



Clare County
Development Plan
2023-2029

Draft Clare CDP 2023-2029 - Public Consultation Portal

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Volume 1

Climate Action and Renewable Energy, Shannon Estuary, Marine and Coastal Zone Management, Landscape, Biodiversity, Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure

Volume 3(a) Ennis Municipal District Written Statements and Settlement Maps

Volume 3(b) Shannon Municipal District Written Statements and Settlement Maps

Volume 3(c) Killaloe Municipal District Written Statements and Settlement Maps

Volume 3(d) West Clare Municipal District Written Statements and Settlement Maps

Quilty

Associated Documents

None of the above

Environmental Reports

None of the above

Your Submission

This submission relates to the need to develop an Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan to guide current and future planning developments relating to Seafield, Quilty and in particular, the lands bordering the Carrowmore Point to Spanish Point and Islands Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Mid-Clare Coast Special Protection Area for Birds – an area protected under the European Union Birds Directive. The full submission is contained within the uploaded file.

Location Map



Earthstar Geographics | Esri, FAO, NOAA

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Upload Files

Submission Clare County Council draft County Development Plan 2023 to 2029.pdf,
0.13MB

Submission – Clare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029

This submission relates to the need to develop an Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan to guide current and future planning developments relating to Seafield, Quilty and in particular, the lands bordering the Carrowmore Point to Spanish Point and Islands Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Mid-Clare Coast Special Protection Area for Birds – an area protected under the European Union Birds Directive.

Background

The coastal risk screening tool available online at coastal.climatecentral.org provides a visualisation of the land projected to be below annual flood levels by 2050. It makes for sobering viewing for populations living along the Clare coast. Whole swathes of land bordering the Atlantic north and south of Quilty village and in the Doonbeg area will be particularly impacted by rising sea levels. These locations are already susceptible to coastal erosion. Rising sea levels and other climate change effects will undoubtedly result in flooding problems for more homeowners, farmers and businesses located in these areas potentially within a decade or more. The National Coastal Flood Hazard Mapping tool available online at floodinfo.ie/map/coastal_map/ also demonstrates the locations where flooding events are likely to have the most impact on communities along the Clare coast. As Richard Cantwell, a Senior Spatial Data Scientist commented to the Clare Champion newspaper “Flood risk is one that will increase exponentially, so it’s vital that the necessary infrastructure is in place to cater for the changing Irish landscape.” (clarechampion.ie/coastal-flooding-could-hit-13-3-of-clare-addresses-by-2050/). In the same article the sheer scale of the issue confronting Clare County Council was clearly indicated i.e. 13.3% of Clare addresses could be hit by coastal flooding by 2050.

Problem

Much of the land bordering the beaches located in Seafield runs alongside a mobile sand community complex. This adds to the natural beauty of the area but also makes the land susceptible to wave and wind erosion. In the last two years, the increased footfall from recreational users has added an extra pressure on the farmland bordering the SAC. This pressure from recreational users including unauthorised camping and parking overnight (wild camping) has resultant impacts on the environment in which the bird population is expected to survive. Any commercial, infrastructural, built environment or public realm developments in Seafield and the road network connecting Seafield Pier to Quilty and Clounahinchy that will further add to an unrestricted increase in recreational users, will undoubtedly have a detrimental impact on the sand dune system in Seafield and the related mobile sand community complex. The negative impact of increased levels of footfall across dune systems in Ireland is well understood at national policy level and our need to protect sand dunes well articulated by the Climate Action Regional Offices (CARO) - caro.ie/projects-research/campaigns/sand-dune/how-to-protect-them. With unrestricted and excessive footfall “we run the risk of watching dune systems simply wash away” (southernstar.ie/news/our-dunes-are-dying-but-if-we-move-quickly-we-can-save-them-4218106). In the case of Seafield, this would have a catastrophic impact on homeowners in Seafield and Tromora Castle who rely on the dune system in Seafield to act as a barrier to coastal flooding arising from storms and the over topping of waves at high tide. There must also be a recognition however that the wider Community needs to be able to

access the beach areas in Seafield, Tromora Castle and Clounahinchy. But it is the central point of this submission that the need to provide access to beaches for recreational use does not outweigh the needs of local homeowners and environmentalists who require the sand dune systems to be protected and maintained as a flood defence barrier and marine related ecosystem.

Solution

An Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan running the length of coastline bordering Carrowmore Point to Spanish Point and Islands Special Area of Conservation and including relevant areas along the Mid-Clare Coast Special Protection Area for Birds needs to be developed. To ensure that environmental and biodiversity concerns are not set aside or dismissed in pursuit of private business interests, this plan needs to consult with and involve all impacted landowners and homeowners within the SAC. It is unrealistic to expect Clare County Council to manage climate change issues relating to the SAC by itself. Therefore, a community-led approach, using a participative democracy network following a design thinking process is likely to achieve positive results. Changes in how we manage land bordering the Clare coastline and how recreational users access this same land is inevitable. To avoid conflicts between competing needs, it will however require an integrated plan to guide current and future development. Any resultant plans must be discussed openly and managed in a transparent way. In the next number of years, those of us living in and visiting coastal areas will have to learn to modify our behaviour to better protect our natural environment and related habitats. We have much to learn from the ARK movement (Acts of Restorative Kindness) and the sand dune system in Seafield has the potential to be managed as a coastal ARK for the benefit of all the Community and visitors who are prepared to treat the beaches with respect. In terms of moving people to and from the beaches in Seafield, encouraging more cars to drive into Seafield is not an environmentally sustainable solution. Rather, simple solutions such as Park and Ride and Park and Cycle options in Quilty can be developed cheaply and quickly and should be explored as part of an Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan for Seafield, Quilty and surrounding areas. The Park and Ride and Park and Cycle options would also better support an increase in tourism spend in Quilty village.