



**CLIFFS OF  
MOHER**

**Preliminary  
Draft**

**2040 STRATEGY**

# FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



## Foreword by Clare County Council

Clare County Council is committed to implementing the objectives of the Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040. This will occur through its ownership of the Cliffs of Moher site and supported by county, regional and national development plans.

I wish to acknowledge Fáilte Ireland as our partners in developing this innovative strategy. In a particular way, I wish to express my appreciation to our Elected Members and the Board and staff of Cliffs of Moher DAC for journeying with this vision and plan. Thanks especially to the local community and the tourism sector for engaging with the strategy development process and for informing its final contents and objectives. A visitor attraction of this renown, scale, and geological and environmental importance requires such extensive engagement and proper planning for future protection and to ensure economic benefit for the wider region.

The 'Clare Tourism Strategy 2030', as the overarching tourism plan for Clare, sets out clear sustainable tourism objectives. It recognises that tourism in the county is heavily dependent on the aesthetic, environmental and heritage qualities of our landscape and seascape. Sustainability, therefore, is at the heart of the Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040, which focuses on creating world-class experiences, enhancing the special qualities of the site, and growing the Cliffs of Moher's contribution to the county in a sustainable way.

This exciting blueprint delivers for local communities, the environment, and visitors to Clare through targeted measures such as dispersing visitors across the county, encouraging visitors to stay longer, increasing bed nights, generating employment, and delivering sustainable access to the Cliffs of Moher site and beyond. The ongoing and proposed changes in processes, practices and structures at the Cliffs of Moher also underline the strategy's strong commitment to combatting climate change and the threat it poses to our natural environment and the tourism economy.

I would urge everyone interested and directly involved in tourism in Clare to fully support the objectives set out in this important strategy which, once implemented, will have immediate and long-lasting positive benefits for the local economy, environment and communities across the county.

**Pat Dowling,**  
**Chief Executive, Clare County Council**



## Foreword by Fáilte Ireland

The Cliffs of Moher visitor experience has played a central role in building a positive image of Ireland at home and abroad for many decades and is a signature discovery point on the Wild Atlantic Way. The Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040 will ensure that this iconic international tourism landmark delivers for the whole region through the development of enhanced relationships and links with the Burren, the Wild Atlantic Way, and the wider hinterland.

Through our Destination and Experience Development Plan (DEDP) for the Burren and Cliffs of Moher, we are delighted to have been able to work with Clare County Council and local communities in the delivery of a strategy that promotes the development of the Cliffs of Moher and County Clare as a sustainable and desirable tourism destination. Embracing a community-led approach to establishing a destination with international appeal and wide-ranging benefits to the wider economy and environment has been a key part of the process.

This strategy sets out to deliver greater economic benefits across the county through a range of actions. Amongst the key measures outlined is the positioning of the Cliffs of Moher as a 'must do' destination, improving the overall economy of communities by motivating visitors to stay overnight and spend more in Clare, creating greater cross promotion and linkages within the local tourism sector, extending the length of the season, and delivering transport solutions that improve access and protect the environment.

Fáilte Ireland looks forward to working closely with industry partners, communities and Clare County Council to support its implementation in the years ahead.

**Miriam Kennedy**  
**Head of Wild Atlantic Way, Fáilte Ireland**

## Acknowledgements

In the development of the Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040, Clare County Council gratefully acknowledges the important contribution and guidance provided by Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development and West Clare MD, Clare County Council; Geraldine Enright, Director of Cliffs of Moher Experience; Tourism Dept. of Clare County Council; and other members of the Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040 Steering Committee, namely;

Cllr. Shane Talty & Cllr. Gabriel Keating, Elected Members, West Clare MD, Clare County Council; Ruth Hurley, Architect, Clare County Council; Miriam Kennedy, Head of Wild Atlantic Way, Fáilte Ireland; Paul Carty, Tourism Consultant; Bobby Kerr, Chair of Cliffs of Moher Centre, DAC Board; Fiona Monaghan, New Projects Manager, Fáilte Ireland; Trina Rynne, Financial Accountant, Clare County Council; John Leahy; Senior Executive Engineer, Clare County Council; Sheila Downes, Environmental Officer, Clare County Council; Clare County Council; Helen Carty, District Conservation Officer, NWPS - National Parks & Wildlife Service; Deirdre O'Shea; Head of Tourism, Clare County Council; John McInerney, Commercial Manager, Cliffs of Moher Centre DAC; Mark O'Shaughnessy, Head of Operations, Cliffs of Moher Centre DAC; Melanie Lennon, Sales & Marketing Manager, Cliffs of Moher Centre DAC; and Sheila Browne; Projects Coordinator, Cliffs of Moher Centre DAC.

Clare County Council wishes to acknowledge the late Chris Smith, Project Lead, Haley Sharpe Design, for his vital contribution to the Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040.

**Contact:** Cliffs of Moher Experience, Liscannor, County Clare, Ireland, V95 KN9T

**Telephone:** +353 65 708 6141

**Email:** info@cliffsofmoher.ie

**Website:** www.cliffsofmoher.ie

### Image credits:

George Karbus

James O. Davies, English Heritage

Mike Mulcaire

Sean Haughton

Pat Dowling, CEO, CCC

Miriam Kennedy, Fáilte Head of WAW, Fáilte Ireland

# FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy has been developed through a multiphase programme of research, development and consultation, taking on board the views and considerations of a wide range of statutory and community stakeholders.

## A Multi-Disciplinary Team

Clare County Council, supported by Fáilte Ireland, has developed the strategy with a multi-disciplinary team of international consultants. These consultants are specialists in a range of disciplines including:

- Tourism, Heritage, Cultural and Interpretation Consultant – Project Lead – Haley Sharpe Design
- Tourism, Economic and Financial Consultant – Haley Sharpe Design
- Architect / Masterplanner – Henchion + Reuter Architects
- Planning and Environmental Consultant – The Planning Partnership
- Environmental & Ecology Consultant – EirEco Environmental Consultants
- Landscape Architects – Arup Landscape
- Transport Planning and Engineering: Infrastructure, Civil, Structural-Roughan & O'Donovan
- Engineering and M&E Services – Bennett Freehill
- Café and Retail Consultant – JB & A
- Quantity Surveyor – KSN
- PSDP – Turner & Townsend

## Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy Steering Group

The development of the strategy has been 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
- Private industry
- The consultation process

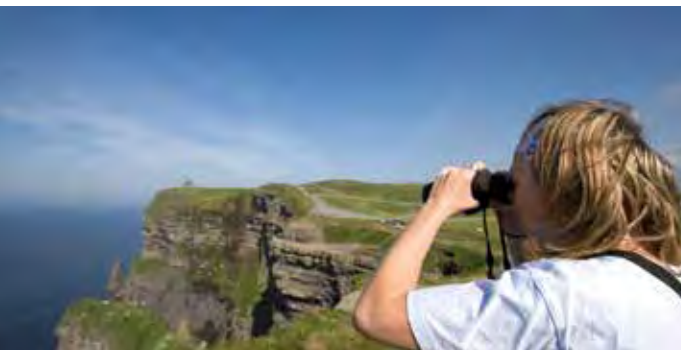
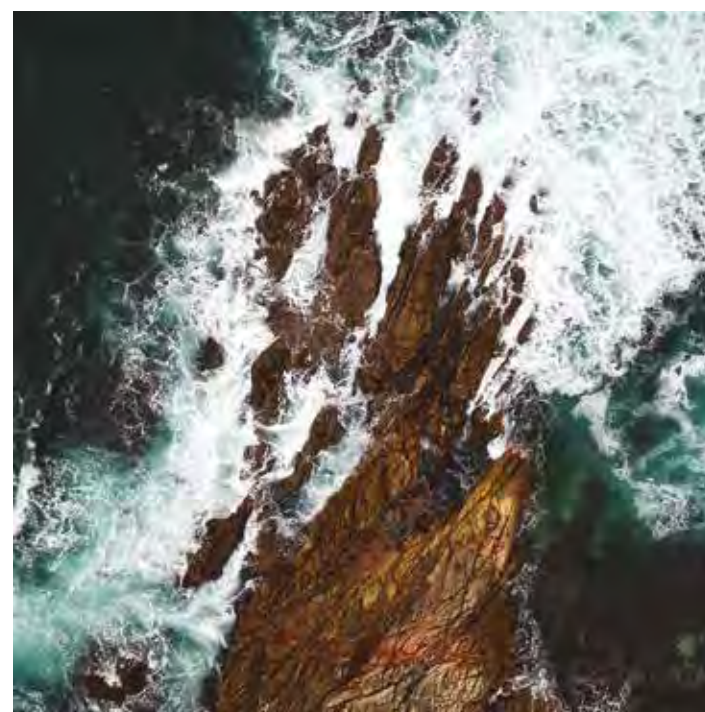
Committee members include:

- Geraldine Enright
- Leonard Cleary
- Bobby Kerr
- Miriam Kennedy
- Fiona Monaghan
- Deirdre O' Shea
- Trina Rynne
- Sheila Downes
- Helen Carty
- Mark O'Shaughnessy
- Melanie Lennon
- John McInerney
- Cllr. Shane Talty
- Cllr. Gabriel Keating
- John Leahy
- Martin Henchion
- Wessel Vosloo



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# SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy sets out a long-term vision for the Cliffs of Moher Experience, focusing on sustainable development of a world-class visitor attraction over the next 20 years. It will inform and drive the delivery of a phased programme of strategic projects at the Cliffs of Moher and across the wider county, providing transformational environmental and economic benefits.

## INTRODUCTION / CORE OBJECTIVES

One of Ireland's favourite visitor experiences, the Cliffs of Moher tower over the rugged west Clare coast. Rising out of the Atlantic waters to a height of over 700ft at O'Brien's Tower and running along the coast for almost six miles, the Cliffs of Moher were formed over 320 million years ago and today are part of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark.

The Cliffs of Moher host major colonies of nesting sea birds and are one of the country's most important bird-breeding sites. The area has been designated a Special Protection Area (SPA) for birds. They are a Signature Discovery Point on Fáilte Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way and a wholly owned tourism asset of Clare County Council.

Clare County Council, supported by Fáilte Ireland, has collaborated with a multi-disciplinary consultancy team led by Haley Sharpe Design to prepare a new Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy, including an overall site masterplan. This is a strategy of transformational and ambitious ideas driven by four core objectives, presented here in no particular order.

# 1

## Providing Sustainable Access

The primary objective is to significantly improve the visitor journey and experience while at the same time protecting the natural assets and maximising positive impacts on local communities. Key strategies explored include the development of built facilities and support services away from the sensitive natural attraction, sustainable transport solutions and pro-active management of the visitor journey.

# 2

## Optimising the World-Class Experience

As a destination, the Cliffs of Moher must offer excellent value for money via diverse visitor offers and added value, delivering a world-class tourism model in which audience needs and satisfaction are central. The strategy will develop a sequence of memorable experiences that prioritise exhilarating encounters with the cliffs and immersion in untamed nature through a network of safe graded walks, enhanced landscape interpretation, and targeted event and activity packages.

# 3

## Transforming the Natural Landscape

The need to conserve and highlight the beautifully rugged and ecologically rich habitats of the cliffs is a key driver for the strategy. Rewilding and regeneration of the natural environment will significantly enhance the biodiversity value as well as increase its aesthetic appeal for a wide range of audiences. Proactive habitat and visitor management across a wider area will strengthen opportunities for conservation research, monitoring and education via strategic partnerships.

# 4

## Enhanced Economic Benefits Across the Region

The Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk and the developing greenways present major opportunities for sustainable access links with the Cliffs of Moher site and for dispersing visitors across the wider area. These assets provide valuable community amenities and can also deliver in terms of attracting visitors, increasing visitor revenue and transforming the economic and social future of the towns, villages and rural areas around the region.



**THE CLIFFS OF MOHER'S ABILITY TO ATTRACT TOURISTS AND PROMOTE IRELAND OVERSEAS BRINGS SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO THE LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL ECONOMY. TO MAINTAIN ITS PREMIER MARKET POSITION, THE DESTINATION MUST INVEST IN THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE AND COMPETE WITH OTHER NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DESTINATIONS.**

# INTRODUCTION / DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY

The strategy has been developed by the multi-disciplinary team in three distinct stages, and has drawn on the expertise and views of a wider network of sector and community stakeholders.

**1**  
**Stage 1**  
Strategic review of the visitor journey and Cliffs of Moher hinterland, a region of international significance in terms of Irish tourism.

**2**  
**Stage 2**  
Proposals for arrival, access and circulation across the Cliffs of Moher site.

**3**  
**Stage 3**  
A masterplan for the site experience, facilities and ancillary buildings, including the existing visitor centre.

A number of transformative options have been assessed and presented by the consultant team at each stage of the strategy development, with feedback provided by the Steering Group. The key decisions arising from these discussions are highlighted in Section 3.

In order to create the Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy a comprehensive multiphase consultation process was undertaken with the public, local community and community groups, state bodies, customers, elected members and landowners. The details and findings of this consultation are included in Section 4.

Throughout the development process, the consultants have drawn on international benchmarking examples of other environmentally sensitive and world heritage sites. Case studies highlighting comparative sustainable tourism and development initiatives are presented throughout Section 3.



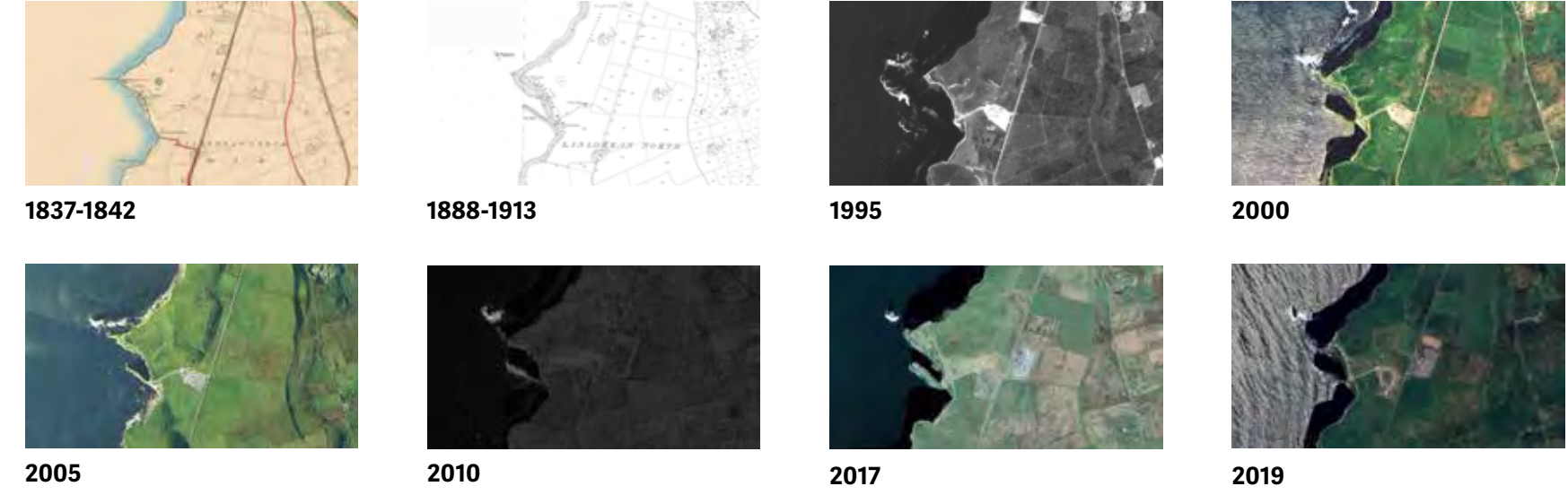
**Our vision is to bring the magic of the Cliffs of Moher Experience alive, inspiring our people while caring and safeguarding the future of our natural environment.**

**Our mission is to deliver world-class experiences in a safe, accessible, authentic, and welcoming environment. We will champion best practice in managing for sustainability and conservation of the Cliffs of Moher, our environment and our culture and heritage, while protecting the status of The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark. We will collaborate with stakeholders to contribute to the development of a prosperous, vibrant local community and economy for future generations.**

## CLIFFS OF MOHER MISSION

# INTRODUCTION / HISTORY OF THE CLIFFS

The Cliffs of Moher is an area that has a rich geological, environmental and social history and has existed as a visitor attraction for almost 200 years. The strategy will safeguard and enhance these special qualities, securing its long term future as a unique natural visitor destination where the land meets the sea.



## Land Change Over Time

These historical Ordnance Survey Ireland maps show how the clifftop landscape has evolved, with farms reorganised to create distinct field patterns. As the land running along the cliff-edge is of lower quality and valuation, it was not divided into smaller fields and would have been used for rough grazing during the summer months.

Like the rest of Ireland, the ownership of the land at the cliffs changed considerably during the late 19th century and early 20th century. This was due to the successive Irish Land Acts signed into law by the UK Parliament. The Landlord and Tenant (Ireland) Act 1870 and the Land Law (Ireland) Act 1881 granted extensive rights to tenant farmers. The Wyndham Land Purchase (Ireland) Act 1903 enabled tenant farmers to purchase their plots of land from their landlords. This legislation created a large group of small property owners in the Cliffs of Moher and Liscannor area. Many of the large fields in the locality were subdivided due to this change of ownership.

<b>c.320 million years ago</b>	<b>c.2,000 years ago</b>	<b>1588</b>	<b>1600-1800</b>	<b>1835</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1979</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2023</b>
Ireland's ancient rivers lay down sediments on the seabed that will form the rocks of the Cliffs of Moher. The great ice ages eventually carve out the spectacular cliff face that can be seen today, extending 9.5km and reaching 214 metres at its highest point.	The Iron Age Fort of Mothar is established on the clifftops, of which no trace now remains. Moher Tower, which gives the cliffs their name, stands near its former site.	The Spanish Armada is seen from the Cliffs of Moher en route home following the unsuccessful invasion of England.	Young Irish nobles visit the cliffs during Grand Tours along the coasts of counties Clare and Galway.	Local MP Cornelius O'Brien builds a folly near the highest point of the cliffs to provide a striking vantage point for visitors, along with a wall of Liscannor Flagstone atop the cliff.	Clare County Council acquires land at Lislorkan North from a local landowning family and opens the restored landscape to visitors.	The Cliffs of Moher are designated as a Special Protection Area due to the significance of their seabird colonies, with nationally important populations of five species.	The new Cliffs of Moher Experience officially opens, comprising the underground visitor centre building, as well as cliff-edge pathways, steps and viewing platforms.	The Cliffs of Moher and wider Burren area becomes a UNESCO Global Geopark, an internationally designated area of geological interest and the third Geopark in Ireland.	The Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk is opened on private lands by agreement with landowners under the National Walks Scheme, following the cliff-edge with trail heads in Doolin and Liscannor.	The Cliffs of Moher becomes one of the 15 signature discovery points along the Wild Atlantic Way, a major coastal touring route launched by Fáilte Ireland.	O'Brien's Tower undergoes significant restoration, providing a new experiential tour of the tower and viewing point for the Cliffs of Moher and the Aran Islands.	The Cliffs of Moher is closed to visitors during Covid-19, providing an opportunity to relay paths and monitor and restore natural habitats.	Publication of the Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy document to set out the long term vision for the Cliffs of Moher.

# INTRODUCTION / STRATEGIC POLICY CONTEXT

The Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy must be fully integrated within the context of wider national, regional, county and local development plans and strategic frameworks so that it can strengthen fundamentals, strategic priorities and partnerships.

The Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy will align with the policy priorities to create high quality visitor experiences within the county, while protecting the cultural authenticity and wildness of the natural assets, sustainably increasing tourism revenue across the season, dispersing visitors more widely within the region, and minimising any adverse impacts on local communities.

Specifically, the strategic development of the Cliffs of Moher site must deliver the overarching objective of nature restoration that underpins the ongoing drive to restore biodiverse land and sea areas and, in the process, increase climate change mitigation and adaption.

The following appraisal of plans and strategies represents a moment in time. As the phased programme of the strategy is delivered, the policy context will continue to be reviewed and updated to ensure that the strategic approach and objectives are complementary and supportive of ongoing policies.

## Formal Designations

The Cliffs of Moher are located within the Cliffs of Moher Special Area of Conservation (SPA Site Code 004154) and are also the site of the Cliffs of Moher Proposed National Heritage Area (pNHA Site Code 000026). The proximity to both statutory and non-statutory ecological protected areas, and location within Ballysteen ED with a Pobal HP Deprivation Index classification as being ‘marginally below average’, presents key challenges and opportunities for development.

The Cliffs of Moher SPA is one of the most important seabird colonies in the country, with nationally important populations of five species. The presence of two species that are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive, Chough and Peregrine, is of note. Owing to the importance of the bird populations, the Cliffs of Moher SPA was designated as a Refuge for Fauna in 1988.

Natura 2000 sites that lie within the Cliffs of Moher development area and Hinterland are:

- Cliffs of Moher Special Protection Area SPA (SPA Site Code 4005)
- Inagh River Estuary Special Area of Conservation (SAC site code 000036)
- Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex Special Area of Conservation (SAC site code 000020)
- Ballyteige (Clare) Special Area of Conservation (SAC site code 000994)

Reporting on the status of Ireland’s seabirds, based on monitoring data, is an obligation under Article 12 of the EU Bird’s Directive. The latest reporting provides species trends for the long-term period (1985/87-2015/18) and the short-term period (1998/2002-2015/2018), as well as site-specific trends for the Cliffs of Moher.



Source: Esri ArcGIS, extracted and annotated under OS Licence AR0114720 by The Planning Partnership, February 2020.

Site / Area	Designation/Status	Notes
<b>Cliffs of Moher SPA</b>	Designated Refuge for Fauna Site Code IE04.	Since 1988
<b>Ballyteige (Clare) SAC</b>	State-owned and managed as a nature reserve.	
<b>Inagh River Estuary SAC</b>	Part of the site is a legally protected Wildfowl Sanctuary (WFS-68).	Since 1986
<b>The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark</b>	Internationally designated area of geological interest.	Since 2011

## Wild Atlantic Way Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027

The Wild Atlantic Way plays a significant role in raising the profile of the County Clare coastline and in generating a growth in touring visitors along coastal routes.

The strategic priorities for the brand include extension of the seasonal appeal for the southern half of the trail, along with protection and enhancement of its authenticity and wildness.

The challenge is to sustainably increase tourism revenue, extend the season and disperse visitors more widely within the region, minimising any adverse impacts on local communities and maximising benefits for them. Given that the tourism offering at the Cliffs of Moher Experience centres on its unique natural heritage, it is crucial that the quality, character and distinctiveness of these assets are protected, and any development enhances and protects the wildness of the landscape.

The visitor strategy for the southern half of the Wild Atlantic Way will focus on increasing year-round footfall among the domestic market and growing international visitor numbers from North America and mainland Europe. This will include diversification into more luxury and ‘slow tourism’ orientated markets, with the aim of attracting higher-spending and longer-staying visitors.

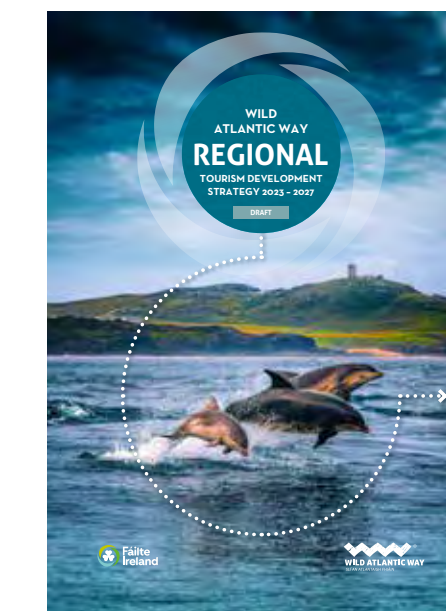
The strategy will focus on creating, enhancing and refreshing compelling visitor experiences and visitor management plans for iconic and signature attractions, including the Cliffs of Moher.

## The Burren and Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience Development Plan

Fáilte Ireland is developing and implementing a series of Visitor Experience Development Plans (VEDPs) that aim to extend the length of stay and increase the visitor expenditure within the area. The Burren and Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience Development Plan recognises the need for improved development and promotion of the area’s unique features to achieve increased international cut through. The primary target markets for the Burren and Cliffs of Moher are identified as the Culturally Curious and Great Escapers.

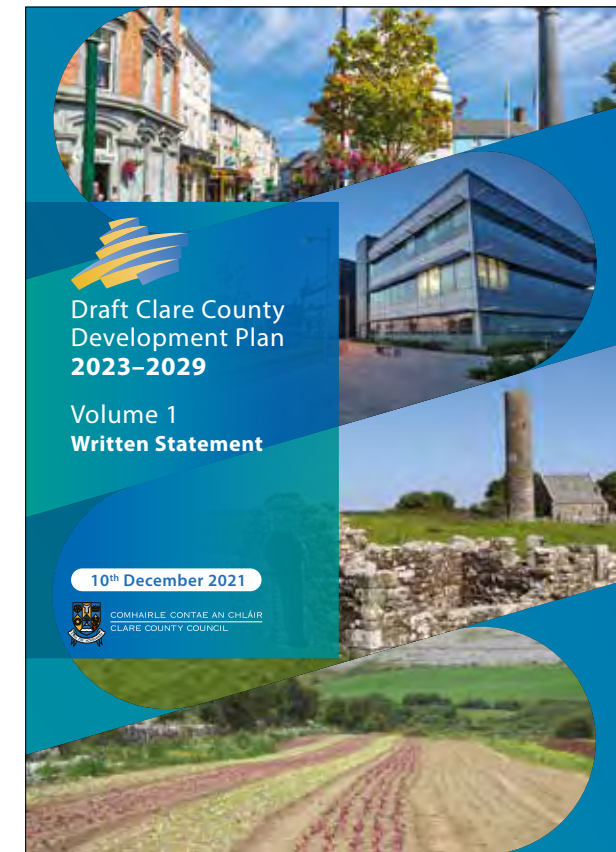
This plan also provides a clear direction towards strengthening and growing the destination’s international market share through the delivery of hero, supporting and ancillary experiences that will:

- Motivate visitors to stay longer and spend more
- Extend the length of the season
- Align to the relevant brand, target markets and segments
- Sustain and increase job creation in the local area
- Protect the special environmental character of the region



# INTRODUCTION / STRATEGIC POLICY CONTEXT

“A County Clare in which tourism growth continues to play a major role in the future development of the County, adapting to the challenges of competing markets by maximising the development of a high-quality diverse tourism product”.



## Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 and 2023-2029

The County Development Plan sets out the aims of Clare County Council for the proper planning and sustainable development of public services. The plan defines the development strategy, detailed policies and objectives, and sub-strategies relevant to the local area to ensure that the principles of proper planning and sustainable development are both upheld and enforced. It is within this framework that public services will be provided and investment decisions made. The following sections are of particular relevance to the Cliffs of Moher:

### Tourism

This chapter details the policies and objectives of Clare County Council relating to the promotion of tourist related development as well as ensuring new developments of this type are cognisant of the implications on the local natural, physical and cultural assets of their area and their impact on the wider environs. In particular, it is recognised that infrastructure development must meet the needs of both resident and visitor populations. Long-term strategic projects such as the Wild Atlantic Way, the West Clare Railway Greenway and other off-road cycling and walking trails are recognised as being essential to the future of tourism and economic growth in local towns and villages. Provision of high-quality green infrastructure also brings quality of life benefits to local communities.

### Cultural and Landscape Heritage

Clare is a renowned centre for arts, crafts and artisan food production and is ideally placed to promote these enterprises as part of the County’s tourism offering. North Clare is well-located in terms of tourism and has a diverse range of tourism resources, especially the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark and the Atlantic coastline. Heritage Landscapes are envisioned as the most valued parts of the county due to their importance to the people of County Clare as well as the wider community, both nationally and internationally. Plans, policies and development decisions in these areas will always need to simultaneously take account of scenic, ecological and historical considerations.

### Biodiversity and Natural Heritage

County Clare has a wealth of natural heritage and biodiversity of local, national and international importance. Objectives are presented to promote County Clare as an environmentally sustainable county through the conservation, protection and enhancement of its natural resources. The EU Habitats Directive, together with the EU Birds Directive, provide for the conservation, protection and, in some cases, restoration of habitats and species that are of European importance, which may be rare, threatened or in danger of disappearance.

The success of the redevelopment of the Cliffs of Moher Experience and associated facilities rests largely on how the proposal will be managed operationally within the context of the Cliffs of Moher’s natural, physical and cultural assets.



The Draft Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029, which has recently undergone public consultation, includes an objective “to sustainably develop greenways, blueways and peatways and walking and cycling trails including the West Clare Railway Greenway to achieve greater accessibility to the countryside and the marine environment by sustainable modes and to achieve maximum benefit and connectivity at local, regional and national levels.”



## County Clare Tourism Strategy 2030

Clare County Council developed a new 10-year tourism strategy for County Clare. The strategy sets out a vision for a cohesive and sustainable tourism sector that maximises the county’s unique characteristics and strengths, making a significant contribution to the local economy and enhancing the county as a regional and national centre for culture and tourism. The Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy dovetails with this through a joint focus on sustainable tourism. Its ongoing implementation will:

- Strengthen the overall framework of the County Clare Tourism Strategy 2030
- Provide a focus and catalyst for the destination experiences
- Enshrine the key fundamentals, strategic priorities and partnership approach

## UNESCO Global Geopark

The Cliffs of Moher are located within a UNESCO Global Geopark and, therefore, are a member of an international partnership of significant geological landscapes. Along with other Geoparks across the world, the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark uses its UNESCO designation to raise public awareness of its internationally significant geological heritage and related natural and cultural heritage assets. UNESCO Geoparks encourage a holistic approach to managing, conserving and promoting the landscape, as each aspect of the environment - geological, ecological, climatic, oceanographic and anthropogenic - is mutually influenced by the other.

Traditional agricultural practices successfully prevail, enabling the conservation of the unique character and biodiversity of the landscape. The collaborative efforts of community-based education, ecotourism, and conservation initiatives are an essential part of the sustainable social, environmental, and economic development of this Atlantic Edge region.

Relevant services and projects delivered include:

- The Burren Ecotourism Network comprising over 60 tourism business in the area dedicated to promoting sustainable tourism. Members sign up to the UNESCO Global Geopark Code of Practice in Sustainable Tourism and in return the UNESCO Global Geopark provides training and marketing and co-ordinates group products such as Food and Activity trails.
- GeoparkLIFE is an EU LIFE project focusing on balancing tourism and conservation in the Burren. This project involves working with national tourism and conservation agencies, local farmers and tourism businesses to minimise environmental impacts and maximise the social and economic benefits of tourism in the Burren.
- The Burren and Cliffs of Moher are among nine European Geoparks to receive EU funding for a project to promote and disseminate geological and cultural initiatives and information by connecting visitor experiences across the Atlantic area.



## Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES)

This 12-year strategic regional development framework sets out how government policies and objectives will be delivered for the Southern Region. In line with international best practise, the RSES adopts a territorially differentiated and place-based approach to regional planning and development.

The region has a wealth of natural, cultural and heritage assets of national importance and is a significant tourist destination. The RSES supports the promotion of the tourism assets of the Mid-West Spatial Planning Area, subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process, comprising natural, cultural and heritage assets including the Cliffs of Moher, Burren, Loop Head, and towns and villages in West Clare.

# INTRODUCTION / STRATEGIC POLICY CONTEXT

## EU Nature Restoration Law

Currently, 85% of Ireland’s internationally important habitats are in poor condition, with nearly half of these habitats demonstrating ongoing declining trends. A fifth of Irish bird species are in long-term decline, with farmland birds the fastest declining group of birds, and one third of Ireland’s wild bee species are threatened with extinction.

On 22nd June 2022, the European Commission proposed a new Nature Restoration Law with binding targets on pollinators, wetlands, rivers, forests, marine ecosystems, urban areas and peatlands in all European countries, including Ireland.

The new law aims to bring nature back across the continent for the benefit of biodiversity, climate and people. Previous attempts to increase restoration have failed, both in the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 and the global strategic plan for biodiversity to 2020. The crucial next step is for both the European Parliament and EU Member States to endorse the law and to expedite its implementation.

The overarching objective of the law is to achieve continuous, long term and sustained recovery of biodiverse land and sea areas and increase climate mitigation and adaptation through restoration. With 80% of Europe’s habitats current in poor condition, the aim is to bring nature back to a broad range of ecosystems. The target is to cover 20% of the EU’s land and sea areas with nature restoration measures by 2030 and eventually extend these to all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050.

Agricultural ecosystem restoration targets focus on increasing the share of agricultural land with high-diversity landscape features and the stock of organic carbon in cropland mineral soils, as well as increasing the populations of grassland butterflies and farmland birds. Existing nature restoration measures will be scaled up, including measures such as rewilding, returning trees, greening cities and infrastructure and removing pollution to allow nature to recover.

The proposed new law has been very broadly welcomed by environmental groups in Ireland. Birdwatch Ireland called it a huge milestone and said it will be transformative for Ireland’s degraded ecosystems, helping to tackle climate breakdown and potentially improving the state of nature at large in Ireland dramatically. The Irish Environmental Network said the proposed new law presents an unprecedented opportunity to address our environmental crises.

In September 2020, at the United Nations Summit on Biodiversity, Taoiseach Micheál Martin along with 93 other world leaders signed the Leaders’ Pledge for Nature, which recognises that the business case for biodiversity is compelling: the benefits of restoring nature outweigh the costs ten-fold and the cost of inaction is even higher.



## Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework

This document acknowledges that coastal areas are a key driver for Ireland’s tourism sector, which the successful branding of the Wild Atlantic Way and internationally-recognised location shoots for the film industry have highlighted in recent years. Ireland’s coastline is a remarkable but fragile resource that needs to be managed carefully to sustain its character and attributes in physical, environmental quality and biodiversity terms.



## National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025

The Cliffs of Moher and Burren are among the distinct landscapes in Ireland being identified, mapped and characterised as part of this national strategy. The key objective is the collection of data and qualitative information about the landscapes of Ireland through liaison between local planning authorities, agencies and community organisations. The ultimate aim is to establish a National Landscape Character Map using the evidence base that can describe and assess distinct landscape character areas at a national scale, informing effective spatial planning and landscape-centred decision making. The database and associated maps will use Landscape Character Assessment methodology and will result in an outline Historic Landscape Characterisation.

## VICE Model

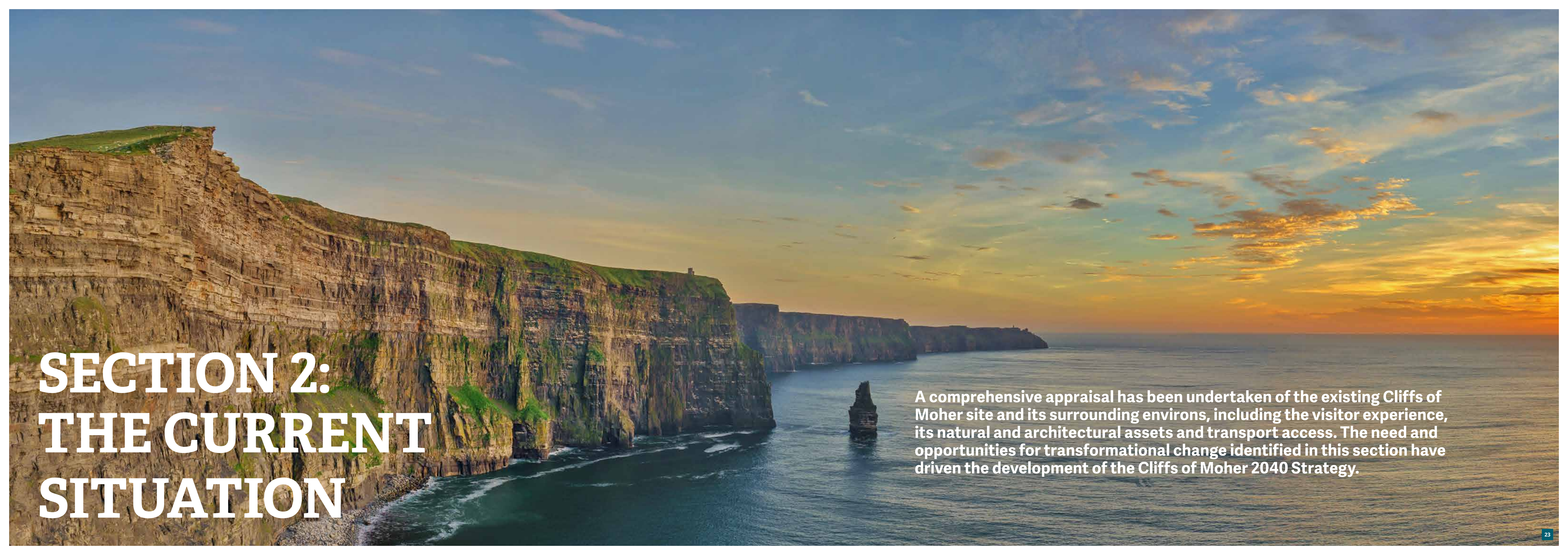
The Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy is framed within the international VICE model for sustainable tourism development. Fáilte Ireland has also deployed the VICE Model approach in its strategic development of a sustainable tourism sector. This focuses on the interaction between:

- 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

## Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The SEA process is a statutory process which, in the instance of the Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy, will be guided by the terms of the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004, and amending European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2011.

This evaluates at the earliest appropriate stage the environmental quality and consequences of policy, plan or programme initiatives by statutory bodies. The SEA process ensures that the environmental consequences of plans and programmes are assessed both during their preparation and prior to their adoption. It also gives interested parties an opportunity to comment on the environmental impacts of the proposed plan or programme and to be kept informed during the decision-making process.



# SECTION 2: THE CURRENT SITUATION

A comprehensive appraisal has been undertaken of the existing Cliffs of Moher site and its surrounding environs, including the visitor experience, its natural and architectural assets and transport access. The need and opportunities for transformational change identified in this section have driven the development of the Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy.

# THE CURRENT SITUATION / A NEED FOR CHANGE

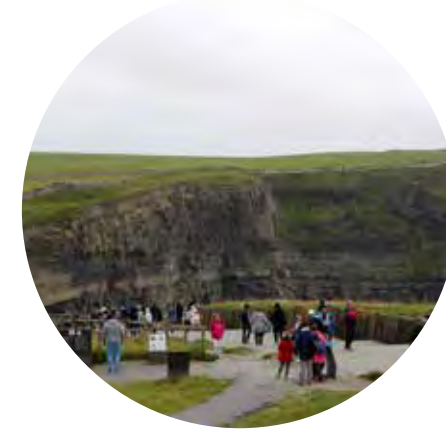
A summary is provided here of the key challenges that currently exist at the Cliffs of Moher and within the wider county area. These demonstrate the underlying need for a long-term strategy and underpin the subsequent approaches and ideas to enhance the Cliffs of Moher Experience.

The popularity of the Cliffs of Moher, with particularly high visitor numbers at peak times, is the critical factor in future development of the destination. High visitor numbers can provide a consistent contribution to the wider economy to ensure a commercially sustainable tourism attraction, however, they also bring many negative impacts to the site, visitor experience and local towns and villages.

## Limited Capacity of Visitor Facilities

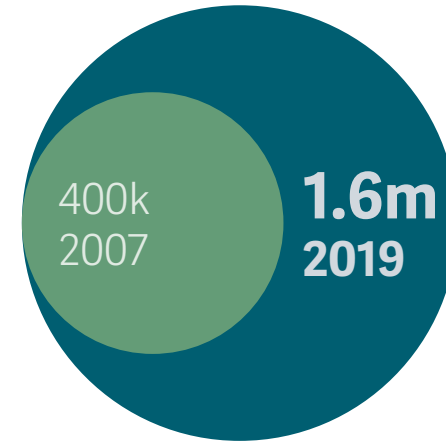
In 2019 more than 1.6m people visited the Cliffs of Moher, making it the most visited natural attraction in Ireland. In 2007, when the visitor centre opened, the number of visitors was 927,000. Statistics for 2019 reflect a massive 72% increase over the 12-year period. Over the past 10 years, visitor numbers have far exceeded that which the site was originally designed to cater for. This has significant negative impacts on both the quality of the visitor experience and the special qualities and environment of the site.

Visitors come to the Cliffs of Moher to enjoy the natural beauty and the outdoor experience. An important part of this is to enjoy the dramatic cliff-edge walks and views and the feeling of being at the edge of the world. However, with the increasing popularity of the site, the limited capacity of its infrastructure and facilities results in severe overcrowding at peak times. The peak season (May - August) accounts for 55% of total visits and the site is extremely busy on many days between 11am and 4pm during this period.



Month (2019)	Total Visitors inc c/w	% Total Visitors
January	39,888	2%
February	43,698	3%
March	102,171	6%
April	141,708	9%
May	186,191	12%
June	211,496	13%
July	237,286	15%
August	248,589	15%
September	172,968	11%
October	125,967	8%
November	53,362	3%
December	41,675	3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,605,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

The Cliffs of Moher visitor centre and site infrastructure was originally designed for a visitor population of 400,000. Visitor numbers peaked at over 1.6 million in 2019.



## Arrivals and Admissions

The car parking located on the eastern side of the R478 road (land side) has capacity for approximately 480 spaces. The R478 is locally widened to provide a right turn lane for the northbound traffic entering the car park and there are three ticket lanes and booths just inside the entrance. Each lane can cater up to seven vehicles, however, during the peak season queuing and congestion often builds back onto the R478. This results in a poor sense of arrival for visitors arriving by car. The reason for this is due to a number of factors, including:

- The high volume of traffic on the R478 accessing the Cliffs of Moher.
- Visitors arriving when the car park is already full and then queuing on the road waiting for a space to come free.
- An at grade zebra crossing on the R478 connecting between the car park and the Cliffs of Moher.

In 2019 the implementation of traffic management measures at the entrances and along the R478 were designed to manage queues and minimise delays. Although this eased the situation, increasingly high visitor numbers will continue to create congestion.

The coach parking located on the western side of the road, closest to the cliffs, has capacity for up to 28 coaches and special need vehicles, with overflow coach parking provided in the car park on the opposite side of the road. In recent years, coaches are required to pre-book slots and this has enabled the coach traffic and parking to be suitably managed.



# THE CURRENT SITUATION / A NEED FOR CHANGE

## Congestion on Access Routes

While the Cliffs of Moher is very well served by coaches, which helps ensure that the number of vehicles per visitor is reduced compared to a pure car-based attraction, a number of coach tours use unsuitable routes such as the Wild Atlantic Way through North Clare and other local roads. Large coaches choosing to travel and park on these narrower roads results in congestion at pinch points on local access routes.

There are several way-marked walk and cycle routes in the area, including the Cliffs Coastal Path and the Burren Way, which are primarily suited to hikers and long-distance cyclists.

## Crowded and Linear Journey to the Edge

High levels of visitors in the outdoor areas, particularly at the cliff-edge, significantly detracts from the quality of the core experience at viewing points. Paved pathways, flagstone walls and designated observation areas are well maintained, however the current direct routing to the edge and the presence of large crowds means that the cliff viewing journey lacks drama and a sense of wildness. As a result, the current experience can feel linear and disconnected from the wild and untamed atmosphere of the cliffs.



## Crowding, Safety and Conservation Issues at the Edge

The restricted cliff-edge paths also create health and safety issues, resulting in erosion of the cliff-edge itself as visitors go beyond the designated pathways. The paths beyond the visitor experience are a major safety hazard due to their proximity to the unstable cliff-edge and unpredictable weather conditions. Visitors rarely heed the warnings in situ and try to get as close to the edge as possible for photograph opportunities.

## THE CURRENT SITUATION / A NEED FOR CHANGE

### Current Built Infrastructure

To date, the architectural strategy has been to subsume the buildings into the landscape, meaning the opportunity to use the architecture to offer a “gateway” orientation point and to assist in visitor planning is lost.

The design of the current visitor centre, retail and catering spaces does little to mitigate the impact of crowds, and are underscaled for the current needs and expectations of visitors at a world-class experience. In general, the size and capacity of the visitor centre facilities are not equipped to deal with the volume of visitors at peak time, which leads to long queues and crowded spaces that are difficult to navigate. This is most apparent in the entrance foyer, where a cross-flow of visitors accessing the reception desk and gift shop prevents circulation and creates a sense of disorder and disorientation upon entry.

The location of coach parking and large paved concourses on the approach to the cliff-edge detracts from the experiential concept of “standing at the edge of the world”.



### Vulnerable Habitats

Much of the coastal headland is grasslands which have been regularly fertilised, grazed by cattle or cut for silage. The fauna here are considerably diminished, reducing the attraction for ground nesting birds and small mammals.

The most important habitat is the rocky sea cliff vegetation and coastal grassland community that provides foraging areas for the Chough. This habitat has been subject to considerable erosion along the pathway and there is now large bare ground along the clifftop.



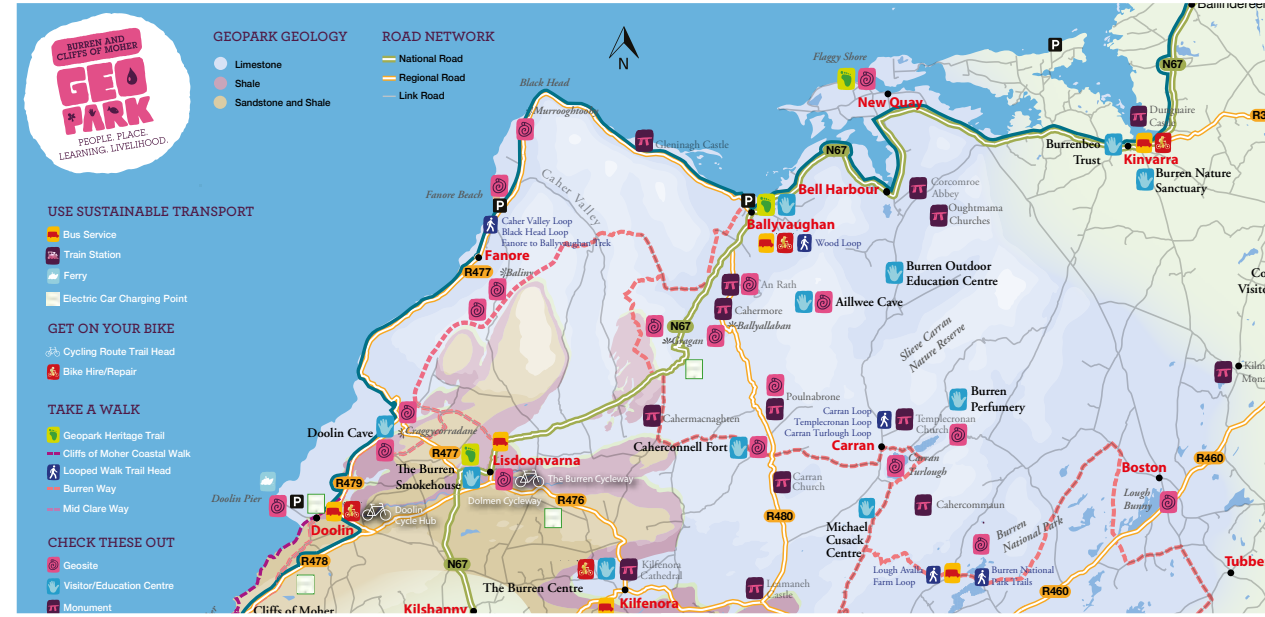
### Limited Benefits for the Wider Hinterland

The current lack of partnerships between tourism products and the absence of connected transport and accommodation infrastructure means the benefits of the high visitor numbers are not felt across the county. County Clare has the second lowest average spend by international overnight visitors.

There are very limited public transport options providing the flexibility that encourages people to stay and explore the area. Local bus routes from Galway to Doolin via the Cliffs of Moher and Ennis are infrequent. A pilot shuttle bus service was trialled by Clare County Council in 2019 and was discontinued due to low uptake and high operating costs. To date there has been limited development, management, maintenance and promotion of sustainable transport routes such as the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk.



# THE CURRENT SITUATION / STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES



The unique ecological and cultural importance of the landscape, and worldwide recognition of this significance, means there is huge potential to develop a world-class visitor experience with far-reaching benefits for visitors, the environment and local communities.

## A Powerful Sensory Experience at the 'Edge of the World'

The Cliffs of Moher can be appreciated for its elemental qualities as a visceral and universally accessible sensory experience. The views of the dramatic sea cliffs and Burren beyond, the bracing wind, the smell of the fresh coastal air and the power of the Atlantic waves create the sense that you are at the very edge of the world.

Better management and physical improvements to the walkways and wider coastal path will deliver a safer and more expansive cliff-edge experience.

## Global Recognition of Geological and Natural Heritage

Through its UNESCO designation, the Cliffs of Moher is internationally recognised as a unique landscape of outstanding natural beauty and geological importance. The dramatic, open and sparsely vegetated coastal headland and rugged vertical sea cliffs are an outstanding example of the glacial karst landscapes of western Ireland. In the stunning rock formations, you can discover the 300-million-year evolution of the environment and see dramatic coastal erosion in action. The enormous cliff face provides a habitat for one of the largest and best-known seabird colonies in Ireland.

Physical improvements at the Cliffs of Moher provide an opportunity to conserve and enhance these precious assets.

## Economic Benefits

The Cliffs of Moher are a major economic engine for County Clare. It is estimated that 90% of staff live within 20 miles of the cliffs and 70% of Cliffs of Moher expenditure on food, drink, art, craft design, operational and maintenance services goes to local businesses.

All of these existing economic benefits can be significantly increased as the 2040 strategy is implemented.

## Proactive Restoration of Natural Habitats

Through a range of restoration measures, the strategy will allow the Cliffs of Moher's unique ecology to recover from the impact of tourism, particularly high footfall at the cliff-edge.

Significant extension of the Cliffs of Moher landholdings and rewilding of the landscape can help to achieve targets set out in the EU Nature Restoration Law, namely the continuous, long-term and sustained recovery of biodiverse land and sea areas, resulting in increased climate mitigation and adaptation through restoration.

## Links to Local Culture and Social History

The Cliffs of Moher has an important connection to the cultural traditions, built heritage and social history of the region. A visit to the cliffs can provide tangible insights into ancient monuments, local folklore, and quarrying and tourism during the 19th and 20th centuries.

High-quality interpretation that is more evenly distributed throughout the visitor experience will highlight stories that are currently understated.

## THE CURRENT SITUATION / STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES



### A Popular and Resilient Tourism Product

Cliffs of Moher Centre DAC, a successful self-funded business unit of Clare County Council, manages the site with a focus on providing world-class experiences through autonomous decision making and active external partnerships.

There is worldwide recognition of the Cliffs of Moher as a top attraction to visit and the site is marketed as a key landmark along the Wild Atlantic Way. The tourism product is closely aligned with the two key market segments – Culturally Curious and Great Escapers – and is of significant appeal to international audiences, particularly American visitors.

### Opportunities for Enhanced Partnerships

The Cliffs of Moher is situated close to other vibrant towns and villages within County Clare, including a variety of natural and cultural attractions. There is huge potential to connect these into a network of diverse experiences, resulting in increased length of stay, visitor spend, and dispersal of visitors across the region.



### Comparator Case Study: Stonehenge, UK

Stonehenge is the most significant and frequently visited Ancient Monument in Britain. The World Heritage Site is overlaid with social, economic and religious narratives and has been characterised by the quest to ascribe meaning. This £27 million English Heritage project aimed to reconnect visitors with the ancient landscape, transitioning from a stopover or quick photo opportunity to a more exciting and longer visit. The key driver for the development was high visitor numbers, with more than one million visitors annually and arrivals set to rise in the following years. A vital component of early planning work was an assessment of how the volume of visitors would best be accommodated within the new facilities and exhibition spaces.

Developed with the support of the National Trust, Wiltshire Council, The Highways Agency and Natural England, the project transformed the setting of Stonehenge. The section of A344 road that ran past the monument was grassed over, with the remaining part closed to public vehicles and now the route of the visitor shuttle service. Today the visitor centre is 1.5 miles away from Stonehenge itself.

Opened in December 2013, visitor numbers have increased by 40% to around 1.4 million. Dwell time, retail income and café income have all approximately doubled. Permanent employees have increased from 43 to around 100, with approximately 40 additional seasonal staff during the months of April to October.

The planned project to move the A303 into a tunnel under the Stonehenge World Heritage Site will complete the strategy to remove traffic that began with the 2012 closure of the A344 road. This will significantly enhance the visitor experience at the stones.

“After nearly 30 years, English Heritage finally has a scheme that will transform the setting of the stones and our visitor’s experience of them.”

English Heritage Chief Executive Dr Simon Thurley



# THE CURRENT SITUATION / LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL



A baseline assessment of the landscape character and quality has defined the geological, biodiversity and cultural value of the Cliffs of Moher and its surrounding environs. Where relevant this has been considered within the context of the wider but related landscape of the Burren.

- 1. Coastal stacks and rock formation
- 2. Limestone pavements, The Burren
- 3. Limestone erosion

## Geology and Landform

Part of the iconic status of the Cliffs of Moher as a tourist destination derives from the scenic qualities which are a direct result of the distinctive geological systems and processes from which they were formed. Composed of layered bands of carboniferous shales and flagstones, the striations of the cliffs are, by contrast to the nearby rock formations of the Burren, of comparatively rapid formation, the legacy of sand and silt being washed into the sea by a long-vanished river system.

In contrast, the rocks of the Burren formed over tens of millions of years, with the fossil rich limestones in the north and east formed in tropical, equatorial seas and deposited over a period of c.20 million years. It is these limestones which define the austere Burren landscape with its characteristic limestone pavements, and which are overlain by the younger siltstones, shales and sandstones of the Cliffs of Moher in the south and west.

The formation and folding of the rocks is also partly the legacy of continental drift and tectonic plate collision, with the entire landmass on which the rocks are sited having collided with what is now mainland Europe shortly after their formation. This resulted in the hitherto flat rocks becoming gently folded and distinctly tilted, as at the Burren. The cracks, fissures and splits frequently evident in the rocks today are the legacy of the enormous forces acting on them during this process.

Some 1.8 million years ago, during the Ice Age, vast masses of ice more than 200 metres thick scoured the surface from the north and north east, carving a series of valleys and depositing drift material in places on top of the bedrock. These are apparent in the series of scattered rocks apparent across much of the Burren to this day, as well as on a number of the beaches on this stretch of the coast, with granites and red sandstones from as far away as Connemara.

Distinctive features of the geology of the cliffs include a variety of structures which are the result of seawater erosion on the soft rocks, such as caves, limestone stacks and arches. There are also rare fossilised neopteran pterygote insects near Doolin, which were an early and major evolutionary advancement in insect development, enabling accurate dating of the rocks. A diversity of trace fossils is also found in the sandstone ledges and the Moher Flagstones. Also significant are sand volcanoes in the carboniferous beds and the Fisherstreet Slide, which is part of the Gull Island Formation and a notable example of sedimentary rock slide, being some 30 metres thick and several kilometres long.



## Cliff Walkway Inspection

In August 2019, visual inspections of the cliff walkway were undertaken approximately 1.3km north and 1.4km south of the existing visitor centre to identify any potential signs of instability or recent activity that may compromise its safety. On the basis of the appraisal, it was concluded that further considerations with respect to assessing the risk of significant slope failure and future natural regression of the cliff from erosion are required.

The key outcome from the survey affecting the Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy is the recommendation that, where possible, the public should be prevented from accessing the cliff-edge. Overarching guidance was given to move the walkway back to create a no-walk zone directly along the cliff-edge.

Short term measures recommended include the widening of the walkway to the north and south of the Cliffs of Moher Experience. Where the walkway is cutting directly through existing landslide systems it is recommended that either the walkway is re-routed at these locations, and should this not be possible an engineered retaining solution should be implemented to prevent destabilising the historic landslides.

## THE CURRENT SITUATION / LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL

### Ecology

The Cliffs of Moher are the habitat for a wide variety of seabirds, coastal flowers and lichens, plus land mammals including badgers, hares and stoats. The seascape is characterised by marine life and sea mammals such as whales, basking sharks and seals. Seabirds inhabiting the cliffs include puffins, a member of the Auk family which winters at sea and returns to the cliffs for the nesting season, along with significant numbers of other cliff-nesting seabirds, across over 20 species including guillemot, razorbill, fulmar and kittiwake. Other species include chough and peregrine falcon. This rich variety of seabird species has led to the designation of the cliffs as a Natura 2000 site – a Special Protection Area (SPA).

The flora and fauna of the limestone plateau of the Burren in particular is diverse, overlaid upon limestone rock and soils, forming a habitat for around 1,100 plant species, approximately three quarters of the total found in Ireland. The elevated oceanic climate gives rise to a unique combination of flora, either simultaneously or in succession across the seasons, including Mediterranean orchid, hoary rock rose and spring gentian, plus a mosaic of ferns and mosses in autumn and winter. The valleys that dissect the plateau are overlain with thick deposits of glacial till and blanketed with fertile grazing lands which have long supported the lamb and beef that characterise much of Irish agriculture.

The landscape also supports numerous emblematic animal species, such as the pine marten, the internationally-endangered Lesser Horseshoe Bat, over 70 species of land snail due to the presence of calcium carbonate, and 28 of Ireland's 30 species of butterfly.



### Existing Habitats at the Cliffs of Moher

#### Grasslands and Siliceous Areas

The principal habitat types are currently grasslands, which vary from an ungrazed fringe along the clifftop to improved agricultural grasslands on the landward side of the existing fence line bordering the cliff pathway, which are regularly fertilised and grazed by cattle or cut for silage.

Invertebrate species in these grasslands are considerably diminished, which reduces the habitat's attractiveness for a range of ground nesting bird species along with its suitability for various small mammals. There are some areas of dry siliceous heath associated with shallow soils and small areas of exposed siliceous rock, mainly in the north of the site.

#### Rocky Sea Cliff Vegetation and Coastal Grassland

The most important habitat within the study area is the rocky sea cliff vegetation/coastal grassland community which provides the preferred foraging habitat for Chough, one of the principal special conservation interests for the Cliffs of Moher SPA.

This habitat has however been subject to considerable erosion along the clifftop pathway with the result that there are now large areas of bare ground along the entire clifftop.

The disturbance of the grassland strip on the seaward side of the wall along the section of trail leading from the current visitor centre to O'Brien's Tower has resulted in the establishment of a suite of opportunistic weed species, which further limits the foraging value for the chough along the clifftop.



## THE CURRENT SITUATION / LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL

### Cultural and Social Influences

#### Neolithic and Bronze and Iron Ages (c.10,000 BC to AD 43)

The Cliffs of Moher literally translates as Cliffs of the Ruined Fort, a reference to the Iron Age Fort of Mothar on the clifftops of c.2,000 years ago, of which no trace now remains, although Moher Tower stands near its former site.

#### Medieval (1066-1600)

The cliffs formed the last destination of the Spanish Armada of 1588. The Spanish fleet, under the Duke of Medina Sidonia, having been unsuccessful in their attempted invasion of England, sailed north around Scotland and wide around Ireland as part of a planned return home, but was annihilated by storms en route.

Boetius Clancy, High Sheriff of Clare, spotted the fleet in distress on 16th September 1588 and was ordered by the Lord Deputy William Fitzwilliam to capture and execute any Spanish sailors. Two more ships carrying almost 700 men sank on 20th September on the reef near Mutton Island. The four survivors were taken prisoner by Clancy and along with survivors from other ships were hanged in a gruesome execution near Spanish Point, before being buried thereafter in a mass grave known as Tuama na Spaineach.

#### Post-Medieval (1600-1800)

From the latter 16th century until the early 19th century, young Irish nobles would embark on the Grand Tour from the coast of County Clare and Galway. Irish travel journals of the 1780s frequently describe the sublime beauty of the Cliffs of Moher, which many of the travellers on their Grand Tour experienced when sailing across to mainland Europe.



#### Early Modern and Modern (1800 to Present Day)

The great landowners of County Clare created a designed landscape and architectural legacy which shapes the character of the cliffs to this day. A notable example was Cornelius O'Brien MP of Birchfield House, Liscannor, who built the folly O'Brien's Tower in 1835 near the highest point of the cliffs, to provide a striking vantage point for visitors. O'Brien was also responsible for the wall of Liscannor Flagstone along the clifftop. The tower forms part of a wider programme of building works by O'Brien in the area, notably the bridge across the Inagh River between Liscannor and Lahinch, his monument at Liscannor, St Brigid's National School, local road schemes and the well house at St Brigid's Well.

The other principal element of the landscape in this period shaping how it is experienced today was flagstone quarrying through the 19th century and into the early 20th. In its heyday, the industry employed around 500 men, resulting in Liscannor becoming a busy port shipping stone to London and Liverpool, and with a village being built for workers near the Doonagore Mines. The mines largely closed with the advent of the First World War, although some reopened in Liscannor in the 1960s, producing the distinctive local flagstone which influences much of the built vernacular in the locality, along with Moher slate

The clifftop also has a long-held popular association with open air musical performances, which continue to take place in the 21st century, and is a scenic backdrop for numerous motion pictures since the 1960s.



#### 1. Monument to Cornelius O'Brien, Liscannor

#### 2. Active quarrying behind the cliff face

#### 3. Interlocking sequence of coastal headlands, coves and wild, elemental seascape creating a dynamic and visually exciting, engaging set of views far beyond "honeypot" sites such as O'Brien's Tower

#### 4. The geology of the site is expressed everywhere including distinctive vernacular detailing such as the Liscannor flagstone clifftop wall

# THE CURRENT SITUATION / LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL

## Key Views

The views arising from the elevated aspect, including intervisibility with the Aran islands, the seascape and adjacent landscapes of the Burren, plus natural and man-made landmarks of the cliffs are a key part of the visitor experience at the Cliffs of Moher.



1. Hag's Head viewpoint



2. Main Platform viewpoint



3. O'Brien's Tower viewpoint



4. Viewpoint S1



5. Viewpoint South



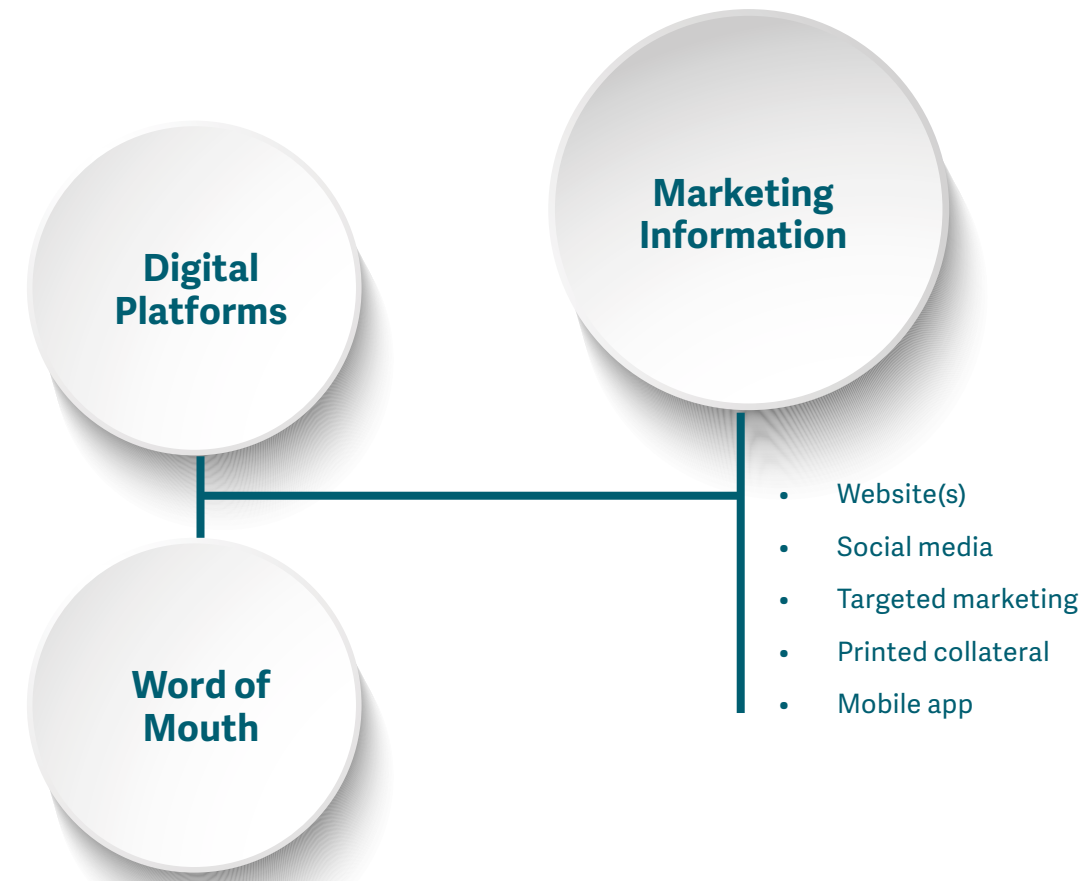
# THE CURRENT SITUATION / VISITOR JOURNEY

A comprehensive review is provided of the existing Cliffs of Moher Experience in its entirety, from pre-visit, to onsite experience, to post-visit.

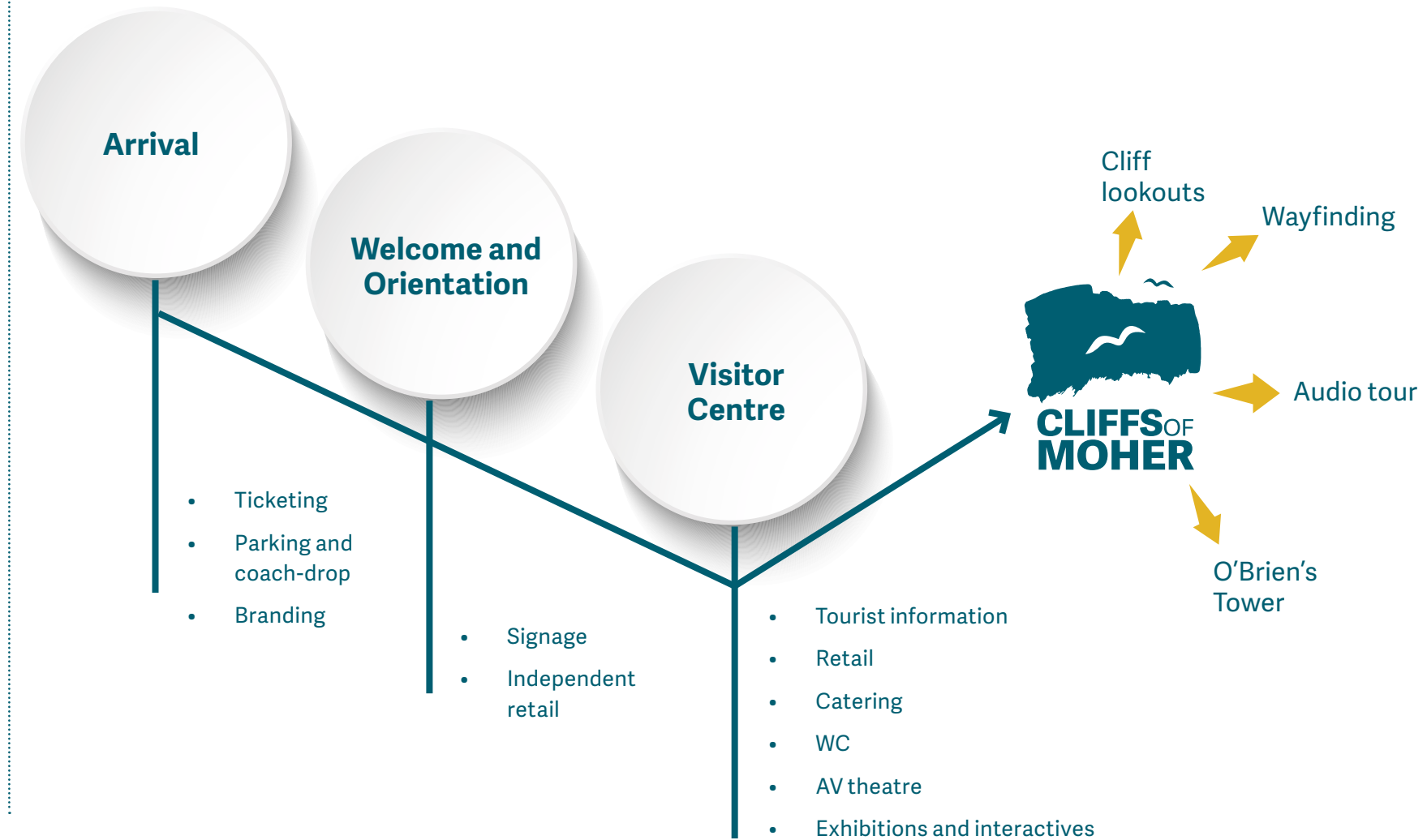
This appraisal has been developed through site visits and an assessment of market research, secret customer evaluations, social media reviews and digital data analysis.

## Cliffs of Moher Experience

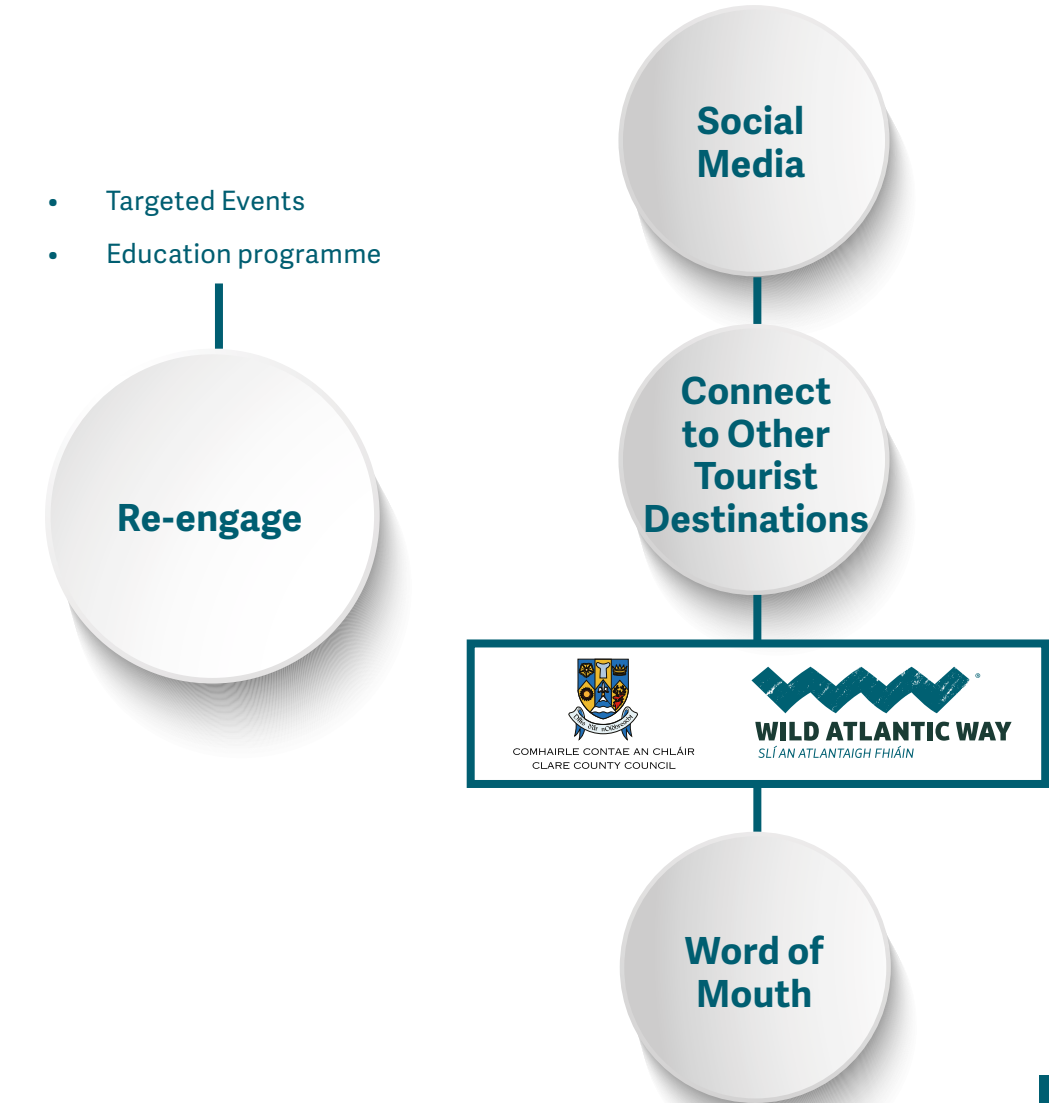
### 1 Pre-visit PLAN AND PREPARE



### 2 Onsite ARRIVE AND EXPLORE



### 3 Post-visit DEPART AND EXPLORE FURTHER



# THE CURRENT SITUATION / VISITOR JOURNEY

## 1 Pre-visit PLAN AND PREPARE

According to market research, pre-visit awareness of the cliffs is strong with 75% of overseas having heard of them prior to arriving in Ireland. However, word of mouth and films are the most used information source, with the official website mentioned by only 10%.

The website itself is rated highly for ease of use and practical information and the booking function is easy to find. The 'Things to Do' feature has a large proportion of page views and a low bounce rate.

Drone footage is effective at emphasising the wildness of landscape but there is a lack of motivating imagery showcasing its appeal during different seasons and times of the day.

Telephone enquiries directed to the reception desk are generally dealt with promptly and in a friendly manner, enabling the centre to provide personal and tailored information about the cliffs and local attractions.

The number of visitors accessing visit information through social media channels has increased annually.



Social Media

Updated information including weather warnings, seasonal events, and festivals and sector news.



Website

### Context

Summary of geology, natural and built heritage assets and related historical events.

### Wider Attractions

Information about attractions in County Clare area.



Onsite Phone Enquiries / Leaflets

### Practical Information

Booking, transport and directions, weather, onsite visitor facilities, group visits.

Opportunities at pre-booking stage to influence visitors to fly Shannon and stay locally, including developing packages with other businesses and accommodation providers as saleable experiences. Further investment in digital marketing and digital transformation is required.

## 2 Onsite ARRIVE

The first interaction visitors have with staff on site is through attendants at one of four car park booths. Staff are able to provide a friendly and personal welcome

There can be lengthy queues to enter the car park and occasionally limited spaces to park during peak times. Long tailbacks along the road can cause problems for cars trying to pass, contributing to a sense of disorder and overcrowding on arrival.

High levels of dissatisfaction from a small minority of visitors on TripAdvisor relate primarily to a feeling that they are paying for parking at a natural heritage site that should be free to access. This is compounded by a sense of resentment that visitors walking along the public footpaths either side of the visitor experience are accessing the same site for free.

As visitors presume that tickets are for parking rather than for access to visitor facilities, there is further dissatisfaction that entry fees are per person rather per car, leading to negative perceptions of value for money.

There is an underwhelming sense of arrival and welcome, with a lack of interpretation that promotes the visitor offer and raises expectations for the experience to come.

Visitors are required to cross a busy main road before entering through the old visitor ticket gateway, now repurposed as a meditation room. This creates a false welcome point and confusion is further compounded by a lack of directional signage to the visitor offers beyond.



## THE CURRENT SITUATION / VISITOR JOURNEY

### 2 Onsite WELCOME AND ORIENTATION

There is a mix of signage and interpretation introduced at different locations, with inconsistent branding and format generally lacking cohesion.

The independent retail offer is unappealing as the first facilities that visitors encounter to the site, and they lack a clear connection to the cliffs.

The coach park is directly opposite the visitor centre entrance, resulting in a large volume of vehicles blocking the view as visitors enter the site.

There is generally a high volume of staff in high visibility jackets providing guidance to visitors as they explore the site, including promotion of other attractions throughout Clare. For many visitors this personal interaction and locally-focused advice is the most memorable element of their visit.



### 2 Onsite VISITOR CENTRE FACILITIES

In general, the size and capacity of the visitor centre facilities are not equipped to deal with the volume of visitors at peak time, which leads to long queues and crowded spaces that can be difficult to orientate.

This is most apparent in the entrance foyer, where a cross-flow of visitors accessing the reception desk and gift shop makes it difficult to circulate and creates a sense of disorder and disorientation upon entry.

The catering facilities are consistently the worse rated element of the visitor attraction, mainly due to long queues, poor signage and limited menu choice.

The visitor centre is generally scored highly by visitors in terms of its architectural design, blending in with the natural surroundings and retaining a modern look and feel.



### 2 Onsite VISITOR CENTRE INTERPRETATION

The interpretative experience is generally well received, mainly because of its clear and open layout and mix of mechanical and digital interactives. The 'Postcards from the Edge' interactive, which superimposes your image over the cliffs backdrop, is particularly popular across audience demographics and provides a takeaway souvenir that can be accessed at home.

Overall, interpretation is starting to look dated and, like external signage, differs in presentation style and format. Digital interactives are frequently out of order, providing visitors with little value for money in case of bad weather obscuring the cliff view.

A large-scale AV presentation explores the cliffs vista along with underwater life from the point of view of a bird in flight. This immersive experience is currently being updated with new computer-generated assets.

Visitors can explore displays along curved walkways with the central area mainly dedicated to children's handling and digital interactives focused on local wildlife. The themes of these different areas can appear disjointed and there is a lack of clear hierarchical messaging that quickly conveys what is significant about the cliffs.

Content is delivered through a variety of media, including light box graphics, an interactive table about deep time and a map showing geological features across Ireland. Some displays are text heavy, with little layered information catering for both children and special interests.

The social history of the cliffs – fishing, bird catching, farming, music – is interpreted through replica objects and photography displayed in niches along the outer walkway. In general, however, there is a lack of human interest stories and people are not visible in displays, preventing visitors from engaging on an emotional level with the cliffs as a cultural landscape.



# THE CURRENT SITUATION / VISITOR JOURNEY

## 2 Onsite CLIFFS LANDSCAPE

Visitors frequently go straight to see the cliffs and may bypass the visitor centre altogether in sunny weather. The spectacular sight of the cliffs is usually considered to be the highlight of a visit, and often override negative feelings regarding visitor facilities and overcrowding.

Paved pathways with flagstone walls and three observation platforms provide views of the cliffs, sea stacks, islands and seabird colonies. This infrastructure is generally received positively, being well maintained and facilitating safe and easy access to the views that visitors come for. For some visitors however, this carefully managed routing and presence of large crowds can lead to an experience that is too linear and limited in exploration of the wild landscape.

As with the rest of the site, external signage is inconsistent in presentation and displayed in a piecemeal fashion, creating an eyesore in the natural environment.

Permanent interpretation in the landscape is limited to a downloadable online app with an audio tour, however members of staff are present at some viewing points to provide expert advice on nesting birds. In good weather, professional musicians also provide live entertainment in fixed busking locations.

O'Brien's Tower, is located on the far end of the walkway and offers the best views of Galway Bay and the Clare coastline.

The flagstone walls are damaged in parts and provide obstacles in an effort to distinguish between general footpaths and walkways managed by the Cliffs of Moher Experience.

The paths beyond the visitor experience are a major safety hazard due to their proximity to the unstable cliff-edge and unpredictable weather conditions. Visitors rarely heed the warnings in situ and seek to get as close to the edge as possible to take instagram-worthy photographs.



## 3 Post-visit DEPART

67% of visitors would post on social media following their visit to the Cliffs of Moher compared to a national average of 53%, suggesting it is one of the most photogenic and talked about places in Ireland.

The Cliffs of Moher Experience retweets and shares some of this content and promotes the ongoing events programme, while the official social media platforms actively promote wider attractions across the county.

School visits are encouraged but there is currently a limited range of special events or activities encouraging visitors, particularly from the domestic market, to re-engage with the attraction. There is considerable scope for expansion of the programme through partnerships with regional festivals and events.



### School Visits

Guided tours and resident geologist offered but no targeted activities.

### Special Events

Celebrate relevant days in calendar (e.g. St Brigid's feast day) but no formal themed talks or activities.

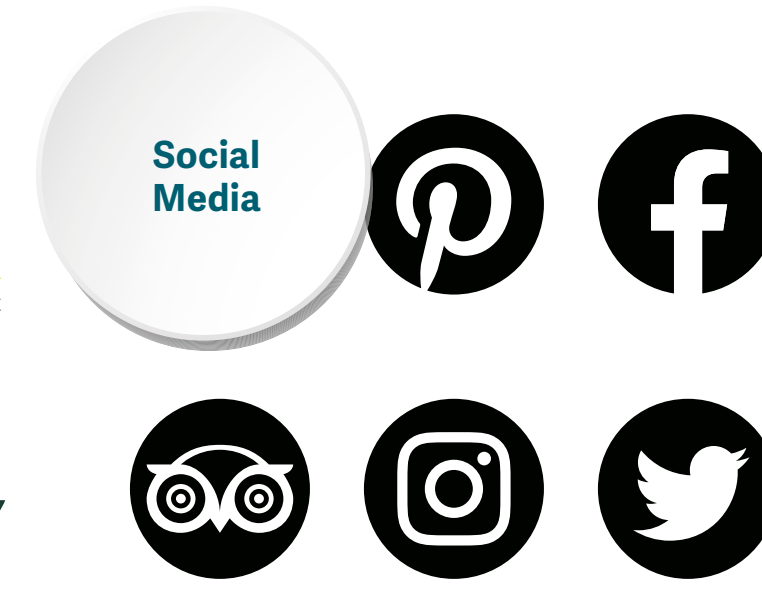


### Wider Festivals / Events

Burren Food Trail, European Geoparks Week and National Heritage Week events focus on whole Geopark.

### Signposting

Signage and roadside branding encourage visits to wider visitor attractions.



### Local Tourism

Promoting tourism, accommodation, food and drink businesses in Burren and Clare.

### Visitor Reviews and Photos

Reposting of reviews and photography from visitors. Management respond to business review websites, including Tripadvisor and Google reviews.

### Post-visit Emails

Visitors who have accepted marketing via WiFi receive a post visit email. Post-visit engagement can be expanded and developed.

# THE CURRENT SITUATION / BUILT INFRASTRUCTURE

The following review of the built infrastructure at the Cliffs of Moher provides an overview of the investment made to date into visitor facilities as well as a critical assessment of the assets in terms of quality, function and impact on the visitor experience.

The primary physical assets have been identified as;

1. Car park and payment kiosks
2. Entrance pavilions and pathway
3. Retail units and adjoining public space
4. Main visitor centre
5. Coach park and coach entrance building
6. Hard landscaping to cliff walk
7. O'Brien's Tower



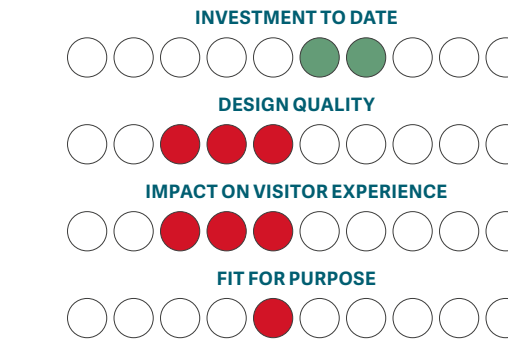
## Car Park and Payment Kiosks

The current visitor car park at the Cliffs of Moher is 3.3ha and is situated to the west of the main visitor attraction on the R478 from Liscannor to Doolin.

In its current layout, the car park has the capacity to hold 450-480 cars with provision for six disabled parking bays.

The car park was constructed in 2007 as a temporary facility but has been in use ever since. This is the first arrival point for all visitors arriving by car. Vehicles enter at portacabin ticket booths and pass through a barrier when they have paid. In addition to the three ticketing booths, there are two temporary WC portacabins in the car park.

The car park surface and kiosks appear to be temporary and parking spaces are poorly delineated. The site offers no shelter and is windswept and open to the elements. There is no mitigation of the visual impact of the cars in the landscape.



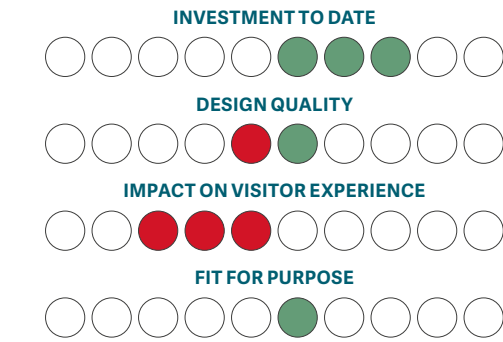
# THE CURRENT SITUATION / BUILT INFRASTRUCTURE



## Coach Park

The coach park is currently located adjacent to the visitor centre to the west of R478 Liscannor Doolin road. It currently will hold 28 coaches and there are 5 disabled car parking bays in this area. The coach park was completed with the new coach entrance building in 2019.

Orientation and wayfinding are poor, and like the car park, there is no mitigation of the visual impact of the coaches in the landscape.

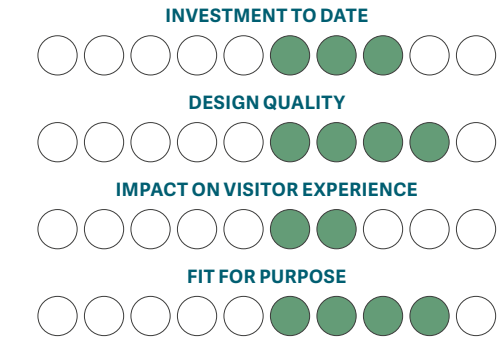


## Coach Park Entrance Building

Designed by Denis Byrne Architects and completed in 2019, this is the newest piece of built infrastructure on the site.

The 280 m2 subterranean building is an arrival point for coaches. Accommodation includes 10 unisex toilets, a meeting room and offices and a pedestrian route through from coach arrival to the visitor centre.

While the building serves its purpose, non-coach visitors are unaware that there are additional WC facilities in the building due to poor wayfinding.



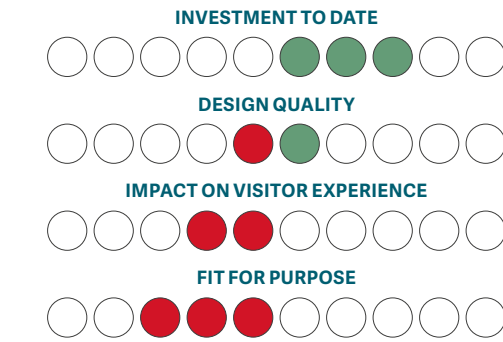
## Entrance Pavilions and Pathway

The entrance pavilions define the main pedestrian entrance to the site. Clad in Liscannor stone and constructed in 2007 with the visitor centre, they were originally built to be ticket and information booths. The right-hand pavilion currently houses a small meditation room.

Visitors can pass between the pavilions or on the pathway to the right to enter the site. The pathway leads from the roadway to the entrance of the visitor centre, a distance of 200m on a concrete block paved pathway of weathered stone appearance.

The scale and location of the pavilions does not create a coherent threshold and their functions are now largely redundant. The buildings have accumulated infrastructure in the form of lighting and signage. Separation between ingress and egress would help with crowd control, however this is not achieved here.

Generic 'suburban' paving is out of context in this location and sets a bland tone.



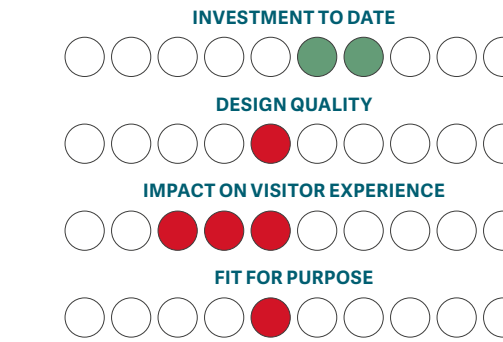
## Commercial Units and Public Space

There are six permanent shop kiosks constructed in 2007 along with the main visitor centre. The kiosks are constructed as concrete vaults with the external façade faced in stone. They are built into the hillside to the east of the main entrance walkway.

Each unit is approximately 20m2. The opening times of the units differ from the visitor centre and are often closed in low season. There is a small cycle parking bay adjacent to the units.

Visitors pass these commercial units before arriving at the visitor centre, which may not convey the right message. The adjacent storage facility is an eyesore that is not in keeping with the subterranean architectural strategy used elsewhere. Their design does little to mitigate visitors' exposure to weather at this critical juncture.

The counterflow of visitors accessing the retail offer and arriving at or leaving the site is frustrating at peak times.



# THE CURRENT SITUATION / BUILT INFRASTRUCTURE



## Visitor Centre

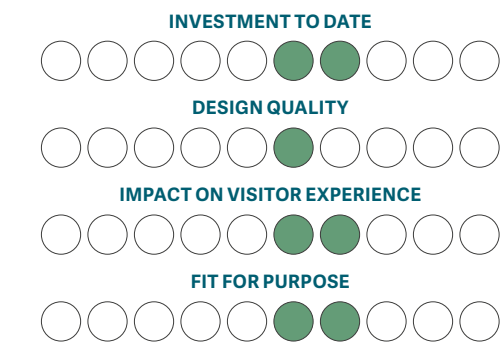
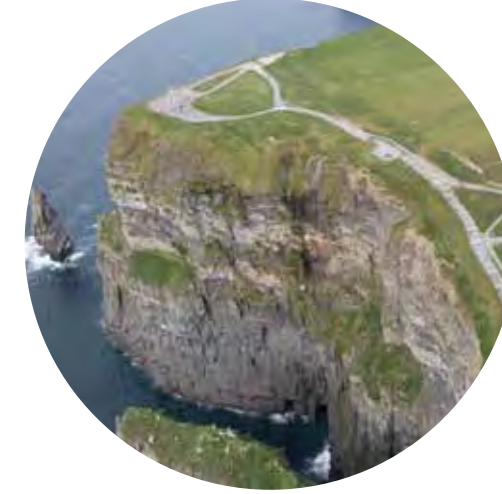
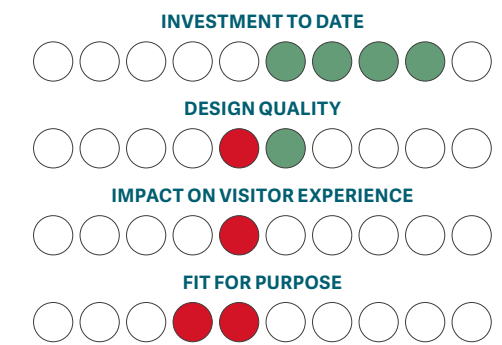
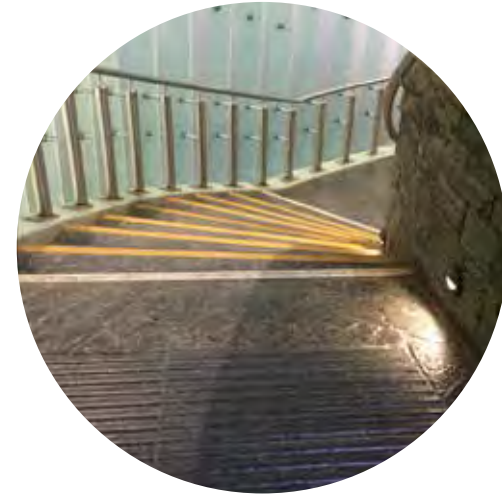
Completed in 2007, the visitor centre was designed by Reddy O’Riordan Staehli Architects. The 2,500 m2 building is a subterranean, self-supporting concrete structure set into the hill so that the external envelope blends into the contours of the surrounding topography.

The entrance foyer has low ceilings, dim lighting and the sparse interior evokes a cave-like atmosphere. Liscannor stone is used for flooring surface throughout. Supporting concrete columns and the ceilings are imprinted with the textured stone motif.

Designed for 400,000 visitors, the centre now receives up to four times this number. The building is undersized to cope with the volume of visitors at peak times. A significant area of the existing visitor centre is underutilised in the exhibition space, thereby putting excessive pressure on the entrance sequence and the restaurant. A defined entrance and separate exit would help to mitigate the crowding pressure.

The design significantly buries the built infrastructure, meaning the opportunity to use the architecture to offer orientation and identification has been lost. There is a lack of legibility of functions internally which is not resolved by the current wayfinding. Specifically, the exhibition space is not visible or easily found from the reception.

There is a lack of natural light and the exhibition space enjoys no relationship to the external landscape or the cliffs.



## Hard Landscaping to Cliff Walk

Significant hard landscaping to the northern half of the site was designed by Brady Shipman Martin and completed with the new visitor centre in 2007. As part of this work, public access to the cliffs was moved back 5m to allow for the ongoing natural erosion of cliff-edges. Walkways were widened from 3m to 5m to take account of increased visitor numbers, drainage problems were rectified and steps redesigned to deal more effectively with high winds.

The protective walls to the Cliff Walk are made from approximately 1.2m high flags of Liscannor Stone, laid in an overlapping pattern. Liscannor Stone, or Moher Flagstone, is the name given to a variety of flagstones and sandstones that rise from the lands around the Cliffs of Moher and the nearby fishing village of Liscannor. This hard naturally riven quartz sandstone was formed in the Namurian of the Middle Carboniferous Period over 320 million years ago. The stone bears the fossil tracks of marine animals that lived during Carboniferous times. These tracks give the stone a highly textured surface of infinitely varied character.

Two raised and cantilevered viewing platforms were constructed at either end of the site. The walkways were improved for accessibility although due to the natural slope of the terrain they were not made fully accessible.

Pedestrian travel direction is an out-and-back scenario and is not looped meaning that there is always a counterflow of people which can be frustrating for visitors during peak times. The increase in visitor numbers has added pressure to the non-landscaped pathways to the south of the site.

The design does little to mitigate the exposure of visitors to weather in this area.



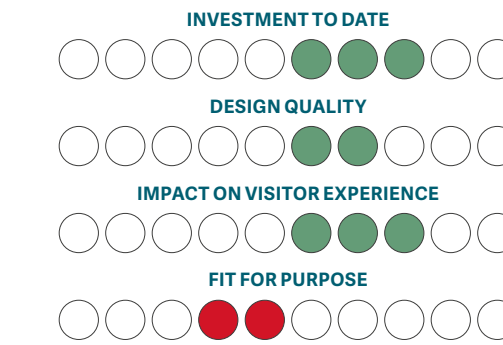
## O’Brien’s Tower

O’Brien’s Tower was built on the cliffs in around 1835 by local landlord and MP Sir Cornelius O’Brien as an observation tower. It is listed in Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 Record of Protected Structures – RPS No. 292 with the following summary description:

“Detached three-bay single-and-two storey rubble stone-built gothic-style observation complex, built c.1835, comprising single-bay two-storey to centre on a circular plan with base batter, battlemented roof parapet. Single bay two-storey lower tower to left on a circular plan and single-bay single-storey battlement screen wall to right having segmental-headed door opening; renovated, c.1970 (NIAH, 2000). Assigned regional rating by NIAH. Set in newly landscaped grounds as part of the Cliffs of Moher redevelopment.”

In 2019 Clare County Council substantially upgraded and renovated the tower. It now provides a safe elevated viewing platform for the cliffs and Clare coastline and further to the Aran Islands and Connemara.

The design does little to mitigate visitor’s exposure to weather at this critical junction.



# THE CURRENT SITUATION / TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

The following review of current visitor access to the site along with the Coastal Walk and wider vehicular and non-vehicular transport networks was carried out through a desk-based study and consultation with relevant stakeholders.

## Strategic Transport Links

The Cliffs of Moher are located on the west coast of Ireland close to Liscannor village in County Clare. They are easily accessed by road from Galway (90 minutes), Ennis (40 minutes) and Limerick (75 minutes). Dublin is approximately a four hour drive, on either the northern route (via the M4 / M6 / M18 / N67) or the southern route (via M7 / N85 / N67).

A ferry service sails from Tarbert in Kerry to Killimer in Clare (45 minutes from the cliffs).

The nearest train stations are at Ennis and Galway.

The Cliffs of Moher is served by a daily public bus service. The Bus Éireann service (Route 350) runs six times a day in the summer each way between Ennis and Galway.

Shannon International Airport, located one hour away, has direct connections from the USA and mainland Europe, serving the west coast of Ireland and the Wild Atlantic Way (WAW).

The WAW is Ireland’s first long-distance touring route, stretching along the spectacular Atlantic coast from Donegal to West Cork. The route can be explored by car, bicycle or on foot. Among its many Discovery Points there are 15 special “Signature Points”, including the Cliffs of Moher. The WAW has been a significant success and a wide range of businesses along its route have reported direct benefits (93%) with increases in overall footfall, especially of USA tourists, a lengthening of the season and higher turnover.

Fáilte Ireland is continuing to invest in and promote the WAW, aiming to disperse visitors more evenly along the route and into towns and villages in the region. In partnership with Clare County Council, Fáilte Ireland must continue to secure appropriate and sustainable facilities and infrastructure in these local communities to facilitate access and realise economic benefits.

## The main towns and villages in the area are:

- Lisdoonvarna (12 km north)
- Liscannor (6 km south)
- Ennistymon (13 km south-east)
- Lahinch (9 km south)
- Doolin (7 km north)

## The nearest larger urban areas are:

- Ennis (40 km east)
- Galway (76 km north)
- Limerick (80 km south-east)



## THE CURRENT SITUATION / TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

### Access to and from the Cliffs

The National Secondary Road N67 runs from Galway to Tarbert, connecting the towns of Lisdoonvarna to Ennistymon, approximately 12 km from the cliffs. The Regional Road R478 connects the town of Lisdoonvarna with Lahinch. Part of the road is on the Wild Atlantic Way and it is the only access route to the Cliffs of Moher. The R478 travels west from Lisdoonvarna, passing nearby Doolin, the Cliffs of Moher and Liscannor before joining the N67 in Lahinch. The Ballyellery Road is a local road that goes from North to South, connecting Doolin village with the northern area of Lahinch.



# THE CURRENT SITUATION / TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

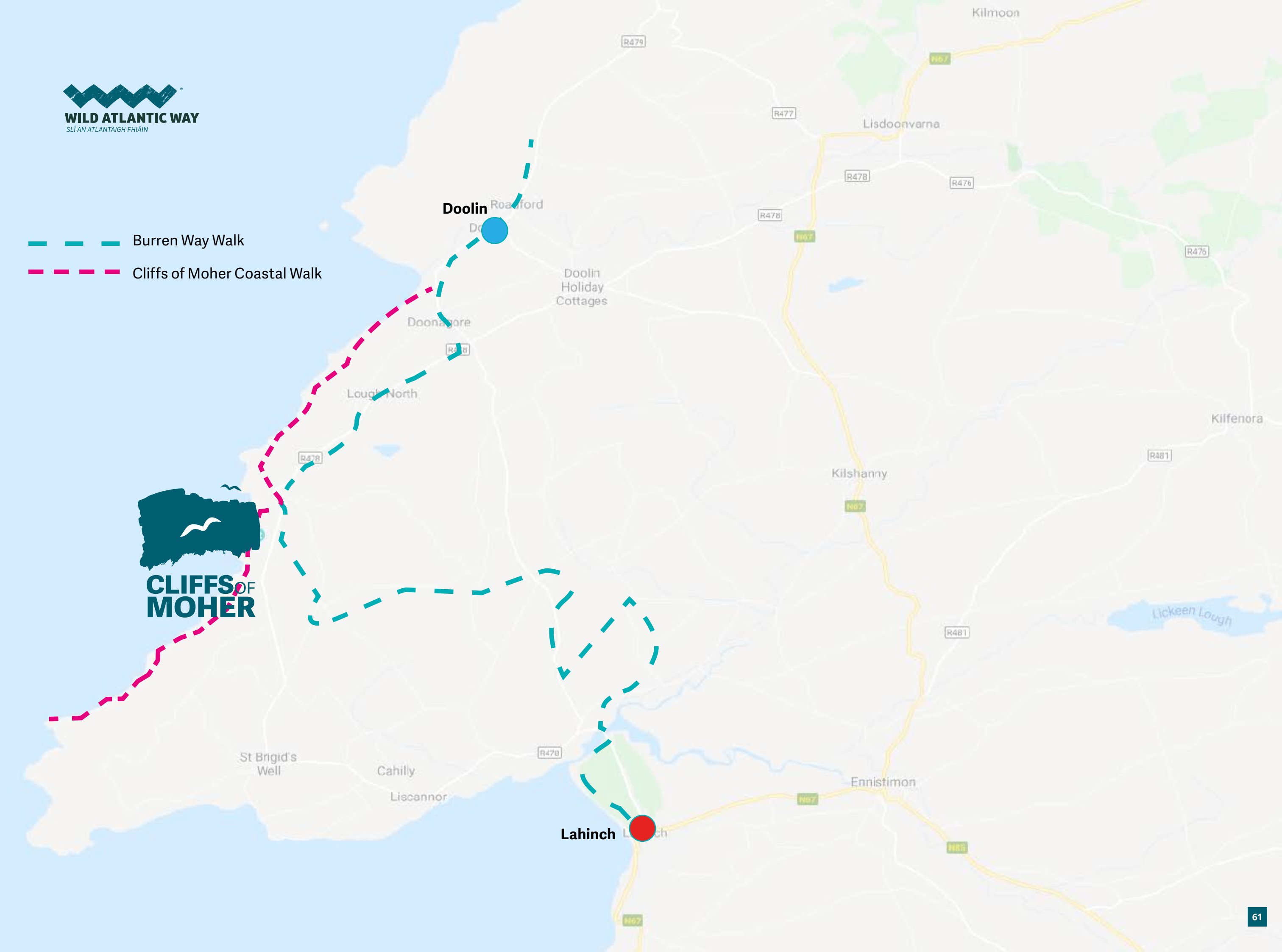
## Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk

The Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk is one of Ireland’s most majestic coastal trails, linking the villages of Doolin and Liscannor, via the Cliffs of Moher. The coastal walk opened in 2013 in partnership with landowners under The National Walks Scheme. Spanning 14 km along the west coast, the popular walking route is the most memorable way to discover these towering cliffs that hang over the wild Atlantic Ocean. It has a terrain of exposed clifftop path, narrow and steep ascents, flagstone steps, farm tracks, local and regional roads.

The 8 km-long northern part of the coastal walk from the existing visitor centre to Doolin and takes around 3-4 hours to complete. The walk to the south side towards Hags Head from the visitor centre measures 6 km in length and takes approximately 1.5-2 hours to complete.

The coastal walk is a key tourism and recreational asset in North Clare. It brings many visitors to the area and is well used by locals. The walk has received international accolades and is often described as the most outstanding coastal walk in the country.

The Burren Way extends 123 km from the towns of Lahinch to Corofin, passing through Liscannor, Cliffs, Doolin, Ballyaughan, Carran and Tubber. The walk follows a mix of green road, pathway, minor roadway, and grassy/rocky track.



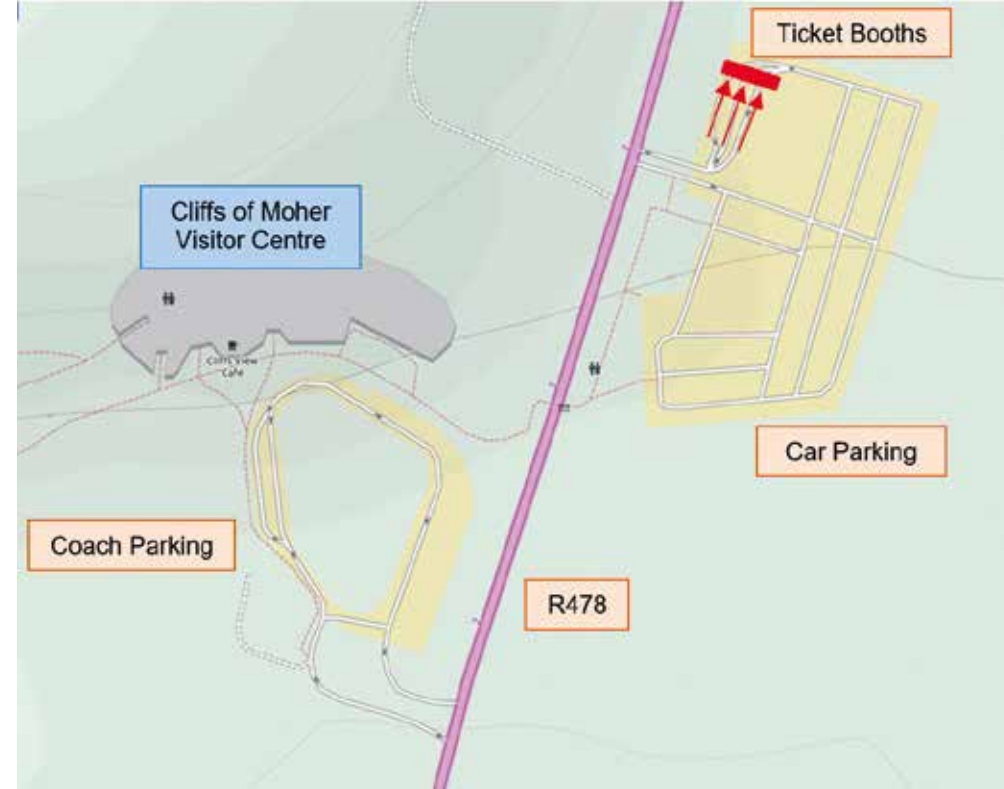
# THE CURRENT SITUATION / TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

## Parking Facilities

Car parking at the Cliffs of Moher is located on the eastern side of the R478 Regional Road, while the coach parking is located on the western side. Access to the car parking from the R478 includes a widened road and a right turn lane for the northbound approach. The car parking is linked to the visitor centre access through a pedestrian zebra crossing of the R478 located at the southern corner of the car park.

The car park ticket booths have been moved further inside the site in order to create three lanes to reduce the congestion at the access point. Each lane can cater up to seven vehicles. However, during the seasonal peak time, usually from February to the end of October and between 11 AM to 4:30 PM, congestion often extends back onto the R478. In addition to the visitor centre car park, there are a number of other public and privately owned car parks located nearby, including:

- Doolin park and ride - located 6.9 km from the Cliffs of Moher
- Liscannor car park - located 5.6 km from the Cliffs of Moher
- Lahinch car park - located 10.3 km from the Cliffs of Moher
- Hag's Head (local) car park - located 5.1 km from the Cliffs of Moher



## Coach Parking

Access to the coach parking is provided with a right turning lane for the southbound traffic on the R478 Regional Road.

The coach parking has been expanded to accommodate up to 28 coaches and special need vehicles. A one-way system that operates in a clockwise direction has also been introduced to minimise conflict points and ease traffic movements into and out of the site.

The west side of the concourse has been upgraded with the scheduled service bus area being removed in order to provide seven additional coach spaces. Nine coach spaces have been provided at the east side of the concourse.

Additionally, the set down area for special needs vehicles and mobility impaired people has been expanded. At busy times some coaches are directed to park in the car park after they have dropped off their passengers before returning later when their passengers are ready to depart.



## THE CURRENT SITUATION / SWOT ANALYSIS

This analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats brings together a summary of the key findings and issues from a baseline analysis of the site and a general review of tourism and expansion in County Clare. These have underpinned the development of strategic approaches and ideas to enhance the Cliffs of Moher Experience.

### Strengths

- Excellent transport connections to County Clare via the M4 M6, the M18, the rail line and Shannon International Airport.
- Strong local tourism networks and community groups, with a commitment to sustainable development and promotion of tourism.
- Proactive local authority that has clearly highlighted the importance of tourism as a cornerstone of Clare's economy and identity, and is working to strengthen the sector.
- Current and planned investment in the tourism product.
- County Clare has the third highest average level of spend by domestic visitors (€237.57).
- New Visitor Experience Development Plan for the Burren and Cliffs of Moher destination.
- Very high international market awareness of the Cliffs of Moher.
- Close alignment between two key market segments (Culturally Curious and Great Escapers), identified for national, regional and county tourism and the Cliffs of Moher and Burren products.
- Abundance of attractive tourism resources, including natural and cultural attractions, vibrant towns and villages and contrasting landscapes within County Clare.
- Globally distinctive karst landscape with protected areas for outstanding wildlife and UNESCO Global Geopark status.
- Geopark travel app and promotion of a wide range of transport options to and around the area.
- Burren Ecotourism Network and Geopark Code of Practice for Sustainable Tourism.
- Ability to offer a diversity of experiences throughout the region, helping to increase length of stay, visitor spend, and disperse visitors within the region.
- High and growing levels of visitor numbers attracted to Cliffs of Moher, as Ireland's second biggest visitor attraction and most visited natural attraction site.
- Cliffs of Moher is a financially successful operation generating significant revenues, an operating surplus and supporting a significant number of jobs.
- Growing importance of American visitors at the Cliffs of Moher, who are now the largest group of visitors (30%).
- Success of new pricing system to help reduce demand at peak hours, with 15% movement in the number of visits from peak to off-peak hours.

### Weaknesses

- The county as a destination lacks a clear identity in the marketplace.
- Promotional activities are limited overseas, with few online packages.
- County Clare has second lowest average spend by international overnight visitors (only €210.95).
- Low economic benefit from coach day visitors, with an average spend of only €12.08 per person.
- Lack of adequate overall road infrastructure and network, resulting in transport and parking congestion and traffic management.
- Negative impacts of traffic on travel and quality of life for local residents.
- Lack of transport and access connectivity across the county.
- Internal public transportation systems are limited and coordination between existing services can be difficult.
- A lack of green infrastructure and ad-hoc trails system which could facilitate alternative active modes of transport within the county.
- Traffic concerns for cyclists with potential to undermine the experience.
- Significant weaknesses, quantity and quality within the accommodation sector, which are constraining the growth of overnight visitation.
- Gaps in community infrastructure and services, including lack of adequate sewerage facilities, public toilets, street lighting, signage, parking and litter facilities.
- Broadband and connectivity issues.
- Limited access to visitor information services at points of entry to Clare and many rural settlements.
- Insufficient mechanisms to facilitate countywide collaboration and strong leadership within the industry.
- Seasonality is a pronounced vulnerability and accentuates many of the weaknesses, with towns, villages and clusters "closing" during the off-season.
- Current visitor demand exceeds the capacity of infrastructure at the Cliffs of Moher.
- Services and wastewater treatment constraints at the Cliffs of Moher visitor centre and facilities.
- Coastal path erosion and lack of visitor respect for the Cliffs of Moher amenity.
- Inconsistent monitoring information relating to the bird species.

### Opportunities

- Tourism is one of the world's largest and fastest-growing economic sectors, with significant financial benefits.
- Maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of protected habitats, and promote environmental enhancement through a sustainable tourism approach with opportunities for conservation focused education, research and monitoring initiatives.
- Develop a world-class visitor experience with transformed interpretation, effective visitor management and infrastructure.
- Greater travel off the beaten track will ease congestion in tourism hubs and spread economic benefits.
- Improved visitor accessibility to the site through wider network of graded pathways and new visitor facilities.
- Ambitious strategy led by Fáilte Ireland to tap into the huge potential that exists in the tourism sector.
- Growth in trips and expenditure of overseas visitors to Ireland and to Mid-West region, especially from North American market, and significant levels of spend on accommodation and food and drink.
- Significant growth in domestic tourism via trips and expenditure.
- Close match between the Cliffs of Moher product offer and the most important destination issues when considering a holiday to Ireland, including beautiful scenery, friendly and hospitable people, and a good range of natural attractions.
- Creating new Greenway and Blueway connections across the destination.
- Popularity of hiking and cross-country walking among overseas and domestic tourists.
- Development of new County Tourism Strategy, with supportive context of overall strategic planning framework.
- Introduction of a Visitor Management Plan to disperse visitors throughout the area and greater use of capacity management principles.
- Redesigning and managing the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk to become a walk of global significance with managed access and extended value.
- Amplifying recognition of the Burren as an internationally-significant landscape.
- Promoting exceptional experiences relating to Burren adventure, wellness and education.
- Creating all year-round visitor experiences to capture Great Escapers, extending the season and sustaining employment.
- Strengthening the partnerships between local organisations and creating a stronger coordinated proactive marketing alliance.
- Improving accommodation options.
- Integrate new digital technologies into orientation and interpretative media.

### Threats

- Heavy reliance of tourism on energy-intensive modes of transport including aeroplanes and automobiles, with high carbon emissions.
- Risks from impact of climate change.
- Impact of overcrowding at flagship natural heritage sites is a key challenge, involving diverse interests and questions of ethics and values.
- Impact of political and terrorism incidents, global natural disasters and pandemics on public's motivation and opportunity to travel.
- The loss of air routes into Shannon Airport and the increasing dominance of Dublin International Airport.
- Limited ability to fully control bus travel patterns and passenger behaviour.
- Loss of biodiversity and landscape appeal through the non-sustainable growth of visitors.
- Potentially inadequate insurance capacity to assist land owners in creating new opportunities to access local areas.
- Cliff erosion along the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk.
- Declining housing stock for tourism workers.
- Increasing costs of business rates, insurance and electricity.
- Macro-economic impacts and financial recession.
- Negative impact on nesting birds.



The Cliffs of Moher 2040 strategy is focused on the future development of the site to create world-class visitor experiences, enhance the special qualities of the cliffs and to grow the tourism and economic contribution to the county in a sustainable way over the next 20 years.

# SECTION 3: THE STRATEGY

# THE STRATEGY / A TRANSFORMED VISITOR EXPERIENCE

The visitor experience at the Cliffs of Moher will be greatly improved, enhancing its premier market position while conserving its beautifully rugged and ecologically-rich habitats.

Visitors will have a 'wilder' back to nature encounter with the landscape, enhanced through new thrilling cliff views, layered interpretation and a high-quality arrival. Creating a larger Cliffs of Moher site is a key part of delivering this step change in the quality of experience for visitors, providing more space for them to enjoy and immerse themselves in the wild atmosphere of the cliffs.



# THE STRATEGY / PROACTIVE CAPACITY MANAGEMENT

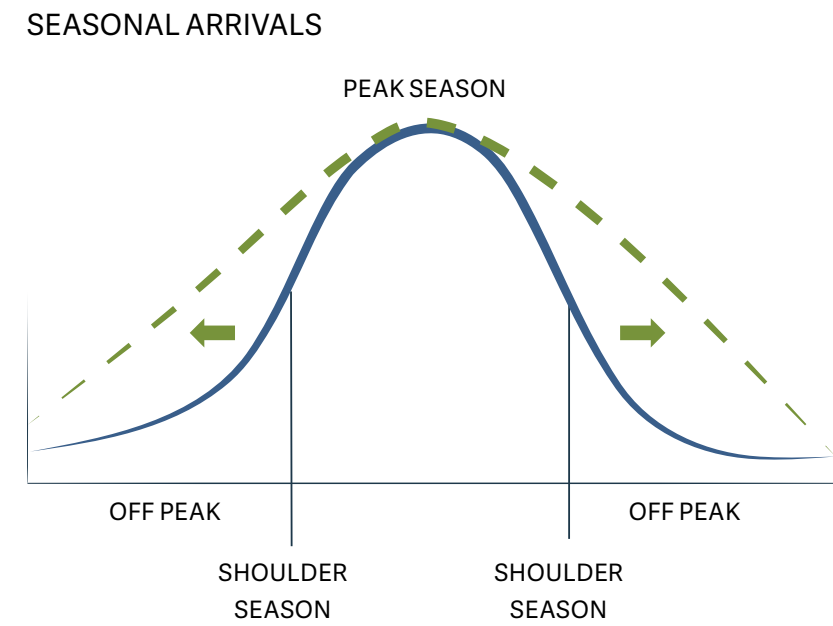
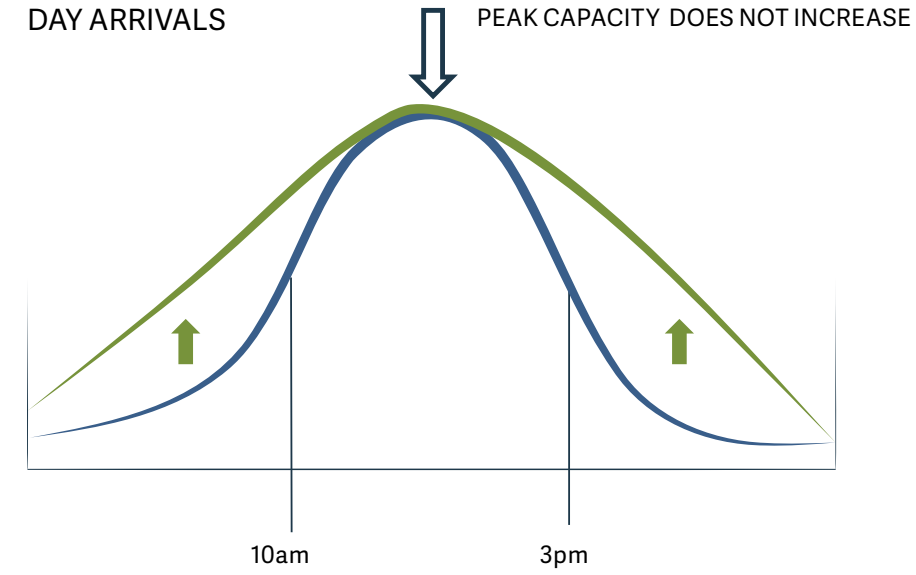
To address the core issue of high visitor numbers at peak times, it is considered that arrivals at peak periods should be capped at the 2019 levels.

Any increase in visitors should be limited to quieter times during peak periods, and during the shoulder and low seasons. The strategy looks to limit the peak day design capacity of the expanded Cliffs of Moher Experience to current levels of c.10,500 visitors and achieve better distribution throughout the day and the year, thereby enhancing the visitor experience and improving management of access to the Cliffs of Moher.

This visitor management strategy is framed within the international VICE model for sustainable tourism development, which focuses on the interaction and balance 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 including senior representatives of the Irish Tourism Industry Confederation (ITIC), Fáilte Ireland, and Tourism Ireland.



## The Key Strategic Objectives are:

### 1 Promoting Earlier and Later Arrivals Throughout the Day

An improved visitor experience aims to spread visitor arrivals earlier and later in the day and encourage audiences, especially Fully Independent Travellers, to explore the wider area. Currently the peak days of the year at the Cliffs of Moher attract c.10,500 visitors. It is proposed that the busiest days will be capped at this level and any increase in visitor numbers will take place outside of the peak times.

### 2 Flattening the Season Peak Curve

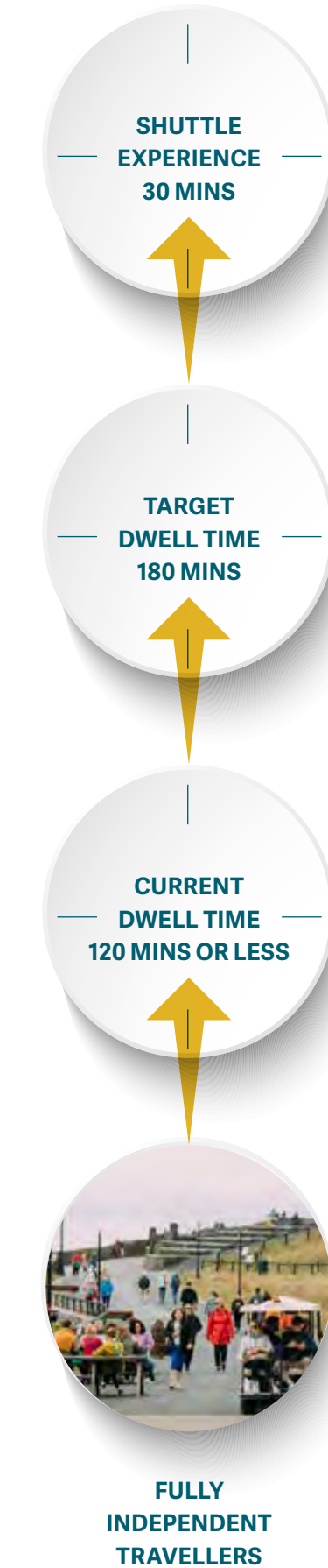
Enhanced facilities and tourist packages at the Cliffs of Moher, developed in partnership with local businesses, will increase visits during the off-peak and shoulder seasons to reduce seasonality and provide greater all year-round viability. The proposals will look to increase the dwell time of visitors at the Cliffs of Moher and facilitate exploration of the wider area.

## Extending Fully Independent Traveller (FIT) visits

FITs will experience an increase from less than two hours to a stay of approximately three hours on site, plus additional time on the shuttle experience. An average stay of 3.5 to four hours will give them time to visit somewhere else locally, while limiting the potential to travel out of the area or county. More FITs will also be encouraged to visit at earlier and later times of the day.

This approach will generate opportunities for additional premium experiences, such as guided tours to O'Brien's Tower, while also encouraging the development of overnight packages with local accommodation.

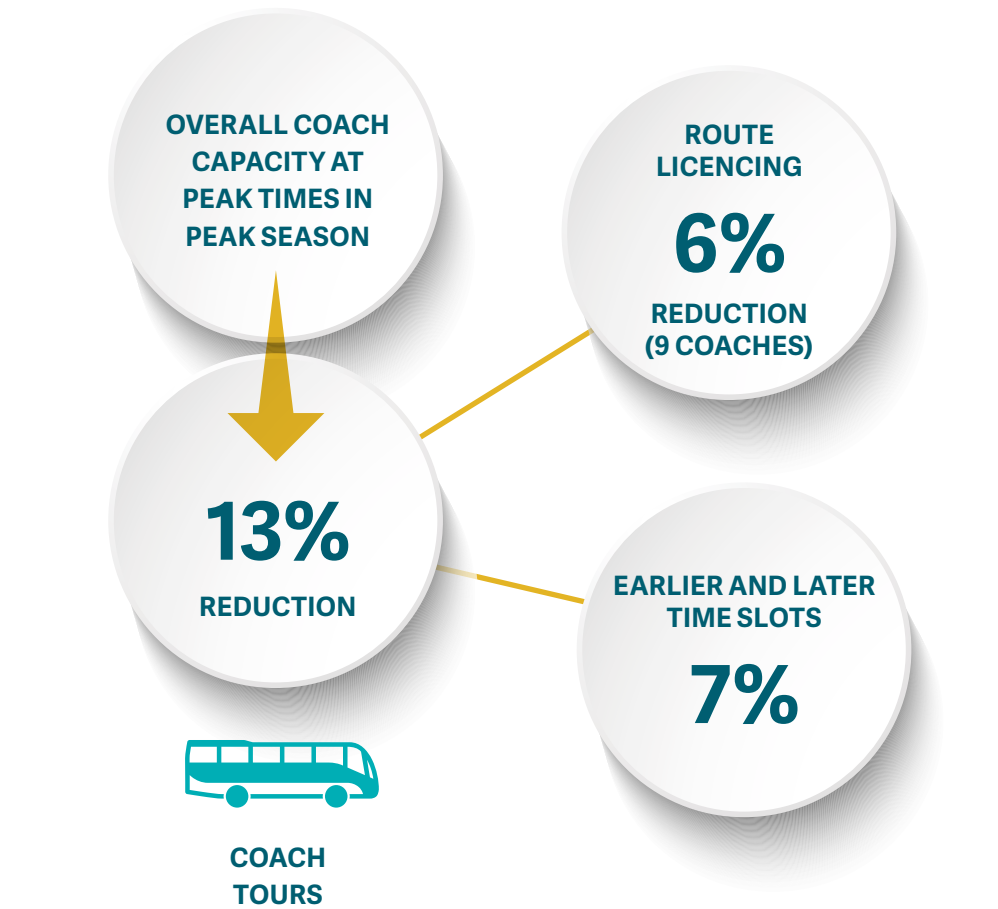
The strategy will work towards a change in the visitor mix to help facilitate greater opportunities for realising economic benefits for the local area. Reprofiting the visitor mix for the Cliffs of Moher reflects a sustainable scenario that balances the strategic and local issues whilst delivering a robust operational business.



## Managing and Re-distributing Coach Arrival Times

It is anticipated there will be some reduction in coach tour visitor numbers, with a consequent increase in FITs. Any increase in visitor numbers will result in them arriving outside of peak times, in the early morning and late evening.

The average dwell time of coach visitors will increase from less than two hours to two hours or more. A coordinated approach with local businesses will seek to ensure additional stops in the Clare area as part of route licensing.





### Visitor Management Case Study: Machu Picchu, Peru

Tourism in Peru has increased at a rate of 25% over the past five years, faster than any other country in South America. Visitor numbers to this iconic World Heritage Site has grown from the low 100,000s in the 1980s, to a peak of nearly 1.5 million tourists in 2018. Cultural tourism accounts for approximately 9.8% of Peru's GDP. However, new measures to curb tourism were implemented by the Peruvian Ministry of Culture in 2011, with UNESCO recommending that the park limit its visitors to 2,500 a day.

#### The following measures were also put in place:

- Visitors are only allowed to enter during one of two time slots, between 6am and noon or between noon and 5.30pm. Visitors have to be accompanied by an accredited guide, who must follow pre-designated paths.
- Access to the Inca Trail, a four-day trek leading hikers to Machu Picchu, is limited to 500 permits a day, 300 of which go to porters and guides.
- Group sizes may not exceed 15 visitors.
- The trail is closed one month each year for maintenance.
- Only licensed tour operators are permitted to sell Inca Trail packages and these must be booked three to six months in advance.
- The nearby town of Aguas Calientes now receives 10% of ticket receipts from Machu Picchu to improve the infrastructure, including sewage and waste treatment.



# THE STRATEGY / SUSTAINABLE AND EFFICIENT ACCESS

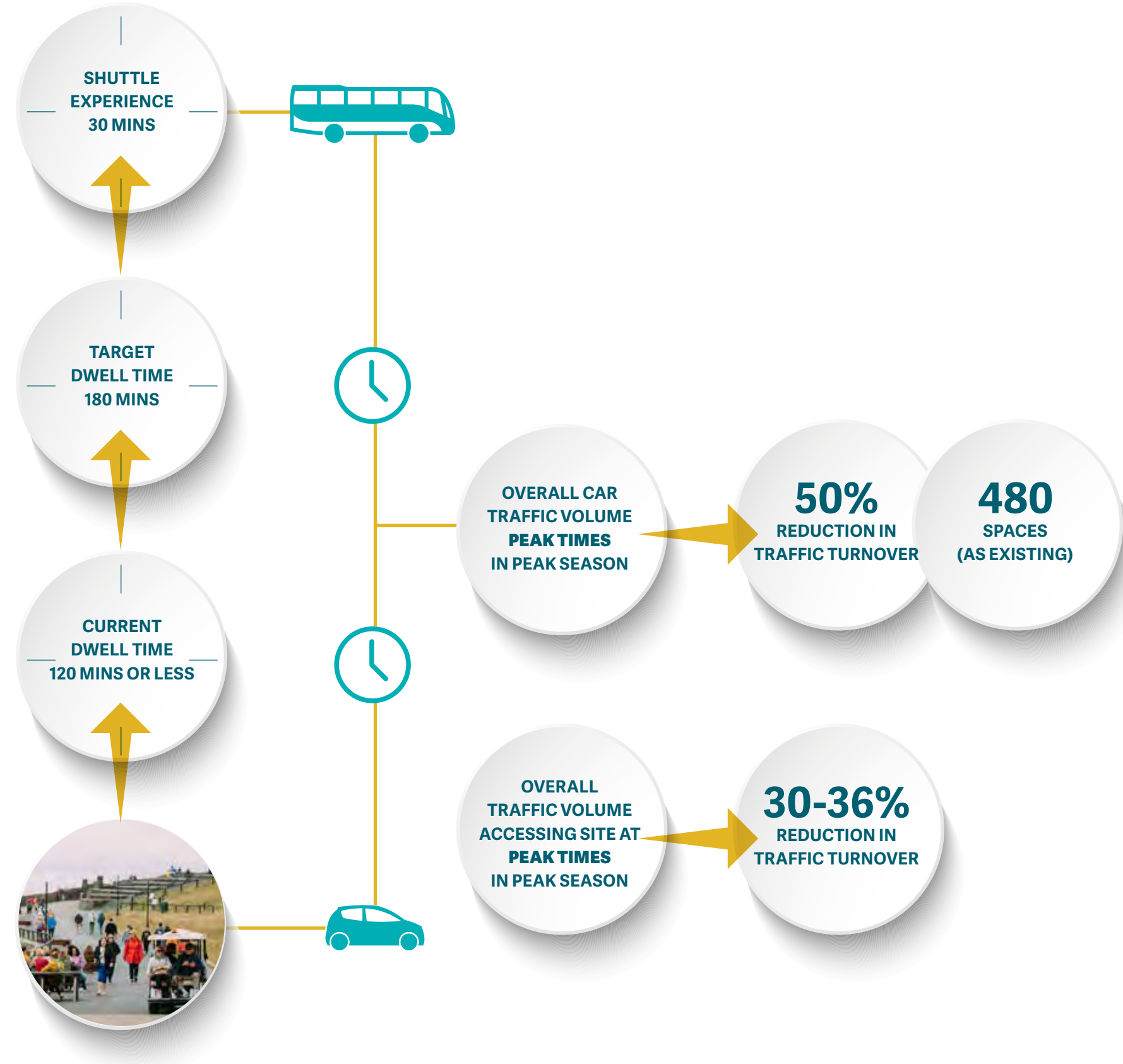
## Improving access to the Cliffs of Moher will require a more strategic and proactive approach to traffic management at the site and across the wider hinterland.

The focus of the future access strategy is encouraging and facilitating sustainable transport provision for tourists and locals to create safer, cleaner and more efficient visits to the site and wider destination.

The expanded facilities at the Cliffs of Moher and the increased dwell time for Fully Independent Travellers (FITs) will result in a reduction in the turnover of car parking spaces and requirement for the implementation of park and ride as well as shuttle bus services.

**! KEY DECISION**

The strategic proposal to establish a new park and ride hub was made to address additional parking demand caused by extended dwell times. Parking facilities, should they remain on site, would need to significantly increase in size to accommodate the same number of visitors, compounding the current issues of congestion and disruption on local roads during the peak season. New park and ride facilities will relieve these pressures as well as extend the benefits of tourism by encouraging visitors to stay and explore local towns.



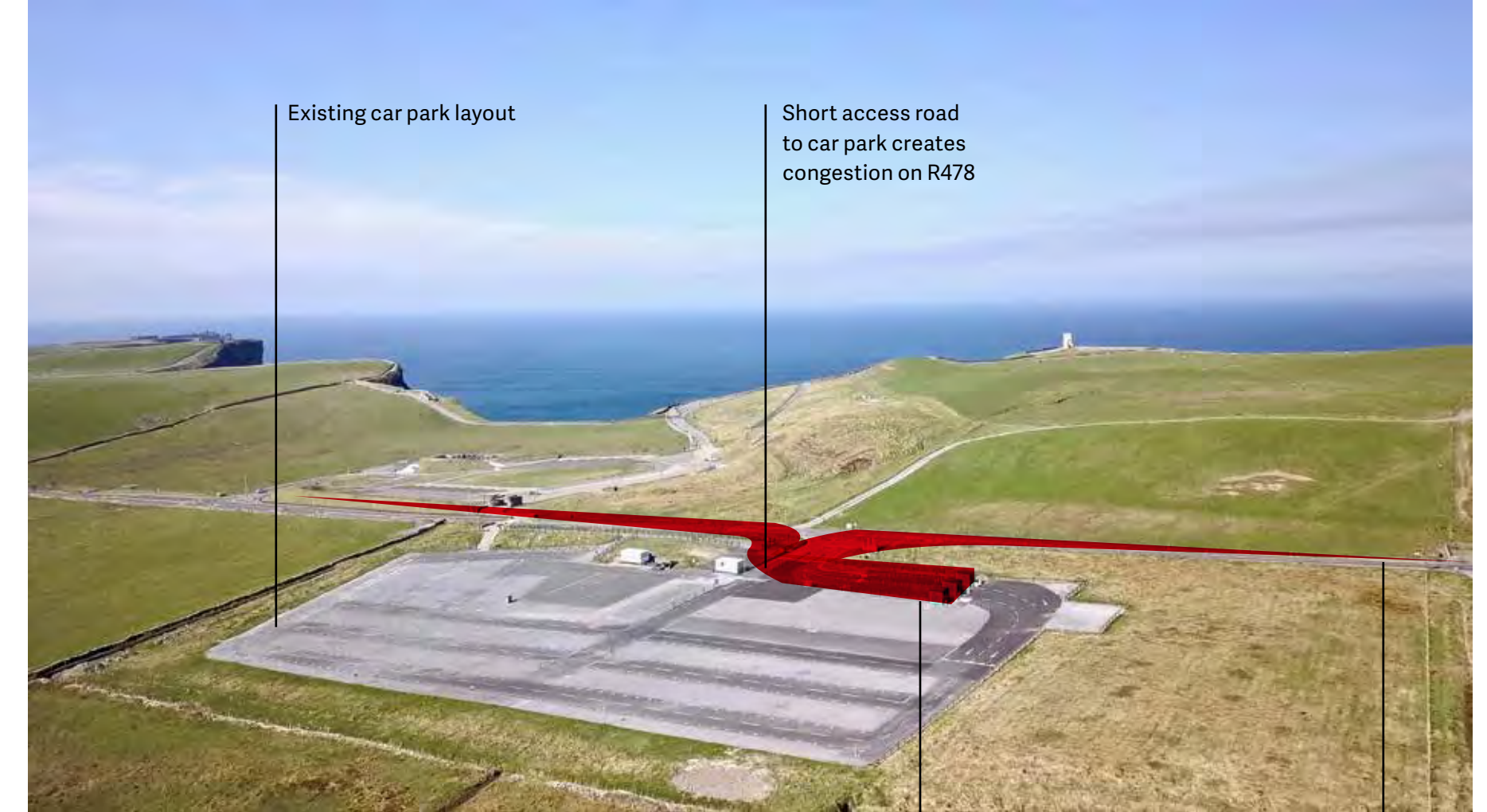
## FITs Car Parking and Traffic Management

Key elements of future transport and access focus on reducing the number of car-borne FITs to the Cliffs of Moher site. This will deliver visitors in a more sustainable way and also significantly reduce the issues of traffic congestion and disruption along the approach routes and on the R478 road close to the site. The aim is to reduce visitors arriving at the site by car by 50% during peak times.

The proposed improvement in the visitor experience, attractions and amenities at the cliffs is projected to increase the current average dwell time on the busiest days from 1.5 hours to three hours. This will result in car parking space turnover at the cliffs reducing by up to 50%. Given this increased average dwell time, proposed car parking provision of around 480 car parking spaces will be required at the Cliffs of Moher site, the same level as the current onsite car parking provision.

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 Cliffs of Moher site speculatively. This will further reduce the risk of people, many who will have potentially travelled a long distance, arriving when the car park is full and queuing on the main R478 road adjacent to the site.

The proposed car access arrangements will include a longer access avenue along with an automatic entrance barrier, which will provide a more efficient arrival system and will speed up the entry process. Combined with the reduced car traffic volumes accessing the site, this will significantly reduce any risk of queuing and delays occurring on the main road.



Ticket barriers too close to R478 create congestion on road. Replace entrance ticket booths with automated barriers.

Three ticket booths with space for seven cars to queue from the R478 creates congestion at peak times. Replace with automated barriers further from road.

R478

# THE STRATEGY / SUSTAINABLE AND EFFICIENT ACCESS

## Park and Ride Hub

A new park and ride hub will provide a key element of the integrated, sustainable transport system for access to the Cliffs of Moher and beyond. Fully Independent Travellers (FITs) will be directed to the hub and then transferred to the Cliffs of Moher site via hydrogen powered shuttle buses.

Any shuttle system and service for the Cliffs of Moher should be developed within the context of a wider, integrated transport strategy for the county to deliver optimum benefits. This will involve coordination with a wide range of organisations.

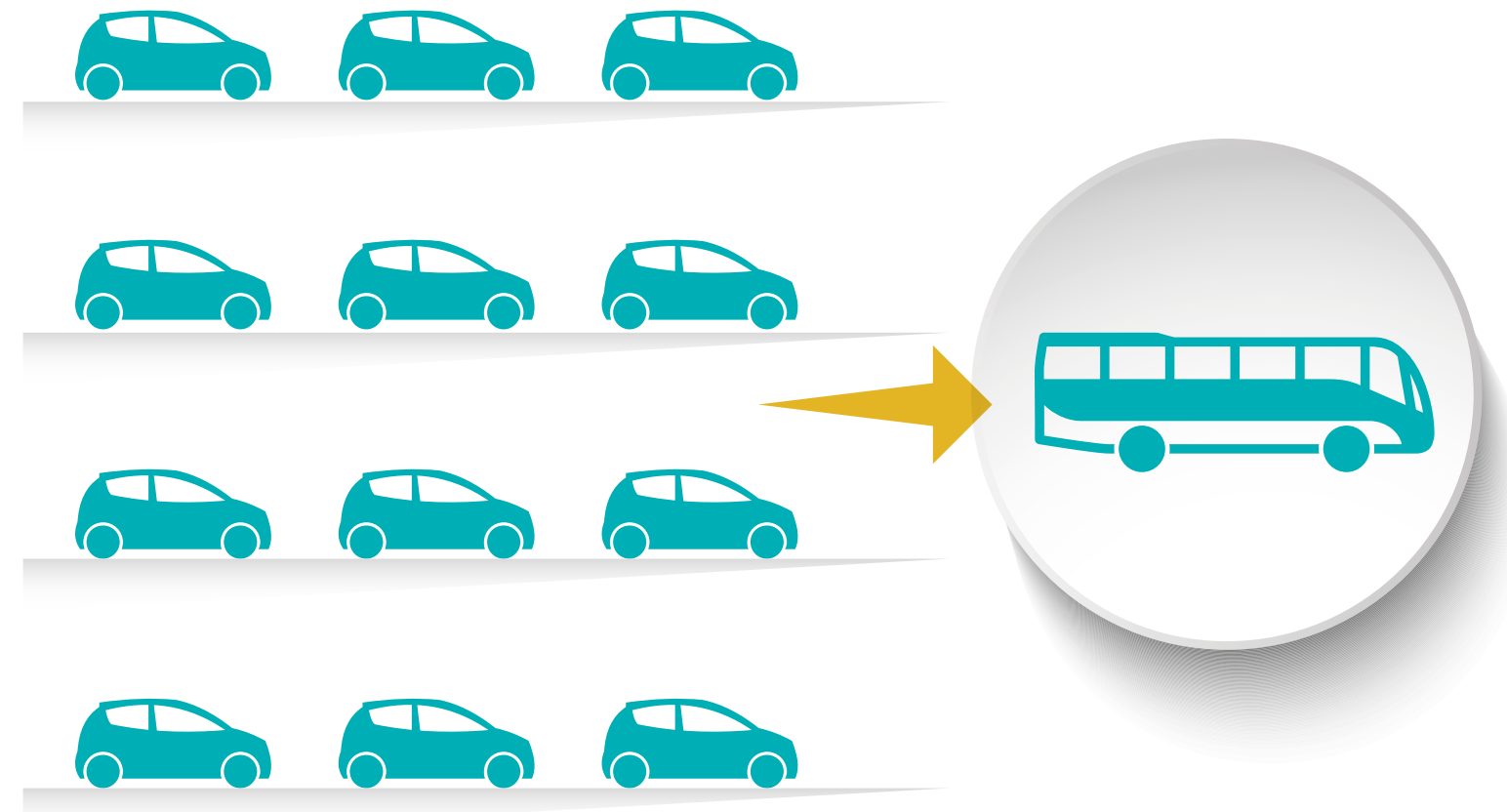
Considerations for the shuttle system will include:

- 'Express Shuttles' providing a direct service, some with limited stops at key locations en-route to the Cliffs of Moher
- 'Explorer Shuttles' offering more leisurely routes across the Burren and the wider area before reaching the Cliffs of Moher. These can provide beneficial transport service links, integrated with other public transport services, to local residents
- The potential for a longer circular hop-on / hop-off service, to allow visitors to see and do more things as part of their visit to the Cliffs of Moher

It is envisaged that the park and ride hub will operate during the peak and shoulder seasons and special event periods, to ease the traffic congestion and disruption to local residents and provide an enhanced experience for visitors. Pre-booking will be available to ensure that the frequency of vehicle pick-ups and drop-offs align with overall visitor demand.

The reduction in car traffic accessing the Cliffs of Moher will be somewhat offset by the shuttle buses transferring people to and from the proposed park and ride hubs, however, one mid-sized shuttle bus with 30 passengers would replace 12 cars on the road.

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



One mid-sized shuttle bus with 30 passengers would replace 12 cars on the road

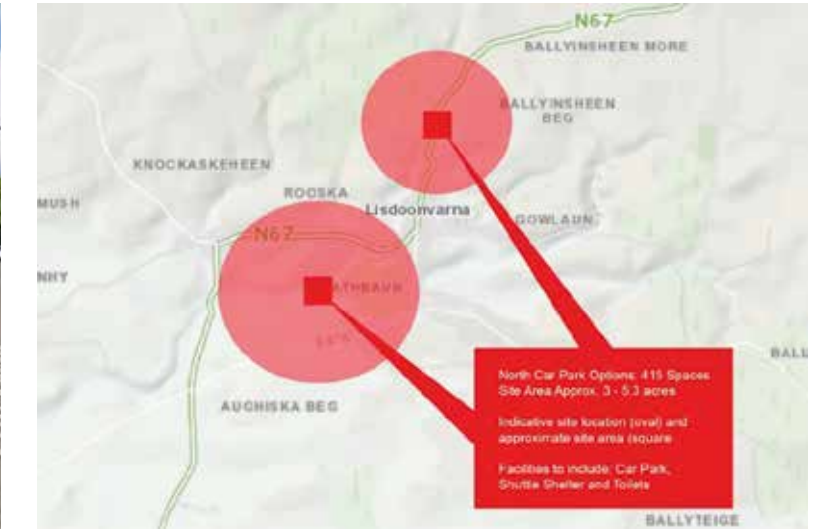
## Hub Locations

The hub will be strategically located to enhance access and tourism across the wider area, on the main feeder routes to the Cliffs of Moher from both the north and south approaches. Ideally the hub will be situated on the edge of a local town to enhance tourism, employment and business connections and encourage visitors to spend more time and money in the wider area.

### Potential Remote Car Park Location North – Lisdoonvarna

The potential Lisdoonvarna park and ride site requires 285 parking spaces based on existing visitor numbers, potentially increasing to up to 415 spaces by 2040 depending on the increase in visitor numbers.

A park and ride site could be located on the north and west side of the town to intercept traffic travelling southbound on the N67, which avoids traffic passing through the town centre. Alternatively, subject to an assessment of capacity on the existing roads through the town, a site could be located on the south side of the town off the N67 and before the R478 that leads to the cliffs.



### Potential Remote Car Park Locations South – Ennistymon

The potential Ennistymon park and ride site requires 250 parking spaces based on existing visitor numbers, potentially increasing to up to 450 spaces by 2040 depending on the increase in visitor numbers.

A park and ride site would ideally be located on the east side of the town, to intercept traffic travelling southbound on the N85, which avoids traffic passing through the town centre.



## THE STRATEGY / SUSTAINABLE AND EFFICIENT ACCESS

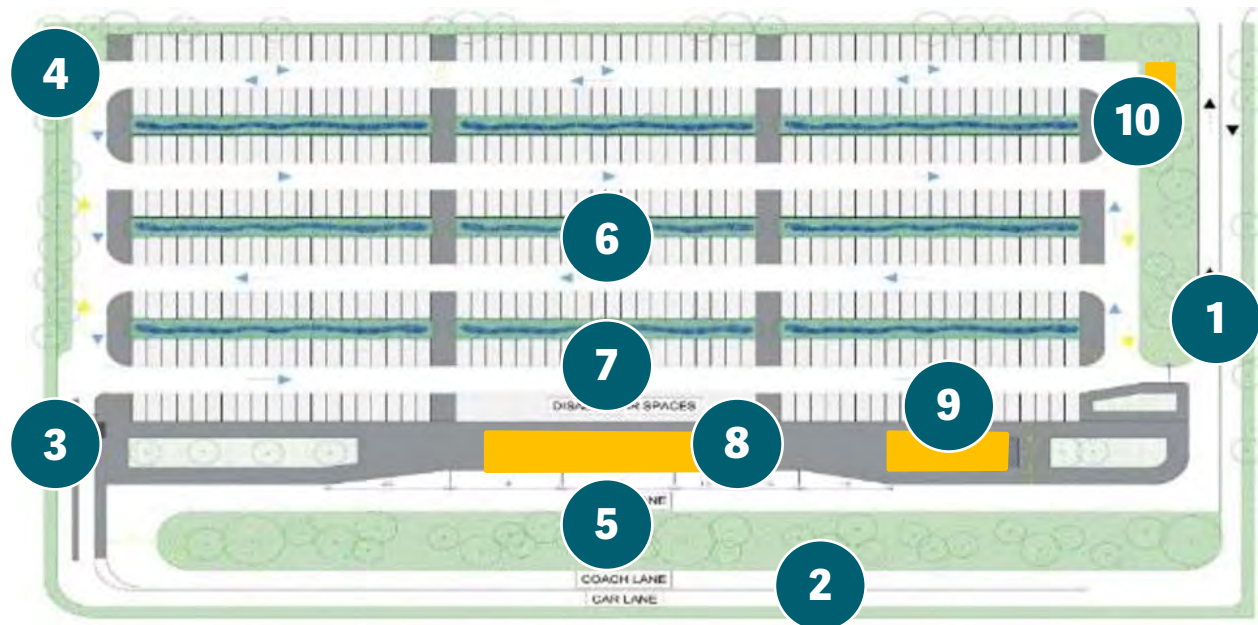
### Hub Facilities

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

1. Extensive feeder road into site
2. Designated car/coach route and shuttle bus route into site
3. Automated entrance barrier
4. Landscaped with hedgerow screening and native tree planting
5. Shuttle bus drop off and pick up area
6. Parking for up to 450 cars
7. Disabled parking adjacent to terminal
8. Sheltered waiting areas
9. Building with toilets and staff area
10. Services that are screened and landscaped

Key features of the shuttle vehicles and services include:

- Shuttles powered by sustainable energy source running between parking hub(s) and cliffs
- Vehicle sizes to be limited to ensure accessibility on local road networks, possibly large minibus style (30-seaters)
- Interpretive opportunities to create a more engaging and enhanced visitor journey to the cliffs
- Frequency of vehicles to be flexible to suit peak and low season times
- Improved pick-up locations, shelters, information points and branded signage
- Free or reduced travel costs available to those employed at the Cliffs of Moher

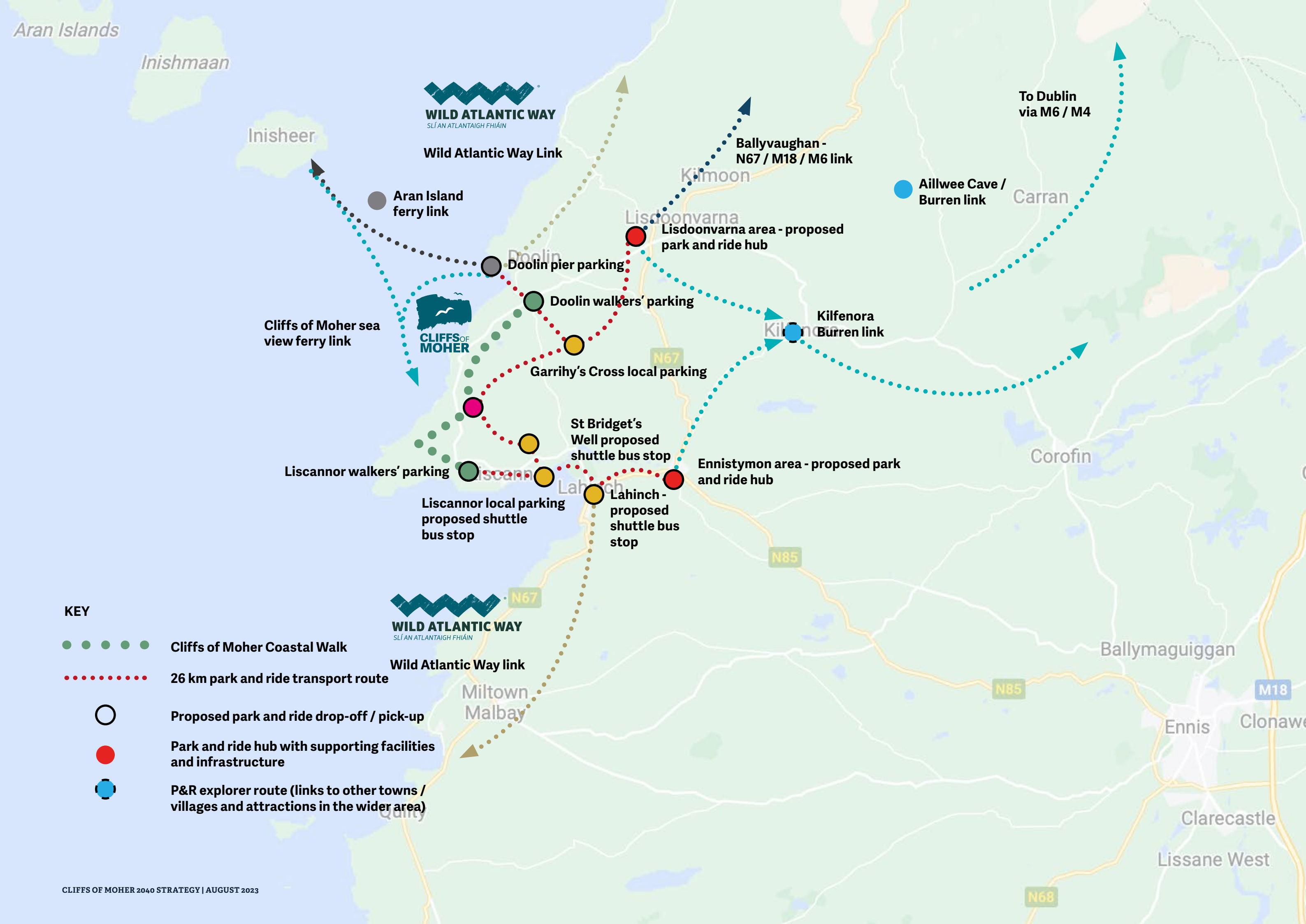


### Shuttle Transport Case Study: Yosemite National Park, USA

In 1980, a masterplan for the national park proposed to ban private vehicles from parts of the valley to ease congestion. The park put in place a free, 8.5-mile shuttle system designed to transport 47 seated and 22 standing passengers. Two types of shuttle services are offered, one serving all stops along the Yosemite Valley and one limited to the eastern Yosemite Valley area.

In addition, the Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) runs services from nearby counties into the park. It is funded mostly by the counties it serves and by the park, which provides around 36% of the operating budget. Revenue from passengers using Amtrak and Greyhound train links accounts for 18% of the budget. Local hotels and RV parks are on the stops for this service and therefore help promote the use of the public transport to the park. There is also now a direct shuttle from Fresno Airport, with the service picking up almost 700 people in the summer of 2016.



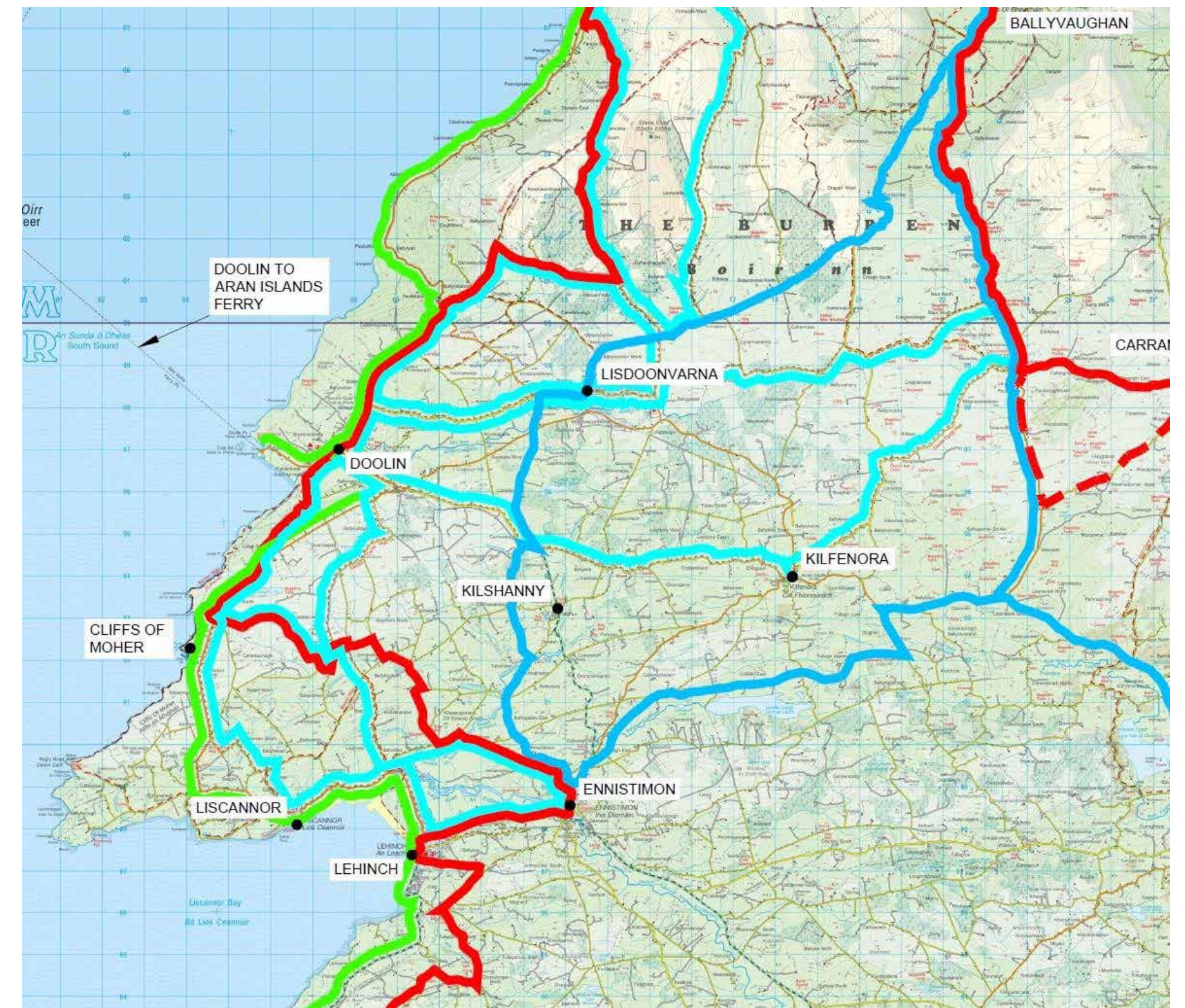


### Enhancing Links to Cliffs of Moher and the Wider Region

Access concerns, issues and opportunities are at the core of the strategy. A key principle is enhancing the links to the Cliffs of Moher and the wider area through an expanded network of sustainable and integrated access opportunities.

In addition to a greater pro-active traffic management, including a park and ride shuttle system, there will be a focus on facilitating and improving the connections with strategic transport routes and services. Alongside this will be an increasing shift to encouraging more use of greenway access links across the wider region, resulting in the dispersal of visitors across the area.

These assets provide valuable community amenities and can also deliver in terms of attracting visitors, increasing visitor revenue and transforming the economic and social future of the towns, villages and rural areas around the region.



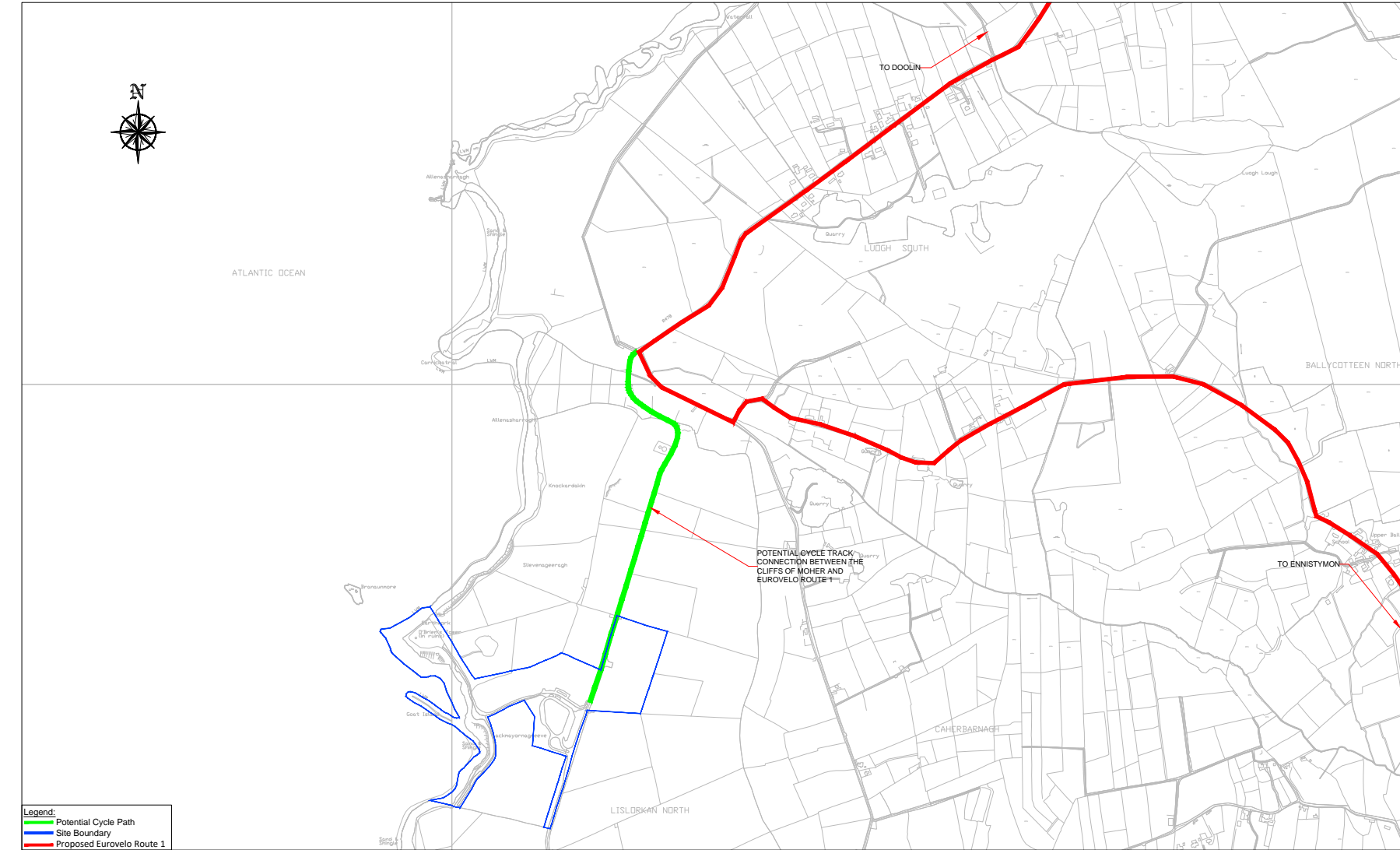
## THE STRATEGY / SUSTAINABLE AND EFFICIENT ACCESS

### Links to Cycle Routes

The new approach to transport will promote the benefits of and access to cycle routes to and from the cliffs, online and in the community. The Clare Cycle hub and proposed Eurovelo routes will be enhanced and improved, along with signage and information at places of interest. Links will also be established with cycle-related businesses and services in the surrounding communities.

The Eurovelo 1 route passes about 1 km north from the Cliffs of Moher visitor entrance, where it proceeds along quieter back roads. Consideration should be given to providing a connection between the proposed Eurovelo 1 cycleway and the Cliffs of Moher Experience by establishing a cycle link running parallel to the R478 for this 1 km section.

There are opportunities to develop and promote cycling off the main roads and in particular east of the R478 and west of the R478 in the Cliffs of Moher area. There is further opportunity to link the Ennis to Ennistymon section of the West Clare Railway Greenway to the Cliffs of Moher and North Clare.



### Greenways Case Study: The Waterford Greenway, South East Ireland

The Waterford Greenway is a spectacular 46 km off-road cycling and walking coastal trail developed by Waterford City and County Council. The trail runs along a disused railway line from Ireland's oldest city, Waterford, to the stunning harbour town of Dungarvan. It has become an important national tourism asset, creating employment and benefiting local communities and the economy in a rural area that was in decline.

Since its opening in 2017, the project has been a stunning success with almost 250,000 walking or cycling Waterford Greenway in its first year. It has resulted in a significant boost for tourism; 68% of users said they travelled to Waterford mainly to use the greenway. Local people see the greenway as an excellent opportunity to pursue enterprises not previously considered viable, including tourism and recreation-related spending on items such as bicycle hire, food and accommodation.

The subsequent development of Green Routes has integrated green areas and open spaces to provide pedestrian and cycle greenways that link communities and also create strategic 'green wedges' to promote biodiversity.

Developed at the cost of €15m, the Waterford Greenway has shown its impact across the county, benefitting the local economy in the southeast of Ireland. More than 90 new jobs were created and a range of businesses have benefited: 80% of visitors came from outside the county, stayed in paid accommodation and spent money on leisure. The project was awarded the Grand Prix and Best Tourism Initiative at the All-Ireland Community and Council Awards 2018 and a Chambers Ireland Excellence Award in 2017. In 2019 it was recognised as the second-best greenway in Europe at the 10th European Greenway Awards.

The success of the Waterford Greenway benefitted from on-going investment. Works are currently nearing completion of a €2.6m extension linking the Bilberry entrance with the historic Viking Triangle, bringing together two of Waterford's most popular tourist attractions. The introduction of the 2.1km stretch is also expected to help provide future greenway links to New Ross as well as Rosslare to the east and Tramore to the west.



# THE STRATEGY / SUSTAINABLE AND EFFICIENT ACCESS

## Enhanced Network of Green Infrastructure

The 2040 Cliffs of Moher Strategy provides a catalyst to facilitate an enhanced network of integrated green infrastructure as a tourism product with significant potential to attract overseas visitors and deliver economic and health benefits for local communities. Clare County Council can play a leading role in facilitating a strategic framework of sustainable access routes for cycling and walking throughout the West Clare area, with improved links to the county and beyond. This will enable greater exploration of local heritage assets and create increased demand for tourism-related facilities and services that will boost the local economies in surrounding towns and villages.

The National Transport Authority (NTA) has allocated funds to Ireland's local authorities with a view to spending €289 million on 1,200 active travel projects, contributing to the development of almost 1,000 km of new and improved walking and cycling infrastructure across the country by 2025. Active travel investment grants for County Clare total £4.5m, comprising 28 projects. The local authority has also been allocated €2.13m in funding as part of the Transport Infrastructure Ireland grant allocations for greenways in the county.

A key focus of the Clare investment is the West Clare Railway Greenway Project, which will follow the 85km route of the old West Clare railway line. Clare County Council is currently progressing public consultation on the development of two sections of this route: Section 1 from Kilrush to Kilkee and Section 2 from Ennis, via Corofin to Ennistymon.

The project will enable communities from Ennis to Kilkee and Kilrush to be connected whilst also enhancing the county's tourism offer, educational amenities and recreational facilities. The development has the potential to create local employment and enterprise opportunities, particularly in the hospitality and leisure industries, while also providing sustainable infrastructure to promote and encourage the uptake of active travel modes.

Further sections of the West Clare Railway Greenway project will run from Ennistymon to Miltown Malbay and from Miltown Malbay to Moyasta (Section 3).



Historical Alignment of West Clare Rail Line



## Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk

Walking within the region will be promoted through an improved Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk and enhanced connectivity to other waymarked routes, including the Burren Way. Improved signage and information will be developed at the access points to the Coastal Walk between Doolin, the Cliffs of Moher, Liscannor and Lahinch. Links will also be developed with transport services, including the proposed Cliffs of Moher park and ride shuttles, to provide greater opportunities and flexibility for visitors wishing to explore the wider area on foot. The proposed looped bus service will enable visitors to hop on and off the bus at multiple locations, thereby facilitating people seeking to walk the length of the Coastal Walk before returning to their starting point by bus.

The management and maintenance of the Coastal Walk is currently the responsibility of Clare Local Development Company. Clare County Council has carried out maintenance and upgrading of 1 km either side of the Cliffs of Moher visitor centre. Clare County Council in collaboration with Fáilte Ireland, the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Clare Local Development Community will progress a Management Plan for the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk with landowners and other key stakeholders to secure the future of the iconic walking route. This would help facilitate the ongoing repair and development of the walk and enhance its connections to the Cliffs of Moher Experience and other local businesses and communities along the route. It would also present opportunities for greater links with other existing trails, new greenways and active travel developments, with potentially transformative economic impacts in the local area.

## THE STRATEGY / A WILDER AND EXPANDED LANDSCAPE

The core concept for the future development of the Cliffs of Moher is to create a wilder, back to nature experience with a high-quality arrival to commence the visitor journey.

A key attraction of the Cliffs of Moher is the wild experience many visitors seek. As such, the proposals will seek to restore and rewild the degraded and agricultural landscapes to the north using a regenerative landscape approach as a driving principle.

This will highlight the site's beautifully rugged and ecologically-rich habitats and provide a more expanded landscape to explore with enhanced viewing points. Delivering this step change in the quality of the experience will require more space for visitors to be able to disperse widely and enjoy a true sense of walking in the wild at the edge of the world.

The visitor journey to the cliff-edge will be carefully staged through a series of landscape and architectural interventions. Rather than just a photo-stop, the core experience for every visitor will be a paced emotional journey that maximises the exhilaration of the final cliff view.



### Conceptual Boundary

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

#### ! KEY DECISION

To achieve this, an emphasis has been placed on relocating and consolidating the arrivals, welcome and support facilities to the east of the main R478 access road. 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 and scrub habitats, with enormous benefits to the site's biodiversity.



## THE STRATEGY / A WILDER AND EXPANDED LANDSCAPE

### Rehabilitation of Habitats

The new Cliffs of Moher Experience presents a unique opportunity to enhance the biodiversity value and aesthetic appeal of the location through the concept of 'rewilding', which in this scenario means converting farmland to a wild landscape and a wilder Atlantic Way.

The existing agricultural grasslands at the site have been intensively managed for many years, producing a resultant uniform sward of grasses in a regular field system. With appropriate management, the landscape can be brought back to a naturally variable mosaic of grassland and scrub habitats that reflect the original cliff landscape. This is expected to increase the floristic diversity in the grassland habitat from approximately five species under the current management to 20 or more species.

The approach will facilitate the dispersal of visitors across the site, creating more space and opportunities for an intimate 'back to nature' experience with the cliffs. It will respond to the constantly changing conditions throughout the day and year and will evolve with the wider landscape. The proposals within this special environment will be light touch but also confident, acknowledging the importance of this cultural landmark.

Whilst natural rewilding is "nature looking after itself", owning the land comes with obligations and responsibilities in the long term. The Cliffs of Moher Experience will provide an ongoing commitment and resources to support land management, including providing specialist ecological input and oversight by an experienced land manager and the implementation of a Habitat Management Plan.

**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:**

**1**  
The proposed setting back of the clifftop pathway from the cliff-edge will allow for the rehabilitation of the rocky sea cliff vegetation and coastal grassland community. This will have a significant positive impact on both the habitat and its suitability for foraging for chough birds, 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 revegetation through soil preparation and potential translocation of sods from appropriate donor locations.

**2**  
The wetlands to the east of O'Brien's Tower were subject to drainage in the past. The vestigial seasonal pond can be redeveloped as a valuable habitat and attractive landscape feature. Other opportunities may exist elsewhere in the site to create wetlands by judicious blocking of drains and some sensitive land-shaping.

**3**  
The incorporation of the agricultural grasslands to the north of the visitor centre provides a valuable opportunity to enhance the landscape's biological diversity through a combined approach of specific interventions and hands-off rewilding. This includes 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 primary focus will be reducing the soil fertility in order to promote the development of a semi-natural grassland, including dry-humid acid species which have a higher floristic diversity and therefore attracts a wider range of invertebrate, ground-nesting birds and small mammals. Scrubs will establish in sheltered areas and spread as it matures.

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



# THE STRATEGY / A WILDER AND EXPANDED LANDSCAPE

## Focus on the Northern Topography

Currently, for most visitors, the journey to and from the cliff-edge is concentrated through a relatively narrow 'corridor' of access that is primarily hard landscaped. This encourages visitors to go directly to the cliff-edge, promoting a short dwell time leading to overcrowding and a reduced quality of experience, with large areas of hard standing that diminish the natural beauty of the site as a whole.

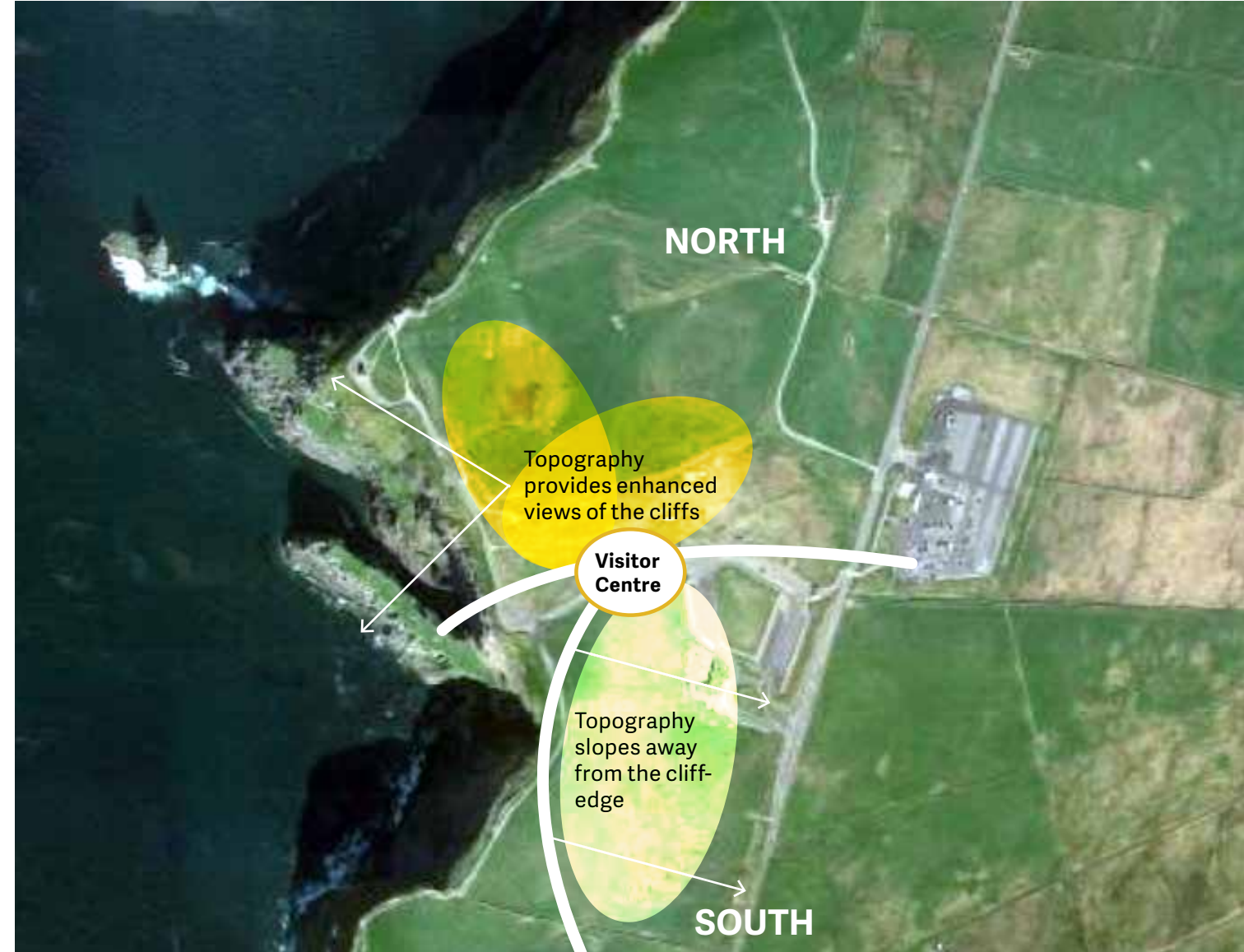


To encourage more visitor penetration across the site and provide additional and varied views of the cliffs, a new approach to visitor distribution is proposed.

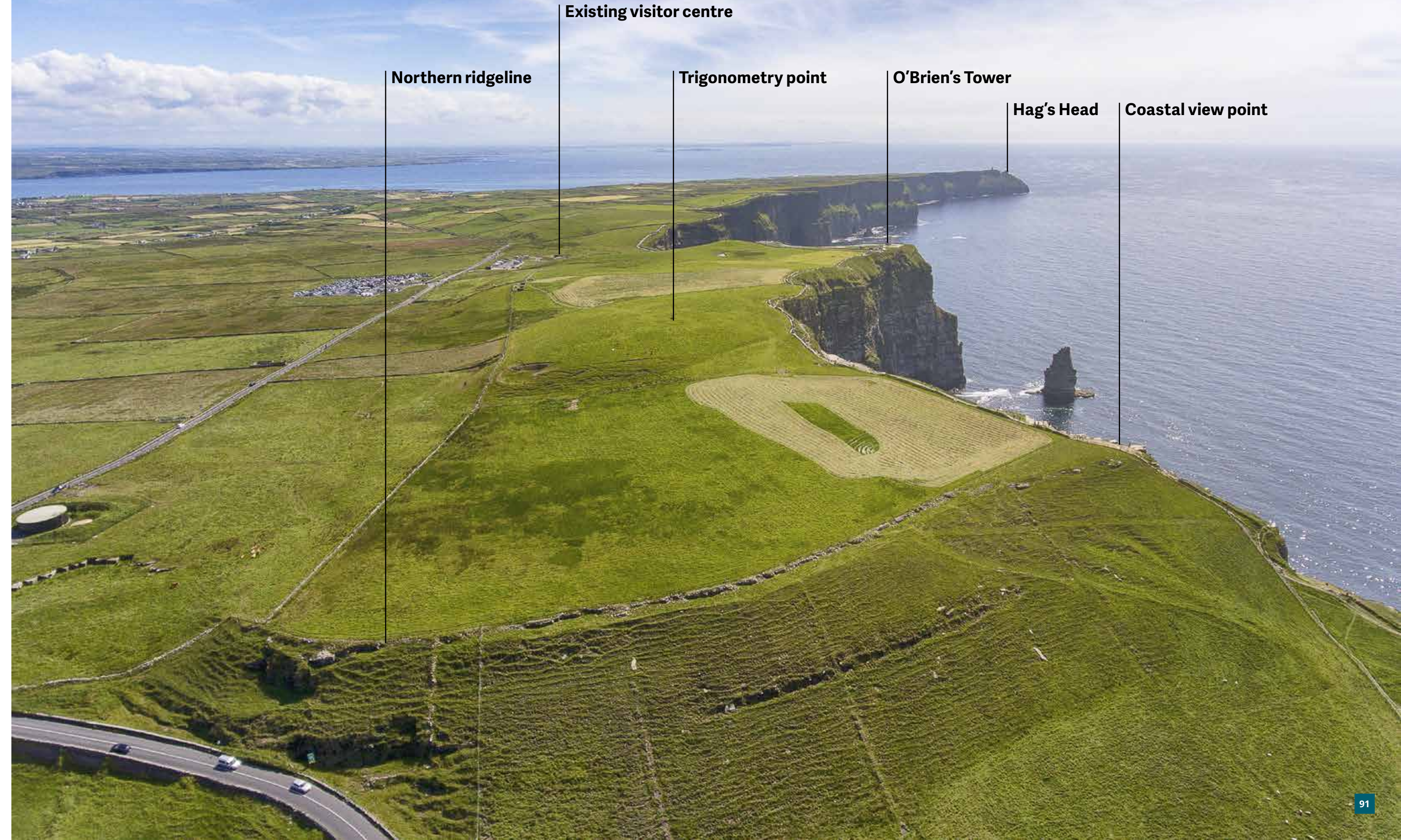
### KEY DECISION

Following site visits, it was determined that the northern topography rises higher in many places along the route than the southern topography, giving a much-enhanced view of the cliff landscape. This led to the proposal to focus on habitat rehabilitation in the north as well as inland, encouraging visitors to navigate various routes to the cliffs, depending on ability, time and interest. The reinstatement of historic features such as the lake can be made available to the visitor in this northern zone.

As the topography of the site naturally slopes away from the cliff-edge, a focus on developing and encouraging more visitors into the land to the south of the existing visitor centre would likely encourage more visitors towards the cliff-edge and, consequently, would not provide the enhanced views that the north of the site naturally provides.



## Aerial View Looking South



## THE STRATEGY / A WILDER AND EXPANDED LANDSCAPE

### Aerial View Looking North

Pollboy headland

Trigonometry point

Views into the Burren

Northern ridgeline



### Rewilding Case Study: Naturum Vattenrike, Sweden

Established in 2005 and officially recognised by UNESCO, this Biosphere Reserve demonstrates how to tackle the practical challenges of combining nature conservation with development. Kristianstad is a middle-sized Swedish city with 85,000 inhabitants built upon and surrounded by wetlands. Because of economic growth in Sweden and the rapid expansion of the city in the 1960s and 70s, the wetlands were identified as a problem and were subsequently drained. In the 1980s and 1990s, the wetlands began to be perceived as a resource rather than an issue, and the work on restoring and creating the "Water Kingdom" started. 150 hectares of wetlands have since been restored. In parallel, several nature reserves were created to protect the area's birdlife and sensitive ecosystems.

The restoration of the wetlands produced hugely positive outcomes for biodiversity. The area covers less than two miles of Sweden's surface, but 20% of the country's red-listed species exist here. Both new and old species such as cranes, wild otters and catfish have found their way back to the area and their numbers have stabilised. In 2019, the reserve started an initiative to improve survival rates of ground nesting birds by working with the Kristianstad-Bromolla Game Preservation Association and Skåne Hunting Association to control predators (fox, badger, crows etc.) on the grasslands.

Nature tourism is a rapidly growing part of the hospitality industry. Vattenrike attracts around 300,000 visitors a year. In 2010, a €10 million public investment was dedicated to building a large visitor centre in the middle of the wetlands. The return on the investment came in the form of increased tourism activities in the city.



## THE STRATEGY / A UNIFIED AND IMPROVED ARRIVAL

As part of the return to nature principle for the site, a new visitor reception building and parking area will be created east of the R478 access road, providing enhanced site-wide welcome facilities through which all visitors will pass in and out of the site.

### KEY DECISION

The proposed new arrival facilities to the east of the R478 will create a unified and improved welcome for all visitors, allowing for more effective management of arrivals. Importantly, this will also allow for significant areas of the landscape around the current visitor centre on the site to be rewilded, removing the need for large areas of hard standing and coach parking facilities close to the cliff-edge and improving the quality of views towards the cliffs.

An earlier option to create new coach and shuttle bus drop off points in screened areas to the east of the R478 was discounted on the basis that it did not achieve the rationale to create a wilder and more expansive cliff landscape. It would also mean there would not be a single arrival point and experience for all visitors.

### Arrivals and Parking

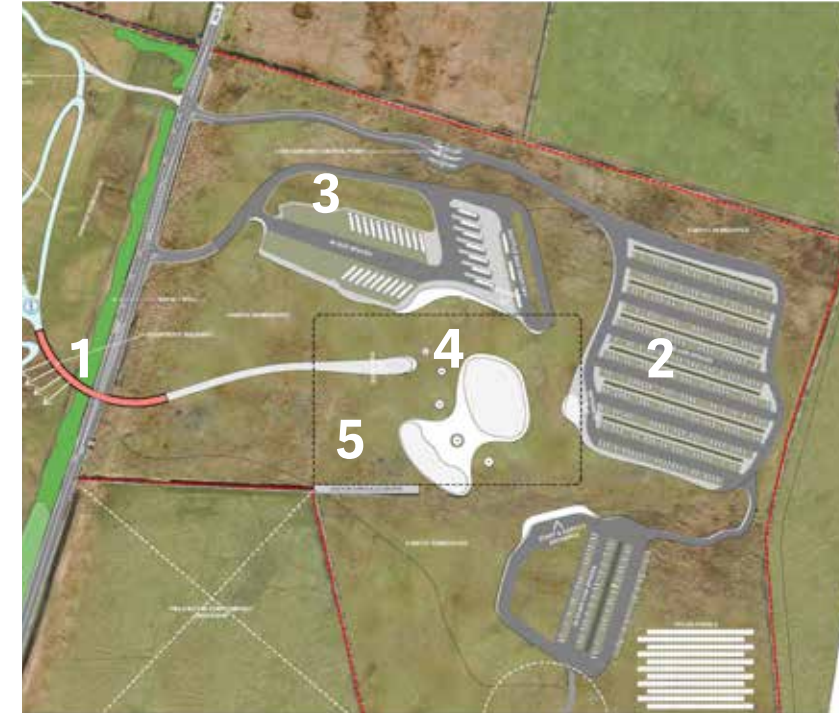
Arrival and parking for all visitors will be provided to the east of the R478 access road. Two separate access roads for cars and coaches and the shuttle will assist the safe and easy entry of all vehicles, thus minimising or eliminating tailbacks onto the R478. Drop-off points will also be provided for local bus services.

This will provide enhanced control and management for all of the various vehicles arriving on site, including coaches, organised tours, shuttle buses, cars and public transport. In conjunction with pre-booking of tickets for all visitors, entry barriers via number plate recognition and ticket scanning will provide the necessary level of security and streamlined access to the site.

The onsite parking requirement is for 40 coach spaces and 480 car spaces, with levels of use restricted in the peak season to some 380 spaces and access supplemented with the shuttle system. This extent of provision is required to accommodate the longer stays on site by visitors at peak times, rather an increased number of visitors. In peak periods, the shuttle bus service will also bring independent visitors to the site from remote parking hubs in nearby towns and 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 such as locally-sourced Liscannor stone gravel, stone and timber will be used to create subtle demarcations in the parking bays.

Electric charging points will be provided for vehicles as part of the sustainable transport approach and secure bicycle racks will be available along with ancillary support facilities.



**1 Separate access road to car parking**

**2 Secluded car parking area**

**3 Shared coach and shuttle bus entrance**

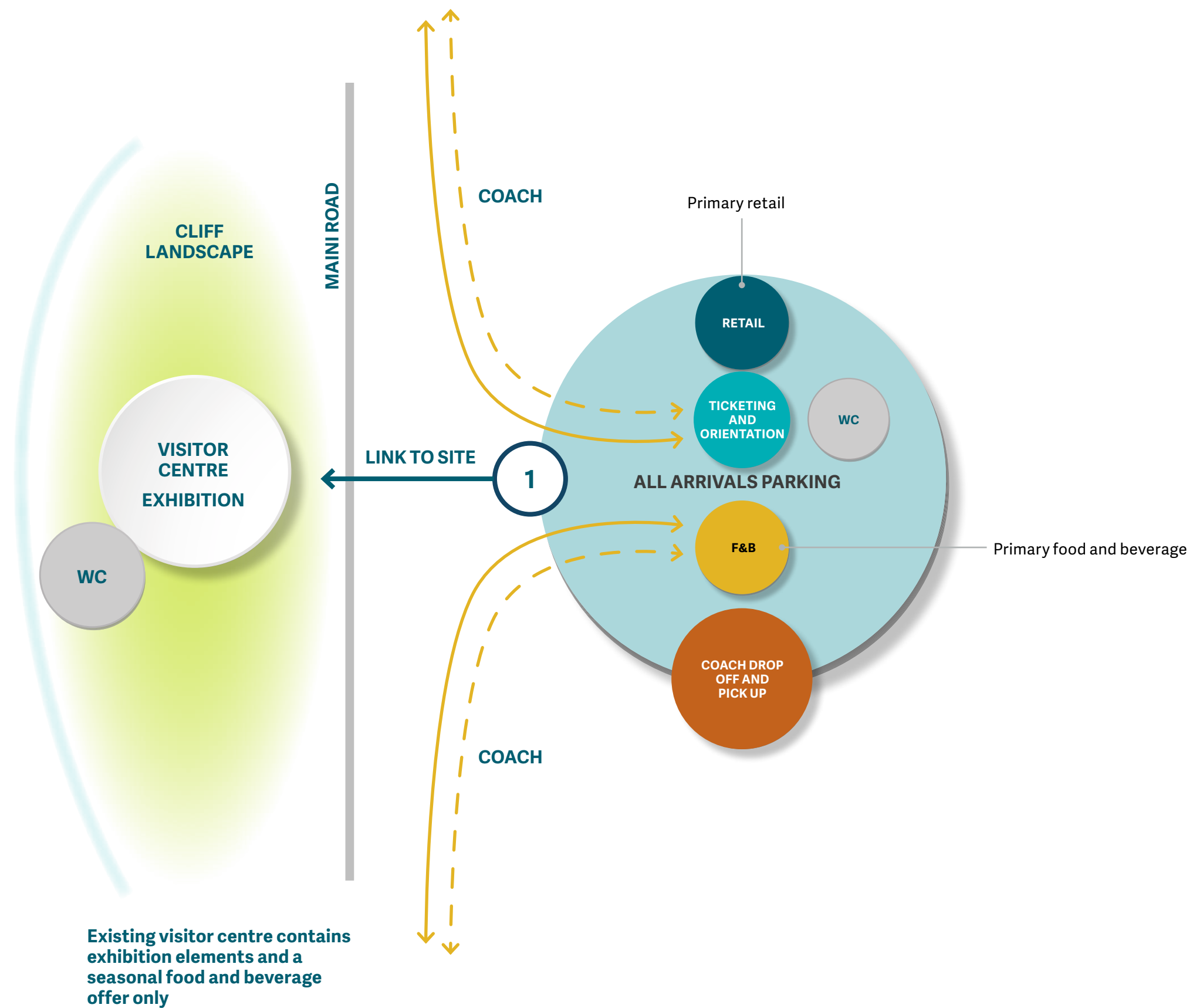
**4 Shuttle to drop to left hand side of back doors to access reception**

**5 Coaches to drop off at right-hand side and park**

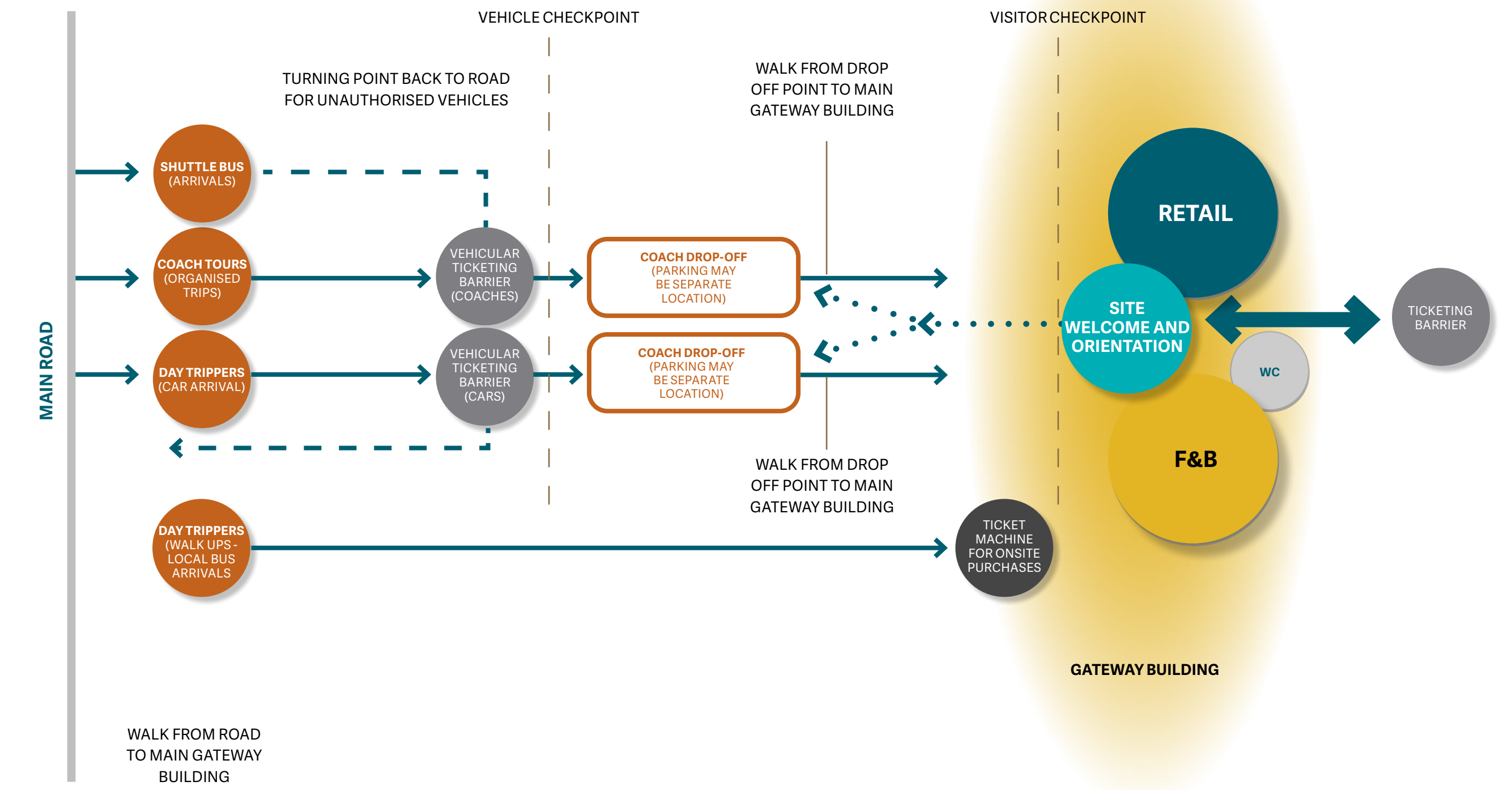


# THE STRATEGY / A UNIFIED AND IMPROVED ARRIVAL

## Arrivals Sequence



Existing visitor centre contains exhibition elements and a seasonal food and beverage offer only



## THE STRATEGY / A UNIFIED AND IMPROVED ARRIVAL

### Welcome to the Reception Building

All visitors will be greeted on arrival within a reception building that can be scaled to flexibly support high and low visitor numbers throughout the year. This new facility will provide all visitors with an improved sense of arrival and welcome. It will facilitate enhanced control and management for all of the various arrival types, including coaches, organised tours, shuttle buses and cars. In conjunction with pre-booking for all visitors, the reception facility will enable streamlined ticketing that delivers the necessary level of security while improving access to the site.

The building will also create a critical threshold between the visitor arriving at the site and entering the site. The architecture itself screens the visual impact of parked cars and buses. Once visitors have passed through the facility, they will enter the core "back to nature" experience and leave the cars and buses behind.

The reception will cater for a wide range of visitor support and operational services, including:

- Toilets
- Orientation
- Retail
- Food and beverage
- Staff facilities including offices and welfare
- Coach and shuttle driver facilities



## THE STRATEGY / A UNIFIED AND IMPROVED ARRIVAL

### Orientate and Raise Anticipation

Upon arrival via shuttle transport, coach or car, the immediate objective must be to orientate visitors in the cliff landscape and highlight the key experiences on offer within the site boundary. Locating facilities, exhibitions, circular walking routes and viewing vistas through a central orientation hub and unified wayfinding system allows visitors to begin their journey at the cliffs with confidence.

The reception building will orientate visitors as they start their journey to the cliffs. Site wayfinding and interpretation will help visitors to better understand the arrangement and opportunities of the site, as well as increase anticipation for the magic and wonder of the cliff landscape.



3D maps will allow visitors to gather and plan their visit, helping to distribute them across the landscape.



Large scale statements conveying the core interpretive themes and emotive messaging that can easily be absorbed while visitors and groups are on the move.



Sculptural elements that evoke the spectacle and scale of the cliffs.

### Welcome Facility Case Study: Giant's Causeway, Northern Ireland

The new visitor centre opened in 2012 in response to the increase in overseas visitors. At the time, the World Heritage Site welcomed 600,000 – 700,000 visitors a year. The new facility welcomed over one million visitors in 2017 and 2018. Pre-covid, the site was the top generator for tourism in Northern Ireland, with most visitors originating from Canada, USA, Great Britain and China.

The building designed has achieved a BREEAM 'Excellent' Award, which is based on overall sustainability in design, materials, energy, construction management and ecology. The design life of the building is 100 years, with minimal services intervention required during subsequent refurbishments.

5km of pipe runs underneath the car park to provide the centre with ground source heat and draw in cooler air. Water is collected from the green roof in an underground tank which is used for the toilets in the centre. Indigenous grasses and wildflower seeds collected from the surrounding area are used for the green roof planting to maintain the sensitive ecology of the site. Building materials are sourced from local and recycled materials, while a park and ride reduces traffic congestion and provides sustainable economic links with the town. The site car parks each feature Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) to avoid increasing the load on the local storm drainage infrastructure.



## THE STRATEGY / LOCALLY SOURCED PRODUCE

### The new catering and retail provision at the Cliffs of Moher will allow the destination to act as a showcase for the outstanding produce of County Clare.

The approach is about embracing what local artisans and suppliers are doing and serving as a beacon for this area of the Wild Atlantic Way. This strategy will appeal not just to visitors, but also to Irish people who in turn will become real ambassadors for the food, drink and retail offer.

Local suppliers can greatly benefit from the Cliffs of Moher Experience as it offers a rare opportunity for them to showcase their products to a global audience. This unparalleled exposure can significantly impact the business outlook of local artisans, as well as provide them with a valuable platform while supporting the local community. Clare County Council is uniquely positioned to create the conditions for new and developing craft enterprises to flourish.

#### Food and Drink Offer

The core principles will be to celebrate local and seasonal Irish produce in a contemporary way, to cook everything on site, and to cater for different price points to variable visitor numbers over a 12-month period.

The West of Ireland is home to some of the country's most important artisans, including the Burren Smokehouse, St. Tola Farmhouse Cheese, Achill Oysters and Velvet Cloud yoghurt. There are already 15 local food suppliers to the Cliffs of Moher and the aim will be to support more local businesses in the future. This will be achieved by focusing on local products and engaging and championing suppliers in a collaborative way. Delivering a programme of events will build awareness of their culinary excellence, including festivals, workshops and supper clubs.

#### Future provision will include:

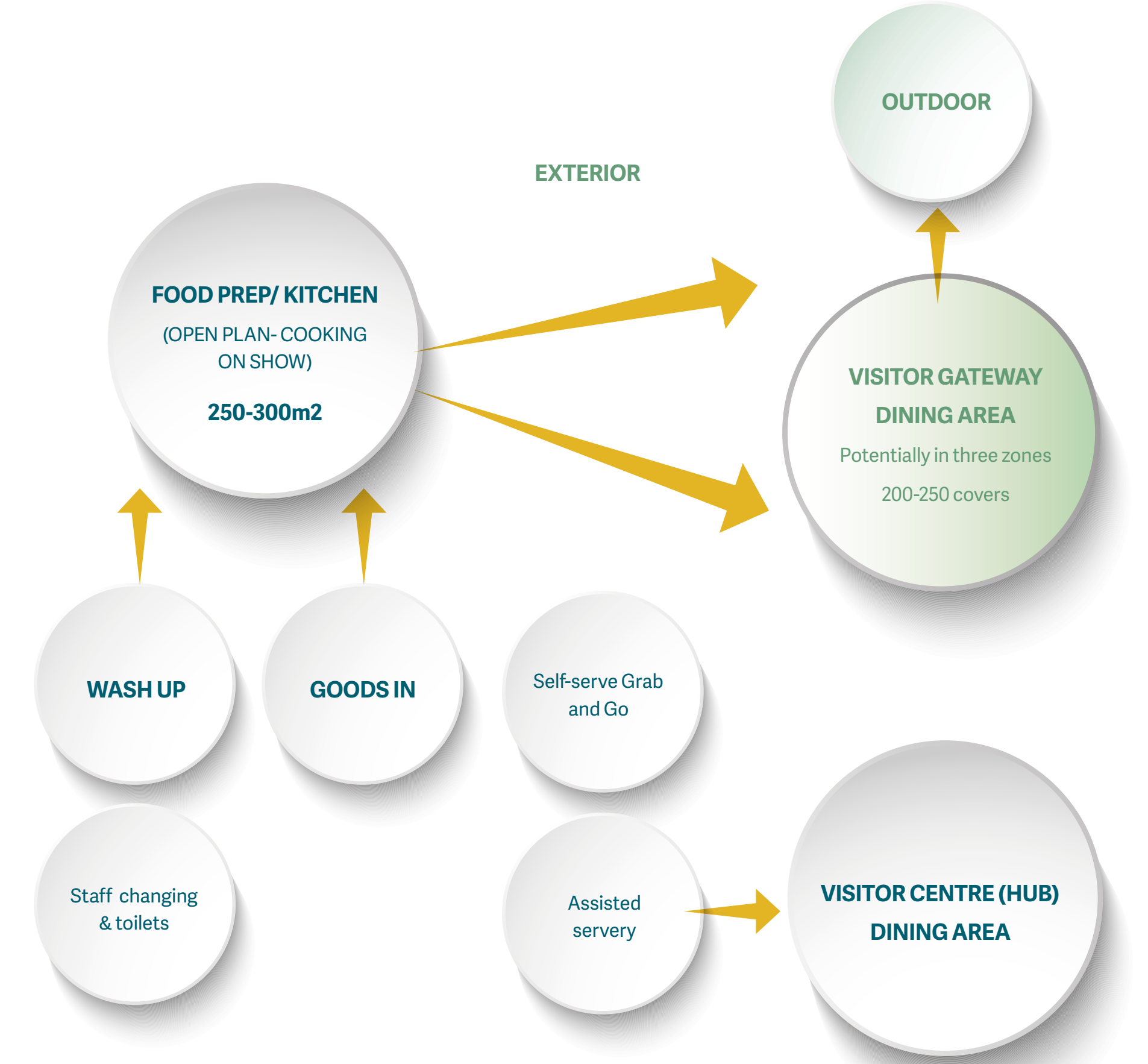
- A serve-assist counter with a full open-plan kitchen offering a range of dishes, with some prepared to order and some residing in the counter.
- A Grab and Go offer, supplied from the open-plan kitchen and supplemented by tea, coffee and soup via serve assist. This will include a picnic provision in peak months, made up of the existing offer but presented in a customised container.
- An unassisted Grab and Go offer, in or adjacent to the retail offer.
- Some third-party seasonal carts, for example ice cream and cold drinks.
- An assisted Grab and Go offer with adjacent seating in the re-purposed visitor centre viewing hub for peak months.
- Ancillary carts to be provided for peak months, serviced by suitable power points but without plumbing and waste being required.



#### Catering Operation

The main kitchen will be open-plan with cooking "on show", 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, and extraction provided.

An adjacent seating area for approximately 200-250 covers will be broken up into three interconnected areas, which have flexibility to close without impacting the customer journey for quieter periods.



# THE STRATEGY / LOCALLY SOURCED PRODUCE

## Retail Offer

The Cliffs of Moher retail spaces will reflect modern retail dynamics and incorporate the latest global trends and best practice. The core principle of the new retail operation centres on provenance, Irish craft skills and local supply.

The Cliffs of Moher already plays an important role in supporting other businesses across County Clare and beyond. The six craft units at the Cliffs of Moher, leased by local businesses, will be relocated as an integral part of the new reception building. There are more than 40 County Clare craft and design suppliers across the site and the aim will be to encourage more local suppliers in the future.

The retail strategy will also incorporate sustainability statements that focus on eco-product ranges and recyclable packaging solutions, and maximise the global brand that is the Cliffs of Moher Experience.



## Bring Local Provenance to Life

The retail offer will showcase Irish and local produce via a large contemporary feature display celebrating Irish fashion and craft at the entrance point. The display would change seasonally through strategic partnerships with organisations such as The Design & Crafts Council Ireland. Within the retail space there will be a display selling products by local makers.

The backstory behind products will be brought to life throughout the shop via innovative signage and on-shelf communication. Makers will be encouraged to share photos and narratives to be used in a constantly updating series of life stories.

## Facilitate Product Personalisation

At least one product at the site should allow for personalisation. For example, a guest photograph taken by an auto camera at the cliff-edge that can be dated, contain a personal message, and be framed before being made available for collection in the retail shop at the end of the visit.

## 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. An interactive video wall will tell the makers’ stories when the showcase stage is not in use.

## Fast-Track Shopping

For those who are time constrained, fast-track shopping solutions will include technologies such as self-scan checkouts and “just walk out” technology. Omni-channel retailing will be facilitated through a dedicated online dispatch hub that allows products purchased instore to be dispatched onwards. A dynamic online retail store will incorporate sophisticated, technology-driven programmes such as automated marketing. For online orders and products coming via the dispatch hub, “pick and pack” will be completed in an offsite facility.

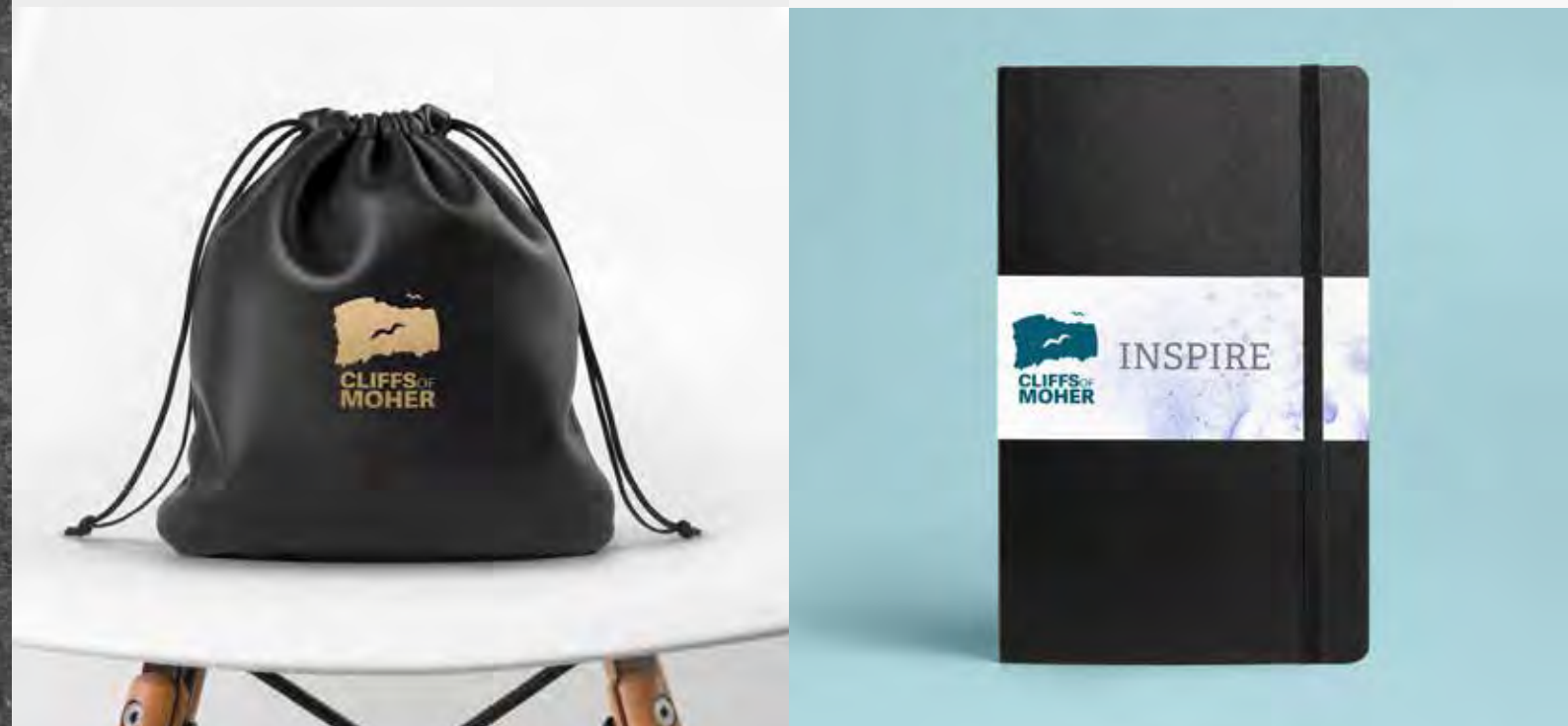
## Unique Product Ranges

Success will be predicated on stocking unique ranges that are not available at other retail destinations. A dedicated eco-range will be made available, using the Eden Project product range as a benchmark, and further range extensions will take place on exclusive Cliffs of Moher products.

## Retail Management

In addition to the Craftworkers, it is recommended that the main retail operation should be operated by the Cliffs of Moher internal team with no contractors involved. This will require significant upskilling and expansion 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 the extensive process of product sourcing, expertise will need to be built in global and local sourcing, each of which has a different discipline and skillset.



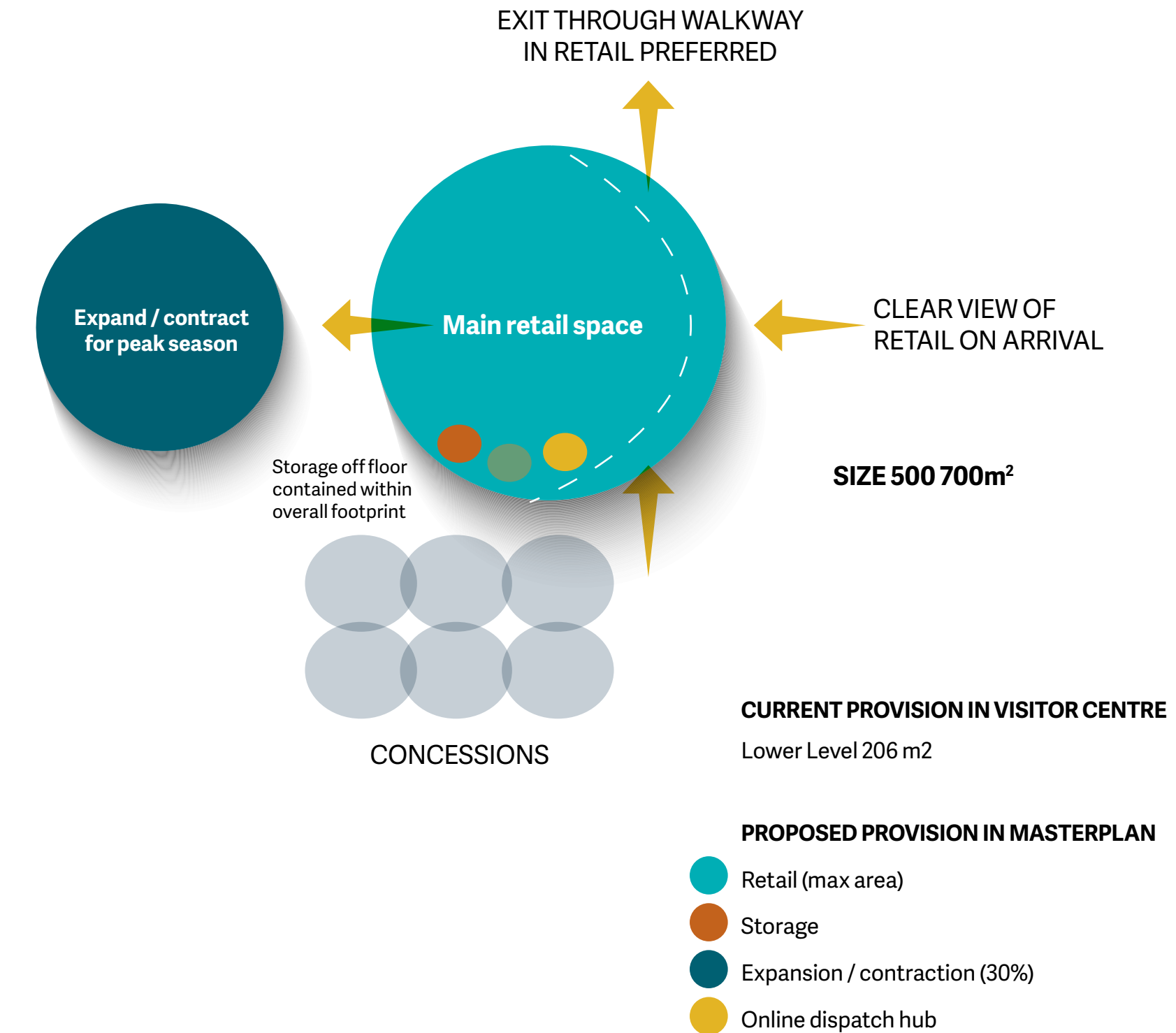
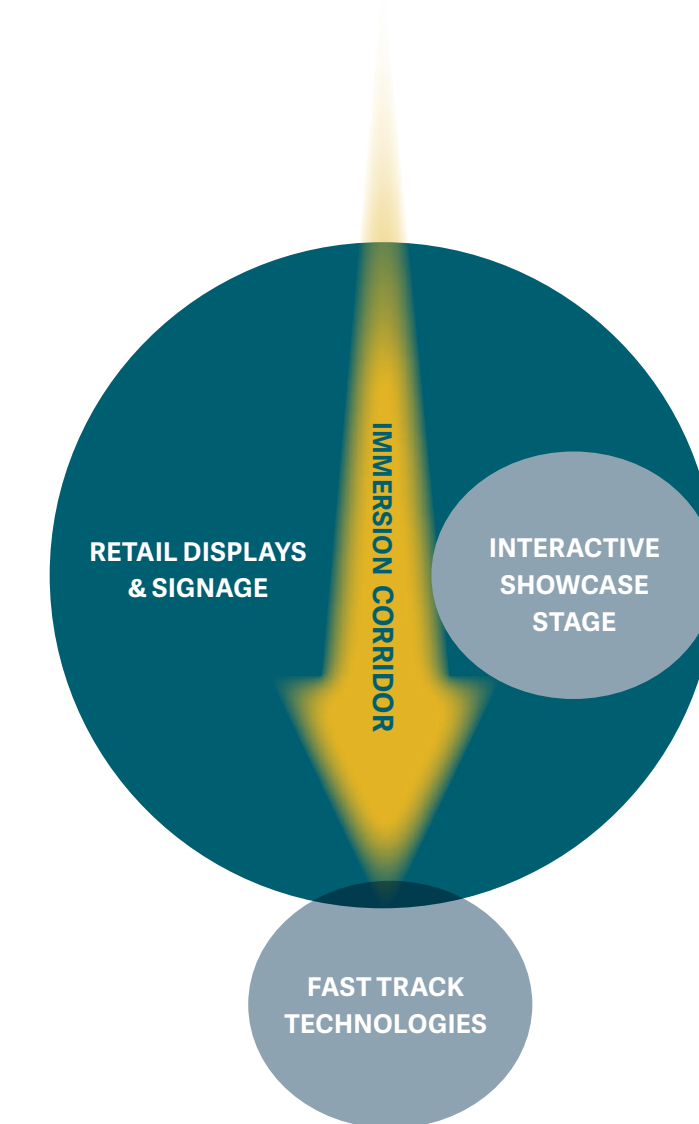


### Retail Operation

It is envisaged that all visitors, 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 showcasing product ranges. Customers will be encouraged to leave the central walkway by stunning visual displays and the interactive showcase stage area.

Those with less time on their hands will be encouraged to shop in units strategically located throughout the retail space. Signage will tell the stories of the makers and will link the shoppers to the backstory behind certain products, creating an emotion-led shopping experience.

Towards the exit, fast egress will be facilitated using technologies like self-checkout counters and "just walk out" technology.



## THE STRATEGY / ELEVATED ACCESS TO THE CLIFFS

Visitors will transition from the reception building facilities to the cliff side of the R478 access road via a new pedestrian bridge.

### KEY DECISION

The creation of a new footbridge will bring visitors to the rewilded cliffs experience at an elevated level. This will provide enhanced accessibility for all across the site, as the need for steep pathways is reduced and views of the site are improved.

It will also resolve a key access issue whereby visitors crossing the road from the current car park disrupt the flow of traffic on the main road, causing significant queues and delays for visitors, local residents and other traffic passing the Cliffs of Moher site.

The footbridge design will mitigate the impact of strong wind and rain on visitors at this elevation, while appearing visually integrated into the surrounding wild landscape.

An underpass was considered for visitors to pass across and under the R478. However, this approach would be at direct odds with the strategy to engage visitors 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, as well as being more environmentally invasive.

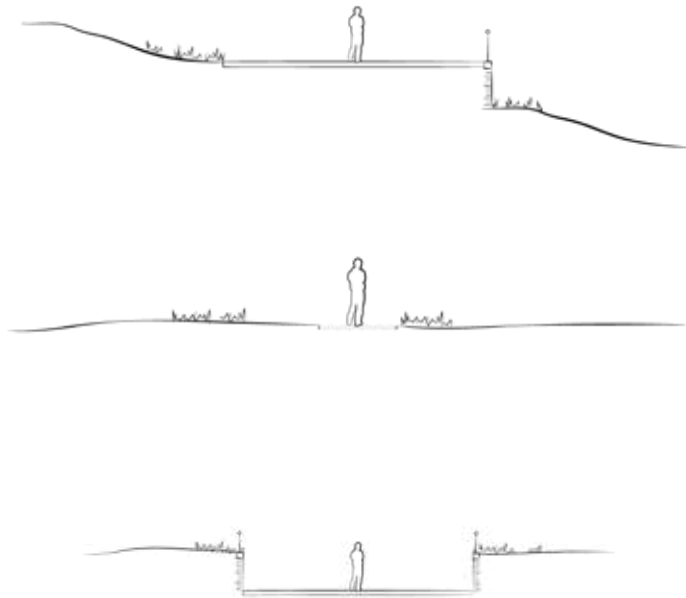


# THE STRATEGY / TIERED NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS

## Different tiers of natural environments will provide a distinction between the more managed landscape and the wild and rugged areas.

Three 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 a balance between the built interventions which provide accessibility for visitors and the wild nature and valuable habitats of the site. Each tier of the landscape will have its own events and attractions to spread the visitors across the site.

Each space will feel like part of the same experience. However, a light touch approach will maintain a degree of subtlety and visual reference from the context. The simple, sturdy and robust aesthetic will reference the geology of the site, including a muted colour palette that highlights the natural beauty of the surrounding landscape. The low profile of each environment will reduce impact on the wider views and the proposals will consider ecological impact.

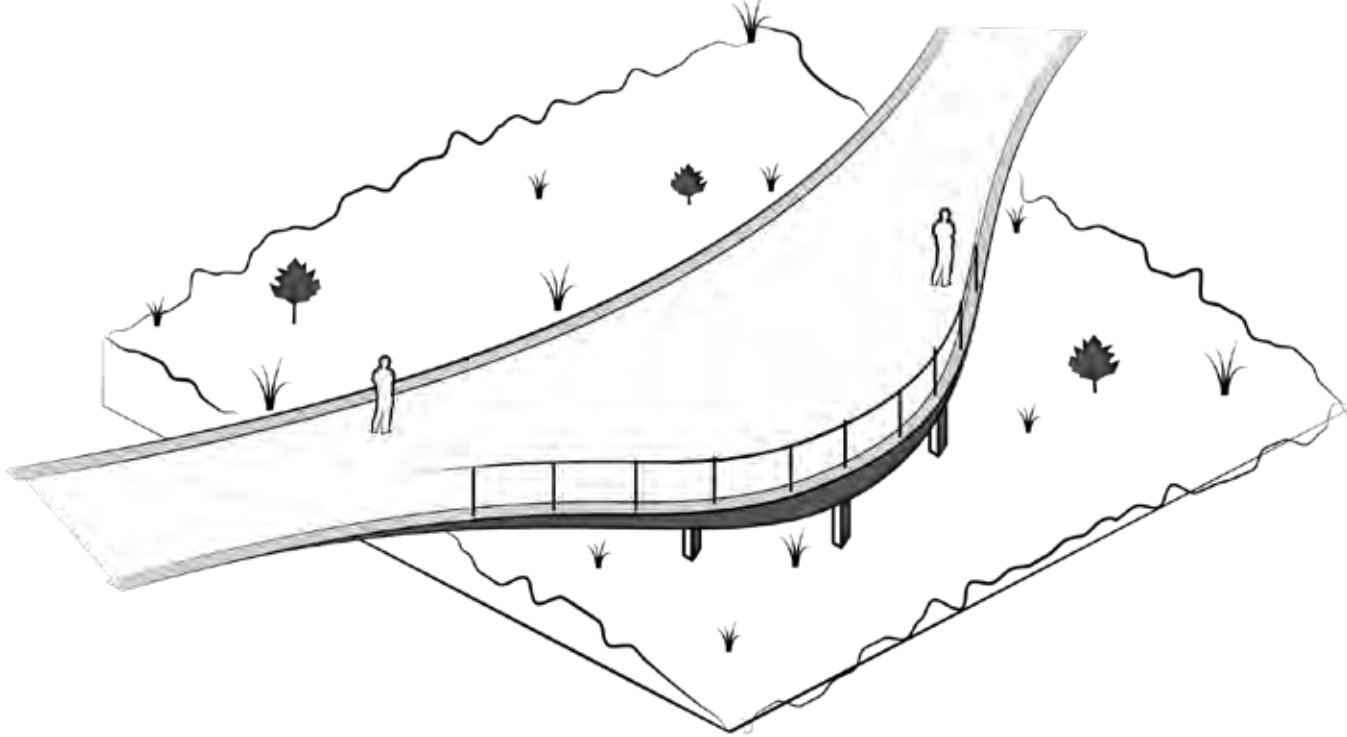
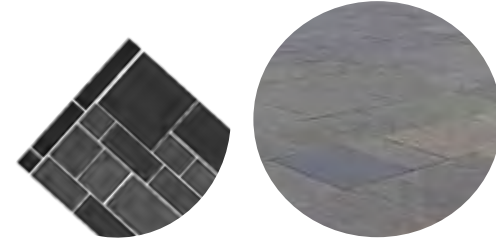


### Tier 1

This will be the "core experience" from arrival, around the visitor centre and onward to the closest cliff-edge experiences. This tier will ideally be fully accessible to everyone with a formal, comfortable aesthetic and well-defined edges. There will be landform changes or elevated walkways to maximise accessibility and reduce the gradients of the primary paths.

Primary paths - formal

Slopes 0-2% (0.6% ramps)

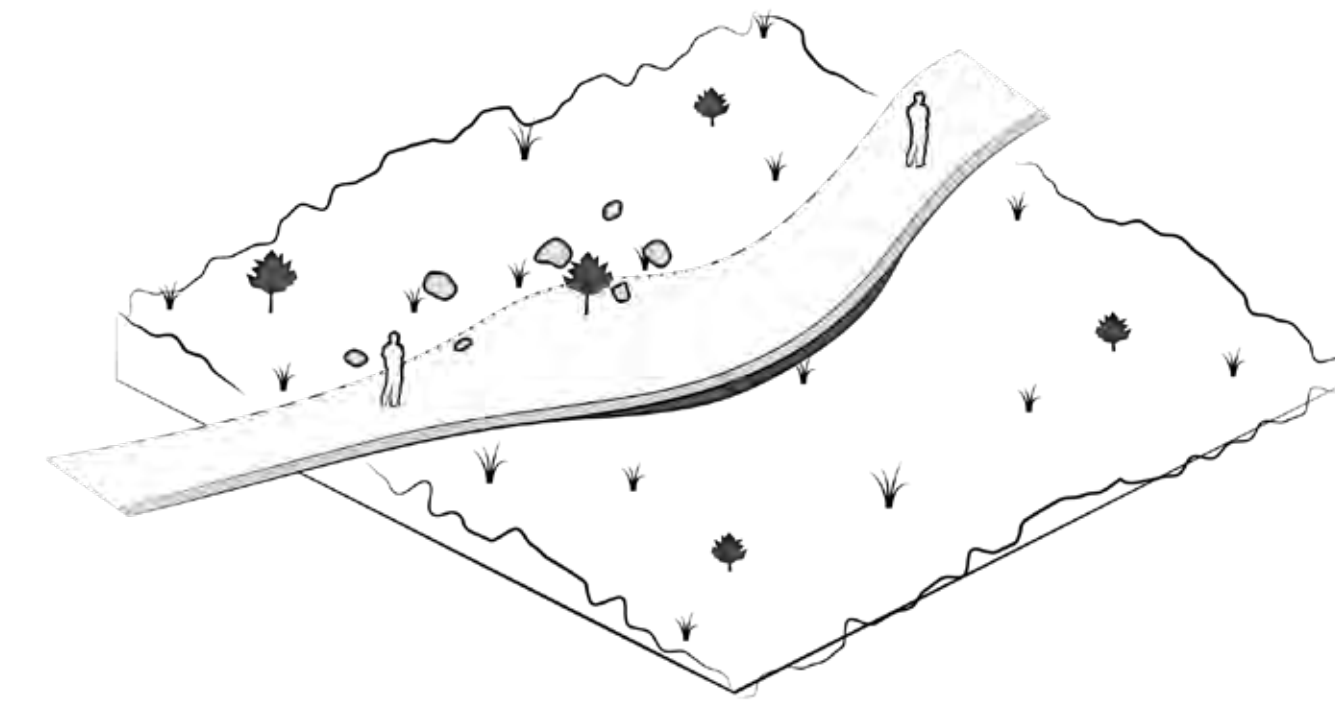
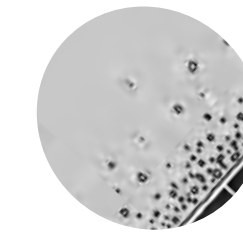


### Tier 2

This environment will be easy to access, but a degree of nature will be introduced 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, thereby encouraging exploration.

Secondary paths - tamed nature

Slopes 0-8%

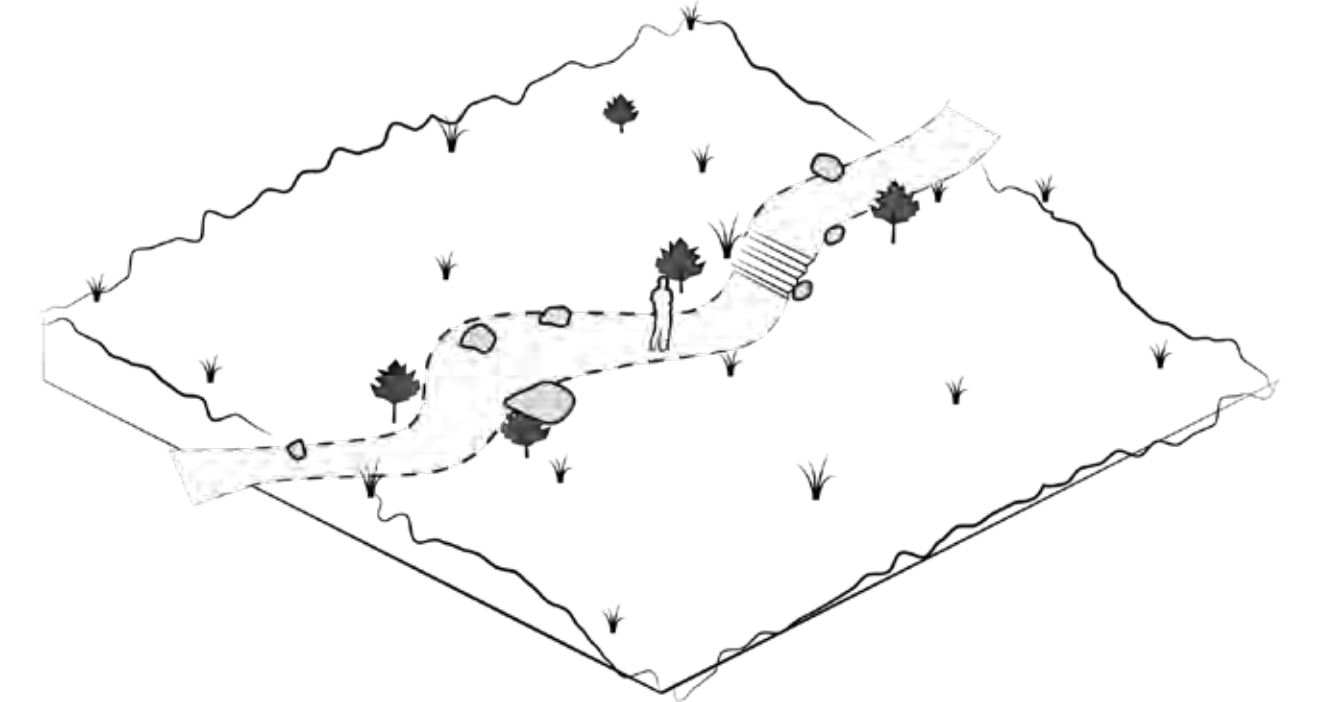
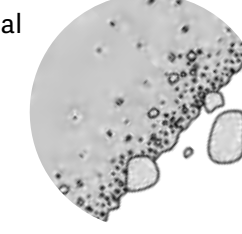


### Tier 3

This 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.

Tertiary paths - wild and natural

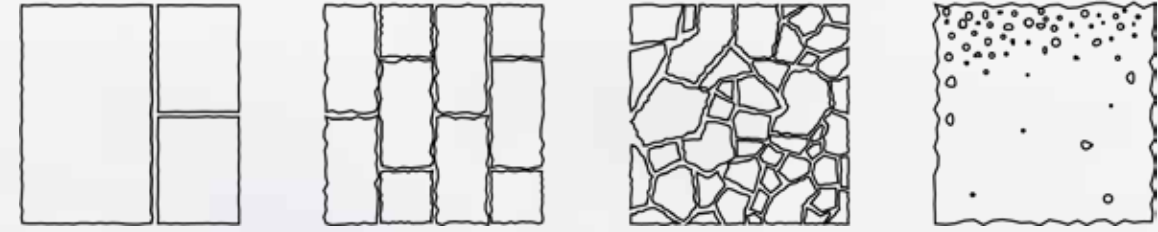
Natural slopes



## THE STRATEGY / TIERED NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS

### Liscannor Stone

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



## THE STRATEGY / NEW EVENTS IN THE LANDSCAPE

The proposals for new events in the landscape will maximise 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 a wide range of locations to create unique encounters with the wild landscape.

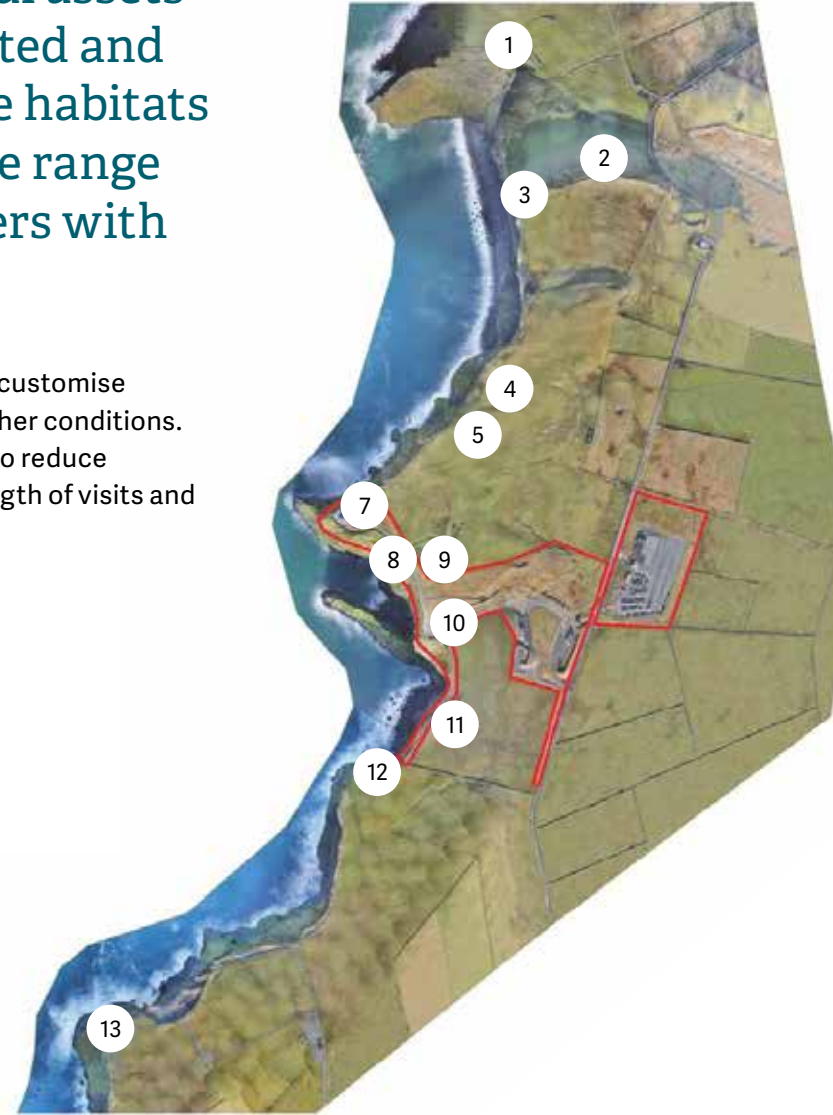
The network of paths and variety of experiences will allow visitors to customise their visit depending on their interests, timeframe, mobility and weather conditions. Looped walking routes will encourage dispersal throughout the site to reduce overcrowding, and the array of landscape events will increase the length of visits and encourage repeat trips.

### Highlight experiences include:

- 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 include:

- Viewing of special flora and fauna
- Ecotourism, grazing livestock and rewilding land management
- Interpretation focusing on geology, ecology and historic land-use



### Viewpoint Names

A series of breathtaking new viewing opportunities will be created, with names inspired by the traditional Irish culture of the local area. Research into historic maps and guidebooks has revealed the historic names that have been given to each natural feature and passed down through generations. These evocative names will give visitors a profound insight into the richness of Irish language and the deep emotional connection our ancient ancestors had with the landscape.

1. Aileen's Wave
2. Burren View
3. Aill Na Searrach
4. Arran Islands View
5. Raven's Rock
6. Branaumore
7. O'Briens Tower
8. Stookeen Point
9. Wetland View
10. The Ledge
11. Goat Island View
12. Puffin's Point
13. Mal's View



# THE STRATEGY / NEW EVENTS IN THE LANDSCAPE

## Cliff-edge Experiences

A range of dramatic new experiences will be provided at the cliff-edge, ranging from adrenalin rushes to quiet reflection. A series of cliff-edge viewing points serve up an exhilarating conclusion to one's journey to the "edge of the world".

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 distinct characters.

The cliff-edge structures will 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 will maximise outward views and prevent climbing, and glass floors in key viewing locations will provide a sense of adrenaline accessible to all visitors.

### KEY DECISION

A new cliff-edge walk will be created further inland, aligning with recommendations to avoid geologically unstable land and allow habitat remediation at the clifftop (see page 35). Moving the cliff walk inland is not detrimental to the visitor's ability to maintain a view of the cliffs as the topography is higher inland than at the cliff-edge. However, a variety of new engineered viewing platforms will bring visitors back to, and at some points over, the edge where views are particularly dramatic. Therefore, visitors will be discouraged from leaving designated pathways to seek adrenaline experiences and photograph opportunities.



### Heritage Area (O'Brien's Tower)

Maintain historic flagstones with additional "windows" in specific locations.



### Along the Cliff-edge

New stone fence and mesh to maximise views but prevent climbing.

### Along Raised Walkways, Ramps, Stairs and Viewpoints

Sleek steel railing to maximise views with opportunity for signage and interpretation



## THE STRATEGY / NEW EVENTS IN THE LANDSCAPE

### Distinct Design Palettes

Whilst the spaces have a cohesive design approach, each area type will have bespoke designed elements to convey their distinct character. The materiality of these spaces contrasts with the tiered landscapes to highlight them as special events within the landscape. There is a complimentary family of material palettes which repeats across each area to create a unified look and feel.

### Vehicular Space Palette

Located in the arrival area, this palette should be modest and sensitive to its setting, minimising impermeable hardstanding areas and utilising natural, local materials for surfaces and demarcation. Disabled parking space surfaces and locations will prioritise accessibility.



### Destination Space Palette

The palette in the external visitor centre spaces and key event points within the landscape will be uncluttered, using muted colours and textures that encourage visitor movement and gathering. The feathered edges of hardstanding features will demonstrate integration with the surrounding landscape and internal and external spaces will be blended where possible.



### Elevated Palette

The palette in locations where there are raised walkways, cantilever structures and on the access bridge will match the aesthetic of the destination spaces to unify the design language. A light surface layer of in-situ concrete with muted colours and textures will complement the built structures.



### Cliff-edge Experience Case Study: Austria

The 5 Fingers Viewing Platform opened on Mount Krippenstein in October 2006, creating a structure that reaches out like a hand over the 400 m drop.

Each 4 x 1 m 'finger' has a different viewing experience. One platform is made entirely of glass and another enables visitors to gain their own personal view of the Hallstatt World Heritage site through a large Baroque picture frame. One has a hole in the floor you can look through and the fifth finger features a free telescope.

Located in the Stubai Glacier Ski resort, the Tyrol Viewing Platform is 3.2 km above sea level and offers visitors the opportunity to view 109 peaks across the full dimensions of the landscape. An example of modern architectural design that blends into the landscape, it uses 20 tonnes of weather-resistant Corten steel in its foundations and the upslope rock anchors. The platform extends 9 m beyond the rock edge and provides visitors with an innovative Viscope telescope.



## THE STRATEGY / INTERPRETATION AND VIEWING HUB

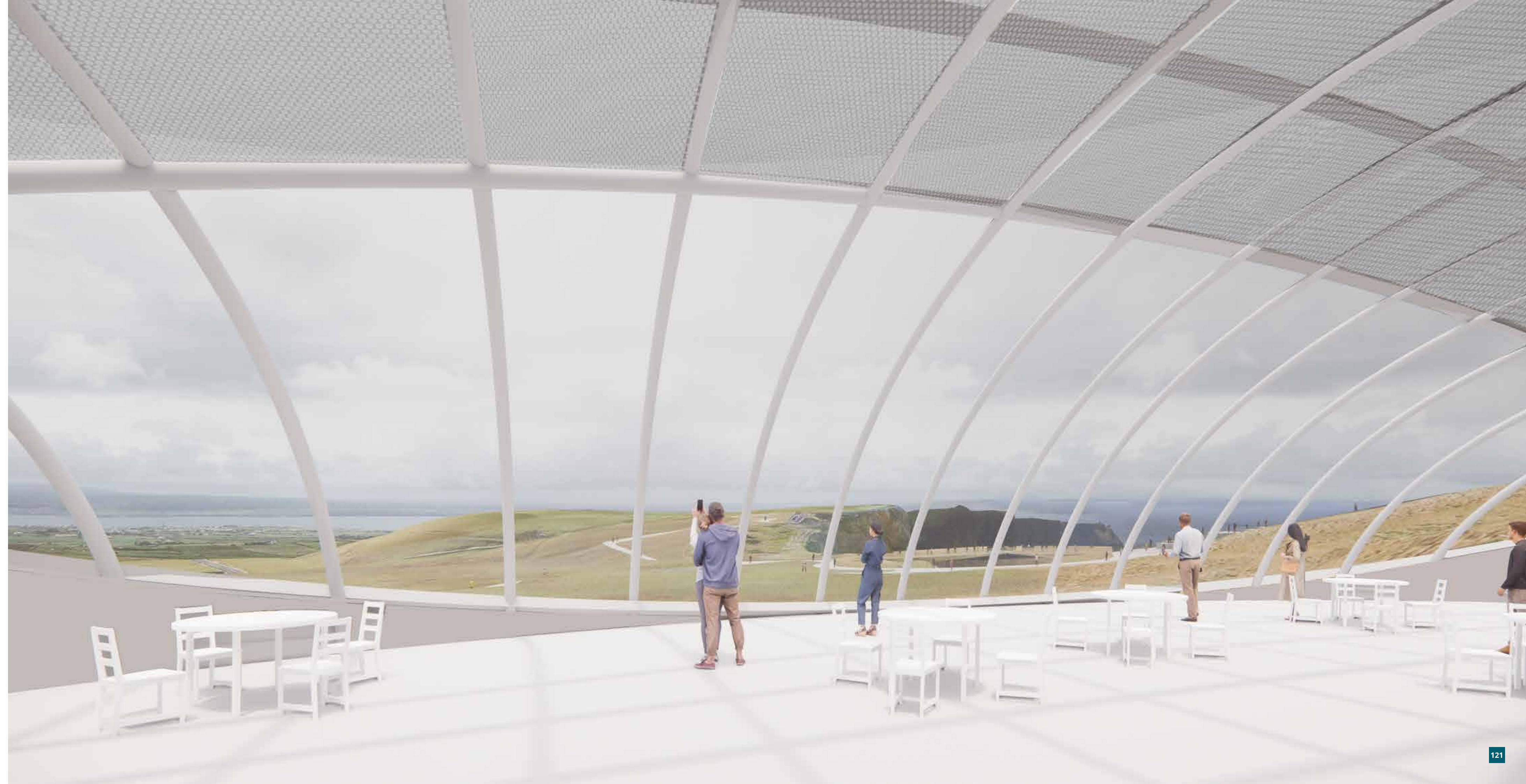
The existing visitor centre will be repurposed as part of the overall concept of moving visitor support services away from the cliff side of the R478 access road.

The building will be remodelled to provide a spectacular panoramic viewing point towards the cliffs and a centralised interpretation hub for the stories of the cliffs. The improved internal facilities will also provide an opportunity to establish the Cliffs of Moher as a valuable local learning and cultural resource.

### ! KEY DECISION

A key justification for transferring visitor facilities and commercial offerings from the visitor centre into the new reception building facility is to avoid the need to expand the existing building. To adequately cope with high visitor numbers, the visitor centre in its current form would require a significantly increased footprint, impacting on views and conservation of habitats in a location that is at the heart of the wild cliffs experience.

The shift in function will significantly reduce the pressure on the building and allow it to provide an alternative role in the visitor experience. The building will be reorganised as an interpretation hub with a focus on providing updated and additional facilities for education and groups. The building will continue to play an important role in offering shelter in inclement weather and it will maintain a seasonal food and drink offer.



## THE STRATEGY / INTERPRETATION AND VIEWING HUB

### Combined Facilities

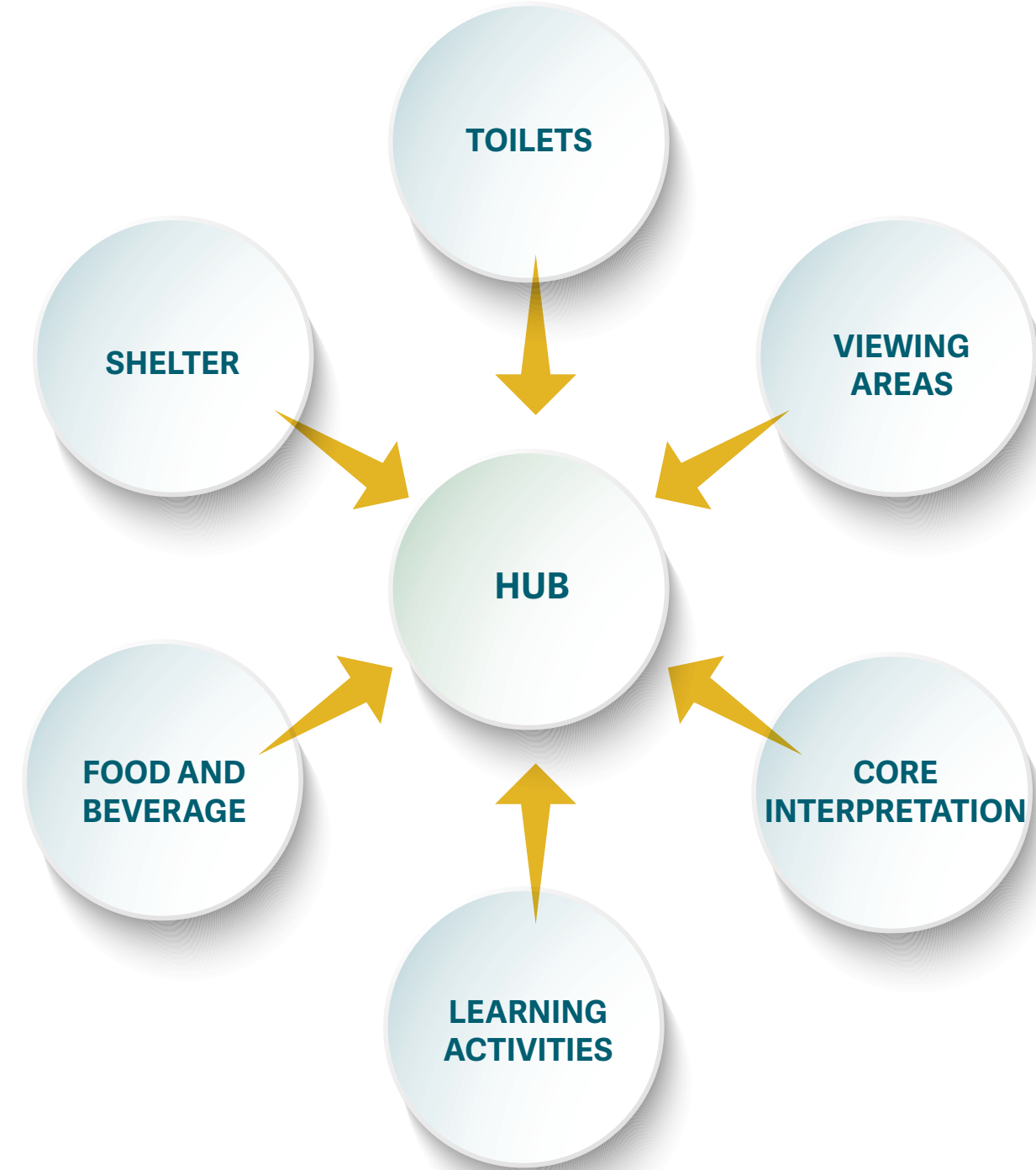
As the visitor centre is no longer the primary destination that fulfils all visitor functions, it can become a destination that is more effectively managed. The internal architecture will be de-cluttered through the removal of ramps, stairs and smaller spaces, creating larger open areas that focus on the following core facilities:

- Extensive internal viewing areas
- Main location for interpretation bringing together the stories of the cliffs
- Education and learning spaces
- Seasonal food and drink offer
- Shelter from inclement weather
- Toilets

The simplified arrangement on the upper level will offer enhanced views of the landscape and potentially an outdoor terrace for all-season events, with increased space in the summer.

The core interpretation spaces across two levels will deliver a standalone offer that can be experienced at the beginning or end of the visitor journey. These will feature permanent displays and a showpiece immersive experience that consolidates all the themes through the contrasting concepts of:

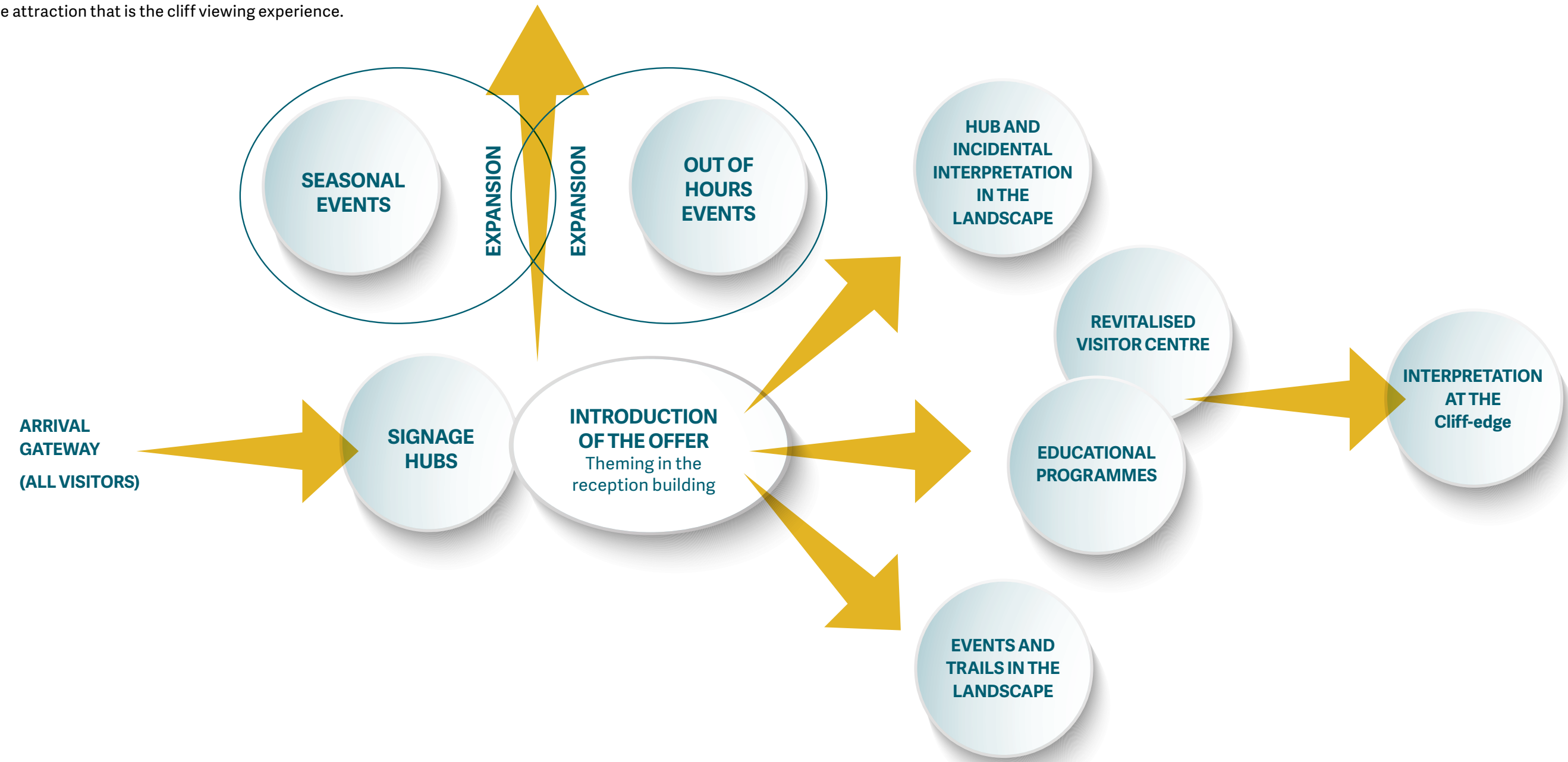
- Time and seasonal change
- The cliffs' immovable ancient rock layers



# THE STRATEGY / REVITALISED INTERPRETATIVE EXPERIENCE

Improving the interpretative offer at the Cliffs of Moher is central to the long-term strategy to create a world-class visitor experience.

Graphic, audio-visual and immersive media will be distributed across the arrival points, wider landscape and interpretation hubs through a strategic and holistic approach that complements and supports rather than attempts to compete with the showpiece attraction that is the cliff viewing experience.



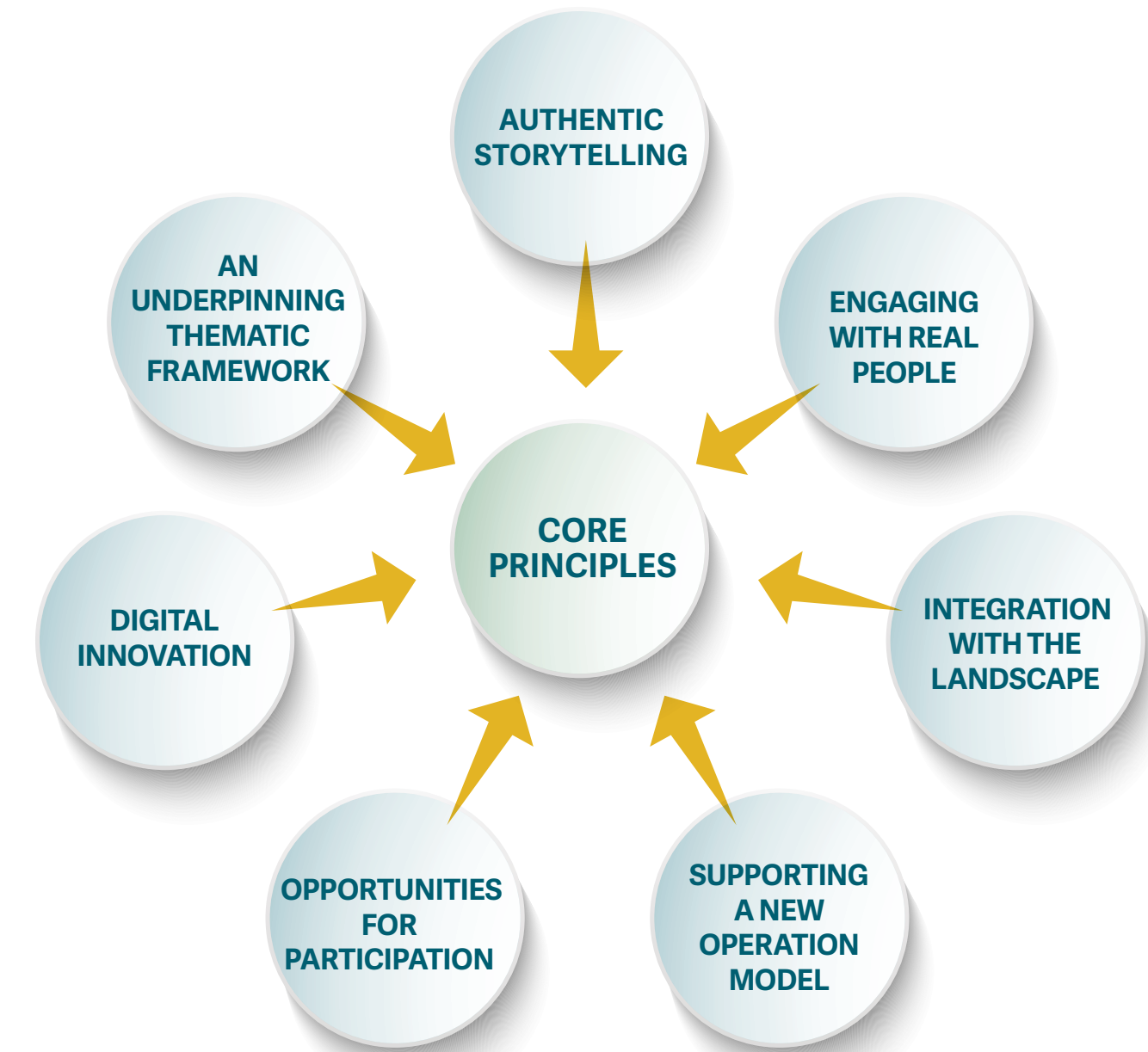
## Authentic Storytelling

Personalised and tailored content will connect visitors to the authenticity of the site, immersing them in the wildness of the setting and reflecting the vibrant cultural heritage of the region.

The first component of this is the storytelling, which will focus on bringing to life personal and cultural stories, evoking emotional responses that will make the history of the place feel tangible.

The experience itself will be participative, stimulating and multi-sensory in a way that helps the visitor to feel absorbed and connected to the essence of the natural landscape.

This strategy will connect with wider strategies to promote the wider Burren landscape as a place of wellness, where contact with the natural elements relaxes the mind and delivers a rejuvenating encounter.



## Engaging with Real People

Interacting and connecting with real people remains a key motivator at heritage sites in Ireland. Although recent social and demographic changes in Irish society have made opportunities to interact with people few and far between, connecting with local communities and their heritage is a significant part of Fáilte Ireland's objective to deliver "real experiences".

**Building on the traditional presence of guides and musicians across the clifftop, an integrated programme of ranger-led tours and events will provide personal insights into the geology, wildlife and folklore and magic of the cliffs and wider county.**

# THE STRATEGY / REVITALISED INTERPRETATIVE EXPERIENCE



## Integration Within the Landscape

A key challenge for interpretation lies in providing bold and engaging experiences across the landscape while ensuring that structures, signage and interactive media blend seamlessly into the wild natural setting.

The geometric forms and materials of external interpretation will reflect the landscape, evoking the cliff topography, flight of the sea birds and fossil trail patterns. Theatrical and sculptural elements, all inspired by the folklore legends of the cliffs, will act as landmarks that surprise as well as orientate visitors in the landscape.

Interpretative media will be integrated into the engineered walkways and viewpoints, delivering content that overlays and augments the stunning views. Signage will consolidate orientation information, utilising consistent icons and colour schemes that quickly highlight nearby destinations and codes of conduct.



## Support the New Cliffs of Moher Operational Model

Interpretation will reinforce the operational strategy to disperse visitors across the landscape and provide flexibility to diversify the offer for peak, shoulder and off-peak seasons. A “hub and spoke” approach for signage will deliver centralised orientation that distributes visitors to destinations across the landscape.

Delivering a kit of parts will allow clusters of interpretation to expand and contract based on predicted seasonal footfall. Crucially, this will allow the Cliffs of Moher to increase and decrease interpretation based on visitor numbers throughout the year.



## Opportunities for Participation

Providing opportunities for local and wider communities to participate in projects at the Cliffs of Moher, thereby getting closer to the historical roots and sustainability ethos of the landscape, is an important strategic objective.

The Cliffs of Moher can capitalise on the revival of volunteering in Ireland by establishing new programmes for specific groups, particularly young people, to participate in research and ecological conservation, and in the process develop important skills and generate a genuine sense of place and belonging.

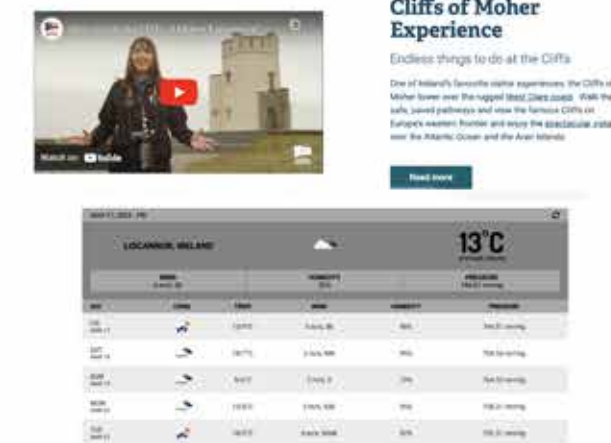
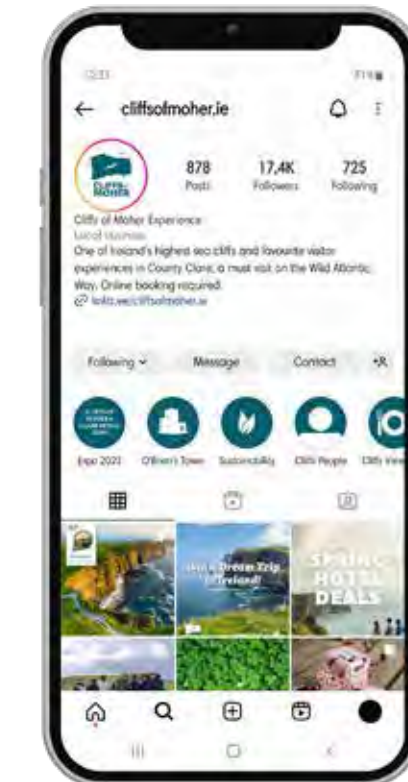
Events and activities that are developed and delivered in partnership with the wider Geopark, focusing on geo-tourism, ecotourism, cultural heritage and wellness across the Burren and cliffs region, will help visitors to consider the landscape holistically and meet joint strategic priorities.

## Digital Innovation

The strategy recognises that technology is playing an ever-increasing role in all stages of the visitor journey. Digital media will be seamlessly integrated into the visitor experience where it can deliver content in surprising and immersive ways while supporting excellent orientation and customer services.

This allows the delivery of flexible multi-language content that is accessible to the increasing range of nationalities visiting Ireland and the Cliffs of Moher, allowing the organisation to continually improve and expand information services in foreign languages.

Initiatives proposed include delivery of digital content on visitor’s own devices and providing location-based information during landscape exploration. Augmented and mixed reality technologies that immerse visitors in digital content while they remain rooted in the real world will provide particularly exciting opportunities for the future visitor experience at the Cliffs of Moher.



# THE STRATEGY / REVITALISED INTERPRETATIVE EXPERIENCE

## Interpretative Theme Framework

A series of core themes have been developed that will engage visitors with the Cliffs of Moher's most significant assets and stories. These will be inserted into a framework that underpins the approach to interpretation and community engagement activities.

Narratives will showcase the 'big picture' of the wider Burren and County Clare landscape, providing a jump-off point to explore and capture interest in heritage and cultural experiences across the wider region. Sustainability messaging will also be incorporated into each theme, supporting the strategy's overarching emphasis on sustainability.

The ancient stone that forms the Cliffs of Moher is the source of all its stories. This idea is at the core of the central interpretative concept, **Stories Set in Stone**, which brings together a collection of narratives that run across the entire site and wider destination. This overarching theme acts as an introduction to all interpretation that can be experienced at the Cliffs of Moher, setting the scene and orientating visitors so they can explore the site with clarity and purpose.

It is through the rock that we can understand the geological evolution of the landscape (**Reading the Landscape**), the people that have thrived here (**Living on the Edge**), the beautiful wildlife that calls it home (**Haven**), the exhilaration of its towering cliff precipice (**Wild Atlantic**), and the majestic folklore it has inspired (**Legends of the Cliffs**).



## STORIES SET IN STONE



READING THE LANDSCAPE

LIVING ON THE EDGE

HAVEN

LEGENDS OF THE CLIFFS

WILD ATLANTIC

## Theme 1: Reading the Landscape

This theme focuses on what is perhaps the Cliff's greatest asset – its ability to tell us something about the local environment that existed over 300 million years ago.

Just as the pages of a book tell us part of a bigger story, each layer of ancient rock at the Cliffs of Moher can be "read" to reveal how the landscape has evolved over millions of years. The aim of this theme is to arm visitors with the background information and visual clues they need to identify and understand signifiers of deep time at the cliffs.

The theme will allow visitors to understand the geology of the cliffs in the context of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark, showing how these distinct Clare landscapes were formed within a wider chronology of geological events.

The following stories will support this overarching idea:

### How Were the Cliffs Formed?

Here we tell the Cliffs of Moher origin story, starting over 300 million years ago when the towering cliffs were merely the mouth of a large river that flowed down to a shallow warm sea at the Equator, 5,000km away from where Ireland is situated today. Great floods of water deposited sand and mud at the delta and over millions of years these sediments were gradually compacted into solid layers of sandstone, shale and flagstone. These layers rested on an older sequence of Carboniferous limestone rocks that can be seen in the dramatic landscape of the surrounding Burren.

Shortly after the rocks which make up the cliffs were formed, the entire continent collided with another one to the south. Originally horizontal, the rocks were gently folded. The enormous tectonic forces also resulted in the many cracks and fissures that can be seen in the Burren limestone pavement. This collision produced mountains which have been eroded as the tectonics plates transported the rocks from the Equator to where they are now.

The rocks were then subject to the great ice sheets of the last ice age, which carved out the landscape to expose the rock. It was only after that ice melted 16,000 years ago that the sea level began to rise and eventually coastal erosion began to form the spectacular cliff face we know today.

### Each Fossil Tells a Story

The cliffs provide a unique opportunity to learn about the life that existed in the ancient delta as it migrated into the ocean. This story encourages visitors to look closer at the stone itself, conveniently displayed in the paving and walls around the landscape. The most obvious feature is the squiggly trails, which are feeding trails left by a marine creature such as a worm, or a snail or slug-like mollusc as it crawled through the sediment, feeding on organic matter transported to the delta by the rivers. This tells us that the flagstones were probably formed in very shallow water along the ancient coast. Other flagstones are marked with fossilised ripple marks formed by waves moving the sands and silts on the ancient sea floor.

A particularly unusual fossil was found in 2013 on a Liscannor Stone paving slab. It has eight nodes, which indicates 8-fold symmetry, something seen in jellyfish, corals and anemones which are classified as "cnidaria". University College Galway recently identified it as a burrowing anemone. Geologists and researchers have not been able to find another specimen like it anywhere in the world.

### UNESCO Global Geopark

The Burren and Cliffs of Moher region of County Clare was designated a UNESCO Global Geopark in 2011 due to its distinct mix of outstanding geology, ecology, archaeology, history, culture, and community. The Geopark has 12 Geosites – areas like the Cliffs of Moher - that are of particular geological significance. Along with other Geoparks across the world, the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Global Geopark uses its UNESCO designation to raise public awareness of its internationally-significant geological heritage and its preservation ([www.burrengeopark.ie](http://www.burrengeopark.ie)).



## THE STRATEGY / REVITALISED INTERPRETATIVE EXPERIENCE

### Theme 2: Living on the Edge

Visitors will engage with the personal and emotive stories of communities and individuals that have made their mark on the cliffs throughout history.

From the earliest settlers in the Burren, people have been drawn to this ancient landscape to visit and make a living. This people-led narrative, which is underplayed in existing interpretation, is crucial to engaging visitors on an emotional level with the landscape. They need to be able to imagine the people that have walked the cliff-edge across time in order to understand the impact it has had on the lives of the community.

This theme refers to the early history and archaeology of the wider Burren, as well as the vibrant industry and culture within its surrounding communities.

The following stories will support this overarching idea:

#### Early Inhabitants

The cliffs take their name from an ancient caher or stone fort, known as Mothar or Moher, that stood near Hag's Head. No trace of the structure remains today; however, the fort's existence suggests that the cliffs were likely inhabited as early as the Neolithic period. The abundance of stone structures such as wedge tombs and forts across the Burren show that a significant population once inhabited the region. The earliest evidence of humans in the Burren comes from further up the coast at Fanore, where archaeologists have found discarded cooked seashells from the later Mesolithic Period, around 6,000 years ago.

#### Quarrying

Quarrying of Liscannor stone has played an important role in the economy of the local area since the 19th century. Flagstone and slate quarried at the Cliffs of Moher can be seen in the field boundaries, building materials and even along the paths you travel along today. The story goes that the local landowner Cornelius O'Brien won a bet with a neighbour that he could construct a wall "six foot high and one inch thick". This wall is still standing, attesting to the durability of the stone. Marketed as "Shamrock Stone", the industry became so prosperous that a village was built around the Doonagore village where around 500 men were employed. The distinctive textured surface patterns created by the fossil tracks of marine animals continue to make the cliff stones a valued product that offer a beautiful expression of the site's geological heritage.

#### Tourism

The Cliffs of Moher was already on the tourist trail from the end of the 16th to early 19th centuries, when young nobles would visit during their grand tours of Europe. Local landlord and MP Cornelius O'Brien really put the cliffs on the map when he built the first visitor centre in the 1830s. Described as "an ornamental building in the castellated style", O'Brien's Tower provided a safe platform with spectacular views of nearly the whole line of coast. He also installed a stables and iron picnic table and even provided a piper to entertain visitors, thereby starting the tradition of busking at the cliffs which continues to this day. In the late 1950s, Denis "Dinny" McMahon became a well-loved part of the visitor attraction. He sold postcards, played the tin whistle and charmed visitors with stories of local gods and goddesses, and the habits of the birds that flew around him daily.

Tourism is still critical to the wellbeing and preservation of the cliffs, Geopark and the wider County Clare. The Geopark is working with tourism businesses to create a sustainable model of tourism within the region.



#### Making a Living where Sea Meets Land

For thousands of years local people have thrived along this wind and rain-swept coast by harvesting from the cliffs, shore, sea and pastures. Fisherman used a traditional sea craft known as a currach to catch cod, ling, sole, plaice, haddock, mackerel, herring and hake. On shore, many varieties of seaweed were collected to use as a fertiliser or for food and drink. Bird catching and egg gathering on the cliffs was a common practice until World War II. Farming is widespread across the Burren and, despite the challenging coastal conditions, the fields and livestock around the cliffs continue to be the source of unique and lovingly crafted artisan products.

### Theme 3: Haven

Visitors are connected to the designated natural heritage of the site, demonstrating how the distinct topography of the landscape provides the perfect haven for a world-renowned seabird colony.

This theme focuses on the significance of the cliffs as a fragile habitat that supports a spectacular diversity of wildlife within a Special Protected Area (SPA). Visitors will be able to identify specific species and understand the importance of ecological conservation on the site. In doing so it connects strongly to the natural heritage of the whole region and the conservation element has the potential to address climate change and human impact issues throughout the Geopark landscape and beyond.

The following stories will support this overarching idea:

#### Bird Colonies

The horizontally-layered flagstones of the cliff face provide ideal nesting ledges for seabirds. Every year they welcome over 20,000 breeding pairs, including guillemots, razorbills, kittiwakes, peregrine falcons, puffins and choughs. At 1,365 individual adults, the cliffs are home to the largest mainland colony of puffins, the majority of which can be seen at Goat Island. Most sea birds come in the spring to breed and are rarely seen near the shore for the remainder of the year. The guillemot lays its egg directly onto the ledge and despite the perilous position its hatched chicks rarely fall. Great black-backed gulls patrol the cliffs for a chance encounter with an unguarded egg or chick and kestrels hover over the clifftops in search of field mice and large insects.

Further inland, four pairs of Chough birds can be seen feeding on the short grass at the clifftop. Stonechat and many other common breeding birds are spotted on the bushes and slate stone walls. A wetlands area will be re-established as part of the landscape strategy, providing valuable habitats for waterfowl, mallards and moorhens.

#### Fascinating Flora

The sheer cliffs are largely unvegetated, though some wide slopes support fescue sward and the more scarce roseroot. Typical maritime vegetation that can be seen on the clifftop are thrift, sea campion, buck's-horn plantain, and rock samphire. The wider landscape will be rewilded as part of the masterplan, allowing dry-humid grasslands to flourish with high floristic diversity and attracting ground nesting birds and mammals. Heathland will develop in shallower soils and scrubs in sheltered areas.

The unique coastal plants at the cliffs represent a tiny proportion of the world-renowned flora that can be seen across the wider Burren. The Geopark is home to almost three quarters of the total flora of 1400 plant species found in the whole of Ireland.

#### Beneath the Waves

Depending on the season, seals, basking sharks, dolphins and whales have been seen in the waters beneath cliffs. Hag's Head is a popular spot for whale watching.

#### Protecting the Cliffs

Teams at the Cliffs of Moher and within the wider Geopark are addressing challenges relating to landscape protection and the interconnectivity of biodiversity and climate change. The acceleration of coastal erosion and impact of tourism means that a careful balance must be struck between sustainability and conservation, ensuring that the cliffs can remain a haven for both wildlife and visitors for generations to come. Future conservation priorities for the site include the sustainable management of bird habitats and the collection of bird count data for ongoing analysis.



## THE STRATEGY / REVITALISED INTERPRETATIVE EXPERIENCE

### Theme 4: Wild Atlantic

This theme focuses on the cliffs and crashing waves as an awe-inspiring and occasionally fear-inducing spectacle that has attracted visitors for generations.

The Cliffs of Moher have been shaped and influenced by the wild Atlantic - it is impossible to consider one without the other. The towering waves have proved to be a big draw for surfers as well as a treacherous foe, as experienced by the Spanish Armada in the 16th century.

The theme conveys the sheer power and uncontrollable force of the Atlantic Ocean along Ireland's west coast, connecting strongly to the thrilling and visceral experience of travelling the Wild Atlantic Way.

The following stories will support this overarching idea:

#### Shaped by the Atlantic

Many of the most famous features of the cliffs have been carved out of the rocks by the forces of the Atlantic. The great sea stack below O'Brien's Tower stands 67 metres high. Its name, An Branán Mór, has a literal translation as the Big Prince or the Big Raven or Rook, probably due to its resemblance to a large chess piece when viewed from the sea. The column of rock was once part of the cliffs but coastal erosion slowly removed the layers of rock joining it to the mainland. Further west, a number of sea caves have formed at the foot of the cliffs. One of these featured famously in the 2009 film 'Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince'. A large sea arch can also be seen at Hag's Head below the Napoleonic signal tower and multiple smaller sea arches can be seen from sea level.

#### Giant Waves

Known to ancient inhabitants as Aill na Searrach (Foals' Leap), Aileen's wave has been linked to the story of seven Celtic gods who were transformed into seven foals and leapt into the afterlife, furious at St Patrick for bringing Christianity to Ireland. Rarely spotted, the wave has remained enigmatic and sought after by some of the world's best surfers. The combination of energy from the storm swells rushing in on the warm Gulf stream and the pull of the tide is what gives Aileen her awesome height and steepness.

#### Spanish Armada

The same ocean forces would prove to be fateful for the Spanish Armada following their defeat at the sea battle of Gravelines in northern France. The Armada fleet planned to return to Spain by sailing north around Scotland before turning south down Ireland's west coast. Boetius Clancy, High Sheriff of Clare, looked out in concern from the Cliffs of Moher on 16th September 1588 as two large ships lurked off the Aran Islands. Two galleon ships were wrecked in terrible gale conditions, resulting in the loss of over 450 lives.



### Theme 5: Legends of the Cliffs

Through the legends and myths associated with the cliffs, visitors are brought closer to the rich oral and musical traditions of the region, specifically nearby Doolin.

The Cliffs of Moher have inspired many stories and myths throughout their history, many related to the physical features of this legendary landscape. This theme shines a light on the legends themselves, along with the special ability of local musicians and storytellers to capture the essence and atmosphere of the cliffs and wider west coast.

This theme intends to capture imaginations and drive visits to nearby towns such as Doolin, Lisdoonvarna, Kilfenora, Miltown Malbay, New Quay and Kinvara, where they can experience the best of the area's authentic music and storytelling scene.

The following stories will support this overarching idea.

#### Myths of the Cliffs

The number of myths linked to the cliffs demonstrates the long-standing fascination with the awe-inspiring landscape and offers fantastical origin stories for some of its key features. The Legend of the Hag and Cú Chulainn tells the story of a witch that falls in love with a mythological hero and in her chase crashes into Hag's Head, which is said to take the shape of her profile. The Irish saint Macreehy features in The Corpse-Eating Eel. Two stones of the cliffs that are only visible during low tide are said to mark his bed. The Leap of the Foals relates to the spread of Christianity in Ireland and explains the name of Aill Na Searrach, or the Cliff of the Foals. In The Lost City of Kilstiffen, legend has it that a city lies underneath the waves and rises every seven years. The keys to the city are supposed to be hidden in a little island off the cliffs.

#### Storytelling

The distinct music and storytelling traditions of Clare have drawn a number of renowned collectors to the area, seeking to record and preserve material for future generations. Seamus Delargy, a young founding member of the Folklore of Ireland Society, travelled to Doolin in 1929 to collect Irish language folktales on an Ediphone machine.

Delargy was amazed by the storytellers' extraordinary memory for detail and their ability to impress their personality on a story through gestures and mood, weaving their creativity and the folktales together to provide a performance. The audience would be active participants, reacting through comments of approval or criticism.

#### The Home of Traditional Irish Music

There is a long tradition of busking at the Cliffs of Moher and nearby Doolin in particular is considered to be the home of traditional Irish music. The music played at the cliffs is said to reflect the distinct rolling landscape, as well as the rough seas and soaring coastline of the cliffs. According to local tradition-bearers, the popular instruments of the early 1900s were concertinas, flutes and whistles, mouth organs and Jew's harps.

The cliffs lend their name to a traditional Irish jig and many musicians from the area continue to produce music that is inspired by unique features of the cliffs landscape. The diversity of traditional music in the region is celebrated at events such as the Corofin Traditional Festival, Doolin Folk Festival, Willie Clancy Summer School in Miltown Malbay and the Feakle Traditional Music Festival.



# THE STRATEGY / REVITALISED INTERPRETATIVE EXPERIENCE

## Interpretative Hierarchy

A carefully paced sequence of immersive, informative and participative experiences will make up the re-imagined interpretative offer for the Cliffs of Moher.

### ATTRACT

Introduce visitors and raise anticipation for the Cliffs of Moher Experience

### ORIENTATE

Help visitors to plan their visit and familiarise themselves with the site's various offers

### ENGAGE

Immerse visitors in the core narrative themes, messaging and related storylines

### DISCOVER

Encourage visitors to discover more through interaction and exploration

### ADVENTURE

Visceral and multi-sensory experiences that connect to the wildness of the setting



## THE STRATEGY / REVITALISED INTERPRETATIVE EXPERIENCE

### Journey to the Edge

Passengers on the shuttle between the park and ride hubs and the Cliffs of Moher will have an exciting and interactive start to their journey through onboard interpretation.

The shuttle experience will become an immersive event in its own right, generating a strong sense of anticipation and arrival as visitors approach the cliffs. Focused interpretation should prepare visitors for the wildlife and landscape features they can look for at the cliffs, wherever possible referring to scenery along the way.

Aligning with Fáilte Ireland's strategy to prioritise first-person interpretation by local people, live interpreters can provide a strong personalised welcome and deliver theatrical storytelling recounting myths and legends associated with the cliffs.

Digital content can be layered over the scenery outside through large window projection screens, providing an opportunity for initial orientation and atmospheric visualisations that build excitement about what visitors can see and do when they arrive.

New virtual reality-based technologies can deliver an awe-inspiring and exhilarating virtual experience of the cliffs. This approach would need to be balanced with the risk of isolating visitors from the landscape outside and lessening the impact of the actual cliff-edge experience.



### Shuttle Experience Case Study: VR Bus Roma, Italy and The Ride, New York

VR Bus Roma is a 30-minute virtual reality (VR) experience tour of Rome launched in 2022, that enables visitors to imagine the ancient monuments as they would have been seen over 2000 years ago. The experience is delivered on an all-electric bus that runs nine tours a day at €15 a ticket.

The 3D reconstructions are brought to life without the need for a VR headset – they are superimposed on transparent OLED screens fitted within the windows of the bus. Motorised curtains allow you to directly compare the Rome of today with the Rome of the past.

The real movements of the bus are transferred into the reconstruction sequences, enabling onboard passengers to experience the physical sensation of travelling through Rome 2000 years ago.

The Ride delivers an interactive sightseeing tour in New York using floor-to-ceiling glass windows and stadium-style seating with 40 LCD TV screens, 3,000 LED lights and surround sound.

Trained hosts and performers provide live interpretation, while a VR experience at specific locations recreates iconic moments of Downtown New York



# THE STRATEGY / REVITALISED INTERPRETATIVE EXPERIENCE

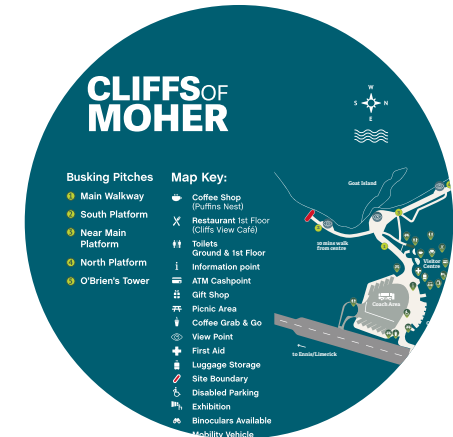
## Interpretation in the Landscape

Interpretation will complement and blend into the landscape, giving visitors the choice to access compelling stories that are relevant to the stunning views and natural environment around them.



### Travel Through Deep Time

A series of graphic and sculptural elements along the first visitor walkway from the bridge to the wetland area will reveal the 300-million-year-long geological formation of the cliffs, beginning with sediments gathering at the mouth of a large river and ending with the great ice ages that carved out the landscape.



### Enhance Iconic Views

Graphics embedded in the safety barriers complement rather than compete with views, highlighting key wildlife and features along the cliff face and into the wider Burren landscape.

Virtual viewfinders and augmented reality accessible on visitor's own devices will animate content onto the landscape in front of them to deliver enhanced immersive experiences.

Sculptural elements can act as intriguing way markers at viewpoints, connecting visitors with the mythology of the cliffs, for example the legends of the corpse-eating eel, the witch of Hag's Head, and the Cliff of Fools.

## Incidental Interpretation Points

Graphic and tactile interpretation will be integrated into pathways to highlight visible features across the landscape, such as the lake and flora and fauna of the rewilded habitats. Robust interactive elements such as fossil rubbing and wind-up or solar powered audio can add to the sense of discovery and adventure.

Strategically located first-person interpretation can provide surprising moments of personalised storytelling relating to cultural traditions and human interest narratives, such as the quarrying industry.

## Site-Wide Wayfinding

A colour-coded network of signposted routes along and around the cliffs will deliver themed narratives based on audience interests and learning objectives, including birdwatching and geological features.

Robust signage materials will reflect and reinforce the cliff's heritage assets, including the landscape topography and fossil trails. Integrated digital signage can deliver updatable visitor information such as weather and safety warnings.

## Interactive App

There is significant scope for enhancing visitors' experiences of adventure and discovery across the landscape through a mobile app, particularly for families. Identification and treasure hunt features can encourage visitors to search for natural features or location specific geocaches hidden in the landscape.

Augmented reality (AR) and mixed reality (MR) applications can reveal the geology under your feet and encourage interaction without distracting visitors from immersion in the environment. The app can also have a secondary role as an orientation and what's on guide, providing a map with real-time GPS locations and notifications about events, activities and safety warnings during the day.

Although difficult to implement in daylight conditions, this technology is likely to continue to evolve and become more commonplace on a range of mobile devices and wearable technology.

## Interpretation Hub

A simplified internal arrangement within the existing visitor centre provides opportunities for a sequence of striking multi-sensory exhibition displays and participatory engagement activities.

### Immersive Experience

The curved walls and domed ceiling of the interpretation hub will be used as the surface for a panoramic audio-visual presentation that is visible in the round. Based on the evocative concept of time and change at the cliffs, this immersive and emotional engaging film will use the existing double height space to provide a linking experience between the two levels of the hub.

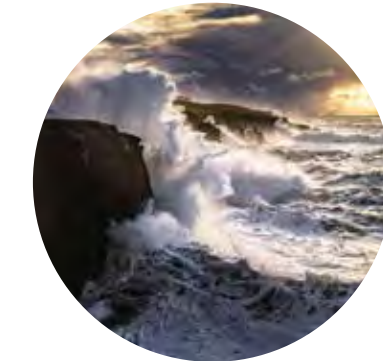
For visitors just arriving at the Cliffs of Moher, this will act as an exciting trailer for the features and activities that they can discover outside. For those having experienced the cliff-edge, this provides a powerful conclusion that adds context and emotion to the stunning views they have witnessed.



The connection between people and the cliffs continues to evolve



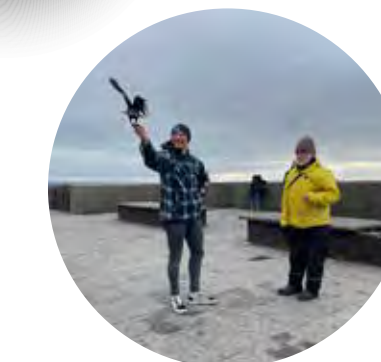
Seasonal changes attract a diverse array of wildlife throughout the year



The force of the Atlantic Ocean constantly reshapes the cliff-edge



Geological formation of the cliffs occurred over millions of years



Fantastical ancient legends of the cliffs are passed down through generations

# THE STRATEGY / REVITALISED INTERPRETATIVE EXPERIENCE

## Stories Set in Stone Permanent Exhibition

The lower level will host an enlarged and enhanced exhibition space with expandable thematic display islands. This "Stories Set in Stone" experience will offer layered interactive and multimedia content that supports and expands on the narratives explored in the immersive show.

## READING THE LANDSCAPE

Interactives exploring rock layers and fossil trails as signifiers of deep time, and links to geology of the wider Geopark.

## STORIES SET IN STONE

A central rock ledge sculpture provides a striking multisensory centrepiece and navigational tool to explore surrounding thematically-arranged displays.

## LIVING ON THE EDGE

People-led storytelling combined with artefact displays focus on the communities that make a living off the cliffs.

## LEGENDS OF THE CLIFFS

Evocative origin stories of the cliffs are recounted in traditional folktale style.

## WILD ATLANTIC

Immersive films and soundscapes evoke the thrill and immense force of towering waves at the cliffs.

## HAVEN

Bird species and their synergy with cliff habitats are introduced through interactive digital media and potentially taxidermised specimens.



## Learning and Engagement Facilities

Flexible classroom spaces will provide a base for dynamic indoor and outdoor learning sessions that target primary and secondary schools, and community groups. These can utilise immersive storytelling and investigative learning techniques led by a team of "ranger" education professionals. The core school offer will consist of a self-led tour of the indoor interpretative experience combined with a range of bookable ranger-led workshops and tours linked to the Irish curriculum, specifically Social, Environmental and Scientific Education subjects.

Indoor workshops will take place in a new suite of visitor centre classroom facilities, which have easy access to the cliff landscape, while outdoor tours and learning activities will maximise the expanded, rewilded environment. The school offer is able to focus on the geological and natural history and wildlife of the cliffs and wider Burren through activities like interactive field work conservation, archaeology, environmental art, orienteering and wildlife identification. More creative sessions can explore the storytelling and musical traditions of the local area.

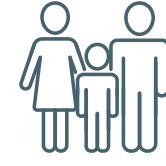
Improved indoor facilities can provide the catalyst to expand the volunteering programme and deliver a series of targeted projects that engage local communities and under-represented groups in outdoor conservation, monitoring and planting. These opportunities can be aligned with regional community archaeology and citizen science initiatives, delivered in partnership with the wider Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark.



## Temporary Exhibitions

A dedicated rotating exhibition space can provide a different offer every year, driving repeat visits and delivering fresh topical content. Exhibition themes can focus on current issues such as climate change and the mitigation of its impacts at the cliffs. Displays can also focus on contemporary art displays and installations that offer surprising and multisensory responses to the cliffs and the wider Burren landscape.

# THE STRATEGY / VISITOR JOURNEY SCENARIOS



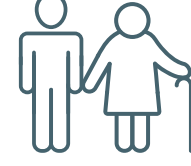
## Young Family Arrives by Car to Remote Car Park:

- Pleasant weather conditions
- 5-10 min negotiating car park
- 10 min wait for shuttle
- 12 min transit time
- 10 min negotiating reception building
- (visitors pass through)
- 15 min to cantilever
- (visitors feel they have arrived and orientate themselves)
- 1.5 hours exploring
- (possibly including 20 mins at the interpretation hub)
- 15 min back to reception
- 45 min retail and snack
- 10 min wait for shuttle
- 12 min transit time
- 10 min negotiating car park



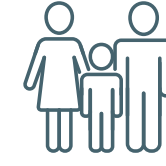
## Three Explorer Friends Arrive by Car to Remote Car Park:

- Pleasant weather conditions
- 5-10 min negotiating car park
- 10 min wait for shuttle
- 12 min transit time
- 10 min negotiating reception building
- (visitors pass through)
- 15 min to cantilever
- (visitors feel they have arrived and orientate themselves)
- 30 min at the hub for coffee
- 2.5 hours exploring all pathways
- 15 min back to reception
- 60 min retail and meal
- 10 min wait for shuttle
- 12 min transit time
- 5 10 min negotiating car park



## Elderly Couple Arrives by Car to Remote Car Park:

- (Mediocre weather conditions)
- 5-10 min negotiating car park
- 10 min wait for shuttle
- 12 min transit time
- 25 min negotiating reception building
- (visitors have coffee)
- 15 mins at interpretation hub
- (visitors feel they have arrived and orientate themselves)
- 30 mins loop of skywalk
- 15 min back to reception
- 45 mins retail and snack
- 10 min wait for shuttle
- 12 min transit time
- 5-10 min negotiating car park



## Young Family Arrives by Car to Onsite Car Park:

- Poor weather conditions
- 5-10 min negotiating car park
- 35 min negotiating reception building
- (visitors looking for gap in the weather)
- 10 min to interpretation hub
- (visitors feel they have arrived and orientate themselves)
- 30 mins loop of skywalk
- 15 min back to reception
- 45 mins retail and snack
- 10 min wait for shuttle
- 12 min transit time
- 5-10 min negotiating car park



## Three Explorer Friends Arrive by Car to Onsite Car Park:

- Pleasant weather conditions
- 5-10 min negotiating car park
- 10 min negotiating reception building
- (visitors pass through)
- 15 mins to cantilever
- (visitors feel they have arrived and orientate themselves)
- 30 mins at the hub for coffee
- 2 hours exploring all pathways
- 15 min back to reception
- 45 mins retail and meal
- 5-10 min negotiating car park



## Elderly Couple Arrives by Car to Onsite Car Park:

- Mediocre weather conditions
- 5-10 min negotiating car park
- 25 min negotiating reception building
- (visitors have coffee)
- 15 mins to interpretation hub
- (visitors feel they have arrived and orientate themselves)
- 30 mins loop of skywalk
- 15 min back to reception.
- 25 mins retail and snack
- 5-10 min negotiating car park



# THE STRATEGY / INSPIRE MORE VISITORS

The marketing strategy focuses on championing the personality of the Cliffs of Moher and translating its essence into a coherent and recognizable visual language that will promote it as a whole.



## Existing Brand

The Cliffs of Moher is a world-recognised brand that has evolved over nearly 200 years. The story began in 1835 when local parliamentarian Cornelius O'Brien brought lords and ladies to his tower to amuse and enthrall. In the 1950s Dinny McMahon, a self-appointed guide, saw the opportunity in tourism as he entertained American visitors at the cliffs. The Cliffs of Moher welcomed 1.6 million visitors in 2019, demonstrating the power of its draw.

It is a signature discovery point on the Wild Atlantic Way, a Special Protection Area for Birds and Wildlife, an important geosite in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark, and a must-see attraction for visitors coming to Ireland.

## Capitalising on this unique brand, we will seek to:

1. Increase visitation to the Cliffs of Moher during the shoulder season, thereby extending the season.
2. Drive consideration for other activities and attractions in County Clare and encourage exploration of the region.
3. Convert one-time visitors into repeat visitors.
4. Grow the year-round appeal of the Cliffs of Moher domestically and internationally, ensuring that it attracts and disperses high-value visitors into and throughout the region.



## Core Objective 1: Deliver High Quality Experiences

The visitor experience at the Cliffs of Moher will be greatly improved, enhancing the visitor attraction's market position while conserving its beautifully rugged and ecologically-rich habitats. Visitors will have a "wilder" back-to-nature encounter with the landscape, enhanced through new thrilling cliff views, layered interpretation, and a high-quality arrival. Visitors will have the opportunity in this new enhanced space to enjoy uninterrupted spectacular views, and immerse themselves in nature and wildness. Visitors will travel far to reconnect with families and friends, creating memories that will last a lifetime.

### Initiatives

1. Continually gather insights from buyers in order to inform the development of saleable visitor experiences and value-added packages.
2. Understand the consumer segments and target markets to deliver sustainable growth of the destination, while identifying clear priorities and alignment around new experiences to be created.
3. Create new itineraries from Shannon International Airport, car rentals, hotels and other attractions that will inspire wider exploration and encourage longer dwell times in the region.
4. Monitor and audit experiences to align with market demand and work with buyers to identify products suitable to grow international visitor numbers.
5. Continuously monitor global tourism and destination trends, visitor sentiment, and international consumer research to build on emerging opportunities.

## Core Objective 2: Capitalise on Digital Innovation

### Initiatives

1. Invest in digital marketing spend to ensure the Cliffs of Moher is ranked high in return search.
2. Understand the path to purchase to ensure visitors are converting.
3. New and improved booking engine to yield high conversions with dynamic pricing to ensure distribution of visitors throughout the day.
5. Use digital assets to connect to the visitor pre-visit, to inform, educate and upsell.
6. Develop an e-commerce function, capitalising on the brand recognition.
7. Seamlessly integrate digital media into the visitor experience where it can deliver content in surprising and immersive ways, while supporting excellent orientation and customer services.
8. Virtual reality based technologies will deliver an awe-inspiring and exhilarating virtual experience of the cliffs.
9. Enhanced digital capability will result in onsite and off-site visitor research and provide new opportunities for differentiated approaches in marketing and promotion.

# THE STRATEGY / INSPIRE MORE VISITORS

## Core Objective 3: Increase Visitor Dispersion and Season Extension Across the Region

### Initiatives

1. Greater cooperation, coordination and communication between the Cliffs of Moher, local businesses and residents to spread the economic benefits from visitors to the wider community.
2. Flexible classroom spaces will provide a base for dynamic indoor and outdoor learning sessions that target primary and secondary schools, and community groups.
3. Improved indoor facilities can provide the catalyst to expand the volunteering programme, and deliver a series of targeted projects that engage local communities and under-represented groups in outdoor conservation, monitoring and planting.
4. Highlight the culture and heritage of the wider Burren and County Clare landscape via onsite interpretation, providing a platform to capture interest in visitor experiences across the wider region.
5. Strengthen partnerships to develop new joint marketing campaigns and regionwide visitor packages to help develop infrastructure and services in local towns and villages, promoting all there is to uncover in the county.
6. Enhance partnerships and achieve greater coordination between the Cliffs of Moher and local businesses and communities. A unified landscape with interconnected experiences will be offered, engaging visitors and the local community with a wider sense of place that incorporates the Cliffs of Moher, Burren and surrounding towns and villages.

7. Attract more luxury visitors from core markets with the aim of retaining higher-spending and longer-staying visitors within the region.
8. Attract adventure and slow tourism markets on a year-round basis, including food lovers, walkers and cyclists, working in partnership with stakeholders such as Burren GEOfood.
9. Continue to work with accommodation providers and the Shannon Region Conference Sports Bureau to increase high-yield business visitors across the association conference, incentive and corporate meeting segment.
10. Deliver packaging offers, joint ticket initiatives within Clare County and a calendar of events for the year, including peak, shoulder and off-season events and offers.
11. Establish collaborative partnerships and public relations with online influencers, tour operators and travel media in the region.
12. Continue to attract best-prospect consumers to fill midweek and weekend business across the full calendar year.
13. Work with the community to give visitors easy access to meet with local people, hear stories, interact with nature and encounter the cultural heritage of the area.

## Core Objective 4: Deliver on New Domestic and International Segmentation Models

The marketing strategy is guided by the Cliffs of Moher and Fáilte Ireland domestic visitor segmentation model, which provides clear insights into consumer motivations for travel through continuous visitor research. Similarly, the strategy is informed by Tourism Ireland's global segmentation model and will respond to any future iterations. This will provide new opportunities for differentiated approaches in the marketing and promotion of the Cliffs of Moher Experience.

75% of all visitors coming to the Cliffs of Moher are international, with 40% being from the USA market. Opportunities exist to grow and expand the domestic market and other international audiences.

### Domestic visitors

Fáilte Ireland's new Motivations Segmentation for the domestic market has unlocked insights that have allowed the region to identify priority segments for targeting and development. Research has shown that motivation is by far the most important driver for taking a trip. Half as important is what visitors want to do on the trip, followed by when they want to travel, and finally, the demographics of the travelling party.

Definitions of personal motivations for domestic markets are as follows:

- **Social Energy:** to enjoy the atmosphere, vibrancy and energy of a place.
- **Time Out:** to escape everyday life and de-stress.
- **Adventure:** to push yourself and do things out of your comfort zone, mainly in the outdoors.
- **Reconnection:** to relax and do very little, mainly with people or friends closest to you.
- **Exploration:** to explore the new and unfamiliar in an area, including culture.
- **Bonding:** to nurture relationships with family and those closest to me.
- **Celebration:** to celebrate a special occasion.

### International visitors

Definitions of personal motivations for international markets are as follows:

- **North America:** American holidaymakers like lots of variety in their holiday itinerary and prefer "bite-sized" experiences so they can explore a wide range of experiences. Iconic historic attractions differentiate Ireland and are an important driver for travel. Activity is generally of an easy nature as they explore and engage within the landscape and historical sites.
- **Germany:** The dramatic coastal scenery at the Cliffs of Moher is a Unique Selling Point for the German market. They are more likely to consume the landscape in an active way, and soaking up the atmosphere of the authentic local culture is also important.
- **France:** French holidaymakers enjoy wandering off the beaten track, away from perceived visitor hotspots, as a means to explore unspoilt landscapes. French visitors are attracted to authenticity and local experiences.
- **Great Britain:** The British market mirrors much of the behaviour of the Irish domestic market in their attraction to bundled holiday-type experiences with lots to see and do to. British people want to experience a different culture that they cannot get at home. Easy walking is their favoured way to explore both urban and rural settings, along with leisurely activities on or near water such as coastal hikes and boat trips.

# THE STRATEGY / INSPIRE MORE VISITORS

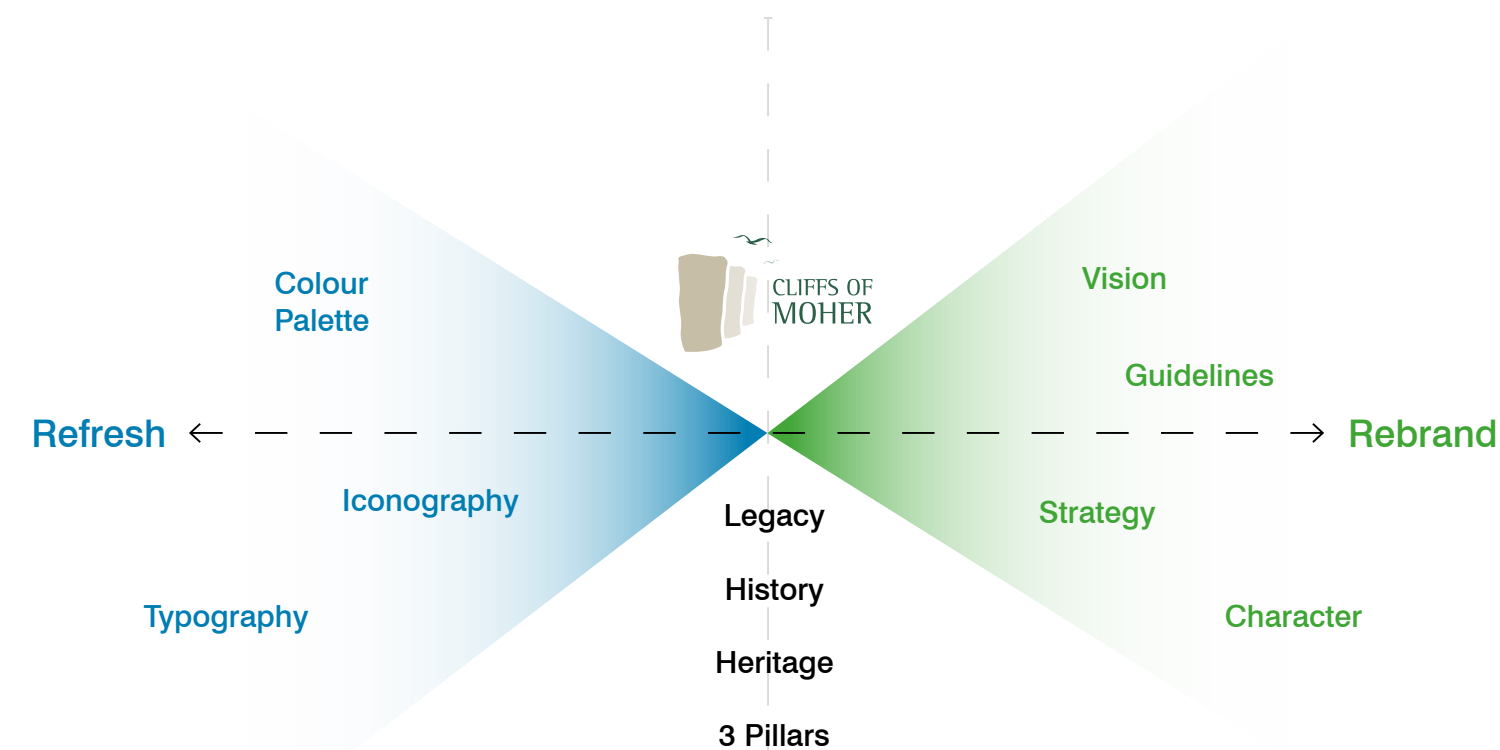
## New Brand Identity

The development of the Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy has provided the ideal opportunity to review and update the Cliffs of Moher brand and consider how it functions within the wider strategy for promoting the destination.

As part of an independent commission to the 2040 strategy, a new study was undertaken to refresh and refine the Cliffs of Moher logo and brand guidelines. These have been developed to focus on the unique, inspiring, mystical and wild aspects of the new visitor experience, with an emphasis on promoting and marketing the cliffs as a sustainable tourist destination.

The new guidelines will inform the Cliffs of Moher communications and presentation of information, interpretation, retail and signage to the visitor, both online and onsite. The message that the Cliffs of Moher, along with the nature and wildlife surrounding the site, must be appreciated in person can be clearly expressed through a dynamic identity system that can evolve with the future requirements of the site.

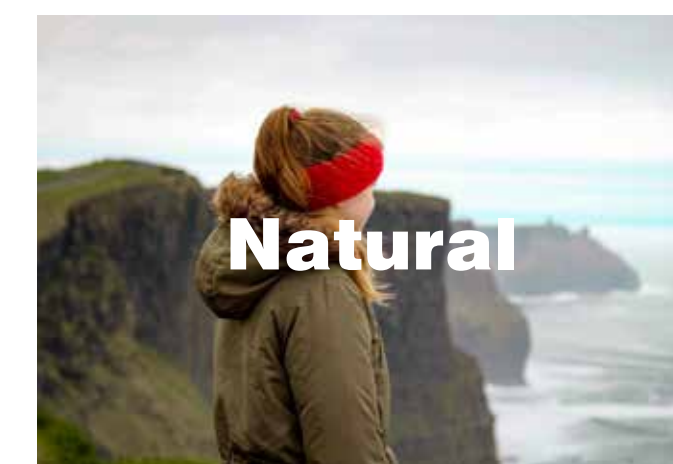
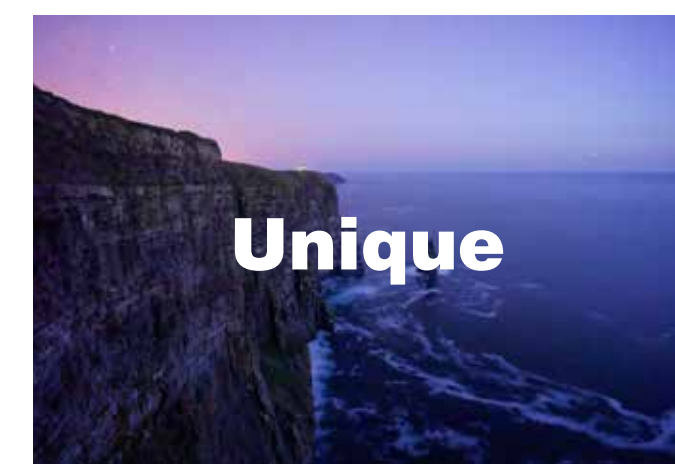
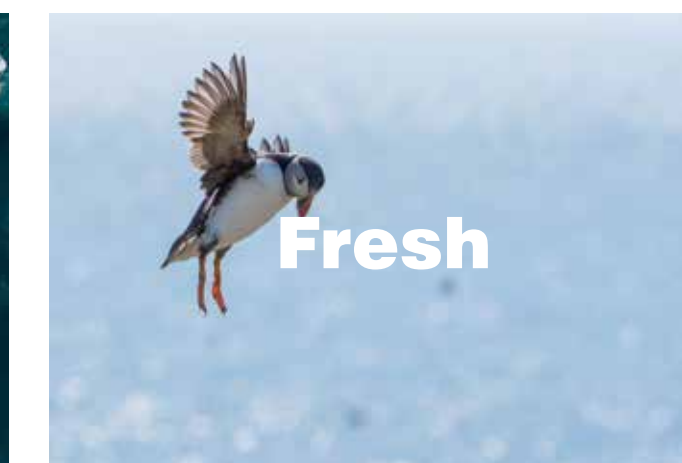
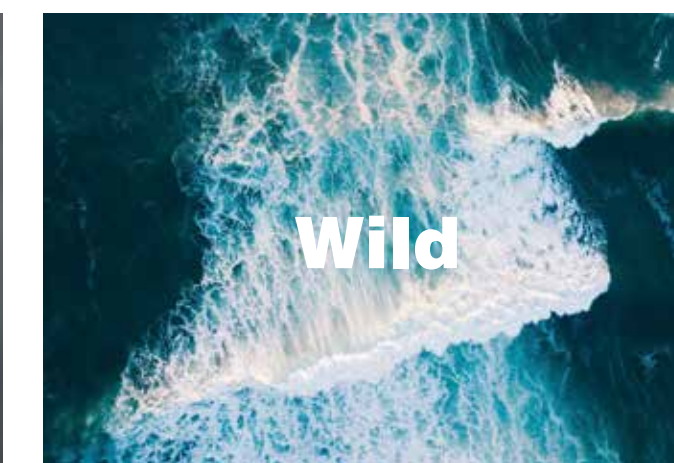
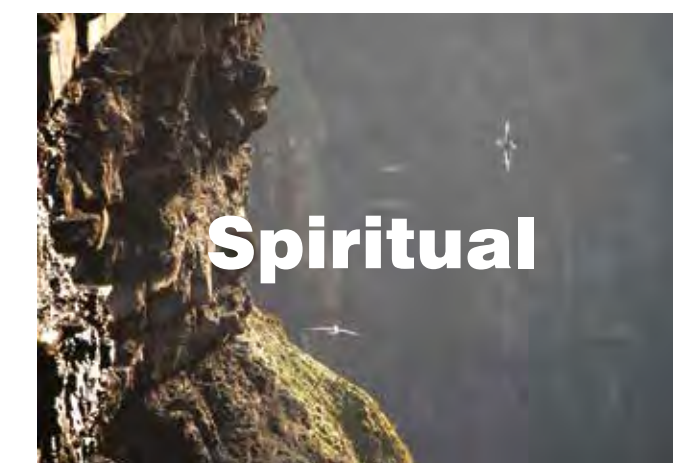
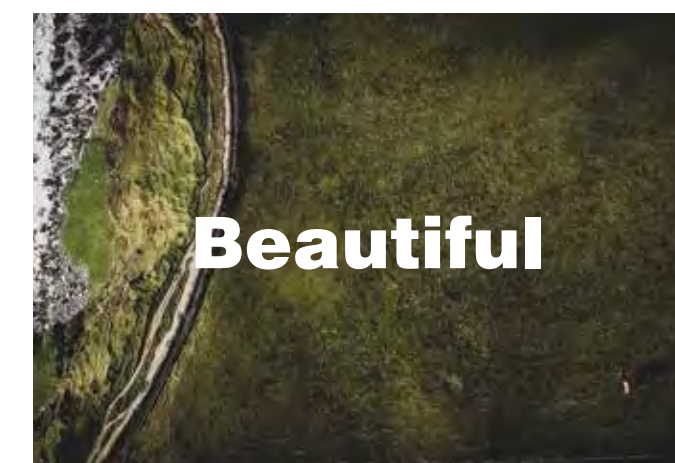
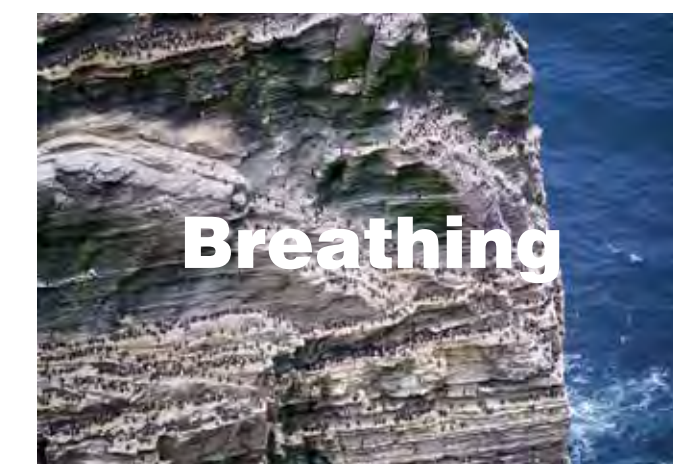
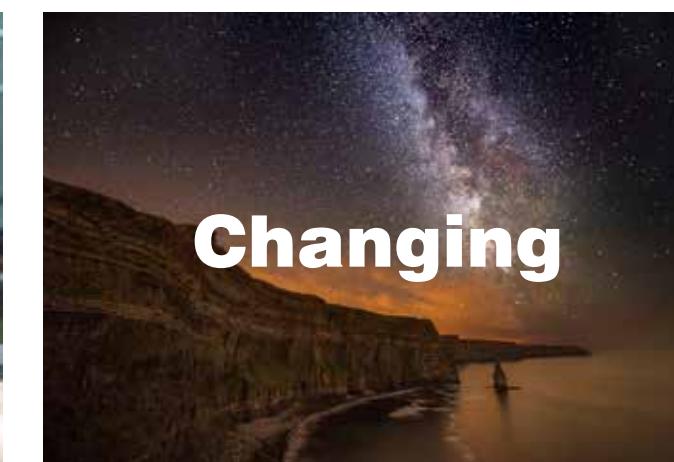
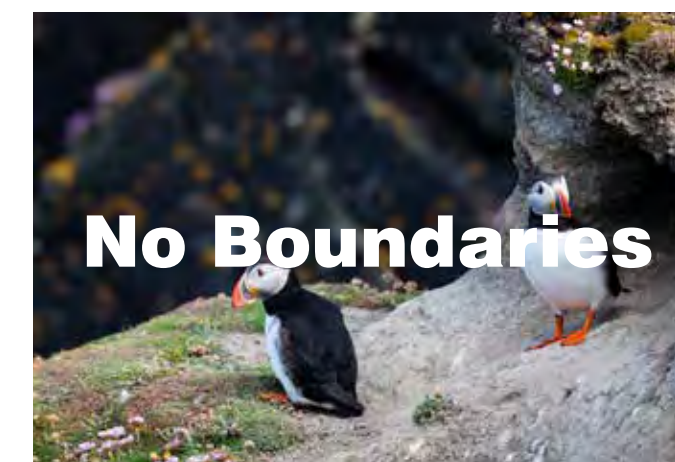
The strong brand strategy can be implemented across various inputs, including signage and wayfinding, social media and traditional marketing materials such as brochures, flyers and gift shop merchandise. Examples from the brand strategy process and guidelines, which will be incorporated into the revitalised site experience, are included here for reference.



## CORE BRAND LOGO



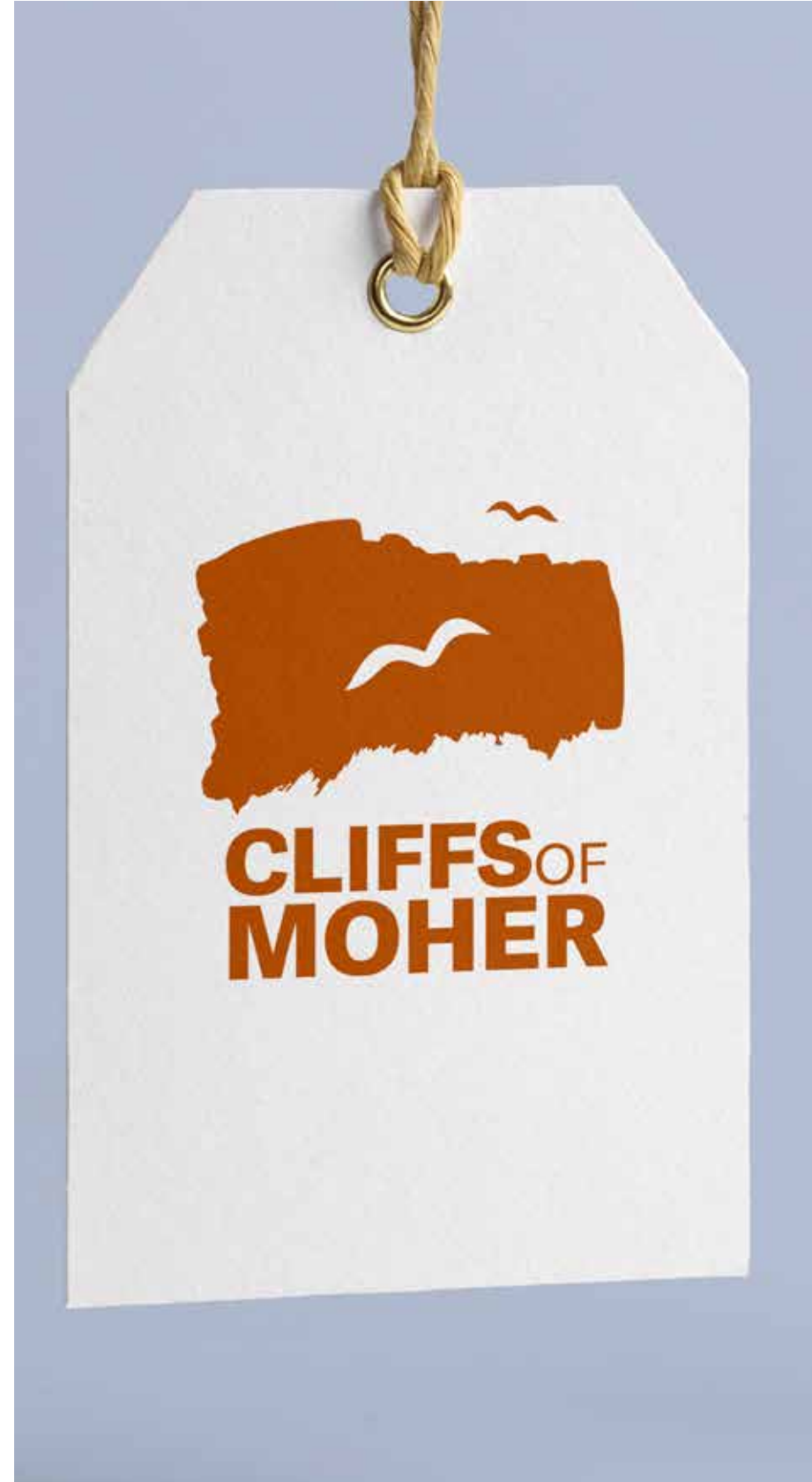
## SECONDARY LOGOS



THE STRATEGY / INSPIRE MORE VISITORS



CRAFTED BY THE  
ATLANTIC

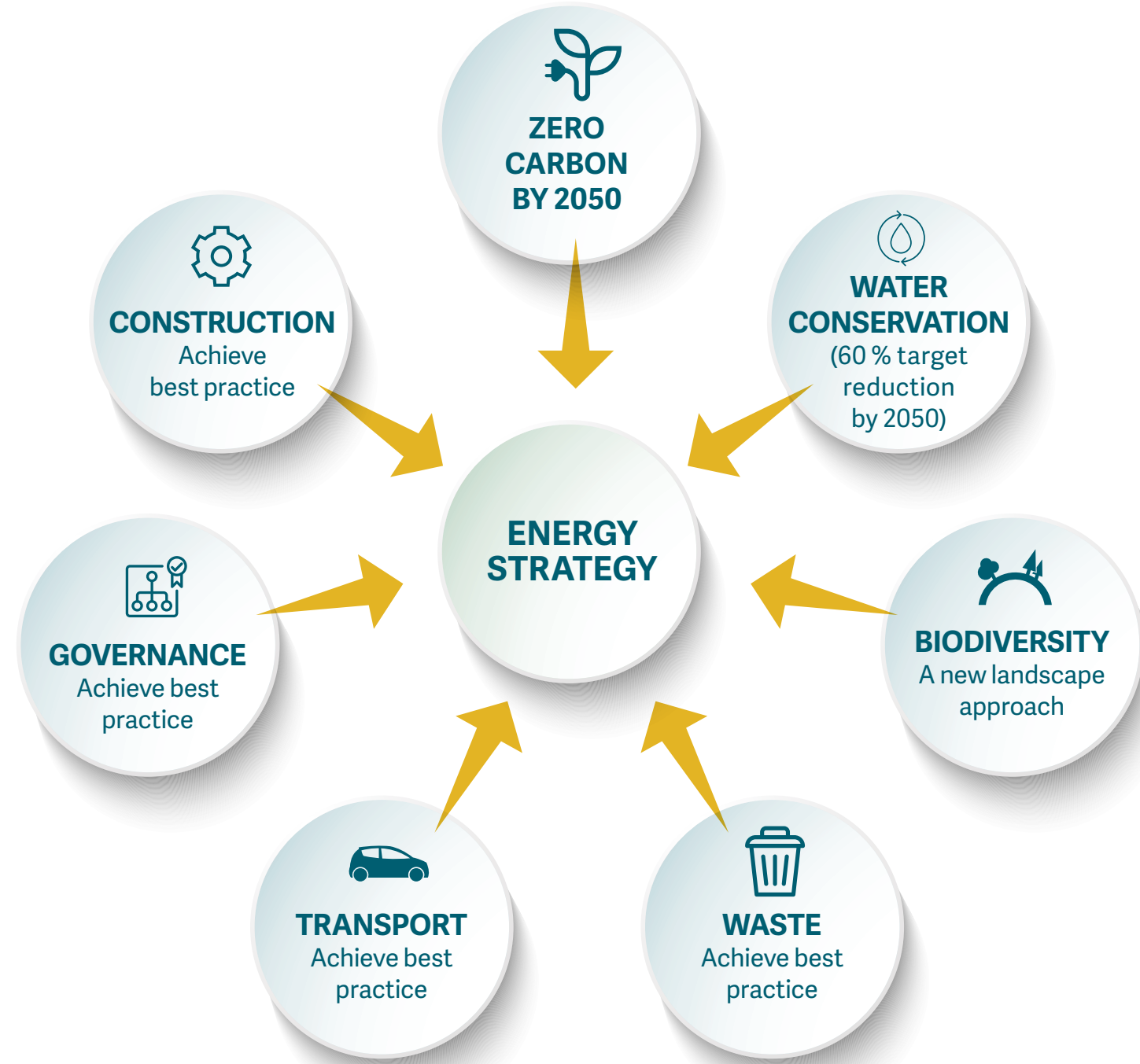


# THE STRATEGY / SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A series of sustainability workshops held in 2021 with the principal stakeholders, Clare County Council and the masterplan design team identified a range of primary sustainability themes for the Cliffs of Moher.

The sustainability strategy has been developed in response to the 2050 Climate Action Strategy. The Cliffs of Moher Experience needs to be significantly more energy efficient to align with the EU goal to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 80–95% in time for 2050. About two thirds of its energy should come from renewable sources and electricity production needs to be almost emission-free, despite higher demand.

The Cliffs of Moher can lead the way by investing in realistic technological solutions that focus on energy use, carbon and climate change, water conservation, waste, biodiversity, transport, construction, health and wellbeing, sustainability education, community relations, education and governance.



## Energy, Carbon and Climate Change

The sustainable tourism strategy aims to reduce the demand on primary energy consumption onsite through implementing good passive design techniques, including natural ventilation, air tightness principles and utilising exposed thermal mass to regulate the temperature of the built infrastructure. Developments will aim to deliver Net Zero Energy, including the target of 100% renewable energy consumption.

The buildings proposed onsite shall seek to reduce energy requirements by optimising design elements of the building, such as insulation values, air tightness, building orientations, solar shading and solar control glass. The focus on minimising primary energy demand should align with the Passivhaus design model, ensuring that primary energy demand is minimised throughout the development.

The availability of renewable energy at grid level within the region shall be utilised as a low carbon source for the new site. Technologies such as battery storage and hydrogen generation shall be used to reduce the peak demand from the grid network and allow energy to be stored and utilised when it is available. This will mitigate the visual and ecological impact of incorporating low-carbon energy technologies within the immediate vicinity of the site.



## Water Conservation

Where possible, water consumption shall be minimised to 0.6 M3/per year by 2050. This will be achieved through a combination of measures, including incorporating best practice in Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS), installing greywater systems to BS 85251:2010 or equal and approved, optimising greywater infrastructure in each building, installing rainwater systems to BS 85151:2009 or equal and approved, monitoring water usage against predicted usage, installing leak detection systems where appropriate and including water efficient solutions at a high level for process requirements where necessary.

## Waste

Best practice in waste management will be achieved. Stakeholders will adopt a waste management plan that is consistent with Clare County Council owned infrastructure and consider processing a portion of generated waste onsite. Appropriate recycling bins and recycling facilities external to the buildings will be provided. Reuse of materials on site will be considered where appropriate.

## Biodiversity

Best practice will be achieved through selection of suitable species for landscaping, retaining existing flora and fauna that are consistent with the existing habitat, conducting regular ecological and biodiversity surveys, and adopting landscaping maintenance regimes designed to encourage biodiversity.



## Transport

The Cliffs of Moher will achieve best practice in transport by encouraging and facilitating sustainable transport provision for tourists and locals to create safer, cleaner and more efficient visits to the site and wider destination. This will include proactive schemes to promote cycling, informed by the Clare County Council Mobility Management Plan, delivery of park and ride hubs and shuttle systems, and provision of Electric Vehicle Charging.

## THE STRATEGY / SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### Construction

All construction activities will adhere to the BS 5228 code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites. Consideration will be given to facilitating deconstruction through design measures, including the selection of materials and methods of construction employed. Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) will be investigated, utilising prefabricated elements and offsite manufacture.

A community/local resident liaison officer will be appointed by the contractor and a Construction Waste Management Plan (CWMP) will be prepared.

### Health and Wellbeing

Opportunities for community healthcare on site will be developed, including provision of external views for most building users where practical, measures to promote the use of stairs and promotion of universal access to facilities, informal recreation and activities.

Development will allow for a purge period on completion of buildings prior to occupation, provision of natural ventilation wherever practical, and regular public access to drinking water. The internal and external acoustic properties of the design and the impact on users will be considered and shared use of space and facilities encouraged. Passive surveillance will be integral to all aspects of design.

### Governance and Sustainability

The development will encourage annual monitoring of the sustainability and energy strategy and make the monitoring report publicly available.

### Community Relations

Consultation, engagement and partnerships will be developed with the local community and Stakeholders.

### Sustainability Education

Best practice will be achieved through the sharing of sustainability information via the website and newsletters, stakeholder adoption of measures to encourage sustainable behaviour, and peer-to-peer teaching of sustainability issues via formal training and coordinated outreach activities.

Further support will be provided to departments involved in sustainability research, and collaboration with other campuses will share lessons learned. Sustainable technologies will be visible throughout the site, allowing them to be used as a learning tool, and sustainability messages will be integrated throughout the interpretation scheme.

### Sustainable Building Case Study: Brockholes Nature Reserve, UK

Lancashire Wildlife Trust secured £8 million of funding from the North West Regional Development Agency to construct a visitor centre which closely adheres to best practice principles in sustainability.

The building sits on a floating platform above the water, which brings visitors right up to the wildlife and provides a solution to the site's inherent flood risk, essential given that the site is situated within 127 hectares of mixed wetlands and ancient woodlands.

The environmental strategy included natural ventilation throughout, state-of-the-art insulation and glazing, rigorous draught proofing, grey water use and a biomass boiler. Rainwater runs off the buildings and the pontoon straight into the surrounding lake. In turn, water is pumped from the lake for WC flushing. The heavy-duty air handling plant serves a commercial kitchen and is integrated within the roof architecture.

Translucent windows conceal interstitial filaments that provide solar shading and insulation. The windows utilise bespoke joinery with thermal breaks and the highest specification of double glazing available. This has resulted in a façade of exceptional thermal and daylight performance. Large sections of window also slide open to provide summer ventilation to densely occupied spaces.

The ceiling surface finish is a spray on acoustic absorber designed to reduce reflected sound, producing a comfortable acoustic environment. Steep pitched roofs enclose larger volumes, good for air circulation and extraction, and are clad in oak shakes which otherwise would be burned as waste. Insulation is made from recycled newspapers.



## THE STRATEGY / ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The priority of the wider strategic economic model for the Cliffs of Moher is to encourage visitors to stay longer in the area, especially overnight, spend more and facilitate greater benefits and investment into local towns and villages.

The key to realising enhancing economic benefits for the area in the future will be enhanced partnerships and greater coordination between the Cliffs of Moher Experience and local businesses and communities.

The Cliffs of Moher Experience will continue to respond to visitor aspirations and provide high-quality facilities onsite, ensuring it remains a commercially sustainable tourism attraction into the future and maintains its premier market position. Visitors will have a deeper and more rewarding experience, stay longer, spend more, make more return visits to the area and encourage family, friends and colleagues to visit.

### Diverse New Tourism Products

Opportunities will be created for wider ranging experiences at the Cliffs of Moher and in the wider area that target existing and new audiences. This includes new bespoke visitor packages which target low-volume and high-value visitors for special access and specialist interest experiences, for example opportunities to participate in future conservation activities, adrenaline experiences, targeted family activities, and bird and wildlife watching. Specific experiences for domestic markets and audiences will be considered, focusing specifically on new products and uses during the shoulder and off-peak periods, such as events and conferences.

### Extended Economic Benefits

A unified landscape with interconnected sites and experiences will be offered, engaging visitors and the local community with a wider sense of place that incorporates the Cliffs of Moher, Burren and surrounding towns and villages.

Development and partnership initiatives will encourage greater exploration and redistribution of visitors around County Clare, with greater retention of visitor spend through incentives to stay overnight. A new local supplier showcase approach will feature local produce and products as part of the Cliffs of Moher 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 and a greater understanding of the benefits of the coexistence with tourists.

### Ongoing Monitoring of Economic Impacts

Commitment to the new strategic economic model and the Cliffs of Moher Destination by the local community and wider industries will be critical to its ultimate success.

This involves communicating and enhancing transparency of the economic benefits of the Cliffs of Moher with the local community, demonstrating that surpluses from the Cliffs of Moher operation supports Clare County Council's budget to promote and develop the tourism product in the county.

Ongoing monitoring of the financial and social impacts should be carried out across the county to help demonstrate how the strategy is spreading the benefits more widely throughout the local economy and enhancing the quality of life for residents.



Doolin



Lisdoonvarna



Ennistymon

### Economic Benefits Case Study: The National Forest, UK

When it was established in the early 1990s, the National Forest aimed to create a new, multi-purpose forest for the nation by restoring a 200 square mile woodland area across parts of Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire. Defra grant-in-aid to the National Forest Company (NFC) was £3.51 million in 2010, to proceed until 2041 in line with inflation. Since 2018, the National Forest has been welcoming 8.2 million visitors per year and supporting nearly 5,000 jobs. The total investment between 1991 and 2010 was £89 million. The benefits to the associated region were considered to be approximately £228 million during the same period, broken down into the following outcomes:

- Timber - £1 million
- Recreation - £186 million
- Carbon - £9 million
- Landscape - £4 million
- Biodiversity - £4 million
- Regeneration - £24 million

The area had been previously suffering from economic and environmental decline, but since 1995 the National Forest has trebled the proportion of land with tree cover to 18%, helped to regenerate the local economy, opened the forest to greater public use and improved the natural environment.

The NFC is working to ensure that every community in the forest is within 500 metres of woodland, and every school has access to an outdoor learning space. Since 1995, approximately 250,000 people have participated in forest-related events and over 450,000 children have enjoyed environmental education sessions in the area.

The visitor economy is now worth around £324 million per annum. Over £1 million has been raised from business sponsorship and donations from the public since 2003 and around 170 businesses use the National Forest logo.

By 2030 gross value added across the forest area is expected to reach £5.6 billion, a 60% increase from 2011. The economy is becoming more diversified with secondary manufacturing and a stronger service-led sector.



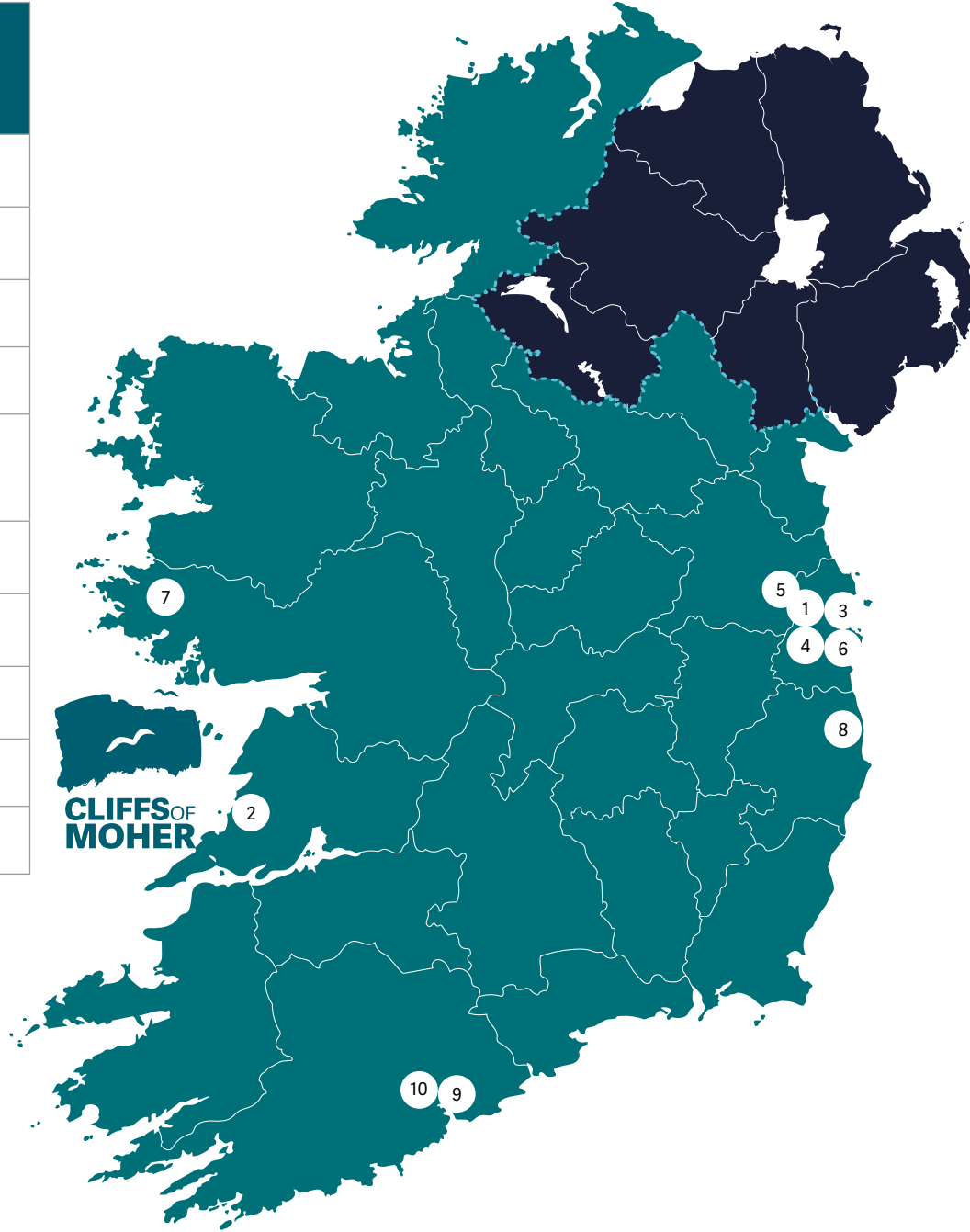
# THE STRATEGY / ECONOMIC BENEFITS

## Visitor Numbers

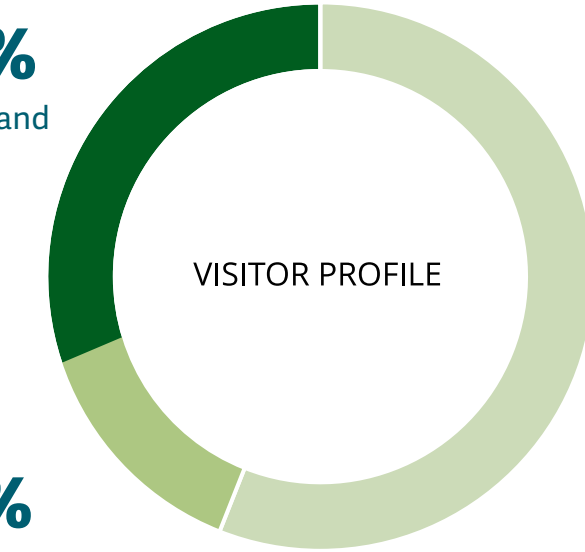
The Cliffs of Moher Experience attracts high levels of visitors and generates significant employment, income and economic benefits. It is the most visited natural attraction in Ireland and the second most popular visitor attraction in the country. The Cliffs of Moher Experience has a premier market position in terms of its success in attracting visitors and in its international promotional profile and role in selling Ireland to overseas visitors.

Ranking (Fee-Charging Attractions)	Attraction	County	Visitor Numbers (2019)	Adult Admission Charge* (€) (2023)
1	Guinness Storehouse	Dublin	1,700,00	26.00
2	Cliffs of Moher Experience	Clare	1,600,000	7.00
3	Dublin Zoo	Dublin	1,283,424	19.00
4	Book of Kells	Dublin	1,144,410	18.50
5	Tayto Park (renamed Emerald Park in 2023)	Meath	720,000	39.00
6	St Patrick's Cathedral	Dublin	628,000	9.00
7	Kylemore Abbey & Gardens	Galway	560,000	16.00
8	Powerscourt House, Gardens & Waterfall	Wicklow	487,876	12.50
9	Fota Wildlife Park	Cork	462,047	18.00
10	Blarney Castle and Gardens	Cork	460,000	20.00

\* Based on lowest adult prices in August 2023



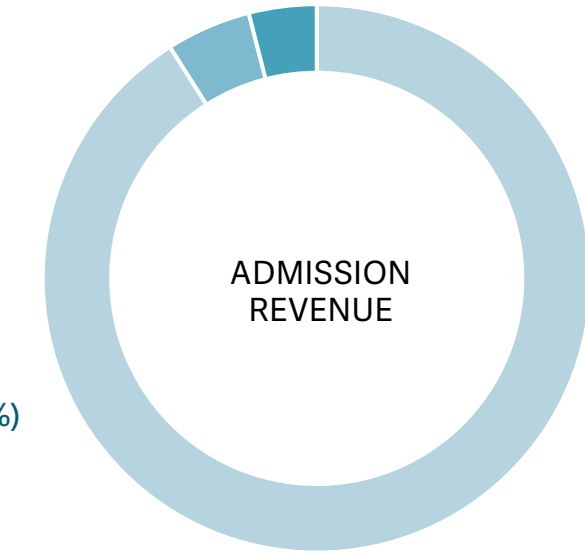
**27%**  
Travel and Route



**56%**  
Free Independent Travellers (FIT)

**17%**  
Route License

**9%**  
Non Admission Revenue Generating (Coastal Walk 5%) (Children 4%)



**91%**  
Admission Revenue Generating

# THE STRATEGY / ECONOMIC BENEFITS

## Managing the Site

The Cliffs of Moher Experience is managed by a wholly owned subsidiary of Clare County Council established to operate the Cliffs of Moher Experience on the local authority's behalf, including all elements of staff recruitment, training, and staff management of those who work at the Cliffs of Moher.

A number of other businesses operate at the site and play an important role in providing employment, generating income and creating economic benefits.



The Visitor Centre



Craftworkers



Cliff View Café



Craft and Gift Store



Puffins Nest Café

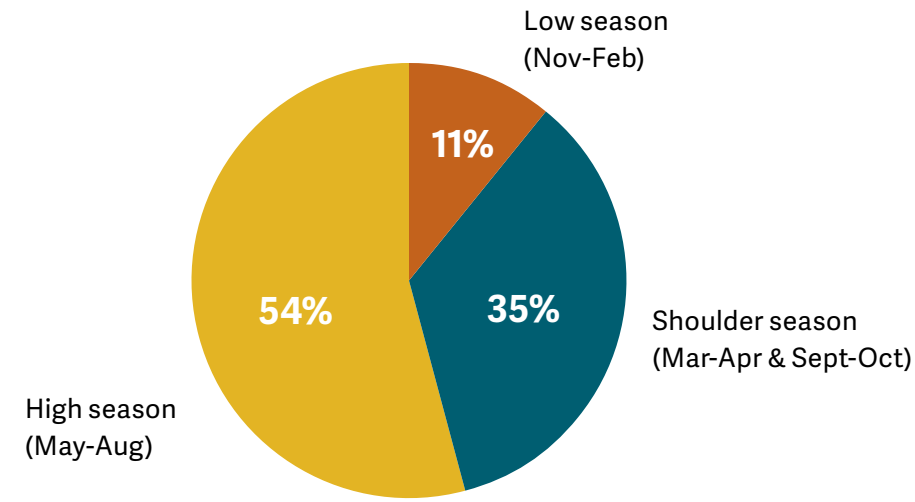
# THE STRATEGY / ECONOMIC BENEFITS

## Financial Performance

In 2019, the Cliffs of Moher site generated an estimated overall income of €18m from visitor spend. The core Cliffs of Moher Experience operation is the most significant generator of revenue.

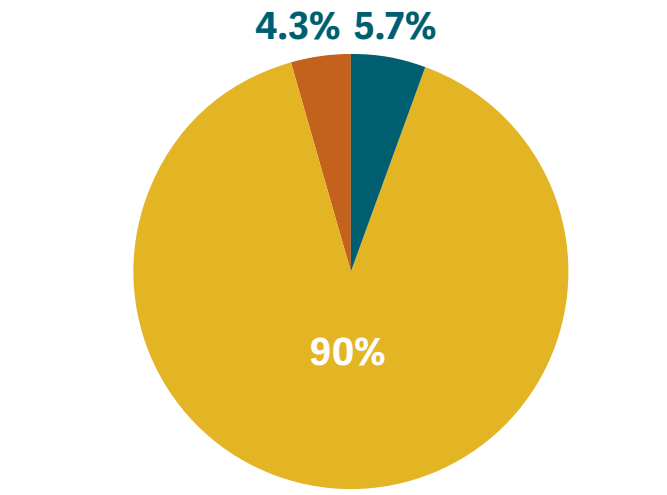
### Revenue

In 2019, the seasonal breakdown of the revenue for the Cliffs of Moher Experience was:



The Shannon Heritage Craft and Gift store Revenue is accounted for under Shannon Heritage, only lease income is reflected in the Cliffs of Moher Experience revenue currently.

Admission income accounted for 90% of total revenue.

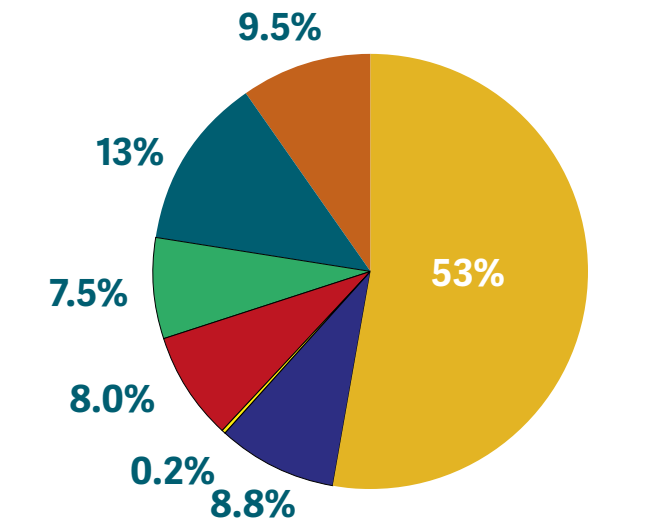


REVENUE Item	% Revenue
Admission Income	90%
Lease Income	5.7%
Merchandise	0%
Cliffs View Café	4.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Expenditure

Staff costs, including salaries (for 76 directly employed staff) accounted for 53% of total operational costs.

The operational surplus generated by the Cliffs of Moher Experience was 54% of total revenue. The net surplus, after capital and finance charges, was 40%



COST Item	% Operational Costs
Staff Costs	53%
Cliffs View Café	8.8%
Merchandise	0.2%
Utilities	8.0%
Marketing	7.5%
Facilities & Operational	13%
Rates / Rent / Insurance	9.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark**

The Burren and Cliffs of Moher were designated a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Global Geopark in 2015. The region achieved this status because it was recognised as a place with unique geology, landscapes, history, and culture.

Geoparks are managed with a focus on education, conservation, sustainable tourism, and community engagement. Our Geopark, where you are now, is managed by Clare County Council working in partnership organisations that oversee tourism, education, and conservation programmes. Attaining UNESCO Global Geopark status involves scientific, cultural, sustainable and management criteria, which are reviewed by UNESCO every four years. As of 2017-22 there are 169 UNESCO Global Geoparks worldwide spread across 46 countries.

**Explore and Experience Our UNESCO Global Geopark**

Given the status of a UNESCO Global Geopark because there is so much to explore and experience.

From the wild Atlantic ocean, the stunning Cliffs of Moher is not only a world famous sea stack and an important breeding ground for sea birds. Moving North the landscape changes from a plain of limestone rock full of 200 million years old fossils. The land might appear to be flat but you will see an extraordinary combination of Arise, Alps and Mediterranean mountains side by side, while beneath your feet there is a vast network of mysterious caves.

You will see the tracks of generations of people who have lived, worked and worshipped by harnessing the energy of the driving local farming traditions, traditional music and food produced from this 'bride rock'.

**Sustainable Tourism in the UNESCO Global Geopark**

Tourism is an important part of UNESCO Global Geoparks, and our Geopark has been a pioneer and international award winner in this area.

In line with our commitment to sustainable tourism, we have developed the Geopark Code of Sustainable Tourism. Businesses that adopt this code of practice become members of the Geopark Sustainable Tourism Network. This is an award-winning and internationally recognised network of businesses committed to the sustainable development of the region. These businesses offer excellent, high quality accommodation, food and experiences. You can find out more about them on [www.burren.ie](http://www.burren.ie).

**BURREN AND CLIFFS OF MOHER UNESCO Global Geopark**

# THE STRATEGY / ECONOMIC BENEFITS

## Current Benefits

The Cliffs of Moher is a major economic engine for County Clare. It plays a key strategic role in the county's economy and tourism industry and delivers significant economic benefits.

### Benefits from the Operating Surplus

The annual operational surplus that is generated by the Cliffs of Moher Experience plays an important role in supporting and developing the county tourism product. This includes providing funding for:

- The Tourism Department of Clare County Council
- Development and maintenance of the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk
- The Burren Ecotourism Network
- Tourism marketing initiatives
- Other relevant Clare County Council projects

Direct employment by the Cliffs of Moher Experience comprised 76 staff (44 permanent and 32 seasonal) at an estimated total annual cost for all employment of €2.6 million. Other employment at the site included:

Puffins Nest Café – 12

Cliff View Café – 38

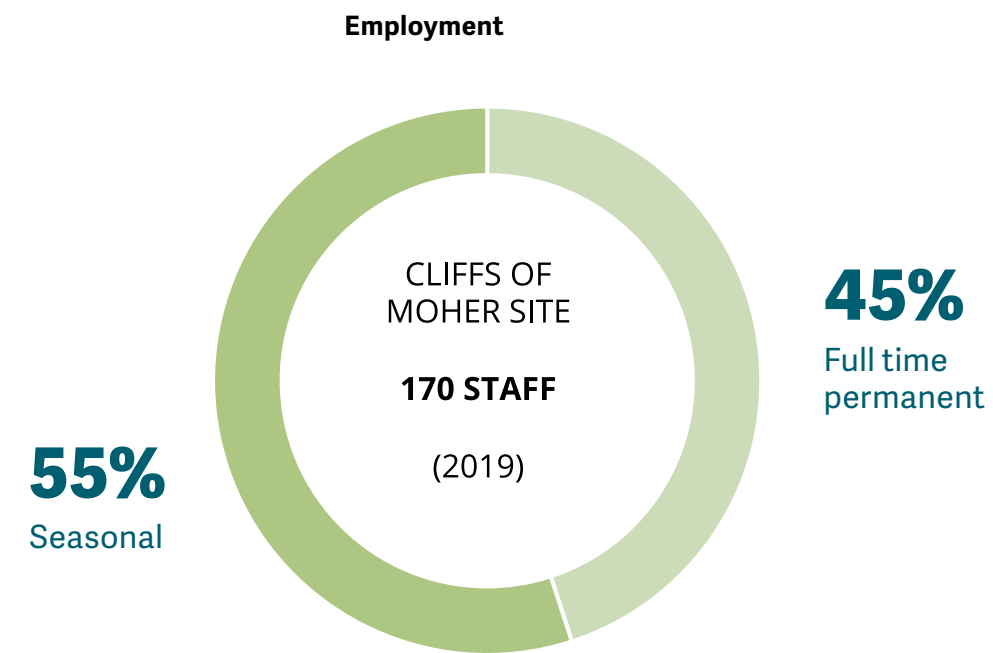
Craft and Gift Store – 26

Craftworkers – 18

The local impact of this employment is highly significant as almost 90% of staff live within 30km of the Cliffs of Moher site:

54% of staff live within 15km

34% of staff live within 16-30km



Market	Numbers (000's)	Total Revenue (£m)	Av. Rev. Per Tourist (€)
All Overseas	1,432	472	330
Northern Ireland	23	8	348
Domestic	1,197	217	181



## Supporting Businesses

The Cliffs of Moher Experience plays an important role in supporting other businesses across the county and beyond.

There are more than 40 County Clare craft and design suppliers in the Cliffs of Moher Craft and Design Shop, accounting for 40% of all suppliers at the site. The remaining 60% are Irish suppliers. There are 15 local food producers supplying to the Cliffs of Moher. The six craft units at the Cliffs of Moher are leased by local businesses.

In addition, the Cliffs of Moher Experience operation also makes significant spend on a range of cultural and heritage services. In 2019, this expenditure of €2.3m included food, drink, art, craft design, operational and maintenance services. This spend by the Cliffs of Moher Experience has a significant impact in supporting the local economy, as around 70% of this expenditure is spent with local businesses.

The Burren and County Clare has some of the country's most important artisans celebrating local craft products. The craft units and the retail shop at the Cliffs of Moher already act as an important showcase for outstanding local suppliers. Future opportunities can be safeguarded and enhanced through direct in-house management of the retail shop, combined with greater liaison with the enterprise function of Clare County Council to develop new local tourism products, services and further collaborative partnerships between the Cliffs of Moher and local businesses.

## Visitor Spend

The Cliffs of Moher generates further benefits to the local, county and national economies from the expenditure by visitors.

Fáilte Ireland research shows that in 2019, overseas holidaymakers had an average spend of €96 per day and domestic overnight visitors had a spend of €74 per day.

Applied to visitors to the Cliffs of Moher, these expenditures would generate an estimated total spend of €141m.

The Mid-West Region includes the counties of Clare, Limerick and Tipperary, and is ranked fourth of the six regions (excluding Dublin) in terms of total tourist numbers and revenue. However, it is ranked third in terms of overseas tourists and sixth in terms of tourists from Northern Ireland.

In 2019, the Mid-West attracted 2.65m tourists who spent a total of €697m, with an overall average spend per tourist of €263.

County Clare commands a strong position in terms of attracting international visitors (ranked fifth in 2017). However, the market share of expenditure is considerably less.

In 2018, Clare County welcomed 769,000 overseas visitors (8% of all overseas tourists who came to Ireland) and hosted 510,000 domestic trips (5% of all Irish domestic trips).

In total, tourism in Clare contributed €244.5 million to the economy:

Overseas visitors spent €156.5 million (3% of overseas tourism expenditure in Ireland), an average spend per visitor of €203.51 (the second lowest in Ireland).

Domestic tourism generated €88 million – an average spend per visitor of €172.55.

# THE STRATEGY / ECONOMIC BENEFITS

## Tourism

The total economic contribution of tourism to the Clare economy is €395m. Despite its significant strengths, the County Clare Tourism Strategy 2030 identifies key strategic challenges; "the value of tourism for the county as a whole is considerably lower than its market size rankings given a low average spend per overseas visitor and a high level of seasonality, and the distinctly uneven geographic spread of benefits."



### The Clare Tourism Strategy 2030 estimates that:

- Tourism supports 6,600 tourism jobs in Clare (2017), which equates to 4,440 full-time equivalent jobs.
- Tourism employment earnings in Clare are just over €110 million.
- When multiplier impacts are included, the total economic impact of tourism in Clare is €395 million.

As the key visitor attraction in the county, the Cliffs of Moher Experience makes a major contribution to the tourism economy and benefits.

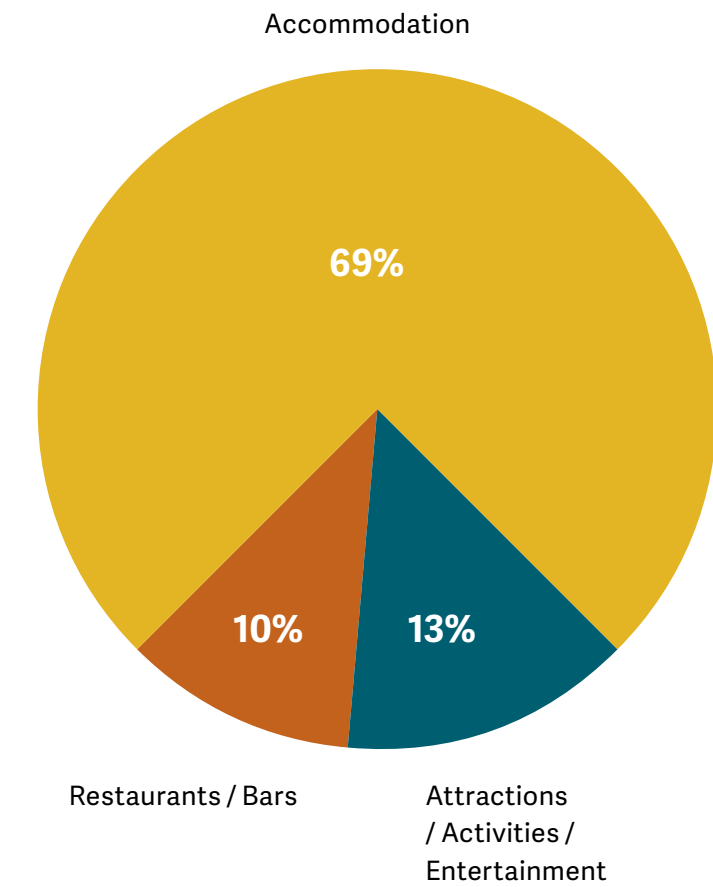
County Clare gains a considerable level of direct and indirect benefit from visitors to the Cliffs of Moher. However, there are opportunities to gain further benefits, especially for the businesses in local towns and villages. These include overnight accommodation, food and beverage, spin off cottage industries, microenterprises, service suppliers and employment expenditure. This can be delivered through a new partnership model, facilitating new tourism product development and encouraging visitors to the Cliffs of Moher to disperse more widely, stay longer, and spend more across the area.

Most coach licences issued by the National Transport Authority stop at another location within Clare as well as the Cliffs of Moher.

Research in 2018 by the Incoming Tour Operators Association Ireland (ITOA) highlighted the scale and scope of the economic benefits of visitors to the cliffs. They estimate that almost 200,000 ITOA visitors to the Cliffs of Moher spent €12m with suppliers in key tourism and hospitality sectors across County Clare:

- Accommodation – 69%
- Attractions / activities / entertainment (excluding Cliffs of Moher) – 13%
- Restaurants / bars – 10%

This indicates an average spend per ITOA visitor within County Clare of €60.



In addition to the direct economic benefits on the Cliffs of Moher site, and those from visitor expenditure, there are significant multiplier effects which bring further benefits to the national, regional and local economy.

Applied to the Cliffs of Moher site, the €18m direct visitor expenditure helps to support 486 tourism jobs and generates €4.14m in tax.

At a wider level, the estimated total economic impact of €141m from spend by Cliffs of Moher visitors supports 3,807 jobs and generates €32.43m in tax.



Every **€1m** of tourist expenditure helps to support **27** tourism jobs.



**1,000** additional overseas tourists support **20** jobs in the tourism industry.



For every euro spent on tourism (domestic and overseas), **23c is generated in tax.**

Source: Key Tourism Facts 2019 (Fáilte Ireland, March 2021)

# THE STRATEGY / ECONOMIC BENEFITS

## Future Development

All of the existing economic benefits of the Cliffs of Moher will be significantly increased as the 2040 strategy is implemented. There will be enhanced benefits at local, regional and national level from the major capital investment and from the enhanced future operation of the site.

The implementation of the Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy will result in major capital investment on the site. The total capital cost for delivery of the strategic and masterplan proposals will depend on the final scope of works, the scheme design and phasing.

The funding for the implementation of the strategy proposals will require a multi-strand approach. Through facilitating and enhancing the aspirations and objectives of other strategies, initiatives and plans, the strategy will work in partnership to help secure resources to achieve its vision. The potential funding package will encompass direct investment from Clare County Council, including reinvestment from the projected annual operational surplus from the Cliffs of Moher Experience, and commercial loans. The project will also seek substantial grant aid from a range of sources including Fáilte Ireland, European and National Programmes and specialist enterprise, tourism, environmental and development bodies. The funding package will be developed alongside the phasing plan to ensure the most cost-effective programme is put in place to realise the significant economic and social benefits that can be generated.

This scale of investment will generate significant temporary jobs (spread over many years) in construction and associated multipliers.

- Every €10m of capital investment creates around 24 jobs in the construction industry.
- Every 10 jobs in the construction industry create a further four jobs indirectly (Source: Construction industry Federation – Ireland).



## World-Class Sustainable Destination

The 2040 Strategy aims to develop a world-class, sustainable destination for the long-term future of the site. The Cliffs of Moher will continue to respond to visitor aspirations through development of high-quality facilities. This approach will deliver a commercially sustainable tourism attraction into the future and maintain its premier market position.

The future business plan for the Cliffs of Moher will depend on the final scope of works, and more specifically on the phasing. Nevertheless, it is projected that the implementation of the 2040 strategy will deliver a more profitable and more robust operation for the future. This scenario will result in significantly increased economic benefits at site, local, regional and national level.

## Local Suppliers

Currently, there are up to 45 County Clare craft suppliers generating significant expenditure and spin-off employment in the area. Utilising support from the local enterprise office, there is potential to establish a craft retail innovation hub that optimises the conditions for startup business, with the expertise in the Cliffs of Moher retail playing a key role in bridging product concept to finished product. Research shows visitors are seeking out gifts from that local area, and view this as a way of contributing back into the local economy and sustaining local communities with minimal impact on the environment.

## Capacity and Spend

The strategy looks to limit the peak day capacity of the expanded Cliffs of Moher site and achieve more even distribution of visitors throughout the year. Pre-booking for all visitors and dynamic pricing will help with spreading visitors more evenly across the day and across the year.

There will be a focus on encouraging visitor arrivals earlier and later in the day, with greater use of special experiences and events. Enhanced facilities and packages at the Cliffs of Moher, in partnership with local businesses, will result in increased visits in the off-peak (20%) and shoulder seasons (25%). This will significantly reduce seasonality and provide greater all year-round viability for the site and businesses in the local area.

Admission charges for the Cliffs of Moher will change in line with the development of the new facilities and to reflect the “world-class” status of the new and expanded visitor offer. Greater use of dynamic pricing will further enhance value for money and provide increased access opportunities for all throughout the year.

Following completion of the proposed 2040 Strategy works, the balanced approach to visitor numbers and pricing is projected to double income from admissions to the extended site.

## Increased Partnerships and Staffing

Increased partnerships with local businesses and suppliers, and enhanced facilities for the onsite local craftworkers is projected to see modest increases in the income from catering, retail and lease arrangements.

Projected expenditure will also rise considerably as the 2040 strategy proposals are implemented. When fully operational, it is projected that direct staff costs will rise by 66%. Other operational costs (utilities / marketing / maintenance etc.) are projected to double to ensure the delivery of a high quality environment and visitor experience.

Overall, the operational surplus from the Cliffs of Moher site is projected to increase by more than double. It is projected that there will be a significant increase in direct and indirect employment on the Cliffs of Moher site. Overall numbers of people employed are projected to double and this will have significant economic benefits, particularly for the local area.

## THE STRATEGY / ECONOMIC BENEFITS



### Wider Tourism Product

Engaging visitors in and raising awareness of the wider Cliffs of Moher destination - its tourism and visitor accommodation, attractions and hospitality facilities - will be critical to the success of the 2040 Strategy. Visitors will have a deeper more rewarding experience, stay longer, spend more, make more return visits to the area, and encourage family and friends to visit.

The Cliffs of Moher will play an enhanced role in stimulating and supporting future investment in the wider tourism product of County Clare. The growth of its premier market position as a key attractor to the county will act as a stimulus and support further development of the wider tourism product. This integrated approach at the heart of the strategy will provide opportunities for securing investment in new products, especially overnight accommodation, to meet visitor demands. The focus on managing capacity and spreading and dispersing visitors more evenly across the year will help towards addressing the key issue of seasonality.



New park and ride hubs will act as a key element of the integrated transport system for access to the Cliffs of Moher and beyond. Situated on the main feeder routes to the cliffs from both the north and south approaches, they will help disperse visitors across the wider area. Ideally located on the edge of local towns, these hubs will enhance tourism, employment and business connections and will encourage new core infrastructure and tourism investment in the wider area.

Development and partnership initiatives will encourage greater distribution of visitors around County Clare and greater retention of visitor spend, especially by providing incentives to stay overnight.

Creating bespoke visitor packages will target low-volume and high-value visitors for special access and interest experiences. A key focus will be encouraging these audiences at the shoulder and off-peak seasons to help reduce seasonality.

Opportunities will be created for wide-ranging, diverse experiences targeting existing and new audiences.

These may include opportunities to be involved in future conservation, adrenaline experiences, family and children's activities, bird and wildlife watching, new interpretation experiences and events.



Offering a unified landscape with interconnected sites and experiences will engage visitors and the local community with the landscape and the wider sense of place encompassing the Cliffs of Moher, Burren and surrounding towns and villages.

New local suppliers and products will be showcased as part of the Cliffs of Moher visitor experience, retail and catering offer.

The sustainable 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 by bringing economic and social benefits to the community, businesses and other organisations will enhance and enrich local life.

## FUTURE ECONOMIC BENEFITS

**The Cliffs of Moher site is projected to generate an overall income of €36m from visitor spend and employ more than 300 people. This expenditure will help support over 900 tourism jobs and generate over €8m in tax revenue.**

**The total expenditure of visitors to the Cliffs of Moher is projected to be over €300m per annum. This will support over 8,000 tourism jobs and generate more than €60m in tax.**

# THE STRATEGY / ECONOMIC BENEFITS

## Links with Key Assets

The key to increasing economic benefits for the area in the future will be enhanced partnerships and greater coordination between the Cliffs of Moher, key strategic assets, and businesses and communities in local towns and villages.

Ongoing communication between all parties and monitoring, along with annual reviews and updates to the Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy, will be required. This will ensure it adapts and reflects the needs and opportunities of the wider tourism initiatives and the local towns and villages.



Fáilte Ireland's vision for the Wild Atlantic Way is for it to be world-renowned for its spectacular seascapes, raw beauty and warm hospitality, as one of the top five touring routes in the world. Its aim is to disperse visitors more evenly along the route and into towns and villages in the region. The Cliffs of Moher and Clare County Council must continue to work closely with Fáilte Ireland to further develop the international and national promotion of the wider Cliffs of Moher destination and secure appropriate and sustainable facilities and infrastructure in the local towns and villages.



A five-year management plan is needed for the Burren and Cliffs of Moher to retain its UNESCO Global Geopark status. This includes a plan to manage peak demand impacts, both social and environmental, better engage consumers in the story of the region and boost awareness of the Burren as an internationally important, vibrant and sustainable world-class destination. This process should include enhanced integration, management and coordination with the Cliffs of Moher to deliver wider benefits to local communities.



The Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk, a linear route of 20km, connects the lively villages of Liscannor and Doolin, via the Cliffs of Moher Experience. The 2040 Strategy has identified the Coastal Walk as a key tourism and economic asset. Consultations are taking place between Clare Local Development Company and Clare County Council to explore future management of the walk by the Cliffs of Moher. It has been agreed that a management plan will be established to review opportunities for enhancing the long term potential of the trail and realise greater economic benefits for the local towns and villages.



The Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy is focused on creating a wider destination to help spread visitors and their spending across a larger area. The key hubs of Ennis and Shannon Airport can play mutually beneficial roles as key arrival points for visitors and as promotional and marketing tools. Tourism Ireland has recently announced a US\$1 million campaign in the United States, highlighting Shannon Airport as the gateway to the Wild Atlantic Way. Future forward planning for both of these key locations will require on-going dialogue with the Cliffs of Moher to help facilitate the dispersal of visitors across the destination.

## THE STRATEGY / ECONOMIC BENEFITS

### Local Partnerships

Clare County Council recognise the importance of integrating the Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy within a framework focused on the social, economic, cultural and environmental benefits to communities in the local area. To ensure the opportunities and benefits from future development of the Cliffs of Moher are fully realised, the local authority is facilitating and supporting economic and development work for key local towns and villages in the local area.



Doolin has a highly successful, award-winning sustainable tourism industry with a diverse range of high-quality businesses. Its vision for 2030/40 is to promote "Doolin as a tourism destination to the domestic and international markets in a sustainable way, with the aim of increasing the average length of stay, extending the length of the season and focusing on higher spending visitors versus volume." Priorities are attracting independent travellers to stay overnight and to proactively manage and control the negative impacts of large coaches. Clare County Council is currently supporting work to identify an enhanced and more integrated relationship with the Cliffs of Moher and to help realise the future economic benefits, whilst protecting the needs and special characteristics of the village.



Lisdoonvarna is famous for its Victorian Spa Complex and Health Centre, which is set in an attractive parkland setting, and has an ongoing tradition of music and festivals. It has a wide selection of hotel and guest accommodation and recently this has become utilised for accommodating large numbers of refugees from Ukraine. The village offers significant opportunities for development of greater links with the Cliffs of Moher to help revitalise its future economic wellbeing. Lisdoonvarna has been identified as a potential site for a park and ride hub for the cliffs and an expression of interest submission is currently being evaluated. Clare County Council is supporting future development planning and a new Heritage Plan for Lisdoonvarna is also being carried out so that the people of the town can decide how best to protect their shared heritage for the future.

Ennistymon has a long history as a market town for the surrounding Burren community. It is a lively and bustling town, with the majority of the businesses still family-owned and run. An Enhancement Strategy for Ennistymon's Town Centre is currently being carried out in partnership with Clare County Council and Clare Local Development Company. The emerging vision is to "support community and businesses by creating more attractive and vibrant streets and public spaces, celebrating the history, rich culture and unique natural beauty of Ennistymon" and to "create an accessible, walkable town centre that is easy to get around, encouraging people to stay longer, gather, meet and play". Future development of the Cliffs of Moher and Ennistymon can bring mutual benefits for creating a wider destination and experience for visitors to the area.

An aerial photograph of a dramatic coastline. On the left, a steep, dark grey rock cliff rises from the water's edge. The cliff face is textured with vertical fissures and is partially covered with patches of vibrant green moss or lichen. At the base of the cliff, white foam from breaking waves is visible. The ocean extends to the right, showing a deep blue color with subtle ripples and small waves. In the bottom left corner, there is a patch of out-of-focus, golden-brown grass. The overall scene is one of natural beauty and ruggedness.

# **SECTION 4: CONSULTATION**

**A comprehensive public consultation programme with local communities, organisations, businesses and residents has been central to developing the Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy, enabling participation and input via an integrated engagement and listening process.**

# CONSULTATION / OVERVIEW

Feedback received from stakeholders via consultation has informed development of the strategy at each stage. The listening process has ensured that the proposals address the collective aspirations for the Cliffs of Moher and the benefits that the destination can bring to the surrounding local communities and wider county.

## Phase 1

The focus of the first part of the consultation process was on extensive preliminary research, onsite investigations and desktop studies to understand the challenges facing the Cliffs of Moher, along with future aspirations. This process included initial consultation with a range of key stakeholders.



## Phase 2

There followed more comprehensive phase two consultations with local communities, organisations, businesses and residents, to allow the strategy team to hear the views of a wide range of stakeholders. These opportunities for people to "have their say" were widely publicised in local and national media, and on social media.



## Commitment to Ongoing Consultation

Business organisations and community groups voiced concerns at the beginning of the consultation process including:

- The need for appropriate timing of the consultation, at a point when considerable planning and reporting had not already been completed by the consultants.
- The need for greater visibility of reports on which community stakeholders could comment.
- That questions are answered and that consistent information be shared across workshops.
- A request for clarity on the objectives of the consultation.

The Cliffs of Moher Steering Group and Clare County Council acknowledged these concerns and a robust and comprehensive Phase One consultation and engagement process was carried out.

A commitment was made to continue ongoing engagement with all sectors of the local community, through extensive phase two consultation on the draft strategy and masterplan proposals.

Business organisations and stakeholder groups welcomed the engagements, which were facilitated with representatives from across the communities. A commitment was made to an ongoing collaborative partnership between the management at the Cliffs of Moher, Fáilte Ireland, Clare County Council, local community stakeholders and representative bodies for the tourism sector in the region.

Previous visitors

Online surveys

5100  
Local residents

14  
Key stakeholders

6  
Business organisations

6  
Community groups

## CONSULTATION / PHASE 1 PROCESS

A comprehensive process was carried out with key stakeholders, business organisations and community groups, local residents and visitors. This engagement ran from the commencement of the work on the 2040 Strategy in November 2019 until September 2021.

Face-to-face / virtual meetings and site visits were held across the county. In addition to the feedback from this engagement process, over 30 written submissions were also received from key stakeholders, local business organisations and community groups.

### The focus of this phase was:

- Understanding the relevant context and wider framework relating to the Cliffs of Moher.
- Identifying concerns about current and future issues relating to the Cliffs of Moher.
- Gaining views on the potential opportunities for developing the Cliffs of Moher.

### This phase of consultation included:

- Virtual meetings.
- Face-to-face meetings.
- Site visits.
- Consultation boards at six locations across County Clare.
- Online consultation material including a video (2,225 website visits / 526 views on YouTube).
- Online questionnaires (May 2021 – June 2021).
- Online submissions via a dedicated project email address.

Key Stakeholders	Community Groups
Cliffs of Moher Steering Group	Community group representatives
Board of Cliffs of Moher Centre DAC	Clare Public Participation Network (PPN)
Clare County Council (Executive / Elected Members)	Doolin Community Council
Representatives to Clare County Council of the Ennistymon Electoral Area	Planning Group of the North Clare Strategic Planning Project
Fáilte Ireland	Lisdoonvarna Fáilte CLG & Community
Clare Local Development Company (CLDC)	Ennistymon Town Team
National Parks & Wildlife Service	
Cliffs of Moher onsite tenants / Shannon Heritage DAC	Business Organisations
Local landowners	County Clare accommodation providers
Clare County Council – Planning	Local business community
Clare County Council – Roads	Burren Ecotourism Network
Cliffs of Moher staff	The Irish Farmers' Association (IFA) / Clare IFA
Clare County Council – Tourism	Doolin Tourism
Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark	Ennis 2040
	Local residents and visitors



## CONSULTATION / PHASE 1 FINDINGS

A number of key considerations relating to the function of the Cliffs of Moher and its role as an international visitor destination were identified by key stakeholders.

### Audiences and the Cliffs of Moher

- The Cliffs of Moher has the potential for further development to appeal to new audiences and users.
- Visitors are central to all thinking and future development. The strategy should look to provide a universal experience for all types of visitors, from arrival to departure.
- Reaching and influencing the customer pre-visit.
- Review a shift away from the Cliffs of Moher Experience as a “day tour” and photo stop destination.
- A focus on improving the visitor experience, reviewing the existing infrastructure and identifying what is required to ensure the delivery of a world-class visitor experience to 2040.
- Opportunities to use pre-booking and dynamic pricing as a mechanism to manage visitor capacity.
- Transport and parking.
- Need to resolve the negative impacts of traffic disruption, especially the size, frequency and volume of large coaches on local roads at peak times.
- Implementing a park and ride solution by developing sustainable transport and greenway links.
- The Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk has been an outstanding success and should be at the centre of future plans for investment and maintenance, creating links with local villages and towns.



### Tourism and Local Benefits

- Review the role of the Cliffs of Moher as a more sustainable tourism model, including creating an integrated experience, redistributing visitors around County Clare and retention of visitor spend.
- Act as a tourism driver in the wider Clare area, with a strong ten-year focus to 2030 and a vision to 2040.
- The planning, infrastructural, social and economic imperatives of the wider Clare area and the hinterland beyond.
- Take account of the needs of local residents, local tourism businesses, business interests generally, visitors and the environment.
- Seek to share locally the benefits from significant visitor numbers, while mitigating the negative impacts.
- Managing capacity to maintain a high-quality visitor experience while minimising disruption to the local communities.
- Review the ability of the wider hinterland’s infrastructure to cope with more visitors (roads, parking, waste water treatment etc.).
- Encouraging visitors to stay longer / overnight in the area and bring real economic benefits to local businesses.
- Cliffs of Moher needs to be seen as a good neighbour.
- Greater transparency of where the Cliffs of Moher profits go and how local communities benefit.
- Request to add an economic pillar to the Cliffs of Moher Strategy and Masterplan via a more detailed economic and social impact study to be carried out as an integral part of the work.

### Environmental Impacts

- Maintaining, protecting and enhancing biodiversity.
- Explore opportunities for sustainable energy initiatives.



# CONSULTATION / PHASE 1 FINDINGS

## Concerns Raised by Residents

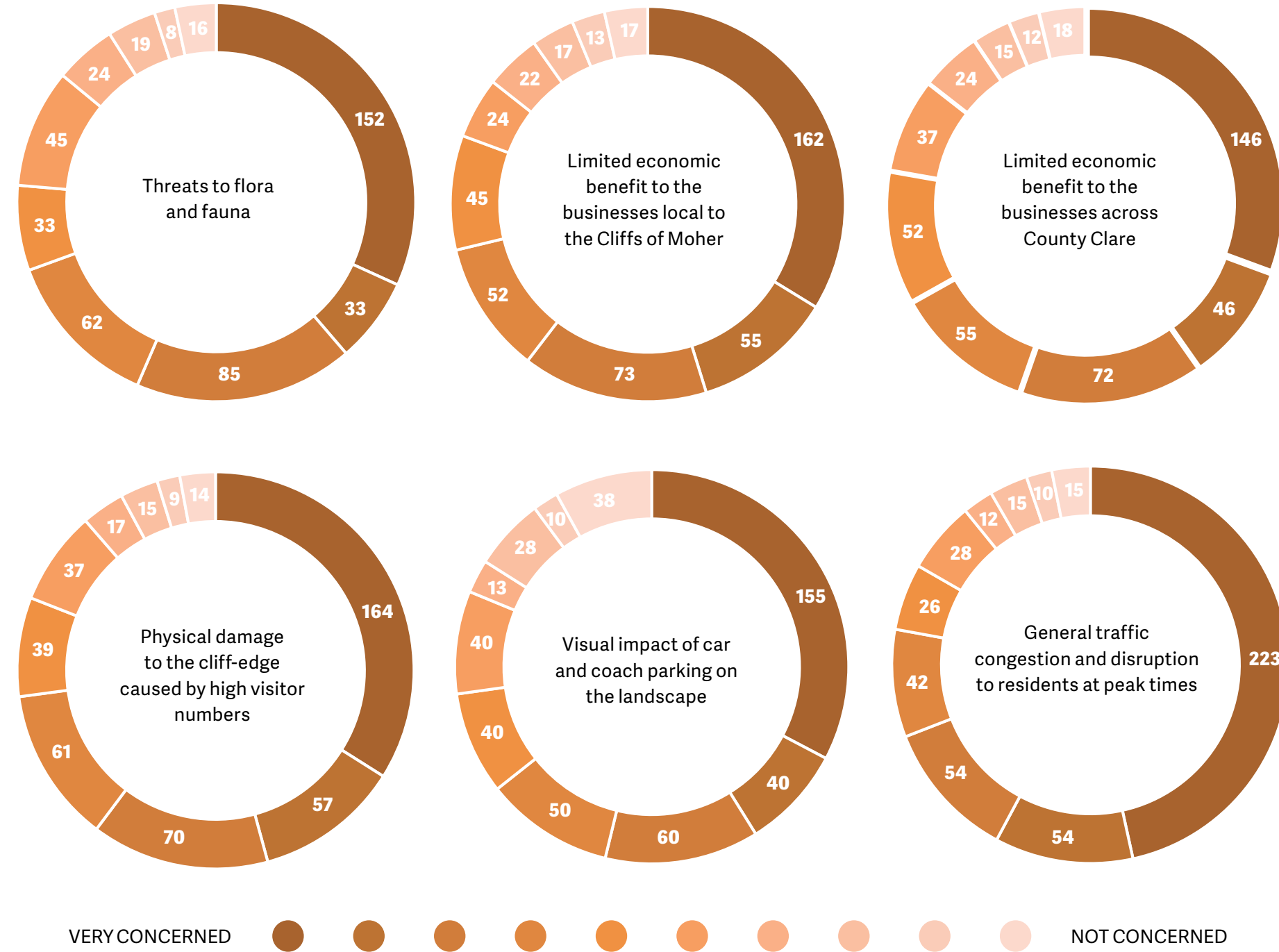
County Clare residents were very concerned about a wide range of current issues relating to the Cliffs of Moher. On average, just over one third of people were "Very Concerned" on all issues (rated 1 on a scale of concern of 1-10).

The highest-rated concern was general traffic congestion and 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 while 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%).



These diagrams show level of concern by respondents. The numbers in each segment represent the volume of respondents based on a scale of 1-10.

Highest level of concern is shown in the darkest colours.

## Potential Opportunities Identified by Residents

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 about 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 the 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 greatest 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 Cliffs of Moher as a magnet to attract and disperse visitors across County Clare (26%).
- Development of more things to see and do at the cliffs (19%).



These diagrams show level of opportunity by respondents. The numbers in each segment represent the volume of respondents based on a scale of 1-10.

Highest level of opportunity is shown in the darkest colours.

# CONSULTATION / PHASE 1 FINDINGS

## Concerns Raised by Visitors

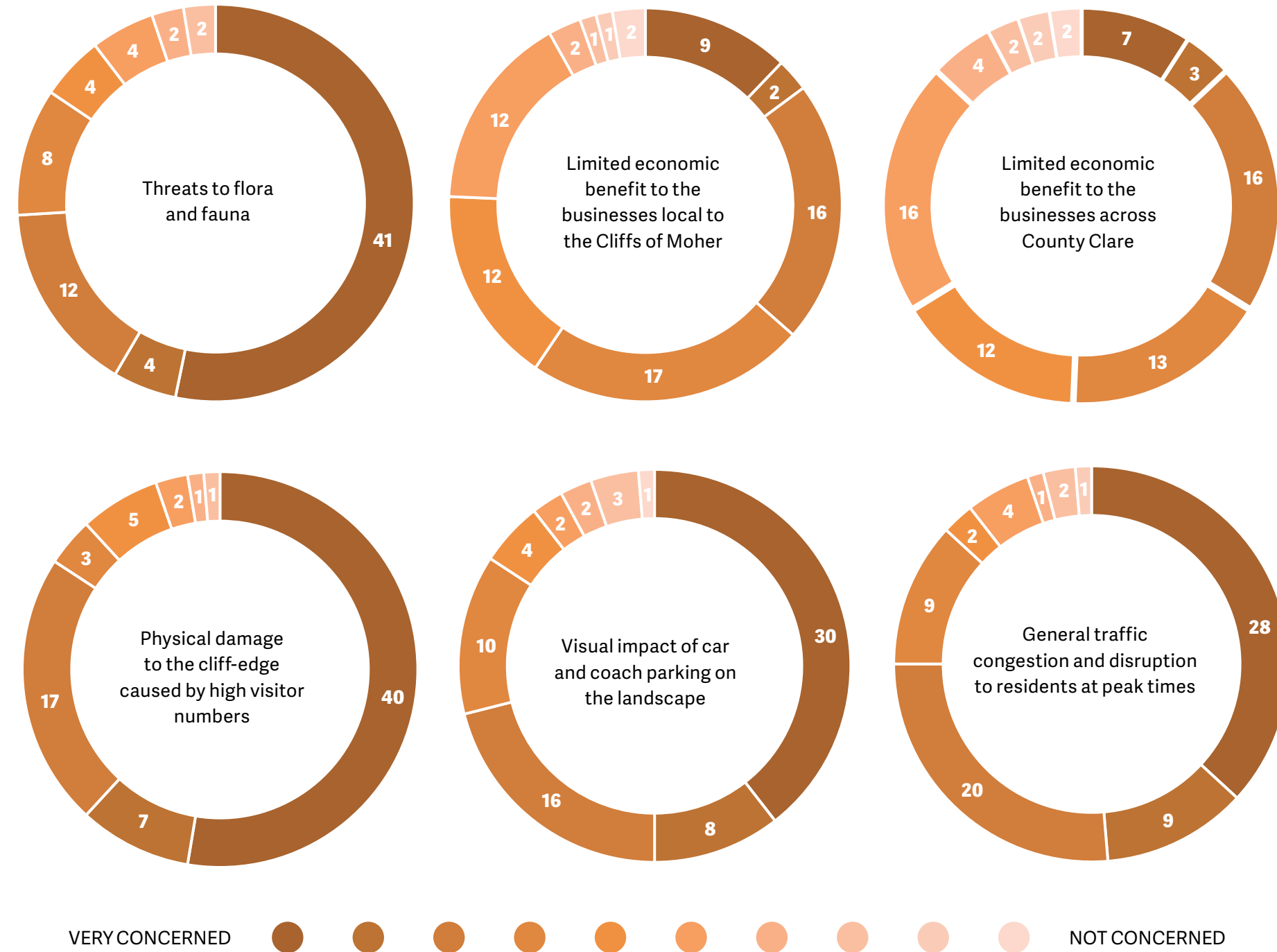
Completed questionnaires were received from 77 people living outside County Clare who had previously visited the Cliffs of Moher. Responses came from residents living across the world, with most living in the USA, Canada and other areas of Ireland.

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).
- 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 caused 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 of Moher and across Clare, were not identified as a significant concern by previous visitors from outside the County.
- Promotion of the Cliffs of Moher as a magnet to attract and disperse visitors across County Clare (26%).
- Development of more things to see and do at the cliffs (19%).



These diagrams show level of concern by respondents. The numbers in each segment represent the volume of respondents based on a scale of 1-10.

Highest level of concern is shown in the darkest colours.

## Potential Opportunities Identified by Visitors

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 destination.

- On average, almost one third of people were very positive about all future opportunities (rated 1) – excluding developing more things to see and do at the Cliffs of Moher.

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)



These diagrams show level of opportunity by respondents. The numbers in each segment represent the volume of respondents based on a scale of 1-10.

Highest level of opportunity is shown in the darkest colours.

# CONSULTATION / PHASE 2 PROCESS

The detailed analysis of the phase one consultation responses helped shape the development of the draft strategy and masterplan proposals.

These proposals were set out in a consultation document which provided the basis for the ongoing engagement process with key stakeholders, business organisations and community groups.

This phase of consultation included:

- A consultation document made available as a download from the Cliffs of Moher website from 5th May 2022.
- The consultation document was issued directly to all key stakeholders, business organisations and community groups in advance of meetings.
- Consultation meetings (mostly held face-to-face) with core stakeholders and also Incoming Tour Operators Association, Ireland and The Coach Tourism and Transport Council of Ireland.
- Eight written submissions were also received from key stakeholders, local business organisations, community groups and individuals.

Key Stakeholders	Additional organisations
As Phase One	Incoming Tour Operators Association, Ireland
	Coach Tourism and Transport Council of Ireland
Community Groups	
As Phase One	
Business Organisations	
As Phase One	



## CONSULTATION / PHASE 2 FINDINGS

The core strategic initiatives and the masterplan proposals contained in the consultation document were developed, taking account of the feedback and key considerations identified by key stakeholders.

### Opportunity

The scale of investment and the vision for future development of the Cliffs of Moher was welcomed:

- It was reiterated that the Cliffs of Moher is a key local, regional and national asset – supporting tourism and economic development.
- Support was given for the focus on high quality visitor experiences integrated within a new rewilded environment, supporting sustainability and economic benefits for local communities.
- The need for an emphasis on quality not quantity was expressed, particularly if visitor numbers are increased.
- Support was given for increased showcasing of the best of local produce as well as encouraging arts and crafts through the retail activities at the Cliffs of Moher.

### Transport and Access

The proposals for transport and access to the Cliffs of Moher was identified as the key challenge:

- There was general support for the concept of remote parking hubs located adjacent to local settlements.
- The need to explore further opportunities for integrating the proposed shuttle service as part of a wider public transport network.
- Support was expressed for greater, proactive management and enforcement measures relating to traffic (cars and coaches).
- The importance of the Coastal Path was raised as a consideration, particularly the need to pursue the opportunity to integrate the Coastal Path and Cliffs of Moher visitor experiences.
- The need to ensure future investment and resources provided for maintenance / health and safety works.
- The need to develop an integrated transport plan for North Clare.

### Sustainability

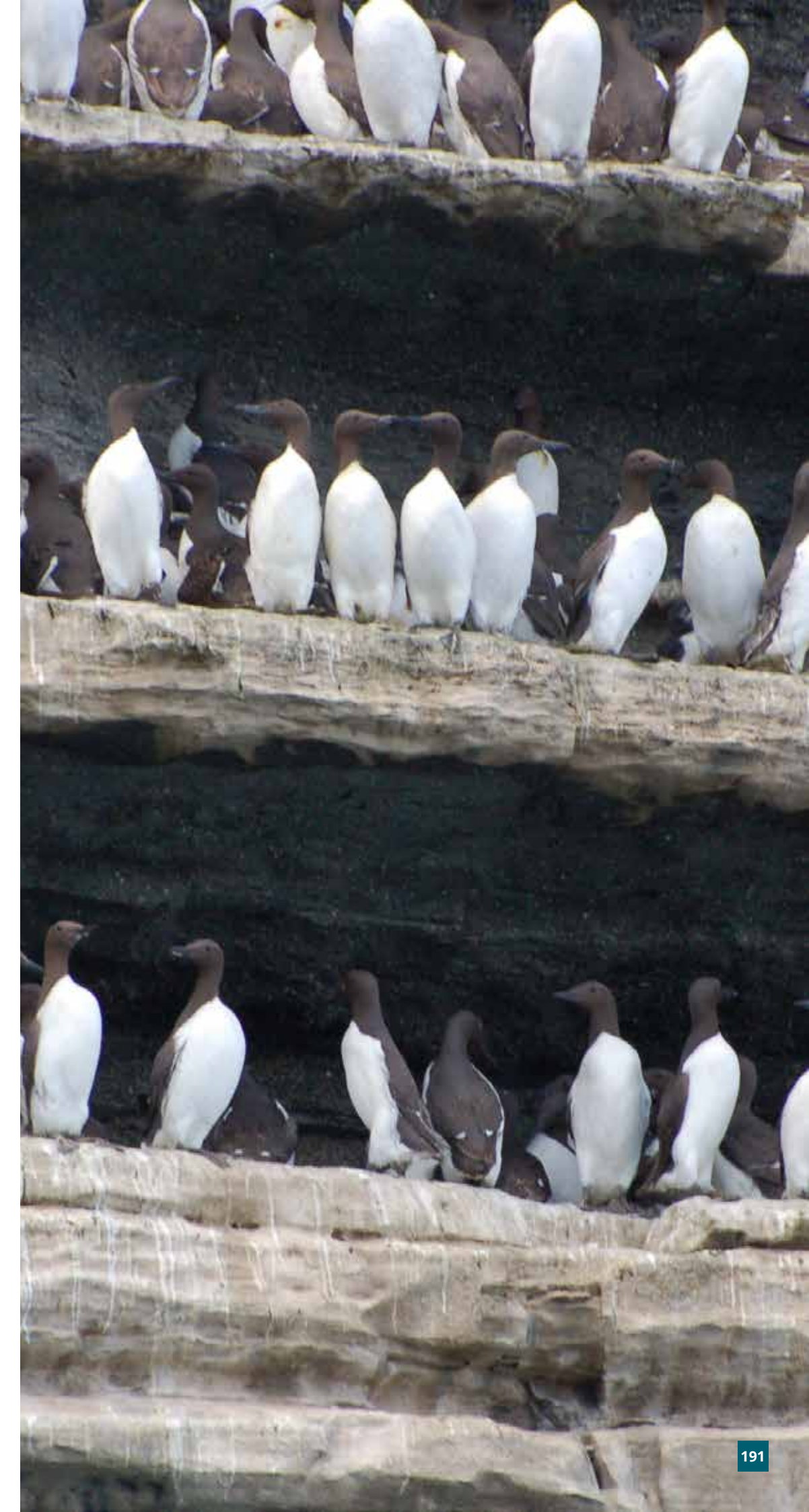
The need to ensure continuity of operation and a high-quality visitor experience during future development of the Cliffs of Moher site, in particular:

- Providing an ongoing, sustainable business plan for the Cliffs of Moher.
- Maintaining economic benefits to the area.
- Clare County Council's intention to develop a sustainable strategy for the Cliffs of Moher, underpinned by commitments to responsible and sustainable tourism was welcomed.
- The emerging strategy is an opportunity to protect, preserve and enhance the Cliffs of Moher site and visitor experience on the one hand, alongside equally tangible benefits for the North Clare region on the other.
- The need to address legacy tourism impacts on local communities, most notably the negative effects of traffic congestion, especially coaches.
- There was support for Clare County Council carrying out detailed studies to identify the impacts of Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy on the towns, villages and communities of North Clare and on the measures to be taken to ensure that the region, as a whole, benefits fairly from the future vision.

### Collaboration

The request to ensure resources are provided to facilitate development of infrastructure, facilities and services within the local towns / villages (especially accommodation stock), and develop greater links between local businesses and Cliffs of Moher for the benefit of all, such as:

- Identifying short-term projects that can be taken forward to act as a catalyst for the future.
- Ensuring future development of the Coastal Path.
- The need to develop a structure for enhanced communication between the local authority, Cliffs of Moher and local communities.
- The need for a continual mechanism for the involvement and oversight by the host communities in the implementation of the strategy.
- Consultation on the strategy has been welcomed and a structure must be put in place to ensure continued, ongoing engagement in the delivery process.
- The need for the Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy to be integrated with the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark, the Coastal Path, the proposed West Clare Railway Greenway project and the wider social, cultural and economic activities of communities across North Clare.
- The importance of developing and managing the implementation of the Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040 in close and ongoing collaboration with the host communities.
- The ongoing need for the Cliffs of Moher and Clare County Council to provide transparency to help communities understand the Cliffs of Moher Business Plan, including levels of capital investment and phasing.
- A requirement for clear goals and measurable targets to be set for the Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040, in alignment with goals of the Clare County Development Plan and Clare County Council's Tourism Strategy.



# CONSULTATION / PHASE 2 FINDINGS

## Survey Findings

As part of Phase 2 of the consultation process, survey questionnaires were received from 214 people comprising 153 residents living within County Clare and 61 previous visitors (living outside County Clare). The feedback on the Draft Strategy and Proposals were very similar and hence the findings are presented on the total responses received.

Overall, the responses of local residents and previous visitors showed strong positive support for all of the key strategic initiatives and for the site masterplan proposals relating to the future development of the Cliffs of Moher. Almost all of the individual initiatives and proposals received positive ratings from around 70% of all respondents.

The least level of support was expressed for developing a new access gateway building, although it should be noted that this proposal was supported by 54% of respondents compared to 46% who expressed a negative view, excluding those who stated that they were neither negative nor positive. From the discussions with the stakeholders, local businesses and community groups, there was a concern over the scale of the retail and catering provision that may be developed as part of this new building and this may account for the feedback on this specific proposal.

This table shows the overall percentage of respondents expressing their rating for each the strategic Initiatives and site masterplan proposals:

Negative (rating 0-4)

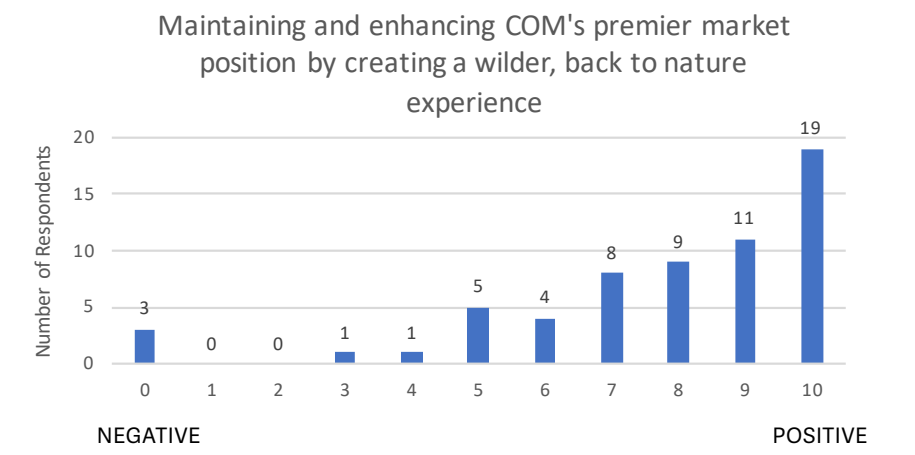
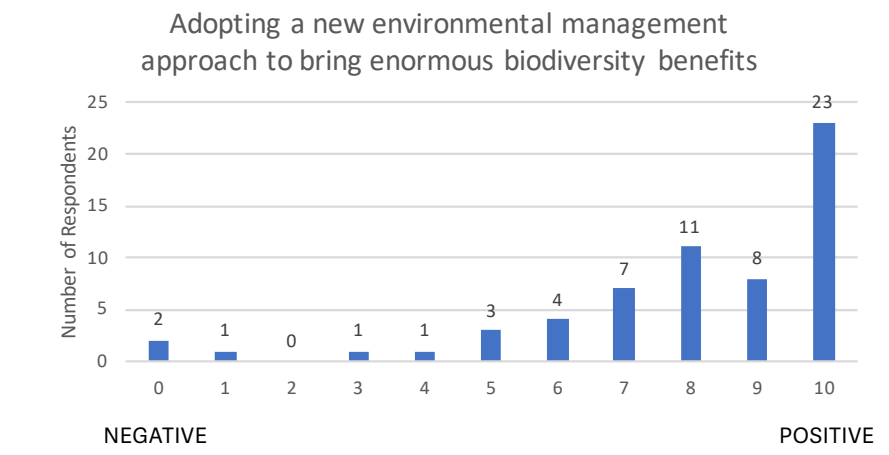
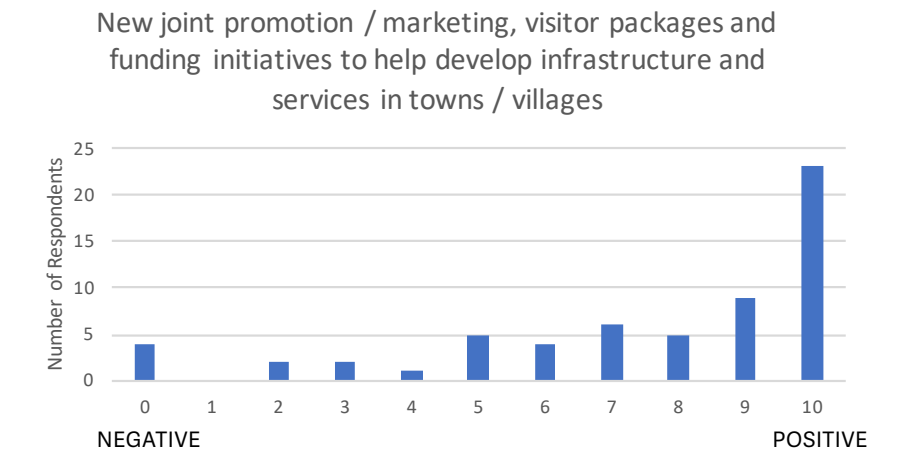
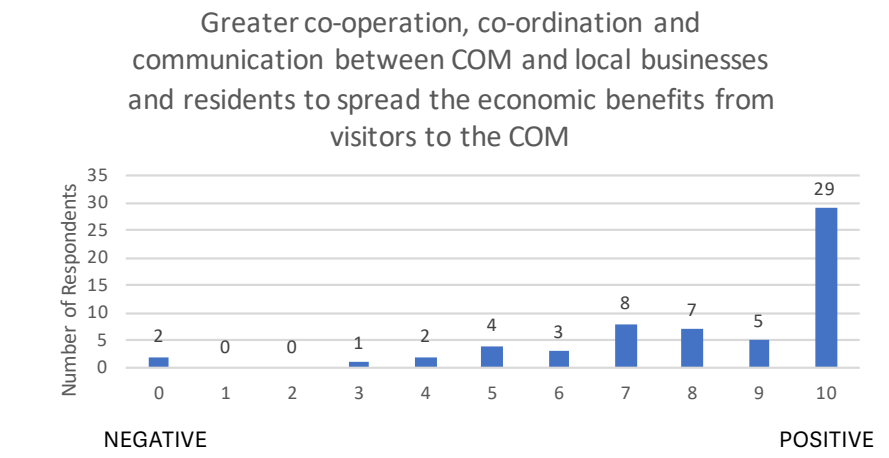
Neutral (rating 5)

Positive (rating 6-10)

Strategic Initiative / Site Masterplan Proposal	Response		
	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Greater cooperation, coordination and communication between Cliffs of Moher and local businesses and residents to spread the economic benefits from visitors to the Cliffs of Moher.	7%	6%	87%
Adopting a new environmental management approach to bring enormous biodiversity benefits.	9%	5%	86%
New joint promotion / marketing, visitor packages and funding initiatives to help develop infrastructure and services in towns / villages.	9%	8%	83%
Maintaining and enhancing Cliffs of Moher's premier market position by creating a wilder, back to nature experience .	10%	12%	78%
Creating a larger site, with a sensitive network of paths, to allow visitors to disperse more widely and reduce erosion.	20%	6%	74%
Providing park and ride hubs and a shuttle system to significantly reduce traffic congestion for residents.	19%	8%	73%
Developing new cliff-edge viewing platforms to provide safe experiences for visitors and reduce site erosion.	21%	6%	73%
Consolidating all arrival, welcome and support facilities to the east of the R478 – allowing the Cliff side of the road to be returned to a natural habitat.	20%	9%	71%
Repurposing the existing visitor centre to create a viewing atrium with interpretation / education facilities.	22%	7%	71%
New proactive transport management / enforcement.	19%	12%	69%
Restoring the existing coach park and waste water treatment areas to natural habitat.	19%	12%	69%
Developing a new pedestrian footbridge over the R478 to provide easy elevated access to the site for visitors and avoid causing traffic queues.	25%	7%	68%
Reducing coach numbers at peak times.	17%	16%	67%
Greater proactive management and pre-booking for all visitors and limiting numbers at peak times.	24%	14%	62%
Developing a new access gateway building.	37%	19%	44%

## Economic Initiatives

These graphs show the emphatic levels of positive support (ratings 6-10) for the proposed economic initiatives with the local towns, villages and businesses, a new environmental approach and developing the tourism and visitor experience.



## CONSULTATION / SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

### KEY CONCERNS

#### Business and Community Groups

The potential negative impacts of traffic disruption, especially size, frequency and volume of large coaches.

The need to realise greater economic benefits through enhanced coordination and relationships, including the need for the Cliffs of Moher to be “a better neighbour”.

Ensuring investment in general infrastructure in towns / villages so that it can cope with increased visitor numbers.

#### Residents

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

#### Previous Visitors

The key concerns relating to the Cliffs of Moher for previous visitors were physical damage caused to the cliff-edge by high visitor numbers and threats to flora and fauna.

### KEY OPPORTUNITIES

#### Business and Community Groups

Overall, business organisations and community groups welcomed the key strategic initiatives and for the site masterplan proposals relating to the future development of the Cliffs of Moher. There was support for developing a sustainable strategy for the Cliffs of Moher, underpinned by commitments to responsible and sustainable tourism. This will involve protecting, preserving and enhancing the Cliffs of Moher site and visitor experience alongside equally tangible benefits for the North Clare region.

They highlighted the importance of the Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy to be integrated with the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark, the Coastal Path, the proposed West Clare Railway Greenway project and the wider social, cultural and economic activities of communities across North Clare. Furthermore, clear goals and measurable targets must be set for the Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy and its delivery must be done in close collaboration with the host communities. Greater transparency and new partnerships must be at the heart of this ongoing engagement process.

#### Residents and Previous Visitors

The responses of local residents and previous visitors showed strong positive support for all of the key strategic initiatives and for the site masterplan proposals relating to the future development of the Cliffs of Moher.

Almost all the individual initiatives and proposals received positive ratings from around 70% of all respondents.

There were emphatic levels of positive support for:

- The proposed economic initiatives with the local towns, villages and businesses
- A new environmental approach
- Developing the tourism / visitor experience.

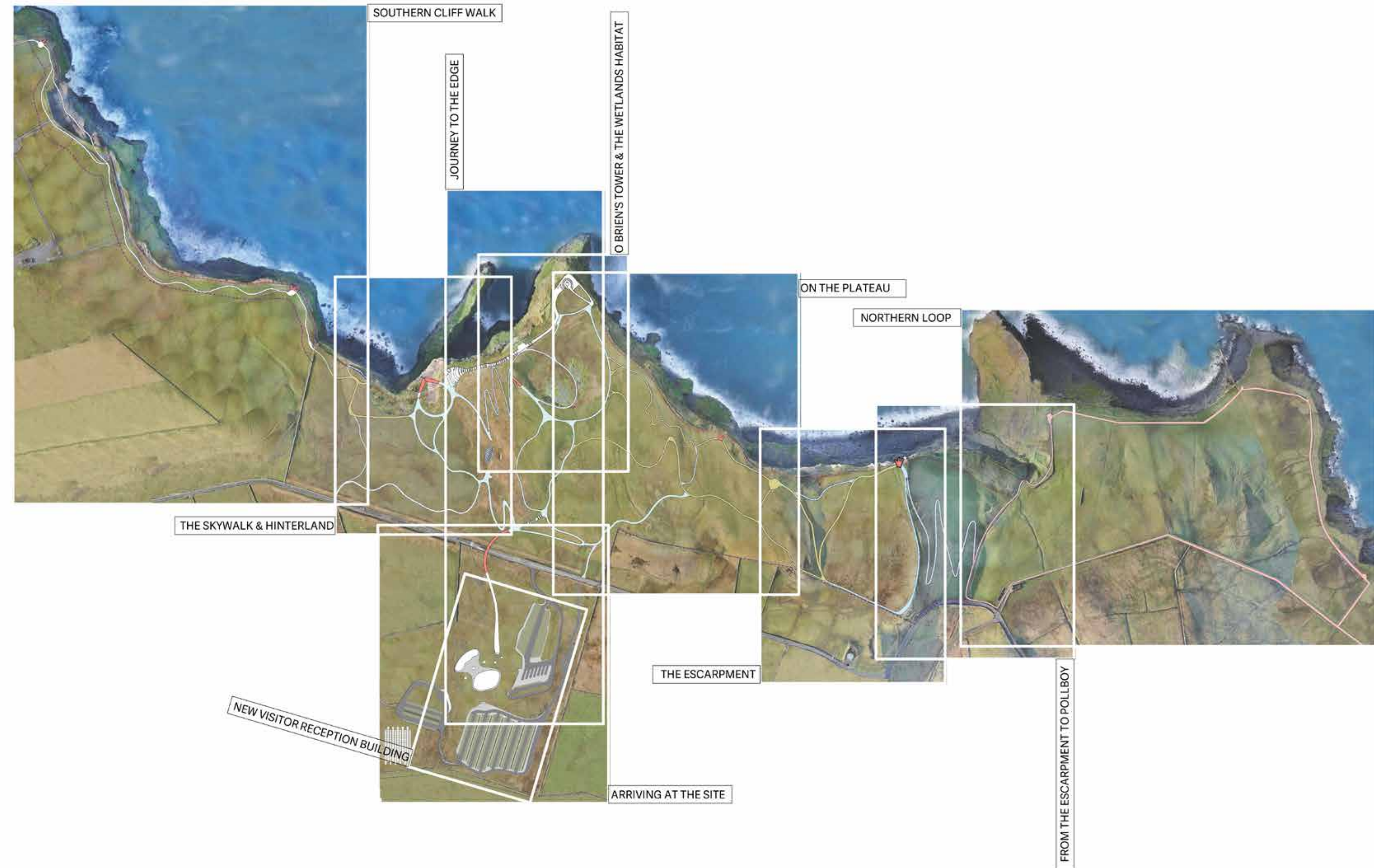


**THE HIGHEST-RATED POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT WERE A SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT SYSTEM FOR ACCESS TO THE CLIFFS OF MOHER AND AROUND COUNTY CLARE, AND ENHANCING THE QUALITIES OF THE CLIFFS OF MOHER'S ENVIRONMENT, FLORA AND FAUNA.**





# SECTION 5: SITE MASTERPLAN



## SITE MASTERPLAN / OVERVIEW



# SITE MASTERPLAN / REWILDING AN ENLARGED LANDHOLDING

Clare County Council has begun negotiations for the purchase or leasing of an extended landholding to facilitate an improved visitor experience. This strategy presents a unique opportunity to enhance the biodiversity value and aesthetic appeal of the site through “rewilding” of the landscape.

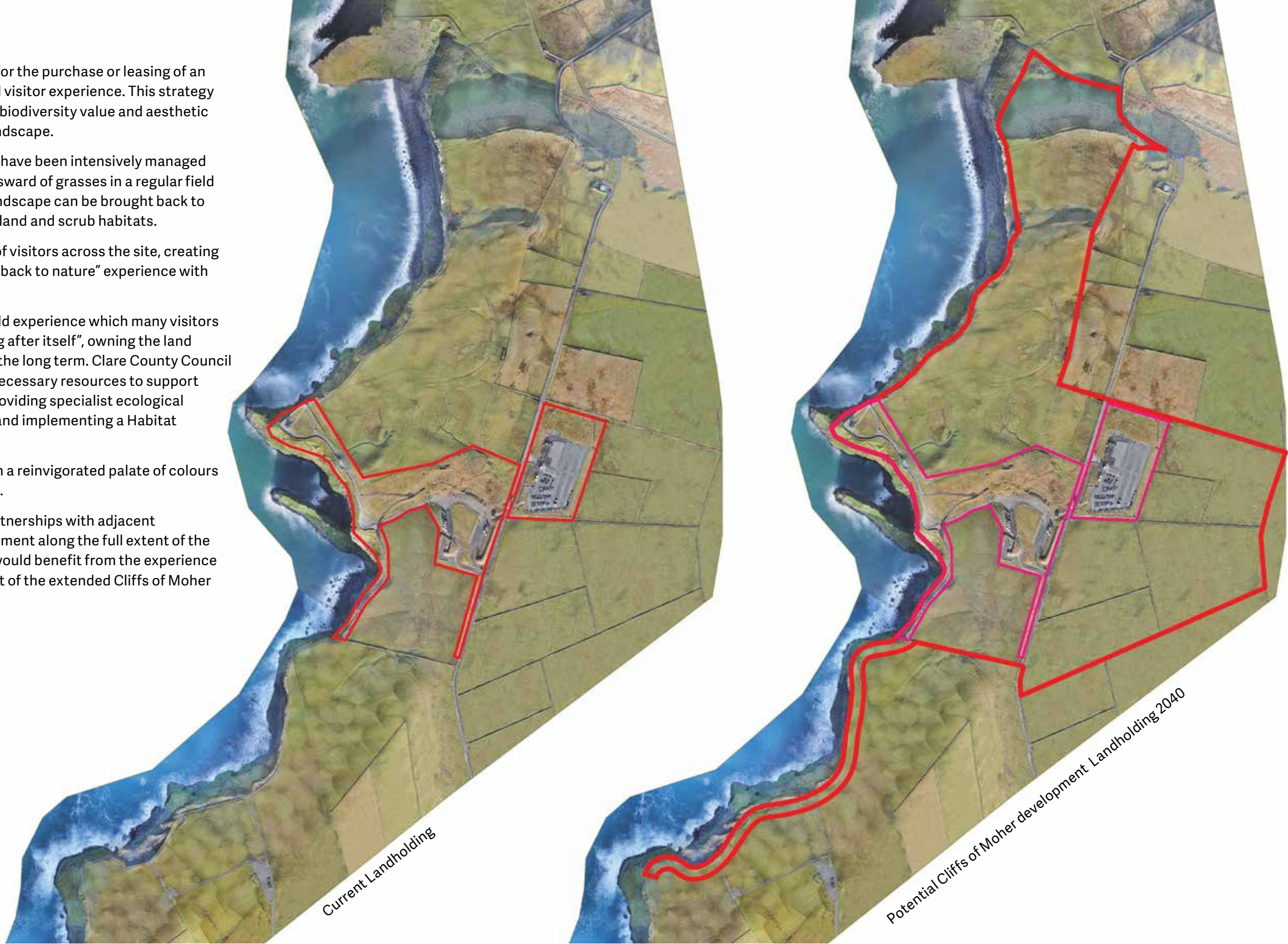
The existing agricultural grasslands at the site have been intensively managed for many years, producing a resultant uniform sward of grasses in a regular field system. With appropriate management, the landscape can be brought back to a naturally variable mosaic of grassland, heathland and scrub habitats.

The approach will also facilitate the dispersal of visitors across the site, creating more space and opportunities for an intimate “back to nature” experience with the cliffs.

A key attraction of the Cliffs of Moher is the wild experience which many visitors seek. Whilst natural rewilding is “nature looking after itself”, owning the land comes with obligations and responsibilities in the long term. Clare County Council will provide an ongoing commitment and the necessary resources to support appropriate habitat management, including providing specialist ecological stewardship by an experienced land manager and implementing a Habitat Management Plan.

This habitat management strategy will result in a reinvigorated palate of colours and textures that will change with the seasons.

There are significant opportunities to form partnerships with adjacent landowners to achieve further habitat improvement along the full extent of the coastal walk in the future. Such partnerships would benefit from the experience and expertise accumulated in the management of the extended Cliffs of Moher Experience site.



Colours and textures of the re-wilded landscape



# SITE MASTERPLAN / NEW GATEWAY BUILDING

The new reception building creates a critical threshold between the visitor arriving at the site and entering the site. The building itself screens the visual impact of parked vehicles.

Once visitors have passed into and through the building the visitor will partake of the core visitor experience and leave the world of cars and buses behind.

The building creates a concealed enclosed courtyard at its centre. This protected external space will have a microclimate protected from the winds and will allow outdoor activities to develop that are not currently possible at the site. This outdoor space will facilitate an extension of the restaurant and retail on peaks days.

The restaurant has an external patio that enjoys views of the western landscape.

Facilities at the new reception building include:

**Ground Floor**

- 400-450 m2 restaurant and cafe
- 350-400 m2 retail
- Visitor "lounge" area 80m2
- Two WCs
- Office
- Education space/reception
- First aid and sanitation
- Coach drivers' facilities

- Retail kiosks

**Lower Floor**

- Restaurant kitchen, prep and storage
- Storage for retail
- Administration offices
- Admin storage
- Equipment storage
- Staff welfare
- Plant

The anticipated net building area will extend to circa 3300 m2.



Reception building - aerial view of courtyard



Reception building - courtyard



Courtyard material quality

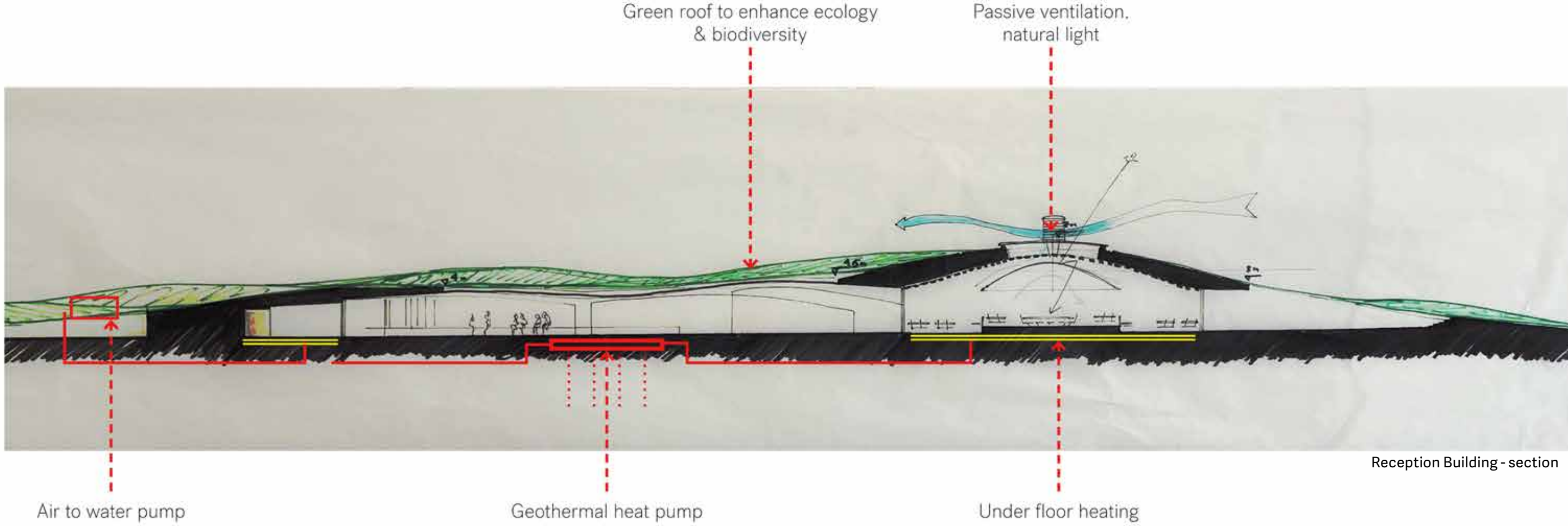


Reception area - covered entrance to courtyard

**SITE MASTERPLAN / NEW GATEWAY BUILDING**



Aerial view over reception building to Liscannor



Reception building - internal space with view to courtyard



Site access - looking back towards reception building



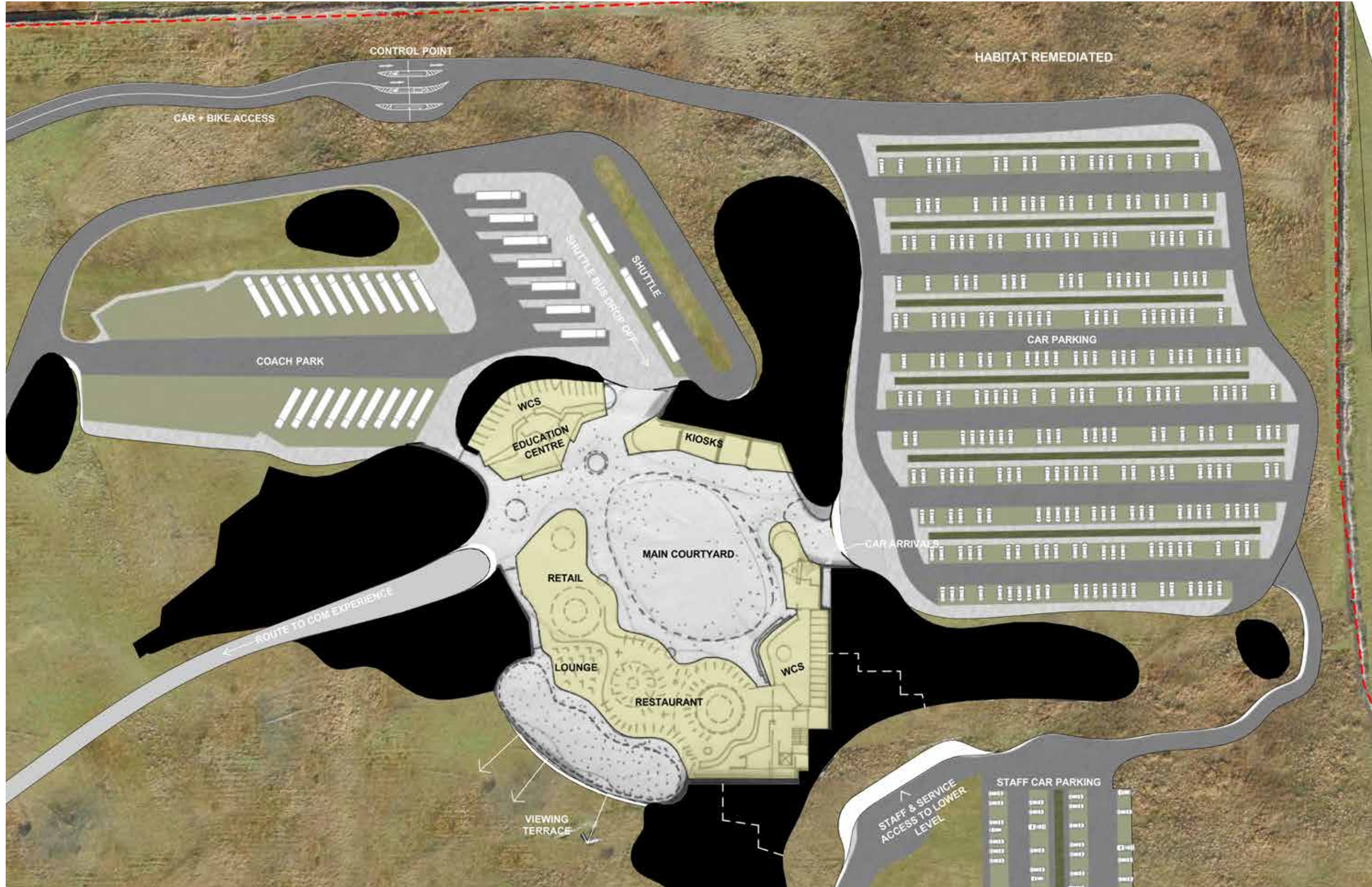
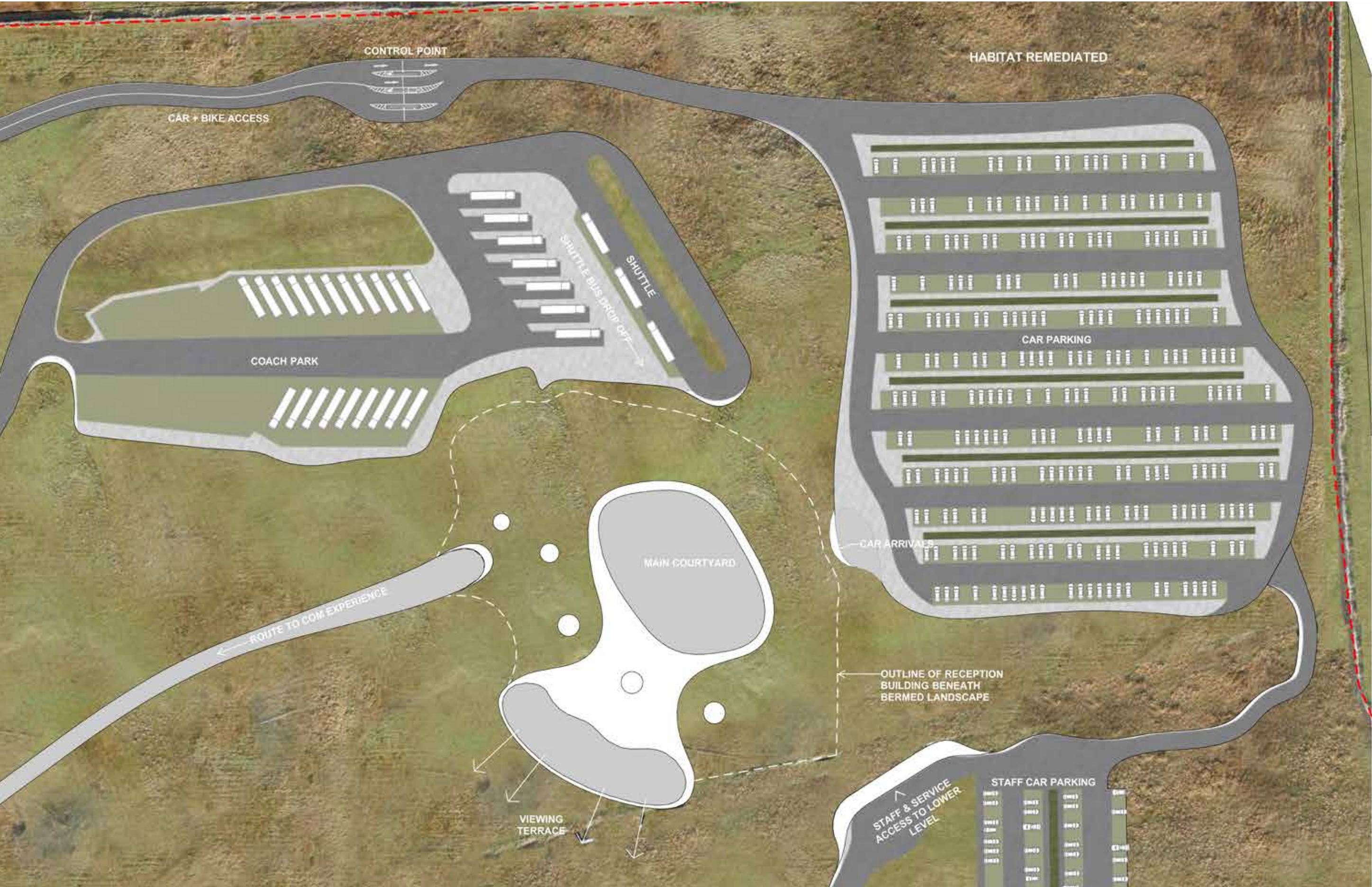
Reception building - relationship between courtyard and terrace

## SITE MASTERPLAN / NEW GATEWAY BUILDING

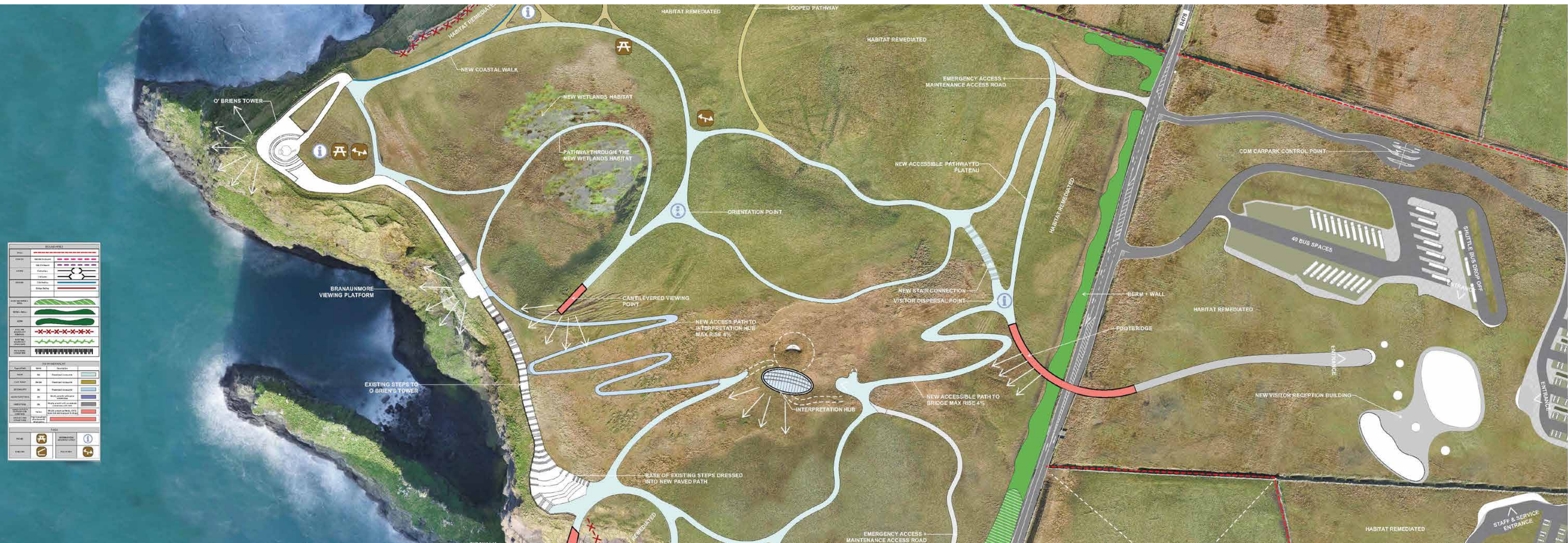


Reception building - internal space with view to external patio and Liscannor

# SITE MASTERPLAN / NEW RECEPTION BUILDING



# SITE MASTERPLAN / JOURNEY TO THE EDGE



BOUNDARIES	
Site	Site Boundary
Water	Water Boundary
Access	Access Boundary
Structure	Structure Boundary
Other	Other Boundary
PAVEMENTS	
Asphalt	Asphalt
Gravel	Gravel
Concrete	Concrete
Grass	Grass
Other	Other
FACILITIES	
Information	Information
Accessibility	Accessibility
Other	Other
TAGS	
PCN	PCN
Other	Other

# SITE MASTERPLAN / JOURNEY TO THE EDGE

The Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy has identified in earlier chapters that the current arrangement of how the visitor reaches the cliffs is underwhelming. The masterplan sets out a spatial arrangement to create an increased sense of anticipation with a slower reveal of the primary attraction. This is achieved in several steps:

**Step 1:** The new reception building creates a critical threshold between the visitor arriving at the site and entering the site. The building itself screens the visual impact of parked cars and buses.

**Step 2:** On leaving the new reception building, the visitor emerges from the bermed landscape to enjoy a panoramic view of the southern cliffs and the landscape through to Liscannor, and the northern plateau. Further on, the visitors continue to enjoy this broad view as they are lifted over the R478 by a footbridge connecting to the landscape north of the current visitor centre.

**Step 3:** Where the footbridge lands on the northern plateau, the visitor arrives at a three-way fork in the pathway. At this point, the masterplan foresees interpretative signage inviting the visitors to disperse into the landscape.

**Step 4:** From this dispersal point, the primary route is to climb the steps facing you and rise over the back of the plateau. On this path, the visitor remains in the wind shadow of the hill and the cliff views for now are obscured. As visitors crest over the top of the hill, the wide expanse of the Cliffs of Moher Experience is slowly revealed. This theatrical reveal is a critical moment for the visitor.

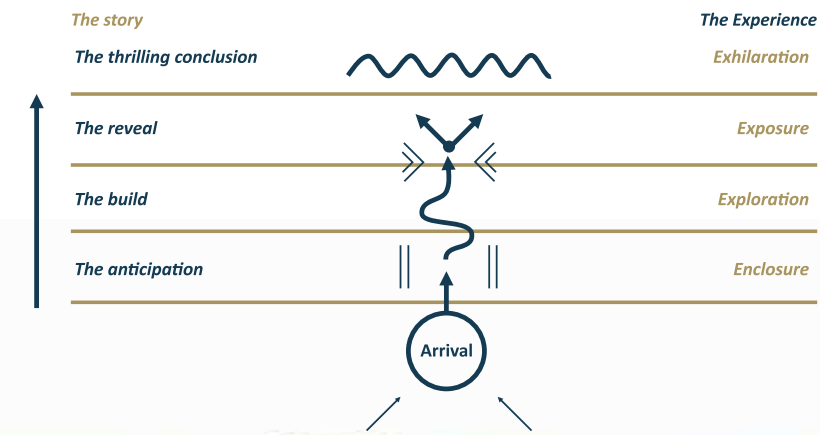
**Step 4a:** From the dispersal point, a pathway to the right will take you up the hill for the same experience. This route has been designed for the less able visitor to avoid the steps. The rise here is never more than 4%.

**Step 4b:** From the dispersal point, a route to the left gives visitors access to the southern landscape, the skywalk and the interpretation hub. This will be the return route for many visitors.

**Step 5:** Having crested the hill, the visitor arrives at a second dispersal point which will offer several further alternative routes.

**Step 6:** For most visitors, the initial arrival sequence onto the site will end at a new cantilever point with panoramic views in all directions. At this point, the visitor has the first "edge of the world" experiences. However, there is more to be revealed and explored as the visitor has still not reached the edge.

**Step 7:** The visitor can now enjoy a 360-degree overview of the site and see the various options that they may wish to explore. For example, they may travel over the wetland habitat to O'Brien's Tower, hook left for the skywalk and return by the interpretation hub, or head north to explore the plateau landscape that is demarcated by the landmarks in the distance.



Site access - exiting reception building



Site access - walking towards footbridge



Site access - view from footbridge

**SITE MASTERPLAN / JOURNEY TO THE EDGE**



# SITE MASTERPLAN / JOURNEY TO THE EDGE



Site access - visitor dispersal



Site access - View looking back from steps



Northern landscape



View over rewilded wetlands

Viewing point - cantilever



# SITE MASTERPLAN / THE SKYWALK AND HINTERLAND

The stone ledge in front of the existing visitor centre has long been the focus of activity for visitors to the Cliffs of Moher. In the 19th century, Cornelius O'Brien built an iron and stone picnic table at this location. The ledge also is of particular interest to geologists as there have been fossil finds at the location. In recent years, access to the ledge has been restricted to better manage the safety of visitors.

The masterplan proposes the construction of a double cantilever at this location to bring the visitor out to experience the cliff-edge. Visitors also have an excellent vantage point to enjoy a view of the southern headlands from this location. Within the circle of the skywalk, the topsoil will be removed to expose more of the clifftop ledge as a geological exhibition.

Interpretative signage and rest/picnic opportunities will be provided as indicated.



Skywalk



**SITE MASTERPLAN / THE SKYWALK AND HINTERLAND**



# SITE MASTERPLAN / THE INTERPRETATION HUB

The masterplan foresees a revised role for the existing visitor centre in the new arrangement of the Cliffs of Moher Experience. With the emphasis of the visitor activity adjusted further north to the plateau, the current building will no longer be at the centre of the project, with many primary visitor functions being provided in the new reception building.

This shift will significantly reduce the pressure on this building and allow it to provide an alternative role in the visitor experience. The building will be reorganised to be an interpretation hub, which will focus on providing an updated interpretative exhibition with additional facilities for education and groups.

The building will continue to play an important role in offering shelter in inclement weather and it will maintain a seasonal café, the kitchen support for which will be in the new reception building.

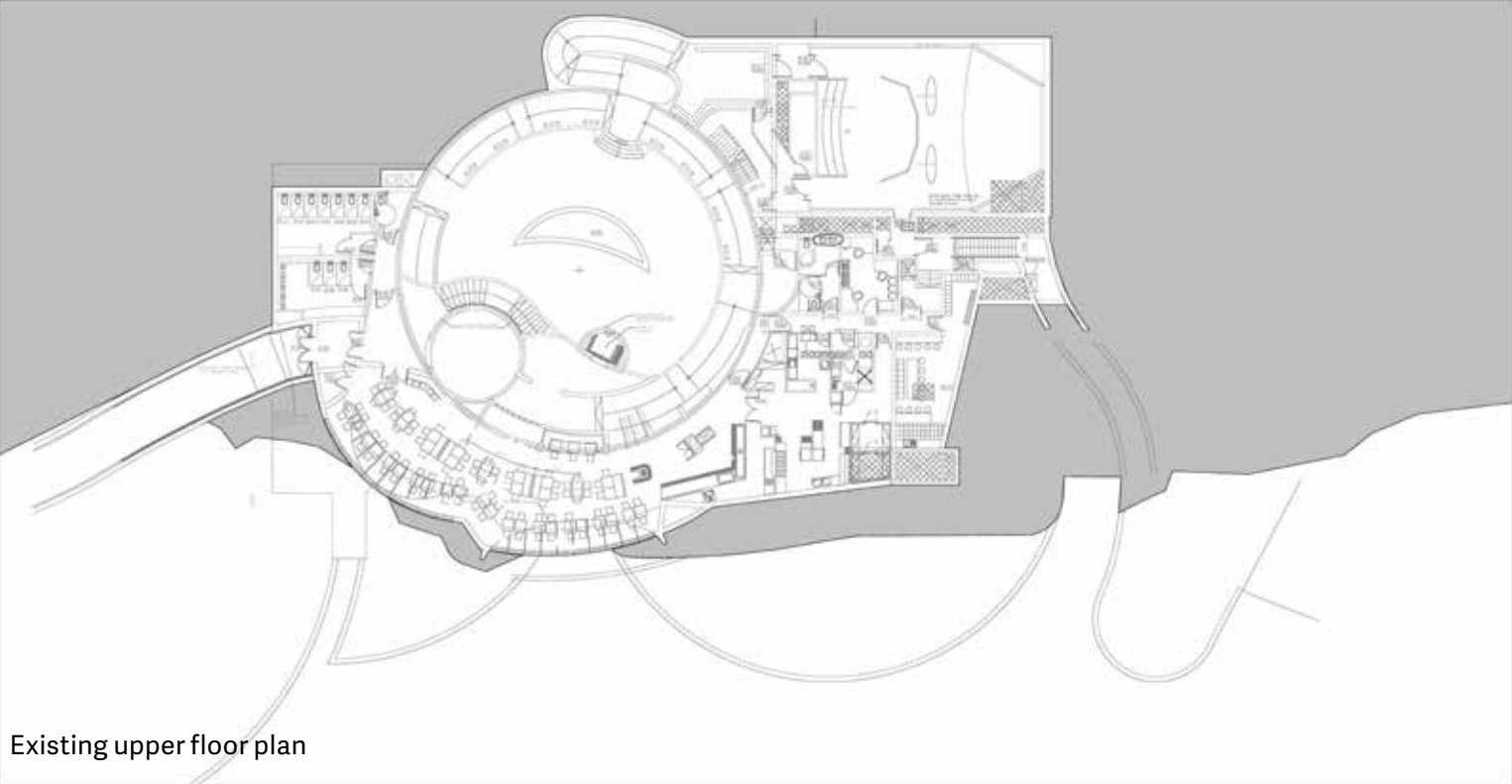
Vehicular traffic needed to sustain activities at the building will be minimised and a significant reduction in hard landscaping around the building can therefore be achieved, in keeping with the ambition to rewild as much of the landscape as possible.

The revised facilities at the interpretation hub include:

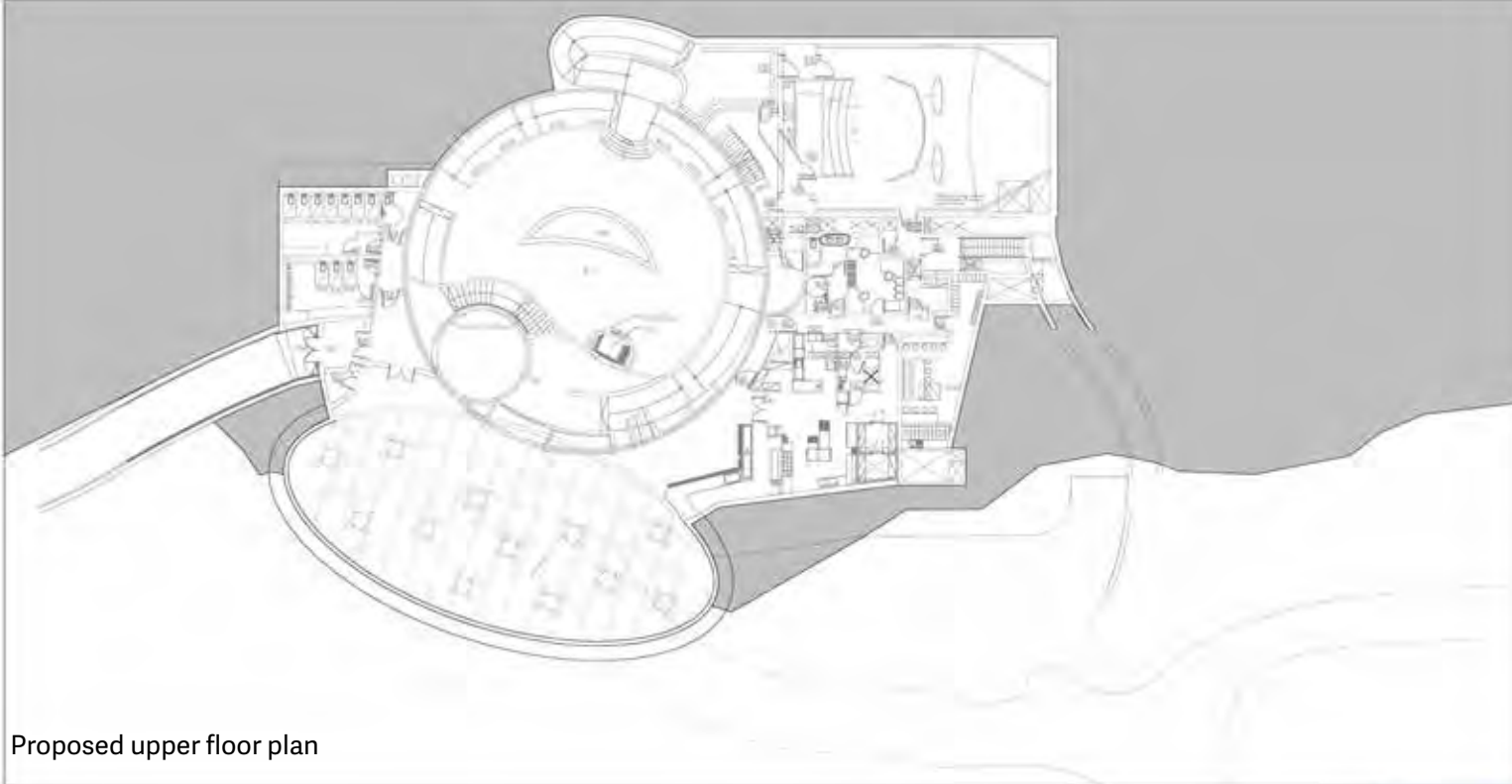
- Ground Floor**
- Entrance lobby (with adjusted lobby/entry).
- Interpretation exhibition in main domed space.
- Audio-visual projection in rear interpretation space.
- Café and retail repurposed as education spaces.
- Current WC will suffice due to lower demand.
- Relocation of back-of-house administration facilities to the new reception building.

- Upper Floor**
- Enlarged café with panorama view.

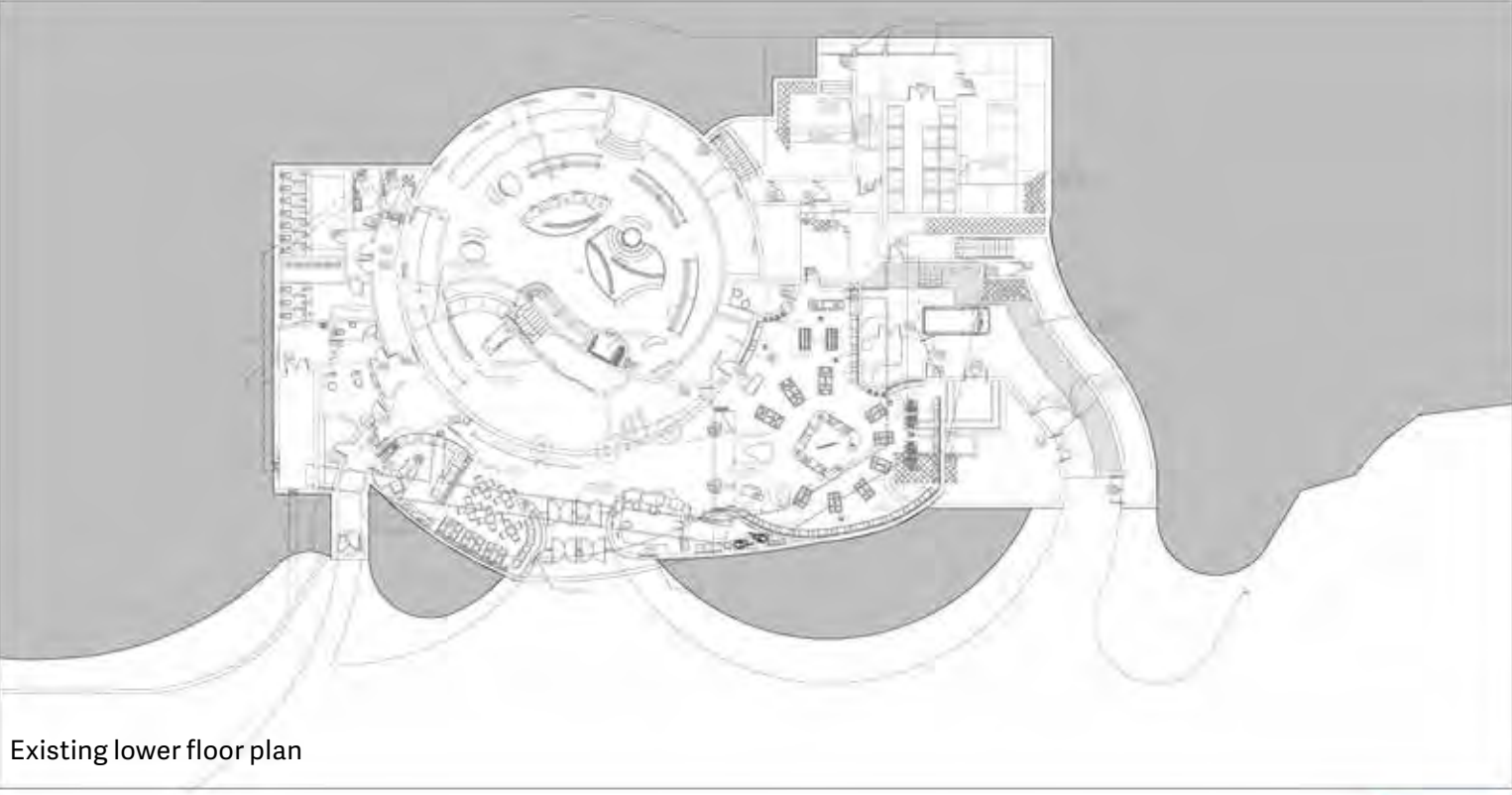
The anticipated net building area will extend to c. 2700 m2



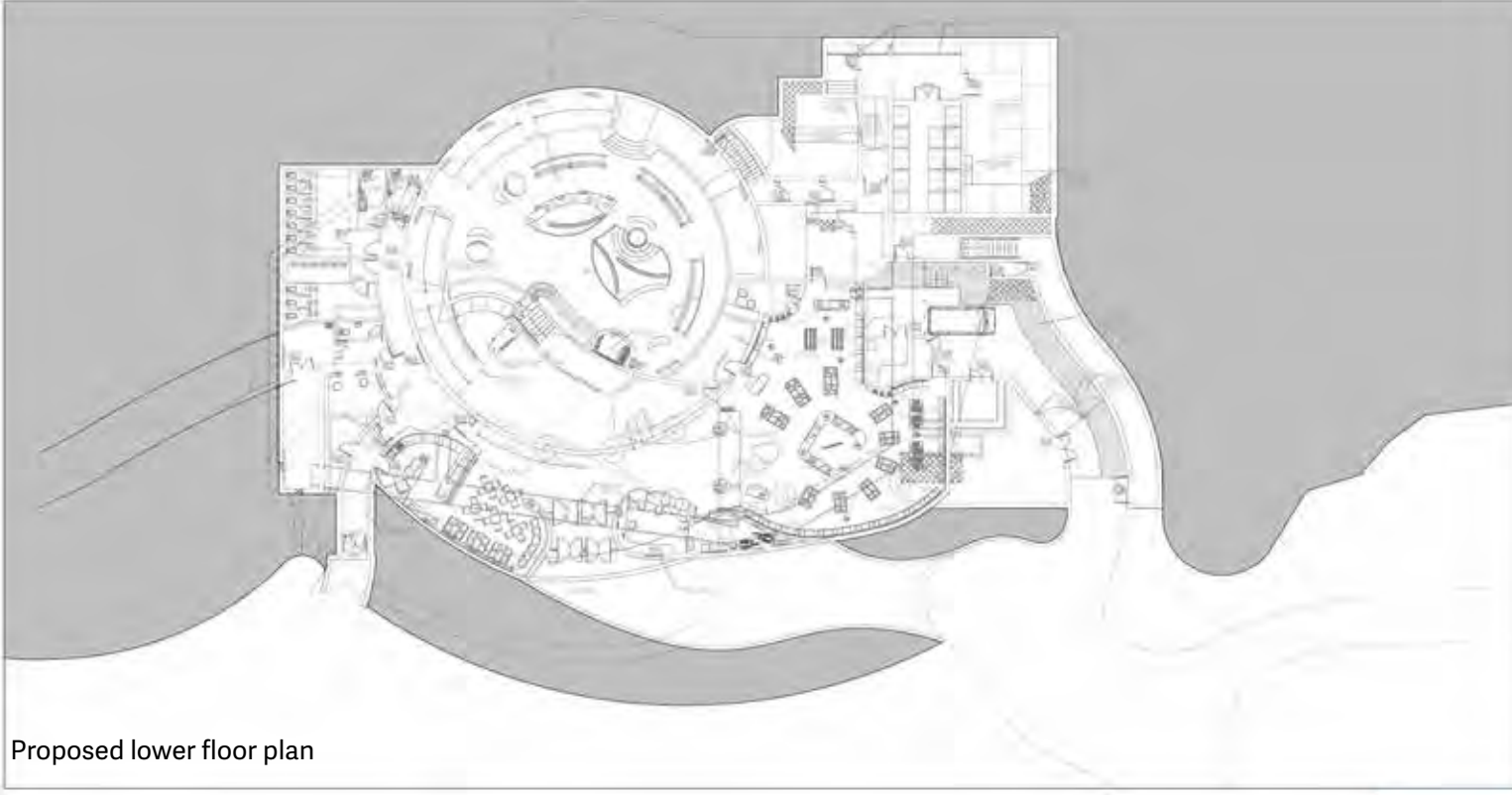
Existing upper floor plan



Proposed upper floor plan



Existing lower floor plan



Proposed lower floor plan



# SITE MASTERPLAN / ON THE PLATEAU



View north on the plateau



View south on the plateau



View south from trigonometry feature

Between O'Brien's Tower and the escarpment is an elevated plateau landscape that enjoys dramatic panoramic viewing opportunities. From various locations in this landscape, the visitor can engage with views of the southern cliff headlands, views to Liscannor and Lahinch, views inland (eastward) and views to the Burren and North Clare from the trigonometry point.

Instead of the visitor experience being constricted to the current narrow clifftop walk, a new landscape of looped walkways offers more options to navigate through the habitats. Looped walking routes of varying distance and duration can therefore be offered to visitors, based on their fitness level and willingness to engage with the climate. On busy days the routes can be organised into a one-way system, if necessary.

Moving north from O'Brien's Tower, an analysis of the stability of the current clifftop walk has identified where this is unstable. A new cliff-edge walk will be created further inland, allowing habitat remediation at the clifftop to be carried out where it is most critical for seabird foraging. Moving the cliff walk inland is not detrimental to the visitor's ability to maintain a view of the cliffs as the topography is higher inland than at the cliff-edge. However, the masterplan does foresee the construction of some engineered viewing platforms to bring the visitor back to the edge where views are particularly dramatic.

The trigonometry point will be developed as a primary "destination" point in the landscape with the addition of a significant sculptural feature and viewing platform. A sculpture at this location will create a marker in the landscape that will allow the Cliffs of Moher site to be identified from the wider hinterland.

The landscape between the pathways will be rewilded and developed as an optimal foraging habitat for seabirds. A dedicated Habitats Management Plan is being prepared to address this issue in detail.

Interpretative signage and rest/picnic opportunities will be provided as indicated.

BOUNDARIES	
WALL	[Red dashed line]
FENCE	Hard Fencing
	Soft Fencing
GATE	Hard Gate
	Soft Gate
ROAD	Cliff Edge
	Other Road
EXISTENTIAL WALL	
STONE WALL	
WALL	
EXISTING BOUNDARY	
EXISTING BOUNDARY	
EXISTENTIAL CORRIDOR	

PATH HIERARCHY		
Type of Path	Width	Description
WALK	3m	Hard surface
CLIFF WALK	3m	Hard surface
WALKWAY	3m	Hard surface
WALKWAY	3m	Hard surface
WALKWAY	3m	Hard surface
WALKWAY	3m	Hard surface
WALKWAY	3m	Hard surface
WALKWAY	3m	Hard surface
WALKWAY	3m	Hard surface
WALKWAY	3m	Hard surface

TAGS	
PICTURE	INFORMATION
WHEELCHAIR	PLAY AREA





# SITE MASTERPLAN / FROM THE ESCARPMENT TO POLLBOY



The escarpment at the northern perimeter of the plateau is a natural elevated position from which visitors may enjoy dramatic cliff views. Views north to the Burren and North Clare from this location will give visitors a better understanding of the wider geographical context.

At the Cliff of the Foals, an engineered cantilevered platform will be constructed to provide a safer opportunity to enjoy this particularly dramatic view.

Additional routes from the escarpment to the Pollboy lookout will be developed to provide easier access for walkers with additional pathways constructed to have less than 6% rise.

The viewing point at Pollboy offers an exceptional visitor experience as it is lower than the cliffs to the south and allows the visitor a vantage point of the cliff structure and the bird life that is unavailable elsewhere.

The cliff-edge walkway will be moved back to improve visitor safety and the clifftop foraging habitat for seabirds.

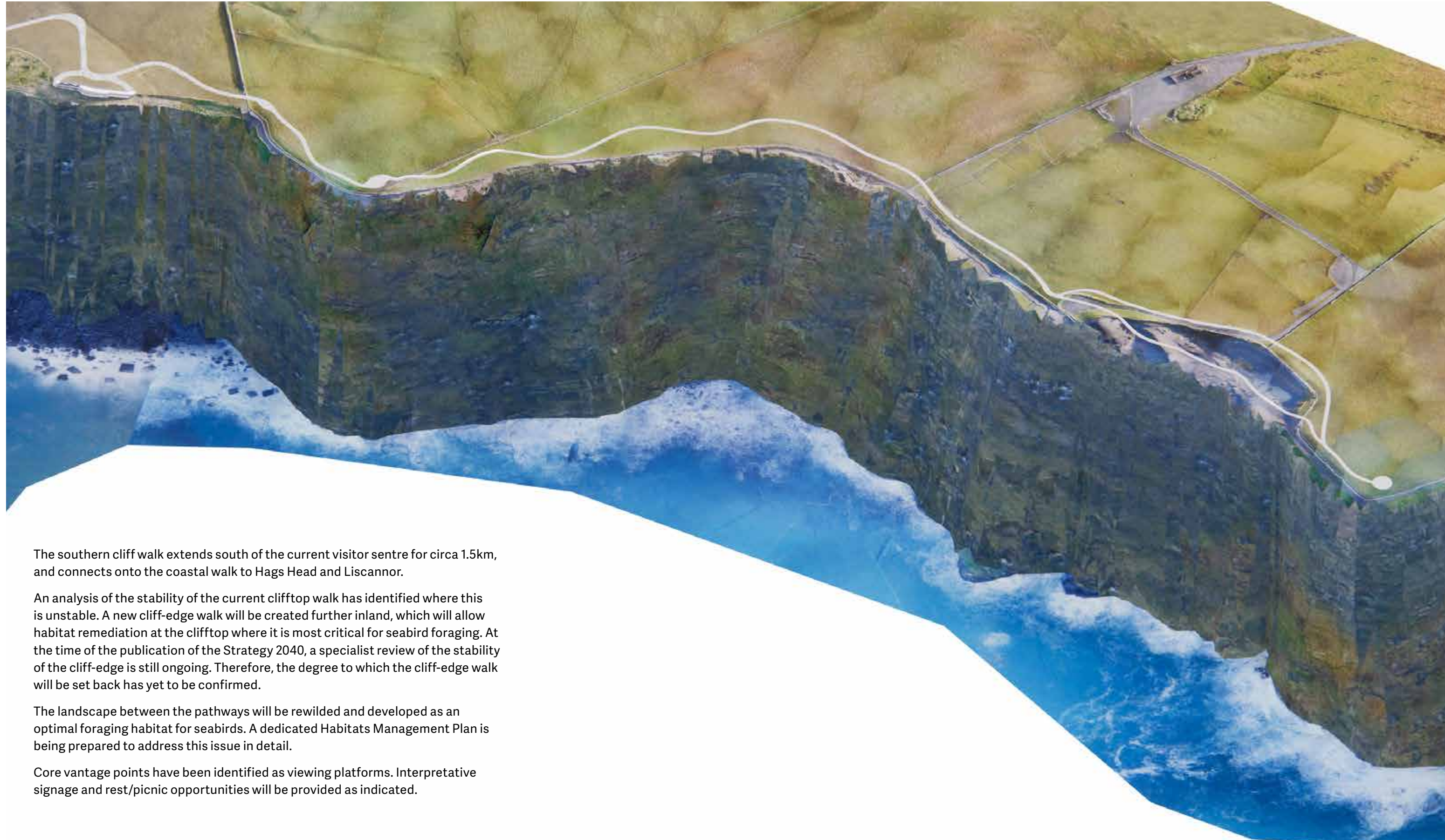
Where the coastal path engages with the R478 road, access will be provided for emergency services.

Interpretative signage and rest/picnic opportunities will be provided as indicated.





# SITE MASTERPLAN / SOUTHERN CLIFF WALK



The southern cliff walk extends south of the current visitor centre for circa 1.5km, and connects onto the coastal walk to Hags Head and Liscannor.

An analysis of the stability of the current cliff-top walk has identified where this is unstable. A new cliff-edge walk will be created further inland, which will allow habitat remediation at the cliff-top where it is most critical for seabird foraging. At the time of the publication of the Strategy 2040, a specialist review of the stability of the cliff-edge is still ongoing. Therefore, the degree to which the cliff-edge walk will be set back has yet to be confirmed.

The landscape between the pathways will be rewilded and developed as an optimal foraging habitat for seabirds. A dedicated Habitats Management Plan is being prepared to address this issue in detail.

Core vantage points have been identified as viewing platforms. Interpretative signage and rest/picnic opportunities will be provided as indicated.

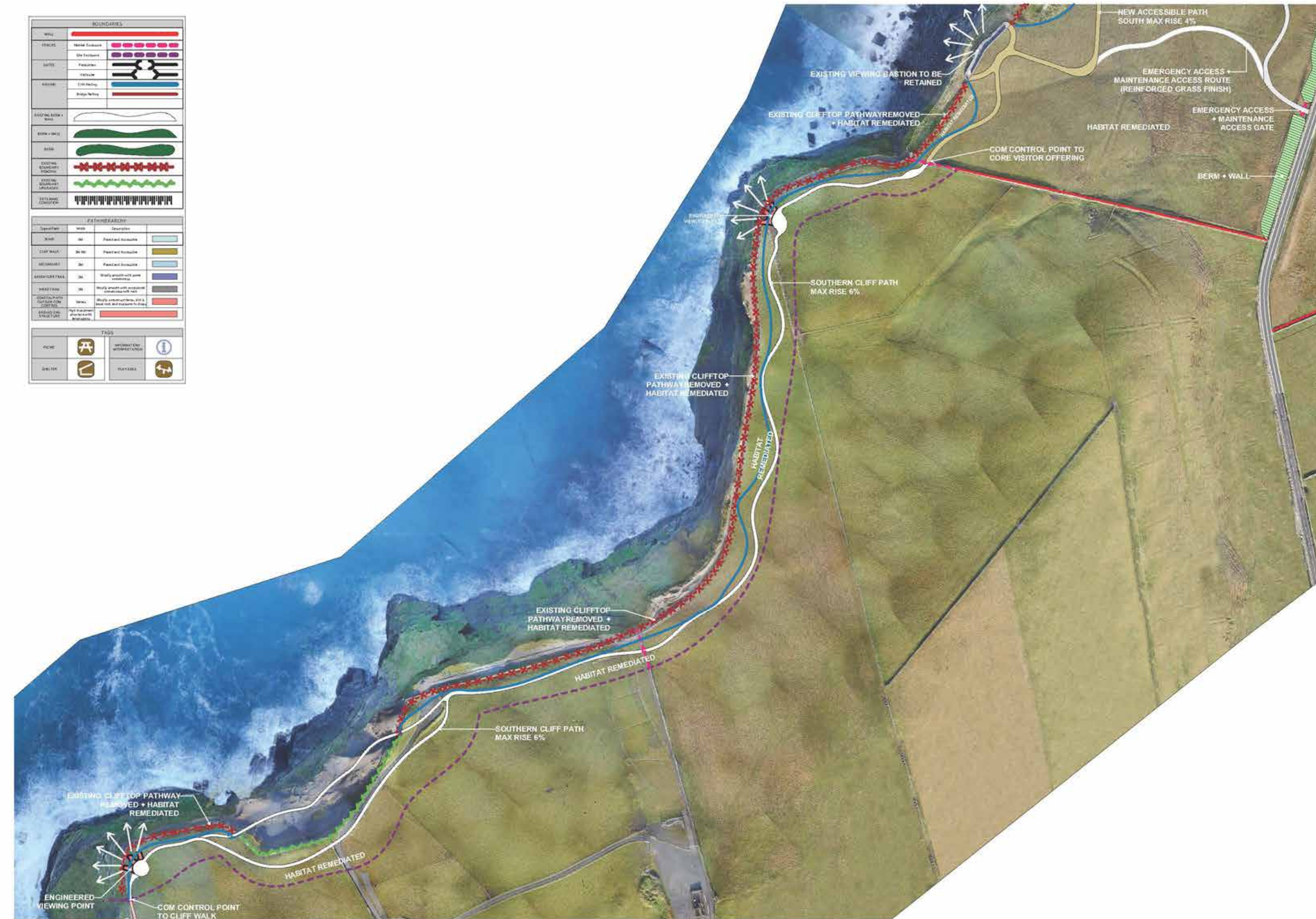
BOUNDARIES	
WALL	Red dashed line
PERMITS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permit Boundary: Red solid line</li> <li>Site Boundary: Purple solid line</li> </ul>
RAILS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perimeter: Black dashed line</li> <li>Footway: Black solid line</li> <li>Cliff Edge: Blue dashed line</li> <li>Bridge Path: Red solid line</li> </ul>
EXISTING PATHWAY	Black dashed line
NEW PATHWAY	Red solid line
EXISTING CLIFFTOP	Red dashed line
NEW CLIFFTOP	Red solid line
EXISTING CLIFFTOP	Red dashed line
NEW CLIFFTOP	Red solid line
EXISTING CLIFFTOP	Red dashed line
NEW CLIFFTOP	Red solid line
EXISTING CLIFFTOP	Red dashed line
NEW CLIFFTOP	Red solid line

PATHWAY	
OPERATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pathway: Red solid line</li> <li>Cliff Walk: Red dashed line</li> <li>Access Road: Red solid line</li> <li>Emergency Access: Red solid line</li> <li>Emergency Maintenance: Red solid line</li> <li>Emergency Gate: Red solid line</li> </ul>
FINISH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pathway: Red solid line</li> <li>Cliff Walk: Red dashed line</li> <li>Access Road: Red solid line</li> <li>Emergency Access: Red solid line</li> <li>Emergency Maintenance: Red solid line</li> <li>Emergency Gate: Red solid line</li> </ul>
FINISH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pathway: Red solid line</li> <li>Cliff Walk: Red dashed line</li> <li>Access Road: Red solid line</li> <li>Emergency Access: Red solid line</li> <li>Emergency Maintenance: Red solid line</li> <li>Emergency Gate: Red solid line</li> </ul>

TAGS	
PICNIC	Blue circle icon
REST	Blue square icon
VIEWING POINT	Blue star icon
EMERGENCY ACCESS	Red square icon
EMERGENCY MAINTENANCE	Red square icon
EMERGENCY GATE	Red square icon



# SITE MASTERPLAN / VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This final chapter of the masterplan sets out to make an assessment of the visual impact of the proposed interventions at the Cliffs of Moher site.

The negative impact of the current arrangement of exposed coach and car parks directly in line of sight of the road and the arriving visitors has been identified in previous chapters.

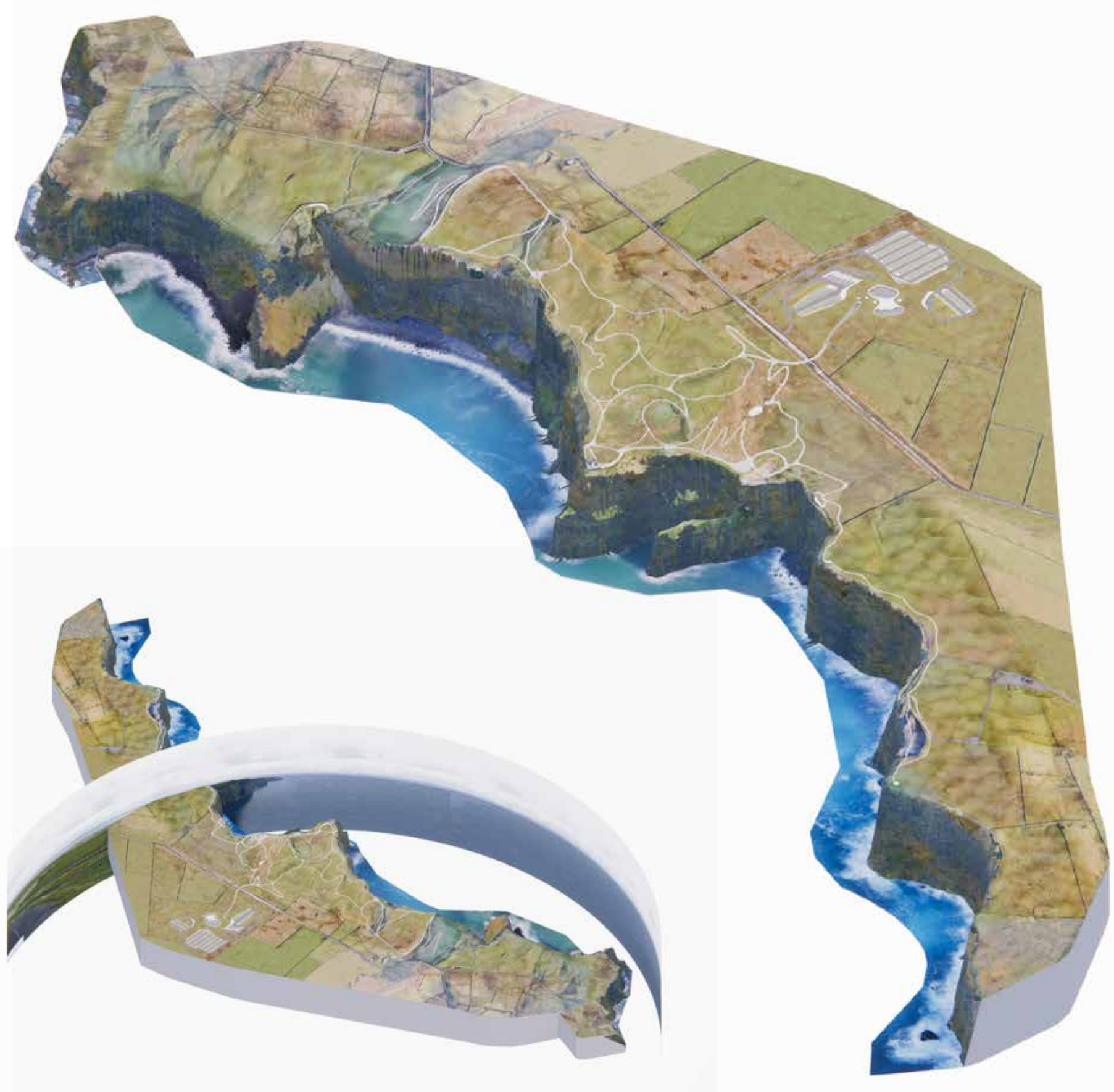
The proposed rewinding of the site will result in subtle seasonal changes in colour in texture of the landscape – it would be difficult to represent this in the masterplan imagery. The impact of the built interventions are, however, easier to assess. An assessment is presented in the following

The masterplan foresees the following reorganisation of the primary infrastructure at the site:

- Removal of the existing car park.
- Removal of the existing coach park.
- Removal of the WWT centre.
- Reduction in paved surfaces on the cliff side of the R478 road.
- Set-back of the new arrival's facilities from the R478.
- Re-organisation and relocation of the arrivals sequence to the east of the R478.
- Manipulation of the topography to screen the impacts of parked cars and coaches to the east of the R478.
- Manipulation of the topography to screen the impacts of the reception building.

The masterplan has carefully calibrated the location and design of the proposed new interventions into the existing topography. Through this approach a significant improvement in the visual impact of the buildings and parking facilities will be achieved, to the benefit of the environment and the visitor experience.

Note: To produce the following images, and most of the previous masterplan images, the whole Cliffs of Moher site was scanned by Lidar photogrammetry and a point cloud model was created to a significant degree of detail. HRA have modelled the new interventions into this base model allowing us to make the following before and after imagery. Images x and x are a collage of a photographic foreground combined with a modelled background. In other views, the distant background was added by collaging photographs with the model as illustrated in the adjacent image. The resulting imagery is therefore precise and represented an accurate representation of the project outcomes.



Existing



Proposed

# SITE MASTERPLAN / VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT



Existing



Proposed

**SITE MASTERPLAN / VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**



Existing



Existing



Proposed



Proposed

**SITE MASTERPLAN / VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**



Existing



Existing



Proposed



Proposed

**SITE MASTERPLAN / VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**



Existing



Proposed



Existing



Proposed

**SITE MASTERPLAN / VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**



Existing



Proposed



Existing



Proposed

## SITE MASTERPLAN / CONSTRUCTION PHASING

CONSTRUCTION PHASE ONE



Two broad development phases are anticipated that will allow for the site to remain open while the construction works are progressing.

In the first phase, the current visitor facilities will remain open and access to the southern pathways will not be affected. Access to O'Brien's Tower and the northern clifftop walk will be retained. The current car park will no longer be available. A small car park within the coach park will facilitate car-borne visitors along with remote car parking and shuttle services at peak times.

Adjacent to this, the construction of the new reception building, car park, coach park, access bridge, and the extended landscape remediation and pathways on the northern plateau can progress.

CONSTRUCTION PHASE 2



In the second phase, the new visitor facilities established in Phase One will be available to maintain a viable visitor product. Once this is fully functioning, a construction precinct can then be isolated for the upgrade of the interpretation hub, construction of the skywalk, removal of the WWT and remediation of the coach park etc.

Further subdivision of the project phasing may emerge over the timeframe of the strategy depending on the availability of funding.

# SECTION 6: SCALED MASTERPLANS

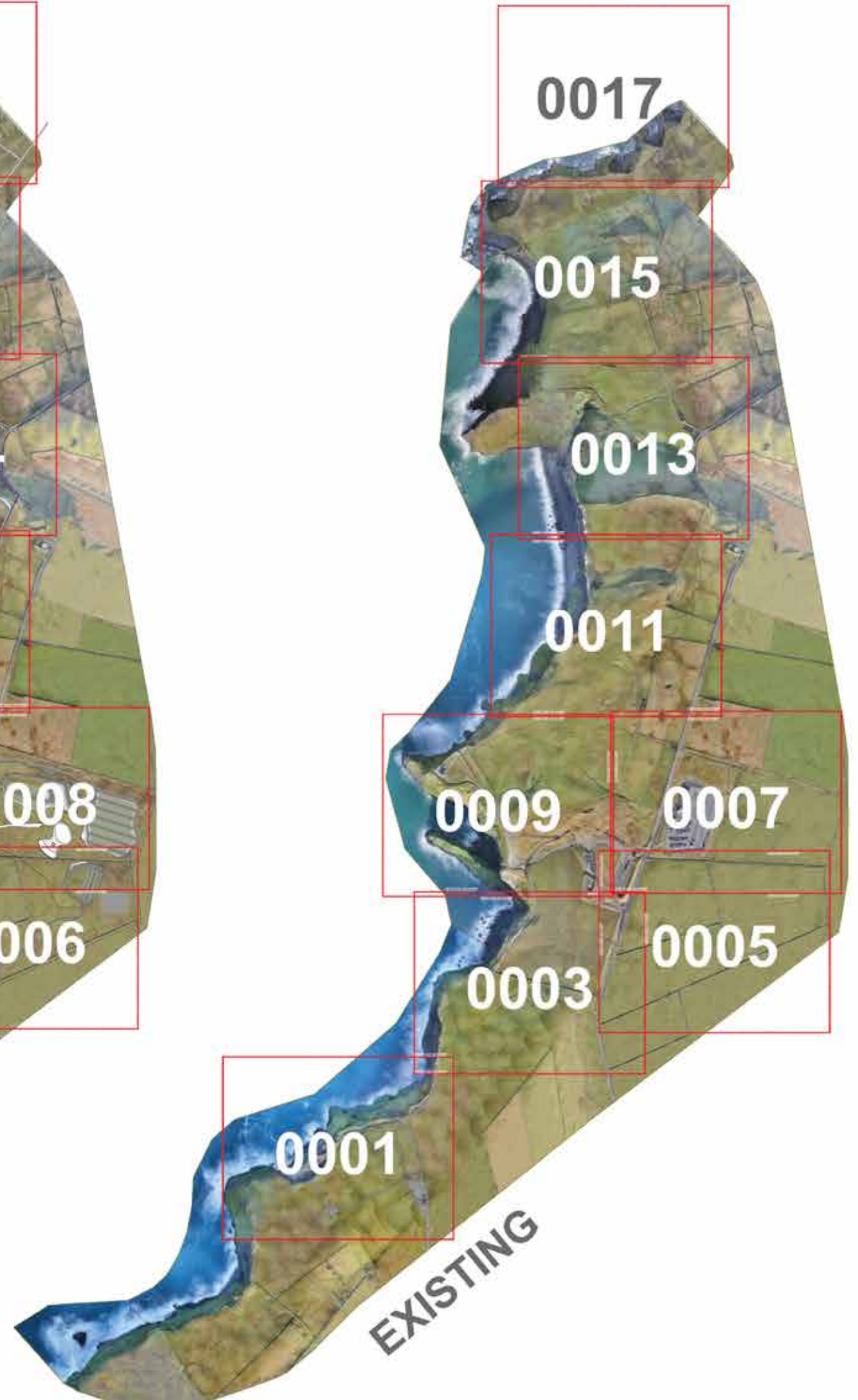
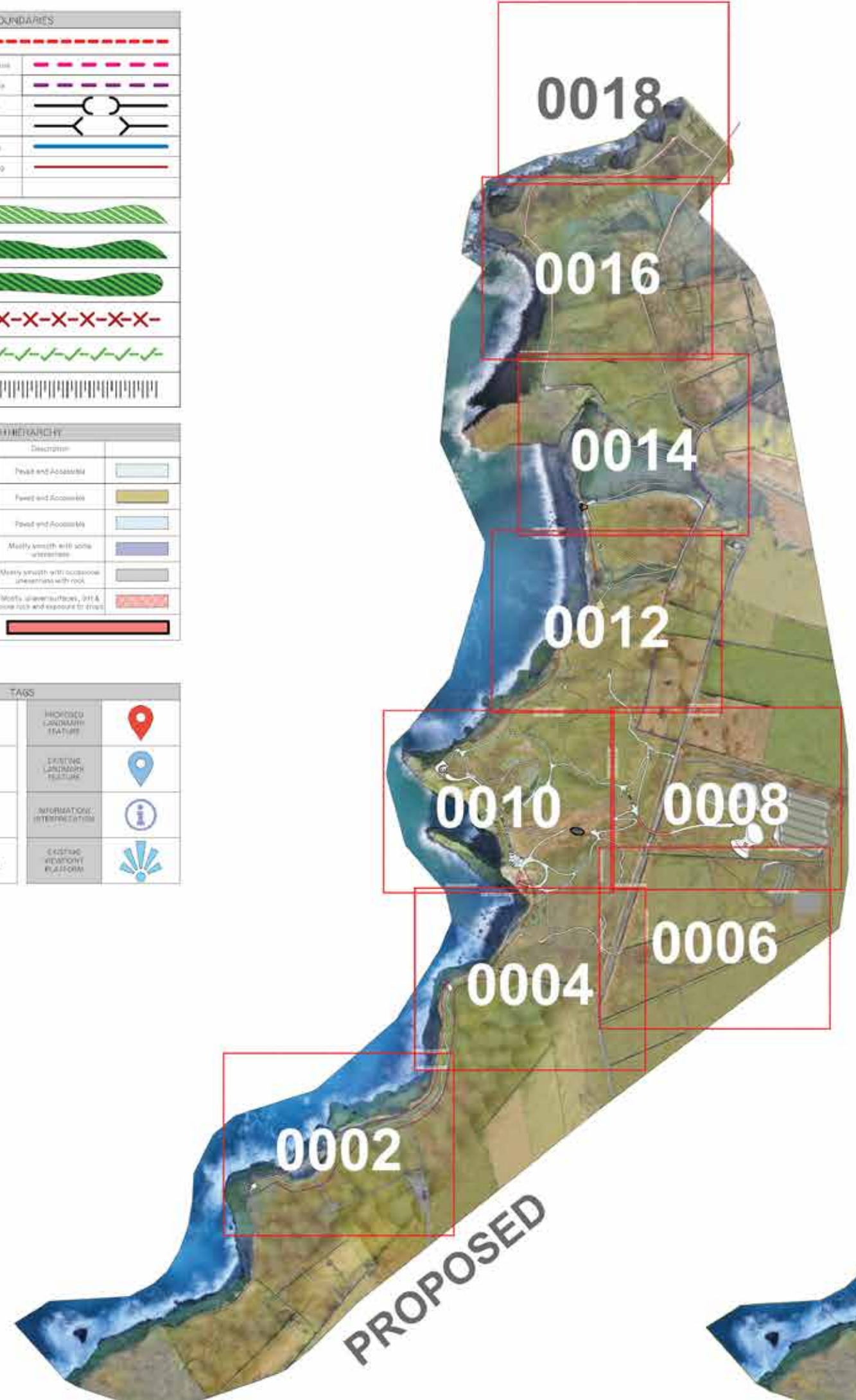
BOUNDARIES			
WALL		---	
FENCES	Harder Distances	---	
	Site Distances	---	
GATES	Hydraman	---	
	Yfocore	---	
RAILING	Off-Railing	---	
	Stake Railing	---	
EXISTING BOUNDARY WALL		---	
BIRD & BALL		---	
BORN		---	
EXISTING BOUNDARY REMOVAL		---	
EXISTING BOUNDARY UPGRADE		---	
RETAINING WALLS		---	

PATH HIERARCHY			
Trail Path	Ways	Description	
MAIN	MP	Fast and Accessible	---
CLUB WALK	MP	Fast and Accessible	---
SECONDARY	MP	Fast and Accessible	---
ADVENTURE TRAIL	MP	Muddy smooth with some unevenness	---
INVERTED	MP	Muddy smooth with occasional unevenness with rock	---
SCALD PAIN OUTSIDE OF STRUCTURE	Other	Muddy uneven surface, with loose rock and exposure to drink	---
PROPOSED STRUCTURE		High resolution structure with irregularities	---

TAGS			
PHONE	📞	PROPOSED LANDMARK FEATURE	📍
WATER	💧	EXISTING LANDMARK FEATURE	📍
PLANTING	🌳	INFORMATIONAL INTERPRETATION	📍
ENCLOSED VISITORS PLATFORM	🏠	EXISTING VISITORS PLATFORM	📍





**MASTERPLAN**

Hanchion + Reuter Architects  
Dublin, Ireland  
Tel: +353 (0)1 454 4140  
E: info@hanchionreuter.com  
www.hanchionreuter.com

**CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
CLIFFS OF MOHER REDEVELOPMENT  
TILE 1 EXISTING - IMAGE  
COM-HRA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0001 / 01  
Scale: 1:750 Date: 16/06/2023  
Format: KM EW MH 594 x 841mm



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Hanchion + Reuter Architects  
Dublin, Ireland  
Tel: +353 (0)1 454 4140  
E: info@hanchionreuter.com  
www.hanchionreuter.com

**CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
CLIFFS OF MOHER REDEVELOPMENT  
TILE 1 PROPOSED - IMAGE  
COM-HRA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0002 / 01  
Scale: 1:750 Date: 16/06/2023  
Format: KM EW MH 594 x 841mm

**LEGEND**

Symbol	Description
[Red dashed line]	Proposed Boundary
[Blue line]	Proposed Path
[Green hatched area]	Proposed Planting
[Red 'X' marks]	Proposed Structures
[Green wavy line]	Proposed Landscaping
[Black wavy line]	Proposed Drainage

**PLANTING**

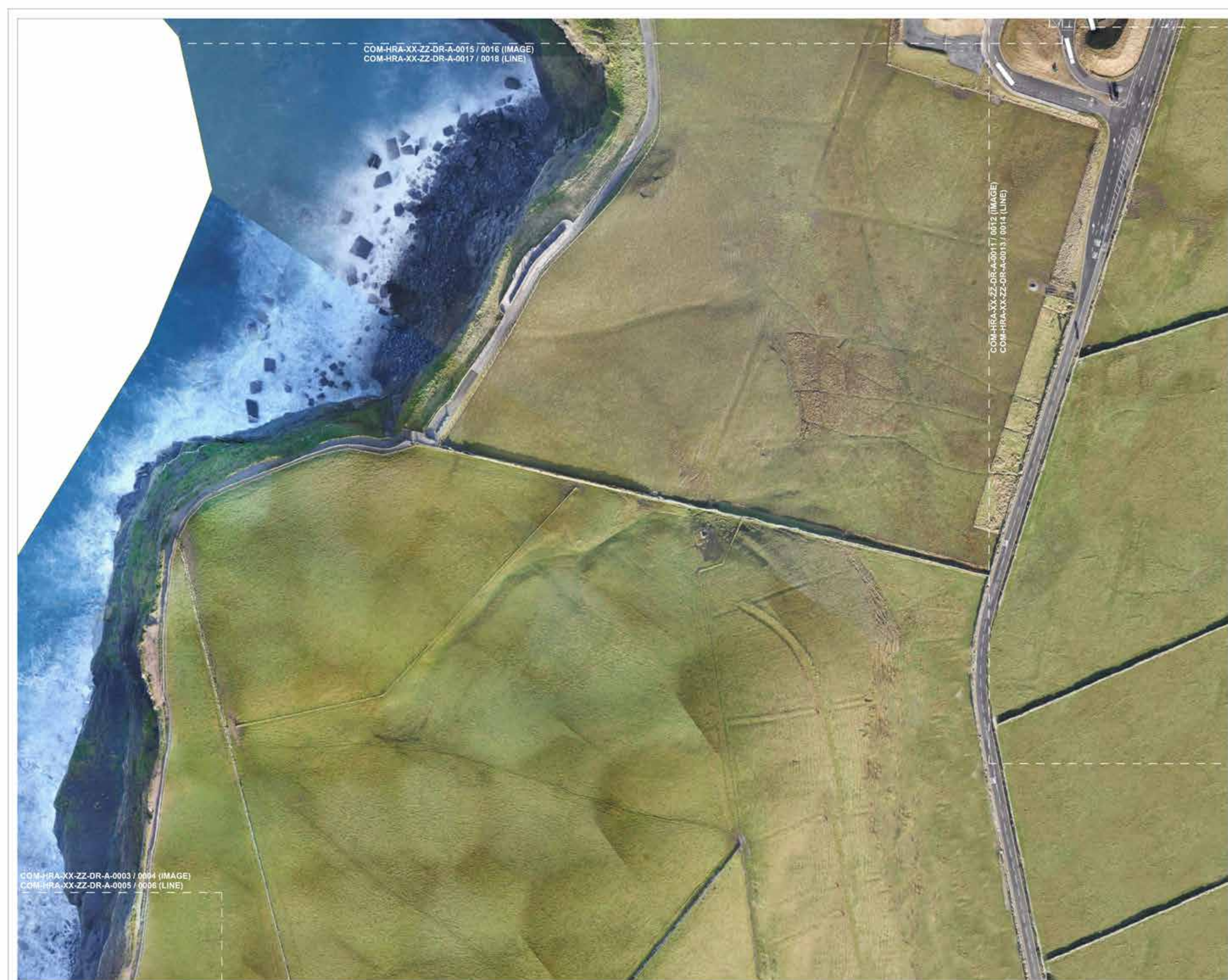
Code	Plant Name	Quantity
P001	Plant Name	Quantity
P002	Plant Name	Quantity
P003	Plant Name	Quantity
P004	Plant Name	Quantity
P005	Plant Name	Quantity

**UTILITIES**

Symbol	Description
[Red line]	Proposed Utility
[Blue line]	Proposed Utility
[Green line]	Proposed Utility
[Black line]	Proposed Utility

**LEGEND**

Symbol	Description
[Red square]	Proposed Structure
[Blue square]	Proposed Structure
[Green square]	Proposed Structure
[Black square]	Proposed Structure

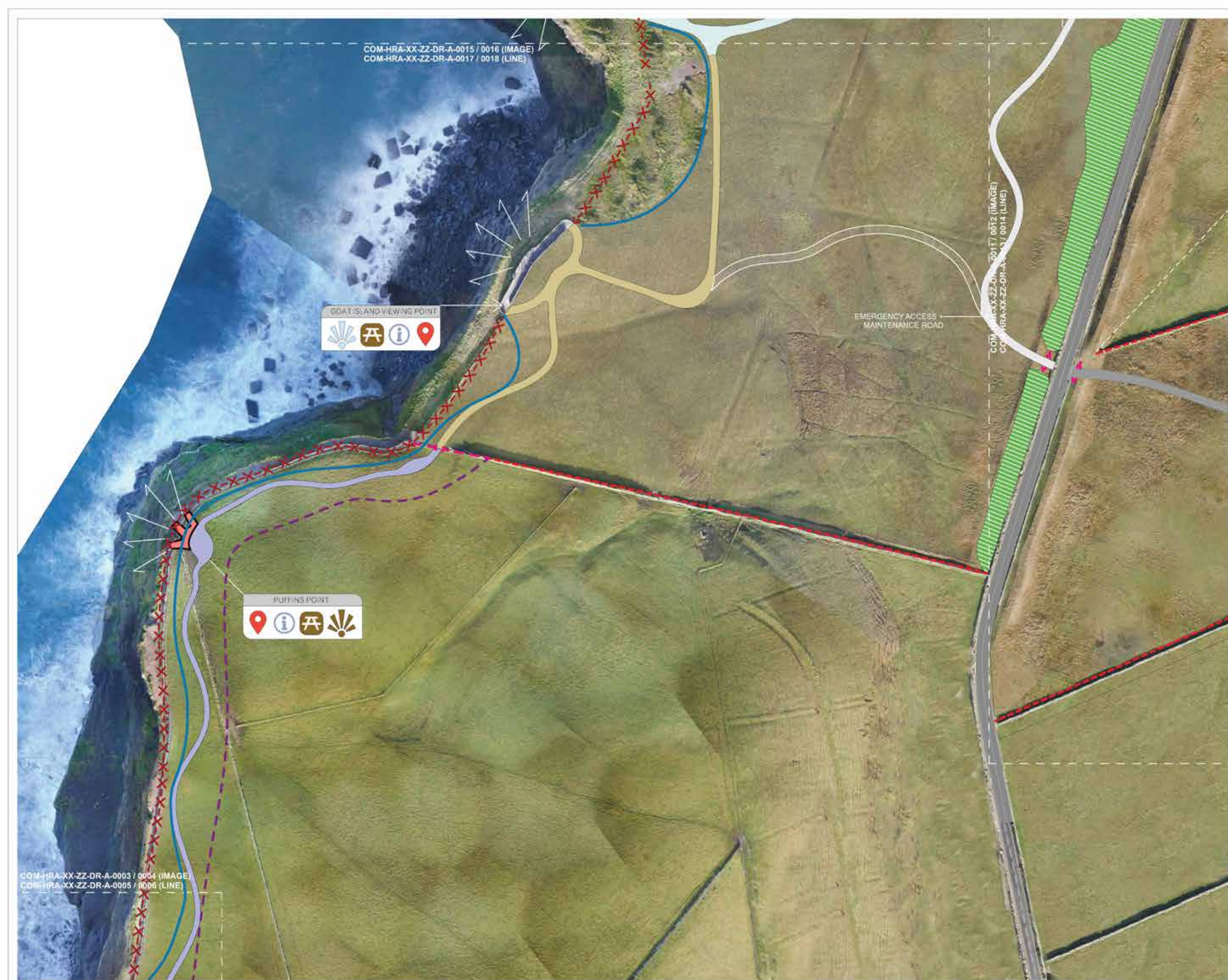


Scale	1:750	Date	16/06/2023
Format	KM	EW	MH
Size	594 x 841mm		

**MASTERPLAN**

**Hanchion + Reuter Architects**  
 2nd Floor, 14, 18B Green Drive, Clonsilla, Wicklow  
 T: +353 (0) 454 4140  
 E: info@hanchionreuter.com  
 W: www.hanchionreuter.com

**CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
 PROJECT: CLIFFS OF MOHER REDEVELOPMENT  
 TILE 2 EXISTING - IMAGE  
 REFERENCE: COM HRA XX ZZ DR A 0003 / 01



Scale	1:750	Date	16/06/2023
Format	KM	EW	MH
Size	594 x 841mm		

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**Hanchion + Reuter Architects**  
 2nd Floor, 14, 18B Green Drive, Clonsilla, Wicklow  
 T: +353 (0) 454 4140  
 E: info@hanchionreuter.com  
 W: www.hanchionreuter.com

**CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
 PROJECT: CLIFFS OF MOHER REDEVELOPMENT  
 TILE 3 PROPOSED - IMAGE  
 REFERENCE: COM HRA XX ZZ DR A 0004 / 01

Symbol	Description
[Red dashed line]	Boundary
[Blue line]	Water
[Green hatched area]	Planting
[Yellow path]	Path
[Red 'X' line]	Viewing Point
[Green wavy line]	Grass
[Black line]	Other





**MASTERPLAN**

Hanchion + Reuter Architects  
Dublin, Ireland

2024  
1:750  
16/06/2023  
KM EW MH 594 x 841mm

**CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
CLIFFS OF MOHER REDEVELOPMENT  
TILE 4 EXISTING - IMAGE  
COM HRA XX ZZ DR A 0009 / 01



**MASTERPLAN**

Hanchion + Reuter Architects  
Dublin, Ireland

2024  
1:750  
16/06/2023  
KM EW MH 594 x 841mm

**CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
CLIFFS OF MOHER REDEVELOPMENT  
TILE 4 PROPOSED - IMAGE  
COM HRA XX ZZ DR A 0010 / 01

SYMBOLS	
Image	Image
Line	Line
Area	Area
Point	Point
Text	Text
Image	Image
Line	Line
Area	Area
Point	Point
Text	Text
Image	Image
Line	Line
Area	Area
Point	Point
Text	Text

SYMBOLS	
Image	Image
Line	Line
Area	Area
Point	Point
Text	Text
Image	Image
Line	Line
Area	Area
Point	Point
Text	Text



**MASTERPLAN**

Hanchon + Reuter Architects  
Dublin, Ireland  
Tel: +353 (0) 1 454 4140  
www.hanchonreuter.com

**CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
CLIFFS OF MOHER REDEVELOPMENT  
TITLE 5-EXISTING - IMAGE  
COM-HRA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0007 / 01

Scale: 1:750 Date: 14/06/2023  
Sheet: KM EW MH 594 x 841mm



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Hanchon + Reuter Architects  
Dublin, Ireland  
Tel: +353 (0) 1 454 4140  
www.hanchonreuter.com

**CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
CLIFFS OF MOHER REDEVELOPMENT  
TITLE 5-PROPOSED - IMAGE  
COM-HRA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0008 / 01

Scale: 1:750 Date: 14/06/2023  
Sheet: KM EW MH 594 x 841mm

**LEGEND**

**EXISTING**

- Boundary
- Footpath
- Proposed Footpath
- Proposed Road
- Proposed Path
- Proposed Cycleway
- Proposed Green Space
- Proposed Water Feature
- Proposed Building
- Proposed Structure
- Proposed Wall
- Proposed Fencing
- Proposed Planting
- Proposed Solar Panel Location

**PROPOSED**

- Proposed Road
- Proposed Path
- Proposed Cycleway
- Proposed Green Space
- Proposed Water Feature
- Proposed Building
- Proposed Structure
- Proposed Wall
- Proposed Fencing
- Proposed Planting
- Proposed Solar Panel Location

**SCALE**

1:750

**DATE**

14/06/2023

**SHEET**

KM EW MH 594 x 841mm

COM-HRA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0021 / 0022 (IMAGE)  
COM-HRA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0023 / 0024 (LINE)

COM-HRA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0015 / 0016 (IMAGE)  
COM-HRA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0017 / 0018 (LINE)

COM-HRA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0019 / 0020 (IMAGE)  
COM-HRA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0021 / 0022 (LINE)



Scale	North Arrow	Scale	Scale	Scale
1:1000	1:1000	1:1000	1:1000	1:1000

**MASTERPLAN**

Hanchion + Reuter Architects  
Dublin, Ireland  
Tel: +353 (0) 83 414100  
E: info@hanchionreuter.com  
www.hanchionreuter.com

CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL  
CLIFFS OF MOHER REDEVELOPMENT  
TILE 6-EXISTING - IMAGE  
COM-HRA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0011 / 01  
Scale: 1:750 Date: 16/06/2023  
Format: KM EW MH 594 x 841mm

COM-HRA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0021 / 0022 (IMAGE)  
COM-HRA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0023 / 0024 (LINE)

COM-HRA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0015 / 0016 (IMAGE)  
COM-HRA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0017 / 0018 (LINE)

COM-HRA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0019 / 0020 (IMAGE)  
COM-HRA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0021 / 0022 (LINE)



Scale	North Arrow	Scale	Scale	Scale
1:1000	1:1000	1:1000	1:1000	1:1000

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Hanchion + Reuter Architects  
Dublin, Ireland  
Tel: +353 (0) 83 414100  
E: info@hanchionreuter.com  
www.hanchionreuter.com

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TILE 6-PROPOSED - IMAGE  
COM-HRA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0012 / 01  
Scale: 1:750 Date: 16/06/2023  
Format: KM EW MH 594 x 841mm

**LEGEND**

**EXISTING**

- 1:1000
- 1:500
- 1:200
- 1:100
- 1:50
- 1:20
- 1:10
- 1:5
- 1:2
- 1:1

**PROPOSED**

- 1:1000
- 1:500
- 1:200
- 1:100
- 1:50
- 1:20
- 1:10
- 1:5
- 1:2
- 1:1

**TOPOGRAPHY**

- 1:1000
- 1:500
- 1:200
- 1:100
- 1:50
- 1:20
- 1:10
- 1:5
- 1:2
- 1:1

**UTILITIES**

- 1:1000
- 1:500
- 1:200
- 1:100
- 1:50
- 1:20
- 1:10
- 1:5
- 1:2
- 1:1

**BOUNDARIES**

- 1:1000
- 1:500
- 1:200
- 1:100
- 1:50
- 1:20
- 1:10
- 1:5
- 1:2
- 1:1

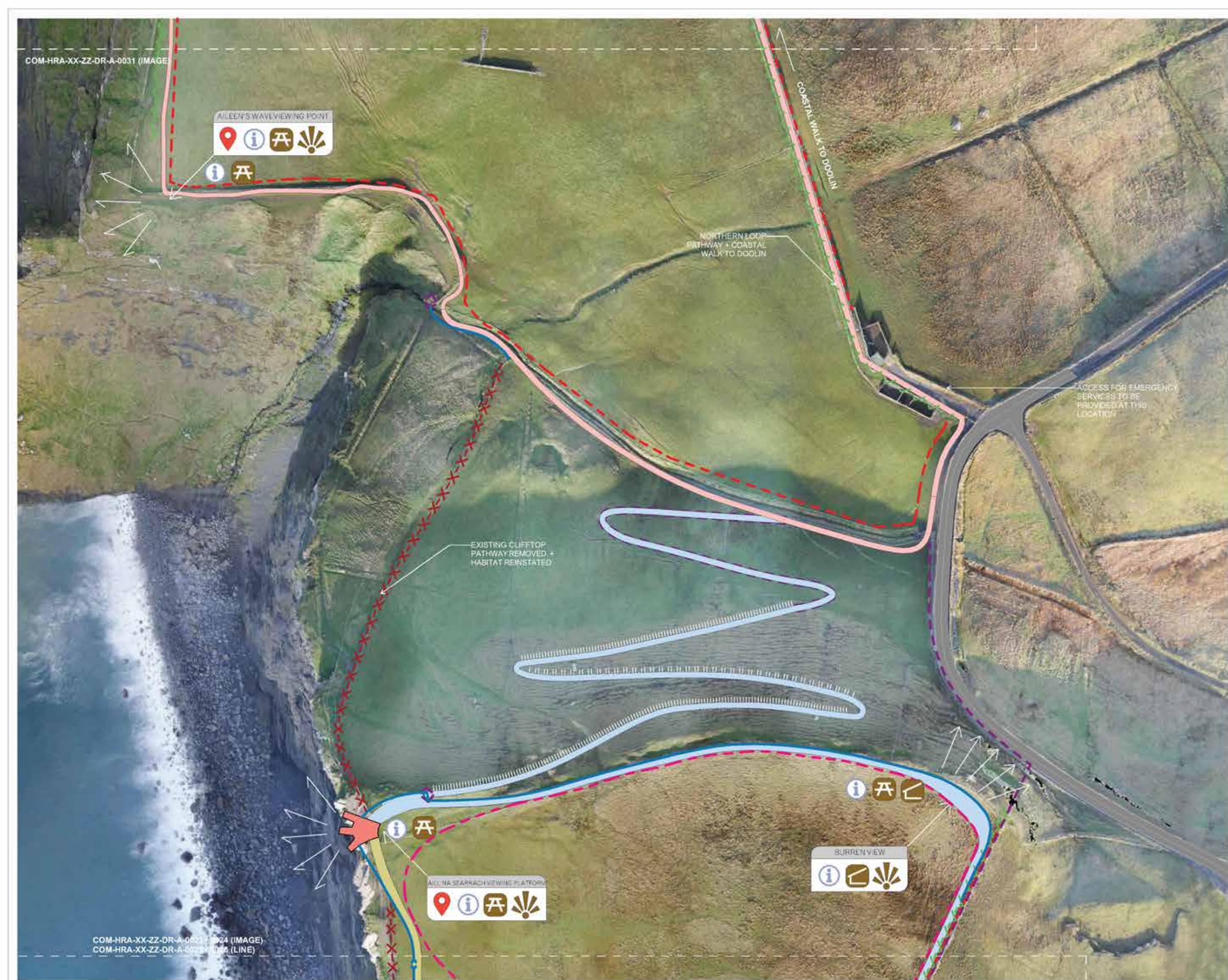
**SYMBOLS**

- 1:1000
- 1:500
- 1:200
- 1:100
- 1:50
- 1:20
- 1:10
- 1:5
- 1:2
- 1:1



**MASTERPLAN**  
 Hanchion + Reuter Architects  
 2nd Floor, 11-13 Green Lane, Dublin 4, Ireland  
 T: +353 (0) 1 454 4140  
 E: info@hanchionreuter.com  
 W: www.hanchionreuter.com

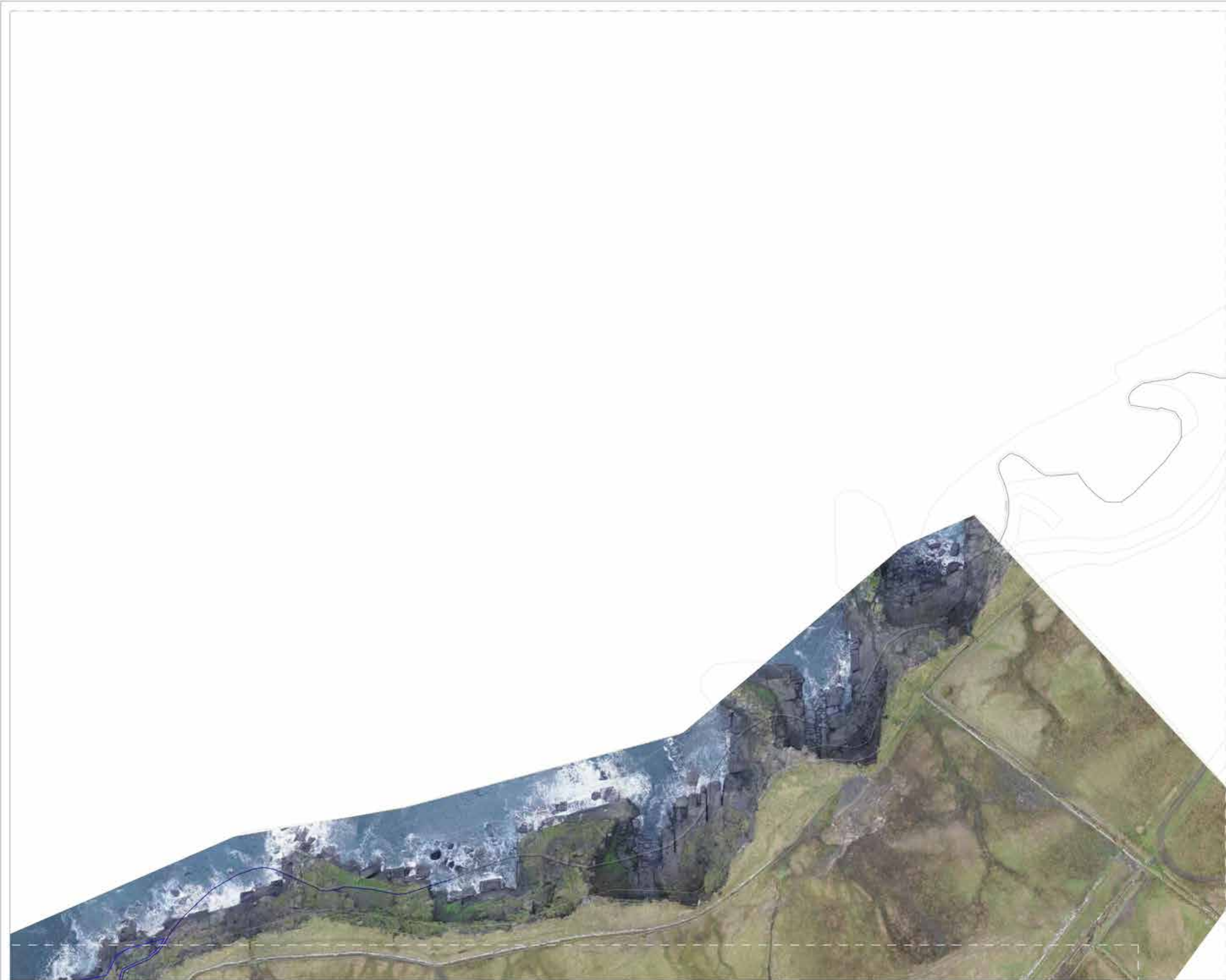
**CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**CLIFFS OF MOHER REDEVELOPMENT**  
**TILE 7 EXISTING - IMAGE**  
 COM HRA XX ZZ DR A 0013 | 01  
 Scale: 1:750 | Date: 16/06/2023  
 KM EW MH 594 x 841mm



**MASTERPLAN**  
 Hanchion + Reuter Architects  
 2nd Floor, 11-13 Green Lane, Dublin 4, Ireland  
 T: +353 (0) 1 454 4140  
 E: info@hanchionreuter.com  
 W: www.hanchionreuter.com

**CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**CLIFFS OF MOHER REDEVELOPMENT**  
**TILE 7 PROPOSED - IMAGE**  
 COM HRA XX ZZ DR A 0014 | 01  
 Scale: 1:750 | Date: 16/06/2023  
 KM EW MH 594 x 841mm





**PRELIMINARY**

**Henchion + Reuter Architects**  
Dulles, VA

The Nationals, 75 Kilbourne Road, Dulles, VA  
T: +1 703 251 6741  
A: 4850 Lees Ferry Road, Suite 200  
E: henry@henchionreuter.com

DATE: 01/2024  
PROJECT: CLIFFS OF MOHER COMPANY  
CLIFFS OF MOHER REDEVELOPMENT  
TILE 9-EXISTING - IMAGE  
SCALE: 1:750  
SHEET: 0034  
594 x 841mm



**PRELIMINARY**

**Henchion + Reuter Architects**  
Dulles, VA

The Nationals, 75 Kilbourne Road, Dulles, VA  
T: +1 703 251 6741  
A: 4850 Lees Ferry Road, Suite 200  
E: henry@henchionreuter.com

DATE: 01/2024  
PROJECT: CLIFFS OF MOHER COMPANY  
CLIFFS OF MOHER REDEVELOPMENT  
TILE 9-PROPOSED-IMAGE  
SCALE: 1:750  
SHEET: 0033  
594 x 841mm

COM-HRA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0031 (IMAGE)

SYMBOLS	
Proposed	[Red dashed line]
Existing	[Black solid line]
Water	[Blue wavy line]
Topography	[Green contour lines]
Vegetation	[Green hatched area]
Other	[Red 'X' marks]
Boundary	[Black solid line]
Other	[Black solid line]

LEGEND	
Proposed	[Red dashed line]
Existing	[Black solid line]
Water	[Blue wavy line]
Topography	[Green contour lines]
Vegetation	[Green hatched area]
Other	[Red 'X' marks]
Boundary	[Black solid line]
Other	[Black solid line]

TILES	
Tile 1	[Red dashed line]
Tile 2	[Black solid line]
Tile 3	[Blue wavy line]
Tile 4	[Green contour lines]
Tile 5	[Green hatched area]
Tile 6	[Red 'X' marks]
Tile 7	[Black solid line]
Tile 8	[Black solid line]

TILES	
Tile 1	[Red dashed line]
Tile 2	[Black solid line]
Tile 3	[Blue wavy line]
Tile 4	[Green contour lines]
Tile 5	[Green hatched area]
Tile 6	[Red 'X' marks]
Tile 7	[Black solid line]
Tile 8	[Black solid line]



The vision for the Cliffs of Moher in 2040 brings together a comprehensive new masterplan for the site, underpinned by a wider strategic tourism framework.

This long-term vision will create outstanding visitor experiences, implement sustainable transport measures and create a network of new access links through integrated greenways. These initiatives will encourage visitors to disperse across the area bringing enhanced social and economic benefits for local communities.

A new environmental management approach, for an expanded Cliffs of Moher site, will create a truly “wild” experience in a more natural and dramatic landscape, bringing enormous biodiversity benefits.

# SECTION 7: OUTCOMES AND KPIs

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND DESIRED OUTCOMES FOR CLIFFS OF MOHER STRATEGY 2040

In developing the Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040 it will be critical to measure and report on the ongoing progress of these ambitious plans as well as outcomes in operating the Cliffs of Moher Experience. The provision of these evidenced based reports will inform stakeholders and will be an aid to support collaboration and partnership. Suggested KPI's and desired outcomes below provide examples of reporting.

### 1 Providing Sustainable Access



- Report on the distribution of visitors annually, including the ratio of Fully Independent Travellers (FIT) and coaches.
- Report on coach / FIT / Walkers / Cyclists.
- Report on the number of days the site is at maximum capacity.
- Report on % of Route Licences for overall group tour business and report on % with additional stops in County Clare.
- Report on the usage of park and ride facilities.
- Report on sustainable access, annual hosting and outreach activities within the local community.

### 2 Optimising the World-Class Experience



- Deliver on the masterplan as outlined by the phasing.
- Review the strategy and delivery of investment every five years.
- Report on investment in the world-class experience in the Clare County Council Annual Report.
- Complete and report on customer satisfaction levels, behaviours and attitudes.

### 3 Transformation of the Natural Landscape



- Set a target to rewild a % of masterplan lands.
- A funding mechanism for ecological and biodiversity surveys will be established using revenue generated onsite.
- Assign a budget to each of these conservation areas.
- Complete ecology and biodiversity surveys.
- Communicate findings of survey reports.

### 4 Enhanced Economic Benefits Across the Region



- Issue an Annual Report on the direct local spend (employment figures, number of products and services locally sourced) and on the indirect value to the local economy
- Commit to providing a dedicated resource to facilitate community liaison
- Issue an annual Community Engagement Report in collaboration with community groups.
- Commit to Economic Benefit Survey every five years.





**CLIFFS<sup>OF</sup>  
MOHER**

**Preliminary  
Draft**

**2040 STRATEGY**