



**Platforms for Growth**  
**Facility Centre for Water Based Activities**

**FENIT**

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## 1.0 Proposed Development Description

### **Summary**

The proposed facility shall be a sustainable water sports-based facility to provide changing, sanitary and meeting facilities for visitors engaged in water-based and other sporting activities including supporting the services of operators providing activities in the area. The proposed facility will also service the users of the Tralee-Fenit Greenway.

It is proposed to

- Demolish existing public toilet block
- Construct new Water Based Activity facility (180m<sup>2</sup> of floor area) consisting of covered central space, individual showers and changing cubicles, WC cubicles, 'changing spaces' compliant changing and shower room, accessible WC and shower room, storage spaces, public lockers, plant room and external showers.
- Construct new public realm area adjacent to the facility to tie into existing Fenit beach access and the Tralee – Fenit Greenway. Public realm to consist of open paved area, raised planters, seating and bike parking and electric bike charging area.
- Provide Traffic calming measures and new pedestrian crossing point
- Provide two Part M Compliant Accessible Car Parking Spaces
- Reconfigure the existing playground including the relocation existing swing set. The facility footprint will require 27m<sup>2</sup> of the 782 m<sup>2</sup> of playground space (3.5%).
- Provision of temporary public toilets during construction
- Tie into existing water and sewer network

## **Background**

Following the submission of a funding application to Fáilte Ireland under Platforms for Growth 2019-2025: Platform 2 – Facility Centres for Water Sports Activities, Kerry County Council were successful in securing funding from Fáilte Ireland to develop facility in Fenit. Platform for Growth is a scheme under Fáilte Ireland with the aim to support the development of shared facilities at waterways in the Republic of Ireland through the provision of funding.

The proposed facility will provide appropriate facilities for water sports and cycling activists. The quality of the visitor experience will be improved and remove the need for individuals and families to ‘get changed at the boot of their car’ and improve the visitor experience.

Fáilte Ireland procured the services of MCA Architects to prepare an exemplar design for the proposed facility which will be developed at 22 locations across the Country where water-based activities are a key visitor attraction. Given the individual site requirements present by the Fenit site.

Given the nature and constraints of the Fenit site, Kerry County Council engaged the services of an Architectural firm to review and adjust the exemplar design prepared by MCA Architects to take into consideration the available site area, the greenway trailhead, location of existing playground and car park, access to the beach, playground and adjoining private property and the location of services. The final design and orientation of the facility adhere to the MCA exemplar design to the greatest extent possible.

The proposed facility will provide hot showers, changing and toilet facilities, secure storage, induction spaces, equipment wash down and orientation points. The facility will be fully wheelchair accessible and built using sustainability best practices such as solar heating panels to meet Nearly Zero Energy Building Standards. Additional cycling related infrastructure will be provided within the building and the surrounding public realm and car park to adjust the facility to service the trailhead. The design incorporates the public realm around the facility and the link to the Greenway creating a serviced trailhead for the Greenway.

## 2.0 Location and Site Description: -

The site is located within the existing car park at Fenit Beach.





## 2.1 Existing Photos



### 3.0 Relevant Planning Policies and Objectives and Strategies

#### National Level

##### Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) The NPF is the overarching planning policy for the state (published in February 2018 under Project 2040) and contains ten National Strategic Outcomes and 75 National Policy Objectives. This planning framework sets out where development and investment should be guided to shape the national, regional and local spatial development in economic, environmental and social terms to 2040. A National Strategic Outcome prescribed in the NPF is 'Enhanced Amenities and Heritage' with the objective to.

***Invest in and enable access to recreational facilities, including trails networks, designed and delivered with a strong emphasis on conservation, allowing the protection and preservation of our most fragile environments and providing a wellbeing benefit for all.***

##### National Tourism Policy 2015: 'People, Place and Policy: growing Tourism to 2025'

The Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport published national tourism policy in March 2015 entitled "People, Place and Policy: growing Tourism to 2025".

The National Tourism Policy notes that to provide an effective tourism product, there must be a diverse range of activities for visitors. While much of our attractiveness as a tourism destination is down to the natural environment, since the early 1990s, the State has supported the development and improvement of our place by investing in our physical visitor attractions, visitor infrastructure, and facilities for visitor activities.

***Policy Proposal 1.3.3 states: The design of future supports for capital investment in tourism will recognise the need for investment in both physical assets and in other areas that provide a lasting improvement in the overall quality of the visitor experience.***

In order to be recognised internationally as a best-in-class activity destination, it is crucial that Ireland invests in compelling activity infrastructure, the visitor experience and building the capacity of the activity providers to ensure the Irish experience meets and exceeds visitor expectations. It is considered the proposed development is critically important to implementing on a key national tourism policy.

## **National Marine Planning Framework**

The NMPF contains a vision, objectives, and planning policies for all marine-based human activities. It outlines how those activities will interact with each other in an increasingly pressured ocean space. It is to be the key decision-making tool for Government departments, State agencies, regulatory authorities, and policy makers for decisions on marine activities up to 2040.

The NMPF has numerous objectives and planning policies which supports the development of tourism, tourism facilities and improved access.

Key Objectives of the NMPF are to.

- Increase participation in a range of water-based sports and recreation activities for the benefit of public health and wellbeing, as well as developing our tourism offering.
- Position Ireland as a world-class sustainable coastal and marine tourism destination through the sustainable development of coastal and marine recreation activities and industries in Ireland.

A number of planning policies support the proposed development

### ***Tourism Policy 1***

***Where appropriate, proposals enabling, promoting or facilitating sustainable tourism and recreation activities, particularly where this creates diversification or additional utilisation of related facilities beyond typical usage patterns, should be supported.***

### ***Sport & Recreation Policy 1***

***Proposals that promote sustainable development of water-based sports and marine recreation, while enhancing community health, wellbeing and quality of life, should be supported, provided that due consideration is given to environmental carrying capacities and tourism pressures.***

### ***Sport & Recreation Policy 4***

***Proposals that improve access to marine and coastal resources for tourism activities, and sport and recreation should be supported, where appropriate, at the applicable scale and aligned with existing development plans.***

### ***Access Policy 2***

***Proposals demonstrating appropriate enhanced and inclusive public access to and within the maritime area, and that consider the future provision of services for tourism and recreation activities, should be supported, subject to the outcome of statutory environmental assessment processes and subsequent decision by the competent authority,***



## **Regional Level**

The principal statutory purpose of the RSES is to support the implementation of Project Ireland 2040 and the economic policies and objectives of the Government by providing a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the development of the Eastern and Midlands, Northern and Western and the Southern Regions. The development of Regional Strategic Outcomes in the RSES is also closely aligned and supportive of both the NSO's prescribed in the NPF and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The Southern Regional RSES highlights that the region has a significant share of Ireland's premier tourism resources – both natural and man-made. The RSES recognises that a successful tourism sector creates significant benefits for many other sectors such as agriculture, food and drinks, transport and retail. The RSES supports the Department of Rural and Community Development's Action Plan for Rural Development (APRD) which seeks to increase tourist numbers to rural Ireland, support sustainable jobs through targeted rural tourism initiatives, develop activity tourism and leverage natural and built heritage assets. (Section 4.6)

The proposed development is supported by Regional Policy Objective 53

***It is an objective to:***

- a) Enhance provision of tourism and leisure amenity to cater for increased population in the Region including recreation, entertainment, cultural, catering, accommodation, transport and water infrastructure inter alia.***
- b) Promote activity tourism subject to appropriate site selection and environmental assessment processes.***

## Local Level

### Kerry County Development Plan

#### **10.4.1.3 Water-Based Tourism**

*County Kerry has an extensive coastline of over 1000km which is a major tourist and environmental asset. The county has 14 blue flag beaches which are a popular resource for a number of water sports activities including surfing, swimming, paddle boarding and kayaking and also for activities such as walking and wellbeing in a coastal setting. The protection of the coastline as a tourism asset is of huge importance to ensure long-term benefits from tourism activities. The waterways, rivers and lakes of County Kerry are rich natural resources that attract many visitors to the County each year. In addition, they provide significant leisure and amenity opportunities including fishing, sea-angling, sailing, birdwatching and pleasure boating. Ensuring access to the lakes and waterways and the sustainable management of activities taking place on the water, on the lakeshore and in the riparian zone of waterways is essential to ensure a balance between tourism development and conservation of natural heritage in these areas. The importance of biosecurity and protection of our watercourses from invasive species is particularly recognised due to the potential negative impacts on fisheries, water quality and angling/other water-based amenity tourism. Given the extent of the County's marine heritage and the indigenous strengths of the region's coastal environs it is an objective of the Council, to encourage the sustainable development of waterways, rivers and lakes for marine tourism related uses*

**KCDP 10-2** Facilitate sustainable tourism development throughout the County and particularly in areas where tourism is currently underdeveloped and where there is a need for local tourism development initiatives including Greenways, Blueways, Peatways, Cycleways, Walkways and Marine Leisure.

**KCDP 10-24** Recognise the importance of universal accessibility to tourist services, facilities, and tourist sites and undertake enhancements to overall accessibility where appropriate in conjunction with key stakeholders and to ensure that information on these facilities is clearly promoted and publicised.

**KCDP 10-35** Promote and facilitate the sustainable development of outdoor activities including winter and adventure sports, in appropriate locations, such as walking, rambling, cycling, land and sea-based activities with specialised centres and facilities in association with Munster Technological University, Fáilte Ireland, National Trails Office, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Local Development Companies, Sport Ireland, Healthy Ireland, Local Development Companies, Kerry Education and Training Board and other relevant national and County based departments and agencies.

**KCDP 10-56** Support the provision of appropriately designed and located toilet and changing facilities at blue flag beaches in the county and at other locations subject to need assessment and environmental compatibility

## **County Kerry Tourism Strategy 2016-2022 (KCC, 2016)**

The Kerry County Council Tourism Unit together with the Destination Kerry Forum and other stakeholders, prepared a Kerry Tourism Strategy & Action Plan 2016-2022 to support the development of tourism in Kerry. The Kerry Tourism Strategy sets out in detail the importance of this industry both in economic and social terms. The Tourism Strategy works to the principles of the National Tourism Policy as outlined in 'People, Place & Policy – Growing Tourism to 2025' and forms an integral part of the County Kerry Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2022. The Vision for Kerry Tourism is 'to maximise, in a sustainable manner, tourism's contribution to the quality of life, economy, employment and local community development, paying particular attention to nurturing and protecting the natural, built, cultural and linguistic heritage of the county.

### ***1.14.4 Develop a plan for the Improvement of facilities at Kerry's 14 no. Blue Flag beaches/marina, for the promotion of water sports and activities***

#### **Tralee Local Area Plan 2018-2024**

OS-06 Encourage the sustainable development of adequate sporting, recreational and playground facilities. These should be provided for at appropriate locations within the towns/villages to cater for the recreational needs of locals and visitors.

FT-I-03 Facilitate the development of industrial, leisure and maritime activities at Fenit Port in a sustainable manner

FT-O-04 Support the development of Tralee - Fenit Blueway including appropriate enhancements to the Tralee Canal to enhance wider participation in sustainable outdoor recreational activities

#### **Fenit Village Masterplan**

*This tradition of leisure and recreation, which coexists with the industry of the harbour has thrived in the vibrant sporting traditions, sailing, swimming and diving, triathlon and fishing that continue. However these activities require facilities that will underpin an active public realm.*

*The existing toilet block will be replaced with a new beach facility incorporating showers, toilets and lockers.*

## 4.0 Assessment

The proposed facility will provide hot showers, changing and toilet facilities, secure storage, induction spaces, equipment wash down and orientation points for members of the public partaking in water-based activities. The facility will be fully universally accessible and contain a 'changing space' compliant changing room. Additional cycling related infrastructure will be provided within the building and the surrounding public realm and car park to adjust the facility to also service the Tralee – Fenit Greenway trailhead.

For the most part, impacts will be confined to the construction, waste management and traffic management.

Long-term positive impacts will be the sustainable development of activity-based tourism in Fenit. The provision of modern state of the art facilities will improve the quality of the visitor experience. Fenit is a hub for outdoor activities such as all year-round sea swimming very popular. This facility will encourage more visitors to partake in the various activities available in Fenit and extend the tourism season beyond the summer months.

The principle of the proposal would be a positive development for the Fenit and environs. The proposal is in accordance with the provisions of the current Kerry County Council Development Plan and Tralee Municipal District Local Area Plan and complies with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The development would provide both an enhanced tourism, sporting, and community amenity of benefit to residents and visitors alike.