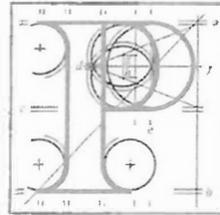


**Our Case Number:** ACP-323980-25



**An  
Coimisiún  
Pleanála**

Fáilte Ireland  
c/o Yvonne Jackson  
National Tourism Development Authority  
88 - 95 Amiens Street  
Dublin 1  
D01 WR86

**Date:** 06 March 2026

**Re:** Proposed Water Supply Project for the Eastern and Midlands Region  
in the counties of Clare, Limerick, Tipperary, Offaly, Kildare, and Dublin.

Dear Sir / Madam,

An Coimisiún Pleanála has received your submission in relation to the above-mentioned proposed development and will take it into consideration in its determination of the matter.

The Commission will revert to you in due course in respect of this matter.

Please be advised that copies of all submissions / observations received in relation to the application will be made available for public inspection at the offices of the local authority and at the offices of An Coimisiún Pleanála when they have been processed by the Commission.

More detailed information in relation to strategic infrastructure development can be viewed on the Commission's website: [www.pleanala.ie](http://www.pleanala.ie).

If you have any queries in the meantime, please contact the undersigned officer of the Commission. Please quote the above mentioned An Coimisiún Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Commission.

Yours faithfully,

  
Eimear Reilly  
Executive Officer

Direct Line: 01-8737184

PA09

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Láithreán Gréasáin Website [www.pleanala.ie](http://www.pleanala.ie)  
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64 Sráid Maoilbhríde 64 Marlborough Street  
Baile Átha Cliath 1 Dublin 1  
D01 V902 D01 V902

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**From:** LAPS  
**Sent:** Wednesday 25 February 2026 16:46  
**To:** Eimear Reilly  
**Subject:** FW: Fáilte Ireland Submission Re: Case reference: PA92.323980  
**Attachments:** Fáilte Ireland\_Submission Ref PA92.323980.pdf

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**From:** SIDS <sids@pleanala.ie>  
**Sent:** Wednesday 25 February 2026 15:02  
**To:** LAPS <laps@pleanala.ie>  
**Subject:** FW: Fáilte Ireland Submission Re: Case reference: PA92.323980

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**From:** Yvonne Jackson <[Yvonne.Jackson@failteireland.ie](mailto:Yvonne.Jackson@failteireland.ie)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 25, 2026 2:59 PM  
**To:** SIDS <sids@pleanala.ie>  
**Subject:** Fáilte Ireland Submission Re: Case reference: PA92.323980

**Caution:** This is an **External Email** and may have malicious content. Please take care when clicking links or opening attachments. When in doubt, contact the ICT Helpdesk.

Dear Secretary,

Fáilte Ireland would like to take the opportunity to make a submission to an SID planning application which is currently lodged with An Coimisiún Pleanála Ref: PA92.323980. Planning Permission for the proposed development of the Water Supply Project Eastern and Midlands Region in the counties of Clare, Limerick, Tipperary, Offaly, Kildare and Dublin.

The attached submission has been prepared by Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority.

I would be grateful if you could send a reply email acknowledging receipt of submission.

Regards,

Yvonne

**Yvonne Jackson**  
Product Development-Environment & Planning Support | Fáilte Ireland

88-95 Amiens Street, Dublin 1, D01 WR86  
M +353 (0)86 0357590



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An Coimisiún Pleanála  
64 Marlborough Street,  
Dublin 1

25<sup>th</sup> February 2026

By Email: [sids@pleanala.ie](mailto:sids@pleanala.ie)

**ACP. Ref.: PA92.323980**

**Applicant: Uisce Éireann**

**Re: Submission in relation to Section 37E application for:**

A planning permission for the development of the Water Supply Project Eastern and Midlands Region in the counties of Clare, Limerick, Tipperary, Offaly, Kildare and Dublin. The proposed development consists of:

- A proposed Raw Water Intake & Pumping Station at Garrynatineel, Ballina, Co. Tipperary;
- A proposed Water Treatment Plant at Incha Beg, Birdhill, Co. Tipperary;
- A proposed Break Pressure Tank at Knockanacree, Cloughjordan, Co. Tipperary;
- A proposed Booster Pumping Station at Coagh Upper, Birr, Co. Offaly;
- A proposed Flow Control Valve at Commons Upper, Celbridge, Co. Kildare;
- A proposed Termination Point Reservoir at Loughtown Upper, Peamount, Co Dublin;
- c.172km of pipeline connecting the water infrastructure sites;
- Uprating and associated works to the existing Ardnacrusha – Birdhill 38kv line and Ardnacrusha – Birdhill – Nenagh 38kv line, works at the existing Birdhill 38 kV electricity substation, power connections to infrastructure; and
- All ancillary works above and below ground. A complete detailed description of the Proposed Development is set out in the documentation accompanying the application including the public notices, the planning report and Environmental Impact Assessment Report.

An EIAR and NIS has been submitted with the application.

To whom it may concern,

This submission has been prepared by Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority, in response to an application for the development of water supply infrastructure consisting of a raw water intake, pumping station, break pressure tank, booster pump station, flow control valve, a termination reservoir and 172km of pipeline. The proposed project area will begin at Ardnacrusha, Co. Clare and terminate at the proposed reservoir in Peamount, Co. Dublin, to include a proposed raw water intake facility & pump station at the Parteen Basin and a proposed water treatment plant in Birdhill, Co. Tipperary.

## **1.0 Introduction**

As a prescribed body in the planning process, one of the main objectives of Fáilte Ireland is to advocate for the protection of key tourism assets and amenities. The Irish landscape is one of the primary assets for tourism in the country and has been the cornerstone of international tourism marketing campaigns for decades. International visitors to Ireland consistently rate scenery as an important reason for their trip. Therefore, as the Irish landscape is one of the primary reasons for visiting the country, it is essential that the quality, character and distinctiveness of this valuable resource is protected.

Equally Fáilte Ireland recognises the importance of developing the State's critical infrastructure sector. In this regard Fáilte Ireland acknowledges and supports the objective of the proposed project to provide a sustainable water supply from the River Shannon to address critical supply issues in the Greater Dublin Area and to provide the capacity to meet the supply needs of other Water Resource Zones in the region.

We further acknowledge the extensive nature of the documentation and detail provided with the application, which includes the provision of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

The scope of this submission is solely in relation to the consideration and assessment of likely effects on tourism and tourism assets and amenities.

## **2.0 Description of the Tourism Baseline**

The proposed Water Supply Project Eastern and Midlands Region is geographically located primarily in Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Region from a tourism perspective.

In 2024 Ireland's Hidden Heartlands welcomed 424,000 overseas visitors, 1.7 million domestic visitors and 93,000 visitors from Northern Ireland which combined generated €618 million in revenue.

The Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023 – 2027 is a roadmap for the tourism industry and all stakeholders involved in tourism in the region. The plan sets out a strategic approach to unlocking the commercial potential of Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. It aims to ensure the focus on tourism development is sustainable and regenerative and that the benefits accrue to local communities and to nature. The product development focus of the strategy is on sustainably building out the range and quality of visitor experiences, with a strong emphasis on eco-tourism. A key focus is on the implementation of the Shannon Tourism Masterplan, and the further development and promotion of a network of walking, cycling and water trails.

The Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon considers the strategic tourism development opportunities for the entire length of the Shannon Navigation and the Shannon Erne Waterway. The masterplan presents a strategic development framework to guide the future sustainable development of the Shannon as a compelling tourism destination within Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. The masterplan is designed to achieve better regional spread of tourism and visitor activity, that will allow coordinated development and maximise beneficial outcomes derived from both public and private investment. This will have the combined effect of harnessing the economic and social potential of the Shannon's natural and cultural assets in both a socially and environmentally sustainable way.

The Lower Shannon Discovery Zone promises to deliver an active and adventurous experience to the visitor, inviting the visitor to "be active, be enthralled!" The combination of the natural and cultural assets available led to proposals to develop Shannon-themed experiences linked primarily to the 'Power of Nature', with inspirers based on 'Journeys and Adventures' as well as 'mighty Shannon' to reflect the sheer energy of the Lower Shannon. These underpin the range of experiences proposed for Discovery Zone 3 in the Masterplan. A number of signature projects are proposed including but not limited to;

- A feasibility study for redevelopment of Visitor Centre and Visitor management at Ardnacrusha,
- The Limerick to Scarriff Greenway/Blueway,
- Develop enhanced Castletlough & Portroe Lookout; Active Amenity Zone & Slow Travel Interchange,
- Implementation of the Iniscealtra Visitor Management Plan,



- integrated Tourism Development Plan for Portumna

These tourism propositions are illustrated below;



(Source: Lower Shannon Discovery Zone Tourism Proposition - The Shannon Mighty River of Ireland, A Tourism Masterplan 2020-2030)

### **3.0 Review of the Assessment of Tourism in the EIAR submitted with the Application**

An EIAR has been submitted with the proposed development and tourism and impact on tourism, is addressed in Chapter 14 Population. The chapter is supported by Figures 14.1-14.63: Sensitive Receptors and Appendix A14.1: Population Baseline.

The Landscape and Visual assessment (Chapter 16) is also relevant to the assessment of impacts on tourism and is cross-referenced, with other chapters of the EIAR, in paragraph 8 of Chapter 14, and elsewhere in the chapter, particularly in relation to Community Amenity.

#### **3.1 Structure of the Chapter with respect to the Consideration of Tourism**

As noted, tourism is considered under Population, which as recognised in paragraph 7 of the chapter, includes the following sub-topics:

- Employment
- Economy
- Community Amenity
- Community Severance and Accessibility
- Tourism
- Land Use and Land-take

Section 14.2 sets out the methodology and legislation, guidelines and guidance used for the assessment of Population, which includes reference to:

- EIAR Guidelines for the Consideration of Tourism and Tourism Related Projects (Fáilte Ireland 2023)

Table 14.2 in Section 14.2.1 Scope of the Assessment, identifies the receptors according to the assessment sub-topic, noting that the 'Subject of Assessment' under tourism is '*Impacts on tourism attractions and tourism-specific businesses (including tourism accommodation)*'.

While not specifically noted in the chapter we believe the consideration of 'community amenity', which is defined in the chapter (paragraph 25) as '*the pleasantness and 'feel' of a community and the ability for people to enjoy the general character or quality of their surroundings*', to be relevant to the consideration of effects on tourism also. This is especially relevant where, as noted in paragraph 26, there may be a reduction in air quality, a reduction in visual amenity, an increase in volume of construction-related traffic and/or an increase in noise and vibration. Consideration of 'community accessibility and severance' is also equally relevant to consideration of effects on tourism.

The methodology for the scope of effects on tourism is set out at sub-section 14.2.1.5, noting that effects on tourism during the construction and operation phase of the proposed project were assessed by considering the following:

- Amenity effects arising from the combination of environmental impacts such as air quality, noise, visual, and traffic and transport
- Accessibility/severance effects resulting from a disruption of access to tourism facilities and accommodation
- Visitor perception effects and the potential for a reduction in visitor numbers to the region due to the perceived scale of construction associated with the Proposed Project

It is noted (paragraph 35) that B&B accommodation has not been considered in the assessment *'as it is considered that their typical or average occupancy would be similar to that of a typical residential dwelling and as such are considered alongside other residential receptors.'*

Table 14.3 in Section 14.2.2 Study Area identifies the study area for consideration of the topic of tourism noting that amenity and severance is an area within 500m from the application boundary and that visitor perception effects are National.

Section 14.2.3 Relevant Guidelines, Policy and Legislation again lists Fáilte Ireland's EIAR Guidelines, together with:

- Shannon Tourism Masterplan (Waterways Ireland, 2020)
- Lough Derg Visitor Experience Development Plan (Tipperary Local Community Development Committee 2020)
- Relevant County Development Plans

While paragraph 34 recognises the extensive scale of the proposed project and the importance of tourism to the national economy, it is regrettable that other relevant national, regional and local tourism strategies are not referenced or considered, including:

- The Tourism Policy Framework 2025 – 2030 - A New Era for Irish Tourism: National Tourism Policy Statement
- Ireland's Ancient East Regional Development Strategy 2023-2027
- Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Regional Development Strategy 2023-2027

Table 14.4 lists the key County Development Plan Policies relevant to the proposed project, however, again there is no consideration or listing of tourism related policies in these development plans.

Table 14.4 lists the key issues raised during scoping consultation, including 23 items raised by Fáilte Ireland, with cross reference to where these have been addressed in the EIAR. However, again there is no consideration or listing of tourism related policies in these development plans.

#### **4.0 Water Levels**

In relation to Lough Derg and Parteen Basin, it is considered that water based (participatory) activities and the impact of the proposed development upon them should be robustly assessed.

Water levels in relation to the navigability and water quality of Lough Derg are key to ensuring the amenity value of the lake is maintained for the wide variety of water-based activities which it supports including cruising and angling in particular, both of which are well established activities in the area. Lough Derg is a dedicated Blueway, The Blueway accreditation has been developed by Fáilte Ireland, Sport Ireland, Waterways Ireland, Sport Northern Ireland and Tourism Northern Ireland. An official accreditation will ensure all Blueway's will be developed to a consistent high standard from a technical and safety perspective and will deliver best in class sustainable visitor experiences. They encourage the use of lakes, canals, rivers and costal environments for walking, cycling, swimming, kayaking, stand up paddle boarding while engaging with nature and heritage. Fáilte Ireland research shows that 73% of domestic tourists engaged in outdoor activities, ranging from walking and hiking, to swimming, kayaking and canoeing, on their most recent overnight trip. The official accreditation of Blueway's responds to this growing public demand for quality outdoor infrastructure close to water and nature. It will ensure Blueway's will be a magnet for visitors and local residents seeking high-quality outdoor experiences.

#### **5.0 Conclusion**

Fáilte Ireland recognises the importance of this strategic national project to address existing water supply deficits and future water supply needs. From a tourism perspective, we therefore ask that the An Coimisiún Pleanála take our observations into consideration when deciding on this application including the likely impact of the proposed development on the tourism and amenity receptors within the area.

Yours sincerely,



Shane Dineen-Manager of Environment and Planning, Fáilte Ireland