

From: Doolin Pier Group [REDACTED]
Sent: 27 October 2020 21:07
To: forwardplan
Subject: Development Plan Review



To whom it may concern:

Please see below our submission to the County Development Plan 2022-2028.

Stage 1: Submission to Issues Paper – Oct/Nov 2020

Vision

“A county that has maximised its unique characteristics, strengths, location and connectivity to become Ireland’s centre of culture, tourism, heritage and the preferred international destination for sustainable investment and innovation. A county in which citizens, visitors and all stakeholders are empowered and supported by public bodies under the leadership of a professional, responsive and progressive local government system”.

Amend to:

“A county that has maximised its unique characteristics, strengths, location and connectivity to become Ireland’s centre of culture, tourism, heritage, **a region of high-quality living**, and the preferred international destination for sustainable investment and innovation. A county in which citizens, visitors and all stakeholders are empowered and supported by public bodies under the leadership of a professional, responsive and progressive local government system”.

1. What are the key characteristics that define County Clare as a good place to live, work, visit and invest and how should they be treated in the new Development Plan?

A good place to live should include access to recreational facilities and local amenities for local communities, i.e. access to the old pier at Doolin for swimming, as has been the tradition since Victorian times.

Economic, Enterprise, Tourism and Retail Development

2. How can we ensure the protection of rural and natural amenities while providing for sustainable economic development?

The preservation of the traditional rights of access to recreational opportunities in the county should be given as much weight as the economic gain from tourism development, e.g. swimming access at the old pier at Doolin. The old pier at Doolin should be retained as an amenity for recreational purposes as outlined in the EIA produced for the purpose of securing planning permission for the new pier, and alluded to in Section 7.2 of the ‘Socio-economic analysis – Doolin Pier Masterplan and Visitor Centre, 2016’ document, which recommends “ladders on the old pier” for “improving access” for “kayakers, kayak surfers, swimmers, anglers”.

The EIA drafted for the purpose of securing permission for the new pier, recognised the need for separation of uses, "It is clear that a larger pier which could offer more shelter and would allow separation of users and full tidal access is needed in Doolin. The proposed development will do this. The proposed development benefits are primarily twofold as it will provide a larger, safer, modern pier fit for purpose for ferry operators and will allow the existing pier to remain exclusively for the use of

recreational users. This separation of users will increase safety, reduce congestion and allow commercial and recreational interests to operate safely and independently of each other".

3. Are there potential tourist attractions including experiential tourism which need further development?
Whilst this is an important consideration, so too is the consideration to leave some natural areas for the local communities to enjoy without restrictions, be it financial or legislative, as they have done for generations.

Social, Community and Cultural Development

4. How can the County Development Plan facilitate the demand for sports and leisure facilities within the County?

The CDP can facilitate leisure facilities in the county by supporting local communities who wish to swim in their local area. The old pier at Doolin has been used for recreational purposes by residents of North Clare and visitors alike for many generations. The old pier is a popular spot for pier-jumping and swimming and has been growing in popularity in recent times with the increasing awareness of the benefits of sea swimming for both physical and mental wellbeing. The old pier has many advantages as a swimming location: it offers a unique swimming experience with instant and easy access to the water; it is also used by people with mobility issues, such as wheelchair users who use the slipway; it is considered by many local swimmers to be safer than both Fanore and Lahinch beaches, both of which have dangerous rip currents and high waves.

Regarding coastal tourism, the CDP should aim to retain and increase the number of Clean Coasts sites in addition to the Blue Flag sites in the county. Designation of Doolin pier as either a Clean Coasts or Blue Flag site would result in high standards in water quality, environmental management and education and safety, to the benefit of all.

Thank you.

Kind Regards,

Nicole Clancy

Doolin Pier Group