



TIPPERARY Transforming

**DRAFT Tourism Product
Development Plan
2020-2030**



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1. Introduction

This document comprises a Tourism Product Development Plan (herein referred to as the 'Plan') for County Tipperary for the next 10 years, 2020 to 2030. This Plan builds on the Tipperary Strategic Tourism, Marketing Experience and Destination Development Plan 2016–2021, and specifically focuses on **tourism product development** for the county.

Tipperary County Council and Tipperary Tourism recognise the important opportunity that tourism provides in terms of economic impact, job creation and sustainability for the county. There is a huge opportunity to drive forward an ambitious countywide investment programme, creating successful tourism development leading not only to job creation and economic development but to county pride, confidence and community wellbeing, all of which is critically important from a county development point of view.

The purpose of this Plan is to guide and assist the council and Tipperary Tourism in delivering its plan to significantly improve the visitor product experience in the county, increase capacity, dwell time, bed nights and the overall county tourism economy.

The Plan suggests ideas for **creating exciting new tourism experiences and significantly enhancing existing ones**. These will lead to building greater capacity among tourism providers and extending visitor length of stay in the county, whilst also building synergies and collaborations between tourism product offerings in order to deliver top quality visitor experiences. There is a suite of innovative and creative potential projects included, along with a range of key targets, followed by an action plan plotting out the roadmap to be focused on for the next decade. Each of these need further assessment and feasibility in order to determine key factors such as funding, partnerships and timing.



The Plan has been careful to be ambitious whilst being realistic

The Plan builds upon the excellent work already done or underway and identifies new hero projects or flagship product development. It provides guidance on the creation of new innovative tourism products and experiences, the development of new clusters of immersive tourism products, as well as adding to existing clusters. This Plan harnesses the innovation in the tourism industry and in the county leadership, leverages partnerships, collaborations, resources, technology and other opportunities and trends to create these experiences. It recognises the importance of alignment with the main Fáilte Ireland complementary propositions for the county of Ireland's **Hidden Heartlands** and Ireland's **Ancient East**.

The Tourism Product Development Plan, in accordance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive, has been subject to a screening assessment to determine the impact of the Plan on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites. The Plan is underpinned by the principles of responsible sustainable tourism and given the nature and scope of the plan, it has been concluded that a

Stage 1I Appropriate Assessment is not required. Careful environmental consideration will need to be given to the tourism proposals (development or activity proposals) at all stages (pre -planning, consent, funding, and operation stages). Regarding the location or potential locations for Concepts proposed within this Plan, the protection of the Natura 2000 networks ecological integrity inherently applies.

The Plan has been careful to be ambitious whilst being realistic. Much work has gone into examining the wide-ranging array of current projects and developments already underway, and into ensuring that new ideas and plans are closely linked to these and built upon them. Resources will always be a challenge, and human resources to lead and direct these initiatives are just as important as financial resources to carry out the interventions. Alignment with National and Regional initiatives already underway or built into the future of plans of key agencies and government is essential to the future of the Plan. This Plan has researched and adopted these themes, trends and plans and ensures an enthusiastic alignment of the Tipperary tourism development to these wider initiatives underway.

Tipperary has a huge amount to offer, from its unique and authentic culture and heritage, its majestic mountains and landscapes, to its waterways at Lough Derg and the River Suir. Tipperary County Council and Tipperary Tourism have the ambition, capacity and innovative thinking to match that opportunity. This Plan sets out a roadmap that focuses resources and direction to a wide range of key initiatives that will more than place Tipperary at the centre of Ireland's tourism offering for the next generation.

It is important to mention in this plan the current and potential impact of Covid - 19 as the single biggest macro-economic factor affecting global and Irish tourism. A full Covid 19 statement is included on page 57.



2. Executive Summary

Introduction

Tipperary County Council and Tipperary Tourism recognise the important opportunity that tourism provides in terms of economic impact, job creation and sustainability for the county. Other benefits emerge from successful tourism development such as county pride, confidence and community wellbeing, which are all critically important from a community development point of view. The purpose of this Plan is to assist the council to deliver its ambitious plan to significantly improve the visitor experience in the county, increase capacity, dwell time, bed nights and the overall county tourism economy.

Interpretive Framework and Themes

The interpretive framework for Tipperary, developed as part of this Plan, aims to identify the overarching themes and primary stories for County Tipperary that will, along with the supporting narratives, create the richness, depth and, importantly, the sustainability of the overall visitor experience over the coming decade. This Interpretive Framework is the foundation upon which the development proposals in this Plan are built - three themes, a variety of stories with multiple new touch points and intriguing storylines, all of which help to cast light upon innovative sustainable visitor experiences that are inspired by County Tipperary's past and physical and cultural highlights, and are designed for current and future generations.

Heritage

A richness of built heritage and culture.

01

Landscape

A wonder of mountains, hills and landscapes.

02

Water

Lough Derg and the River Suir. The waterscape, surrounding hinterland, towns and villages.

03

Tourism Development Concepts

A careful examination of the existing tourism product landscape of the county and in-depth and wide-ranging consultations and workshops within the county were conducted. Overlaying these steps with a review of best practice and current national and international trends in tourism product development allowed the proposed range of products to be identified in this Plan.

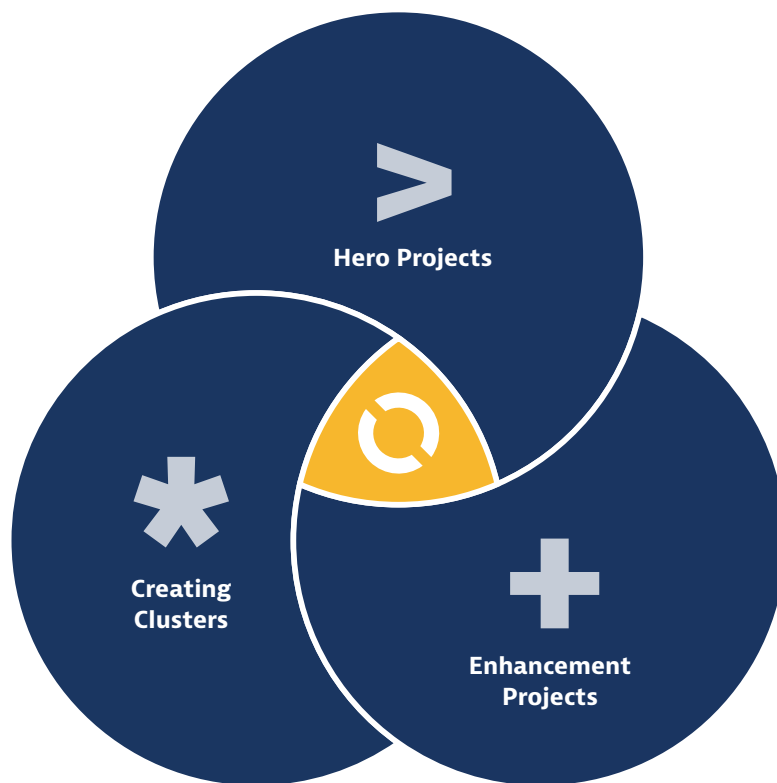
The Tourism products and projects proposed for the county are set out across the following **main categories** in this Plan.

HERO PROJECTS both new and existing significant tourism projects capable of attracting over 100,000 visitors annually.

CREATING CLUSTERS combinations of attractions and activities where a number of projects delivered and bundled together can attract and hold visitors. This may include one additional new product or a number of additional new products from this plan.

ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS where existing products are in place and the proposal is an extension or enhancement of the current situation to improve a visitor's experience when in the destination, but is not a primary reason to visit a destination.

Viewed as a collective whole the delivery of these concepts in the three categories above will significantly alter for the better the trajectory of the Tipperary tourism economy for the coming generation. The aim is to achieve all of the targets as set out in Recommendation 1 further on in this report. This, in the eyes of the Plan, can best be achieved through embedding a number of nationally/internationally significant projects of scale coupled with the considerable enhancement of existing propositions, in both location and theme, all underpinned by a national-leading **responsible tourism development approach**.



Resources, Management and Operations

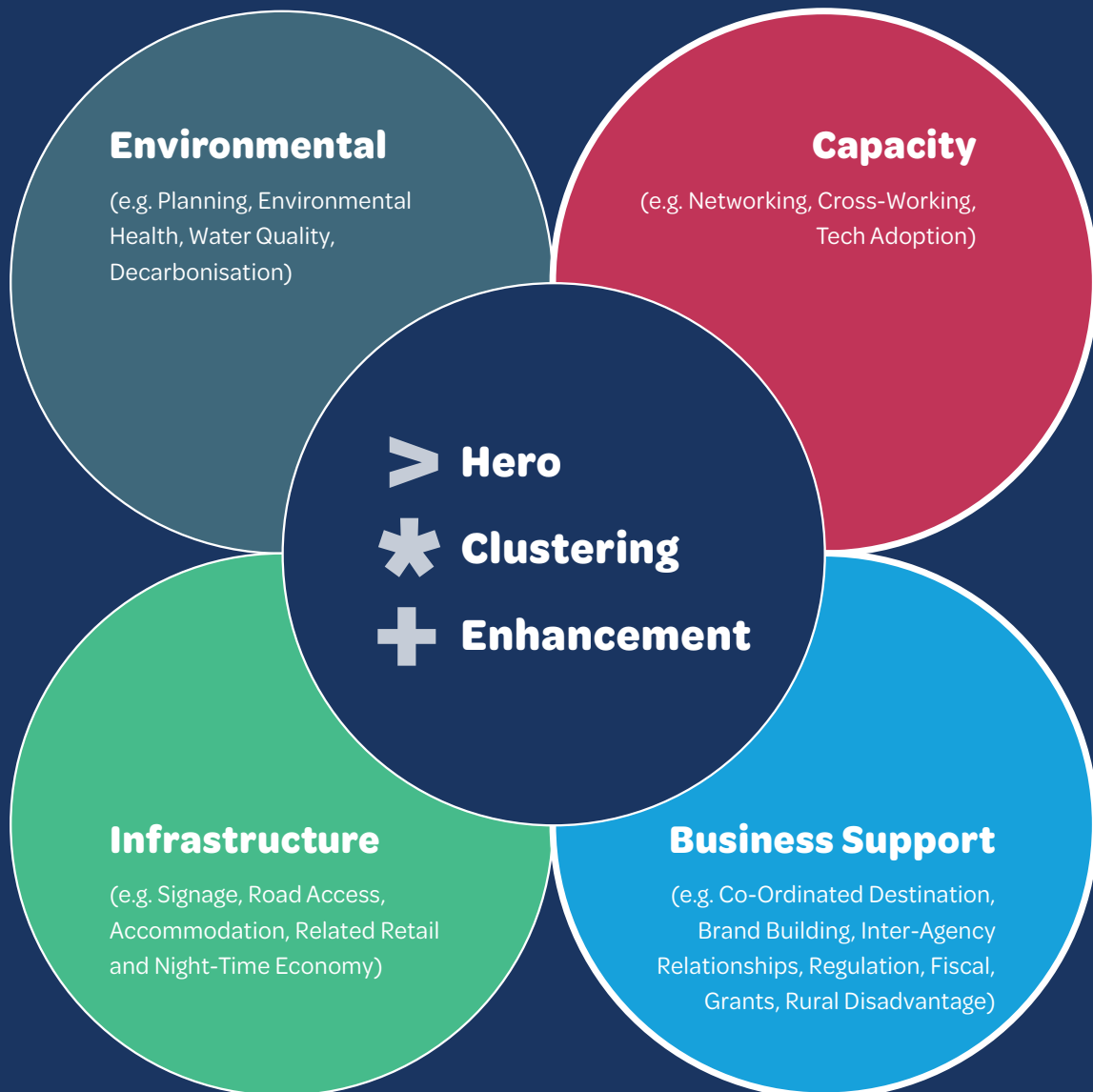
The current situation regarding Covid 19 is explained in the statement on page 57 and remains the primary determinant of available public and private funding for the foreseeable future. The scale and duration of its impact have a direct impact on available project funding. The situation at the time of writing indicates that its impact is under control and managed.

The council and Tipperary Tourism are the key resources in leading on the implementation of this plan. Irrespective of which project it is and who ultimately funds or manages the activity, initial leadership to inspire action and co-ordinate partners will be essential. The council has excellent leadership from the CEO, tourism and planning departments to inspire this action and make things happen. Tipperary County Council along with Tipperary Tourism is the key partnership that will determine the ultimate outcome of the Plan.

3. Significant Cross-Cutting Themes

This Plan can be viewed through two distinct prisms: those factors we have direct control over, and those that influence our performance but which we have little control over. The purpose of this section is to unravel these. The results should provide us with a clearer picture of where to place our priorities, energy and investment.

In order to identify the concepts in the next section considerable consultations and an online survey were carried out. The following graphic illustrates the linkage between the core new product development Concepts (**see Section 4**) and the outside influences that will play a significant role in their implementation. Many of these will impact upon virtually every concept relating to the core themes.



Environmental Responsible Tourism Approach

Tourism development in Ireland will be greatly influenced over the coming decade by climate change and the push towards a more carbon neutral economy. From Lorrha to Lahore, on both the supply and demand side, the global tourism economy will change from cheap flights to visitor fashions and from energy, waste and water management to government incentives. Food production is set to undergo considerable change. Tipperary needs to ensure it gets on the right side of this seismic shift.

Responsible development is a hallmark of this Plan. It attempts to equally service the commercial, community and environmental needs of the county over the coming decade and beyond; a trinity of equals rather than competing forces.

Firstly, however, this Plan needs to be cognisant of a number of external forces that will shape its delivery:

- a. Policy** – the programme for government, Ireland 2040 objectives and the EU’s prosperity and resilience, particularly in a post-Covid-19 and Brexit scenario;
- b. National and international climate change** mitigation measures; and,
- c. Marketplace trends.**

The potential is in place through the 2020s to research, draft and implement a far seeing **responsible tourism approach** for County Tipperary that will have positive intergenerational impacts. Standards will lie at the heart of this initiative. Irish tourism is awaiting a fully integrated countywide pilot strategy to deliver genuine responsible tourism that is a win for all. Tipperary County Council has a distinct advantage as they are already recognised leaders in articulating and putting in place the necessary structures, resources and partnerships to see the delivery of a green and healthier county. This Plan will aim to graft tourism onto this policy.

The last decade has witnessed few internationally significant examples of scale and integration in relation to sustainable tourism planning in Ireland. There are earlier templates like the Green Box to learn from, however a blank canvas awaits a county with the natural assets, latent capacity, brand signifiers and committed drivers like Tipperary.

Evidence suggests four elements need to be constantly at play to deliver a successful outcome within the decade. These are, in no order of priority:

- ✓ A critical mass of natural assets with a global appeal;
- ✓ A commitment to refit existing/design new offerings to the highest of standards;
- ✓ Build capacity within the county; and,
- ✓ A need to communicate this new proposition to the world.

It should be pointed out that much of this effort involves better utilising existing budgets rather than creating new funding. New funding opportunities should be harnessed as they come on stream over the coming decade. Leadership initially from the top will be important, emphasising that this initiative is about deep structural change within the county’s tourism economy.

To develop this cross-cutting theme (that also likely defines tourism development over the coming decade) it is essential that a number of actions occur simultaneously:

- ✓ Conduct the necessary research both at home and abroad, resulting in an action plan;
- ✓ Ensure full multi-party and high level political support;
- ✓ Make available the early phase resources to support the early adopters on the ground (likely no more than 60 ventures); and,
- ✓ Begin to graft responsible tourism onto the brand and messaging emerging from the county.

This communications strategy is important, never over-promising while raising awareness both within and outside the county of Tipperary.

Capacity

There is growing competition at inter-county level within the rural Irish tourism economy. Generally, a common organisation structure exists across counties with trade/trade representative networks at its core, supported by all relevant aspects of the Local Authority funnelled through a designated officer. This is the primary relationship driving Tipperary's tourism development. Radiating out are the supporting agencies at local and national level, especially Fáilte Ireland. This structure is from the supply side, with its visitor inputs from Fáilte Ireland and Tipperary Tourism. This Plan attempts to provide the product development 'script' with these primary alliances for the coming decade and beyond.

Capacity in this context refers to the professional, business and commercial competence of the tourism providers within Tipperary. These providers can be drawn from private, community or public enterprises. They can straddle all themes, representing businesses of all scales and longevity. The results from the online survey (public consultation carried out in development of this Plan) reveal a tourism trade acutely aware of both the opportunities and threats that lie ahead. Four aspects in particular stand out that need to be delivered to build up this capacity:

- ✓ Co-ordinated, ongoing and bespoke industry **training** easily accessible to all;
- ✓ More awareness of the benefits of ongoing **research** planning;
- ✓ Awareness raising and support in the adoption of tourism related **technology**; and finally,
- ✓ Enhanced support for greater trade **networking** and joint-working.

This Plan is building upon much good work already in motion delivered through Tipperary County Council, Tipperary Tourism and the private sector.

The new and enhanced projects outlined in this Plan require considerable ongoing support from county (e.g. LEO and ETB) and national agencies (e.g. Waterways Ireland and Heritage Council). The recent past has witnessed considerable work done in this regard, but more is required over the lifespan of this Plan. Many of the tourism projects are supported by the town-scale regeneration project under project Ireland 2040.

Fáilte Ireland's ongoing support for Tipperary is considerable. It is fair to call it a 'total support approach' for the county, as it has embraced research, product development, capacity building and marketing. Their behind-the-scenes strategic guidance has contributed greatly to the maturing of tourism development in the county. Through their signature propositions of Hidden Heartlands and Ancient East the county is fully aligned with national strategy into the medium- to long-term.

In the same vein the role, impact and potential of Tipperary Tourism should also be acknowledged as a practical vehicle to help deliver heightened professionalisation and network support. The existing initiatives are working, however it would be wise where possible to examine new improved multi-partner ways to get support to those small Tipperary tourism enterprises that most need them. The online survey has identified some obstacles in the eyes of the trade and stakeholders, like planning issues, commercial rates, environmental health and licensing. A related business issue is the cost of insurance; this Plan would hope that sensible reform, sensitive to the needs of the small tourism business operator in rural Ireland today, will be forthcoming.

One of the most important drivers of tourism across the county over the last two decades has been the two LEADER companies in the north and south of the county. Their efforts (often under-acknowledged) in delivering the Rural Development Programme (RDP) has contributed to developing a foundation, especially in more remote/rural areas, upon which this Plan can build. The recreation offering within the county in particular owes a great debt to successive programmes. As the companies gear up to delivering the next incarnation of the RDP within Tipperary it is critical that the findings and recommendations within this Plan are fully aligned with their actions and priorities.

Funding and Business Supports



Infrastructure

Tourism at its heart is about the visitor travelling from their home place to a recognised destination for a period longer than 24 hours. Understanding the act of travel (convenience, information, cost and time) is an important factor in influencing consumer behaviour to either choose Tipperary or to not.

Thankfully access to the county has dramatically improved over the last decade and is destined to be further enhanced over the lifespan of this Plan. However, this primary road network does come with challenges, such as enticing the visitor to simply 'stop' in the county, given that an east coast to west coast journey can be achieved in less than three hours. Although the tourism economy in the county is serviced by public transport (especially rail and bus) it is currently of marginal influence in mainstream journey planning for tourists. The private car is the preferred means of transport. There are valuable lessons to be learned from Tipperary's tourism past. One consultee was at pains to point out that the tourism of yesteryear was, 'the German, Swiss and French visitors who rented a basic house and toured, often outside the county. They found Tipperary a great hub'.

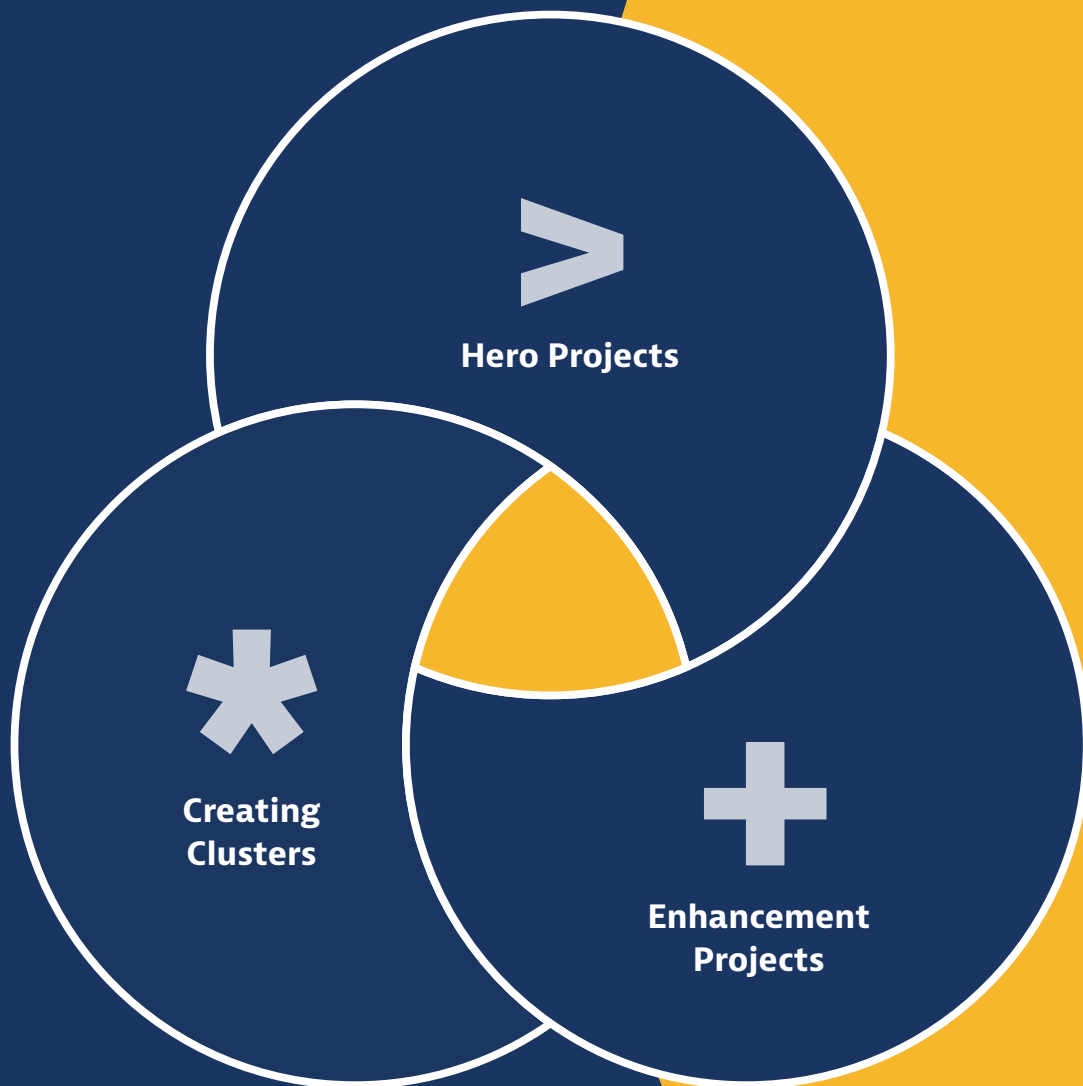
The visibility of Tipperary as a tourism destination through a co-ordinated, smart and contemporary signage programme across the entire County (and linking counties) needs to be delivered. The county possesses the scattered remains of many different signage initiatives from individual attractions, heritage town/villages, recreational destinations, amenities and events. This is common to virtually every other county. Tipperary has an opportunity to be ahead of the curve and capitalise upon greater brand/destination recognition while supporting the visitor in their physical journey.

A leading objective in this Plan is to engineer opportunities for visitors to stay longer in the county. Part of enticing visitors to say longer and spend more money is to build up excellence in both the supportive retail, artisan/craft markets, visitor-friendly culture and the night-time economy. Imagination and investment are required to blend these into the offering of each town in the county. As Fáilte Ireland say: *'Successful destination towns work collaboratively and strategically in providing the necessary products and services to support the tourism industry.'*

This Plan was tasked with looking at general accommodation provision. It remains a critical piece of the tourism development jigsaw. More than virtually any other investment, accommodation (whether it be hotel, self-catering, hostel, homestay or new modes) can accelerate tourism growth. Tipperary needs more accommodation across all sectors and locations. Without balanced provision the ambitions in this Plan will be constantly challenged.



4. Concepts



Concepts and Categories

This section sets out the main tourism product themes and concepts that will make up the next generation of tourism offerings in Tipperary. Each is embedded in one of the three core themes: water, heritage or uplands/landscape. The three categories of concepts are Hero, Creating Clusters and Enhancement. Each concept has been assigned the most suitable category, however a degree of fluidity is called for in relation to some who may straddle two categories.



Hero Projects: This category presents a small number of fresh tourism development concepts of real scale, interconnection and innovation for County Tipperary over the coming decade. These will have worldwide reach, ambition and be fully aligned with national tourism policy. The aim in each is to paint a picture of how all the Tipperary partners involved can work together to fundamentally imagine/reimagine and consequently commercially energise the specific project.



Creating Clusters: The concepts in this section are in lockstep with the hero concepts above, however they differ in that they may be existing concepts represented here afresh with new components. They may also be concepts possibly of a lesser investment scale than the Hero Projects, while often being in need of investment over a phased basis. In essence the aim of these clusters is to build up the range of things to see and do in the county thus extending dwell time and visitor expenditure.



Enhancement Projects: Many of the concepts in this category are currently in train facilitated by Tipperary County Council, Tipperary Tourism and their partners. They are being viewed as being of strategic importance, dovetailing well with the two categories above. Two in particular are community driven and represent a growing capacity from this sector within the county to take the leading role (with public support from LEADER and others) in delivering significant projects with potential international appeal. Their impacts on the ground, delivering appropriate tourism development helping to refresh rural communities, should not be underestimated.

A detailed and systematic approach was adopted to arrive at a comprehensive yet balanced number of projects that went on to form the foundation of this Plan. Projects were scored using the following criteria: Appropriateness to Tipperary Tourism, Complexity and Cost to Deliver, Commercialisation / Viability / Greatest Tourism Impact (income / employment), Innovation / WOW Factor, Social Acceptance / Environmentally Responsible. This resulted in 19 projects being selected. It is important to acknowledge that over the ten year lifespan of this project that another generation of tourism development projects will emerge and that these criteria can help initially assess their suitability and alignment to the rolling Plan over the coming decade.

A key question is 'who' needs to drive the Concepts profiled below. Recent history tells us that projects of this likely scale and complexity require a combination for skills, experience, leadership and resources in order to be sustainable. There are four distinct partner types to be considered. These include: Public Sector (including agencies), Private Sector, Community, and Special Interest Groups (including NGOs). As each project unfolds various combination of the above will materialise and many of the larger multi-disciplinary projects will have a number of Partnerships involving potentially all of the above groups. Cashel, Clonmel, Carrick-on-Suir and Nenagh are good examples of concepts that will have multi partner arrangements. In relation to participation, concepts should always remain 'open' ventures, welcoming to new partners that have something positive to add to their delivery.

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Transforming Tipperary Concepts
Potential Locations
 (please note that a number of concepts are countywide products).





Category 1:

Hero Projects

Cashel Heritage Capital of Ireland



Location
Cashel



Timeframe
Multi-phased project with at least a ten-year lifespan.



Heritage



Hero
Project

Description

Cashel is Tipperary’s most significant tourism destination. Over the coming decade it will undergo great change that presents considerable opportunities for both the county and the region.

A key challenge is generating greater linkage between the Rock of Cashel (OPW) and the town. Cashel will be aiming to enhance the visitor experience, encouraging people to stay longer (and spend more) through the development of a new Visitor Centre, developing new visitor infrastructure including the Bishops Walk and new visitor services, while all the time improving capacity, standards and communications.

There are three parallel yet interconnected concepts being pursued, namely:

- ✓ The overarching development of ‘destination Cashel’ through it becoming a Fáilte Ireland designated Destination Town;
- ✓ A new mould-breaking Visitor Interpretative Centre; and,

Embedding Best Practice

The global best practice to be considered is the UNESCO World Heritage Site, see: www.whc.unesco.org/en/recognition-of-best-practices/ from the Historic Areas of Istanbul, the Acropolis in Athens to Oaxaca in Mexico. This is a valuable learning resource for Cashel going forward.

Next Steps

- ✓ Continue work on implementation of Cashel Destination Town Plan.
 - ✓ Develop and deliver a Masterplan for Cashel.
 - ✓ The Bishops Walk, a historic processional route used by royals and bishops, will be reinvigorated, dispersing visitors from the Rock into the town centre.
- This vision for Cashel Destination Town & Heritage Capital of Ireland will co-exist with a number of important considerations including:-**
- ✓ The performance of the town has a demonstrable direct and indirect impact on tourism throughout the county;
 - ✓ Cashel needs to remain fully aligned with Fáilte Ireland’s “Ireland’s Ancient East” proposition (especially Castles and Conquests) and;
 - ✓ This leading national heritage tourism destination will need to manage in a responsible manner an increasing number of visitors over the coming decade.

1.1

Cashel: Living History

Repertory Company of Ireland



Location
Cashel



Timeframe
3 years



Heritage



Hero
Project

Embedding Best Practice

No comparable venture exists in Ireland or UK. Good practice examples: Living History Education Foundation, see: www.livinghistoryed.org/; The Association for Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museum, see: www.alhfam.org/; and Past Pleasures Ltd, see: www.livinghistoryed.org/, www.alhfam.org, pastpleasures.co.uk/.

Next Steps

After discussions, if there is consensus growing around the concept, then a Feasibility Study is required to define the project in detail.

Description

The vision is to develop a totally unique 'school' promoting excellence in living history. This commercial venture will service (and define) the next generation of heritage related attractions in Ireland. The opportunities for Ireland's Ancient East to work hand in glove with this facility could be significant.

From a quality assurance perspective, the venture would provide bespoke/accredited training from acting skills to character development, from script development to authentic costumes and props, to recruiting, training the trainers, management and promotion. These are likely to be residential/multi-day accredited courses. It is envisaged there will be a rehearsal space/small studio theatre being an integral part of the space.

An opportunity exists to export living history related skills/services. In addition, the company will immediately service the living history needs of Tipperary's heritage offerings which will be in the process of reinventing itself. This is viewed as an important cog in this reinvention. No other county in Ireland would be setting the bar so high.

A subset of this venture would be the creation of a voluntary community-driven 'Tipperary Re-Enactors Society', aiming to help bring alive the various events from Tipperary's past, from life in a medieval monastery to the Irish civil war. These re-enactors would perform at events and festivals throughout the county and beyond.

1.2

Cashel: Tipperary Tribes Ireland's Latest Evening Show



Location
Cashel



Timeframe
4 years



Heritage



Hero
Project

Embedding Best Practice

Best quality local food products promoted through the three-course meal. Local musicians and artists promote Tipperary culture to a mainly overseas audience.

There is much to learn from the long established and much respected Bunratty Medieval Banquet, Co Clare, see: www.bunrattycastle.ie

Next Steps

- ✓ Discussion with Comhaltas on plans for the future and tease out partnership potential on new concept.

Description

This concept involves a complete redesign of the long-running evening entertainment with a meal at Cashel. This in turns adds value to the concept of 'destination Cashel' which runs through this Plan. As an evening economy attraction it will likely ripple over into other aspects of the commercial life of the heritage town.

A new evening entertainment space capable of hosting over 100 guests for dinner and top class entertainment, with a difference.

The difference is the audience is part of the show. The audience is facilitated by a group of experts and artists who know how to include everyone in this truly immersive and interactive experience. Each person

adopts part of the show and gets either an instrument to play, a dance to perform, lines to sing or a poem to rehearse. They arrive early for a rehearsal with the experts and take basic lessons, enough to perform some activity on stage later. The evening will have a supportive, fun-filled atmosphere where guests will learn something new and perform with the experts.

There are different stages as the evening unfolds towards the finale, where the full audience and cast perform a rehearsed piece that has a place for everyone.

No visitor will forget this evening due to their own personal experience, and they may purchase a recording of the show online after the event.

2.1

Lough Derg Ballina Floating Village - Floating Cultural, Educational, Entertainment & Food Experience



Potential Location
Drumineer/ Garrykennedy
(suitable waters)



Timeframe
10 years



Water



Hero
Project

Embedding Best Practice

Artificial floating islands exist in Asia and Europe. Viva, Seoul is similar in scale, design and function to what is being proposed on the Lough Derg, see: www.industryleadersmagazine.com/mega-man-made-artificial-solar-powered-floating-island-viva-seoul/.

Floating Garden in Rostock, Germany, see: www.boxdesignstudio.wordpress.com/tag/floating-gardens/; and Mur Island (The Murinsel) in Graz, Austria, see: www.archello.com/project/mur-island; are also models to inspire and inform.

Next Steps

- ✓ Instigate a multi-partner discussion on Lough Derg and potential interventions.
- ✓ Establish scoping process/document indicating a shortlist of options.
- ✓ Carry out detailed feasibility on one main option or a cluster of options.

hotel; all within an artificial solar-powered floating island. The floating island thematically harmonises Ireland's past, present and future. An iconic sustainable destination symbolising the revitalisation of Lough Derg.

What could be embedded on the site: Auditorium/ Conference Hall (500+ seater); Ireland-wide showcase for craft and floating food market based on the pop-up model; a multi-use interpretative space embracing VR/ AR and living history (tourism, educational possibly genealogy); and finally, a dynamic floating garden would complete the offering.

Description

The scale and potential impact of this concept should not be underestimated. Its strategic effect on the whole of Lough Derg region from a tourism development perspective is considerable.

Community and trade consultations have clearly informed this Plan that significant scale interventions or supporting infrastructure will unleash the tourism potential of Ballina and surrounds. This concept is an answer to this request, while remaining sympathetic to the Lough Derg VEDP (in draft) which promotes 'slow travel' and 'authentic experiences'. In addition this project would also be in harmony with the Shannon Region Tourism Masterplan where suitable projects of innovation and scale are encouraged.

The concept is a powerful contemporary design statement housing an all-year-round modular visitor-offering unlike anything else in Ireland: part leading heritage and cultural attraction, part floating food market, part high-end retail destination, part modular

2.2

Lough Derg Iconic Viewpoint and Waterside Activity Park



Location
Lough Derg, River Shannon



Timeframe
5 years



Water

Hero
Project

Embedding Best Practice

These include for new facilities on the lake - Cantilever Structure over the Columbian Icefields of Jasper National Park in Alberta, Canada; The Elastic Perspective sculptural staircase, Rotterdam; Top of Tyrol Mountain Peak Platform, Austria, see: www.stubaier-gletscher.com/aktivitaeten/aussichtsplattform/; and the new viewpoint at Inveruglas, An Ceann Mòr, Loch Lomond National Park, Scotland, see: www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/things-to-see/scenic-routes-viewpoints/an-ceann-mor-inveruglas/.

Next Steps

- ✓ Review of original research and re-alignment to IHH and emerging markets.

Description

Over the last decade considerable joined-up thinking and inter- county planning has gone into creating a more high profile and visitor-friendly Lough Derg visitor proposition for both the domestic and international markets. The Lough Derg Marketing Group have made significant impact in areas of regional coordination and developing awareness.

This Plan aims to continue to support the impressive bundling work being undertaken and represented through the Lough Derg VEDP. The aim is to reimagine the lake (and its surrounds) in an integrated sense, adding value to the emerging Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands proposition. New partnership, especially with the private sector, will likely deliver the next generation of tourism offerings.

Two existing concepts illustrate how to begin to broaden the visitor experience on and around the lough: namely

- a) at the locality known as the ‘Lookout’, a picnic area and viewing point on the R494 near Portroe (one of the key assets on the west Tipperary side of Lough Derg) would offer an accessible and panoramic view over the lake from Castlough to Holy Island, County Clare; and
- b) the proposed Castlough Waterside Park with its outdoor trails and floating marina would further unify the experiences of the lake shore and the lake. Both these projects are at a conceptual stage.

There then follows two original tourism development concepts for the lake: one of international significance, namely an iconic floating village; and a new value-added element to get more people on to the lake, namely a fleet of eco self-driving boats.

2.3

Lough Derg Fleet of Self-Drive Eco Boats at Ballina



Location
Ballina, River Shannon



Timeframe
1 year



Water



Hero
Project

Embedding Best Practice

GoBoats, Copenhagen, see www.goboat.dk: Pollution free small boats with optimum stability, they move slowly and silently (approx. 5-6 km/h), powered by solar energy cells generated prior to rental, with a battery life that has a specific range.

The popular Wee Red Boats on Lough Erne at Enniskillen are a non-electric diesel day boat option, see: www.erneboathireltd.com.

Next Steps

- ✓ Multi-partner discussion followed by the delivery of an initial scoping document outlining the options, obstacles, processes and cost.

largely by private boat owners, anglers and canoeists and, importantly, an existing day cruise operator. There is considerable private sector capacity to drive this concept forward. The fleet should be between 8-10 boats to begin.

On a related but slightly larger scale there is now an opportunity (recognised in the Shannon Region Tourism Masterplan) to support the creation of a new cruise hire fleet located in Killaloe/Ballina.

Description

The concept is to embed a fleet of attractively designed electric day boats, with limited range on the water, under private management (a community run management model may also be explored) at Lough Derg. The aim of this concept is to attract more visitors into Ballina, get them to say longer and spend more money.

Waterway visitors highly rate getting out on Irish waterscapes, but likely only 5% of visitors to waterways destinations will ever get out on the water. There is latent demand in Ballina and a business model that could work. The town has significant jetty space used

3
(3.1-3.2)

Tipperary Equine Experiences

Heritage

Hero Project



Potential Location

3.1 Fethard; 3.2 Existing location, outside Tipperary Town



Timeframe

3 years



Embedding Best Practice

For world-leading best equine practice used throughout the attraction, see: www.kyhorsepark.com/. For horse racing see Dundalk Racecourse: www.dundalkstadium.com.

Next Steps

- 3.1 Detailed scoping and feasibility.
- 3.2 Support the delivery of the all-weather track and multipurpose facility.

Alignment with Fáilte Ireland's Sport of Kings Visitor Experience Development Plan.

Description

Tipperary is reputed as the equine centre of Ireland and this new attraction aims to firmly establish this in the eyes of the visitor of tomorrow.

There are 2 major equine concepts: 3.1 Tipperary Equine World Experience, and 3.2 Tipperary Racecourse Development.

3.1 Tipperary Equine World Experience: A new Tipperary horse park, home to the largest collection of native horse breeds in the country. It will promote and celebrate every aspect of equine culture in a publicly accessible way (with fun and learning at the heart of the experience). This concept is based on the world-famous Kentucky Horse Park currently achieving over 1 million visitors annually. Fethard is home to both the Coolmore stud and the new interactive attraction Fethard Horse Country Experience in the centre of the town. The aim is to elongate the visitors' stay, increase expenditure locally and heighten the experience, creating something unique in Ireland. Suggested content that visitors will enjoy:

- ✓ Largest collection of Irish Horse breeds in the country on display in their natural environment.
- ✓ Thoroughbred centre – a training centre for future champions.
- ✓ Equine Care – equine vet base where best practice animal care is openly demonstrated to visitors.

- ✓ Visiting champion horses from around the country on show.
- ✓ International Museum of the Horse & the Breeding Dynasty of Thoroughbreds.
- ✓ Home to the largest new horse festival in Ireland.
- ✓ Working horse farm tours (include tours of nearby horse farms).
- ✓ Innovative 'programming' ideas – 'mind your own horse for an hour'.
- ✓ Home to largest collection of horse memorabilia – photos, trophies, old tack, equipment.
- ✓ Library of bloodline genealogy (see above).

3.2 Tipperary Racecourse Development: Horse Racing Ireland (sports' governing body) have forecast that by 2022, Tipperary Racecourse will be the location for the second all-weather track in the country after Dundalk. This multi-million euro investment will have a considerable impact on the local and county economy. The aim of this concept is to develop a modern and commercially progressive sporting tourism attraction in Tipperary town that would be open for business all year round.

4

Tipperary Bushcraft Survival and Activity Park



Potential Location

Knockmealdowns or similar type of upland location(s). Boglands could also be examined.



Timeframe

2 years



Landscape



Hero Project

Embedding Best Practice

Best practice in quality facility management and creating a fun environment. See: www.bewilderwood.co.uk and www.legoland.co.uk.

Also W5, Belfast is a good example of best practice, see: www.w5online.co.uk/whats-on.

Next Steps

- ✓ Extensive market testing required on this concept and benchmarking with other existing successful similar operations.

Description

This is a specialised outdoor 'active in nature' destination created to attract domestic or international groups who want to experience real survival techniques and have fun in the wilds of Tipperary.

It is directed at adventurous couples, groups or families and involves camping/glamping for multi-day stays. Group leaders set a range of survival challenges for the groups which will require all of their ingenuity to overcome.

The concept is loosely based on a number of successful and mainstream TV models. Combined with this is

a standout quality outdoor activity hub promoting Ireland's fittest family concept. A full outdoor challenge facility is set out with a number of different challenge levels capable of being carried out by families competing against each other or against themselves. Each programme has a difficulty level rising to the 'big one', which is a specially designed 'iron man' style challenge capable of also attracting overseas interest. The full hub would have approximately 5 or 6 different challenge zones in order of difficulty or type of terrain. Some challenges would have water features, others trees, logs and ropes.

5

Tipperary Centre Sports



Potential Location
Thurles



Timeframe
2-3 years



Heritage

Hero Project

Description

This concept is aimed at children up to teenage years, and creates a sports village attraction where top-class tutors are available to work with children at any level, creating challenges and fun through multiple sports. This would involve a wide range of activities and appeal to families wanting to immerse themselves in sport for a holiday or short break.

This is not a locally based sports concept, but more a 'Centre Parcs for sport' model. Families come from all over Ireland (and abroad) to base themselves on the campus and the children immerse in sport activity. This concept could be linked to the language summer school market to target more overseas visitors.

Embedding Best Practice

Best practice in managing sports programmes of complexity and scale. Staff training and accreditation critical. Health and safety plus child protection are important factors.

For an international academic overview with references to the importance of outdoor play for young children's healthy development, see: www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2444866416301234.

Next Steps

- ✓ Scope our project ambition and priorities.
- ✓ Establish potential location and partners.
- ✓ Detailed feasibility work on preferred option.

The location of this project will need careful consideration bearing in mind areas where the council own sufficient lands. Thurles would be an ideal location as it was Town of Sport 2012 and is strongly associated with GAA sports, which will be a strong part of the concept.

6

Tipperary Youngworld



Location
Tipperary Town



Timeframe
3 - 4 years



Heritage



Hero Project

Embedding Best Practice

Extensive market testing required on this concept and benchmarking with other existing successful similar operations.

Best practice in quality facility management and creating a fun environment.

See W5, award-winning science & discovery centre in Belfast: www.w5online.co.uk.

Next Steps

- ✓ Scope our project ambition and priorities.
- ✓ Establish potential location and partners.
- ✓ Detailed feasibility work on preferred option.

Description

A children's standout play area like no other in the country.

The concept involves discovery for children on a giant scale. There will be specially-created indoor play zones such as a full model farm, town and park zone. Each zone is a creation of the space as a child sees it, with exciting things to discover in each being inspired by 'Tipperary unique' lore, landscape and environment.

This concept is aimed at the domestic market, getting connected families around Ireland to take a break in Tipperary with at least one overnight stay to take in this

attraction. The closest competitor is the W5 attraction in central Belfast which is more science-based. Although the spaces can accommodate adults to accompany young children, it is designed for children with low doorways, small child-sized seating and children's café areas. Key places of inspiration include the internationally popular Legoland concept.

7

Policing Ireland

Crimes of the Past & Crime Prevention of Today & Tomorrow



Location
Templemore



Timeframe
3 - 5 years



Heritage



Hero Project

Description

In todays mainstream culture policing/solving crimes are popular currency.

This attraction would employ interactive technology, storytelling and set creation e.g. crime scene re-enactments, dressing up in uniforms, rides in

Embedding Best Practice

For family- friendly and highly interactive policing and justice museums see: the Justice and Policing Museum in Sydney, Australia, www.sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/justice-police-museum; and Vancouver Police Museum and Archive, www.vancouverpolicemuseum.ca.

Next Steps

A round table session is required at the outset to examine this very particular vision. If consensus emerges a Feasibility Study can be commissioned immediately. Fáilte Ireland should be kept abreast at all stages of this early development phase as there is the potential of creating a nationally significant and uniquely themed visitor experience.

decommissioned vehicles and 'an arrest, fingerprinting and holding cell experience'. Tipperary, through its assets, capacity and legacy, can create an immersive, fun and informative experience like no other in Ireland. There is likely a considerable domestic and international demand for this offering.



Category 2:

Creating Clusters

8
(8.1-8.4)

Blueways, Greenways and Future Trail Development



Location
Countywide



Timeframe
3 - 5 years

Landscapes



Creating
Clusters

Description

A walking and cycling holiday experience is a mainstream part of most Irish holidays. The societal benefits from recreational investment by the state is well documented. Investment and awareness of our new Blueways has opened up slow travel on our inland waterways. Tipperary is primed to capitalise on this exponential growth but new facilities, route infrastructure with enhanced co-ordination and promotion are required.

A recreational strategy for the whole of Tipperary would be a wise next step to help open up much of the county's dormant world-class recreational assets for future generations. A number of projects are identified below which stand out as having significant potential, but these are far from the only assets in the county that should be considered for properly co-ordinated support. The roles and insights from the two LEADER companies, South Tipperary Development Company and North Tipperary Development Company, in realising the provision of recreational excellence is important.

Embedding Best Practice

Two standout greenways to date, see: the Great Western Greenway (Mayo), www.greenway.ie/, and the Waterford Greenway, www.waterfordcouncil.ie/images/GIS/Greenways/WaterfordGreenway2017Map.pdf

Next Steps

- ✓ A Tipperary Recreational Strategy is required.

A number of special themed recreational projects stand out which offer both potential to enhance the visitor experience and linkage to wider national networks e.g. Suir Blueway Tipperary, Lough Derg Blueway and the Beara Breifne Way. All projects below need to be fully aligned with the Green and Blue Infrastructure Masterplan Roadmap for Tipperary Waterways.

- ✓ **8.1** Suir Blueway Tipperary – support further development.
- ✓ **8.2** Tipperary Town to Sliabh na Muc – support the examination of the concept for a linear walk from the town to the iconic summit.
- ✓ **8.3** Birr to Roscrea Greenway – support this project linking Birr, Roscrea and Portumna.
- ✓ **8.4** Littleton Bog Labyrinth – creating walkways and cycleways across a network of raised bogland linking Twomileborris, Gortnahoo, Urlingford, Templetouhy and Littleton.

Slieve Na Muc Viewing Platform



Location
Glen of Aherlow



Timeframe
Ongoing



Landscapes



Creating Clusters

Embedding Best Practice

Stairway to Heaven Walk in Co. Fermanagh, see: www.walkni.com/walks/cuilcagh-boardwalk-trail/. A 1.6 km stepped boardwalk constructed to prevent walkers from damaging the protected blanket bog. The full trail takes about 6 hours. Since opening, the mountain has seen a 2,000% increase in visitors, rising from 3,000 a year to 80,000 within the first few years. Many similarities with the Glen of Aherlow.

Next Steps

All the necessary parties need to examine further developing this vision. Some early technical work would be helpful regarding engineering options and on environmental impacts. An early examination of land ownership will be important.

It would be wise to take all stakeholders on a study visit to the Stairway to Heaven in Co. Fermanagh and have some organised engagement with local community groups/landowners on both the Fermanagh and West Cavan side of the border.

Description

Examine developing a greenway from Tipperary Town to the summit of Slieve na Muc that encompasses a signature viewing platform opening up the spectacular north-facing vista.

This platform would be seen as a magnet to draw more recreational tourists into the area and wider region. The selection of the actual location to host the viewing point is likely the most challenging decision with land ownership, environmental impact, community engagement and visitor management all being essential considerations.

This concept has the potential of becoming a signature project for the whole Munster Vales, building on good environmental practice to enhance the visitor experience in the uplands of Tipperary.

Clonmel

Creating a Tourism Destination – Flights of Discovery



Location
Clonmel



Timeframe
2 - 5 years

Heritage



Creating
Clusters

Embedding Best Practice

Best practice examples of integrated destination development with significant tourism element, see: www.nuigalway.ie/media/buildingsoffice/files/Nuns-Island-Masterplan-Design-Brief-Web-Publish.pdf; www.dublindocklands.ie/about-us/docklands-history/regeneration-history.

Next Steps

- ✓ For the Dowd's Lane project, next steps involve interpretive design and concrete actions to move to project implementation stage.
- ✓ Funding required for Suir Island.
- ✓ For West Gate next step is interpretive design.

Description

Clonmel Town has significant potential as a tourism destination. It has significant strengths and opportunities and currently is coming from a low base of tourism activity. This tourism project includes a number of strands that all form part of a new integrated tourism offer:

- ✓ The Tipperary Museum of Hidden History has already been reimagined and includes new themes: 'Life and Death', 'A Country Worth Fighting For', 'Politics and Power' and 'The Suir Story'.
- ✓ The West Gate will house a new immersive interpretive theme, focusing on the revolution of industry and thought in 18th and 19th century Clonmel.
- ✓ Dowd's lane is the original and historic brewing facility for Bulmers Cider and this project involves creating a brand new visitor experience on that site to tell the original authentic story of cider production in Clonmel. The old brewing vats and associated infrastructure still exist and will be incorporated into the new attraction.

- ✓ The creation of a green oasis on Suir Island with walking trails and nature appreciation including the existing world class slalom course.
- ✓ An addition of a new Bianconi car tour is also part of the project.

The various attractions are integrated and combined under the Clonmel 'Meadow of Honey' and 'Follow the Bees' theme. The theme reflects historic associations of Clonmel with honey bees and provides a brand and concept which will prove unique and powerful in its promotion.

It is recommended that the title 'Flights of Discovery' be reconsidered.

9.1

Clonmel Bulmers Food Experience



Location
Clonmel



Timeframe
3 - 5 years



Heritage



Creating
Clusters

Embedding Best Practice

Creating a food concept alongside the branded cider attraction has been done in other food concept developments, see: www.armaghcider.com/.

Next Steps

- ✓ Scope out the project further and have initial discussions at high level between council and Bulmers as part of project planning and development.

Description

The Dowd's Lane project is an ideal tourism attraction project to stimulate activity in the heart of Clonmel. It focuses on Bulmers and its long history in Clonmel; an authentic story and likely to be very popular with visitors.

This project is the development of a food concept in parallel with this development. Whilst cider is being displayed and described, a whole range of apple based

products indigenous to Tipperary could be showcased. This will broaden the appeal of the overall project and make it more family friendly, and also takes it into the organic food sector, thus drawing in that additional market. It lends itself to additional evening products that combine the food and drink, hospitality and entertainment areas.

10

Nenagh Historic and Cultural Quarter (including Nenagh Gaol)



Location
Nenagh



Timeframe
2020-2030



Heritage



Creating Clusters

Description

The Nenagh Historic and Cultural Quarter is a large quadrant in the heart of Nenagh Town Centre embracing a cluster of historic landmark buildings and civic spaces, including Nenagh Gaol, Nenagh Castle and Banba Square. This significant regeneration project aims to revitalise the local economy/visitor economy by activating, in an integrated yet phased manner, tourism-led regeneration comprising arts, artisan retailing, history, heritage and culture (including a Genealogy Centre, Arts Centre and Tourist Office).

The core themes of the project are:

- ✓ Nenagh Gaol – this new immersive attraction to be built on the theme of ‘Crime, Punishment & Repentance’;
- ✓ Nenagh Castle (OPW) – to be enhanced under the theme of ‘Enhancing the Visitor Medieval Experience’;
- ✓ Banba Square – ‘Regeneration and Development of the Public Realm’.

There will also be the creation of an attractive arrival point for visitors to the Nenagh Gateway, including a new civic plaza at the heart of the new Quarter.

Embedding Best Practice

See examples of best practice heritage-led urban regeneration:

Kilkenny City Centre – Original Medieval Mile and Abbey Quarter, www.housing.gov.ie/planning/national-planning-framework/abbey-quarter-project-kilkenny; www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/urban-regeneration-plans-and-frameworks; and Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Docks area, www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/urban-regeneration-plans-and-frameworks.

Next Steps

- ✓ Given the scale and complexity of this project considerable support is now required behind the delivery of the Rural Regeneration & Development Fund for the design and development stage of this project.

It is fitting in this context that 2020 sees Nenagh celebrate its 800th birthday under the tag line ‘Heritage at its Heart’.

The project is now part of a wider framework and cluster of projects, including new centre for sustainable excellence, regeneration quarter, education campus and historic and cultural quarter. The project has potential to be of greater scale, ambition and economic impact. It has potential to attract more international visitors and fit well within the IHH brand. Consider adding more living history, new interpretive angles such as penal reform, addition of auditory sensory and new special event opportunities.

11 Cahir

Destination Development



Location
Cahir



Timeframe
1 - 10 years

Heritage



Creating
Clusters

Description

Cahir is a picturesque historic town, known for its iconic Castle and Swiss Cottage, its visitor numbers have increased significantly over the past decade. Cahir's emergence as the commencement point of Suir Blueway Tipperary and a key destination on the Butler Trail now provides an opportunity to develop a town-scale vision and strategy to develop, refresh and enhance its visitor experience leveraging its heritage and recreational assets.

Four main pillars have been identified to guide the transformation of Cahir into a destination town that delivers memorable experiences for locals and visitors alike:

- ✓ Public Realm Enhancement; reimaging the square and town centre.
- ✓ Delivering a Blue and Green Infrastructure Strategy to create a series of linked recreational experiences along the river and as a destination point to exploring the River Suir corridor.
- ✓ Leveraging the development of opportunity sites to deliver large-scale integrated adventure facilities/tourism related infrastructure e.g. Quarry site, The Mill site.
- ✓ Building on linkages with other towns including Cashel, Munster Vales and through clusters e.g. Suir Blueway Tipperary, The Butler Trail.

Embedding Best Practice

See: www.ballyhass.ie/.

See: www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/4_Corporate_Documents/Corporate_Guides/Failte-Ireland-Tourism-Destination-Towns-Checklist.pdf?ext=.pdf

Enniskillen - the major outdoors orientated town on the Erne system, a heritage town with significant investment in the public realm, a tourism destination with a mature food, craft and related visitor services. See: www.heritageisland.com/attractions/enniskillen-castle-and-heritage-town/.

The Boyne Valley and Slane Castle Estate - a tourism destination with river based activity, food circles, the new Boyne Valley Greenway, The Castle and Slane Distillery all building up around the historic river and Slane Village as the focal point. See: www.discoverboynevalley.ie/escape-boyne-valley-memorable-experiences-slane-0.

Next Steps

- ✓ Commission and deliver a destination development plan for Cahir.
- ✓ Build on the linkage with Cashel, Munster Vales, Suir Blueway Tipperary and The Butler Trail.

Through building on strategic partnerships and a holistic approach to destination planning Cahir can be established as a tourism centre of excellence both in its own right and as part of established networks of experiences in the county and the region.

12

Carrick-on-Suir Destination Development



Location
Carrick-on-Suir



Timeframe
3 - 5 years

Water



Creating
Clusters

Embedding Best Practice

Recent work on Kilkenny's Medieval Mile (a discovery trail running through the centre of the city, linking the 13th-century St Canice's Cathedral and the Anglo-Norman castle with significant heritage/culture in between) offers Carrick-on-Suir helpful pointers. See: www.medievalmilemuseum.ie and www.visitkilkenny.ie/

Next Steps

- ✓ Support the delivery of the Carrick-on-Suir Regeneration Plan.
- ✓ Support connection of Suir Blueway Tipperary to Waterford Greenway.
- ✓ Support the enhancement of the Butler Trail.

Description

Carrick-on-Suir has exceptional potential as a regionally important heritage, cultural and recreational tourism destination.

The vision embedded in this Plan ties together the many assets and distinct projects already underway into a unified destination development vision for Carrick-on-Suir over the coming decade. The Carrick-on-Suir cluster of projects already in motion includes: the 'Tides of History' project (a newly redeveloped Carrick-on-Suir Heritage Centre), continued enhancement of the Ormond Castle Quarter experience and the further development of the recreational assets of the Suir Blueway Tipperary (53km walking, cycling and water sports trail stretching from Cahir to Carrick-on-Suir), including reimagining the arrival point at Sean Healy Park combined with impressive new cycling infrastructure. The significance of the Butler Trail to Carrick-on-Suir's

development is considerable. The glue that binds these concepts together is excellence in the design and delivery of the public realm making the town a great place to visit, live and do business in.

The existing Carrick-on-Suir Regeneration Plan – 'A Journey from the Suir Blueway to the Ormond Castle Quarter' (2020) signifies a town driven by investment in orientation and public realm enhancement actions in order to build on its relationship and synergies with the Suir Blueway (west) and the historic Ormond Castle Quarter (east) and thereby regenerating the town centre. This should be viewed as the foundation stone upon which Carrick-on-Suir will be transformed with tourism at the heart of the town economy going forward.

13 The Butler Trail



Location
Countywide and beyond



Timeframe
Ongoing



Heritage



Creating Clusters

Embedding Best Practice

Other trails linking heritage and cultural experiences in Ireland, see:

Loophead Route Co. Clare, www.loophead.ie/things-to-do-ireland-loop-head-drive/; Causeway Coast Route,

www.theirishroadtrip.com/the-causeway-costal-route/; Yeats Country and Lough Gill,

www.activeme.ie/guides/?cmrm_route_type=Sligo,

www.discoverboynevalley.ie/driving-route/.

Next Steps

- ✓ Establish a plan for the development of the trail throughout the county and beyond.
- ✓ Further support from FI on enabling this roll-out, particularly as the offering gains traction under the Ireland's Ancient East brand proposition.

not be underestimated. This applies to everyday spaces that locals and visitors move through and linger within; the places where people live, work and play.

In its next iteration the Butler Trail should not be viewed exclusively as a heritage trail but also as a self-guiding journey through a network of remarkable town and villages. These towns and villages need to be supported in building their infrastructure and facilities to encourage visitors to stay longer.

Description

The Butler Trail is chiefly delivered through a downloadable multilingual app and audio guide. It offers a remarkable journey through five centuries of the county's history, revealed through the influence and impact of the Butler family dynasty. There is also an inter-county dimension with Kilkenny.

The journey is countywide and beyond; connecting Cahir, Clonmel, Carrick-on-Suir and Roscrea, with other towns to be linked such as Holycross, Thurles and Nenagh. There is an ambitious signage programme to underpin the trail with a network of panels in each town.

The trail now needs a structure and plan, including corresponding partnership and resources. The app needs refreshing and content needs further research and scripting. The trail needs a plan, including visitor impacts and touchpoints, visitor journey, training, mentoring and animation. The structure needs formalisation and all partners to be fully aware of the part they play. In addition, the role of Tipperary County Council in enhancing the public realm in towns and villages should

Tipperary Giant Sculpture



Location
To be examined



Timeframe
1 - 3 years



Water
Heritage
Landscapes



Creating
Clusters



Embedding Best Practice

See: www.pinterest.ie/greenpublicart/public-art/ for some international examples.

See: www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/5303/The-history-of-the-Angel-of-the-North

Next Steps

A multi-stakeholder conversation needs to occur, facilitated possibly by the county Arts Officer. The aim of this is to identify the what, where, how and indicative associated costs.

Description

Commission a large distinct sculpture of scale representing the core themes of Tipperary as a tourism destination: water, landscape and heritage.

The sculpture will be sensitively located to be 'revealed' in an unexpected vista or landscape.

The scale is important as the visual impact and social media sharing need to aspire to be the rural Ireland equivalent of the Angel of the North by Antony Gormley

(1998), Gateshead: a steel sculpture of an angel, 20 metres tall, with wings measuring 54 metres across.

The design outcome could be through an international competition. It is also envisaged that the immediate areas around the sculpture will become a much visited viewing point, with car parking and basic facilities. The aim of the sculpture includes signposting visitors to other attractions within the county.



Category 3:

Enhancement Projects



Location
Lorrha



Timeframe
1 – 10 years

Heritage



Enhancement
Projects

Embedding Best Practice

Guédelon Castle (Château de Guédelon) currently under construction near Treigne, France, described by BBC Two Secrets of the Castle series as “the world’s biggest archaeological experiment”: recreating a 13th-century castle. The project is using only period construction techniques, tools, and costumes with materials all obtained locally. Attracted about 300,000 visitors by year 1, generating a profit of 3 million euros. The castle is to be complete by 2023. See: www.guedelon.fr/en/.

Next Steps

- ✓ Commission scoping study (including business plan).
- ✓ An early study visit to best-in-class projects like Guédelon Castle would be highly advised.

Description

The small North Tipperary village of Lorrha (population of 100) has a very impressive set of early Christian archaeological riches, with three significant ecclesiastical sites spanning over 1,000 years within easy walking distance. The dynamic community are keen to help sustain the local tourism economy for future generations through ‘mining’ this historical and heritage wealth. All the essential building blocks are in place to see this challenging project realised over time.

The likely vision needs to be broken into two distinct phases, namely:

- a) the construction of Ireland’s largest wooden church, employing traditional methods and material, in which the slow meticulous build will involve hundreds of volunteers and become a national story; and
- b) the creation of a medieval village adjacent to the village (built upon authenticity). The experience will be

driven by the best living history practitioners through a series of physical reconstructions and excellence in programming.

The offering will speak to a broad mass of visitors, from the culturally curious, to those wishing to be educated, and those seeking a truly original immersive heritage experience.

The complexity and long-term commitment of multiple partners to see this realised need not be underestimated. Leadership from the outset will be key. This has the potential to become one of the standout heritage experiences in the whole of Ireland.

16 Loughmore Village

Village Regeneration & Purcell

Worldwide Family Roots

Project



Location
Loughmore



Timeframe
2 – 10 years



Heritage



Enhancement
Projects

Embedding Best Practice

See examples of community driven tourism and heritage based projects: failteireland.ie/, www.FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/4_Corporate_Documents/Failte-Ireland-Strategy.pdf

Next Steps

- ✓ Discussion with Loughmore community group to assess how much of this is already on their agenda.
- ✓ Feasibility work to be undertaken in conjunction with them on all aspects of the project

- ✓ Interpretive information at the old abbey with safe access.

Loughmore Roots Project – the castle was home to two families, the Butlers and the Purcells, being more so linked with the Purcells. Online interest is significant from the Purcell family, now dotted throughout the world and all connected back to Loughmore Castle. A roots project would see a genealogy-based project in the village and online, building up the rich history and connections. An annual get together could take place, with options for any family members to stay in the mill accommodation at any time of the year and connect back to their roots.

Description

There has already been significant community-based work done in Loughmore to get the Cottage Café open on a community/voluntary basis. Its success is obvious and very commendable. Further regeneration work could be done as follows:

- ✓ Convert the mill building to accommodation.
- ✓ Extend Cottage Café into evening restaurant type offer with entertainment.
- ✓ Create river walks along the Suir.
- ✓ New access pathways into castle grounds and outdoor information boards, along with viewing base. This would create all year round access and information.
- ✓ Village public realm scheme with funding assistance possibly from town and village renewal funding, similar to town regeneration, including repainting, shop fronts, pavements, etc.

Roscrea Castle & Demesne



Location
Roscrea



Timeframe
2 years



Heritage



Enhancement
Projects

Embedding Best Practice

The OPW has a long and successful history of delivering on such castle and demesne sites around Ireland. Kilkenny Castle in particular offers learnings about managing the flow of visitors from a heritage town adjacent to a heritage castle site, see: www.kilkennycastle.ie.

Next Steps

- ✓ Final agreement of the vision and making the case to secure the necessary funding to enhance the entrance to Roscrea Castle and Demesne.

Description

This OPW-managed site is often underappreciated when viewed alongside other nationally significant castle sites like Cashel and Cahir across the county. Over the last decade enhancement work has been undertaken to improve both castle and grounds.

This concept visualises a further enhancement through significant investment in public realm works aimed at marrying the attractive heritage town more to the castle, thus adding value and enhancing the visitor experience.

The key focus of this concept is to enhance the arrival experience to Roscrea Castle and Demesne through

decluttering the street of any elements which have a negative impact on the presentation of the castle. This will include improvements to the visitor experience, better visitor flow and increased dwell time. Innovative design solutions, including strategic tree planting and signage, will collectively demarcate the front door of the castle and blur the boundaries between the street and castle. This will result in the seamless flow of public space between the castle and town.



Location
Countywide



Timeframe
3 - 5 years



Water
Heritage
Landscapes



Enhancement
Projects

Embedding Best Practice

See: www.mountainbothies.org.uk/bothies/what-is-a-bothy/. Also, the French national parks have an interesting variation, moving a little upmarket and encouraging linear uplands long distance walking, see: www.refuges-vanoise.com/refuges.html.

Next Steps

- ✓ A simple Feasibility Study is required before any further work is done. This study needs to examine the market, organisational model options, likely properties, refurbishment, legal/contractual, commercial sustainability, dovetailing with the overall Tipperary tourism economy and project administration.

Description

A bothy is usually a small traditional hut or cottage, especially one for housing farm labourers or for use as a mountain or wilderness refuge. It is primarily a Scottish/UK offering, although many of the longer distance walking routes in France/Spain employ similar types of rustic accommodation. Tipperary's landscape/mountain and water offering, in particular, could benefit from developing a network of vernacular rustic buildings that have been refurbished to a basic standard.

These out of the way self-catering accommodation units could help give greater definition to the more active-in-

nature Tipperary offering, fully aligned to the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands proposition in particular. This is in line with emerging market trends.

In addition, this initiative could encourage and enhance traditional building skills which could be exported elsewhere. The rural regeneration aspect is worth referencing. These networks of perhaps six to eight properties (to begin with) could help breathe new life into all of the core themes and is perfectly aligned with the responsible tourism approach. The aim would be to grow this to between 12 and 15 properties by year five.

Luxury Mountain Lodge Concept



Potential Location
Glen of Aherlow



Timeframe
2 - 3 years



Landscapes



Enhancement Projects

Embedding Best Practice

Best quality local food and drink promoted through the facility. Green rebuild and sustainable management.

See: www.sustainabletourism.net/case-studies/companies-and-organizations/ski-resorts/ for some global examples of best environmental practice in sensitive upland areas.

Next Steps

- ✓ Discussion with Glen of Aherlow Fáilte Society.

Description

There exists an opportunity to create a luxury mountain lodge offering. This can be developed in association with an existing, well established, capable accommodation operator.

The old Glen Hotel remains ripe for a full redevelopment and rebranding as a luxury mountain lodge offering. The idea rotates around quality self-catering with communal spaces, combined around a Mediterranean style pizzeria restaurant and bar with local craft ale and food produce, building up the Tipperary après-ski style experience. This would be a quality trendy setting, with mid- to higher-end prices for a rustic experience in the Tipperary mountains. Other features would include:

- ✓ Hot tub and sauna relaxation facilities/wellness programmes;

- ✓ Dedicated lodge chefs (if required);
- ✓ Excellent broadband and laptop zones;
- ✓ Exceptional services/supports for hikers/day walkers;
- ✓ Bike/electric bike hire (with supporting services);
- ✓ Outdoor drying rooms for wet clothes and equipment.

The central business concept is to keep overheads low whilst providing a very on trend facility/services/ experience aimed at young couples, singles in groups and outdoor activity enthusiasts, equal or better to anything they will get across Europe's uplands resorts. This offering would have both a winter and summer market.

5.

'10 Point' Action Plan

Introduction

This concluding section of the Plan is born out of a number of different yet complementary sources, including the initial Tipperary Strategic Tourism, Marketing Experience and Destination Development Plan 2016 - 2021, findings from extensive consultations and the online survey previously discussed. Many of the detailed recommendations associated with the ten headline actions below are profiled in greater detail in the previous section.

Primary Targets for the Plan

The Plan has established the following ambitious, yet achievable, macro-economic targets for the coming decade:



INCREASE BY 50%

People employed (FT/PT) in the county tourism economy;



INCREASE BY 100%

Overnighting visitors into the county;



GROW BY 75%

International visitors to Tipperary;



€150 MILLION

Investment in tourism and related offerings within the county over the coming decade



Signature Action

Tipperary – National Leader in Responsible Tourism



1.1 This is a significant cross-cutting theme that underpins the design and delivery of *all actions* in the Plan. It should build upon the VICE tourism destination development model where visitors, the industry that serves them, the community that hosts them and their collective impact on the environment all work in harmony.

Outputs

A re-engineered/engineered tourism offering built on best practice; an enhanced brand identity/reputation and increase in visitor numbers/expenditure.



Tipperary County Council with Tipperary Tourism.



Duration of Plan.



1.2 Further research and planning are required.

Outputs

Detailed Feasibility Study examining all aspects of embracing responsible tourism in the county; a detailed action plan on how best to deliver on the potential.



Tipperary County Council with Tipperary Tourism.



Year 1.



Signature Action

Icon Legend



Deliverable Recommendations



Responsibility



Time Frame



Signature Action

Cashel – Destination Town & Ireland’s Heritage Capital



2.1 Create an integrated Cashel Tourism Product Development Plan that aligns a number of significant projects through the delivery of the Destination Town Plan. These include development work to reimagine Cashel as the *Heritage Capital of Ireland* (see **Concept 1**) which includes a new visitor centre, the Bishops Walk, town enhancement and new facilities.



Tipperary County Council with multiple partners including FI and OPW, along with the community and private sector.



Duration of Plan.

Outputs

The transformation of Cashel as the leading heritage tourism destination town in Ireland; a suite of new tourism offerings, services and facilities; a significant upswing in the economy of the town; support for proposed UNESCO World Heritage Site bid for the Irish Royal Sites.



2.2 Further investigate the potential of creating internationally significant tourism facilities like *Cashel: Living History Repertory Company of Ireland* (see **Concept 1.1**).



Tipperary County Council with multi-partners.



Years 3-5.

Outputs

A resident living history training company dedicated to delivering excellence in helping interpret/communicate heritage to visitors; a vehicle to enhance the visitor experience at all heritage offerings in the county; a unique accredited training facility attracting heritage workers from across these islands.



2.3 Further research developing *Tipperary Tribes – A Traditional Heritage & Culture Evening Entertainment Show* (see **Concept 1.2**) to help generate a night-time economy of scale in the town.



Facility lead with multi-partner support.



Years 2-3.

Outputs

A nationally significant traditional culture stage show, drawing inspiration from Cashel’s long and dramatic heritage; highest of artistic standards; commercially sustainable throughout the full year; a means to encourage visitors to stay overnight in Cashel.



Signature Action

Lough Derg - An International Lake Destination



3.1 Research and support delivery of *Lough Derg 'Floating Village': a Floating Cultural, Educational, Entertainment & Food Experience* (see **Concept 2.1**).

Outputs

A signature capital development project for the inland waterways/Shannon River; significant design statement for Lough Derg and Tipperary; commercially sustainable enterprise; expands the mainstream attractiveness of Lough Derg as a destination.



Tipperary County Council with partners e.g. Waterways Ireland.



Years 4-10.



3.2 Support the establishment of *Fleet of Self-Drive Eco Boats at Ballina* (see **Concept 2.3**).

Outputs

Establish a fleet of self-drive electric day boats on Lough Derg; cater for a demand by today's visitor to get out on the water in a safe and controlled way; add to the green credentials of Tipperary and Lough Derg by having the only electric fleet in Ireland.



Private sector operator.



Years 1-2.



3.3 Support the development objectives for Lough Derg emerging from the Visitor Experience Development Plan (see **Concept 2.2**).

Outputs

This Plan can offer practical support and guidance to the multi-party group that have been driving the integrated development of Lough Derg as an inland waterways destination.



Lough Derg Marketing Group.



Duration of the Plan.

4

Signature Action

Tipperary – Excellence in Recreational Development



4.1 The development of a Tipperary County Recreational Strategy.

Outputs

An integrated recreational strategy for the county covering all outdoor activity (excluding team field sports) to help guide local policy and investment; alignment of the county recreational strategy with all significant national initiatives and funding.



Tipperary County Council.



Year 1.



4.2 Support the further development of *Suir Blueway Tipperary* (see **Concept 8.1**).

Outputs

Further integration of the Suir Blueway Tipperary into the countywide recreational and outdoor activity offering; encourage the provision of enhanced visitor services/ facilities along the blueway route.



Tipperary County Council, communities and local partners.



Ongoing.



4.3 Research the development of a *Tipperary Town to Sliabh na Muc Greenway* (see **Concept 8.2**).

Outputs

A detailed Feasibility Study is required to scope everything from route selection to technical aspects of design, finish and embedding distinguishing features into the greenway; learning from best practice examples from Ireland and further afield.



Tipperary County Council with local landowners and communities.



Year 1.



4.4 *Birr to Roscrea Greenway* (see **Concept 8.3**): support the development of this significant inter-county project.

Outputs

The further scoping of the project to identify best options on route, experience enhancement, community buy-in, funding, management and maintenance.



Local Authorities.



Years 3-6.



4.5 Support the delivery of the *Littleton Bog Labyrinth* (see **Concept 8.4**), a network of walkways and cycleways across Tipperary's raised bogland.

Outputs

Deliver on the Feasibility Study.



Bord na Móna with Tipperary County Council and local communities.



Years 2-5.

4

Signature Action

Tipperary – Excellence in Recreational Development



4.6 Scope the opportunity to create a *luxury mountain lodge offering* in the Tipperary uplands (see **Concept 19**).

Outputs

Initially a Feasibility Study to identify the options going forward.



Private sector operator.



Years 3-6.



4.7 Support the delivery of the Munster Vales Strategic Development Plan (see **Concept 8**).

Outputs

Help enable the Munster Vales to become the premier outdoor activity offering in Ireland's Ancient East.



Munster Vales multi-partner co-ordination group.



Duration of the Plan.

5

Signature Action

Tipperary Equine Experiences



5.1 Support the development of an integrated and branded *Tipperary Equine Experiences* (see **Concept 3**), incorporating an enhanced, Tipperary Racecourse and the Fethard Horse Country Experience.

Outputs

Detailed examination into a new nationally significant 'Equine World' visitor experience in Tipperary; an integrated development plan tying together all the equine related tourism attractions/experiences within the county; Full alignment with Fáilte Ireland, Ireland's Ancient East, Sport of Kings, Visitor Experience Development Plan.



Multi-partner (public, private and community).



Ongoing.

6

Signature Action

Tipperary's World Class Community, Culture & Heritage Clusters



6.1 Unlocking potential of the *Butler Trail* (see **Concept 13**). The delivery of an integrated five-year plan addressing product development/enhancement across all communities, marketing/branding, organisation, partnership building and resourcing.

Outputs

Integrated five-year development Plan for Butler Trail to assist future trail planning.



Tipperary County Council working with partners such as Fáilte Ireland.



Year 1.



6.2 Careful examination of the potential to create a nationally significant new tourism attraction *Policing Ireland* in Templemore (see **Concept 7**).

Outputs

Detailed Feasibility Study examining the potential and means to deliver a unique policing orientated visitor experience in Ireland.



Multi-partners.



Years 2-3.



6.3 Iconic *Tipperary Sculpture* (see **Concept 14**): Commission a large distinct sculpture of scale representing the core themes of Tipperary as a tourism destination, namely water, landscape and heritage.

Outputs

Examination of site, theme, design and construction options; development of an internationally recognised Tipperary iconic sculpture reflecting the spirit and heritage of the county going forward.



Tipperary County Council



Years 4-6.



6.4 Community Tourism: Support *Ireland's Medieval Village, Lorrha* (see **Concept 15**) by developing an achievable vision and securing resources to unlock its 1,000 year-old heritage potential.

Outputs

Feasibility Study examining the integrated development of Lorrha as a significant heritage destination over the coming decade; embed living history and experience-based tourism as a foundation for telling the Lorrha story.



Community with multi-agency support.



Ongoing.



6.5 Community Tourism: Support *Loughmore Village* (see **Concept 16**) by developing an ambitious regeneration plan including restoration, recreational development and the Purcell Worldwide Family Roots Project.

Outputs

Explore through a Feasibility Study the development of all aspects of heritage destination development; add value where possible to the existing Cottage enterprise.



Community with multi-agency support.



Years 1-3.



Signature Action

Reimagining Town Centres & Destination Towns



7.1 Support the continued integrated development of Clonmel as a leading regional tourism destination, illustrated by the potential of the *Dowd's Lane - Bulmers Cider visitor experience* (see **Concept 9**) and *Suir Blueway Tipperary* (see **Concept 8.1**).

Outputs

Support the town's ambitious ongoing development activity through the life of the Plan.



Tipperary County Council with partners.



Ongoing.



7.2 Support the further scoping and delivery of the 'Nenagh Historic and Cultural Quarter' (see **Concept 10**).

Outputs

Support the strides being made to reimagine Nenagh town centre through public realm investment, artisan/craft small business development and developing an integrated heritage offering including the gaol.



Tipperary County Council with partners.



Years 2-5.



7.3 *Carrick-on-Suir, Destination Development* (see **Concept 12**): Support the continued development of the town, tying together its considerable cultural, heritage, recreational assets and public realm.

Outputs

Support a co-ordinated approach to reimagining the significant cultural, artistic and heritage assets of the town.



Tipperary County Council with community, business and related partners.



Years 3-7.



7.4 *Roscrea Castle & Demesne* (see **Concept 17**): A further enhancement through significant investment in public realm works aimed at marrying the attractive heritage town more to the castle.

Outputs

Support the ongoing enhancement work being rolled out by the OPW and Tipperary County Council, forging greater linkages between the castle and the heritage town.



Tipperary County Council, OPW, community and business partners.



Years 2-4.



Transform Cahir into an ambitious destination town that delivers memorable experiences for locals and visitors alike leveraging off its heritage and recreational assets (see **Concept 11**).

Outputs

Support the destination development of Cahir building linkages to Cashel, Munster Vales, Suir Blueway Tipperary and The Butler Trail.



Tipperary County Council



1 - 10 years.



Signature Action

Tipperary – Leader in Immersive Family Fun Tourism



8.1 Further research the development of *Tipperary Bushcraft Survival and Activity Park* (see **Concept 4**).

Outputs

Detailed Feasibility Study to examine the best options going forward.



Private sector with support from Tipperary County Council and agencies.



Years 3-6.



8.2 Research and delivery of a new family orientated *Tipperary CentreSports* (see **Concept 5**). A sports village campus where top class tutors are available to work with children at any level, creating challenges and fun through multiple sports and building upon the county's proud GAA tradition.

Outputs

Engagement with all stakeholders to try to identify if a common vision exists; possible commissioning of a Feasibility Study to outline options going forward.



Tipperary County Council with private sector, community and development agencies.



Years 3-7.



8.3 Research and deliver *Tipperary Youngworld* (see **Concept 6**), a unique discovery centre for children on a giant scale.

Outputs

Support a sustainable multi-party vision that emerges from discussions and research.



Private sector with multi-agency support.



Years 3-6.



Signature Action

Alignment - Orchestrating Partnerships



9.1 Ensure total alignment between the Plan and the strategy/actions of Ireland's Ancient East and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands.

Outputs

Regular engagement examining the delivery of agreed targets for key projects across the county.



Tipperary County Council, Tipperary Tourism and Fáilte Ireland.



Ongoing.



Signature Action

Alignment - Orchestrating Partnerships



9.2 Identify and deliver at least one inter-county project of scale under each of the three thematic pillars of this Plan e.g. Munster Vales (Landscape), Lough Derg (Water), Butler Trail (Heritage).

Outputs

Support the ongoing inter-county partnership building on delivering strategically important projects of scale.



Tipperary County Council with Tipperary Tourism.



Ongoing.



9.3 Support the scoping of a new *Tipperary Bothy Network* (see **Concept 18**). This regeneration of a network of traditional cottages or huts in out-of-the-way locations is in keeping with emerging trends in global tourism.

Outputs

Initial Feasibility Study required to examine the concept in detail.



Multi-party with LEADER Companies (x2), community, landowners and Tipperary Tourism.



Years 2-5.



9.4 Ensure close programming alignments between the Tipperary LEADER companies (x2) and delivery of the Plan.

Outputs

Creation and delivery of a formal mechanism to identify, monitor and evaluate the input of the Rural Development Programme (and related), administered through the LEADER companies with the implementation of the Plan.



South Tipperary Development Company Limited, North Tipperary Development Company, Tipperary County Council and Tipperary Tourism.



Ongoing.



9.5 Commence engagement with the Tipperary diaspora to support delivery of the Plan.

Outputs

Internally within the council build a coherent engagement strategy with the Tipperary diaspora to help promote significant initiatives like the Plan.



Tipperary County Council.



Ongoing.



9.6 Ensure the Plan is viewed as a 'continuum', embracing and constantly echoing previous and future tourism and related visions for the county including *Tipperary Strategic Tourism, Marketing Experience and Destination Development Plan 2016 - 2021* and the County Development Plan.

Outputs

Ensuring full strategic alignment and integration.



Tipperary County Council.



Ongoing.



10.1 Robust benchmarks to be established to monitor performance including visitor satisfaction, expenditure, employment, investment/funding secured and percentage of action plan carried out and percentage of action plan complete.

Outputs

Detailed, transparent and communicable evaluation of the Plan in line with best practice.



Tipperary County Council with
Tipperary Tourism.



Ongoing.



10.2 Regular and systematic communication with all stakeholders over the ten-year life of the Plan, including an initial roadshow targeting all partners.

Outputs

Establish a formal approach to engaging with all essential stakeholders and use a communications plan with brand identity to emphasise challenges and successes.



Tipperary County Council with
Tipperary Tourism.



Ongoing
(and regular).



10.3 Further research into leveraging private sector/ third party funding to help support the delivery of the Plan.

Outputs

Research on how best to enhance existing sources of funding while examining new imaginative ways to identify potential new funding streams to support the delivery of this Plan. These could vary from corporate, philanthropic, legacy funding, event income generation, or through obscure international channels.



Tipperary County Council with
Tipperary Tourism.



Years 1-2.



10.4 Development of an integrated countywide signage plan.

Outputs

Detailed signage plan building on best national/international practice in relation to place and way marking.



Tipperary County Council.



Years 1-2.

Covid-19 (Corona Virus) Statement – Tipperary

It is important to mention in this Plan the current and potential impact of Covid-19 as the single biggest macro-economic factor affecting global and Irish tourism.

At the time of writing Covid-19, an international pandemic caused by a life-threatening virus, has a global reach and unprecedented negative economic impacts. The county and national tourism and hospitality sectors has been severely effected mitigating against short to medium term planning.

This Plan should be read with the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic clearly in mind. Its outbreak right in the middle of the process of developing this Plan creates a dilemma as to how it is properly reflected to the ultimate benefit of the Plan and the county. It is essential to point out that the Plan overall assumes that the tourism industry will fully recover over a number of years. This assumption avoids the imprecise science of predictions of scale and impact of the pandemic on all the various parts of the tourism industry and in County Tipperary in particular.

This Plan, due to its longer- term view and focus, deals with the county in a period **post Covid-19** and one that has returned to a stronger base with a recovery of jobs and activity.

Should Covid-19 persist for a number of years to come and its impact have a fundamental impact on the very future of the tourism industry then these assumptions and the basis of preparation of this report will have to be amended.

At the time of writing, Ireland is beginning to open various facilities and businesses after the initial lockdown phase and the hospitality and main tourism operations are reopening.

6. Conclusion

Once in a generation an opportunity presents itself to create the roadmap for future tourism development in Tipperary.

This Plan is a product of all that has gone before it, the visionaries and drivers, the entrepreneurs and of course the visitors who came to spend time with us. It is also specific to the county – there is no one-size-fits-all solution to plotting a county’s tourism growth. Importantly, with possible dark clouds on the horizon, the Plan is also an output of the economic conditions at the point of commission.

Tipperary is starting from a solid foundation – it has considerable natural assets open to development, it has a forward-looking political and executive class, a healthy blend of experienced business people with the arrival of a new generation of exciting operators, communities keen to see change and shoulder their responsibilities, and national agency and central government support to see a transformative vision delivered. Significantly, the greatest recognisable threat to see this Plan realised over the next decade, is the ability of those who stand to gain most to work effectively together.

The Plan began with establishing (or restating) the core themes upon which the development concepts are built – water, heritage and landscape. The concepts that followed fell into three distinct categories:

Hero Projects – both new and existing significant tourism projects capable of attracting over 100,000 visitors annually.

Creating Clusters – combinations of attractions and activities where a number of projects delivered and bundled together can attract and hold visitors. This may include one additional new product or a number of additional new products from this plan.

Enhancement Projects – where existing products are in place and the proposal is an extension or enhancement of the current situation to improve a visitor’s experience when in the destination, but is not a primary reason to visit a destination.

As with any county tourism plan in Ireland today, scheduled over the medium-to-long term, there are many variables to consider. These variables tend to fall into the internal (upon which we have a degree of control e.g. business supports) and the external (those that we have little or no control over e.g. global economy). Those whose task it is to deliver this Plan will constantly be fine-tuning it to take account of changing circumstances and grasping opportunities currently impossible to identify.

However, one major cross-cutting theme across this Plan is a genuine commitment to see Tipperary become the home of responsible tourism over the coming decade. It is an undertaking not to be entered into lightly, however Tipperary has an existing confluence of skills and commitment that lend themselves to deliver on the challenge.

Viewed as a collective whole, the delivery of these concepts in the three categories above will significantly alter the trajectory of the Tipperary tourism economy for the coming generation. The aim is to move the county up the national league table of tourism-performing counties by 2030. This Plan is only the start of a significant journey for the people of Tipperary.



OPTIMIZE TRANSFORMING

