

CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL  
CLIFFS OF MOHER  
STRATEGY 2040

Phase 2 Consultation Document  
May 2022

# ***FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CLIFFS OF MOHER***

## **Background**

**The Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience is the most visited natural attraction in Ireland attracting 1.6m visitors (2019). It is a signature discovery point on Fáilte Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way, a main Geosite of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Geopark, a Special Protected Area for Birds and Wildlife and is a wholly owned tourism asset of Clare County Council.**

**Clare County Council, supported by Fáilte Ireland, is working, with a multi-disciplinary consultancy team led by Haley Sharpe Design, to prepare a new Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040 including an overall site masterplan.**

**The development of the Strategy is being guided by a Steering Group comprising representatives from:**

- Clare County Council**
- Fáilte Ireland**
- Cliffs of Moher Experience**
- Cliffs of Moher Centre DAC Board**
- Clare County Council Elected Members**
- National Parks & Wildlife Service**
- Representatives from Private Industry**



# THE FOCUS OF THE 2040 CLIFFS OF MOHER STRATEGY

## Strengthening Fundamentals, Strategic Priorities and Partnerships

The Cliffs of Moher 2040 strategy, hinterland and site masterplan must be fully integrated within the context of wider national, regional, county and local development plans and strategic frameworks.

## Sustainable Tourism Development

The Cliffs of Moher destination strategy and vision is framed within the international VICE model for sustainable tourism development. This focuses on the interaction and balancing the relationships between:

- Visitors
- The Industry that provides services to them
- The Community and culture that hosts them
- Their collective impact on, and response to, the Environment where it all takes place

It also reflects the Actions to Promote Sustainable Tourism Practices 2021-2023 set out by the Sustainable Tourism Working Group, established under the aegis of the Tourism Leadership Group and chaired by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media and includes senior representatives of the Irish Tourism Industry Confederation (ITIC), Fáilte Ireland, and Tourism Ireland.

The strategy is focused on future development of the Cliffs of Moher site to:

- Create world class experiences
- Enhance the special qualities of the site
- Grow the Cliffs of Moher's (COM) tourism and economic contribution to the county in a sustainable way over the next 20 years



# INVESTMENT REQUIRED TO ACHIEVE A STEP CHANGE IN THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

**Need for future investment to maintain premier market position. The Cliffs of Moher has a premier market position in terms of its success in attracting visitors and in its promotional profile and role in selling Ireland to overseas visitors. It success brings significant local, regional and national economic benefits**

**Aspirations of tourists and visitors are ever rising and, without on-going investment, competition from national and international destinations and attractions is a threat to the Cliffs premier market position.**

**The challenge is to deliver a step change in the quality of visitor experience utilising best practice visitor management and environmental management principles to ensure the future of the natural assets is safeguarded and conserved.**

**Best practise has focused on:**

- **Development / moving built visitor facilities and support services away from the sensitive, natural attraction – e.g. Ayres Rock / Grand Canyon Sky Walk / Stonehenge**



- **Regenerating the environment and ecology and pro-active management and control of visitor access – e.g. Eden Project / Zion National Park**



# HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE DRAFT 2040 STRATEGY

## The Consultation Process

As part of the Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy a comprehensive phase 1 consultation process was carried out with County Clare residents, key stakeholders, business organisations, community groups and visitors to the COM. This engagement process ran from the commencement of the work in November 2019 until 24th September 2021. The focus of this phase 1 consultation was:

- Understanding the relevant context and wider framework relating to the Cliffs of Moher
- Concerns about current and future issues relating to the Cliffs of Moher
- Views on the potential opportunities for developing the Cliffs of Moher

We have valued greatly the responses and feedback you have already provided, which has helped shape the development of our draft proposals.

Your participation in the refinement of the COM 2040 Strategy is crucial so that it fully addresses the collective aspirations for the Cliffs and the benefits it can bring to the county.



# YOUR PHASE 1 CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

## COUNTY CLARE RESIDENTS KEY CONCERNS

The key concern relating to the Cliffs of Moher for Clare County residents was general traffic congestion / disruption caused by large visitor numbers at peak times.

Completed survey questionnaires were received from 484 residents living within County Clare. Almost all these residents had previously visited the Cliffs of Moher (99%).

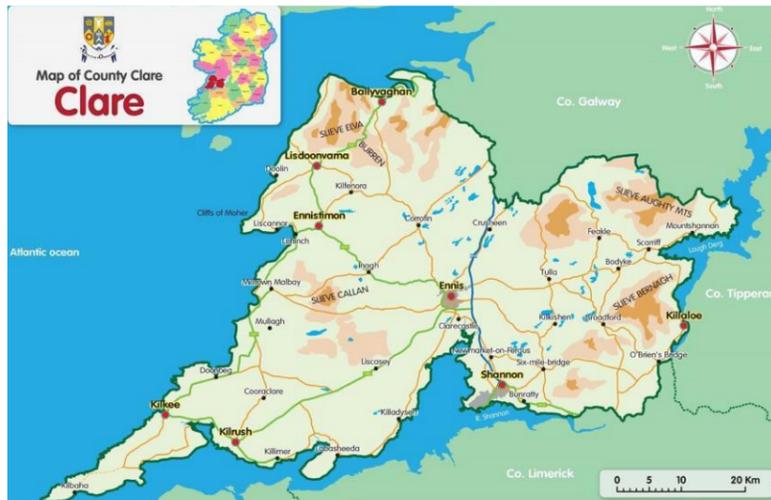
County Clare residents were very concerned over a wide range of current issues relating to the Cliffs of Moher. On average, just over one third of people were 'Very Concerned' on all issues (rated 1 on a scale of concern of 1-10).

The highest rated concern was general traffic congestion / disruption caused to residents by large visitor numbers at peak times:

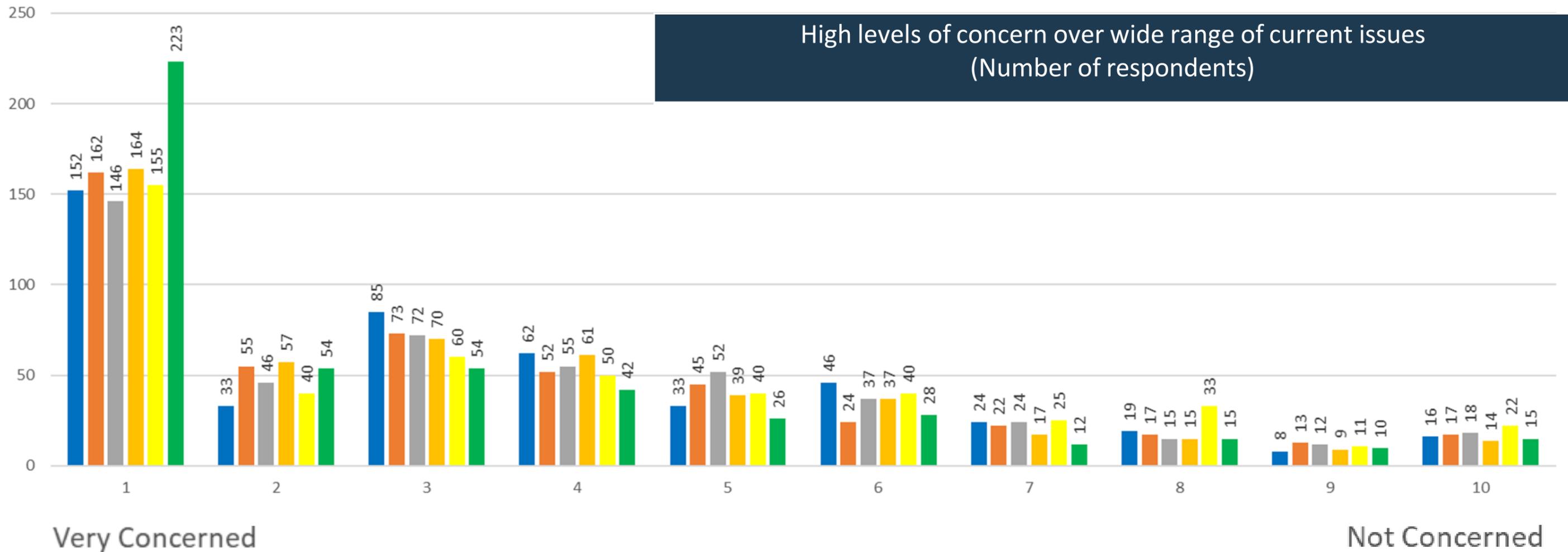
- This was rated 1 (on a scale of concern of 1-10) by 47% (223 people) of respondents. 78% of people were concerned over traffic congestion / disruption (rated 1-4).
- 71% of respondents identified both cars and coaches as the main cause of congestion; 22% identified coaches as the main cause.

The highest level of concern (rated 1) was very similar for each of the other issues:

- Limited economic benefits to businesses local to the Cliffs of Moher (34%) / to businesses across County Clare (31%)
- Physical damage caused to the cliff edge by high visitor numbers (34%)
- Threats to the flora and fauna of the site (32%)
- Visual impact of car / coach parking on the landscape (31%)



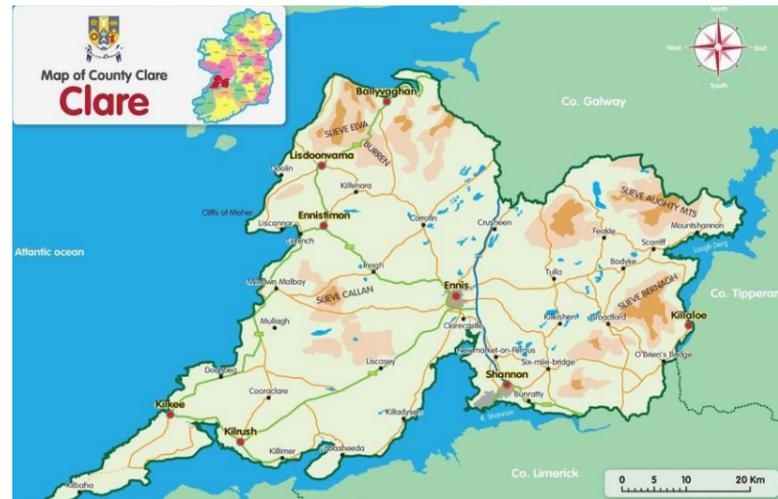
# COUNTY CLARE RESIDENTS KEY CONCERNS



- Threats to Flora and Fauna
- Limited economic benefits to businesses local to the Cliffs of Moher
- Limited economic benefits to businesses across County Clare
- Physical damage caused to the cliff edge by high visitor numbers
- Visual impact of car / coach parking on the landscape
- General traffic congestion / disruption caused to residents by large visitor numbers at peak times

# COUNTY CLARE RESIDENTS - POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

**The highest rated potential opportunity for future development was a sustainable transport system for access to Cliffs of Moher and around County Clare.**



**County Clare residents were very positive in their views on the range of potential opportunities for developing the Cliffs of Moher. On average, almost one third of people were very positive on all future opportunities (rated 1 on a scale of 1-10).**

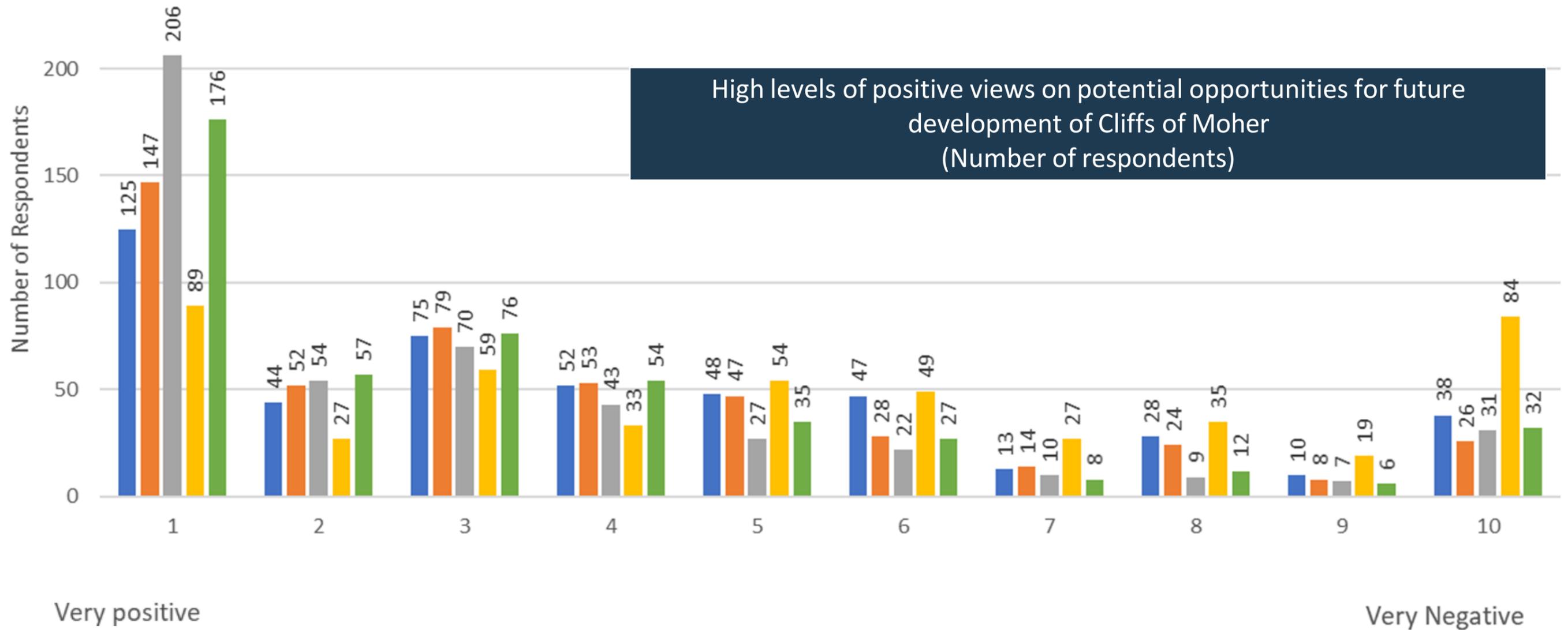
**The highest rated potential opportunity for future development was a sustainable transport system for access to Cliffs of Moher and around County Clare:**

- **This was rated 1 by 43% of respondents (206 people).**
- **78% of people were positive regarding a sustainable transport system (rated 1-4).**

**The positivity (rated 1) for other future development opportunities were:**

- **Enhancing the special qualities of the Cliffs of Moher (36%)**
- **Realising greater economic benefits to local businesses by encouraging visitors to stay longer at the cliffs and the area (31%)**
- **Promotion of the COM as a magnet to attract and disperse visitors across County Clare (26%)**
- **Development of more things to see and do at the Cliffs (19%)**

# COUNTY CLARE RESIDENTS- POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES



- Promotion of the Cliffs of Moher as a magnet to attract and disperse visitors across County Clare
- Realising greater economic benefits to local businesses by encouraging visitors to stay longer at the cliffs and the area
- Development of a sustainable transport system for access to the Cliffs of Moher site and around County Clare
- Development of more things to see and do at the Cliffs of Moher site
- Enhance the special qualities of the Cliffs of Moher's environment, flora, and fauna.

## **PREVIOUS VISITORS - CONCERNS**

**The key concerns relating to the COM for previous visitors were physical damage caused to the cliff edge by high visitor numbers and threats to flora and fauna**

Completed questionnaires were received from 77 people (living outside County Clare) who had previously visited the Cliffs of Moher. Responses came from residents living across the world. Most people lived in USA / Canada and other areas of Ireland

Previous visitors (from outside County Clare) were very concerned over a wide range of current issues relating to the Cliffs of Moher. On average, one third of people were **VERY CONCERNED ON ALL ISSUES** (rated 1 – on a scale of concern of 1-10)

The highest rated concerns were physical damage caused to the cliff edge by high visitor numbers and threats to flora and fauna. These were both rated 1 (on a scale of concern of 1-10) by 53% of respondents.

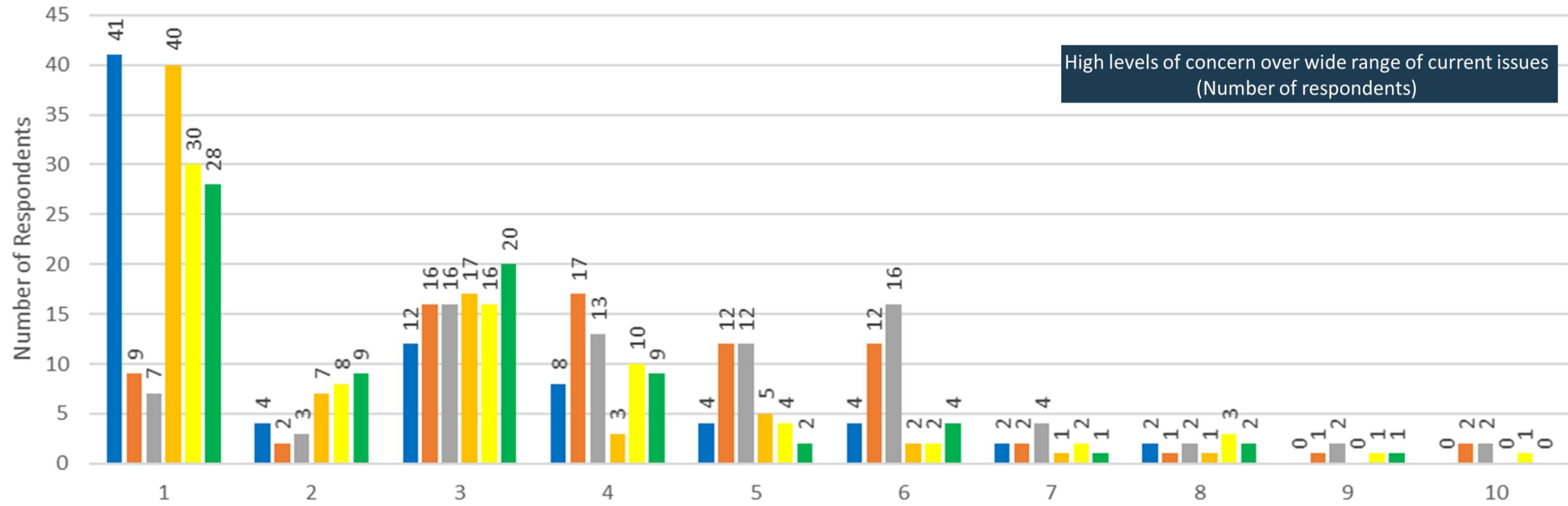
88% of people were concerned by physical damage caused to the cliff edge by high visitor numbers (rated 1-4) and 84% of people were concerned by threats to flora and fauna (rated 1-4)

The next highest levels of concern (rated 1) were:

- Visual impact of car / coach parking on the landscape (39%)
- General traffic congestion / disruption cause to residents (37%). 78% of respondents identified **BOTH CARS AND COACHES** as the main cause of congestion

Limited economic benefits to businesses (both local to the Cliffs and across County Clare) were not identified as a significant concern by previous visitors from outside County Clare

# PREVIOUS VISITORS - CONCERNS



High levels of concern over wide range of current issues  
(Number of respondents)

Very Concerned

Not Concerned

- Threats to Flora and Fauna
- Limited economic benefits to businesses local to the Cliffs of Moher
- Limited economic benefits to businesses across County Clare
- Physical damage caused to the cliff edge by high visitor numbers
- Visual impact of car / coach parking on the landscape
- General traffic congestion / disruption caused to residents by large visitor numbers at peak times

## PREVIOUS VISITORS – POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

**The highest rated potential opportunities for future development was a sustainable transport system for access to Cliffs of Moher and around County Clare and enhancing the qualities of the Cliffs of Moher's environment, flora and fauna.**

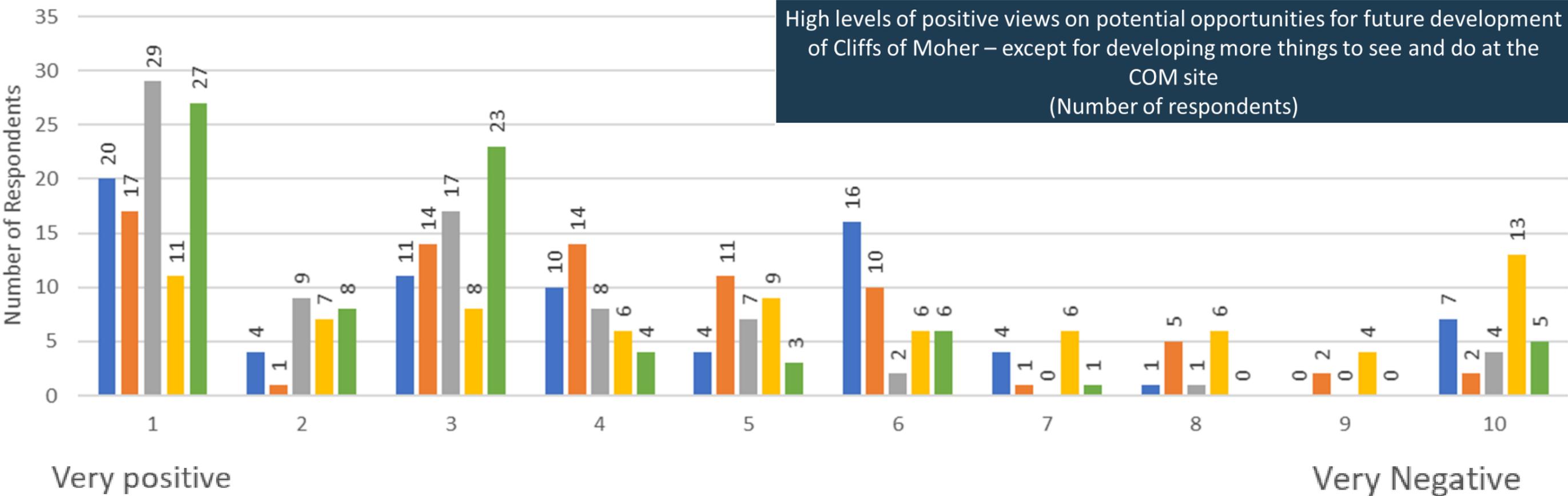
**Previous visitors were generally positive in their views on the range of potential opportunities for developing the Cliffs of Moher – except for developing more things to see and do at the COM site.**

**On average, almost one third of people were very positive on all future opportunities (rated 1) – excluding developing more things to see and do at the COM site**

**The highest rated potential opportunities for future development were:**

- A sustainable transport system for access to the Cliffs of Moher and around County Clare (rated 1 by 38% of respondents)**
- Enhance the qualities of the Cliffs of Moher's environment, flora and fauna (rated 1 by 35% of respondents)**

# PREVIOUS VISITORS – POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES



- Promotion of the Cliffs of Moher as a magnet to attract and disperse visitors across County Clare
- Realising greater economic benefits to local businesses by encouraging visitors to stay longer at the cliffs and the area
- Development of a sustainable transport system for access to the Cliffs of Moher site and around County Clare
- Development of more things to see and do at the Cliffs of Moher site
- Enhance the special qualities of the Cliffs of Moher's environment, flora, and fauna.

# COMMUNITY GROUPS AND BUSINESS ORGANISATIONS

The key concerns relating to the COM for community groups and business organisations related to:

- **Negative impacts of traffic disruption (especially size, frequency and volume of large coaches)**
- **Realising greater economic benefits through enhanced co-ordination and relationships – COM to be a better neighbour**
- **Ensure general infrastructure in towns / villages can cope**

Meetings were held with the following Community Groups and Business Organisations:

- County Clare Accommodation Providers
- Local Business Community
- Burren EcoTourism Network
- Doolin Tourism
- The Irish Farmers' Association / Clare IFA

- Community Group Representatives
- Clare Public Participation Network
- Doolin Community Council
- Planning Group of the North Clare Strategic Planning Project
- Lisdoonvarna Fáilte CLG & Community
- Ennistymon Town Team

**Over 30 organisations / groups across the County made detailed submission responses.**

**The key concerns and issues relating to the future of the COM for community groups and business organisations were:**

- Need to resolve negative impacts of traffic disruption (especially size, frequency and volume of large coaches) on local residents at peak times
- Need to achieve a balance between requirements of local community, businesses, visitors and the special environment – also between national tourism and local impacts!

- How can visitors be encouraged to stay longer / overnight in the area and bring real economic benefits to local businesses?
- Can the general Infrastructure of the County cope with more visitors (roads, parking, water treatment etc.)
- Cliffs of Moher needs to be seen as a good neighbour
- Greater transparency of where cliff's profits go – how do local communities benefit?
- Opportunities to use pre-booking and price as a mechanism to manage visitor capacity
- Critical to add an economic pillar to the COM Strategy and Masterplan – more detailed and specific economic and social impact study to be carried out as an integral part of the work.

## ***DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY – VISITOR NUMBERS AT PEAK TIMES ARE THE CRITICAL FACTOR***

Visitor numbers at peak times are the critical factor in future development of the COM. They secure a continued contribution to the wider economy to ensure a commercially sustainable tourism attraction. However, visitor numbers also bring many negative impacts on the site and in the local towns / villages.

Visitors come to the Cliffs to enjoy the natural beauty and the outdoor experience. However, the site facilities are at capacity from February through to the end of October, particularly between the hours of 11.00am – 4.30pm. Visitors experience queues on entry to the car parks, crossing the road (for car visitors) which creates a poor sense of arrival. They are often unable to access the visitor centre and use toilets, catering and retail facilities due to overcrowding.

Furthermore, high levels of visitors in the outdoor areas and spaces, especially at the cliff edge, which significantly detracts from the quality of the core experience at viewing points. The restricted cliff edge paths also create health and safety issues, and extensive erosion of the cliff edge itself, as visitors go beyond the designated pathways.



The high visitor numbers cause significant disruption in the local towns / villages on the access routes to the COM. This has been highlighted as the key concern by County Clare residents, local community groups and businesses.



# ***A SUSTAINABLE APPROACH TO FUTURE VISITOR NUMBERS – MANAGING IMPACTS AND THE QUALITY OF THE EXPERIENCE***

The Strategy looks to limit the peak day design capacity of the expanded COM site to 10,500 visitors and achieve better distribution. This means that there will be NO increase in peak day numbers of visitors from 2019 levels.

The key strategic approach is to get visitors, especially Fully Independent Travellers (FITs) to explore the wider area. They will stay longer at the COM but the aim is not that they stay all day.

There will be a focus on spreading visitors arrivals earlier and later in the day.

Enhanced facilities and packages at the COM, and in partnership with local businesses, will increase visits in the off-peak and shoulder seasons to reduce seasonality and provide greater all year round viability.

The proposals will look to increase the dwell time of visitors on the COM:

- Coach visitors – a slight increase in average dwell time to at least 2 hours. A co-ordinated approach with local businesses will seek to ensure additional stops in the areas as part of Day Tour Operator coach licences.
- FITs – increase from less than 2 hours to 3 hours on site (plus additional time on the shuttle experience). A total average COM visitor experience of 3.5 to 4 hours (inc. shuttle) for FITs will give them time to visit somewhere else locally (but limit the potential to travel on out of the area and / or the County).

The Strategy will work towards a change in the visitor mix to help facilitate greater opportunities for realising economic benefits for the local area.

Overall, on peak days over the main arrival period (10am – 3pm) coaches will be reduced by around 13%.

This will be achieved by decreasing day tour coaches by 6% (approx. 9 coaches) and moving 7% more coaches (approx. 11 coaches) to earlier and later time slots.

This decrease in coach visitors will be balanced by increasing FITs visitors by around 10%. More FITs will be encouraged to visit at earlier and later times of the day. This approach can offer opportunities for additional premium experiences (guided tours / access up O’Brien’s Tower etc.) and also encourage development of overnight packages with local accommodation.

This approach to re-profiling the visitor mix for the COM reflects a sustainable scenario which balances the strategic and local issues whilst delivering a robust operational business for the COM.

Projections for total visitors on peak day are presented in the following tables. This includes breakdowns for coach visitors and FITs along with hourly arrivals and hourly visitors on site.

## PEAK DAY PROJECTIONS OF VISITOR NUMBERS AND ARRIVALS –

### COACH VISITORS

<i>Arrival Time</i>	<i>% Visitors Arriving</i>	<i>Number Of Visitors Arriving</i>	<i>Average Visitor Stay (Hours)</i>	<i>Number Of Visitors On Site</i>
7am - 8am	2%	<b>84</b>	2.0	84
8am - 9am	3%	<b>126</b>	2.0	210
9am -10am	3%	<b>126</b>	2.0	252
10am - 11am	9%	<b>378</b>	2.0	504
11am - 12 noon	16%	<b>672</b>	2.0	1050
12 noon - 1pm	16%	<b>672</b>	2.0	1344
1pm - 2pm	17%	<b>714</b>	2.0	1386
2pm - 3pm	16%	<b>672</b>	2.0	1386
3pm - 4pm	9%	<b>378</b>	2.0	1050
4pm - 5pm	3%	<b>126</b>	2.0	504
5pm - 6pm	3%	<b>126</b>	2.0	252
6pm - 7 pm	3%	<b>126</b>	2.0	252
7pm - 8 pm	0%	<b>0</b>	n/a	126
8pm - 9pm	0%	<b>0</b>	n/a	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,200</b>	2.0	

**PEAK DAY PROJECTIONS OF VISITOR NUMBERS AND ARRIVALS –  
FULLY INDEPENDENT TRAVELLERS**

<b>Arrival Time</b>	<b>% Visitors Arriving</b>	<b>Number Of Visitors Arriving</b>	<b>Average Visitor Stay (Hours)</b>	<b>Number Of Visitors On Site</b>
7am - 8am	2%	114	3.0	114
8am - 9am	4%	228	3.0	342
9am - 10am	9%	513	3.0	855
10am - 11am	9%	513	3.0	1,254
11am - 12 noon	12%	684	3.0	1,710
12 noon - 1pm	13%	741	3.0	1,938
1pm - 2pm	15%	855	3.0	2,280
2pm - 3pm	14%	798	3.0	2,394
3pm - 4pm	9%	513	3.0	2,166
4pm - 5pm	4%	228	3.0	1,539
5pm - 6pm	4%	228	3.0	969
6pm - 7 pm	3%	171	3.0	627
7pm - 8 pm	2%	114	2.0	513
8pm - 9pm	0%	0	n/a	285
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,700</b>	<b>3.0</b>	

**PEAK DAY PROJECTIONS OF VISITOR NUMBERS AND ARRIVALS –**

**TOTAL VISITORS (EXCLUDING COASTAL WALK VISITORS APPROX. 600)**

<b><i>Arrival Time</i></b>	<b><i>% Visitors Arriving</i></b>	<b><i>Number Of Visitors Arriving</i></b>	<b><i>Average Visitor Stay (Hours)</i></b>	<b><i>Number Of Visitors On Site</i></b>
7am - 8am	2%	198	Coach Visitors 2 hours / FIT visitors 3 hours	198
8am - 9am	4%	354		552
9am -10am	6%	639		1,107
10am - 11am	9%	891		1,758
11am - 12 noon	14%	1,356		2,760
12 noon - 1pm	14%	1,413		3,282
1pm - 2pm	16%	1,569		3,666
2pm - 3pm	15%	1,470		3,780
3pm - 4pm	9%	891		3,216
4pm - 5pm	4%	354		2,043
5pm - 6pm	4%	354		1,221
6pm - 7 pm	3%	297		879
7pm - 8 pm	1%	114		639
8pm - 9pm	0%	0		285
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9,900</b>		

# CREATING A STEP CHANGE IN THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE – A WILDER CLIFFS OF MOHER

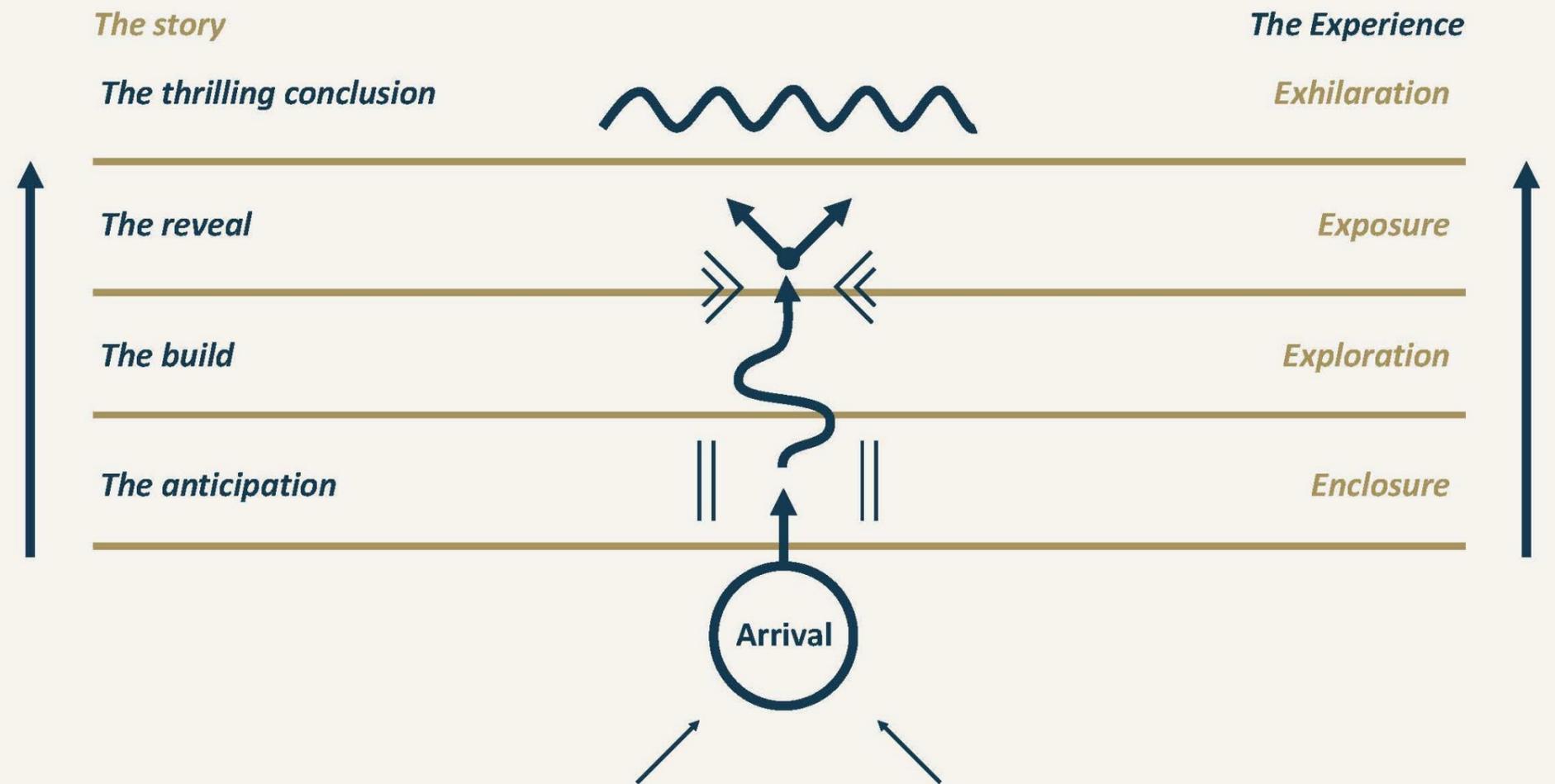
The core concept of the strategic vision for the future development of the COM is to create a ‘wilder’, back to nature visitor experience with a high quality arrival to commence the visitor journey.



Delivering this step change in the quality of the visitor will require more space for visitors to be able to disperse more widely and enjoy a true sense of WALKING ON THE WILD SIDE AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD.

Visitors will enjoy a holistic experience of the story of the edge – not just a photo-stop – from arrival to the thrilling views at the edge of the world!

## Experiencing the “Story of the Edge”



# CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT – CREATING A WILDER COM

1. Re-wilding – Back to Nature Experience

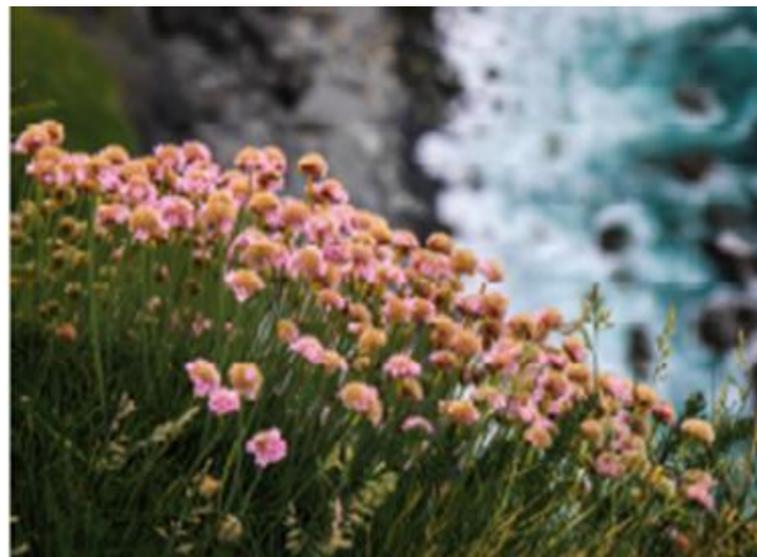
2. Arrivals, Welcome & Support Facilities

## ***A DRAMATIC, NEW WILDER ENVIRONMENT***

In addition to a significant expansion of the landholding for the COM, a dramatic change in the nature of the environment is also required. At the heart of the concept is a not only an opportunity to enhance the aesthetic appeal of the location but to dramatically increase the biodiversity value of the COM.

To achieve this, an emphasis has been placed on relocating and consolidating the arrivals, welcome and support facilities to the East of the R478. This will create a conceptual boundary between the road and the cliff side environment, allowing each location to have a primary purpose and character.

A new management approach will transform the uniform sward of grasses in a regular field system to a naturally variable mosaic of grassland, heathland and scrub habitats with enormous benefits to biodiversity. The visitor will experience a truly wilder COM experience.



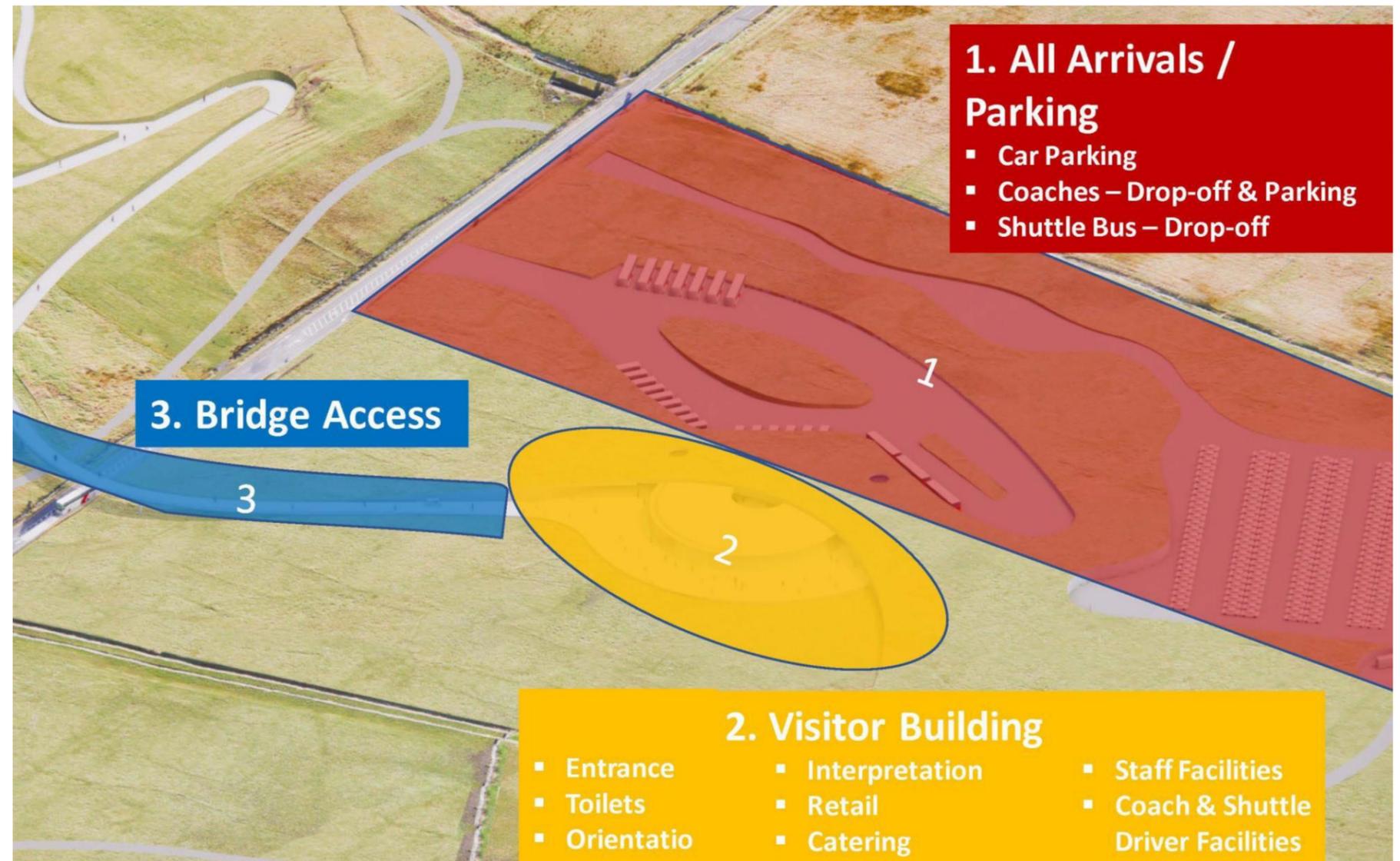
# ARRIVALS, WELCOME AND SUPPORT FACILITIES

As part of the return to nature principle for the site, a new arrivals gateway facility is created East of the R478, providing an enhanced and improved site-wide welcome facility, through which all visitors will pass, both in and out of the site.

This creates a unified and improved experience for all visitors, allowing for more effective management of arrivals.

Importantly, it also allows for significant areas of the landscape around the current visitor centre on the site to be re-wilded, removing the need for large areas of hard standing and coach parking facilities close to the cliff edge, improving the quality of views and landscape towards the cliffs.

The new gateway facility is scaled to flexibly support high and low visitor numbers throughout the year.



## ARRIVALS AND PARKING

Arrival and parking for all visitors will be provided to the east of the R478.

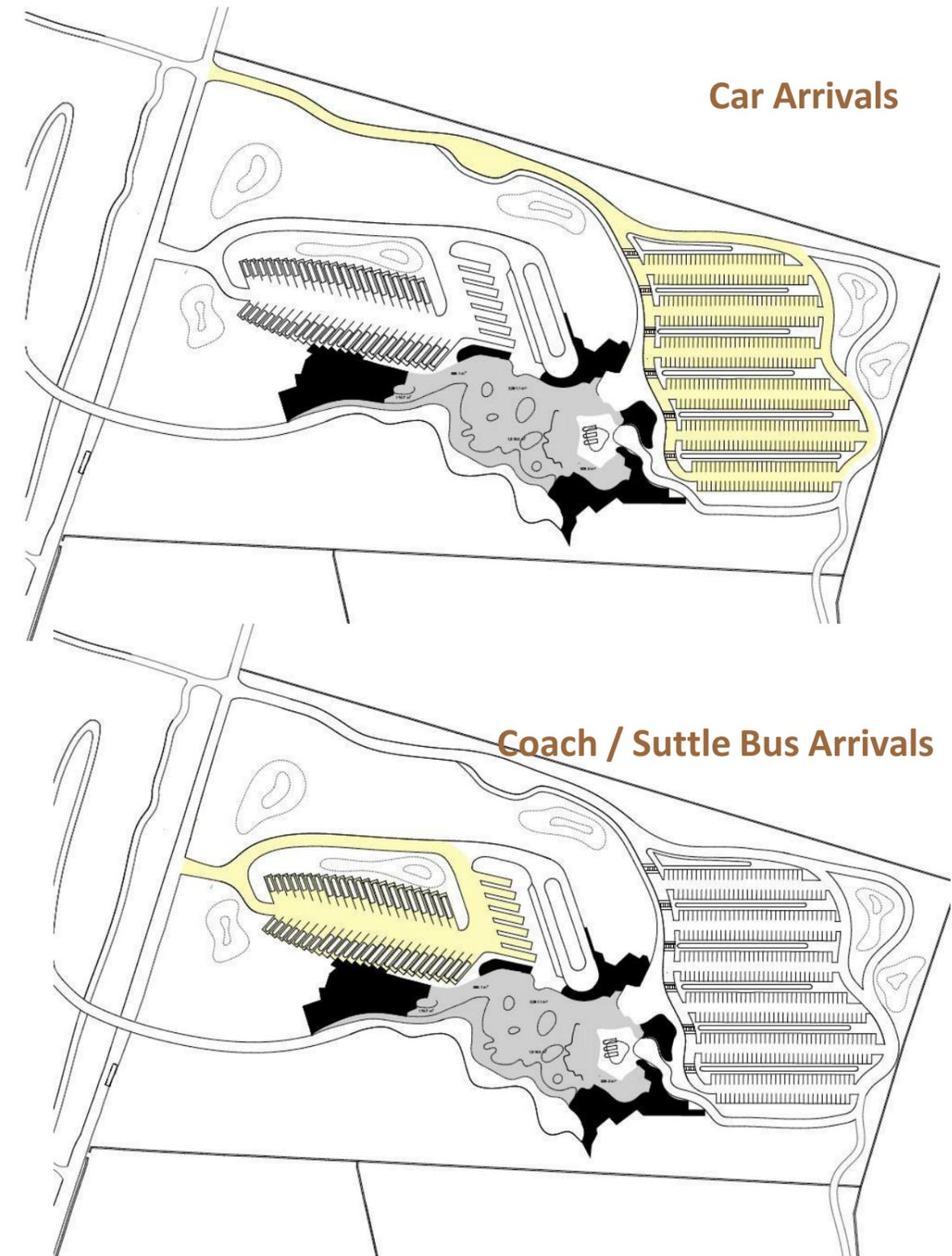
Two separate access roads for cars and coaches / shuttle will ensure all vehicles can enter safely and easily to ensure there are no tailbacks onto the R478. Drop-off points will also be provided for local bus services.

The on-site parking requirement is for 480 cars spaces (levels of use will be restricted in the peak season to some 380 spaces and access will be supplemented with a Shuttle system) and 40 coaches spaces. This level of provision is required to accommodate the longer stays on site by visitors at peak times (not more visitors on these days). Electric charging points will be provided for vehicles as part of the sustainable transport approach, secure bicycle racks will be available along with ancillary support facilities.

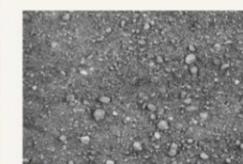
In peak periods, a Shuttle Bus service will also bring independent visitors to the site from remote parking hubs in nearby towns / villages.

All parking will be set within a more natural landscape, using bunds to minimise visual impacts of both the road and parking areas, to create a high quality sense of arrival.

Landscaping in these areas will be modest and sensitive to the setting. Tarmac surfaces will be used for road surfaces and impermeable hardstanding areas will be kept to a minimum. Natural materials will be used including locally sourced Liscannor stone gravel and stone and timber will be used to create subtle demarcations in the parking bays.



Subtle parking demarcation using natural materials: timber or stone



Dark gravel surface



Asphalt

# WELCOME TO THE NEW VISITOR GATEWAY

All visitors will be greeted on arrival within the new Visitor Gateway comprising a range of core visitor services.

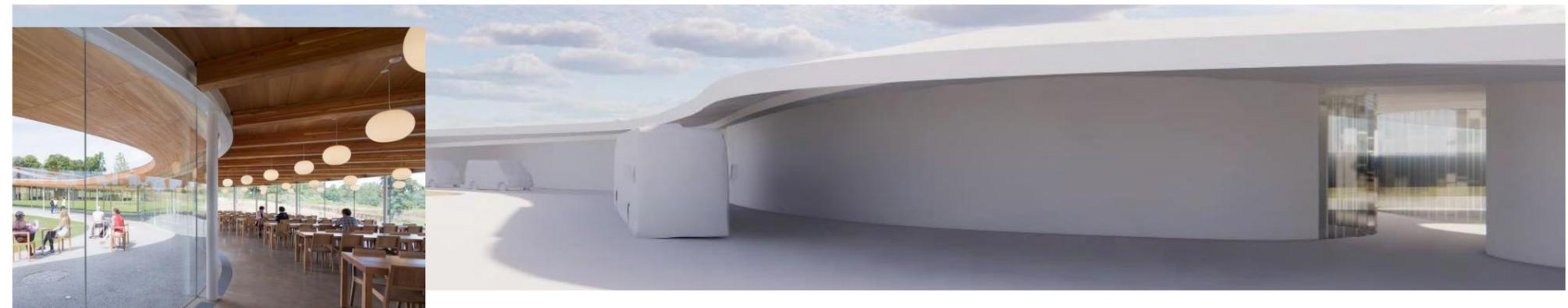
Facilities will cater for a wide range of visitor support and operational services including:

- Toilets
- Orientation
- Interpretation
- Retail
- Food and beverage
- Staff facilities – offices / welfare
- Coach and Shuttle Driver facilities

It provide all visitors with an improved sense of arrival and welcome.

It will facilitate enhanced control and management for all of the various arrivals types (coach / organized tours / shuttle buses, car and public transport arrivals).

In conjunction with pre-booking for all visitors the Gateway will enable streamlined ticketing providing necessary level of security but easier access to the site.



# THE JOURNEY TO THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

The Gateway will orientate visitors as they start their journey to the edge of the world. Site wayfinding and interpretation will be provided to help visitors understand both the arrangement and opportunities of the site and begin to express the magic and wonder of the Cliffs.

Provision, inside and outside the Gateway will include:

- 3D maps will allow groups to gather and plan their visit, distributing visitors to destinations across the landscape
- Large graphic statements conveying core themes and emotive messaging that can easily be absorbed in transit
- Sculptural elements evoke the spectacle and scale of the cliffs (e.g. rock layers)



# PROPOSED FOOD AND BEVERAGE CONCEPT

## A Showcase for Local Produce

Food and beverage at the Cliffs of Moher will act as a showcase for the outstanding local produce. Its philosophy will be:

- To celebrate local, seasonal and fresh Irish food in a contemporary way.
- To cook everything on site.
- To cater for different price points to variable visitor numbers over a 12 month period in a considered way

This area of Ireland has some of the country's most important artisans including:

- The Burren Smokehouse
- St Tola cheese
- Achill Oysters
- Velvet Cloud yoghurt.

The CoM's approach is about embracing what they are doing and becoming a lighthouse, a beacon for this area of the Wild Atlantic Way.

This will be achieved by:

- Use of local products
- Championing local producers in an overt and considered way
- Engaging with suppliers in a collaborative way
- Executing festivals/workshops and supper clubs in an on-going programme of culinary excellence

The Cliffs of Moher will become a beacon of culinary excellence for the local area, which will speak volumes not just to visitors, but to Irish people who in turn will become real ambassadors.



# THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE OFFER

Future Provision will include:

- A serve-assist counter with a full open-plan kitchen. Customers to shop a range of dishes, some prepared to order, some residing in the counter.
- A Grab & Go offer, supplied from the kitchen above and supplemented by a tea, coffee and soup offer (serve assist). This will include a picnic provision in peak months (made up of the existing offer but presented in a customised container).
- An unassisted Grab & Go offer (in or adjacent to the retail offer).
- Some 3<sup>rd</sup> party seasonal carts (eg ice-cream / cold drinks etc.)
- An assisted Grab & Go offer with adjacent seating in the re-purposed viewing hub(peak months).

The main kitchen will be open-plan with cooking 'on show'. This will be supplemented with a 'hidden' wash up area and provision for a 'goods-in' area, fridges and store rooms. Staff changing and toilet facilities also need to be adjacent. Extract will be required.



An adjacent seating area broken up into three interconnected 'zones'. It should be possible to close down the zones without impacting the customer journey for quieter periods. Anticipated total seating area circa 200/250 covers.

Ancillary (i.e. general seating): Unlimited, in as much as general seating accessible for consumption of F&B much like an airport.

A grab and go offer (self-serve) needs to be linked / adjacent to the assisted serve counter so staff can monitor, clean, refresh. But it should be self contained and positioned to draw customers who might be put off by queues at the main counter.

Ancillary carts to be provided during the summer months. It is suggested at this point to service with suitable power points. Plumbing and waste would not be provided.

## Benchmarks

- Guinness Storehouse (particularly Brewer's Dining Room)
- Eden Project
- Powerscourt House and Gardens
- Tebay Services



# PROPOSED RETAIL CONCEPT AND PRINCIPLES

It is envisaged that the COM retail space will reflect modern retail dynamics, and incorporate the latest global trends of retail best practice.

A core principle of the new retail operation will centre around provenance, Irish craft skills and local supply.

The retail strategy will incorporate sustainability statements which will centre around eco-product ranges and sustainable packaging solutions.

Omni-channel retailing will be facilitated through a dispatch hub for product purchased on site and a dynamic online retail store incorporating a sophisticated, technology driven automated marketing programme.

## Core COM Retail Principles

*Overtly bring Irish and local provenance to life*

- It is envisaged that a large ultra-modern feature display celebrating Irish fashion/craft will dominate the entrance point.
- It is envisaged the feature display would change seasonally and would involve a partnership with the likes of the Design and Crafts Council Ireland etc.
- Within the retail space there will be a retail product display selling products made by local makers.

*Facilitate product personalisation*

- At least one product at the site should allow for personalisation e.g., a guest photograph taken by an auto camera at the cliff edge can be dated, contain a personal message and be framed, to be collected in the retail shop post visit.



# PROPOSED RETAIL CONCEPT AND PRINCIPLES

## Retail entertainment

- The retail space will embrace elements of retail entertainment and consumer engagement.
- An additional showcase stage will be located within the retail footprint which will accommodate a rolling calendar of “meet the maker/crafter” events.
- When the showcase stage is not in use, an interactive video wall will tell the maker stories.



## Fast-track shopping

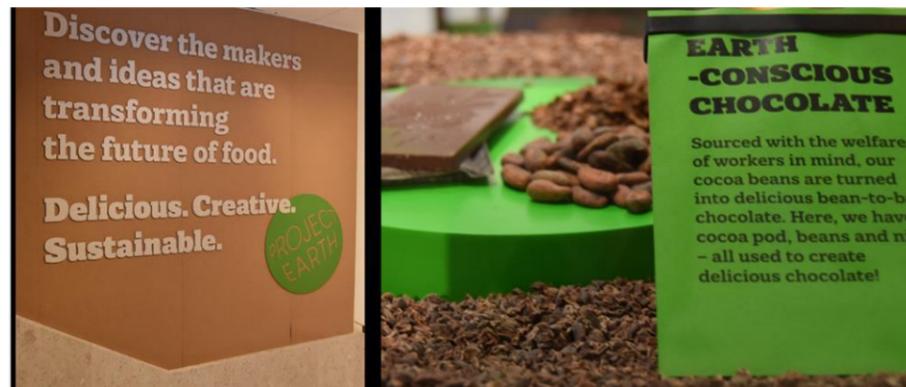
- Facilitate those who are time constrained with fast-track shopping solutions.
- The retail outlet will embrace technology to allow for a speedy checkout and online shopping.
- Self-scan checkouts and “just walk out” technology will enable self shopping.
- A dedicated online dispatch hub will allow products purchased instore to be dispatched onwards .
- For customers shopping online and product coming via the dispatch hub, “pick and pack” will be completed in an off-site facility.



# PROPOSED RETAIL CONCEPT AND PRINCIPLES

## Bring stories to life

- Bring product stories to life through signage, display and story telling.
- Throughout the shop the backstory behind products will be brought to life through innovative signage and on-shelf communication.
- Makers will be encouraged to share photos and design influence narrative with COM to be used in a constantly updating series of life stories



## Unique product ranges

- Success will be predicated on stocking unique ranges not available at other retail destinations
- A dedicated eco-range will be stocked using the Eden Project product range as a benchmark
- Further range extension will take place on the exclusive COM products



## Gifts that are good for the world

Whether it's gorgeous homeware, beautiful accessories, ingenious toys for kids, or stuff for the garden, all the carefully chosen products in our shop have an ethical story behind them.

### How we decide what to stock

We don't just choose nice products; all the lovely things in our shop meet at least one of our five buying criteria:

#### 1. Plant derived

At Eden we like to reconnect people with nature and remind them how much we all rely on plants. So it seems only right that we should showcase the amazing things they are used for. If manufactured in a sustainable way, natural products can have a lower environmental impact than stuff created from virgin plastic or metal.

Lots of our kitchenware range is made of bamboo, a fast-growing, endlessly renewable resource. It thrives naturally without using any pesticides or fertilisers, absorbing greenhouse gases as it grows.

#### 2. Fairly traded

## ***THE RETAIL EXPERIENCE***

It is envisaged that all guests, on exiting the visitor experience, will pass through the retail space through a wide immersion corridor which will “walk” the customer through the retail offer, thus enhancing impulse purchases, and will facilitate showcasing product ranges.

Customers will be encouraged to leave the central walkway by vibrant displays, stunning visual displays and the interactive showcase stage area.

Those with less time on their hands will be encouraged to shop impulse units strategically located throughout the unit.

Signage will tell the stories of the makers, and will link the shoppers to the back story behind certain products, creating an emotional shopping experience.

Towards the exit fast egress will be facilitated using technology enablers like self checkout counters, “just walk out” technology etc.



### ***Operational Recommendations***

- The retail operation should be operated by the COM internal team with no contractors involved.
- This will require significant upskilling of the team to ensure global retail best practice standards are achieved.
- Stunning visual merchandising will be a core element of the retail model and inhouse skills will also need to be strengthened in this area.
- In terms of product sourcing, expertise will need to be built in global and local sourcing, each of which has a different discipline and skillset.

## TOWARDS A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

*Visitors will transition from the Gateway facilities to the cliff side of the R478 via a new pedestrian bridge.*

**This footbridge will bring visitors to the re-wilded Cliffs experience at an elevated level to provide enhanced accessibility for all across the site, as the need for steep pathways is reduced and views of the site are improved.**

**Visitor access to via a new bridge will resolve a key current issue whereby visitors crossing the road from the current car park disrupt the flow of traffic on the main road and this causes significant queues and delays for visitors, local residents and other traffic passing the COM site.**

**An underpass was considered for visitors to pass across / under the R478. This would result be at direct odds with visitors engaging with spectacular views. It would bring visitors out at a low level, making ease of access to the cliff side of the site more difficult and would be environmentally more invasive.**

Visitor access pedestrian footbridge



# MAINTENANCE AND WASTE WATER FACILITIES – RE-WILDING OF EXISTING SITE AND DEVELOP NEW FACILITIES

New maintenance and Waste Water Treatment will be developed with natural landscaping to minimise any visual impacts to the West of the R478.

Re-wilding will take place on the areas of:

- The current coach access, reception and parking and
- Current waste water treatment area

This approach to maintenance and waste water facilities is integral to the overall concept of creating a Back to Nature Experience on the cliff side of the R478. The re-wilding will create a natural landscape with out any negative impacts of service infrastructure, vehicles and hard surfaces as visitors cross the road using the bridge.

Current Coach Parking Facilities + Waste Water Treatment



Returned to natural landscaping

○ Current coach access

○ Relocated Waste Water Treatment

# RE-WILDING – BACK TO NATURE CLIFFS EXPERIENCE

The expansion of the landholding for the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre presents a unique opportunity to enhance the biodiversity value and aesthetic appeal of the location through ‘re-wilding’.

A series of key actions are recommended in order to achieve the most rapid transformation of the site from a managed landscape to a semi-natural mosaic of habitats.

The interventions along the cliff edge will be aimed at rehabilitating the natural eroded sections. Within the agricultural grasslands the primary focus will be reducing the soil fertility in order to promote and increased floristic diversity.

A suitable grazing regime will form a key element in the process which will require suitable livestock at appropriate stocking densities.

The development of the site into a mosaic of semi-natural habitats is a long-term process and will require specialist ecological input and oversight by an experienced land manager.



## A NEW LANDSCAPE APPROACH

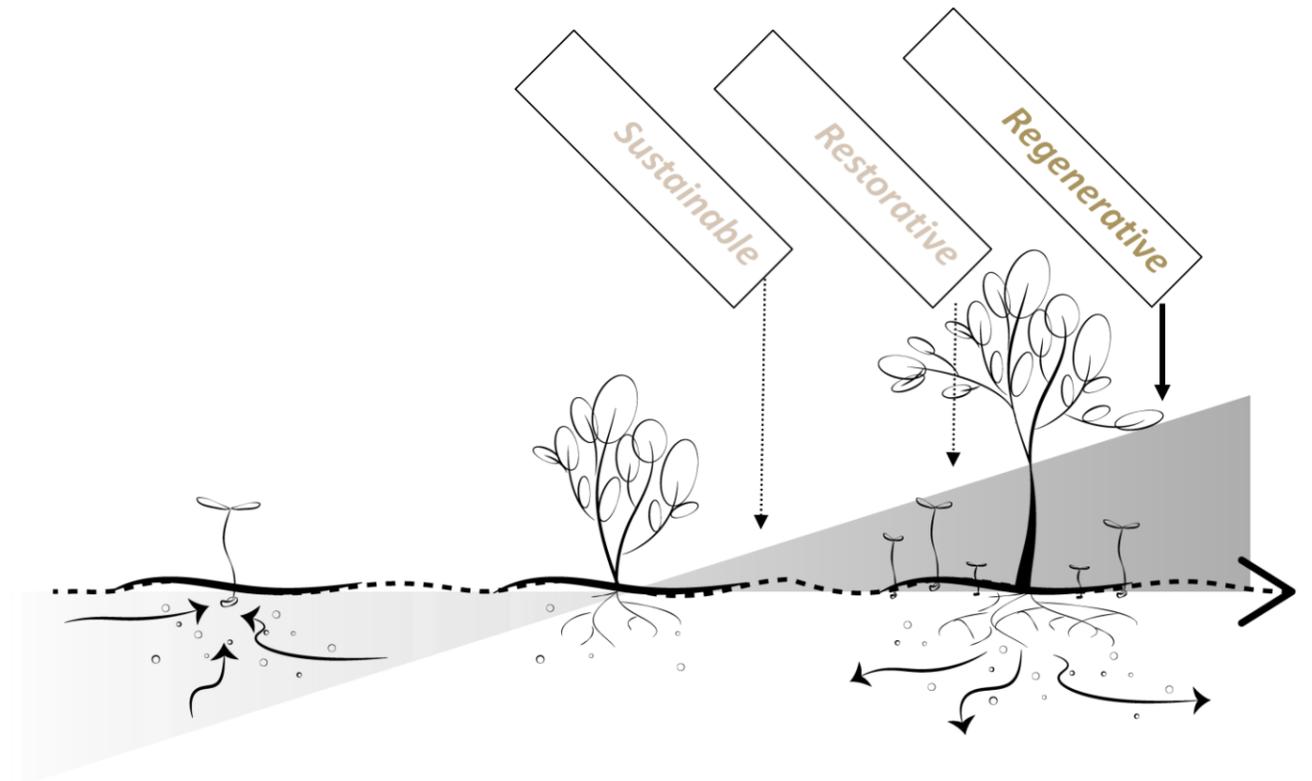
The proposals will have a “light touch” within this special environment but will also be confident, acknowledging the importance of this cultural landmark.

A key attraction of the Cliffs of Moher is the “wild” experience many visitors seek. As such, the proposals will restore and re-wild the degraded and agricultural landscapes using a regenerative landscape approach as a driving principle. This will highlight the site’s beautifully rugged and ecologically rich habitats.

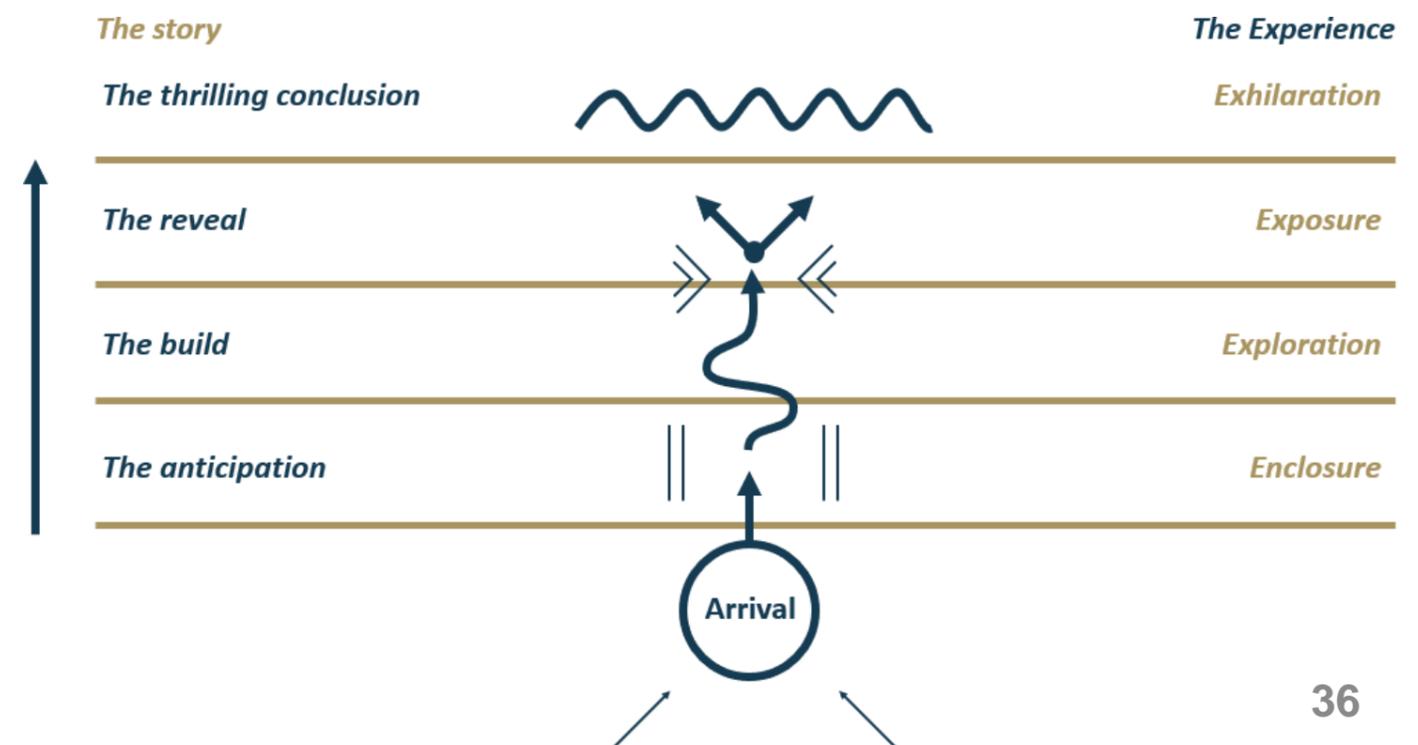
The landscape approach will facilitate the dispersal of visitors, creating more space and opportunities for an intimate experience for each visitor. It will respond to the constantly changing conditions throughout the day, year and evolution of the landscape. Proposals will be low maintenance with robust details and materials in line with the sustainable targets.

The proposals will have a positive effect on the:

- The flow and numbers of visitors
- The sensitivity of the ecology
- The drainage and erosion rates
- The visual impact of built elements from the visitor’s and the surrounding areas’ perspectives
- Telling the story of the edge



## “The Story of the Edge”



# CREATING NEW EVENTS IN THE LANDSCAPE

The proposals will exploit and enhance the natural assets of the Cliffs of Moher. From the elevated and windswept trigonometry point to rare habitats and endangered birds; there are many locations to create special visitor experiences.

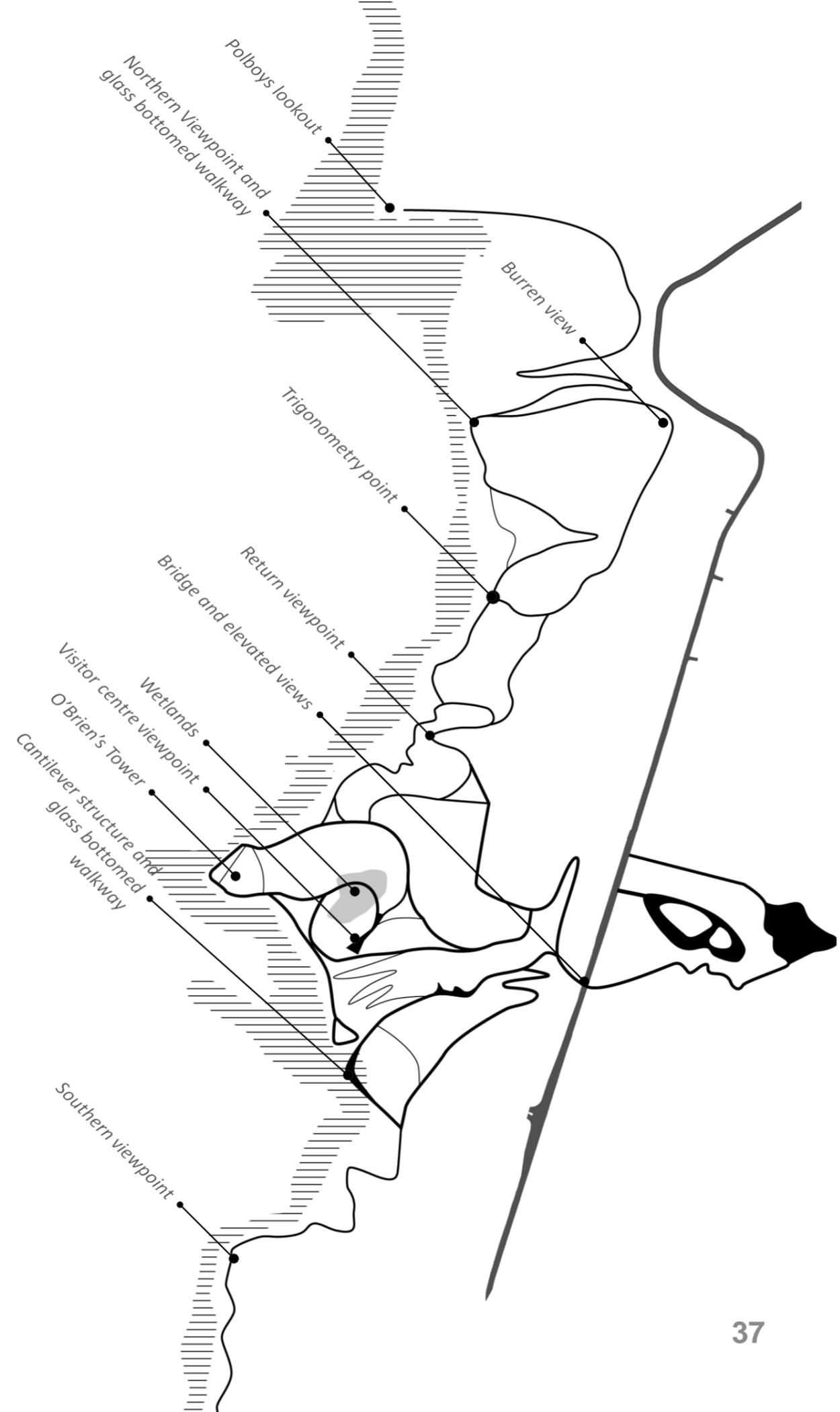
## Highlighted experiences

- Elevated views
- Raised walkways with cliff edge or inland views
- Over the edge structures with glass bottomed viewing opportunities
- Heritage assets such as O'Brien's Tower

## Sitewide experiences

- Viewing of special flora and fauna.
- Eco-tourism, grazing livestock and rewilding land management
- Geological or ecological information dissemination

There is a wide spread of experiences to be gained across the full length and breadth of the site. The network of paths and variety of experiences will allow visitors to customise their visit depending on their interests, timeframe, mobility and weather conditions. The path network also allows visitors to filter throughout the site to reduce overcrowding. The array of experiences will increase the length of visits and encourage repeat trips.



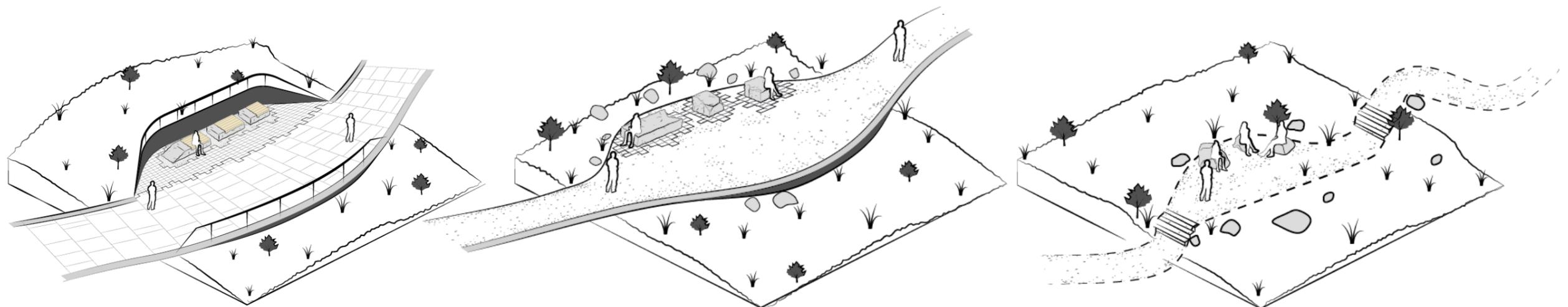
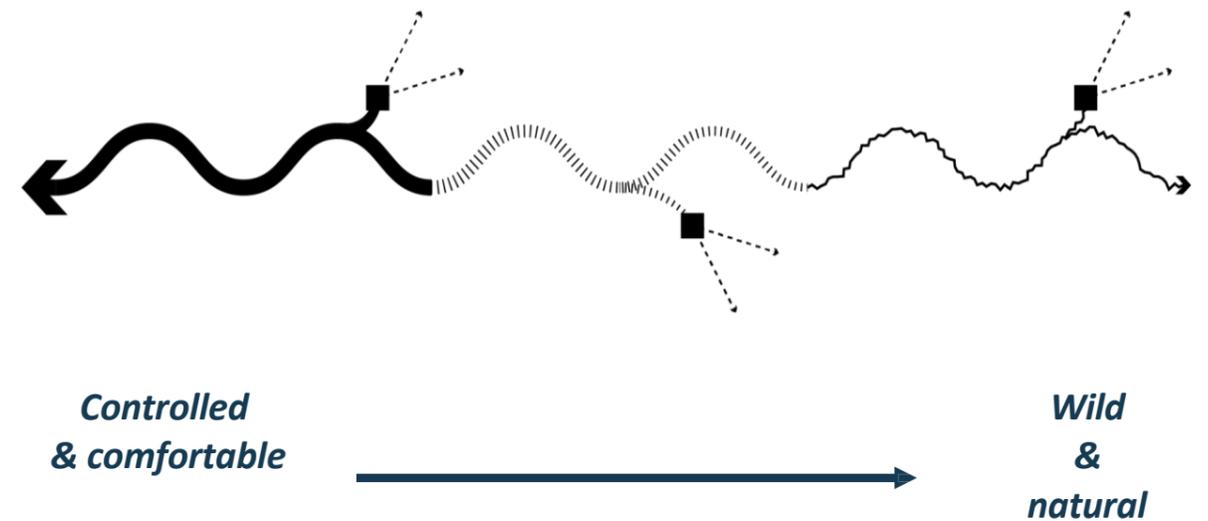
# A TIERED NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

As part of the “Story of the edge” 3 tiers of landscape will mark the transition from the controlled and comfortable environment to the wild and natural. The principle of having tiers within the landscape is to strike the balance between; the amount and scale of built interventions which provide accessibility for visitors, versus, the wild nature and valuable habitats of the site. Each tier of the landscape will have it’s own events and attractions to spread the visitors across the site.

**Tier 1** will be the “core experience” – from arrival, around the visitor centres and onward to the closest cliff edge experiences. Ideally this will be fully accessible to everyone with a formal, comfortable aesthetic and well defined edges. To maximise accessibility there will be landform changes or elevated walkways to reduce the gradients of the primary paths.

**Tier 2** will be easy to access but introduce a degree of nature through the courser materiality and a feathered edge merging the paths with their context. There are modest landform changes to remove the most challenging slopes, but generally the paths will follow the existing ground levels. These paths lead to cliff edge experiences beyond the core experience encouraging exploration.

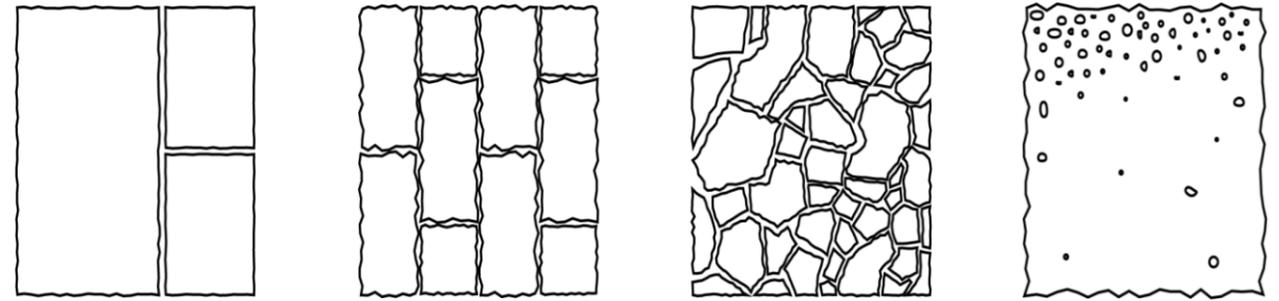
**Tier 3** will most closely resemble a “wild” experience being fully immersive and remote. Whilst the paths will be arranged to be safe and avoid the steepest gradients, there will be little to no landform changes where practicable to maximise the adventurous nature of the landscape furthest from the core experience. The edges of the paths will blend into the setting letting the ecology and restored natural habitats take priority.



# LISCANNOR STONE – LOCAL GEOLOGY AT THE HEART OF THE SITE

Local Liscannor Stone reflects the local geology and design vernacular whilst also telling the story of the geological and industrial history of the area. It is a robust material with a dark colour which will camouflage the built elements into their setting. Using it as a key material will support local industry and skills whilst avoiding a larger carbon footprint transporting foreign materials to the site.

Liscannor stone can be used in different formats in each of the different tiers of the landscape creating a unifying element across the site, bringing cohesion to the design and experience.



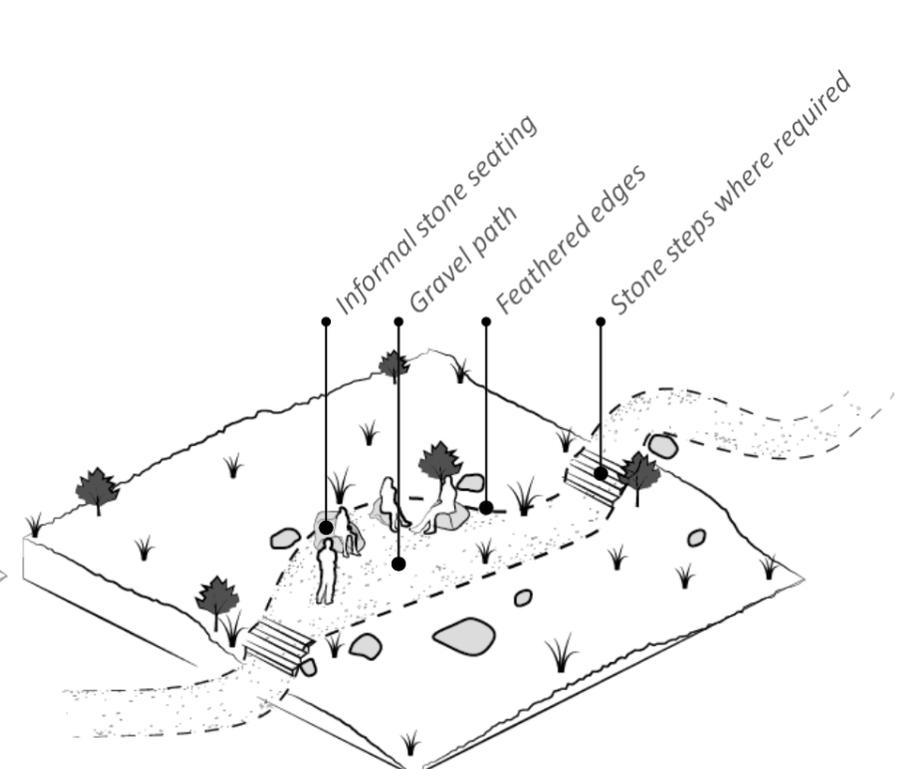
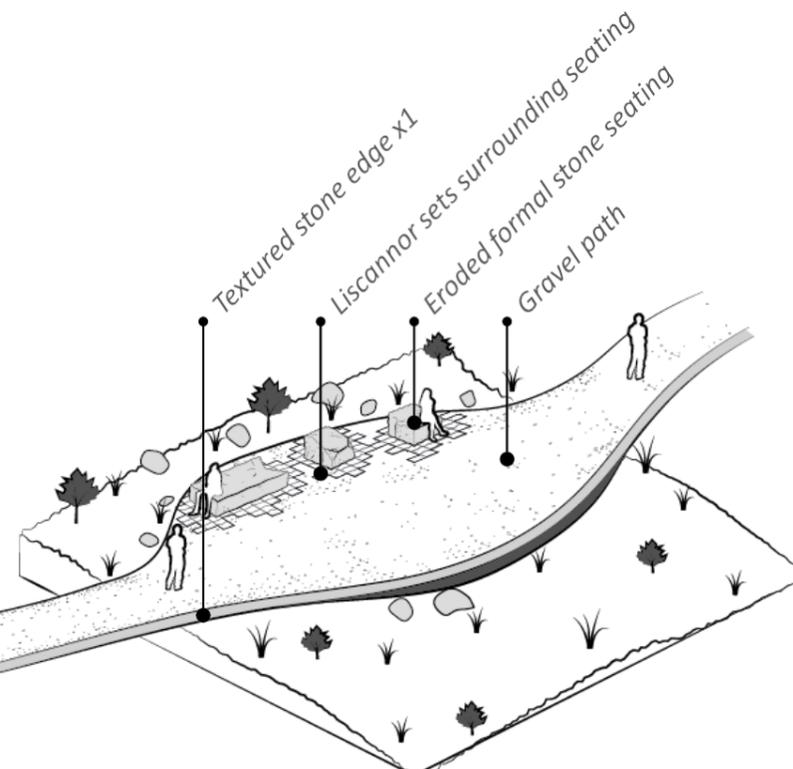
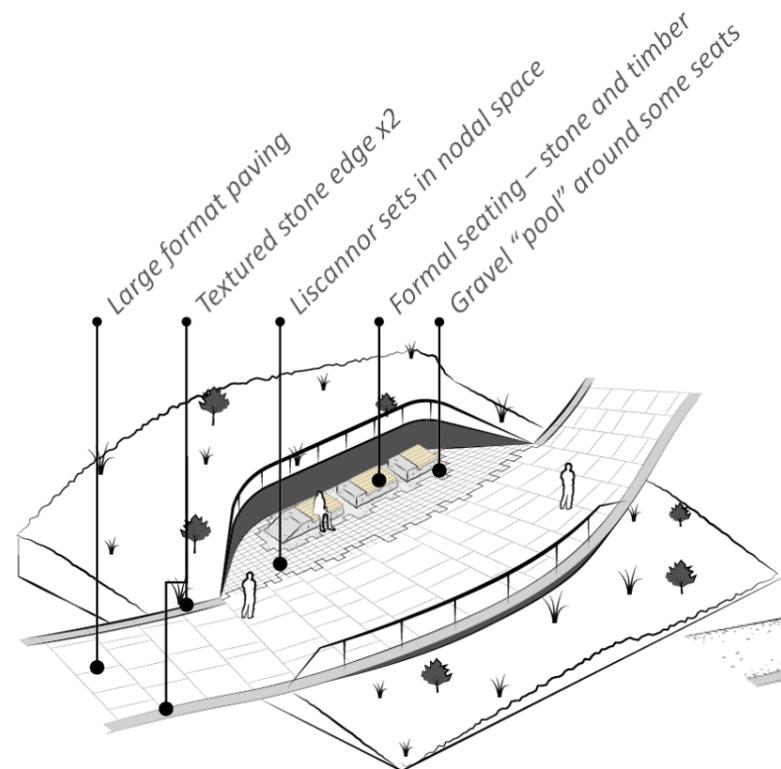
## Tier 1



## Tier 2



## Tier 3

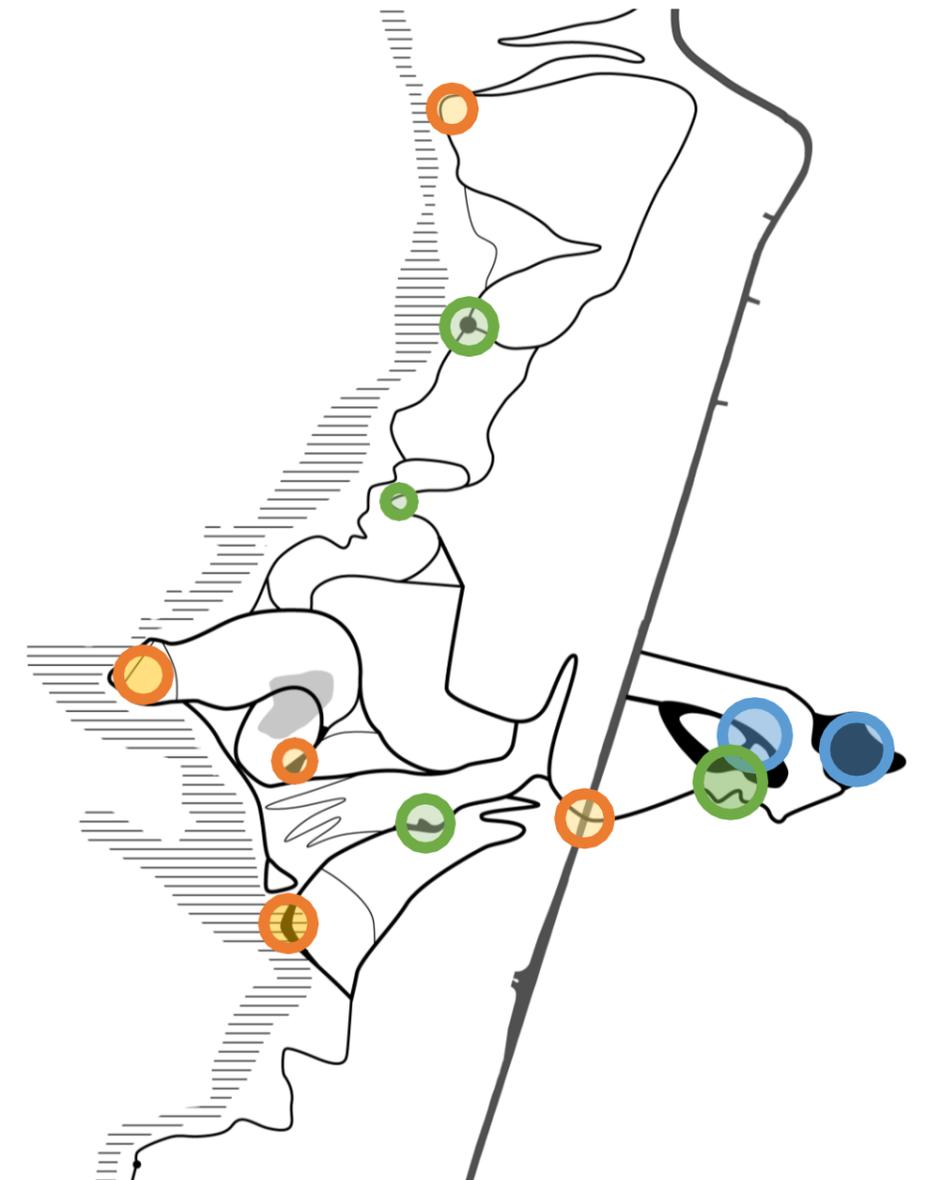


# FOCAL SPACES FOR CREATING SPECIAL MEMORIES

Within the site are a series of focal spaces. The materiality of these spaces contrasts with the tiered landscapes to highlight these special events within the landscape. There is a complimentary family of material palettes which repeats across the focal spaces to create a unified visitor experience.

- The vehicular space palette** in the car park and coach / shuttle bus arrival space
  - The area should be modest and sensitive to its setting
  - Minimise impermeable hardstanding areas
  - Use of natural, local materials for surfaces and demarcation
  - Disabled parking space surfaces and location to prioritise accessibility
- Destination space palette** in the external visitor centre spaces and key event points within the landscape
  - An uncluttered open landscape with muted colours and textures to allow visitor movement or gathering and highlight the architecture and / or surrounding views and natural beauty of the landscape
  - The hardstanding features a feathered edge demonstrating the integration with the surrounding landscape.
  - Blending of internal and external spaces where possible
- Elevated palette** in locations where there are raised walkways, cantilever structures or along the bridge over the road.
  - Match the design aesthetic of the destination spaces to unify the design language
  - A light surface layer of in situ concrete with muted colours and textures to contrast from and emphasise the bridge / structure
  - Design should compliment the architecture and materials
  - Barriers with wire mesh or cables to maximise outward views and prevent climbing

Whilst the spaces have a cohesive character, each individual space will have unique, bespoke designed elements and detailing to convey storytelling, interpretation information and wayfinding.



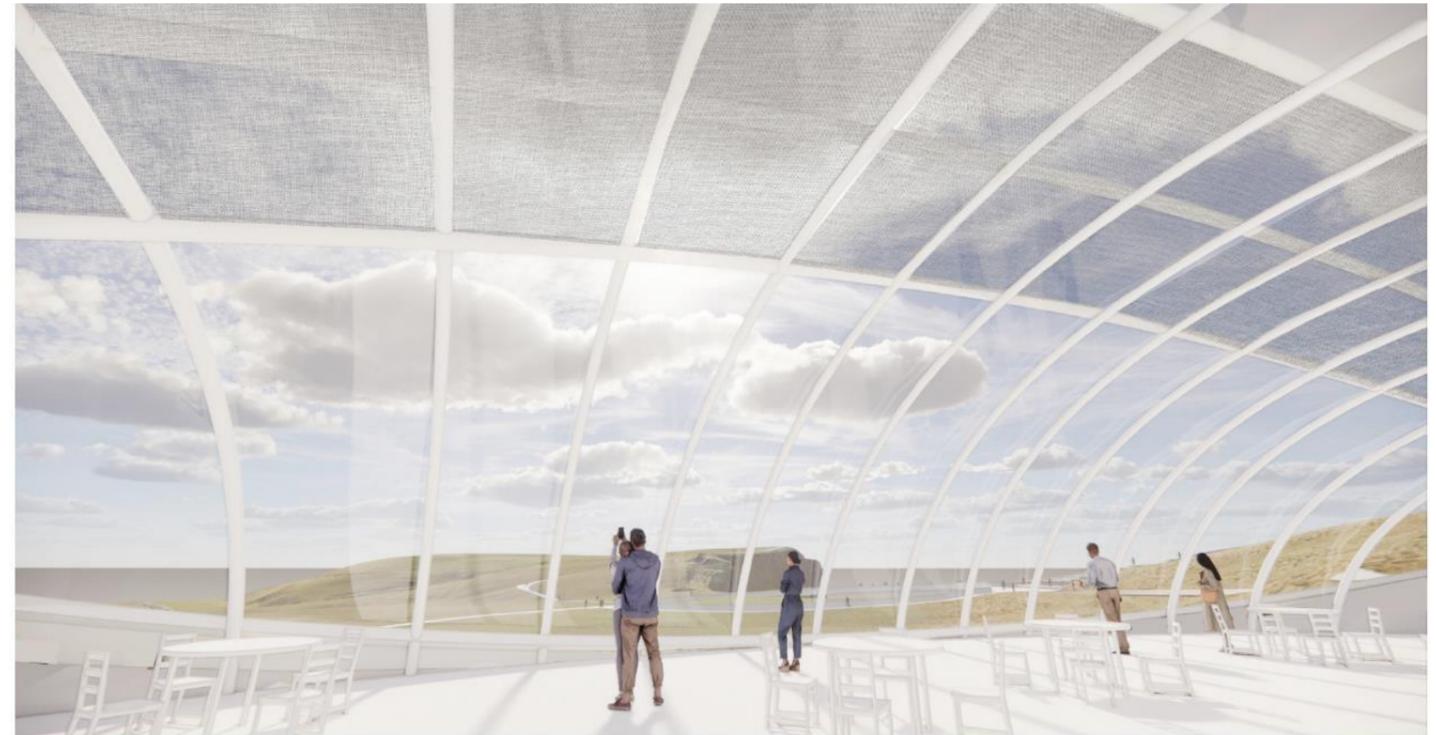
## ***A SPECTACULAR PANORAMIC VIEWING POINT***

**The existing visitor centre will be re-purposed as part of the overall concept of moving visitor support services away from the Cliff side of the R478. The building will be re-modelled to provide a spectacular focus as a panoramic viewing point towards the cliffs.**

**Importantly, it will also provide an opportunity for visitors to take shelter and to give respite to visitors during inclement weather.**

**Within the redeveloped visitor centre provision will be made for:**

- **Extensive internal viewing areas**
- **Interpretation – the main location for bringing together the stories of the cliffs**
- **Education / Learning spaces**
- **Limited food and drink offer**



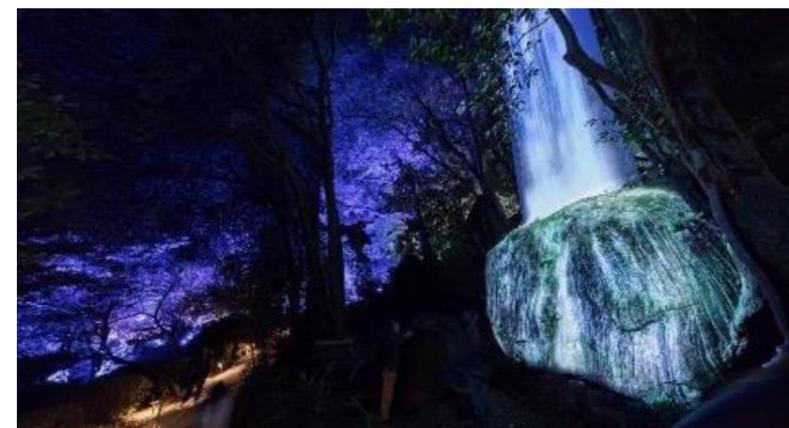
# A PANORAMIC VIEWING POINT WITH IMMERSIVE INTERPRETATION

The core interpretation spaces will deliver a standalone offer that can be experienced at the beginning or end of the visitor journey. It will feature permanent displays and a showpiece immersive experience that draws together the stories of the cliffs.



The interpretation will:

- Provide layered interactive and multimedia content will expands on and give context to interpretation across the landscape
- Offer an enhanced and scalable exhibition offer during winter season, along with temporary exhibitions
- Provide Interpretation that prioritises interactive and multi sensory experiences along with personal story led content
- Give opportunities for user-generated content that capitalises on the Instagram appeal of the cliffs

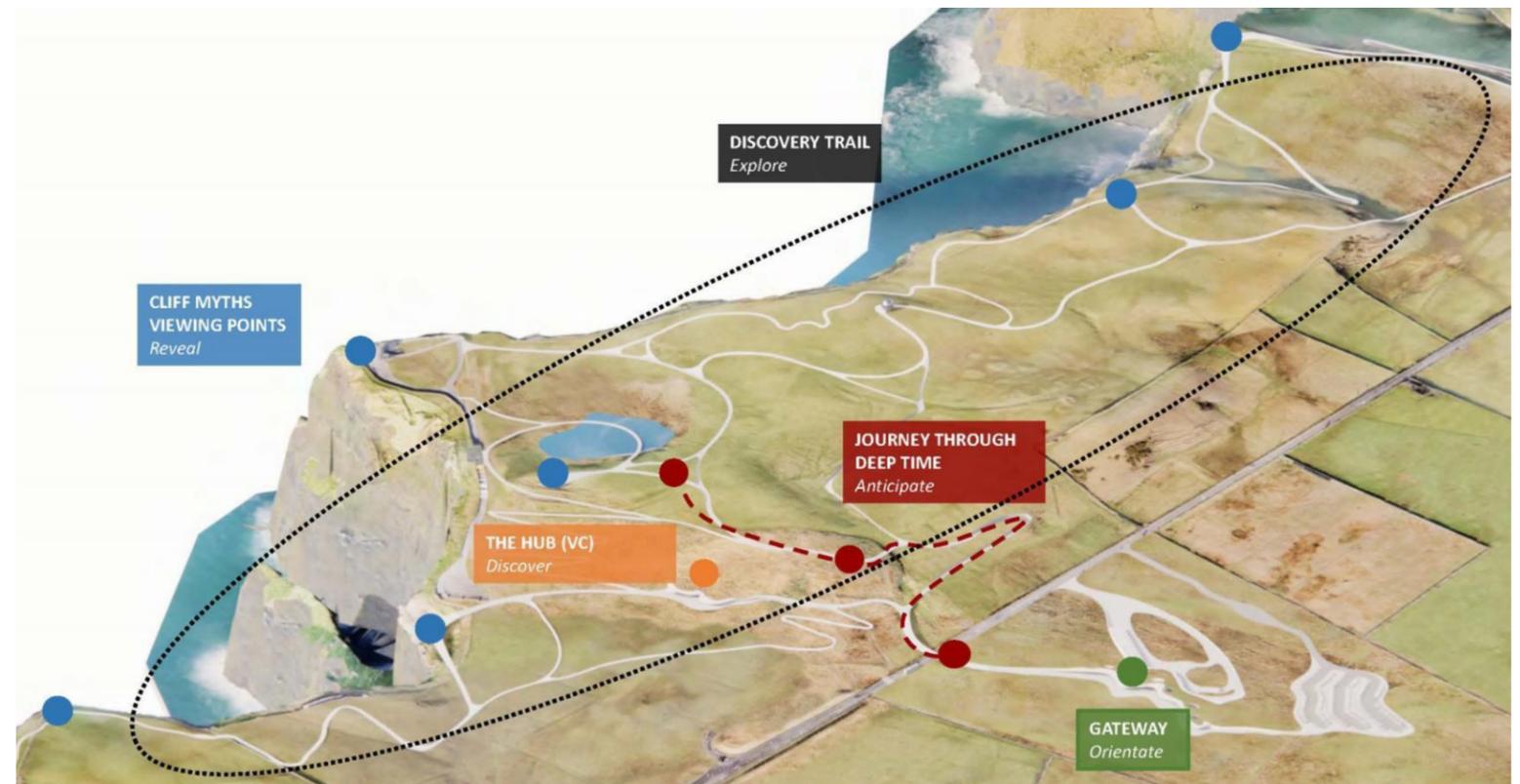


# ***BUILD ANTICIPATION THROUGH A 300 MILLION YEAR-OLD STORY – ORIENTATE, ANTICIPATE, DISCOVER, REVEAL AND EXPLORE***

The walk on the wild side will be enhanced by encouraging further exploration through interaction and adventure.

Orientation, wayfinding and interpretation interventions will complement and blend into the landscape including:

- Graphics and sculptural elements along the walkway will reveal the geological formation of the cliffs, beginning with sediments gathering at the mouth of a large river and ending with great ice ages carving out the landscape.
- Incidental interpretation points – integrated into pathways with interactive and multi sensory elements (e.g. wind up bird song audio). These highlight visible features across the landscape, such as the lake habitat, flora and fauna.
- Shelters with light touch interpretation deliver key themes around historic use of the landscape (quarrying, farming, cliff harvesting) and conservation.
- Spaces also used for live demonstrations (e.g. fossil handling) and performances.
- Mobile app encourages visitors to discover content ‘hidden’ in the landscape



## ***NEW RANGE OF NEW EXPERIENCES ACROSS THE SITE***

**A range of new experiences will be provided across the site to help disperse visitors and provide them with a more diverse, enhanced experience. A range of viewing destinations will allow people to enjoy spectacular views of the Cliffs and the wider landscape of the Burren and the surrounding areas.**

**A former lake will be restored to create a dramatic setting and to encourage new wildlife, flora and fauna.**

**Physical barriers will be an important element for visitor safety and management. These will be designed to take account of the impacts on views and heritage features. Different approaches are appropriate across the site in areas with different characters.**

**The design of all infrastructure across the site will make each space feel like part of the same experience. This will create a common and consistent style and branding across the site to give visitors a holistic edge of the world experience.**



# ENHANCED EXPERIENCES AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

A range of new dramatic new experiences will be provided at the cliff edge ranging from adrenalin rushes to quiet reflection. A series of cliff edge viewing points will provide the key conclusion to the journey to the edge of the world.

The cliff edge structures will be designed to:

- Match the design aesthetic of the destination spaces using a light surface layer of in situ concrete with muted colours and textures
- Wire mesh or cables to maximise outward views and prevent climbing
- Use of glass floors in key viewing locations

Landmark sculptures could provide intriguing way markers at 'edge of the world experiences' and viewing points.

These connect visitors with the mythology of the cliffs, representing the legends of the corpse-eating eel, the witch of Hag's Head, and Aill Na Serrach.



# A SUSTAINABLE MORE DIVERSE LANDSCAPE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

The COM 2040 Strategy has a overall framework of creating a more sustainable and diverse landscape for future generations to enjoy. The expansion of the landholding for the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre could present a unique opportunity to significantly enhance the biodiversity value.



The landscape transformation will include:

## Rehabilitation of Vegetation & Grassland

The proposed setting back of the cliff top pathway from the cliff edge will allow for the rehabilitation of the rocky sea cliff vegetation / coastal grassland community which will provide a significant positive impact for both the habitat and its suitability for foraging for chough, subject to suitable management.

This habitat should host a wide range of salt and wild tolerant herbaceous plants with corresponding dramatic flushes of colour during the flowering period. The extensive areas of bare ground will require rehabilitation to speed up the process of re-vegetation through soil preparation and potential translocation of sods from appropriate donor locations.

## Developing the Wetlands

The wetlands to the east of O'Brien's Tower which was subject to drainage in the past and remains as a vestigial seasonal pond could be re-developed as a valuable habitat and landscape feature. Other opportunities may exist elsewhere in the site to create wetlands by judicious blocking of drains and some sensitive land-shaping.

## Developing a Suite of Semi-Natural Habitats

The incorporation of the agricultural grasslands to the north of the Visitor Centre provides a valuable opportunity to enhance its biological diversity through a combined approach of specific interventions and hands-off rewilding.

Developing a suite of semi-natural habitats that will grade into a mosaic based on the prevailing environmental conditions including the level of exposure

The suite of habitats will include dry-humid acid grasslands which will have a higher floristic diversity with associated increase in invertebrate diversity attracting a suite of ground-nesting birds and small mammals.

Heathland will develop on the shallower soils while scrubs will establish in sheltered areas and spread as it matures.

# ***SUSTAINABLE AND INTEGRATED ACCESS TO THE COM AND THE WIDER DESTINATION – A MORE STRATEGIC AND PRO-ACTIVE APPROACH***

**Access concerns, issues and opportunities are at the core of the COM future.**

**Development of sustainable and integrated access to the COM will be critical to resolving the:**

- **current traffic congestion and disruption for local people, especially in the peak season**
- **limited dispersal of visitors and subsequent economic benefits for local businesses in towns / villages in County Clare**

**Delivering success will require a more strategic and pro-active approach to traffic management across the wider COM destination.**

**The focus of the future COM access strategy will be on Encouraging and facilitating sustainable transport provision for tourists and locals to create safer, cleaner and more efficient visits to COM and the wider destination.**

## **Proposed Initiatives**

- **Enhancing control and management of the volume of all visitors to the COM – both car and coach travellers**
- **Developing an integrated park and ride system through co-ordination and links with existing and new transport services, local towns / villages and other county attractions. It is envisaged that the proposed shuttle bus services would be free for local residents and COM staff.**
- **Introducing a new pro-active operational transport management and enforcement system across the County including measures to:**
  - **Resolve issues of coaches / cars taking inappropriate routes.**
    - **Investigate and implement traffic management measures including weight restrictions and potentially a one way system for coaches to and from the cliffs to improve mobility**
  - **Manage, plan monitor conditions (e.g. stops at other locations in County Clare) relating to coach licences issued by Clare County Council**
- **Encouraging alternate uses of transport around county, primarily biking & walking and hiking.**
- **Implementing the Inner Relief Road, at Ennistymon and localised road improvements and widening at pinch points on R478 and across key routes.**
- **Improving road layouts and pavements throughout urban and local communities across all key routes**
- **Better links of bus services with local businesses and existing car parking (Bus stops to be off road where possible)**
- **Promoting walking with new end to end management plan and improvements to the COM Coastal Walk**

# PARK AND RIDE HUBS AND A SHUTTLE SYSTEM

Park and ride hubs will provide a key element of the integrated transport system for access to the COM and beyond. They will operate throughout the peak 4 months to ease the traffic congestion and disruption to local residents and provide an enhanced experience for visitors.

Park and ride hubs and the shuttle system will help reduce the number of cars on the main routes to the COM by around 50% at peak times.

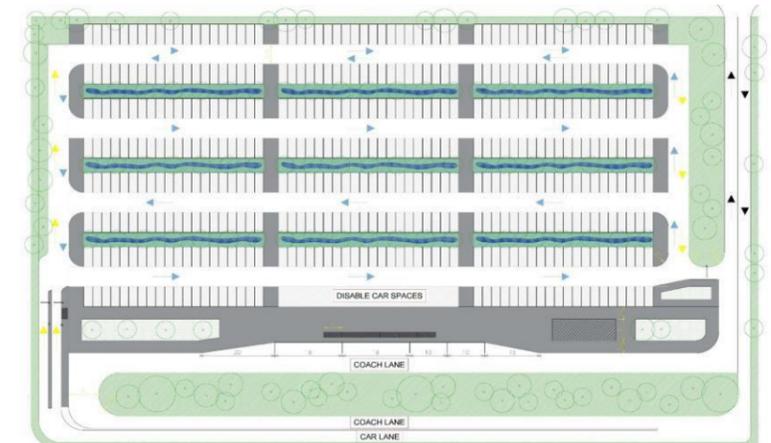
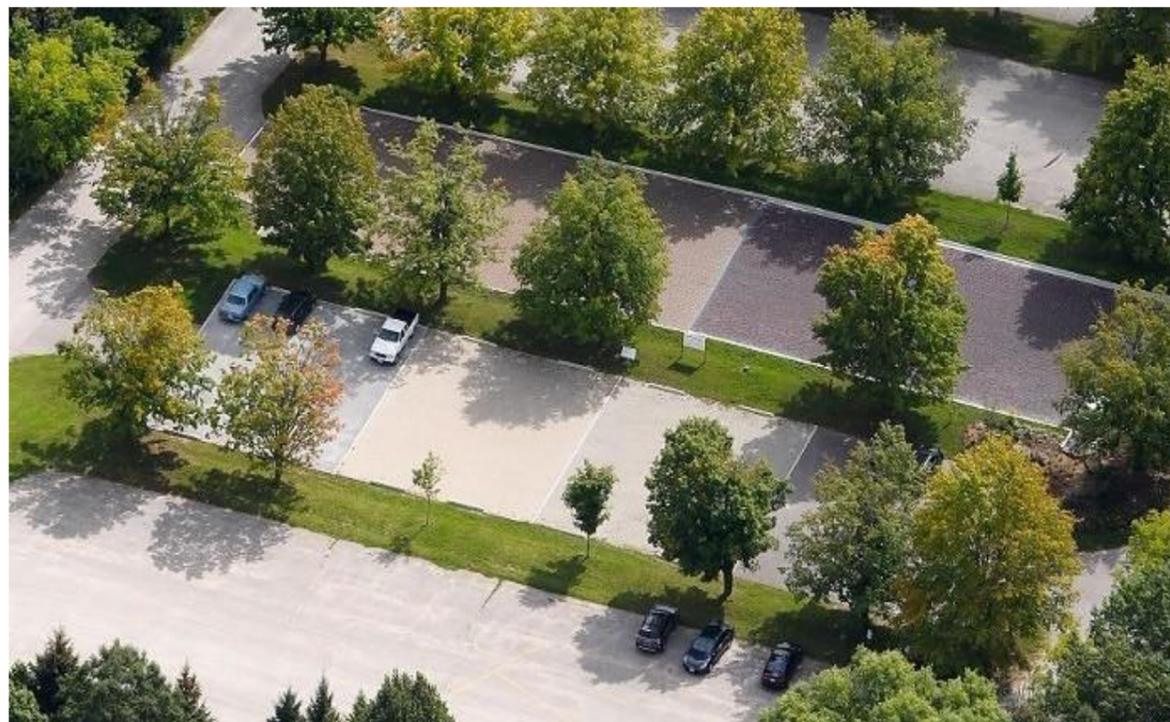
These hubs would be situated on the main feeder route to cliffs from both the north and south approaches. Ideally the hubs will be located on the edge of local towns to enhance tourism, employment and business connections and encourage visitors to spend more time and money in the wider area.

In addition to car parking, the hubs may also provide some remote parking for coaches. This would also help relieve pressure on the access road to the COM and parking at the site itself.

Clare County Council is currently inviting Expressions of Interest from public, community and private parties who wish to be involved in the development of future hubs.

The range of facilities envisaged at the park and ride hubs include:

- Extensive feeder road into site.
- Designated car / coach route and shuttle bus route into site
- Automated Entrance barrier
- Landscaped with hedgerow screening and native tree planting
- Shuttle bus drop off and pick up area
- Coach and car parking spaces with electric recharging units
- Disabled parking adjacent to terminal
- Sheltered waiting areas
- Building with toilets and staff area
- Electric battery storage, screened and landscaped



## ***SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION IN TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND DISRUPTION***

The new Cliffs of Moher experience will result in a significant increase in car parking requirements at peak times. This will be due to the longer dwell time of the Fully Independent Travellers (FITs) on site – not an increase in total numbers of visitors

Levels of on-site visitor car parking will be restricted in the peak season to around 400 spaces. The additional car parking demands will be provided for at the proposed park and ride hubs, with visitors travelling the remainder of the journey to and from the Cliffs via shuttle bus.



The reduced turn-over of car parking spaces at the Cliff will in turn result in a reduction of car traffic accessing the Visitor Centre by up to 50%;

The reduction in car traffic access the Visitor Centre will be somewhat off-set by the shuttle buses transferring people to and from the proposed park and ride hubs, however, one shuttle bus with 30 passengers would replace 12 cars on the road;

The reduction in coach tour arrivals will be balanced by an increase in FITs, however, these increased numbers will primarily be outside the peak times of the day (early morning / late evening).

The overall result is that traffic volumes accessing the Visitor Centre at peak times will be reduced compared to the current situation.

It is proposed that all car arrivals during the peak season will require pre-booking (similar to the current situation for coaches), which will eliminate the occurrence of visitors arriving at the Visitor Centre speculatively and queuing to enter.

The revised car access arrangements will include a longer access avenue along with an automatic barrier that will speed up the entry process.

The above, combined with the reduced traffic volumes accessing the Cliffs of Moher, will eliminate any risk of queuing and delays occurring on the Main Road passing the Visitor Centre.

# THE JOURNEY TO THE EDGE – THE SHUTTLE EXPERIENCE

The shuttle vehicles will provide a sustainable transport option to and from the cliffs.

Key features of the shuttle vehicles and services include:

- Hydrogen powered sustainable buses to run between parking hubs and cliffs & links with local community
- Vehicle sizes to be limited to ensure accessibility, possibly large minibus style (30 seaters)
- Frequency of vehicles to be flexible to suit peak and low season times.
- Free or reduced travel costs to staff & locals
- Improved pick up locations, shelters and information points



The Shuttle experience will provide visitors with an amazing start to their journey to the edge.

The Shuttle experience will:

- Provide An immersive experience – generate anticipation
- Communicate the amazing geological story of the cliffs
- Highlight what visitors can see and do
- Layer digital content over the scenery – keep visitors engaged with the external landscape
- Integrate first person interpretation – a personalised welcome and theatrical storytelling





# COM ALREADY DELIVERS SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC BENEFITS

**It is important to recognise that COM is a major economic engine for County Clare. It economic benefits should be communicated on a regular basis as part of developing a greater transparency and understanding of the key strategic role it plays in the County economy and the tourism industry.**

**In 2019 the COM site employed 170 people (around 45% full-time permanent positions). This included direct employment of 75 staff (44 permanent and 31 seasonal) at an estimated total annual employment cost of all employment €5million. The local impact of this employment is highly significant – it is estimated that 90% of staff live within 20 miles of the Cliffs.**

**COM spend on food, drink, art, craft design, operational and maintenance services that have a significant impact in supporting the local economy – 70% of this other expenditure is spent with local businesses. There are over 40 Co. Clare Craft and Design suppliers and 15 Clare food suppliers at COM.**

**In 2019 the COM site generated an estimated overall income of €18m from visitor spend. The site opens year round 363 days per annum with extended opening hours maximising opportunity.**

**Fáilte Ireland research suggests that Overseas Holidaymakers on average spend €96 per day and Domestic Overnight Visitors spend €74 per day. Applied to visitors to the COM this would generate an estimated total economic impact of €141m.**

**Whilst, there is a significant level of economic leakage outside of Clare County, there is still a considerable level of indirect benefit to the County and the towns and villages around the COM through overnight accommodation, food and beverage, spin off cottage industries, micro industry, service suppliers and employment expenditure. Most coach licences issued by Clare County Council stop at another location within the County as well as the COM.**

**Fáilte Ireland estimates that every €1 million of tourism expenditure supports 27 tourism jobs.**

**The scale of the economic impact of the COM from direct expenditure and visitor expenditure is considerable.**

**All of the existing economic benefits of the COM will be significantly increased as the 2040 strategy is implemented.**

**Communicating and enhancing transparency of the financial and economic benefits of the COM with the local community will be critical to future success. Surpluses from the COM operational supports Clare County Councils Clare Tourism budget to promote and develop the tourism product in the county.**

**COM supports tourism and community related activities and COM continue to build relationships with local communities, providing opportunity to engage with COM across a multitude.**

# STRATEGIC ECONOMIC MODEL

The strategic economic model for the COM

Destination has a priority to encourage visitors to stay longer, especially overnight, spend more and facilitate the benefits and investment back into the local economy.

The key to realising enhancing economic benefits for the area in the future will be an enhanced partnership and greater co-ordination between COM, local businesses and the local communities. On-going engagement and communication between all parties will be at the heart of this process.

Key elements within the strategic economic model include:

- Developing a world class, sustainable destination. COM will continue to respond to visitor aspirations, providing high quality facilities on-site to ensure a commercially sustainable tourism attraction into the future and maintain its premier market position.
- Engaging visitors in and raising awareness of the COM Destination and its visitor attractions. Visitors will have a deeper more rewarding experience, stay longer, spend more, make more return visits to the area and encourage family and friends and colleagues to visit.
- Development and partnership initiatives will encourage greater exploration and re-distribution of visitors around County Clare and greater retention of visitor spend especially by providing greater incentives to stay overnight.
- Creating bespoke visitor packages. New experiences will target low volume and high value visitors for special access / specialist interest experiences (e.g. premium experience / personal experiences etc).



## STRATEGIC ECONOMIC MODEL – KEY ELEMENTS (CONT.)

- Offering more diverse experiences. Opportunities will be created for wide ranging, diverse experiences for existing and new audiences (e.g. to be involved in COM's future sustainability / adrenaline experiences / family and children activities / bird and wildlife watching / new interpretation experiences / events etc.).
- Delivering a more unified experience to create a wider destination. Offering a unified landscape with interconnected sites and experiences; engaging visitors and the local community with the landscape and the wider sense of place of COM, the Burren and the surrounding towns and villages will help create a holistic experience for the COM area.
- New local supplier showcase approach featuring local produce / products as part of the COM retail and catering offer.

- Sustainable destination protected by all. This approach will focus on celebrating the richness of the landscape and its values to embed respect and appreciation in visitors. This will be built through a deeper understanding and care of the landscape, its historical significance and its diverse uses today. Ultimately, this will foster greater community stewardship of the landscape.
- Sustaining a living landscape through bringing economic and social benefits to the community, businesses and other organisations from visitors to the region thereby enhancing and enriching local life.



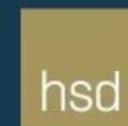
## ***THANK YOU AND HAVE YOUR SAY***

**Your participation in the refinement and finalisation of the COM 2040 Strategy is crucial so that it fully addresses the collective aspirations for the Cliffs and the benefits it can bring to the county.**

**If you would like to make a contribution please email  
[com2040@haleysharpe.com](mailto:com2040@haleysharpe.com)**

**Please visit [www.cliffsofmoher.ie](http://www.cliffsofmoher.ie)  
for more information including a Feedback Questionnaire.**





CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL  
CLIFFS OF MOHER  
STRATEGY 2040