

Screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment

Determination

under the
European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes)
Regulations 2004 (as amended)
for the

Draft Westmeath Tourism Strategy 2023 - 2027

In order to comply with the requirements of Regulation 9 of the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (Statutory Instrument Number (SI No. 435 of 2004), as amended, this determination has been made by Westmeath County Council relating to whether the Draft Westmeath Tourism Strategy would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

This determination takes into account relevant criteria set out in Schedule 1 'Criteria for determining whether a plan or programme (or modification thereto) is likely to have significant effects on the environment' of the aforementioned Regulations. These criteria are considered in a Screening for SEA Report for the Westmeath Tourism Strategy that has been prepared to inform this determination.

The Screening for SEA Report concludes that:

"Screening is the process for deciding whether a particular plan, programme or strategy, other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would be likely to have significant environmental effects, and would thus warrant SEA. The purpose of the report is to provide the findings of the evaluation of the requirement for SEA to be undertaken on the Draft Strategy.

This Screening for SEA Report has examined the Strategy, including against relevant criteria set out in Schedule 1 'Criteria for determining whether a plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment' of the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 435 of 2004), as amended.

Implementing the Strategy will involve Westmeath County Council helping to facilitate, promote, support and coordinate stakeholders (including 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/screening for environmental assessment, as appropriate. The Strategy will not provide consent, establish a framework for granting consent or contribute towards a framework for granting consent.

The Strategy fully aligns with the provisions of the existing NPF, RSES, County Development Plan, Fáilte Ireland's Regional Tourism Development Strategy for Ireland's Hidden Heartlands and Westmeath County Council's Climate Adaptation Strategy. As such, the proposed Strategy is wholly subject to the requirements of the provisions set out in these documents and does not set out to introduce any alterations or additions to those provisions.

Implementation of the Strategy shall be consistent with and conform with the NPF, the Eastern and Midland RSES, the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 and Fáilte Ireland's "Ireland's Hidden Heartlands" Regional Tourism Development Strategy, including provisions relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management that have been integrated into these documents, including through SEA and AA processes.

In order to be realised, projects included in the Strategy (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 Strategy is not part and does not contribute towards.

Taking into account the above and the measures that have been already integrated into the existing planning framework that provide for and contribute towards environmental protection, environmental management and sustainable development, it is advised that all potential effects arising from the Strategy: either are provided already (beneficial) by existing plans, strategies etc. (that have been subject to legislative requirements relating to public consultation and environmental assessment) and will be further contributed towards; and/or are provided already (adverse) by existing plans, strategies etc. (that have been subject to legislative requirements relating to public consultation and environmental assessment) and will be mitigated so as not to be significant. Consequently, it is advised that the Strategy does not necessitate the undertaking of SEA.

This Screening for SEA Report is referred to Westmeath County Council for SEA Screening Determination."

Furthermore, Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) has also been undertaken on the Draft Strategy. That process has concluded that the Strategy is not foreseen to give rise to any significant adverse effects on any designated European sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, therefore Stage 2 AA is not required. An AA Screening Report that accompanies the Strategy contains the findings of this assessment and has informed this Screening for SEA Report.

The undersigned, having carefully considered the information referred to above agrees with and adopts the reasoning and conclusion presented above and in the "Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report". The undersigned hereby determines pursuant to Regulation 9 of the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004, as amended, that SEA is not required for the Draft Westmeath Tourism Strategy.

Signatory:

Barry Kehoe *DoS*

Date:

23 Feb 2023.