

Appendix 1

WATERWAYS IRELAND'S STATUTORY REMIT, GOVERNANCE AND COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Statutory Remit

Waterways Ireland is a cross-border Body, the largest of six North/South Implementation Bodies created as part of the implementation of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement of 10th April 1998. The Agreement between the Government of Ireland and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was given domestic legal effect by means of the North/South Co-Operation (Implementation Bodies) (Northern Ireland) Order, 1999 and the British-Irish Agreement Act, 1999.

Waterways Ireland's statutory function is to manage, maintain, develop and restore specified inland waterways, principally for recreational purposes. In the discharge of its management and development function, Waterways Ireland also engages in promotion, including marketing and development of the tourism and commercial potential of the inland waterways. In July 2007, Waterways Ireland's remit was extended by the North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC) to include responsibility for reconstruction of the Ulster Canal from Upper Lough Erne to Clones, and following restoration, for its management, maintenance and development, principally for recreational purposes.

Waterways Ireland's navigational remit traverses 1,100 km through Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland - from Coleraine to Limerick, Dublin to Carrick-on-Shannon and Waterford to Belleek. As navigation authority, it is responsible for the following inland waterways:

- Lower Bann Navigation
- Erne System
- Shannon-Erne Waterway
- Shannon Navigation
- Royal Canal
- Grand Canal
- Barrow Navigation
- Ulster Canal

(see also Figure 1)

Governance Arrangements

As a cross-border Body, Waterways Ireland operates under the policy direction of the North South Ministerial Council and the two Governments, and is accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Houses of the Oireachtas.



Figure 1 Waterways Ireland Navigational Network

At an administrative level, Waterways Ireland reports to Government Sponsor Departments - the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) in Northern Ireland and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) in Ireland.

Operational performance targets are agreed with both Sponsor Departments and are reported in quarterly Monitoring Meetings.

Funding is provided by grants from money voted by the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Houses of the Oireachtas. 15% of resource funding is provided by the Northern Ireland Assembly, and 85% by the Irish Government; this reflects the current distribution of waterways in each jurisdiction. Capital infrastructure programmes are funded separately by the jurisdiction where the works are carried out.

Waterways Ireland has separately secured millions of euros from Irish Government administered competitive funding programmes to deliver large scale transformational capital projects. These projects are subject to additional governance and audit processes.

Waterways Ireland's headquarters is in Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh with regional offices located in Dublin, Carrick-on-Shannon, Dublin and Scarriff.

Why Sustainable Development matters

Waterways Ireland's legislated custodial remit holds an integral obligation to deliver Sustainable Development of the waterways network. The 10-Year Plan 'Reimagining Our Waterways' commits Waterways Ireland to plan, deliver and evidence Sustainability within all of its Development Functions and processes relating to the provision and upgrade of infrastructure, buildings and services along the waterways.

It is intended that Waterways Ireland's commitment to effectively achieving Sustainable Development of the inland waterways and associated property will be evidenced through the following:-

- (a) *Joined up integrated Sustainable Development Planning, Management and Decision-Making processes within Waterways Ireland in accordance with legislative obligations, national and international guiding principles including alignment with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, and best practice insights.*
- (b) *The enduring existence, functioning, and development of the waterways, associated structures, buildings, and preservation of the surrounding natural and built environment for future generations to behold and enjoy.*
- (c) *Creation of sustainable social, economic and environmental opportunities linked to a vast public asset and property portfolio, enabled through multi-functional use of waterway environments by communities, visitors and the commercial sector.*

Further information is available at www.waterwaysireland.org

Appendix 2

ASSET AND PROPERTY PORTFOLIO

Importance of the Barrow Corridor's natural, built and cultural assets

1. Asset and Property Portfolio across all 8 waterways

Waterways Irelands entire Asset and Property Portfolio extends across a vast range of infrastructure assets including the 18 Principal Asset Categories; *Breakwaters, Bridges, Culverts, Dry docks, Earthworks, Effluent Handling systems, Locks, Slipways, Weirs, Water Pumping Stations, Buildings, Specialist Angling Infrastructure, Moorings, Car parks, Navigation Channels, Supply Channels, Towpaths/Pathways & Trackways, Navigation Aids and associated adjoining lands*. The current valuation of the rebuild costs of this infrastructure is estimated in excess of €1 billion.

As custodian of the inland waterways, Waterways Ireland is committed to managing its assets sustainably, balancing environmental, social, heritage and economic requirements at a local, regional and national level. An Asset Management System is integral to achieving this objective and is implemented through a robust process framework that is enabling Waterways Ireland to make informed decisions on prioritised investment requirements across the whole asset lifecycle.

2. Waterways Ireland's navigational remit for the Barrow Line and Barrow River (Navigation)

Waterways Ireland has legislative responsibility for a 115 km navigational route. This comprises the 46 km Barrow Line extending from the summit level of the Grand Canal at Lowtown to Athy in Co. Kildare, and the 69 km Barrow Navigation from Athy Co. Kildare to St. Mullins in Co. Carlow.

This expansive 115 km canal and river channel passes through 33 locks, 65 bridges, and provides 15 locations for public mooring, and a number of Dry Docks some of which currently are not operational. The operational Dry Dock at Athy can be hired by members of the public for maintenance, repairs or inspection to private boats.

2.1 Environmental significance of the Barrow Navigation

Development of a transformational Masterplan for the Barrow Corridor must fully reflect the environmental significance of the project area.

A section of the Barrow Navigation from Athy to St. Mullins is within the River Barrow and River Nore Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a site of European Importance designated under the Birds and Habitats Regulations, 2011 (as amended). This means that the potential for any significant effects on the conservation interests of this designation must be evaluated in accordance with the requirements of an Article 6(3) Appropriate Assessment. Waterways Ireland must obtain consent from the relevant competent authority for any plan, project or development that has the

potential to give rise to likely significant effect on the conservation objectives of any European Site (SAC/SPA). Furthermore, many of the structures along the navigation (e.g. bridges, locks, and buildings) are on the Record of Protected Structures and/or National Monuments. Similarly, Waterways Ireland must obtain necessary consent from the relevant planning authority for works that may be undertaken to a Protected Structure.

In summary, the SAC designation, other national environmental designations and protected structures within the Project Area will influence the creation of a Masterplan that can deliver sustainable development proposals.

Due to recent changes in environmental case law, certain aspects of routine maintenance works now require consent from the relevant planning authority. Consequently, Waterways Ireland has submitted planning applications to Carlow, Kildare and Laois County Councils for a five-year schedule of routine and essential maintenance works along the Barrow Navigation portion of the river and its adjacent towpath.

3. Compelling the visitors – The Barrow Corridor in Focus

The Barrow is an important heritage corridor comprising a rich tapestry of natural, built and cultural assets of regional, national and international importance.

The Barrow Line and Barrow Navigation are of strategic national significance as a gateway into and out of Dublin and to the Shannon Navigation via the Grand Canal. They also connect adjoining Greenway and Blueway routes developed, under development, and planned.

The Barrow Line and Barrow Navigation are of significant regional importance since they connect the counties of Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois and Carlow and the following towns and villages: *Lowtown, Rathangan, Monasterevin, Vicarstown, Athy, Carlow, Leighlinbridge, Bagenalstown, Goresbridge, Graiguenamanagh and St. Mullins*. These waterways can be considered the south east's greatest natural asset and single catalyst capable of socially, economically and environmentally regenerating the 11 towns, villages and communities through which it passes.

The Barrow Line traverses through waterlogged bogs and grassy farmland in Kildare and Laois before joining the Barrow's peaty tide. The Barrow Navigation is part of Ireland's second longest river, meandering through woodland valleys, ancient hinterlands and charming villages. It is a renowned coarse and game angling destination and overall, considered by many visitors, writers and broadcasters, such as Dick Warner, as the most beautiful inland waterway in Ireland.

One of the best ways to experience the beguiling wonder of the Barrow Line and Barrow Navigation is by boat, with the water channel relatively undiscovered with plenty of places to moor along the way. The narrow width of the Barrow's water channel, by contrast to the Shannon Navigation, means that it is most suited to slow powered craft such as barges, rowing, and kayaking, although white water activity is becoming increasingly popular in many of the curved weirs such as at Clashganny in Co. Carlow.

Alternatively, visitors can follow the Barrow Way, a long-distance walking and hiking trail along the Barrow Navigation's original towpath, weaving past pretty lock keeper's cottages, flowing waters and gushing weirs, all amidst a landscape of lush, rolling greenery. The Barrow Way is designated as a National Waymarked Trail by the National Trails Office of the Irish Sports Council and is managed by Waterways Ireland.

A 46 km Barrow Blueway extending along the Barrow Line from Lowtown to Athy in Co. Kildare is due to be completed in June 2026 (funded by the Rural Regeneration & Development Fund, Kildare County Council, Laois County Council and Waterways Ireland). The Blueway is being developed using the existing canal towpath owned by Waterways Ireland. For understanding:-

A Blueway is a network of approved and branded multi-activity recreational trails and sites, based on and closely linked with the water, together with community and commercial providers facilitating access to activities and experiences. Blueways are designed for a range of users from those who have little to no skills or prior experience in undertaking land and water adventure activities, to experienced users. This is a product for local communities and/or visitors to experience, with a unique capacity to transform both people and places along its route.

The value of the Blueway proposition lies not only in the multiplicity of recreational opportunities that can be offered both to rural and town communities and visitors, it results in the development of visitor destinations, stimulates business activity/spend and in doing so, successfully regenerates entire regions, reverses population decline and creates healthier, happier and more connected communities and towns. Blueways also provide a unique way in which to engage people to discover nature and hidden heritage whilst increasing recreational use of our waterway environments in a sustainable manner.

4. Uncovered History - the Barrow Corridor in Focus

The Barrow corridor holds a history of milling, distilling and waterway transport using horse drawn barges carrying both passengers and produce such as barley, flour, sugar beet, Guinness, whiskey, butter and meat. Athy, Graiguenamanagh and Carlow were important river ports, with Dry Dock boat repair facilities located at Carlow, Rathellen near Bagenalstown and Graiguenamanagh.

- (a) Over 4000 men were employed in the development of the Barrow by 1791, and this further stimulated new business opportunities. Barley produce was transported along the Barrow Navigation and Barrow Line into Dublin as the raw material for the famous Guinness Stout, with the return journey carrying finished product for sale throughout the country and exported abroad through Waterford port.

- (b) Monasterevin was once the centre for several thriving industries including Cassidy's Whiskey distillery from 1784-1934, their whisky and Patrick Cross Pale Ale became world-famous. The Barrow Line and River Barrow allowed the distilling industry to flourish in terms of both access to water and a transport route.
- (c) Evidence of horse drawn carriages plying along the towpath can be seen at Ballymanus Bridge, south of Vicarstown where the bridge is heavily scored with rope marks made by the horse drawn boats as they turned the corner of the bridge.
- (d) Millford Flour Mills operating from Ballygowan near Carlow from 1790 to 1862 was reported to have the largest and most powerful mill wheels in Great Britain and Ireland.
- (e) Sugar beet from up to 10,400 growers was transported along the navigation to Carlow, supplying Ireland's first sugar factory which operated for over 80 years from 1926.
- (f) In terms of built heritage that would capture the interest of visitors, Ballyteague Castle is a typical example of an Irish fortified house in the 14th to 16th Century. It is thought to have been a "Geraldine" Castle i.e. of the Fitzgerald dynasty. Thomas Fitzgerald 10th Earl of Kildare is said to have taken refuge there after the battle of Allen in 1535.

Athy was the location for many battles from the 11th Century. The Town Bridge, known locally as 'Horse Bridge' was built in 1796 and sits beside White's Castle built in 1506 by the eighth Earl of Kildare. The bridge was built across the River Barrow to enable horses move from the Grand Canal towpath to the River Barrow bank and vice versa. A short distance upstream is Woodstock Castle, built in the 13th Century.

- (g) There is also much evidence of Christian and Norman heritage throughout the Barrow corridor. Early Christian and later medieval church establishments can be evidenced all along the river, notably at or near St. Mullins, Old Leighlin, Carlow, Sleaty, Nurney and Monasterevin.

At St. Mullins, 7th century ruins of a monastic establishment on the eastern bank of the River Barrow are associated with the life of the great ecclesiastic St. Moling. Within the graveyard area which encircles the monastic site the traces of four ruined churches can be found, and a small cell believed to be the identical Teach Moling in which he lived. Each year on the Sunday before 25th July, thousands gather from many parts of Ireland and abroad to take part in the historic pilgrimage which now consists of Mass at the penal altar, and to drink water from the holy well and visit the graves. A large mound existing near the entrance to the cemetery is reported to be the remains of a Norman motte following their invasion through Wexford in 1169.

- (h) Until the advent of the railways in 1834, boat owners appeared to have enjoyed a period of unexampled prosperity with river trade very lucrative. They were described as 'Well to Do' and wealthy, many having a number of trade boats. The Sneezer boat offered day excursions from Bagenalstown and Leighlinbridge to Shrulle Castle, Co. Laois, with musicians, quadrilles dancing and fine food in abundance.
- (i) The demise of canal transport, subsequent loss of industries along the canal, and introduction of motorway infrastructure changed the fortunes of villages and towns along the Barrow corridor, with resultant low levels of economic activity, and disconnected from substantive commercial opportunities.

5. Current status of commercial and recreational activity along the Barrow Corridor

Today commercial waterway transport has entirely disappeared. In its wake, the Barrow corridor has economically stagnated, leaving many disused canal and industrial properties that remain atmospheric of a bygone era. These properties represent potential redevelopment opportunities.

Whilst recreational boating on the Barrow has historically been lower than on the Shannon Navigation, a reduction in Barrow lock traffic since 2013 evidence a hire boat sector in significant decline. Against this trend, however, there has been notable diversification and growth in other forms of waterway use and related tourism. Commercial offerings such as barge hire, guided boat tours, hydro bike experiences, and floating saunas have emerged, attracting both domestic and international visitors seeking unique leisure activities. Alongside these developments, there is increased use of the waterway by small boats (kayaks, canoes, and curraghs), greater engagement with the towpath by walkers and cyclists, and a growing interest in heritage and biodiversity, both by locals and visitors. These trends highlight a shift from traditional hire boating toward more varied, experience-driven recreation and wellness activities on and around the Barrow.

Research undertaken by Waterways Ireland in 2025 evidence low visitor demand for the Barrow Line and Barrow Navigation when contrasted with the other navigations (see report findings detailed within Appendix 4).

6. Property owned by Waterways Ireland with development potential

Waterways Ireland's property assets along the Barrow Line and Barrow Navigation with development potential are primarily of linear scale, these extending along the adjoining towpath under Waterways Ireland's ownership.

Additional property offering potential for development include lands, car parks, lock houses, and service blocks providing shower and toilet facilities.

Subject to any decision by Waterways Ireland to develop waterside property is the need to secure necessary planning and regulatory consents, and the expiry of any existing licence agreements relating to lands currently in agricultural use.

6.1 Property with development potential owned by other public bodies

Property under the ownership of the local authorities and / or other public bodies within the Project Area may additionally be identified as offering development potential of relevance to the Barrow Corridor Tourism Masterplan. These considerations will be explored through the consultative process undertaken by the appointed consultants with the agreement of the Project Lead and the Project Steering Group.

7. Regulation of boating on the Barrow

Navigational rules, known as bye-laws, outline the proper usage of the inland waterways for boating. Waterways Ireland, through its Inspectorate, has responsibility for enforcing those navigational bye-laws.

Bye-laws and associated legislation relating to the Barrow Line and Barrow Navigation include:

No. 3/1986 – Canals Act, 1986 as amended

S.I. No. 247 of 1988 – Canals Act, 1986 (Bye-Laws), 1988

No. 11/2005 – Maritime Safety Act

7.1 Mooring on the Barrow Line and Barrow Navigation is subject to regulations

The Combined Mooring and Passage (CMP) permit allows mooring for up to five days. The Non-Residential Extended Mooring Permit (NR-EMP) allows mooring in a designated spot for up to one year. NR-EMP is for non-residential purposes only and cannot serve as a primary residence. Overnight stays are limited to 90 days annually.

See Waterways Ireland's website for cost information [Apply for Your Canal Permit Online](#)

8. Navigational responsibility for the River Barrow south of St. Mullins, Co. Carlow

Legislative responsibility for the River Barrow south of St. Mullins to the sea lies with the Port of Waterford. This section of the river is tidal.

Appendix 3

WATERWAYS IRELAND INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PROGRAMMES (2000 – 2025)

Since Waterways Ireland's establishment, significant unprecedented capital investment enabled the upgrade and replacement of all navigational mooring infrastructure throughout Northern Ireland and Ireland, this necessitated by the previous decades of underinvestment. Remedial works to engineering structures underpinning and linked to the waterways, including bridges, were carried out in line with budget availability on a yearly basis. Large scale harbour developments were completed to enhance the appeal of existing waterway destinations and create new destinations; ancillary related developments included the upgrade of existing service blocks and new build. The Royal Canal Restoration Programme was fully completed, this including the replacement of 9 road bridges. Phases 1 and 2 of the Ulster Canal Restoration Programme was completed (the latter in June 2024), with Phase 3 currently at pre-development stage. Assessment of 50 sites for Motorhome Destination development and EV Charging infrastructure have been completed, and preparation of Masterplans to inform the repurposing and transformation of compelling property assets, for example, Tullamore Harbour.

The restoration of Bell Harbour in Monasterevin in 2023 is an example of large-scale maintenance works completed by Waterways Ireland. Bell Harbour now offers first class mooring facilities for both hire boats and private boating on the Barrow Line. Restoration of the quay walls in Vicarstown in 2025-2026 is also exemplary of Waterways Ireland work and commitment to maintaining the waterways and associated built heritage.

Capital Investment Rationales

The rationales behind Waterways Ireland's capital infrastructural programmes since 2000 can be contextualised as follows:

- (1) The need to invest substantive capital budget in sustaining the future existence of the navigational infrastructure – the locks, lock gates, weirs, bridges, towpaths, aqueducts, sluices, and the navigation channels through dredging and embankment strengthening works. These investments are critically necessary to ensure the navigations remain safe, operational, and that the thousands of built structures integral to the navigations, and greater fragility in the 200 year old canal network, are preserved as working heritage for future generations to behold and appreciate.
- (2) The need to provide high quality customer facilities that will attract increased users to the navigations, whilst ensuring sustainable development decisions and construction processes, and giving consideration to optimum usage levels at individual sites. Facilities must meet customer needs and expectations, although the size of each site and its experience offerings/potential will result in some degree of facility

variation between sites. Facilities must evolve with emerging customer needs and include moorings/jetties; fishing stands; slipways; canoe steps for small craft; amenity areas; power access; lighting; water; EV Charging; service blocks with shower and laundry facilities; Motorhome services, and Pump-out facilities that enable boaters discharge effluent and thus comply with navigation Bye-laws.

- (3) The need for Waterways Ireland to have the operational resources in place that enable delivery of high quality services to users throughout the navigational network. Such resources include plant, machinery, operational depots, lock houses and warden/waterway patroller offices that provide a base for staff to work from, store materials and plant, repair such plant, and also manufacture lock gates.
- (4) Each of the eight navigable waterways is different in terms of their infrastructural needs, and their geographic reach and expanse is linked to their suitability for different types of water recreational activities, and development potential. For example, the Shannon-erne Waterway restored in 1994 with mechanised locks requires significantly less investment than the 200 year old Grand Canal and Barrow Navigation, the latter having aging navigational structures that have and will continue to require increasing capital investment. The expansive broad loughs on the Shannon Navigation and Erne system are particularly suited to cruising, sailing and power boating, while the narrow channels of the canals are more suited to rowing, kayaking, and slow powered craft such as barges. Whilst restoration of the Ulster Canal has advanced significantly, the two completed sections are not infrastructurally connected. Completion of the 10 km section linking Clonfad to Castle Saunderson, providing connectivity to the entire inland waterways network on the island, is critical to optimising the value of the Ulster Canal Restoration Programme. Completion of the 10 km connecting section is the focus of Waterways Ireland's Phase 3 works programme, and this is currently being progressed through pre-development stages.
- (5) In 2014, Waterways Ireland began the transition from being solely a navigational authority for boating to stimulating the multi-functional use of waterway environments by communities and visitors through development of Blueway and Greenway routes using the canal towpaths. The transition in strategic focus unlocked the opportunity to attract increased and more diverse users to the waterways environment and in doing so, public demand and value of the waterways network has heightened.
- (6) The towpaths which extend along the vast reaches of the Royal Canal, Grand Canal, and Barrow Navigation provide land based development opportunities in terms of walking and cycling routes, as well as linear access for electricity distribution, telecom connectivity, solar power generation, and solar lighting of the towpath routes to provide enhanced safety yet minimise negative impacts of artificial lighting on nocturnal animals. A 130 km Royal Canal Greenway was completed in 2021 (Ireland's longest Greenway and voted best Greenway in Europe in November 2023), a 46 km Barrow Blueway route from Lowtown to Athy is due to be completed in Q2 of 2026, and a 131 km Grand Canal Greenway is currently under phased development.

- (7) Development of new and enhanced visitor destinations linked to unique navigational infrastructure. For example, the restored Meelick Weir and 300m walkway on the River Shannon which opened in 2021. This capital investment has a dual purpose, not only is it a critical piece of infrastructure in maintaining the navigation level between Lough Ree and Lough Derg, the 300m walkway serves to unite the communities of Meelick and Lusmagh and offers an extraordinary recreational experience.
- (8) Waterways Ireland are the owners of in excess of 70 lock houses, historically occupied by lock keepers who were required to live in close proximity to their place of work. The changing use of the waterways from industrial to recreational use has meant that many of these properties are no longer occupied and represent future development opportunities. The properties are in various states of repair and work has commenced to restore a number of them and provide alternative uses.
- (9) Waterways Ireland as a public funded body can discharge its statutory remit for the waterways in a way that facilitates the governments in Northern Ireland and Ireland deliver wide ranging policy initiatives including Active Travel; Climate Action; Rural & Urban Regeneration; Economic and Social development; Recreation and Tourism Development; Community and Rural Development.

The above considerations combined with the varying reaches of the individual waterways through cities, towns and rural areas; and availability of government budgets and competitive funding opportunities, has resulted in wide ranging capital infrastructural investment priorities, and delivery of development opportunities linked to Waterways Ireland's diverse Asset and Property Portfolio – the navigations; towpaths, lands and buildings.

Appendix 4

INDICATORS OF VISITOR DEMAND FOR THE BARROW LINE AND BARROW NAVIGATION

Available indicators evidence low visitor demand for the Barrow Line and Barrow Navigation when contrasted with the other navigations.

1.0 Waterways Ireland research findings from Brand Usage and Attitude Research Debrief, October 2025 (Draft Report)

Based on an online survey of 1,752 respondents between 31st August and 9th October 2025; 80% were from ROI and 20% from NI.

(a) With the exception of the Ulster Canal, the Barrow was the least visited waterway in ROI within the last 12 months (Slide 20).

(b) Overall, the Grand Canal & Grand Canal Dock was the most visited waterway on the island, while the Shannon was second, and Royal Canal third. Interestingly, the Barrow was marginally more commonly visited than the Erne (Slide 20).

(c) The greatest number of visitors to the Barrow in the last 3 months were from Co. Kildare at 79% and secondly Carlow at 36% (Slide 25).

(d) The Barrow was considered by ROI respondents as the waterway they are least likely to visit in the future with 16% intent. By contrast, the Shannon was most commonly selected at 43% among ROI respondents, and also among the total NI and ROI respondents at 39% (Slide 39).

(e) Among those considering visiting a waterway in the future, 86% of potential visitors to the Barrow would not have visited in the last 12 months or recent years (Slide 40).

(f) Accessibility improvement suggestions for the Barrow were most commonly Physical Access, Facilities for Disabilities, Accessible Transportation, and Information Accessibility (Slide 46).

(g) The least common location for Angling and Fishing was the Barrow at 43%. The most common locations for Angling and Fishing were the Sea/Coastal areas (63%) and the Shannon (63%), followed by the Grand Canal / Grand Canal Dock (56%); (Slide 48).

2.0 Lock Passage Barometer

Monasterevin is chosen as a barometer of demand since it is the boat hire base on the Barrow Line. Hired boats navigate from Monasterevin north along the Barrow Line towards the Grand Canal and south towards the Barrow Navigation.

(a) Yearly Lock passage data recorded by Waterways Ireland evidence vessel numbers (locals and visitors) at Monasterevin mainly less than the 2019 pre-covid figures. Years 2023 and 2025 were the exceptions. A 20% increase in 2025 vs. 2019 can be attributed to an extended

boating season due to more favourable weather. Met Éireann reported 2025 as the warmest Spring and Summer seasons on record for Ireland.

(b) Total Yearly Lock Passages at Monasterevin in 2023 = 519 and in 2024 = 462.

(c) In 2024, total yearly Lock Passages on the Barrow Line and Barrow Navigation were marginally less the 2019 pre-covid figure of 473 i.e. a reduction of 11 vessels.

(d) There is no data available to determine usage of the Barrow Line and Barrow Navigation by small craft e.g. Kayaks, Canoes, Stand-Up Paddle Boards. However, small craft usage is anecdotally considered to be higher than hired craft usage of the Barrow corridor.

Appendix 5a

RELEVANT POLICY AND DATA INSIGHTS

The Barrow Corridor Tourism Masterplan should reflect consideration and appropriate alignment with relevant data insights, reports, government policy, good practice and potential development opportunities. The appointed consultant therefore must take account of but not be limited to the following policies and data insights.

1. Government of Ireland

- The National Planning Framework (Project Ireland 2040)
- Programme for Government 2025 – Securing Ireland’s Future
- Sectoral Capital / Investment Plans 2026-2030 – separate Plans for the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment; Department for Transport; the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment; and Department of Rural and Community Development.
- A New Era for Irish Tourism, National Tourism Policy Statement, 2025
- Tourism Policy Framework, 2025-2030
- Embracing Ireland’s Outdoors – National Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2023-2027
- Understanding Life in Ireland 2025: The Well-Being Framework 2025
- Ireland’s National Climate Action Plan (CAP23)
- Tourism Sectoral Climate Adaptation Plan, 2025-2030
- Heritage Ireland 2030 – Ireland’s new Heritage Plan
- Natural, built and cultural heritage designations and policies

2. Regional Assemblies

- Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly – relevant to County Kildare and County Laois.
- Southern Regional Assembly – relevant to County Carlow, County Kilkenny and County Wexford.

3. Local Authorities – Carlow, Laois, Kildare, Kilkenny and Wexford

- County Development Plans
- Local Area Plans for key settlements along the waterways
- Tourism Strategies
- Outdoor Recreation Strategies

4. Waterways Ireland

- Reimagining Our Waterways – 10 Year Plan (2023-2032)
- Valuation of Ireland’s Waterways, 2024 (Indecon International Consultants)
- Visitor Monitoring data
- Lock Passage numbers
- Vessel Registration data
- User Insights and Attitudes Survey findings, 2025
- Waterways Ireland Revenue Generation Strategy, 2024 (EY)
- Glamping, Motorhome, and EV Charging Infrastructure Feasibility Study 2024 (KPMG Future Analytics)
- Waterways Ireland Climate Action Plan

- Waterways Ireland Heritage & Biodiversity Plan

5. Fáilte Ireland

- Consumer sentiment reports
- Sustainable Tourism in Ireland – Understanding the opportunity
- Fáilte Ireland's new corporate strategy 2026 – 2029 (due Q2 2026)
- Ireland's Ancient East Path to Growth
- Ireland's Ancient East Regional Development Strategy
- Relevant regional Destination Experience Development Plans to deliver world class visitor experiences, to facilitate communities to play an enhanced role in developing tourism in their locality, and support a sustainable tourism sector:
NOTE: Separate Destination Experience Development Plans for Carlow, Laois, Kilkenny, Wexford, and the Thoroughbred Country.
Web link: [Fáilte Ireland - Experience Development | Ireland's Ancient East | Fáilte Ireland](#)
- Feasibility study on the future development and greening of the cruise hire sector, 2024 (Fáilte Ireland, KPMG)

6. Other reports

- Barrow Blueway Placemaking Plan, 2023 (Meinhardt)
Commissioned by County Kildare LEADER Partnership, Waterways Ireland and Kildare County Council.
- Barrow Blueway Economic Plan, 2021 (Louise Brown Associates)
Commissioned by County Kildare LEADER Partnership, Kildare County Council and Waterways Ireland.
- Tourism – Ireland's largest indigenous industry, April 2025 (Irish Tourism Industry Confederation)
- European Strategy for Sustainable Tourism, 2026

7. Existing Visitor Services, Amenity infrastructure and Tourism Attractions along the Barrow Corridor.

8. Existing and planned transportation and travel infrastructure within the Project Area.

Appendix 5b

SPATIAL MAPPING REQUIREMENT - RFT SECTION 3.1.7

Spatial Maps should be provided identifying the proposed projects. The maps should be underpinned by Spatial Analysis that harnesses insights and understanding from the most relevant data sets and reports. The Spatial Analysis should reflect but not be limited to the following:-

1. The Project Area as identified in RFT Section 2.1.5 inclusive of (a), (b), (c) and (d).
2. All Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage designations.
3. Boundary and corridor property assets (*water, land and built*) owned by Waterways Ireland, Local Authorities and other public entities. For example, Slieve Bloom Mountains on the Barrow Navigation.
4. Local Authority jurisdictional administrative boundaries and zoning.