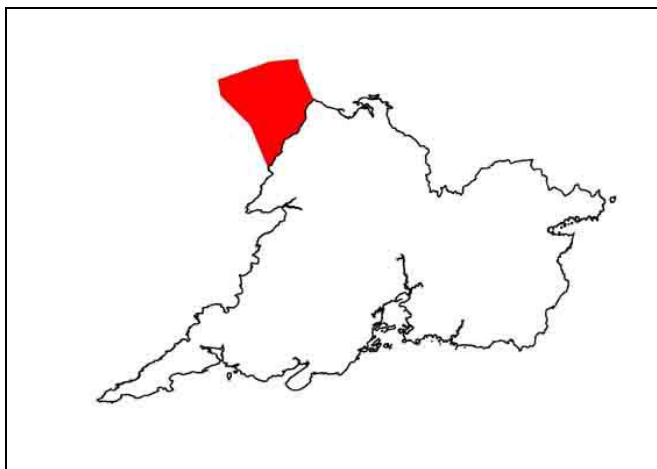


## *AREA 2: THE BURREN*



### *Key Characteristics*

- Flat limestone pavements, limestone farmlands and low limestone cliffs are a key feature of the SCA .
- Undeveloped area, strongly characteristic and contained by the uplands of the Burren.
- Sliabh Elva meets the sea along this strip of coastline.
- Extensive views to the Aran Islands.
- Fanore is a Blue Flag beach and also classified as a visually vulnerable and visually sensitive area in the county development plan.

## *Typical Photograph: Fanore Bay and Hinterland*



### *Landscape Character types and habitat types*

LCTs	HLTs	HLT Codes	HT	HT codes
Coastal Limestone Slopes	Coastal Intertidal	CI	Sand shores	LS2
Limestone Uplands	Rough Ground 2	RG2	Marram dunes	CD2
Limestone Farmland	Rough Ground 3	RG3	Dune slacks	CD5
	Dunes	D	Rocky sea cliffs	CS1
	Enclosed Land 4	EL4	Exposed rocky shores	LR1

### *Seascape Character Area Extent*

The Burren SCA is an exposed coastline extending from the north eastern tip of Blackhead Bay in north-west Clare to Doolin Point situated along the western fringe of the county.

### *Geology and Landform*

This SCA is dominated by flat limestone pavements, limestone farmlands and low limestone cliffs. The Caher River, the only river found in the high Burren intersects through the SCA. Of significant interest are the yellow sand bay and dunes at Fanore. This dune system comprises high dunes, fore dunes and dune slacks. The dune slack is unusual with extensive exposed limestone pavement and erratics

### *Coastal Ecology*

The coastal dune system at Fanore consists of both mobilised and stabilised areas. Sea Spurge (*Euphorbia paralias*), Sea Holly (*Eryngium maritimum*) and Marram Grass (*Ammophila arenaria*) are common species found in the high dunes. The fore dunes are largely covered by a mixture of Marram Grass (*Ammophila arenaria*) and Sand Couch (*Elymus farctus*). Throughout this SCA, trees are windswept and vegetation is sparse reflecting the level of exposure the coastline is subjected to.

### *Historical Seascapes and Human Influence*

Settlement along the coastal strip is scattered and decreases considerably as one rises onto the higher slopes. A road hugs the coast, travelling along a narrow strip of the coastal shelf.

Characteristic of the coastal strip are the considerable numbers of intervisible dry-stone forts, many with views across the South Sound to the forts of the Aran Isles. The forts are interspersed with remnant field systems, visible in the landscape as linear bumps or lines of stones.

### *Condition and Sensitivity*

Overall the condition of the seascape is considered good, despite some degradation due to caravan parks and holiday home development on the sand dunes at Fanore. The coastline would be sensitive to further tourism development, such as has occurred around Fanore, due to the remote and tranquil nature of the area. Further developmental pressure on the Aran Islands would also pose a threat as views of the islands are extensive from the Burren seascape.

### *Forces for Change*

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- Impacts of boat traffic in Galway Bay, i.e. ferry traffic passing en route to the Aran Islands.
  - Increased pressure from ferry traffic and fishing boats along the shoreline
  - Increasing tourism development and loss of dune system at Fanore
  - Caravan development in isolated areas at Fanore where proper infrastructure facilities are lacking
  - Road traffic and caravan park in dune system at Fanore, is a detractor
  - Impacts of road upgrades upon landscape character
  - Prominent development within sight of the coastline: Galway, Aran Islands
  - Any new inappropriately sited new houses
  - Potential use of the area for visitor daytrips and educational and research purposes
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## *Principles for Seascape Management*

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- Continuous monitoring of water quality is needed to maintain status of the Blue Flag Beach at Fanore
  - Any road improvement schemes along the coastline should be carefully designed
  - New tourist facilities should be sited outside of vulnerable areas
  - Appropriate proactive planning policies need to be developed and implemented to protect views to the Galway coastline
  - NHA and SAC designated areas should be determining factors in controlling landuse
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