

CHAPTER 12

Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning



12.1 Introduction

Our coastal areas are home to vibrant coastal communities, attractive coastal settlements, coastal landscapes and seascapes of intrinsic natural amenity value and a diverse range of coastal habitats, some of which are of international and national importance protected by conservation designations. These areas are also home to a variety of land uses including ports, harbours, fishing and aquaculture, tourism, leisure and amenity all of which make a valuable economic contribution to local communities and the county.

However, these areas are facing many challenges with competing demands on limited resources. The pressures include vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, residential and holiday home development, balancing the demands of tourism with the need to protect the tourism product and protecting our coastal natural and cultural heritage.

The sea is a very important asset for our county and region, offering significant economic potential, particularly, in the areas of fishing and aquaculture, transport, shipping, tourism and offshore energy production. Many activities and uses that take place on land or in the sea can have impacts on both the land and the maritime area, and it is therefore important that these interactions are considered. The planning of the country's marine area is undergoing an ambitious programme of reform, with an impending new regime for the management of development and activities in Ireland's maritime area (See Section 12.3). The new regime will give coastal local authorities and An Bord Pleanála additional responsibilities with regard to development management in parts of the maritime area.

The Plan sets out the spatial planning framework for future development in the county's coastal areas. The policy approach responds to the challenges facing these areas, controlling the scale and rate of development which can be accommodated without damaging or detracting from the qualities and attractions of the coast. It also focuses on bringing water to at least good status and protecting and restoring habitats and species to favourable conservation status while maximising the economic development potential of these areas to create employment for the local community and to further enhance these areas as attractive places to live, visit and to work.

12.2 Climate Action in Coastal Areas

Our coast is one of the most vulnerable areas in the county to the impacts of climate change. In this regard, the planning authority will, inter alia,

- Avoid vulnerable development in areas under threat from coastal erosion and/or coastal flooding/sea level rise.
- Ensure new developments do not exacerbate erosion or flood risk at that location, or elsewhere along the coast.
- Preserve and enhance natural features and habitats, such as wetlands, hedgerows and vegetated dunes, in regulating flooding and protecting from coastal erosion.
- Work alongside the relevant authorities to protect our natural and cultural heritage assets, in particular in coastal areas under increased risk from coastal erosion/ coastal flooding/sea level rise.
- Ensure new development in coastal areas is climate proofed and resilient to all elements of climate change.
- Give consideration to appropriate tourism developments that would allow our coastal areas maximise opportunities that the changing climate (warmer summers) will offer.
- Support appropriate renewable energy developments that will assist in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, including appropriate infrastructure to facilitate offshore renewable energy development in appropriate locations.
- Facilitate development at ports and harbours which will improve safety in marine activities to avoid potential damage from climate change such as increased storminess and storm surges.
- Ensure that climate change is fully integrated into the forthcoming Coastal Strategy being prepared by the Council.
- Have regard to the National Marine Planning Framework and its associated climate action policies when approved and published.
- Support citizen science monitoring of the coastal zone including climate change indicators and impacts of extreme weather and use this for informed timely decision making, covering, in particular, extreme events like mass death of organisms due to heat waves and removal of marine litter accumulations after storms and floods.

12.3 Marine Spatial Planning

12.3.1 EU Marine Spatial Planning Directive 2014/89

Marine spatial planning is a new concept introduced under this Directive. It is a process that brings together multiple users of the ocean to make informed and coordinated decisions about how to use marine resources sustainably. It is a process by which the relevant public authorities analyse and organise human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic and social objectives¹. This must be presented in a Marine Spatial Plan by the 31st March 2021, and the Directive outlines the range of activities that must be included in the plan. In Ireland, this plan will be known as the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) (see Section 12.3.5).

12.3.2 Marine Planning Policy Statement

This statement serves as a parallel to the 2015 Planning Policy Statement which underpins the operation of entire land-planning system in Ireland. The statement outlines the ambitious programme of reform for marine planning, and it outlines that, in parallel to land based planning, the marine planning system will comprise three elements: marine forward planning, marine development management and enforcement.

12.3.3 Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018

Amongst other matters, this Act gives effect to the Marine Spatial Planning Directive, establishing a framework for the preparation of the marine spatial plan and to provide for matters connected therewith. It states that the Act refers to the maritime area and does not apply to those parts of the maritime area to which a development plan, a local area plan, the national planning framework, a regional spatial and economic strategy, a guideline or a directive under Part II of the Principal Act applies.

The Act requires public bodies, which includes local authorities, to adopt measures that are consistent with its functions and necessary to secure the objectives of the NMPF. In this regard, functions include:

¹ Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, National Marine Planning Framework- Consultation Draft, p.9 (published November, 2019)

- The formulation of any policy, programme or plan in relation to development or activity, or proposed development or activity, in the maritime area.
- The giving of any consent or approval for the purposes of any such proposed development or activity.
- The regulation of any such development or activity.

The Act also provides that the Minister may give a direction to a public body to adopt measures relating to the implementation of marine spatial planning, compliance with the marine spatial plan or compliance with the State's obligation under the Directive.

12.3.4 Marine Planning and Development Management Bill 2019

The impending Act will address a number of key areas including:

- Introduce powers for the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government to put in place statutory marine planning guidelines (parallel to statutory planning guidelines under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000);
- Provide an enhanced statutory basis for marine forward planning with decisions to be taken in a manner that secures the objectives of the NMPF.
- Introduce a single State consent system for the entire maritime area (replacing foreshore leases and licences which are limited to the territorial sea) with the Ministers for Housing, Planning and Local Government and Communications, Climate Action and Environment assuming responsibility for the State consents enabling occupation of the maritime area for development and activities within their respective remits.
- Eliminate the unnecessary duplication of development management processes (including environmental assessments) for activities or developments that are currently assessed under both the foreshore and planning regimes.
- 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 to development type and location.
- Provide for strengthened enforcement and compliance of State consents and development management.

- Provide for transitional arrangements including, inter alia, a future development management pathway for offshore renewable energy projects.
- Provide for a system of designation of Strategic Marine Activity Zones.

One of the main features of the new regime will be to extend the existing planning permission functions of coastal local authorities to the outer limit of a newly defined nearshore. Part 2 of the Bill provides for the designation of this new nearshore area in which coastal local authorities will exercise certain planning and enforcement functions. This area will be coastal, and it will extend a number of kilometres from the shoreline. The boundaries of this nearshore area will be determined by factors such as the particular geography of the coastline, practical matters relating to coastal local authority boundaries and practicalities in relation to the exercise of coastal local authority functions².

12.3.5 National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF)

The NMPF is a 20-year national plan for the country's maritime areas, setting out how we want to use, protect and enjoy our seas. It will provide the over-arching framework for marine decision-making that is consistent, evidenced based and secures a sustainable future for our country's marine area. The NMPF contains a series of overarching policies over environmental, social and economic themes, and provides sectoral policies for 16 sectors ranging from renewable energy, aquaculture, port, harbours and shipping to tourism and defence. The NMPF gives a commitment to prepare sub-national and/or regional plans.

The NPF supports the alignment of land use spatial planning and marine spatial planning. NPO 38 requires regional and local development plans to take account of and integrate relevant maritime spatial planning issues. The Plan must be consistent with the NMPF, and as outlined in Section 12.3.2, the Minister may direct a planning authority to take measures to ensure their development plan complies with the NMPF. Relevant common policy areas will include renewable energy, electricity networks, coastal and flood defences, fishing and aquaculture, ports and harbours, public access, tourism and recreation, protected sites and species, seascape and landscape.

² General Scheme of the Marine Planning and Development Management (MPDM) Bill Frequently Asked Questions, page 11

The effective date from which it will become a legal obligation to comply with the requirements of the NMPF will be the date on which it is approved and adopted, currently expected to be late 2020/early 2021. Until then, there is no plan in place to comply with³. Once the NMPF is adopted, the Planning Authority will review the Plan to ensure that it is consistent with the adopted NMPF. It should be noted however that many of the objectives of the Draft NMPF have been integrated into this chapter and/or are implemented through the various chapters of the Plan. The commitment to have regard to the NMPF, future associated sectoral plans and Section 28 marine planning guidelines is given here while Table 12-1 lists where the high level objectives and their components and the 16 key sectors/activities are addressed within the relevant chapter(s) in the Plan with corresponding objective numbers listed.

Table 12-1 Incorporation of the Draft National Marine Planning Framework into the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028

NMPF High Level Objectives and Key Sectors/Activities	Chapter/Strategy No.	Key Objectives No.
Environmental-Ocean Health	10, 12 and 13	WQ01, WQ02, WQ05 and WQ15, CZM 39 and 43
Social Engagement with the Sea	6, 8, 12 and 13	CZM21 and 22
Economic Thriving Maritime Economy	6, 8, 12	ED72
Aquaculture	6 and 12	CZM47, 53 and 83. ED80 and 90.
Defence and Security	12	CZM54
Energy -Carbon Capture	12, Volume 10	CZM48
Energy - Off shore Gas	Volume 10	-
Energy Transmission	12, Volume 10	CZM49 and 50
Energy - Petroleum	Volume 10	-
Energy - Offshore Renewable Energy	12 and Volume 10	CZM51

³ Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, National Marine Planning Framework-Consultation Draft, 2019, p23.

NMPF High Level Objectives and Key Sectors/Activities	Chapter/Strategy No.	Key Objectives No.
Fisheries	6 and 12	ED82, TS91 and 92 and CZM47
Marine Aggregates and Mining	6	Section 6.7.4
Ports, Harbours and Shipping	6, 7, 8,12 and Volume 3	ED72 and 76, TS85, 87, 89 and 90 and CZM52
Safety at Sea	12	CZM16
Sport and Recreation	12 and 14	CZM58-CZM71
Telecommunications	9	TC02
Tourism	7 and 12	TM21-28 and CZM56-65
Wastewater treatment and disposal	9 and 10	WS01, WW01,WW06, WQ01, WQ02 and WQ05

12.4 Coastal Zone Management Spatial Strategy

12.4.1 The Coastal Zone

The policies and objectives of this chapter refer to the entire coastal area of our County. It includes the foreshore and the areas within any of our coastal towns and villages. It will also include the new nearshore once defined. The area to which these policies apply are not defined on a map.

The Plan contains two maps which relate to the coastal area and they each have a different application:

- Map 3 Coastal Zone in Volume 1 Written Statement shows the Coastal Zone and it is read conjunction with Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing in so far as it relates to rural housing.
- Map 7.1 Landscape Character Units in Volume 7 Landscape Character Assessment shows the Coastal Landscape Unit, and it is read in conjunction with the policies and objectives of Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing, Chapter 11 Landscape and Green Infrastructure and Volume 7 Landscape Character Assessment.

12.4.2 Goal

The overall goal for the coastal zone and maritime area is to ensure that it is protected and managed to balance social, economic and environmental interests while allowing these areas to be used in a planned and sustainable manner. This will be achieved by:

- Adapting to and managing the challenges of climate change in coastal areas and the maritime area.
- Promoting vibrant, accessible and sustainable coastal communities by facilitating appropriate social and economic development and/or regeneration of these areas to provide self-sustaining, socially inclusive and vibrant places to live, work and visit.
- Adopting an integrated and collaborative approach to the management of coastal areas and the maritime area to ensure their long term sustainability and stability.
- Implementing and managing the land/sea interactions and facilitating development which is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable, in the maritime area in accordance with the draft NMPF.
- Maximising the economic potential of the coastal and maritime areas and its resources in a sustainable manner.
- Ensuring the conservation and enhancement of coastal landscapes and seascapes, biodiversity, the cultural, historic and architectural heritage and archaeological features of the coast and maritime area.
- Promoting preservation and enjoyment of marine related cultural and heritage assets.
- Adopting ecosystem-based approaches and ensuring the pressure of human activities take into account the precautionary principle and the need to achieve good environmental status and the appropriate management and restoration of habitats and species to favourable conservation status.
- Realising the potential of marine resources in an integrated fashion.

12.4.3 An Integrated Approach to Coastal Zone Management

Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) is about the sustainable management of the coastal zone. It is a process which brings together all those involved in the development, management and use of the coast to help ensure future management takes place in an integrated, informed and efficient manner. Both the NPF and the RSES support the development of Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plans (ICZMP). The NMPF has added significantly to policy development in this area and this chapter incorporates the policies of that plan into ICZM insofar as possible.

There are many bodies and State agencies involved in managing different aspects of the coastal zone in Ireland and as some of the responsibilities of these groups overlap, an integrated approach is required in order to ensure the efficient use of investment and resources. The Council will continue to advocate for the prioritisation of this approach to coastal zone management and will continue to work with the local communities, adjoining local authorities, the Southern Regional Assembly and the Marine Spatial Planning division of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government to ensure that potential trans-boundary issues relating to coastal zone management are addressed at both the strategic and local level.

Coastal Zone Management Strategic Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

Objective CZM01

To ensure the sustainable development of the county's coastal areas and the maritime area for the long term benefit of coastal communities and the economic well-being of these areas and the county whilst protecting and enhancing environmental quality and managing and restoring biodiversity.

Objective CZM02

To prepare a County Coastal Strategy, which will be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment and compliance with the Habitats Directive, to provide the framework

to sustainably manage our coastal areas, in particular, those areas at risk of coastal erosion and coastal flooding, and to have regard to the Strategy when preparing land use plans and assessing planning applications.

Objective CZM03

To maximise the economic development potential of the county's coastal and maritime areas subject to compliance with the objectives of the County Development Plan with regard to the location of economic development, the protection of the scenic amenity and views associated with coastal areas and the maritime area which is crucial to the tourism industry, the protection of the amenity, livelihood and cultural well-being of coastal communities, the protection and restoration of coastal features, habitats and species, compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria and the proper planning and sustainable development of these areas.

Objective CZM04

To seek investment in the sustainable development of infrastructure (physical and social), access (upgraded pier infrastructure, landing facilities and passenger and cargo ferry services), regional connectivity (transport networks and digital) and enterprise growth and deliver initiatives with local communities and other stakeholders to strengthen and sustainably grow coastal communities subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

Objective CZM05

To collaborate with the Southern Regional Assembly, the Marine Spatial Planning Division of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, adjoining coastal local authorities, local communities and relevant stakeholders to prepare and implement an Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan for the coastal and estuarine areas of the county and region.

Objective CZM06

To work alongside the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and other relevant government departments and bodies in the implementation of the National Marine Planning Framework.

Objective CZM07

To review the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028 after the adoption of the National Marine Planning Framework and the enactment of the Marine Planning and Development Management Act to ensure alignment and consistency between land use and marine planning.

Objective CZM08

To implement any future Marine Planning and Development Management Act in so far as it relates to the duties and functions of the Planning Authority, in particular, the assessment of planning applications and planning enforcement in the newly designated nearshore area.

Objective CZM09

To work alongside the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Community with regard to the designation of the new nearshore area for the county and to ensure that future development of this area complies with the objectives in the County Development Plan, is subject to proper planning and sustainable development, compliance with the Habitats Directive and all other relevant planning and environmental criteria.

Objective CZM10

To have regard to any future Section 28 Guidelines issued by the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government relating to marine spatial planning when carrying out, where relevant, the forward planning, development management and enforcement functions of the Planning Authority.

Objective CZM11

To support the sustainable growth and development of the maritime area and the maritime economy in accordance with the objectives of this chapter and the relevant objectives in Chapter 6 Economic Development Strategy, Chapter 8 Transportation Strategy, Chapter 9 Infrastructure Strategy, Chapter 11 Landscape and Green Infrastructure, Chapter 13 Heritage and Conservation and Volume 10 Energy Strategy as referred to in Table 12-1 and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Objective CZM12

To support transboundary consultations and cooperation by requiring proposals that have transboundary impacts beyond the maritime area, either on the terrestrial environment or neighbouring international jurisdictions, to show evidence of consultation with the relevant public authorities, including terrestrial planning authorities and other country authorities.

Objective CZM13

To support proposals that optimise the use of maritime space, including through consideration of opportunities for co-existence and co-operation with other activities and enhancing other activities where appropriate subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.

Objective CZM14

To support development in the coastal zone and maritime area that will facilitate a transition to a low carbon economy such as carbon capture and storage and renewable energy developments including offshore tidal and wind energy subject to compliance with Objective CZM46 and the proper planning and sustainable development of these areas.

Objective CZM15

To support the achievement of Ports of National Significance Tier 1 status for Rosslare Europort, and to provide for the appropriate development of Rosslare Europort and other harbours in the county to ensure the effective growth and sustainable development of the county and the region subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Objective CZM16

To support development which provides for safety at sea, navigation safety and maritime search and rescue operations and ensure that they are key considerations in the assessment of development proposals, in particular, the development or expansion of port facilities, or the development of infrastructure in or adjacent to the maritime area including offshore wind farms and other temporary or permanent fixed infrastructure.

Objective CZM17

To work with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in the preparation of sub-regional plans for the maritime area and nearshore area which will maximise the beneficial impacts of the development of the maritime area while protecting County Wexford, its landscape and seascapes, environment, economy and people.

Objective CZM18

To participate in the preparation of sectoral guidelines and plans by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

Objective CZM19

To support the development of a research driven marine cluster in the Southern Region to support the development of marine ICT and biotechnology subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and all normal planning and environmental criteria.

Objective CZM20

To support the implementation of the South East Fisheries Local Action Group Local Development Strategy 2016 subject to compliance with all relevant EU Directives and national legislation and normal planning and environmental criteria.

12.5 Managing the Coastal Zone and Maritime Area

There are components in the coastal zone and the maritime area that need to be considered in all developments. Objectives relating to these components are included at the end of this section, and development proposals will be required to demonstrate compliance with these objectives, where relevant.

12.5.1 Coastal Communities and Social Benefits

The Council will continue to seek investment in infrastructure and facilities that improve the quality of life of our coastal communities, and support the development of direct and indirect economic and employment opportunities associated with the coastal and maritime area.

The Council is however mindful that these developments should maintain and if possible improve the social benefits that these coastal communities enjoy. Social benefits related to coastal living include, but are not limited to, health and well-being, enjoyment, cultural identity and a sense of place. These can include direct benefits such as the enjoyment of sea views and coastal landscapes during all seasons and recreation in and adjoining the coastline and maritime area, to indirect benefits such as marine related employment including fishing, aquaculture and tourism. The effects of developments in coastal areas and maritime areas on air quality must be also be considered, in particular, proposals that may result in air pollution and the consequence impacts on air quality for coastal communities.

In this regard, there is a need for developments to consider the potential social impacts on local coastal communities (positive and negative, direct and indirect, permanent and temporary as well as those resulting from cumulative impacts).

12.5.2 Universal Access

The Council will continue its work to improve universal access for all in coastal and maritime areas, including facilitating access to and enjoyment of beaches and the enjoyment of recreation activities. The Council will require new developments in these areas to be accessible, ensuring that everyone, regardless of their age and ability, enjoys equal access.

12.5.3 Climate Action

Climate change will manifest itself in the coastal zone and maritime area through increased sea levels and storm surges, which in turn will result in increased risk of coastal flooding and coastal erosion. In this regard, climate action, coastal erosion (Section 12.5.4) and coastal flooding (Section 12.5.5) need to be carefully considered by all development proposals. The impacts of climate change on coastal and marine ecosystems also needs to be carefully considered. Rising sea temperatures and sea levels and ocean acidification have been identified as some of the key climate change impacts for coastal and marine environments. These factors have the potential to seriously affect the functioning of coastal and marine ecosystems, for example, the impacts of increased temperatures on mudflats.

12.5.4 Coastal Erosion

There is approximately 125 km of 'soft' shoreline (shoreline prone to erosion) along the county's coastline. Coastal erosion and coastal flooding are serious issues for the Council especially as the frequency and intensity of storms and coastal flooding events and the associated threats to critical and public infrastructure increases.

The OPW is the State agency responsible for both coastal erosion and flood risk management. In 2013, the OPW completed the Irish Coastal Protection Strategy Study (ICPSS). These studies provide strategic assessment of the extent of coastal erosion and coastal flooding along the south-east and southern coastlines. The assessments estimated the erosion lines for the coastline in the years 2030 and 2050.

The erosion maps identify the following areas as being prone to erosion: Kilpatrick, Ardamine, Glascarrig, Killincooly to Ballinesker, Rosslare, Tacumshin to Kilmore

Quay, Ballyteige Burrow to Cullenstown and Fethard. The studies also identified low confidence rates for erosion predictions in localised areas where coastal defence works are in place. These areas include Courtown, Pollshone, Cahore, Blackwater and Rosslare. It is important to note that the impacts of climate change and the related sea level rise and increased frequency and severity of coastal storms are not taken into account in these studies.

Geological Survey Ireland (GSI), in partnership with the Discovery Programme through the CHERISH project, is surveying sections of the Irish coastline and producing digital elevation models. In Rosslare, a 200m section of an eroding sediment cliff was surveyed in 2017 and in 2018. Up to 4m change in elevation was seen with nearly 5,800 m³ of material eroded as the shoreline retreats. This is not uniform, with erosion focused at discrete regions on the shoreline. Interestingly, nearly 5,300 m³ of sediment was deposited within the studied area, meaning that while erosion is occurring, much of that material is not moving far. In total, only 500 m³ of sediment transported out of the studied region, perhaps just offshore.

This type of data is essential for informed decision making in the area and will be used for the management of infrastructure, land-use and planning, and for future climate-change adaptation and mitigation. The Council will continue to work with the GSI and the OPW to ensure that risks posed by coastal erosion are carefully managed so as to protect people, property and coastal habitats. The Council has a key role to play in managing coastal erosion including coastal maintenance and emergency works and managing coastal protection schemes. The OPW has some funding available for local authorities to carry out coastal defence works. However, due to limited funding schemes are prioritised based on risks to public safety and public infrastructure.

To this end, the Council has commenced work on a County Coastal Strategy which will make recommendations about the management of development in vulnerable areas and approaches to coastal protection. It may be necessary to vary the Plan to incorporate these recommendations following the adoption of the strategy.

The Council will carefully consider the location and siting of new developments and vulnerability to coastal erosion, particularly dwellings and critical infrastructure. In this regard, the Council will assess development within settlements with coastal protection works in place or underway (Objective CZM34) differently to development

within settlements without coastal protection works and where coastal erosion is a threat (Objective CZM35). Applicants should liaise with the Planning Authority in advance of submitting a planning application to determine which objective will apply. It should be noted that 'a soft shoreline' is a shoreline prone to erosion. The Council will also adopt a presumption against allowing development in settlements on soft shorelines/area at risk of coastal erosion where this would extend the length of the coastline that would require coastal protection works.

12.5.5 Coastal Flooding

Tidal and coastal flooding is caused by higher sea levels than normal, predominantly related to storm surges and results in the sea or tidally influenced rivers overflowing onto the land. This type of flooding is influenced by high tides, storm surges caused by low atmospheric pressure exacerbated by high winds and wave action. With a significant length of coastline, many settlements are also sensitive to the impacts of tidal flooding, many in combination with fluvial flooding. The impacts of climate change will increase the risk posed by coastal flooding, and similar to coastal erosion, these risks must be carefully managed.

The ICPSS identifies the hazard and potential risk from coastal flooding at a strategic level. The SFRA contained in Volume 11 identifies areas along the coast at risk from coastal flooding, and outlines the considerations that need to be made in respect of climate change and anticipated sea level rises.

The Council will continue to work with the OPW and other key agencies and departments relevant to coastal erosion and coastal flooding including National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

12.5.6 Ecosystem Services

The biological diversity of our coast is complex and an invaluable part of the county's natural heritage. Natural features such as wetlands, dunes and vegetation are important corridors and stepping stones for the dispersal of biodiversity and the Council is obliged to protect them under Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.

Coastal habitats such as dune systems and shoreline habitats are dynamic and interconnected. Erosion is a natural process which many coastal habitats depend on, and it is therefore important that the natural circulation of sediment and organic matter is allowed to continue without physical obstruction and that natural erosion is allowed to continue in order to conserve these habitats. In relation to flooding, overtopping is a natural process in certain coastal habitats such as lagoonal systems where such “shock” events, corresponding to a sudden increase in salinities, are a natural feature of their ecology.

Other coastal features, habitats and species can be fragile and susceptible to damage from natural erosion and flooding and from developments and activities. The Council will ensure that these features are protected both for the services they provide and in their own right. It is also important to ensure that non-indigenous species and invasive species introduced by human activities do not adversely alter ecosystems in coastal and maritime areas.

While the provision of public access points to beaches is important, multiple access points can result in negative ecological impacts such as interfering with ground nesting sites and causing breaks in dunes/grasslands and interrupting Article 10 corridors. The Council will limit the number of accesses from developments to beaches and will consider access points where they provide public access as well, that is, where the applicant will enter into an agreement to provide public access too from the same access. This could be achieved by segregating the access from the private garden at the edge of the site.

Biodiverse ecosystems play a very important role in regulating our environment and there is a need to ensure protection of wildlife and their habitats. The Council recognises the inherent socio-economic and environmental value of wildlife and the importance of protecting highly mobile species such as fish, birds, marine mammals such as seals and marine reptiles such as turtles from disturbance, which is when species spend extra time or energy to avoid a human activity or output. This must be considered for developments in both the coastal area and the maritime area. Sources of displacement or disturbance can include vessels, offshore structures, lighting on offshore structures and underwater noise. It is also important to ensure that the integrity of the sea floor and deep-sea habitats are protected and not adversely affected by development or activity or the deposition of marine litter in the maritime area.

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive, which was put in place to protect the marine ecosystem and biodiversity upon which our health and marine-related economic and social activities depend, requires a coherent and representative network of spatial protection measures, including marine protected areas (MPAs) to be put in place where appropriate. The use of this area-based protection approach will help to maintain, conserve and restore marine ecosystems to achieve or maintain the good environmental status of the maritime area.

As outlined in Chapter 13 Heritage and Conservation, some MPAs are already in place in the county through the Natura 2000 networks of SACs and SPAs designated under the Habitats and Birds Directives respectively. Both existing and future designated MPAs will be protected by the Council through compliance with the Habitats Directive and other relevant legislation.

12.5.7 Built and Cultural Heritage

Our coastal areas and their maritime features including harbours, piers and landings, are an important part of our built heritage and contribute to defining the cultural heritage of these areas. The Council will continue to protect heritage assets along the coast and under the sea in order to safeguard this heritage for its intrinsic value, social benefits and its services to other activities, e.g. tourism. Chapter 13 Heritage and Conservation, which includes a section on underwater heritage, will be consulted when considering development proposals in the coastal zone and maritime area.

12.5.8 Seascape and Landscape

Many areas of our coastline are distinctive for their natural beauty and their diverse range of activities. The Council must consider the potential impacts on seascape and landscape to ensure that both iconic views and character are protected and also to aid in the process of enabling development where it is most appropriate, e.g. the effects of development such as wind and tidal energy projects, port development, coastal defences, cable landings and pipelines on an area's seascape and landscape will need to be carefully considered.

12.5.9 Water Quality

Good water quality in coastal areas and the maritime area is very important, in particular, for the local communities, supporting habitats and ecosystems and for economic development. There are also habitats that can play a part in managing water quality. The main threats to water quality in these areas are eutrophication and contaminants caused by various activities including agriculture, shipping, aquaculture, wastewater treatment plants and industrial waters. The Council will ensure that development proposals will not result in adverse impacts on water quality, and where possible contribute to an improvement, in order to achieve the objectives of the Water Framework Directive, the River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 and other Directives including Bathing Water, Shellfish Waters and the associated Pollution Reduction Programme and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. This is discussed further in Chapter 10 Environmental Management.

Managing the Coastal Zone and Maritime Area General Objectives

(These objectives will be applied, where relevant, to all proposed developments in the coastal zone, both within and outside of existing settlements and in the maritime area when/where applicable).

It is the objective of the Council:

Objective CZM21

To support proposals for new development or activities in coastal and maritime areas that enhance or promote social benefits for the local communities, and where considered necessary an applicant will be required to demonstrate that adverse impacts on local communities will be avoided, mitigated or minimised appropriately.

Objective CZM22

To require developments that will be used by the public to be universally accessible to ensure that everyone enjoys equal access regardless of their age or ability.

Objective CZM23

To consider a limited number of access points from developments to a beach. The Council will consider an access where the applicant agrees to enter into an agreement to provide public access to the beach from the proposed access and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

Objective CZM24

To address, as part of the County Wexford Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024, and the forthcoming County Wexford Coastal Strategy, the effects of sea level changes and coastal flooding and erosion in the coastal zone and maritime area and to support the implementation of adaptation responses in vulnerable areas subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Objective CZM25

To have regard to the potential impacts of climate change in the future land use plans and the assessment of planning applications in the coastal zone and maritime area.

Objective CZM26

To work with the OPW to develop appropriate strategies for the management of identified coastal erosion and flood risk and associated risks.

Objective CZM27

To have regard to the findings and recommendations of the Irish Coastal Protection Strategy Studies and any future update of these studies during the preparation of local area plans, the assessment of planning applications and the carrying out of local authority developments.

Objective CZM28

To support the development of updated national modelling of coastal erosion and in the absence of such adopt a precautionary approach to development in the coastal area.

Objective CZM29

To have regard to all available mapping resources and studies relating to coastal erosion and flooding along the county's coastline in the preparation of local area plans, the assessment of planning applications and in the carrying out of local authority own works. These mapping resources and studies include those of the Geological Survey Ireland such as the coastal vulnerability index and mapping, those referenced in the County Coastal Strategy, the flood zone maps that form part of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment of the County Development Plan and which include the OPW's Irish Coastal Protection Strategy Study coastal flood maps, and the recently published National Indicative Fluvial mapping prepared by the OPW.

Objective CZM30

To carefully consider development proposals in areas identified at risk of coastal erosion, which include but are not limited to Kilpatrick, Ardamine, Glascarrig, Killincooly to Ballinesker, Rosslare, Tacumshin to Kilmore Quay, Ballyteige Burrow to Cullenstown and Fethard, and areas where coastal defence works are in place but confidence rate are low including but not limited to Courtown, Pollshone, Cahore, Blackwater and Rosslare.

Objective CZM31

To carry out environmentally sensitive local authority own coastal protection works where necessary and subject to the works being appropriately designed and where it is demonstrated that the works would not exacerbate existing problems of coastal erosion or result in altered patterns of erosion, deposition or flooding elsewhere along the coast to the detriment of other properties, important habitats, species, marine life, coastal features or designated sites.

Objective CZM32

To prepare coastal erosion management plans and support the development of coastal protection or management works for the following locations subject to compliance with the Habitats and SEA/EIA Directive and subject to normal planning and environmental criteria:

- Rosslare Coastal Erosion and Flood Risk Management Plan.
- Courtown North Beach Nourishment and Marina Feasibility Study.
- Grange, Fethard on Sea Coastal Erosion Management Plan.
- Bastardstown / Ballyhealy Coastal Erosion and Flood Risk Management Plan for the area between Kilmore Quay and Carnsore.

Objective CZM33

To consider proposals for environmentally sensitive coastal works in limited circumstances, which include but are not limited to the protection of an inhabited permanent residence/ habitable dwelling and critical infrastructure such as access roads. Where coastal protection works are proposed in these circumstances the onus will be on the applicant to provide evidence (including appropriate modelling which incorporates climate change) to demonstrate that the development will not be at risk over its lifetime. The Planning Authority will have regard to recent and historic trends and events in assessing such applications. The onus will also be on the applicant to ensure that the proposed works would not have a negative impact on the erosion of nearby properties. Pedestrian access for the public to the beach must be retained and if necessary access for people with disabilities.

Objective CZM34

(new developments within settlements that have coastal protection works)

Within coastal settlements located on a soft shoreline or where there is an identified area of coastal erosion risk, the Council will consider the development of buildings or uses (including caravans or temporary dwellings) where there are existing coastal protection works in place or these works are underway. In order for the development to be considered:

- (a) The development must not extend the length of the coastline that would require additional coastal protection works.
- (b) The applicant must objectively establish based on the best scientific information available at the time of the planning application that the likelihood of erosion at the location is minimal taking into account, inter alia, the effectiveness of the existing coastal protection works and any potential impacts of the proposed development on erosion or deposition.
- (c) The onus will be on the applicant to provide the evidence (including appropriate modelling which incorporates climate change) to demonstrate that the development will not be at risk over its lifetime. The Planning Authority will have regard to recent and historic trends and events and the data sources referred to in Objective CZM29 in assessing such applications.
- (d) The applicant must also demonstrate that the proposed development will not pose a significant or potential threat to coastal habitats or features, and is compliant with the Habitats Directive.
- (e) This objective will not apply to minor extensions to existing buildings.

Objective CZM35

(new developments within settlements with no coastal protection works)

Within established coastal settlements located on a soft shoreline and where there is an identified coastal erosion risk and where there are no coastal protection works in place and no such work is underway or planned by the Council, the Council will only consider the development of infill sites where the development is a minimum of 100m (or such greater distance as may be specified by the Planning Authority having regard to the data sources referred to in Objective CZM29) from the soft shoreline. In those circumstances the following applies:

- (a) The development must not extend the length of the coastline that may require coastal protection works in the future.
- (b) The applicant must objectively establish based on the best scientific information available at the time of the planning application that the likelihood of erosion at the location is minimal taking into account, inter alia, any potential impacts of the proposed development on erosion or deposition.

- (c) The onus will be on the applicant to provide the evidence (including appropriate modelling which incorporates climate change) to demonstrate that the development will not be at risk over its lifetime. The Planning Authority will have regard to recent and historic trends and events and the data sources referred to in Objective CZM29 in assessing such applications.
- (d) The applicant must also demonstrate that the proposed development will not pose a significant or potential threat to coastal habitats or features, and is compliant with the Habitats Directive.

Objective CZM36

(new development outside of settlements)

Where the principle of a development outside of an existing settlement in the coastal zone is acceptable and it complies with the location objectives of the Plan, the Council will only give consideration to the development of buildings and uses (including caravans and temporary dwellings) where the development is a minimum of 250m (or a greater distance as may be specified by the Planning Authority having regard to the data sources referred to in Objective CZM29) from the soft shoreline or an area identified as at risk from coastal erosion. In order for the development to be considered:

- (a) The applicant must objectively establish based on the best scientific information available at the time of the planning application that the likelihood of erosion at the location is minimal taking into account, inter alia, the effectiveness of any existing coastal protection works and any impacts of the proposed development on erosion or deposition.
- (b) The onus will be on the applicant to provide evidence (including appropriate modelling which incorporates climate change) to demonstrate that the development will not be at risk over its lifetime. The Planning Authority will have regard to recent and historic trends and events and the data sources referred to in Objective CZM29 in assessing such applications.
- (c) It must be demonstrated that the development will not pose a significant or potential threat to coastal habitats or features and is compliant with the Habitats Directive.

- (d) The Planning Authority will not permit a development where such development could not be adequately defended over its lifetime without the need to construct new or additional coastal defence works.
- (e) This objective will not apply to minor extensions to existing buildings.

Objective CZM37

To prohibit development within areas liable to coastal flooding other than in accordance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Office of Public Works, 2009), Chapter 9 Infrastructure Strategy and Volume 11 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

Objective CZM38

To restrict the removal of beach material, sand and gravel.

Objective CZM39

To establish a coastal monitoring programme to provide information on coastal erosion on an on-going basis.

Objective CZM40

To protect the environmental quality of our coastal and maritime areas by ensuring that new developments do not detract from water quality and ensuring that wastewater treatment and non-point sources are appropriately located.

Objective CZM41

To apply an ecosystem approach to planning in the coastal and maritime areas to ensure the protection of biodiversity habitats and species and marine protected areas to ensure that development or activity in the coastal zone or maritime area does not give rise to displacement or disturbance of species, or does not adversely impact on coastal habitats, species and features such as wetlands and vegetated dunes which

play an important role in flood relief and in protecting from coastal erosion, and are important in their own right.

Objective CZM42

To protect heritage assets in the coastal zone and maritime area including underwater heritage in accordance with Chapter 13 Heritage and Conservation and Volume 5 Record of Protected Structures and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Objective CZM43

To adopt a presumption against development which would have inappropriate impacts on the seascape and landscape of the coastal area.

Objective CZM44

To protect water quality in our coastal and maritime areas and to ensure that development proposals would not result in adverse impacts on water quality in order to comply with objectives of the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and the associated National River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021, the EU Shellfish Waters Directive (2006/113/EC) and associated Pollution Reduction Programme, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the Habitats Directive.

Objective CZM45

To maintain, conserve and restore marine ecosystems in existing and future designated Marine Protected Areas in order to achieve or maintain good environmental status of the maritime area.

12.6 Specific Land Use/Land Side Developments in the Coastal Zone

As previously outlined our coastal areas are home to a variety of land uses ranging from residential and economic to tourism and recreation. This section does not cover all land use categories and accordingly all other chapters should be consulted to ascertain the applicable objectives, in particular, Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing for one off rural housing and holiday homes, Chapter 6 Economic Development Strategy, Chapter 7 Tourism Development, Chapter 8 Transportation Strategy and Chapter 9 Infrastructure Strategy, Chapter 10 Environmental Management and Volume 10 Energy Strategy.

12.6.1 Landside Developments to Facilitate Development in the Maritime Area

There are many interactions and co-dependencies between the development of the maritime area and landside. Land based infrastructure can be critical to realising the economic and social benefits of marine activities. This type of infrastructure includes but is not limited to physical structures or facilities for landing, storage and processing of catch or freight, for passenger transfer or utilities transmission, slipways and boat repair facilities. In this regard, the Council will support the appropriate development of landside infrastructure and facilities. This is discussed further in Section 12.6.2 to Section 12.6.9.

Landside Developments to Facilitate Development in the Maritime Area Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

Objective CZM46

To support the development of appropriate land-based infrastructure which facilitates marine activity (and vice versa), and support proposals for appropriate infrastructure that facilitates the diversification or regeneration of marine industries subject to compliance with the objectives of this County Development Plan, the

protection of the scenic amenity associated with coastal areas and the maritime area which is crucial to the tourism industry, the protection of the amenity, livelihood and cultural identity of coastal communities, the protection of coastal features, habitats and species and compliance with the Habitats Directive, normal planning and environmental criteria and proper planning and sustainable development.

12.6.2 Fisheries and Aquaculture

These sectors are an integral part of our coastal economy and co-exist in various locations with other marine sectors such as ports, marine leisure and tourism. As outlined in Chapter 6 Economic Development Strategy, the Council supports the development of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture sectors, driven by skilled workforces and promotes sustainable industries that protect and enhance the social and economic fabric of rural coastal communities, which are dependent on these sectors. The Council will continue to support the development of appropriate landside facilities and other developments that offer value added opportunities for these sectors. The Council will work with these sectors to promote improved marine litter management and the provision of reclamation facilities, as appropriate, in developments in coastal and maritime areas.

Fisheries and Aquaculture Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

Objective CZM47

To support the development of vibrant fisheries and aquaculture sectors that produce high quality foods, protect and enhance the social and economic fabric of rural coastal communities and conserves biodiversity around our coastline and ensures good marine litter management, and to support the development of associated landside infrastructure subject to compliance with Objective CZM46 and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

12.6.3 Energy Developments in the Maritime Area

Energy developments in the maritime area will require landside infrastructure e.g. interconnectors, pipelines and cables.

12.6.3.1 Carbon Capture and Storage

Carbon Capture Storage (CCS) has the potential to assist Ireland in meeting its emissions reduction targets by supporting the transition to low carbon electricity generation and industrial activity. It involves the capture of CO₂ at source from electricity generation or industrial activity. This is then transported either by pipeline to a geological formation such as a depleted gas or oil field for storage, or alternatively by ship to a remote storage location. The CO₂ is injected into the geological reservoir for permanent storage.

Carbon Capture and Storage Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

Objective CZM48

To support the use of existing infrastructure and the provision of new landside infrastructure such as pipelines to facilitate the development of carbon capture storage where considered feasible and subject to compliance with Objective CZM46 and ensuring that all safety, health and environmental issues relating to the deployment of this storage are considered and are acceptable.

12.6.3.2 Energy Transmission

The Council acknowledges that the building of interconnection infrastructure that links Ireland to larger cross border markets will provide security of supply which is a critical component underpinning economic development. This will also increase competition, bringing direct benefits through lower energy costs. Increased levels of storage and interconnection will also be critical to absorbing a high level of renewable generation onto the system as renewables require back-up which will have to be provided by quick response plant, storage or interconnection.

Energy Transmission Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

Objective CZM49

To support energy transmission proposals that maintain or improve the security and diversity of Ireland's energy supply, including interconnectors, while ensuring that the development is informed by consideration of space required for other activities of national importance described in the National Marine Planning Framework and subject to Objective CZM46 and complying with all relevant safety, health and environmental requirements.

Objective CZM50

To support the development of land-based, coastal infrastructure that is critical to and supports energy transmission subject to complying with Objective CZM46 and to ensure that development proposals do not adversely affect energy transmission proposals in sites held under a permission, or that are subject to an on-going permitting or consenting process for energy transmission proposals.

12.6.3.3 Offshore Renewable Energy

Offshore renewable energy has a key role to play in the transformation to a clean, low carbon system. It also minimises the amount of energy that has to be generated on land. This is discussed in further detail in Volume 10 Energy Strategy. The Council will support this development, and the development of land-based infrastructure required to develop and maintain these developments.

It is also noted this sector offers significant opportunities for Rosslare Europort. It will have a critical role in facilitating the necessary development of both offshore renewable generation and grid infrastructure, requiring investment to handle plant, equipment and cabling, and the associated shipping during the construction, operation and maintenance phases of future projects.

Offshore Renewable Energy Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

Objective CZM51

To support, within the context of the Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDPA) and its successors, the development of Ireland's offshore renewable energy potential, including domestic and international grid connectivity enhancements subject to compliance with the objectives of this County Development Plan, the protection of the scenic amenity and coastal views associated with coastal areas and the marine area which are crucial to the tourism industry, the protection of the amenity, livelihood and cultural well-being of coastal communities, the protection of coastal features, habitats and species and compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria and proper planning and sustainable development.

12.6.4 Ports, Harbours and Shipping

Landside infrastructure is critically important for the functioning of these operations and maximising their economic potential and social benefits to the local communities. The Council will continue to support direct and indirect related infrastructure, while at the same time safeguarding the ports and harbours from inappropriate development that may compromise their activity and expansion in the future. The development of our ports and harbours are discussed in further detail in Chapter 6 Economic Development Strategy and Chapter 8 Transportation Strategy.

Ports, Harbours and Shipping Objectives:

It is the objective of the Council:

Objective CZM52

To safeguard access to Rosslare Europort, harbours and navigation channels in the coastal zone and maritime area, and to safeguard our ports and harbours from inappropriate development that would compromise current activities or the future expansion of the port and harbours.

Objective CZM53

To support the development of landside infrastructure associated with port, harbours and shipping activities and to support the co-location with other infrastructure such as fisheries, aquaculture and tourism subject to compliance with Objective CZM46 and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

12.6.5 Defence and Security

The role of the Defence Organisation in the maritime area includes maritime security such as fishery protection services and the operation of the State's Fishery Monitory Centre.

In the carrying out of their duties, the Naval Service and Air Corps may require unimpeded access and the ability to deploy throughout the Irish maritime area at any time. They may also require the exclusive use of certain areas of sea at particular times. Military activities in the maritime area may involve operational, practice and training activities, routine patrolling, transporting equipment and personnel in and out of the country, and communications including using radar⁴. In this regard, proposals must consider the operational requirements of the Defence Forces of their security and non-security related tasks, and the Defence Organisation should be consulted to ensure that a proposal will not result in an unacceptable interference with the performance of those tasks.

Defence and Security Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

Objective CZM54

To support the work of the Defence Organisation and to ensure that relevant development proposals considered by the Planning Authority will not result in an unacceptable interference with the performance by the Defence Forces of their security and non-security related tasks.

⁴ Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, National Marine Planning Framework-Consultation Draft, 2019, page 96

12.6.6 Telecommunications

The Council will continue to support proposals that will ensure existing and future international telecommunications connectivity which is critically important to support the future needs of society and enterprise across the country. This may require landside infrastructure such as cables and pipelines, and the Council will support such proposals where evidence is provided of an approach to development and activity that integrates the needs of cables and pipelines. (Refer to Chapter 9 Infrastructure Strategy).

Telecommunications Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

Objective CZM55

To support proposals that will guarantee existing and future international telecommunications connectivity which is critically important to support the future needs of society and enterprise and to support the development of associated landside infrastructure where evidence is provided of an approach to development and activity that integrates the needs of cables and pipelines and subject to compliance with Objective CZM46 and proper planning and sustainable development.

12.6.7 Wastewater treatment and disposal

The Council will continue to support Irish Water proposals relating to wastewater treatment and disposal, in particular, proposals which address the discharge of untreated wastewater into coastal waters. (Refer to Chapter 9 Infrastructure Strategy).

12.6.8 Tourism and Recreation in the Coastal Zone

The county's coastal areas and the maritime area offer significant potential for tourism related development with associated employment opportunities for the county and the region. The development of tourism projects in coastal areas needs to

be carefully managed as over-development and an increase in tourism activity pose threats to the ecology and resources of the coastline and the overall quality of the tourism product.

Our coastal and maritime areas offer a range of marine sport, leisure and adventure activities. These include sailing, canoeing, sea kayaking, water skiing, coastering and sea swimming. These offer opportunities for physical activity and the development of outdoor recreation tourism. The Council will continue to support the development of outdoor activities, including the provision of land-based infrastructure, and associated overnight accommodation in line with the objectives on tourist accommodation in Chapter 7 Tourism Development.

Harbours and marinas provide services for tourists and local people involved in water-based activities. They provide access to towns and villages and their associated services and amenities, thereby contributing to these local economies. The Council recognises the importance of safeguarding and developing these facilities. There are currently two Blue Flag marinas in the county: Kilmore Quay Marina and 'Three Sisters Marina' in New Ross Town.

A coastal path has been developed along many parts of the coastline. Although not continuous, the coastal path extends approximately 221km from Kilmichael Point in the north-east corner of the county to Ballyhack Village in the south-west. The coastal path offers potential as both a casual walkway and as a link between coastal areas.

Many of the coastal settlements have experienced development pressures for holiday home accommodation and second homes. To ensure long term sustainability the focus will be on clustering holiday home accommodation in the existing villages along the coastline. The Council also recognises the need to facilitate the development of local retailing and services in these areas as this will help the local economy and local communities capitalise on the economic potential of existing and planned holiday accommodation developments. The scale of this type of development will be carefully monitored to ensure the protection of the character and environment of the coastal areas.

The Council will continue to carry out improvements to our coastal amenities to improve the tourism and recreation potential of our coastal areas. This will include the improvement of existing ports and harbours, the development of marinas at

appropriate locations (e.g. Trinity Wharf, Wexford Town and Courtown Harbour and beach nourishment (e.g. Courtown Harbour). All such development will be fully accessible and subject to appropriate environmental assessments.

Tourism and Recreation in the Coastal Zone Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

Objective CZM56

To direct tourism related developments to existing settlements within the coastal zone save for the exceptions outlined in Section 12.8 of this chapter and in Chapter 7 Tourism Development and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and all normal planning and environmental criteria.

Objective CZM57

To promote the sustainable development of inclusive water-based sports and marine recreation, and to promote the inclusive development of water-based sports and marine recreation, where appropriate.

Objective CZM58

To support landside development which optimises on maritime tourism such as sea angling, sailing, marine adventure activities, diving and surfing at locations in accordance with Chapter 7 Tourism Development and subject to compliance with Objective CZM46 and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Objective CZM59

To support proposals which improve access to marine and coastal resources for tourism activities and sport and recreation, where appropriate and subject to compliance with Objective CZM46, Chapter 7 Tourism Development and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Objective CZM60

To ensure that development proposals do not adversely impact on sports clubs and other recreational users, in particular, their facilities and other physical infrastructure, or unduly interfere with access to and along the shore, to the water or use of the resource for recreation and tourism.

Objective CZM61

To ensure that, where relevant, development proposals enhance water safety through the provision of appropriate International Organisation for Standardization (ISO) and European Committee for Standardisation (CEN) compliant safety signage and ensure that due consideration is given to best practice guidance for marine and coastal recreation areas by the Visitor Safety in the Countryside Group.

Objective CZM62

To require tourism and recreation developments in the coastal and maritime areas, including harbours and marinas, to be universally accessible.

Objective CZM63

To encourage and facilitate extensions of the use of harbours, where appropriate, to include elements of active and passive leisure, tourism, transport and fishing and service enterprises to create vibrant, attractive focal points for existing coastal settlements subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

Objective CZM64

To facilitate the development of marinas, jetties and associated facilities for maritime leisure developments at appropriate locations including the site of Trinity Wharf, Wexford Town and Courtown Harbour. The developments should be universally accessible and the siting of the installations should not detract from the visual amenity, environmental quality of the area or public access to beaches

and are subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

Objective CZM65

To support the development of marine tourism clusters along the south-east coastline subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

Objective CZM66

To support the further development of a way-marked Coastal Walkway, where possible and appropriate, along the full length of the county's coastline and connecting where possible to similar walkways in adjoining coastal counties. This will be done in conjunction with the adjoining local authorities, landowners and other partner agencies. All programmes and works to develop the coastal walkway will be required to respect the residential amenities of coastal communities, comply with Objective CZM41, the Habitat's Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

Objective CZM67

To ensure that there is appropriate public access to the coast including the provision of coastal walkways and cycle ways subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria. Every effort should be made to ensure that this public access is designed to provide universal access for all, and locations where the topography and terrain allow should be pursued in this regard.

Objective CZM68

To encourage tourism and recreation facilities and developments to be accessible for pedestrians and cyclists and take advantage of sustainable transport alternatives through the provision of pathways, cycleways and links to the public transport system where possible, subject to normal planning and environmental criteria.

Objective CZM69

To promote public access, including public walkways to beaches and the seashore, where environmentally appropriate and subject to the protection of amenities of coastal communities and normal planning and environmental criteria.

Objective CZM70

To maintain and upgrade facilities in coastal areas through the provision of appropriate support facilities such as car parking, coach parking, cycle parking, universally accessible public toilets and refuse disposal facilities and subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

Objective CZM71

To support and promote the development of coastal routes as tourism attractions and local amenities, in co-operation with statutory and relevant organisations, for recreational activities including walking, cycling, pony trekking, whale/dolphin watching and bird-watching. These routes should provide links to other activities and facilities where feasible and practicable and are subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

12.6.9 Beaches and Bathing

The county's coastline is scattered with many beaches which are attractions for tourists and residents. The EU Bathing Directive 2006/7/EC aims to preserve, protect and improve the quality of all designated bathing waters to protect the health of people who choose to bathe in these waters. Beaches that comply with the 'excellent' standard in accordance with the Directive can be awarded the Blue Flag. In 2020, there were eight designated bathing areas in the county and six of these were Blue Flag beaches.

In 2020 there were nine Green Coast Award beaches in the county. The aim of this award is to recognise beaches of high environmental quality. To achieve the award, beaches must have excellent water quality and have effective and appropriate management to ensure the protection of the natural environment.

The Council continues to be proactive in improving universal accessibility to beaches. It launched the successful beach wheelchair initiative in 2015 which has now been rolled out to eight beach locations in the county. The Council will continue to carry out improvements to beach accesses ensuring that in so far as possible beaches can be accessed and enjoyed by everyone.

Table 12-2 Designated Bathing Areas, Blue Flag and Green Coast Beaches 2020

Designated Bathing Areas	Blue Flag Beaches	Green Coast Award Beaches
Ballymoney North Beach	Ballymoney North Beach	Ballyhealy
Ballinesker	Ballinesker	Booley Bay
Carne	Carne	Cahore Point
Courtown North Beach	Morriscastle	Culleton's Gap
Curracloe (White's Gap)	Curracloe	Grange
Duncannon	Rosslare Strand	Old Bawn
Morriscastle		St Helen's Bay
Rosslare Strand		Cullenstown Strand
		Baginbun

Beaches are also home to an array of coastal habitats, for example, sand dunes which also act as a natural coastal defence. Human activities, such as walking routes and weather events can interfere with the stability and regeneration of sand dunes. It is therefore important that beaches and sand dunes are protected and well managed.

Coastal protection works include beach nourishment which is a process involving dredging material (sand, gravel, pebbles) from a source area (offshore or inland) to feed a beach. Nourishment plays an important role in the maintenance of beaches, in particular, to compensate for natural erosion and it can protect the area against storm surges. It can also be used to maintain beach width for tourism and

recreational purposes. The Council will continue to carry out beach nourishment works where considered necessary.

Beaches and Bathing Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

Objective CZM72

To protect beaches, access to beaches and designated bathing areas as valuable local amenities and as a tourism resource.

Objective CZM73

To protect bathing waters in order that they meet the required bathing water standards and to implement the findings and recommendations of the Bathing Water Quality in Ireland reports as published.

Objective CZM74

To ensure that coastal areas and bathing waters are maintained to the highest levels and to work to retain the status of Blue Flag and Green Coast beaches and increase the number of beaches with these statuses.

Objective CZM75

To prohibit developments or activities on or adjacent to beaches where such development would either significantly interfere with the recreational use of the area or cause damage to the ecological or visual integrity of the beach or sand dune system.

Objective CZM76

To provide car parking, cycle parking, universally accessible toilet and waste facilities at suitable locations at the county's bathing areas, where possible, and subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

Objective CZM77

To improve universal accessibility to beaches for people with disabilities subject to normal planning and environmental criteria.

Objective CZM78

To promote safe practices and the provision of information to the public in relation to safety in coastal zone areas.

Objective CZM79

To carry out beach nourishment works where necessary for maintenance, in particular to compensate for erosion, and to maintain beach width for tourism and recreational purposes subject to compliance with the Habitats Directives, other relevant Directives and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

12.7 Development within Settlements in the Coastal Zone

Existing coastal settlements have, and continue to play, an intrinsic role in the economic, recreational and social development of the county. The Council will encourage appropriate development in these existing settlements, and in particular, will encourage developments which provide opportunities to expand local services and facilities that benefit both permanent residents and visitors. The Council will direct new holiday home schemes and second homes to these existing settlements in the interests of sustainable development and proper planning of the coastal areas.

While the Council will adopt a presumption against the development of new dwellings, new developments including critical infrastructure or significant extensions to existing dwellings or properties which rely on the provision of coastal protection works and where the Council does not have plans to carry out those works, Objective CZM35 does allow for new developments to be considered in certain circumstances.

Note: The strategic objectives contained in Section 12.4 and the general objectives

contained in Section 12.5 and 12.6 also apply, where relevant, to developments within existing settlements.

Development within Settlements in the Coastal Zone Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

Objective CZM80

To ensure that development is in keeping with the scale and character of the coastal settlement and that the design positively contributes to and enhances the coastal landscape setting.

Objective CZM81

To control the nature and pattern of development within existing settlements in the coastal zone and ensure that development is prohibited where it poses a significant or potential threat to coastal habitats or features, and/or where the development is likely to result in adverse patterns of erosion or deposition elsewhere along the coast.

Objective CZM82

To consider proposals for new developments within coastal settlements located on the soft shoreline or in areas identified at risk of coastal erosion in accordance with Objective CZM34 and Objective CZM35.

12.8 Development outside of Existing Settlements in the Coastal Zone

The Council recognises the importance of retaining the character of the coastal zone so as to protect the quality of the tourism product, the environment and to ensure the overall proper planning and sustainable development of the coastal zone. The Council will carefully consider development proposals outside of existing settlements, and in the case of one-off rural housing, will only consider developments where

the applicant has demonstrated a need to reside at the particular location in the coastal zone in accordance with the sustainable rural housing strategy in Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing. The locational objectives in Chapter 6 Economic Development and Chapter 7 Tourism will also apply.

Note: The strategic objectives contained in Section 12.4 and the general objectives contained in Section 12.5 and 12.6 also apply to developments outside of existing settlements.

Development outside of Existing Settlements in the Coastal Zone Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

Objective CZM83

To restrict development outside the boundaries of existing coastal settlements to that which is required to be located in that particular location such as:

- Development to support the operation of existing ports, harbours, marinas, fisheries and aquaculture.
- Agricultural development.
- Tourism development appropriate to the particular coastal location (other than new build holiday home accommodation) where there is a demonstration of a location or resource based need in accordance with the objectives set out in Chapter 7 Tourism Development.
- Other developments where an overriding need is demonstrated.

The development must comply with Objective CZM46, Objective CZM36 relating to coastal erosion and demonstrate that it will not give rise to adverse patterns of erosion or deposition elsewhere along the coastline.

Objective CZM84

To consider one-off housing in areas outside of the boundaries of settlements in the coastal zone in accordance with the rural housing objectives in Chapter 4 Sustainable

Housing and subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

Objective CZM85

To encourage small-scale rural resource based economic or tourism businesses to renovate and reuse existing traditional farm buildings such as traditional stone buildings or buildings of architectural merit for use by the economic/tourism, business . The business use must comply with the relevant locational objectives in Chapter 6 Economic Development Strategy and/or Chapter 7 Tourism Development and is subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria including protecting the character and visual amenities of the coastal area and residential amenities.

Objective CZM86

To ensure that developments in the coastal zone are sensitively sited, designed and landscaped and do not detract from the visual amenity of the area, the seascape or coastal landscape character unit.

Objective CZM87

To prohibit development outside the boundaries of existing coastal settlements where such development could not be adequately defended over the lifetime of the development without the need to construct new or additional coastal defence works.