

CHAPTER 19

MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING & COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT

19.0 Introduction

The coastal areas of County Wicklow are amongst the most scenic, sensitive and valuable resources in the County. Many diverse activities and industries, including marine and coastal recreation and tourism, fisheries and aquaculture, shipping and port activities, energy production and other commerce / trade, along with Wicklow's largest towns, are located along Wicklow's coastline. Our coastal areas are under significant pressure and they face many challenges. The sea itself is also an important resource for the County and many of the activities that take place off-shore have an impact on the land and coastal areas and therefore it is important to take into consideration such impacts.

Planning in our coastal and marine areas is changing in Ireland with new procedures and government policy emerging for marine spatial planning and the management of development in our maritime areas. Marine spatial planning is a new way of looking at how we use the marine area; it is about planning when and where human activities take place at sea. It aims to balance the different demands for using the sea including the need to protect the marine environment. It's about ensuring these uses and activities are as efficient and sustainable as possible. A marine spatial plan – in Ireland known as the National Marine Planning Framework– is the outcome of that process.

The impact of climate change is a significant threat to Wicklow's coastal areas as they are one of the most vulnerable areas in the County. Coastal ecosystems are already stressed by human activity, pollution, invasive species and storms, with climate change intensifying the impact on the coastline. Rising sea levels have the potential to change the shape of the coastline, contribute to erosion and inundate coastal ecosystems and eliminate wetlands. Warmer oceans may disrupt coastal and marine ecosystems. An integrated coastal zone management approach, with a variety of relevant organisations, has an important role to play in addressing the challenge of climate change.

With reference to the **National, Regional and County Objectives** set out in Chapter 2 of this plan, the protection and appropriate development of our coastal zone and marine environment will contribute to numerous goals across the three pillars of 'sustainable healthy communities', 'climate action' and 'economic opportunity' by:

- conserving and enhancing coastal and marine biodiversity, protected habitats and species;
- identifying, protecting and enhancing coastal green and blue infrastructure and ecosystem services and promote the sustainable management of strategic natural assets such as coastlines, farmlands, peatlands, uplands woodlands and wetlands;
- building resilience to increased risks of extreme weather events, changes in sea level and patterns of coastal erosion to protect property, critical infrastructure and food security;
- reduction and management of coastal and estuarine flood risk;
- supporting and appropriately managing the impacts of the development of alternative and renewable sources of electricity including off shore wind, wave and tidal energy;
- supporting employment growth around Wicklow's natural resources and supporting key sectors for growth particularly the maritime industry including support services for off-shore wind energy, tourism and recreation;
- ensuring access to coastal areas for active and passive uses to support physical and mental health and well-being within the community.

19.1 Legislative & Strategic Context

EU Marine Spatial Planning Directive 2014/89/EU

In 2014 the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union adopted Directive 2014/89/EU. This directive established a framework for Marine Spatial Plans and details the main goals and minimum requirements. A national Marine Spatial Plan must be in place by March 2021.

The MSP Directive was originally transposed into national legislation by way of regulations made in 2016 (SI 352 of 2016). Since the regulations were made under the European Communities Act 1972, they were strictly limited to measures required to transpose the directive. In October 2018 the regulations were repealed and replaced by Part 5 of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018. Part 5 re-transposes the Directive in primary legislation and contains a number of measures that are additional to those required by the directive, including:

- Adoption of the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) by both Houses of the Oireachtas;
- Review and replacement of the NMPF every 6 years;
- Obligation for marine regulatory bodies to secure the objectives of the NMPF when making policies, plans, or granting consents; and
- Enforcement powers for the Minister if the foregoing obligations are not being fulfilled.

National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF)

The NMPF, launched in July 2021, is a national plan for Ireland's maritime area, setting out over a 20 year horizon, how we want to use, protect and enjoy our seas. The NMPF details how all marine based human activities will interact with each other in an ocean space that is under increasing spatial pressure, ensuring the sustainable use of our marine resources to 2040. The NMPF sits at the top of the hierarchy of plans and sectoral policies for the marine area. The plan has been informed by existing sectoral plans and will, in turn, be used to inform future cycles of those plans in an ongoing feedback loop. It provides a coherent framework in which those sectoral policies and objectives can be realised. It will become the key decision-making tool for regulatory authorities and policy makers into the future in a number of ways including decisions on individual consent applications which will have to secure the objectives of the plan, similar to the way that terrestrial plans form part of the decision-making tool-kit in the on-land planning process.

The County Development Plan must be consistent with the approved NMPF, with common policy areas including renewable energy, electricity networks, coastal and flood defences, fishing and aquaculture, ports and harbours, public access, tourism and recreation, protected sites and species, seascape and landscape. When dealing with an application in the maritime area it is important to refer to the NMPF as a key policy document along with any other relevant government guidance / policy.

Maritime Area Planning Act 2021

This legislation has put in place a comprehensive and coherent planning system for the entire Maritime Area. This Act streamlined previous arrangements to allow for a single consent principle (eliminate the duplication of development management processes for activities or developments that are currently assessed under both the foreshore and planning regimes with the introduction of a single process administered by local authorities / An Bord Pleanála). One of the main features will be to extend the existing planning permission functions of coastal local authorities to the outer limit of a newly defined nearshore¹.

The constituent elements of this system are: (1) Forward Planning; (2) Development Management; and (3) Enforcement. The Act also has established a new agency, Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) to undertake certain consenting and enforcement functions.

¹ Part 2 of the Bill provides for the designation of a new nearshore area in which coastal local authorities will exercise certain planning and enforcement functions.

National Planning Framework (NPF)

The NPF recognises that our coastal areas play a variety of roles, across a number of sectors and are an important asset for future development of the Country. It identifies that sustainable utilisation of Ireland’s marine resources, particularly in the nearshore, is dependent to a significant degree on how we manage our resources on land, and that there are many shared aims and overlapping areas of co-ordination and activity between marine spatial planning and land-use planning.

| | |
|---|---|
| Common Aims | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Planning Framework and Maritime Spatial Plan. ▪ Spatial expression of national policy; national guidance and priorities. ▪ Strategic decision making and coherent development consent framework. ▪ Sustainable, forward looking, long term use and management of areas. ▪ Co-ordination of Departments and Sectoral issues in a plan-led manner. ▪ Consistency between maritime and terrestrial planning in areas of common interest. ▪ Coherent transboundary planning. |
| Areas of Overlap for Co-ordination | <p>Sectoral: Community Development & Public Consultation; Economic Development; Transport – Ports and Harbours; Energy – Electricity & Renewable Energy; Fishing; Aquaculture & Mariculture; Social and Culture; Tourism & Leisure; Flood Protection; Extraction; Enabling Infrastructure; Health & Safety; Communications</p> <p>Environment: Sustainable Use of Resources; Climate Change Adaptation; Water Quality; Coastal Erosion & Accretion; Protected Sites and Environmentally Sensitive Areas; Flooding; Biodiversity; Landscape and Seascape</p> <p>Governance: Regulation and Licensing: Consent process for onshore and offshore development and activities; Responsibilities for managing activities in areas of land-sea interaction</p> <p>Data: Research including spatial data management; cumulative effects; evidence base; socio-economic profiles</p> |
| NPO 41a | Ensure that Ireland’s coastal resource is managed to sustain its physical character and environmental quality. |

Source: NPF Table 7.1

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)

The RSES acknowledges that effective Integrated Land and Marine Planning is needed, ensuring maritime activities are as sustainable as possible and that the relevant stakeholders are engaged in the planning of maritime activities. The RSES states that detailed regional maritime spatial plans may be required over the lifetime of the RSES, which will offer an opportunity for further stakeholder engagement and integration of marine and territorial plans. As terrestrial and marine ecosystems are closely connected, the Regional Assemblies and the coastal local authorities, including Wicklow, have an important role in ensuring integration of land and marine planning within the Region.

19.2 Local Context & Strategy

Local Economic & Community Plan

It is a high level goal of Wicklow’s LECP to capitalise on Wicklow’s unique attributes and proximity to the Dublin market, excellent quality of life, human capital, tourism, landscape, marine, agricultural and forestry resources. With respect to the marine area, the LECP sets out the following objectives, many of which have been delivered or are in train:

- Create a County Wicklow Maritime Strategy which will support the development and expansion of our harbours and ports in order to deliver improved commercial, tourism and leisure activities;
- Survey harbours to identify existing and future infrastructure needs;

- Examine the opportunities for Wicklow's ports to capitalise on the expansion of the offshore wind industry;
- Evaluate the potential development opportunities within the short-sea shipping industry;
- Investigate attracting and expanding maritime industry related services in the County, including internationally traded services;
- Develop a Marine Tourism Action Plan to promote marine leisure activities, allowing for collaborations with National and International tourism agencies to promote the County's marine assets and liaise with local businesses and communities in creating complimentary marine related activities;
- Continue to examine how to harness the coastline tourism potential by developing a coastal walk from Bray to Arklow, incorporating towns, villages and landmarks and linking it with urban and heritage trails;
- Maintain and extend the number of Blue Flag status beaches in the County;
- Investigate sources of funding to carry out a feasibility study for the development of Wicklow Port; and
- Examine how maritime leisure activities can be expanded and how International maritime tourism links can be developed and actively promoted.

Marine Economy / Blue Economy

'Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth' (2012) is the Government roadmap for ensuring that the 'blue economy' contributes towards sustainable growth, generating social, cultural and economic benefits for all citizens.

The marine economy, including Wicklow's ports and shipping services, is a key enabler of effective economic growth and it is an important gateway for the movement of people and freight. Established ocean and coastal economic sectors include seafood related enterprise, such as commercial fishing and aquaculture, products of marine biotechnology and bio-discovery, marine tourism, energy exploration and production, maritime transport, shipbuilding and ship leasing. There are likely to be increased demands on Wicklow Port as a Port of Regional Significance, arising out of Brexit. Planning will play a key role in managing the environmental impacts of the growth of the blue economy on marine biodiversity, introduction and/ or spread of invasive species and increased pollution.

Fishing is an important economic sector in the county. It is acknowledged that the industry faces challenges in relation to seasonal employment, fish stocks and coastal hazards, there are also opportunities for diversification and development of new products (see also Chapter 9 of this plan).

There is a significant opportunity for Wicklow to take advantage of the Offshore Wind Sector² and any associated spin offs such as on-shore 'operations and maintenance' facilities and the creation of a 'local offshore wind enterprise zones' (see also Chapter 16 of this plan).

Wicklow's ports are an important infrastructural asset and are addressed in more detail in Chapter 12 of this plan.

Marine Environment, Biodiversity & Heritage

Ireland's coastline is a remarkable but fragile resource that needs to be managed carefully to sustain its character and attributes in physical, environmental quality and biodiversity terms. It is an important challenge to align the growth of the blue economy with conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems health. Wicklow County Council's support of the regeneration of native oysters is an example of a project that meets that challenge. Wicklow's coast is full of biodiversity with a number of EU and nationally protected habitats (Chapter 17 of this plan addresses natural heritage environment and biodiversity in more detail).

Underwater cultural heritage can be found in many forms along the coast, e.g. ship wrecks, and in all underwater environments, including inland water bodies. The UNESCO 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage has best practice standards for the protection of underwater cultural heritage to promote its safeguarding. Maritime villages and towns with such cultural heritage resources, have the potential to exploit

² Maritime Strategic Review for County Wicklow 2019

associated cultural tourism assets, while ensuring its value and protection. Such cultural tourism could include diving on wrecks, coastal wreck trails and maritime heritage tours.

Coastal Erosion & Flooding

As a result of climate change, sea levels and patterns of accretion and erosion are key issues for planning and flood risk assessment in our coastal areas, especially in managing the ongoing development of our cities and towns. Chapter 14 and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment of this plan address flood risk management, including coastal flooding, in more detail.

The OPW is the State agency responsible for both coastal erosion and flood risk management. In 2013, the OPW completed the Irish Coastal Protection Strategy Study which provides a strategic assessment of the extent of coastal erosion and coastal flooding along the south-east coastline. In 2019-2020 Iarnród Éireann and Wicklow County Council prepared a preliminary study on coastal erosion on the east coast. The main Dublin to Rosslare railway line runs along the coast from Bray to Wicklow Town. The aim of this study is to understand the mechanisms, and thus plan for or prevent further erosion of the coastline and its potential impact on the railway line.

The Council will continue to work with the OPW and all other relevant agencies, to ensure that risks posed by coastal erosion are carefully managed.

19.3 Coastal Cells

As not all coastal areas have the same characteristics or pressures, the County has been divided into coastal 'cells' as shown on Maps 19.01 A & B and 19.02. For each cell a set of objectives is set out as follows; the provisions contained are subject to compliance with the European Habitats, Birds and Water Framework Directives, including protection of Bray Head SAC, Murrrough Wetlands SAC, Murrrough SPA, Wicklow Reef SAC, Wicklow Head SPA, Magherabeg Dunes SAC, Buckroneg-Brittias Dunes and Fen SAC and Kilpatrick Sandhills SAC.

Cell 1 Bray Town

This cell extends from the County boundary in the north to open heathland at Newcourt on the slopes of Bray Head in the south. Between these two areas is located the built up area of Bray. The 'coastal' parts of Bray vary in their characteristics, with the lands of the former Bray golf clubs lands to the north of the harbour, the harbour itself which is somewhat 'industrialised', the seafront, with its Victorian history and promenade and the lower slopes of Bray Head.

Bray Seafront is a locally distinctive and significant area in the town. It is rich in architectural and natural heritage, comprising the beach, the Esplanade and many fine architectural structures dating to Victorian times, many of which are listed in the Record of Protected Structures. The area has huge symbolic, cultural, social and economic importance and as such, its character must be preserved to ensure that its amenity and economic value is safeguarded for existing and future generations.

Cell 2 Bray Head

This cell extends from the Brandy Hole in the north to the Cliff Road at Windgates in the south, bounded by the current R761. This is an area of high amenity under considerable pressure from development, coastal erosion, trespass and fire. Public access to Bray Head is provided via the cliff walk, which extends from Bray to Greystones and numerous other paths and tracks.

Most of this area has been designated a Special Amenity Area under Section 202 of the Planning & Development Acts (SAAO). A SAAO is designed to protect areas that are of particularly high amenity value, which are sensitive to intense development pressure and which cannot be adequately protected by existing planning controls. As a candidate Special

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>Area of Conservation, flora and fauna are particularly significant. Many of the species found within this area are listed for protection under the EU Directives and the Wildlife Act, and these designations are upheld in the Order. In both the Local Area Plan for Bray and County Development Plan, important views and prospects of the Head are listed for protection.</p> |
| Cell 3 Bray Head to Greystones (Rathdown) | <p>This cell is bounded by the Bray Head SAAO to the north and partially to the east, the R761 to the west and the northern 'settlement boundary' for Greystones to the south.</p> |
| Cell 4 Greystones Town | <p>This coastal cell comprises the coastal area between the northern and southern 'settlement boundaries' for Greystones – Delgany. This zone is not uniform, with farmlands bounded by cliffs to the north, the harbour and north beach action plan area, the Victoria seafront area in the central area, the south beach and Charlesland golf club area to the south.</p> |
| Cell 5 Greystones to Kilcoole (Ballynerrin) | <p>This cell consists of the coastal strip between the R761 and the coast between the southern 'settlement boundary' for Greystones – Delgany and the northern 'settlement boundary' for Kilcoole (including the northern tip of the lands designated 'The Murrough pNHA' and excludes the lands designated 'The Murrough cSAC'). This area is intensively used for agricultural purposes and includes pockets of rural housing - at Ballygannon near Glenroe Open Farm and near the train station.</p> <p>This area is characterised by a soft shore line, which has implications for both the existing railway line and the development of new dwellings. Coastal protection works have been carried out by Iarnrod Eireann to protect the railway line, particularly the installation of rock armour on the seaward side of the line. These works however are not adequate to protect all lands to the east of the railway line from risk from flooding and therefore the development of new dwellings requires to be strictly controlled, in the interests of public health and safety.</p> |
| Cell 6 Kilcoole - Wicklow Town (The Murrough) | <p>The cell consists of the coastal area between the R761 and the coast from the southern 'settlement boundary' of Kilcoole and the northern 'settlement boundary' for Wicklow Town – Rathnew, excluding the settlement of Newcastle. This is by far the largest single definable cell along the coast being 1,925 hectares in extent.</p> <p>This cell is dominated by The Murrough cSAC, which occupies 25% of the area. The Murrough is a coastal wetland complex, which stretches for 15km from Ballygannon to north of Wicklow town, and in parts, extends inland for up to 1km (The Murrough is also a pNHA). A shingle ridge stretches the length of the site and carries the mainline Dublin-Wexford railway. The site supports a number of habitats listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive and a number of bird species listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive, as well as a wide range of important migratory birds. There are also many rare plants in the site.</p> <p>This area is also characterised by a soft shore line and control measures are therefore required. This is also a historical landscape, with land divisions dating back to Cromwellian times and many substantial Georgian and Victorian country houses.</p> |
| Cell 7 Wicklow Town and Environs | <p>This cell comprises the coastal area of the lands within the 'settlement boundary' for Wicklow Town – Rathnew and extends from Tinakelly in the north to Dunbur Head in the south. The Murrough cSAC continues into this area. Like the other more urban coastal cells, this cell is varied in character, with the lands to the north of the harbour the home to in-depth residential, industrial and utilities infrastructure, while the lands to the south of the harbour are for the most part in residential use, opening up to the Wicklow golf club lands and Dunbur Head to the south.</p> <p>The Murrough Coastal Protection Study was published in 2007 following a detailed study</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>carried out on the area between Five Mile Point and Wicklow Pier. Although coastal erosion was found to be significant, in light of the environmental impacts of coastal protection works, limited intervention was recommended, other than (a) those works necessary to protect the existing railway bridge and the port access road bridge and (b) the installation of breakwaters north of the harbour to stabilise and improve the recreational value of the beach.</p> <p>The draft East Coast Erosion Study, commissioned by Irish Rail, and completed by Arup in 2020 further recommends the use of offshore islands and beach nourishment for soft coastline and extension and enhancement of the existing coastal protection works.</p> |
| Cell 8 Wicklow Head / Kilpoole | <p>The cell consists of the coastal area between Local Road L-5103 and regional road R750 and the coast from the 'southern boundary' for Wicklow Town – Rathnew to Furzeditch and includes Wicklow Head. This mainly agricultural area is under pressure for development (particular urban generated rural housing) and as a result is significantly developed with single rural houses and one larger scale development at Blainroe. This is a high amenity area, being the location of the highly attractive and visited beaches of Silver Strand, Magheramore and Magherabeg. The Magherabeg Dunes are designated a cSAC and pNHA.</p> |
| Cell 9 Brittas Bay | <p>The cell consists of the coastal area between the R750 and the coast, from the boundary of Cell 8 to Mizen Head / Ardinairy. This area for the most part comprises an agricultural area, with notable pockets of more intense development around Ballynacarrig (Brittas Bay), Brittas Bridge and Cornagower and a significant number of single rural houses and caravan parks / holiday homes. Ballynacarrig is designated a 'Type 2 village' in the County settlement strategy.</p> <p>The centrepiece of this area is Brittas Bay beach, a sandy beach that is 4km long, backed by 100 hectares of sand dunes. Development pressure resulting from the popularity of the area as a tourist and day-tripper destination during the summer months has resulted in the development of a number of caravan parks / holiday home developments and has created problems relating to traffic and parking. The Council has developed two large car parks in an attempt to alleviate some of these traffic problems.</p> <p>The Buckroneys-Brittas Dunes and Fen is designated a cSAC and pNHA.</p> <p>The draft East Coast Erosion Study, commissioned by Irish Rail, and completed by Arup in 2020, recommends the protection of Brittas Bay dunes by dune enhancement (planting) and managing access by the public.</p> |
| Cell 10 Mizen Head to Arklow (Sallymount / Johnstown) | <p>This cell consists of the land between the old N11/ M11 and the coast, between Ballytunny / Ardinairy in the north and the northern 'settlement boundary' for Arklow Town and Environs at Seabank to the south. There are a number of fine stretches of sandy beach in this cell, particular Ennereilly beach. There is limited tourist development in this cell and few tourist facilities such as car parks, resulting in some car parking and traffic issues. The Buckroneys-Brittas Dunes and Fen system (designated a cSAC and pNHA) and the Arklow Sand Dunes at Seabank to the south (designated a pNHA) extends into the area. There are fine long distance views available over this cell from the N11/M11.</p> |
| Cell 11 Arklow Environs | <p>This cell comprises the coastal area within the settlement boundary of Arklow Town and Environs. There are long sandy beaches along most of this cell, with the central harbour area the location of intensive residential and industrial development and the southern end marked by Arklow Rock. The area around Arklow Rock – Askinnity, to the south, is a designated pNHA.</p> |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| | The draft East Coast Erosion Study, commissioned by Irish Rail, and completed by Arup in 2020 recommends the protection of the dunes by dune enhancement (planting) and managing access by the public, and further recommends management of existing defences and detached breakwater construction. South of Arklow Harbour, the study recommends beach nourishment. |
| Cell 12 Arklow Head / Clogga | This cell stretches from Rock Big in the north to the Wicklow County boundary at Kilmichael point in the south. The coast road forms the eastern boundary of the cell, for the most part, but the cell does extend inland as far as the railway line at Bogland and Money Little. Tourism development, mainly in the form of holiday homes and mobile home parks has taken place around Clogga. Clogga beach itself is an attractive, medium sized sandy beach with limited tourist facilities and a very small car park. The Arklow Rock-Askinnity pNHA extends into this cell. |

19.4 Marine Spatial Planning and Coastal Zone Management Objectives

Marine Planning Objectives

- CPO 19.1** To review and update the County Development Plan if necessary to ensure that it is consistent with the following:
- the National Marine Planning Framework; and
 - the Maritime Area Planning Act.
- CPO 19.2** To work with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and other relevant government departments and bodies on marine planning with particular reference to the following areas;
- the implementation of the National Marine Planning Framework;
 - the implementation of the Maritime Area Planning Act in so far as it relates to the duties and functions of the Planning Authority;
 - the designation of the nearshore area for County Wicklow; and
 - the preparation of any sub-regional plans for the maritime area and nearshore area.
- CPO 19.3** To support the development of the Marine Economy / Blue Economy sector, particularly in the renewable energy, shipping and fishing / aquaculture sectors. To support the work of the Wicklow Maritime Business Development Group and the implementation of strategies and projects related to enhancing the marine economy.
- CPO 19.4** To support the development of Marine Tourism, especially with regard to development of Wicklow's harbours, beaches, marine landscape, maritime cultural heritage and water related activities, including leisure and recreational tourism, subject to compliance with environmental requirements.
- CPO 19.5** To work with the OPW and any other relevant bodies to address the effects of sea level changes, coastal flooding and erosion and to support the implementation of adaptation responses in vulnerable areas.
- CPO 19.6** To support developments which provide for safety at sea, navigation safety and maritime search and rescue operations, in particular, the development or expansion of port facilities, or the development of safety / navigation infrastructure in or adjacent to the maritime area.

Coastal Zone Management Objectives

- CPO 19.7** To facilitate an Integrated Coastal Zone Management approach to ensure the conservation, management and protection of man-made and natural resources of the coastal zone.
- CPO 19.8** To protect the character and visual potential of the coast and conserve the character and quality of seascapes.
- CPO 19.9** To strictly control the nature and pattern of development within coastal areas and ensure that it is designed and landscaped to the highest standards, and sited appropriately so as not to detract from the visual amenity of the area. Development shall be prohibited where the development poses a significant or potential threat to coastal habitats or features, and/or where the development is likely to result in undesirable patterns of erosion or deposition elsewhere along the coast.
- CPO 19.10** To prohibit the development of habitable structures below 3m (OD Malin), in the interest of public safety and the protection of property and residential amenity.
- CPO 19.11** To protect both public and private investment by prohibiting any new building or development (including caravans and temporary dwellings) within 100m of 'soft shorelines' i.e. shorelines that are prone to erosion, unless it can be objectively established based on the best scientific information at the time of the application, that the likelihood of erosion at a specific location is minimal taking into account, inter alia, any impacts.
- CPO 19.12** To facilitate the provision of new or the reinforcement of existing coastal defences and protection measures where necessary along the full coastline of the County and in particular to consider the implementation of the measures identified in the Murrough Coastal Protection Study³, the draft East Coast Erosion Study⁴ and any other similar studies that are produced during the lifetime of the plan. To employ soft engineering techniques or natural solutions as an alternative to hard coastal defence works, wherever feasible.
- CPO 19.13** Projects giving rise to adverse effects on the integrity of European sites (cumulatively, directly or indirectly) arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall not be permitted on the basis of this plan⁵. Ensure that development proposals, contribute as appropriate towards the protection and where possible enhancement of the ecological coherence of the European Site network and encourage the retention and management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild fauna and flora as per Article 10 of the EU Habitats Directive. All projects and plans arising from this Plan will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.
- CPO 19.14** To ensure that there is no removal of sand dunes, beach sands or gravels through application of the provisions of the Foreshore (Amendment) Act (1992), in close co-operation with the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.
- CPO 19.15** To ensure the County's natural coastal defences (beaches, sand dunes, salt marshes and estuary lands) are protected and ensure they are not put at risk by inappropriate works or development.

³ 2007, WCC/RPS

⁴ Irish Rail / ARUP 2020

⁵ Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. there must be: a) no alternative solution available, b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the project to proceed; and c) adequate compensatory measures in place.

Coastal Cell Objectives

Cell 1 Bray Town

CPO 19.16 To enhance the visual, recreational and natural amenities of the Bray coastal area, in accordance with the policies and objectives set out in the County Development Plan and the Local Area Plan for Bray.

Cell 2 Bray Head

CPO 19.17

1. To protect and enhance Bray Head, in accordance with the SAAO.
2. To maintain and enhance amenity routes on Bray Head and in particular the cliff path from Bray to Greystones.
3. To facilitate the development of services and facilities for visitors such as suitable signage, footpath surfaces, notice and maps, while preserving the rugged and natural character of the area and its paths.
4. To protect all listed views and prospects to or from Bray Head as set out in the Local Area Plan for Bray MD and the County Development Plan.
5. Development, which would reduce existing areas of heathland, maritime grassland and wooded areas, will not normally be permitted except for reasons of overriding public interest.
6. To facilitate existing agricultural usage of Bray Head, in a sustainable and suitable manner, which does not compromise either landscape quality or habitat diversity.
7. To strictly regulate and manage development in this cell to protect its amenity and green break function between the built up area of Bray and Greystones. Within this area, the following restrictions apply:
 - a) Residential development shall be strictly limited to those persons engaged in agriculture in this cell and who can demonstrate a definable economic need to live on the farm holding;
 - b) The highest standards of siting and design will be rigorously enforced for any developments in this area;
 - c) Commercial and industrial development will be prohibited in the cell.
8. To facilitate coastal protection works (natural, soft or hard engineered), to protect both the amenity value of the Cliff Walk and the significant economic and social value of the railway line.

Cell 3 Bray Head to Greystones (Rathdown)

CPO 19.18

1. To strictly regulate and manage development in this cell to protect its function as a green break between the built up area of Bray and Greystones. Within this area, the following restrictions apply:
 - a) Residential development shall be strictly limited to those persons engaged in agriculture in this cell and who can demonstrate a definable economic need to live on the farm holding;
 - b) The highest standards of siting and design will be rigorously enforced for any developments in this area; and
 - c) Commercial and industrial development will be prohibited in the cell.
2. To maintain and enhance the cliff path from Bray to Greystones, while preserving its rugged and natural character.
3. To strictly control the development of new entrances and access driveways on the R761, to those which can be proven to be necessary for either traffic safety reasons or the normal functioning of the landholding.
4. To facilitate coastal protection works (natural, soft and hard engineered), to protect both the amenity value of the Cliff Walk and the significant economic and social value of the railway line.

Cell 4 Greystones Town

- CPO 19.19**
1. To support the objectives of the relevant Local Area Plan for Greystones – Delgany and Kilcoole, in particular to provide for a high quality integrated harbour/marina mixed development linked to a linear coastal public park and any future heritage park. The development shall provide leisure, recreational, open space and marine facilities, and mixed form residential, commercial, civic and social amenities, centred around the harbour and marina. The development shall provide a link to the coastline with public access and coastal protection works provided to preserve the landscape from further erosion in the future.
 2. To facilitate the development and enhancement of visitor and recreational facilities along the coastal area, particularly walking routes, car parking areas, signage and changing / toilet facilities.

Cell 5 Greystones to Kilcoole (Ballynerrin)

- CPO 19.20**
1. To facilitate the development of visitor and interpretative facilities, particularly those relating to bird watching, in a sustainable and suitable manner which does not compromise either landscape quality or habitats.
 2. To control and limit residential development to that shown to be strictly necessary (in accordance with the County settlement and rural development strategies) and to require the highest standards of siting and design for any new dwellings and regard to environmental designations.
 3. To prohibit the development of new dwellings within 100m of the shoreline.
 4. To protect all listed views and prospects along the R761 and coast in this cell.
 5. To strictly control the development of new entrances and access driveways on the R761, to those which can be proven to be necessary for either traffic safety reasons or the normal functioning of the landholding.
 6. To facilitate the development of a coastal walk (having due regard to environmental designations and compliance with the EU Habitats Directive) and to restrict development that interferes with the achievement of this objective.
 7. To facilitate and support the upgrading of Kilcoole train station and associated facilities.
 8. To facilitate coastal protection works (natural, soft and hard engineered), to protect both the ecological and amenity value of the coastline and the significant economic and social value of the railway line.

Cell 6 Kilcoole - Wicklow Town

- CPO 19.21**
1. No development will be permitted that has an adverse impact on the environmental and ecological quality of The Murrough cSAC. The Planning Authority will have particular regard to the impact that all developments have on the integrity of the cSAC, including development that is within the cSAC and development that is not within a designated area, but which is likely to have an effect thereon.
 2. To facilitate the development of visitor and interpretative facilities, particularly those relating to bird watching and beach usage, in a sustainable and suitable manner which does not compromise either landscape quality or habitats.
 3. To maintain and improve points of vehicular access to the coast at Six Mile Point, Five Mile Point and Ballybla.
 4. To strictly control the development of new entrances and access driveways on the R761, to those which can be proven to be necessary for either traffic safety reasons or the normal functioning of the landholding.
 5. To control and limit residential development to that shown to be strictly necessary (in accordance with the County settlement and rural development strategies) and to require the highest standards of siting and design, which takes due cognisance of the historic settlement pattern in the area and to environmental designations.

6. To prohibit the development of new dwellings within 100m of the shoreline.
7. To facilitate the development of a coastal walk (having due regard to environmental designations and compliance with the EU Habitats Directive) and to restrict development that interferes with the achievement of this objective.
8. To protect all listed views and prospects along the R761 and coast in this cell.
9. To facilitate the provision of necessary infrastructure, include water infrastructure and to serve the local settlements/area.
10. To facilitate coastal protection works (natural, soft and hard engineered), to protect both the amenity and ecological value of the coastline and the significant economic and social value of the railway line.

Cell 7 Wicklow Town and Environs

- CPO 19.22**
1. To support the coastal protection and development objectives of the relevant Local (Area) Plan for Wicklow Town – Rathnew.
 2. No development will be permitted that has the potential to adversely affect the conservation objectives of The Murrough Wetlands SAC, The Murrough SPA, Wicklow Head SAC, or Wicklow Reef SPA either directly, indirectly or cumulatively.
 3. To facilitate the development and enhancement of visitor and recreational facilities along the coastal area, particularly walking routes, car parking areas, signage, changing / toilet facilities and water based clubs.
 4. To support investigations into alternatives for the development of Wicklow Port.
 5. To retain Wicklow Golf Club at its present location and to preserve the open character of this area, as it acts as an important buffer area between the town and recreation areas further to the south.
 6. To facilitate coastal protection works (natural, soft and hard engineered), to protect both the amenity and ecological value of the coastline and the significant economic and social value of the railway line.

Cell 8 Wicklow Head / Kilpoole

- CPO 19.23**
1. To preserve the open character of Wicklow Head.
 2. No development will be permitted that has an adverse impact on the environmental and ecological quality of the Magherabeg pNHA / cSAC or Vulnerable Aquifer designations in the area. The Planning Authority will have particular regard to the impact that all developments have on the integrity of a SAC, including development that is within a SAC and development that is not within a designated area, but which is likely to have an effect thereon.
 3. Development that is detrimental to the quality or amenity of heritage features will not be permitted, including views and prospects, archaeological features and protected trees/structures.
 4. To strictly control the further proliferation of sea outfalls for effluent discharge and in particular to prohibit short sea outfalls. All effluent discharges should be in compliance with the EU Bathing Water Directive.
 5. To facilitate the development of new tourist accommodation subject to the following controls:
 - a) The development of new tourist accommodation shall be restricted to the existing development cluster at Blainroe or to existing developed sites;
 - b) Permission will only be considered for new accommodation where the development forms part of a well developed, integrated tourism and recreation development, which would add to the public amenity and enjoyment of the area and provides a significant public element (e.g. public car parking, playground / indoor playzone, swimming pool open to paying public etc);
 - c) the development of any further static or touring caravan parks shall be prohibited; and

- d) the development of any further holiday homes shall be prohibited, other than a small scale element of which may be allowable in an integrated development that provides a range of accommodation types;
 - e) automated gates will not be permitted on any development.
6. To strictly control the development of new entrances and access driveways on the R750 to those which can be proven to be necessary for either traffic safety reasons or the normal functioning of the landholding.
7. To control and limit the development of permanent rural housing to that shown to be strictly necessary (in accordance with the County settlement and rural development strategies) and to require the highest standards of siting and design for any new dwelling and regard to environmental designations.
8. To conserve the right of way from the Wicklow Town settlement boundary along the coastline to Brides Head and Lime Kiln Bay.
9. To facilitate coastal protection works (natural, soft and hard engineered), to protect the amenity and ecological value of the coastline.

Cell 9 Brittas Bay

CPO 19.24

1. To facilitate the enhancement of recreational amenities and facilities in the cell to cater for day visitors and long stay holiday makers to the extent that it is consistent with maintaining the capacity of the cell (including its beach and bathing water quality, sand dunes, car parks and road network) and in a manner that does not diminish its unique rural, scenic and recreational amenities.
2. No development will be permitted that has an adverse impact on the environmental and ecological quality of the pNHA, cSAC or Vulnerable Aquifer designations in the area. The Planning Authority will have particular regard to the impact that all developments have on the integrity of a cSAC, including development that is within a cSAC and development that is not within a designated area, but which is likely to have an effect thereon.
3. To protect, conserve and encourage the recovery of the beach-dune system at Brittas Bay, in accordance with the conservation objectives for which the SAC is designated, and as per site specific conservation management prescriptions prepared in 2018. Development that results in the erosion of the beach-dune system will not be permitted. In this respect, the Council will particularly ensure protection against erosion caused by amenity and recreational use of the dunes.
4. Development that is detrimental to the quality or amenity of heritage features will not be permitted, including views and prospects, archaeological features, protected trees/structures.
5. To strictly control the further proliferation of sea outfalls for effluent discharge and in particular to prohibit short sea outfalls. All effluent discharges should be in compliance with the EU Bathing Water Directive. Any development that compromises the Blue Flag status of the beach will not be permitted.
6. To facilitate the development of appropriate outdoor and indoor recreation in the cell by permitting the use of its rural hinterland for environmentally sensitive and sustainable recreational purposes, where buildings and structures have only a minor impact on the landscape and where the completion of landscaping schemes would assimilate such developments into the countryside (e.g. golf, pitch and putt, amenity forestry, paint ball games, adventure fun parks).
7. All services and facilities to serve the local community and tourists shall be located within the boundaries of Ballynacarrig Village. Notwithstanding this, one small-scale local service type development shall be considered in proximity to the South Beach car park. The development may comprise a shop/service garage/pub/restaurant/café development. The maximum floor area of the development shall be 200m².
8. To facilitate the development of new tourist accommodation subject to the following controls:
 - a) New tourist accommodation shall be directed into one of the three identified development clusters of Ballynacarrig Village, Brittas Bridge and Cornagower (as shown on Map XX.02), or to existing developed sites. Only in exceptional circumstances, and

where the following criteria are complied with, will accommodation be considered on a greenfield site outside a cluster:

- i. the development shall be located in close proximity to the identified clusters and shall have or be provided with direct and high quality connections to the clusters and to the coast;
 - ii. the development shall be of an exceptionally high quality design.
- b) Permission will only be considered for new accommodation where the development forms part of a well developed, integrated tourism and recreation development, which would add to the public amenity and enjoyment of the area and provides a significant public element (e.g. public car parking, playground / indoor playzone, swimming pool open to paying public etc);
 - c) The development of any new static or touring caravan parks shall be prohibited; expansion of existing facilities will be considered subject to the suitability of the site, and be of a modest scale and high quality design;
 - d) The development of any further holiday homes shall be prohibited, other than a small scale element of which may be allowable in an integrated development that provides a range of accommodation types;
 - e) Automated gates will not be permitted on any development;
 - f) The development of temporary camping/glamping sites may be considered strictly on the basis of:
 - i. the use being seasonal only (March – October) and the full removal of all temporary structures and facilities at the end of each season,
 - ii. the highest quality of design and layout being employed, including excellent screening,
 - iii. strict adherence to environmental controls especially with regard to waste/wastewater disposal.
9. To limit the size of existing public car parks to the present levels and to support the development of additional car parking on the inland side of the road at Cornagower East.
10. To strictly control the development of new entrances and access driveways on the R750 to those which can be proven to be necessary for either traffic safety reasons or the normal functioning of the landholding.
11. To control and limit the development of permanent rural housing to that shown to be strictly necessary (in accordance with the County settlement and rural development strategies) and to require the highest standards of siting and design for any new dwelling and regard to environmental designations.
12. To facilitate coastal protection works (natural, soft and hard engineered), to protect the amenity and ecological value of the coastline.

Cell 10 Mizen Head to Arklow (Sallymount / Johnstown)

- CPO 19.25**
1. To facilitate the enhancement of recreational amenities and facilities in the cell to the extent that it is consistent with maintaining the capacity of the cell (including its beach and bathing water quality, sand dunes, car parks and road network) and in a manner that does not diminish its unique rural, scenic and recreational amenities.
 2. No development will be permitted that has an adverse impact on the environmental and ecological quality of the pNHA, cSAC or Vulnerable Aquifer designations in the area. The Planning Authority will have particular regard to the impact that all developments have on the integrity of a cSAC, including development that is within a cSAC and development that is not within a designated area, but which is likely to have an effect thereon.
 3. Development that is detrimental to the quality or amenity of heritage features will not be permitted, including views and prospects, archaeological features, protected trees/structures.
 4. To strictly control the further proliferation of sea outfalls for effluent discharge and in particular to prohibit short sea outfalls. All effluent discharges should be in compliance with the EU Bathing

Water Directive. Any development that compromises the Blue Flag status of the beach will not be permitted.

5. To facilitate the development of appropriate outdoor and indoor recreation in the cell by permitting the use of its rural hinterland for environmentally sensitive and sustainable recreational purposes, where buildings and structures have only a minor impact on the landscape and where the completion of landscaping schemes would assimilate such developments into the countryside (e.g. golf, pitch and putt, amenity forestry, paint ball games, adventure fun parks).

6. To facilitate the development of new tourist accommodation subject to the following controls:

- a) New tourist accommodation shall be limited to suitable sites west of the coast road that are served by a high quality road network and/or can be provided with direct and proximate access to the coast.
- b) Permission will only be considered for new tourist accommodation where the development forms part of a well developed, integrated tourism and recreation development, which would add to the public amenity and enjoyment of the area and provides a significant public element (e.g. public car parking, playground / indoor playzone, swimming pool open to paying public etc).
- c) The development of any new static or touring caravan parks shall be prohibited; expansion of existing facilities will be considered subject to the suitability of the site, being of a modest scale and high quality design.
- d) The development of any further holiday homes shall be prohibited, other than a small scale element of which may be allowable in an integrated development that provides a range of accommodation types.
- e) Automated gates will not be permitted on any development.

7. To strictly control the development of new entrances and access driveways on the R750 to those which can be proven to be necessary for either traffic safety reasons or the normal functioning of the landholding.

8. To preserve existing access routes to the beach and to support and facilitate the development of additional car parking on the inland side of the coast road, proximate to existing access ways to the beach.

9. To control and limit the development of permanent rural housing to that shown to be strictly necessary (in accordance with the County settlement and rural development strategies) and to require the highest standards of siting and design for any new dwelling and regard to environmental designations.

10. To facilitate the provision of necessary infrastructure, include water and energy infrastructure, to serve the local settlements/area.

Cell 11

Arklow Environs

CPO 19.26

1. To enhance the visual, recreational and natural amenities of the Arklow coastal area, in accordance with the policies and objectives set out in the Arklow Town and Environs Local Area Plan.

2. To facilitate the development and enhancement of visitor and recreational facilities along the coastal area, particularly walking routes, car parking areas, signage, changing / toilet facilities and water based clubs.

3. To support and facilitate the development of marine and shipping activity in Arklow, particularly the recreational use of the existing harbour / marina and the development of a roll on-roll off port at the existing Roadstone jetty.

4. To facilitate coastal protection works (natural, soft and hard engineered), to protect the economic, amenity and ecological value of the coastline

Cell 12 Arklow Head / Clogga

- CPO 19.27**
1. To facilitate the enhancement of recreational amenities and facilities in the cell to cater for day visitors and long stay holiday makers to the extent that it is consistent with maintaining the capacity of the cell (including its beach and bathing water quality, sand dunes, car parks and road network) and in a manner that does not diminish its unique rural, scenic and recreational amenities.
 2. Development that is detrimental to the quality or amenity of heritage features will not be permitted, including views and prospects, archaeological features, protected trees/structures.
 3. To strictly control the further proliferation of sea outfalls for effluent discharge and in particular to prohibit short sea outfalls. All effluent discharges should be in compliance with the EU Bathing Water Directive. Any development that compromises the Blue Flag status of the beach will not be permitted.
 4. To facilitate the development of appropriate outdoor and indoor recreation in the cell by permitting the use of its rural hinterland for environmentally sensitive and sustainable recreational purposes, where buildings and structures have only a minor impact on the landscape and where the completion of landscaping schemes would assimilate such developments into the countryside (e.g. golf, pitch and putt, amenity forestry, paint ball games, adventure fun parks).
 5. To facilitate the development of new tourist accommodation subject to the following controls:
 - a) New tourist accommodation shall be restricted to the existing developed cluster at Clogga or to existing developed sites;
 - b) permission will only be considered for new accommodation where the development forms part of a well developed, integrated tourism and recreation development, which would add to the public amenity and enjoyment of the area and provides a significant public element (e.g. public car parking, playground / indoor playzone, swimming pool open to paying public etc);
 - c) the development of any further holiday homes shall be prohibited, other than a small scale element of which may be allowable in an integrated development that provides a range of accommodation types;
 - d) the development of any further static or touring caravan parks shall be prohibited;
 - e) automated gates will not be permitted on any development; and
 - f) new development shall have or be provided with high quality direct access to the main traffic routes;
 - g) development shall be of an exceptionally high quality design.
 6. To preserve existing access routes to the beach and to support and facilitate the development of additional car parking, proximate to existing access ways to the beach.
 7. To control and limit the development of permanent rural housing to that shown to be strictly necessary (in accordance with the County settlement and rural development strategies) and to require the highest standards of siting and design for any new dwelling and regard to environmental designations.
 8. To facilitate coastal protection works (natural, soft and hard engineered), to protect the economic, amenity and ecological value of the coastline.



North Coastal Cell

Map No. 19.01a



Legend

-  Coastal Cell
-  SPA, SAC and pNHA
-  N11 / M11 Motorway

Map not to Scale

**WICKLOW COUNTY
DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022-2028
(as varied Feb. 2026)**

Wicklow County Council
Planning Department



© Tailte Éireann - Surveying. All rights reserved.
Licence number CYAL50511422
Wicklow County Council



South Coastal Cell

Map No. 19.01b

Legend

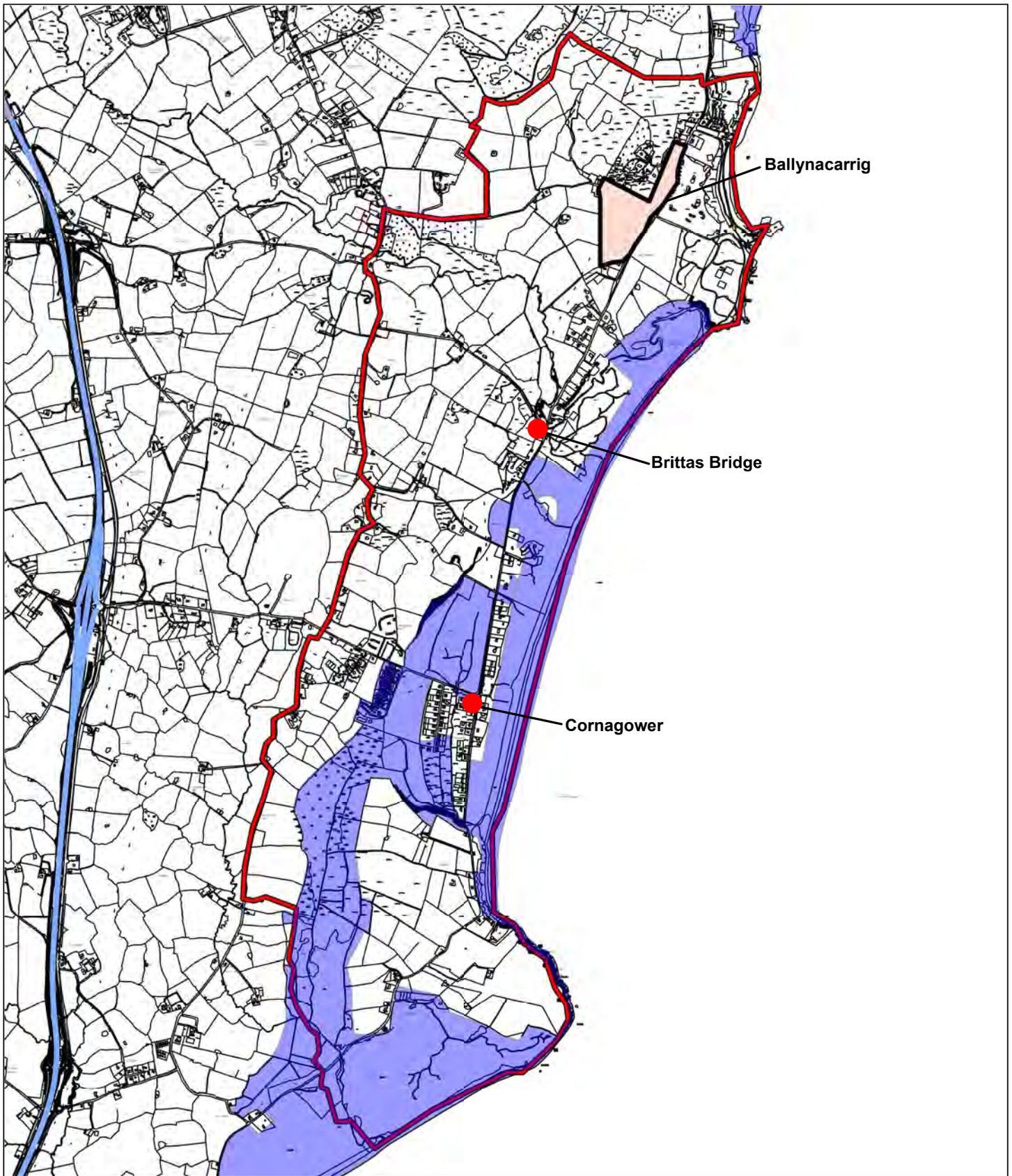
- SPA, SAC and pNHA
- N11 / M11 Motorway

Map not to Scale

**WICKLOW COUNTY
 DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022-2028
 (as varied 2025)**

Wicklow County Council
 Planning Department

© Tailte Éireann Surveying . All rights reserved.
 Licence number CYAL50441462-2025/35/CCMA/
 Wicklow County Council



**Brittas Bay
Coastal Cell**

Map No. 19.02



Legend

-  Coastal Cell
-  SPA, SAC and pNHA
-  Settlement Boundary
-  N11 / M11 Motorway

Map not to Scale

**WICKLOW COUNTY
DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022-2028**

Wicklow County Council
Planning Department



© Ordnance Survey Ireland. All rights reserved
Licence number 2022/35/CCMA/Wicklow County
Council