Comhairle Contae Fine Gall
Fingal County Council

Minutes of Marine and Coastal Management Strategic Policy Committee

Tuesday, 16th December, 2025

PRESENT

Councillor A. Donnelly
Councillor D. Mulligan
Councillor C. Johnston
Councillor P. Mulville
Ms. Máire O'Brien
Mr. Charles Sargent
Ms. Alison Regan

The Chairperson, Councillor A. Donnelly, presided.

OFFICIALS PRESENT

David Storey, Director of Services, Catherine O'Donovan, Senior Executive Officer, John Daly, Senior Engineer, David T Byrne, Senior Executive Engineer, Kevin Halpenny, Senior Parks and Landscape Officer, Grainne Carroll, Administrative Officer, Maria Hand, Senior Staff Officer.

MCM/51/25 (Agenda Item No 1)

Confirmation and Re-Affirmation of the Minutes of Marine and Coastal Management Strategic Policy Committee meeting held on Wednesday 24th September 2025

Minutes of the Marine and Coastal Management Strategic Policy Committee meeting held on Wednesday 24th September 2025 which had be circulated were considered.

It was proposed by Councillor C. Johnston seconded by Councillor A. Donnelly and **AGREED.**

MCM/52/25 (Agenda Item No 2)

Presentation on Biodiversity Plan – Coastal Aspect

A presentation was given to the members by Hans Visser, Senior Parks and Landscape officer providing an update on the coastal actions on the Biodiversity Plan. This was followed by a discussion and questions from the members.

The presentation was **NOTED**.

MCM/53/25 (Agenda Item No 3)

Marine and Coastal Management SPC 2025 Work Programme Report

A presentation was given by David Storey, Director of Services, Environment, Climate Action, Active Travel and Sports on the 2025 Policy Programme under the following headings:

- Biodiversity Plan (Coastal Aspect)
- Coastal Erosion
- Climate Action Plan
- Coastal Water Sports Facilities Audit
- Balleally Landfill

Councillor C. Johnston requested that the topic of Coastal Erosion be recorded as an urgent priority, and it was agreed that this committee should invite a representative from the Government bodies dealing with this issue on a National level to a future SPC meeting.

The proposed SPC policy programme for 2026 was also discussed. The members requested a list of the criteria required in order for a Blue Flag to be awarded to be forwarded on.

The presentation was **NOTED.**

MCM/54/25 (Agenda Item No 4)

PPN - M. O'Brien - Policy of Fixed Moorings in Environmentally Sensitive Coastal Areas

The Motion in the name of Ms. Maire O'Brien was proposed by Ms. Maire O'Brien and seconded by Councillor A. Donnelly.

Motion:

"That Fingal adopt the policy of laying fixed moorings with buoys in sheltered environmentally sensitive coastal areas, for use by boats who wish to stop there temporarily, as such, this will reduce the damage to seagrass, other seabed plants and the seabed itself by unregulated anchoring."

Report:
The Council have no plans to adopt a policy for the laying of fixed moorings with buoys. The adoption of such a policy would indicate that the Council had plans for such works. The installation of additional moorings would require funding to be made available for the planning process, design, installation and maintenance of this infrastructure, including safe access to fixed moorings. There is no provision within the Council's 3 year Capital Programme for these works. Ireland's Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) sets out the authorisation procedure for proposals for new mooring buoys in Irish waters under the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021. Under this Act, one must submit an application for a Maritime Usage Licence (MUL) to MARA. For information the link to the MARA website is: https://www.maritimeregulator.ie/our-work/maritime-usage-licences/licensing-of-maritime-usages. Fingal County Council will not be submitting applications to MARA for the provision of new mooring systems for private vessels in any of the Natura 2000 sites.
There are four harbours under the control of Fingal County Council. These working harbours are at Balbriggan, Skerries, Loughshinny and Rush. Vessel owners can apply for a mooring in one of the four harbours of their choice. Information on moorings and harbours can be found at the following link: https://www.fingal.ie/council/service/harbours. This includes the application forms for each specific harbour along with different Byelaws and regulations applying to each location. These govern the use of moorings and other activities within the harbours. In addition, there is a berthage available for private vessels upon application at Malahide Marina, Howth Harbour and Howth Yacht Club. There is ample provision for mooring and berthage provided for vessels in the Fingal area.
The Council is not aware of damage to seagrass, seabed and other seabed plants caused by unregulated anchoring nor has the Council received any complaints or requests for moorings in the Natura 2000 sites.

Following some discussion on this motion Mary T Daly, Director of Services, Operations Department, agreed to investigate this issue with the relevant statutory body in January 2026 and will revert back to this committee with their response.

The Report was **ACCEPTED.**

The Meeting concluded at 17:29.

CHAIRPERSON **DATED**