

Chapter 6 Natural Environment, Conservation & Heritage

6.0 Introduction

The Council recognises the importance of the natural and built environment in terms of the economic, social and cultural well-being of the County. It is the aim of the Council to ensure a balance between development and protection of the natural and built environment. This will be achieved through appropriate policies and objectives that respect the natural and built environment, the economy and the social and cultural needs of the community.

6.1 Coastal Zone Management

Tramore's coastline is a valuable natural resource providing a buffer for extreme weathers, an important wildlife area for a range of protected habitats and species, and a scenic landscape asset of tourism value. A growing body of evidence illustrates that rising sea levels, increasing storm frequency and wave energy will increase the rate of erosion, loss of habitats and incidence of flood-related events in vulnerable areas of the Waterford coast.

The Council recognises the need for a strategic approach to coastal protection. In 2008, Waterford County Council through the Heritage Plan undertook a Scoping Study towards the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) of Tramore Bay which will help inform application of ICZM to Tramore's coastline.

Policy CZM 1

To apply the process of ICZM in the future management and sustainable development of the Tramore coastal zone.

Policy CZM 2

To recognise the value of Tramore's natural coastal defences in Tramore Dunes and Back Strand and ensure their protection from damaging activities including coastal erosion and recreational activities.

Policy CZM 3

To protect the scenic value of the Coastal Zone in Tramore including landward and seaward views and continuous views along the coastline and manage development so it will not materially detract from the visual amenity of the coast.

Objective NH 1

To assess all proposed developments which are likely to impact (directly or through indirect or cumulative impacts) on designated sites for nature conservation or sites proposed for designation and protected species in accordance with the relevant legislation.

6.1.1 Climate Change

The DoECLG published the *National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (Building Resilience to Climate Change)* in December 2012. This framework provides a mandate for local authorities and other agencies to prepare local adaptation plans (including mitigation) for climate change as part of development planning to be published by mid-2014. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment was carried out as part of the Waterford County Development Plan 2011-2017 and policies on floodrisk are included in Chapter 7 of the Plan. Climate change and flood risk are addressed in the Environmental Report of this Plan. Local adaptation plans shall be reviewed and updated in accordance with DoECLG guidelines on integrating climate change adaptation into development plans as well as guidance on adaptation proofing of SEA.

Policy CC 1

To incorporate climate change adaptation planning in accordance with DoECLG guidelines in the future management and sustainable development of the Tramore coastal zone.

6.1.2 Protection of the Sand Dunes

Tramore possess a varied and attractive landscape with one of the major attractions being the beach and sand dunes. Tramore Dunes and Back Strand lie at the head of Tramore bay, east of Tramore. This area is designated as a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA), candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA). The Dunes are well developed and contain several habitats as listed on Annex 1 of the EU Habitats Directive, including the priority habitat fixed dune with herbaceous vegetation.

It is the aim of the Council to protect the sand dunes in so far as possible. A programme of conservation works was carried out in 2010 and 2011 involving establishment of sand fencing, sand ladders and transplanting of Marram Grass. Further conservation works where necessary will be carried out over the lifetime of the Plan to maintain Tramore Sand Dunes and subject to available funding.



Tramore Dunes

The Back Strand is an area of some importance for shore birds on the south coast. The site regularly supports internationally important numbers of Brent Goose and nationally important numbers of Golden Plover.

The ecological value of the Back Strand area will be enhanced by the creation in 2013 of a compensatory wetland at Kilmacleague adjacent to the northern end of the Back Strand. The wetland has been created by the construction of new sea embankment to enable inundation of the compensatory wetland area. The area of created habitat inside this embankment is 7.5 hectares with the aim of establishing 5 hectares of mudflat and 2.5 hectares of saltmarsh which will become established after the initial development of a shallow coastal lagoon.

Policy NH 1

To conserve, maintain and facilitate restoration of the favourable conservation status of species and habitats within Tramore Dunes and Back Strand (candidate) Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area and the Mid-Waterford Coast Special Protection Area.

Policy NH 2

To comply with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive to ensure that there is no significant adverse impact of development on the integrity of the Tramore Dunes and Back Strand SAC and SPA and that the requirements of Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive are fully satisfied by screening all projects and plans for Appropriate Assessment.

Policy NH 3

To protect plant, animal species and habitats occurring in Tramore which have been listed in the Habitats Directive, Bird Directive, Wildlife Act (1976) and Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Flora Protection order S.I. No. 94 of 1999.

Policy NH 4

To monitor the development of the created wetland at Kilmacleague to ensure maximum conservation gain for the site and to seek to attain qualifying status for inclusion within the Tramore Back Strand SAC and SPA.

6.1.3 Geological Heritage

Geology is now recognised as an intrinsic component of natural heritage and it is appropriate that due regard is given to conservation of geological heritage features. The Geological Survey of Ireland established the Irish Geological Heritage (IGH) programme in 1998 with the objective of identifying and selecting sites that best represent the geological heritage of

Ireland for designation as Natural Heritage Areas. The IGH identified Tramore Dunes and Lady Elizabeth's Cove as County Geological Sites of Interest.

Policy GH 1

To protect Tramore Dunes and Lady Elizabeth's Cove as Sites of County Geological Interest in recognition of their geological heritage value.

6.2 Green Infrastructure**6.2.1 Urban Forestry/Woodlands**

Urban forestry plays a major role in developing urban areas in terms of supporting flora and fauna and acting as a natural habitat for wildlife. Visually, it can enhance the amenity of an area, often serving as a barrier between adjoining landuses. Furthermore, it may have valuable amenity potential for the local residents providing attractive walkways and paths. Generally urban forestry proposals for amenity purposes will be supported, where planting of deciduous species will contribute to the richness and diversity of flora and fauna of the area, and the overall visual amenity of the area. Planting of coniferous forestry should be avoided in the urban area and in areas overlooking the coastline. Urban forestry proposals should include a broad mix of deciduous species indigenous to the area. Newtown Woods was established as a "Neighbourwood" Scheme of the Forestry Service.



Newtown Woods

Trees are a valuable feature of the landscape for their amenity and wildlife value but due to its coastal location Tramore has one of the lowest levels of tree cover in the County. Areas of woodland value in the Plan area include Newtown Woods, Bookie Woods and Corbally Mór. The Council will carry out an assessment of trees and woodlands within the LAP area within the lifetime of the Plan and consider designation of Tree Preservation Order's where appropriate.

Policy GI 1

The Council will preserve and enhance the amenity and biodiversity value of Tramore by preserving as far as possible trees, woodlands and hedgerows and will consider Tree Preservation Orders in order to protect trees of significance in the Plan area.

6.2.2 Sites of Local Biodiversity Interest

Tramore Dunes and Back Strand, Newtown Woods and the Boating Lake are significant in Tramore not only for their visual amenity, tourism and recreational value but also for providing habitats for wildlife and protection against weather and climatic events such as flooding and coastal erosion.

Linking these areas is a network of ecological corridors such as treelines, hedgerows, open spaces, earth banks and stone walls. Key biodiversity sites and ecological corridors in Tramore include Bookie Woods, the Garraun Stream, Glen Road and tree corridors on the approach road from Pickardstown. Other sites of local interest are the Town Park, Tramore House Gardens, constructed wetlands along the Riverstown Relief Road and semi-natural areas on the outskirts of the Town.

These green spaces are now being regarded as “green infrastructure” and essential links in the network of our urban areas for a range of services and benefits for our communities.

Policy GI 2

To protect and encourage the creation of sites of local biodiversity value, ecological corridors and networks that connect areas of high conservation value such as tree corridors, hedgerows, earth banks and wetlands.

Policy GI 3

To review and update the Tramore Habitat Map as new information becomes available and to incorporate green infrastructure into future development for the benefit of the natural environment, adaptation to climate change and quality of life for the local community.

Policy GI 4

To protect and preserve existing hedgerows and healthy mature and developing trees by incorporating them into the site layout of any new development where appropriate and to encourage new planting and the replacement of lost hedgerows and trees using native species.

Objective GI 1

It is an objective to minimise the impact of new development on habitats of natural value that are key features of Tramore’s ecological network and require that an appropriate level of environmental assessment is prepared to an acceptable standard in respect of any proposed plan or project likely to have an impact on these sites or protected species.

6.2.3 New Residential Development

The Council will aim to protect and preserve mature and semi-mature trees where possible and will require new developments to be so designed as to integrate existing trees into any new schemes. Sufficient distance should be maintained between existing mature trees and new buildings.

6.2.4 Public Open Space

Although the provision of public open space has improved in Tramore, there are still too few publicly accessible open areas in the Town. The Council in association with a number of local community groups is currently working on a series of projects to develop and extend the use and accessibility of a number of public areas.

It is anticipated that the Council will undertake the redevelopment of the boating lake into a Town Park within the period of this Plan. This will provide a public open space, with sports amenities, close to the Town Centre that is available to the public throughout the year.

In addition, the Council is working with community groups on the redevelopment of Tramore House Gardens and developing the Doneraile Walk. It is envisaged that these projects will be undertaken during the lifetime of the Plan, subject to the availability of resources.

The Council also intends to undertake a series of public realm improvements throughout the Town over the course of this Local Area Plan [See Section 6.5 below].

6.2.5 Proposed Town Park

The proposed Town Park shall be developed around the existing boating lake area just off the promenade in Tramore. This area shall provide a significant area of public open space and shall provide a year round recreational and amenity area for Tramore. The provision of a Town Park not alone provides for a quality area of open space but also allows for the development of a variety of artistic, cultural and recreational amenities such as playgrounds, water features, concerts, markets, trade/exhibition stands etc. It is envisaged that the Council shall continue to work closely with local and community groups in the development of the Town Park.

Proposals for the park include areas of active (i.e. playground) and passive open space and there will be a strong emphasis on integration into the surrounding environment through quality pedestrian linkages and a high standard of lighting and landscaping. This will compliment an area which is predominantly centered around the beach and the amusement park.

Policy GI 5

Ensure that existing and proposed residential developments and amenity areas link effectively with each other through the provision of safe pedestrian links, footpaths and lighting.

Policy GI 6

Require the provision of a hierarchy of open space both for active and passive recreational use in new residential developments.

Objective GI 2

It is the aim of the Council within the lifetime of this Plan, to develop a Town Park for Tramore.

Objective GI 3

The Council will support the re-development of Tramore House Garden and the Doneraile Walk.

6.3 Protection of the Natural Environment**6.3.1 Ground Water Resources**

The area within and adjoining Tramore Town supports a Regionally Important Fissure Flow of extreme vulnerability and a poor generally unproductive flow of high vulnerability. Consideration shall be given to the potential for adverse impact on the groundwater resource in the area arising from future potential development within the Plan area.

The European Communities Environmental Objectives Groundwater Regulations 2010, S.I. No. 9 of 2010 have been issued by the Minister for the Environment and have been developed for the purpose of responding further to the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and the Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC). The regulations provide for clear environmental objectives and groundwater quality standards to strengthen the regime for the protection of groundwater.

Policy NH 5

It is a policy of the Council to preserve and protect groundwater and surfacewater quality in accordance with the Groundwater and Surface Water Regulations.

6.3.2 River Basin District Management

The EU Water Framework Directive provides for an integrated approach to the protection, improvement and sustainable use of all waters, including rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal waters and groundwater. It proposes a system of water management based on natural river catchments. It aims at maintaining the 'high status' of surface waters where it exists; preventing any deterioration in the existing surface water status, and achieving good status, at least, in all waters by 2015.

Policy NH 6

The achievement of good ecological status, good ecological potential and good chemical status for all river water and groundwater if possible within the lifetime of the Plan.

Objective NH 2

To take into consideration the South East River Basin Management Plan when considering new development proposals.

Objective NH 3

To implement the South East River Basin Management Plan and its programme of measures through the provision of good environmental management as reflected in the policies and actions herein.

6.4 Built Heritage

Tramore Town is the quintessential Victorian seaside resort of the south east. The Town has developed and grown far beyond its humble beginnings as a small fishing hamlet. In the 1700's thatched cottages were built along an irregular street now known as Main Street. Over time the Town has experienced many changes from the arrival of the railway in 1853 to the construction of Harney's seawall in 1893, to the building boom of the Celtic Tiger. The layout of the Town is determined by its topography, with the setting of the Victorian terraces of houses positioned to maximise the views of the Bay. The main civic buildings in the Town include the Railway Station, the Coastguard Station, Christ Church, and Tramore House and Gardens. Holy Cross Church designed by J.J Mc Carthy is considered of National importance and is a landmark building of on the horizon of the Town. Also of architectural importance are the terraces of Victorian houses, the large detached houses, the long lengths of rubblestone walling and the street furniture such as post-boxes, bollards, kerbing etc. The majority of the Victorian houses still retain their rendered finishes, casement windows and doorways which entail details of moulded plasterwork, fanlights and sidelights. The main roof type is pitched slate with clay ridge tiles. Off the Main Street the roof pitches are low

and obscured by low parapets. There are many fine examples of wrought iron works in railings and gates around the Town, most notably along Church Road.

6.4.1 Protecting the Built Heritage of Tramore

The built heritage of Tramore is protected by either inclusion on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS), or under the policies and objectives of the Local Area Plan. The archaeology of Tramore is protected under The National Monuments Acts 1930-2004. Recorded sites and features pre-1700 A.D. of historical and archaeological importance are included in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP). The aim of these measures is to protect and enhance this heritage for the benefit of residents and visitors alike and to ensure that it is passed on for future generations to enjoy and cherish

A Protected Structure or proposed protected structure is one that the Planning Authority considers to be of special interest under one of more of the following categories - architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical grounds. Details of Protected Structures are entered by the Council in its Record of Protected Structures (RPS). The Tramore area currently has 36 structures on the RPS. The RPS is included in Appendices. Structures can be added to, or deleted from the RPS at anytime by a formal process. The Council maintains a continually updated copy of the RPS, a list of which is available on the Council website.

The Council in partnership with the Waterford Institute of Technology prepared “*The Architectural Heritage of Tramore - Guide for Owners*” in 2009. This document can be downloaded from the Waterford County Council website at:

www.waterfordcoco.ie/en/service/conservationandheritage/publications

Policy BH 1

It is the policy of the Council to maintain a Record of Protected Structures and to protect all the structures or parts of structures which are of historical, architectural, artistic, archaeological, social, scientific, technical and cultural interest.

Policy BH 2

Demolition of a Protected Structure can only be considered in exceptional circumstances and the onus will be on the developer to provide the strongest justification for such an action.

Policy BH 3

It is a policy of Waterford County Council to protect the built heritage and to encourage sensitive development or reuse of buildings to promote economic growth and regeneration.

Objective BH 1

Within the historic core of Tramore, it is an objective of the Council to:

- Identify, protect and enhance the unique character of a streetscape by providing guidance on appropriate development to retain its distinctive character;
- Protect, where appropriate, elements of the streetscape such as rubblestone boundary walls, free-standing bollards, and street furniture as identified on NIAH survey which all make a positive contribution to the built heritage;
- To retain, where appropriate, original building features of vernacular structures such as the timber sash windows, the Victorian doorways, rooflines, low parapets and remains of shop fronts. Where appropriate, the Council shall encourage the reinstatement of historically correct traditional features such as sliding sash windows and shop fronts etc;
- Promote sensitive reuse and/or alterations of buildings of historic character;
- Ensure that the design of new building respects the streetscape; and
- Strengthen the Town core by promoting the redevelopment of underused Town Centre sites.

6.5 Improving the Public Realm

The term “Public Realm” refers to all areas to which the public has open access including streets, public parks, civic buildings and facilities. In Tramore this area extends beyond the historic core. The historic elements such as the rubblestone walls, street furniture (such as post boxes etc) can contribute to the special interest and distinctive character of an area.

The Tramore area also has extensive public roads, pavements and tracks. During the lifetime of this Plan, it is an objective of the Council to undertake a Public Realm Enhancement programme that will improve these facilities. These improvements will primarily seek to improve amenities for cyclists and pedestrians but will also enhance the urban built environment. Taken together these interventions will improve the appearance, accessibility and usability of the Town.

Policy BH 4

It is the policy of the Council to encourage the sensitive redevelopment of vacant or derelict sites in the streetscape.

Objective BH 2

Subject to the availability of resources, the Council will undertake a Public Realm Enhancement Programme over the lifetime of the Plan.

6.6 Vistas and Settings

The location of a structure of special interest is often enhanced by its setting. In Tramore there are many vistas and settings to be considered. Some of the main vistas are:

- The approach into the Town on the Waterford Road;
- The view from the beach uphill towards the Town;
- Views onto and from the Doneraile Walk;
- Views up and down Train Hill;
- Views from the Coastguard Station towards the Metal Man and Brownstown Head; and
- Terraces of houses such as Atlantic Terrace, Bellevue Terrace and Gurteen Terrace.

Any proposed new development should respect the existing character of its setting and blend in harmoniously. New developments should consider the existing building heights, vertical and horizontal lines, window size and fenestration in the vicinity, building materials and elevations of the existing structures. New developments should be sited and designed sympathetically so as not to detract from the setting.

Objective BH 3

To protect the vistas and settings of protected structures and the streetscape by the retention, where feasible, of terraces of historic vernacular houses.

Objective BH 4

To retain and enhance, where appropriate, the existing rubblestone walls, hedgerows and mature trees which form an intrinsic part of Tramore's built heritage

6.7 Archaeology

The archaeological heritage of the Town is composed of structures, constructions, groups of buildings, developed sites, all recorded monuments as well as their contexts, and moveable objects, situated both on land and under water.¹ This includes:

- Recorded sites and features of historical and archaeological importance included in the Record of Monuments and Places;
- Major sites of archaeological importance in state ownership and guardianship;

¹ The European Convention for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage, Valetta, 1992

- National Monuments which are the subject of preservation orders in County Waterford; and
- All previously unknown archaeology that becomes known (e.g. through ground disturbance, fieldwork or the discovery of sites underwater).

The National Monuments Acts 1930-2004 provides for the protection of the archaeological heritage.

6.7.1 Record of Monuments and Places

The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) of County Waterford identifies archaeological sites within the Tramore area. There are currently over 50 archaeological sites in the Record of Monuments and Places in the jurisdiction of the Tramore Local Area. This includes enclosures, ringforts, middens, standing stones and a promontory fort. These recorded monuments are protected under the National Monuments Act 1994 as amended. The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht have relevant publications and mapping relating to archaeological heritage on their website www.archaeology.ie.

Policy AH 1

To ensure the preservation of all archaeological monuments included in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP).

Policy AH 2

To secure the preservation 'in situ' of archaeological remains and settings in accordance with government of all archaeological monuments included in the Record of Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994 and sites, features and objects of archaeological interest generally.

Policy AH 3

To ensure that development in the vicinity of a site or archaeological interest shall not have significant adverse impact on the character of the archaeological site.

Policy AH 4

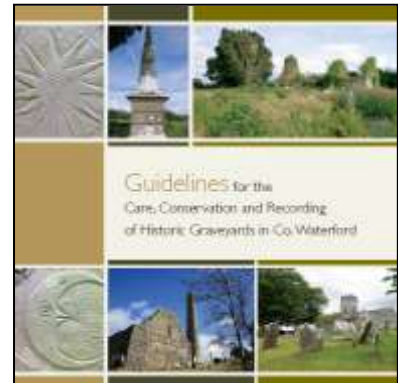
To protect and preserve the archaeological value of underwater archaeology. In considering development proposals the Council will take account of rivers, inter-tidal and sub-tidal environments, and the potential to impact on previously unrecorded sites and will have regard to the advice and recommendations of the Underwater Archaeology Unit of the DAHG. Any development either above or below water including to coastal edges shall not be detrimental to the character of an archaeological site or its setting.

Policy AH 5

Promote public awareness of the rich archaeological and architectural heritage of Tramore by providing information, where feasible, by way of smart phone applications, information via the internet, leaflets or tour guides.

6.8 Historic Graveyards

Historic graveyards include all graveyards and burial grounds used prior to the 20th century. A distinction is made between the terms “burial grounds” and “graveyards” where burial grounds are areas of land used for burials while graveyards are burial grounds associated with churches. There are over one hundred historic graveyards located in the County. In the Tramore Local Area Plan, this includes sites such as Drumcannon and Kilmacleague West. Graveyards dating from pre 1700 A.D. are given statutory protection under the National Monuments Act 1930-2004.

**Policy AH 6**

It is the policy of the Council to apply best practice in the care and management of historic graveyards as detailed in the guidance document on the “*Care, Conservation and Recording of Historic Graveyards in County Waterford*” published by Waterford County Council in 2009 and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht website www.ahg.gov.ie.