



Section 3: Shaping Future Development





Landscape view of Enniscrone

3. Shaping Future Development

One of the main attractions of Enniscrone is the natural environment and its unique landscape setting. It is imperative therefore to avoid degradation of this asset occurring through laissez-faire development and lack of visitor management. A number of factors assist in determining the Development Strategy for Enniscrone. These include physical constraints to development and the capacity of the land to provide for future land use needs. Other issues have also arisen which focus on the needs of the local residents, current planning issues (such as traffic circulation and improvement of pedestrian linkages), and the improvement of the economic and social environment.

3.1 Constraints to Development

Map 4 displays environmental parameters, which influence the potential developable land areas around Enniscrone. It is important that these elements are considered in determining future lands for development, as many of the environmental features around Enniscrone are important to preserve and maintain for both residents and visitors. The Pier area, Cliff Edge walk, Castle Field, the Beach and the Hollow provide important amenities for the town; future development should be directed in a manner, which preserves the views from and to these areas and strengthens their amenity value.

3.1.1 Environmental Parameters

- **Topography and Landscape**

Due to the undulating topography of the Enniscrone landscape certain views need to be protected. Visually vulnerable areas such as ridgetops should generally be kept free from development. (see section 4.1.3.1 and Map 4) Other natural features such as significant tree groups and hedgerows can assist in assimilating development into the landscape. Maintaining the existing demarcated stock would be beneficial for the area in terms of visual image.

- **Environmental Designations**

The Killala Bay/Moy Estuary widens to approximately 8 km, forming a north facing triangular bay, with the town of Enniscrone situated on the eastern shore. Extensive sandflats and mudflats are exposed in the estuary and bay at low tide. Much of the inner part of the bay is intertidal. For the most part, these flats are unvegetated but contain extensive mats of Eelgrass, Beaked Tasselweed and Green algae, which provide important feeding grounds for birds.

The long sandy Bartragh Island separates the northwest side of the bay from the open water. The dune systems at Bartragh Island are well developed and constitute good examples of stabilised dunes with an extremely rich and diverse flora. Species recorded on the dunes include Marram Grass, Pyramidal Orchid, Kidney Vetch, Fairy Flax, and Harebell. The dunes are generally undisturbed and are considered to be one of the best in the country in terms of their naturalness, and condition. The dunes at Enniscrone in the northeast have been recently modified by an extension to the Enniscrone golf course and part of the dune complex is now proposed for exclusion from the cSAC.

Other species, which are of ecological importance include the Mollusc *Vertigo Angustior*, which is listed in Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive, The Otter is listed under Annex II and IV of the Habitats Directive and is also rated as an Internationally Important mammal. Also recorded from the site is the Irish Hare, which is a sub-species, listed under the Bern Convention. It is also a Red Data Book Species listed as Internationally Important. The above species are also legally protected under the Irish Wildlife Act (1976). Common Seal have been

sighted on sand banks adjacent to a channel to the south of Bartragh. This species is also listed as an Annex II species in the Habitats Directive.

The major objectives for conservation management are to maintain and if possible improve the ecological value of priority and non-priority habitats and to maintain the populations of important plant, bird and animal species. This can only occur through achieving a consensus on the conservation management of these sites with landowners, the local community and other interested parties.

Under these directives development is restricted within the designated areas. This area has been given careful consideration within the local area plan. Due to the dynamic nature and sensitivity of this environment a buffer zone at the edge of the designated areas should be introduced to minimise any negative effects that intensive forms of development may have on these areas.

- **Coastal Zone Management**

The Government has developed a discussion document, entitled “*Coastal Zone Management - A Draft Policy for Ireland*,” as a response to national and global concerns over coastal management. Coastal protection is important. Over-development and increases in tourism numbers threaten areas of high ecological and resource value.

According to the *Sligo County Development Plan* it is the policy of the council to draw up a strategic coastline policy, which will support the preparation of a coastal zone management plan for the Sligo region.

The coast is a finite resource that has been developed over a long period of time, but is continually under pressure for further development and use. Coastal zone management has developed in recognition that a more efficient and sustainable use of the coastal resource can be achieved. The government’s discussion document, states that, “*policies of limitation and curtailment on tourism and leisure development and use are, therefore, likely to be necessary to deal with the increasing pressures.*”

In 1996 the Department of the Marine allocated a grant specifically relating to a Dune Management Scheme for Enniscrone. This monitors and provides soft engineering techniques, which enables the protection and maintenance of the dunes and beach in Enniscrone. Essentially the foredune bank was reconstituted and boulders were placed in front of the most vulnerable sections. Also sand fencing, timber fencing and information notices explaining the scheme were positioned in desired locations to try to alleviate the impact that uncontrolled pedestrian access has on the dunes.

It is apparent that any development should not damage the integrity of Enniscrone as a tourist resort or as a full time residential abode. If the integrity of the environment was damaged, the year round visitors using the area would diminish. The number of visitors at a site, if exceeding the carrying capacity, can cause ecological damage. Although the carrying capacity of any area is finite, it may be enhanced through successful management. The diverseness of recreational locations within the immediate Enniscrone area enhances this capacity.



Wild daisies, Enniscrone



Archaeological remains, Castle Field, Enniscrone

- **Archaeological Features**

A significant amount of land in and around Enniscrone includes sites of archaeological interest. (see Environmental Parameters Map 4) There are a number of notable structures and sites, including the following – Enniscrone Castle, Ecclesiastical remains of St. Valentines Church and Graveyard, the Cahirmore Cliff Promontory fort, passage tombs and numerous ringforts, enclosures and souterrains. It is important for the environmental and cultural sustainability and economic viability of the town that these sites should be actively promoted and marketed with appropriate access and linkages made available.

A cluster of archaeological sites is evident in the Castle Field area of Enniscrone. A conservation plan has recently been undertaken for this area by Northwest Archaeological Services Ltd., the grant for the project being provided by the Heritage Council. (see section 4.1.4)

3.2 Capacity for Future Land Uses

Within the town core itself there are numerous vacant and undeveloped sites available for infill development. Six hectares of land within the town core are currently free from development. An emphasis towards infill development within the town will be urged within the time frame of this plan, as well as backland development to the north and south of the immediate town core. Development at these locations will assist in consolidating the town core and help to relieve piecemeal and ribbon like development along the existing route to and from Enniscrone. However, as well as environmental constraints, a number of issues need to be taken into account to ensure the successful identification and development of prime lands.



Undeveloped land, Main Street, Enniscrone

3.2.1 Infrastructural Considerations

- **Road Network / Traffic Circulation**

For the town to expand in a consolidated sustainable manner there will be a need for the development of auxiliary roads. This will enable the opening up of backlands within the existing town structure for future investment potential and residential purposes. A major constraint to future road building is the implementation and funding of such infrastructural projects. Also the alignment and location of roads may cause conflicts due to land ownership patterns and topography. (see section 4.1.8.1)

- **Car Parking**

It can be difficult to ascertain alternative suitable sites for car parking in a town the size of Enniscrone. This proves increasingly difficult to justify when car parking difficulties only arise during peak summer holiday times. However, through the use of carrot and stick policies, restricting parking in some areas, creating others and improving the signposting, this dilemma may be overcome. (see section 4.1.8.1)

- **Wastewater Services**

The importance of wastewater services is imperative to the future development of Enniscrone, therefore due to current capacity problems, future developments will be constrained until improvements and upgrades are carried out on the existing system.

