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## Section A – Immediate Priorities

### 1.1 Key Activities and Deliverables 2020

The following table sets out a summary of the areas for immediate action, key deliverables and work streams where a Ministerial decision may be required within the next three to six months. More detail on each of the items and actions is provided in the comprehensive Ministerial briefing document. Additionally, there may be some revision of this list in the coming weeks of the listed items and actions to ensure alignment with the new Programme for Government.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heritage Policy Area</th>
<th>Area for action/Ministerial Decision</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| National Monuments            | Support the reopening of National Monuments in State care, in partnership with the heritage sector and OPW.  
                                   Finalise Memorandum of Understanding with Historic Environment Scotland to address Climate Change impacts on heritage.  
                                   Introduce new National Monuments Bill into Oireachtas pre-legislative scrutiny and progress through Oireachtas legislative stages  
                                   Launch of Heritage Ireland 2030- the new national heritage plan- and commencement of delivery including establishment of cabinet sub-committee and other delivery infrastructure | 3 months  
                                   3 months  
                                   6 months  
                                   6 months  |
| Built Heritage                | Issue Ministerial Recommendation to Dublin City Council arising from the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage Survey of Dublin Stage 4  
                                   Progress the development of the National Policy on Architecture  
                                   Progress the development of Energy Efficiency Guidelines including tendering for contract to research and public | 3 months  
                                   3 months  
                                   3 months  |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultation on draft guidelines</td>
<td>Consultation on draft guidelines.</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop guidance for the identification and reuse of early traditional buildings to support the revitalisation of historic towns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Council</td>
<td>Appoint new board to the Heritage Council.</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deliver National Heritage Week, 15-23 August with increased media focus</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterways Ireland</td>
<td>Recruit new Chief Executive Officer</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secure agreement and approval of North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) regarding surplus WI property.</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meelick Weir – progress €3.2 million investment in the restoration of the weir and its walkway, critical to the management of the navigation and water levels.</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Parks and Nature Reserves</td>
<td>Complete capital projects at waste water treatment facilities at Glenveagh National Park and car park facilities at Tomies Wood (Lough Leane looped Walk) and Muckross in Killarney National park</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete the 32 RRDF projects (including the introduction of electric buses in Glenveagh, visitor counters nationally, new signage &amp; branding for the network of sites).</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete the masterplan for future development of Glenveagh National Park</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife Licencing</td>
<td>Process 6,000 deer hunting applications for the beginning of the hunting season on 1 September 2020</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decision on the application by the Irish Coursing Club for licences, on behalf of their affiliated clubs, to capture and tag hares for 2020/21 hare coursing season – decision required by Minister by early August.</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transpose EIA Directive 2014/52/EU in Wildlife Acts and EC (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biodiversity</td>
<td>Complete the Prioritised Action Framework for Natura 2000, a document intended to clarify and prioritise the necessary conservation measures in all SAC and SPA sites for the period 2021-2027; submit to Government for</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Timeline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approval and forward to EU Commission</td>
<td>3 months</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruit staff for the LIFE Integrated Project on blanket bogs (€20 million) and LIFE corncrake project in Donegal, Mayo and Galway (€5 million)</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete EU Invasive Species Regulations</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft Ireland’s positions on EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designate additional marine areas for protection of deep sea reef habitat and liaise with relevant Government Departments on marine related matters including offshore seabird sites and wind energy.</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress actions on the designation, protection and restoration of Special Areas of Conservation, as well as Special Protection Areas, to address EU infringement cases.</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete roll out of enlarged NPWS Farm Plan Scheme (40-50 new farmers)</td>
<td>6 months</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Peatlands**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Progress Wildlife (Amendment) Bill 2016 through the Houses of the Oireachtas with a view to enactment.</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restoration measures to be undertaken on approximately 1,800 hectares on up to 9 raised bog designated sites across 7 counties.</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue with the programme of the formal designation of sites as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) by Statutory Instrument (163 sites remaining to be formally designated by Statutory Instrument) and with the completion of the formal designation of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) by Statutory Instrument (4 sites remaining to be formally designated by Statutory Instrument).</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve projects for funding under the Peatlands Community Engagement Scheme 2021.</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete the mid-term review of the National Peatlands Strategy.</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment and Bord na Móna with the development of an enhanced restoration scheme for Bord na Móna owned bogs as part of the Just Transition programme.</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.2 Programme for Government Commitments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Programme for Government - &quot;Our Shared Future&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heritage Division</strong></td>
<td>The following broad range of commitments are outlined in the PfG which would fall within the remit of, or relate to the work of, NPWS Strategy and Regional Operations:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Review the remit, status and funding of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) to ensure that it is playing an effective role in delivering its overall mandate and enforcement role in the protection of wildlife.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Biodiversity</strong></td>
<td>- Progress the establishment of a Citizens’ Assembly on Biodiversity.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Promote biodiversity initiatives across primary, post primary and third-level sectors, and ensure that schools, colleges and universities across the country play an active role in providing areas to promote biodiversity.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Ensure that every local authority has a sufficient number of biodiversity and heritage officers among their staff complement.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Support biodiversity data collection.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Publish a new National Pollinator Plan and encourage public bodies to promote and protect biodiversity.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Introduce policies on supports for urban biodiversity and tree planting.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Continue implementation of the third National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021 and build on the commitments made at the first National Biodiversity Conference.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Support local nature groups and local authorities to work in partnership on local biodiversity projects.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Continue to raise awareness of biodiversity through initiatives like the Annual Biodiversity Awards Scheme.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Coordinate the actions in the Programme for Government regarding peatlands to maximise the benefits for biodiversity.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Appoint Education Liaison Officers in each of our National Parks to work with schools across the country, to promote the importance of biodiversity and the natural world, and to involve pupils in the work that goes on in our National Parks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NPWS Strategy & Regional Operations
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Protection of Natural Heritage</strong></th>
<th><strong>Heritage Strategy</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review the protection (including enforcement of relevant legislation) of our natural heritage, including hedgerows, native woodland and wetlands.</td>
<td>Publish and implement the new all-of-government heritage policy and begin its nationwide implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a new National Invasive Species Management Plan.</td>
<td>Explore multi-annual funding models and ensure adequate funding is made available for the implementation of each County Heritage Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parks</strong></td>
<td><strong>Continue to support the role of the Heritage Officers in the areas of heritage education, health and wellbeing and citizen science.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue to develop and implement a master plan of our National Parks and National Reserves.</td>
<td><strong>Encourage each local authority to appoint a Conservation and Repurposing Officer.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritise the upkeep and expansion of parks, green spaces and other recreational infrastructure for community enjoyment and biodiversity enhancement.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will examine the establishment of an offshore maritime area as Ireland’s seventh national park. This would form part of the expanded MPA’s and allow for a learning experience in the maritime environment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work with the activity tourism sector to identify the interventions the State can make to support their expansion, including exploring the feasibility of a group insurance scheme.</td>
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<tr>
<td>We will expand the Environment Fund, taking account of the consultation process which has been completed, through the introduction of new levies, and ring fence this money for investment in biodiversity and climate initiatives, including a parks fund to support the development of new parks and wildlife areas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td><strong>Built Heritage Policy Incl. Heritage Council</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage and support local authorities to reduce the use of pesticides in public areas.</td>
<td><strong>The PfG outlines the following actions in relation to Built Heritage Policy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building on the success of the UNESCO Dublin Bay Biosphere, achieve further UNESCO designations for Irish sites, including the Lough Allen region.</td>
<td><strong>Heritage Strategy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a new National Outdoor Recreation Strategy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Invest and promote blueways and recreational trails for the benefit of the local community and tourists alike.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expand the Walks Scheme to achieve a target of 80 trails.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Built Heritage Policy Incl. Heritage Council</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>The PfG outlines the following actions in relation to Built Heritage Policy</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Heritage Strategy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Publish and implement the new all-of-government heritage policy and begin its nationwide implementation.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Explore multi-annual funding models and ensure adequate funding is made available for the implementation of each County Heritage Plan.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Continue to support the role of the Heritage Officers in the areas of heritage education, health and wellbeing and citizen science.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encourage each local authority to appoint a Conservation and Repurposing Officer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Build on community led schemes such as the Built Heritage Investment Scheme and the Structures at Risk Fund, which provide grant aid to protect and maintain important historic buildings in our local communities.

Encourage traditional building skills in devising an apprenticeship programme with the sustainable construction sector focusing on heritage disciplines and crafts.

Expand the Heritage in School Scheme so that more students can enjoy our rich natural cultural heritage.

Continue with the expansion of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage and include modern and industrial buildings.

**Town Centre First**
The PfG commits to the development of a Town Centre First policy, modelled on the scheme developed by the Scottish Government, and informed by the Town Centre First pilot project. An incoming government would implement a strategic approach to town centre regeneration by utilising existing buildings and unused lands for new development and promote residential occupancy in our rural towns and villages. The following related actions are outlined in the PfG:

- Prioritise a Town Centres First collaborative and strategic approach to the regeneration of our villages and towns, using the Collaborative Town Centres Health Check (CTCHC) framework to gather data and lead actions.
- Expanded town and village renewal scheme for vacant and derelict buildings incl. promote residential occupancy.
- Seed capital to LAs to provide serviced sites in towns and villages.
- Examine ways to ensure unused or underused building stock in cities and other urban centres can be made available for upgraded and sustainable housing and further develop ‘Live Above the Shop’ measures.
- Introduce a new scheme to expand and build on the Living Cities Initiative to encourage infill development.

**Retrofitting/Climate**

- We will commence an ambitious retrofitting programme to make our buildings warmer and more energy efficient, reduce our emissions and deliver a crucial economic stimulus.
- We will publish our National Retrofitting Plan as part of the National Economic Plan.
- Delivery of a National Aggregated Model of Retrofitting reaching over 500,000 homes by 2030 as part of the EU Renovation Wave
- Expand the role of Vacant Homes Officers in local authorities and
support local authorities to bring vacant stock into productive use.

- Ensure that development of sustainable communities is the core objective of the LDA delivering sustainable, climate resilient, low-carbon housing.
- Build the capacity of local authorities to lead locally and engage citizens on climate change and biodiversity.

The PfG contains the following actions which relate to the work of the National Monuments Service or to policy areas where the NMS may play some role:

**Tourism**

1. Further develop the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands and Ireland’s Ancient East to bring further sustainable benefits to rural communities.
2. Promote Seafest a significant marine and tourism event in the national calendar.
3. Develop and support the agri-tourism sector.

**Community Development**

The PfG indicates a continuation of the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund and Urban Regeneration and Development Fund process under Project Ireland 2040. Additionally, the PfG sets out broad commitments to

- prioritise the upkeep and expansion of parks, green spaces and other recreational infrastructure for community enjoyment and biodiversity enhancement, and;
- support, through a consultative process, community groups, arts and cultural bodies, sports clubs, voluntary organisations and charities to recover and enhance their impact in the aftermath of COVID-19.

**Sustainable Farming**

Continue to support farmers to embrace farming practices that are beneficial environmentally, have a lower carbon footprint and better utilise and protect natural resources.

The PfG sets out the belief that farmers must be rewarded for adapting to more sustainable methods of farming, and sets out the intention to design a flagship environmental scheme under the new CAP which is user friendly for farmers, delivering broader environmental and biodiversity benefits and aligning financial support with climate, forestry and land use objectives. This would be complemented by an ambitious ECO-scheme under Pillar 1 of the CAP rewarding farmers who deliver enhanced environmental performance.
The PfG indicates that the conclusion of the current CAP at the end of 2020 provides a significant opportunity to reorient agri-environment and land use policy to deliver more in the short term on the key priorities of climate, biodiversity, designated land, water quality and carbon reduction and removal. An incoming government would pilot this agri-environment scheme during the transition period, supported by additional exchequer funding. The scheme would seek to include farmers not currently in GLAS who previously participated in AEOS, and those exiting GLAS. This pilot would inform the shape of the flagship agri-environment scheme for the next CAP.

**Forestry**
In relation to Forestry the PfG sets out the following commitments:

- Implement the MacKinnon Report and review the forestry appeals process to ensure it is aligned with other comparable appeals processes and ensure the licensing system is sufficiently resourced to clear the existing backlog, ensuring prompt issuing of licences in the future.
- Invest in schemes that promote recreational forestry and work with Coillte on projects such as Coillte Nature to provide the public with access to recreational forests across the country.

**Cross-border and International**

- Enhance, develop and deepen all aspects of north-south cooperation and the all-island economy.
- Ensure that each government department maintains strong links with their Northern Ireland counterpart.
- Prioritise regular bilateral engagements between the Irish and British governments across all sectors.
- Deepen our relationship with the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales.
- Work with our EU partners to ensure greater coherence and consistency on actions to tackle climate change and the promotion of biodiversity.
- Strongly advocate for democracy and democratic values, the rule of law, multilateralism, climate action and free trade.
- Ensure that our environmental and human rights objectives and our obligations under international agreements and treaties are central to the work of our embassies.

**Waterways Ireland**
Under the PfG an incoming Government would

- Work with the Northern Ireland Executive to deliver the flagship cross-border Ulster Canal project in order to restore the all-island
inland water system as a premier tourism attraction.
- Invest and promote blueways and recreational trails for the benefit of the local community and tourists alike.
- Water infrastructure deficits impact on the provision of safe and secure drinking water, leads to pollution and environmental damage and presents a challenge in achieving sustainable development across urban and rural Ireland.
- Continued investment in infrastructure is required to ensure continued supply of good quality drinking water and appropriate treatment of wastewater to protect our waterways.
- Cycling and electric cycling have enormous potential to facilitate a high proportion of daily trips if we provide an environment which protects and prioritises this mode of transport. We will promote cycling and pedestrian safety and enable this through improved design, increased separation and better signage and marking.
- Work with the Northern Ireland Executive to deliver key cross-border infrastructure initiatives, including the A5, the Ulster Canal connection from Clones to Upper Lough Erne, the Narrow Water Bridge, and cross-border greenways, in particular the Sligo-Enniskillen greenway (subject to feasibility).
- Explore how bodies established under the Good Friday Agreement can ensure there is a joined-up approach to environmental issues on an all-island basis to tackle climate breakdown and the biodiversity crisis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NPWS Peatland Issues &amp; Land Designation</th>
<th>The PfG outlines the following actions relating to peatland issues and land designation:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Evaluate before the end of 2020 whether Ireland should include wetlands in our land use inventory notified under EU regulations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Ensure Bord na Móna is required to take into account climate, biodiversity and water objectives as they deliver on their commercial mandate through an amendment to the Turf Development Act 1998.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Support the Just Transition Commissioner in designing a comprehensive and inclusive response.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Publish and implement a detailed all-of-Government implementation plan consistent with the recommendations of the first report of the Just Transition Commissioner.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- We will support a just transition for the workers and regions impacted as peat and coal fired power generation is phased out.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- We will consider the implementation of a carbon price floor in the ETS to support the transition from fossil fuels to renewables.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- We will expand the Environment Fund, taking account of the consultation process which has been completed, through the introduction of new levies, and ring fence this money for investment in biodiversity and climate initiatives, including a parks fund to support the development of new parks and wildlife areas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
– Coordinate the actions in the Programme for Government regarding peatlands to maximise the benefits for biodiversity.
– Seek reforms to the CAP to reward farmers for sequestering carbon, restoring biodiversity, improving water and air quality, producing clean energy and developing schemes that support results-based outcomes.
– Incentivise the re-wetting of carbon rich soils.
– We believe farmers must be rewarded for adapting to more sustainable methods of farming. We will design a flagship environmental scheme under the new CAP which is user friendly for farmers, delivering broader environmental and biodiversity benefits and aligning financial support with climate, forestry and land use objectives. This will be complemented by an ambitious ECO-scheme under Pillar 1 of the CAP rewarding farmers who deliver enhanced environmental performance.
– The conclusion of the current CAP at the end of 2020 provides a significant opportunity to reorient agri-environment and land use policy to deliver more in the short term on the key priorities of climate, biodiversity, designated land, water quality and carbon reduction and removal. We will pilot this agri-environment scheme during the transition period, supported by additional exchequer funding. The scheme will seek to include farmers not currently in GLAS who previously participated in AEOS, and those exiting GLAS. This pilot will inform the shape of the flagship agri-environment scheme for the next CAP.
– Establish a new Planning and Environmental Law Court managed by specialist judges and on the same basis of the existing Commercial Court model.
– Ensuring that the employment opportunities created are sustainable and part of our national move to a low-carbon future.

The following are PfG commitments that relate to the work of the work of this unit, or where the Department may play some role in informing or working towards such a commitment.

Legislation
– Review and reform the judicial review process so that such reforms come into effect upon the establishment of the Environmental and Planning Law Court, while always adhering to our EU law obligations under the Aarhus Convention.

Forestry
– Publish a successor forestry programme to deliver an ambitious afforestation plan reviewing grant and premium rates across all categories in this area, with a particular focus on an increased farmer rate of support.
– Implement the MacKinnon Report and review the forestry appeals
process to ensure it is aligned with other comparable appeals processes and ensure the licensing system is sufficiently resourced to clear the existing backlog, ensuring prompt issuing of licences in the future.

- Actively promote and support farm forestry/rewilding options that do not impact on agricultural production and support biodiversity and habitat creation. We will incentivize, the option of small-scale (e.g. one hectare) forestry/rewilding.
- Invest in schemes that promote recreational forestry and work with Coillte on projects such as Coillte Nature to provide the public with access to recreational forests across the country.

**Land Use**

- The Government will undertake a national land use review including farmland, forests, and peatlands so that optimal land use options inform all relevant government decisions. The review will balance environmental, social and economic considerations and involve a process of evaluation of the ecological characteristics of the land.

**Other**

- Extend the badger vaccination programme nationwide and end badger culling as soon as possible, consistent with the best scientific and veterinary advice.
- Task the NCCA to develop an Irish Cultural Studies Junior Cycle level 2 short course which values the heritage, language, nature, biodiversity and culture, including Traveller culture and history, of Ireland and history of the Irish Language in the global landscape.
- Commit to emphasising and building capacity for green apprenticeships through a Green Further Education and Skills Development Plan, as tackling the climate crisis will require a broad range of skills across the construction, energy and natural heritage sectors.
- We believe farmers must be rewarded for adapting to more sustainable methods of farming. We will design a flagship environmental scheme under the new CAP which is user friendly for farmers, delivering broader environmental and biodiversity benefits and aligning financial support with climate, forestry and land use objectives. This will be complemented by an ambitious ECO-scheme under Pillar 1 of the CAP rewarding farmers who deliver enhanced environmental performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NPWS Science and Biodiversity Council and Biodiversity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carry out a baseline biodiversity survey on every farm to inform future policy development. Publish a new National Pollinator plan and encourage public bodies to promote and protect biodiversity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete a national hedgerow survey.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
- Incentivise the re-wetting of carbon rich soils.
- Invest in research in the agri-food sector, prioritising investment in areas such as climate and the bioeconomy. We will implement the National Policy Statement on the Bioeconomy, providing the agri-food sector with new opportunities, using biological resources from the land and sea in a sustainable and circular manner.
- Institute a state-sponsored national Tree Planting Day and provide communities across the country with trees to plant on this day annually.
- Engage with local authorities and local communities in a radical expansion of urban tree planting and neighbourhood and community forests.
- Promote close to nature-continuous cover forestry systems to ultimately create permanent biodiverse forests containing trees of all ages.

**Forestry**
- Encourage the private sector to meet corporate social responsibility or sustainability objectives by investing in native woodlands, building on the Woodland Environmental Fund.
- Promote planting of ‘protection forests’ along rivers and lakes to protect water quality and assist in managing flood risks.
- Provide increased support for the development of agroforestry/silvopasture on Irish farmlands.
- Continue to uphold the objectives of the Forest Consent System, the Bird and Habitats Directive, the catchment management approach of the Water Framework Directive and the Forest Law and Enforcement Governance Trade regulation (FLEGT).
- Ensure Coillte’s remit supports the delivery of climate change commitments and the protection of biodiversity. We are fully committed to the retention of the commercial forests of Coillte in public ownership.

**Agrifood**
- Implement these strategies, ensuring that the competitiveness and financial viability of food production systems are maintained and enhanced, while increasing environmental and biodiversity benefits to the economy and society.
- Ensure that in addition to growing international markets and value-added export growth as a key priority, a strategic focus of the Foodwise 2025 successor strategy will be on environmental protection, reversing biodiversity decline and developing additional market opportunities for primary producers closer to home.

**Land Use**
- The Government will undertake a national land use review including farmland, forests, and peatlands so that optimal land use options
inform all relevant government decisions. The review will balance environmental, social and economic considerations and involve a process of evaluation of the ecological characteristics of the land. It will include consideration of emissions to air and water, carbon sequestration, as well as climate adaptation challenges. Policy co-benefits, such as rewetting or forest regrowth to mitigate flooding risks in river catchments will be considered. All stakeholders will be consulted. Such a review would allow knowledge transfer to policy makers, advisory services and landowners, to assist farmers in making an informed choice as to how best to use their land while also benefiting from available supports and incentives.

- Publish a National Soils Strategy that will assess all appropriate soil health parameters and will inform future policies on good soil management practices.
- Review the effects of the nitrates derogation on water quality in conjunction with the EPA which will inform future policy in this area.
- Work with nitrates derogation farmers to improve environmental outcomes on their farms, ensuring the sustainable use of the derogation, in line with our environmental objectives.

**Marine**

- We are committed to prioritising the development of the marine. As an island nation, Ireland has a special relationship with the ocean. Everything must be done to protect marine biodiversity and to secure a sustainable future for the fisheries sector while supporting coastal communities.
- We support the principles and ambition of the EU Biodiversity Strategy and will develop comprehensive legislation for the identification, designation and management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Irish territorial waters. We will realise our outstanding target of 10% under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive as soon as is practical and aim for 30% of marine protected areas by 2030. This will be done on the basis of scientific expertise and in close consultation with all stakeholders, in particular the fishing industry as well as environmental and community representatives. This consultation process will begin in the first 100 days of Government.
- We will examine the establishment of an offshore maritime area as Ireland’s seventh national park. This would form part of the expanded MPA’s and allow for a learning experience in the maritime environment.
1.3 COVID 19 Response

Assessing the impacts

- The economic impact of COVID-19 on the heritage sector has been significant. As a key plank of Ireland’s tourism offering, impacts have included elimination of ticket revenues for the State’s heritage estate for the period of closure, reduction in employment opportunities for guides and heritage services, and challenges in delivering the necessary maintenance to the State’s heritage assets to ensure its protection and care. Throughout the COVID 19 emergency, the Department has been working with its agencies and sectoral stakeholders to assess and mitigate the impacts of COVID-19.

- The Heritage Council is preparing to publish the findings from a survey it conducted on the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on the heritage sector. The sector has faced closures, job losses and delays. Some heritage sites have seen increased pressure from visitor numbers and many organisations have developed new online content for those engaged in home schooling or cocooned. This survey was launched as part of an effort to quantify the impact on community groups, specialised businesses, visitor sites and organisations. Of the 510 respondents surveyed, two thirds had suffered loss or postponement of work due to COVID 19, with 52% experiencing temporary closure. 17% of respondents believed that their business/organisation would be unlikely to survive the next 12 months and 75% of organisations did not have a recovery plan in place. The findings will help inform Government about appropriate supports for the sector.

- The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) network of 6 National Parks and 78 Nature Reserves, which contain 485km of trails have remained accessible throughout the COVID-19 emergency. Keeping the National Parks open throughout this period has placed operational pressures and costs on the network. The NPWS has redeployed indoor staff to monitor and support social distancing and has also secured voluntary assistance. The period of the emergency has also seen increased risks to the ongoing operation of the Parks and Reserves including from damage to habitats and wildlife, illegal dumping, activities in violation of the measures introduced on 27 March, and, in particular, wildfires.

- While the National Parks were open all visitor centres at these sites have been closed. As a result, the network has experienced a significant loss of income from tours, concessions within the Parks (cafés etc.) and other revenue streams. This is especially acute at high volume locations such as Muckross House, Kerry and Glenveagh Castle, Donegal and will impact on Departmental Appropriations-in-Aid.

- Since 12 March, National Monuments and Heritage Buildings and Houses have been closed to the public with significant revenue loss from admission fees, car parking and associated restaurant and service businesses. This has had a negative impact for site owners and operators, both State and privately-funded or managed. This includes the OPW (which operates National Monuments and National Historic Properties in the ownership of the
Minister), the Irish Landmark Trust, the Irish Heritage Trust, and the Irish Historic Houses Association.

- Throughout the COVID-19 emergency, the Department has noted a significant increase over recent weeks in illegal metal detecting at National Monuments and other protected archaeological sites.
- Waterways Ireland’s locks and service blocks in Northern Ireland will remain closed in line with the five step roadmap to recovery.

Mitigating the impacts and contributing to wellbeing during the COVID-19 emergency

- Waterways Ireland’s towpaths and the NPWS network of 6 National Parks and 78 Nature Reserves and 485km of trails have remained accessible throughout the COVID-19 response, providing those within 2km, 5km and now 20km with safe open space in which to exercise and relax. Staff remained on site throughout for essential operational activity. In addition to wild fire monitoring, these include health & safety to ensure social distancing, security patrolling in case of illegal dumping and antisocial behaviour, and wildlife management.
- With travel abroad likely to be reduced after the restriction period the NPWS are continuing to prepare for increased visitor numbers at sites across the country. Car parks have now reopened, where possible, and local staff are in close communication with An Garda Síochána in respect of any accessible parking areas and vehicular usage. HSE guidelines on social distancing continue to be promoted at NPWS sites and information is being widely shared on websites and social media channels.
- NPWS staff have been working closing with An Garda Síochána to ensure the implementation of the restrictive measures, and to ensure the safety and security of the Parks and Reserves and in particular to monitor and prevent wildfires and, in that regard, to work with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) to ensure cross-compliance.
- There have been 7 significant fires in National Parks as well as a number of smaller conflagration in nature reserves and lands in close proximity to NPWS sites, since the start of the Covid-19 restrictions. Wild fires are not a natural phenomenon in Ireland. The closed season for burning is 1st March to 31st August. For the remaining six months of the year (1st of September to the 28th of February), fires may be set under certain conditions. The main source of wild fires is thought to be the deliberate starting of fires. Where appropriate, cross compliance reports for the Department of Agriculture have been prepared. NPWS staff have increased rolling wildfire patrols at a number of locations.
- There has been a significant increase in evening/night time anti-social behaviour at sites, with illegal camp fires and groups drinking becoming more common in many locations, particularly Killarney. NPWS is mounting later patrols at several sites to discourage such activity and the assistance of an Garda Síochána assistance has also been required. Dealing with this anti-social behaviour is a considerable draw upon limited staff resources. Aside from the physical distancing concerns, litter is another significant problem. NPWS is in liaison with OPW and
Coillte with a view to presenting a unified “Leave No Trace” marketing campaign around the, responsible use of these sites.

The Department will continue to liaise closely with OPW over the graduated reopening of **National Monuments** in State Care and Historic Properties, and is providing advice to the Irish Heritage Trust and others regarding the reopening of their own properties. The Department has noted a significant increase over recent weeks in illegal metal detecting at National Monuments and other protected archaeological sites and is, with the National Museum of Ireland, working to highlight the damage this causes and with An Garda Síochána to prosecute those carrying out this activity.

The outgoing Minister announced, on 10 June, that 449 heritage projects across every county in the country will benefit from a combined sum of over €4.3m under this year’s **built heritage** capital grant schemes – The Historic Structures Fund (HSF) and The Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS). This funding is supporting the owners and custodians of historic and protected structures as they carry out hundreds of small-scale, labour-intensive projects to repair and safeguard our built heritage. The schemes have the potential to provide some much needed economic stimulus right across the country in all local authority areas and will provide employment for the many small businesses, skilled conservation specialists and tradespeople involved in heritage-related construction activity. They will help sustain at least some specialist heritage businesses whilst the market recovers.

The **Heritage Council** announced plans for a modified National Heritage Week, which takes into account ongoing restrictions on events and gatherings due to COVID-19. Rather than focusing on the organisation of in-person public events, local heritage groups and organisers, families and communities are being invited to develop projects around this year’s theme of ‘Heritage and Education: Learning from our Heritage’. Coordinated by the Heritage Council since 2005, National Heritage Week will run this year from Saturday, 15 – Sunday, 23 August.

The online services provided by the Heritage Division of the Department are being promoted as part of the all-of-Government wellbeing initiative.

The Heritage Council along with the National Museum of Ireland launched a new initiative **Know your 5K** which invites the public to find out more about their locality and to upload and share their discoveries to OurIrishHeritage.org, a website managed by the National Museum and dedicated to helping communities and individuals to share their heritage stories and discoveries online. The Heritage Council has also collaborated with RTÉ Home School Hub to make available a series of 10 Heritage in Schools tutorials which are suitable for those home schooling and which complement RTÉ’s daily School Hub broadcasting service.

**Waterways Ireland**, following new COVID-19 procedures and protocols for compliance with Health and Safety legislation, has reopened locks on the Shannon Navigation, Shannon-Erne Waterway, Royal Canal, Grand Canal, Barrow Line and Navigation reopened on 8 June. Electricity and water services have been reconnected and normal pump-out facilities are available for boaters.
- Winter mooring facilities have been further extended until 20 July 2020 in order to ease pressure on the boating community. Boaters do not need to travel to move their vessel. There will be no additional cost for this extension.
2.1 Key Policy and Strategy Documents and Legislative Framework

The Oireachtas has conferred a number of functions, duties and powers on the Minister through legislation which are supported by a framework of policies, strategies, and action plans. This framework of legislation, policy and strategy directs and informs the work of the Division. A summary of the key legislation, policy and strategy documents for Heritage is provided in the tables below:

Cross Government Strategy – National Development Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislation/Policy/Strategy</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage – 2018 to 2027</td>
<td>A ten-year plan setting out the Government’s commitment for capital investment of almost €1.2 billion in Ireland’s culture, language and heritage. The strategy prioritises capital spending across three themes - Culture, Heritage and Language and the Islands – and 12 programme areas:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– €725 million for cultural infrastructure and programmes, incorporating:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– €460 million for our National Cultural Institutions;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>– €265 million for a cultural and creativity investment programme;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– €285 million for natural and built heritage; and,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– €178 million for the Gaeltacht, the Irish language and the Islands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislation/Policy/Strategy</td>
<td>Summary</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>National Monuments Act 1930 (as amended)</strong></td>
<td>Provides for the protection and preservation of National Monuments. A Bill to replace the Act and a number of associated Acts has been drafted and will be presented to the Minister this year for consideration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wildlife Act 1976 – 2018 (as amended)</strong></td>
<td>Provides for the framework for conservation of wildlife (including regulation of hunting and definition of wildlife crimes) and, <em>inter alia</em>, designation of Nature Reserves and Natural Heritage Areas. A Bill to amend this Act passed final stage in the Seanad in November 2019, with final amendments due to be presented to the Dáil prior to the dissolution of the 32nd Dáil. The Bill, if enacted, will give legal effect to the reconfiguration of the raised bog Natural Heritage Area networks and will place a public duty on public bodies to promote the conservation of biodiversity, among other provisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heritage Act 1995 (as amended)</strong></td>
<td>Provides for the governance of the Heritage Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011) (as amended)</strong></td>
<td>Provides for the transposition of the Birds and Habitats Directives into Irish law, including provision for the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), as well as the requirement for all public authorities to conduct a screening for Appropriate Assessment and, if necessary, an Appropriate Assessment on any plan or project for which it receives an application for consent, or which the public authority itself wishes to undertake or adopt.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Planning and other legislation

The Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht has a number of statutory functions, including that of a “prescribed body” or “consultation body” under various statutes, including the Planning and Development Acts 2000, as amended for development impacts on archaeological architectural and natural heritage, the Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, as amended and the Environmental Impact Assessment (Agriculture) Regulations 2011. The Minister is also a statutory consultee for various public authorities on the implications of the activities they are regulating, which may have an impact on the built or natural heritage (e.g. forestry, marine, foreshore applications, dumping at sea permits etc.)

### Policy & Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy &amp; Strategy</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The (3rd) National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021</td>
<td>Sets out actions that Government Departments and agencies, local authorities, civil society and the private sector will undertake to achieve Ireland’s ‘Vision for Biodiversity’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The National Peatlands Strategy</td>
<td>A strategy setting out the approach to the management and conservation of Ireland’s peatlands taking into account their current and potential uses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Interpretative Masterplan for Ireland’s National Parks</td>
<td>A plan, to be delivered through a strategic partnership with Fáilte Ireland, to enhance visitor experiences throughout the National Parks and Nature Reserves network. This plan is part of the Department’s sectoral investment plan under Project Ireland 2040- Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage 2018 – 2027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Ireland 2030 (under development)</td>
<td>This strategic policy, in final preparation and to be launched in 2020, aims to provide a coherent, comprehensive framework of values, principles, strategic priorities and actions to guide and inform the heritage sector over the next decade.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Sectoral Climate Change Adaptation Plans                                         | The Department has responsibility for two sectoral climate adaptation plans under the National Adaptation Framework (NAF):  
  - Biodiversity  
  - Built and Archaeological Heritage  
  Both plans were published in Sept 2019.                                           |
| National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation Management Plan 2017-2022     | Sets out how the raised bog SACs and Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) are to be managed, conserved and restored and how the needs of turf cutters are to be addressed.                                                      |
## North-South

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislation</th>
<th>Summary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British-Irish Agreement Act 1999</td>
<td>The Act gives effect to the 1998 Good Friday Agreement by establishing the relationship between the Minister, Waterways Ireland and An Foras Teanga.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The policy framework for North-South bodies is determined by the North South Ministerial Council and the Ministers of sponsoring Departments, North and South. Waterways Ireland is sponsored by the Northern Ireland Department for Infrastructure and An Foras Teanga is sponsored by the Northern Ireland Department for Communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Canals Act 1986 (as amended)</td>
<td>Provides for the duties of Waterways Ireland and relationship with other state bodies regarding canal infrastructure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon Navigation Act 1990</td>
<td>Provides for the powers to create and enforce bye-laws for use of certain navigations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2 Cross Government Policy and Activity

The Division is engaged in and contributes to a number of whole-of-Government and inter-Departmental initiatives and policies.

Brexit
Since 2016, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has overseen the co-ordination of the whole-of-Government response to Brexit through the cross-Departmental coordination structures chaired by that Department. This included contingency planning for a no-deal or worst-case outcome, bringing together the detailed work being undertaken by individual Departments. This work has provided baseline scenarios for the impact of Brexit across all sectors, which is capable of being adapted as appropriate in light of developments in the EU-UK negotiations, which are now focused on the future relationship between the EU and UK.

The Withdrawal Agreement, signed in January 2020, provided for the orderly withdrawal of the UK from the EU on 31 January 2019. Key to this work is the Political Declaration agreed in 2019 between the EU and the UK, which provides the foundation for an ambitious and comprehensive future relationship.

This Division participates in inter-Departmental preparations for Brexit. In terms of impacts on the heritage sector, the Division may experience an increase in requests for import and export permits in respect to wildlife trade and the Division is also working closely in the areas of research and on mutual accreditation schemes with UK counterparts in the heritage sector.

The Division will continue to assess the outcome of the future relationship discussions on its North-South body, Waterways Ireland.
**Project Ireland 2040 - The National Planning Framework and National Development Plan**

In February 2018, the Government finalised and approved *Project Ireland 2040*, composed of the National Planning Framework (NPF) - a spatial strategy intended guide planning and development - and the National Development Plan, 2018-2027 (NDP) - , which set out a 10-year investment programme to underpin the development objectives of NPF. The NDP includes 10 strategic priorities to achieve the 10 national strategic outcomes (NSOs) identified by the NPF.

**Table 2.1: NPF National Strategic Outcome and aligned NDP Strategic Investment Priority, 2018-2027**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>National Strategic Outcome (NSO)</th>
<th>Strategic Investment Priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Compact Growth</td>
<td>Housing and Sustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Enhanced Regional Accessibility</td>
<td>National Road Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities</td>
<td>Rural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sustainable Mobility</td>
<td>Environmentally Sustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A Strong Economy, supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills</td>
<td>Enterprise, Skills and Innovation Capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>High-Quality International Connectivity</td>
<td>Airports and Ports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Enhanced Amenity and Heritage</td>
<td>Culture, Heritage and Sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient</td>
<td>Climate Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sustainable Management of Water and other</td>
<td>Water Infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health</td>
<td>Education, Health and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The resources available under the NDP have been directed to projects which are aligned with these outcomes. The NDP outlined €116 billion in capital investment by the state between 2018-2027, composed of €25 billion in planned expenditure by state-owned enterprises and €91 billion in exchequer capital expenditure.
2.3 EU Engagement and Agenda

Engagement with the European Union takes place at Ministerial level through meetings of the relevant Council of the European Union configuration, at official level through attendance at Committees and Working Groups of the Council of the EU, and at a technical level through attendance at Expert Groups that inform and assist in later policy and legislative developments by the European Commission.

Ministerial Engagement

The Council of the EU meets in ten different ‘configurations’ covering individual policy areas. The relevant Council configurations is the Environment Council. Under the previous Government, the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCAE) takes the lead at the three annual meetings of the Environment Council and any informal meetings. However, the Division contributes position and briefing papers to inform deliberations where a policy matter appropriate to natural heritage is on the agenda.

Policy Engagement by Officials

Officials from the Division attend the following Committees, Working Party and Groups:

- European Council Working Party on the Environment which negotiates issues of climate change and, relevant to the Department, biodiversity;
- European Commission Habitats Committee which is a regulatory committee established to assist in the implementation of the Habitats Directive;
- European Commission Committee on Invasive Alien Species which discusses the implementation of the Regulation on Invasive species;
- The Nature Directors Meeting which brings together the senior officials charged with nature and biodiversity across the EU.

EU Cases

When the European Commission is of the opinion that a Member State has failed to fulfil an obligation under the Treaties (including failing to implement an EU Directive or Regulation) the Commission may open infringement proceedings. Infringement proceedings follow through various stages (which may take many years):

- EU Pilot – an informal dialogue between the Commission and Member State on the issue in question;
- Letter of Formal Notice that a Member State formally requesting information in respect of the issue in question;
- Response by the Member State;
- A Reasoned Opinion from the Commission setting out the alleged breach;
- Response by Member State (or explanation of compliance with Reasoned opinion);
- Referral to the Court of Justice of EU (CJEU) by the Commission (if they believe the Member State has not complied with the Reasoned Opinion);
- Judgement by the CJEU;
- Compliance by Member State or referral back to the CJEU to enforce compliance (including levying a fine, which can be very large).

It should be noted that many issues are now resolved through the informal Pilot process.

There are currently six open infringement proceedings at various stages, five of which relate to implementation of the Habitats Directive and one to the Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-Sharing Regulations (now implemented). Further information on these cases is provided in section 3.14:

1. European Court of Justice Judgement C418/04 (Birds Case);
2. European Commission Infringement 2010/2161 (Peatland Case);
3. European Commission Infringement 2015/2006 (Designations and Conservation Measures Case); following Ireland’s implementation of EU ABS Regulation via SI 253/2019;
4. European Commission Pilot 5104/13 (Pearl Mussel Case);
5. European Commission Pilot 7653/15 (Marine Pilot); and
6. European Commission Infringement 2017/2171 (Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-Sharing Case) - this case is in the process of being closed by Commission.
2.4 Project Ireland 2040 – Divisional Capital Investment Plan

*Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage, 2018-2027* prioritises capital spending across three themes - Culture, Heritage, and Language and the Islands:

- €725 million for cultural infrastructure and programmes, incorporating:
  - €460 million for our National Cultural Institutions;
  - €265 million for a cultural and creativity investment programme;
- €285 million for natural and built heritage; and,
- €178 million for the Gaeltacht, the Irish language and the Islands.

**Project Ireland 2040 - Heritage Investment Programme**

The €285m Heritage Investment Programme includes 5 programmes:

- a €85 million allocation to care for the historic environment, which encompasses the annual capital grant to Waterways Ireland to maintain and expand inland waterways, the annual capital grant to the Heritage Council to operate grant schemes such as the Historic Towns Initiative, support for historic buildings and archaeological heritage in the hands of non-state custodians, and support for interpretation at both state-owned and privately-owned National Monuments (see section 3.10);
- a €60 million allocation to invest in built heritage, including the Built Heritage Investment Scheme, the Historic Structures Fund, and capital investment in the National Historic Properties owned by the Minister and properties managed by the Irish Heritage Trust (see section 3.9);
- a €60 million investment in natural heritage and the promotion of the conservation of biodiversity, including supports for the *National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021*, the on-going programme of bog restoration, and the CTCCS (Cessation of Turf Cutting Compensation Scheme) (see sections 3.12 and 3.13);
- a €50 million investment in the National Parks and Nature Reserves, including a works programme for conservation and amenities, and a series of investments in new and existing visitors centres to implement the Tourism Interpretative Master Plan formulated in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland (see section 3.4); and,
- a €30 million allocation for National Monuments, including a conservation programme for the National Monuments under the guardianship of the Minister (see section 3.5).
**Allocation of capital grants by programme heading for the Heritage, 2018-2027**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Parks and Nature Reserves</td>
<td>€50m</td>
<td>€1.8m</td>
<td>€3m</td>
<td>€2.9m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Heritage and Biodiversity</td>
<td>€60m</td>
<td>€4.1m</td>
<td>€5.6m</td>
<td>€11.2m*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Monuments</td>
<td>€30m</td>
<td>€0.3m</td>
<td>€0.5m</td>
<td>€0.45m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Built Heritage</td>
<td>€60m</td>
<td>€3.5m</td>
<td>€4.5m</td>
<td>€4.6m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring for our Historic Environment</td>
<td>€85m</td>
<td>€7.9m</td>
<td>€7.7m</td>
<td>€7.3m**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>€285m</td>
<td>€17.5m</td>
<td>€21.4m</td>
<td>€26.5m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* includes €5 million in additional funding for Peatlands Restoration but excludes any contribution from the Environment Fund

** includes €4.4 million in funding to Waterways Ireland from North-South - Programme D of the Department’s Vote
3.1 Business Units and Responsibilities

The Heritage Division is organised into six business units, dealing with our built and natural heritage, as follows:

- The National Parks and Wildlife Service (four business units)
  - Strategy and Regional Operations
  - Peatland Issues and Land Designation
  - Science and Biodiversity
  - Legislation and Licensing
- The National Monuments Service
- The Built Heritage Policy and Architecture Advisory Unit
National Parks and Wildlife Service – Strategy and Regional Operations

Principal Officer: Trevor Donnelly
Staff: 259 Officials
Location: North King Street, Dublin 7
Contact: trevor.donnely@chg.gov.ie (01) 888 3209

Responsibilities:

– Management and development of the State’s 6 National Parks and 78 Nature Reserves for conservation purposes to the highest international standards and for their sustainable recreational and tourist use.
– Promotion of an efficient, effective and accountable delivery of on-the-ground services by regional management.
– Overseeing the development and management of an NPWS property management system.
National Parks and Wildlife Service – Peatland Issues and Land Designation

Principal Officer: Brian Lucas
Staff: 33 Officials (including EU LIFE project team (5) until end of December 2020)
Location: North King Street, Dublin 7 & Wexford
Contact: brian.lucas@chg.gov.ie
(053) 911 7385

Responsibilities:
- Designation of areas for nature conservation i.e. Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation under the EU Birds and Habitats Directives and Natural Heritage Areas under the Wildlife Acts.
- Development and implementation of Peatlands policy.
- National Raised Bog Designated Sites (SACs and NHAs) Restoration Programme
- Administrating site protection for designated sites.
- Operation of the Cessation of Turf Cutting Compensation Scheme and related matters.
- Provision of central support in the context of the relocation of turf-cutters to non-designated bogs under the Cessation of Turf Cutting Compensation Scheme.
- Acquisition of lands under the Voluntary Bog Purchase Scheme
- Implementation of the compensation scheme and appeals mechanism arising from refusal of consent for the carrying out of certain activities.
National Parks and Wildlife Service – Science and Biodiversity

Principal Officer: Dr Ciaran O’Keeffe
Staff: 48 Officials
Location: North King Street, Dublin 7
Contact: ciaran.okeeffe@chg.gov.ie
(01) 888 3295

Responsibilities:
- The delivery of specialist scientific information and advice;
- Work on EU matters including infringement cases
- Legislation
- Managing projects funded under the EU LIFE programme
- Liaison with other Departments concerning biodiversity (Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine in relation to CAP, EMFAF and other matters, and also the Department of Housing and Local Government and the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment);
- Implementation of the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017 – 2021 and providing funding to local authorities in this regard;
- Inspection and licensing of zoos in accordance with the EU Zoos Directive
- Processing applications for permits for the import/export of endangered species and/or products derived from biological material of these species (such as plants used in cosmetics, animal skins used for luxury goods, and particular types of wood in musical instruments or furniture) under the UN CITES Convention and the EU Wildlife Trade Regulation, and ensuring compliance with same;
- The Department’s Climate Action Sectoral Adaptation Plan for Biodiversity
- Participation in international conventions for biodiversity and nature, in particular the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), input to EU positions for these Conventions, with a focus on negotiations on the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework which will set the tone for actions to halt biodiversity loss in the coming years.
National Parks and Wildlife Service – Legislation and Licensing

Principal Officer: John Fitzgerald
Staff: 24 Officials
Location: North King Street, Dublin 7
Contact: john.fitzgerald@chg.gov.ie
(01) 888 3228

Responsibilities:

- Implementation and oversight of compliance with, the EU Birds and Habitats Directives.
- Provision of advice and guidance regarding adherence to EU and national legislation on wildlife protection and conservation.
- Issuing licenses under the Wildlife Acts e.g. Coursing, Deer Hunting.
- Co-ordination of the Department’s built and natural heritage observations on planning applications, Strategic Housing Developments, Strategic Infrastructure Development applications, land use plans and other referrals from planning authorities in the context of the Minister’s role as a statutory consultee within the planning process and on applications from various consent authorities (e.g. forestry, marine, dumping at sea licences etc.)
The National Monuments Service

Principal Officer: Terry Allen
Chief Archaeologist: Michael MacDonagh
Staff: 48 Officials
Location: Custom House, Dublin 1
Contact: terry.allen@chg.gov.ie (01) 888 2160
        michael.macdonagh@chg.gov.ie (01) 888 2034

Responsibilities:

- Protecting, conserving and managing Ireland’s archaeological heritage through the provision of an appropriate administrative, policy and legislative framework under the National Monuments Acts.
- Regulating archaeological activity, including archaeological excavation, detection devices and diving on historic wrecks.
- Reviewing planning applications and Strategic Infrastructure Development applications and providing archaeological observations in the context of the Minister’s role as a statutory consultee within the planning process.
- Creating increased public awareness and appreciation of the value and importance of Ireland’s archaeological heritage, including the 1,000 monuments in the ownership of the Minister.
- Promoting and providing information on the quality of our archaeological heritage as a support and stimulus for inward investment and cultural tourism.
- Acting as Focal Point for the UNESCO World Heritage Convention on behalf of Ireland as State Party.
Built Heritage Policy and Architecture Advisory Unit

Principal Officer: Catriona Ryan
Staff: 16 Officials
Location: Custom House, Dublin 1
Contact: catriona.ryan@chg.gov.ie (01) 888 3962

Responsibilities:
- Protecting, conserving and managing Ireland’s built heritage through the provision of an appropriate administrative, policy and legislative.
- Provision of professional advice on built heritage, related conservation and architectural policy.
- Provision of financial support for the protection of heritage buildings and historic structures through the Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) and the Historic Structures Fund (HSF) which are generally administered through the local authorities.
- Provision of funding, together with appropriate oversight and engagement with the Heritage Council, including in relation to compliance with financial and corporate governance requirements.
- Receipt of planning applications and Strategic Infrastructure Development applications and co-ordination and issue of architectural heritage observations in the context of the Minister’s role as a statutory consultee within the planning process.
- Maintaining the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) – a database of the architectural heritage of Ireland covering the period since 1700. NIAH building surveys provide the basis for the recommendations of the Minister to the planning authorities for the inclusion of particular structures in their Record of Protected Structures. The published surveys are a source of information on the selected structures for relevant planning authorities. They are also a research and educational resource.
3.2 Details of Heritage Expenditure

The Heritage Division is responsible for overseeing the 2020 REV allocation of €62.5m, €40.4m in current expenditure and €22.1m in capital expenditure. A significant portion of expenditure (€25.3m or 38.6%) of expenditure on the Heritage programme is allocated towards pay and non-pay administrative expenditure. This reflects the significant proportion of the Department’s staff employed in maintaining our National Parks and Nature Reserves, providing scientific services, promoting the conservation of biological diversity protecting our archaeological heritage of over 160,000 sites and monuments and working with OPW in management and conservation of the almost 1,000 National Monuments in the ownership and guardianship of the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

The other main expenditure areas include:

- An allocation of €13.7m (or 22%) to maintain and improve Ireland’s 6 National Parks and 78 Nature Reserves and promote biodiversity;
- An allocation of €10m (or 16%) towards peatlands restoration, conservation and management, including Just Transition measures (which was provided €5 million in Budget 2020 from revenues arising from the increase in the carbon tax) and the Cessation of Turf Cutting Compensation Scheme, including the relocation of turf cutters to non-designated bogs;
- An allocation of €6.9m (or 11%) to support our built heritage and Ireland’s national monuments, including through the operation of the Built Heritage Investment Scheme and the Historic Structures Fund;
- An allocation of €6.6m (or 10.5%) to fund the Heritage Council.

Expenditure overseen by Heritage Division, 2020

![Expenditure chart]

- **Built Heritage and National Monuments**: €6.9m
- **Heritage Council**: €6.6m
- **National Parks and Wildlife Service**: €13.7m
- **Peatlands Restoration, Conservation and Management**: €10m
- **Administration**: €25.3m
3.3 Work of the National Parks and Wildlife Service

The National Parks and Wildlife Service is staffed by:

- technical staff, including staff working directly in the field as part of the divisional regional structure of the NPWS, and those working as scientific staff;
- industrial staff, maintaining our National Parks and Nature Reserves; and,
- administrative staff.

Organisation of the NPWS

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the Department is responsible for the protection of wildlife and promotion of the conservation of biological diversity in Ireland. The NPWS undertakes a wide range of functions and work-streams, some of which are the responsibility of one or more business units, and many of which are directly undertaken on the ground by regional NPWS staff.

The NPWS Strategy and Regional Operations Unit is primarily responsible for overseeing and managing NPWS regional staff. Frontline conservation Rangers are deployed through a regional structure and assignments are determined in light of Departmental business needs and priorities. In instances where geographical gaps may occur, a measure of cover is provided by way of staff in adjacent areas and through higher management grades, particularly that of the District Conservation Officer grade.
The work undertaken by the NPWS includes:

- Managing a property portfolio in respect of National Parks and Nature Reserves of approximately 87,000 hectares (there are 6 National Parks and 78 Nature Reserves);
- Responsibility for implementing the Habitats and Birds Directives;
  - which provides for the designation of marine and terrestrial areas as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Areas (SPA) on account of the importance of habits or species in those areas (SACs and SPAs form part of the EU wide Nature 2000 network of important ecological sites);
  - the control of certain actions within SACs and SPAs (landowners require the permission of the Minister to undertake these 'notifiable actions'); and,
  - the development of conservation plans for SACs and SPAs (by the NPWS).
- Preventing wildlife crime;
- The licencing of activities relating to wildlife such as hunting, possession of certain birds or animals, import and export of certain wild birds or animals, capture of certain birds or animals for scientific purposes, and licences to disturb certain protected species (licencing is governed either by Habitats and Birds Directives or Wildlife Acts);
- The publication of research and manuals relating to biodiversity and wildlife, including mapping to support the designation of SACs and SPAs;
- Operation of the NPWS Farm Plan which priorities delivery of farm plans for key habitats and species not covered by other agri-environmental schemes;
- The implementation of Government decisions regarding the conservation and management of Ireland’s peatlands;
- Fulfilling the role of statutory consultee in development applications (governed by the Habitats Directive);
- Policy relating to invasive alien species (including implementation of relevant EU legislation)
- Servicing international Conventions relating to nature and biodiversity such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), including participating in the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework discussions which will culminate in the UN Biodiversity Conference 2020 (CBD-COP15).

**Immediate priorities for the coming months (whole NPWS service)**

- Commence preparations for a review of the NPWS in line with the Programme for Government commitment
- Make 2020 annual payments under the Cessation of Turf Cutting Compensation Scheme - €2.3m has been paid out in 2020 annual payments this year so far.
- Relocate turf cutters to 2 non-designated relocation sites in counties Galway and Westmeath. 14 bog plots have been allocated at a relocation site in Westmeath.
and 13 plots have been allocated at a relocation site in Galway. Domestic turf cutting commenced on both sites this year. Another relocation site has been prepared in County Galway but it has been agreed that turf cutting will not commence there until 2021 to allow the site time to settle.

**Turf Cutting Enforcement.** The new turf cutting season commenced on March 17th. NPWS has an operational role in respect of managing regulations to protect Raised Bogs in Areas of Special Conservation. This oversight roles includes the management of aerial monitoring of such bogs to check that these important bogs are not illegally cut. Such instances are reported to the EU and are a key factor in the latter’s determination as to whether to pursue possible legal action against the State. The monitoring work is sensitive and is the evidential precursor to the taking of prosecutions for illegal cutting. There is a Judicial Review pending on the constitutionality of turf cutting on raised bog sites protected by European legislation. This case is expected to be heard in the High Court in coming months.

Commence restoration measures on approximately 1,800 hectares on up to 9 raised bog designated sites and complete the EU LIFE raised bog restoration project on 12 SAC sites.

Continue with the programme of the formal designation of sites as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) by Statutory Instrument (target for 2020 is in the region of 100 Statutory Instruments) and with the completion of the formal designation of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) by Statutory Instrument (4 sites remaining to be formally designated by Statutory Instrument).

Continue to progress the Wildlife (Amendment) Bill 2016 through the Houses of the Oireachtas with a view to enactment as soon as possible (See Section 3.7).

Ongoing Management and development of key properties: 6 National Parks and 78 Nature Reserves (87,000 hectares).

Management of Rural Regeneration & Development Fund Projects: In partnership with Fáilte Ireland and the Department of Rural & Community Development, NPWS is managing 32 projects, dispersed nationally, including the upgrading and development of trails across the Parks and Reserves network, the installation of visitor counters within the parks and reserves, increased visitor facilities and improved signage and branding.

Invasive Species Management in the National Parks: The Department has a long-standing and ongoing programme to tackle invasive species across its National Parks. The infestation in Killarney National Park, in particular, is subject to a high degree of scrutiny. The existing Rhododendron management programme has made significant inroads into the problem with approx. 2,000 of the 3,000 hectares, involving some 40 different sites, under effective control.
There are 6 National Parks and 78 Nature Reserves. Visitor numbers to the National Parks have been increasing in line with overall tourist figures and some, such as Connemara National Park, have experienced a significant increase in visitor numbers with a 3-fold increase in recent years. Four of the National Parks are experiencing capacity constraints, requiring more visitor facilities and infrastructure, while others require more development to capitalise on the growing interest in visiting the National Parks by domestic and international visitors.

Table 4.2: Overview of National Parks incl. Visitor Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park</th>
<th>Established</th>
<th>Size (ha)</th>
<th>Annual Visitors*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killarney National Park</td>
<td>1932</td>
<td>10,300</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenveagh National Park</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>170,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wicklow Mountains National Park</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>21,500</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connemara National Park</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>180,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Burren National Park</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>70,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild Nephin Ballycroy National Park</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Visitor numbers only relate to the number of visitors to the National Parks that entre via the Park Visitor Centres or Info point. Visitors entering the National Parks directly without accessing the Visitor Centre are not included in these figures.

The Department has been investing in the National Parks and Nature Reserves through:

- A Strategic Partnership agreed with Fáilte Ireland in 2017 and based on Tourism Interpretative Masterplan for Ireland’s National Parks;
- its Project Ireland 2040 sectoral plan, *Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage, 2018-2027* (which allocated €50m over the 10 years to National Parks and Nature Reserves); and,
- with co-funding support from the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) (administered by the Department of Community and Rural Development).

Under Project Ireland 2040 some €50m in funding has been ring-fenced for investment in the National Parks and Nature Reserves network.

Investment priorities include:

- A €2.1m investment in Wild Nephin- Ballycroy National Park including walking trails under the Strategic Partnership and a €0.4m feasibility study for a planetarium under the RRDF;
- A €2m investment in Connemara National Park including improvements to walking trails under the Strategic Partnership and development of the visitor centre;
- Improving access and car parking facilities at Killarney National Park
- Feasibility and design work on a visitor centre for the Wicklow Mountains National Park (€0.5m co-funding awarded under the RRDF); and,
- A masterplan for a significant programme of works at Glenveagh National Park, including restoration works to the Castle, improved trails and a new visitor centre.

**Immediate priorities for the coming months**

- The completion of health & safety works to the water supply & waste water treatment facilities at Glenveagh National Park. The project involves the upgrade of the Waste Water Treatment Plan at Glenveagh National Park.
- Upgrading of access and car park facilities at Tomies Wood (Lough Leane looped Walk) and Muckross in Killarney National park.
- Completion and on-going management of the 32 RRDF projects (including the introduction of electric buses in Glenveagh, visitor counters nationally, new signage & branding for the network of sites).
- Completion of the masterplan for future development of Glenveagh National Park.
- Continuation of invasive species management works across the network of sites.
3.5 Climate Change Adaption for Heritage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsible Business Units</th>
<th>Built Heritage Policy and Architecture Advisory Unit National Monuments Service, NPWS.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Officers</td>
<td>Catriona Ryan, Michael MacDonagh, Ciaran O’Keefe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact</td>
<td><a href="mailto:catriona.ryan@chg.gov.ie">catriona.ryan@chg.gov.ie</a> (01)888 3962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:michael.macdonagh@chg.gov.ie">michael.macdonagh@chg.gov.ie</a> (01) 888 2034</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:ciaran.okeeffe@chg.gov.ie">ciaran.okeeffe@chg.gov.ie</a> (01) 888 3295</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht prepared two Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plans to address the impacts of climate change on Ireland’s heritage:

- Biodiversity, and;
- Built & Archaeological Heritage.

The plans were launched in November 2019 under the Climate Action Plan and set out the actions needed to protect heritage from the impacts of climate change.

**Built and Archaeological Heritage Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan**

Climate change can be expected to give rise to structural damage to monuments and historic properties, the undermining of structures, loss of ground adjacent to structures, exposure and erosion of archaeological sites, and collapse of unstable masonry elements. Additional slow-onset risks identified include the loss of historic landscape features, decay of building fabric caused by increased saturation, microbiological growth to interiors and contents and increased corrosion of metal elements. A further threat is posed by maladaptation – the inadvertent loss or damage to heritage structures and sites during adaptation works by others.

The Plan identifies 5 Goals with associated Objectives (48 Actions have also been identified to meet those Objectives):

**Goals:**

1. Improve understanding of the heritage resource and its vulnerability to climate change impacts.
2. Develop and mainstream sustainable policies and plans for climate change adaptation of built and archaeological heritage.
3. Conserve Ireland’s heritage for future generations.
4. Communicate and transfer knowledge.
5. Exploit the opportunities for built and archaeological heritage to demonstrate value and secure resources.

Priority actions have been identified in the Plan, including:

- Evaluate the nature and extent of threats to heritage sites
- Assess the heritage values and cultural significance of places and structures
- Develop an evidence-based approach to managing the effects of climate change
- Develop risk preparedness & resilience
- Develop capacity at all levels
- Improve maintenance practices for buildings
- Ensure the availability of the correct skills and materials to maintain, repair and adapt historic structures and sites
- Prevent poor adaptation practices and works
- Augment research into climate change and its effects on built and archaeological heritage

**Biodiversity Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan**

By the end of the century, climate change is likely to become the most significant driver of biodiversity loss. Increases in temperature will change the timing of life cycle events and the distribution of species. The physical impact of more intense storms and increased winter/spring rainfall will accelerate the degradation of habitats that are already compromised by unsustainable practices.

The Biodiversity Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan considers terrestrial, freshwater and marine biodiversity and ecosystem services. The goal is to protect biodiversity from the impacts of climate change and to conserve and manage ecosystems so that they deliver services that increase the adaptive capacity of people and biodiversity. This is achieved by identifying adaptation options that will help to protect biodiversity and ecosystem services from the impacts of changing climate.

The overall goal of the Plan is “to protect biodiversity from the impacts of climate change and to conserve and manage ecosystems so that they deliver services that increase the adaptive capacity of people and biodiversity while also contributing to climate change mitigation.”

The Plan identifies 6 Objectives (underpinned by Actions to meet those Objectives)

Objectives:

1. Protect, restore and enhance biodiversity to increase the resilience of natural and human systems to climate change;
2. Improve understanding of the impacts of climate change on biodiversity;
3. Improve landscape connectivity to facilitate mobility in a changing climate;
4. Engage society and all sectors to protect biodiversity to enhance resilience;
5. Ensure sufficient financing is available to implement the Biodiversity Climate Change Adaptation Plan; and
6. Put adequate monitoring and evaluation measures in place to review the implementation of the Biodiversity Climate Change Adaptation Plan

Priority actions have been identified in the Plan, including:

- Restore and enhance natural systems through management to increase resilience.
- Establish and implement an all-island invasive species programme.
- Develop and implement a National Soil Strategy to increase the resilience of soils.
- Develop an integrated coastal management strategy which includes ecosystem-based adaptation actions.
- Promote ecosystem restoration and conservation through Payment for Ecosystem Services and investment in actions that increase carbon sinks while promoting biodiversity.
- Carry out a comprehensive vulnerability assessment of biodiversity in Ireland.
- Develop an impact assessment tool to screen for potential maladaptation impacts.
- Design corridors and buffer zones to enhance the resilience of protected areas and designated sites by increasing opportunities for dispersal across the landscape.
- Implement measures to reduce the barrier effects of roads, railways and technical objects in rivers and streams to facilitate species spatial responses to climate change.
- Undertake natural capital accounting in all sectors to ensure natural capital is being valued and Ecosystem Based Adaptation and green infrastructure options are being employed.
3.6 Work of the National Monuments Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsible Business Unit</th>
<th>National Monuments Service</th>
<th>Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Officer Chief Archaeologist</td>
<td>Terry Allen Michael MacDonagh</td>
<td>€1.2m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:terry.allen@chg.gov.ie">terry.allen@chg.gov.ie</a> (01) 888 2160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:michael.macdonagh@chg.gov.ie">michael.macdonagh@chg.gov.ie</a> (01) 888 2034</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Background**

The National Monuments Service is headquartered in the Custom House, Dublin, and has 47 staff members, working across the country in 9 regional locations. Ireland has over 160,000 known archaeological sites and monuments, of which almost 1,000 are National Monuments in the ownership and guardianship of the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. This unique archaeological heritage represents over 7,000 years of settlement on this island.

The work of the National Monuments Service includes:

- Leading development of Heritage Ireland 2030.
- Preparation of proposals for new or revised legislation to protect the archaeological heritage.
- Developing national policy and standards in relation to archaeological heritage and participating in international co-operation in that regard (including in relation to World Heritage Sites).
- Providing archaeological advice to OPW on all aspects of the conservation, management and presentation of National Monuments in the ownership or guardianship of the Minister.
- Regulating archaeological excavations, use of detection devices for archaeological purposes and diving on historic wrecks and underwater archaeological sites.
- Conserving and managing Ireland’s unique archaeological heritage for the benefit, education and enlightenment of present and future generations, as a support to the economy and sustainable employment and in compliance with statutory requirements.
- Implementing the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014 in regard to protection of archaeological monuments and historic shipwrecks and the licensing or other regulation of a range of activities.
- Providing advice to planning authorities, including An Bórd Pleanála, on development proposals (development plans, heritage plans and individual planning applications) that may have implications for the archaeological heritage.
- Management of Ireland’s World Heritage portfolio and progression of sites on the Tentative List – Ireland has 2 World Heritage Sites, Brú na Bóinne and Skellig Michael.
- Maintaining and developing the Archaeological Survey of Ireland as the national inventory of known archaeological sites and monuments and for the related Historic Wreck Inventory. Maintaining an Archive of records relevant to archaeological heritage and reports and archive material relating to all licensed archaeological excavations.
- Dealing with reports of threats or damage to monuments in accordance with the National Monuments Acts.
- Implementation of the Climate Change Adaptation Plan for Built & Archaeological Heritage.

**Moore Street**

The State’s proposal to provide a 1916 Commemorative Centre in Nos. 14 -17 Moore Street was stopped after proceedings were taken in the High Court by 1916 Relatives who objected to plans to demolish adjoining buildings which they regarded as essential to the remembrance of the events of 1916 on Moore Street.

The Moore Street Consultative Group was set up by the then Minister after the original High Court judgement (since overturned by the Court of Appeal). The Group’s report *Moore Street – Securing History* noted that there should be appropriate recognition of the history of the street, its street trading traditions and its part in the Rising, and that these should be reflected in the re-development of Moore Street and Moore Lane.

Working off the *Moore Street – Securing History* report, the Moore Street Advisory Group (MSAG, chaired by Dr Tom Collins), with administrative and financial support from the Department, has engaged with stakeholders, including the owners of the site surrounding the National Monument (Hammerson) to broker a consensus on a way forward for a mutually complementary regeneration of the wider area, including strengthening its street market. Its membership is made up of Oireachtas members, 1916 relatives’ groups, city councillors and street traders. The MSAG presented the Minister with a report of their work on July 31\textsuperscript{st}, 2019. The report contains 9 recommendations which will, inter alia, facilitate the completion of the State’s 1916 Commemorative Centre in the National Monument at Nos. 14 – 17 Moore Street by the Office of Public Works. The 4 key actionable recommendations identified are:

- there is an urgent need to secure the fabric of the national monument at Nos. 14 to 17 Moore Street and that the MSAG confirms its support for the OPW to carry out this process as soon as possible;
- the Department should develop a scoping document on the potential for an increased State and State supported heritage and culture presence in the area;
– an expert group should be appointed by Dublin City Council to lead the urgent regeneration of the street market; and

– the MSAG should be reconfigured to a smaller more focused group in order to move the process forward as quickly as possible.

Officials from the National Monuments Service are liaising with colleagues from the Office of Public Works and the Chief State Solicitor’s Office in order to progress the plans for the presentation of the monument to the public.

The Irish Heritage Trust has been engaged to develop a vision on the potential for a greater heritage/cultural presence in the area. It will be engaging with State and State supported bodies to assess the potential and benefit of relocating or creating new heritage activities in the regenerated Moore Street area. Hammerson which will be developing the Dublin Central Site that surrounds the national monument has indicated that it would be willing to accommodate any such proposals on a commercial basis. Dublin City Council is in the process of appointing an expert group to advise on the market.

Dr Tom Collins has agreed to continue to act as chair of the newly reconfigured MSAG. Requests for nominations to the MSAG have been sent to each of the representative groups. The appointment of Oireachtas and local authority representatives was interrupted by the General Election and it is hoped to have the first meeting of the group as soon as these become available.

**Immediate priorities for the coming months**

- Finalisation and launch of Heritage Ireland 2030
- Progress Monuments and Archaeological Heritage Bill (see section 3.6)
- Develop a roadmap for the completion by OPW of conservation work to Moore Street national monument with a view to early opening of the buildings as a 1916 Commemorative Centre; develop a scoping document on the potential for an increased State and State supported heritage and culture presence in the area.
- Identify strategic priorities for future Project Ireland 2040 capital investment under the Strategic Partnership with Fáilte Ireland, OPW and the Department (National Monuments Service & Built Heritage & Architectural Policy units).
- Continue high standard of care and presentation of national monuments in State ownership or guardianship through effective working relationship with OPW in management of national monuments.
- Management of Ireland’s UNESCO World Heritage obligations, including finalisation of new 10 year management plan for Sceilg Mhichil, establishment of management infrastructure for Brú na Bóinne and management of new nominations to the Tentative List of World Heritage sites.
Establishment of implementation structures with BHAP as per the National Adaptation Framework requirements for the implementation of the Climate Change Adaptation Plan for Built & Archaeological heritage.

Continued management of large increase in development applications affecting the nation’s archaeological resource and regulation of associated archaeological activity including archaeological excavation.

Finalisation of Conservation Management Plan for the Hill of Tara and commencement of others for key heritage sites to ensure their protection and accessibility.
3.7 Monuments and Archaeological Heritage Bill

The statutory basis for the protection and preservation of monuments and archaeological objects is currently provided by the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014, the 1930 Act having been much amended since 1930. In 2009, an Expert Advisory Group recommended to the then Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government that the National Monuments Acts be replaced by new legislation. The Heads of Bill were approved by Government in 2010 and progress has continued on an intermittent basis since then.

A complete draft of the Monuments and Archaeological Heritage Bill has been produced by the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel and reviewed by the Advisory Counsel within the Office of the Attorney General. However, before the Bill can be submitted to the Government for approval to publish it, the scheme of the legislation will have to undergo Pre-Legislative Scrutiny (PLS) by the Oireachtas Committee responsible for Heritage. This is because the original Heads were approved by Government before the introduction of PLS.

When enacted, it will replace all existing National Monuments Acts, as well as certain related legislation, such as certain provisions of the Irish Church Act 1869 and the Irish Land Act 1903.

The Bill will replace the current multiple systems of monument protection with a single Register with two levels of protection for monuments. Special protection will be able to be applied to registered monuments of particular interest. In these cases, a licence granted by the Minister will be required for any works that might affect the monument. Other registered monuments and all newly identified archaeological monuments of specified classes will have general protection, requiring three months advance notice of any proposed works to the Minister (who will have powers to impose conditions on such works). In line with the advice of the Office of the Attorney General, environmental impact assessment procedures have been integrated into the Bill and where EIA or screening for EIA arises a licence will in all cases be required for proposed works to protected monuments. The Bill will also harmonise the system for protection of underwater cultural heritage with that for archaeological heritage on land.

The Bill will provide a clear statutory basis for the Commissioners of Public Works (OPW) to manage monuments of which the Minister is owner or guardian, as well as a clear basis for the Minister’s title to or guardianship of monuments (much of which is currently derived through several pieces of old legislation).
The multiple forms of licences and consents that exist under current legislation will be replaced with an integrated licensing system for works and other activities regulated under it. The Bill therefore represents an important measure of regulatory reform to the benefit of all whose activities are regulated under the existing Acts (including landowners, developers and heritage professionals) while at the same time enhancing protection for heritage.

The Bill provides for clear civil enforcement powers in relation to contraventions of the legislation. Under the existing Acts, criminal prosecution is the only statutory option for dealing with breaches of the Acts. This will be combined with modernised prosecution and evidentiary procedures so that prosecution will be available as a viable option where merited.

**Immediate priorities for the coming months**

- Submission of a Memorandum for Government approval to proceed to Pre-Legislative Scrutiny
- Conduct of Bill through process of Pre-Legislative Scrutiny
- Liaison with the Office of Parliamentary Counsel in relation to necessary amendments arising from PLS
- Initiation of the Bill in the Houses of the Oireachtas
3.8 Wildlife (Amendment) Bill

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsible Business Unit</th>
<th>National Parks and Wildlife Service – Peatland Issues and Land Designation</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>€80,000 approximately for a Strategic Environmental Assessment, notification to landowners and public notification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Officer</td>
<td>Brian Lucas</td>
<td>Contact</td>
<td><a href="mailto:brian.lucas@chg.gov.ie">brian.lucas@chg.gov.ie</a> (053) 911 7385</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Background – 2014 Review of the Raised Bog Natural Heritage Area Network

Ireland has designated 75 natural heritage areas, NHAs, under national law for the protection of raised bog habitats. These sites complement the 53 areas of protected raised bog in Ireland which have been nominated for designation as special areas of conservation, SACs, in accordance with the EU Habitats Directive. Additional raised bog habitat within the natural heritage area network makes a contribution to the overall objectives of the habitats directive to maintain or restore these habitats to favourable conservation status.

In recognition of the fact that the same legal regime did not apply to NHAs as to SACs, in April 2011 Government decided to carry out a scientific review of the natural heritage area raised bogs. The main objective of the review was to look at how the NHA network could contribute to conservation objectives, while avoiding unintended impacts on the traditional rights of landowners and turf cutters and, therefore, minimising the cost to the taxpayer arising from compensation.

The review of the raised bog natural heritage area network was published in January 2014. It sets out a series of measures to ensure that Ireland meets its obligations under the EU Habitats Directive, as well as its obligations under the EU environmental impact assessment directive relating to the regulation of turf cutting on NHAs.

The review concluded that Ireland could more effectively achieve conservation of threatened raised bog habitat through focused protection and restoration of a reconfigured network through the following measures:

- the phasing out of turf cutting on 36 existing NHAs, which will remain designated, including seven sites to be divided, with part to be conserved and part de-designated;
- the complete de-designation of 46 NHAs, including the relevant areas of the seven sites to be divided where it has been judged that their conservation potential is expected to be marginal and-or that restoration would be prohibitively expensive for the conservation benefits achieved - the consent of the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is not required for domestic turf cutting on these sites, while large scale or commercial turf cutting is regulated through other consent systems; and,
– the designation as NHAs of 25 currently undesignated raised bogs which are in public ownership or where there is reduced turf cutting pressure. These NHAs are being designated to make up for the loss of habitat within the sites where it is proposed that turf cutting can be allowed to continue.

The total area of active and degraded raised bog under the proposed new network is 765 hectares, in comparison with an area of 694 hectares in the current network. The proposed newly configured network would have a greater area of both active and degraded raised bog still capable of regeneration compared to the current network; in the short to medium term, losses of active bogs will be reduced due to the lower intensity of recent turf cutting in the new network; costs to the taxpayer will be greatly reduced due to the smaller number of turf cutters required to stop turf cutting and requiring compensation; and increased potential for more rapid restoration of raised bog due to the inclusion of State-owned lands into the new network.

**Wildlife (Amendment) Bill 2016**

The Wildlife (Amendment) Bill 2016 would give legal effect to the proposed reconfiguration of the raised bog Natural Heritage Area network arising from the 2014 Review of Raised Bog Natural Heritage Area network, provides for a review or reviews of blanket bog Natural Heritage Areas, at the discretion of the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, and places a duty on public bodies to promote the conservation of biodiversity.

The Bill was passed (Final Stage) by the Dáil on 13 December 2018 and by the Seanad on 6 November 2019. 16 amendments to the Bill have been made in the Seanad, including 11 Government amendments. These amendments must be considered by the Dáil, as the House which initiated the Bill, before the Bill is ready to be enacted. The 32nd Dáil was dissolved prior to the consideration of the amendments. The Bill and additional amendments may be referred to the 33rd Dáil.

**Immediate priorities for the coming months**

- Obtain Government approval for proposed amendments to the 5 non-Government amendments to the Bill made by the Seanad and progress these through the Dáil.
3.9 Heritage Ireland 2030

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<tr>
<th>Responsible Business Unit</th>
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<th>Budget</th>
<th>Contact</th>
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Heritage Ireland 2030 is a new National Heritage Plan which will set out key principles and policies for conserving and managing Ireland’s heritage over the next decade and more. The Plan is currently being finalised with a view to publication.

**Key elements of Heritage Ireland 2030**

Heritage Ireland 2030 will assist the integration of essential heritage-policy principles into decision-making across the whole of government and provide the policy tools necessary for achieving a truly sustainable society with solid heritage foundations, recognising the importance of heritage to our well-being as a nation.

Heritage Ireland 2030 will embrace and support existing policies and initiatives. It will provide further policy backing for the mitigation of climate-change impacts and the protection of biodiversity. It will build connections between related initiatives and ensure coherence in delivering its vision.

Heritage Ireland 2030 will also provide a bridge between our tangible built and natural heritage and our intangible heritage – our language and cultural traditions in their diversity – ensuring that important aspects of our identity do not lose their connection to the landscape and people from which they have evolved.

A 4-month public consultation process for Heritage Ireland 2030 closed at the end of March 2019. Over 70 consultation events were held across the State during the consultation period with over 1000 people attending. In addition to contributions from these events which were held with key partners such as the Heritage Council and local authorities, over 2,100 submissions were received. A Heritage Ireland 2030 Information Day was held in Dublin Castle on 28 May. The many themes and priorities expressed by the many participants in the consultation process have been analysed and distilled and were presented to the attendees on the 28 May and are informing the substance of the plan.
Heritage Ireland 2030 will strengthen many aspects of our powerfully diverse heritage. The strategy’s delivery structures will allow all bodies which protect and manage Ireland’s diverse heritage to engage constructively with each other, with other public authorities and with communities, enterprise and NGOs.

Heritage Ireland 2030 will be delivered with community engagement and involvement, with leadership and through cooperation and partnership. It will build stronger heritage partnerships, allowing all stakeholders to work together to better ensure its protection.

Heritage Ireland 2030 will support the concept of heritage communities as a way of enabling people to exercise their rights and responsibilities towards their heritage and to celebrate it.

Heritage Ireland 2030 will commit to government providing leadership and support to organisations, communities, citizens and local government.

Heritage Ireland 2030 is formed around three themes:
1. Communities and Heritage
2. Leadership and Heritage
3. Heritage Partnerships

Immediate priorities for the coming months

- Continued liaison and engagement with other relevant Government departments.
- Finalise plan and seek Government approval to publish.
- Prepare for annual Heritage Ireland 2030 Forum in 2020
- Launch and commence implementation of Heritage Ireland 2030
3.10 Built Heritage Policy and Architectural Advisory Activities

<table>
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The main activities in respect of built heritage policy and architectural advisory activities are as follows:

- Protecting, conserving and managing Ireland’s built heritage through the provision of an appropriate administrative, policy and legislative framework.

- Provision of financial support for the protection of heritage buildings and historic structures through the Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) and the Historic Structures Fund (HSF) which are generally administered through the local authorities.

- Provision of funding together with appropriate oversight and engagement with the Heritage Council, including in relation to compliance with financial and corporate governance requirements.

- Provision of built heritage advised into national planning policy and co-ordination and issue of architectural heritage observations on planning applications and Strategic Infrastructure Development applications in the context of the Minister’s role as a statutory consultee within the planning process.

- Maintaining the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) – a database of the architectural heritage of Ireland covering the period since 1700. NIAH building surveys provide the basis for the recommendations of the Minister to the planning authorities for the inclusion of particular structures in their Record of Protected Structures. The published surveys are a source of information on the selected structures for relevant planning authorities. They are also a research and educational resource.


- Implementation of actions under the Climate Action Plan including implementation of the Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan for the Built and Archaeological Heritage in conjunction with the National Monuments Service, and the development of guidance for energy efficiency upgrading of traditional buildings.

- The provision of architectural heritage recommendations to the National Monuments Service with regard to structures protected under the National Monuments Acts.
- Provision of professional advice on built heritage, related conservation and architectural policy and traditional buildings skills.

- Work with OPW and Fáilte Ireland on the Partnership Agreement between the three bodies.

**The Minister’s role as statutory consultee in the Planning process**

In accordance with regulations under the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended, planning applications lodged with planning authorities that have the potential to impact on built, archaeological, or natural heritage must be referred to the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

The Minister’s role as a statutory consultee is specified in the relevant regulating legislation, and is variously termed ‘prescribed authority’, ‘specified body’, ‘environmental authority’ or ‘consultation body’.

In any such capacity, the Minister may make submissions or observations to assist the responsible authority in carrying out its functions, including consent functions, in compliance with various legislative and administrative requirements with respect to the conservation, protection and preservation of natural and built heritage.

The Minister also has a role in providing advice and guidance in relation to natural and built heritage matters in the context of plans, programmes and projects under consideration by individuals and authorities, and any environmental assessments required. In addition, the data holdings and publications of the Department have widespread application in land use planning, project design and environmental assessments.

Any observations made by the Minister are to assist planning authorities. Ultimately, however, the decision to grant planning permission is a matter for the relevant planning authority and the Minister has no role in this regard.

**Protection of the Built Heritage**

The Minister’s functions with regard to the protection of our architectural heritage are set out in the Planning and Development Acts, as are the responsibilities of local authorities and owners. Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, gives primary responsibility to planning authorities to identify and protect the architectural heritage by including particular structures on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS).

The Department’s National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) was established by the Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1999. Its purpose is to identify, record, and evaluate the post-1700 architectural heritage of Ireland as an aid in its protection. The Minister can make recommendations to planning authorities for buildings and structures to be included on the Record of Protected Structures.
(RPS) and these recommendations arise from the survey of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage mentioned above. Inclusion on the RPS places a duty of care on the owners and occupiers of protected structures and also gives planning authorities powers to deal with development proposals affecting them and to seek to safeguard their future. However, the final decision as to inclusion of a building or structure on the RPS remains a reserved function of the relevant planning authority.

The Department provides financial support for the protection of heritage buildings and historic structures through two built heritage grant schemes generally administered by the local authorities. These are the Historic Structures Fund (HSF) and The Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS).

**The Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS)**

The Built Heritage Investment Scheme is a scheme for the repair and conservation of structures on the local authority Record of Protected Structures. It is designed to leverage private capital for investment in small scale conservation projects across the country and to support the employment of skilled conservation professionals. In line with the commitment to increase the resilience of our heritage resources in the Department’s recently published Climate Change Adaptation Plan for the Built and Archaeological Heritage, a new stream of funding was introduced into the Built Heritage Investment Stream this year for minor repair works and routine maintenance. Maintenance is identified as a cost-effective way to increase resilience to both current stressors and the impact of future climate change. The BHIS has an allocation of up to €2.5 million for 2020.

**The Historic Structures Fund (HSF)**

The Historic Structures Fund is for conservation and enhancement to heritage structures and historic buildings, in both private and public ownership, for the benefit of communities and the public. The fund has an allocation of up to €1.7 million for 2020.

On 10 June 2020, the Minister announced that 449 heritage projects across every county in the country will benefit from a combined sum of over €4.3m under the above built heritage capital grant schemes (393 BHIS projects and 56 HSF projects). This funding will support the owners and custodians of historic and protected structures as they carry out hundreds of small-scale, labour-intensive projects to repair and safeguard our built heritage. The schemes have the potential to provide some much needed economic stimulus right across the country in all local authority areas and will provide employment for the many small businesses, skilled conservation specialists and tradespeople involved in heritage-related construction activity. They will help sustain at least some specialist heritage businesses whilst the market recovers.

Successful applicants are advised that all works must be carried out in compliance with physical distancing instructions and other public health measures determined by the Government and the
HSE. It will be the project manager’s responsibility to monitor and ensure compliance with the most up to date and accurate information from the Government and the HSE websites

**Immediate priorities for the coming months**

- Oversee process to appoint new board to the Heritage Council. PAS has indicated that the assessment of applications will take place on the 9th or 10th July 2020. A shortlist of suitable candidates will then be prepared to be sent forward by PAS for consideration by the Minister.

- In conjunction with the National Monuments Service to complete and launch *Heritage Ireland 2030*, the new national heritage plan.

- Develop a new National Policy on Architecture

- National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH): issue Ministerial Recommendations to local authority and publish Dublin North City Suburbs; complete two surveys, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown Phase 4 and Dublin City Phase 15.

- Monitor progress of the Historic Towns Initiative, Historic Structures Fund and Built Heritage Investment Scheme, identifying any delays or issues relating to delays arising as a result of Covid-19 and reallocating funding as required to ensure the greatest chance of success for the greatest number of projects.

- Develop guidance for the identification and reuse of early traditional buildings to support the revitalisation of historic towns.

- Review current planning policy and provide design criteria for tall and large buildings in historic urban centres to support the regeneration and densification of historic urban centres.

- Implementation of actions under the Climate Action Plan including implementation of the Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan for the Built and Archaeological Heritage in conjunction with the National Monuments Service, and the development of guidance for energy efficiency upgrading of traditional buildings.

- Progress National Strategy on Vernacular Architecture.
3.11 Heritage Council Oversight and Governance

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The Heritage Council is established under the Heritage Act 1995 and its function is to propose policies and priorities for the identification, protection, preservation and enhancement of the national heritage, including monuments, archaeological objects, heritage objects, architectural heritage, flora, fauna, wildlife habitats, landscapes, seascapes, wrecks, geology, heritage gardens and parks and inland waterways. The Heritage Council is based in Kilkenny.

**Heritage at the Heart – Heritage Council Strategy 2018-2022**

Heritage at the Heart sets out the Heritage Council’s vision for the next five years and builds on all of the Council’s achievements since its establishment in 1995. Its vision is very clearly stated as being to see heritage at the heart of Irish society and decision-making and that Ireland will be internationally recognised as a centre of excellence in heritage management, conservation and community engagement.

Key initiatives supported by the Heritage Council include:

- **The Historic Towns Initiative**, is a joint undertaking by the Department and the Heritage Council and aims to promote the heritage-led regeneration of Ireland’s historic towns. In 2018 and 2019, €1m was shared between 6 towns each year for heritage-led conservation projects. €1 million in ring-fenced capital funding has been allocated in 2020 for a further six towns. This programme includes works to significant historic buildings, streetscape conservation and the public realm and demonstrates the effective way that heritage can be used to regenerate urban centres. Town’s being funded in 2020 are Tralee, Ramelton, Ballina (Co. Mayo), Sligo and Clones. Previously funded were Nenagh, Boyle, Letterkenny, Navan, Kilrush and Ballina in 2019, with Youghal, Portlaoise, Kilmallock, Ballinrobe, Kells, and Carrick-on-Suir in 2018.

- **The Heritage in Schools Scheme** is a primary school heritage education initiative which facilitates visits to primary schools by a range of Experts on Ireland’s natural, cultural and built heritage and is the Heritage Council’s main activity for primary schools. The Scheme provides an additional resource for teachers and supports the stated aims and objectives of the Social, Scientific and Environmental Education (SSEE) curriculum and emphasise engagement with local heritage
through place-based learning and learning in the outdoor classroom. In 2019 over 1,000 primary schools received over 2,500 visits under the scheme.

This year, in response to the public health crisis, 15 online tutorials were prepared under the Heritage in Schools initiative. The tutorials are freely available and were also broadcast on RTÉ Home School Hub as part of a new collaboration between the Heritage Council and RTÉ.

**National Heritage Week** is part of the European Heritage Days initiative run by the Council of Europe. It brings together communities and cultural institutions, academics and enthusiasts, to build awareness about the value of heritage and support its conservation. It is the biggest cultural event in Ireland with over 2,000 events attended by over 423,000 people in 2019, maintaining the trends from previous years. The theme for National Heritage Week 2020 is “Heritage in Education”.

National Heritage Week 2020 takes place 15th August – 23rd August 2020. Due to COVID-19-related restrictions on social gatherings, this year, rather than inviting communities to host Heritage Week events, the Heritage Council is inviting communities around the country to undertake projects that explore a topic associated with the theme – ‘Heritage and Education: Learning from our Heritage’. The new approach is designed to promote the wide sharing of experience and knowledge. Projects can comprise researching an aspect of heritage on your doorstep, sharing or re-learning a heritage skill, or exploring an aspect of Ireland’s educational heritage. All projects will be uploaded to a dedicated website, www.heritageweek.ie.

- Funding support provided by the Heritage Council to County Heritage Plans (CHP) contributes to the operational work programmes of Heritage Officers in local authorities across the country. Heritage Officers facilitate the delivery of a structured local heritage service in their local authorities and promote heritage as an influential element in quality of life and economic wellbeing.

Through the Irish Walled Towns Network (IWTN), the Heritage Council supports local authorities and communities in caring for and celebrating the medieval heritage of 29 IWTN member town’s across Ireland, both north and south. This grant support is available to IWTN members via two streams, a capital fund for conservation works and an interpretative fund for festivals and awareness raising projects.

**The National Biodiversity Data Centre**
The National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) is an Initiative of the Heritage Council and is operated under a service level agreement, by Compass Informatics. A review of the NBDC was completed in 2019 and a working group to implement the findings of this report has been established.
Adopt a Monument Scheme

This scheme helps communities become actively involved in the conservation and interpretation of their local archaeological and cultural heritage sites. The programme was initiated by the Heritage Council in 2016 and is now working with thirteen communities on the development of conservation works, implementing management plans and encouraging participation in local heritage.

Heritage Council Survey on the impact of Covid-19

The Heritage Council recently launched a survey on the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on the heritage sector. The sector has faced closures, job losses and delays, as well as increased home working. Some heritage sites have seen increased pressure from visitor numbers and many organisations have been busy developing new online content for those engaged in home schooling or cocooned. This survey attempts to quantify the impact on community groups, specialised businesses, visitor sites and organisations. The Heritage Council anticipates that the findings will help advise Government about supports for the sector. The survey was devised after examining equivalent surveys carried out in Ireland and the UK and was tested by a leading marketing research company. The survey closed 6th of May 2020 and the Heritage Council will publish its findings shortly. This survey attempts to quantify the impact on community groups, specialised businesses, visitor sites and organisations. The Heritage Council anticipates that the findings will help advise Government about supports for the sector.

The Heritage Council along with the National Museum of Ireland launched a new initiative Know your 5K which invites citizens to share their discoveries and insights about the hidden heritage of their locality. This citizen science project invites the public to find out more about their locality; to identify how heritage inspires people – so if someone has a poem, story or painting of a particular site, monument or place they are invited to upload and share their discoveries to OurIrishHeritage.org a website, managed by the National Museum and dedicated to helping communities and individuals to share their heritage stories and discoveries online. This is a project that can be enjoyed by families, individuals and communities of all ages.

Immediate priorities for the coming months

- The Board of the Council, which consists of eleven members including the Chair, is appointed by the Minister. The current Board members were appointed for a four-year term by the Minister in July 2016, following a public competition via the Public Appointment Service (PAS). The Chair’s appointment runs to 5 October 2021. The 4-year term of the 10 ordinary members of the Board, however, expires on 19 July 2020.

- As the Heritage Council is a State Board, the process to fill vacancies is being
Prioritised focus on National Heritage Week with additional budget allocation for media (partnership with Independent Broadcaster of Ireland, independent and commercial local radio) for blanket local coverage

Investment in Irish Times Saturday Supplement re. Heritage in Schools programme

Develop Health and Well Being elements of Know Your 5K, Adopt a Monument Programme (developed during Covid-19 and hugely popular).

Developing an advocacy programme to secure funds in budget 2020 to re-instate the Heritage Council’s Community Grants Scheme and thus support the revitalization of rural and urban communities across Ireland

Secure additional funding for increased supports for the Heritage sector in response to COVID 19 to support not for profit organisations, community groups and small businesses

Commission expert analysis outlining the economic impact of the Heritage sector on the Irish economy
The Department launched the public consultation phase for a new National Policy on Architecture in December 2019. The proposed new Policy will support long-term planning strategies and will assist in addressing key issues including societal well-being, climate change and urban regeneration. It will provide tools to help creatively address challenges such as the need to deliver new homes and neighbourhoods for a growing population, together with the schools, hospitals, workplaces and infrastructure. The adaptation of existing as well as the design of new buildings will also be critical to meet the targets set by the Climate Action Plan 2019.

A public consultation discussion document, outlining the scope and ambitions of a new Policy, was developed by a steering committee including officials from the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, the Office of Public Works, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, the Department of Education and Skills, The Health Service Executive, the City and County Architects Association, the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland, the schools of architecture and the Irish Architecture Foundation. The Arts Council also contributed to the content.

The Department is working with stakeholders to promote the consultation period and is holding and contributing to various workshops and events as well as promoting through print and social media. Built environment organisations in the public and private sector have been notified and invited to contribute through the consultation process. The consultation phase is now being finalised - 116 submissions were received, together with 40 responses through a Survey Monkey.

The discussion document *Places for People* and other relevant material can be found at https://www.chg.gov.ie/heritage/built-heritage/architectural-policy

**Immediate priorities for the coming months**

- Review the responses to the public consultation phase on a new National Policy on Architecture.
3.13 Peatlands

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**Context for Peatlands Policy**

Natura 2000 is at the heart of the EU’s nature & biodiversity policy. It is an EU-wide network of nature protection areas established under the 1992 Habitats Directive. The aim of the network is to assure the long-term survival of Europe’s most valuable and threatened species and habitats. It is comprised of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated by Member States under the Habitats Directive, and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) which are designated under the 1979 Birds Directive. The establishment of this network of protected areas also fulfils a Community obligation under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

Ireland has a high proportion of Europe’s remaining peatlands. Significant efforts have been made by the State to resolve the issue of the protection of Ireland’s raised bog SACs (designated or nominated for designation in accordance with the EU Habitats Directives) and natural heritage areas (NHAs) which are designated under Irish legislation (Wildlife Acts). These efforts have included the establishment of the Peatlands Council, intensive and on-going engagement with turf cutting interests, the farming community, non-governmental organisations and with the European Commission, as well as the establishment of a long-term compensation scheme for affected turf cutters.

The Department is leading on the State’s efforts to conserve manage and restore protected raised bog peatlands, in co-operation with these stakeholders through the following policies and initiatives:

- The 2014 Review of Raised Bog Natural Heritage Area Network.
- Peatlands Enforcement.
- Cessation of Turf Cutting Compensation Scheme/Voluntary Bog Purchase Scheme.

Between 1997 and 2002, Ireland nominated a total of 53 raised bog sites for designation as SACs and 75 raised bogs as NHAs. The raised bogs SACs contain most of the functioning remnants of the extensive raised bog complexes that once covered much of the midlands. Ireland has also
identified 50 areas as SACs for the protection of blanket bog. These SACs include lowland and mountain blanket bogs areas predominantly along the western seaboard but also widely distributed on upland areas. A further 73 sites containing blanket bog habitat have been designated as NHAs.

**Raised bog restoration policy**

In recognition of the fact that the same legal regime did not apply to NHAs as to SACs, in April 2011 Government decided to carry out a scientific review of the natural heritage area raised bogs. The main objective of the review was to look at how the NHA network could contribute to conservation objectives, while avoiding unintended impacts on the traditional rights of landowners and turf cutters and, therefore, minimising the cost to the taxpayer arising from compensation.

The review of the raised bog natural heritage area network was published in January 2014. It sets out a series of measures to ensure that Ireland meets its obligations under the EU Habitats Directive, as well as its obligations under the EU environmental impact assessment directive relating to the regulation of turf cutting on NHAs.

The review concluded that Ireland could more effectively achieve conservation of threatened raised bog habitat through focused protection and restoration of a reconfigured network through the following measures:

- the phasing out of turf cutting on 36 existing NHAs, which will remain designated, including seven sites to be divided, with part to be conserved and part de-designated;
- the complete de-designation of 46 NHAs, including the relevant areas of the seven sites to be divided where it has been judged that their conservation potential is expected to be marginal and-or that restoration would be prohibitively expensive for the conservation benefits achieved - the consent of the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is not required for domestic turf cutting on these sites, while large scale or commercial turf cutting is regulated through other consent systems; and,
- the designation as NHAs of 25 currently undesignated raised bogs which are in public ownership or where there is reduced turf cutting pressure. These NHAs are being designated to make up for the loss of habitat within the sites where it is proposed that turf cutting can be allowed to continue.

The total area of active and degraded raised bog under the proposed new network is 765 hectares, in comparison with an area of 694 hectares in the current network. The proposed newly configured network would have a greater area of both active and degraded raised bog still capable of regeneration compared to the current network; in the short to medium term, losses of active bog’s will be reduced due to the lower intensity of recent turf cutting in the new network; costs to the taxpayer will be greatly reduced due to the smaller number of turf cutters required to
stop turf cutting and requiring compensation; and increased potential for more rapid restoration of raised bog due to the inclusion of State-owned lands into the new network.

The National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) Management Plan 2017-2022, also sets out how the raised bog special areas of conservation (SACs) and natural heritage areas (NHAs) are to be managed, conserved and restored into the future and how the needs of turf cutters are to be addressed.

Within that Plan, the protected raised bog restoration programme is set out which aims to restore active raised bog, a priority habitat under the EU Habitats Directive to meet national conservation targets. The programme is being directly managed by the Department with Bord Na Móna engaged as project managers of restoration works being undertaken on State lands in 2019 and 2020.

In tandem with these works the Department is undertaking an EU LIFE funded €5.4m Project, ‘Restoring Active Raised Bogs in Ireland’s Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Network 2016–2020’ to restore habitat on 12 raised bog SAC sites. A project steering group oversees project implementation with monitoring undertaken on behalf of the European Commission by the NEEMO, an entity in charge of assisting EASME (an agency of the Commission) in the monitoring of the LIFE program project.

**Budget 2020: Just transition**

In Budget 2020, €5m in the revenue arising from the increase in carbon tax from €20 per tonne to €26m per tonne was allocated to the Department. This will fund bog restoration and rehabilitation which will restore bogs to their natural habitat and become sinks that absorb carbon. This programme will support the Department to restore 1,800 hectares on up to 9 raised bog designated sites in 2020 across 7 counties with Bord na Móna engaged as project manager and to undertake the restoration works, following a public procurement process.

**Peatlands Enforcement**

An inter-agency programme of monitoring for turf cutting during the season has been put in place involving the Department and the Gardaí, in particular. NPWS arranges for aerial monitoring of the protected raised bogs.

**Cessation of Turf Cutting Compensation Scheme (CTCCS)**

In April 2011, the Government agreed to the setting up of an independently chaired Peatlands Council to assist the Government and stakeholders regarding certain issues related to the management of Ireland’s peatlands and to the establishment of the Cessation of Turf Cutting
Compensation Scheme for active turf cutters effected by the cessation of domestic turf cutting on the raised bog SAC sites. Applicants to the Cessation of Turf Cutting Compensation Scheme administered by the Department may, further to the option of a Departmental review, appeal their case to the Peatlands Council in the event that they are informed that the qualifying criteria of the scheme have not been met. The Council may then make recommendations to the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht on such cases.

**EU Case**
The deterioration of peatlands which are protected within Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) under the Habitats Directive has led to an infringement action being brought against Ireland by the Commission and as a result more effective protection and regulation of potentially damaging activities has been required. Further details on this case is provided in section 3.14.

**Immediate priorities for the coming months**
- Make 2020 annual payments under the Cessation of Turf Cutting Compensation Scheme. €2.3m has been paid out in 2020 annual payments this year so far.
- Relocate up to 54 turf cutters to 4 non-designated relocation sites in counties Galway, Roscommon and Westmeath. 14 bog plots have been allocated at a relocation site in Westmeath and 13 plots have been allocated at a relocation site in Galway. Domestic turf cutting commenced on both sites this year. Another relocation site has been prepared in Galway but it has been agreed that turf cutting will not commence there until 2021 to allow the site time to settle. A legal issue has arisen in relation to the fourth relocation site.
- Commence restoration measures on approximately 1,800 hectares on up to 9 raised bog designated sites.
- Complete the EU LIFE raised bog restoration project on 12 SAC sites.
3.14 Biodiversity Conservation

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**Background**

Globally the planet is losing biodiversity at a rate unprecedented in human history. In Ireland, the Department assesses that 85% of our protected habitats are in poor or bad condition, and 14% of species assessed are considered to be endangered. The number of plants, insects, mammals and birds that are threatened or endangered is growing year on year. Domestically, the Department seeks to promote the conservation of biological diversity through:

- The National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021;
- Management and, where appropriate, expansion of the National Parks and Reserves;
- Management of invasive species; and,
- Designation of SACs and SPAs.

Internationally, the Department services EU working groups on biodiversity, in particular involving discussions at this time on the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030; also the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) participating in the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework discussions which will culminate in the UN Biodiversity Conference 2020 (CBD-COP15) which will represent an important moment in global efforts to protect biodiversity. The timings of the Conference are currently under review in light of the COVID 19 pandemic.

**The National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-21**

The Action Plan outlines the Government’s steps to protect Ireland’s biodiversity and halt species decline. Project Ireland 2040 includes a commitment to invest €60m in protecting Ireland’s natural heritage and biodiversity.

The Plan’s main aims are built around the need for all sectors of society to participate in nature conservation. They are to:

- mainstream biodiversity across the decision making process in the State.
- strengthen the knowledge base underpinning work on biodiversity issues.
- increase public awareness and participation.
- ensure conservation of biodiversity in the wider countryside.
- ensure conservation of biodiversity in the marine environment.
expand and improve on the management of protected areas (such as national parks and special areas of conservation) and protected species.

- enhance the contribution to international biodiversity issues.

**Invasive species**

Invasive alien species are plants and animals which are transported by human action from their natural home, and then survive, reproduce and spread in a new territory. Some have considerable negative impacts on the ecology of their new location and may have serious economic and environmental consequences. Invasive species are one of the major, and growing, causes of biodiversity loss and species extinction. They have a considerable impact on many sectors across Ireland and cause negative effects in key sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, forestry, transport and tourism.

The Department has been seeking to combat the spread of invasive species through:

- the operation of an Invasive Species Fund which will provide funding over 2019-2021 to local authority led projects.
- transposition into Irish law of the EU Regulation on Invasive Alien Species (see below).
- Annual targeted programme of works to manage the spread of the invasive species *Rhododendron ponticum* in Killarney National Park.
- working with the other state agencies such as IFI and Transport Infrastructure Ireland.
- working with the National Biodiversity Data Centre (funded by the Heritage Council) which collates and distributes data on records of any new species and also works on public awareness.

Invasive Alien Species Regulations 2020 are at an advanced stage of drafting and are required to give full effect to the EU IAS Regulation (1143/2014) in Ireland. These new domestic regulations will ban the import and sale of invasive species, of European and of national concern, in compliance with EU trade rules (TFEU). These new regulations will update and strengthen the legislative framework in Ireland to tackle invasive alien species which are a major driver globally of biodiversity loss.

The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization is an international agreement which aims at sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources, between users and providers, in a fair and equitable way. The agreement entered into force on October 12, 2014, as a supplement to the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD - the overarching global framework for biodiversity). At its heart, the intention of the Protocol is to better ensure equitable access to and sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources (biological materials). The EU ABS Regulation (511/2014) gives effect to the two of the three main elements of the Protocol:

- Equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use in the EU of genetic resources; and,
Arrangements for the monitoring of the uses of these materials.

The EU Regulation does not provide for regulation of access to Member State genetic resources; this is left to Member States to apply themselves, as they see fit, in line with the Protocol. The EU ABS Regulation was transposed in Ireland by Statutory Instrument (Ratification of the Nagoya Protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity – SI 253/2019) which set out a specific legislative framework around access to genetic resources in third countries and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from utilization of these resources in Ireland. The next step in the process of putting a clear and effective ABS framework in place in Ireland is ratification of the Nagoya Protocol itself. Ratification will require a joint Memorandum for Government prepared by the Department and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. This is currently at draft stage in the Department.

**EU funded LIFE projects**
The Department is currently operating two projects co-funded by the EU LIFE fund, and is starting up two new projects, described below.

- **KerryLIFE** is working with farmers and foresters to improve water quality for the freshwater pearl mussel in 2 river catchments in Kerry. It concludes in the summer of 2020.
- **BogLIFE** is working to restore 12 raised bogs in the midlands.
- **Crex LIFE** starts in 2020 for 5 years with a budget of nearly €5 million and will restore the corncrake population in north Donegal, west Mayo and Galway.
- **LIFE IP-PAF Wild Atlantic Nature**, also starts this year and encompasses promotion of the Natura 2000 network nationally in conjunction with rehabilitation work on the blanket bog network in Donegal and Connacht.
- Both **CrexLIFE** and **LIFE Wild Atlantic nature** were due to start in January 2020 but start-up was delayed by the pandemic, and recruitment of the project teams is starting now, i.e. end June. It is crucial to agree the overall messaging for Wild Atlantic Nature, particularly as it relates to future turf cutting in the blanket bog network.
- The Department is also working on securing funding for two further LIFE projects – **LIFE On Machair** and **LIFE Strategic Nature Project (SNaP)** for Ireland. Strategic Nature Projects are large in scale and are aimed at mainstreaming EU nature and biodiversity objectives and priorities into other policies and financing instruments. If successful in our application, the SNaP will facilitate the delivery of result-based approaches, the creation of a data hub for the management of conservation measures nationally, and will seek to integrate and co-ordinate conservation actions in the biodiversity, water, agriculture and marine sectors.
- There is considerable potential to seek to draw down EU funds for additional LIFE projects to support the delivery of necessary conservation measures within the Natura network.
3.15 EU Cases

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsible Business Unit</th>
<th>Budget</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Parks and Wildlife Service – Science and Biodiversity</td>
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<tr>
<th>Principal Officers</th>
<th>Contact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brian Lucas/Ciaran O’Keeffe</td>
<td><a href="mailto:brian.lucas@chg.gov.ie">brian.lucas@chg.gov.ie</a> <a href="mailto:ciaran.okeeffe@chg.gov.ie">ciaran.okeeffe@chg.gov.ie</a> (01) 888 3295</td>
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Background
There are six open infringement proceedings at various stages, five of which relate to implementation of the Habitats Directive and one to Invasive Species Regulations:

1. European Court of Justice Judgement C418/04 (Birds Case).

   Ireland’s compliance with the European Court Judgement in this Case is largely achieved but requires the finalisation of Statutory Instruments for 4 undesignated Special Protection Areas under the Birds Directive and completion of Hen Harrier Threat Response Plan.

2. European Commission Infringement 2010/2161 (Peatland Case).

   There is on-going engagement with the European Commission and a draft Programme of Measures (POM) has been the subject of discussion. The POM outlines the measures which the State is undertaking as regards the conservation, management and restoration of protected peatlands, in response to the issues raised by the Commission. The measures are rooted in a number of key policy documents approved by the Government - the 2016 National Peatlands Strategy, the 2014 Review of Raised Bog Natural Heritage Area Network and the National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation Management Plan 2017-2022 (published in 2017).

   3 SPA Statutory Instruments will be prepared for signature by the Minister shortly. For the remaining candidate SPA (West Donegal Islands), there is one appeal outstanding which is due to be heard by the Designated Areas Appeals Advisory Board. The appeal may go ahead in accordance with public health COVID-19 pandemic guidelines once it is confirmed that travel to the island may take place and the Board members and the appellant agree on a date for the appeal.

This case was opened in February 2015 and is the subject of ongoing discussion with the Commission. The case by European Commission asserts that Ireland had failed to comply with the Habitats Directive by failing to:

(a) Formally designate its Special Areas of Conservation within 6 years of the date on which the Commission adopted the candidate SACs as sites of community importance, 276 sites have been formally designated by Statutory Instrument and a further 11 Statutory Instruments will be prepared for signature by the Minister shortly;

(b) Establish detailed site-specific conservation objectives for its SACs; and,

(c) Establish necessary conservation measures that correspond to the ecological requirements of the habitat and species present within these sites.

While a) and b) above are progressing at a good speed, section c), in regard to measures across the whole national territory, is an immense task which requires substantial involvement of other Departments, most notably DAFM. A range of measures will be required in order to support the work required to deliver on the necessary conservations measures.

4. European Commission Pilot 5104/13 (Pearl Mussel Case).

This case was opened in 2015, but has now been rolled up into the Designation and Conservation Measures case (above).


This case is at a Pilot stage. It concerns the requirement to designate further marine protected areas, mostly but not entirely in offshore waters. In this regard, collaboration with DCCAE and the Marine Institute on two marine survey programmes has been of great value. The first investigated the distribution of seabirds, whales and dolphins in the offshore, and will move shortly into a second phase; the second mapped and recorded deep sea biodiversity along the continental shelf.

The Department is currently entering in discussions with DCCAE and DAFM on the requirements for designation and how that might interact with wind energy, hydrocarbon exploration and fisheries.

6. European Commission Infringement 2017/2171 (ABS Case). This case is in the process of being closed by the Comission, following Ireland’s implementation of EU ABS Regulation via SI 253/2019.
4.1. Bodies under the aegis of the Division

The Division is responsible for two bodies under its aegis set out in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agencies</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Executive</th>
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<tr>
<td>Heritage Council</td>
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<td>Michael Parsons</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Virginia Teehan</td>
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<td>North/South Body</td>
<td>Division</td>
<td>John Mc Donagh</td>
</tr>
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<td>(Acting)</td>
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All agencies are required to comply with the operation and governance arrangements set out for them in the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. For the majority, with the exception of the North-South Bodies, the following governance typically arrangements apply:

- Designated liaison officer at PO level;
- Agreement of an oversight arrangement between the Department and the Board of the agency;
- Agreement of an annual performance delivery agreement (PDA) between the executive of the agency and Department including an annual budget and programme of work;
- Quarterly liaison meetings held to oversee delivery of the annual PDA, annual expenditure and preparation for the annual estimates process. It also typically sets out activity targets for the year, defines the outputs and outcome indicators against which performance will be measured as well as setting out the responsibilities of the Department, including the provision of grant funding and any conditions attaching to the funding provision;
- The liaison unit and Department’s HR unit provide sanction for filling posts.
The Department also supports the work of Waterways Ireland. WI operates under the policy direction of the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) and the Ministers of the Sponsor Department, and is accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Houses of the Oireachtas. Waterways Ireland is co-sponsored by the Northern Ireland Department for Infrastructure, led by Minister Nichola Mallon.

Responsibility for fulfilling the Department’s role as co-sponsor of Waterways Ireland falls to the Heritage Division. Liaison with Waterways Ireland is managed by the Waterways Ireland & North South Co-operation Unit under the National Parks and Wildlife Service – Strategy and Regional Operations Branch (Trevor Donnelly).

Details on the Heritage Council is provided in Section C of this brief.
6.2 Details of Waterways Ireland Expenditure

REV 2020 provided for the allocation of €25.7 million to Waterways Ireland to support its activities in maintaining and enhancing a range of important waterways including the Shannon, Barrow, Royal and Grand canals, the Erne System and the Ulster Canal. The majority of this funding is current (some €20.7 million) and relates in large part to the pay and pensions costs of Waterway’s staff and retired staff. Capital investment of €5.5 million took place in 2019.

Waterways Ireland also receives funding from the Department for Communities and the Department for Infrastructure in Northern Ireland.

This funding makes an important contribution to maintaining the impetus around north-south co-operation established by the Good Friday Agreement and enhancing the administrative relationship between the two jurisdictions. Importantly, this funding programme protects key tourism and infrastructural resources of our waterways network.
6.3 Waterways Ireland – Oversight and Governance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsible Business Unit</th>
<th>National Parks and Wildlife Service – Strategy and Regional Operations</th>
<th>Budget</th>
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<tr>
<td>Principal Officer</td>
<td>Trevor Donnelly</td>
<td>Contact</td>
<td><a href="mailto:trevor.donnelly@chg.gov.ie">trevor.donnelly@chg.gov.ie</a></td>
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<td>(01) 888 3209</td>
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Waterways Ireland (WI) was set up on 2 December 1999, being the largest of 6 North South Implementation Bodies established under the British-Irish Agreement Act 1999.

Co-funding is provided from the Department and the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) for Northern Ireland to the Body in accordance with budgets approved by the NSMC for the management, maintenance, development and restoration of the inland waterways.

Over 2018-2027, capital investment will be allocated to Waterways Ireland by the Department under its Project Ireland 2040 sectoral plan, *Investing in our Culture, Heritage and Language*.

A Monitoring Committee comprised of Department, Department for Infrastructure, and Waterways Ireland focuses and facilitates discussion on progress against Waterways Ireland’s Business Plan objectives and targets including: performance against Key Strategic Objectives, financial performance, progress and status of major and ongoing capital projects against expected timeframes and budget and any issues and changes that might impact upon Waterways Ireland and the environment in which it operates.

Oversight and governance is also ensured through regular ongoing communication with the Northern Sponsor Department and the Body.

This Department has close, effective liaisons directly with the Department for Infrastructure which is also important in contributing to supporting the North South process.

There is also on-going liaison with the NSMC Secretariat and the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade’s Anglo Irish Division as appropriate.

**Major and ongoing capital projects**

- **Ulster Canal**: In May 2018, the Government approved a proposal to develop the amenity of the 13.5km section of the Ulster Canal from Upper Lough Erne to Clones on a phased basis. Given that the Central Border area will be most directly affected by Brexit, the development of the Ulster Canal is a statement of intent to mitigate its impacts in the Region, with potential to stimulate economic activity, giving a much needed boost to job creation and the opportunity to attract significant numbers of visitors to the area. In line
with the Department’s Statement of Strategy to “Continue to maintain and develop the navigable inland waterways, principally for recreational purposes” and the commitments in the Programme for Government, the Department is strongly supporting Ulster Canal development.

- **Shannon Navigation Works:** A strategic response to address flooding in the Shannon has been put in place including the establishment of the Shannon Flood Risk Stage Agency Co-operation Group. The partners in this Group are OPW, Bord na Móna, ESB, Irish Water, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Inland Fisheries Ireland, Environmental Protection Agency, the County & City Management Association and Waterways Ireland.

  On 6 December 2019, the Government approved a range of activities undertaken by the Shannon Flood Risk Stage Agency Co-operation Group including OPW funding of €7m to Waterways Ireland to implement a co-ordinated strategic programme of maintenance activities for the River Shannon and for the removal of a number of constrictions in the Callows region.

  This Department has now formally requested the first tranche of funding to enable the preparatory phase of works for the current year under the purview by Waterways Ireland.

- **Meelick Weir:** Meelick Weir regulates the navigation level for that section of waterway between Athlone (Lough Ree) and Meelick (Lough Derg). The weir and its walkway link the historic village of Meelick (Galway) to Lusmagh (Offaly) The weir was damaged in the storms of 2009 and the walkway closed following further storms in 2015/16.

  In March 2019, the Department announced a €3.2 million investment by Waterways Ireland in the restoration and replacement of the weir walkway. The work involves the tilting of weir boards, which will be a significant improvement in health and safety for employees managing water levels on site, along with the other critical infrastructure requirements (replacement of lock gates, jetty replacement, embankment works and bridge strengthening).

  Meelick Weir is also a major tourism attraction on the River Shannon and its restoration shows the Government’s commitment to supporting all aspects of rural Ireland’s economic development.

  The development and re-instatement is critical to the management of the navigation and regulation of water levels. Reopening the connectivity between the communities of Lusmagh and Meelick is a significant gain for both communities. The project is expected to be completed in 2020.
**Major and ongoing capital projects – City Block 19**

Waterways Ireland is the freehold owner of City Block 19 - a triangular piece of land comprising 1.2 hectares (2.965 acres) of mainly disused land and is located at the confluence of the River Dodder, the River Liffey and Grand Canal Dock. 0.485 ha (1.2 acres) of the site is held under a 99 year lease in favour of the National Asset Management Agency (NAMA), with 45 years of the lease remaining. The entire site is part of the North Lotts & Grand Canal Dock Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) which has a planning requirement for 40% residential, 30% commercial and 30% community and/or cultural site usage mix.

Waterways Ireland’s objectives for City Block 19 are:

1. Secure a long-term sustainable income from development of the site
2. Add economic value to the wider Dublin economy
3. Protect and preserve the historical and cultural significance of the site
4. Retain a prominent Waterways Ireland presence in the area
5. Ensure the site is developed to support the recreational animation of Grand Canal Dock

Waterways Ireland is currently considering options for the site including discussions with NAMA in regard to its leasehold of a portion of the site.

**Current challenges – Chief Executive Officer**

The now former Chief Executive of Waterways Ireland resigned from her post with effect from 31 January 2019.

The Chief Executive of all North South Implementation Bodies is appointed by the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC). The absence of a Northern Ireland Executive and the consequential absence of the NSMC has meant that recruitment of a substantive Chief Executive Officer for Waterways Ireland has not been possible. With the necessary sanctions and agreement of both Sponsor Departments, an Acting Chief Executive has been operating as an interim measure since April 2019.

While recent political events in the North will see the full restoration of the institutions of the Good Friday Agreement including the Executive, the Assembly and the NSMC, it is unlikely that the newly formed NSMC will be in a position to substantiate the appointment of a Chief Executive Officer to Waterways Ireland before the expiration of the Acting CEO’s current contract. Therefore the Acting CEO’s contract will be extended until January 2021.
The Joint Secretariat of the NSMC have now confirmed that the process may be initiated to recruit a substantive CEO without reverting to, or obtaining prior agreement from the NSMC on the basis that the selection process would be subject to:

- The post advertised at the same grade, salary band and terms of conditions of the previous substantive CEO;
- Operation of a recruitment and selection process materially similar to the previously agreed and operated process i.e. usually open competition, public advert, use of PAS etc., and
- NSMC approval sought to the appointment of the preferred candidate at the conclusion of the process.

Sponsor Departments are currently initiating a substantive CEO recruitment process based on the aforementioned criteria.

**Current Challenges – Additional Senior Management Vacancies**

There are in excess of 10 additional senior roles within Waterways Ireland that have remained vacant for some time. The Director of Operations post is vacant and the current Director of Business Development has recently tendered his resignation. As a result, Waterways Ireland will be seeking Department approval to carryout recruitment campaigns to fill these critical posts in the near future. An organisational and strategic review is ongoing.

**Immediate priorities for the coming months**

- Recruitment of senior managerial staff including Chief Executive.
- Preparation of papers for renewed NSMC plenary/sectoral meetings with a view to obtaining all outstanding NSMC approvals.