

Developing Management Options for Brittas Bay Dunes

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Background

- Historical decline in condition of the dunes and associated SAC
- WCC, Community and NPWS concerns dune condition, litter, anti-social behaviour etc
- Status as the county's most popular coastal area
- Potential for enhanced management, enhanced community value and improved amenity
- AL appointed to investigate, recommend and specify a range of management options to assist with main problems



Why does Brittas Bay need management?



Importance – SAC designation



Community/amenity value



Landscape value



Ecosystem services



Intrinsic wildlife value



Personal value/people's stories



Decline in the sites condition, appearance and amenity value due to multiple factors affecting the value of the site

Special Area of Conservation – Brittas and Buckroney Dunes and Fen SAC

Annual vegetation of drift lines

Perennial vegetation of stony banks

Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetaliea maritimi)

Embryonic shifting dunes

Shifting dunes along the shoreline with Ammophila arenaria (white dunes)

Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)*

Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (Calluno-Ulicetea)*

Dunes with Salix repens ssp. argentea (Salix arenariae)

Humid dune slacks



Community/amenity value





Ecosystem services

Barrier to sea

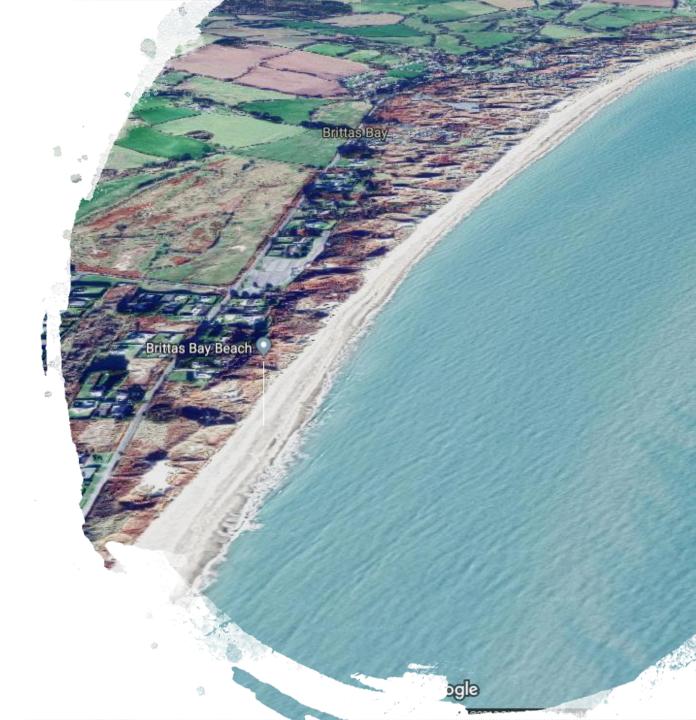
Amenity value (as described)

High dunes shelter property

Aesthetic value

Pollinators – e.g. mining bees

Potential for more...



Your own personal story...how you use the site

Your favourite dog walk

Your daily/weekly/yearly swim

Childhood memories

Learning about nature



What are the main management issues?

- Erosion by sea
- Erosion by people
- Invasive non-native species
- Anti-social behaviour litter, fires, vandalism etc.
- Dogs and dog walking
- Horses
- High volumes of people at peak periods (with varied activities and needs)



Erosion



Dune front receding – loss of habitat & stability – worsened by paths



Paths increasing severity of "blow outs" – impacts on dune height and stability



Invasive species

- Sea Buckthorn completely displaces dune habitat – longer term may cause increase risk of erosion
- Other species shade and and displace native plant communities and of lower value to other wildlife



Anti-social behaviour

e.g.

- Litter
- Fires
- Vandalism

and other behaviour – all impacts on other users, on habitats and wildlife and on site value



Dogs and dog walking







Faecal deposits – impact on habitats and people Littering of waste bags

Impact on ground nesting birds





Erosion in dune areas – dogs like long grass! Conflict with visitors in rare cases



Management – the most likely options...







Erosion control works

Removal of non-native plant species - esp.
Sea Buckthorn and
New Zealand Flax

Restoration of dune vegetation communities





- signage, "policing", path closure, site clean up, events Overall "re-branding" of the site - making it a special site and not just a beach



Additional recommendations

Survey & monitoring programme – wildlife, habitats, visitors, impacts Management/stakeholder group – takes account of neighbours, user groups and authorities to make good management decisions

Full site re-brand — local nature reserve or other special title to impart importance



Considerations

Establishment of a management group – right people, mechanism to manage the site

Need for establishment of volunteer resource – willing people, proper co-ordination

Need for greater resource input - €€€

Development of funding opportunities for management e.g. LIFEnature, Interreg, Leader etc?

Inclusion of other partners – NPWS, eNGOs, schools, others?



Timescale

1

Production of draft detailed management options by end of the month 2

Review with council staff

3

WCC to determine steps thereafter

Thanks for listening

Any questions?