



Chapter 8

Natural

Resources

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8.1 Introduction

Kerry has a number of naturally occurring resources that contribute to the social and economic fabric of the County. These include water resources, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, renewable energy and extractives. These resources are generally located in rural areas providing employment and contribute to the economy of these rural communities. The continued sustainable development of these resources at appropriate locations will serve to diversify and strengthen the economy of the County.

The nature and scale of the development and operations required to develop these resources can have a significant environmental impact that can damage other economic sectors such as tourism and recreation. Protecting the environment from undesired impacts such as unsuitable development is key to the development of sustainable communities and the preservation of our countryside. Therefore, proper planning and sustainable development of natural resources require a balanced approach with appropriate policies for the growth and development of these resources while ensuring that the adverse environmental impact associated with such development are kept to a minimum.



Strategic Objectives	
It is an objective of the Council to:-	
NR-1	Maximise the economic potential and development of natural resources in a sustainable manner while ensuring no significant adverse effect on the environment including the integrity of the Natura 2000 Network through the implementation of the objectives and the Development Management Guidelines and Standards of this Plan.
NR-2	Maximise the employment potential of the natural resources within the County in a sustainable way through the promotion of associated industries at appropriate locations.
NR-3	Ensure that the development and exploitation of natural resources does not result in any significant adverse effects on the local community.

8.2 Extractive Industry

The extractive industry provides essential raw materials for the construction industry as well as providing employment and economic growth in the local and regional economy. The continual supply of aggregates, including recycled construction and demolition material is necessary for continual economic growth; which is an integral requirement for the implementation of the National Development Plan, Transport 21 and private sector development. Reserves of suitable material are finite and extraction can only take place where these reserves are found.



Quarry extraction works and ancillary activities have the potential to impact on the environment (e.g. noise, dust, vibration, visual intrusion, hydrological disruption, water pollution, loss or fragmentation of habitat, traffic generation, adverse impact on road network and archaeological impacts). In certain instances quarries can also be beneficial to the environment, particularly at the decommissioning phase when opportunities for habitat creation and alternative uses can arise. Applications for mineral extraction will therefore be considered on their merits in terms of potential for impacts on the environment and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. As part of the assessment process, due regard will be given to the DEHLG publication “*Quarry and Ancillary Activity Guidelines*” (2004). In addition proposals will be screened for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) in accordance with current best practice and guidance documents.

The Planning Authority will where appropriate, support the extractive industry by issuing planning permission with a timeframe that extends over the estimated life of the quarry. A phasing proposal for the development will be required from the applicant to assess the likely time-scale of the proposal. The Planning Authority will impose strict conditions on planning permissions relating to the appropriate mitigation measures necessary to control / reduce impacts on the environment and surrounding area. In addition, a development contribution and financial bond will be required to ensure appropriate restoration and reinstatement works are undertaken within 12 month of the cessation of works.

General Extractives Objectives	
It is an objective of the Council to:-	
NR-4	Facilitate the sustainable development of the extractive industry and seek to ensure the ongoing availability of an adequate supply of aggregates for the construction industry, while ensuring environmental protection, through the implementation of the objectives and Development Management, Guidelines and Standards of this Plan.
NR-5	Ensure all extractive development proposals comply with the objectives of this plan as they relate to development management standards, flood risk management requirements and the protection of landscape, biodiversity, infrastructure, water and air quality, built and cultural heritage and residential amenity.
NR-6	Ensure that quarrying and mining proposals are not permitted in areas where the visual or other impacts of such works would significantly adversely injure the amenities of the area or create significant adverse affects on the road network in the area.
NR-7	Ensure that development for aggregates / mineral extraction, processing and associated concrete production will be prohibited in Prime Special Amenity Areas and will not generally be permitted in other open or sensitive landscapes.



8.2.1 Foreshore Extraction

The extraction of material from the foreshore, beaches, sand dunes and watercourses can have serious adverse impacts on the environment. It can alter the ecosystem in an area and in certain instances initiate or contribute to erosion. The Council will seek to prohibit such extraction from occurring.

Protection of the Foreshore	
It is an objective of the Council to:-	
NR- 8	Utilise its powers to prevent, where appropriate, the extraction of inorganic material from the foreshore and watercourses. Proposals necessary for the purposes of flood risk management navigation route protection etc will be considered on their merits and will be subject to detailed environmental assessment. As part of this the potential for impact on fisheries and Natura 2000 sites will be taken into consideration.

Given the lack of comprehensive safety information and the absence of national guidelines on the fracking industry favourable consideration will not be given to any fracking proposal in this county during the lifetime of this Plan.

8.3 Forestry

Forestry is an important renewable resource with a major role to play in sustainable rural development. In addition to the direct benefits of planting, in terms of valuable crops and employment, forestry has an important impact on rural economies through the

development of related industries, locally produced sustainable energy and rural tourism opportunities. In 2011, over 5,620 individuals were employed in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing in the County (CSO). The expansion of forestry is also a national objective.

The strategic plan for the development of the forestry sector *Growing for the Future* published by the Department of the Agriculture, Food and Marine aims to increase the national forest estate to 17% of land cover by 2030. This target size for the sector will provide the critical mass necessary to support the range of associated processing industries and related sectors, which provide much of the wealth and employment generated by forestry. In Kerry, approximately 55,000 ha (11.5%) of all the land in the County is covered by forestry⁽¹⁾. The forest estate in Kerry is relatively unique to the rest of the country in that it is predominantly in private ownership.

Over the last number of years there has been a move to divert forestry resources into biomass production with the view to penetrating the national and local heat markets. The use of the County's forestry resources in biomass is being strongly supported by the Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine and the Teagasc Forestry Development Unit as well as other local partners. Wood is seen as a clean, efficient and renewable form of energy, businesses and organisations are increasingly using wood for industrial energy generation and for heating commercial buildings and schools. In June 2007, Meitheal Foraoise Chiarrai (Kerry Forestry Task Group) was established among growers, state agencies and rural development interests to develop the full potential of forestry.

Notwithstanding this the Council recognises that afforestation can have less favourable impacts unless it is appropriately located and of a scale and design that is sympathetic to the physical nature of the landscape.

(1) Kerry County Council-Renewable Energy Resource Assessment of County Kerry.

The *National Forest Standard* is published by the Forest Service and follows the principles of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM). As the national regulatory body for forestry, the Forest Service implements SFM through environmental guidelines that acknowledge environmental considerations at all stages in the forestry sector⁽²⁾. There are a suite of guidelines from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine that cover water quality and other environmental issues including *Forestry and Water Quality Guidelines*, *Forestry and Freshwater Pearl Mussel Requirements*, *Forest Biodiversity Guidelines*, *Forest Harvesting and Environmental Guidelines*; *Forestry and Archaeology*; *Forestry and Landscape*, *Forest Protection Guidelines*, *Forestry and Otter Guidelines*, *Forestry and Kerry Slug Guidelines and Bats and Forestry Guidelines*.

The Council will, therefore, in conjunction with the relevant authorities, encourage the sustainable development and expansion of forestry, in a manner that is compatible with the environmental guidelines listed above.

Forestry also has the potential to impact on flood risk management and biodiversity. Accordingly this should be taken into consideration when formulating or assessing forestry development proposals.



Forestry	
It is an objective of the Council to:-	
NR- 9	Encourage and promote sustainable forestry development in the County, while ensuring environmental protection through the implementation of the Plan and the relevant regulations, guidelines and standards relating to forestry development operated by other relevant statutory bodies.
NR-10	Encourage, promote, provide and facilitate access to forestry and woodlands, in co-operation with Coillte, the Forest Service and other agencies for walking routes (including looped walks), mountain trails, nature trails, mountain bike trails, bridle paths, orienteering and other recreational activities for the benefit of local people and tourists and take into account the Forest Service 2006 Publication “Forest Recreation Guide for Owners and Managers” based on National Spatial Strategy.
NR-11	Support the continued sustainable expansion and diversification of the forestry sector, in a manner that maximises its contribution to the social and economic well being of the County and which is compatible with the protection and enhancement of the environment and heritage of County Kerry.
NR-12	Ensure that the diversity and character of the countryside is maintained and promote the sustainable cultivation of native species in the forestry throughout the County.

(2)<http://www.marine.ie/home/community/educational/lessonplans/TheRealMapofIrelandIrelandsMarineResource.htm>

NR-13	Encourage the appropriate use of forests for timber, energy, biodiversity, recreation and tourism and shelter and development of associated businesses and enterprise at local level. Proposals shall be in accordance the provisions of the Renewable Energy Strategy (Kerry County Council 2012), the objectives, policies and development standards of this Plan as they relate to the natural environment.
NR-14	Ensure that the County's valuable remaining native woodlands are protected and enhanced and where appropriate sustainably expanded through the use of appropriate planning and development measures.

The following points should be considered in relation to proposed forestry developments:-

- Forest developments should comply with the principles of Sustainable Forestry Management (SFM), specifically the following guidelines - *Forestry and Water Quality Guidelines, Forestry and Freshwater Pearl Mussel Requirements, Forest Biodiversity Guidelines, Forest Harvesting and Environmental Guidelines, Forestry and Archaeology, Forest Protection Guidelines, Forestry and Otter Guidelines, Forestry and Kerry Slug Guidelines and Bats and Forestry Guidelines.*
- Forest developments should follow current best practice and the *Forest Service's Forestry and the Landscape Guidelines* (July 2000). Forest landscape objectives should focus on compatibility with and enhancement of local landscape character. Roadside planting should aim to enhance and complement existing visual amenities, without impeding views and prospects, particularly in sensitive high amenity areas.
- Afforestation projects should be designed and implemented in a manner likely to enhance existing local amenities.
- Any adverse impacts of afforestation on watercourses and sources of water supply should be prevented.
- Forest owners should prepare and maintain a forest fire defence strategy, including provision and maintenance of adequate prescribed firebreaks, water supply reservoirs and forest access. Fire plans should be prepared for each forest and reviewed annually.

8.3.1 Location

The Forest Service prepared a national *Indicative Forestry Strategy*⁽³⁾ which identifies areas in the state suitable for forestry, having regard to the sensitive areas of high amenity, listed views, archaeological sites and natural heritage Areas. The strategy also has regard to the impact on water quality, bogs, wildlife, rural dwellings and the need for sustainable development generally.

The Council will co-operate with the National Parks and Wildlife Services, Coilte, The Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine/ Forestry Service and any other relevant authority in the preparation of the strategy for the County and in identifying environmentally sustainable locations. The Council in its consultative role shall support the sustainable implementation and further development of best forest practice, as defined by the Forest Services publication '*Forest Service Guidelines and the Code of Best Forest Practice*' for all forest developments and operations.

(3) *Forest Service Indicative Forestry Strategy 2008, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.*

8.3.2 Assessment of Applications

Under the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2013, initial afforestation of up to 50 hectares are normally exempt from planning. Therefore the majority of afforestation developments to date have not been regulated by the Council. They are, however, subject to approval by the Forestry Service and in grant aided projects of 25 hectares or more, the Council is consulted.

In the case of forestry developments requiring planning permission or on which the Council is consulted, the Council will have regard to the following:-

- *A Strategic Plan for the Development of the Forestry Sector in Ireland*, published by the Department of the Agriculture, Food and Forestry, 1996.
- Various environmental guidelines issued by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine including *Forestry and Water Quality Guidelines*, *Forestry and Freshwater Pearl Mussel Requirements*, *Forest Biodiversity Guidelines*, *Forest Harvesting and Environmental Guidelines*, *Forestry and Archaeology*, *Forest Protection Guidelines*, *Forestry and Otter Guidelines*, *Forestry and Kerry Slug Guidelines*, *Bats and Forestry Guidelines* and any other guidelines issued over the lifetime of this plan.
- In evaluating the visual impact of proposals the Planning Authority will have particular regard to the Forestry Services Landscape Guidelines. These guidelines aim to ensure a positive relationship between the forest and the character of a given landscape, to mitigate visual conflict and retain existing character and diversity.
- The recommendations of Inland Fisheries Ireland and the Environment Section of the Council.
- The provisions of the County Development Plan and all relevant Plans.

Forestry Development Guidelines	
It is an objective of the Council to:-	
NR-15	Have regard to the publications listed above and the recommendations of relevant bodies.
NR-16	Ensure afforestation is not located in a manner that will have a deleterious impact on environmental, landscape or public amenity values, in keeping with relevant forestry regulations, standards and guidelines.
NR-17	Ensure, in cooperation with Coillte and other relevant bodies, that run-off from forestry activity do not have a negative impact on the quality of recreational angling, which is an important element of the Countys tourism product.

8.3.3 Adjacent Landowners

The planting of large scale forestry can impact on the residential amenity of adjacent landowners and adversely affect the maintenance of public roads.

Forestry Adjacent Landowners	
It is an objective of the Council to:-	
NR-18	Ensure afforestation is not located in a manner that will significantly adversely impact on the amenities of adjacent landowners or significantly adversely affect the maintenance of the public road.



8.3.4 Forest Recreation

Developing a forest as an amenity creates a resource for the local community and for visitors to an area. Using the forest for simple quiet enjoyment or for a particular sport or adventure activity promotes fitness, health and a sense of well-being. Forest recreation also creates the basis for a wide range of related enterprises and opportunities for income generation. The Council recognises the tourist and recreational benefits of forested areas and will seek to encourage the sustainable management of forest lands for recreational and tourism purposes as set out in the natural heritage section of this plan.

Forestry Recreation	
It is an objective of the Council to:-	
NR-19	Encourage the sustainable development of forest parks and other tourist related amenities at appropriate locations within forested areas in accordance with the <i>Forest Recreation in Ireland; A Guide for Forest Owners and Managers published by the Department of Agriculture and Food (2006), the Forestry Landscape Guidelines and the objectives, policies and development standards of this plan as they relate to the natural and built environment.</i>

8.4 Fishing / Aquaculture

Our ocean wealth will be a key element of our economic recovery and sustainable growth, generating benefits for the County. Not alone fishing, but fish distribution, processing, aquaculture and related activities generate significant levels of employment and remain an important resource for the County

which has potential for further sustainable development. Aquaculture is the farming of aquatic organisms such as fish, shellfish and even plants⁽⁴⁾.

It is essential that a balance is achieved between generating a sustainable and economically viable industry on the one hand and complying with EU policies and quota on the other hand. The Council will support the sustainable development of the operations of the fishing and aquaculture industry while protecting and preserving the biodiversity and ecosystems in our oceans, so they can continue to provide essential monetary and non-monetary goods and services.

In recent years there has been a decline in the marine fishing industry due in part to the EU quota restrictions.

However there has been an expansion in the aquaculture and secondary sectors of the industry as a whole and overall fishing remains an important and vital sector in the economy of the County.

Aquaculture and food processing both have the potential to continue to expand in the County, while opportunities for the development of a service industry exist particularly in South Kerry with approximately 300-400 Irish and foreign fishing vessels operating off the coastline. The Council recognises the importance of the industry as a whole to the economy of the County and will continue to play a supportive role to ensure fishing and aquaculture is managed and assisted where necessary.

In addition to commercial fishing and aquaculture the aquatic environment (marine, estuarine and freshwater) supports smaller scale fishing and angling activities. The protection and support of water quality, habitat etc as natural resources necessary to safeguard these activities is therefore of importance.

⁴⁾ http://www.maine.gov/dmr/aquaculture/what_is_aquaculture.htm



Natural Resources Fisheries	
It is an objective of the Council to:-	
NR-20	Support and promote the sustainable development of the aquaculture sector in order to maximise its contribution to employment and growth in coastal communities and the economic well being of the County, while ensuring environmental protection through the implementation of the objectives and Development Management, Guidelines and Standards of this Plan.
NR-21	Support the sustainable use of existing port facilities for the catching and processing of fish as an economic activity that contributes to the food industry in the County.
NR-22	Support added-value marine and freshwater foods and service industries in a sustainable manner and at appropriate locations where they comply with the general policies and development management standards of this plan.
NR-23	Support the protection of water quality, key habitat and other natural resource requirements necessary to safeguard coastal, estuarine and freshwater fisheries.

NR-24	Have regard to the advice of the relevant statutory bodies, as appropriate and recommendations of the Environmental Section of Kerry County Council in assessing the environmental impacts of developments.
NR-25	Sustainably improve road networks that link port facilities to the larger urban centres.
NR-26	Have regard to the need to maintain Blue Flag Beach status, recreational use and nature conservation interests in an area when assessing maritime development proposals on sites.
NR-27	Support the sustainable development of marine aquaculture and fishing industries and its diversification at appropriate locations having regard to the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive, the relevant River Basin Management Plans, the Habitats Directive, the integrity of the Natura 2000 network and visual amenity.