

A decorative wavy ribbon with a color gradient from orange to yellow to green to blue, flowing across the top of the page.

9

Tourism



Vision

Ensure County Cavan is a quality place to visit and stay with a wide variety of high quality tourist attractions, infrastructure and facilities.





Policy

Provide for the continued expansion of the tourism sector, with a focus on creating strong visitor towns and sufficient high-quality visitor services and the continued development and enhancement of visitor attractions and activities to provide memorable, immersive visitor experiences, capitalising on our natural and cultural heritage assets, whilst safeguarding these resources for future generations.

9.1 Background

The tourism sector in Ireland has experienced strong growth in the past decade and is now one of our largest national indigenous industries, supporting an estimated 270,000 jobs. 2018 continued the upwards trend in Irish tourism, with a rise in overseas visitor numbers by 6.9% and over €5 billion in revenue generated to the national economy. Tourism is now considered to be one of the country's most important economic sectors, particularly in rural areas where other employment sources are limited and it has been credited with playing a significant role in the economic recovery in recent years. Overall employment in tourism is estimated to be in the region of 230,000. County Cavan had been comparing favourably with surrounding counties and other parts of the North West.

In 2019, Cavan welcomed 1% of the 9.7 million overseas tourists who came to Ireland, spending 1% of the €5.2bn overseas tourism expenditure in Ireland, with a further 310,000 domestic visitors to Cavan & Leitrim generation an estimated 53mn in revenue. Britain, Northern Ireland and the domestic market are the main sources of tourism business. No business or tourism destination works in isolation from the influences of the environment within which they operate. The impact of COVID on tourism industry in Cavan and nationally in 2020/2021 has been catastrophic and much of the effort of the forthcoming months and years will be focussed on recovery.

National tourism policy falls within the remit of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport. The national agencies, Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland, deliver and implement the adopted policy. Ireland is promoted nationally and internationally and four distinct experience propositions are used to define the appealing characteristics of each region. County Cavan sits within two of these regional experience brands, 'Ireland's Ancient East' covers the east of the County from Cavan town eastwards and 'Ireland's Hidden Heartlands' incorporates Cavan town westwards.

9.2 Policy Context

9.2.1 People, Place and Policy: Growing Tourism to 2025, Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, 2015

This National Strategy aims "to facilitate a vibrant, attractive tourism sector that makes a significant contribution to employment across the country; is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable; helps promote a positive image of Ireland overseas, and is a sector in which people want to work". Implementation of this strategy is being realised through a series of Three-Year Action Plans.

9.2.2 Tourism Action Plan 2019-2021, Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, 2018

The current National Tourism Action Plan 2019-2021 places an emphasis on regional growth and season extension and on helping to build the attractiveness of less well-known attractions and regions, thereby creating a more even spread of tourism growth across the country and supporting less developed tourism areas.

9.2.3 Tourism Development & Innovation, A Strategy for Investment 2016-2022, Fáilte Ireland, 2016

This strategy focuses on building compelling visitor experiences, developing a world class industry, and creating visitor-friendly infrastructure and communities. Much of the capital investment nationally is focused on the four regional experience brands, with an emphasis on increased revenue generation from tourism and alignment with the brands.

9.2.4 National Planning Framework 2040

Tourism is part of National Strategic Outcome 7, 'Enhanced Amenities and Heritage' which requires investment in public realm, recreational infrastructure and rural amenities including activity-based tourism such as greenways, blueways and peatways, with the development of a strategic national network of these trails highlighted as a priority. Built, cultural and natural heritage is identified for its intrinsic value in defining the character of urban and rural areas and adding to their attractiveness and sense of place.

9.3 Tourism in Cavan

Tourism constitutes one of Cavan's most important economic sectors in providing business and employment opportunities leading to job creation.

Cavan is a county with substantial heritage and cultural assets, along with a scenic, unspoilt and rich natural environment, within easy reach of Dublin, Belfast and the North West. The following highlights key visitor attractions in the County:

1. County Cavan Museum
2. Cavan Burren Park
3. Killykeen Forest Park
4. Dun Na Ri Forest Park
5. The Shannon Pot
6. Clough Oughter Castle
7. St. Killian's Heritage Centre
8. Cavan Adventure Centre
9. Killinkere Visitor Farm

County Cavan is very well served with good quality hotels. In total, there are fourteen hotels in the County, with a combined hotel room capacity of 844 rooms. A number of hotels in the county are considered 'destination' hotels and serve as reasons to visit in their own right. The county has strengths in natural and built heritage and in the areas of outdoor activities and food.

There are two tourist offices in the county. Cavan County Council support the operation of a tourist office in the Johnston Library Building, which shares a space with Cavan Genealogy Centre. The local community group in Blacklion operate a tourist office from the Market House in Blacklion.

Natural tourism assets in County Cavan include the UNESCO Global Geopark which covers Cavan town westwards, taking in the settlements of Killeshandra, Milltown, Belturbet, Ballyconnell, Swanlinbar, Glangevlin and Blacklion. A geopark is a region with geological heritage of international significance and where that heritage is being used to support local communities through sustainable tourism.





Cavan is famous for its scenic natural heritage, most famously its rivers and lakes and drowned drumlin landscape of Lough Oughter and the River Erne system. Cuilcagh Mountain forms a backdrop to the west while Lough an Leagh to the east of the county provides another high point. Access to Cuilcagh Mountain was created in 2015 with the development of the Cuilcagh Boardwalk on the Fermanagh side.

The lakes and rivers in Cavan have historically created a vibrant angling industry in the county, with coarse and pike fishing to the forefront. This has sustained a sizable number of B&Bs, small hotels and self-catering properties in rural towns and villages across County Cavan for years. In addition, the county hosted a healthy programme of national and international fishing festivals. Lough Sheelin is regarded as one of the finest brown trout fisheries in Europe and supports accommodation providers, boat and bait hire providers and guides in the area.

The River Shannon rises in County Cavan at the Shannon Pot. The River Erne also rises in Gowra and flows through Belturbet. Boat hire is available at the marina in Belturbet. The Shannon – Erne Waterway links the villages of Belturbet and Ballyconnell and is a designated blueway. There are two adventure and activity providers operating in the county.

County Cavan has two designated forest parks – Dun a Ri, Kingscourt and Killykeen Forest Park, Cavan. Both parks attract thousands of visitors every year. The Castle Lake in Bailieborough and Deerpark Forest in Virginia are also open to visitors and are popular amenities.

There are four designated national looped walks in County Cavan – Killeshandra Looped Walk; Ballyconnell Canal Loop, Swanlinbar Loop and the Castle Lake, Bailieborough. The Cavan Way in the West of the county is a long distance national way marked trail. There are several other short – medium walks throughout the county. The four forests mentioned above all have trails within the boundary of the park. There is one designated 12km cycle way in the county in Killykeen Forest Park, linking the park to Killeshandra.

Quality food is one of Cavan's strengths. Chefs such as Neven Maguire, Richard Corrigan and Gearoid Lynch have restaurants in the county. There are several other good restaurants including excellent offerings in the hotels in the county. In 2019 a new brand '*Created in Cavan*' was created to support and promote Cavan food and drinks producers and a resource appointed to manage it.

There are three 18-hole golf courses in County Cavan with the Slieve Russell designated a PGA National. Cavan Equestrian Centre, outside Cavan town, is the biggest equestrian centre in Ireland with 450 permanent stables and hosting a year-round programme of championship events and horse sales.

Cavan Burren Park in Blacklion and the island castle of Clogh Oughter are iconic tourism heritage attractions in the county. Other heritage sites popular with visitors include Turbet Island in Belturbet, Drumlane Abbey in Milltown and the Shannon Pot near Glangevlin. Cavan Burren attracts close to 30,000 visitors per year and is a flagship attraction in the UNESCO Global Geopark. Cavan County Museum and the World War 1 Trench Experience in Ballyjamesduff is the county's biggest indoor visitor attraction, with a range of exhibits and experiences, delivering a year-round programme of events.

Cavan County Council has secured €4.8 million for a new Discovery Centre at the Shannon Pot, alongside enhancements including a new elevated walkway for Cavan Burren Park under Fáilte Ireland's Platforms for Growth Capital Investment Programme. The Shannon Pot project involves the development of a new state of the art Discovery Centre, comprising of a three-part complex containing the main visitor exhibition area, reception area, ticket box, public amenities, a café, and a retail shop. In addition to a looped trail at the Discovery Centre which will take visitors on a journey around the pot itself. Developments at the Cavan Burren Park will include an upgrade of the existing car park, the visitor centre and its immediate surrounds, a new outdoor amphitheatre meeting area and a new 450 metre elevated walkway.

There is a vibrant culture and arts scene in County Cavan. Visitors can access the arts through the Ramor Theatre in Virginia and the Townhall Arts Space in Cavan town. Culture Night takes place in the county every September and Cavan Arts Festival takes place annually in May.

The County hosts a number of other festivals including the county fleadh, the NYAH traditional arts festival and adventure events such as *Lets Tri Cavan* and the *Kayakarun* along with many other smaller community festivals.

In line with the objectives outlined in the County Tourism Strategy 2017 – 2022 and the Local Economic and Community Plan 2016, Cavan County Council pursue funding opportunities through Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Fund, LEADER and Fáilte Ireland to improve the range, standard and availability of tourism product in the county.

Having regard to national and regional tourism policy, the Council is committed to supporting the growth of tourism in the County. Cavan County Council through the work of the Tourist Office will continue to take advantage of national, regional, cross border initiatives and funding schemes and maximising the potential of our unique natural, heritage, cultural, and amenity assets. A co-ordinated and collaborative approach is taken with relevant agencies, tourism businesses and communities throughout the County. The Council will continue to collaborate with relevant agencies and stakeholders and will continue to support collective development and marketing.

A strong emphasis will be placed on securing sustainable tourism growth, whereby the quality of our landscapes, natural environment and cultural heritage is protected and safeguarded for the long-term enjoyment of assets.

The National Planning Framework recognises the role that tourism can play in increasing cross border cooperation. It advocates capturing greater international interest by promotion strategic attractions of scale and signature visitor attractions. Opportunities exist to maximise exposure through co-operation and themed branding bundles such as Irelands Ancient East and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. Development of blueways and greenways, such as the Ulster Canal, also offers potential for an enhanced tourism offering throughout the border area.

The Council through the work of the Tourism Office, must continue to aggressively promote the County's attractions to the target markets, particularly via social media and the "This is Cavan" website. Cross – border collaboration is also hugely important for the County, as is on-going cooperation and collaboration with Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland in promoting the county both domestically and internationally.

The current County Tourism Strategy was formulated in 2017 and due for review in 2022.

The core objectives of the strategy were:

- To increase tourist visits and economic return by 15% - 20% over the next five years
- To invest in and improve on Cavan's leisure experiences to set a standard of excellence across the County
- To build capacity and galvanise tourism providers, local business and industry partners in delivering Cavan's full potential as a leisure destination.
- Provide strategic direction on development and marketing for Cavan tourism

In 2018, Cavan welcomed 96,090 overseas tourists⁸ contribution to the local economy in Cavan of over €52M. Irish residents took 222,000 trips to Cavan and Leitrim spending €29mn (1% of domestic tourist spend) across the two counties.

Fáilte Ireland's figures indicate that in 2019, Cavan welcomed 1% of the 9.7 million overseas tourists who came to Ireland, spending 1% of the €5.2bn overseas tourism expenditure in Ireland, with a further 310,000 domestic visitors to Cavan & Leitrim generation an estimated €53mn in revenue.



⁸ 1% of the 9,609 million who came to Ireland in 2019



Tourism Development Objectives

It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

T
01

Promote the development and strengthening of the overall value of Cavan as a tourist destination by encouraging the enhancement and development of sustainable and high-quality visitor attractions, activities and infrastructure, enabling an increase in the overall capacity and long-term development of the county's tourism industry, subject to appropriate siting and design criteria and the protection of environmentally sensitive areas.

T
02

Engage and collaborate with key stakeholders, relevant agencies, sectoral representatives and local communities to develop the tourism sector in Cavan, to ensure that the economic potential of the tourism sector is secured for the local economy.

T
03

Support the implementation of the County's Tourism Strategy in line with national and regional policy, tourism trends and identified challenges, in collaboration with Fáilte Ireland, Waterways Ireland, tourism businesses and communities and other supporting agencies.

T
04

Continue to work closely with Fáilte Ireland to maximise the benefit of national and regional initiatives/plans/strategies for the county, with a particular emphasis on initiatives which will increase the economic benefit from tourism, support local business development and encourage new enterprise opportunities.

T
05

Utilise the county's natural and heritage resources to foster the development of tourism as a viable sector of the economy in a sustainable manner which complements the scale, quality and unique features of the location and county.

T
06

Protect and conserve the natural, built and cultural heritage features which add value to the visitor experience in Cavan and seek to restrict developments which would damage or detract from the quality of scenic areas and identified natural and cultural heritage assets.

T
07

Support actions to increase access to state and semi-state lands such as National Parks, Forest Parks, Waterways, together with Monuments and Historic Properties, for recreation and tourism purposes, subject to the requirements of the Habitats Directive, National Monuments Act and other provisions and policies to protect and safeguard these resources and subject to the ability of local infrastructure to support the resulting increased tourism.

T
08

Support the development and expansion of tourism related enterprise including visitor attractions, services and accommodation and food and craft businesses, particularly those offering a visitor experience, such as tastings, tours and demonstrations.

T
09

Ensure all tourism developments shall integrate climate change adaptation, the enhancement of nature and biodiversity measures into their activities, plans and proposals.

T
10

Monitor and 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. Visitor/Habitat Management Plans will be required for proposed projects as relevant and appropriate.

T
11

Promote Tourism as an integral part of Cavan's economic profile supporting urban and rural enterprises.

T
12

Carry out an audit of existing tourism signage and notice boards in the county to ensure that they meet the needs of visitors and prepare a county wide coordinated strategy for the enhancement of same.

T
13

It is an objective of the Council to support the provision of accessible tourism.

T
14

Support the development of a new Discovery Centre at the Shannon Pot in collaboration with Fáilte Ireland as a key tourism product under the Fáilte Ireland Platforms for Growth capital investment programme.

T
15

The Council will support the preparation of Destination Experience Development Plans (DEDP) and other tourism masterplans both within the county and also those which crosses from the county into neighbouring counties in collaboration with Fáilte Ireland and other tourism stakeholders.

The Council will work with Fáilte Ireland to prepare and implement The Ancient Destination Experience Development Plan (ADEPD) as it extends into parts of the county.

9.4 Town & Village Tourism

The important role that towns and villages throughout the County as tourist centres and the facilities and services they can provide are recognised by Government. Through *“Realising our Rural Potential”* which seeks to revitalise town and village centres through the implementation of initiatives such as the Town and Village renewal scheme and other such initiatives.

The Council has sought to improve the overall appearance of the County’s towns and villages in recent years through Pride of Place Initiatives, Tidy Towns Initiatives and effective development management and enforcement and delivery of actions in individual revitalisation plans for towns and villages.

Cavan’s towns and villages offer a high quality visitor services incorporating a range of accommodation, restaurants, cafes, visitor attractions, arts and cultural scene. Chapter 2 of this plan contains an overview of the tourism product, asset and key tourism related development objectives for each settlement.

9.4.1 Destination Towns

As part of Ireland’s Ancient East programme Cavan Town has been designated as a Destination Town. The continued expansion of the tourism sector in Cavan will require additional visitor facilities, additional bed-nights (across all sectors of accommodation) in the destination town. The RSES states that over the next decade, it is estimated Ireland will have to increase its bed-stock by approximately 50%. This plan supports the provision of the required supporting infrastructure, including improvements to the public realm, transport links, accommodation, night-time economy and harnessing our natural and built heritage and developing our cultural infrastructure.

Under the Destination Towns Initiative, Cavan has secured €540,518 to enhance public spaces in a manner to engage, improve “sense of place” and enhance visitor experience. The following works will be undertaken in Cavan Town as part of the project:

- Public realm works at Townhall and the junction of Townhall Street and Farnham Street
- Enhancement of the town’s heritage town trail
- A review and updating of tourism signage and waymarking throughout the town
- Planting, seating and lighting.



Destination Towns Development Objectives

It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

DT
01

Ensure provision is made for the expansion in accommodation and facilities and necessary supporting infrastructure within Destination Towns, whilst supporting the sustainable development of our natural and built heritage.

DT
02

Establish potential tourist and amenity attractions of scale in the Cavan, in partnership with Fáilte Ireland, and the relevant Local Authorities.

DT
03

Ensure that “Discovery Points” targeting Irelands Ancient East are included for Cavan as enablers for increasing bed nights and visitor numbers.

9.5 Tourism Infrastructure and Visitor Services

The provision of appropriate and high-quality infrastructure to meet the needs of visitors is fundamental to Cavan reaching its potential for a thriving tourism sector. In general, such developments shall be encouraged to locate within or in close proximity to existing towns and villages where they can avail of existing public services, commercial and community facilities providing for a suitable range and critical mass of services. It is recognised, however, that sometimes tourism developments are more appropriately located in alternative locations subject to the provision of the relevant required infrastructure. The Council recognises the potential for pressure being placed on the County’s natural and heritage amenities through increased tourism. In this regard, it is important that our precious heritage is protected and that the provision for increased tourism activity is in line with the provision of the required infrastructure to support such development. The Council shall ensure that our natural amenities are enhanced and remain protected and unspoiled. Tourism related development proposals will be required to demonstrate a high standard of design, with strong consideration given to a proposal’s potential impact on its surroundings in terms of scale, intensity and the potential for the proposal to add significantly to the quality of the visitor experience.



The Council recognises that the provision of accommodation such as hotels, guesthouses, hostels, and glamping sites are essential to enable growth in the tourism sector.

of a wide range of tourist accommodation types and restricting development that would be likely to reduce the capacity of the resource and/or have a detrimental impact on the local environment.

The Council shall support the development of tourism in the county by encouraging the provision



Tourism Infrastructure and Visitor Services Development Objectives
 It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

- TV 01** Promote tourism related developments in existing settlements within the Settlement Hierarchy, subject to existing carrying capacity.
- TV 02** Facilitate the development of high quality tourist accommodation such as hotels, hostels, B&B's / guesthouses, camping and glamping at suitable locations, in both urban and rural settings throughout the county, subject to ensuring a high standard of design, layout, landscape and environmental protection and the provision of adequate infrastructure.
- TV 03** Encourage the upgrade of existing accommodation facilities to meet Fáilte Ireland's Standards' as appropriate, subject to development management standards as set out in this plan, ensuring that new and existing developments do not negatively impact on sensitive environments.
- TV 04** Facilitate the development of visitor infrastructure linked to natural and heritage environments, while ensuring that it does not detract from the status, quality and value of these environments.
- TV 05** Support, implement and require best practice environmental management and climate proofing of tourism related developments and activities, such as accommodation, restaurants, activity providers, festivals, events and tourism enterprises, to include zero climate impact, energy efficiency, waste management, and recycling.
- TV 06** Support rural tourism initiatives such as agri-farm tourism, health and wellbeing centres, glamping, trekking and trails together with new opportunities to promote food and nature tourism, in order to sustain employment in rural areas.
- TV 07** In collaboration with Fáilte Ireland, promote, encourage and facilitate the development of a new visitor discovery experience centre at Shannon Pot as a key tourism product under the Fáilte Ireland Platforms for Growth capital investment programme.



9.6 History, Heritage and Ancient Sites

Cavan is enthralled in heritage and already has a strong foundation in the provision of world-class heritage tourism attractions. Increased marketing, investment and support is required in order to increase revenue generated to the local economy from these attractions, both directly and indirectly. The creation of stronger linkages between attractions, activities, visitor services and accommodation is critical to increasing visitor dwell time and encouraging multi day visits to the county with resulting economic benefit.

Cavan's natural heritage cannot be underestimated for its tourism value. Our well preserved natural environment, and traditional farming can be found in abundance along our waterways, lakeshores, bogs, greenways and trails. Activities such as back to nature, bird watching and foraging are becoming increasingly popular as 'slow and experiential tourism' becomes more prevalent internationally.

Visitors targeted under the *Ireland's Ancient East* and *Ireland's Hidden Heartlands* brand proposition are those who want this more relaxed pace of holiday, where they can attune with nature and go 'off grid'. Adequate recognition of the value of investing in heritage conservation will reduce the potential conflict with loss of authenticity and appreciation of a place, tourism provision and more informed planning decisions. Investing in heritage in terms of placemaking will benefit not just tourism but the local citizen. The protection and conservation of the County's heritage assets and features will be of paramount importance, including natural and cultural heritage, in order to safeguard the quality of assets into the future. (see Chapter 10 Natural Environment and Chapter 11 Cultural/Built Heritage).





History, Heritage and Ancient Sites Development Objectives It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

**HHAS
01**

Encourage sustainable tourism enterprise development associated with rural life style, landscape, natural and heritage locations to develop Cavan's infrastructure and gain the benefit from increased visitors, subject to development management standards.

**HHAS
02**

Support sustainable initiatives and projects that enable visitors to enjoy and connect with our natural heritage, including walking or cycling trails, glamping, viewing points, facilities for bird-watching and angling, tours and events, subject to the requirements for protecting this valuable and sensitive heritage.

**HHAS
03**

Support enhanced access to state, semi-state and private lands such as bogs, forests, waterways, together with National Monuments and Historic Properties, for recreation and tourism purposes. Access should be planned and managed in a sustainable manner that protects heritage, environmental sensitivities, ecological corridors, and the ability of local infrastructure to support increased tourism.

**HHAS
04**

Support the diversification and innovation of our tourism product with opportunities arising for the development of new tourism offerings such as nature, culturally curious and slow tourism.

**HHAS
05**

Support the conservation of estates and demesnes by way of facilitating appropriate development that contributes to their economic viability.

9.7 Lakes and Waterways

Cavan is widely regarded as Ireland's finest fishing destination, known to have a lake for every day of the year, in addition to the Shannon and Erne rivers. The value of the lakes and waterways from a tourism and amenity perspective is significant having regard to their scenic beauty, serene environment and natural heritage and habitat value. The River Erne and the vast Lough Oughter lake system, the Shannon – Erne Waterway and the Dromore/Annalee river system dominate the middle of the County. To the east, lies the upper River Boyne system and to the south and north west, parts of the mighty River Shannon. These lakes and rivers have good stocks of bream, roach, rudd, perch and pike. Eels are present throughout the county. Tench are also widespread and have grown to specimen size in some locations. Open wild waters can be found in the wider river stretches or large lakes such as Gowna, Oughter, Sillan, Upper Lough Erne, Lough MacNean or Lough Ramor. Lough Sheelin is regarded as one of the finest brown trout fisheries in Europe and supports accommodation providers, boat and bait hire providers and guides in the area.

Cavan County Council recognises the economic benefit this type of tourism brings to the county. Many towns throughout the county are now regarded as established angling towns, offering with angler – friendly accommodation, services and facilities. There are several well known and popular angling festivals that take place throughout the year in angler friendly towns and villages such as Cootehill, Belturbet, Arvagh, Gowna and Killeshandra. International anglers comprise of many of the participants in these events, many stay locally and make a valuable contribution to the local economy. The angling sector contributes over €800 million to the Irish economy every year and supports over 11,000 Irish jobs, often in rural communities where there are fewer job opportunities available. The average length of stay for tourist anglers is 11 nights, 25 per cent longer than average tourists. In addition, tourist anglers spend more, €1,027 compared to €832 average spend per trip. Angling is a key part of Ireland's outdoor recreation offering and has the potential to stimulate innovation and entrepreneurship in rural areas and can help to compensate and reverse the decline experienced in many rural towns and villages.

Our lakes and waterways have benefited from significant public and private investment from a variety of sources in the long term, particularly in recent years. Public amenity areas have been developed at numerous locations along our waterways, many of which include car parking, information panels, toilets, viewing points and boat mooring.

The Council will seek to facilitate increased visitor access and enjoyment of Cavan’s lakes and waterways, through encouraging developments which provide visitor services and / or create stronger connections with towns and villages which can provide those services. Such services may include bike, boat and watersport equipment hire, changing and toilet facilities and guided tours, along with general services such as accommodation and restaurants etc. This will require support for the establishment of small-scale enterprise development in a sustainable manner. This poses a challenge, given the inherent environmental sensitivities at such locations. However, the Council will encourage and seek to create stronger connections between water-based amenities and nearby population centres, and the reuse of existing structures where visitor services can be best accommodated. Where existing underused structures and infrastructure already exists at water side locations, priority will be given to developments which maximise the use of existing infrastructure as opposed to new development in new locations.

The quality of our water resources is of paramount importance to realising the potential of these assets for tourism. All tourist related development in the vicinity of any of the lakes and waterways in the County shall be subject to the requirements of the Habitats Directive.



Lakes and Waterways Development Objectives
It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

LW 01 Support the development of the angling tourism sector throughout the County, including the development of an updated angling strategy for County Cavan.

LW 02 Continue to engage with Inland Fisheries Ireland on the delivery of the National Strategy for Angling Development in Cavan

LW 03 Support angling festivals that attract visitors and have the potential to create bednights in the county.

LW 04 Facilitate increased access to Cavan’s waterways, from towns and villages where visitor services are located, with an emphasis on providing a strong visitor experience associated with the lakes and waterways and their heritage and amenity value, including trails, bird hides, and water sports facilities, subject to the protection of environmentally sensitive areas and the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

LW 05 Support the provision of infrastructure to enable increased tourism activity associated with Cavan’s waterways, including boating, marina/berthing, kayaking, angling, blueways and harbour amenities while ensuring that such provision does not negatively impact on sensitive environments and subject to the requirements of the Birds and Habitats Directives.

LW 06 Prioritise development proposals which support the Shannon Tourism Masterplan’s Gateway, Towns and villages and utilise existing infrastructure and disused structures in close proximity to Cavan’s waterways for the provision of visitor services, including changing facilities, boat storage, glamping, where appropriate.

LW 07 Support the provision of walking and cycling links between lakes, rivers, bogs and nearby towns, villages and visitor attractions, provided such developments do not negatively impact on sensitive environments.

LW 08 Support the development of Waterways Ireland ‘Shannon Tourism Masterplan’ and its objective to revitalise the combined Shannon Navigation and Shannon Erne Waterway as a key destination within Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands, identifying visitor experiences based on the region’s natural and cultural assets.



9.8 Greenways, Cycling and Walking

Cavan County Council, working with strategic partners at a national, regional and local level, are strongly committed to greenway development and recognises their strong potential particularly for generating tourism activity and associated positive wellbeing, quality of life and economic benefits. At a regional level, Cavan County Council works closely with neighbouring local authorities and strategic agencies relevant to greenway development.

County Cavan has a wide range of trails of varying degrees of difficulty. Many of these trails are managed and maintained by Cavan County Council. Cavan County Council recognises the potential that trails have for both citizens through improved activity options, smarter travel, access to nature and the countryside and also for tourists who can generate economic growth through tourism.

Trails development is considered a priority in the Local Economic and Community Plan. A *Walking and Cycling Strategy for County Cavan* was prepared by Cavan County Council in 2018.

Destination development is a key pillar of the County Cavan Tourism Strategy 2017 – 2021 which has, as an objective, the need to invest in and improve on Cavan's leisure experiences and to set a standard of excellence across the county.

The Cavan Walking Festival takes place annually and encourages local people to get out walking and creates an attractor for people to visit Cavan.

The government's National Cycling Policy Framework (2009) estimated that for every €100 million invested in cycling in Ireland, a return of €400 million could be obtained.

The development of further cycle paths and the ongoing development of Greenways is a priority of the Cycling and Walking Strategy for County Cavan.





Greenways, Cycling and Walking Development Objectives

It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

**GCW
01**

Continue to develop the greenways in the county and to augment the visitor experience through the provision of infrastructure, having regard to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport various Guidelines along with high quality signage and links to nearby visitor attractions and places of interest.

**GCW
02**

Support the provision of visitor services within existing towns and villages, such as cafes, accommodation, and changing facilities, by providing linkages with greenways and trails where appropriate.

**GCW
03**

Continue to support the development of Sligo Leitrim Northern Counties Greenway, the Cavan and Leitrim Railway Greenway, the Boyne Valley to Lakelands County Greenway, the Ulster Canal Greenway and the Sligo to Cavan Greenway by working with Regional Authorities (EMRA and NWRA), neighbouring counties and national bodies to develop and complete these routes.

**GCW
04**

Support increased opportunities for off-road walking, including looped walks and longer distance trails, taking account of 'positive control points' in trail design, such as areas of natural beauty, lakeshores or rivers, bogs, built heritage and archaeological features and with links to towns and villages. In designing walking trails. The Sport Ireland Guide to Planning and Developing Recreational Trails will be consulted.

**GCW
05**

Continue to maintain and further enhance the County's walking and cycling trails, striving to achieve National Trails accreditation and other standards as set by Sport Ireland, in partnership with local communities and landowners.

**GCW
06**

Continue to support the development of the Cavan Town and Killykean Greenways, Belturbet to Cloverhill Railway Greenway, Cavan to Clones Railway Greenway, Crossdoney to Killeshandra Railway Greenway, Kingscourt to Carlingford Railway Greenway, and the Cavan Railway Greenway.

**GCW
07**

Support the provision of visitor interpretation along walking and cycling trails, including storyboards, artworks and other media, to create a greater sense of place, connecting and immersing visitors in our local heritage and stories.

**GCW
08**

Support the provision of services for visitors using walking and cycling trails which are appropriate to the location and activity, including bike rental and service points, picnic benches at scenic locations, public toilets, and other ancillary services in remote areas.

**GCW
09**

Promote the principles of 'Leave no Trace' in all trail information panels, promotional materials and events and use all statutory procedures to deter negative environmental impact resulting from use of our trails and outdoor recreation amenities.

**GCW
10**

Support the Cavan Walking Festival as a sustainable form of tourism

**GCW
11**

Continue to work with Coillte to facilitate the usage of the forest parks in the county in particular Killykean Forest Park, Dun a Ri Forest Park, Deerpark Forest and the Castle Lake, Bailieborough.

**GCW
12**

Create an environment where pedestrian routes link towns to walking trails and forest parks where possible.

**GCW
13**

Continue to implement the objectives and actions outlined in the Walking and Cycling Strategy for County Cavan 2016.



9.9 Arts, Culture and Festivals

Cavan with its exceptional community spirit is a county rich in environmental, local food, culture, sport and artistic expression. There is a vibrant arts and culture scene in County Cavan. Cavan Arts Festival takes place annually in Cavan town in May, while Cootehill Arts Festival takes place annually in July. Sport is supported with a passion in County Cavan with numerous sporting facilities and venues in every parish. Musical, drama and dance talent are also on display with many venues featuring home grown talent. The tradition of Irish, country and contemporary music and dance is celebrated countywide in various venues and halls and pubs. Similarly, with the County's Tidy Town Community groups and environmental activities.

A number of activities and festivals enable local communities to celebrate a valuable cultural heritage and spotlight local talent and unique local attributes. While some festivals remain small in scale year after year, reaching only a local audience, others have the ambition to grow into larger events, capable of attracting larger numbers of visitors, resulting in a greater impact to the local economy and highlighting the festival location as one worth visiting to a wider audience. The Council will seek to support these festivals where possible,

to support their growth potential, subject to any necessary event licensing and quality standards. The Council provides support for the county's arts and cultural facilities along with assistance to groups organising festivals through its annual grants scheme and other support through its arts, tourism, planning and heritage sections.

Fáilte Ireland has identified that an opportunity exists for festivals and events to play a more significant role in driving Ireland's tourism performance. Cavan has several festivals and events but none which can yet be described as signature or nationally recognised festivals.

Cavan County Council through Cavan Sports Partnership runs the annual Cavan Walking Festival which takes place over ten days and delivers a programme of guided walks in partnership with local communities. The UNESCO Global Geopark also delivers a year round programme of events relating to geology, archaeology, science and natural heritage.

There are several agricultural shows taking place in the county annually, primarily in Arvagh, Muff (Kingscourt) and the long running Virginia Show.





Arts, Culture, Environment and Festivals Development Objectives
It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

- ACEF 01** Support the continued expression of local culture, visual and performing arts and craft through the various arts, music and cultural centres, galleries and craft shops.
- ACEF 02** Continue to support activities, events and evolving visitor experiences as important tourist offerings.
- ACEF 03** Support events and festivals in the county, with a particular focus on events which have the potential to attract a wider audience and spotlight the county as a visitor destination.
- ACEF 04** Support the continued development of tidy towns, local food, culture, sport, visual and performing arts and craft through the various environmental activities, fairs, festivals, arts, music and cultural centres, galleries and craft shops.
- ACEF 05** Continue to provide supports to community groups, sporting organisations, indigenous enterprises and organisations which create locally produced food, products, activities and events.
- ACEF 06** Encourage and support tidy towns organisations, festivals and event organisers to incorporate green principles in their event planning and management.
- ACEF 07** Identify opportunities to capture and celebrate the rich musical and creative heritage of the county.



9.10 Tourism Climate Change Context and Development Objectives

In accordance with the format set out in Chapter 5: Climate Change of this Plan the following is an assessment of the content of this chapter in a climate change context and associated development objectives.

Tourism has the capacity to directly and indirectly sustain communities, create employment and deliver real social benefits for rural Ireland. If we do not curb our Green House Gas (GHG) emissions and start to adapt, regional economies and industries that depend on natural resources and favourable climate conditions (e.g. agriculture and tourism) will begin to suffer greatly. As one of Ireland's most important economic sectors, the tourism industry generated €5.6 billion 2018, with an additional €2 billion coming from domestic returns alone⁹. However, tourism is responsible for nearly one tenth of the world's carbon emissions and set to increase by 4% year on year – outpacing most other economic industries¹⁰.

The operational impacts on tourism of climate change will be increasingly felt, with reduced water availability, extreme weather events, decline in insurability, and increased costs against efforts to cut emissions. Travel, particularly by air, contributes more than half of the CO₂ emissions associated with tourism, with one long-haul flight generating more carbon than the average person produces in a year; notwithstanding the added air pollution¹¹.

Short haul flights are the greatest offenders, with 25% of an aeroplane's CO₂ emissions typically generated at take-off alone¹². The practice of 'sustainable tourism' as a means of supporting environmental conservation, social development and local economies through tourism is considered the most appropriate response. The promotion and development of 'domestic tourism' aligns neatly with the concept, while adhering to the NPF 'NPO 22' setting out to "facilitate tourism development and in particular a National Greenways, Blueways and Peatways Strategy, which prioritises projects on the basis of achieving maximum impact and connectivity at national and regional level". The development of such Greenway, Blueway and Peatways, all found within County Cavan, has the added benefit of improving our Green Infrastructure provision, encouraging more sustainable means of transport, and supporting biodiversity.

9 Failte Ireland (2019), 'Key Tourism Facts 2018', September 2019.

http://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/3_Research_Insights/Key-Tourism-Facts-2018.pdf?ext=.pdf

10 Gabbatiss, J. (2018), 'Tourism is responsible for nearly one tenth of the world's carbon emissions', Independent Newspaper, 07 May 2018, UK.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/environment/tourism-climate-change-carbon-emissions-global-warming-flying-cars-transporta8338946.html>

11 Kommenda, N. (2019), 'How your flight emits as much CO₂ as many people do in a year', The Guardian Newspaper, 19th July 2019, UK.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/ng-interactive/2019/jul/19/carbon-calculator-how-taking-one-flight-emits-as-much-as-many-people-do-in-a-year>

12 Jung, Y. (2010), 'Fuel Consumption and Emissions from Airport Taxi Operations', Green Aviation Summit, NASA Amers Research Center, Sept 8-9, 2010, USA. https://flight.nasa.gov/pdf/18_jung_green_aviation_summit.pdf



Tourism Climate Change Development Objectives

It is a development objective of Cavan County Council to:

TC
01

Continue to fund, improve, develop all Greenways, Blueway, Peatways, and achieve Sport Ireland Trail registration for all existing and proposed trails, wherever possible.

TC
02

Integrate natural borders/buffers as an integral component of the design of greenways, blueways, peatways, trails and amenity areas to promote natural enhancement.

TC
03

Support opportunities for increased tourism within limits of existing infrastructure and sensitive habitats.

TC
04

Prioritise tourism marketing to the domestic market, across multiple media platforms.

TC
05

Invest in the development of the local sustainable tourism market with zero carbon impact.

TC
06

Ensure all tourism developments shall integrate climate change adaptation, the enhancement of nature and biodiversity measures into their activities, plans and proposals.

TC
07

Support, implement and require best-practice environmental management and climate proofing of tourism related developments and activities, such as accommodation, restaurants, activity providers, festivals and events and tourism enterprises, to include zero climate impact, energy efficiency, waste management, and recycling.

