a pontoon that is available for use on Lough Conn. - Assess suitability for new infrastructure that will provide an experience in keeping with the sensitive environment while still allowing for good access to the water.	PHH1, PHH2, MA1, MA2, MA3 B1, B2, B3 ANC1, ANC2 W1, W2	B1, B2, B3, W1, W2		LSG1, LSG2, AACH1, AACH2 L1, L2,	Yes
Commentary/ Potential Environmental Effects Initiatives to enhance Lough Conn and Cullen for water trails and eco adventure would likely have positive impacts for human, health, material assets and more sustainable modes of movement (green and blue infrastructure) and the resulting tourism sector. If worked through a cross-community stakeholder group this could also have benefits for protection of sensitive waters and biodiversity including bird life and offer opportunity for environmental education and awareness. As with any proposals to develop infrastructure and attract more visitors to environmentally sensitive sites there is potential for negative environmental impacts. This could result from construction and operation of associated infrastructure but also from increased visitor number causing disturbance (noise, light, presence) to wildlife, potential for spread of invasive species, lack of critical infrastructure leading to potential pressures and pollution on the natural environment. Mitigation measures in the form of proper planning, assessment at project level, consideration for cumulative impacts, implementation of visitor management and monitoring for same will be required.					

Catalyst Project- The Gaeltacht & Associated Actions	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
Strengthen Belmullet as a Core Hub and Destination Town within The Gaeltacht The town, which was the last of Ireland's planned towns, is located on an isthmus between two bays – Blacksod Bay and Broadhaven Bay, and is a destination hub offering ease of access various experiences adventure and cultural experiences within the Mullet Peninsula, the northern area of Erris, Geesala and beyond the Gaeltacht into Wild Nephin National Park. Its role can be considerably strengthened through the following initiatives. • Belmullet Tidal Pool: Work is set to commence on re-lining the three external faces of the tidal pool. Completion of this project will provide a memorable 'adventure' experience year-round, regardless of tide levels. The pool's orientation with the western skies and evening sunsets adds to its celebrated acclaim. - Explore opportunities through capital investment programmes to further improve the experience with the addition of toilet, shower and change facilities. Currently there is nowhere to change in an area that is very open and offers no privacy. Consider the potential to add a seating/refreshment area. • Work with the community to expand the appeal of Belmullet as a core hub and destination town within the Gaeltacht. Continue to undertake planning discussions that are focused on bringing new concepts forward. - Develop the proposed looped walk around the town, taking in the seascapes of both bays. Integrate this with the work that was initiated through the Destination Town initiative and continue efforts to strengthen sense of place at the harbour front as part of this circular walk. • Belmullet Water Towers: The three towers, which are still in use, are a prominent landmark in the local landscape. As a blank 'canvas', the towers offer an opportunity to become a visual statement of aspects of life in the Gaeltacht – making them an attraction in their own right. - Consider working with Irish Water and the community to identify themes that could be illustrated on the towers. Use community discussions to illustrate how art of this nature can enhance identity. - Assess opportunities for developing trail access to the towers.	PHH1, PHH2, MA1, MA2, MA3 L1, L2	B1, B2, B3, W1, W2		ANC1, ANC2 LSG1, AACH1 AACH2	Yes

Contd. Overleaf

Catalyst Project- The Gaeltacht & Associated Actions	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
GOLF is a significant demand generator within the Belmullet area. Carne Golf Links attracts 14,000 visitors per annum, with North America being core to its international market. For many of these overseas visitors, playing golf on the Mullet Peninsula is both an experience of wild adventure and an opportunity to become further immersed in the culture of the Gaeltacht. The activity has considerable potential to grow further and to contribute to the growth of the local economy. - Support the plans to develop on-site accommodation at Carne Golf Links. Bed space is limited within the area, particularly in light of the size of the wedding market in Belmullet, and new accommodation is required to grow this sector. - Work with Carne Golf Links in its aspirations to host the Irish Open. - Explore ways of elevating the Irish language within the Gaeltacht golf experience - Highlight the small course at Doohoma as a distinctive experience in a stunning setting, and encourage new approaches to packaging it with a wider regional offering.	PHH1, PHH2, MA1, MA2, MA3 L1, L2	B1, B2, B3, W1, W2		ANC1, ANC2 LSG1, AACH1 AACH2	Yes
Commentary/ Potential Environmental Effects Actions proposed in and around Belmullet town including upgrading a tidal pool (and associated infrastructure), developing walking loops, enhancing existing water tower structures and increasing assets. Enhancement of existing water towers should result in a positive for local landscape quality. However, these actions may result in uncertain environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and development may have negative impacts on locally environmental sensitive sites and any development at the golf course may have negative impacts for the local protected sand dune and machair level, implementation of visitor management and monitoring for same will be required, as appropriate.					

76

Catalyst Project- The Gaeltacht & Associated Actions	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
- Rosspoint – work with Seirbhísí Curam Chill Chomáin Cuideachta Faoi Theorainn Ratháiochta to assist in advancing the proposed glamping and organic gardening initiative. This is being positioned as a training centre for organic food production and has the capacity to build a distinctive niche market. • Work with businesses and residents that are currently involved in hosting Irish language students and delivering related educational programmes, to deepen their awareness of this activity as an element of tourism and one that can be further leveraged in terms of its value to the community. • Ensure local festivals that highlight Gaeltacht traditions, sport and language are promoted as visitor experiences • Review directional signage across the Gaeltacht and engage with communities and visitors to determine the consensus regarding Irish only or bilingual signs. - Install welcome signage on key access routes. • Inishkea Islands – work with boat tour operators, the commonage owners, NPWS, the LIFE on Machair programme representatives, MCC and FI to agree on a sustainable approach to facilitating visits to the islands. The ground work has been established through the recent Inishkea Islands Visitor Management Assessment conducted through the LIFE programme, which highlights the environmental sensitivity of the islands, the impacts of recreational activity and concerns regarding visitor management, and potential measures that should be taken to address the related issues. - Action the management plan through establishing consensus on the recommendations that should be progressed, and set agreements in place with relevant stakeholders. Proposed initiatives relate to signage, education, wardening of the islands, capacity decisions, the development of way-marked trails and related visitor facilities. - Work through the recommendations for Blacksod Pier area, particularly the action relating to toilets, to implement initial steps to manage visitor impact on the islands. - Ensure that the Irish language is incorporated into the experience, and woven into the storytelling.	PHH1, PHH2, AACH1, AACH2, B1, B2, B3	B1, B2, B3, W1, W2		ANC1, ANC2 LSG1, LV1, LV2 MA1, MA2, MA3	Yes
Commentary/ Potential Environmental Effects Actions proposed for clusters in the Plan area all have potential positive impacts for the human population, cultural heritage and tourism sector. Some of the actions relate to supporting activity, potential positive impact for biodiversity and the conservation of protected habitats and species. There is opportunity for negative impacts if initiatives and projects are not implemented with correct consent and planning and/or environmental considerations re not taken into account e.g. ext. Mitigation measures in the form of proper planning, assessment at project level, implementation of visitor management and monitoring for same will be required, as appropriate.					

Catalyst Project- Ballina Town & Associated Actions	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
Ballina Quay Plans to regenerate the Quay area have been in progress for a number of years. The actions recommended below reinforce existing initiatives, and present them in a broader context of regional destination development. • Amenity area: Continue to work on developing the amenity value of the area and its potential to become a strong micro-destination recognised for its access to water sports, quality food offerings, and distinctive business outlets with a high level of visitor appeal. A feasibility assessment may be required to fully maximise the Quay as a new amenity resource. (EXAMPLE: the new Surf Centre at Strandhill illustrates the way in which the right mix of visitor offerings and support services can have a significant catalytic impact within a destination). - Ensure that the public realm hard landscaping and design will draw visitors to the quay and will improve access to the water. Work towards separating motorised and foot access to heighten safety and the overall ambiance of the area. - Install a pontoon at the southern end to complement the new northern pontoon. This will improve access to boating, kayaking, SUP, and to dragon boats. - Continue to look at options to separate water access for boats from access to non-motorised craft through the development of a new slipway. - Continue to look at options for boat storage, including containers and/or the Kennedy Glasgow House. • Connectivity: Develop a summary plan that presents the active transportation routes designed to connect the Quay with the proposed pedestrian/cycle link to Belleek Woods and to the town centre, and work towards improving the linkages as project funding becomes available. - Explore use of the embankment for pedestrian access, as an alternative to the public road. • New attractions: - Work with partners to develop a kayaking trail along the Moy Estuary linking the Quay to Killala. This in turn could be used to develop a kayak and cycle trail between the two harbour areas, where visitors could kayak one way and return by bike along the Monasteries of the Moy recreational trail through Belleek Woods.	PHH1, PHH2, MA1, MA2, MA3 B1, B2, B3 ANC1, ANC2 AACH2, AACH2	B1, B2, B3, W1, W2		LSG1, LSG2, L1, L2,	Yes

Contd Overleaf

79

80

Catalyst Project- Ballina Town & Associated Actions		Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
Commentary/ Potential Environmental Effects Initiatives to enhance Ballina Quay, create a cultural quarter and further develop other quay sites in the town would likely have positive impacts for human, health, material assets, cultural heritage and more sustainable modes of movement (green and blue infrastructure) and the resulting tourism sector. If worked through a cross- community stakeholder group this could also have benefits for protection of sensitive waters of the Moy and the Salmon for Life Centre could afford a positive opportunity to provide further awareness and education around environmental protection. As with any proposals to develop infrastructure and attract more visitors to environmentally sensitive sites such as the River Moy there is potential for negative environmental impacts. This could result from construction and operation of associated infrastructure but also from increased visitor number causing disturbance (noise, light, presence) to wildlife, potential for spread of invasive species, lack of critical infrastructure leading to potential pressures and pollution on the natural environment. Mitigation measures in the form of proper planning, assessment at project level, consideration for cumulative impacts, implementation of visitor management and monitoring for same will be required.						
Belleek Woods The 200-acre site is one of Europe's largest urban woodlands. It offers an exceptional experience of Irish woodlands and their native wildlife within walkable access of the centre of Ballina, with walking and cycle trails that connect through to the Monasteries of the Moy recreational trail. The rich cultural heritage of the area, Belleek Castle and the associated restaurants, the Distillery, and the intent to prioritise an active transportation cycling link between the Quay and Belleek Woods Work are all working together to position Belleek Woods as a core tourism asset of Ballina and North Mayo. - Undertake an assessment of the arrival experience into the Woods and determine whether there is potential to create a stronger tree-lined arrival route. The current access route provides an underwhelming approach. - Explore new uses of the restored Gate Lodge that complement Ballina's heritage of life, land and sea. - Continue to work on trail maintenance, signage and general orientation (particularly at point of arrival). - Continue to work on the restoration of the pond, and develop interpretive panels that will highlight the related themes of sustainability and biodiversity. - Continue to work on the preservation and presentation of local heritage elements, including the Hermitage, the boathouse and the graveyard.		PHH1, PHH2, MA1, MA2, MA3 B1, B2, B3 ANC1, ANC2 AACH2, AACH2	B1, B2, B3, W1, W2		LSG1, LSG2, L1, L2,	Yes
Commentary/ Potential Environmental Effects The various actions proposed for Belleek Woods would offer a planned and structured way to help ensure that there is proper planning, stakeholder engagement and environmental protection integrated into the upgrade of the site. The output of such actions at this site could be of benefit to biodiversity, human health, air quality and climate alike enhancing green infrastructure, ecosystem services and sustainable transport. This could also enhance cultural heritage of the site. The development of this project, however, may result in uncertain environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure, with proposed increases in visitor numbers. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent. Therefore mitigation measures would be required in the form of proper planning, where required assessment, implementation of visitor management and monitoring for same will be relevant.						

Table 8.10 Assessment of WMDEDP - Our Heritage of Life Land and Sea - Catalyst Project- Killala Town & Associated Actions

Catalyst Project- Killala Town & Associated Actions	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
Tower Hub Initiative - Support the re-imagination of the Tower Bar as an orientation point to the town's heritage, biodiversity and its perspective on sustainability; and, as a community hub that will stimulate social engagement and learning. - Assist with developing interpretive themes for its integrated Killala Story Space. This will provide an ideal opportunity to bring forward the themes relating to Killala, including the Souterrain, the Humbert theme and the story of the French invasion, the monastic heritage and neolithic archaeology. Killala sits adjacent to the largest monastic cluster in the country and within an area that has a high density of ring forts, and is therefore well located to bring these themes to life through static and audio-visual interpretation, guided activities, events and storytelling. - Similarly, the town's emphasis on wind power and its diversity of ecosystems and designated sites provides a strong basis for bringing these themes to the fore, and celebrating local aspirations and achievements. - Work with partners to develop a programme of tourism education and training. - Position the Tower Hub as a staging point for new guided experiences within Killala and beyond. Work towards developing new guides and provide the mechanisms for promoting and booking local experiences.	PHH1, PHH2, B1, B2, B3 ANC1, ANC2 AACH2, AACH2			MA1, MA2, MA3 L1, L2 W1, W2, LSG1	No
Commentary/ Potential Environmental Effects The development of the tower in Killala Village would bring an overall positive impact to the region from an environmental perspective. The human population and cultural heritage element would benefit from the promotional, education and awareness approach to this action. Similar with emphasis being placed on diversity of ecosystems this should also benefit biodiversity and its protection.					

Catalyst Project- Killala Town & Associated Actions	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
Killala Pier Area The Killala Town Centre First Plan has a series of recommendations designed to revitalise the harbour area, improve the public realm and strengthen connectivity with the town centre. All of these actions will support the objectives of this DEDP. In particular, the following are highlighted: - Continue to explore options for the sensitive development of the community council owned land on Geyerris Head as a small-scale campervan and camping site, with shower and toilet facilities. These facilities could also be used to service visitors arriving by yacht and those using the pier area to access water sports. - In the short term, develop provisional camping facilities at the Community Centre. (In both cases consider the Rosses Point and Strandhill model which sees user fees being invested back into maintenance of the site and into wider aspects of community tourism). - Support the feasibility and environmental assessments that will arise from pursuing this initiative given that the community land is located within the Killala Bay / Moy Estuary Special Area of Conservation. Elements of the site are reclaimed land from former dredging activity – careful attention needs to be directed towards mitigating any likely environmental impact on the adjacent sand and mudflats. Killala Pier Area continued - Explore options to purchase fresh catch at the pier and/or a seafood experience. - Continue discussions regarding accessibility from the sea into the harbour area. A preliminary dredging report has been prepared. The last dredging maintenance took place in the 1990s. With some degree of dredging, it would be possible to open up Killala to additional boat traffic and to create boating access to Moyne Abbey. This in turn could strengthen the concept of a water recreational trail between Ballina Quay and Killala. It would also provide an opportunity for tender vessels to transport passengers from smaller berthed cruise ships in the Bay, as a more sheltered option to Kilcummin. The development of a walking trail and boardwalk to Ross Beach (see page 31) would further strengthen the pier area as the starting point.	PHH1, PHH2, MA1, MA2, MA3 B1, B2, B3	AACH2, AACH2, W1, W2, B1, B2, B3		ANC1, ANC2 LSG1 LV1, LV2	
Commentary/ Potential Environmental Effects This project and proposed action contain a lot of proposals in and around the coastal part of Killala. There would be positive impacts for the human population and resulting benefit to the tourism sector and local economy. These would come about from increased tourism related infrastructure (camping and campervan sites and associated critical infrastructure). The proper planning of such facilities can have a positive impact for other environmentally sensitive sites discouraging wild camping etc. However, there are a number of actions (including development of lands for camping, dredging the harbour etc) that as stated in the action would require in depth environmental assessment. There is potential for negative impact on water quality, biodiversity and cultural heritage. Mitigation measures will need to be implemented in the form of detailed planning, environmental assessment, cumulative or knock on affects, consideration for invasive species management, implementation of visitor management and monitoring for same.					

Catalyst Project- Killala Town & Associated Actions	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
Monasteries of the Moy The monasteries represent one of the most concentrated monastic archaeological clusters in the country and a key asset in the story of North Mayo. • Work with partners, including MCC and OPW to prepare a strategy for the ongoing development of the visitor experience, including access, interpretation, directional signage, infrastructure for cyclists, and the potential for outdoor events. Establish a strong vision for this experience. • Link the story back to the ruined Augustinian Abbey beside St Muiredach's Cathedral in Ballina. • Work through the proposed Killala Tower Hub initiative to support storytelling, both at the hub building and through guided services. • Progress the work on improving access and parking at Moyne Abbey, and improve access to Rosserk Abbey.	PHH1, PHH2, AACH1, AACH2	B1, B2, B3		MA1, MA2, MA3 L1, L2 LSG1 W1, W2 ANC1, ACN2	
Commentary/ Potential Environmental Effects This project would bring an overall positive impact to the region from an environmental perspective. The human population and cultural heritage element would benefit from the promotional, education and awareness approach to this action. Consideration for potential negative impacts on biodiversity from infrastructure development is possible. Therefore, suitable mitigation is recommended e.g. proper planning, assessment as required, visitor management plans to be undertaken.					

Table 8.11 Assessment of WMDEDP - Our Heritage of Life Land and Sea - Supporting Initiatives

Our Heritage of Life Land and Sea - Supporting Initiatives	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
Networking storytelling and visitor/interpretive centres - Develop a mapped database of the story elements across the region, identifying where the stories are presented to the visitor. Key themes include: - Legends and mythology – the Children of Lir, St. Deirbhile, stories related to Neolithic promontory forts – e.g. Dún Briste, which means “broken fort” / associated with St. Patrick, Fionn mac Cumhaill (Lough Conn and Lough Cullin), and the Táin Bó Flidhaise Cattle Raid - The Neolithic sites and the wider story of early agriculture – e.g. Belderrig, Blanemore; - Sacred landscapes of early ecclesiastical heritage and Patrician sites, and medieval monastic heritage; - Lighthouses and coastguard stations; - The French invasion and the story of General Humbert; - The story of Admiral Brown; - The Spanish Armada; - Political figures past and present – Michael Davitt, Mary Robinson - Emigration and genealogy - Military themes – the middle ages through to the Second World War, including the legacy of the look-out posts; - Social enterprise – past and present (Foxford Woollen Mill, Solas); - The environmental theme, including climate change, biodiversity / rewilding / rewetting the bogs; rare breeds (Irish Moiled Cattle and Cladoir Sheep); regenerative farming practices; renewable energy / wind farms; and the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve initiative. - Develop new collateral that presents the key themes and stories of North Mayo and where each one can be explored. - Highlight the linkages between interpretive / visitor centres and sites on the ground that present more of the same story. - Position the interpretive / visitor centres as points on a journey of discovery, rather than stand-alone attractions.	PHH1, PHH2, AACH1, AACH2		ANC1, ACN2	MA1, MA2, MA3 L1, L2 LSG1 W1, W2 B1, B2, B3	No
					Contd Overleaf

Our Heritage of Life Land and Sea - Supporting Initiatives		Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
- Work with themes to explore ways of consolidating disparate elements into a stronger and more cohesive offering that will encourage extended lengths of stay. Assess interest for building a network of interpretive centres/themed attractions to work on the wider North Mayo story. The emigration and genealogy theme is an example of one that can be explored from different angles and in different places. Elements include: - Solas Visitor Centre - North Mayo Heritage Centre - Blacksod Memorial Garden – the story of the emigrant ships - CFID database for those that left from Blacksod - Blacksod Bay song - Resource publications: e.g. The Placenames and Heritage of Dun Chaacháin; Cill Ghallagáin Graveyard - Addergoole Titanic Memorial Park - Moygownagh – the work of St Cormac’s (Heritage) Society – including the ANSEO project - James Hack Tuke story of assisted emigration - Potato pickers and links with Scotland - Story of the strip farms and Tubary rights at Geesala - Hills of Bones – history in the language / Cnoc na gCnámh - Deserted village of Attymass – the links with North America – Irish Hunger Memorial in State, Scranton etc. - With this particular theme, consider establishing a working group of ‘experts’ from across North Mayo to discuss ways of strengthening existing saleable experiences and encouraging further exploration of North Mayo. - Reassess the Humbert theme and its presence on the ground (Kilcummin, Killala, Ballina, Lahardane, into Castlebar). This storyline has had stronger traction in the past, and has seen a level of revival with the 225th anniversary events of the French Landing. Assuming that the theme may find a base in the proposed Killala Tower Hub, explore the potential to strengthen its presence on the ground through new way marking or through the development of an annual hiking event. - Explore further development options for the Táin Bó Flíodhaise Cattle Raid story and develop a preliminary feasibility plan on its potential as an attractor. - Liaise with Irish Lights to explore tourism options for Ballyglass Lighthouse and ways of heightening the story of lighthouses and coastguard stations within Erris. - Continue to support the community in Foxford with strengthening the Admiral Brown story. Focus on developing significant recognition in 2027 – the 250th anniversary of his birth. Work with MCC to identify possible locations for the former museum.		PHH1, PHH2, AACH1, AACH2		ANC1, ACN2	MA1, MA2, MA3 L1, L2 LSG1 W1, W2 B1, B2, B3	No

Contd Overleaf

Our Heritage of Life Land and Sea - Supporting Initiatives	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
Interpretive / Visitor Centres - Conduct a full inventory of all the interpretive/visitor centres in terms of thematic content, visitor services and facilities, and programming. Use this assessment to highlight gaps, opportunities and new ways of leveraging the centres as a network of experiences. - Consider ticketing options that would encourage visits to multiple centres. Where feasible, use centres as booking locations for extended guided experiences and activities allowing visitors to explore key themes beyond the walls of the centre SOLAS: this is the tourism hub for the Mullet Peninsula – ensure that it has a strong food offering that is focused on local foods and well networked with local suppliers. - Work towards developing an innovative programme of activities and events that will raise the profile of the centre and increase footfall, including a new AV/AR experience. Any programme of events should be integrated into a wider programme of events offered by other centres within the network. Michael Davitt Museum: explore options to move forward with the initiatives that the Museum itself is proposing, including the need for a reconfiguration of existing space, a refresh of the exhibits and implementation of the 2024 interpretation plan, and the potential for a new auditorium. North Mayo Heritage Centre: explore opportunities to further upgrade the centre and its storytelling role in rural traditions. Continue to expand its profile in genealogy. Foxford Woollen Mill: consider the potential for developing new higher-end exclusive experiences that will give a small group a private and immersive experience, in addition to the current tours. Oweninny: continue to develop and implement the proposed recreation plan to further diversify the experience and broaden the centre's appeal. - Work with bespoke operators to develop new Wild Mayo themed tours that take in a number of centres in any given tour.	PHH1, PHH2, AACH1, AACH2		ANC1, ACN2	MA1, MA2, MA3 L1, L2 LSG1 W1, W2 B1, B2, B3	No
Commentary/ Potential Environmental Effects Actions set out here relate to enhancing the story telling aspect of the Plan area in order to create connectivity and have visitors spend more time in a wider area. This is further boosted by plans to improve and revamp visitor centres. Overall, this aspect of the Plan would have a positive impact for the tourism sector and therefore human population. Cultural heritage would also benefit from the progress of these projects. There may be some element of negative impact in terms of travel and its impact on climate. Relevant mitigation to ensure safeguarding of the environment would be to ensure environmental protection forms part of the thread of stories as well as forming elements of interpretation in visitor centres.					

Our Heritage of Life Land and Sea - Supporting Initiatives	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
Strengthening Emerging Sectors The Creative Arts Sector Tír Sáile represents North Mayo's iconic expression of the artist's interpretation of the landscape and mythology through sculpture. The sculpture trail was established in 1993 and is the largest public arts trail ever undertaken in Ireland. It currently consists of 11 works between Killala and Blacksod. Over time, many of the works have fallen into disrepair and the trail no longer enjoys the same degree of recognition or visibility. There is still a high level of pride and commitment to the trail, and a full review was undertaken in 2024 to assess how it could be elevated again as a key product offering. • Implement the findings of the report – A Review of the Tír Sáile Sculpture Trail. This should include the recommended decommissionings of sites that have been lost to the landscape, the repair actions, and improvements to interpretation and signage. Access and road repair issues need to be addressed, and new marketing collateral should be developed. • Reposition the trail to include the Spirit of Place sculptures, highlighting the evolution of the original trail in the interpretive overview. • The review recommends the addition of audio narratives at the various sites. This should include the option of listening to the narrative in the Irish language for all the installations in the Gaeltacht. • As recommended in the report, consider further enhancing the experience through AR and digital storytelling. • Assess options for improving inclusion and accessibility for all. • Use all arts facilities and visitor centres to promote the Tír Sáile experience.	PHH1, PHH2, AACH1, AACH2. L1, L2 B1, B2, B3		B1, B2, B3 L1, L2 AACH1, AACH2	MA1, MA2, MA3 LSG1 W1, W2 ANC1, ANC2.	Possibly Contd overleaf

Our Heritage of Life Land and Sea - Supporting Initiatives	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
• Work towards identifying strategies that will further strengthen the arts in existing centres and explore the economic return that is generated through the arts. There are already strong linkages with North America (Ballingleen Arts Foundation), Dublin (potentially through the proposition for the new cultural centre to be housed in the barracks building in Ballina), and with the wider regional market (the Ballina Arts Centre), while Áras Inis Gluaire in Belmullet is Ireland's only bilingual arts centre with deep diaspora connections. - Establish an arts working group that can identify ways of leveraging the region's artistic strengths to extend the length of stay. The galleries can play a role similar to the visitor centres in encouraging movement around the region. • While the arts in North Mayo have always drawn their inspiration from the landscape, the synergy between the arts and the environment has intensified and provides a strong basis of differentiation. The emerging artistic voices and forms of dialogue are expressing the bio-cultural identity of North Mayo in exciting new ways, and are playing a stronger role in elevating environmental issues. These trends have the potential to significantly underpin potential work on the proposed UNESCO Biosphere Reserve initiative – see page 47. - Explore the feasibility of presenting Art in the Landscape Festival of Change on an ongoing basis – whether in the original format or an adapted format that can be sustained more readily. The inaugural two-day event was hosted in both Offaly and North Mayo in 2024, offering a diverse range of opportunities for participants to discuss art in the landscape, experience different forms of artistic expression inspired by landscape, and gain insights on place-making through art. - Promote the intrinsic value and the activities relating to new forms of environmental dialogue through the arts. These are already happening at community level (e.g. the Creative Ireland BluePrint project that looked at climate change and flooding in Crossmolina together with communities in Northern Ireland), and have the potential to generate new market interest and overnight stays from non-traditional markets. - Similarly, promote the work of Wilderland project - a public art and community ecology project in Mayo that is using creative processes and art in the landscape to deepen people's appreciation of their environment, including processes such as rewilding Wild Nephin National Park. Opening these events to the visitor has significant potential to deepen their relationship with both place and community, and will likely generate repeat visitation from the domestic market. It will also highlight North Mayo's core commitment to sustainability. • Work with artisans to identify bespoke opportunities that will profile traditional skills and offer enriched experiences. Examples include the story of wool processing (Carrowteige and Ballycastle), and the potential for a lace-making activity in Belmullet.	PHH1, PHH2, AACH1, AACH2. L1, L2 B1, B2, B3		B1, B2, B3 L1, L2 AACH1, AACH2	MA1, MA2, MA3 LSG1 W1, W2 ANC1, ANC2.	Possibly
Commentary/ Potential Environmental Effects This collective of art projects would bring an overall positive impact to the region from an environmental perspective. The human population, cultural heritage, biodiversity, water and landscape could all benefit from the promotional, education and awareness approach to this action. A strong element in the proposed actions is education and promotion of the environment and ecology of the region. It is important when considering the improvement of Tir Saile or any other art themes trail, that possible impacts on biodiversity, water quality and landscape are considered and relevant mitigation is applied.					

Our Heritage of Life Land and Sea - Supporting Initiatives	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
Agritourism and Local Foods • Address the gaps in this area of experiences through working with emerging entrepreneurs and identifying new potential business operators – with a focus on a cluster-based approach. - Build on the work of businesses that are showing a strong commitment to regenerative farming and sustainability practices. Examples include the organic garden at North Mayo Heritage Centre, the Elly Bay Farm, the potential horticultural business at Rosspport, and producers such as Black Book Foods. Consider developing new training/learning experiences around these businesses that would add value to their existing activities and could offer the potential for new overnight stays. - Develop a training programme that highlights good practice elsewhere. Knocknarea Farm in Strandhill, for example, not only provides an opportunity to buy organic produce direct, but also offers foraging tours and ‘pop-up’ overnight immersive retreats. Similarly, but on a much larger scale, Glen Keen Farm at Louisburgh provides a multi-faceted agritourism experience that integrates tourism with agriculture and conservation in an innovative and award-winning way. - Work with farm businesses to explore appropriate options for developing farm-based accommodation and low-service facilities to expand opportunities for visitors to in rural settings. - Develop and pilot a cluster-based mentorship programme. Participants could be selected on the basis of application. The programme should work through developing a market-ready, shelf-stable product to offer local markets and/or an immersive experience on the farm, from initial business concept to piloted market entry. • Work with existing restaurants and local suppliers to strengthen the presence of local foods in restaurant menus. Opportunities to eat local fish are very limited, and discussions are required to explore new ways of addressing this gap. • Work with distilleries to promote related tours, tastings and visitor experiences. • Continue to highlight and build experiences around local products and achievements, such as brown bread (Pulathomas), seaweed soda bread (Belmullet), honey mead (Carrowteige), Erris lamb; and work with distillery and brewery businesses to bring new recognition to the region’s spirits and beers.	PHH1, PHH2, B1, B2, B3 W1, W2 ANC1, ANC2 LSG1			AACH1, AACH2. L1, L2 MA1, MA2, MA3	No
Commentary/ Potential Environmental Effects This set of actions would bring an overall positive impact to the region from an environmental perspective. Organic, sustainable and locally sourced foods would have positive benefits for the natural environment including water quality, biodiversity, soil and climate. In addition, the human population should see positive health benefits as well as locally economic advantages to producing foods at or close to source of consumption. No mitigation is proposed.					

Our Heritage of Life Land and Sea - Supporting Initiatives	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
Ecotourism and Biodiversity The ecological value of the North Mayo landscapes is well recognised and large tracts are designated areas under EU and national legislation. While developing experiences in these areas has to be handled with a keen awareness for their environmental sensitivity, it also highlights an opportunity for low-impact ecotourism and educational tourism. • Continue to encourage communities, such as Ballycastle, that have developed strong educational markets for field studies to build new academic links and to explore ways of enhancing the destination experience for the incoming 'field-students'. • Work with registered tour guides to identify opportunities for bookable eco-tours. Guided bird watching in particular, offers scope for further growth. Enhancing these eco-tour experiences with opportunities to engage in local community activities will further strengthen the offering for this niche market. • Work with the Clew Bay Tourism Network and related partners to explore the opportunity to advance the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve concept – with the possible intent of extending its boundaries into North Mayo. As has been documented in the Preliminary Scoping/Feasibility Study for the proposed Biosphere Reserve, the concept has significant potential to further shape and underpin tourism offerings that promote the ecological and bio-cultural values of the area. Biosphere Reserves elsewhere, including all that were documented in the case-studies, have used the UNESCO designation to further develop sustainable tourism. - The recommendations for the creative arts sector and for agritourism and local foods could all gain uplift from this designation. • Support Mayo NE in their exploratory enquiries to look at developing a centre that focuses on the theme of bog restoration – potentially in Bangor Erris. - Work with partners to develop and promote opportunities to engage in regenerative activities, such as eradication of invasive species, and bog restoration. • Dark Skies – work with Ballycastle and Belmullet to position the towns as northern gateways to the Mayo Dark Skies Park. - Work with Mayo Dark Sky Park to coordinate promotion of events.	PHH1, PHH2, B1, B2, B3 W1, W2 ANC1, ANC2 LSG1 AACH1, AACH2. L1, L2			MA1, MA2, MA3	No
Commentary/ Potential Environmental Effects The ethos of this set of actions all centre around ensuring environmental protection and promotion while also promoting sustainable and responsible tourism. This should offer benefits to most if not all aspects of the environment. It is important that in promoting and educating about the natural environment that appropriately educated and informed individuals are doing so. No mitigation is suggested.					

Table 8.12 Assessment of WMDEDP -Our Vibrant & Connected Destination - Catalyst Project- Accommodation

Catalyst Project- Building Capacity & Associated Actions	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
Strategic Partnership Focus To position North Mayo as a premier destination along the Wild Atlantic Way, Fáilte Ireland will work closely with the local authority to support the stimulation of new accommodation across North Mayo. This will involve actively pursuing the development of distinctive, high-quality accommodation offerings that reflect the region's unique character through focusing on the following: - Identifying and enabling strategic sites for eco-lodges, boutique guesthouses, and heritage conversions that align with the area's natural and cultural assets. - Engaging with investors and developers to promote innovative models such as glamping, wellness retreats, and experiential stays that appeal to emerging market segments. - Supporting planning and infrastructure readiness to fast-track viable projects, particularly in underutilized or high-potential areas. - Collaborating with local communities to ensure developments are sustainable, inclusive, and contribute to year-round tourism. - Collaborating with An Bord Pleanála and MCC to address the growing interest in nature-immersed accommodation experiences in remote areas. Opportunities exist for innovative glamping facilities, often as a form of agritourism, though current planning policies may limit potential.	PHH1, PHH2,	B1, B2, B3 W1, W2 LSG1 AACH1, AACH2. L1, L2 MA1, MA2, MA3		ANC1, ANC2	Yes
Commentary/ Potential Environmental Effects This action centre around the requirement for additional accommodation to successfully grow the tourism sector for the Plan area. Some of the proposals relate to repurposing and upgrades etc. This would be positive for some elements of the environment including the human population. However, there is also potential unknown or negative effects on the population if this accommodation conflicts with the development of residential properties for the area, so could conversely have negative impacts on the human population in this regard. There could also be potential significant negative effects as a result of an increase of resource consumption and pressure on existing infrastructure and utilities in the area, if not developed. Developing niche visitor accommodation options in rural destinations could impact greenfield sites and could reduce soil resources, negatively impacting soils, biodiversity, water quality and landscape. However, the objective to grow the accommodation base in destination towns will support compact sustainable development within existing settlements. Mitigation would therefore be required to ensure proper planning, management and assessment.					

Catalyst Project- Building Capacity & Associated Actions	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
Serviced, Outdoor and Holiday Let Accommodation Additional specific initiatives include: - Encouraging current accommodation businesses to invest in upgrades and extensions, such as those needed to support the golf market and Carne Golf Links. - Identifying strategies to reopen or redevelop stalled projects or closed premises. - Highlight options for increasing hostel accommodation in areas offering wild adventure, focusing on communities like Killala, Ballycastle, Belmullet, and Bangor Erris. This includes regenerating and repurposing buildings no longer in commercial use, such as the old grain store in Killala and the disused building at Bellacorick. - Support the proposed renovation and development of Kilmurray Yards as a multi-faceted accommodation concept, recognising that it strongly aligns with the experiential themes in this plan and has the potential to strengthen the offering in the Crossmolina area with its distinctive focus on wellness.	PHH1, PHH2,	B1, B2, B3 W1, W2 LSG1 AACH1, AACH2. L1, L2 MA1, MA2, MA3		ANC1, ANC2	Yes
Commentary/ Potential Environmental Effects This action centre around the requirement for additional accommodation to successfully grow the tourism sector for the Plan area. Some of the proposals relate to repurposing and upgrades etc. This would be positive for some elements of the environment including the human population. However, there is also potential unknown or negative effects on the population if this accommodation conflicts with the development of residential properties for the area, so could conversely have negative impacts on the human population in this regard. There could also be potential significant negative effects as a result of an increase of resource consumption and pressure on existing infrastructure and utilities in the area, if not developed. Developing niche visitor accommodation options in rural destinations could impact greenfield sites and could reduce soil resources, negatively impacting soils, biodiversity, water quality and landscape. However, the objective to grow the accommodation base in destination towns will support compact sustainable development within existing settlements. Mitigation would therefore be required to ensure proper planning, management and assessment.					
Camping and Motorhome Infrastructure There is a distinct shortage of camping infrastructure across North Mayo and a growing issue of wild camping in sensitive and scenic areas, such as Rinroe Beach. The lack of managed toilets or waste disposal services in many areas exacerbates the situation and increases the negative environmental impact. Support communities and private investors in increasing camping facilities from a policy perspective, such as proposed initiatives for Killala Pier, Rosspoint, and Belmullet. - Encourage further development of facilities at informal field sites, particularly those near towns and villages with supporting food and drink options, such as in Ballycastle. - Promote the development and use of legitimate waste management ('sani-dump') facilities for campervans. For example, RV Dump Sites (https://rvdumpsites.net/) provides a searchable database of facilities across North America with user-generated content.	PHH1, PHH2, B1, B2, B3 W1, W2 AACH1, AACH2. L1, L2 MA1, MA2, MA3			LSG1 ANC1, ANC2	No
Commentary/ Potential Environmental Effects This proposal would see benefits for much of the environment. It would allow for increased structured tourism with benefit for the local community, protection of biodiversity, water quality and landscape and would also allow for proper management of material assets including waste and wastewater. Such facilities should be sited suitably and but through proper planning, assessment and management sustainably.					

Table 8.13 Assessment of WMDEDP -Our Vibrant & Connected Destination - Catalyst Project- Building Capacity

Catalyst Project- Building Capacity & Associated Actions	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
Leadership and Networking - Establish a North Mayo Implementation Working Group that can assess the implementation of the DEDP and determine the necessary actions to secure success on an ongoing basis. The structure and approach taken in Clew Bay with the establishment of the Clew Bay Tourism Network (CBTN) should be mirrored in North Mayo with cross-sector representation to enable good dialogue between all key tourism actors. - Ensure that the two groups work together on projects that benefit both regions, such as Dark Skies, the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve initiative, and inter-regional trails projects. - Adopt a similar approach to the Clew Bay Tourism Network in areas relating to networking, reporting of progress and overall communication. The monthly news bulletins that the CBTN produces on industry-related news, the progress reports on the DEDP's implementation, and the online posting of the reports and initiatives arising from the implementation of the DEDP keeps everyone up to date, and generates both pride in overall accomplishment and a sense of momentum arising from such progress. - Hold an annual North Mayo networking meeting to review implementation of the DEDP. - Continue to build on the initiation of county-wide networking events – both across the county and within the North Mayo region. Creating a networking platform will foster partnerships and provide new opportunities for cross-selling between sectors – particularly between accommodation businesses and activity operators. - Combine networking events with local familiarisation tours to increase industry knowledge.	PHH1, PHH2			B1, B2, B3 W1, W2 ANC1, ANC2 LSG1 AACH1, AACH2. L1, L2 MA1, MA2, MA3	No
Commentary/ Potential Environmental Effects This action will support in raising awareness regarding tourism and successfully implementing the Plan itself. It provides economic benefits to the plan areas population. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.					

95

Catalyst Project- Building Capacity & Associated Actions	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
Commentary/ Potential Environmental Effects This action will support in raising awareness regarding tourism and successfully implementing the Plan itself. It provides economic benefits to the plan areas population. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required. It will encourage participation in Fis Climate Action Programme and so could have positive impacts for both climate and human population. No mitigation required.					

Table 8.14 Assessment of WMDEDP -Our Vibrant & Connected Destination -Supporting Initiatives

Catalyst Project- Building Capacity & Associated Actions	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
Transport to North Mayo • Work with Bus Éireann and TII to explore opportunities to strengthen timely bus connections with Ireland West Airport, Knock. In particular, assess and strengthen linkages with flights from the UK. • Encourage dialogue between public transport to streamline time-tabling to facilitate convenient movement from one form of transport to another to complete a journey. • Continue to promote direct rail linkages with Dublin, and the opportunities to travel by train within the county.	PHH1, PHH2, MA1, MA2, MA3, ANC1, ANC2			B1, B2, B3, W1, W2, AACH1, AACH2, L1, L2, LSG1	No
Commentary/ Potential Environmental Effects These actions would all contribute positively towards the human population, climate and material assets. While there will be emissions from such modes of transport this is preferable to single car usage for which this area currently heavily relies on for tourism. No mitigation is suggested.					

Catalyst Project- Building Capacity & Associated Actions	Potential Positive Effects	Potential Negative Effects	Uncertain Effects	No Likely / Neutral Effects	Mitigation Required
Access within North Mayo • Work with Bus Éireann and/or Local Link to create new public transport linkages along the north coastal route with a particular emphasis on supporting the Céide Coast Path. Ideally this service should be a flexible pick-up and drop-off service. • Review connectivity in general and work with Bus Éireann and Local Link to address critical gaps and improve local service. • Conduct an assessment of all roads to key attractions and Tír Sáile installations. Prioritise repair issues on roads such as to Doohoma Discovery Point, and the access to Kilcummin loop walk. • Explore opportunities to improve/recreate access to viewsapes for visitors touring North Mayo – for example, the R310 as it runs parallel to Lough Conn. • Explore opportunities to open up and/or improve opportunities to pull off the road to appreciate the panoramic views – for example, along the N59. Where there are existing pull-offs that provide a significant view, assess the potential to improve the experience through interpretation. • Work with relevant agencies such as the Irish Wheelchair Association and the National Disability Authority to conduct appraisals of accessibility at sites and attractions across the region, and address issues where feasible. • Work with businesses to promote digital accessibility and compliance with the EU Accessibility Act.	PHH1, PHH2, MA1, MA2, MA3 ANC1, ANC2		B1, B2, B3 W1, W2 AACH1, AACH2. L1, L2 LSG1		No
Commentary/ Potential Environmental Effects These actions would all contribute positively towards the human population, climate and material assets. While there will be emissions from such modes of transport this is preferable to single car usage for which this area currently heavily relies on for tourism. No mitigation is suggested.					

8.2 Overall Findings

Table 8.13 summarizes the main findings of the environmental effects that might arise from the Plan provisions.

The overall conclusions for this section are as follows:

- The Plan contributes towards Compliance with Environmental Legislation and Guidelines
- The Plan provides for Environmental Protection and Management
- The Plan is likely to contribute towards, in combination with other governmental policies, plans etc., an increase in greenhouse gas emissions – although such increases will be mitigated
- The Plan is Consistent with the existing Statutory Decision-Making and Consent Granting Framework
- Potentially Significant Adverse Effects will be mitigated

Table 8.15 Overall Findings – Environmental Effects arising from Plan Provisions

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework ¹⁷			SEO Codes
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potential Significant Adverse Effect, if unmitigated	Residual Adverse Non -Significant Effect	
Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	- Contribution towards the protection and management of biodiversity and flora and fauna (in designated sites, including European Sites and Wildlife Sites, and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats) including through: - Visitor management strategies; and - DEDP requirements for environmental protection and management. - Contributes towards the maintenance of existing green infrastructure and its ecosystem services. - Contribution towards protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna as a result of contributing towards the protection of environmental vectors, air, water and soil	Arising from both construction and operation of tourism related development/activities: - Loss of/damage to biodiversity in designated sites (including European Sites and Wildlife Sites) and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats, and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna. - Habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration, including patch size and edge effects; and - Disturbance (e.g. due to noise and lighting along transport corridors) and displacement of protected species such as birds and bats	- Loss of an extent of non-protected habitats and species arising from the replacement of seminatural land covers with artificial surfaces arising from projects consented through the statutory planning/consent-granting framework. - Losses or damage to ecology (these would be in compliance with relevant legislation; and mitigated as projects would demonstrate compliance with various environmental protection and management measures)	B1, B2, B3
Population & Human Health	- Contribution towards the protection of human health including through DEDP requirements for environmental protection and management. - Contribution towards the protection of human health as a result of not directing additional tourists towards specific locations in instances where significant problems with critical infrastructure (drinking water,	- Potential interactions if effects upon environmental vectors such as water are not mitigated. - Potential interactions if additional tourists are directed towards specific locations in instances where significant problems with critical infrastructure (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) have been identified	Potential interactions with residual effects on environmental vectors. This has been mitigated by provisions that have been integrated into the Plan, including those relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management.	PHH1 PHH2

¹⁷ Effects include in-combination effects – those arising from services, infrastructure and other development (to service development, including tourism) that are planned for and consented through the statutory framework including the NPF, RSES and lower-tier land use plans. Examples may include developments/operation of developments relating to water services, transport, access or accommodation. Mitigation includes that which has been integrated into the Plan – please refer to Section 9 of this report.

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework ¹⁷			SEO Codes
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potential Significant Adverse Effect, if unmitigated	Residual Adverse Non -Significant Effect	
	wastewater, waste and transport) have been identified. • Contribution towards the protection amenity usage and access. • Contribution towards the sustainable growth of tourism and associated sustenance and growth of communities within the Plan area			
Land, Soils & Geology	• Various provisions (e.g. relating to maintaining the wildness of areas that have not yet been developed) help to minimise land-take and loss of extent of soil resource. • Contribution towards the protection of the environment from contamination.	• Adverse impacts upon the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource. • Potential for increase in coastal /riverbank erosion.	• Loss of an extent of soil function arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces and from sea level rise/coastal erosion	LSG1
Air Quality, Noise & Climate	• Contribution towards climate adaptation and mitigation through measures relating to: • Walking and cycling; and • Contribution towards European and national objectives for climate adaptation and mitigation, taking into account a wide range of detailed measures including those relating to resilience.	• Potential conflict, in combination with plans and programmes from all sectors including transport and land use planning, between increases in visitors (which is likely to result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions and other emissions to air, including from aviation, with associated interactions with climatic factors) and local, national and European objectives to reduce carbon emissions. • Potential conflicts between transport movements, including car movements, and air quality	• An increase in travel related greenhouse gas and other emissions to air, including from aviation. This has been mitigated by provisions that have been integrated into the Plan, including those relating to sustainable mobility and compliance with the Climate Action Plan and the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2018 and any subsequent versions). • Risks remain due to uncertainty with regard to climate and interactions with issues including flooding and material assets.	ANC1 ANC2
Material Assets	• Contributes towards protection and allows for continued use of public assets and infrastructure. • Contains clear objectives around seasonality and regionality which look not only to spread the benefits of tourism but also the potential impacts/ load associated with tourism.	• Increased number of visitors have the potential to increase traffic levels. • The need to provide adequate and appropriate water services (it is the function of Uisce Eireann to provide for such needs). • Increases in waste levels and residual wastes from visitors and construction of developments.	• Residual wastes to be disposed of in line with higher level waste management policies. • Increased loading on critical infrastructure (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) where no significant problems have been identified with this infrastructure.	MA1 MA2 MA3

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework ¹⁷			SEO Codes
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potential Significant Adverse Effect, if unmitigated	Residual Adverse Non -Significant Effect	
	- Helps to minimise likelihood of exceeding capacity immaterial assets as a result of not directing additional tourists towards specific locations in instances where significant problems with critical infrastructure (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) have been identified - Contribution towards compliance with national and regional water services and waste management policies	Potential impacts upon public assets and infrastructure.	- Exceedance of capacity in critical infrastructure risks remain due to uncertainty with regard to climate – however such risks will be mitigated by measures that have been integrated into the Plan; and the statutory planning/consent-granting framework. - Any impacts upon public assets and infrastructure to comply with statutory planning/consent granting framework.	
Architectural, Archaeological, & Cultural Heritage	- Contribution towards the long-term protection of archaeological and architectural heritage by encouraging greater levels of awareness and appreciation through, use, interpretation and access, in line with the requirements relating to the protection of cultural heritage including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and/or their context; and entries to the Records of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context - Contributes towards protection of designated sites of geological heritage	- Potential effects on designated and unknown archaeological heritage. - Potential effects on architectural heritage - Adverse effects on designated geological heritage sites.	- Potential alteration to the context and setting of architectural heritage however, these will occur in compliance with legislation. - Potential alteration to the context and setting of archaeological heritage however, this will occur in compliance with legislation. - Potential loss of unknown archaeology however, this loss will be mitigated by measures integrated into the Plan	AACH1 AACH2
Water	- Contribution towards the protection of water resources (including the status of surface and groundwaters), bathing water quality and water-based designations including through integrating requirements for environmental protection and management into the Plan. - Contribution towards flood risk management and appropriate drainage	- Adverse impacts upon the status of water bodies and entries to the WFD Register of Protected Areas (ecological and human value), arising from changes in quality, flow and/morphology. - Increase in flood risk	- Increased loadings as a result of development to comply with River Basin Management Plan. - Flood related risks remain due to uncertainty with regard to extreme weather events – however such risks will be mitigated by measures that have been integrated into the Plan; and the statutory planning/consent-granting framework	W1 W2

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the existing statutory planning/decision-making and consent-granting framework ¹⁷			SEO Codes
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potential Significant Adverse Effect, if unmitigated	Residual Adverse Non -Significant Effect	
Landscape & Visuals	Contribution towards the protection of landscape designations as a result of facilitating compliance with relevant plans; and maintaining the wildness of areas that have not yet been developed.	- Occurrence of adverse visual impacts, especially in marine, estuary, island and ridge areas where, and conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape. - Changes in the appearance of the landscape	Residual visual effects (these would comply with landscape designation provisions)	LV1 LV2

8.3 Interrelationship Between Environmental Factors

The interactions between the environmental factors are an important consideration for the environmental assessment. Due to the variety of activities associated with tourism, there is potential for all environmental factors to interact with each other to some degree, either positively or negatively. Main interactions are likely to be between tourism/visitors interacting with local populations and human health, biodiversity, climate, architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage, landscape and material assets.

The likely interactions between environmental factors, given the implementation of the Plan, are set out in Table 8.14. The table below indicates with a tick (✓), the interactions across the environmental factors.

Table 8.16 Interactions between Environmental Factors

✓= Key Interactions

x- Minor/No interactions

Environmental Factor	Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	Population & Human Health	Land, Soil & Geology	Air Quality, Noise & Climate	Material Assets	Architectural, Archaeological, and Cultural Heritage	Water	Landscape & Visuals
Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna		✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
Population & Human Health	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Land, Soil & Geology	✓	✓		X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Air Quality, Noise & Climate	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	x
Material Assets	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Architectural, Archaeological, & Cultural Heritage	x	✓	✓	✓	✓		x	✓
Water	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X		✓
Landscape & Visuals	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	

8.4 Potential Cumulative Effects

Cumulative effects can be described as the addition of many small impacts to create one larger, more significant, impact.

There are 2 types of potential cumulative effects that have been considered, namely:

- Potential intra-Plan cumulative effects - these arise from the interactions between different types of potential environmental effects resulting from a plan, programme, etc. The interrelationships between environmental factors that help determine these potential effects are identified on Table 8.15.
- Potential inter-Plan cumulative effects - these arise when the effects of the implementation of one plan occur in combination with those of other plans, programmes, projects, etc.

The WMDEDP could have a relationship with other plans and programmes. However, these plans and programmes have also been subject to environmental assessment, including SEA and AA, for the purpose of preventing and mitigating potential negative environmental effects. Table 8.18 lists the relevant plans and programmes that have potential for cumulative effects with the WMDEDP.

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 WMDEDP.

The assessment of cumulative effects concludes that the implementation of the WMDEDP will not result in direct, indirect or cumulative impacts which would have the potential to adversely affect the environment. Indeed, the implementation of the WMDEDP 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 of natural heritage, cultural heritage and landscape.

Table 8.17 Potential Cumulative Effects with other Plans and Programmes

Plans & Programs	Potential Cumulative Effect	Likely Cumulative Effect
National Planning Framework (NPF) Project 2040 (First Revision April 2025)	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
Northern and Western 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 have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
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	No

Plans & Programs	Potential Cumulative Effect	Likely Cumulative Effect
	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	
County Development Plans (Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028, Sligo County Development Plan 2024-2030)	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 within the 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 – Wild Atlantic Way 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

8.5 Summary

The environmental assessment of the provisions of the WMDEDP identifies potential uncertain effects on the environment as set out above. Much of this relates to uncertainty in the likely outcome of objectives and the potential nature and scope of any development, which may or may not, derive from the implementation of catalyst projects, enabling projects, destination projects and the Plan. Therefore, measures are detailed in Section 9 which will set the context for the avoidance and / or reduction of any such potential environmental effects.

In working with the SEA process, the Plan acknowledges the requirement for any development to adhere to best practice in terms of environmental governance. Indeed, protection and enhancement of the environment is a critical pillar underpinning the core objectives and success of the WMDEDP.

In this context any proposals for development arising from the WMDEDP must meet the proper planning and sustainable development policies, objectives and development management provisions of the statutory Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028.

9 Mitigation

The finding of the environmental assessment in Section 8 of this Environmental Report is that, if unmitigated, a number of the actions of WMDEDP have potential for uncertain or negative effects on various aspects of the environment. This section sets out the types of mitigation measures that are appropriate at this strategic level to ensure such negative or uncertain effects are mitigated for adequately.

9.1 Level of Mitigation

This Plan has been informed by and is situated alongside a hierarchy of statutory documents setting out public policy for land use development, tourism, infrastructure, sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management. These include (but is not limited to) the

National Planning Framework (NPF), Climate Action Plan (CAP), the National and County Biodiversity Action Plans, the Northern & Western Region Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032 (SRRSEs), and the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 and local area plans located with the plan area.

Implementing the DEDP will involve Fáilte Ireland working collaboratively to facilitate, promote, support and coordinate stakeholders (including local authorities, other government agencies, tourism operators, communities and visitors) in their activities in a way that is consistent with existing and emerging plans.

In order to be realised, projects included in this Plan will have to comply, as relevant, with the various provisions of legislation, policies, plans and programmes. (including requirements for project level Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form part of the statutory decision-making and consent granting framework, of which this Plan is not part and does not contribute towards.

Such legislation, policies, plans and programmes include:

- Compliance with statutory higher-level plans and policies including the NPF, RSES, Climate Action Plan, etc.
- Compliance with statutory land use plans that form part of the statutory decision making and consent granting framework (e.g. Development Plans, such as the Mayo County Development Plan 2022- 2028 and Local Area Plans) as appropriate,
- Requirements for project level environmental assessment, including EIA, AA & SSFRA, as required.

9.2 Plan Mitigation

Plan mitigation is mitigation that is incorporated into the text of the Plan to prevent, reduce, offset and monitor any likely significant environmental effects. The Plan has benefitted from iterative feedback with stakeholders and the SEA team to inform the Plan as presented for public consultation. **Appendix B** of the Plan details some of these measures to include:

9.2.1 Infrastructure Capacity

With respect to infrastructural capacity (including drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) the potential environmental impacts associated with increase visitor numbers and increase pressure on capacities of existing infrastructure (including accommodation) will require careful planning and assessment. The potential environmental effects of the likely increase in tourism volumes resulting from the relevant projects in this plan will need to be considered at project level and mitigated as appropriate. This aspect should be linked to the development of visitor management plans as appropriate.

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

9.2.2 Visitor Management

Those receiving funding shall seek to sustainably manage existing and any increase in visitor numbers and/or any change in visitor behaviour to avoid significant effects on the environment including loss of habitat and/or disturbance to sensitive species (including human beings and biodiversity). This shall include for example, ensuring that new projects are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities. Visitor management plans will be required for proposed plans, programmes and projects that are to receive funding as relevant and appropriate.

9.2.3 Control and Management of Invasive Species

Proposals and the development of Visitor Management plans shall consider the control and management of invasive species having regard to existing objectives contained with the County Development Plan.

Developers and managers of existing tourism or recreational sites and/ or future development should adhere to best practice and facilitate the development of appropriate facilities to minimise the spread of invasive species including along blueways and greenways. Further information and resources on “Check, Clean, Dry, Disinfect” should be sought on invasives.ie

Fáilte Ireland shall work with partners to encourage greater awareness of potential threats caused by invasive species and how they can spread.

9.2.4 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 ([NPWS - Ecosystems Services Mapping & Assessment](#)). Proposals for the development of any green infrastructure should demonstrate the synergies that can be achieved with regard to the: provision of open space amenities; sustainable management of water; protection and management of biodiversity; protection of cultural heritage; and protection of protected landscape sensitivities

9.3 Requirements for Environmental Protection & Management

The key environmental protection measures included in the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 provide for appropriate and detailed mitigation of potential uncertain environmental effects of the WMDEDP over and above those already embedded into the plan as discussed above. These measures include policies and objectives for the natural environment, climate action & renewable energy, sustainable communities, infrastructure, movement and transport, economic development, tourism & recreation, housing, built environment and settlements. These can be further reviewed in the Plan itself:

Further to the above Table 9.1 contains various provisions with which all and any partners as named out in the WMDEDP against various action (e.g. local authorities) will demonstrate compliance at lower levels of decision making in order to progress projects and receive as appropriate relevant funding and support. These decision-making processes will include project level assessments for consent.

Table 9.1 Environmental Protection & Management Compliance Requirements

Environmental Topic	Requirement for Environmental Protection & Management
All	Regulatory framework for environmental protection and management Responsible partners shall cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the of the regulatory framework for environmental protection objectives and management. Local authorities and others will demonstrate, as appropriate, that plans, programmes and projects comply with EU Directives – including the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC, as amended), the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (85/337/EEC, as amended) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC) – and relevant transposing Regulations.
All	Information to be considered by local authorities and others at lower levels of decision making and environmental assessment Lower levels of decision making and environmental assessment by local authorities and others, as relevant, should consider the sensitivities identified in Section 4 of the SEA Environmental Report, including the following: • Candidate Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas. • Features of the landscape that provide linkages/connectivity to designated sites (e.g. watercourses, areas of semi-natural habitat such as linear woodlands etc) • Salmonid Waters. • Shellfish Waters. • Freshwater Pearl Mussel catchments. • Nature Reserves. • Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas. • Areas likely to contain a habitat listed in annex 1 of the Habitats Directive.

Environmental Topic	Requirement for Environmental Protection & Management
	• Entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and Zones of Archaeological Potential. • Entries to the Record of Protected Structures. • Un-designated sites of importance to wintering or breeding bird species of conservation concern • Architectural Conservation Areas; and • Relevant landscape designations
All	Construction and Environmental Management Plan Construction Environment Management Plans (CEMPs) shall be prepared in advance of the construction of larger projects and implemented throughout. Such plans shall incorporate relevant mitigation measures indicated in any lower tier Environmental Impact Statement or Appropriate Assessment. CEMPs typically provide details of intended construction practice for the proposed development, including: a. location of the sites and materials including area(s) identified for the storage of compound(s) - construction refuse, b. location of areas for construction site offices and staff facilities, c. details of site security fencing and hoardings, d. details of on-site car parking facilities for site workers during the course of construction, e. details of the timing and routing of traffic to and from the construction site and construction associated directional signage, f. measures to obviate queuing of construction traffic on measures to obviate queuing of construction traffic on the adjoining road network, g. measures to prevent the spillage or deposit of clay, rubble or other debris, h. alternative arrangements to be put in place for pedestrians and vehicles in the case of the closure of any public right of way during the course of site development works, i. details of appropriate mitigation measures for noise, dust and vibration, and monitoring of such levels, j. containment of all construction-related fuel and oil within specially constructed bunds to ensure that fuel spillages are fully contained; such bunds shall be roofed to exclude rainwater, k. disposal of construction/demolition waste and details of how it is proposed to manage excavated soil, l. a water and sediment management plan, providing for means to ensure that surface water runoff is controlled such that no silt or other pollutants enter local water courses or drains, m. details of a water quality monitoring and sampling plan. n. if peat is encountered - a peat storage, handling and reinstatement management plan. o. measures adopted during construction to prevent the spread of invasive species (such as Japanese Knotweed). p. appointment of an ecological clerk of works at site investigation, preparation and construction phases
All	Maintenance Plan Lower tier assessments should examine the need for Maintenance Plans informed by environmental considerations to be prepared and implemented.
Biodiversity and flora and fauna	Protection of Biodiversity including Natura 2000 Network Responsible partners shall contribute, as appropriate, towards the protection of designated ecological sites including candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs); UNESCO World Heritage and UNESCO Biosphere sites; Ramsar Sites; Salmonid Waters; Shellfish Waters; Freshwater Pearl Mussel Flora Protection Order sites; Wildlife Sites (including catchments; Nature Reserves); Certain entries to the Water Framework Directive Register of Protected Areas; Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs); Wildfowl Sanctuaries (see S.I. 192 of 1979) ; and Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). Responsible partners shall demonstrate compliance with relevant EU Environmental Directives and applicable National Legislation, Policies, Plans and Guidelines, including the following and any updated/superseding documents): • EU Directives, including the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC, as amended)⁴, the Birds Directive(2009/147/EC)⁵, the Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC)⁶, the

Environmental Topic	Requirement for Environmental Protection & Management
	Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (85/337/EEC, as amended), the Water Framework Directive(2000/60/EC) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC) • National legislation, including the Wildlife Act 19767, the European Communities(Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1989 (SI No. 349 of 1989) (as amended), the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000, the European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (amended), the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the European Communities(Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011), the European Communities (Environmental Liability) Regulations 20088 and the Flora Protection Order 1999 • National policy guidelines (including any clarifying Circulars or superseding versions of same), including the Landscape and Landscape Assessment Draft Guidelines 2000, the Environmental Impact Assessment Sub-Threshold Development Guidelines 2003, Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidelines 2004 and the Appropriate Assessment Guidance 2010 • Catchment and water resource management Plans, including River Basin District Management Plan 2009-2015 (including any superseding versions of same). • Biodiversity Plans and guidelines, including Actions for Biodiversity 2011-2016: Ireland's 2ndNational Biodiversity Plan (including any superseding version of same). • Ireland's Environment 2014 (EPA, 2014, including any superseding versions of same), and to make provision where appropriate to address the report's goals and challenges. Appropriate Assessment All projects and plans arising from this programme will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. A plan or project will only be authorised after the competent authority has ascertained, based on scientific evidence, Screening for Appropriate Assessment, and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment where necessary, that: 1. The Plan or project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary effects on the integrity of any European site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); or 2. The Plan or project will have significant adverse effects on the integrity of any European site(that does not host a priority natural habitat type/and or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000; or 3. The Plan or project will have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of any European site(that hosts a natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons for overriding public interest, restricted to reasons of human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura2000. Protection of Natura 2000 Sites No projects giving rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on Natura 2000 sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this programme (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects9) NPWS & Integrated Management Plans Regarding, integrated management plans, Article 6(1) of the Habitats Directive requires that Member States establish the necessary conservation measures for Special Area of Conservation involving, if need be, appropriate management plans specifically designed for the sites or integrated into other development plans. The NPWS's current priority is to

Environmental Topic	Requirement for Environmental Protection & Management
	identify site specific conservation objectives; management plans may be considered after this is done. Where Integrated Management Plans are being prepared for all Natura sites (or parts thereof), responsible partners shall engage with the National Parks and Wildlife Service in order to ensure that plans are fully integrated with other plans and programmes, with the intention that such plans are practical, achievable and sustainable and have regard to all relevant ecological, cultural, social and economic considerations and with special regard to local communities. Coastal Zone Management Responsible partners shall demonstrate that works will be undertaken in accordance with best practice and local authorities and others shall, as appropriate: support measures to protect the coast, the coastal edge and coastal habitats; and facilitate an Integrated Coastal Zone Management approach to ensure the conservation, management and projection of man-made and natural resources of the coastal zone. Biodiversity and Ecological Networks Responsible partners shall demonstrate, as appropriate, protection and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological connectivity, including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, semi-natural grasslands, rivers, streams, natural springs, wetlands, geological and geomorphological systems, other landscape features and associated wildlife where these form part of the ecological network and/or may be considered as ecological corridors or stepping stones in the context of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive Protection of Riparian Zone and Waterbodies and Watercourses Responsible partners shall demonstrate that waterbodies and watercourses are protected from inappropriate development, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. This will include protection buffers in riverine, wetland and coastal areas, as appropriate Non-Designated Sites Responsible partners shall demonstrate the appropriate protection of non-designated habitats and landscapes and to conserve the biological diversity Non-native invasive species Responsible partners shall support, as appropriate, the National Parks and Wildlife Service's efforts to seek to control the spread of non-native invasive species on land and water
Population & Human Health	Human Health Responsible partners shall assess proposals for development in terms of, inter alia, potential impact on existing adjacent developments, existing land uses and/or the surrounding landscape. Where proposed developments would be likely to have a significant adverse effect on the amenities of the area through pollution by noise, fumes, odours, dust, grit or vibration, or cause pollution of air, water and/or soil, local authorities and others shall ensure the introduction of mitigation measures in order to eliminate adverse environmental impacts or reduce them to an acceptable operating level
Land, Soil & Geology	Soil Protection and Contamination Responsible partners shall ensure that adequate soil protection measures are undertaken where appropriate. Adequate and appropriate investigations shall be carried out into the nature and extent of any soil and groundwater contamination and the risks associated with site development work, where brownfield development is proposed. Areas of geological interest Responsible partners shall demonstrate protection and maintenance of the character, integrity and conservation value of features or areas of geological interest
Water	Water Framework Directive and associated legislation Responsible partners shall contribute towards, as appropriate, the protection of existing and potential water resources, and their use by humans and wildlife, including rivers, streams, wetlands, groundwater, coastal waters and associated habitats and species in accordance with the requirements and guidance in the EU Water Framework Directive 2000 (2000/60/EC), the European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended), the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (SI No. 272 of 2009), the Groundwater Directive 2006/118/EC and the European Communities Environmental Objectives (groundwater) Regulations, 2010 (S.I. No. 9 of 2010) and other relevant EU Directives, including associated national legislation and

Environmental Topic	Requirement for Environmental Protection & Management
	policy guidance (including any superseding versions of same). Local authorities and others shall support the application and implementation of a catchment planning and management approach to development and conservation, including the implementation of Sustainable Drainage System techniques for new development.
	River Basin Management Plan Responsible partners shall support the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures as outlined in the various River Basin Management Plans 2009 – 2015, and associated Programmes of Measures, or any such plans that may supersede same during the lifetime of this plan as well as relevant recommendations contained in the Water Quality in Ireland 2007 – 2009 (EPA, 2011, and any updated/superseding document). Local authorities and others shall demonstrate that proposals for development would not have an unacceptable impact on the water environment, including surface waters, groundwater quality and quantity, river corridors and associated woodlands and coastal waters. Also, local authorities and others shall have cognisance of, where relevant, the EU's Common Implementation Strategy Guidance Document No. 20 which provides guidance on exemptions to the environmental objectives of the Water Framework Directive
	Bathing Water Responsible partners shall contribute towards the achievement of the requirements of the EU Bathing Water Directive and transposing Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008) and EU Mandatory Values, as a minimum, and EU Guide Values, where possible.
	Flood Risk Management Guidelines Responsible partners shall support, as appropriate, in co-operation with the OPW, the implementation of the EU Flood Risk Directive (2007/60/EC), the Flood Risk Regulations (SI No. 122 of 2010), the DEHLG/OPW publication The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines (2009) (including any clarifying Circulars or superseding versions of same) and relevant outputs of the Catchment and Flood Risk Assessment and Management Studies (CFRAMS).
	Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) Responsible partners shall ensure that new development is adequately serviced with surface water drainage infrastructure and promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems as appropriate.
Air, Noise & Climate Add here	Infrastructure for Walking, Cycling and Water-based activities Responsible partners shall work with Fáilte Ireland, the National Trails Office, Coillte, the Department of the Housing, Local Government & Heritage Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Department of Enterprise, Tourism & Employment and other relevant stakeholders, to improve on the existing level of infrastructure and facilities for walking, cycling and water-based activities along the Wild Atlantic Way.
	Climate Action Responsible partners shall work with Fáilte Ireland to • Implement the actions in the Climate Action Plan 2025 and the Local Authority CAP and subsequent updates. • Work with partners to improve access and availability of sustainable • Work with partners to implement the relevant actions in the National Adaptation Framework. • Implement the relevant actions in the Sectoral Adaptation Plan for the Tourism Sector • Work with partners to implement relevant targets contained in the Tourism Policy Framework

Environmental Topic	Requirement for Environmental Protection & Management
Material Assets	Construction Waste Responsible partners shall demonstrate that all waste arising during construction phase will be managed and disposed of in a way that ensures the provisions of the Waste Management Acts and regulations and National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy 2024-2030. Construction Waste Management Plans will be implemented by local authorities and others to minimise waste and ensure correct handling and disposal of construction waste streams in accordance with the Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects, Department of the Environment, July 2006
	Waste Disposal Responsible partners shall safeguard the environment by seeking to ensure that residual waste is disposed of appropriately.
	Uisce Éireann Responsible partners shall co-operate with and support, as relevant and appropriate, Uisce Éireann in its new role as the lead authority for water services.
Architectural, Archaeological & Cultural Heritage	Archaeological Heritage Responsible partners shall contribute, as appropriate, towards the protection and sympathetic enhancement of archaeological heritage, in particular by implementing the relevant provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the National Monuments Act, 1930 (as amended).
	Protection of Archaeological Sites Responsible partners shall contribute, as appropriate, towards the protection of archaeological sites and monuments and their settings, archaeological objects and underwater archaeological sites that are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places, in the ownership/guardianship of the State, or that are subject of Preservation Orders or have been registered in the Register of Historic Monuments. Contribute, as appropriate, towards the protection and preservation of archaeological sites, which have been identified subsequent to the publication of the Record of Monuments and Places.
	Consultation Responsible partners shall consult with the National Monuments Service of the Department of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht in relation to proposed developments adjoining archaeological sites.
	Underwater Archaeological Sites Responsible partners shall contribute, as appropriate, towards the protection and preservation of underwater archaeological sites in riverine, intertidal and sub-tidal locations.
	Architectural Heritage Responsible partners shall help to ensure the appropriate protection of architectural heritage by complying, as appropriate, with the legislative provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) in relation to architectural heritage and the policy guidance contained in the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2011 (and any updated/superseding document)
Landscape & Visuals	Landscape Designations Responsible partners shall contribute, as appropriate, towards the protection of county and local level landscape designations from incompatible developments. Proposals for development that have the potential to significantly adversely impact upon these designations shall be accompanied by an assessment of the potential landscape character and visual impacts of the proposed development - demonstrating that landscape impacts have been anticipated and avoided to a level consistent with the sensitivity of the landscape and the nature of the designation. Such assessments should be prepared having regard to the relevant aspects of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (2013 Landscape Institute).
	Coastal Areas and Seascapes Responsible partners shall protect the character and visual potential of the coast and conserve the character and quality of seascapes.

10 Monitoring

Article 10 of the SEA Directive requires monitoring to be carried out for significant effects directly related to the implementation of the Plan *“in order to, inter alia, identify at an early-stage unforeseen adverse effects and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action.”* It is a key part to ensuring the Plan does not negatively impact the receiving environment, and to assess whether current mitigation measures are appropriately compensating any anticipated environmental impacts.

Monitoring of the Plan is focused on monitoring the identified potential significant negative and positive effects only on the environment as a result of implementing the Plan.

10.1 Indicators & Targets

Monitoring is based around indicators that allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Strategic Environmental Objectives identified in Section 5 and used in the evaluation. Each indicator to be monitored is accompanied by the target(s) that were identified with regard to the relevant strategic actions refer to Table 10.1.

Table 10.2 overleaf shows the current indicators and targets that have been selected for monitoring the likely significant environmental effects of implementing relevant Fáilte Ireland Plans, Programmes, etc. These monitoring measures are updated on an ongoing basis as new data comes to light.

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

10.2 Reporting & Responsibility

The monitoring process will be undertaken by Fáilte Ireland, including preparation of evaluation reports and corrective actions, if required. The steering group that will be formed to implement the Plan (that includes key stakeholders responsible for project ownership and/or partnering in the delivery of the plan) will be a key source of monitoring data and any remedial measures, as appropriate.

The findings of monitoring will be reported on periodically with frequencies to be determined during the implementation stage. It is recommended that the proposed environmental monitoring programme is agreed in advance of finalisation with all partners and stakeholders involved in the monitoring. After consultation is undertaken on the Plan, the environmental monitoring programme can be amended and will be finalised and published in the SEA Statement.

Table 10.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna (B)	B1	Ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of Natura 2000 Sites and Annex habitats and species ¹⁸ and no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function.
	B2	Preserve, protect, maintain and where appropriate enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, including internationally, EU and nationally designated sites, habitats and protected species
	B3	Ensure WMDEDP does not contradict biodiversity protection, restoration and rehabilitation objectives in the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028.

¹⁸ ‘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
Population & Human Health (PHH)	PHH1	Promote sustainable high-quality tourism within the plan area that supports economic development and maximises potential for employment and investment.
	PHH2	Improve health and wellbeing by provision of recreational and tourism related activities.
Lands, Soils & Geology (LSG)	LSG1	Minimise green field development and protect land and soil resources from pollution and degradation.
Air Quality, Noise & Climate (ANC)	ANC1	Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality and noise emissions through the reduction of emissions.
	ANC2	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)	MA1	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.
	MA2	Promote sustainable waste management, minimisation and recovery.
	MA3	Promote sustainable transportation including increased use of public transport and active travel measures.
Architectural, Archaeological & Cultural Heritage (AACH)	AACH1	Protect and avoid impact on places, features and landscapes of cultural and archaeological importance, including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP).
	AACH2	Protect 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)).
Water (W)	W1	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.
	W2	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.
Landscape & Visuals (LV)	LV1	To protect landscape character, minimise the loss of historic landscape features such as mature trees and hedgerows and scenic views.
	LV2	Avoid impacts on the statutory landscape & visual designations as identified in the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028.

Table 10.2 Proposed SEA Monitoring Programme

Note: The monitoring programme has taken into full consideration assessment and monitoring completed on other tourism related plans including the Wild Atlantic Way operational Plan and resulting Environmental Monitoring Programme.

Environmental Factor	SEO	Indicator	Target	Source and Frequency
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna (B)	B1 -Ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of Natura 2000 Sites and Annex habitats and species ¹⁹ and no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function	Conservation status of habitats and species protected under European and International legislation	Maintenance of favourable conservation status for all habitats and species protected under National and International legislation to be unaffected by implementation of the Plan.	- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage report of the implementation of the measures contained in the Habitats Directive - as required by Article 17 of the Directive (every six years) - DHLGH National Monitoring Report for the Birds Directive under Article 12 (every three years). - Local authority/ An Coimisiún Pleanála planning application project decisions relating to projects under the plan. - EPA State of the Environment reporting. - Data from any relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programme relevant to the project/area.
	B2 - Preserve, protect, maintain and where appropriate enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, including internationally, EU and nationally designated sites, habitats and protected species	Conservation status of habitats and species protected under International and National legislation	No habitats or ecological networks, or parts thereof to be impacted/ lost without remediation resulting from projects arising from the Plan.	- Data from beneficiaries provided in funding applications as required under Mitigation Section 9 of the SEA ER. (Frequency: ongoing - project specific). - CORINE mapping resurvey (every five years). - Local authority (LA) or An Coimisiún Pleanála planning application project environmental assessments & decisions.

¹⁹ '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.

Environmental Factor	SEO	Indicator	Target	Source and Frequency
				- EPA State of the Environment reporting. - Data from any relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programme relevant to the project/area. - Visitor management plan relating to project(s). - National Biodiversity Data Centre, The Irish Wetland Bird Survey (I-WeBS).
	B3- Ensure WMDEDP does not contradict biodiversity protection, restoration and rehabilitation objectives in the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028.	To comply with the biodiversity policies and objectives of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028	No contravention of the biodiversity policies and objectives of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028	Mayo County Council monitoring for likely significant environmental effects of the developments and compliance with policies and objectives of the CDP
Population and Human Health (PHH)	PHH1- Promote sustainable high-quality tourism within the plan area that supports economic development and maximises potential for employment and investment.	To comply with the tourism and economic development policies and objectives of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028	To sustainably manage visitors to the area and to comply with the tourism and economic development policies and objectives of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028	- Data from beneficiaries provided in funding applications as required under Section 9 of the SEA ER. (Frequency: ongoing). - Visitor management plan relating to projects. - Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities. - Fáilte Ireland (annual review): Tourism performance reports, visitor surveys, monitoring programmes, tourism research & reports. - Central Statistics Office.
	PHH2: Improve health and wellbeing by provision of recreational and tourism related activities.	Occurrence of a spatially concentrated deterioration in human health arising from environmental factors resulting from the WMDEDP, as identified by the Health Service	Ensure that visitors have appropriate access to recreational areas and public health amenities.	Data from beneficiaries provided in funding applications as required under Section 9 of the SEA ER. (Frequency: ongoing).

Environmental Factor	SEO	Indicator	Target	Source and Frequency
		Executive (HSE) and / or Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).		• Visitor management plan relating to project(s) • Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities. • Publicly available data from HSE and EPA to be reviewed. • EPA State of the Environment reporting. • Local Authority reports (annual review).
Lands, Soils & Geology (LSG)	LSG1 -Minimise green field development and protect land and soil resources from pollution and degradation.	Extent of conversion of land cover / green field to developed / artificial surfaces.	Contribute to NPF target to limit the rate of increase of land that is sealed or artificialised and promote the reversal of this in suitable areas e.g., flood zones, high density areas.	• CORINE land cover mapping (CORINE every 6 years (due 2024)). • Land use national land cover map (Fáilte Éireann - every five years). • EPA State of the Environment reporting.
Air Quality, Noise & Climate) (ANC)	ANC1 - Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality and noise emissions through the reduction of emissions.	Demonstration of compliance with air quality and noise provisions Number of exceedances of ambient air quality standards in the County, as monitored under the EPA's National Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Network	To maximise the number of measures relating to air quality and noise minimisation being implemented	• To maximise the number of measures relating to air quality and noise minimisation being implemented.
	ANC2 - 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.	Demonstration of compliance with provisions relating to climate adaptation and mitigation	To maximise the number of measures relating to climate adaptation and mitigation being implemented	• Data from beneficiaries provided in funding applications as required under Section 9 of the SEA ER. (Frequency: ongoing - project specific). • EPA - GHG emissions data and projections. • Government Climate Action Plan (annual review). • Met Eireann (annual statistics).

Environmental Factor	SEO	Indicator	Target	Source and Frequency
				- Transport for Ireland - Local Link network statistics. - Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities. - FI CAP accreditation (annual review). - Mayo County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029.
Material Assets (MA)	MA1- 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.	Number of incompatibles developments (supported by the plan) adversely affecting existing or planned infrastructure, including water supply, wastewater management, energy and transport infrastructure	No incompatible development (supported by the plan) adversely affecting existing or planned material assets infrastructure.	- Review of Annual Environmental Reports prepared by Uisce Éireann. - Review of publicly available data from EPA monitoring. - EPA State of the Environment reporting. - Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes. - Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities.
	MA2- Promote sustainable waste management, minimisation and recovery.	Tonnes of different types of waste received at Council and private Waste Management Facilities annually	Increase waste recycling and recovery in the County. Reduce waste generation in the County.	- EPA State of the Environment reporting. - Waste licence & permit returns - Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.
	MA3- Promote sustainable transportation including increased use of public transport and active travel measures.	% change in modal split. Kilometres of permanent segregated cycling network. Kilometres of permanent integrated cycling network. Number of Electric Vehicle charging points in the city & county Total Area of road reallocated for sustainable alternatives.	Percentage increase in the number of public transport users in the City & County. Increase kilometres of permanent segregated cycling network . Increase kilometres of permanent segregated cycling network.	- Review delivery of sustainable transport projects via Mayo County Council / NTA/TII - Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities. - Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.

Environmental Factor	SEO	Indicator	Target	Source and Frequency
			Increase number of Electric Vehicle charging points in the county. Increase Total Area of road reallocated for sustainable alternatives	
Architectural, Archaeological & Cultural Heritage (AACH)	AACH1- Protect and avoid impact on places, features and landscapes of cultural and archaeological importance, including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP).	Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan.	No adverse effects on archaeological or cultural heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan	- Review of data available from National Monuments Section of Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. - Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes. - Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities
	AACH2- Protect 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)).	Percentage of entries to the Records of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from the Plan.	No adverse effects on architectural heritage resulting from implementation of the Plan	
Water (W)	W1- 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.	Classification of Overall Status (comprised of ecological and chemical status) under the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (S.I. No. 272 of 2009). Groundwater compliance with Groundwater Quality Standards and Threshold Values under Directive 2006/118/EC, subject to exemptions provided for by Article 4 of the WFD.	No deterioration in the status of any groundwater or surface water, or adverse effect upon the ability of any groundwater or surface water to achieve 'good status' as a result of the WMDEDP	- Information issued under the Water Framework Directive Monitoring Programme for Ireland (multi-annual). - Review of WFD status of Bathing Waters, green flag / blue flag for beaches. - EPA State of the Environment reporting. - Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes.

Environmental Factor	SEO	Indicator	Target	Source and Frequency
		Reference to EPA WFD Monitoring programme and status of surface waterbodies, groundwater bodies reported		
	W2- 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.	Flood-related incidences related to the WMDEDP	Compliance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines and to ensure that any new developments granted planning permissions are on appropriately zoned lands	• Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities. • Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes. • Review of planning applications for any new infrastructure to be accompanied by standalone flood risk assessment report in sensitive areas
Landscape & Visuals (LV)	LV1 - To protect landscape character, minimise the loss of historic landscape features such as mature trees and hedgerows and scenic views	Number of unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in Development Plans and other statutory land-use plans.	No unmitigated conflicts with the appropriate protection of statutory designations relating to the landscape, including those included in Development Plans and other statutory land-use plans.	• Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes
	LV2 - Avoid impacts on the statutory landscape & visual designations as identified in the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028.	Status of High Amenity Zones and Views and Prospects. Number of developments permitted that result in avoidable adverse impacts on High Amenity Zones and Views and Prospects.	All action and development proposals supported by the plan must comply with policy objectives relating to the protection of High Amenity Zone and Views and Prospects defined in the Development Plans. No development supported by the plan should have an adverse impact on High Amenity Zones and Views and Prospects.	• Input from any other relevant Fáilte Ireland monitoring programmes. • Lower tier environmental assessment and decision making by local authorities

11 Next Steps

This SEA ER, the Appropriate Assessment Screening and NIS, will be published alongside the Draft Plan and will be made available for public consultation for a period of at least four weeks. Feedback received during the public consultation period will be reviewed and the Draft Plan amended accordingly.

On finalisation of the Draft Plan by Fáilte Ireland, an SEA Statement will be prepared that includes information on:

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

Once the SEA Statement is published, the Plan will enter the final SEA stage and undergo monitoring over the lifetime of the Plan.

Appendix 1 – SEA Screening Determination

Screening Determination for Strategic Environmental Assessment under SEA Directive 2001/42/EC as transposed into Irish law under S.I. 435/2004, as amended

Concerning the proposed Wild Mayo Destination and Experience Development Plan

Fáilte Ireland as the Competent Authority for the proposed Wexford Destination and Experience Development Plan has undertaken screening for SEA under Directive 2001/42/EC as transposed into Irish law under S.I. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. 200 of 2011.

The screening assessment was carried out using the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects as set out in Schedule 1 of S.I. 435/2004, as amended and having regard to Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08¹, which directs that:

"In any case where, following screening, it is found that the draft plan or amendment may have an impact on the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site or that such an impact cannot be ruled out, adopting a precautionary approach

- *an appropriate assessment of the plan must be carried out and;*
- *in any case where a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) would not otherwise be required, it must also be carried out."*

Following assessment of the criteria and having regard to the nature of the Plan and the potential for likely significant environmental effects from implementation of the Plan, including on the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites, Fáilte Ireland has determined that the Plan will require SEA.

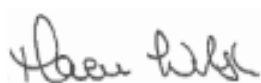
This determination has been made following consideration the criteria set out in Schedule 1 to S.I. 435/2004, as amended, and following consultation with the Statutory Environmental Authorities for SEA.

The principal reason the Plan requires SEA is as follows:

- As directed under Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08: because the potential for likely significant environmental effects on European sites could not be ruled at Appropriate Assessment screening stage.

Signed on behalf of Fáilte Ireland:

Dated: September 2025



¹ <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf>