

Kerry County Council (KCC)

Castleisland Town Centre First (TCF) Masterplan and Public Realm Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Applicability Screening

Reference: Issue

01 | 5 February 2026

This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client. It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.

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1. Introduction

Arup have been commissioned by Kerry County Council (KCC) to prepare a Town Centre First (TCF) Masterplan for the town of Castleisland (referred to hereinafter as ‘draft Masterplan’), incorporating a detailed Public Realm Plan. The primary objective of the draft Masterplan is to set out a clear and actionable strategy for the future development and revitalisation of Castleisland’s town centre.

The draft TCF Masterplan has been prepared and implemented by the Town Centre Team Town, Regeneration Officers, Local Authority Multi-disciplinary Team, Local community and Business Groups. TCF Town Teams are defined in Town Centre First A Policy Approach for Irish Towns¹ as ‘a group of local residents, business people, community representatives and other stakeholders who come together to make their area a better place to live, work, visit and invest. They represent diverse sectors and backgrounds. They have a unique position in the community to become ‘local experts’ on their area and to take a lead on the development of interventions that can make positive long-term changes for the town.’

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is defined as ‘the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt that plan or programme.’ (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2004).

Arup has been commissioned by KCC to carry out Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Applicability Screening of the draft Masterplan. The Applicability Stage of Screening, with which this report relates is defined as ‘The first and most basic task is to determine if the Plan/Programme (P/P) falls within the scope of the SEA Directive and transposing legislation, and to confirm if it constitutes a P/P that requires mandatory SEA’. Full SEA Screening is defined in the relevant guidance documents as ‘the process for deciding whether a particular plan, other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would be likely to have significant environmental effects, and would thus warrant SEA.’

The purpose of this document is to carry out a screening exercise to determine, in respect of the draft Masterplan, if SEA applies in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment (“SEA Directive”) as transposed by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 435 of 2004), as amended.

This SEA Applicability Screening Report provides the findings of the SEA screening process for the draft Masterplan.

¹ DHLGH, DRCD (2022) Town Centre First A Policy Approach for Irish Towns. Available at: [gov.ie - Town Centre First Policy \(www.gov.ie\)](http://gov.ie - Town Centre First Policy (www.gov.ie))

2. Strategic Environmental Assessment

SEA is a systematic, on-going process for evaluation, at the earliest possible stage, of the environmental quality and consequences of implementing certain plans and programmes on the environment. It is intended to provide the framework for influencing decision-making at an earlier stage when plans and programmes - which give rise to individual projects - are being developed. SEA should result in more sustainable development through the systematic appraisal of policy options.

The SEA process is comprised of the following steps:

- **Screening:** Decision on whether or not SEA of a Plan or Programme is required. This is the current stage of the SEA process to which this report relates. If it is determined that the SEA Directive applies, then a SEA Screening is completed.

If SEA is considered to be required following Screening, the following steps are required:

- **Scoping:** Consultation with the defined statutory bodies on the scope and level of detail to be considered in the assessment,
- **Environmental Assessment:** An assessment of the likely significant impacts on the environment as a result of the Plan or Programme.
- **Preparation of an Environmental Report.**
- **Consultation on the Plan or Programme and associated Environmental Report.**
- **Evaluation of the submissions and observations made on the Plan or Programme and Environmental Report and**
- **Issuance of a SEA Statement identifying how environmental considerations and consultation have been integrated into the Final Plan or Programme.**

This process is outlined in Figure 1.

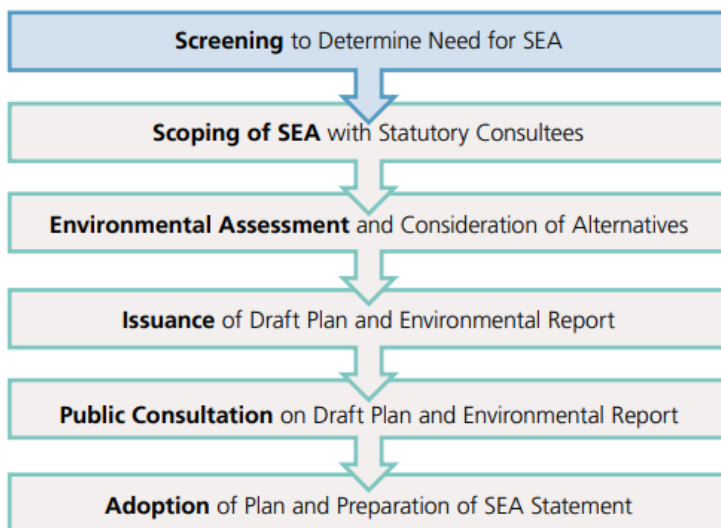


Figure 1 How SEA Screening relates to the overall SEA process

3. Guidance and Legislation

3.1 Legislative Overview

The SEA Directive - *Directive 2001/42/EC on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment* - requires that an environmental assessment be carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

The objective of the SEA Directive is *'to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans...with a view to promoting sustainable development'* (Article 1 SEA Directive 2001).

In Ireland, the SEA Directive has been transposed into national legislation through the following regulations:

- European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations (S.I. 435/2004) as amended by S.I. No. 463/2025; and
- Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations (S.I. 456/2025).

As the draft Masterplan is not a 'development plan', as defined by the regulations, S.I. No. 463/2025, is the application legislation to the draft Masterplan.

3.2 Guidance Documents

A number of national guidance documents on SEA were reviewed in the preparation of this SEA Screening Report, including:

- Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidelines for Regional Assemblies and Planning Authorities (DHLGH, 2022)
- Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland (EPA, 2013)
- Good Practice Guidance on SEA Screening (EPA, 2021)
- Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC): Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment- Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2004)
- Implementation of Directive 2001/42 on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment (European Commission, ND)
- SEA Resource Manual for Local and Regional Planning Authorities (EPA, 2015)
- Integrating Climatic Factors into Strategic Environmental Assessment in Ireland - A Guidance Note (EPA, 2019) and
- Synthesis Report on Developing a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies For Plans and Programmes in Ireland (EPA, 2003).

4. Draft TCF Masterplan

4.1 Background

As previously discussed, the primary objective of the draft Masterplan is to set out a clear and actionable strategy for the future development and revitalisation of Castleisland’s town centre.

The draft TCF Masterplan has been prepared and implemented by the TCF Team Town, Regeneration Officers, Local Authority Multi-disciplinary Team, Local community and Business Groups. TCF Town Teams are defined in Town Centre First A Policy Approach for Irish Towns² as ‘a group of local residents, business people, community representatives and other stakeholders who come together to make their area a better place to live, work, visit and invest. They represent diverse sectors and backgrounds. They have a unique position in the community to become ‘local experts’ on their area and to take a lead on the development of interventions that can make positive long-term changes for the town.’

4.2 Planning Policy

4.2.1 Introduction

The future development and regeneration of Castleisland is shaped by a comprehensive framework of planning policies at national, regional, and local levels. This section outlines the strategic planning context that guides the actions and recommendations set out in the Draft Masterplan. These policies are essential in ensuring that future projects align with overarching goals for compact growth, sustainability, and rural regeneration.

4.2.2 National Level

At the national level, Project Ireland 2040, comprising the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the National Development Plan (NDP) 2021–2030, sets the vision for Ireland’s spatial and economic development. The NPF focuses on promoting compact and sustainable growth, revitalising town centres, and making better use of existing infrastructure and underutilised land. The NDP supports this vision with investment strategies aimed at delivering infrastructure, stimulating the economy, and enabling a green and inclusive recovery. Complementary strategies like ‘Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy’ and ‘TCF – A policy approach for Irish towns’ also emphasise the regeneration of rural towns and villages, promoting vibrant, lived-in communities by supporting local economies and addressing vacancy and underutilisation.

4.2.3 Regional Level

At the regional level, the Southern Regional Assembly (SRA) delivers the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), translating national objectives to the Southern Region, including County Kerry. The RSES supports balanced regional growth and addresses demographic challenges by fostering resilient, inclusive communities. For Castleisland, this includes recognising its role in the broader Tralee-Killarney hub and supporting its continued evolution as a key service, economic, and residential centre within the county.

4.2.4 Local Level

Locally, the Kerry County Development Plan (CDP) 2022–2028 and the Killarney Municipal District Local Area Plan (LAP) 2018–2024 provide statutory planning guidance in the draft Masterplan area. These documents reinforce the importance of compact settlement, sustainable development, and rural vitality. Specifically, the CDP identifies the preparation of a Masterplan for Castleisland as a key objective, with a focus on revitalising the town centre, enhancing its retail offering, promoting tourism, and attracting new economic activity. The Killarney Municipal District LAP further positions Castleisland within the Tralee/Killarney economic corridor and supports its continued development as a well-connected, high-quality market town with a distinctive identity.

² DHLGH, DRCD (2022) Town Centre First A Policy Approach for Irish Towns. Available at: [gov.ie - Town Centre First Policy \(www.gov.ie\)](http://gov.ie - Town Centre First Policy (www.gov.ie))

4.3 Draft TCF Masterplan Overview

The draft Masterplan is a non-statutory community level plan produced for Castleisland, County Kerry. The draft Masterplan has been driven by a Town Team, supported by the Town Regeneration Officer and a multi-disciplinary technical team in KCC. Key to the success of the draft Masterplan is the local community and stakeholders who have come together to help shape and implement the Masterplan.

The Vision for Castleisland is to be a vibrant, inclusive, and resilient market town, building on its heritage while embracing innovation and sustainability. It aspires to be a great place to live, work, visit, and raise a family, serving as a vital hub for the surrounding rural hinterland.

To achieve this vision, the draft Masterplan is structured around eight interrelated themes:

- Community
- Age-Friendly
- Schools
- Sports
- Leisure & Recreation
- Daily Basics
- Tourism
- Culture and Heritage
- Sustainability & Resilience; and
- Prosperity.

These themes emerged from community priorities and guide targeted interventions.

The strategic themes and objectives are translated in the draft Masterplan into a series of potential Project Initiatives. The core initiatives included in the draft Masterplan include:

1. Strengthening the Town Core - Main Street
2. Strengthening the Town Core - The Mart Area
3. Adaptive Reuse of Buildings - Unlocking potential
4. Civic Centre
5. Connecting Communities
6. Castleisland Town Park Project
7. Ivy Leaf Park Community Regeneration Project
8. Castle Heritage Regeneration Project
9. Environmental Improvements – Revitalising Streets Transforming paces
10. Gateway Enhancements – Crafting Memorable Entrances to Castleisland
11. Events and Animation – A Diverse Calendar of Branded Events.

The Masterplan outlines a process for Implementation, including short, medium, and long-term interventions, funding pathways, delivery partners, and a Delivery Roadmap to ensure the successful realisation of Castleisland’s shared community vision.

4.4 Plan Area

Castleisland is a regional town located in County Kerry. Castleisland is strategically situated at the junction of two key national routes: the N21, which connects Tralee to Limerick, and the N23, providing direct access to the N22 towards Farranfore. This advantageous location places Castleisland at the heart of County Kerry, with excellent connectivity to major towns such as Tralee and Killarney, as well as Kerry Airport, just 10 km to the southwest.

KCC is the responsible local authority for the area. Refer to Figure 2 for Castleisland's location.



Figure 2 Castleisland (Source: TCF Masterplan for the town of Castleisland, Arup, KCC)

5. SEA Screening Methodology

5.1 Overview

The approach to SEA Screening broadly follows the SEA Decision Tree adapted from the research report Development of SEA Methodologies for Plans and Programmes (P/P) in Ireland (Scott and Marsden, 2001), the adaptation of such is shown in Figure 3 below.

According to the EPA guidance, the screening process comprises three principal stages:

1. Applicability
2. Screening
3. Determination.

The guidance states that the overall characteristics of the plan or programme should first be considered, by means of Stage 1 ‘Applicability’ check to see if it falls within the requirements of the SEA Directive.

Should this Stage 1 Applicability check determine that the plan or programme is of a type that falls within the requirements of the SEA Directive, the potential environmental significance of implementing the proposed plan or programme should then be considered, against the significance criteria outlined in Annex II (2) of the SEA Directive (Stage 2 ‘Screening’).

EPA guidance for the Screening process is outlined in Figure 3.

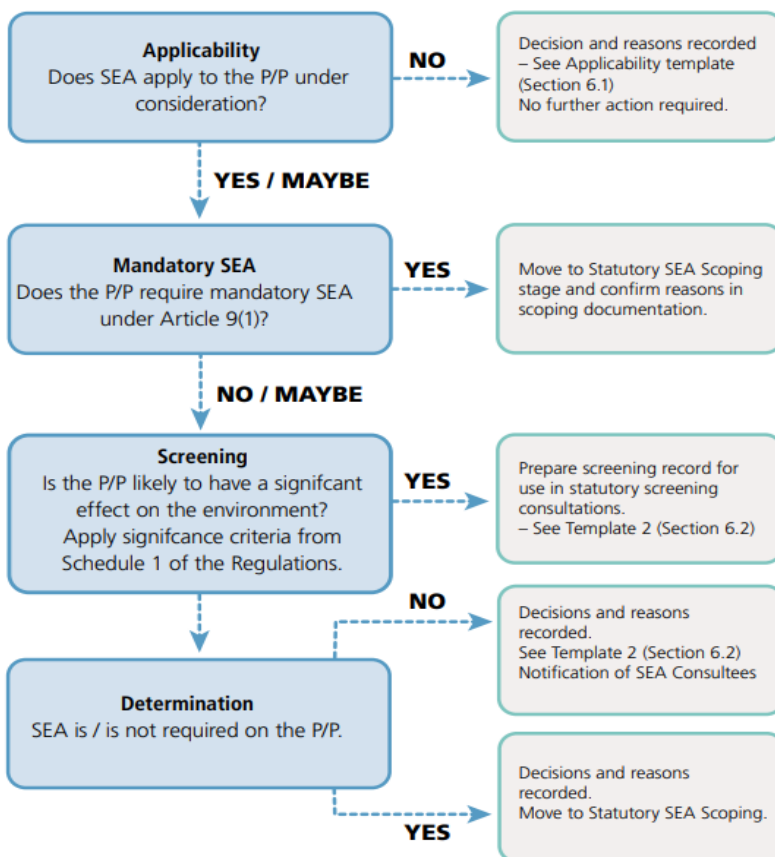


Figure 3 SEA Screening Process under S.I. 435/2004, as amended by S.I. No. 463/2025 Source: (EPA, 2021)

The three principal stages – applicability, screening and determination of screening have been summarised as follows:

- **Stage 1: Applicability** (including mandatory requirement) - To determine the applicability of SEA to the Plan/Programme (P/P) maker and P/P and/or where relevant to confirm if mandatory SEA is required. The first step of SEA Screening is to determine the mandatory requirements if SEA is required under the SEA Directive. Refer to Section 6 of this report for further details on whether or not the draft Masterplan is considered to constitute a P/P under the SEA Directive, and Section 7 for whether SEA is or is not determined to be required under the SEA Directive.

If the P/P is determined to constitute a P/P under the SEA Directive, an Applicability Table is completed (as included in 6.1 of this report) and with this analysis it can be identified whether the P/P constitutes a P/P under the SEA Directive and whether the P/P does or does not require SEA under the SEA Directive.

Where there is uncertainty about the nature of the P/P and whether it may give rise to significant effects on the environment, the P/P should move to Stage 2 Screening as the Plan cannot be screened out for SEA or AA and requires a more detailed screening assessment. Refer to Stage 2 Screening below and Section 5.2 of this report for further details.

- **Stage 2: Screening** - To examine whether a P/P which relates to use of a small area at local level, or a minor modification to a plan or programme listed under the SEA Directive, or a P/P other than those listed under the SEA Directive, but which sets the framework for development consent, is likely to have significant effects on the environment.
- **Stage 3: Determination** - Where screening of non-mandatory P/P is required, a formal determination on the outcome is required.

Where it is considered that the P/P does require SEA, the plan maker should advise that they will move forward to SEA scoping.

Detailed descriptions of the Screening Stages have been outlined in Section 5.2 – Section 5.4.

5.2 Stage 1 ‘Applicability’

The Applicability Stage of Screening includes the mandatory requirements. Under S.I. No. 435 of 2004 as amended by S.I. No. 463/2025, plans and programmes (P/P) are defined as:

“plans and programmes” means P/P, as well as any modifications to them

(a) which are subject to preparation and/or adoption by an authority at national, regional or local level or which are prepared by an authority for adoption, through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government, and

(b) which are required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions.

Should the plan fall under the definition of ‘plans and programmes’, then the requirement to carry out environmental assessment is dependent on the following:

- *which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism and town and country planning or land use, and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, or*
- *which are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site but, either individually or in combination with other plans, are likely to have a significant effect on any such site.*

If these triggers are met, then an assessment of potential significant effects on the environment is required to determine the need for SEA.

Under S.I. 456/2025, the definition of ‘plan’ has the meaning assigned to it in section 198(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2024, included as follows:

“plan” means—

- (a) National Planning Framework or a revision to a National Planning Framework,
- (b) National Planning Statement, an amendment to a National Planning Statement or a revocation of a National Planning Statement,
- (c) a revocation of guidelines issued by the Minister under section 28 of the Act of 2000 and continued in force by virtue of section 27,
- (d) a regional spatial and economic strategy or a revision to a regional spatial and economic strategy,
- (e) an amendment to a regional spatial and economic strategy as provided for in subsection (2) of section 37,
- (f) a development plan or a variation of a development plan,
- (g) an amendment to a development plan as provided for in subsection (2) of section 62,
- (h) an urban area plan, an amendment to an urban area plan or a revocation of an urban area plan,
- (i) a priority area plan, an amendment to a priority area plan or a revocation of a priority area plan,
- (j) a coordinated area plan, an amendment to a coordinated area plan or a revocation of a coordinated area plan other than a revocation in accordance with subsection (3) of section 77,
- (k) a direction in respect of a regional spatial and economic strategy as provided for in section 40,
- (l) an order under subsection (3) of section 68,
- (m) a direction in respect of a development plan as provided for in section 65,
- (n) a direction in respect of an urban area plan, a priority area plan or a coordinated area plan as provided for in section 80, and
- (o) an urgent direction in respect of a development plan as provided for in section 67;’)

The Applicability Stage of Screening consists of a four-step process. as outlined in Table 1 below:

Table 1 Stage 1 ‘Applicability’ Steps Source: (EPA, 2021)

Step 1:	Establish the status of the plan or programme-making body Is the P/P prepared and/or adopted by an authority at national, regional or local level or prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government?
Step 2:	Establish the nature of the plan or programme Is the P/P required by legislative, regulatory, or administrative provisions?
Step 3:	Check the plan or programme is not exempt Is the sole purpose of the P/P for national defence, civil emergency or finance / budget?
Step 4:	Check if the plan or programme requires mandatory SEA Is the P/P prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecoms, tourism, town and country planning or land use and does the P/P set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in the Annexes of the EIA Directive; or Will the P/P require assessment under Art. 6 or 7 of the EU Habitats Directive?

There are three possible outcomes following Stage 1 Applicability Screening:

1. **The SEA Directive does not apply** - The P/P is not of a type which falls within the remit of the SEA Directive / SEA Regulations. It is recommended as good practice to keep a note of the deliberations alongside the P/P on the relevant website, alongside the AA screening determination. There is no requirement to notify the environmental authorities.
2. **The SEA Directive does apply** - The P/P is of a type which falls within the remit of the SEA Directive / SEA Regulations and requires mandatory SEA. Proceed to SEA Scoping and statutory consultation with the designated environmental authorities. The Screening outcome should be confirmed within the SEA Scoping Report.

3. **The SEA Directive may apply** - The P/P may be within the remit of the SEA Directive as either it relates to use of a small area at local level or minor modifications to a relevant P/P, it is a P/P which may set the framework for future development consent even though not listed as a P/P type, or there is uncertainty in relation to any of the provisions considered at the Applicability Stage, and so a case-by-case determination will be required. Proceed to Stage 2 Screening.

An Applicability Screening template (**‘Template 1’**) is provided in the EPA guidance document and is utilised in Section 6.1 of this SEA Screening Report.

5.3 Stage 2 ‘Screening’

Stage 2 consists of determining, on a case-by-case basis, if SEA is required for a Plan or Programme which has characteristics that may give rise to significant effects or for which there is uncertainty on key characteristics. Although an SEA Screening Report is not a mandatory requirement in the legislation it has become embedded good practice and is the recommended approach in this guidance note.

The Screening Stage consists of a four-step process, outlined in Table 2, as set out in the EPA’s Good Practice Guidance on SEA Screening Report.

Table 2 Summarised Stage 2 ‘Screening’ Steps Source: (EPA, 2021)

Step 5:	Describe the characteristics of the P/P and the receiving environment including any environmental problems.
Step 6:	Identify the potential for significant environmental effects
Step 7:	Statutory consultation with Designated Environmental Authorities
Step 8:	Draft Determination

Stage 2 of the SEA Screening methodology consists of an environmental significance screening, which may be undertaken to assess whether a plan or programme, which has not been screened out by the ‘Applicability Stage’, is likely to result in significant environmental effects and should therefore, be taken forward for SEA.

An SEA Screening template (‘Template 2’) is provided in the EPA’s Good Practice Guidance on SEA Screening Report.

Annex II of the SEA Directive sets out the “statutory” criteria that should be addressed when undertaking the ‘Screening Stage’. Annex II of the SEA Directive is transposed into national legislation as Schedule 1 ‘Criteria for determining whether a Plan or Programme (or Modification thereto) is likely to have significant effects on the Environment’ of the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004, as amended.

The ‘Significance Criteria’ and sub-criteria are outlined below.

“Criteria for determining whether a Plan or Programme (or Modification thereto) is likely to have significant effects on the Environment.

1. The characteristics of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, having regard, in particular, to:

1. *the degree to which the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;*
2. *the degree to which the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, influences other plans including those in a hierarchy;*
3. *the relevance of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;*
4. *environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme;*
5. *the relevance of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).*

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to

1. *the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;*
2. *the cumulative nature of the effects;*
3. *the transboundary nature of the effects;*
4. *the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents);*
5. *the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);*
6. *the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:*
 - a. *special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;*
 - b. *exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values;*
 - c. *intensive land-use.*

the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status.”

5.4 Stage 3 ‘Determination’

As soon as practicable after making the final determination as to whether SEA is required or not, the plan maker should make a copy of the decision, including, as appropriate, the reasons for requiring or not requiring an environmental assessment, available for public inspection at the P/P offices and on the website.

The P/P maker should also send a copy of the final determination to the relevant SEA environmental authorities notified during screening. This determination should stay linked to the P/P or modification on the website to ensure transparency and provide important information on decision making during the lifetime of the P/P or if any modifications are made.

6. SEA Screening

6.1 Stage 1 – SEA ‘Applicability’

As outlined in Section 5.2, Stage 1 ‘Applicability’ of the SEA Screening methodology constitutes the use of Template 1, based upon the relevant Applicability steps. Template 1 is reproduced as Table 3.

Table 3 Stage 1 ‘Applicability’ of SEA Screening Source: (EPA, 2021)

Section 1: General Details	
Type and title of P/P:	Draft TCF Masterplan
Name of P/P Maker:	KCC
Date:	2026
Section 2: Status of P/P maker	
Is the P/P prepared and/or adopted by an authority at national, regional or local level or prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>The draft Masterplan is being led by KCC. KCC are working alongside Castleisland’s Town Team of local people, Regeneration Officers, Stakeholders and Business Groups. The draft Masterplan is being prepared and facilitated by Arup.</p> <p>A competent authority for the purpose of SEA is defined under S.I. No. 435 of 2004 as amended by S.I. No. 463/2025 <i>“the authority which is, or the authorities which are jointly, responsible for the preparation of a plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme ”</i> .</p> <p>KCC is the local authority for County Kerry. As such, the draft Masterplan can be considered a document prepared by an authority at local level.</p>
Is the P/P required by legislative, regulatory, or administrative provisions?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>The Kerry CDP identifies the preparation of a Masterplan for Castleisland as a key objective, with a focus on revitalising the town centre, enhancing its retail offering, promoting tourism, and attracting new economic activity. Specifically, objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KCDP 4-6 - <i>‘Facilitate and support the development of a Town Centre First Plan for Settlements in collaboration with communities and stakeholders.’</i>; and - KCDP 4-7 - <i>‘Prepare a masterplan for Castleisland and other similar size settlements subject to Town Centre First funding.’</i> <p>Ultimately, it can be considered that the draft Masterplan is required by legislative, regulatory, or administrative provisions.</p>
Section 3: Nature of the P/P	
Is the P/P prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>The primary objective of the draft Masterplan is to set out a clear and actionable strategy for the future development and revitalisation of Castleisland’s town centre. The draft Masterplan is therefore considered to be a plan prepared for the town and country planning, and land use sector.</p>
Does the P/P provide a framework for the development consent for projects listed in the EIA Directive?	<p>No.</p> <p>Potential projects contained within the Draft Masterplan were considered as likely to have potential to provide a framework for the development consent for projects listed in the EIA Directive, detailed as follows:</p> <p>1.</p> <p>The Planning and Development Act 2024 constitutes the principal statutory framework through which the State gives domestic legal effect to the obligations arising under the EIA Directive. Under the Planning and Development Act 2024, the following <i>Infrastructure Projects</i> (Schedule 5 – Development for the purposes of Part 10 - Article 93 – Part 2. 10. (b)) were considered to potentially be applicable to development proposed by the draft Masterplan:</p>

	<p><i>‘Construction of a car-park providing more than 400 spaces, other than a car-park provided as part of, and incidental to the primary purpose of, a development.’</i></p> <p><i>‘Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere.’</i></p> <p>It is noted that the Draft Masterplan proposes to identify a location for an overflow car park. However, this facility will serve as <i>‘a temporary, event-driven parking resource, activated primarily during peak times such as markets, festivals, and other major public events along Main Street’</i>. The Draft Masterplan will not facilitate the development of a permanent car park, the net amount of parking spaces in Castleisland are likely to be reduced or at the very most will stay constant as a result of the Draft Masterplan. Any additional car parking proposed as part of the Draft Masterplan is proposed along existing streets/ roadways.</p> <p>In addition, there will be no urban development facilitated as part of the Draft Masterplan that will involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere.</p> <p>Thus, it is not considered that the Draft Masterplan provides a framework for the development consent for projects listed in Annex II Part 10 (b) of the EIA Directive.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>Further, as the EIA Directive is transposed into Irish law through amendments to the Roads Act 1993, Regulation 8 of the European Union (Roads Act 1993) (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2019 (S.I. No. 279 of 2019) was also reviewed to ascertain whether the proposed bridges identified in the Draft Masterplan, namely, a new shared surface bridge (Barrick’s Street) and a feature bridge (the Castle Heritage Regeneration Project) could constitute a type of proposed road development under Section 50(1)(a)(iv)(b) of the Roads Act 1993, as follows:</p> <p><i>‘(b) the construction of a new bridge or tunnel which would be 100 meters or more in length.’</i></p> <p>However, it is anticipated that the new shared surface bridge (Barrick’s Street) and feature bridge (the Castle Heritage Regeneration Project) will be approximately 20m in length. Thus, it is not considered that the Draft Masterplan provides a framework for the development consent for projects listed under Section 50(1)(a)(iv)(b) of the Roads Act 1993.</p> <p>Overall, it is considered that the Draft Masterplan, in and of itself, does not provide a framework for the development consent for projects listed in the EIA Directive.</p>
<p>Is the P/P likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site which leads to a requirement for Article 6 or 7 assessments?</p>	<p>No.</p> <p>A report for the purposes of Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening has been prepared by Arup on behalf of KCC, the AA Screening report concludes that:</p> <p><i>‘Applying the precautionary principle, and based on the best available scientific information, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Castleisland Town Centre First Masterplan will not result in Likely Significant Effects, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, on any European site.’</i></p>
<p>Section 4: Exemptions</p>	
<p>Is the sole purpose of the P/P to serve national defence or civil emergency or is it a financial/budget P/P or is it co-financed by the current SF/RDF programme?</p>	<p>No.</p> <p>The sole purpose of the Draft Masterplan is not to serve national defence or civil emergency, and the Draft Masterplan is not a financial budget, or co-financed by the current Structural Funds and Regional Development Funds programme.</p>
<p>Section 5: Conclusion</p>	
<p>Does fall within scope:</p> <p>1. The plan does apply to one or more of the sectors in the SEA Directive and does provide a framework for development consent of projects requiring EIA</p> <p>AND/OR</p>	<p>S.I. No. 435 of 2004 as amended by S.I. No. 463/2025, defines ‘plans and programmes’ (P/P) as those:</p> <p><i>“(a) which are subject to preparation and/or adoption by an authority at national, regional or local level or which are prepared by an authority for adoption, through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government, and (b) which are required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions.”</i></p>

<p>the plan is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site and, therefore, requires an assessment under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. SEA is therefore required.</p> <p>2. There is uncertainty about the nature of the P/P and whether it may give rise to significant effects on the environment. The plan cannot be screened out for SEA or AA and requires a more detailed screening assessment.</p> <p>Does NOT fall within scope:</p> <p>3. The plan does not apply to any of the sectors in the SEA Directive and does not provide a framework for development consent of projects requiring EIA,</p> <p>AND</p> <p>The plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site and therefore does not require an assessment under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. SEA is therefore not required.</p> <p>For outcome 1 the plan maker should advise that they will move forward to SEA scoping. For outcome 2 the P/P should move to Stage 2 Screening. For outcome 3 the applicability template should be completed and kept on file.</p>	<p>The Draft Masterplan is being prepared by Arup on behalf of KCC. KCC is an authority at a local level, and the Draft Masterplan is considered to be required by provisions of the Kerry CDP which identifies the preparation of a Masterplan for Castleisland as a key objective. It is therefore a type of ‘plan or programme’ defined under S.I No. 435 of 2004 as amended by S.I. No. 463/2025.</p> <p>As the Draft Masterplan falls under the definition of ‘plans and programmes’, the requirement to carry out environmental assessment is dependent on the Draft Masterplan being of the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism and town and country planning or land use, and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, or</i> • <i>which are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site but, either individually or in combination with other plans, are likely to have a significant effect on any such site.</i> <p>The Draft Masterplan is a plan that is being prepared for the town and country planning, and land use sectors, however, it is not considered to be a plan that, in and of itself, provides a framework for development consent for projects listed in the EIA Directive.</p> <p>Finally, a report for the purposes of AA Screening has been prepared by Arup on behalf of KCC, the AA Screening report concludes that:</p> <p><i>‘Applying the precautionary principle, and based on the best available scientific information, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Castleisland Town Centre First Masterplan will not result in Likely Significant Effects, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, on any European site.’</i></p> <p>Thus, the findings of the Applicability Screening are as follows:</p> <p>The SEA Directive does not apply.</p>
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6.2 Outcome of ‘Stage 1 Applicability’

Following the ‘Stage 1 Applicability’ outcome and having regard to the SEA Decision Tree shown in Figure 1 above, it was determined that the SEA Directive **does not apply** to the Draft Masterplan in Stage 1 of ‘Stage 1 Applicability’.

7. Conclusion

As outlined in Section 6, it is concluded that the SEA Directive does not apply to the Draft Masterplan following the ‘Applicability Stage 1’. The Draft Masterplan is prepared by a local authority, the Draft Masterplan is considered to be required by legislative, regulatory, or administrative provisions, however the Draft Masterplan does not provide a framework for development consent of projects requiring EIA and will not result in Likely Significant Effects, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, on any European site.

According to the EPA Good Practice Guidance on SEA Screening³ (EPA, 2021), as the Draft Masterplan is not of a type which falls within the remit of the SEA Directive / SEA Regulations. It is recommended as good practice to keep a note of the deliberations alongside the Draft Masterplan on the relevant competent authority’s website, alongside the AA screening determination. There is no requirement to notify the environmental authorities.

³ EPA (2021) SEA Screening Good Practice 2021. Available at: [SEA_Screening_GoodPractice_2021.pdf](#)