

WEST CORK AND KENMARE

DESTINATION AND EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (DEDP)

OCTOBER 2023





A MESSAGE FROM MIRIAM KENNEDY, HEAD OF WILD ATLANTIC WAY, FÁILTE IRELAND

The West Cork and Kenmare coast transitions along the way from gentle and lush to being more rugged, from vibrant towns to more remote rural villages and open countryside. This area, at the start or end of your Wild Atlantic Way journey requires time to explore its back roads and by ways and to take in the alluring lifestyle of the islands. It offers an intimate encounter with the land, the coast and its people. It is about helping the visitor to slow down a little – to take time to discover how the layers of history have shaped and enriched the region.

The development of the 5-year plan provides a shared vision and clear direction towards improved development, strengthening the promotion of the area's unique features by growing the destination's market share through the delivery of Priority Projects and hero experiences that seek to maximise the key strengths of the area. This will be achieved by targeting domestic and international visitors who will stay longer in the region, spend more and/or who will arrive in off-peak periods.

Working together with our co-chairs, Des and Neil and key industry and stakeholders we will work together to drive recovery and growth in this area of the Wild Atlantic Way region. It will enable us to recover and grow the visitor economy to create sustainable, high-quality jobs in the sector that will serve to support and strengthen local communities while protecting our natural environment.

Miriam Kennedy
Head of Wild Atlantic Way
Fáilte Ireland

A WELCOME FROM OUR TWO WEST CORK AND KENMARE CO-CHAIRS: DES O'DOWD & NEIL LUCEY

The West Cork and Kenmare Destination and Experience Development plan sets out the actions, priorities and future investment plan for West Cork and Kenmare for the next 5 years.

In West Cork and Kenmare we value tourism, and it is a significant contributor to the economic, social and cultural life of our area. These plans are designed to not only enhance the way in which visitors experience West Cork and Kenmare but also for the benefit of the local communities who live and work in the area.

As Co-Chairs of a passionate and ambitious industry led stakeholder group, we are committed to the successful completion of this plan that will grow the year-round economic value of tourism activity through season extension.

During the lifetime of this plan, new challenges, changing market trends and consumer behaviour will be continuously assessed and actions updated as required.

Sustainability is the key to effectively growing our tourism product and any future developments and actions must be sustainable – safeguarding the natural built and cultural heritage of our towns, which have always been the foundation stones of our tourism industry.

We wish to acknowledge the role and engagement of Fáilte Ireland, Cork and Kerry County Councils, Leader Companies, Údarás and OPW in aiding and assisting us to deliver on this plan and we look forward with confidence to the implementation of the West Cork and Kenmare Destination and Experience Development Plan.

Ní neart go cur le chéile



Des O'Dowd
West Cork / Kenmare Co-Chair
Fáilte Ireland



Neil Lucey
West Cork / Kenmare Co-Chair
Fáilte Ireland



CONTENTS

Introduction	01
Destination Development Strategy	05
Performance Indicators	11
Hero Experience Themes	12
Action Plan	18
Environmental & Sustainable Considerations	30
Consultation	36

INTRODUCTION

This is a summary document. Copies of all Primary plans are available on [Failte Ireland - West Cork and Kenmare Destination and Experience Development Plan](#) | [Experience development](#) | [The Wild Atlantic Way](#)

The West Cork and Kenmare coast is a diverse area characterised by remote rugged and mountainous peninsulas, hidden inlets and coves, headlands and islands, set against a backdrop of a rich rural landscape of rolling hills and picturesque towns and villages. Stretching from Kinsale in County Cork to Kenmare in County Kerry and includes the West Cork Gaeltacht (see map page 10), this destination offers the visitor the opportunity to slow down and take time to explore. Evidence of the areas rich heritage and unique culture can be found everywhere, from ancient sites such as stone circles and submerged glacial woodlands to, the copper mines, lighthouses, castles and military forts of the more recent past. The character of this area runs deep and the people are proud of their traditions and relish every opportunity to share with visitors from near and far. Spending time in the Gaeltacht communities of Mhuscraí or on the island of Óilean Chléire gives an authentic opportunity to hear the Irish language spoken in everyday interactions, or to even learn a “Cúpla Focal”. Visitors can enjoy traditional Irish music and dance in a public house or community hall, and to listen to poetry and stories handed down from generation to generation. This is a part of Ireland where the culture and traditions of times gone by are growing stronger and yet sit comfortably in a modern outward looking society.

For visitors travelling west and northwards, this is the starting point for a journey of discovery along one of the world’s most renowned long-distance coastal routes, the Wild Atlantic Way. The coastline transitions along the way from gentle and lush to being more rugged, from vibrant towns to more remote rural villages and open countryside. An area that requires time to explore its back roads and by ways and to take in the alluring lifestyle of the islands. This stretch of the Wild Atlantic Way is all about offering an intimate encounter with the land, the coast and its people. It is about helping the visitor to slow a little – to take time to discover how the layers of history have shaped and enriched the region.

Recognising the need for improved development and promotion of the area’s unique features to achieve increased domestic and international cut-through, Fáilte Ireland, working with key stakeholders, industry and community has developed two Destination

and Experience Development Plans (DEDPs) for West Cork and Kenmare, along the Wild Atlantic Way. These 5-year plans - The Three Peninsulas West Cork & Kenmare and, The West Cork Coast, provide a shared vision and clear direction towards strengthening and growing the destination’s market share through the delivery of Priority Projects and hero experiences that seek to maximise the key strengths of the area. Both plans are available on [www.failteireland.ie](#). In addition to the DEDP plans, the Mhuscraí Gaeltacht community have developed a three-year Tourism Action Plan which is very much aligned with the vision and actions of the DEDP plans. Mhúscraí Gaeltacht is an integral part of the West Cork & Kenmare destination, therefore the [Mhuscraí Gaeltacht Tourism Action Plan](#) is incorporated into this summary document and the work of the implementation group. From this point forward the destination development and implementation includes the geography and actions within all three plans and will be called out as West Cork and Kenmare DEDP implementation.

Within the three plans, the stories and destination themes form the basis of the “Visitor Experiences” that are currently available or that can be developed. They provide depth to existing product, they allow visitors to emotionally connect to the destination, and they ensure that visitors leave with strong memories. The Plans are designed to encourage all operators and organisations involved in delivering tourism to reinforce and add value to the experience through aligning with these stories and themes.

In addition to focusing on the visitor experience, the plans are equally cognisant of the need to consider the other elements of the VICE model which are foundational to the plans – Visitor, Industry, Community and the Environment. Getting the balance right is critical in building long-term sustainable tourism and is a core objective to the actions outlined.

Our Ambition for West Cork & Kenmare

Our ambition for West Cork and Kenmare is to drive recovery and growth in this area of the Wild Atlantic Way region. We want to recover and grow the visitor economy to create sustainable, high-quality jobs in the sector that will serve to support and strengthen local communities while protecting our natural environment. This will be achieved by targeting domestic and international visitors who will stay longer in the region, spend more and/or who will arrive in off-peak periods.

While 2022 was a relatively strong year due to pent-up demand and deferred bookings, 2023 and beyond are expected to be more challenging. Forecasting the rate and pace

of recovery and growth is difficult. At a minimum we expect a return to 2019 levels of revenue by 2026, in inflation adjusted terms, with an ambition to exceed this. We expect an additional 5% supply side capacity (accommodation, visitor attractions, activity providers, etc.) to come on stream over the period of these plans, which would be achieved through greater optimisation (e.g., longer opening hours/season) and new stock.

Vision for West Cork and Kenmare 2027

West Cork and Kenmare offers the visitor an intimate encounter with vibrant coastal communities, authentic Irish culture and exhilarating experiences and countless opportunities for exploration and adventure. It is a destination shaped by a unique artistic culture which creates a sense of other worldliness, where the mysterious shifting of light and the captivating serenity of inland seas all add a mystical dimension to its offshore Islands and rugged coastline.

West Cork is recognised as a leading national outdoor activity destination through the quality of its outdoor trails and on-water experiences. In West Cork and Kenmare, the visitor is encouraged to stop, slow down and experience all that the destination has to offer in a meaningful way. They become immersed in community, absorbed in authentic cultural experiences and inspired by adventure.

As you enjoy the outdoors in West Cork and Kenmare let the diverse and eclectic fusion of culturally rich flavours in every village and town take your tastebuds on an unforgettable culinary journey. It has become Ireland’s premier food in tourism destination where sustainably and locally sourced food is synonymous with a world class visitor experience.

Challenge for West Cork and Kenmare

Visitation to most parts of West Cork & Kenmare with the exception of Kinsale, tends to be seasonal with a high proportion of day trippers, although the development of strong festivals in food and the arts is generating a growth in bed nights. The main towns of Clonakilty, Skibbereen, Macroom, Bantry and Kenmare together with Castletownbere and Glengarriff provide accommodation hubs, but as demand for trail-based experiences and activities in West Cork, on the islands and in Kenmare grow, the limited bed base in these areas is constraining growth where it is particularly needed. Given the particular strengths in the arts, the strong food culture, the rich cultural heritage and the distinctive geography, there is significant potential to develop unique experiences as outlined in this plan and to grow tourism in a way that is in keeping with local aspirations.

Aims and Objectives

The key objectives of the West Cork and Kenmare DEDP are to develop compelling experiences for this stretch of the Wild Atlantic Way and to,

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



Baltimore Harbour, West Cork, Co Cork



West Cork and Kenmare Destination and Experience | Development Plan

DESTINATION AND EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR WEST CORK AND KENMARE

Fastnet Lighthouse on Fastnet Rock, Co Cork

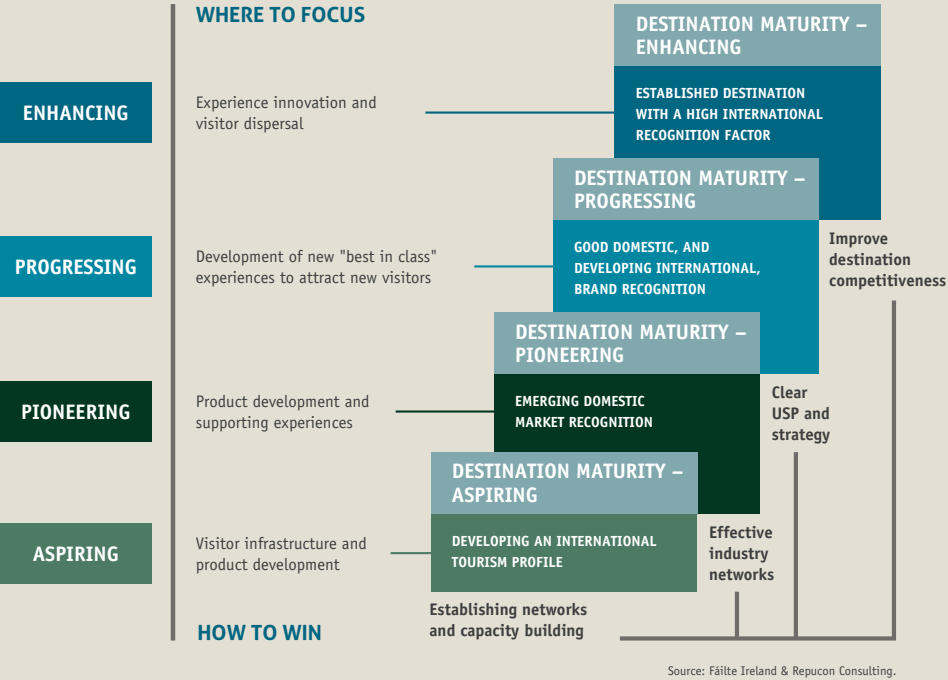
DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Developing distinctive destinations requires a multi-layered approach reflecting the range of factors that influence the visitor experience. Our destination development framework recognises the difference that exists in destination maturity across the Wild Atlantic Way. This requires a dedicated approach for each destination based on their maturity levels.

The eastern half of West Cork & Kenmare falls broadly into either the Progressing or Enhancing categories (established destinations with good domestic market recognition or a high international recognition factor). The western half of West Cork and Kenmare is categorised into Aspiring or Pioneering categories (destinations with low profile and destination recognition or good domestic market recognition).

The associated strategic approach to develop West Cork and Kenmare as a distinctive destination recognises the issues and challenges it faces and how they are linked to this level of maturity. It ensures that the plans capture the destination development needs and where sustainable tourism growth opportunities exist. By understanding the destination maturity levels, the appropriate type and mix of interventions and supports will be applied for the sustainable tourism development of West Cork and Kenmare.

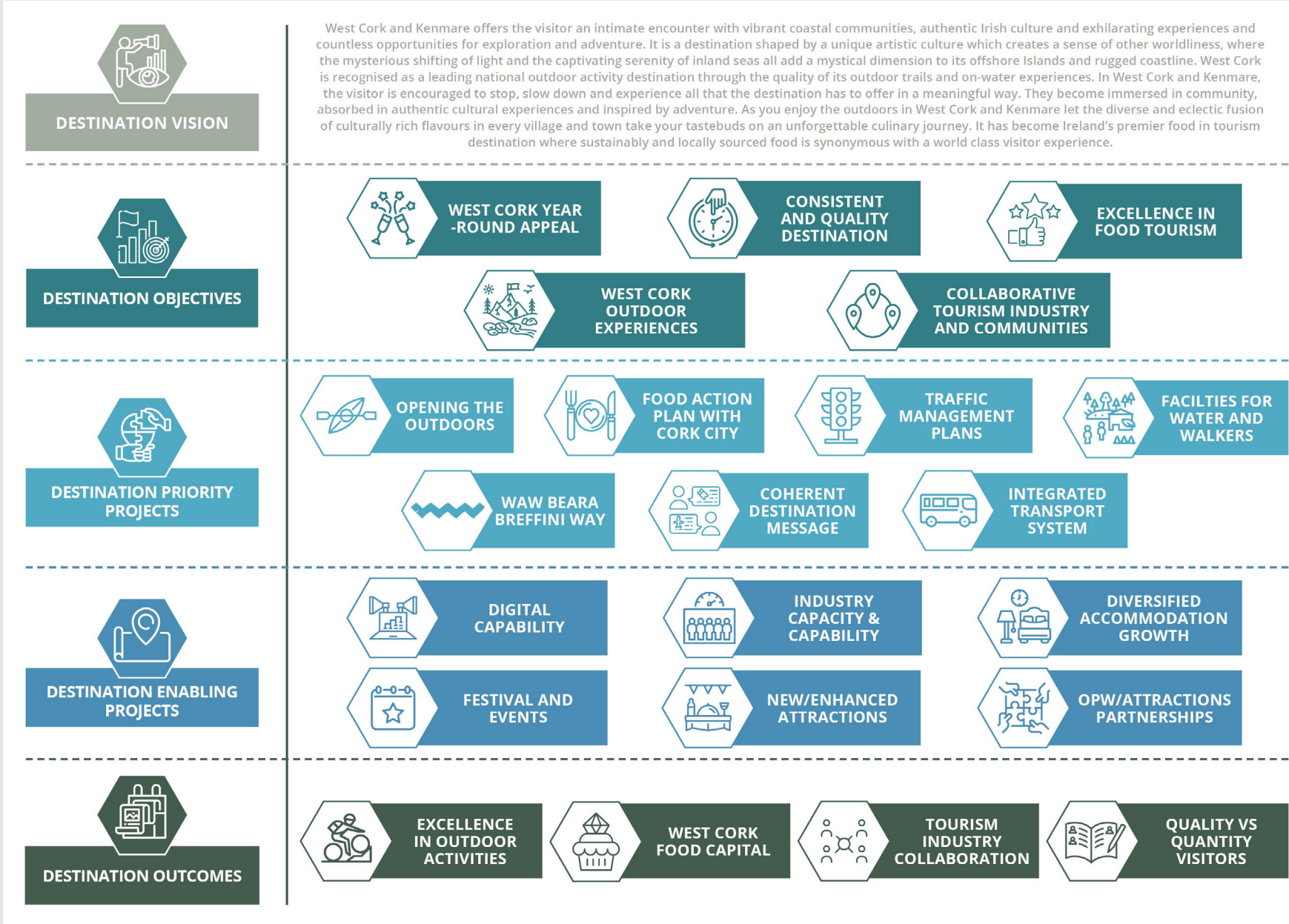
Maturity Levels



Why the Plan was needed:

Seasonality	Very uneven distribution of visitors across the destination and highly seasonal
Night Time Economy	Very poor night time economy outside of pubs
Food & Drink Destination	West Cork has Highest % of artisan food & drink producers (approx 40%) but needs to maximise the potential of the destination as a premier artisan destination
Day Trippers	Relatively high proportion of day trippers – need to generate more overnights
Bookable Experiences Online	Insufficient pool of new and updated visitor experiences with very little bookable online
Coherent Marketing	Lack of a coherent marketing approach for the destination as a whole adopted by the tourism industry and communities
All Weather Experiences	Lack of indoor product that is motivational for visitors and supporting the evening economy
Infrastructure	Public infrastructure such as transport, toilets & parking in need of improvement /management
Activity Experiences	An abundance of water-based activity that needs a co-ordinated approach for development & marketing, i.e., Whale and Dolphin watching

WHAT THE PLAN WILL DELIVER



PRIORITY PROJECTS

Transformational projects which can act as a catalyst for tourism growth. The Priority Projects presented here are initiatives designed to generate significant momentum across the region. It is anticipated that they will strengthen the positioning of the West Cork and Kenmare as a visitor destination and will act as a stimulant for both local and regional sustainable economic growth.

Traffic Management Plans

Development and delivery of visitor management plans for products including attractions, towns, villages which are close to or at capacity in peak season. Traffic Management Plans which will address traffic congestion, improve the operation and safety of the Wild Atlantic Way route for visitors and local communities alike and will greatly improve the visitor experience.

Image Below: Italian Gardens, Bantry House, Bantry, Co Cork



Premier artisan Food & Drink Destination

Position West Cork and Kenmare as one of the premier national and international artisan food and drink destinations of Ireland, drawing domestic and overseas visitors, specifically to experience the quality and provenance of product and cuisine.

Image Below: Glandore lunch overlooking the estuary, Co Cork



Integrated Transport for the destination

Develop an integrated transport system that leverages local transport networks to seamlessly disperse visitors throughout West Cork and Kenmare reviewing current transport systems and identifying where there are gaps in the service for visitors; and creating solutions where feasible to fill these gaps.

Image Above: Touring along Kerry Cork border at Priest's Leap

Kinsale Start/End Wild Atlantic Way

Develop an iconic opportunity for Kinsale as Start/End of Wild Atlantic Way. This project should incorporate elevating Heritage assets of the town, improving public realm and providing adequate infrastructure to preserve the essence of the town to create an attractive sustainable iconic tourism destination at the Start / End of the Wild Atlantic Way.

Image Right: Charles Fort, Kinsale, Co Cork



OPW - Masterplan sites Kinsale / Boat House Garnish (OPW)

Develop a master plan for the key OPW attractions in Kinsale that clearly demonstrates the delivery of a strong destination visitor experience.

Work with OPW to improve the orientation, interpretation and overall experience through the restoration of the Boathouse on Ilncullin / Garnish Island.

Image Right: Garinish Island, Ilncullin Italian Garden, Co Cork



Skibbereen Heritage Centre

Expand the story of The Famine in Skibbereen through the development of the Workhouse/Soup Kitchen building adjacent to the Skibbereen Heritage Centre.

Image Above: Skibbereen Heritage Centre, Co Cork



Beara Breifne Way

Implement the Beara Breifne Way Masterplan which provides a framework to ensure the Beara Breifne Way realises its potential as an internationally compelling visitor experience.

Image Above: Garnish Beach, Beara Peninsula, Co Cork



Durse Island Cable Car Project

Upgrade Dursey Cable Car which links the remote island of Dursey to the mainland on Beara Peninsula. The new cable car will allow the islanders and visitors to travel to Dursey Island.

Image Left: Dursey Island Cable Car, County Cork



Compelling Outdoor Destination

West Cork and Kenmare to be known nationally and internationally as a compelling destination for a wide variety of outdoor pursuits, both land and water-based, which will be further enhanced by thematic festivals and events at regular intervals throughout the year which will extend the season.

Image Left: Lough Hyne, Co Cork

Develop a Vibrant Gaelic Culture

Continue to develop the Gaeltacht areas through immersive experiences in Gaelic culture and language that make them truly unique. Work to ensure that there are reminders that visitors are in a distinctive area where the Gaelic language is spoken, the road signs, the traditional music, song, dance and storytelling can be readily found.

Image below: Timoleague, Co Cork



Destination Enablers

Develop a strong enabling environment that plays a key role in supporting a vibrant tourism industry for West Cork and Kenmare.

- ▶ A cohesive approach to destination development is based on strengthening the competitiveness of the destination for leisure tourism and its appeal to both national and international visitors.
- ▶ Coordinate a strong partnership-based approach aimed specifically at supporting the implementation of the Strategy, strengthening entrepreneurship, and growing the tourism economy and extending the season.

Image Above: Cape Clear Island Harbour, Co Cork

Developing all weather experiences

There is a strong regional spread of stand-out experiences that engage tourists through storytelling and innovative interpretation, which in turn, provides them with compelling reasons to stay and spend longer in the destination. This helps support sustained economic growth and community wellbeing whilst valuing our heritage, history and environment.

Image Below: Blue Flag Beach, Inchydoney



PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The overarching objective of the West Cork and Kenmare DEDP is to sustainably increase the economic benefit of tourism to the area. Equally, the plan is designed to provide a destination development focus that aligns all stakeholders with an agreed vision through the adoption of a five year pathway to achieve this ambition.

Specific KPIs will be baselined and monitored throughout the lifecycle of the plan. The impact of the plan will be measured through the monitoring of key metrics that examine the commercial development of tourism across the area.

The plan framework adopts the VICE model as a means of measuring success. The VICE Framework identifies sustainable tourism as the interaction between Visitors, the Industry that serves them, the Community and culture that hosts them and their collective impact on and response to the Environment where it all takes place.

The measurement of success will include analysis of the following areas of performance over the course of West Cork and Kenmare DEDP.



Demand Side – VISITOR

1. Increase bednights in West Cork & Kenmare by 2% YoY ahead of regional average from year 3 of implementation of West Cork and Kenmare DEDP.
2. Increase in visitor numbers in off peak season.
3. Increase the value of visitors to West Cork & Kenmare over volume.
4. Increase visitor satisfaction.



Supply Side – INDUSTRY

5. Increase Saleable Products (five new or improved saleable experiences per annum).
6. Season Extension: Extend opening hours annually by 5% annually per DEDP.



Destination Development – COMMUNITY

7. Coherent approach in developing West Cork and Kenmare as a leading international destination for responsible tourism.
8. Deliver on key sustainable tourism targets in areas of focus such as traffic and transport.
9. Heighten market awareness of the range and diversity of experiences that introduce the visitor to the West Cork and Kenmare area.



ENVIRONMENT

10. Develop effective management of the environment, including natural, cultural and heritage assets through the progression of a DEDP Monitoring Programme.

HERO EXPERIENCE THEMES



Galley Head Lighthouse, Rosscarbery, Co. Cork

HERO EXPERIENCE THEMES

“To create an experience, you need to engage them emotionally. It’s about striking a balance between facts and activities (the functional) and engaging, amazing and memorable elements (the emotional). You want your story to be the first story every visitor tells when they get home, or even better the story they share on social media.” Tourism Queensland

The West Cork & Kenmare Story

West Cork and Kenmare, where living in the moment promises a kaleidoscope of flavours, colour and adventure; and where the serenity of the bays and countryside today stand in distinctive contrast to the piracy, smuggling, shipwrecks and sackings of the past. This is a coastline where the interplay of land and sea offers a unique blend of intimacy, harmony and surprise as time is taken to meander slowly through the towns and villages and off the beaten tracks. While a shadow of poignant times still lingers, the opportunity to relax and embrace all that this gentle landscape has to offer today is more deeply appreciated.

The Creative Framework

Understanding the essence of West Cork and Kenmare and the stories that are associated with the region provides the basis for a creative framework that can be used in positioning the region and shaping the development of HERO experiences. The framework presents three inter-related elements of this coastal area that highlight the strengths and personality of the destination in a way that will differentiate West Cork and Kenmare and will create ‘cut-through’ in a busy marketplace while creating a sense of cohesion in the visitor experience.

This Destination and Experience Development Plan focuses on bringing these destination elements to the fore through providing a context to strengthen existing experiences and to develop new experiences. The framework should be regarded as a tool – one that is designed to elevate the region’s best and to bring to life those stories that underlie its very essence in a way that enables the visitor to make an emotional connection with the region and to clearly recall the memories of the experiences.



Gougane Barra Lake, Gougane Forest Park, Co Cork

WHOLE SOME FLAVOURS OF LAND AND SEA			
 Baltimore, Co Cork	Flavours of fusion	Artistic Encounters	Makers and Producers & Moments of indulgence
	West Cork is emerging as a premier food destination. The rural eclectic culture is at the heart of this food experience that offers a fusion of flavours and culinary styles from around the world – flavours that have been absorbed into everyday life. The experience is infused with the passion, skills and artistry of chefs and food producers that work together to celebrate all that the local land and sea has to offer year-round. Combine this with the relaxed and laid-back culture of West Cork and Kenmare, and the result is truly a restorative and inspirational experience.	Creativity is a hallmark of West Cork and Kenmare – a reflection of the mystical play of light on the landscape. It is a region of artists and artisans – those proud to be native to the area and those inspired by the welcome – working together to create a culture of visual, literary and performing arts that can be celebrated in iconic festivals, appreciated in studios and boutiques, heard in the ‘parlours’ of homes, and visible in the stone walls and sculptured carvings – even the very hills seem to whisper the poetic musings of bygone bards. Whether the visitor is encountering artistic talent and traditions that have been passed down through generations or the infusion of new creative styles, the experience touches the heart of West Cork and Kenmare including its islands, the people, the culture, the blending of past and present.	Makers and Producers & Moments of Indulgence food and drink experiences in tourism have the potential to connect visitors to cultures in a very special way. They showcase the people, places, and processes behind the food that makes each destination unique. Food and beverage consumption is an intrinsic part of the tourist experience. It can play a strong role in affecting destination choice and it is an important channel for tourists to experience the local culture and spending on food comprises of one-third of tourists’ total expenditure

VOYAGES OF DISCOVERY LAND AND SEA			
 Bantry, Co Cork	Harmonious confrontation	Slow Discoveries and Island Encounters and Ocean Adventures and Maritime Traditions	Celestial Sanctuary
	The geography of the West Cork and Kenmare including the islands has created centuries old focus on assessing and responding to risk, leveraging the natural dynamics of deep waters, protecting strategic military advantage, and fine-tuning expertise in contemporary endurance sports. From safe havens for pirates in the seventeenth century to military bases for the British, the Americans, and the Irish Artillery, this is a region steeped in military heritage that never actually went to war – although Wolfe Tone’s weather battered Expédition d’Irlande came close to altering this narrative. Today, the personal adventure of confronting the challenges that land and sea present remains core to the area as enthusiasts participate in road running, cycling, sailing, kayaking and long-distance hiking.	The passion, adventure and drama associated with seafaring life can be found along the entire West Cork & Kenmare Coast. This was a theatre of tragedy and euphoria – from sackings, armadas, shipwrecks and piracy to silks, spices and stories of boat building achievements. That passion remains with the talent of rowers bringing home the gold, the fishing vessels that return with their catch, the lifeboats that continue to safeguard the waters, and the excitement of catching a wave or glimpsing the ocean’s giants rising out of the depths of the sea. It is also a geography that compels the visitor to slow down and get off the beaten track to experience the serenity of the coves, the charisma of the islands, and the magnetic charm of small towns. The magical discovery of bioluminescence and the opportunity to wonder through tranquil gardens, quietly observe estuarine birdlife or reflect on former monastic life rewards those who slowdown in an area where mind and body can recharge.	There is a sense of other worldliness within the destination that has added to their magnetic appeal over the centuries. The mysterious shifting of light, the captivating serenity of inland seas, and the warmth of the Gulf Stream all add a mystical dimension to this haven. Time seems to move differently. The alignment of stone circles with the rising solstice sun accentuates a clear sense of continuity from early Neolithic times through to today – almost an impression of co-existing with the past, with the dark skies at night contributing to this celestial story. The interplay of the rugged with the serenity of gardens and oceanic ecosystems created a landscape highly sought after in the Romantic era – an allure that continues to appeal today.

STORIES OF LAND AND SEA



Castletownbere, Co Cork

Under Seige and Tragedies on Land and Sea

The stories of sackings, battles, siege and revolution echo from Kinsale to Baltimore, Bantry, Beara & Kenmare. Much of modern Ireland was shaped under the hands of those who fought for their cause and defended their principles in this part of the country. Forts, castles, historic sites and plaques remind the visitor of troubled times that stand in sharp contrast to the tranquillity of today's landscape and the vitality of towns villages and islands. Here, stories of times past can touch a visitor unexpectedly, whether it be The Battle of Kinsale story through Charles Fort and other related OPW sites or the story of Baltimore and Bantry at the turn on the seventeenth century when the entire economy was based on pilchards and piracy, or in more recent times key figures like Michael Collins and Sam Maguire.

In the midst of beauty and serenity, there are moments when the harsh realities of more poignant times can be discerned. The communal grief can be felt in the famine graveyards and the shadows of the former poorhouses; the despair of those lost at sea or stolen from families through acts of war still seems to cry out when least expected. Tragedies on land and sea that have befallen this area.

Kith, Kin and Clan

The names of the clans ring out in every street – whether it is “O’Sullivan”, “O’Mahony”, “O’Daly” or “O’Driscoll”. From ancient times Irish society was organised around traditional kinship groups or clans – and nowhere is this more evident than in in West Cork and Kenmare. There are landmarks to these great clans from cliff edge castles to street pubs, and the stories of how kith, kin and clan have prospered, how they have withstood tempestuous times, and how today the pride in the names is as strong as ever has long intrigued our visitors. More recent families of entirely different descent have continued to influence the landscape, the architecture, and the cultural context – and taken together kith, kin and clan have become bedrock to West Cork and Kenmare.

Marginal Livelihoods

Living near the edge relates not only to the geography of West Cork and Kenmare, but also to many aspects of the local economy. Making a living in the destination requires a spirit of vibrant resilience – one that can take the rough with the smooth, and yet remain determined to maintain traditional values associated with land, sea and family. The landscape has a clear story to tell – of mining, fishing and farming, the Irish language– even smuggling when it came to making a livelihood. The traces of past economic activity, the challenges of working in today's marginal environments, and the connectivity with the world that was established through trade are all stories within the landscape and stories of so many of the people you meet in the street and countryside.



Baltimore Evening View

INTRODUCTION TO THE ACTION PLAN

The following Action plan section sets out Priority Projects and examples of some of the other supporting initiatives and experiences. It is not a comprehensive listing. For a full listing of the actions please refer to the primary plan documents online, linked at the start of this summary.

Barleycove Beach View, Co Cork

IRELANDS PREMIER FOOD DESTINATION

Irelands Premier Food Destination. Encouraging visitors to travel to the region that lies behind the growth of artisanal food and drink in Ireland. This is where the wholesome flavours of land and sea truly originated, and where you can meet producers and makers who have devoted energy

and creativity into making this region an exciting ‘foodie’ destination of international repute. Discover the eclectic stories that lie behind so many award-winning flavours.

IRELANDS PREMIER FOOD DESTINATION	
Key Actions	Lead
A co-ordinated structure that is business led, underpinned by governmental and academic support and staffed by a fulltime Food and Drink co-ordinator that will position the West Cork & Kenmare Destination as Irelands premier Food Destination both Nationally and Internationally by 2027.	Failte Ireland, Cork County Council, Food & hospitality businesses
Strengthen the Taste of West Cork Food Festival to highlight the wholesome flavours and moments of indulgence within the DEDP.	
Assess potential to expand existing community food events, such as the Baltimore Seafood Festival, to be much broader in their seafaring scope. Work with breweries and distilleries to develop an artisan beer and spirits festival/event in the off-season.	
Identify and work towards developing new and existing hands on experiences, offered through the festival, involving makers and producers (for example, seafood experiences and foraging workshops and, bespoke culinary tours with overnight experiences etc.) and, layer these with other experiences, and identify those that could be delivered throughout the year. Work to profile more seafood on menus along the West Cork & Kenmare Coast	
Use existing resources, such as A Taste of West Cork Food Festival Artisan Food Guide, to create a web-based interactive tool to facilitate developing cycling and, self-touring culinary experiences.	
Strengthen the integration of food producers and food service operators through developing ways of networking and knowledge sharing between the two sectors.	
Continue to promote, support and further develop exceptional culinary experiences in restaurants throughout the region. Develop a stronger regional profile on restaurants and food. Collect & curate Food and Drink stories and promote to raise profile through national and international events.	
Explore the opportunity to develop covered/indoor all-weather food and craft market places for West Cork and Kenmare to increase the destination value of these attractions, appeal to the target markets and enable the South West to benefit from the growing sophistication of markets.	

INTEGRATED TRANSPORT SYSTEM AND VISITOR DISPERSAL

Integrated Transport System and Visitor Dispersal - Transport to and within the region is a key destination enabler. The key urban towns and beaches in the area are seeing congestion in peak season. An integrated transport system is essential to disperse the visitors from the key hub towns of Kinsale, Clonakilty, Skibbereen, Bantry, Macroom, Castletownbere, and Kenmare out to the lesser travelled areas. This will allow for the development of new best-in-class HERO experiences to attract visitors building on the Slow Discovery concept. It will support the continued development of walking, cycling, eco-tourism, birdwatching, and island experiences, allowing visitors to enjoy the true essence of the destination and uncovering the stories of land and sea. It would link all modes of transport - car, bus, local link, walking, cycling, kayaking, boat, together to make it seamless for the traveller.

INTEGRATED TRANSPORT SYSTEM AND VISITOR DISPERAL	
Key Actions	Lead
Develop an integrated transport network linking all modes of transport to seamlessly disperse visitors throughout West Cork and Kenmare.	Cork County Council, Failte Ireland, Local Link, Bus Eireann, Local transport providers, activity businesses, accommodation providers.
Map existing cycle routes and assess safety and suitability of these routes. Identify potential for developing cycle lanes on existing transport corridors and highlight the importance of including cycle initiatives in road upgrade projects.	
Address road maintenance issues on the existing designated cycle routes. Assess potential of designating select minor roads as ‘green lanes’ for cycling.	
Continue to assess supporting infrastructure, including route signage and cycle parking requirements to meet the growing demand and reduce inappropriate parking. Permanently sign the section of Eurovelo 1 through the West Cork & Kenmare DEDP	
Continue to support/encourage the extension of cycle initiatives and bicycle sharing schemes such as the Clonakilty Community Cycle Scheme. Pursue options to extend the availability of e-bikes.	
Work with IAAT to help ensure access to adequate insurance at viable rates	
Encourage the development of cycling experiences – including itineraries with suggested stops to visit arts and craft businesses, restaurants, coffee shops and sites of interest. Explore developing a Slow Food Cycle Event as an additional way of connecting producers with visitors and local residents and promoting overnight stays. Repackage components of the West Cork Garden Trail into a viable cycling experience, ensuring that the tour highlights places to eat. Support and raise the profile of cycling events such as the Clonakilty Bike Festival	
Examine the feasibility of improving themed connectivity that will enhance walkability and use of active transport. Seek to improve pedestrian walkways and cycleways between all main attractions	
Assessment of signage and wayfinding needs and consideration of implementing a cohesive signage strategy, including interpretative signage to highlight the key stories.	
Work with stakeholders to extend the Cork Metropolitan Cycle Network Plan westwards.	

DEVELOPING OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

Compelling Land and marine-based experiences have the potential to be exceptional within the West Cork and Kenmare destination. Opportunities exist for developing and enhancing appropriate infrastructure to an international standard allowing the sustainable expansion of HERO experiences. Building on the array of land and marine adventure activities currently offered including walking, cycling, hiking, boat tours, kayaking, surfing, stand-up paddle boarding and others – and consolidating the offering to assist the visitor in booking and engaging in the activities.

DEVELOPING OUTDOOR ADVENTURE	
Key Actions	Lead
Sustainably expand existing infrastructure and trails to establish southern sections of the Wild Atlantic Way Coastal Path.	Failte Ireland, Cork County Council, tourism businesses, local Communities
Implement the outputs of the Beara Breifne Master Plan and work towards developing connectivity between the Beara Way and the Kerry Way, and between Sheep’s Head Way and the Beara Way through Glengarriff to develop a Camino type offering for the South West region.	
Dursey Island – to construct a two-car aerial tramway system and to build a Visitor Centre at the departure point on the mainland and waiting shelter/toilet facility on the Island	
Develop a Shared Facility for Water-based Activity Operators.	
Develop an iconic opportunity for Kinsale as Start/End of Wild Atlantic Way	
Castletownbere Harbour – improve or develop new pier and leisure craft facilities with 40-80 berths to enhance its status within the new European Cool Route (described as the World’s Most Adventurous Cruising Route) and to allow for a general increase in leisure vessels stopping over.	
Schull Harbour development. Redevelopment of Schull Harbour to include upgrading of the existing pier	
Bantry Harbour – confirm a viable location and create a Marine Activities Centre to include: A slipway for launching and recovering dinghies; A pontoon for launching coastal rowing boats; Hardstand for storage of boats, access space, parking and ancillary activities;	
Continuing to improve walking and cycling infrastructure, including a focus on safety issues, through: Enhancing all Way Marked Ways to become an international renowned walking destination and providing the tools to integrate all local visitor themes	

SUPPORTING CULTURE, ARTS & HERITAGE

The West Cork & Kenmare destination has a distinctive feel based on a unique fusion of cultural, craft and artistic influence. It is an area of the Wild Atlantic Way that is all about the people – how diverse cultures have come together and how newcomers are embraced. This richness of cultural integration provides the basis for artistic and creative traditions of language, storytelling, music, dance, art and craft that differentiate this destination.

SUPPORTING CULTURE, ARTS AND HERITAGE	
Key Actions	Lead
Develop a master plan for the key OPW attractions in Kinsale that clearly demonstrates the delivery of a strong destination visitor experience. The plan needs to include a visitor strategy for an integrated experience relating to Charles Fort, James Fort and Desmond Castle, and the potential to create new walking tours and interpretative cycle routes – focusing on creating significant added value to the existing experiences.	OPW, Failte Ireland, Tourism Businesses, local communities.
Support the development of the Lusitania Visitor Centre at the Old Head of Kinsale.	
Expand the story of The Famine in Skibbereen through the development of the Workhouse/Soup Kitchen building.	
Develop the Oileain Cleire Fastnet Experience and Heritage Centre and support Islanders to create experiences for visitors to actively understand island life and culture on each of the islands.	
A Vibrant Gaelic Culture in the Destination.	
Support existing and new opportunities for visitors to learn the Irish language, engage with Irish culture, traditions and craft, particularly in the Gaeltacht areas.	
Bere Island – complete the restoration of Lonehart Battery, including sand-blasting of the guns and expansion of the parade area to enlarge the space available for activities to position the island as a key destination for military heritage and enhance the site as a significant visitor attraction.	
Allihies Copper Mines - Increasing the level of guided interpretation and storytelling, working to pull the regional story together particularly the Bronze Age components, and pursuing funding to open the Mountain Mine to pre-booked guided tours (initially) will provide the basis for a stronger visitor experience.	
The West Cork Music Festival - initiatives that support the profile of this festival and its extension throughout the year will strengthen its iconic status within the West Cork & Kenmare Destination .This will include strengthening the cultural and economic impact of the West Cork Music Festival and related festivals through establishing a year-round venue for West Cork Music.	
Support the development of Coláiste Íosagán.	

EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

The vision for West Cork & Kenmare of having a domestic and international reputation for compelling, timeless and sustainable visitor experiences can only be delivered by a partnership approach between innovative and progressive business owners and staff and, a supportive network of agencies providing access to quality skills development, networking opportunities, market access, marketing, mentoring and funding supports. Below are just a few examples of an almost endless list of experience development ideas and concepts that have emerged as a result of the destination research and consultations that formed much of the basis of the DEDP.

EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT	
Key Actions	Lead
Encourage the development of walking, hiking kayaking cycling and other outdoor experiences, including itineraries with suggested stops to visit arts and craft businesses, restaurants, coffee shops and sites of interest.	Failte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, tourism businesses.
Capturing Shifting Lights – work with professional artists and photographers to develop an experience learning how to capture the dynamic qualities of light in different areas across West Cork & Kenmare. Package the experience with accommodation and combine with local food experiences.	
Bere Island Military Festival – a new festival to profile and celebrate the unique social history of military ‘occupation’ and life in the Treaty Port. Include an opportunity to wear costume to increase the level of engagement. This event is likely to attract the island’s diaspora and will need to be packaged with a range of accommodation, including the opportunity for homestays.	
An Alternative Perspective on Creating Legacies – develop an experience that highlights the stories of key women from West Cork & Kenmare and how they shaped history and what we see today – such as the story of Ellen Hutchins, Molly Gallivan, the Kenmare Lace nuns, Pirate Queen Anne Bonny of Kinsale and so many more. Develop a range of activities that complement the stories, such as a focus on gardens or art and tapestries. Add value to the experience through a focus on local foods and boutique accommodation.	
The O’Daly Bardic School – support the initiative as identified in the 2019 Feasibility Study (Creating a Sustainable Tourism Offering in Kilcrohane) to celebrate the creative legacies of a medieval hereditary profession.	
Discovering the Forgotten Secrets of Islands – develop a bookable experience of treasure hunts that can highlight the shared marine, military and social history of the islands, and should be packaged with additional services, including accommodation, local food and local transport. The concept can be developed using a digital app that provides the clues and challenges, which will assist in the maintenance of the experience.	
Muscraí - Intangible Heritage & Culture experiences route.	

DESTINATION ENABLING PROJECTS

ENABLER 1: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP	Lead
The implementation of the West Cork & Kenmare DEDP will be overseen by the West Cork and Kenmare DEDP implementation Group and a number of key thematic sub-groups. These groups will operate from 2022 to 2027 and will be tasked with: ▶ Supporting the delivery of the West Cork and Kenmare DEDP. ▶ Driving growth as per the agreed PT's in the Action Plan. ▶ Leading and managing the Action Plan.	
ENABLER 2: IMPROVING ACCESS TO AND WITHIN THE REGION	
Air and Sea Access	Lead
Expanding air and sea access – continue to work together to improve air and sea access into the Southwest particularly in relation to bringing back routes following the fallout to air traffic in light of Covid 19, as well as ▶ Seeking to secure new route development into Cork Airport – particularly new routes from Ireland’s major Continental markets –Germany, France, Italy and Benelux countries. ▶ Working with partners to see an extension of seasonal North American flights into Ireland. ▶ Strengthening access to the region by ferry through developing new or expanding existing routes with Europe.	Cork Airport, CCC, Port of Cork
Car-parking	Lead
Continue to assess and address car parking needs in towns and villages, including the implementation of park and ride facilities in peak season. ▶ Establish the feasibility of an underground car-park in Kinsale associated with the development of the harbour area.	CCC
Signage	Lead
Undertake a signage audit of the region. A number of issues need to be addressed, such as: ▶ Improving welcome signage at the outset of the Wild Atlantic Way and use signage to strengthen Kinsale’s gateway position.	FI, CCC

ENABLER 3: SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE	
Diverse range of quality accommodation	Lead
Encourage the creation of conditions that will promote investment in developing diverse categories of bed stock in the accommodation sector, including new budget accommodation to complement existing facilities, while also encouraging new levels of innovation in accommodation delivery e.g., glamping, and enhancement of quality. ▶ Explore options for attracting investment to the island communities for new and bespoke accommodation and the upgrading of existing accommodation, ensuring that it does not reduce housing stock for local residents or increase the number of empty dwellings. ▶ Work with CCC to review the nature of current restrictions on the islands and determine the viability of policy changes that may be needed to support an increase in accommodation. ▶ Identify local sites in the vicinity of Lough Hyne that would accommodate wild camping or pod development for walkers and cyclists interested in spending time at Lough Hyne. ▶ Work with existing accommodation providers to address issues of quality which can have a considerable impact on the visitor experience and the reputation of the local destination	FI, CCC, LTGs
Marine Infrastructural requirements	Lead
Work with communities to assess and address infrastructural requirements to facilitate the development of marine tourism and improve the quality of the region’s maritime environment and to fully implement the Marine Leisure Infrastructure Strategy (2010-2020). This includes issues relating to access of slipways and related parking requirements, marina capacity, and temporary berthing options. ▶ Continue to implement dredging work to maintain viability of local and commercial interests. ▶ Continue to explore the opportunity to develop marina facilities at Baltimore near Bull Point. ▶ Assess public realm areas of beaches and address infrastructural requirements that will improve the appeal and safety of the beach experience outside of peak season.	CCC, DoAFM
Accessibility requirements	Lead
Work with Cork County Council to review accessibility and inclusion issues to ensure that all visitors have an opportunity to engage fully in experiencing a destination. This has become a recognised priority from a global perspective, a new strategic focus nationally, and needs to be addressed locally. ▶ Review existing initiatives and models such as the Arts and Disability Networking Cork – a partnership between the Arts Council of Ireland, Arts and Disability Ireland and Cork City Council in association with the arts and disability sectors in Cork City – and assess transferability of approach and projects. ▶ Work towards undertaking a comprehensive assessment of sites, attractions and facilities in relation to the access requirements of older visitors, young families, and visitors with specific access constraints. ▶ Improve pedestrian access in towns as opportunities arise.	CCC, ACI

INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

Bespoke Business Support Programme	Lead
Create a “ Bespoke Business support Programme ” for the West Cork and Kenmare as the basis for industry training and mentoring, with a focus on developing new and innovative visitor experiences that are bookable online and adopting the DEDP as a basis for commercial development.	FI, WCICC, LEO
Saleable Experience Programme	Lead
Develop the capacity of the tourism industry to create saleable experiences for selling online and delivering to the international market.	FI
Staffing	Lead
Fáilte Ireland will help businesses to make the industry an appealing and rewarding workplace that can retain talent with good retention and development programmes.	FI
Networking and Familiarisation Visits	Lead
Networking – create a networking plan to develop a strong dialogue between tourism businesses. ▶ Familiarisation visits – organise industry familiarisation trips to build relationship between providers, strengthen awareness of what is on offer, and assist in connections and partnership opportunities between tourism providers. ▶ Support Pure Cork in its development of a ‘socialisation plan’ designed to build awareness and engagement amongst all stakeholders across key touchpoints of the visitor journey.	LTGs, PC
Strategic Planning / Community Planning	Lead
Encourage community stakeholders to maintain a strategic planning focus at the community level , using the DEDP to determine strategic priorities on a regular basis. ▶ Consider undertaking further tourism planning discussions on the islands to support the sustainable growth of tourism.	LTGs, FI
D.5 Sustainability	Lead
As noted, sustainability is a core value to the region and needs to be supported and celebrated . ▶ Ensure that discussions on tourism reflect this value system and identify ways of raising the profile of sustainability within the visitor experience. ▶ Consider working as a region towards accreditation as a sustainable destination and use an accreditation process to strengthen the principles and practices of sustainability in business operations, destination development, and marketing. Any programme adopted should ensure that the specific issues of the islands are fully integrated into the initiative. ▶ In adhering to the principles of the VICE Model identify strategic steps that will assist communities in resolving development issues that have the potential to undermine local sense of place, environment or cultural heritage.	FI, PC, CCC, LTGs

HERO EXPERIENCES	
Enhancing Visitor Awareness of Hero Experiences in West Cork	Lead
Work with Fáilte Ireland to profile key HERO experiences on the Wild Atlantic Way platform and ensure that the positioning of the West Cork & Kenmare on this platform is in line with this Plan. Highlight the types of experiences that will differentiate the region and encourage increased visitation and interest.	FI
Marketing	Lead
Work within the marketing strategies of Pure Cork to ensure that messaging and visual material relating to the West Cork Coast are aligned with the Wild Atlantic Way and the direction of this Plan. ▶ Work with partners to profile all events, activities, experiences, visitor sites and attractions online. ▶ Continue to work with partners that target the cruise sector, ensuring that the experiences and modes of travel are compatible from a social and environmental perspective. ▶ Work with the Convention Bureaus and accommodation venues that have meeting facilities to promote new experiences as opportunities to extend the stay of the business market and provide value for spousal/partner itineraries.	FI, Pure Cork, CCC
Digital Publication	Lead
Digital Publication: Strengthening the distribution of experiences through engaging businesses in promoting increased industry participation in social media and the West Cork Digital Publication	FI, Pure Cork
ANIMATING THE DESTINATION	
Festivals an Events	Lead
Support existing festivals and investigate opportunities for new events where these promote the themes and experiences identified in this Plan, and proactively focus on using festivals and events to extend the tourism season and expand visitor and community experiences. ▶ Work with the County Council to ensure that all festivals and events are promoted online on the Pure Cork tourism website in addition to the websites of local tourism groups and the event itself. ▶ Encourage adoption of Cork County Council’s Festivals / Events Guidelines and Policies. ▶ Promote best practices in waste management and greening of festivals; and encourage capacity building in demonstrating event-friendliness and hosting. ▶ Host a bi-annual networking event to explore opportunities for collaboration, extension of festivals, new ideas, and the sharing of information on evolving standards for festivals and events. ▶ Continue to support the emerging trend toward the development of integrated activities within events, such as combining guided hiking activities with food festivals, and use festivals to showcase other elements of the destination visitor experience to encourage return visitation. ▶ Develop community capacity to monitor and report the economic impact of festivals and event.	CCC, Festival and Events Organisers, PC

Sense of Place	Lead
Encourage all communities to focus on strengthening their ‘sense of place’ and overall welcome. This is well advanced in a number of towns and villages but is an area that requires ongoing commitment. Use the Destination Town toolkit as guide for developing Sense of Place. In addition: ▶ Work with local government officials to explore opportunities for business incentives that will improve the streetscape and continually assess how to maintain the upkeep of the urban built environment. ▶ Assess the provision of basic visitor infrastructure along the Wild Atlantic Way and facilitate improvements in toilet facilities, litter receptacles, viewpoints, signage, and parking in a manner that is sensitive to the environmental context. ▶ Pursue opportunities to animate public gathering places at weekends. ▶ Work with the retail and hospitality sector to extend opening hours where feasible e.g., cafes. Work towards developing a stronger night-time economy other than pubs.	CCC, LCs, FI, LTGs,
Storytelling	Lead
Identifying the stories and working with businesses and communities to develop a sound working knowledge of these stories is important to delivering strong theme-based experiences that allow the visitor to connect emotionally with the destination and to create a greater sense of authenticity. It is also a key success factor in the development of local brands. To be effective, this will involve: ▶ Supporting and encouraging local initiatives that are designed to collect and curate local stories. There is a wealth of stories, with a number of them needing to be handled with a degree of sensitivity to ensure delivery is acceptable to all audiences. This will require a collaborative approach from local historical societies and community groups as the basis of the work. ▶ Develop a searchable database of stories which can be accessed on a password protected intranet site. ▶ Host storytelling forums and develop opportunities to extend the knowledge base to the wider tourism community. ▶ Highlight examples of where stories are told in a way that significantly impacts the visitor experience. ▶ Use storytelling to animate videography and strengthen local branding. Stories will add a new dimension to traditional visual materials and will assist in generating a deeper emotional connection.	FI, SECAD, LTGs, HC, PPN, Active Retirement Groups, LCs
Digital Infrastructure	Lead
SME digital strategies: Covid-19 has accelerated the shift to digital and new consumer behaviours are rapidly emerging. The need to fully embrace digital strategies is now more important than ever. ▶ Strengthen the distribution of experiences through engaging businesses in adopting online booking systems and online distribution. ▶ Promote increased industry participation on social platforms.	FI

ENVIRONMENTAL & SUSTAINABLE CONSIDERATIONS

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

Wild Atlantic Way Operational Programme 2015-2019

Molly Gullivan’s Visitor Centre, Kenmare, Co Kerry

ENVIRONMENTAL & SUSTAINABLE CONSIDERATIONS

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

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

This plan provides an opportunity to ensure that all existing and future tourism projects and initiatives are planned, developed and managed in a sustainable and integrated manner. The VICE (Visitor, Industry, Community and Environment) Model for Sustainable Tourism is an approach that this plan is developed from and strives to implement.

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

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

- ▶ Completion of detailed environmental assessment including Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA)
- ▶ Development and commitment to carry out environmental monitoring on the plan over its lifetime,
- ▶ A firm commitment to ensuring sustainable and responsible tourism principles are practiced,
- ▶ Compliance with statutory decision making and consent granting at Plan implementation stage, and
- ▶ Integrating requirements for environmental protection and management.

The following table demonstrates the overarching sustainable principles that form a foundation in the development and implementation of the Clew Bay Destination & Experience Development Plan.

Environmental Considerations

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

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

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

Environmental Assessment

Consideration has been given to the requirement to undertake environmental assessment of this DEDP in order to ensure full legal compliance and to further integrate protection, enhancement, and promotion of the environment in developing and implementing the DEDP. The SEA and AA documents provide a comprehensive description of the environmental baseline including natural heritage, ecosystem services, designated sites, and protected species within and beyond the DEDP area. The findings of SEA and AA should be read in conjunction with the DEDP. The following sets out the two types of environmental assessments that were considered:

1. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

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

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

- ▶ The SEA Directive requires that the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes are monitored. Section A5a details the measures that have been selected in order to monitor the likely significant effects of implementing this DEDP.
- ▶ Monitoring can demonstrate the positive effects facilitated by the DEDP and can enable, at an early stage, the identification of unforeseen adverse effects and the undertaking of appropriate remedial action.
- ▶ The occurrence of persistent significant adverse environmental effects which are directly attributable to tourism would necessitate consideration of the effects in the context of the DEDP and a possible review of part(s) of the DEDP.
- ▶ Environmental monitoring will be based around indicators that allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Strategic Environmental Objectives.
- ▶ A variety of sources of information will be used to run the Environmental Monitoring Programme.
- ▶ Environmental monitoring will be executed by Fáilte Ireland and will run concurrent with the implementation phase of the DEDP itself. It will be reported on to the DEDP’s implementation group on an annual basis where relevant information sources allow, and the findings of the monitoring will influence the actions of the DEDP as it progresses. The monitoring will be linked directly to the DEDP’s KPI’s, including monitoring of visitor numbers where relevant.
- ▶ Environmental monitoring for the DEDP and other existing/future Fáilte Ireland plans, programmes, etc. may be undertaken and reported on at the same time.
- ▶ Appendix ?? sets out the indicators that will be used in the operation of this Environmental Monitoring Programme.

2. Appropriate Assessment (AA)

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

Key Findings of the SEA and AA Process for the DEDP

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

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

This suite of mitigatory actions includes:

- The requirement to establish the status of the DEDP and its interrelationship with statutory decision-making and consent-granting frameworks.
- Integrating the requirements for Environmental Compliance into the DEDP. Particular emphasis is placed on the following:
 - Requirements for lower-tier environmental assessment,
 - The Cork County Development Plan 2022 - 2028
 - The Kerry County Development Plan 2022 - 2028,
 - The Climate Action Plan 2021,
 - Visitor management,
 - Consideration for infrastructural capacity and green infrastructure, and
 - Ecosystem services.

Implementation and Consent

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

Implementing the West Cork and Kenmare DEDP will involve Fáilte Ireland helping to facilitate, promote, support, and coordinate stakeholders (including local authorities, other Government agencies, tourism operators, communities, and visitors) in their activities in a way that is consistent with existing and emerging plans that have been subject to environmental assessment. The DEDP does not provide consent, establish a framework for granting consent, or contribute towards a framework for granting consent.

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

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

Integrating Requirements for Environmental Protection and Management into the DEDP

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

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

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

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

In order to be realised, projects included in the DEDP (in a similar way to other projects from any other sector) will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans, and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment, and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent granting framework, of which the DEDP is not part and does not contribute towards. Such legislation, policies, plans, and programmes include:

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

Infrastructure Capacity

With respect to infrastructural capacity (including drinking water, wastewater, waste, and transport) the potential impact on existing infrastructure as well as the potential environmental effects of a likely increase in tourism-related traffic volumes along any routes resulting from the relevant initiative shall be considered and mitigated as appropriate, where relevant.

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

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

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

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

Visitor Management

Those receiving funding shall seek to manage any increase in visitor numbers and/or any change in visitor behaviour in order to avoid significant effects including loss of habitat and disturbance, including ensuring that new projects are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities.

Extensive research by Fáilte Ireland has shown improved environmental outcomes (including improved attainment of conservation objectives) in areas with visitor management strategies. Visitor management strategies will be required for proposed plans, programmes, and projects that are to receive funding as relevant and appropriate.

Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services

Those receiving funding shall contribute towards the maintenance of existing green infrastructure and its ecosystem services while taking into account the output of the Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystem Services project being undertaken by the NPWS. Proposals for the development of any green infrastructure should demonstrate the synergies that can be achieved with regard to the provision of open space amenities; sustainable management of water; protection and management of biodiversity; protection of cultural heritage; and protection of protected landscape sensitivities.

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

CONSULTATION

A wide range of stakeholders were consulted during the preparation of this DEDP. Individual organisations and agencies include:

- ▶ **ACI** - Arts Council of Ireland
- ▶ **AT** - An Teagasc
- ▶ **ATOWC** - A Taste of West Cork Food Festival
- ▶ **BBPC** - Bantry Bay Port Company / Bantry Harbour Board
- ▶ **BCC** - Baltimore Community Council
- ▶ **BCC** - Bantry Chamber of Commerce
- ▶ **BDTA** - Bantry Development and Tourism Association
- ▶ **BHAS** - Bantry Historical and Archaeological Society
- ▶ **BIPG** - Bere Island Project Group
- ▶ **BPG** - Bantry Project Group
- ▶ **BT** - Beara Tourism
- ▶ **BWI** - Beara Tourism
- ▶ **C** - Coillte
- ▶ **CBF** - Clonakilty Bike Festival
- ▶ **CC** - Ceoltas Ceoltóirí
- ▶ **CCC** - Cork County Council
- ▶ **CCE** - Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann
- ▶ **CCT** - Comharchumann Chléire Teoranta
- ▶ **CCCS** - Clonakilty Community Cycle Scheme
- ▶ **CETB** - Cork Education and Training Board

- ▶ **CIE** - Córas Iompair Éireann
- ▶ **CnO** - Comhar na nOileán
- ▶ **CRWC** - Michael Collins / Cork Rebel Way Committee
- ▶ **CUAS** - West Cork Maritime Heritage
- ▶ **DB** - Destination Beara
- ▶ **DCHG** - Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
- ▶ **DoAFM** - Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- ▶ **DARD** - Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
- ▶ **DTTAS** - Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
- ▶ **EPA** - Environmental Protection Agency
- ▶ **ETBs** - Educational Training Boards
- ▶ **FI** - Fáilte Ireland
- ▶ **FLAG** - Fisheries Local Action Group
- ▶ **GTDA** - Glengarrif Tourism Development Association
- ▶ **HC** - Heritage Council
- ▶ **HICC** - Heir Island Community Council
- ▶ **IFT** - Irish Farmer's Association
- ▶ **IFI** - Inland Fisheries Ireland
- ▶ **IHF** - Irish Hotel Federation
- ▶ **ILC** - Irish Lights Commission

- ▶ **ISA** - Irish Sailing Association
- ▶ **ITOA** - Irish Tour Operators Association
- ▶ **KCC** - Kerry County Council
- ▶ **KCTB** - Kinsale Chamber of Tourism and Business
- ▶ **KMEG** - Kenmare Marketing and Events Group
- ▶ **LCs** - Local Communities
- ▶ **LEO** - Local Enterprise Office
- ▶ **LE** - Local Enterprises
- ▶ **LHS** - Local History Societies
- ▶ **LLTC** - Local Link Transport
- ▶ **LTGs** - Local Tourism Groups
- ▶ **LM/OHSTH** - Lusitania Museum / Old Head Signal Tower Heritage Ltd
- ▶ **NMCI** - National Maritime College of Ireland
- ▶ **MTU** - Munster Technological University
- ▶ **NPWS** - National Parks and Wildlife Service
- ▶ **NTO** - National Trails Office
- ▶ **NRA** - National Roads Authority
- ▶ **NSAI** - National Standards Authority of Ireland
- ▶ **RAI** - Restaurant Association of Ireland
- ▶ **RRO** - Rural Recreation Officer
- ▶ **SECAD** - SECAD Partnership CLG
- ▶ **SHC** - Skibbereen Heritage Centre
- ▶ **SIDS** - Skerkin Island Development Society
- ▶ **SKDP** - South Kerry Development Partnership
- ▶ **STI** - Sustainable Travel Ireland
- ▶ **TC** - Taste Cork

- ▶ **TIL** - Tourism Ireland
- ▶ **TUD** - Technical University of Dublin
- ▶ **UCC** - University College Cork
- ▶ **UnaG** - Údurás na Gaeltachta
- ▶ **VSCG** - Visitor Safety in the Countryside Group
- ▶ **WCCC** - West Cork Cycling Clubs
- ▶ **WCDP** - West Cork Development Partnership
- ▶ **WCFBG** - West Cork Forest Bathing Group
- ▶ **WCIF** - West Cork Islands Federation
- ▶ **WCLD** - West Cork Local Development
- ▶ **WCCMF** - West Cork Chamber Music Festival
- ▶ **WCGT** - West Cork Garden Trial
- ▶ **WCICC** - West Cork Islands Community Council

The views of local business operators, community groups, regional and national agencies, and local government within West Cork and Kenmare were of fundamental

importance in the development of this DEDP. In undertaking the work, 200+ attendees participated in community workshops, in-depth interviews with a cross section of stakeholders, agencies, communities, together with site visits. In addition to the consultation, a significant number of national and county plans and strategies have informed this DEDP.

Fáilte Ireland would like to thank all stakeholders in the preparation and implementation of this ambitious vision for West Cork and Kenmare.



Kenmare Stone Circle, The Ring of Kerry, Co Kerry



Fáilte
Ireland



WILD ATLANTIC WAY
SLÍ AN ATLANTAIGH FHIÁIN