

TO whom it may concern

I wish to put forward my opinion with regards to the Baseline report as issued in relation to the National Marine Planning Framework. I have a couple of observations to make in relation to the points raised and also the information supplied in the document.

I would also like to bring attention to the juxtaposition between our inland waterways on the Shannon and the canals of Ireland. The inland waterways are very well serviced when it comes to pontoons and berthing options. As a result of this they have more than sufficient capacity from a tourism and recreation point of view.

There is a well constructed route of marinas and maps of locations in remote locations all the way down the Shannon basin. The inland waterways manage a water system of roughly 1000 km, on the Shannon alone which is only 365 km they have over 40 different docking/ marina locations. According to your map we only have 21 on the entire coastline of Ireland! Despite their being a huge need and desire for them from both Irish and visiting boats. The old adage of 'build it and they will come' rings through for Marine infrastructure no more than for land based infrastructure plans. 'Ireland 2040 Our plan- National Planning framework' sets out the need for growth and development and I would envisage that the Marine plan needs to set out the targets for growth also.

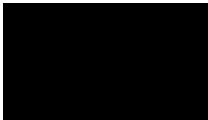
Taking this as the example it is easy to see the economic and employment benefits of building tourism infrastructure in remote areas that are economically disadvantaged. With regards to the MSP, Fáilte Ireland have identified that one of the major areas for growth is that visitors to Ireland want to spend time on the water. With current facilities this is an unattainable goal. Tourism hotspots on the Wild Atlantic Way need to have a clear route to building and developing infrastructure on the water. As you state in the report 70% of visitors to Ireland are concentrated in just 30% of the country the majority of which are along the coastline. The current procedure for getting planning is not working and thus MSP needs to clearly set out the criteria for marina and infrastructure building. Information wise two startling inaccuracies stand out, namely that two marinas in Killybegs and Rossaveal are not mentioned on the map.

The Killybegs marina has been there for 2 years and has space for 63 visiting boats. It is an example of everything that is wrong with the current system as it took almost 25 years of local concerted effort to get the facility built. Anecdotally talking to the

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people who run it they have seen a huge increase in the number of visiting boats to the harbour as they know their is safe and secure berthing. In an area such as this there should not be restrictions on what can be built. There was a local desire to grow the area in a space that was already used for aquaculture and fishing. I think it is an example of an area where multi use zoning could be used to help an area to develop. In an area which already caters to multiple fishing boats and has harbour facilities there needs to be a much faster system to build a marina. Between Killybegs and Rossaveal there is not one marina that visiting boats can come into. Marinas are not only for visiting boats, once they are built they encourage local recreation on the water. Access to the water should not be restricted in fact it should be encouraged and planning needs to reflect the need for increased need for access

Tourism in its many iterations can co-exist with most other marine economic activities. For example marine aquaculture and tourism actually go hand in hand. The tourism benefits from the aquaculture and vice versa. From the sale of local produce to the tourists to the visiting of farms this is a growth area on land with 'Farm to Fork' journeys and can also be a growth area on sea if we can develop these sort of trails. The infrastructure of marinas and access to the water is the spot where tourism suffers. BIM are already marketing these journeys with their 'Taste the Atlantic' brand, the next evolution of this is to increase the amount of visitors that can access them.

On a personal level I live in a small rural community on the West coast of Ireland. At present I see the results of local people not being consulted with regards to designations of areas that while designed to support rural landowners in fact are detrimental to their development. The SAC or Special Areas of Conservation are now so prohibitive that rural business and individuals cannot expand due to restrictive planning policies. The idea of SAC's is good but the implementation of them was not thought through by anyone apart from state bodies. The example being that all Coillte land is outside of SAC's despite it being in some of the most scenic and environmentally sensitive areas of Ireland. While smaller farmers and existing businesses were not informed of this option.

Rural Ireland has been left behind in the development of big industry and broadband amongst others. In lieu of all this infrastructure it is beholden to the group to be able to offer up alternative areas of investment and growth in coastal Ireland. Along the Western coastline we suffer from a lack of infrastructure and a lack of a clear pathway to achieve it. The only way it will work effectively is if there is a clear pathway to planning and development of regions. We do not favour the zoning of individual areas but rather a set of criteria that once fulfilled would contribute to ease of development. All marine users would benefit from increased infrastructure on the coastline of Ireland. France and the UK have developed marinas throughout their coastlines and this has resulted in a vibrant and growing commercial and private marine industry. Ireland is better placed to take advantage of its marine facilities however we are lacking the infrastructure to achieve this.

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The only way that the infrastructure will get built is if the onerous planning process can be streamlined so that communities and businesses know what they must do to get planning and this is equal across the entire country. As you can see the unequal distribution of marinas in the east and South coast is to the detriment of the rest of the country. The Marine Spatial Plan cannot be based on one single entity, I understand and has to take into account all the differing points of view. However I feel that with the lack of voices on the board from rural Ireland we are in danger of once again leaving them behind in this planning process.

From an adventure sports point of view we want to see the coastline of Ireland developed in such a way that the coastal and other areas are understood to be an integral part of the ecosystem. From Angling to kayaking we cover a lot of different bases and as such we would look to include rather than exclude coastal communities in the thought process. i.e. how can this Marine Spatial plan work to benefit and help the rebirth of rural Ireland rather than contribute to its gradual decline.

Yours

Shane Young

