
***Submission to the Clare County Development Plan
(2023 – 2029)***

on behalf of the

Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark, March 2022

This submission is based on the identification, from years of research, observation and local feedback, of the challenges and issues created by increased visitor traffic to the Geopark region throughout the tourism season which has a direct impact on roads infrastructure, the quality of life of the local population, significant congestion in certain locations and on the carrying capacity of popular recreational areas, local roads, public parking areas, public toilet facilities and amenities in general.

The approach to date has been to isolate certain issues and deal with specific aspects, such as licensing regulations, the number of coaches at peak times, parking or passing areas in specific locations, signage, park and ride proposals, site management plans and visitor dispersal strategies, without looking at how each item impacts another and addresses the whole issue. Planning for future tourism trends and capacity demands has not been fully considered either. Increased integration of planning for rural economic development, rural transport, sustainable communities, sustainable travel and tourism would be welcome.

The need for an integrated solution was also identified in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience Development Plan (VEDP) prepared by Failte Ireland and officially launched during the summer of 2021; *‘A key issue for both the Burren and Cliffs of Moher is the environmental pressures that are already being witnessed during peak periods. To help ensure the future sustainability of the region’s natural and cultural assets and communities, it will be imperative that an appropriately resourced visitor management, traffic and transport strategy is developed and delivered.’* This has become the first of a series of catalyst actions identified to enable the successful implementation of the VEDP.¹

An action arising out of this Catalyst was the creation of a working group of community, transport and tourism representatives from North Clare. At a public meeting on March 1st, 2022 it was agreed that *‘an appropriately resourced visitor management, traffic and transport strategy’* requires an integrated approach with input from a number of departments within the Council and a wide range of community, farming, transport, tourism and law enforcement stakeholders. It was proposed to make submissions to include this important strategic issue as an objective within the County Development Plan.

The proposed strategy incorporates numerous areas of the County Development Plan; it addresses the key principles of sustainability and climate action (especially in transport) and it is directly related to CDP objectives under rural development, tourism, sustainable communities, retail and physical development.

¹ The Burren and Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience Development Plan, 2020. Failte Ireland pg 43.

The following are examples of the current CDP objectives that would influence and would be influenced by this proposed strategy:

CDP 2.15 Low Carbon Economy and Society

CDP 7.12 Improved accessibility and mobility to town centers

CDP 8.1 Rural Economic Development

CDP 8.3 Agri-tourism

CDP 8.6 Rural Transport

CDP 9.24 Tourism in North Clare and the Burren

CDP 9.3 Sustainable Travel

CDP 10.11 Recreational Routes

CDP 10.12 Countryside Recreation Access

CDP 11.2 Smarter Travel

CDP 11.3 Local Transport Plans

CDP 11.5 Walking and Cycling

CDP 11.8 Bus Transport

CDP 11.10 EV and CNG Infrastructure and smart mobility

CDP 11.11 to 11.17 Roads development

11.22 Ports and Harbours

11.25 Directional Signage

The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global geopark proposes that the development of an integrated traffic and transport strategy for North Clare be included as an objective under the County Development Plan. This objective could be included under CDP 9.24 Tourism in North Clare and the Burren and should incorporate and link to other objectives relating to transport, rural development, sustainable communities, retail and physical development.

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