

SEA Screening Statement

Draft Clare County Heritage Plan
True to our Heritage
2024-2030

Planning Department

Clare County Council

November 2023



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1.0 Introduction

Clare County Council intends to prepare its third Heritage Plan for the County and to build on the work of the previous 2004 – 2008 and 2017 – 2023 plans. The new plan establishes a framework for collaborative heritage management and development for the next 6 years based on:

- A Vision and 7 Areas of Focus
- Aims – what we want to achieve.
- Actions – what we can do.
- Outcomes – What we will have as a result.

The EU Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment provides that SEA is required for plans and programmes which are subject to preparation and/or adoption by an authority at national, regional or local level, and those which are required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process is the formal systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt the plan or programme. In addition to SEA, a Habitat Directive Assessment is required, which comprises the assessment, based on scientific knowledge, of the potential impacts of the plan on the conservation objectives of any European site and the development, where necessary, of mitigation or avoidance measures to preclude negative effects.

The impacts assessed must include the indirect and cumulative impacts of the plan, considered with any current or proposed activities, developments or objectives/policies that may impact on the site. It informs plans of the environmental impacts of alternative actions and contributes to the integration of environmental considerations into plan making.

The key to deciding if SEA will apply is whether the draft Plan would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. The draft plan was screened having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the SEA Regulations 2004.

The current step in the application of the SEA process is outlined in the following infographic which sets out the application of the assessment process at the Screening stage.

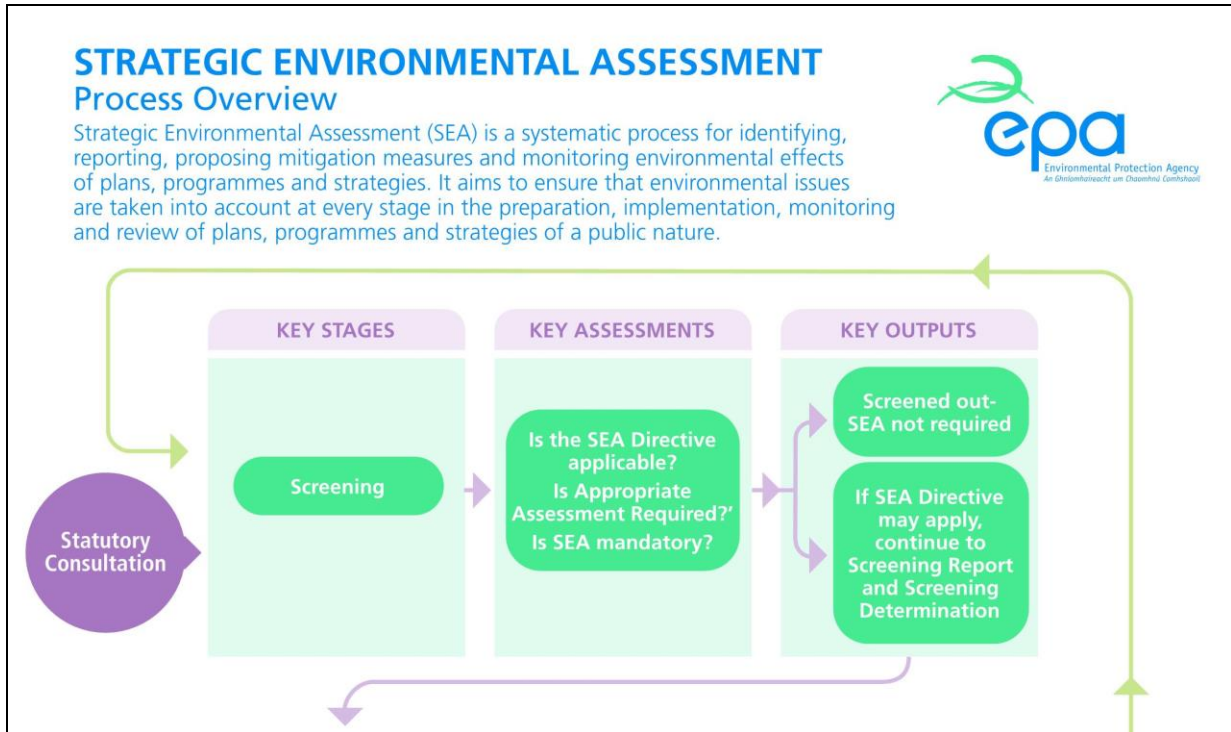


Figure 1 SEA Process Overview

2.0 Screening Process

2.1 Introduction to the Draft Heritage Plan

The draft Clare County Heritage Plan 2024-2030 supersedes the Clare County Heritage Plan 2017-2023. The Plan is a non-statutory, statement of intent in relation to the heritage of County Clare. The Plan sets out the vision and direction for heritage management for the next six years. It represents an agreed way forward and the ongoing commitment to heritage by Clare County Council’s Executive and elected Members. The Plan is prepared in accordance with government Policy as set out in the National Heritage Plan – *Heritage Ireland 2030*. In addition, a new Clare County Heritage and Biodiversity Action Forum has been set up representing a broad range of interest groups, experts and volunteer groups involved with heritage and biodiversity across the county. They have identified the challenges and priorities in heritage for the coming years and will guide the implementation and monitoring of the new Clare heritage Plan. The County Clare Heritage Plan 2024-2030 is a county-wide plan with many partners responsible for its implementation. Clare County Council is a key partner and the Heritage Officer in many cases will deliver the plan or act as co-ordinator for projects. Clare County Council as the lead partner together with the members, commit to supporting an annual programme of actions in association with the Heritage Council and other partners.

2.2 Purpose of the Plan or Programme.

The Clare County Heritage Plan 2024-2030 aims to create awareness and understanding, leading to a greater appreciation, enjoyment, and ownership of our natural, cultural, built and community heritage and will optimise the unique character of County Clare’s heritage.



Figure 2 Overall Vision for the Plan

The Plan has seven key Focus Areas -

- Focus Area 1. It's How You Tell Them**
- Focus Area 2. Looking Back / Moving Forward
- Focus Area 3. Life is for Living**
- Focus Area 4. Changing Times
- Focus Area 5. Sounds Wonderful**
- Focus Area 6. Keeping Track**
- Focus Area 7. Light the Spark, See the Light**

The Heritage Plan for 2024-2030 has been prepared in consultation with the people of County Clare together with all relevant government departments, local interest groups, committees, and statutory bodies with an interest in the heritage of county Clare. The plan aims to identify priorities for action, establish a framework for the management of heritage at local level and increase awareness, appreciation, and enjoyment of our heritage for all. It sets out 41 actions to be undertaken over a 6-year period in relation to Clare’s natural and cultural heritage under the seven key themes as already outlined.

3.0 Schedule 2A Screening Assessment

The following section and table here under present the SEA screening assessment of the Clare County Heritage Plan against the criteria provided in Schedule 2a of SEA Regulations (S.I. 435 of 2004) which details the criteria for determining whether a plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Criteria for determining whether the proposed Heritage Plan are likely to have significant effects on the environment
<p>1.The characteristics of the Heritage Plan having regard, in particular, to:</p> <p><i>the degree to which the Heritage Plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources,</i></p>
<p>The Heritage Plan is not intended to be a detailed programme of works but aims to create awareness and understanding, leading to a greater appreciation, enjoyment, and ownership of our natural, cultural, built and community heritage and will optimise the unique character of County Clare’s heritage. It will complement existing frameworks and statutory plans and policies of which the Clare County Development Plan 2024-2030 is of most relevance. The Heritage Plan does not set a framework for projects rather it supports the strategic objectives of the CDP 2024-2030 and provides for greater engagement through community participation which is achieved through public consultation at a local level together with the establishment of a new Clare County Heritage and Biodiversity Action Forum which represents a broad range of interest groups, experts and volunteer groups involved with heritage and biodiversity.</p> <p>In addition, through the application of both the SEA and HDA process to the Clare CDP 2023-2030 a significant number of protective and precautionary objectives have been included to ensure no significant effects on the environment. As the Heritage Plan will be implemented under the guidance of the Clare CDP it too will be subject to these objectives and mitigation measures. These include Objective CDP 16.6 Proposed Works to Buildings – Protected Species and Environmental Considerations and CDP Objective 3.3 Appropriate Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. A full list of all relevant Mitigation Measures arising from the Clare CDP 2023 – 2030 which are directly or indirectly applicable to the Heritage Plan are listed in Annex 1 of this report and should be fully incorporated into the Heritage Plan to ensure application at project level.</p>

the degree to which the Heritage Plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy,

The Heritage Plan is set within the context of the current Clare CDP 2024-2030. Any potential projects facilitated by the preparation of this Heritage Plan would be in compliance with the relevant policies and objectives of the Clare County Development Plan and will subsequently form part of a more specific project level assessment.

the relevance of the Heritage Plan in the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,

The preparation of the Heritage Plan has been underpinned by a number of guiding principles. Through the many actions which serve to provide training, awareness, assistance and knowledge through facilitating feasibility studies and other surveys it will ensure that environmental considerations are inbuilt into any future projects that may arise thus promoting sustainable development at all times.

Environmental problems relevant to the Heritage Plan

The SEA Environmental Report of the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 provides considerable detail on environmental problems relevant to the County.

The environmental report conducted as part of the SEA process on the entire content of the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 discussed various issues of concern in the plan area (County Clare) and provided various mitigating measures to avoid, reduce or remove impacts considered to be severe or significant in line with the mitigation hierarchy.

There are numerous areas of environmental sensitivity within the County, many of which are designated under the legislative framework. These include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Natural Heritage Areas, Proposed National Heritage Areas (pNHA), views and prospects, Architectural and Archeological Conservation Areas, protected structures, recorded monuments and structures, and recreational and amenity areas. Details of these areas together with aims and policies for their protection are set out in the draft Clare CDP 2023 - 2029 and the accompanying SEA and AA.

As already stated, any projects arising from the implementation of the Heritage Plan must ensure consistency with the CDP which sets out the framework for development and land use. Therefore, any future development arising from specific actions of the Clare County Heritage Plan will be subject to **CDP Objective 3.3 Appropriate Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment**

- a) To require compliance with the objectives and requirements of the Habitats Directive, specifically Article 6(3) and where necessary 6(4), Birds, Water Framework, and all other relevant EU Directives and all relevant transposing national legislation.
- b) To require project planning to be fully informed by ecological and environmental constraints at

the earliest stage of project development and any necessary assessment to be undertaken, including assessments of disturbance to species, where required together with the preparation of both statutory and non-Statutory Ecological Impact Assessments (EclA);

- c) To protect, manage and enhance ecological connectivity and improve the coherence of the Natura 2000 Network;
- d) To require all proposals to ensure there is 'no net loss' of biodiversity within developments
- e) To ensure that European sites and Natural Heritage Areas (designated proposed NHAs) are appropriately protected;
- f) To require the preparation and assessment of all Plans and Projects to have regard to the information, data and requirements of the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report, SEA Environmental Report and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Report contained in Volume 10 of this Development Plan; and
- g) To require compliance with the objectives of the Water Framework Directive and support the implementation of the 3rd Cycle River Basin Management Plan (and any other iteration during the lifetime of the CDP).

the relevance of the Heritage Plan in the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans linked to waste-management or water protection).

The EU has a wide range of environmental legislation, dealing with such issues as tackling climate change, sustainable development, waste management, air pollution, water protection, nature and biodiversity, soil protection and noise pollution. Directives relating to the environment are specifically mentioned in the Clare CDP with which the Heritage Plan must be in compliance with are;

- **EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC),**
- **EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC),**
- **EU Water Framework Directive (2006/60/EC),**
- **EU Groundwater Directive 92006/118/EC),**
- **European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2014 S.I. 350 of 2014,**
- **European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended**
- **Wildlife Act 1976, as amended, and**
- **Flora Protection Order 1999**

Any future projects arising from the Heritage Plan will be required to comply with all of the EU legislation.

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:

the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,

The Heritage Plan operates within a set timeframe 2024-2030 however there is no statutory requirement for its preparation, and as stated above must be compliant and consistent with the statutory planning framework.

Given the findings of the Screening for Appropriate Assessment there is no potential for the Heritage Plan to result in significant impacts on the environment including surface and groundwater quality which would affect water dependent habitats and species.

Therefore, it is considered that any potential environmental effects arising from projects associated with the Heritage Plan should be addressed and assessed under the existing statutory planning framework. As the Heritage Plan is consistent with the CDP a more sustainable approach to development is embedded within the Heritage Plan and negative environmental effects are avoided, and promotion of positive environmental effects may be achieved through consistency with the Clare CDP 2024-2030.

the cumulative nature of the effects,

Given that the ethos behind the development of this Heritage Plan is to create awareness and understanding, leading to a greater appreciation, enjoyment, and ownership of our natural, cultural, built and community heritage and will optimise the unique character of County Clare’s heritage it shouldn’t lead to cumulative effects on the environment and overall should lead to a positive effect. Once the environmental protection measures within the County Development Plan are followed, adhered to and implemented, it is predicted that the Heritage Plan would not give rise to cumulative effects.

the transboundary nature of the effects

In terms of negative transboundary environmental effects/impacts it is considered that with proper regard and consistency with the environmental protection policies and objectives contained in the adopted 2023-2029 Development Plan and the completion of appropriate environmental assessments and planning process for any proposed development arising from the Heritage Plan, no negative transboundary environmental effects are predicted.

the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),

As above, the Heritage Plan is not identified as giving rise to effects that would present as risks to human health or the environment given its consistency with the objectives contained in the Clare CDP 2023-2029. It does not seek to support employment or generate any outcome which may lead to a risk to human health.

the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be

affected).

As stated above, effects should they arise are identified as positive where consistency with the development plan is achieved and/or effects are addressed through the statutory planning framework. The Heritage Plan does not zone lands and the quantity of lands zoned in the Clare CDP 2023-2029 is predicated by the projected population figures (particularly housing and the core strategy). The Heritage Plan does not identify specific parcels of land within which potential projects will be implemented however it will aim to work with those areas which have been identified as “open space”, “buffer zones”, and “green infrastructure” to promote sustainable development which is in keeping with the overall approach for the county.

the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:

(a) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage

The County has numerous areas designated under natural and cultural heritage including 37 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), 10 Special Protection Areas (SPAs), 14 Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and 61 proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs). There are also a number of other sites across the County that have been designated for environmental and/or ecological protection. These sites include the Burren National Park, one Ramsar site (Galway Bay), 5 Wildlife Sanctuaries and 4 Nature Reserves.

Over 7,500 archaeological sites are recorded within the county with certain clusters present in areas such as the Burren; 911 protected structures are listed in the County and a number of landscapes and scenic routes are also designated.

A separate Appropriate Assessment Screening has been carried out for the Heritage Plan in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive which concluded that the proposed Heritage Plan, in view of best scientific knowledge and on the basis of objective information, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, is not likely to have significant effects on the conservation objectives of any European Site.

(b) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,

As any works arising from this Heritage Plan must be consistent and compliant with the Clare CDP 2023-2029 including specific provisions regarding environmental quality standards such as those contained in the Water Framework Directive and other environmental standards it is not likely to result in exceedances of EQS or limit values.

(c) intensive land-use,

The Heritage Plan does not provide for additional land use or intensification of same; land use zonings will remain as provided in the CDP 2023-2029.

Therefore, such effects are not identified.

(d) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or

international protection status.

The Clare CDP 2023-2029 recognises the importance of sites with National and European designations and sets out policies and objectives for their protection. These include sites designated under the EU Birds, and Habitats Directive, the Geopark designation and the National Park amongst others.

Given the consistency of the actions and Vision of the Heritage Plan with the Clare CDP 2023-2029 it is not considered that the implementation or realization of the Heritage Plan, in line with sustainable development and consistent with the policies and objectives of the plan, will have significant negative effects on areas or landscapes which have recognised national, European Union or international protection status.

A Screening for Appropriate Assessment has been prepared in tandem with this SEA Screening to assess if likely significant effects arise in relation to conservation objectives of European Sites. This has found that no such effects are identified.

4. Conclusion

Section 9 (1) of the (2004) Regulations (S.I. No. 435) states *“subject to sub-article (2), an environmental assessment shall be carried out for all plans and programmes*

- (a) which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications and tourism, and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, or*
- (b) which are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site but, either individually or in combination with other plans, are likely to have a significant effect on any such site.”*

In accordance with the SEA Directive and Regulations, the Planning Authority has conducted a Screening exercise to determine the requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment of the likely significant impacts arising from the implementation of the County Heritage Plan.

It is the opinion of Clare County Council that the actions contained within the draft plan are unlikely to give rise to significant impacts on the environment. It is concluded therefore that an SEA is not required for this plan.

Therefore, on the basis of the above assessment and consideration of the criteria as set out in Schedule 2a of the Regulations 2011 (as amended) it is considered the Heritage Plan is unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects and does not require full SEA.

ANNEX I RELEVANT OBJECTIVES ARISING FROM THE CLARE
COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2023 – 2029 WHICH MUST BE
IMPLEMENTED AS PART OF THE HERITAGE PLAN

Objective	SEA Commentary
<p>Objective CDP 3.3 Appropriate Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To require compliance with the objectives and requirements of the Habitats Directive, specifically Article 6(3) and where necessary 6(4), Birds, Water Framework, and all other relevant EU Directives and all relevant transposing national legislation; b) To require project planning to be fully informed by ecological and environmental constraints at the earliest stage of project development and any necessary assessment to be undertaken, including assessments of disturbance to species, where required together with the preparation of both statutory and non-Statutory Ecological Impact Assessments (EclA); c) To protect, manage and enhance ecological connectivity and improve the coherence of the Natura 2000 Network; d) To require all proposals to ensure there is ‘no net loss’ of biodiversity within developments e) To ensure that European sites and Natural Heritage Areas (designated proposed NHAs) are appropriately protected; f) To require the preparation and assessment of all Plans and Projects to have regard to the information, data and requirements of the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report, SEA Environmental Report and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Report contained in Volume 10 of this Development Plan; and g) To require compliance with the objectives of the Water Framework Directive and support the implementation of the 3rd Cycle River Basin Management Plan (and any other iteration during the lifetime of the CDP). 	<p>Adherence to this objective will ensure no significant effects on the environment as a result of implementation of the actions arising from the Heritage Plan</p>
<p>Objective CDP 10.1 Sustainable Communities</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To ensure that future development proposals contribute to the creation of sustainable communities throughout County Clare; and b) To work in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders to facilitate the planning and delivery of accessible community facilities throughout the County. 	<p>This objective will ensure that the requirements of the local community are sought and addressed throughout the process ensuring development allows for the development of facilities which will benefit the entire community.</p>
<p>Objective CDP 10.2 Local Community Development Committee</p>	
<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To support the work of the Clare Local Community Development Committee; b) To work with the Clare Local Community Development Committee and all relevant stakeholders to seek investment in delivering the actions and stakeholder initiatives of the Clare Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021 (and any subsequent Plan) so as to strengthen community infrastructure and promote social inclusion for all citizens across all our communities; c) To seek investment in initiatives that achieve the physical, economic, social, and environmental regeneration of 	

Objective	SEA Commentary
<p>disadvantaged areas in the County and the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area; and</p> <p>d) To support the development of an inter-agency Social Enterprise Strategy to support the retention and expansion of existing social enterprises and the development of new social enterprises.</p>	
<p>Objective CDP 10.3 Voluntary and Community Groups</p> <p>a) To actively engage with the Clare Public Participation Network in the preparation and implementation of this Plan and other local authorities’ plans, policies and programmes to ensure that it represents and responds to the needs of the residents of County Clare; and</p> <p>b) To support the empowerment of individuals and groups in communities through volunteering and active citizen engagement.</p>	<p>Through the process of public consultation on the Heritage Plan active engagement with the Clare Public Participation Network should be undertaken and facilitated to ensure that it represents and responds to the needs of the public of County Clare</p>
<p>Objective CDP 10.4 Diverse and Socially Inclusive Society</p> <p>a) To plan for a more diverse and socially inclusive society which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Recognises the positive contribution of migrants and persons seeking international protection to multi-cultural communities and the economic life of an area and supports the Government’s <i>Migrant Integration Strategy</i>; ii. Prioritises parity of opportunity and improved well-being and quality of life for all citizens of the County including for example the LGBTI+ community, travellers and minority groups through enhanced integration programmes, measures to support sustainable accessible communities and the provision of associated services; <p>b) To work with all relevant stakeholders to help tackle disadvantage and social exclusion, to secure improvements in the quality of life for all citizens and to promote equality of access to public and social services; and</p> <p>c) To work with all target groups, including older persons, young people, the disabled, the traveller community, refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, to advance their physical, social and cultural integration.</p>	<p>Inclusivity is a broad term that refers to how easily all people can access, understand and use places, products or services regardless of age, size, gender, race or physical, sensory, mental health and intellectual abilities or disabilities. In its broadest sense it means that places, products and services can be positively enjoyed by people from all cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.</p>
<p>Objective CDP 10.5 Inclusivity and Equal Access</p> <p>a) To promote social inclusion by implementing best practice in universal accessibility and design;</p> <p>b) In conjunction with representative organisations to promote disability awareness and improve equal access for all through universal design for public transport access, housing, social, cultural and recreational facilities and the public realm so as to improve quality of life equally for all;</p> <p>c) To work with representative organisations to ensure that investment in infrastructure and facilities is appropriately informed with regard to accessibility issues;</p> <p>d) To take all required steps to ensure compliance with the <i>Disability Act 2005</i>; and</p>	<p>Adherence to this objective will ensure that sectors of society will have access to key sites and features of our natural heritage and to any new features arising from the implementation of the actions arising from the Heritage Plan</p>

Objective	SEA Commentary
<p>e) To support the upgrade and extension of existing pedestrian provision and public lighting facilities in existing urban areas to further promote walking, cycling and active travel.</p>	
<p>Objective CDP 10.7 Community Facilities</p> <p>a) To promote and encourage optimum usage of the large number of community facilities across the County;</p> <p>b) To update the inventory of community, social and cultural facilities throughout the County within the lifetime of this Plan;</p> <p>c) To encourage, advise and assist community groups wishing to provide community facilities in their area; and</p> <p>d) To ensure that sufficient lands are zoned for community use to meet the demands of the projected population during the lifetime of this Plan.</p>	<p>The addition of such facilities can have a major impact on a community, especially in areas where no other dedicated facilities exist.</p>
<p>Objective CDP 11.26 Water Framework Directive and River Basin Management</p> <p>a) To facilitate the implementation of the <i>River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027</i> and any subsequent plan for ground, surface, estuarine, coastal and transitional waters in the Plan area as part of the implementation of the <i>EU Water Framework Directive</i>;</p> <p>b) To protect groundwater and surface water resources in accordance with the statutory requirements and specific measures as set out in the <i>River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027</i>, and any subsequent management plans;</p> <p>c) To achieve and maintain at least good water quality status for all water bodies except where more stringent obligations are required such as Blue Dot/High Status Objective Water Bodies;</p> <p>d) To consider development proposals where it can be clearly demonstrated that the development will meet the requirements of the <i>River Basin Management Plan</i>; and</p> <p>e) To work with and support LAWPRO and support improvements/recommendations within Priority Areas for Action, Blue Dot/High Status Objective catchments and any additional areas identified within subsequent River Basin Management Plans.</p>	<p>Through adherence with this objective the Heritage Plan will be in compliance with the Water Framework Directive and will ensure any future detailed proposals do not interfere with the overall achievement of “good” status in accordance with the Directive.</p>
<p>Objective 11.27 Protection of Water Resources</p> <p>a) To protect the water resources of County Clare having regard to the requirements of the relevant EU Directives;</p> <p>b) To ensure that developments that would have an unacceptable impact on water resources, including surface water and groundwater quality and quantity, designated sources protection areas, coastal and transitional waters, river corridors and associated wetlands are not permitted;</p> <p>c) In areas of potable groundwater resources or over vulnerable aquifer areas, development proposals will only be considered if the applicant can clearly demonstrate that the proposed development will not pose a risk to the quality of the underlying groundwater;</p> <p>d) To protect groundwater resources, in accordance with statutory requirements and specific measures as set out in the Shannon and Western River Basin Management Plans;</p> <p>e) To ensure that proposals for development which infringe on a river boundary, or an associated habitat, including their connection by</p>	<p>Given the geographical extent of European sites throughout the county as already outlined within this report the protection of water resources is therefore critical. Full adherence to this objective will be required at project level to ensure the protection of water resources.</p>

Objective	SEA Commentary
<p>groundwater, will only be considered where it can be clearly demonstrated that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The character of the area will be conserved; • An acceptable physical riparian zone will be maintained with all natural vegetation preserved; • There will be no impact on the ecological, aquatic or fishing potential of the waters or associated waters; • All proposals are in compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive, where appropriate. 	
<p>Objective CDP 11.42 Light Pollution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To require proposals for development that include the provision of external lighting, to clearly demonstrate that the lighting scheme is the minimum needed for security and working purposes; b) To ensure that external lighting and lighting schemes are designed so that the incidence of light spillage is minimised ensuring that the amenities of adjoining properties, wildlife and the surrounding environment are protected; and c) To require that external lighting is designed taking the <i>Bat Conservation Ireland Guidance Notes for: planners, engineers, architects and developers on bats and lighting</i> into consideration, together with EUROBATs Guidelines for consideration of bats in lighting projects. 	<p>This objective is of particular relevance to any future development associated with car parking or the addition of external lighting which may arise from some heritage projects. Adherence to the requirements of this objective will be required where bat records exist, potential foraging/breeding or roosting areas or where a “high” landscape area for bats exists. Guidance such as the new ILP Guidance note on bats and Artificial Lighting will be significant in this regard. Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting Institution of Lighting Professionals (theilp.org.uk)</p>
<p>Objective CDP 15.3 European sites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To afford the highest level of protection to all designated European sites in accordance with the relevant Directives and legislation on such matters; b) To require all planning applications for development that may have (or cannot rule out) likely significant effects on European Sites in view of the site’s Conservation Objectives, either in isolation or in combination with other plans or projects, to submit a Natura Impact Statement in accordance with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive and the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended); and c) To recognise and afford appropriate protection to any new or modified SPAs or SACs that are identified during the lifetime of this Development Plan through the planning application process bearing in mind proposals for development outside of a European site may also have an indirect effect. 	<p>Given the extent of European Sites across the county the requirements of this objective must be adhered to at all times.</p>
<p>Objective CDP 15.4 Appropriate Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To implement Article 6(3) and where necessary 6(4) of the Habitats Directive and to ensure that Appropriate Assessment is carried out in relation to works, plans and projects likely to impact on European sites (SACs and SPAs), whether directly or indirectly or in combination with any other plan(s) or project(s); and b) To have regard to Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in 	<p>At project level the requirement for undertaking Appropriate Assessment must be taken into consideration and strictly adhered to.</p>

Objective	SEA Commentary
Ireland – Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009 or any updated version.	
Objective CDP 14.4 Natural Heritage Areas a) To actively promote the conservation and protection of areas designated as an NHA and to only consider proposals for development within or affecting an NHA where it can be clearly demonstrated that the proposed development will not have a significant adverse effect on the NHA; b) To identify and afford appropriate protection to any new or modified NHAs identified during the lifetime of this plan.	Given the extent and number of NHA and pNHAs throughout the county any future works must be carried out in compliance with this objective.
Objective CDP 15.8 Non-Designated Sites a) To ensure the protection and conservation of areas, sites, species and ecological networks/corridors of biodiversity value outside of designated sites throughout the County and to require an ecological assessment to accompany development proposals likely to impact on such areas or species; b) To ensure that available habitat mapping is taken into consideration in any ecological assessment undertaken; c) To complete the Habitat Mapping of the County (in accordance with A Guide to Habitats in Ireland - The Heritage Council 2000) in order to identify and record the natural habitats of the County at a detailed level and afford appropriate protection to areas of importance as required; and d) To implement and monitor the actions as set out in the Clare Biodiversity Action Plan and the National Biodiversity Action Plan.	At a project level all works proposed will need to ensure protection and conservation of the natural environment. There is a particular onus on the local authority to ensure no deterioration of natural habitats and the habitats of species as well as the disturbance of the species for which the areas have been designated, in so far as such disturbance could be significant in relation to the objectives of the Habitats Directive and in particular Article 6(2).
Objective CDP 15.12 Biodiversity and Habitat Protection a) To protect and promote the sustainable management of the natural heritage, flora and fauna of the County both within protected areas and in the general landscape through the promotion of biodiversity, the conservation of natural habitats, the enhancement of new and existing habitats, and through the integration of Green Infrastructure (GI), Blue Infrastructure and ecosystem services including landscape, heritage, biodiversity and management of invasive and alien species into the Development Plan; b) To promote the conservation of biodiversity through the protection of sites of biodiversity importance and wildlife corridors, both within and between the designated sites and the wider Plan area; c) To support the implementation of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan, National Biodiversity Action Plan and National Raised Bog SAC Management Plan; d) To ensure there is no net loss of potential Lesser Horseshoe Bat feeding habitats, treelines and hedgerows within 2.5km of known roosts;	Adherence to this objective will ensure no significant effects on the environment as a result of implementation of the actions arising from the Heritage Plan. The ethos behind this objective is one of conservation and protection of the natural environment which is enshrined in the concept of the Heritage Plan also.

Objective	SEA Commentary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e) To implement and monitor the actions as set out in the Clare County Biodiversity Plan; and f) To promote biodiversity net gain in any new plans/projects/policies to promote development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before. 	
Objective CDP 15.14 Habitat Fragmentation and Green Infrastructure Corridors	The Heritage Plan will seek to support this objective and provide enhancement of connectivity and maintenance of the integrity of habitats through its development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To ensure that development proposals support and enhance the connectivity and integrity of habitats in the Plan area by incorporating natural features into the design of development proposals. b) To ensure that the potential impacts upon the migratory routes of fauna including birds and bats and the movement of species between European Sites are fully considered within the relevant ecological assessment. These assessments shall fully consider flight collision risks, habitat fragmentation and barrier risk as required. 	
Objective CDP 15.19 Woodlands, Trees and Hedgerows	The Heritage Plan will seek to implement and supplement this objective where possible through its development and implementation at a local level.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To preserve and conserve individual or groups of trees identified in Volume 2 of this Plan as 'Trees for Preservation' which will enhance the character and appearance of an area; b) To carry out tree survey work during the lifetime of this Plan to identify future trees of importance in the County and facilitate their future protection; c) To protect individual or groups of trees within the Plan area which are important for environmental, recreational, historical, biodiversity and/or aesthetic reasons or by reason of contribution to sense of place, including groups of trees which correspond with protected habitats, or which support protected species, under the Habitats Directive; d) To work with landowners, local communities and other relevant groups to promote the retention and conservation of existing trees and hedgerows and encourage development proposals that enhance the landscape through positive management and additional planting/sensitive replanting of native tree species; e) To protect woodlands and hedgerows from damage and/or degradation and to prevent disruption of the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows of the County; f) To ensure, where required, applications for development include proposals for planting / leave a suitable ecological buffer zone, between the development works and areas/features of ecological importance; g) Where hedgerows are required to be removed in the interests of traffic safety or where breaches to hedgerows occur due to river drainage/maintenance works and flood repair, to require the applicant/developer to reinstate the hedgerows with a suitable replacement of native species to the satisfaction of the Council; h) To require each green space in new residential developments to have at least one native oak tree, or other naturalised tree species of similar stature and lifespan, integrated into the agreed 	Through the securing of heritage council funding based on actions contained in the Heritage Plan it will assist in the achievement of these objectives over the lifetime of the County Development Plan.

Objective	SEA Commentary
planting/landscaping scheme; and i) To require, where possible, that all trees felled as a result of development proposals be replaced at a minimum ratio of 10 new native species per 1 tree felled.	
Objective CDP 15.29 Alien and Invasive Species	
a) To raise awareness of the threat of alien invasive species and how they can spread, and take all necessary steps to prevent the spread of non-native invasive species and noxious weeds in the Plan area, including requiring landowners, developers and boat operators to adhere to best practice guidance in relation to their control; b) To require all development proposals to address the presence of invasive alien species on the proposed development site and to require an Invasive Species Management Plan where such species are present; c) To carry out surveys of invasive species across the County; d) To implement the requirements of EU Regulations 1143/2014 on the Prevention and Management of the Introduction and Spread of Invasive Alien Species and to manage invasive hydrological connectivity issues to European Sites to prevent the spread of invasive species to sensitive sites; and e) To facilitate the work of agencies addressing the issue of terrestrial and aquatic invasive alien species.	
Objective CDP 16.1 Architectural Heritage	
a) To ensure the protection of the architectural heritage of County Clare through the identification of Protected Structures, the designation of Architectural Conservation Areas, the safeguarding of historic gardens, and the recognition of structures and elements that contribute positively to the vernacular and industrial heritage of the county. b) To ensure that the archaeological and architectural heritage of the county is not damaged either through direct destruction or by unsympathetic developments. c) To support and promote architectural vernacular skills training and facilities in the county.	The Heritage Plan will complement this objective through the delivery of a number of the key actions.
Objective CDP 16.6 Proposed Works to Buildings - Protected Species and Environmental Considerations	
It is an objective of Clare County Council to protect habitats and species when considering proposed works to buildings which are likely to impact on protected ecological sites and protected species and to ensure that decision-making on heritage related projects and developments is informed by an appropriate level of environmental assessment.	The Heritage Plan will complement this objective with key actions such as Action 3.9 with respect to town centre first and public realm.