

CHAPTER 7

# Tourism Development



## 7.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the spatial planning strategy and objectives to guide and facilitate the development of a sustainable tourism industry in the county. While the Council strongly supports the development of tourism as a key pillar of economic growth for the county, it also recognises that there is a need to protect and manage the county's tourism assets and resources to ensure their long term sustainability and ensure that new tourism developments respect, respond and enhance their physical setting, environmental quality and local community.

The Council has a direct and indirect role in delivering tourism related developments. The Council's enhanced role in economic development will see it focus predominantly on tourism product development, co-ordination and facilitation of the tourism industry within the county. The Council is currently leading a number of proposed projects including greenways, blueways, a marina in Wexford Town, Carrigfoyle Outdoor Activity Centre, Ireland's Ancient East incorporating the Norman Way, the Wexfordia project which is a concept to develop new visitor experiences at three sites across the county, namely the Hook Lighthouse, the Dunbrody Famine Ship and the Irish National Heritage Park. A tourism development is also planned for Enniscorthy Town. As a planning authority the Council must ensure that public and private tourism and related developments are in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the county including considerations relating to location, scale, siting, access, design and protection of the environment, heritage and amenity of host communities.

## 7.2 Climate Action and Tourism

The key aims include to:

- Ensure new tourism related development in coastal areas is located away from areas at risk of coastal flooding and coastal erosion.
- Ensure only water-compatible tourism related development occurs in areas at risk of flooding e.g. marine and water based sports and ancillary facilities.
- Develop, where possible, new tourism related development along, or in close proximity to public transport routes, making use of existing railways in the county.

- Ensure that EV charging networks are rolled out to the main tourism destinations in the county.
- Ensure new tourism related buildings are NZEB and ensure the design and layout of the site and buildings take account of predicted climate change.
- Work with relevant State bodies to protect the county's natural, built and cultural heritage from the impacts of climate change.
- Give consideration to appropriately located tourism developments that would allow our coastal areas maximise opportunities that the changing climate (warmer summers) will offer.
- Work with relevant State bodies, including Irish Water, to assess the capacity and resilience of water supplies in the county, particularly during summer months.

## 7.3 Policy Context

The preparation of this chapter had regard to national, regional and local policies relating to tourism development and promotion.

### People, Place and Policy - Growing Tourism to 2025

The Government's Tourism Policy Statement sets out a series of policy objectives and headline targets to increase overseas visitor revenue to €5 billion, to grow total employment by 50,000 to 250,000, and to achieve ten million overseas visitors. The document also sets out the role for local authorities in the development and promotion of tourism which, from a land use planning perspective, includes:

- To continue to act as a primary developer of a range of public tourism infrastructure including outdoor tourism infrastructure and urban and rural heritage,
- To support community efforts in destination development including assisting communities to align their efforts with the tourism agencies, brand architecture and consumer segmentation model,
- To provide a competitive environment for tourism enterprises through a continued focus on high quality maintenance of public infrastructure frequently used by visitors,

- To promote universal access in tourism initiatives and developments, and
- To support efforts in destination development and promotion for 'age friendly' tourist and accessible tourism in collaboration with communities, relevant Government Agencies and stakeholders.

## Realising Our Rural Potential-Action Plan for Rural Development

This Government Statement focuses on five key pillars to promote rural development. Pillar 3 relates to maximising rural tourism and recreation potential with the key objectives to:

1. Increase tourist numbers to rural Ireland.
2. Support sustainable jobs through targeted tourism initiatives including the support of key marketing initiatives such as Ireland's Ancient East,
3. Develop and promote activity tourism in rural areas through the development of blueways, greenways and other recreational opportunities, and
4. Develop and promote our natural and built heritage.

## National Planning Framework

The NPF recognises that the country's wealth of natural heritage, built heritage, landscapes, green infrastructure, rivers, coastal areas and the marine, and the Arts and culture offer significant capacity to directly and indirectly sustain communities, create employment and deliver real social benefits for rural areas in particular. NPO 22 aims to facilitate tourism development and, in particular, a National Greenways, Blueways and Peatways Strategy which prioritises projects on the basis of achieving maximum impact and connectivity at national and regional level, while NPO 60 requires the conservation and enhancement of the rich qualities of the natural and cultural heritage of Ireland in a manner appropriate to their significance.

## Draft National Marine Planning Framework

The Draft National Marine Planning Framework recognises the importance of land-sea interactions in the tourism industry and the interdependence of the landside and marine elements. It aims to position Ireland as a world class sustainable coastal and marine tourism destination through the sustainable development of coastal and

marine recreation activities, to support coastal communities, to maintain the natural marine and coastal areas and improve access for tourism.

## Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region

The RSES outlines that a successful tourism sector creates significant benefits for many other sectors such as agriculture, food and drinks, transport and retail. RPO 53 sets out the tourism objective for the region which is:

- a) Enhance provision of tourism and leisure amenity to cater for increased population in the region including recreation, entertainment, cultural, catering, accommodation, transport and water infrastructure inter alia.
- b) Promote activity tourism subject to appropriate site selection and environmental assessment processes.
- c) Sustainably develop the road network and public transport services and facilities for improved visitor access, longer dwell times due to improved connectivity to ports and airports and tourism growth.
- d) Sustainably develop walking and cycling trails opening greater accessibility to the marine and countryside environment by sustainable modes and promote the sustainable designation and delivery of Greenway and Blueway Corridors.
- e) Facilitate appropriate tourism development and in particular a National Greenways, Blueways and Peatways Strategy, prioritising sustainable projects that achieve maximum impact and connectivity at national and regional level.
- f) Identify and map catchment areas concerning culture, heritage and tourism of regional significance/scale. Such catchments should have the potential to deliver small-scale economic development and using wider local services such as post offices and local public transport.
- g) Support the relevant authorities in the development of specific monitoring protocols for visitor pressure to ensure that tourism activities are maintained within sustainable limits for the European sites in the region.

RPO 54 reinforces the need to monitor and assess the on-going effect of tourism on sensitive features with particular focus on natural, archaeological and built heritage assets, while RPO 173 states that there will be investment in the sustainable

development of infrastructure and service improvements on the transport networks along the region's key tourism corridors including Ireland's Ancient East.

## County Wexford Tourism Development Strategy 2019-2023

The aim of the strategy is for County Wexford to become one of Ireland's most compelling tourism destinations and, in doing so improve the quality of life of people and communities throughout the county. It is envisaged that the strategy will directly:

- create new employment opportunities throughout the county;
- create year-round sustainable tourism businesses-driving 'season extension';
- diversify sources of income to Wexford's local economy;
- create and improve local infrastructure, facilities and amenities; and
- bring people and communities together.

The strategy is seeking to increase tourism revenue by 18.7% and visitor numbers by 12% and in doing so creating approximately 800 new jobs in the county.

The strategic goal for visitor experience development is *"To strengthen, develop and elevate Wexford's range of compelling, unique and must-do visitor experiences, creating real standout and competitive differentiation."* The visitor experience development framework is focused on five key elements:

- 1) Establish the most compelling clustered experience of Ireland's Ancient East.  
This will be centred on a clustered experience encompassing the Hook Peninsula, Loftus Hall, the Dunbrody Famine Ship, the Irish National Heritage Park, Tintern Abbey, JFK Homestead and Arboretum.
- 2) Develop Wexford's Town profile as a unique and vibrant Maritime town.  
This will be centred on the town's Viking heritage, its long and rich seafaring history, unique maritime environment, water sports, festival and food offering and, in time, the Trinity Wharf Development.
- 3) Establish Wexford's contemporary coastal experience.  
This will be focused on coastal towns from Gorey to Fethard, and encompassing key Blueways and Greenways, developing clustering experiences that will rejuvenate Wexford's sunny South East's proposition and position it alongside leading coastal experiences such as Cornwall in the UK.

- 4) Culture and heritage experience development.  
The development and clustering of unique and diverse cultural and heritage experiences (including the Irish National Heritage Park, Enniscorthy, Ferns Castle, Wells House, Johnstown Castle and the Norman Way), brought to life through storytelling and animation.
- 5) Create a new and unique and original iconic experience.  
The exploration and development of a completely new and unique visitor experience to Wexford (this is a longer term/horizon objective).

### Wexford Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021

The Wexford LECP highlights the potential of tourism as an economic driver with a particular emphasis on its role in creating employment, supporting and sustaining rural communities and populations. High Level Goal 3 aims *"to continue to develop and promote County Wexford as a great place to live, work and visit"*. Key priorities under this goal, which the Plan supports and will facilitate the implementation of, includes:

1. Support rollout of Ireland's Ancient East and other collaborative marketing ventures;
2. Provide support and training to develop Wexford's niche tourism sector.
3. Increase Wexford's profile as a tourist destination for both international and domestic tourism.
4. Increase the variety of quality tourist accommodation and
5. Diversification of the tourism product.

## 7.4 Tourism Product

County Wexford is a popular tourist destination for both overseas and domestic visitors. In 2018 Wexford welcomed 3% (circa 288,000) of the overseas tourists who came to Ireland, spending 2% of the €5,217bn overseas tourism expenditure in Ireland. In the same year, the county attracted 785,000 domestic trips (c. 7% of the 10,918 million domestic trips in 2018), spending €157 million (8% of domestic tourist spend).

The county has a diverse range of natural, built and cultural heritage assets. Such assets include natural amenity areas such as the Blackstairs Mountains, forests and

woodlands, river valleys, the coastline, coastal walkways, sandy beaches, nature reserves and a rich archaeological and built heritage. Strong performing attractions in the county include Wells House and Gardens, J.F.K Arboretum, Johnstown Castle Gardens and Agricultural Museum, Dunbrody Famine Ship and Visitor Centre, Irish National Heritage Park, Hook Lighthouse and Dunbrody Abbey.<sup>1</sup>

The county offers a range of quality tourist accommodation which together with tourist attractions will attract visitors to the county and encourage them to stay longer. Recent improvements to road infrastructure, including the M25 New Ross Bypass and the M11 Enniscorthy Bypass, have enhanced access and reduced journey times to Wexford. Wexford's proximity to two airports, Waterford City and Dublin Airport, and being the home of Rosslare Europort makes it easy for tourists to travel to the county.

The most exciting tourism opportunity for the county lies with Fáilte Ireland's 'Ireland's Ancient East' (IAE) programme. This is a branded visitor experience encompassing the rich heritage and cultural assets that Ireland has to offer in the midlands and south eastern region of the country. County Wexford is home to a wealth of cultural heritage and attractions, which form an integral part of Ireland's Ancient East, and therefore the county is in a significantly advantageous position to attract further visitor numbers to the county.

The Norman Way was one of the first tourism initiatives in the county to evolve from the programme. It is a heritage trail that runs along the south coast of the county, focused on a range of medieval sites which help the visitor understand the Norman way of life. Phase 1 of the Trail, which was officially opened in 2017, is focused on eleven sites from Lady's Island to St Mary's Church in New Ross. The 'Eurovelo 1 Atlantic Coast' route also follows the Norman Way giving cyclists the opportunity to enjoy the sites and scenic landscapes. The trail also offers opportunities for other tourist activities, restaurants, pubs and shops to benefit, and possibilities for the development of spin off local businesses. Phase 2 is currently under way.

The Council is also actively pursuing further developments under the IAE brand including:

- A new Norman experience at the Dunbrody Visitor Centre, New Ross Town.

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<sup>1</sup> Fáilte Ireland's Survey of Visitor Attractions Top attractions in County Wexford 2016 (+20,000 visitors)



- A new Viking village at the Irish National Heritage Park which will be linked to the nearby Wexford Town to reflect its Viking heritage.

Other current Council tourism related projects include:

- Enhanced visitor experience at Hook Lighthouse which would centre on the 'Story of a Thousand Shipwrecks' and the location and geology of the area by delivering a dynamic animated visitor experience.
- Enniscorthy Town tourism project/town centre enhancement
- Wexford Arts Centre
- Carrigfoyle Outdoor Activity Centre
- Greenways and blueways
- Cultural and events centre and marina as part of the planned Trinity Wharf Development in Wexford.
- Public realm projects in New Ross town (removal of oil tanks from the quay front, a public park at High Hill), Enniscorthy Town (Templeshannon Urban Renewal), Wexford Quayfront, Main Street Bunclody and Esmonde Street Gorey Town.

## 7.5 Tourism Development Spatial Strategy

The county has a strong tourism product with many opportunities to enhance the tourism offer and the visitor experience. This spatial strategy will facilitate the further development of a tourism industry which will act as a key economic driver in a socially and environmentally sustainable manner. The Strategy will also ensure that the industry develops in appropriate locations, and at a pace and scale which ensures that the natural and cultural assets, which form the basis of the industry, are not diminished in the long term.

### 7.5.1 Overall Goal

It is the goal of the Council, as set out in its County Tourism Strategy, to become one of Ireland's most compelling tourism destinations and in doing so improve the quality of life of people and communities throughout the county.

To achieve this, the Council will utilise Wexford's history including the Vikings, the Normans, the 1798 Rebellion and the 1916 Rising, its unique natural and built tourism assets and its strategic location to further develop tourism as a key economic driver for the county while ensuring that this takes place in a manner which respects the county's heritage, culture, people and environment.

## 7.5.2 Strategy

The spatial planning strategy will guide and facilitate the development of tourism products and experiences that are based around the use and enjoyment of our natural and built heritage assets by all. Having regard to this, the key aims are to:

- Ensure that the tourism industry in County Wexford continues to grow in a sustainable manner and to protect the county's natural and built resources and assets.
- Maximise the potential of tourism as a key pillar of economic growth for the county and region through the development of a high quality, strong, year-round tourism industry, which provides sustainable well-paid jobs.
- Maximise the potential of the Ireland's Ancient East Programme for the county through the participation in and facilitation of appropriate projects and initiatives.
- Promote improved access to the county through the further development of Rosslare Europort and the provision of enhanced public transport, road access, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, incorporating the principles of universal design throughout the county.
- Enhance towns and villages across the county so that they are vibrant, attractive, accessible and welcoming places to visit and to maximise their potential to support and benefit directly from the tourism industry.

## 7.5.3 Sustainable Tourism

There is a need to achieve a balance between appropriate tourism developments and economic, environmental and social sustainability. In this regard, the needs of the visitor, the place and the host community must be carefully balanced and it must be ensured that the tourism assets can continue to be enjoyed by future generations

and not prejudiced by short term or purely economic considerations. It is also imperative that natural assets such as habitats and species and water quality are not diminished or threatened by tourism development or activity.

#### 7.5.4 Making Tourism Accessible for Everyone

Everyone must be able to enjoy tourism amenities and experiences, regardless of age or ability. The Council, through its roles as a planning authority and a building control authority, will ensure that there is a wide range of accessible tourism experiences. While the Council acknowledges that some existing sites by reason of their historical design, siting or location may have accessibility limitations, the Council will make every effort to ensure tourism developments and associated spin off developments are accessible to everyone.

#### Tourism Strategic Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

##### Objective TM01

To protect and sustain the natural, built and cultural features that form the basis of the county's tourism industry including landscapes, historic buildings and structures, habitats, species and areas of natural heritage value and water quality.

##### Objective TM02

To facilitate, where appropriate, proposals to improve access for all at existing tourism sites and facilities, and to require all new tourism related developments to ensure the development is accessible to everyone, regardless of their age, size or ability.

**Objective TM03**

To facilitate the development of a sustainable diversified tourism industry at appropriate locations and at a suitable scale, subject to compliance with the objectives of this chapter and normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective TM04**

To implement the County Wexford Tourism Strategy 2019-2023 subject to compliance with the Habitats, SEA, EIA and Water Framework Directives and normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective TM05**

To continue to develop tourism products and tourist related infrastructure and to carry out enhancements to the public realm in towns and villages and environmental improvements to ensure that the county is an attractive place to visit and stay.

**Objective TM06**

To engage with Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, the Arts Council, National Parks and Wildlife, Wexford Local Economic Office and other key stakeholders to promote and maximise the tourism potential of the county and to support the development of niche tourism sectors such as Geo-tourism, Eco-tourism, Food tourism and community-based tourism, while ensuring the protection of the natural, cultural and built heritage of the county.

**Objective TM07**

To support the future development of Destination Experience Development Plans which may be developed by Fáilte Ireland during the lifetime of this plan and to ensure continued collaboration and alignment with Fáilte Ireland and tourism stakeholders to ensure successful implementation and delivery of these plans subject to compliance with the Habitats, SEA, EIA and Water Framework Directives and normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective TM08**

To develop a tourism cluster in the South-East focused around key tourist sites and attractions in conjunction with adjoining local authorities, Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland and other key stakeholders.

**Objective TM09**

To deliver the Ireland's Ancient East Programme and facilitate the phased rollout of the branding strategy, orientation signage and the enhancement of the visitor experience at the chosen programme sites.

**Objective TM10**

To maximise the potential of the main towns in the county as tourism visitor hubs, and to implement guidelines such as the Fáilte Ireland Development Guidelines for Tourism Destination Towns to inform the development and operation of the towns as tourism destination towns, and to work with all stakeholders to leverage funding streams that will assist with maximising the tourism potential and offering of the towns.

**Objective TM11**

To develop Wexford Town's profile as a unique and vibrant Maritime town which encompasses its natural environment, its history and heritage, water-based activities, festivals, innovation and food offering subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective TM12**

To balance the development of tourism facilities, infrastructure and accommodation in our towns, villages and rural areas with the needs of the communities, the need to provide for housing and year round facilities and vitality for the resident population and the sustainable year round use of existing infrastructure such as wastewater treatment infrastructure.

### Objective TM13

To ensure that new tourism development is sustainable in terms of use of resources and resilient in terms climate change.

### Objective TM14

To support and develop our towns and villages and rural heritage sites including our beaches for tourism purposes through the facilitation of links by public transport, greenways, blueways and associated infrastructure subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective TM15

To support the development of the specific Council tourism projects referred to in Section 7.4 of this Plan and the County Wexford Tourism Strategy 2019-2023 subject to compliance with the Habitats, SEA, EIA and Water Framework Directives and normal planning and environmental criteria, and to utilise all available funding mechanisms to advance these projects including the Urban Regeneration Development Fund and the Rural Regeneration Development Fund.

## 7.6 Locations for Tourism

The spatial planning strategy is focused on directing tourism development to our towns and villages. While rural based tourism offers significant potential for the county, it is prudent that it is carefully managed to protect these areas which are, in themselves, a tourism product. Accordingly, tourist development in rural areas will be carefully considered in accordance with the objectives and exceptions set out in this chapter, Chapter 6 Economic Development Strategy and Chapter 12 Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning.

### 7.6.1 Tourism in Towns and Villages

Towns and villages in the county provide a range of tourism attractions, facilities and services and are themselves destinations to which tourists come. Some settlements in the county, such as the coastal settlements of Rosslare Strand and Courtown, rely heavily on tourism because of their character, location and setting and also due to the unique range of entertainment, activity and lifestyle options that they offer.

Sustainable tourism facilities, when properly located and managed and particularly if they are easy to get to by a range of transport modes, will encourage longer visitor stays, help to extend the tourism season and add to the vitality of settlements throughout the year<sup>2</sup>. In this regard, tourist accommodation, visitor centres and commercial/retail facilities serving the tourism sector should generally be located within towns and villages and developed with the principles of universal design to ensure they are accessible for all. This will help to foster strong links to a range of other economic and commercial sectors and sustain the host settlement and its community. There are exceptions where tourist developments will be considered outside of towns and villages. These exceptions are discussed in Section 7.6.2 Rural Based Tourism, Section 7.7.4 Integrated Resorts and Amenities and Section 7.7.5 Tourist Accommodation.

#### Objective TM16

To facilitate the development of a variety of high quality tourist accommodation within towns and villages, subject to compliance with Section 7.7.5 Tourist Accommodation and Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing, and normal planning and environmental criteria.

#### Objective TM17

To facilitate the development of tourist attractions and tourist related commercial and retail developments such as craft and design and artisan food shops, that are appropriate in scale and design for its host town or village.

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<sup>2</sup> Fáilte Ireland-Guidance on Sustainable Tourism (2016).

### Objective TM18

To develop and maximise the tourism potential of the county by facilitating the appropriate expansion of existing and the provision of new universally accessible sustainable tourism attractions, facilities and infrastructure in towns and villages while ensuring the protection of the environment and subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

## 7.6.2 Rural Based Tourism

The economic benefits of rural tourism and the continued development of this sector have huge potential to revitalise local economies, provide job opportunities for the farming community and enhance the quality of life of rural communities.

The Council will continue to support rural based tourism projects where it relates to the use of a rural landholding and the enjoyment of a rural resource and is appropriate in scale for the rural location.

The following provides guidance on the types of land holdings and premises that may be considered for rural based tourism development:

- For agri-tourism/farm diversification projects a farm holding which is a minimum of 10ha.
- For equestrian related tourism, an equestrian farm which is a minimum of 10ha.
- For wood crafting, the timber should be either sourced on the site (an established forested landholding) or sourced close by to the site. Such facilities are envisaged as of craft scale and not commercial wood manufacture.
- Other examples of suitable landholdings include a county house with outbuildings and walled gardens.
- Individual premises along a Greenway such as a traditional dwelling, building or farm building from which it is proposed to provide a service to greenway users and other tourists such as a café, bicycle hire or a craft shop.

The Council will consider each proposal on a case-by-case basis. The rural resource tourism product/attraction must be located on the site, or in close proximity to the



site and the scale must be commensurate to the premises. It must be demonstrated that the proposed development does not adversely affect the rural character, environmental quality and amenity of the rural area.

Where an extension to an existing authorised project is proposed, the Council will consider whether the proposed increase in scale and intensification of use remains appropriate to its rural location, the impact on the environment and residential amenity or whether by reason of its increased scale and intensification, sourcing of inputs, number of employees and traffic generation it would be more appropriately relocated to zoned lands within a town or village.

It is acknowledged certain tourist facilities located in rural areas may be provided as stand-alone developments, and that ancillary uses (e.g. café, restaurant, shop) may be required in order to ensure the long term viability of the tourist facility. Additional uses will only be permitted in cases where the additional use is integrated with and connected to the primary use of the site as a tourist facility, and in cases where the Council is satisfied that the additional use is ancillary to the primary use of the site as a tourist facility. The additional use shall be located adjacent to the tourist facility, and avail of shared infrastructure and services, insofar as possible.

Proposals which include the provision of tourist accommodation in a rural area will be considered in the context of Section 7.7.5 Tourism Accommodation, Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing and Chapter 12 Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning. The Planning Authority will not favourably consider proposals to convert a residential unit, which was previously granted/ used as a granny flat/self-contained unit for occupation by an immediate family member (whether authorised or not) for use as tourist accommodation.

## Rural Based Tourism Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective TM19

To consider the development of rural based tourism development where it is in accordance with Section 7.6.2 and where it is proposed to develop niche activities,

such as those relating to food (particularly value-added products), forestry (such as wood products), crafts, eco-tourism and agri-tourism, (for example farmhouse accommodation will be considered)<sup>3</sup>, open farms, farm holidays, health related retreats,<sup>4</sup> equestrian activities including bridle paths, bird-watching holidays, painting/ photography tuition, angling tourism, field studies and hill-walking where such development will not detract from the visual and rural amenity of the area and subject to normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective TM20

To permit proposals to extend an existing rural resource based tourism project where the scale and intensity of the use and project remains appropriate to its rural setting and where it will not detract from the rural character, amenities, residential amenities or environmental capacity of the area and subject to normal planning and environmental criteria. Proposals which include the provision of tourist accommodation will be considered in the context of Section 7.7.5 Tourism Accommodation and Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing and Chapter 12 Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning.

## 7.6.3 Tourism in Coastal Areas

The County Wexford Tourism Development Strategy aims to develop a contemporary coastline experience. Building on Wexford's coastal towns and villages, beachfront accommodation, increasingly developed blue and greenways, coastal drives and walks (such as the Slí Carman Coastal Walks), water and land-based sports activities, range of islands reachable on day trips, nature and wildlife reserves, food and drink offering and culture the renewed proposition should be developed and promoted. Whilst Wexford's coastal offering should be developed and promoted so that a wide range of destinations and communities benefit, it will also be important to develop a number of leading lights within the experience offering with Courtown, Curracloe, Rosslare, Kilmore Quay and the Hook Peninsula receiving particular focus.

Coastal habitats and features such as wetlands and vegetated dunes play an important role in flood relief and in protecting from coastal erosion and are

<sup>3</sup> Proposals which include the provision of tourist accommodation will be considered in the context of Section 7.7.5 Tourist Accommodation in this chapter and Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing

<sup>4</sup> This does not include a hotel.

important in their own right. Such features, habitats and species can be damaged or disturbed by tourism development and associated activity. Future development in coastal areas will be carefully managed to ensure that the character of these areas is protected and enhanced whilst achieving and maximising their economic potential. Chapter 12 Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning addresses development in the coastal zone including tourism development within, and outside of, existing settlements and at beaches and harbours in coastal areas. The Council will direct tourist development, including tourist accommodation, to existing settlements in the coastal zone save for certain exceptions outlined in that chapter.

## Tourism in Coastal Areas Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective TM21

To consider proposals for tourism in the coastal zone subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and in accordance with the locational and other objectives in Chapter 12 Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning and Chapter 6 Economic Development and normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective TM22

To prohibit tourism development that would significantly diminish the natural heritage, scenic and recreational amenity and economic value of the county's coastline and coastal areas.

### Objective TM23

To ensure that tourism development or activity does not significantly 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 TM24**

To ensure that tourism development in coastal areas is sensitively designed and considers views from scenic routes, paths and trails and from the popular sea transport routes.

**Objective TM25**

To facilitate development which would improve tourism potential and tourist numbers, such as marinas, sea angling, sailing, marine adventure activities, diving and surfing and beach nourishment at appropriate locations in accordance with this chapter and Chapter 12 Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective TM26**

To facilitate the development and facilities to support cruise tourism in Rosslare Harbour and the county.

**Objective TM27**

To carefully consider tourism developments which would interact with other maritime activities and uses, and to prohibit development which would unduly impact on fisheries, seafood, transport or other important marine uses.

**Objective TM28**

To encourage the development of infrastructure such as harbours for tourism and commercial purposes subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective TM29**

To support the co-ordinated development of the Irish Sea Way Trail subject to compliance with the Habitats, SEA, EIA and Water Framework Directive and all other planning and environmental criteria and the proper planning and sustainable development of the county.

## 7.7 Specific Tourism Developments

### 7.7.1 Activity and Adventure Tourism

The Action Plan for Rural Development 'Realising Our Rural Potential' recognises the potential of activity tourism to contribute to economic growth in rural areas. The Plan states 'outdoor adventure tourism is a key growth sector worldwide and has been identified as a priority for Irish tourism in future years'. The development and promotion of this sector provides opportunities for growth, in rural areas in particular, by facilitating businesses to leverage the tourism assets in their area in a sustainable way to support recreational activities. In Wexford activities such as canoeing, water sports, cycling, angling, walking trails, and mountain hiking tracks e.g. Blackstairs Mountains range (in consultation with Coillte and other landowners), beautiful beaches, and rivers provide ample opportunities for activity tourism.

#### Greenways/Active Travel Routes

Greenways/Active Travel Routes provide recreational pathways for use by visitors and residents and encourages and promotes walking and cycling in a safe and controlled environment. They are also a significant tourism asset and create opportunities for the development of new enterprises and spin off businesses along their routes to serve the needs of visitors and residents. The Council will focus on developing villages and links to other attractions along these routes such as Tintern, Hook Head and Bannow Island. The South East Regional Enterprise Plan to 2020 aims to develop a greenway network which will serve as a quality international tourism product, that can also link the wide range of recreational, cultural and heritage experiences in the region that are part of Ireland's Ancient East. The local authorities in the region have established and resourced a Regional Project Office to implement the strategy for the development of the regional Greenway/Blueway Network.

The Council is currently planning four greenways/active travel routes for the county:

1. The Rosslare to Waterford Greenway. The Council will examine the feasibility of developing a sustainable transport corridor along the disused Rosslare Europort to Waterford Railway which would accommodate a reopened passenger and freight line and a greenway for active travel and amenity use. This corridor would

include an off-road cycle and walking path from Rosslare Harbour to Waterford City alongside the rail line and will take in the villages of Kilrane, Rosslare, Killinick, Mayglass, Bridgetown and Wellingtonbridge and link in with the New Ross Town Greenway project.

2. New Ross Town to Waterford Greenway including Redbridge-Mount Elliot. This is a joint project with Kilkenny and Waterford local authorities.
3. Wexford Town to Rosslare Strand Greenway. This will be via the South Slobs.
4. Wexford Town to Curracloe Greenway –final route being considered.

The use of disused railways as greenways will be promoted by the Council. However, the Council will ensure these developments are designed in a manner which will not give rise to a conflict, or prejudice, the reopening of these railways in the future. This approach is supported in the RSES which outlines the need to safeguard disused railway line alignments for possible future use, for example conversion to greenways but the development of new greenways along disused railways should still allow for future rail use if feasible at a later stage.

Two greenways (No. 3 and No. 4) present issues in relation to potential impacts on SACs and SPAs and these projects can only proceed if they comply with the provisions of the Habitats Directive. These projects will only proceed if such issues can be satisfactorily resolved following AA and EIA at project level.

## Blueways

Inland waterways in the county have the potential to add to the tourist product given their recreational, aesthetic and ecological value. Waterways offer a diverse range of activities from walking routes, kayaking, boating, angling and bird watching. The Council is actively involved in the development of an approved and branded 'Blueway Trail' on, and along, rivers in the county which give access to other activities such as cycling, walking and canoeing. Feasibility studies are being carried out on a Slaney Blueway from Enniscorthy Town to Wexford Town. The Council will also support the extension of this blueway to Bunclody Town subject to feasibility assessment and environmental assessments. Any such proposal will be subject to Appropriate Assessment in accordance with the requirement of the EU Habitats Directive to ensure the protection and preservation of all designated SACs and SPAs.

## Specific Tourism Developments Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective TM30

To encourage and facilitate sustainable and appropriate forms of activity and marine tourism in towns, villages and rural areas through the development of greenways, blueways and other recreational opportunities such as walking trails, water sports, outdoor and indoor activity centres, subject to compliance with the locational and other objectives of this plan, and subject to Appropriate Assessment in accordance with the requirement of the EU Habitats Directive to ensure the protection and preservation of all designated SACs and SPAs.

### Objective TM31

To ensure that the development of greenways/active travel routes along disused railways safeguards the railways and does not prejudice their reopening for the sustainable movement of freight and/or passenger travel in the future.

### Objective TM32

To consider the development of small scale complimentary facilities and businesses along greenways, blueways and walking trails such as bicycle hire, cafés, craft and design shops, pubs and restaurants subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria. These facilities and businesses should be located within existing settlements so that they are easily accessible to both users of the routes/trails and the wider public. Consideration will also be given to the use of traditional and agricultural buildings for commercial purposes along these routes in accordance with Section 7.6.2 Rural Based Tourism.

### Objective TM33

To consider the development of car parking facilities at designated entry/exit points along greenway and blueways routes, subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective TM34

To facilitate the provision of outdoor activity based tourism facilities which extend the tourist season. Consideration will be given to this type of development in rural areas where the development is suitable for the rural location, is appropriate in scale for the rural location and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and with normal planning and environmental criteria. The Planning Authority may consider the provision of indoor facilities where it is ancillary to and complements an outdoor activity based tourism facility. Proposals to provide ancillary tourism accommodation will be subject to Section 7.7.5 and associated objectives.

### Objective TM35

To facilitate and encourage the development of new and expanded outdoor activities such as cycling routes, walking trails (including in the Blackstairs Mountains in consultation with Coillte and other landowners), mountain hiking, bird watching, water sports and canoeing. The location of these developments will be considered on a case-by-case basis, having regard to the nature of the proposal, its location and siting, its scale, potential for impacts on its host rural area and residential amenities and environment and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective TM36

To support and facilitate the development of tourism related infrastructure associated with inland waterways, subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective TM37

To ensure the full recreational potential of the River Slaney and the River Barrow is realised whilst taking cognisance of the aims and objectives of the National River Basin Management Plan (2018 – 2021) and subject to compliance with Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.



### Objective TM38

To protect the view and vistas from waterways from inappropriate development that would detract from the amenity of the waterways.

## 7.7.2 Business Tourism

Wexford is strategically located, has high quality road and rail connections enabling the county to capitalise on the growing conferencing and events market. The existence of a number of large hotels is also a critical factor in being able to facilitate large scale events. The Council will continue to work with hotels across the county that offer conference facilities to ensure that they can maximise the potential of this sector. Business tourism offers many potential spin-offs for the local area and economy and it is important that local tourist activities and facilities are supported by marketing and promotion by these hotels.

### Business Tourism Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective TM39

To support the development of conferencing facilities on appropriate sites in towns and villages as a means of attracting business and tourism subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

## 7.7.3 Creative Arts, Culture and Food Tourism

Creative arts and culture is enjoyed by everyone, both residents and visitors, from visual arts, theatre, music and dance to opera and film. Creative arts and culture generates significant economic revenue for the county, both direct and indirect, and it provides a variety of employment opportunities. The development of this sector

and associated venues and performance spaces will be encouraged and facilitated, where appropriate. The Council will encourage improvements to public realm spaces to consider the ability of these spaces to facilitate and accommodate stimulating new experiences e.g., festivals/performance spaces.

The county has a diverse range of arts and cultural facilities most notably the National Opera House which is home to the internationally renowned Wexford Opera Festival, Wexford Arts Centre, theatres in the main towns, art galleries, Gorey School of Art and Design, libraries, museums and cinemas. There are plans to extend this offering including the redevelopment of Gorey Market House and the refurbishment of Wexford Arts Centre. The Trinity Wharf development in Wexford Town also proposes a multi-use cultural and event centre.

Wexford has also become synonymous with festivals and events covering a variety of themes including maritime, food, literary and music providing opportunities for artists, musicians and food producers to showcase their talents and products.

The Council, in partnership with Creative Ireland, is promoting Wexford as a film location, targeting national and international film companies. The development of the film industry has value added economic potential for the county through the development of film trails/routes based around film locations in the county, for example, 'Brooklyn' in Enniscorthy Town and 'Saving Private Ryan' at Curracloe Beach.

Food and beverage consumption accounts for 35% of all international tourism revenues. The county's food and beverage offering has a significant role to play in developing tourism in the county and delivering great visitor experiences, increasing dwell time around the country and growing spend.

Fáilte Ireland is promoting the development of food tourism based on a vision that 'Ireland will be recognised by visitors for memorable food experiences which evoke a unique sense of place, culture and hospitality'. Wexford is synonymous with high quality food production and has developed a very good reputation in the areas of agri-food, seafood, artisan food production, and in more recent times, craft breweries. The Wexford Food Family was set up in 2011 to promote Wexford as a food brand locally, nationally and internationally. The county hosts annual food festivals showcasing and promoting the local food industry. There is an opportunity to develop a branded food and beverage trail which could be separate to, or complement, other established trails in the county.

## Creative Arts, Culture and Food Tourism Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective TM40

To safeguard the artistic, cultural and historic heritage of the county and to facilitate the expansion and development of facilities such as interpretative centres which are appropriate in scale, siting and design and suitably located adjacent to sites of interest, subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective TM41

To develop the Arts, culture and heritage attractions throughout the county in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, the Heritage Council, the OPW, the Arts Council, National Parks and Wildlife and other key stakeholders.

### Objective TM42

To facilitate the development of appropriately scaled, designed and sited tourism facilities and infrastructure related to the film industry, including film trails/routes, signage and visitor attractions.

### Objective TM43

To support and encourage the growth of Food Tourism in the county, and to consider the development of food tourism related activities such as local farmers markets, artisan food producers, craft breweries and distilleries and to facilitate the development of a Wexford Food Trail in conjunction with other branded trails. These developments will be directed to towns and villages and will only be considered in rural areas where they are tied to an existing premises and a rural based resource and where it is appropriate in scale to the rural location and subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria. Where expansion is proposed to industrial scale and/or the development is no longer considered appropriate in scale to its rural location it will be directed to zoned land.

### Objective TM44

To support existing festivals and cultural events which take place in the county and to promote the development of a variety of new festivals and events to appeal to a range of different visitors and to increase the profile of the county as a key tourism destination.

## 7.7.4 Integrated Resorts and Amenities

The Council recognises that some forms of tourism development, due to their self-contained nature or scale, may require a location outside of existing settlements, for example, golf courses. Such developments, and their requirement to locate outside of existing settlements, will be assessed on a case-by-case basis having regard to their scale, nature, site suitability and normal planning and environment criteria.

The Council will give consideration to the development of a limited number of integrated tourism/leisure/recreation complexes at appropriate locations in the county. It must be demonstrated that the development is dependent on an existing local resource or a unique site characteristic or an overriding need is demonstrated for the development at that location. The use must be designed to respect the character of the area and any existing natural or built heritage features on the site. The proposal must not detract from the overall character and quality of the site's setting.

An integrated tourism/leisure/recreation complex may include a number of following uses: hotel and associated facilities, health/spa/wellness facilities, restaurant/café, conference centre, golf course, equestrian centre, nature trails, walking trails, trekking courses, indoor/outdoor water facility, fishing facility, museums/art galleries and associated facilities. The development must have a critical mass of activities to ensure that it is a self-sufficient destination tourism facility and not be developed in a piecemeal manner.

Such a complex may also include a small amount of ancillary tourism accommodation and leisure retail. The complex must be a significant attraction in itself to warrant/require tourist accommodation and leisure retail uses. These uses will be limited in

the scale/quantum permissible and must be ancillary to and for use by facility. The tourist accommodation shall be used for tourism purposes only, shall not be allowed to be used as permanent residences, shall be available for short term letting only, shall be retained in single company ownership and shall not be sold off individually.

The development must be based on an integrated and comprehensive master plan and business plan and facilities and accommodation must be maintained in a single ownership. An overall planning application will be required for the entire complex with proposals, where appropriate, for:

- The preservation/conservation of natural amenities on the site,
- The preservation/conservation of the heritage structures on the site,
- The retention of the open nature of the lands,
- Significant and appropriate landscaping of the site,
- Physical linkages, including cycle ways and/or footpaths to the nearest settlement, and
- A phasing agreement that the tourist attraction/facility is developed before or at the same time as any ancillary tourist accommodation or leisure retail.

## Integrated Resorts and Amenities Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective TM45

To facilitate the development of tourist related resorts and amenities in towns and villages, subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective TM46

To consider the extension of an existing tourist related resort and amenity where it is outside of a settlement only where the proposal to extend the tourism/leisure/recreation offering is commensurate to the overall scale of the resort and is appropriate at that location. The proposal to extend must comply, where relevant,

with Section 7.7.4 and is subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria. The Council will only consider the provision of ancillary tourist accommodation where it remains subservient to the overall tourism/leisure/recreation offering. In general the provision of new accommodation shall be required to be accompanied by commensurate improvement to the resort amenities and facilities. The provision of tourist accommodation on the site will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with Section 7.7.4.

#### Objective TM47

To consider the development of new tourist related resorts and amenities and the development of a limited number of high quality integrated tourism/leisure/recreation complexes and resorts and amenities outside of existing settlements where it is demonstrated that the development is dependent on an existing local resource or a unique site characteristic or where an overriding need is demonstrated for the development at that location. The development must be in accordance with Section 7.7.4 and is subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

### 7.7.5 Tourist Accommodation

The provision of a variety of high quality tourist accommodation is important for visitors and it will encourage a longer dwell time in the county.

Tourist accommodation should be located within towns and villages in order to be in close proximity to services, public transport and amenities.

The Council will therefore direct new tourist accommodation including hotels, guesthouses, hostels, B&Bs and holiday homes to towns and villages, save for the exceptions outlined in this section, Section 7.6.2 Rural Based Tourism and Objectives TM46 and TM47 in Section 7.7.4 Integrated Resorts and Amenities.

Proposals for tourist accommodation in towns and villages must be proportionate in size, appropriate in scale, siting and design to its host settlement. The Council will also consider cumulative impacts and will not consider proposals which give rise to the

proliferation of this use in a settlement. While the form of development will depend on the form of development in the settlement, in general the Council will discourage individual holiday homes on large sites in favour of compact development of streets and places in accordance with Chapter 5 Design and Place-making in Towns and Villages.

In the case of a proposed change of use from residential to tourist accommodation, the Council will take into account a number of factors, including the applicable land use zoning (where relevant), whether the site is located within a designated Rent Pressure Zone, if there is an identified permanent housing demand (for rent or purchase) in the settlement as identified in Volume 9 Housing Strategy, the existing level of tourist accommodation and the appropriateness of tourist accommodation in that particular settlement. This is discussed in further detail in Chapter 4 Sustainable Housing.

### **Farmhouse Accommodation**

With regard to tourist accommodation in rural areas, the Council will favourably consider proposals to develop self-catering tourist accommodation on a farm holding as part of a farm diversification project. This accommodation can be provided by an extension of the existing farmhouse or by the utilisation of other existing dwellings/structures on the farm holding. Only where it has been demonstrated that these are not viable options, will the Council consider new build development. Any new build development shall be in close proximity to the existing farmhouse.

### **Conversion of 'Granny Flats'/Self-Contained Units to Tourist Accommodation in Rural Areas**

Given the intended nature of these units and the material considerations applied when considering the granting of granny flats/self-contained units for use by an immediate family member, the Council will not favourably consider proposals to convert these units (where authorised or unauthorised) to tourist accommodation, regardless of whether the original use is now no longer required. This is in the interests of regulating development, avoiding haphazard development, protecting residential amenities and the proper planning and sustainable development of rural areas.

## Hotels in Rural Areas

The Council will support and encourage hotels in rural areas where it is demonstrated that the hotel development is dependent on an existing local resource or a unique site characteristic or where an overriding need is demonstrated for the development at that location. The development must respect and enhance its rural location, the existing natural or built features on the site and its landscape setting. The development of ancillary holiday homes will not be permitted.

## Camping, Motorhome Parks, Glamping and Caravan Parks

The Council recognises the importance of this type of accommodation in developing the tourism industry in the county. The development of these facilities should generally be located within or nearby existing settlements with pedestrian and cycle linkages provided. Consideration will be given to camping/glamping and motor home parks in the rural area where it can be demonstrated that the development would not significantly impact on the rural character of the area and have no significant impact on the surrounding environment. The Council will support community groups and sports clubs to develop short-term stay zones for motor homes.

The development of extensions to existing “static” caravan parks within settlements will be assessed based on the wastewater treatment plant capacity and the need to provide permanent housing. Such developments will require a higher standard of amenities such as play areas, biodiversity areas, screen planting, walkways and cycle paths.

## Holiday Chalets

Chalets for use as holiday home accommodation have developed over time on an ad hoc basis mainly in areas within the coastal zone. There has been increasing pressure in recent years to replace these chalet structures. The Planning Authority recognises that most of these structures are in coastal areas where issues of coastal flooding and coastal erosion must be considered. The Planning Authority is also aware that many of these structures are served by inadequate infrastructure, including wastewater and roads. The Planning Authority will only consider the replacement or extension of existing holiday chalet structures where it complies with Objective TM59, and other relevant objectives of the Plan.



## B&Bs and Guesthouses

This type of accommodation remains a popular option for people, both in towns and villages and in rural areas such as farmhouse accommodation and country house accommodation. The use of not more than four bedrooms in a house, where each bedroom is used for the accommodation of not more than four persons as overnight guest accommodation, is considered exempted development for the purposes of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), provided that such development would not contravene a condition attached to a permission under the Act or be inconsistent with any use specified or included in such a permission. Applications for permission where the use of more than four bedrooms is proposed for this use, or it is proposed to build a purpose built B&B, will be favoured in towns and villages. Such applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis in rural areas, where the scale remains consistent with that associated with this type of accommodation and is appropriate to the rural location and subject to normal planning and environmental criteria.

## Hostels

This type of accommodation should ideally be located within towns and villages, preferably served by public transport. However, the Council will also give consideration to the development of small scale hostel accommodation along established walking/hiking routes and on the site of an outdoor activity tourist facility in a rural area such as an Adventure centre/outdoor pursuits centre. With regard to the latter, the accommodation shall remain ancillary to the existing tourism facility on the site, and will only be available for use by those utilising the tourism facility.

## Short term letting

Rural dwellings which have been permitted in recent times in County Wexford are restricted to permanent residence and cannot be used as short term/holiday rents. However, in some areas such as Courtown, housing developments have been permitted as holiday homes and can be rented for short term use without any further planning consents. Short term rentals are also a very important sector in providing tourism accommodation in County Wexford.

New legislation has been introduced to bring additional controls as a means to

provide more accommodation for long term housing rentals in areas designated as Rent Pressure Zones (Planning and Development Regulations 2019, S.I. No 235 of 2019).

## Tourist Accommodation Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

### Objective TM48

To facilitate the provision of proportionate high quality accessible tourist accommodation and the expansion/upgrade of existing hotels, guesthouses, hostels and B&Bs where the use and scale of the tourist accommodation is appropriate to and in keeping with the scale and character of the settlement.

### Objective TM49

To consider a proposal to change the use from residential to short term letting in a Rent Pressure Zone having regard to Guidance Note for Local Authorities for Regulating Short Term Letting (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, July 2019).

### Objective TM50

To give consideration to the development of a hotel facility in a rural area where it is demonstrated that the hotel development is dependent on an existing local resource or a unique site characteristic or where an overriding need is demonstrated for the development at that location. The development must respect and enhance its rural location, the existing natural or built features on the site and its landscape setting and is subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria. The development of ancillary tourist accommodation including holiday homes on or adjoining the site will not be permitted.

### Objective TM51

To require new holiday home developments, both individual and multi-unit, to take place in serviced towns and villages and to ensure that the scale and design of the

development is appropriate to the settlement, enhances the character and any special qualities of the settlement. The Council will only consider the development of new holiday homes in a rural area where the development is ancillary to an 'Integrated Tourism/Leisure/Recreation Complex' and where the proposal complies with the provisions of Section 7.7.4, the Habitats Directive and normal planning and environmental criteria.

#### Objective TM52

To have regard to Fáilte Ireland's 'Registration and Renewal of Registration Regulations for Short Term Tourism Accommodation Rental' (Fáilte Ireland, 2018) or any future update of these guidelines, when considering planning applications for this type of development.

#### Objective TM53

To consider, on a case-by-case basis, proposals for new holiday chalet/caravan/mobile home parks within existing settlements where there is not a proliferation of such developments and subject to them having a critical mass of onsite amenities and facilities (such as pools/playgrounds/indoor activity centres/restaurants) over and above what would have traditionally been the case for such developments. The Council will not consider proposals which would result in a reduction in the capacity in the public waste-water treatment system that would be detrimental to the delivery of necessary permanent housing. All such developments shall be required to have the highest standards of accommodation (minimum specifications shall be provided and will be conditioned as part of the development), layout, design and landscaping.

#### Objective TM54

To consider, on a case-by-case basis, proposals to extend an existing authorised holiday caravan/mobile home park. The Council will consider the location of the park (within or outside of an existing settlement and the appropriateness of the increased scale of the park at that location), its existing layout, design, visual and environmental quality and the number of existing parks in its vicinity. The Council will not consider proposals where they give rise to a proliferation of this use in a settlement, rural or coastal area, and are unlikely to give favourable consideration to the extension of

such facilities outside of settlements unless they are on self-contained sites with a critical mass of onsite amenities (such as pools/playgrounds/indoor activity centres/restaurants) or connected by footpath, lighting etc. to a settlement. The Council will not consider proposals which would result in a loss of capacity in the public waste water treatment system that would be detrimental to the need for permanent housing in the area.

#### **Objective TM55**

To facilitate the development of sites for camping and glamping and campervans/ touring caravans/motor homes subject to site suitability and normal planning and environmental considerations.

#### **Objective TM56**

To consider the provision of farmhouse accommodation/self-catering accommodation on a farm holding as part of a farm diversification project. The accommodation shall be provided by an extension to the farmhouse or by the utilisation of other existing dwellings/structures on the farm holding. Only where it has been demonstrated that these are not viable options will permission be considered for a new build development. Any new build development shall be in close proximity to the existing farmhouse.

#### **Objective TM57**

To consider the development of small scale hostel type accommodation along established walking/hiking routes and on the site of an outdoor activity tourist facility in a rural area such as an Adventure centre/outdoor pursuits centre. With regard to the latter, the accommodation shall remain ancillary to the existing tourism facility on the site, and will only be available for use by those utilising the tourism facility.

#### **Objective TM58**

To facilitate B&B and guesthouse tourist accommodation developments in towns and villages, and to consider on a case-by-case such developments in a rural area where it is appropriate in scale to its rural location e.g. farmhouse accommodation or country

house, will not detract from residential amenity and complies with normal planning and environmental criteria.

### Objective TM59

To strictly control the replacement and extension of existing holiday chalet structures. The Council will only consider such proposals where the following criteria are complied with:

- (a) It is demonstrated that the structure which it is proposed to replace has been on the subject site previous to 1st October 1964 when the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963 came into effect or has the benefit of planning permission and is in accordance with the planning conditions pertaining to same.
- (b) It is proposed to replace the existing structure with a new structure which is equal to or not more than 20% of the floor area of that being replaced, or to extend the structure with an extension which is equal to or not more than 20% the floor area of the structure to be extended. This is to ensure that the scale and form of this type of development is consistent.
- (c) The replacement structure is for use as holiday home accommodation.
- (d) Risk of coastal erosion will be considered in accordance with relevant objectives in Section 12.5 of Chapter 12 Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning.
- (e) The risk of flooding to the structure and its associated waste water treatment infrastructure is minimal. This should be demonstrated by a site-specific flood risk assessment, if deemed necessary by the Planning Authority.
- (f) The structure can be connected to the public waste water system, or effluent from the structure can be treated on-site in accordance with the EPA's Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (EPA, 2009).
- (g) Suitable water conservation measures form part of the development proposal.
- (h) Satisfactory access arrangements are in place, and
- (i) All other normal planning and environmental criteria are complied with.

### Objective TM60

To adopt a presumption against the change of use of granny flats/self-contained units for use by a family member (whether authorised or unauthorised) outside of settlements in rural areas to tourist accommodation.

## 7.7.6 Tourist Infrastructure

The provision of well-planned and attractive tourist infrastructure is important to the overall quality of the county's tourism product and to create a positive and good experience for visitors. Tourist infrastructure includes car and bus car-parking, footpaths and walkways, bicycle parking, seating, picnic and rest facilities, toilets and showers, lighting, signage and information boards and refuse and recycling facilities designed with the principles of universal design. The Council will consider proposals for tourist infrastructure on a case-by-case basis having regard to the type of tourist attraction, its setting and character and the ability to successfully integrate the proposal on, or adjoining, the site. The Council will assist tourist bodies and local community groups in the provision of adequate recreational and tourism infrastructure.

The provision of tourist orientation signage and wayfinding infrastructure is important as it allows visitors to travel with ease between their destinations and to detour to points of interest along the way which will increase dwell time in the area. While the Council acknowledges the signage needs of local businesses there is a need to avoid a proliferation of signage for reasons including traffic safety and visual amenity/erosion of scenic amenity. In this regard, there is a need for co-ordinated approach to signage and the preparation of signage plans for key areas/activities in the county such as the branded signage for Wexford Trails. Ireland's Ancient East also has its own branded signage and the Council will facilitate its roll out in the county.

### Tourist Infrastructure Objectives

It is the objective of the Council:

**Objective TM61**

To facilitate improvements to tourism infrastructure including proposals to improve car, bus and bicycle parking, proposals to provide electric car and bicycle charging infrastructure, directional signage/information boards and service/rest facilities designed in accordance with principles of universal design subject to normal planning and environmental criteria and without detracting from the physical setting, character or visual quality of the tourism asset.

**Objective TM62**

To facilitate the development of co-ordinated and branded orientation, signage and wayfinding infrastructure for tourist attractions and tourist facilities subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria.

**Objective TM63**

To assist Fáilte Ireland in the roll out of the branded signage relating to Ireland's Ancient East.