

-----Original Message-----

From: Shane [REDACTED]
Sent: 01 April 2020 15:04
To: MSP - Marine Spatial Planning <msp@housing.gov.ie>
Subject: National Marine Planning Framework

Please find attached

Yours faithfully

Shane Kennedy

National Marine Planning Framework discussion

To whom it concerns: My take on regulation of the Maritime area and internal waters.

1. Ships of all/any size should be exempt from regulation other than existing Maritime regulation and COLREGS, unless, maybe, they are deliberately disabled or permanently grounded for use other than as ships.
2. Definition of Foreshore should be clarified. It currently has a different definition in the Planning Acts than in the Foreshore Act.
3. The historical division between Law of the Land and Law of the Sea should be confirmed as being the high water mark (HWM). Any regulation below or beyond (from the landlubbers perspective) the HWM should be done under it's own laws. These laws should cover all internal (LWM – HWM and other) waters too. This space is defined in international law and our Maritime Jurisdiction Act, 1959.
4. Regulation should be by national body rather than by the Local Authority. This to eliminate the need for training personnel for every coastal county where many will never need to deal with a maritime matter. It also would largely remove local interest from regulating National waters.
5. Responsibility for compensation for criminal damage to ships needs to be updated. Currently, and through an old (Victorian) law, it can fall on the county to compensate owners [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] While the County boundary should remain the same, I feel that it is unreasonable to burden the county with liability beyond that boundary. Ships these days are almost all insured, and responsibility should fall on the owners TO insure their vessels.

From: Jaggie Whelan [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, Ap
To: MSP - Marine Spatial Planning
Subject: My Marine Spatial Planning opinion

National Marine Planning Framework

Public participation and my response

To start off my opinion piece of the planning framework I would like to draw attention to [Marine Planning in policy statement](#), point 2.4. In this statement you mention that your vision is the desire to for sustainable growth of our ocean's wealth among other things. But this key point of sustainable growth is one of importance to me as I think it should be the top priority for this countries marine planning and development. I would rather see the countries marine areas grow slowly and sustainably while improving economic development, water and coastline quality and participation in marine based activities, rather than see these things develop at a high rate that is unsustainable for the future. I also think that having an environmentally friendly development of our coastlines goes hand in hand with sustainability. There cannot be one without the other. My opinion of this planning framework and the future of this countries marine areas will highly involve and be based around sustainability. Which is why I am worried about this framework's priorities on these matters. The first goal of the HOOW is for a thriving maritime economy and while I think this goal is very important and is very beneficial for the future of Ireland and its marine environment, I just hope it does not come at the cost of the environment. The second goal is to then preserve, and where possible, restore our rich biological diversity and ecosystems. Now of course I do not want to come off as a hardcore hippy, but I am concerned that economic gains will be prioritised over healthy ecosystems as has been done across the world for too long. The third goal is well deserved, I do not think Irish people realise the wealth we have in our oceans and around our coastline. From tourism to fishing our oceans are a great asset to the country that should be valued more by the people of Ireland. One of the reasons I am worried about the priorities of this planning framework, is because of the two stated goals of HOOW. Goal 1: To double the value of our oceans wealth to increase of GDP. Goal 2: Increase the turnover from our ocean economy to exceed 6.4bn. Now although these are desirable goals for the benefit of our country, there is not one goal based on the protection of our marine areas, or even the restoration and improvement of our marinas. This leads me to believe the use of our ocean for economic benefit is the top priority of this framework (even though sustainability is mentioned with each topic).

The [linkage with land planning and the National Planning Framework](#) is also vital for the success of almost any aim of the planning. The cooperation between these two frameworks should be done regularly in order to achieve the stated goals. Especially when it comes to the water quality of Ireland. I believe the water quality of our rivers and lakes should be improved as much as possible which will in turn improve the water quality of our marine areas. I remember reading a diary which described the river Liffey in the centre of Dublin as

being clear and filled with salmon in the right season. Now although this was from almost 200 years ago and that may not be realistic in our day and age, I think it is certainly something we should strive for.

The [National Marine Planning Framework and Climate Change](#) is a central consideration in the draft as it should be. Where possible the planning framework for this country's marine areas should mitigate or minimise the amount of Co2 emissions in all sectors involved. However, Ireland is not known in the EU for its dedication to reducing our Co2 emissions and in fact Ireland was terribly far behind our 2020 target goal. Which is why I hope this Planning framework sets a new trend in Ireland and really dedicates itself to 'make Ireland a leader in responding to climate change' as stated.

The [National Marine Planning Framework and Sustainable Development](#) is an important part of this framework for the health and future of our marine areas. In particular, the 'nutrient pollution' of Irelands agriculture. This area should be focused on in cooperation with the land planning framework as I am sure a lot of the pollution that reaches our marine areas comes from our rivers via estuaries around the coast. The runoff of nutrients into the rivers and even ground water across the country is a major problem that needs to be tackled.

The [Future of Petroleum Exploration in Ireland](#), in this topic which is important for the future of the country and the world, the 'Climate Action Plan envisages a major shift away from oil combustion'. While the extraction of offshore natural gas reserves will still be perused my concern is what will happen if offshore oil is found in the search for natural gas? Will the offshore oil be left alone in accordance with our shift away from oil or will it be extracted anyway as it has already been found? I would like if this issue is clarified for the public as I think this may be an easy loophole in the Governments Climate Action Plan.

[Non-indigenous Species](#), this section is of importance to me as I work in the outdoors and know too well the effects of non-invasive species in the country. I think that the proposals to reduce the risk of introduction and/or spread of non-invasive species isn't doing enough to combat this growing issue. I think measures should be put in place to eliminate invasive species where possible. Rhododendron, gunnera tinctoria and Japanese knotweed are a huge problem in some parts of the country and if something is not done to not only stop their spread, but to exterminate them, then they will take over more areas, killing off native species. These three examples are chosen because they are a huge problem that is not moving anywhere. They are not animals that can evade danger or hide, they are in plain sight and can be exterminated if the recourses are provided. Obviously, there are many other species that are more complicated to control but I think these are easy targets. The introduction of structures for freshwater wash-down facilities is a good way of tackling the problem, but only if these facilities are readily available and easily accessible for users. I think the most important factor for this to work is if the facilities are convenient, if they are convenient and easy to use then people will have no problem using them. If they are expensive and not convenient to the users, then they will not be out to use.

[Aquaculture](#), in this section under key issues of Marine Planning the point is made that aquaculture production is expected to increase in the coming years. This economic business should be perused and expanded upon, Irelands marine areas and clean water make it perfect for aquaculture production. I think Ireland also has the chance to be a leading producer of

quality seafood in Europe, I also think Irish aquaculture should focus on niche seafood products that are not in high production in other areas of Europe. Of course, I think all of this should be done at a manageable level. If fish stocks will be depleted in order to achieve this, then it is not worth it. Sustainable fishing must be enforced and regulated in our waters, global fish stocks are depleting and if Ireland can continue fishing in a sustainable way, or even in a way that leads to the increase of fish stocks then I believe this would be a good choice. This would allow Ireland to continue fishing in the future when other countries may not be able to the same extent.

Defence and Security, this area is vital for the enforcement of fishing regulations. This enforcement will make sure sustainable regulations will be enforced in order to protect our fish stocks from overfishing. The defence forces will also be important in protecting our waters and fish from foreign vessels fishing in Irish waters. I think harsher measures should be enforced on those who break these regulatory laws.

Energy- Offshore Renewable Energy, this area is one Ireland could take a leading role in if the resources and research was put into the field. This area sounds good and I think Ireland should pursue the prospect of renewable energy from our coastal areas as much as we can. There should be an increase in offshore wind farms and wave energy. I think Ireland should increase its reliance on offshore wind development like the UK has. I also think Ireland should invest more in tidal and wave technologies, Ireland already has this technology, but it is still under research. I think this should change and Ireland should take a leading role in developing and researching this technology.

Sports and Recreation, this section is one in which Ireland should heavily invest in. Ireland has some of the best coastline in Europe and the potential to become a hot spot for water-based activities. I think Ireland should put more investment into the development and marketing of these coastal areas for sports and recreation. With the right facilities and promotion, I think tourism based on water-based sports could be a huge market. If investments were made in building changing facilities, toilets and showers along popular coastal recreational areas then it could heavily increase the number of tourists that come to Ireland for this reason. Ireland already has numerous coastal communities that thrive off of the visitors along the Wild Atlantic and I think this development would further increase that. With these investments I think there should also be a focus on watery safety for recreational users and the right infrastructure to accommodate for the increased waste and pollution that would go with these increases. Of course, as I have stated before this should all be done in a sustainable way, that does not put a large strain on existing infrastructure and does not damage the habitat of flora or fauna. Not only should this area be invested in for the potential number of tourists it could attract but also for the amount of Irish people that would benefit from this investment. Ireland is the most obese country in Europe and for the health and benefit of the people that live here, these developments could help decrease that number and lead to people having a healthier lifestyle.

Lastly, under **Appendix B: NMPF Stakeholder Advisory Group Membership**, there are 19 organisations which are part of the economic group, while there are only 7 organisations under the economic group. This further leads me to believe that it is the economic development of the marine areas which will be placed higher in importance than the environment. Now I see the reason why there are so many organisations underneath the

economic section, but I would like to see the environmental organisations have more of a voice in the stakeholders advisory group membership.

Submission in Favour of the Inshore Fishing Industry.

I wish to make this submission on behalf of the now almost extinct group of fishermen "The Salmon and Inshore Fishermen's Assoc. of which I was secretary during the Sixties and Seventies.

This group comprised mainly of small coastal farmers that supplemented their income by seasonal Inshore fishing, which included Salmon fishing, herring drift net and sprat fishing, Lobster, Crayfish, and Crab fishing from small inshore type boats.

Down the years we submitted submissions similar to this one, to different Departments and Organisations, making many recommendations that we considered would benefit the inshore industry but we were not listened to. Our Submissions were ignored by the Principal Officers and Depts.

It was the era of the coming of the EEC with its treasure chest of monies, funding Big Boats, Close to shore Fish Farms, Licensing aquaculture in our bays and estuaries with very little controls or regulation and little or no checks or inspections. This was one reason that spelled the demise of the inshore industry and the inshore fishermen.

The powers of the then EEC fisheries Commissioner demonstrated the lack of control or authority of Irish Govt. ministers and Dept. officials. The secret dealings that happened during the negotiations for our entry Into the EEC came to light and spelled the end to the Inshore fishing industry.

The ending of Salmon Drift netting was a case in point. The salmon fishermen made several representations to Politicians and Dept. of Fisheries, warning and advising them what was happening, but in vain.

Eventually it was the failure of the Dept. itself to enforce their own laws, rules and regulations written into their own Salmon Drift net legislation that was the main reason for the ending of Salmon Drift netting.

Another reason was the issuing of drift licenses to larger over-size boats fishing extensive over-length nets of illegal Mona-filament material.

These were commercial boats, crewed by full-time professional fishermen and had to fish illegal gear to make it pay and pay wages.

The legal length of net was 1500 yds. 30 meshes deep, quite sufficient for the economical inshore boats.

Ultimately with accusations of over-kill of salmon by drift netting, particularly coming from river anglers and private river owners, put an end to Salmon Drift netting. The inshore fishermen were penalized for the wrongs of the bigger off-shore boats.

Salmon drift netting was abolished and the EEC treasure chest stepped in and bailed out the Ministry.

It was an extraordinary time. Irish Fishing was being crucified, especially the Inshore fleet, all in the interest of Agriculture.

A second serious mistake was allowing the introduction and licensing of mink farms - an animal alien to Ireland of which very little expertise was known, again plus the failure of inspections or supervision after set up, resulting in a high escapement number of the buggars. These wild mink were to become a serious predator of river salmon and river eels but more importantly of salmon reds devouring the salmon spawn at will.

The consuming of the spawn meant no salmon fry to replace the adult fish. The river eel is completely wiped out in many of our rivers

The official Irish and EEC policy at the time welcomed the coming of the large commercial boats, financed mainly by the EEC, fishing under laws now laid down by the EEC. None of these laws defended or protected the rights of inshore fishing grounds for the inshore fisherman.

When the occasion demanded these large boats ignored any rights the inshore waters claimed, many inshore herring drift nets were damaged without any compensation.

The high engine power of these boats were plundering the shallow inshore waters right around our coast. Even to this day as the occasion arises there's no restrictions on them competing with inshore boats.

Common Sense was a scarce commodity with our Fisheries supremo's whose actions put an end to the inshore industry that in pre EEC days gave employment to several thousand men.

Visit any small rural fishing community to-day and you'll see their half-deckers, yawls and punts lying there disintegrating, while their idle ex crew members can only look out to sea and sadly shake their heads.

"Tis also very saddening to know that many are Irish speaking communities where our Teanga Dhùchais is the spoken language.

We make this submission in a last gasp effort to rescue what was once a thriving industry around coastal Ireland, and equally important to highlight its importance to the economy's of our off-shore Islands.

Many of the traditional skills and cunning that was needed by these men of yesteryear, who have passed away, will have to be recaptured.

The following is a list of what we think is needed to revive inshore fishing.

- (1) The setting up of a special Inshore Zone of 5 miles around Ireland, measured from a base line of headlands under ten (10) nautical miles apart.
 - a. This zone confined to boats of an overall length of 45 feet (13.7m) or under with maximum engine horse power of 90hp.

- b. That a separate (TAC) total allowable catch for controlled species caught legally inside this special zone be applied.
 - c. That all boats wishing to fish in this zone be registered and licensed.
- (2) That Fishery Committees be established in all Coastal Counties under the jurisdiction of Co. Councils. Their membership consist of one Co Councillor from each coastal electoral division within the County and one representative from each active fishery or marine organisation within each County. That all future applications for setting up new Fish Farms, Aqua- culture and shell fish projects, etc. or the extensions of existing ones must first come before this committee where they will be supported or rejected by them. This committee to meet quarterly, with a Council official as Secretary.
- (3) If there is a will and desire to see the return of the Wild Salmon then it has to be taken seriously and the following common sense recommendations need to be implemented.
- Regional Fishery Boards employees given increased powers and support to eradicate the three PPP the main enemies of river salmon, namely the polluters, the predators and the poachers in that order.
- Cages and traps be provided to capture and dispose of the main predator.
- a. That Seals be dropped from the protected species list as their numbers have increased dramatically. That Fishery employees be given the equipment to control their numbers
- It's very well known in fishing circles that Wild Salmon is the main food and delicacy of seals and the control of their numbers is absolutely vital.
- "ill fares the land that ill defines its prey, Allows seals accumulate and fishermen decay."
- b. That Regional boards be instructed to replace and repair salmon hatcheries that have been closed or gone into disrepair.
- That new hatcheries be set up, especially on suitably placed rivers.
- (4) That grants be made available to boat owners for boats under the 45ft. length, to repair and restore to safe sea-going standard making them sea-worthy again.
- a. Because of their geographical situation and way of life, off-shore Island fishermen get special treatment and concessions helping with their economy and incomes.

Frankie Gallagher



Draft NMPF Submissions
Marine Planning Section
Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
Newtown Road
Wexford
Y35 AP90

By email (msp@housing.gov.ie)

6 April 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

Galway Harbour Company (“GHC”) welcomes the opportunity to present its views on the draft National Marine Planning Framework (“NMPF”).

As a port, we are acutely aware of the importance of the marine to Ireland’s economic prospects.

While we have commented on each area of the NMPF, the matter which is of most relevance to us relates to offshore energy and, specifically, the importance of ports in facilitating the deployment of offshore energy in order to assist Ireland in meeting its renewable energy targets.

Our comments in respect of the various aspects of the draft NMPF are set out below:

Proposals for key sectors –

A. Aquaculture

We welcome the priority given to eliminating the licensing backlog. In general terms, we believe that this sector is capable of generating significant economic growth in remote parts of Ireland such as Connemara and its growth should be encouraged. A planning system which enables the coastal communities relying on aquaculture to partner with Research Institutes and technological hubs in the regional cities such as Galway should be encouraged.

B. Defence and Security

Ongoing international developments such as Brexit and the US/China trade dispute only serve to highlight the importance of Ireland’s naval defence vessels. A fully developed network of ports, expanded as appropriate to handle the larger naval vessel sizes of the future, is desirable to assist these efforts.

C. Energy - CCS

No comments.

D. Energy Offshore Gas Storage

No comments.

E. Energy Transmission

We believe that the West of Ireland can play a very significant role in meeting Ireland's offshore renewable targets. As such, it is critical that a transmission network is put in place to allow for the efficient transmission of such energy from the West coast to our country's major population centres.

In the medium to long term, the West coast represents a renewable export opportunity to European markets and every effort should be made to plan for the transmission networks which will be necessary to facilitate this export opportunity.

F. Petroleum

No comments.

G. Energy – Offshore Renewable Energy

We strongly support the objectives set out in this section. We are of the view that offshore renewable energy represents a wonderful opportunity for Ireland to achieve the targets set out in the Climate Action plan. The role of ports in assisting our efforts in this regard is significant. Port developments which allow for the provision of land banks for storage and/or servicing and offices should be encouraged, particularly such developments which are near cities of scale. Such locations are likely to prove more successful in attracting inward investment and skilled, mobile staff.

As noted in the document, the timely delivery of this resource is likely to require a collaborative approach across various state agencies and this is welcomed. Given the Climate Change emergency, there is an urgency surrounding this matter and measures need to be put in place as soon as possible to facilitate a timely and efficient planning process.

We very much welcome ORE Policy 2 regarding zones for offshore wind.

H. Fisheries

In general, the overall approach is accepted.

I. Marine Aggregates and Mining

Mining, whether offshore or onshore, requires regional port infrastructure to enhance competitiveness and reduce our carbon footprint. The expansion of our regional ports will enable the returns from any such activity maximized and the carbon footprint minimised.

J. Ports, Harbours and Shipping

We welcome the critical importance attributed to our ports in the document. Specifically, we recognise the fact that the document notes that Ports of Regional Significance can play a more significant role in supporting Ireland's national economic development. Planning processes should be adapted such as to take into account the following:

- Regional ports are likely to play a significant role in the development of facilities to enable the supply and services of Ireland's offshore renewable energy industry. This should be encouraged via legislation as it will enable regional growth and assist us in meeting our targets under the Climate Action Plan. Ideally, such regional ports should be situated in a city of scale which will be more attractive as an investment destination, particularly in respect of offshore servicing and research and development.
- Planning policy should consider the merits of proposed port developments/relocations in the context of the development opportunity afforded by the relocation. Port relocations from existing city centre locations provides an excellent opportunity to enable the creation of new urban quarters of scale in a manner entirely consistent with the NPF. This is particularly relevant in the cases of the cities of Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford.
- The expansion of regional Ports, combined with related infrastructural access improvements, should be generally encouraged to cope with forecast increased economic output, to safeguard against risks arising from Brexit and, more importantly, to reduce trucking distances and related emissions between our factories and our ports. A more balanced spread of port business around our coast would aid regional economic competitiveness and is capable of significantly reducing our carbon footprint.
- In order to maintain navigable shipping channels to Ports, the current process of maintenance dredging should not become more restrictive or include additional layers of administration. Requiring a foreshore licence to dredge and a foreshore licence to dispose of the dredge material at sea for the same dredge campaign is onerous. A single application process should suffice.

K. Safety at Sea

We welcome the approach adopted. Galway Harbour Company remains committed to the highest standards of safety and will continue to cooperate with and support agencies such as the Coastguard, Galway City Council and the RNLI in their efforts to improve safety at sea.

L. Seaweed Harvesting

In general terms, we believe that this sector is capable of generating significant economic growth in remote parts of Ireland such as Connemara and its growth should be encouraged. A planning system which enables the coastal communities relying on aquaculture to partner with Research Institutes and technological hubs in the regional cities such as Galway should be encouraged.

M. Sport and Recreation

Marine based sport and recreation makes an important contribution to the country's well-being and, in our view, has the potential for significant growth. The NPF correctly identifies Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford as areas for significant population growth in the years ahead. The relocation of commercial port activities from the city centre to relocated ports will facilitate the development of the inner-city docks for sports and recreational activities such as sailing, canoeing/kayaking etc and should be encouraged under the framework. To the extent that ports can be relocated from inner city locations, the planning system should allow for new walking and cycling routes to enable residents, workers and visitors to easily access the new urban area which has been facilitated by the port relocation.

N. Telecommunications

The broad approach set out is welcomed. Planning for telecommunications infrastructure should allow for areas of significant population growth, particularly the 4 regional cities of Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford. The impact of Brexit should result in an increased focus on cable connectivity with other jurisdictions. Such cables should be encouraged through the planning process and the landing of such cables near significant areas of population, preferably near Ports, should be encouraged.

O. Tourism

The importance of ports and harbours to Ireland's tourism efforts is welcomed. The cruise industry represents an important sector for Irish tourism and is capable of generating future growth. The expansion/relocation of regional ports will enable such regional locations to welcome larger cruise ships and increase visitor numbers to Ireland. Inner dock regeneration, facilitated by way of port relocations, also enhances the visitor experience as it improves the cityscape, facilitates the provision of walkways and cycling routes in the city centre and enables the growth of marine sports and leisure.

P. Waste Water, Treatment and Disposal

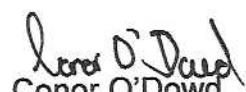
No comment other than to ensure that, in planning such facilities, provision is made for population growth. This is particularly relevant in the 4 regional cities of Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford which are noted in the NPF as areas of growth in excess of the national average.

Concluding remarks

GHC is generally supportive of the Department's proposals in the draft Framework, subject to the matters noted above.

Please feel free to contact me if any clarification in respect of this submission is required.

Yours sincerely,



Conor O'Dowd
CEO
Port of Galway



Tionól Reigiúnach Oirthir agus Lár-Tíre Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly

3ú Urlár ó Thuaidh | Ionad Cathartha | An tSráid Mhór | Baile Munna | Baile Átha Cliath 9
3rd Floor North | Ballymun Civic Centre | Main Street | Ballymun | Dublin 9



National Marine Planning Framework – Consultation Draft

This submission on the National Marine Planning Framework – Consultation Draft has been reviewed by the executive and approved by the Cathaoirleach of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA).

The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) welcomes the preparation of the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) which sets out a strategic approach to manage Ireland's marine activities. The NMPF, when finalised will coordinate with the National Planning Framework - Project Ireland 2040 (NPF) in supporting the sustainable use of the marine resources to 2040 and will be the key decision-making tool for Government Departments, State agencies, regulatory authorities and policy makers for decisions on marine activities.

Background and relevance for the development of a National Marine Planning Framework

The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) is part of the regional tier of governance in Ireland. It is primarily focused on the formulation, adoption and implementation of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), oversight and coordination of Local Economic and Community Plans, management of EU Operational Programs, EU project participation, implementation of national economic policy, and additional functions through working with the National Oversight and Audit Commission.

In line with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) made the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region on the 28th June 2019. The RSES brings together spatial planning and economic policy providing the environment for investment and in doing so it marks a significant policy milestone for not only regional government in Ireland, but also national and local government. The primary statutory objective of the RSES is to support implementation of Project Ireland 2040 – which links planning and investment through the National Planning Framework and ten year National Development Plan (NDP) – and the economic and climate policies of the Government by providing a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the Region. As part of this, it sets the context for each local authority within the Eastern and Midland Region to develop their county and city development plans in a manner that will ensure national, regional and local plans align.

Observations on the Draft National Marine Policy Framework

The Assembly welcomes the preparation of the NMPF which, when finalised, will provide a strategic framework, that, in parallel to the NPF, will guide marine planning and development over the period to 2040. The NMPF is highly relevant to the RSES as terrestrial and marine ecosystems are closely connected, development and uses are interlinked and overlap in tandem with the significance of the marine sector for job creation, maintenance and sustainability in the region. All of this highlights the need for consistency in terms of land use and ocean-based planning. The Assembly welcomes the forthcoming Marine Planning and Development Management Bill 2019 which will streamline planning and licensing application procedures reducing unnecessary duplication of processes.

National Marine Planning and RSES Alignment

The Assembly welcomes the recognition given in the Draft NMPF to the role of the three Regional Assemblies and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies in terms of policy hierarchy and alignment. Section 2.33 would benefit from a broader reference to the strategic functions of the Regional Assemblies which include, in addition to policy making, monitoring and oversight and promoting enhanced co-ordination and a framework for investment throughout the Regions.

In terms of consistency and alignment between the Eastern and Midland RSES and the NMPF (as stipulated in Section 2.35) the attention of the Department is brought to the three key cross-cutting principles of the EMRA RSES; Economic Opportunity, Healthy Placemaking and Climate Action. Each of these principles relate to and support the three main themes and their associated high-level Overarching Marine Planning Policies (OMPPs) of the Draft NMPF; under “Environmental – Ocean Health”, “Social – Engagement with the Sea”, and “Economic – Thriving Maritime Economy”.

Central to the successful implementation of the RSES is the realisation of Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSOs), contained as part of the Strategy and defined as a mechanism to achieve the National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) of the NPF. Of particular relevance to the NMPF are the RSOs that support a strengthening blue-green economy and protect and enhance international and regional accessibility (RSO 15), that build climate resilience (RSO 8), that support strengthened and healthy urban and rural communities and economies (RSO 3, 4), that support the transition to low carbon and clean energy (RSO 9), along with the sustainable management of water and other environmental resources (RSO 7). The 16 RSOs set out in the RSES are fully aligned to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), EU thematic objectives¹, and the NPF NSOs.

Furthermore, the RSES recognises the marine sector as a labour-intensive economic activity which is of particular importance to the region and highlights that development opportunities in the marine or blue economy relate to fishing, renewables, new applications for health and medicine, and tourism to name a few. Marine resources also provide many non-commercial benefits, for example amenity, biodiversity and climate regulation. The valuable contribution that sustainable utilisation of marine resources for balanced regional development and quality of life is closely associated with effective engagement and the protection of the marine environment. The RSES explicitly acknowledges the importance of consistency and alignment between the future NMPF and regional approaches to

¹ New priorities for EU funding 2021-2027; A Smarter Europe, A greener, low-carbon Europe, A more connected Europe, A more social Europe, a Europe closer to citizens.

marine spatial planning and implementation into future land use plans in the Region in recognition of the opportunity to harness Ireland's ocean potential (RPO 7.1).

Sub-National Marine Planning and Collaboration

The Assembly welcomes the commitment expressed in the Draft NMPF to the future preparation of Regional or sub-national marine plans. It is noted that the intention expressed in Section 2.54 is that these plans will be developed through a partnership approach between the National Marine Spatial Plan team and groups of local authorities working on a regional basis. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) accompanying the Draft NMPF has also highlighted that regional or sub-regional marine plans can address the differing pressures around Ireland extensive coastline and marine waters (SEA, p. 106). Given the increasing demand for marine space, the NMPF can enable stakeholders and the public to ensure a joined-up approach in planning and management, which is supported by the following Regional Policy Objective within the RSES;

RPO 6.22: EMRA support the preparation of the Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) to ensure alignment, and consistency between land use and ocean based planning, and to ensure co-ordination which supports the protection of the marine environment and the growth of the Marine economy.

As terrestrial and marine ecosystems are closely connected, the Regional Assemblies and the coastal local authorities have an important role in ensuring integration of land and marine planning within the Region and with Northern Ireland to ensure that management of coasts and marine waters is on an all-island basis. The attention of the Department is drawn to the collaborative platform (RSO 16) that underpins the EMRA RSES in providing a regional framework for collaboration and partnerships and which supports local and regional bodies in leveraging funding and partnership opportunities including those related to the marine economy.

The EMRA has developed a wide range of stakeholders, across the region, nationally and in a European Context, and this has been further enhanced during the collaborative approach that was taken in the formulation of the RSES for the region. With this collective engagement the Assembly provides capacity building for the planning system in the region by providing a common evidence base, a methodological approach to core strategies of local authority development plans including data sets of assets of settlements across the region and fora to deal with strategic, common and cross boundary issues. The EMRA adopts an all-Ireland approach to collaboration with co-operation with relevant departments in Northern Ireland, and where appropriate with the Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA), to support mutually beneficial policy development and activity in the areas of spatial and infrastructure planning, economic growth and related spheres (RPO 11.1). The RSES explicitly promotes the development of a cross-boundary and cross-border strategic management and stakeholder framework to protect the marine environment (RPO 7.2). Similar collaborative and partnership approaches will assist funding and pilot project initiatives in relation to land use and marine priorities as part of future regional marine plans.

The Assembly recognises the opportunities in the changing dynamic in Ireland and the RSES seeks to optimise and lead investment in the Region and maximise the potential of National and European funding. This will be facilitated through partnership with stakeholders and in collaboration with other agencies to deliver on the shared vision of the Strategy and to continue building a sustainable,

healthy and resilient region. The establishment of the RSES Implementation Groups will oversee progress on the implementation of the RSES and identify opportunities to drive regional development (RPO 12.1). This will also include the building of institutional capacity to ensure that all government agencies, local authorities and regional stakeholders have sufficient capacity to access funding sources and successfully attract competitive funding (RPO 6.35).

EMRA continually participate in externally funded learning platforms and projects which develop and share best practice from the region with partners across Europe in the fields of the digital economy, spatial planning and the environment. For example the EMRA developed a strategic management framework and stakeholder engagement model for Dublin Bay (available at: <http://emra.ie/strategic-management-framework-dublin-bay/>) as part of a wider EU Life+ project titled The Celtic Seas Partnership. The project built partnerships between people and organisations to support local level implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, promote better understanding of marine resources, common goals and adoption of an ecosystem-based approach. It is recognised that learning from good practices will be important particularly in terms of engagement of the planning profession in regional and local marine planning initiatives in the implementation of the NMPF.

EMRA are currently developing a Regional Development Monitor to analyse socio-economic trends across the three Regional Assemblies (Eastern and Midland, Southern, and Northern and Western) which will provide a common, up-to-date shared evidence base with information on assets, economic base, settlement functions and economic performance to be published as open data where appropriate, in accordance with RPO 6.36. This will enable understanding of how towns and localities have developed to date, thus enabling the identification of growth constraints, the assets and the growth opportunities that will enable evidenced based decision making. Through effective monitoring, shared baseline data and the establishment of regional working groups will facilitate the development of regional marine plans and their implementation.

The RSES process has proved successful in transposing national planning policy to the regions and the Regional Assemblies are therefore positively positioned to assist the Department in any future marine sub-national/regional-plan making process as expressed in Section 2.54 of the Draft NMPF. It is recommended that a priority action of the NMPF should be the preparation of regional level plans for the marine, such as Regional Marine Planning Frameworks, in collaboration with the Regional Assemblies. Regional marine plans should align with existing regional structures and the coastal boundary of each RSES, for effective land use and marine planning integration at the regional tier.

Overarching Marine Planning Policies

The overarching marine planning policies (OMPP) set out in the NMPF are grouped according to three themes; environmental, social and economic. It is acknowledged that the policies apply to all proposals capable of having impacts in the maritime area including land-based development. (Note: the related planning policies set out in the supporting text should include the reference number e.g. Biodiversity 1, 2, 3, 4 as per Table 1 p. 26, and placed in a highlighted box for emphasis and ease of reference).

Environmental – Ocean Health

The detailed approach and consideration to environment related planning policies for ocean health is a welcome addition. In terms of OMPPs relating to biodiversity, the Draft NMPF Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) notes that a specific policy supporting integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) would be welcome to provide a clear mechanism to maintain, restore and enhance biodiversity in the coastal zone (SEA, pg. 125). The RSES recognises and supports the ICZM approach which can assist in meeting obligations under the Water Framework Directive (WFD), MSFD, and Nature Directives. It enables collaborative and stakeholder engagement approaches to the management and protection of coastal resources against coastal erosion, flooding and other threats (RPO 7.3). It is recommended that the NMPF include specific policies to support an ICZM approach for the management and protection of coastal resources and communities.

The Draft NMPF recognises ‘Natural Capital’ as a new concept requiring a sound footing in regulation to enable its understanding and role in an ecosystem approach to marine management. National policies supporting the protection and enhancement of ‘Natural Capital Assets’ and promoting an ecosystem services approach in cross-sectoral policy considerations, are welcome and are aligned with the Climate Strategy of the EMRA RSES. The RSES ‘Climate Action’ key principle is underpinned by the objective “to enhance climate resilience and to accelerate a transition to a low carbon economy recognising the role of natural capital and ecosystem services in achieving this”. Further, ‘Natural Capital’ is a key indicator in the asset-based approach used to inform the growth strategy of the RSES.

The RSES recognises that the incorporation and consideration of an ecosystem services approach can lead to significant enhancements in relation to planning policy as well as at project stages and is recommended to be used by local authorities in the preparation of development plans and other statutory land use plans (RPO 7.21). To enhance knowledge and expertise in this area, EMRA has partnered with other Regional Authorities and agencies across Europe on a new EU Interreg Project – PROGRESS – Promoting the Governance of Regional Ecosystem Services – which, through an exchange of best practice and learning, will achieve an improvement in the making and implementation of regional and local policies in this area.

In terms of Marine Protected Areas, it is noted that the UNESCO Dublin Bay Biosphere is not referenced in the Draft NMPF and does not appear to be indicated on the map of designated sites (pg. 44) despite it being an internationally significant designated site that is managed by the Dublin Bay Partnership, which includes the local authorities, Dublin Port Company, Fáilte Ireland and the NPWS. It is recommended that the maps be updated to recognise and identify this internationally significant designated site.

In terms of Climate Change, the Assembly welcome the OMPPs that support proposals that contribute to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and incorporate adaptation measures. It is recommended that the Climate Action Regional Offices (noted under ‘key reference’) be recognised in the NMPF as playing a key role in assisting and supporting the respective local authorities in the regions in implementing their climate action strategies in accordance with RPO 7.33.

Social – Engagement with the Sea

In terms of ‘Social – Engagement with the Sea’, the OMPPs would benefit from reference to health and well-being as a key component. As stated in the SEA, a key message for the NMPF is recognition of the benefits of a good quality environment to health and wellbeing and is particularly relevant in the context of experience, sport and recreation (SEA, pg. 44). It is recommended that OMPP ‘Social Benefits 2’ could be expanded to support proposals that promote health and well-being. This will align with RSES RSO 4 Healthy Communities and the overall RSES key principle of Healthy Placemaking. The supporting narrative would also benefit from reference to the DCCAE Code of Practice for Wind Energy Development in Ireland Guidelines for Community Engagement which contains principles for effective community engagement for wind energy projects that can be applied to both onshore and offshore projects.

In terms of the Transboundary OMPP, as terrestrial and marine ecosystems are closely connected, the Regional Assemblies and the coastal local authorities have an important role in ensuring integration of land and marine planning within the Region and with Northern Ireland to ensure that management of coasts and marine waters is on an all-island basis. As aforementioned, the RSES explicitly promotes the development of a cross-boundary and cross-border strategic management and stakeholder framework to protect the marine environment (RPO 7.2).

Economic – Thriving Maritime Economy

In terms of ‘Economic – Thriving Maritime Economy’ the OMPPs would benefit from a reference to ‘clustering’ and the support for marine activities and initiatives that facilitate and support clustering for innovation and entrepreneurship. Clustering is a key component of the Economic Strategy of the RSES which seeks to diversify local and rural economies and create quality jobs, and achieve a sustainable, competitive, inclusive and resilient Region.

NMPF Sectoral Policies and Marine Management

The marine environment in Ireland to date has generally been managed on a sector by sector approach and there is a need for an integrated approach which takes into account the management of the entire marine ecosystem. This includes a need to balance competing coexisting activities and uses in the marine environment. The Draft NMPF has set out Sectoral Marine Planning Policies for each individual marine sector/activity in the maritime area and has also highlighted the interdependent nature of activities by indicating policy relationships, which is a welcome addition. The attention of the Department is drawn to Best Practice Guidelines which were produced as part of the aforementioned Celtic Seas Partnership which were designed to support better management of activities in the Celtic Seas. They include advice on the difficulties of working across borders and sectors and the co-location of marine renewables with other marine industries. The Celtic Seas Partnership helped to build relationships and create partnerships between scientists, governments and users of the sea. The Best Practice Guidelines² include:

1. Encouraging effective marine management and decision-making across borders.
2. Encouraging harmonious co-existence of marine renewables projects with other marine uses and interests

² <http://www.celticseaspartnership.eu/ceitic-seas-partnership/best-practice-guidelines/>

3. Encouraging positive interaction and preventing conflicts between marine stakeholders.

The Guidelines also advocate the importance of data, using evidence-based scientific information and effective communication between stakeholders.

Marine Infrastructure

The National Planning Framework (NPF) highlights the maritime sector's key role within the economy as an important gateway for the movement of people and freight between Ireland and its trading partners. Both the NPF and the RSES recognise that Ireland's port and shipping services play an important role as enablers of economic growth. Irish ports are critical infrastructure for international trade, with over 90% of our international trade moving by sea and also serve as logistics and distribution hubs. It is also noted that the Eastern and Midland Region is strategically located on part of the trans-European transport network from Belfast to Rosslare Europort and is linked to the U.K. across the Irish Sea.

The Eastern and Midland Region is also home to the largest sea port in the country, Dublin Port, and also contains a number of regional ports of significance and smaller harbours. Dublin Port is recognised in the RSES as a critical national facility, a key economic driver for the Region and the nation. As a major trading centre it has seen sustained growth with volumes expected to increase exponentially by 265% over the 30 years to 2040. The Assembly welcome the NMPF Sectoral Marine Planning Policies (SMMP) with respect to Ports, Harbours and Shipping and emphasise the following Regional Policy Objectives within the RSES which provide supportive policy alignment:

RPO 8.21: The EMRA will support the role of Dublin Port as a Port of National Significance (Tier 1 Port) and its continued commercial development, including limited expansion and improved road access, including the Southern Port Access Route.

RPO 8.22: The EMRA supports ports of Regional Significance that serve an important regional purpose and/or specialised trades or maritime tourism; and the accessibility requirements of regional ports within the Region, from within their regional catchments will be addressed through the provision of improved access routes, where necessary and improved access to the national and regional road networks. Opportunities for the use of rail, where such ports are connected to the rail network is also promoted.

RPO 8.23: The EMRA supports the protection of the marine related functions of ports in the Region in order to ensure the future role of ports as strategic marine related assets is protected from inappropriate uses, whilst supporting complimentary economic uses including the potential for facilitating offshore renewable energy development at ports.

RPO 8.24: The EMRA supports the undertaking of feasibility studies to determine the carrying capacity of ports in relation to potential for likely significant effects on associated European sites including SPAs and SACs.

Dublin – Belfast Economic Corridor

The Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor is a key element and economic driver for the EMRA region. The Corridor is underpinned by a strong presence of transport infrastructure that connects the two main cities of scale on the Island. Its area of influence hosts a combined population- between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland - of more than 3.3 million people of which Drogheda, Dundalk and Newry are part. The Corridor is also the national entry point to the island through its

airports and ports with three major airports, Dublin Airport, Belfast International Airport and Belfast City Airport, and significant ports in Belfast and Dublin, with complimentary ports along the Corridor. It offers extended strategic connections throughout the Island through links with the TEN-T network and the Dublin- Rosslare route.

The Corridor has the capacity to provide the only potential paired city growth pole of scale on the Island- reaching a European benchmark 5 million population target to compete with similar city regions in the EU. The Draft NMPF highlights the challenges facing the wider economy post-Brexit in terms of impact on future trade, our route to market, supply chains, and transport logistics. The imperative to counteract Brexit with a proactive spatial economic policy adds to the international significance of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor. It is recommended that the significance of the Corridor be stated and recognised in the NMPF. The RSES has identified a number of sectoral opportunities associated with the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor (including Dundalk and Drogheda) that includes marine energy, wind energy and energy storage.

Fishing Clusters

Fishing is a substantial sub-sector in the Eastern and Midland Region, with Howth being one of six National Fishery Harbour Centres and a number of small fisheries clusters along the eastern seaboard including Wicklow, Clogherhead and Dún Laoghaire. While the traditional fishing industry faces challenges in relation to seasonal employment, fish stocks and coastal hazards, there are also opportunities for diversification and development of bio resources including seafood, aquaculture and offshore renewables.

The Draft NMPF supports the maintenance and sustainable development of our seafood industry, particularly in recognition of our strong fishing heritage and its contribution to vibrant, accessible sustainable coastal and island communities. The RSES provides RPO 7.5 to support and enable the sustainable development of this sub-sector in the region;

RPO 7.5: EMRA shall work with coastal stakeholders to support the sustainable development of the national Fishery Harbour Centre in Howth and the sustainable growth of the seafood and on-shore aquaculture sector in the Region, and to ensure that marine resources are sustainably managed and that planned activities on land do not adversely affect the marine economy and environment.

The RSES further recognises the importance of this sector to rural economies which can be enhanced through innovation and diversification;

RPO 6.7: Support local authorities to develop sustainable and economically efficient rural economies through initiatives to enhance sectors such as agricultural and food, forestry, fishing and aquaculture, energy and extractive industries, the bioeconomy, tourism, and diversification into alternative on-farm and off-farm activities, while at the same time noting the importance of maintaining and protecting the natural landscape and built heritage.

It is also noted that one of the strategic principles and high-level priorities highlighted in the Draft NMPF is to support the preservation and enjoyment of Ireland's rich marine related cultural and heritage assets. The RSES acknowledges that maritime villages and towns represent a significant cultural heritage resource for the Region and local authorities are required to develop policies for the protection of same in their development plans;

RPO 7.6: Local authorities shall include in development plans, where relevant, policies for the protection and enhancement of ship wrecks and underwater cultural heritage and shall consult the Wreck Inventory of Ireland Database when assessing planning applications located in marine, riverine or lacustrine environments.

Renewable Energy

The Draft NMPF highlights the critical role it will play in facilitating climate change and mitigation, through policy support of offshore renewables and carbon capture and storage. In terms of future initiatives, it is considered that focusing on effective community engagement will be essential for building public confidence and to help Ireland achieve transition to renewable energy. An increase in community participation in renewable energy projects such as community ownership models should be supported in this regard. The RSES supports an increase in the amount of new renewable energy sources in the Region. This includes, amongst others, the use of wind energy – both onshore and offshore:

RPO 10.24: Support the sustainable development of Ireland's offshore renewable energy resources in accordance with the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources 'Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan' and any successor thereof including any associated domestic and international grid connection enhancements.

Implementation Arrangements

Section 21 of the Draft NMPF provides a list of public bodies that have a role in making policies, plans or programmes relevant to the maritime; and it is recommended to include the Regional Assemblies. In terms of Appendix F and supporting actions to implement the NMPF, it is recommended that an additional action be included on the future intention to prepare sub-national/regional marine plans to be co-ordinated with the Regional Assemblies as a key stakeholder in their preparation and adoption.

Conclusion

The Regional Assembly welcomes the opportunity to further engage on the process of preparing the National Marine Policy Framework and the executive looks forward to continuing engagement with the MSP team.

Regards,



Jim Conway
Director
Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly
6th April 2020



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07th April 2020

Re: Submission on the Draft National Marine Planning Framework

Dear Sir / Madam,

We confirm that we have been retained by Shannon Foynes Port Company (SFPC), Mill House, Foynes, Co. Limerick to make this submission on the Draft National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF). We welcome the Draft Planning Framework and acknowledge the identification of Ports, Harbours and Shipping as a key sectoral activity in Chapter 14.0 of the draft document.

Whilst we acknowledge that Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) is a process that brings together multiple users of the seas coordinated decisions about how to use marine resources sustainably, our submission is solely focused on ports, harbours and shipping and the crucial role that they play in facilitating Irish economic growth and prosperity.

SFPC previously made a submission on the Draft MSP Baseline Report. In that submission, SFPC highlighted their role and function within the Shannon Estuary and set out their future plans for growth as detailed in Vision 2040. It is not proposed to restate these plans here, save to reiterate that SFPC is a National Tier 1 Port and is a Core Corridor Port on the Trans European Transport Network (TEN-T), with a 30-year masterplan - Vision 2041, to guide and coordinate its growth until 2041. Under Vision 2041 port throughput is expected to double to 20 million tonnes per annum over the plan period. This growth will be facilitated through the delivery of port expansion plans including an



extension of quayside jetty infrastructure and expansion of port lands, which has already received planning consent and a new deep-water berth at Foynes Island, which is currently at feasibility stage.

This submission seeks to address a number of issues including:

1. Provision of support for a tiered approach to port planning;
2. Identification of specific SFPC Port projects;
3. Clarification in respect of wording in the NMPF relating to ports and sustainable travel;
4. Recognition of established marine based planning on the Shannon Estuary;
5. Support for Climate Action Plan through marine planning; and
6. Need to identify specific outcomes.

1.0 Tiered Approach to Port Planning

There are 10 no. planning policies in the NMPF in respect of ports and harbours. These policies appear to focus on protecting existing ports, their operations and future expansion plans and ensuring that future non port related development does not hinder existing and future port expansion and operations. The NMPF does not appear, however, to have any policies, supporting the development and expansion of ports, notwithstanding significant supporting text in subsequent paragraphs. Such direct support is important, as it provides confidence and certainty to not only potential investors but also in the assessment and decision making associated with the planning application process.

The NMPF reinforces National Ports Policy and a tiered approach to development. Whilst this recognition is important, it is considered that a specific planning policy is required supporting the hierarchical approach to port planning in the country.

In effect, projects detailed within Port Masterplans relating to Tier 1 Ports must be prioritised and supported, where it is essential to safeguard national port capacity and Ireland's international connectivity. In such instances, it may not always be possible to avoid adverse environmental impacts, but projects associated with Tier 1 Ports should be afforded practical and realistic opportunities to minimise, mitigate and in some instances state the case for proceeding in accordance with Article 6 of Directive 92/43/ EEC. Direction on this issue is considered important in order to provide the necessary support and guidance for necessary port projects, where potential conflicts may arise.

The following wording is suggested:

Ports, Harbours and Shipping Policy 11

Proposals advanced by Tier 1 Ports which are detailed within an adopted Port Masterplan and are necessary to safeguard national port capacity and Ireland's international connectivity must be supported in principle. Proposals that cannot avoid environmental impacts must, in order of preference (a) minimise, (b) mitigate or (c) if it is not possible to mitigate the significant adverse impacts, must state the case for proceeding in accordance with Article 6 of Directive 92/43/ EEC.

2.0 Identification of Specific Port Projects

Section 14.14 of the NMPF recognises that there are major development projects taking place currently, within Tier 1 ports. Whereas the text specifically references major infrastructure projects within Dublin Port and the Port of Cork, it does not make such specific reference in the case of SFPC. Making specific reference to infrastructure development projects is important as such reference provides the national support required to help secure international funding.

For example, it is stated that redevelopment of Alexander Basin and associated infrastructure will ensure that Dublin Port continues to play a vitally important role in facilitating trade and tourism in our capital city, the wider hinterland, and across our national economy. In the case of the Port of Cork it is stated that the port is on its way to becoming one of the finest ports in Europe by providing deep-water berths and state of the art infrastructure at its new Ringaskiddy facility. In the case of SFPC reference is made to building its future around its unique deep-water resources and the availability of shore side facilities that can meet the requirements of port users.

It is therefore requested that the text within the NMPF is amended to make specific reference to the capacity expansion programme both planned and permitted within the Port of Foynes including the significant extension of port landside capacity recently permitted at Durnish and the planned development of new deep water berths at Foynes Island.

The following wording is suggested:

On the west coast, the Port of Foynes, alongside the permitted extension of port landside capacity at Durnish and the planned development of a deep-water terminal at Foynes Island, will play a primary role in meeting the expected growth in demand and in responding to market requirements, including the ability to handle the largest vessels. Foynes Island facilitates unrivalled international shipping connectivity at a relatively uncongested point on the terrestrial national supply chain

3.0 Ports & Sustainable Travel

Section 14.34 of the NMPF correctly highlights that integration and alignment is needed between terrestrial and marine planning processes to ensure that ports link with public transport to encourage sustainable travel. Terrestrial planning should coordinate with and support ports with the necessary transport links and suitable road networks. Indeed, the provision of an adequate road and rail network are key twin elements for the TEN-T requirement for Tier 1 ports

However, it does need to be clarified within the NMPF that the advancement and utilisation of sustainable transport modes by ports, such as rail, is only practical and realistic, where it is financially viable to do so. The expansion and development of ports in Ireland must not be stymied through a lack of operational freight rail lines in the country.

The link between port operations and rail freight is complex, dependent on freight type, frequency and destination and such complexities must not be undermined in planning for the future growth of our ports.

The following wording is suggested under Section 14.34:

Integration and alignment is needed between terrestrial and marine planning processes to ensure that ports link with public transport to encourage sustainable travel, where it is financially viable to do so.

4.0 Recognition of Established Marine Based Planning on the Shannon Estuary

The NMPF must acknowledge extensive marine based planning that has already been undertaken on the Shannon Estuary and which seeks to sustain and grow different sectors operating within the Estuary in a sustainable and viable manner.

The Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary is an inter-jurisdictional land and marine based framework plan prepared to guide the future development and management of the Shannon Estuary. It was commissioned by Clare County Council, Kerry County Council, Limerick City and County Councils, Shannon Development and Shannon Foynes Port Company and was published in November 2013. SIFP recognises the Estuary and its environs is a multi-functional zone, with the waters and adjoining lands supporting a range of functions, uses, communities, activities, and environmental resources/assets which bring character, prosperity and vibrancy to the area. It also recognises that the Estuary hosts a wide range of strategic economic assets. These characteristics are explored and promoted in the SIFP but yet, it is recognised that the Estuary is also a very important and sensitive ecosystem as the entire area is designated as a Special Area of Conservation [SAC] and as a Special Protection Area (SPA) as far west as Foynes.

The SIFP recognises that the challenge going forward is to maximise the economic, social and environmental potential of the Shannon Estuary through coordinating and managing a balanced, comprehensive approach to economic growth and sustainable management of the area's natural assets over a thirty year horizon. Importantly it provides a level of certainty for future investment by identifying a number of Strategic Development Locations (SDL's) within the Estuary which are particularly appropriate for marine related industry which requires access to deep water. These identified sites enjoy a statutory guideline development framework and have undergone Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA). Of note is the fact that all of the relevant local authorities have prepared variations to their County Development Plans in order to implement the recommendations of SIFP.

It is requested that the NMPF supports and further advances the critical work undertaken in the preparation of the SIFP. It is submitted that the most effective way of supporting the SIFP is by referencing the document within the NMPF and by providing supporting policy where relevant.

Under the heading 'Interaction with Other Facilities' it is recommended that the following wording is inserted into a new Section, Section 14.37.

Significant marine planning has already been undertaken on the Shannon Estuary with the publication of the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary. This adopted framework plan supports the development of a number of Strategic Development Locations in the Estuary for marine related industry with access to deep water and these locations shall continue to be promoted for such uses.

5.0 Climate Action Plan & Marine Planning

Section 14.33 of the Draft NMPF correctly acknowledges that Ports can support the growth of other marine activities such as offshore renewable energy through the provision of facilities for import and export of equipment and facilities for vessels supporting the industry. This is particularly important given the Climate Action Plan whereby the Government objective is to have 70% electricity generation from renewables by 2030. Section 2.45 of the Draft NMPF highlights the significance that marine planning will play in climate change.

Chapter 11 of the Draft NMPF deals with off-shore renewable energies. SFPC consider the development of floating offshore windfarms as critical to achieving electricity generation from renewables by 2030.

SFPC is strategically located in proximity to the country's best wind resources off the west coast and existing high voltage grid connectivity along the north and south shores of Shannon Estuary. Advancing renewable technologies in the Estuary will require supporting port infrastructure. Implementation of the SIFP's Strategic Development Locations and SFPC's Masterplan - Vision 2041 will be essential to the delivery of supporting port infrastructure necessary to achieve the Government's climate change objectives.

6.0 Identification of Outcomes

Chapter 21 of the NMPF sets out how the plan is to be implemented and the legislative framework that underpins / will support the implementation of the NMPF. Whilst the implementation measures on a broadscale are to be welcomed, the delivery of specific actions within the plan are unclear.

For example, Planning Policy 10 relating to Ports, Harbours and Shipping states that proposals within ports limits, beside or in the vicinity of ports and/or that impact upon the main routes of significance to a port must demonstrate within applications that they have been informed by consultation at pre-application stage or earlier with the relevant port authority. Presently, there is no legislation which can demand or ensure such provision. Whilst the Planning & Development Act 2000 as amended lists the prescribed bodies that must be consulted during the assessment of a planning application,

Harbour Authorities are not an identified prescribed authority. The Planning & Development Act 2000 needs to be amended to ensure the effective implementation of this measure and it is not clear within the NMPF if or when such a measure will be implemented.

To be effective, the NMPF must identify desired outcomes that represent the achievement of a goal. These outcomes must be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound.

7.0 Conclusion

The NMPF is to be welcomed. SFPC in particular welcomes the prioritisation of ports, harbours and shipping which are necessary to safeguard national port capacity and Ireland's international connectivity.

SFPC look forward to the finalisation and implementation of the NMPF which will act as a solid platform for all associated with Marine Planning in Ireland.

Yours faithfully



Mary Hughes MIPI
Director HRA Planning Chartered Town Planning Consultants DAC

Jordan Collins



Date 4/4/2020

National Marine Planning Framework

To whom it may concern,

I am frequent user of coastal areas mainly for recreation, and I am writing to you regarding my contribution towards the National Marine Planning Framework. My submission will largely focus on marine litter, alongside this there will be a reference to seaweed harvesting. First, I would will present a major concern of mine regarding the NMPF.

I would like to stress the point of participation in this consultation as extremely inadequate. I understand that it is the objective of NMPPF to bring multiple users of the ocean together to make informed and coordinated decisions. It is my belief that recreation users and locals should be informed regarding this framework. It is their right as citizens to engage with decisions that affect their futures. After all we live in a democracy that values participation. I have seen the overview of submissions received during pubic consultation. The figure shows that there have been 173 responses overall. This is where I draw my conclusion from, that the engagement for this framework is, as previously noted extremely inadequate.

In the introduction of NMPPF consultation draft, reference is made to the island, as one of Europe's largest marine areas. This area is noted to be inextricably linked by culture and society. This culture is linked to coastal regions; however the people of these areas have not been informed of the framework as I have been speaking to locals in the Donegal area. This does not provide adequate evidence that people from these areas have not been informed. However, I do think it is clear in the responses that engagement is alarming low. Thus, providing evidence that this consultation was not adequately presented to the people it will directly affect. Lastly, on this point Damien English TD at the beginning of the Draft referred to Ireland becoming more informed from the baseline report carried out in 2018. The TD noted that this information could benefit communities and businesses for the use of marine resources. I think the TD has been misinformed of the responses from individuals and the lack of awareness in the community of the report. If the people of coastal communities have not been informed, how is it possible that they can benefit as their voices have not been heard.

Now, I would like to present an idea that would aid with managing marine litter on the coastal walk between Moville and Greencastle in Donegal on the Inishowen Peninsula. This walk is 4.1 km long. I think it is important to note that this idea could also be deployed in

other coastal areas if appropriate and affordable. First, I will present an explanation of why this problem should be acknowledged and given appropriate consideration.

Marine litter is a global issue. United Nations Environment Programme 2005 notes that Marine litter kills, injures and causes pain and suffering and every year entails great economic costs and losses to people and communities around the world. These communities include the coastal areas of Ireland.

Below is representation of sources of marine litter relevant to Ireland.



The coastal walk between Moville and Greencastle is 4.1KM long. The walk is hugely popular. Consisting of multiple small sandy beaches, these are areas of concern as there is a collection of marine litter deposited along these areas from the sea.

I believe an initiative involving the local council to encourage civic engagement in cleaning the coast would be an adequate way of managing marine litter along this area.

What would this initiative involve?

1. Two open cages situated at both sides of the walk one beside the car park at Moville and one beside the Greencastle fishing yard specifically for marine litter.
2. Signs informing walkers of their duty to protect the environment along the walk. The signs could provide information that can be seen in figure 1 of the damage

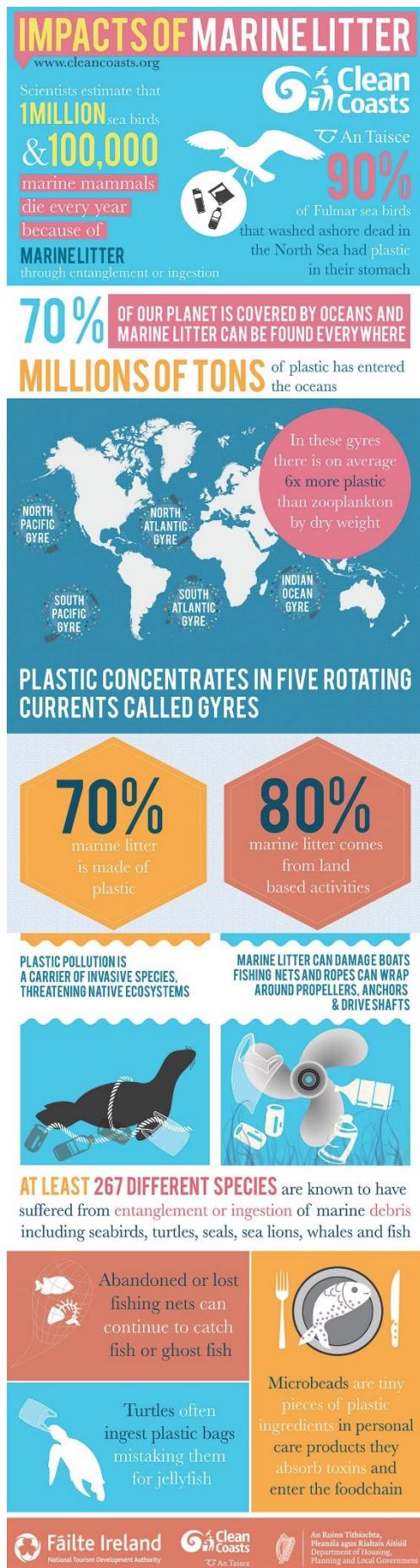
marine litter has on the environment. The signs could also provide activities for families to carry out with young children to protect the environment.

3. People need to be educated on the issue of marine litter and the signs provide an opportunity to do this. If one is not informed, they cannot be expected to care and protect.
 4. We have multiple dog poo strategies in Ireland for people to clean up after their dogs. I believe we can adapt one of these strategies which is providing bags to people for cleaning coasts on posts.
 5. Providing bags for cleaning coasts. Alongside this a sign encouraging activities to protect the environment.
 6. It is important to note that the Coastwatch Marine Litter report 2019. Noted that depending on shore type and source, a greater &/or well targeted cleaning effort can generate a reduction in marine litter locally.
 7. Also, the European Plastic strategy suggested that targeted deposit schemes can aid in reducing littering and boost recycling. See below in the Danish example.
<http://www.dansk-retursystem.dk/en/>
 8. An idea; would be for every cage that is filled up the council could release money to local community and GAA clubs as an incentive to look after the coast.
 9. One problem I have identified however, is fly tipping. This could provide a place for fly tippers to off load their rubbish. Alternatively, cameras could be put in place if not already there to prevent such actions.
- 10.** Lastly, we have seen similar signs that I speak of with 2-minute beach clean.



This sign is an example of how we can encourage our citizens to take action towards protecting their environment for future generations. Although, I would stress that a more permanent sign would be appropriate. This picture is only to shed a visual of the possibilities we have available.

Figure 1



I would like to make one last recommendation; this will be directed towards the harvesting of seaweed. In the NMPF 16.0 three objectives are outlined however, these objectives do not directly state that they will support local harvesters that could be irreversibly impacted by larger companies capitalizing on commercialization of seaweed harvesting.

I believe it is vital to protect the local people, that have a livelihood built around harvesting seaweed. One objective supports the motion of sustainable harvesting but does not directly note the impact of local businesses. In 16.1 it is noted that seaweed harvesting is integral part of rural marine communities but does not wish to mention protection for one's livelihood who is linked to the harvesting of seaweed. I would like to suggest that further consultation on this topic be generated and that it is seriously considered in the planning of this framework.

Sincerely,

Jordan Collins

Hello,

please find attached a document with my submission for the NMPF.

Kind regards,

Heather

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A critique of:

Public Participant, Communication and Engagement

Panel discussion at road show

I attended the public consultation events in Westport on the 26/11/2019. To ‘encourage public participation, communication and engagement’ would definitely not be how I would have described my experience there. I will comment that your presentation of information specific to the area was important and was enlightening for the community, although numbers were as low as 15 people at this event. This evening was insightful for people that had not yet read much of the report, I can value the importance of this as it can be difficult to read through a report. I was one of 5 members of my college class that had arrived after studying the report hoping to engage in the questioning part of the evening and excited to receive valuable answers contributing to our public submission. Personally, I engaged in two questions. One about the low numbers of public participation in the contribution to this framework. Secondly a question on why the environmental stakeholder pillar is so low.

In response myself and my classmate received answers not full with information or reflection on some weakness in the report. We received roundabout answers with hints of sarcasm. I think it is important to treat the public as public. It is important not to answer as if we are politicians challenging the framework. We value your framework and how much information, consideration and support has gone into it. We came along that evening to try help gain an insight into what to note in our public submissions. Padraig Dempsey Assistant Principal marine spatial planning in particular had a sense of being challenged when asked about the framework. I received answers such as “and where did you pull these figures out of”, “right back at ya” “well it worked for you guys because you’re here, aren’t you?”. I felt challenged by Padraig rather than informed. Credit to other members of the panel Conor McCabe from marine planning policy along with Peter Hynes and larla Moran from Mayo

County Council offering information insights during the evening. Numbers are already low at some of these public information evenings and it would be in best interested to create a positive space of knowledge exchange. If you feel a question is irrelevant or it is represented well enough in the report, it is still important to value the opinion of an outsider rather than becoming defensive. I could predict numbers being lowered in the future if all consultations resulted in public members leaving feeling very challenged as I did that night. I thought I would receive information during this session instead of being challenged of my existing knowledge.

Numbers of participation and engagement

In January 2019 National Marine Planning Framework held an art competition. This was a hugely successful competition, with 1000 students competing to have their artwork showcased on the cover of the Marine Planning Framework. This result shows that a successful campaign can really spike number of participant and awareness on the National Marine Planning. In the framework Eoghan Murphy, T.D. Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government states that “75% of our population live in coastal counties”. This works out to be over three and a half million people that I would consider as **interested persons** of the framework. Over 170 submissions were received for the baseline report. In my opinion I would see these numbers as very low. It was noted that these are the usual numbers for public contribution towards frameworks like these at the public consultation evening. When I stated that I thought these numbers were low and received the answer “where did you pull these figures from” and that these number where regular for public contribution towards a framework “so right back at you”. I said “ I compared them with the amount of people living close to water, affected by water and the numbers of people marching in the streets for change every week”. I still stand by this statement and feel there is lots of room for improvement in participant numbers. Suggestions in engaging the public in doing so are:

- Provide a space of positivity and knowledge exchange from both the panel and audience, it is important to value the publics opinion when in their presents
- Open up social media outlets. Your twitter is quite good, open it up to more popular outlets for young people such as Facebook, Instagram, adds on various social medias.
- Utilize college settings they are full of informed members of the public looking for a chance to contribute to our future. Our college GMIT in particular have an amazing green campus society with truly wise and knowledgeable people. There is also an Outdoor Education course on campus who too can offer great insight. Use these college settings through information evenings, contacting chairpersons of societies, information stalls. This can be applied to all colleges
- Utilizing sporting bodies, water based in particular. Communicate with them via email, social media and or information evenings. These are hugely valuable water users with some of the most valuable insights to the past, present and future of Irish water.

- Radio stations. A radio slot was offered to the National Marine planning network during the information night I attended. These are valuable opportunities with active members of the public often listening.
- Contact local environmental groups pushing for change, things like this are their opportunities to make a change. Suggestions include: Extinction Rebellion, Fridays for Future, The Galway Environmental Network (the local environmental networks, not just the national network, some have more of a concern for coastal regions than others)

[The need for further study](#)

While reading through the report these are some other general notes I took that need to be reviewed. Most of these notes are concerns of the issues of sustainability in each section along with some others.

Throughout this report it is noted a couple times of the need for more information, feasibility of studies and ongoing development in a certain area was stated. Including in 7.0 Energy Carbon Capture and Storage, 11.22 Energy- Offshore Renewable Energy, 16.19 Biomass of Seaweed, under Seaweed Harvesting. My recommendation is that you should sponsor studies in this area to encourage research being undertaken in these fields. There are many students all over the country looking for further study opportunities. In particular GMIT Mayo fourth year students in Outdoor Education are encouraged to undertake a dissertation study and some of your lacking researched areas would fit here perfectly.

[“Safe Havens”](#)

14.37 “Port construction and operational activities can have adverse impacts on air quality, noise and marine biodiversity. Post construction, however, ports can act as safe havens or sheltered areas for particular marine species”. I would not describe these constructed ports as ‘safe havens’ for marine species. They are mentioned twice as ‘safe havens’ throughout this report. More than likely, long before construction of the port, it is likely that a natural inlet in the coast was present. Now, these can be described as safe sheltered havens. Because construction had come along and developed in this area doesn’t necessarily mean its anymore of a ‘safe haven’ then it originally and naturally was. These constructions often result in toxifying leaching, fuel deposits and much more. Although fish may live in these constructed ports, they are more often then not living healthy lives, as a result these use of words are misleading.

[‘working pier’ definition](#)

As a regular water user as sport and recreation for both my work and personal use through experience I have noticed there is a serious need for a official definition of a ‘working pier’. There are many interpretations of a working pier and their varied from aquaculture employees and adventure sport employees. There has been many disagreements of who can utilise these ‘working piers’ for their own occupations. The need for a definition of ‘working pier’ will need to be included in this framework in sections 5 aquaculture, section 14 ports, harbours and ships and section 17 sport and recreation. Consideration for water users in the sport and recreation section is important. They too earn their living off the water with many returning benefits to the public such as health, sense of place and

connection. Kayak, coastal steering, surf, sailing instructors as well as many more need to be considered when defining a ‘working pier’.



SAVE OUR SEAFRONT

Chair: Richard Boyd Barrett, TD

[REDACTED] saveourseafront.com

Draft NMPF Submissions
Marine Planning Section
Department of Planning, Housing and Local Government
Newtown Road
Wexford, Y35 AP90.

8th April 2020

Dear Sir / Madam

Re. Save Our Seafront submission on National Marine Planning Framework.

Save Our Seafront members are involved with dealing with many aspects of the Covid 19 crisis and we are not in a position to put together a more detailed final submission. We enclose 2 previous documents which set out our position.

We also wish to re-iterate the following key points:

-The protection of Biodiversity is central to our position. Biodiversity is at risk as never before and needs to be afforded a greater level of protection than that proposed in the Framework.

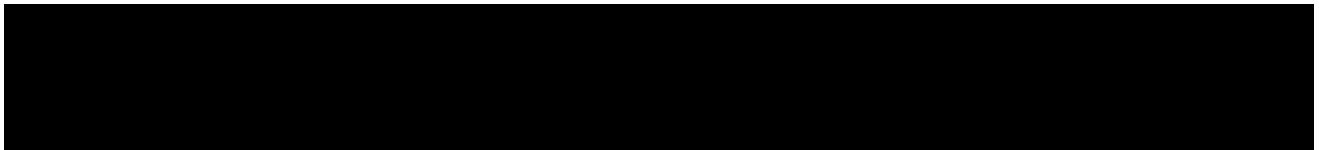
-The buffer zone for offshore wind farms should be 22kms from the coastline, as is the norm in other European countries.

-There needs to be a much greater level of public participation in the location and impact of offshore wind farms.

-Locations and zones for offshore windfarms should be subject to independent assessment by Resource and Constraints analysis, as has happened in Scotland and other jurisdictions. This is particularly necessary on the East Coast of Ireland where permissions were granted before the finalisation of a comprehensive National Marine Planning Framework.

Yours faithfully

Fergal McLoughlin
Save Our Seafront, Dun Laoghaire.



MSP Submissions
Marine Spatial Planning Section
Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
Newtown Road
Wexford
YP35 AP90

9th December 2018

Dear Sir / Madam

Re: Save Our Seafront submission on Marine Spatial Planning

Save Our Seafront wish to make the following observations:

Offshore windfarm development will have a negative effect on landscape and tourism unless it is managed properly and in accordance with accepted international standards. Ireland's coastline is internationally renowned and it is a significant factor in attracting tourists. The imposition of large-scale, industrial wind farms in close proximity to the coastline would have a seriously detrimental effect on the marine landscape and would result in the loss of tourism and related jobs.

The norm for wind farms under construction in the EU in 2017 was approximately 40 kilometres from the coastline. Save Our Seafront strongly advocate that this should be the norm for Ireland, if it is necessary to go that route. The existing development at Arklow & Codling on the east coast is

approximately 10 kilometres from the coastline. Proposed developments at Dublin Array & Oriel are at a similar distance from the coastline, on near-shore Annex 1 sandbanks. We are conscious of the negative effect on marine habitats which are vitally important to marine wildlife and birds. Such developments are cheaper to develop for private offshore wind developers. These projects are out of line with accepted international practice and were advanced without independent assessment of landscape impact.

There are also many questions about the effectiveness and cost benefit of wind farms as opposed to solar energy, wave power etc. We support and advocate the necessity for renewable energy in combatting Climate Change, but it should be effected in a manner which does not destroy Ireland's beautiful marine landscape and its tourism industry which is central to the well-being of so many people and to the national economy.

Save Our Seafront and our membership are particularly concerned with issues affecting the east coast. The coastal landscape is central to the well-being and tourism potential of Dun Laoghaire and Dublin, affecting millions of people who avail of the east coast landscape and seascape - Seapoint, Dun Laoghaire Harbour, DL Baths, Dalkey, Killiney beach and headland, the Bray to Greystones walk, as well as the new Wicklow Greenway.

It is vital that Ireland's unique, natural landscape and seascape is preserved from inappropriate marine development, and that the landscape is protected by a professional, transparent and democratic Marine Spatial Strategy.

Yours faithfully

Fergal McLoughlin
Save Our Seafront, Dun Laoghaire.



SAVE OUR SEAFRONT - Chairperson: Richard Boyd Barrett TD
saveourseafront.com

**SUBMISSION TO THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT RE PROPOSED DUBLIN ARRAY
PROJECT ON KISH BANK (MS53/55/L1)**

Introduction

Save Our Seafront is a community organisation based in Dun Laoghaire. It was established in 2002 and has campaigned on a number of issues including the proposal in 2012 to allow drilling for oil in Dublin Bay.

Save Our Seafront is in favour of renewable energies. We welcome effective policies and plans that will see Ireland transfer some of its energy sources from fossil fuels to renewables and work towards reaching targets for renewables set by the EU.

The world's reliance on fossil fuels is unsustainable. Ireland is 80% reliant on fossil fuels, it needs to reduce this to 60% at a minimum by 2020 and ideally exceed this target. We are currently, according to the Minister for Energy, 630 MW behind where we should be. In order to achieve this we need an effective national plan for renewable energy, that is state led, open to public scrutiny, respects the natural environment and has a built in process of consultation and appeal in line with best practice.

The proposal for a wind farm on the Kish Bank on the surface looks like a step in the right direction, provided that it is managed to maximise both the renewable energy and financial return to the state. However, we have some major concerns that we would like to be addressed before any decision is made to grant approval for the Saorgus project.

1. Foreshore Act

The Dublin Array project is subject to the Minister for the Environment granting a Foreshore Lease to install the 145 wind turbines just 10 kms from the coast. The Foreshore Act 1933 is the legislation that governs the granting or refusal of this lease. This raises a number of issues about which we are concerned:

- The Act provides minimal opportunity for public consultation and lacks transparency. There is no involvement of a planning authority, whether Local Authorities or An Bord Pleanala, in the granting of Foreshore Licences/Leases. The absence of any appeal procedure is not in line with best practice when it comes to decisions that affect the environment.
- The Department of the Environment has already acknowledged that the Foreshore Act is outdated when it opened up a public consultation process on a new Foreshore and Marine Area Development Bill.
- The Aarhus Convention, which Ireland ratified in June 2012, aims to increase public involvement in all matters relating to the environment. Its provisions are broken

down into three pillars – Access to information, Public participation in environmental decision making and Access to justice. The lack of any appeals procedure surrounding the granting or refusal of a Foreshore Licence/Lease begs the question as to whether there is real access to justice for people with concerns around a particular foreshore application and whether the Foreshore Act 1933 meets the requirements of the Aarhus Convention.

- Considering the above we ask you not to grant the Foreshore lease for this particular project until we can be sure that the process is in line with EU requirements and the public are offered the full provisions recommended in the Aarhus Convention.

2. **A plan for renewable energies and protection of our natural resources**

In Save Our Seafront we believe that a coherent plan for renewable energies must be state led and part of a strategic plan to develop alternatives to fossil fuels. The state owned company ESB is best placed to implement this plan as its core objective is to provide for the energy needs of the state. Where private companies put forward proposals to build energy infrastructure or develop alternative energy sources; the state should identify the prime sites for development and hold a public tendering process to ensure that development is in the public interest and that it has an adequate return to the state taking into account all the relevant factors including the financial and environmental costs

The Kish Bank was selected, according to the proposers of the project, because it “had all the attributes ideally required for an offshore wind farm - high wind resource, suitable water depths and ground conditions for installation of turbines, proximity to the high electricity demand of Dublin, lack of interference with shipping or fisheries etc.”. If this is the case, it means that the Kish Bank is a valuable Natural Resource and as such should be protected and only exploited in the interests of the Irish people.

The tax, royalty and licensing arrangements for development of wind energy need to have clear benefits for the Irish people. Considering the controversy that has surrounded this in relation to Oil and Gas exploration the public need specific details and guarantees of the benefits before any lease is granted.

There are also question marks over the cost benefit of wind energy that needs to be addressed. David McKay’s research “Sustainable Energy Without the Hot Air”ⁱ suggests that the energy returns are questionable. A number of other reports question the real cost per unit of electricity compared to other forms of generation.ⁱⁱ

While we understand that the development of renewable energies is of benefit to all the people of the world, the development in our own country should be of specific benefit to the Irish state in terms of reaching the EU targets for 2020, guaranteeing a security of supply of energy and providing a revenue stream that can play a part in emerging from the current economic crisis. In the government’s ‘Strategy for Renewable Energy 2012 - 2020’ document it states ‘Our offshore wind resource will be developed as an export opportunity to UK and North West Europe’. As this is the only reference to wind energy development in the entire document it strongly indicates that the intention is to export the energy and not supply the Irish in order to help us reach our 2020 targets. Any renewable energy project located in Ireland should be used to guarantee energy supply in Ireland and achieve our targets for renewable energy before supplying any foreign markets such as the UK.

The Foreshore Act states: “Foreshore Leases may be assigned with the agreement of the Minister but consideration will not normally be given to any such assignment during the period of application, construction or initial 2 year period of generation of

electricity." This clause is clearly there to guard against speculation. Despite this clause the valuable 99 year leases given for the Arklow and Codling Banks to Irish promoters were sold on in 2008 to international power companies. The price was based on the size of the permitted development.

The application for the development of Dublin Array is from a small Kerry based company called **Saorgus**. We are concerned that the licence to build and operate the Kish Bank wind farm, once the necessary leases are secured, will then be sold on to a third party. In such a case, what guarantees will be provided that the output, control, and economic and environmental benefits accrue to the state rather than some multinational investment company?

3. Size of installation and proximity to land

The applicant is looking for a lease to install 145 turbines just 10 kms from the coast of Dublin. There is only one wind farm currently operating in the world that is bigger than this – London Array which has 175 turbines.

The planned farm is just 10kms from the coastline. Across Europe a best practice buffer zone of 22kms is developing. Already this buffer zone is in place in Germany, Belgium and The Netherlands. A similar buffer zone has been recommended in Denmark and in the UK.

Dublin Bay and the Wicklow coastline are vital to our heritage. Its natural beauty and its literary associations play an important role in tourism on the east coast. While we understand that the development of renewable energies will change and impact on our land and seascapes, we believe that the sheer size and proximity of this development would mean the industrialisation of Dublin Bay and Wicklow Coast.

We also have concerns about the technical competence of Saorgus. Nothing in their application indicates any previous experience in executing a project of this size.

The Dept. Of Environment and Dept. Of Communications state that they are undertaking a targeted review of The 'Best Practice Wind Energy Guidelines' published in 2006, to address the manner in which guidelines affect key issues of community concern to ensure wind energy does not have a negative impact on local communities.

The 2012 government policy statement on strategic importance of transmission of other energy infrastructure emphasises the importance of local community acceptance and adherence to national and international best practice.

The Dept. Also states the the Saorgus application will not be assessed until the offshore renewable energy development plan OREDP has been published. When the application is assessed it will take into account associated SEI.

Given the above, what specific steps are the government taking to ensure local community acceptance and adherence to international best practice. Will the government ensure that all information in relation to this project is provided to the local community and their concerns will be taken into consideration before any decision is made on the project.

4. Environment

The shallow sandbanks along our coast are an important breeding and foraging ground for many marine species. Of particular concern are the Harbour Porpoises protected under the adjacent Rockabill to Dalkey Island Area of Special Conservation (SPA 004014). The government is required under the EU Habitats Directive to ensure conservation measures are in place to appropriately manage the SAC and ensure

appropriate assessment of plans and projects likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of the SAC. It seems likely that the proximity of the project to this SAC will have an effect on its integrity. Also of concern are the Purple Sandpiper and Tern colonies likewise protected under the EU Habitats Directive. The installation of 145 turbines could potentially seriously damage these sandbanks and disturb the habitats of these protected species.

5. Exclusion zone – effects on water sports and leisure – tourism

According to the European Wind Energy Association the locations of existing and planned offshore wind projects in the EU tend to be geographically separate from areas of high coastal tourist use. This is a factor in the development of a 22 km buffer zone use by several countries. A number of studies have been done on the visual impact on amenities available to both the local community and the tourist industry . Jacob Ladenburg and Sanja Lutzeyer have suggested that from “a welfare economic point of view there is a non-trivial economic trade-off between offshore generation costs and the visual impacts from offshore wind farms. Offshore wind farms close to the shore generate cheaper electricity, but also cause higher levels of visual impacts compared to locations at larger distances”.ⁱⁱⁱ They go on to outline the problems associated with such installations close to the shoreline.

While many of the American studies concentrate on the trade off between the visual impact, the financial benefits provided to the local community to compensate for the visual loss of amenity versus the environmental benefits to society as a whole; they all stress the importance of openness, engagement with the local community, a democratic process that involves the local community in an attempt to balance all the various concerns and interests.

The coastal area from Dunlaoghaire to Wicklow is a huge tourist attraction and the visual impact on this is of major concern, particularly the cliff walk from Bray to Greystones

This has not been the case with the Kish Bank proposal. We believe that the licence should not be provided until such a process has taken place.

Summary

Save Our Seafront are in favour of any move toward renewable energies, in order to meet targets set for 2020. However, EU directives and international best practice need to be observed. The Danish, who could be considered leaders in this field produce 30% of their electricity through wind energy, a figure which they have pledged to increase to 50% by 2020. In 1999 they passed a bill ensuring that the right to exploit energy from wind and water within their territorial waters and economic zone belongs to the Danish government. Tendering is common practice in the pre – exploitation phase to ensure competitiveness and a public appeals process is in place in line with EU law. They have recently moved toward introducing a buffer zone of 22 km and they have produced extensive studies on near shore and off shore wind projects. It would make sense for the government to consult with other countries such as Denmark to produce a comprehensive marine spatial planning strategy. In consideration of the above concerns we ask that no decision be made on a possible wind farm on the Kish Bank until all of them are addressed.

i David McKay, *Sustainable Energy Without the Hot Air*, (UIT Cambridge, Cambridge, 2009).

ii www.ewea.org/fileadmin/ewea_documents/.../Facts_Volume_2.pdf. See also the US Department of Energy "Federal energy Management Programme" at www1.eere.energy.gov > ... > [Technologies](#).

iii Ladenburg, Jacob and Lutzeier, Sanja , The Economics of Visual Disamenity Reductions of Offshore Wind Farms - Review and Suggestions from an Emerging Field (March 20, 2012). USAEE Working Paper. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2026492> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2026492>



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae Luimnígh

Limerick City
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07th April 2020

Dear Sir or Madam,

Limerick City and County Council welcome the opportunity to comment on the National Marine Planning Framework – Consultation Draft and welcome the development of an overarching framework, when combined with the suite of measures proposed; it will bring together the multiple uses and Government Departments that regulate the marine environment. It is critical that there is effective governance and a co – ordinated approach to plan making for managing our maritime environment. The long term more sustainable development of the maritime environment needs to be considered, particularly in the rapidly changing environment, we find ourselves in; however, this cannot happen in isolation, it has to be considered in the context of the National Planning Framework and land use planning while having regard to appropriate environmental legalisation.

The document sets out that one of the aims of the Marine Planning Development Management Bill is to eliminate the unnecessary duplication of the development management processes (including environmental assessments) for activities or developments that are currently assessed under both the foreshore and planning regimes and introduce a single development management process for the maritime area for activities and developments to be administered by An Bord Pleanála/Local Authorities as appropriate based on development type and location. While the Local Authority welcome the proposal and acknowledge the significant overlap that currently exists, there is a requirement for clear regulations, which will set out the responsibilities of the relevant stakeholders. The Local Authority would also welcome the development of a digital medium, where the areas would be mapped and any applications made, be available to view and which would demonstrate clear delineation of the areas that would be subject to terrestrial planning control and those subject to maritime provisions. It is likely that applications may cross both boundaries and clear guidance required as to how these dual type of applications would be considered.

The document sets out that the Government is committed to the preparation of regional or sub-national plans in the future, similar to other jurisdictions like England, Scotland and Germany. By definition, these plans would have a local character and could potentially provide for quite detailed plan making at bay or harbour area. The document sets out that at least three such regional plans will be prepared through a collaborative approach, and grouped on the basis of, for example, shared coastline/geography, similar maritime challenges, and opportunities and existing partnership arrangements. The Strategic

Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary commissioned in 2011, by Clare County Council, Kerry County Council, Limerick City and County Councils, Shannon Development and Shannon Foynes Port Company represent this collaborative approach. The goal at the outset of the SIFP preparation was to review existing relevant information and data, conduct additional essential research and prepare a marine and land - use planning strategy for the SIFP study area. The key objective of the SIFP was to research and develop an integrated approach to facilitating economic growth and promoting environmental management within and adjacent to the estuary, which is a multi-functional zone, with many different stakeholders and many differing agendas. The SIFP was incorporated into the relevant County and City Development Plan by way of variation, which sets out the relevant policies and objectives for the appropriate functional area. The plan has delivered a co-operative and integrated approach between statutory agencies involved in the area and provides sustainable, integrated and proactive vision for the Shannon Estuary and its environs.

In relation to Chapter 3 – Overarching Marine Planning Policy, the Local Authority would like to outline the following comments:

- The inclusion of “an eco-systems-based approach to the management of human activities” is welcomed, as it is perhaps the best way of dealing with human effects on complex marine and littoral ecological systems.
- Biodiversity Planning Policies - the setting out of planning policy responses towards proposals that will affect the marine environment, either positively or negatively is welcomed. It is clear from the key references outlined, that the responses are ecologically based. Similarly, as outlined in S3.44, the mention of cost benefit analysis promoting eco-system based adaptation options is also welcomed, as it emphasises the importance of such approaches.
- The mention of Natural Capital should be accompanied by a clear definition for the sake of clarity. Despite this, the emphasis on natural assets and the need for their careful management is welcomed.
- Key issues for Marine Planning is a very useful indication of the vulnerability of marine wildlife to disturbance, particularly at key periods in their lives, such as breeding and migration. Following on from this the inclusion of Marine Protected Areas, which might help deal with these issues is welcomed.
- The mention of marine litter and the inclusion of policies that support efforts to deal with it are also welcomed. This is a growing problem, with the potential to affect both human use of the coast and has implications for wildlife and the marine food chain. Similarly the inclusion of noise and other emissions (light, energy) is also welcome because of its possible effects on marine life. These issues are often overlooked particularly during the construction phases of a project, its inclusion is welcomed and suitable management, and enforcement shall be considered, as appropriate.
- Considering the impacts of climate change and indeed coastal change and greenhouse gases “for the lifetime of the proposal” is to be welcomed, as it places climate and coastal change at the heart of project appraisal, however, it may be difficult to demonstrate and assess, having regard to the constant nature of change.
- The necessity to integrate both terrestrial and marine planning systems in considering infrastructure does indeed deserve a mention; however, what is lacking is practical

measures as to how this might be achieved. Reference to proposals or legislation, which might assist in achieving this integration, would be welcomed.

- The specific mention of Heritage Assets is welcome. The specific mention of underwater heritage and archaeology is important, the National Monuments Service in repeated submissions to land use plans in Limerick has identified this, as an issue. Section 3.191 is particularly important in this regard. The inclusion of the need to assess the possible effects of a proposal on marine heritage is welcomed.
- Rural Coastal and Island Communities, such communities are often on the periphery of both policy and national awareness. The specific mention of them and indeed in the establishment of a marine planning framework, which highlights the issues they face, would help highlight these areas and ensure they are considered in terms of policymaking.
- Social benefits; the fast growing area of marine recreation is closely associated with social benefits that might accrue from marine environments. This area needs to be carefully managed and this is acknowledged in Section 3.219. Local history should be added to the list in Section 3.219.

Chapter 7. 0 sets out Energy Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS), which is becoming an issue for consideration, and though the Kinsale Gas Field, was used for this purpose, it is no longer in use. Statutory Instrument 575/2011 (ES geological storage of CO₂) prohibits such usage. It is suggested that any discussion of this aspect of carbon storage is premature, pending the enactment of future legislation. This shall be highlighted in the document.

Chapter 9.0 Energy – Transmission, in relation to energy transmission in the marine environment, the issue of infrastructural resilience in the face of climate change comes to mind. This has been raised as an issue by other Government Bodies and while the idea of an “efficient and robust system” is mentioned on page 110, the issue of climate change and its possible effects on infrastructure and the need for this to be included in infrastructure design and maintenance should be acknowledged.

Chapter 10.0 Energy – Petroleum – there is a significant contradiction in terms of petroleum production and the need to progress to a low carbon future and this contradiction needs to be clearly acknowledged. While, it is considered that petroleum production would play a role in energy provision in the short-term, while transition to more sustainable energy sources takes place, nevertheless there is an inherent contradiction in this section, between the drive towards a reduced carbon future and the licensing and production of petroleum products in the Irish Marine Environment.

Chapter 11.0 Energy Offshore Renewable Energy and Appendix D – Spatial Designation Process – Strategic Marine Activity Zones – The potential establishment of designated zones for Offshore renewable Energy is welcomed as it would remove much of the speculation, which currently surrounds the sector. This would need to take into account other marine activities such as fishing, shipping, as well as ecological concerns. ORE Policy 10 is also welcomed in that it provides for the construction of land based coastal infrastructure, which would be essential for the development of offshore renewables.

Chapter 12 Fisheries 12.16 sets out one of the key issues for marine planning, which is the competition that exists between fisheries and other users of the marine environment. Reconciling the spatial requirements of fisheries and other needs, such as that of ecology will be a huge issue into the future. The need for a marine reserves should also be considered as part of this section. This should be linked with Marine Protected Areas, as outlined in the document.

Chapter 18.0 Telecommunications - The issue of ensuring a climate resilient communications network (also an issue for energy transmission) should be considered in more detail in this Chapter. It is acknowledged in S18.17 p.167), however, further detail is required based on the concerns raised by Service Providers, in the preparation of the Climate Change Adaptation Plan by Limerick City and County Council.

Chapter 20.0 Wastewater Treatment and Disposal - Much of the content of this Chapter relates to onshore legislation and guidance such as the Urban Waste Water Treatments Directive, what may be lacking is addressing water pollution, which might originate in the marine environment such as from shipping. This area should be considered and addressed in the Chapter.

Chapter 21.0 Implementation Arrangements - S21.5 highlights the establishment of an integrated marine spatial planning framework, consisting of marine forward planning, marine development management and marine enforcement is long overdue and welcomed. However how it integrates with the current terrestrial system and the implications for current Local Authority planning functions needs to be clearly set out, with clear responsibility for each of the stakeholders.

If you wish to discuss any of the issues raised in the above submission, don't hesitate to contact the Forward/Strategic Planning Section, Limerick City and County Council.



Vincent Murray
A/Director of Services – Economic Development Directorate

National Marine Planning Framework Public Consultation

Joint submission on behalf of:

Save Fenit Island Alliance (SFIA)

SFIA is a community group made up of an alliance of local people, public representatives, local businesses and sponsors who have been campaigning for more than a decade to regain access to the tranquil, and historically and culturally important Fenit Island;

and:

Tralee Bay Sea Angling Club (TBSAC)

TBSAC is the largest and one of the oldest sea angling clubs in Ireland. Members of the club are currently members of the Senior, Ladies and Junior Irish National Sea Angling Teams competing internationally.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The authors of the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) Consultation Draft document acknowledge (19.13, pp 171) that access to the Irish coastline ‘can be limited in many areas’. The authors go on to suggest some of the reasons why access to the coastal margins of the country is limited. In this submission it is our intention to further explore the issue of public access of our coast and to draw particular attention to what we consider to be the overriding obstacle in achieving the legal entitlement of the Irish public and visitors to access the coastline for recreational purposes.

1.2 Ireland has a much undervalued resource in the form of a large, nationwide network of coastal pathways, tracks, access routes, pilgrimage tracks and camino. These traditional pathways have been used by local communities and visitors to the regions for decades and in many instances for generations. We would suggest that the potential of this network of pathways habitually used by the public is seriously undervalued by Local Authorities and Lawmakers and that as a consequence they have virtually no protection in law.

1.3 The central tenet of this contribution to the consultation exercise is that Irish lawmakers should give urgent consideration to the introduction of laws which protect traditional walkways, coastal pathways and access to beaches and uplands which have been habitually used by local communities and visitors for decades. Only by protecting in law the freedom of access to such places will visitor destinations be secured into the future and provide the certainty and confidence necessary for businesses and public bodies to provide the investment in tourism facilities and infrastructure required by visitors to an amenity. It is through such investment that secure employment will be created to the benefit of remote rural and coastal communities and the Irish economy as a whole.

1.4 At the core of this submission is the proposal for the fundamental reform to the identification, registration and designation of pathways in regular, long-term use by the public. The submission goes on to provide a rationale for this proposal. Although we suggest a nationwide strategy encompassing all of Ireland’s many and varied environs with the potential to attract visitors we focus principally on access to Ireland’s coastal margins in keeping with the focus of this consultation exercise.

2.0 Public Access to the Outdoors - a comparative analysis with the United Kingdom

2.1 Overall tourism is worth some €9.4 billion to the Irish economy and supports the employment of an estimated 260000 people [1]. Much of that tourism is reliant upon visitors having unrestricted access to the country's varied landscapes and coastline - especially in the growth areas of active and adventure tourism much of which takes place along the coastal margins of our island nation [2]. Sadly, when compared to competitor states elsewhere in Europe, Ireland's laws with regard to public access to the coastal margins and hinterland of the country are simply not fit for purpose. As a consequence access to the coastline is frequently being prevented by landowners from Donegal to Wicklow [3] [4]. Currently, local communities and local authorities have no recourse to law in such circumstances and therefore are unable to ensure continued public access to exciting and scenically stunning coastal environs which had previously been enjoyed by local people and visitors for decades.

2.2 In the United Kingdom pathways and tracks receive, with the minimum of complication, designation as protected public Rights of Way. This is in sharp contrast to the protocols which exist here in Ireland where there is no easily achievable legal protection at all for the old and much-used wealth of tracks and paths, access routes and pilgrimage trails that have existed for generations all over the uplands and to and along the coastal edge of Ireland.

2.3 Here in Ireland the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2015 require local authorities to preserve existing public rights of way by mapping and listing them as part of their county development plans [5]. This requires local authorities to map and list existing pathways to be considered as Rights of Way. These candidate routes must then go into the County Development Plan which in due course goes before Councillors to be voted upon. This is the fundamental flaw in the arrangement as Councillors frequently act in a clientelist way to do the bidding of their landowning constituents resulting in a pathway previously in habitually long-term use by the public failing to achieve the status of a Right of Way. We maintain that such a system is archaic, profoundly undemocratic and long overdue for reform.

2.4 In all too many instances landowners go a stage further and block pathways previously accessible to the public. Such instances are commonplace nationally [3] [4] and here in County Kerry two such pathways, one providing access to the boat club's facilities at Lough Leane and another on the coastal margins of Fenit Island have been blocked in this manner and are now the subject of legal proceedings. The latter example indicates the extreme lengths to which some landowners will go to in order to deny the public's access to a previously much loved local amenity and popular visitor destination. The example involves the erection of some 2km of industrial scale fencing which transgresses a Special Area of Conservation and denies access to a well defined, age old coastal pathway leading to the birthplace of St Brendan and to Fenit Castle, a designated National Monument. The fencing has also brought an end to angling tourism to the area which had previously attracted significant numbers of anglers from the UK and elsewhere in Europe. The cessation of such angling tourism has impacted negatively on local businesses most notably in the hospitality sector. The only defence to the blocking of access to such pathways previously enjoyed by the public is for local groups to employ Article 9(1)(a)(x) of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001[6]. This requires communities to show that the path has been in habitual public use for not less than 10 years. Even then, it requires often reluctant County Councils to enforce removal of the blocking development. This

process can take several years and if successful still does not confer a pathway with any kind of Right of Way status. The resulting uncertainty does nothing to encourage innovation or investment with the potential to benefit visitors who are drawn to a scenic walk, remote strand or headland, an angling spot or a wild swimming venue accessed by such a pathway.

2.5 Contrast those experiences with that of the United Kingdom - our nearest competitor in the international tourism sector. Since 1949 and the introduction of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act [7] the British public have had a legally enshrined entitlement to access the countryside and moreover a clearly defined process by which they can have a traditionally used pathway or track registered as a public Right of Way. Crucially the 1949 Act led to the creation of a definitive map of all Rights of Way in the British Isles. It is this entitlement which is central to the main proposal contained in this submission.

2.6 Countryside access rights in the UK were further strengthened by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 [8]. Subsection (5) of section 53 of the 1981 Act, became key to much of what can be done today, since it provides that "*Any person may apply to the [surveying] authority for [a definitive map modification order adding a right of way]*". Before the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, all an individual or community group could do was produce the evidence and ask the Local Authority to make an order; but under this provision any individual or community group has the right to apply themselves, formally, and to appeal if the application is rejected.

2.7 It is our view that the Scottish model also has much to recommend it as it is considered by many that the legislation and regulation set in place by the Scottish government to safeguard the public's access to the countryside and coastal margins is exemplary. The Scottish model places great emphasis on the rights and responsibilities of all stakeholders and centres around an 'Outdoor Access Code'[25]. This approach has proven to be enormously successful in terms of achieving greater public access to the countryside, increased visitor numbers and bringing accompanying jobs and other economic benefits to remote Scottish communities.

3.0 Consequences and Benefits of the Creation of Public Rights of Way

3.1 As a consequence of the legal framework outlined above pathways, trails, bridal ways and coastal paths and routes used by the public for recreation purposes and which provide access to the coast, lakes, uplands, riverbanks and canals have been safeguarded by their designation as public Rights of Way. These Rights of Way are recorded in a definitive map which contains a network of routes providing public access across National Parks, heritage sites, private lands and much of the coastal margins of the British Isles. All such routes and associated maps are freely available to potential tourists worldwide and have been compiled into a publication 'Rights of Way: A guide to Law and Practice' [8] this publication is known throughout the rambling and fell walking community as the 'Blue Book'.

3.2 The existence of such safeguarded paths ultimately led to the creation of The Wales Coast Path which was launched on 5 May 2012, and was heralded as the world's first coastal path to cover an entire country. [9] [10] [11] It follows the entire Welsh coastline from Chepstow, Monmouthshire, in the south to Queensferry, Flintshire, in the north. Crucially in terms of our core submission, many parts of the Wales Coast Path are previously established paths and/ or designated Rights of Way. Such include the North Wales Path,

the Anglesey Coastal Path and the Llŷn Coastal Path. The Pembrokeshire Coast Path had been a designated National Trail,^[12] and in 2011 was voted by National Geographic magazine as the second-best coastal destination in the world.^{[13] [14]} The Wales Coast Path runs through eleven national nature reserves and other nature reserves such as those managed by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and The Wildlife Trust.^[15]

3.3 Subsequently, and to some extent inspired by the success of the Wales Coast Path, further legislation was enacted by the English parliament to bring about Natural England's Coastal Access Scheme which was approved by the Secretary of State on 9 July 2013 under section 298(2) of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, and presented to Parliament pursuant to section 298(6) of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.^[16] This legislation led directly to the creation of The England Coast Path a long-distance National Trail. When fully complete, it will be 2,795 miles (4,500 kilometres) in length^[17] and will follow the whole coastline of England.

3.4 The trail is being implemented by Natural England, a non-departmental public body of the UK government responsible for ensuring that England's natural environment is protected and improved. It also has a responsibility to help people enjoy, understand and access the natural environment.^[18] In December 2014 the UK Government, encouraged by the success of the Wales Coast Path, announced that more than £5 million of additional funding was being committed over the following 5 years, to ensure that the England Coast Path will be completed by 2020, a decade earlier than would have otherwise been possible.^[19] A study carried out in 2014 shows that visitor numbers to the Wales Coast Path that year exceeded 37 million with a total direct spend of £546million.^[20]

4.0 The Economic and Social Benefits of Public Access to the Countryside: a case study

4.1 The South West Coast Path is England's longest waymarked long-distance footpath and a National Trail. We have chosen this initiative as a case study as much of this coastal region of England experiences similar social and economic challenges to those experienced by similar remote, coastal areas in the Republic of Ireland. Our intention is to use the South West Coast path as an exemplar to show that securing public access to a coastal pathway offers considerable social and economic benefits for communities in the vicinity of the amenity.

4.2 The West Coast Path stretches for 630 miles (1,014 km), running from Minehead in Somerset, along the coasts of Devon and Cornwall, to Poole Harbour in Dorset. It has been voted 'Britain's Best Walking route' twice in a row by readers of the Ramblers Walk magazine, and regularly features in lists of the world's best walks.^[21]

4.3 The final section of the path was designated as a National Trail in 1978. Many of the landscapes which the South West Coast Path crosses have special status, either as a national park or one of the heritage coasts. The path passes through two World Heritage Sites: the Dorset and East Devon Coast, known as the Jurassic Coast, was designated in 2001, and the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape in 2007.

4.4 In the 1990s it was thought that the path brought £150 million into the area each year,^[22] but new research in 2003 indicated that it generated around £300 million a year in total, which could support more than 7,500 jobs.^[23] This research also recorded that 27.6% of visitors to the region came because of the Path, and they spent £136 million in a year. Local people took 23 million walks on the Path and spent a further £116 million, and other

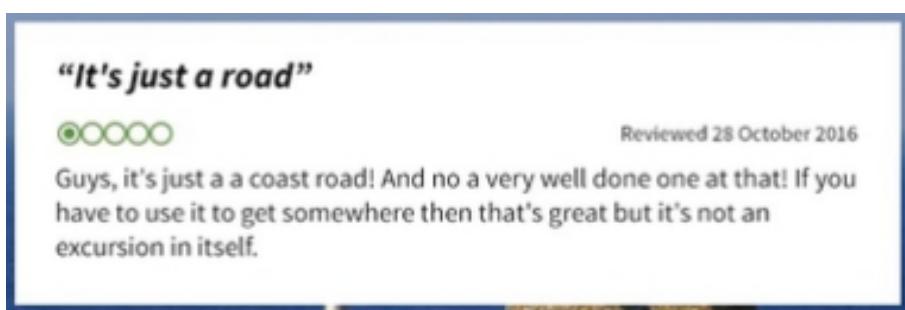
visitors contributed the remainder. A further study in 2005 estimated this figure to have risen to around £300 million.^[23] Following investment through the Rural Development Programme for England, more detailed research was undertaken in 2012, and this found the annual spend by walkers to have risen to £439 million which sustains 9771 full-time equivalent jobs. ^[24]

4.5 The above figures provide compelling evidence of the benefits to the economy of ensuring the public's entitlement to access to the countryside and so encouraging public and private investment and the creation of enterprises which enhance the quality of life for local communities as well as serving the needs of visitors to an area.

5.0 Summary and Recommendations

5.1 Clearly legislation regarding the public's right to access the countryside in Ireland lags some way behind that of the United Kingdom. The means by which publicly accessible pathways can achieve Right of Way designation also differs greatly, an issue we feel is overdue for reform. We argue that the outdated nature of current Irish law as it relates to public access to the countryside and coastal margins is to the detriment of our crucially important tourism industry, remote coastal communities and the exchequer.

5.2 Our contention is that the visitor experience is greatly enhanced if he or she has the opportunity and entitlement to explore the environs of the coastal margins of the country via designated pathways and coastal access tracks. Large expensive Initiatives such as the Wild Atlantic Way have a place in the overall tourism offering but without the opportunity to leave your car and walk a coastal pathway, launch a sea kayak at a remote promontory or engage in open water swimming it provides little more than a scenic drive along the western seaboard.



Tripadvisor review 2016

5.3 We fully understand the concerns which farmers and other landowners may have with regard to the public having the right to walk across parts of their lands. The provisions of the UK's Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW) allow for the public's 'right to roam'. That is right of open access, they can wander anywhere within an area of mapped open access land as long as they do no damage and do not interfere with the other uses of the land (e.g. farming). Part 1 of the CRoW which was later amended by the Marine and Coastal Access Act to include access to the coastal margin is quite different. Under these provisions the public have the right of 'passage and re-passage' along a right of way.

5.4 It is perhaps the case that the 'right to roam' as defined in UK law would be a difficult political sell in Ireland. However, we take the view that the England Coast Path is an interesting model that combines a waymarked path with areas of open access and one

which might more easily be adopted here in Ireland. The trail itself is, we think, unique in being a linear path with open access rights (they were amended slightly so that access to the trail itself cannot be restricted due to reasons of land management etc). The coastal margin is slightly different to other CRoW land because it encompasses all land uses between the trail and the sea that aren't excepted under Schedule 1 of the CRoW Act. Directions are then used to restrict access to other areas of land that might not be suitable for open access, such as mudflats that have sensitive wildlife. In that way, it works more like the Scottish model.

5.5 Finally, it has been our intention, in compiling this submission, to highlight and exemplify the economic and societal benefits of safeguarding public access to the countryside and coastal margins of our country; and in doing so, to put forward a compelling argument for change. If it is the case that we have been successful in our efforts, then it is our fervent hope that the National Marine Planning Framework will include a strong recommendation to government that democratically sustainable legislation, similar to that of our neighbours in the United Kingdom, should be enacted to safeguard and promote the public's access to the outdoors here in Ireland for the benefit of all of our citizens in addition to crucially important visitors from elsewhere in the world.

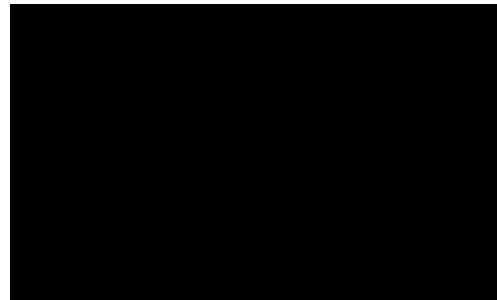
End.

Submitted 9 April 2020

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Save Fenit Island Alliance



Eugene Farrelly
Chairman
Tralee Bay Sea Angling Club



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General observations

Healthy Ireland and the Irish Physical Activity Research Collaboration welcomes the development of the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF). The availability of opportunities for people to engage in marine based sporting and recreational activities is an extremely important element of the Get Ireland Active - National Physical Activity Plan (NPAP). Swimming, in particular, provides benefits, in terms of physical and mental health, for citizens at every stage of their life course, from infancy to advanced old age, in a way that other forms of physical activity do not. In addition, access to costal and river areas provide opportunities for people to be physically active through additional modes (e.g. walking)

We could not find reference anywhere in the document to Get Ireland Swimming or Swim Ireland, (although there is a reference to sea swimming). Swim Ireland hosts information regarding “Open Water” swimming. It is not clear as to whether any consideration has been given to these programmes. While it may be the case that this document is intended as a high-level policy document which does not need to reference specific programmes or initiatives, it may be useful to have this mentioned and clarified.

Sport and Recreation – specific observations on the draft text

We welcome and endorse the objectives set out and particularly welcome the references to:

- Healthy Ireland, the National Sports Policy and National Physical Activity Plan
- Public health and wellbeing set out in the first objective.
- The importance of the marine environment for the promotion of physical activity reflected in the third objective
- The reference to promoting access for people of all abilities in objective 5.
- Reference to the social, environmental and economic benefits of marine recreational activities (17.11).

Suggested amendments

- Exercise interactions with green and blue spaces offer low-cost, non-invasive solutions to public health challenges—particularly around mental health and obesity—and issues around environmental sustainability¹. We support the inclusion of any legislation that will put in place and facilitate the granting of right-of-way status to Ireland's network of old and existing pathways and tracks to and along Ireland's coastal edge. Where the very continuance and existence of these pathways cannot be guaranteed, neither can the outdoor greenspaces where the attainment of wellbeing through healthy exercise be brought about.
- The wording of objective 5 could be amended to include other groups of citizens who may be at risk of exclusion, such as those experiencing social or economic disadvantage and older adults. This would help create an “inclusiveness for all” approach.
- Finally, can we suggest a specific reference – or possibly even a separate objective - reflecting the importance of the marine environment in promoting recreational physical activity and sport among children and young people. This endorses options the marine environment offers for a cohort of the population that have reported poor levels of physical activity.

Suggested amendments - Planning Policies

- Policy 3 – Can we suggest rewording again to include disadvantaged/elderly alongside people with disabilities.

Typos Noted

There are some minor typos in the document as follows:

- Page 160 – Paragraph 17.6 – last line – full stop needed after the word entails.
- Page 160 – Paragraph 17.8 – beginning of third line – first word should be “through” not “though”
- Page 161 – Paragraph 17.10 – second line – the word “particularly” should in fact be “particular”.

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Draft Consultation on National Marine Planning Framework.

Plastics in our Oceans
By
Mary O'Boyle



(weforum.org)

Introduction

Tonnes of marine plastic ends up in our oceans. There will be more plastic than fish in our oceans if we don't do something about it. Plastic makes up 80% of our marine debris.

Plastic impacts on our coral reefs, sea turtles, and whales. Fish are entangled in plastic which causes them serious injury and fatalities. Sea birds and marine mammals are injured and killed. Plastic threatens small fish species and giant mammals as well as countless marine species and habitats. Plastic ingestion is killing sea birds and marine mammal.

Plastics include cigarette butts, food wrappers, plastic drinks cups, bottles, straws, single use plastics like cups and plastic bags. It is estimated that every year, 8 million tonnes of plastics enter our rivers and oceans.



(evoke.ie)(Ireland to ban single use plastics in 2021)

Recycling in Ireland

Ireland is good at recycling and has achieved the highest rate of recycling, surpassing EU recycling targets.

New measures have been taken by the government in banning the use of single use plastics. The ban will remove single use plastic cups, straws and cutlery. The move came because the European Parliament voted for an EU wide ban on single use plastics, by 2021.

Popularity of Plastics

The growth of global plastic started in the 1950s and over the next 65 years, grew enormously on a yearly basis. Plastic was cheaper and more durable than paper wrappings and bags. Plastic became hugely popular in the 1960s. Polyethylene is the most common type used in disposable bags. It was created in 1898, but the 1950s saw its recreation. Plastic is not biodegradable and takes millions of years to break down. It effects our environment and impacts globally on climate change.

Plastic Bags

In the last 50 years, plastic bags became hugely popular. Plastic bags became so popular and cheaper to produce and stronger than paper but had huge consequences for the environment.

Ocean pollution is one of the largest environmental problems, with plastic being a main contributor.

Marine Debris

Marine debris is made up of plastics, glass, metal, paper, cloth, rubber and wool from litter and fishing gear. Marine mammals ingest and get tangled up in plastic.

Sewer overflows, beach visitors, Inadequate waste disposal and management, and illegal dumping contribute to marine debris.

Ocean based plastic originates mainly from the fishing industry, aquaculture and nautical activity.

Microplastics are tiny pieces of plastic that filter into large bodies of water like rivers and oceans and are very dangerous to our marine life as they ingest them and then they can end up in the food chain.

Solutions to Ocean Pollution

There are new laws introduced by the government to deal with single use plastics. Single use cups will have levies imposed, and straws, plastic cutlery and plastic bags will also be banned.

Beach visitors will have to pick up their own litter on the beach and use reusable bottles. The levies will come into force in 2021 and will have a ban on cutlery, straws, balloon sticks and cotton buds.

Conclusion

Minister English has launched the Draft Consultation on National Marine Planning Framework.

The draft will provide a framework for effective management of marine activity and sustainability. Litter and plastic pollution will be addressed in this draft framework.

Plastic pollution in our oceans and waterways is a big problem to the sustainability of our fish stocks and the lives of our sea mammals and sea birds. Plastic pollution will decimate our oceans marine life if its not addressed and we all need to make a conscious effort to keep our beaches litter free and keep plastic out of our oceans.