Laytown, Bettystown and Mornington Beach Management Plan

Revised Draft informed by Public Consultation and NIS Process

Meath County Council

2nd February 2020

AECOM

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1. Introduction

1.1 Beach Management Plan

The Laytown, Bettystown and Mornington Beach Management Plan (BMP) will act as the main reference document for the day to day management of the beach and will be proactively and reactively updated as and when required.

At regular meetings between MCC, and the authors of the Draft NIS and Draft Plan, Draft Plan Recommendations were iteratively amended to avoid adverse effects to European sites (i.e. 'mitigation by design'), taking account of relevant stakeholder submissions.

The primary issues in summary are Management Structure, Beach Wardens, Access, Parking and Traffic, Beach Safety, Community, Sports and Recreation, and the existing Bye-Laws. Coastal Erosion is not part of the scope of the BMP and will be dealt by MCC in separate studies.

1.2 Location

The Beach Management Plan covers the areas of coast adjacent to the Laytown, Bettystown and Mornington in Co. Meath.

Meath has the second shortest coastline of Ireland's coastal counties (21km), all of which is classified as soft coast. The beach is located on a 5km long beachfront which stretches from Mornington at the River Boyne, boarding County Louth to Laytown at the River Nanny.

a) Type of Beach

Laytown, Bettystown and Mornington beach consists of a fine sand beach backing onto sand dunes.

b) Bathing Waters

Laytown / Bettystown is the only designated bathing water in the Bathing Water Regulations (2008) along this stretch of beach. The Boyne River discharges to the sea to the north of the bathing water, while the Nanny, Mosney and Delvin Rivers discharge to the sea to the south of the bathing water. The bathing area is approximately 1.5km in length and 0.6km^2 in area.

Figure 1.1: Area covered by the Beach Management Plan

c) Sea Action

The dominant wave direction along the Meath coastline is from the east to south-east, and the prevailing drift therefore from south to north. The Beach is experiencing a net loss of sediment and the beach levels are lowering significantly.

Sand from Laytown / Bettystown is being carried north where it has been trapped by the training walls at the Boyne entrance. The holding capacity of the south training wall, which was built in the 1970s, is now limited due to the growth in the width of the beach at Mornington. As a consequence, Drogheda Port Company is required to frequently dredge the entrance channel at the Boyne Estuary to remove sand which now bypasses the end of the south training wall.

d) Tides

The beach is mesotidal with a tidal range between 2-4m.

e) Right of Way

Public Rights of Way which gives access to seashore, riverbank or other place of natural beauty or recreational utility, have been identified to date by Meath County Council in accordance with Section 10(2)(o) Planning and Development Acts 2000-2011. There are twelve Public Rights of Way to the Seashore in the Bettystown area, as set out in Section A14 of the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019.

1.3   Beach Access

Seaview Terrace is the primary vehicular access point onto the beach. The access is dominated by vehicular traffic as footpaths for pedestrian access are narrow. Generally it is accepted that the access needs to be improved and upgraded for pedestrian safety and improved streetscape.

Please refer to Recommendations 1, 2 and 3 in Appendix A for proposed upgrades to Seaview Terrace.

The Foreshore Bye-Laws control/govern the traffic access to the beach and parking on the beach.

Figure 1.2: Beach Access Points

1.4   Drogheda Port Company

The area covered by the BMP falls within the jurisdiction of Drogheda Port Company which is a commercial state port handling over 1 million tonnes of cargo annually in addition to over 700 vessel calls. The Company provides port facilities for both general freight and container services. The limits of the Port Company are defined by the Harbours (Amendment) Act 2009 but essentially run from Benhead to the south and Clogherhead to the North.

1.5   Recreational Areas

Car parking is permitted on the beach from 150m north of the Seaview Terrace beach entrance all the way south to Laytown. The densest area of car parking on the beach is directly in front of the Seaview Terrace and this also forms the main recreation area of the beach. This is also dependant on whether the tide is in or out. When the tide is out, people generally use the part of the beach in front of the parking area; however this may not be possible when the tide is in. People also use the section of the beach north of the parking area which is a lifeguard patrol zone during the summer months. The northern portion of the beach is most popular with walkers, with many people preferring the soft sand on the more southerly section of the beach around the Seaview Terrace entrance.

1.6   Car Parks

Motorists presently park on Bettystown Beach. Aside from the beach itself there is no public car park in Bettystown, owned or operated by MCC, which provides car parking for beach users. MCC are therefore under pressure to accommodate all car parking on the beach.

Other large car parks in the town within walking distance of Seaview Terrace include the Funtasia car park (approximately 3 minute walk), the Anchorage car park (approximately 4 minute walk) and Tesco car park (approximately 7 minute walk). These are all privately owned and have various restrictions and parking management measures in place which may deter beach users from utilising them.

An area for car parking is provided close to the Mornington Beach pedestrian access.

A temporary car park of approximately one hundred spaces is provided in Laytown every year in close proximity to the existing train station car park and next to the children's playground. During the Laytown Races all cars are removed from the beach, it is currently the only day of the year when parking is entirely removed from the beach.

1.7   Public Toilet Facilities

Currently, the only toilet facilities are located in the Arcade building in Bettystown and are accessed from the street. There are no plans to locate toilets at Layton or Mornington at present.

Please refer to Recommendation 1 in Appendix A for proposed upgrades to the existing public toilets.

1.8   Infrastructure

The following infrastructure is in place on the beach;

- Coastal protection measures are present from the southern end of Laytown beach carpark and include relatively recently constructed gabion stone cages with stone toe protection present along this stretch of shoreline to the southern end of Netterville Terrace. While these measures protect the shoreline, they also exert pressure on the beach with no dry sand present in this area and extensive stretches of the underlying stone basement exposed in the intertidal zone.

- Coastal protection measures consisting of stone armour are present from Netterville Terrace as far as the southern end of Laytown Racecourse with similar pressure to the beach as outlined above.

- Boardwalks provided in the Dune System at Mornington;

- Gravel car park at Mornington.

Figure 1.3: Mornington Dunes boardwalk and car park

Boardwalk near Mornington Dunes

Gravel car park at Mornington

2. Environment and Wildlife

2.1 Natura 2000 Sites

There are 2 No. SPA's Special Protection Area (SPA) and 1 No. Special Area of Conservation (SAC) located on the Laytown, Bettystown and Mornington Beach. This includes the following;

- Boyne Estuary SPA;

- Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC; and

- River Nanny Estuary and shore SPA.

Figure 2.1: Boyne Estuary SPA & Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (© NPWS)
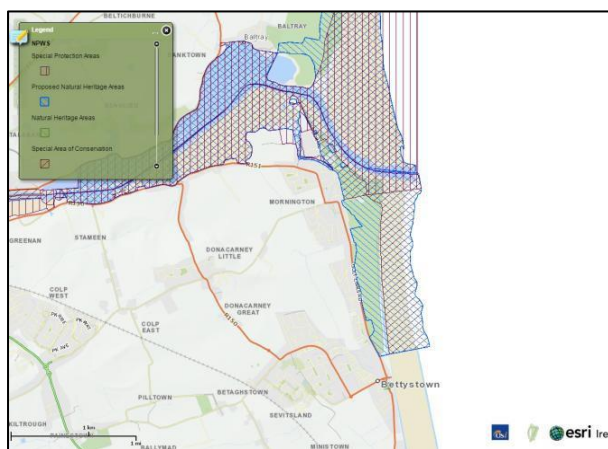
Figure 2.2: Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC & River Nanny Estuary and shore SPA (© NPWS)
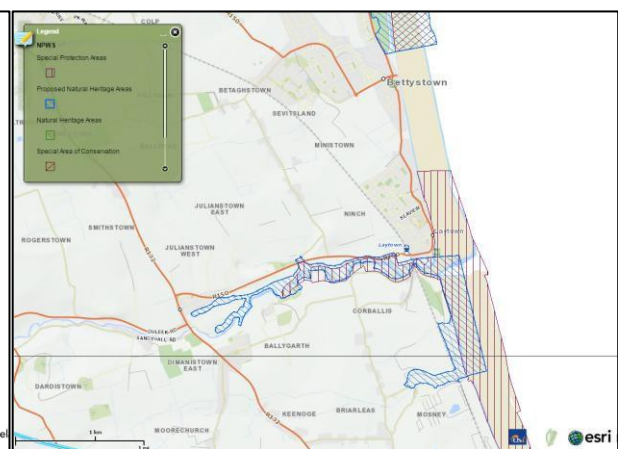
2.1.1 Boyne Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA) and River Nanny Estuary and shore SPA

The Boyne Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA) and River Nanny Estuary and shore SPA have been designated Special Protection Areas under the EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC). The Boyne Estuary supports nationally important numbers of many wintering birds including Shelduck, Golden Plover, Lapwing, Black-tailed Godwit, Redshank, Turnstone, Oystercatcher, Grey Plover and Sanderling.

Many water birds are winter visitors to Ireland's shores. They migrate here over thousands of kilometres from their breeding grounds further north. Light bellied Brent Geese and Knot are two such species that fly south over the winter period to less harsh environments where food is more readily available.

Estuaries provide rich habitats for many wildlife species and have an abundance of invertebrates (animals without backbones) such as worms, snails and crustaceans that provide food for bird communities. The Boyne Estuary supports intertidal mudflats and saltmarsh habitats. These are important areas where flocks of birds gather to feed and roost.

2.1.2   Boyne Coast and Estuary Special Area of Conservation

The Boyne Coast and Estuary is designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC includes most of the tidal sections of the River Boyne, intertidal sand and mud flats, salt marshes, marginal grassland, and the stretch of coast from Bettystown to Termonfeckin that includes the Mornington and Baltray sand dune systems.

The Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC is a coastal site that supports a high diversity of habitats. A total of eight habitat types seen here including the estuary, tidal mudflats, embryonic shifting dunes, marram dunes, fixed dunes, Salicornia mud, and both Atlantic and Mediterranean salt meadow are protected under Annex 1 of the European Union Habitats Directive because they are rare and at risk of being lost or damaged.

2.2   Sand Dunes

Dunes are dynamic ecosystems that support an array of plant, bird and animal life. Marram grass is the main dune building species. It helps bind loose, windblown sand into ridges and dunes. This allows other plant species to begin to take root and grow. The more stable areas of dunes support a high diversity of plant species including common bird's-foot-trefoil, wild thyme, lady's bedstraw and wild pansy along with a variety of grasses, mosses and lichens. Many of these species are important food sources for butterflies and bees that live on the sand dunes.

Although created and shaped by natural processes, sand dunes require conservation measures to protect them from erosion caused by human activity. Public use and trampling by horses can wear away grass cover on the dunes allowing the wind to further erode the fragile dune system. If this continues much of the existing sand dunes will disappear along with the wonderful plant and animal life they support.

The dune system in Bettystown is National Parks and Wildlife System protected but most are in private ownership. During periods of very good weather, reports have been received of anti-social behaviour particularly in the vicinity of the dunes.

The installation of a timber boardwalk through the dune system was completed in 2014. It was installed to minimise the paths through the dune system by encouraging the use of this designated path to the beach thereby assisting in the protection of the dune system.

Golden Plover

Oystercatcher

Marram Grass

Common bird's-foot-trefoil

Small Blue Butterfly *Cupido Minimus*

2.2.1   NPWS Ranger Contact details

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), contact details is National Parks and Wildlife Service, Government Buildings, Kilcarn, Navan, Co. Meath Tel: 076-1002634.

2.2.2   Wildlife Monitoring

The NPWS undertake a number of regular surveys of wildlife on Laytown, Bettystown and Mornington Beach including:

- Marine biotape classification
- Saltmarsh

Historical research and monitoring information is also available for the following:

- Skate population
- Dog whelks

For further information on any of these please contact the Senior NPWS Ranger and/or MCC heritage officer.

3. Management of the Beach

3.1 Management Structure

The implementation of the Beach Management Plan will require the successful coordination of tasks and roles through the management system put in place. Key to the new management system is the Beach Manager. The Beach Manager is a representative from Meath County Council who will manage the resources which are made available from Meath County Council for the operation of the beach. The Beach Manager will be the first point of contact from MCC regarding any issues that may arise from the Beach Wardens, Life Guards, local groups or communities, or from the general public. The Beach Warden will be the key contact for the beach, to ensure effective communication is maintained between key stakeholders.

3.2 Proposed Structure

The proposed management structure for Beach is shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Laytown/Bettystown/Mornington Beach Management Structure
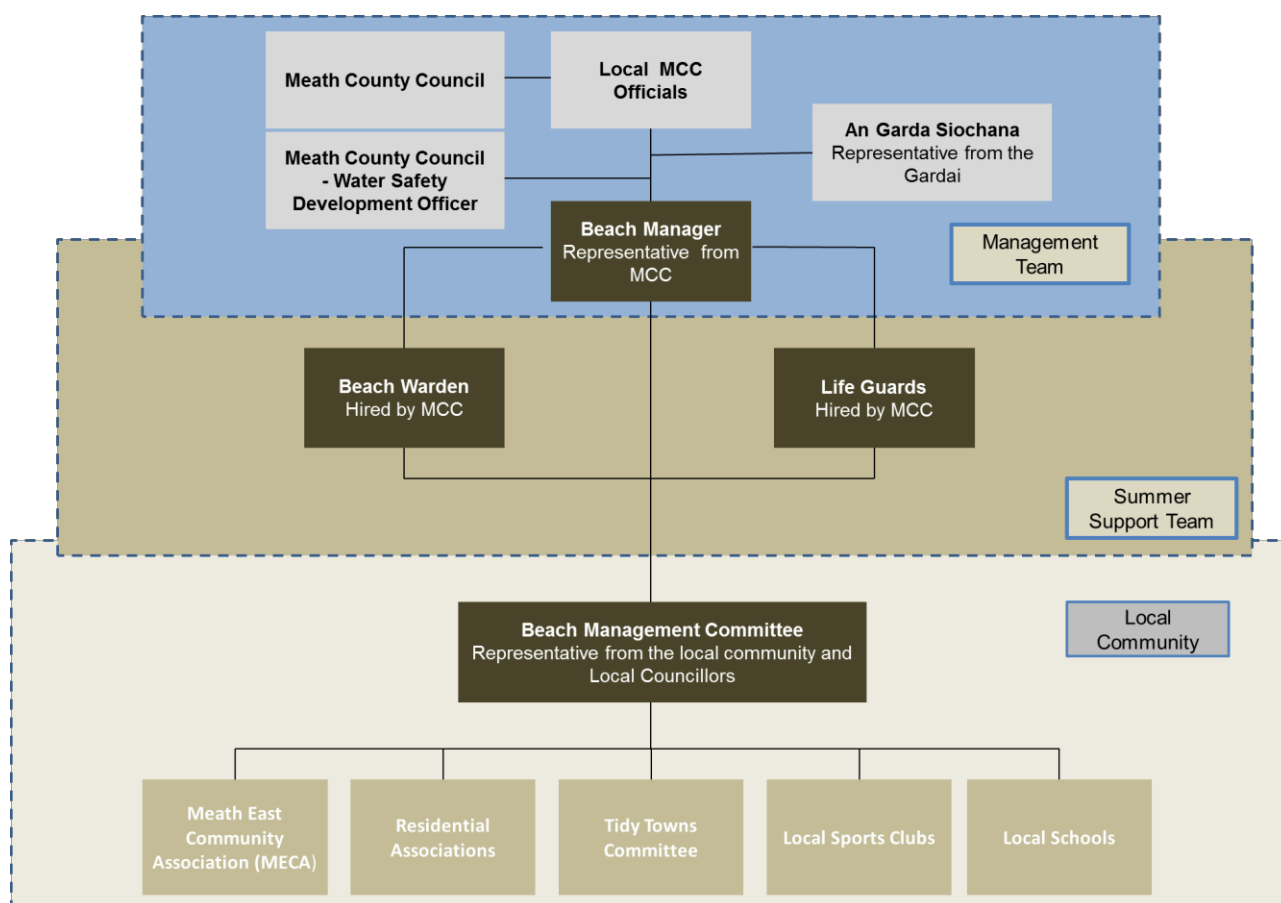
3.3 Beach Manager

The Beach Manager will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the beach. The Beach Manager will be a representative from Meath County Council. Whilst the role does not require a full-time position, the person will need to perform beach management functions throughout the year and tasks including;

- Implementation of the Beach Management Plan.
- Control of budgets where allocated.
- Hiring / Coordination with the Beach Wardens.

- Hiring / Coordination with the Life Guards.

- Liaison with the local community.

- Attending meetings with the local councillors / Beach Management Committee.

- The licensing of public events.

- Coordinate with the Gardai regarding any anti-social behaviour reported on the beach.

3.4   Beach Wardens

Beach Wardens are employed by Meath County Council for the summer bathing season. Beach Wardens have a number of different responsibilities, including duties to be carried out on a daily basis, enforcing the Meath County Council Foreshore bye Laws 2010, coordinating the traffic management, and ensuring that litter management is provided. A list of duties for the Beach Wardens includes the following;

Table 3.1: Duties of the Beach Wardens

Daily Duties	Traffic Management
To oversee and ensure the observance of the Fore Shore Bye-Laws	On good days, in the interest of Beach Safety and traffic Management, cone off the entrance to the beach.
Manages the assigned area in respect of all activities and enforces same	To ensure the implementation of the Traffic and Parking Bye-Laws in the coastal area including the issue of on the spot fines.
To act as a first point of contact with the public with particular emphasis on the provision of tourism related advice and guidance.	Coordination and preparation for predictable increases in visitor numbers.
To remove/arrange for the removal of hazards from the beach.	
To carry out any other instructions which may be given by the line manager/supervisor from time to time.	
Beach Bye-Laws	**Litter / Animal Control**
Liaising with the local Gardai	To assist in the implementation of the County Meath Litter Plan including the issue of on the spot fines, the initiation of prosecutions, etc.
Prosecutions and attending Court	
To enforce the Casual Trading Bye-Laws for the Laytown/Bettystown area in association with the local Gardai.	To ensure that litter bins on the beach are emptied, as required and maintained in a tidy condition.
To meet with and act as liaison to Community Groups as required	To work as part of the local authority's regulatory/enforcement machinery including the carrying out of inspections, the issue of oral and written instruction, etc. This will cover such areas (but not exclusively) as dog and horse control, indiscriminate dumping, unauthorised skips, abandoned vehicles, etc.

3.5   Beach Management Committee

The Beach Management Committee is the voice of the local community and will oversee all aspects of the management of the beach. It will comprise of 15 members of the local community.

The activities of the Beach Management Committee will involve:

- Coordination with the Beach Manager regarding Beach issues/concerns.

- Coordination with sports/local groups and teams.

- Coordination with schools.

- Working with the local communities.

- Developing new sports and events for the beach.

- Attendance at public meetings to listen to any concerns / issues that the public may have.

- Elect a chairperson to whom members of the public can directly address with queries.

3.6 Beach Resources

Laytown, Bettystown and Mornington Beach currently has a limited range of resources to offer beach users. On the beach itself, aside from the ability to park on the beach, there are no resources available to beach users. This lack of resources is reflective of the culture which has developed on the beach itself which centres around beach users being self-sufficient by bringing packed lunches picnics etc. with them in their cars.

There are a greater range of resources provided a short walk from the beach entrance at Seaview Terrace in the form of take aways, retail stores, public houses, a hotel as well as the Funtasia amusement centre.

3.7 An Garda Síochána

The local Gardai are vital in the management of the beach, as they will be able to enforce the law and provide support to the Beach Wardens and Lifeguards should the need arise.

In order to ensure a strong line of communication between the Beach Wardens / Lifeguards and the local Gardai, the Gardai shall meet with the Beach Wardens and Lifeguards at the start of the summer season. This meeting will be arranged and coordinated by the Beach Manager.

A communication plan will be agreed with the Gardai so that the wardens and lifeguards know who to contact should an incident occur on the beach.

3.8 Lifeguards

Life Guards are employed by Meath County Council. Two Life Guards are on duty at any one time and operate on weekends during the month of June and on a seven day week basis during July and August. All the lifeguards employed by Meath County Council must have a current Irish Water Safety, National Beach Lifeguard Award or equivalent qualification as recognised by the International Lifesaving Federation (ILS). Lifeguards have a number of different responsibilities, as indicated in the Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Duties of the Beach Lifeguards

Daily Duties	Hazards / Risks
Check weather for appropriate flag to be erected	Priority must be given to the Swimmers / First Aid
Check tide	Warns the public of dangerous conditions and post warning devices
Wear official lifeguard clothing that is provided by the County Council at all times when on duty	
Put out Temporary Signage	
Keep the assigned area clear of all hazards and remove same as required e.g. broken glass etc	
Check all signs and life-saving equipment on beach daily	
Reports to MCC on the state of all rescue equipment, facilities and supplies	
Beach Bye-Laws	**Water Safety**
Explains state and local bye-laws and regulations	Beach Patrol must take place regularly
Investigates complaints and accidents	Supervises and assists in rescue operations
	Administers medical aid and performs cardio-pulmonary resuscitation
	Coordinates with and requests assistance from other agencies as required
	Log all accident and incident reports in book provided

3.9   Complaints Procedure

Complaints about the beach, its services, or incidents on the beach may be received from members of the public by the Beach Manager, Beach Wardens, Lifeguards, or other Officials of Meath County Council.

Complaints may be verbal or written, but in all cases should be logged. The Beach Manager, who investigates and retains a record of all complaints, should then be supplied with details of the complaint.

The Beach Manager will pass the complaint on to the appropriate Office at Meath County Council dependant on the nature of the complaint. This will then be investigated and the complainant responded to.

The Beach Manager monitors complaints and if appropriate action may be taken to address the issue after consultation with other officers as required.

See Appendix B for more details on the complaints procedure.

3.10   Risk Assessments

All events on the beach must have a risk assessment[1]. The risk assessment should consider all aspects such as health and safety, environmental and welfare issues. MCC organised events are to be signed off by the Beach Manager. Any MCC activity or event that does not have a signed-off risk assessment will not be permitted.

Risk Assessments for other events not organised by MCC, should be prepared by the applicant and submitted in accordance with the event management guidelines.

An example Risk Assessment template is found in the Appendix C[2].

The Beach Manager / MCC will be responsible for preparing a generic risk assessment form that can be provided to others for information.

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[1] MCC finalised Event Management Guidelines in 2016.

[2] The Risk Assessment should cover health and safety, environmental and welfare issues.

4. Beach Cleaning

4.1 Introduction

The importance of a clean environment cannot be over emphasised. There is of course a duty of care in terms of public health and safety, but alongside these are the considerations of environment sustainability, and of course support for the local economy. At Laytown, Bettystown and Mornington the local community welcomes visitors, with visitors taking the degree of cleanliness into account when making decisions on whether to visit, and whether to return.

Please refer to Recommendation 27, 28, and 29 in Appendix A for proposed measures to achieve blue flag status.

4.2 Pollution Incident – who to contact

Occasionally an unusual quantity of waste or pollutant appears on the beach. Under the Sea Pollution Act 1999 (as amended), Meath County Council prepared an Oil Spill/NHS Pollution Response Plan. A draft plan for County Meath has been completed and submitted to the Coast Guard for comment and will be amended accordingly as necessary.

In the instance of chemical pollutant, unidentified waster or shipping waste, members of the public are asked to contact Meath County Council Environmental Department as a matter of urgency.

4.3 Fly Tipping – who to contact

If fly tipping at Laytown, Bettystown and Mornington Beach is reported to MCC by members of the public, it is aimed to be removed within 48 hours. Investigation takes place to try to identify the fly tipper, which if successful can lead to criminal proceedings. Responsibility for fly tipping procedures lies with Meath County Council Environmental Department.

4.4 Bathing Water

In accordance with the Bathing Water Regulations (2008), Meath County Council monitors the bathing water at Bettystown Beach on a weekly basis, from the end of May until September.

The results of testing of individual samples are displayed through the bathing season for public information purposes. The results of the Water Quality are displayed on a notice board at the entrance to the beach on Seaview Terrace by MCC Environmental Department. The sample quality status is a comparison of the individual test results with the EPA classification standards below.

Table 4.1: Classification Standards for Coastal & Transitional Waters

Parameter	Excellent	Good	Sufficient	Poor
Intestinal Enterococci	<100	101-200	201-250	>250
Escherichia coli	<250	251-500	501-1,000	>1,000

While the quality of an individual sample will be determined in this way, the annual quality assessment will be based on statistical assessment over 4 bathing seasons, in accordance with the EU Bathing Water Directive (Directive 2006/7/EC) and Bathing Water Quality Regulations 2008.

4.4.1 Assessing Water Quality Status

The water quality of designated bathing waters is assessed in accordance with Bathing Water Quality Regulations 2008 as follows.

Table 4.2: For coastal and transitional waters:

Parameter	Excellent quality	Good quality	Sufficient quality
Intestinal Enterococci (cfu/100ml)	100 (*)	200 (*)	185 (**)
Escherichia coli (cfu/100ml)	250 (*)	500 (*)	500 (**)

(*) based on a 95-percentile evaluation over 4 bathing water seasons

(**) based on a 90-percentile evaluation over 4 bathing water seasons

Further information on bathing water quality can be found at http://splash.epa.ie/# or by contacting Meath County Council Environmental Section (046-9097200).

4.5   Litter

Beach cleaning and bin emptying is the responsibility of MCC. Cleaning of the beach commences in April/May – in advance of the bathing season. The beach is swept during the summer period; at weekends and where possible during the week between July and August. However this is both weather and staff availability dependent. Cleaning involves occasionally usage of a specialised machine. Litter is removed; however, as a rule seaweed is not removed from the beach. Between September and May the beach is subject to responsive cleans only.

There are four big belly bins at the Square and Beach Entrance in Bettystown, together with bins at the beach. The existing bins are supplemented with wheelie bins as required during the busy periods.

The Council provide a small funding stream to both Julianstown Community District Group and Meath East Community Association (MECA) to support their sterling efforts in litter management on the beaches and the Dunes Areas.

Please refer to Recommendation 15, 16, 17 and 18 in Appendix A for proposed upgrades to litter management.

4.6   Recycling

There are currently no recycling facilities at Bettystown / Laytown Beach for glass or aluminium.

Please refer to Recommendation 17 in Appendix A for proposed recycling facilities.

4.7   Dog Fouling

Dog owners are responsible for cleaning up dog faeces. It is illegal for a person to permit a dog under their control to foul and fail to remove the faeces, as per Section 22 of the Litter Pollution Act. All areas of Bettystown Beach, plus all adjoining public areas are covered by this legislation.

This law is enforced by Meath County Council, who regularly monitor the beach, particularly during the summer season by the Beach Wardens. Non-compliance with the Foreshore Bye Laws 2010 can result in receiving a fine of €75, which can be administered by MCC officials and the Beach Wardens.

Please refer to Recommendation 12, 13, 14, 19 and 20 in Appendix A for proposed measures to prevent dog fouling on the beach.

4.8   Community Clean Ups.

A large number of voluntary groups and individuals organise beach cleans throughout the year, with particular emphasis on the bathing season. Meath County Council fully support and encourage these events and can assist with the provision of the following:

- Equipment - Pickers, bags and gloves - available through the Beach Warden or by arrangement with Meath County Council;

- Collection service - Bags of litter will be collected by MCC and its agents;

- 2 minute beach clean - These boards will be stocked by MCC and bags of litter collected by the Beach Warden; and

- Big Beach Clean Up - National event supported by An Taisce, MCC and local groups.

Community Groups undertaking Clean Ups and other activities are advised to have insurance for their group in place.

The Beach Manager is the contact during peak season, and the Environment Section, Meath County Council will assist throughout the year.

5. Access and Parking

5.1 Beach Access

Seaview Terrace is the primary access point onto the beach for both vehicles and pedestrians. Figure 5.1 illustrates the location of Seaview Terrace. Figure 5.2 shows a ground level view of the beach access.

Figure 5.1: Existing Beach Access in Context of Bettystown (© Google Streetview)

Figure 5.2: Existing Beach Access at Seaview Terrace

The current beach access is constrained in terms of space with a limited cross section existing between the property boundaries on Seaview Terrace. The existing width (including footpaths) varies from approximately 7m at its narrowest point to around 8.5m at the widest point approaching the beach.

A second entrance is provided further south at Delaney's, which has been opened during very busy periods. This is usually controlled by the Gardai. This entrance is closed the rest of the year, other than when opened by the Gardai.

The buildings on Seaview Terrace have been purchased by Meath County Council. The acquisition of these buildings offers the potential to significantly improve the existing beach access. The council are in the process (as of 23rd April 2018), of inviting architects to provide designs for a purpose built seafront building, either by using the existing buildings or a new building to provide for a purpose built seafront building that could offer a range of amenities for beach users.

5.2   Beach Parking

The MCC Foreshore Bye-Laws (2010) allows parking within a designated area on the beach. At present this permits vehicles to access and park on the beach all year round in the area between River Nanny in Laytown to a point 150m north of the Seaview Terrance in Bettystown. The majority of motorists currently park within a 150m long area to the north of Seaview Terrace entrance. North of this point is a lifeguard area and also a zone that is safer for younger children to play due to the restrictions on car parking.

Figure 5.3: Existing Parking on Bettystown Beach

5.3 Parking Management

For the majority of the year the number of vehicles parking on the beach is low. On a typical, dry, warm, summers day there may be up to several hundred vehicles parked on the beach. During periods of exceptionally warm weather however, there may be a demand of over a thousand vehicles on the beach.

The primary issue associated with these times of exceptionally high parking demand is the safety of beach users, children in particular, interacting with vehicles on the beach. Traffic congestion in the town was also flagged as a significant issue when the beach is this busy.

The Beach Wardens manage the traffic on the beach while they are on duty, using cones to direct traffic as in shown in Figure 5.4 below. There is not a set area for parking, and it is generally it is up to the vehicle owner to park where they think is suitable. During busy periods Beach Wardens are stationed at the entrance to beach to keep traffic moving. This is to ensure that the entrance to the beach is kept clear.

Figure 5.4: Bettystown Access with cones set out by the Beach Wardens
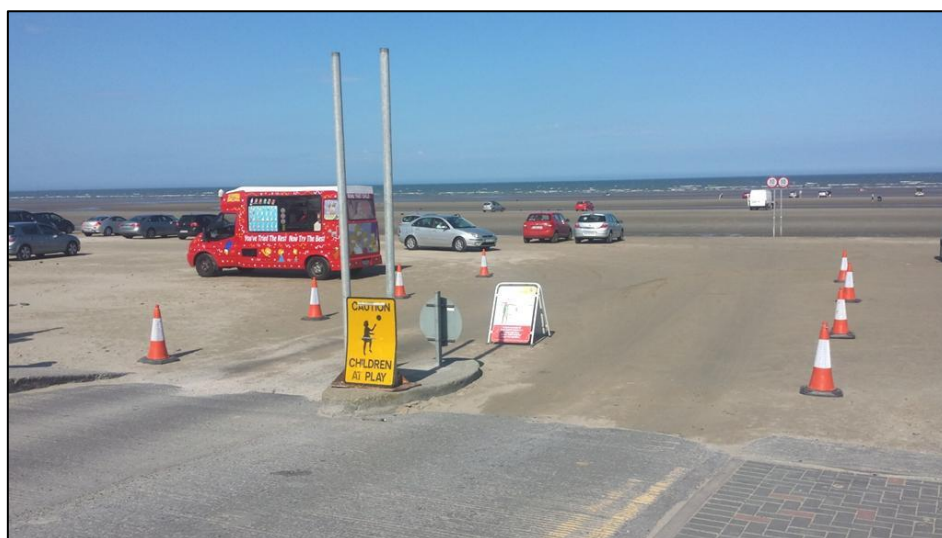
The entrance to the car park has been closed previously when MCC/Gardai have considered the beach to be at capacity. Motorists have been sent away from the entrance to the beach.

Please refer to Recommendation 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 in Appendix A for proposed parking measures.

6. Bye-Laws

6.1 Byelaws

A number of restrictions and regulations apply to the beach and adjacent areas at Laytown, Bettystown and Mornington Beach. The relevant provisions are the following:

- Meath County Council Foreshore Bye-Laws 2010

- Litter Pollution Act, 1997

6.2 Foreshore Byelaws

Meath County Council Foreshore Byelaws commenced on 7th April 2010. They cover the control of animals (dogs and horses) and parking allowed on the foreshore. Also controlled are the littering and the use of watercraft including jet skis and power boats.

Please refer to Recommendation 19, 20, 21 and 22 in Appendix A for proposed animal control and Recommendation 15, 16, 17 and 18 for proposed upgrades to litter management.

6.3 Enforcement

Preventing an offence in the first instance is the most effective way of enforcing byelaws and policies. Signage around the beach that clearly indicates to the public the activities that are permitted and prohibited should be maintained.

If the Beach Manager, Wardens, or Lifeguards identify a member of the public who has chosen to ignore a restriction then that person's attention should be drawn to the restriction. Generally an explanation suffices and the offender adheres to the request. In other instances where the offender refuses to comply the officer should obtain as much information as possible (including name or address if this can be achieved) in order that appropriate action can be taken. If this fails any information supplied to the Beach Manager, who collated and monitors details of offenders, and who will liaise with the council's legal advisors to pursue action as appropriate.

There is a 75 euro fine for infringement of the foreshore bye-laws by order of Meath County Council. If the fine issued under the Bye Laws is not paid, a maximum court fine of 3,000 euro can be imposed.

Confrontational situations should be avoided and the Gardai should be contacted.

7.   Events

7.1   Existing Events

Activities on the beach include sand sculpting and kitesurfing. Laytown / Bettystown has hosted the National Sand Sculpting and Sandcastle Competition in recent years. Laytown Strand Race is a horse racing event which takes place annually on Laytown Strand.

There are a number of existing large events held on the beach each year. Large events currently held during the year include:

- Sand yachting – held February / March

- Cricket Ireland Competition - held midsummer

- Sand Castle Competition – held July

- Laytown Races – September. During this event parking is allowed on local fields and stewards are organised. Beach is closed to vehicle traffic on the day of the races.

- European Land Sailing Championship – September 2017.

Please refer to Recommendation 26 in Appendix A for proposed events to increase beach tourism and activities.

7.2   Events – Application Procedure for Holding Events[3]

Requests to hold various activities primarily at Bettystown Beach are processed by the Council and only granted once certain criteria are met. A beach event application form is required. There is a Schedule of Conditions to be met when such an event is organised;

- Notification of the event to the council at least 2 weeks before the proposed event date(s)

- Confirmation that the event is beach related.

- Assurance that the event will not cause a nuisance or pose a danger to other beach users.

- Submission of a map showing the beach area affected by the event.

- Submission of an adequate safety plan and evidence of consultation with the emergency services i.e. Ambulance Service, Gardai etc.

- Submission of a traffic management plan to facilitate access to and egress from the event site

- Assurance that any litter / rubbish generated by the event is properly disposed of and the beach is left in a clean state.

- Indication of expected attendance.

- Co-operation on the event day(s) with the Area Engineer / Area Administrator or other Authorised Person and comply with any instructions given.

- Payment of fee as per application form.

- Payment of a contribution (if applicable) towards the cost of the works carried out by the Council to facilitate the event.

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[3] MCC finalised Event Management Guidelines in 2016.

7.3 Events Risk Assessments

All events on the beach requiring permission from Meath County Council will also require a risk assessment covering health and safety, environmental and welfare issues. Interested parties are advised to visit **BeSmart.ie** which is a free online tool that lets users generate their own risk assessments and, if required, safety statement. It provides guidance through the entire risk assessment process using simple language and easy-to-follow instructions. On completion, users will have a specific risk assessment and / or safety statement that can be printed, downloaded and implements. A link to the HSA Be Smart tool is here: https://www.besmart.ie/

Risk assessment must be submitted and approved by MCC in advance of event.

7.4 Formation of Clubs

Clubs and associations will be encouraged by both the Beach Management Committee and Meath County Council.

7.5 Commerce – Casual Trading Licence.

There are six casual trading pitches licensed each year for Bettystown/ Laytown Beach covering the area from the disused public toilet at Laytown to the Lady's Finger at Mornington and covering the period 1st May to the 30th September. Licences are not transferrable from one year to the next and must be applied for each year following a public notice seeking expressions of interest.

There are a number of MCC officials who are appointed Authorised Officers under Section 10 of the Casual Trading Act 1995 and article 13 of the Casual Trading Bye Laws 1997 for the Laytown/Bettystown Municiple District.

7.6 Fishing

Fishing licences are required as per existing Irish State legislation, with no other permits required.

The Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) is a Department of the Marine Initiative designed to breathe life back into Towns / Villages affected by economic downturn. There are six FLAG area in the Country and including one for the coastal counties of Meath, Louth and North Dublin and for each such area an integrated local development strategy has to be prepared.

8. Beach Safety

8.1 Main Hazards

Although Laytown, Bettystown and Mornington Beach is relatively safe, incidents do occur as a result of the public use of the sea and adjoining area. Experience has shown that there are four main categories of hazards at the Beach and these are as follows:

- Vehicles on the beach

- The wind and its effect on both the sea and on inflatables

- The sea at low tide and the distance from the Life Guards

- The use of personal watercraft amongst bathers

8.2 Lifeguards – Risk Assessment for Monitoring and Patrolling of the Beach

A comprehensive Risk Assessment for monitoring and patrolling exists for Bettystown Beach. This covers the following topics:

- Working in Changing Environments

- Adverse Weather Conditions

- Raising and Lowering Flags

- Contact with jet skis, leisure craft, surfboards

- Violence and Aggression

- Jellyfish / Weaver Fish

- Presence of Animals

- Manual Handling / People Handling

- Expose to plants / insects

- Biological hazards

8.3 Emergency Action Plan[4]

The lifeguard service has a detailed Emergency Action Plan. This EAP covers procedures should either a minor or major incident occur.

8.4 Accidents – First Aid

Beach Warden and Lifeguards will be trained in First Aid. First aid packs are available at lifeguard station when in operation. The Beach Wardens have a first aid box in their vehicle; however this is mainly for employee use.

8.5 Lost Children

When the beach is busy during the main bathing season young children may stray away from their parents. The beach warden / lifeguard will assist in the search for the lost child. If a child should become lost when the beach warden / lifeguarding service is not in operation the emergency services should be contacted.

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[4] The need for an EAP has been brought to the attention of MCC. This will be prepared by MCC.

8.6   Lost Possessions

If the Beach Warden or MCC staff member is approached by a member of the public advising they have lost such items as wallets / car keys, they may be able to assist in a search. Members of the public are able to leave their details with the Beach Wardens / MCC official so that an item may be forwarded on if found.

The Beach Manager retains all lost property found on the beach and handed in, and logs valuable items. These are then passed to the Gardai at the end of each work day.

9.   Communications/Signage

9.1   Signage

There is a large amount of signage in and around Bettystown / Laytown relating to the beach. This broadly falls into the following categories.

Please refer to Recommendations 23, 24 and 25 in Appendix A for proposed new signage at Laytown, Bettystown and Mornington.

9.1.1   Information boards

There are information signs located near the beach at the various access points. These contain the following information:

- Meath County Council Foreshore Bye-Laws 2010

- A map of the beach with the SPA and SAC zone details marked on

- Wildlife information

- Details about the Blue Flag and Seaside Awards

- An outline of do's and don'ts relating to the beach

- Beach Safety advice

- Results of Bathing Water Sampling

These signs are reviewed annually and updated as necessary by the MCC Environment Department. Figure 9.1 shows the existing signs at Seaview Terrace.

Figure 9.1: Existing Signs at Seaview Terrace

9.2   Information Signs

There are a number of other notices and signs adjacent to the beach, generally relating to laws, byelaws and other restrictions and regulations. These signs are strategically placed as close as possible to the area concerned.

The bye laws are provided on a large sign at Bettystown Beach.

Appendix A: Recommendations

Table of Contents

Background

This appendix to the Laytown, Bettystown and Mornington Beach Management Plan (BMP) covers some of the background information and consultation undertaken during the development of the BMP. The BMP will act as the main reference document for the day to day management of the beach and will be proactively and reactively updated as and when required.

The following elements are discussed in more detailed within this appendix. As per the brief, the existing issues and potential opportunities associated with the beach and the requirement to protect European sites from recreational disturbance have been compiled and are presented. The appendix is set out as follows:

1. Consultation

2. Beach Access and Provision of Public Toilets

3. Alternative Car Parking

4. Litter and Waste Management

5. Signage

6. Beach Tourism and Activities

7. Blue Flag Status

The conflict between (constitutional) rights of access to public lands and the requirement to protect European sites from recreational disturbance may pose an enforcement challenge. Whilst the Recommendations proposed have been identified as the optimal response to mitigate adverse effects on European site integrity, the legality and feasibility of enforcing some will be subject to discussion and agreement with MCC, as proponent of the Draft Plan.

As part of their statutory role in the protection of European sites, MCC has committed to drafting new Bye-laws to support the implementation of protective measures for European sites in the Draft Plan. These Bye-laws will address(to the extent legally practicable) the threats posed to coastal habitats and wintering birds from horses, dog-walkers, car users, and other forms of recreation.

1   Consultation

The methodology for the Beach Management Plan consists fundamentally of three phases:

Phase 1: Review of Existing Situation and Background Data.

Phase 2: Concept Design, Preliminary Design and Consultation.

Phase 3: Recommendations and BMP Report.

Phase 2 of the delivery of the BMP consisted of a significant degree of consultation with MCC engineers, local councillors as well as local residents and other members of the public. While the design team carried out site visits and conducted a significant amount of desktop research, it was acknowledged that there are other issues which can only be fully understood through consultation with local residents and other members of the public who use the beach on a regular basis.

During the first two phases of the study, particularly Phase 2, the following stakeholders were consulted:

- MCC Officers: A number of meetings have been held with MCC Officers throughout the life of the project.

- Local Councillors: A presentation was made and workshop held with a number of local councillors to discuss existing issues on the beach and to explore potential opportunities. These councillors also attended the open evening held on 22nd July 2015.

- Local residents and other members of the public: An open evening was held on the 22nd July 2015 in the Neptune Hotel in Bettystown to which members of the public were invited and all feedback and suggestions were welcome. A second open evening was held on the 20th June 2017 in the Neptune Hotel in Bettystown to which members of the public were invited.

- Benone Strand Beach Manager: The Beach Manager of Benone Strand in Co. Derry was also consulted as part of Phase 2 of the study.

- A draft Beach Management Plan (BMP) and draft BMP Recommendations Report was issued for non-stationary public consultation during summer 2017. Submissions from from a variety of locals and stakeholders were received which have been reflected in the final recommendations.

2 Beach Access and Provision of Public Toilets

Introduction

This section has been prepared to investigate the possibilities for improving/enhancing the existing beach access at Seaview Terrace. The section reviews the existing situation, identifies deficiencies with the existing arrangement and outlines potential solutions which will improve the access for all users.

Beach Access - Existing Situation.

The existing beach access in Bettystown is located on Seaview Terrace in the centre of the town and is the primary access point onto the beach for both vehicles and pedestrians. Figure 2.1 illustrates the location of Seaview Terrace. Figure 2.2 shows a ground level view of the beach access.

Figure 2.1: Existing Beach Access in Context of Bettystown (© Google Streetview)

Figure 2.2: Existing Beach Access at Seaview Terrace

Some of the main issues with the current access include:

- Narrow footpaths (pedestrians walk in single file)

- Pedestrians walking on road and potential interaction with vehicles

- Existing space underutilised (Buildings not interacting with street)

- Vehicles blocking back through access during periods of high demand

- Vehicles double parking or delivery vehicles serving surrounding restaurants and take-aways parking on-road / footpath on southern side of road

- No means of controlling access to beach, beach accessible 24/7

- Inadequate amenity provision, no public toilets

- Generally unattractive access and unwelcoming

- No space for interactions for people

- Mix of materials, street furniture and signage

The current beach access is constrained in terms of space with a limited cross section existing between the property boundaries on Seaview Terrace. The existing width (including footpaths) varies from approximately 7m at its narrowest point to around 8.5m at the widest point approaching the beach. With both pedestrians and vehicular traffic entering at this point, there is limited space to appropriately accommodate different users and the area feels uninviting.

Objectives

The objectives of improving the existing beach access are:

- Improve accessibility and functionality for all users, especially pedestrians.

- Improve the aesthetics of the area.

- Improve the amenities available at, or adjacent to, the entrance to the beach.

Following the stakeholder consultation and by assessing the existing issues/conditions the following proposals were identified.

Proposal 1: Purchase land on Seaview Terrace. Upgrade access to improve pedestrian route and public realm space. Construct a purpose built seafront building and provide for a range of facilities/services in the new building.

Proposal 2: Create one-way system with one-way in from Seaview Terrace and outbound from laneway near Neptune Terrace.

Proposal 3: Controlling Access to the Beach during Off-Peak hours.

Proposal 1: Purchase Land and Houses on Seaview Terrace

There currently is housing on Seaview Terrace at the entrance to the beach. These buildings have been acquired by Meath County Council with a view to developing community facilities and improving beach access.

This acquisition offers the potential to significantly improve the existing beach access and provide for a purpose built seafront building that could offer a range of amenities for beach users.

The following benefits could be achieved:

- Provide a purpose built seafront building with a mixed use facility that would provide a range of facilities to beach users. These amenities would generate revenue, some of which could be reinvested in the maintenance and upkeep of the beach. Alternatively, this revenue could be invested in additional resources for policing of foreshore bye laws or cleaning of the beach.

- Provide for a greatly improved access, which is attractive and accommodates the needs of all users, in particular pedestrians.

- Provide improved public realm / civic space at the entrance to beach.

- Provide a potential location for public toilets, showers and changing facilities (with a view to increasing the attractiveness of the beach as a destination for beach activities and events)

- Any facilities provided where people may congregate e.g. a café, will provide a form of passive surveillance and help deter anti-social behaviour in the vicinity of any public toilets.

Figure 2.3: Existing Terrace of Houses on Seaview Terrace (© Google Streetview)

Figure 2.4: Available Space at Front of Properties

A lifeguard's tower could be accommodated on the upper floor of a seafront building. This would provide improved lifeguard facilities over those currently provided on the beach and a more centralised location to observe beach activities. Currently, lifeguards located away from where the majority of activity is occurring. The property could be used by MCC to store equipment relating to upkeep and maintenance of the beach and could also be used to securely store beach wheelchairs if available. Beach wheelchairs should become available when a purpose built seafront building becomes available. A summary of the advantages and disadvantages of this option are summarised in Table 2.1 below. Figure 2.5 provides an example of a beach café in the UK and closely resembles how such a facility could sit on the context of Bettystown beach if developed.

Figure 2.5: Café/Restaurant at Beach Entrance

Table 2.1: Proposal 1 - Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages	Disadvantages
Improved amenities	High initial capital cost
Provision of public toilets	Development costs
Income stream for MCC	Finding and retaining tenants for potential commercial and residential space
Passive surveillance of area	
Widened footpaths	
Generally improved aesthetics	
Safety improvement by not having to walk to Funtasia to use toilets	

Project Ref: Recommendation 1

Action: Purchase houses on Seaview Terrace and provide a range of amenities within a custom built building. Develop community facilities at Seaview Terrace.

Proposed Project Partners: Meath County Council and Beach Management Committee.

Proposal 2: Create one-way system with one-way in from Seaview Terrace and outbound from laneway near Neptune Terrace.

An additional proposal would be to introduce a one-way system on the beach.

Pedestrian facilities can be improved on Seaview Terrace with the introduction of a one-way system on the beach. By converting Seaview Terrace to one-way, there is an opportunity to reallocate some of the existing road space for pedestrians. The existing road carriageway width on Seaview Terrace is approximately 5m wide. With the introduction of a one-way system there is the opportunity to reduce the road carriageway to 3.0m wide. The remaining 2.0m can be redistributed as footpath, thus providing an improved facility for pedestrians.

The proposed one-way system on the beach is shown in Figure 2.8, with motorists accessing the beach via Seaview Terrace, parking in the new parking zone to the south of the access, and exiting through Neptune Terrace to the south. The laneway on Neptune Terrace will require minor improvement works in order to provide for vehicular traffic. Any alterations to Neptune Terrace would require detailed design to ensure the safety of pedestrians and motorists at this location. A comprehensive traffic and parking study will be commissioned by the MCC Transportation Department in 2019, looking at this proposal and others. Photos of the existing laneway are shown below.

Figure 2.6: Neptune Terrace / R150   **Figure 2.7: Neptune Terrace / Bettystown Beach**

Figure 2.8: Proposed One-way System on Bettystown Beach

Project Ref: Recommendation 2

Action: Examine creation of a one way system for beach traffic during busy periods.

Proposed Project Partners: Meath County Council and Beach Management Committee.

It is recommended that the provision of the one way system is assessed in further detail, including the bollards required to set out the parking zone, and the upgrades required at Neptune Terrace to provide a safe road access.

Proposal 3: Controlling Access to the Beach during Off-Peak hours

A number of local residents raised concerns regarding anti-social behaviour on the beach, in particular during the night time period. People bring their cars onto the beach to drive dangerously and recklessly causing concern to local residents, and posing a safety risk to all on the beach.

In order to control the access to the beach it is proposed to consider access controls to prevent vehicles etc. entering the beach during the night time. MCC and the beach wardens will have control of the raising bollard and the time that the access to the beach is open. Bollards will be required at Seaview Terrace and Neptune Terrace. Emergency vehicles will also be able to gain access by a variety of means that activate the control feature, such as on-board electronic devices or card keys.

Project Ref: Recommendation 3

Action: Examine Access Controls to the beach.

Proposed Project Partners: Meath County Council, Beach Management Committee, Beach Wardens, Emergency Services and Gardai.

3   Car Parking

Overview

This section has been prepared following discussions with MCC officials, local engineers and members of the public. The following sets out the existing issues associated with the car parking on Laytown, Bettystown and Mornington Beach and outlines proposals and recommendations for future beach related parking in the area.

Existing Parking

The MCC Foreshore Bye-Laws (2010) allows parking within a designated area on the beach. At present this permits vehicles to access and park on the beach all year round in the area between River Nanny in Laytown to a point 150m north of the Seaview Terrance in Bettystown. The majority of motorists currently park within a 150m long area to the north of Seaview Terrace entrance. North of this area is a lifeguard patrol zone where vehicles are not permitted to enter.

Existing Parking Demand

For the majority of the year the number of vehicles parking on the beach is low. On a typical, dry, warm, summers day there may be up to several hundred vehicles parked on the beach. During periods of exceptionally warm weather however, there may be a demand of over a thousand vehicles on the beach.

The primary issue associated with these times of exceptionally high parking demand is the safety of beach users, children in particular, interacting with vehicles on the beach. Traffic congestion in the town was also flagged as a significant issue when the beach is this busy.

Currently, parking capacity on the beach is dependent on the tide and how many cars can be accommodated on a given day. There is no set parking capacity. Counts of parked vehicles were carried out by the Beach Warden on the beach between the 13th and 26th of August 2015. These counts were carried out three times daily at 11am, 3pm and 6pm. The counts showed a max of 450 vehicles parked on the beach at 3pm on both the 13th and the 18th. On these days, the temperatures were 21°c and 18°c and sunny. The average numbers of parked vehicles on the beach on these two days were also high at 252 and 250 vehicles. Aside from these two days the numbers of vehicles parking on the beach are relatively modest with the next highest number being 150 at 3pm on the 16th and 24th of August 2015.

Future Beach Parking Proposals

From discussions with MCC officials, local engineers and the general public, the consensus is that the existing parking situation on the beach is not a sustainable long term solution. This was also highlighted in the SRUNA report. However, it was also considered that removing car parking from the beach entirely is not an achievable target in the short or medium term. With this in mind it is thought that complete removal of car parking from the beach needs to be viewed as a long term objective. In the shorter term, parking volumes will be reduced and better managed with a view to continually reducing parking capacity over time as alternative parking sites arise and behaviours change.

Project Ref: Recommendation 4

Action: Complete, but phased removal of parking from the Mornington/Bettystown/Laytown beach, subject to the availability of appropriate alternative parking.

Proposed Project Partners: Meath County Council and Beach Management Committee.

Short / Medium Term Parking Proposals

Based on the current levels of parking demand and the expected number of spaces which will be made available in the alternative parking sites (see Section on Alternative Parking Locations below) it is considered that maintaining a quantum of parking on the beach of between 200 and 300 vehicles strikes a good balance between continuing to cater for demand whilst also offering a significant reduction in the existing on beach parking.

In addition to limiting the level of parking on the beach, it is also proposed to move the area of parking from north of Seaview Terrace to an area south of Seaview Terrace. It has been noted by MCC that members of the public enjoy parking close to, and north of, the Seaview Terrace entrance as the sand is softer in this area. Moving the car parking to the area of harder sand south of Seaview Terrance, which is less coveted by beach users, will ensure that this area of soft sand will be available for all beach users to enjoy. Moving the area of parking also presents the possibility of extending the Lifeguard patrol zone further south as far as the Seaview Terrace entrance where the majority of beach users congregate.

The proposed parking area would be set out by cones or temporary bollards. Motorists would be discouraged from travelling outside the parking area with a line of cones or temporary bollards which would extend towards the shoreline, setting out a location for rows of vehicles to park.

There are a number of bollard options available. A composite bollard with a wooden finish would be the best option as the plastic finish would be less susceptible to corrosion.

Some of the bollards could be made to look aesthetically pleasing or an artistic feature, an example of bollards found in a beach in Geelong, Australia shown below.

Figures: 3.1 & 3.2: Geelong bollards   Figure 3.3: Composite Square Bollards

At the location where the car parking is proposed, there is an issue of surface water flowing on to the beach. It is recommended that this be examined with a view to intercepting and finding an alternative type outfall.

Project Ref: Recommendation 5

Action: Restrict and co-ordinate parking in parking zones, using cones and temporary bollards, preferably south of Seaview Terrace.

Proposed Project Partners: Meath County Council and Beach Management Committee.

Project Ref: Recommendation 6

Action: The existing Lifeguard Zone is to be relocated south to an area north of Seaview Terrace.

Proposed Project Partners: Meath County Council, Beach Management Committee,

Alternative Parking Locations

Alternative parking locations are required to ensure that haphazard and illegal parking does not become an issue in the town when the volume of parking on the beach is reduced.

The following objectives have been identified for these alternative car parking sites:

1) Good access from the local road network.
2) An adequate number of spaces must be provided.
3) MCC have control over the site or at least an agreement is in place between MCC and the owner / operator.
4) Site is within walking distance of beach or a convenient method of accessing beach can be provided.
5) It should be sustainable to provide parking on the site in the long term and offer good value for money.

Table 3.1 outlines the possible alternative parking sites which have been identified by MCC for assessment and the approximate number of spaces in these locations. It should be noted that the existing car parks, such as The Anchorage, also service existing developments and that the number of spare parking spaces in these car parks is significantly less than the capacity. Figures 3.4 to 3.6 show the location of these sites.

Table 3.1: Car Parking Locations and Approximate Parking Numbers

Location	Car Parking Numbers (Capacity)
1. Greenfield Site North*	200-395
2. Funtasia	174
3. Anchorage	128
4. Tesco	185
5. Greenfield Site South*	270-540
6. Schools (Colaiste na hInse)*	325
7. Schools (Scoil Oilibheir Naofa)	46
8. Train Station Car Park	95
9. Greenfield Site – Laytown*	95

*Approximate - based on area of site

Figure 3.4: Existing Car Parks and Greenfield Sites in Bettystown

Figure 3.5: School Car parks in Bettystown
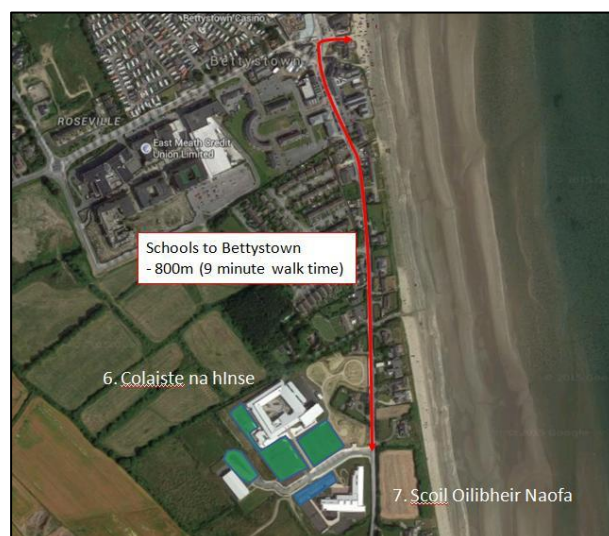
Figure 3.6: Potential Car Parking in Laytown

Table 3.2 below shows the list of sites considered as alternative parking locations in the town and whether the sites meet the objectives identified as part of this study. As shown in the Table, only the schools sites meets all five objectives, while the greenfield site in Laytown meets 4 out of 5 objectives.

Table 3.2: Objectives met by Alternative Car Parking Locations

Site / Objective	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Greenfield Site North*	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	2/5
Funtasia Car park	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	3/5
Anchorage (Two Car Parks)	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	3/5
Tesco Car Parking	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	2/5
Greenfield Site South*	↑	↑	↑	↓	↓	3/5
Schools (Colaiste na hInse and Scoil Oilibheir Naofa)	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	5/5
Train Station Car Park	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	3/5
Greenfield Site - Laytown	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	4/5

It is anticipated that commuters will park on the beach until the number of parking spaces there is exhausted. At this time, motorists will be directed to the schools and finally, if required, the greenfield parking site in Laytown. In conjunction with this strategy, signage will need to be provided. Ideally this signage would consist of Variable Message Signs which would be used to inform drivers of parking availability in the town so they don't automatically proceed to the beach if there are no spaces available.

School parking

The quantum of parking provided at the schools is provided below:

- Colaiste na hInse - 325 car parking spaces

- Scoil Oilibheir Naofa - 46 car parking spaces

All sites are within the control of MCC or, in the case of the schools, can be controlled in cooperation and consultation with the boards of managements of the schools. These sites also meet the other criterion in that they provide good access to/from the local road network.

Project Ref: Recommendation 7

Action: Agree and implement overspill beach parking during the summer months in the school car parks if required.

Proposed Project Partners: Meath County Council, Beach Management Committee, Department of Education, Colaiste na hInse and Scoil Oilibheir Naofa

Laytown parking

An additional option for overspill parking is to utilise the school car parks in Colaiste na hInse and Scoil Oilibheir Naofa in combination with the existing greenfield site in Laytown which is currently utilised on the day of the Laytown Races. The quantum of parking at Laytown is noted below.

- Greenfield Site / Laytown - 95 car parking spaces

This combined with the parking on the beach will be more than sufficient to accommodate the demand in most circumstances.

Project Ref: Recommendation 8

Action: Consider overspill beach parking during the summer months in the existing greenfield site in Laytown.

Proposed Project Partners: Meath County Council and Beach Management Committee.

Bus service

It is noted that the site in Laytown is a significant distance from the main soft sand area in Bettystown and is outside of the distance that people would usually walk. In order to mitigate this it is proposed to provide a shuttle bus service during periods of good weather in the summer months. This bus will pick up at Laytown, Inse Bay and the schools and drop off at Bettystown. It is estimated that the shuttle bus will be required for around ten days during the summer months of July and August each year to cope with peak demand.

This bus service would be appointed through a tender process. The bus would operate in a loop and would also allow for people to be dropped down to the Laytown beach area as well as to the Bettystown beach area.

Figure 3.7: Proposed shuttle bus route

Project Ref: Recommendation 9

Action: Provide a shuttle bus to connect school carparks and Laytown parking (greenfield site) to Bettystown Beach during the summer months if required.

Proposed Project Partners: Meath County Council, Beach Managaement Committee

Car free days

It is recommended that 'car free days' are trialled at the beach in order to introduce the new parking strategy, in order to see how the beach, and the wider town area, operates with the beach parking removed. The aim of 'car-free days' would be to demonstrate to the local residents how the beach can be a more attractive and safer environment with the parking removed and to garner support for further parking restrictions on the beach in the future. These 'car-free days' could run concurrently with beach events such as a sand yachting competition, for example, where the car parking would be removed to facilitate the competition.

Project Ref: Recommendation 10

Action: Introduce car free days at the beach during beach events.

Proposed Project Partners: Meath County Council and Beach Management Committee.

Beach Warden

The time of year and weather very much dictates parking demand and it will be up to the Beach Manager and/or Beach Warden to coordinate with his/her staff regarding the need for additional parking provision. The Beach Manager will be responsible for checking if the good/exceptional weather is expected over the following 3/5 days and planning appropriately.

MCC staff will be required to manage the car parking at the two locations and to enforce the Foreshore Bye-Laws with regards to parking on the beach.

Project Ref: Recommendation 11

Action: The Beach Warden responsibilities should include managing and coordinating when the overspill parking is required.

Proposed Project Partners: Beach Wardens, Meath County Council and Beach Management Committee.

4   Litter and Waste Management

Throughout Phase 2 of the study, littering on the beach was consistently raised as an issue by local residents. Many local residents who attended the open evening are regular beach users and also volunteer litter pickers. There are currently 18 litter bins provided on the beach which are emptied on a daily basis by MCC during the summer. Figure 4.1 below is typical of the standard of bin provided by MCC on the beach. These bins are provided at the back of the beach and are primarily concentrated within the car parking area. No litter bins are provided between the Seaview Terrace entrance as far south as the Sacred Heart Church, approximately 1km in distance.

Following the review of the existing situation and the consultation process the following issues in relation to litter have been identified:

- No recycling facilities (on the beach or nearby)
- Over-flowing bins
- Horse and Dog fouling
- Litter on Beach
- Dumping of litter beside bins

Figure 4.1: Litter Bin on Beach

Dog fouling

Dog fouling was a problem on the beach that was raised by a number of local residents during the open evening with the public. In partnership with the community, it is recommended the following measures be implemented.

Project Ref: Recommendation 12

Action: Increase the fine for dog fouling to the maximum that is permissible under the either the Section 22 of the Litter Pollution Act or MCC Foreshore Bye-Laws.

Proposed Project Partners: Meath County Council and Beach Management Committee.

Project Ref: Recommendation 13

Action: Increase enforcement of byelaws, litter and waster legislation by MCC officials and beach wardens during the summer months.

Proposed Project Partners: Beach Wardens, Meath County Council and Beach Management Committee.

Project Ref: Recommendation 14

Action: New signage campaign regarding Dog Fouling.

Proposed Project Partners: Meath County Council and Beach Management Committee.

Littering

Whilst the immediate response to litter may be to provide for more bins on the beach, these will have to be provided with a broader campaign to reduce litter on the beach. The responsibility for the creation of rubbish lies with the people who visit the beach and these people should be encourage to take their rubbish with them.

Figure 4.2: Bigbelly bins

Project Ref: Recommendation 15

Action: Provide for larger capacity bins during the summer season.

Proposed Project Partners: Meath County Council.

Bins should be located on hardstanding, and provided at numerous locations north to south within the Draft Plan area, including and in particular on appropriate on-sensitive areas within the Mornington dune system. A screening for AA should be completed by MCC of proposed bin locations, where within or in the vicinity of the European site boundaries.

Project Ref: Recommendation 16

Action: Adopt 'Leave–no-trace' policy for the beach or for a section of the beach.

Proposed Project Partners: Meath County Council and Beach Management Committee.

Project Ref: Recommendation 17

Action: Provide for recycling facilities, either nearby or on the beach.

Proposed Project Partners: Meath County Council and Beach Management Committee.

Project Ref: Recommendation 18

Action: Encourage greater community involvement and run awareness campaigns regarding waste, litter, dog fouling etc.

Proposed Project Partners: Local community and Beach Management Committee.

Animal Control

Furthermore, it is proposed to provide a dog free zone on the beach. The dog free zone would be located in the lifeguard patrol area. This area is the most popular area for children to play. Between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. during the Summer Season dogs should not be permitted in the lifeguard patrol area. This is similar to the beach bye laws in place in Co. Clare, which have been in place for the last 7 years. Restrictions on horses onto the beach will be considered by MCC if and when the Bye Laws are being amended.

Project Ref: Recommendation 19

Action: Prohibit dogs in the lifeguard patrol area between 11a.m. - 6p.m. during the summer months.

Proposed Project Partners: Meath County Council and Beach Management Committee.

Project Ref: Recommendation 20

Action: Control of dogs within the River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA i.e. dogs to be leashed from September to March inclusive.

Proposed Project Partners: Meath County Council and Beach Management Committee.

Project Ref: Recommendation 21

Action: Restriction of horses from the dunes at Mornington within the Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC.

Proposed Project Partners: Meath County Council and Beach Management Committee.

Project Ref: Recommendation 22

Action: Restriction of horses from the shoreline within the Nanny Estuary and Shoreline SPA from September to March inclusive (except for the Laytown Strand Races).

Proposed Project Partners: Meath County Council and Beach Management Committee.

5   Signage

Existing situation

There is a wide variety of signage provided along the coastline in Laytown, Bettystown and Mornington at present on the R150 / R151 Coast Road as well as the beach itself.

Road Signage

On the Coast Road, on both the northern and southern approaches, there is an obvious lack of signage. There are also brown information signs welcoming people to Bettystown on both the northern and southern approaches to the town.

There is a lack of information signage on the approaches to the town in relation to car parking on the beach.

On the beach itself there is an assorted array of signage. Upon entrance to the beach there are a number of signs outlining the foreshore bye laws and the various restrictions on the beach. On the beach itself, there is signage specifying the 10kph speed limit and delineating the extent of the car parking area and the beginning of the Lifeguard patrol zone.

Figure 5.1: Location and Extent of Signage on the Beach

Review and Replace Existing signs

A creative illustrator and a communications consultant should be commissioned by MCC to review existing signage (Figure 5.1). This review should be conducted in close consultation with the MCC Environment Department who review the signage annually. The review should identify which signs should be removed, to include any which may be perceived over-long (and therefore are less likely to be read; e.g. the detailed sign showing all existing Bye-Laws in Figure 5.1 above; lower right hand side); and/or are deemed for other reasons unlikely to foster and promote voluntary compliance. Additional environmental signage will be considered as appropriate.

> **Project Ref:** Recommendation 23
>
> **Action:** Review existing signage and, where necessary, develop new signage incorporating 'softer', playful and/or eye-catching graphics/text phrasing, to promote a sense of stewardship and self-policing amongst beach users.
>
> **Proposed Project Partners:** Meath County Council and Beach Management Committee.

Proposed information and way finding signage

The proposal for signage at Laytown, Bettystown and Mornington beach is to provide for a co-ordinated and consistent suite of signage in Bettystown. This signage would cover information signs, way finding signage and interpretative signage.

The signage must be consistent with the style of other Meath County Council interpretative signage and wayfinding signage (as recommended in the Meath Tourism Strategy).

The following signage would be provided in line with the design style of the overall signage suite:
- Wayfinding signage - with walking and cycling times
- Parking (including cycle parking)
- Bio-Diversity Interpretative signage at the following locations – Seaview Terrace, Mornington, Laytown
- Heritage Interpretative signage – Bettystown and Laytown
- Information signage at Seaview Terrace and Laytown

Some signage such as regulatory signage in relation of the Fore Shore Bye Laws and parking will have to be provided in accordance with the relevant regulatory requirements.

Figure 5.2: Potential Bettystown Signage

Project Ref: Recommendation 24

Action: Provide for a co-ordinated and consistent suite of signage to promote a sense of pride in the local area.

Proposed Project Partners: Meath County Council and Beach Management Committee.

Bio-diversity interpretative signage

Appropriate signage can have a significant effect on human behaviour near sensitive bird habitats. Six studies (two replicated and controlled, two before-and-after and two small studies) from across the world found increased numbers of breeders, higher reproductive success or lower levels of disturbance in waders and tems following the start of access restrictions of the erection of signs near nesting areas (Williams et al., 2017). If correctly designed, these signs can be effective in promoting compliance with reduced regulation, thereby reducing the enforcement burden on public authorities.

Project Ref: Recommendation 25

Action: Review the indicative locations for signage and ensure signage pertaining to the Nanny River Estuary and Shore SPA is located at the point of entry into, and within the site.

Proposed Project Partners: Meath County Council and Beach Management Committee.

6   Beach Tourism and Activities

Laytown, Bettystown and Mornington Beach possesses significant potential as a destination for beach tourism and beach activities and events. The beach itself is already extremely popular with beach goers. Anecdotally as well as from consultation, it is clear that potential exists to attract a different kind of user to the beach, a more active beach goer who wants to exploit its potential as a destination to participate in beach events.

With its lengthy, uninterrupted stretch of sandy beach it is considered to have significant, currently unexploited potential as a destination for leisure events such as sand yachting and kite landboarding. These types of events are already held successfully in other locations in Ireland such as on Dollymount Strand.

There are a number of events which take place on Bettystown Beach throughout the year. These include the following;

- Sand yachting – held Feb/March

- Cricket Ireland Competition (held midsummer)

- Sand Castle Competition – held June

- Laytown Horse Races – held 10th September.

Sand castle building took place in June 2015, on the same weekend a beach cricket competition took place.
Figure 6.1: Sandcastle Building Competition on Bettystown Beach in 2011

Beach Activities

The following potential future opportunities for tourism and activities on the beach were identified during the development of the BMP:

Project Ref: Recommendation 26

Action: Increase beach tourism and activities in spring and summer only (April to August inclusive), outside the wintering bird season), including:

- Car Free Days
- Canoeing with jetties on the River Nanny
- Beach Football
- Creating designated area for sports
- Swimming lessons / Life-saving programs for all
- Attraction of Maidens Tower of Mornington
- East Coast Cycle Route
- Tara Brooch
- Greenway Mornington to Drogheda
- Fishing
- Triathlons

- Eco-tourism
- Kiting – festivals
- Fishing
- Volleyball
- Sailing
- Sand yachting
- Sandcastles
- Bird watching with the erection of bird watching huts/stands
- Provision of space for clubs to meet/change etc

Proposed Project Partners: Beach Warden, Meath County Council and Beach Management Committee.

7   Blue Flag Status

The Blue Flag programme is operated by An Taisce on behalf of the international, non-governmental, non-profit organisation the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE). A Blue Flag is awarded to beaches that comply with 33 criteria under the following headings:

- Environmental Education & Information Provision;

- Water Quality;

- Environmental Management; and

- Safety & Services.

It is understood that a previous application was made for a Blue Flag for Bettystown Beach in February 2007. The application was subsequently withdrawn in March 2007 due to opposition amongst local residents and business owners to the restriction of parking on the beach, which was proposed in the application. The following sets out the current identified obstacles for Laytown, Bettystown and Mornington beaches in achieving Blue Flag status.

Identified Obstacles - The criteria for awarding Blue Flag status are presented in a document entitled "Blue Flag Beach Criteria and Explanatory Notes 2015", available from the website www.blueflagireland.org, run by An Taisce. A table presenting all 33 criteria required to achieve Blue Flag status and whether potential obstacles were identified to satisfying these criteria is presented in the Appendix E. As outlined in the table, potential obstacles were identified for two of the listed criteria. These are discussed further below.

Water Quality – Clarifications from An Taisce are required in relation to the period of water quality data that is needed to demonstrate compliance with Criteria 2.10. In addition, it is likely that water quality data will be required from surface water discharge points to the sea along the beach.

Environmental Management - Any future plans for the beach will need to address the prevention of damage to the local natural environment. This will likely comprise measures to limit parking on the beach and limit access to the dune system.

Clarification from An Taisce should be sought in relation to the identified obstacles. Following on from this, a programme of works can be developed to address data gaps and prepare for a Blue Flag application.

Blue Flag requirements

The potential opportunities to achieve a blue flag include:

Project Ref: Recommendation 27
Action: Maintain high quality water.
Proposed Project Partners: Meath County Council and Beach Management Committee.

Project Ref: Recommendation 28
Action: Implement a phased removal of parking from the beach. These proposals will reduce and manage the parking on the beach, with the future aim of removing all parking on the beach in the future.
Proposed Project Partners: Meath County Council and Beach Management Committee.

Project Ref: Recommendation 29
Action: Limit the access to the dunes in Mornington by closing off the vehicular access to the parking area to better control and manage vehicle movements in the area. Consider providing a limited number of car parking spaces on the adjacent road.
Proposed Project Partners: Meath County Council and Beach Management Committee.

Figure 7.1: Existing Access to Mornington Beach should be closed off to vehicular traffic

8   Recommendations summary

Project Ref.	Recommendation	Action
Recommendation 1		Purchase houses on Seaview Terrace and provide a range of amenities within a custom built building. Develop community facilities at Seaview Terrace.
Recommendation 2	**Improve Beach access**	Examine creation of a one way system for beach traffic during busy periods.
Recommendation 3		Examine Access Controls to the beach.
Recommendation 4		Complete, but phased removal of parking from the Mornington/Bettystown/Laytown beach, subject to the availability of appropriate alternative parking.
Recommendation 5		Restrict and co-ordinate parking in parking zones, using cones and temporary bollards, preferably south of Seaview Terrace.
Recommendation 6		The existing Lifeguard Zone is to be relocated south to an area north of Seaview Terrace.
Recommendation 7	**Beach parking management**	Agree and implement overspill beach parking during the summer months in the school car parks if required.
Recommendation 8		Consider overspill beach parking during the summer months in the existing greenfield site in Laytown.
Recommendation 9		Provide a shuttle bus to connect school carparks and Laytown parking (greenfield site) to Bettystown Beach during the summer months, if required.
Recommendation 10		Introduce car free days at the beach during beach events.
Recommendation 11		The Beach Warden responsibilities should include managing and coordinating when the overspill parking is required.
Recommendation 12		Increase the fine for dog fouling to the maximum that is permissible under the either the Section 22 of the Litter Pollution Act or MCC Foreshore Bye-Laws.
Recommendation 13	**Tackle dog fouling**	Increase enforcement of byelaws, litter and waster legislation by MCC officials and beach wardens during the summer months.
Recommendation 14		New signage campaign regarding Dog Fouling
Recommendation 15		Provide for larger capacity bins during the summer season.
Recommendation 16		Adopt 'Leave–no-trace' policy for the beach or for a section of the beach.
Recommendation 17	**Litter management**	Provide for recycling facilities, either nearby or on the beach.
Recommendation 18		Encourage greater community involvement and run awareness campaigns regarding waste, litter, dog fouling etc.
Recommendation 19		Prohibit dogs in the lifeguard patrol area between 11a.m. - 6p.m. during the summer months.
Recommendation 20	**Implement animal control**	Control of dogs within the River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA i.e. dogs to be leashed from September to March inclusive.
Recommendation 21		Restriction of horses from the dunes at Mornington within the Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC.
Recommendation 22		Restriction of horses from the shoreline within the Nanny Estuary and Shoreline

		SPA from September to March inclusive (except for the Laytown Strand Races).
Recommendation 23		Review existing signage and, where necessary, develop new signage incorporating 'softer', playful and/or eye-catching graphics/text phrasing, to promote a sense of stewardship and self-policing amongst beach users.
Recommendation 24	**Improve signage**	Provide for a co-ordinated and consistent suite of signage to promote a sense of pride in the local area.
Recommendation 25		Review the indicative locations for signage and ensure signage pertaining to the Nanny River Estuary and Shore SPA is located at the point of entry into, and within the site.
Recommendation 26	**Increase beach tourism and activities in spring and summer only (April to August inclusive), outside the wintering bird season),**	Organise beach events, including: Car Free Days Canoeing with jetties on the River Nanny Beach Football Creating designated area for sports. Swimming lessons / Life-saving programs for all. Attraction of Maidens Tower of Mornington East Coast Cycle Route Tara Brooch Greenway Mornington to Drogheda Fishing Triathlons Eco-tourism Kiting – festivals Volleyball Sailing Sand yachting Sandcastles Bird watching with the erection of bird watching huts/stands. Provision of space for clubs to meet/change etc.
Recommendation 27		Maintain high quality water.
Recommendation 28	**Achieve blue flag status**	Implement the car parking proposals as outlined in this Recommendations appendix. These proposals will reduce and manage the parking on the beach, with the future aim of removing all parking on the beach in the future.
Recommendation 29		Limit the access to the dunes in Mornington by closing off the vehicular access to the parking area to better control and manage vehicle movements in the area. Consider providing a limited number of car parking spaces on the adjacent road.

Appendix B: Complaints Procedure

Meath County Council Complaints Procedure

Meath County Council is committed to delivering the best possible care to our customers. Above all else, people expect and deserve courtesy, sensitivity, a unique response to their needs and the minimum delay when contacting their County Council. However, it is recognized that there may be, from time to time, cause for complaint.

You have the right to complain if you feel:

- You have been unfairly treated by Meath County Council

- That a service to which you are entitled is not being provided

- That a service, that is being provided, is inadequate

- That a decision made with regard to you is wrong or did not take into consideration all of the facts

- That a request for service / information has been ignored.

This Complaints Handling Procedure aims to ensure that any and all complaints are deal with in a consistent, equitable and transparent manner.

Customer Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 - A customer who is dissatisfied with a service from Meath County Council should make contact with the relevant department. As far as possible, we will try to resolve any issues at this stage.

Stage 2 - If issues are not resolved at Stage 1, a customer may lodge a formal complaint. Complaints should be submitted in writing or by email to the Complaints Officer, Corporate Services, Meath County Council, County Hall, Navan, County Meath or by email to customerservice@meathcoco.ie

Stage 3 - Complaints will be acknowledged within one week of receipt.

Stage 4 - Customer complaints will be investigated by the Complaints Officer.

- A response will issue within four weeks of receipt of a complaint. Where this is not possible, an interim reply will issue setting out the reasons for the delay.

- Where a complaint relates to a specific staff member, that staff member will be consulted in relation to the complaint.

- Where a mistake has been made, an apology and explanation will be offered and every effort made to rectify the matter.

- Where a complaint highlights deficiencies in our processes or procedures, every effort will be made to remedy the situation as quickly as possible.

Stage 5 - If you are unhappy with the response you receive to your complaint, you can refer your complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman. By law, the Ombudsman can investigate complaints about any of our administrative actions or procedures as well as delays or inaction on our behalf. TheOmbudsman provides a free, impartial and independent dispute resolution service. The contact details for the Office of the Ombudsman are:

Office of the Ombudsman
18 Lower Leeson Street
Dublin 2
Tel: Lo-call 1890 22 30 30
Tel: 01 639 5600
Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.ie

Web: www.ombudsman.ie

Appendix C: Risk Assessment Template

Meath County Council Risk Assessment Template

Risk Assessment						RA No.	
Section / Location:						Revision No.	
Description of the job / task / activity:							
		Current Risk				Revised Risk	
Hazard and Risk	Risk Group	L x S	RR	Control Measures	Responsible Person	L x S	RR

Appendix D: Contacts List

Name	Organisation	Role	Phone	Email

Appendix E: Blue Flag Criteria