

Location 1. Flaggy Shore (Area: circa 3km²)

The site is within the Galway Bay Complex Special Area of Conservation SAC (000268) and is also part of the Galway Bay Special Protection Area (SPA). This important location is becoming increasingly popular with visitors and adverse visitor impacts can be especially felt during warm weather and long weekends, when people are attracted to the shore to walk and swim. The lack of designated parking areas poses problems and there are regular instances of people camping and lighting fires at points along the shore. Tensions sometimes arise between locals driving to their homes and visiting pedestrians on the narrow coast road. The area is in need of a visitor management strategy which conserves the important habitats, raises awareness of the importance of the SAC designations and the habitats they protect, provides suitable designated parking areas and encourages visitors to be sensitive to local living requirements.

Location 2. Blackhead (Area: circa .28km²)

This is a popular section of the R477 coast road, voted one of the top 10 scenic drives in Europe by the Automobile Association. This section contains popular fishing points, a world class walking loop and a roadside viewing area. This section is located in the Blackhead Poulsallagh Complex SAC (000020). The fishing points attract large numbers of fishermen at particular times of the year, leading to traffic congestion, erosion, illegal parking and severe littering. The privately owned land surrounding the fishing and viewing areas attracts a constant stream of visitors, many of whom indulge in the popular practice of building mini-dolmens and cairns and, in the process, damage the limestone pavement, a priority habitat under the EU Habitats Directive. This area is in need of a visitor management strategy that counteracts the popularity of mini dolmens, raises awareness against littering and of the need to protect priority habitats and increases respect for private land.

Location 3. Fanore Dunes (Area: circa .9km²)

A popular amenity with locals and visitors, Fanore sand dunes (listed as Annex 1 under the EU Habitat Directives) are a site of high conservation importance containing a rich diversity of habitats and vegetation. The site is owned by Clare County Council and is part of the Blackhead Poulsallagh Complex SAC (000020). The dunes have been subject to serious erosion over recent years from both natural and human pressure. This is a site that requires ongoing monitoring and site works that respond to evolving conservation needs and amenity requirements.

Location 4. Medieval Stone Fort and Prehistoric Cairn at Blackhead (Area: circa .28km²)

Despite their remote location on steep hill tops, both these monuments are within easy reach of much used walking trails. The Medieval stone fort can be accessed from the viewing point at Murrooghtoohy. Both are not excavated and have suffered from visitor impacts over the years; structural masonry has been dislodged, archaeological features and evidence interfered with, features have been 'added' by overzealous amateur archaeologists and material has been removed from both sites. The challenge at monuments like these is to balance restoration with preservation; how to decide how much direct intervention is required to stabilise the monument, and what methods must be employed to prevent future deterioration and vandalism.

Location 5. Ballyreen and Poulsallagh (Area: circa 1.5km²)

Due to the presence of fine examples of Burren habitats this area, part of the Blackhead Poulsallagh Complex SAC (000020), is of international scientific interest. The limestone pavement and heath and the marine component are particularly noteworthy, while the plant communities contain a high density of rare and interesting species. Poulsallagh is also listed as a site of international geological/geomorphological importance by the Irish Geological Heritage Programme. The area suffers greatly from visitor impact; it is a popular stopping off area for coach tours, camper vans, fishermen, rock climbers, walkers and film crews. The removal of stone walls, littering, erosion, fires and human waste are issues that require urgent management.

Location 6. Prehistoric Court Tomb at Doolin (Area: circa 4 hectares)

This is located on the outskirts of Doolin village and is easily accessed from the road and the shore. The local heritage group would like to develop a walking trail and include this site. The tomb is not excavated and is suffering from scrub encroachment. The challenge here is to address the implications with regard to conservation of archaeological sites and projected visitor impact from proposed walking trails. This highlights the need for procedures that ensures an appropriate process of assessment takes place ahead of any inclusion of monuments on walking trails. The assessment process needs to be backed up with a methodology for carrying capacity and an ongoing management and monitoring plan.

Location 7. Cliffs of Moher (Area: circa .1km²)

The Cliffs of Moher is one of the top five visitor attractions in Ireland, attracting up to 1 million visitors per annum. The site is well managed and employs a series of visitor management techniques, including rangers, to monitor and manage the visitor impacts on this Special Protection Area designated under the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC). It is one of the most important seabird colonies in Ireland. This site is included in the list for consideration as a possible case study to test the effectiveness of the visitor management strategies employed on the valuable assemblage of over 20,000 breeding seabirds. The project may be able to improve on visitor management techniques and provide opportunities to test species survey and monitoring techniques.

Location 8. Lisdoonvarna Spa Wells (Area: circa 1 hectare)

A site containing a looped walk in the town of Lisdoonvarna incorporating three of the original Spa Wells and important regional geological 'contexts' and features. This site poses the challenge of managing natural and cultural locations of interest in an urban setting; the visitor management model would have to address issues around the care and maintenance of locations subject to constant human and traffic impacts and vandalism.

Location 9. Medieval Church and surrounding archaeological complex at Carron (Area: circa .25 hectares)

This historical monument is in a highly visible location adjacent to a busy tourist route (R480) and attracts an average of 50,000 visitors per year. It is a site containing an unusual fortified 15th century church and graveyard and surrounding archaeological complex with excellent views of one of the oldest geomorphological features in the Burren known as the Meggagh Depression. The deteriorating condition of the church building is cause for concern and has been highlighted in a report by the County Council Conservation Officer. Concerns have been raised in relation to the safety of visitors. The original aim with this site was to ensure that the building is stabilised, improve interpretation of both the archaeological and geomorphological features and provide car parking for

a limited number of cars. However, prior to this, sustainable 'best practice' conservation and management procedures must be developed and applied.

Location 10. Sheshymore Pavement (Area: circa .2km²)

A privately owned site located on the East Burren Complex SAC (001926) containing a geological site of international importance (as identified by the Irish Geological Heritage Programme) that is frequently visited by third level geology students from Ireland and abroad. The site is suffering from the rapid encroachment of hazel scrub. Access is restricted and parking is not available. The landowner would welcome the establishment of a safe access route, insurance cover and a management programme at this location. The issue with this location is if it should be developed and promoted as a location for general public access, and if so, what level of visitor access, interpretation, maintenance and monitoring would be required to safeguard this important geological resource.

Location 11. Medieval stone fort at Cahercommaun (Area: circa 2km²)

This is one of the best loved, interesting and most dramatic of archaeological monuments in the Burren; a 9th century wealthy and powerful farmstead complex built on the edge of a cliff. The National Monuments Service have implemented a successful visitor management strategy in terms of controlling access to the monument itself, however, there are broader issues in relation to the overall access and management of the monument that need to be addressed and improved. One proposal is to develop a walking trail from a local visitor centre which would offer welcome links between the NMS and local business, add value to the visit by expanding the access options and providing added services such as interpretation, guiding services, toilets, cafe and parking. Again, good conservation management policies have to be developed to guide this proposal.

Location 12. Lough Bunny (Area: circa 8 hectares)

Lying within the East Burren Complex SAC (001926) Lough Bunny is approximately 102ha in area, within a shallow depth of about 2m over most of its area. The location under consideration is on the R460 between Corrofin and Gort, adjacent to Lough Bunny and the Burren National Park. It is a site containing interesting geological features and a great range of Burren flowers, and is a favourite location for botanists and students. The site consists of a small parking area with picnic tables and an interpretative panel. Access to the Lough shore is across the road, through Commonage lands. The Lough shore itself and surrounding lands are subject to erosion, the car park attracts a lot of picnic parties at weekends and littering and minor vandalism is a problem. As part of commonage, there are maintenance and access issues at this site that need to be addressed. If successful this would be a positive example of good practice on access for other commonage owners in the Burren, who have been negatively disposed towards management proposals and access agreements in the past.

Following the “areas to be covered” in Q9, the following is an indicative estimate of the cost breakdown. This is very approximate and will require further validation at the preparatory actions stage. Not all of the locations below will be chosen, the choice will be informed by a selection matrix with environmental, infrastructural, social and economic criteria and the budget.

Location No	Project	€ (estimated)
1	Flaggy Shore	90,000
2	Black Head	12,000
3	Fanore Dunes	50,000
4	Stone fort/cairn at Black head	60,000
5	Ballyreen and Poulsallagh	100,000
6	Wedge Tomb at Doolin	25,000
7	Cliff s of Moher	20,000
8	Lisdoonvarna	25,000
9	Carron church/archaeological site	160,000
10	Sheshymore Pavement	20,000
11	Stone fort at Cahercommaun	40,000
12	Lough Bunny	25,000
Total		627,000*

***Only a selection of the above will be chosen, to suit criteria and budget**