

Commissioners of Irish Lights Submission

Draft National Planning Framework

Introduction

The Commissioners of Irish Lights is the General Lighthouse Authority throughout the island of Ireland, its adjacent seas and islands. Irish Lights carries out the obligations of the Irish & British Governments in relation to the provision of an Aids to Navigation (AtoN) service around the coast of Ireland commensurate with the amount of traffic and degree of risk under the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention.

Irish Lights provides Aids to Navigation and Allied Services for the Safety of Persons and Infrastructure at Sea and the protection of the Marine Environment.

Irish Lights welcomes the publication of the National Planning Framework – Ireland 2040 Our Plan. In particular we would like to endorse the need for the plan to take into account the requirement to develop a national maritime spatial plan by 2021. This process should be progressed in tandem with the further development of the NPF and there should be scope to address marine development and spatial planning requirements in the preparation of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies. In our opinion separating these activities would represent a missed opportunity for Ireland.

It is important that land use planning and maritime planning processes work alongside each other effectively. In order to achieve this, a better understanding of each other's activities is important. The complexity of planning at sea means that shore planning techniques can't easily be transferred to Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) it is therefore important to consult with the various maritime stakeholders including the "40% of Ireland's population that lives within 5km of the coast". Bringing stakeholders together at an early stage will help to increase understanding and build trust. Careful and early consideration should be given to establishing local and regional marine stakeholder groups so that sound MSP principles and practices can be taken into account from an early stage.

Complexities such as jurisdictional issues can arise where activities have a presence both on land and in the marine environment and there can be a cross-over of jurisdictions with no underpinning regulations. It is important that there is clear guidance available as to exactly who is responsible.

Where transboundary issues may exist such as on the island of Ireland a common system of information management is essential. Brexit needs to be closely monitored, particularly in the area of borders for maritime activities. We need to understand the key coastal and maritime issues and that there will be different cultural contexts.

In line with the spirit of the document which recognises the need for all actors to play their part in contributing to the development of the 2040 vision set out in the NPF, we set out below, for information, the specific objectives in the plan where Irish Lights is actively working with stakeholders to deliver, services innovation and value added.

Planning for Diverse Rural Places

- NPO 22 – Support the development of National Broadband Plan
- NPO 23 – Facilitate the development of National Greenways / Blueways Strategy
- *Irish Lights is working with local communities utilising property owned by Irish Lights, providing a range of safety at sea services, and addressing connectivity in peripheral areas through provision of coastal data and communications infrastructure.*

Realising Our Island and Marine Potential

- NPO 40 – Regional and local development plans will take account of and integrate relevant maritime spatial planning issues.
- NPO 41 – Support growth and development in remote coastal communities and islands
- NPO 42a – Ensure Ireland's coastal resource is managed to sustain its physical character and environmental quality.
- *The Irish Lights visual and electronic Aids to Navigation services are a critical national infrastructure which facilitates commerce (with over 90% of goods transported by sea), protects lives and property and prevents environmental damage to our seas and coastlines.*
- *Irish Lights provides a real time weather observation service around the coast which support safety, business planning and environmental monitoring needs for a range of coastal sectors and activities <https://cilpublic.cil.ie/MetOcean/MetOcean.aspx>*
- *These observations will be an important resource for marine spatial planning.*

Ireland and Northern Ireland

- NPO 45 – work with departments in NI for mutual advantage in spatial planning, economic development and promotion, co-ordination of social and physical infrastructure provision and environmental protection and management.
- NPO 51 – support the co-ordination and promotion of all-island tourism initiatives through continued co-operation between the relevant tourism agencies and Tourism Ireland.
- NPO 52 – ensuring effective management of shared landscapes, heritage, water catchments, habitats and transboundary issues to environmental policy.
- *Irish Lights provides marine navigation infrastructure and allied safety services around the coast of Northern Ireland and actively co-ordinates its activities with a wide range of NI stakeholders.*
- *Irish Lights provides advice and support to ensure the effective consideration of navigation risks in offshore development activity in NI, including offshore renewables and participates in development process for marine plans.*
- *Irish Lights has established the Great Lighthouses of Ireland (GLI) as an innovative all-island tourism project, which preserves key maritime heritage assets at 12 sites around the island of Ireland and has facilitated a range of third parties to fund and present these assets to the wider community as tourism projects. Significant economic benefits have emerged and the project is still at an early stage.*

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any further questions.

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