



'Donegal's Regional Action Plan

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Action Plan

2 Core Objectives

Objective 1- To positively target a defined gap in the County Donegal Development Plan in relation to cultural heritage.

Objective 2- Build a more objective evidence based approach to cultural heritage to further inform and enable appropriate development in heritage rich Coastal Donegal and focusing on areas with significant cultural heritage

OBJECTIVE 1:

To positively target a defined gap in the County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024 in relation to cultural heritage.



Natural Heritage:
5 new policies



Built Heritage:
4 new policies



Archaeological Heritage:
1 new policy



Tourism: 3 new objectives and 3 new policies

Further outputs

- In excess of 130 buildings were added onto the National Record of Protected Structures during phase 1 of the project, giving statutory legal protection and ensuring the appropriate managed development of these historic buildings. Work is ongoing to provide for the addition of further buildings and continually expand the number of protected buildings.
- Successful 'Built Heritage Investment Scheme' funding was awarded to the following 3 projects in the Dunree Fort area:
 - Dunree Lighthouse- €5k for emergency repairs
 - Napoleonic Gun Battery, Buncrana- €6.5k emergency repairs and conservation report
 - Buncrana Castle- €17k for stone roof repairs
- Successful 'Historic Structure Funding' was awarded to St Mura's Cross Fahan, and archaeological artefact dating from the 7th Century- €15k

OBJECTIVE 2:

Build a more objective evidence based approach to cultural heritage to further inform and enable appropriate development in Coastal Donegal in areas with significant cultural heritage

During the collation of cultural Heritage data, a concentration of significant heritage assets were identified around the shores of Lough Swilly, a large Sea Lough on the north Atlantic Coastline of County Donegal.

Dunree fort and complex came to the fore as a location of important and plentiful heritage assets and opportunities. It was identified as an opportune location of focus owing to its significant military, maritime, historical, archaeological, built and cultural assets.



Lekeito's Best Practice Model

Lekeito's Heritage Experience was identified as a good example of how Dunree Fort could be developed and managed, owing to the many parallels between the 2 projects. Of interest was the emphasis on how Lekeitos multiple heritage assets were harnessed and used allowing the conservation of the complex through new, innovative and self-sufficient methods.

There have been many recent publications and reports that highlight the economic and socio-economic value of heritage and it is interesting how Lekeito's model has successfully balanced this with the sustainable management of its heritage.



How Lekeito's Model informed plans for the development of Dunree Fort

Considered Lekeito's revaluation of their cultural heritage to:

- Reinforce local identity;
- Provide opportunities to learn about the history of the site;
- Look at economic diversification outside of 'Tourism';
- Identify ways to conserve the physical structures on the site;
- Impacts on Natural Heritage;
- Recovering 'Intangible Heritage'

In order to inform and achieve:

- A holistic tourism and economically viable development;
- Preservation and conservation of the various heritage assets;
- Tie into other tourism developments in the area and create a clustered product, and
- Create a blueprint for the expansion of this model to further develop other related military maritime structures dotted around the coast of Lough Swilly.

Regional Results in Phase 2

- Application for funding to Fáilte Ireland for in excess of €2.5m to develop the 70 acre Dunree site as a visitor attraction, integrating the architecture, history, heritage, environment and seascape of the area including the various military structures and also the lighthouse and lighthouse keep. This application is currently at stage 2 of a 5 stage process.

Longer Term Results

- Inform the forthcoming Marine Spatial Plan for Donegal (being rolled out at a national level across Ireland.)
- Further evidenced based policy making and development of guidelines.
- Continued focus on embedding cultural heritage into policy development.
- Strongly identify cultural heritage as strategic resource in the redevelopment of coastal and fluvial landscapes.
- Continued active engagement with communities, stakeholders and politicians.
- Continue to engender an increased appreciation of Heritage.
- Maintain the relationships and collaborations built up over the process to further integrate cultural heritage into development programmes, funding applications in a proactive manner in the context of appropriate management of these unique and finite resources.

Unexpected Results

- The success of our collaboration and liaison with Fáilte Ireland (National Irish Tourist Board) and Donegal Tourism. We are working alongside these agencies identifying opportunities to align cultural heritage tourism strategies. A particular focus is how the heritage assets can be incorporated into the tourism product and with an initial focus on identifications of clusters and tourist mapping, thereby informing the visitor of the collective heritage assets of the county.
- Working with 'The Heritage Council' to examine ways that the significant research and identification of heritage assets through the project could be used by them on a National platform.
- Significance of the outputs of phase 1 and the implementation of Actions in phase 2 on informing existing and planned funding and development applications



HERICOAST

Interreg Europe



European Union
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Thank you



**Comhairle Contae
Dhún na nGall**
Donegal County Council



Project smedia