

# Aim of Lough Muckno & Environs Master Plan

## Here & Now:

**Castleblayney, May 2025**

Monaghan County Council has appointed a multi-disciplinary team, led by Cunnane Stratton Reynolds, to prepare a **10-year Master Plan and Development Framework** for Lough Muckno & Environs.

This will serve as a **vision statement** for the sustainable evolution of the study area, and to guide a phased development of an **enhanced experience** for local community and visitor alike.

## Aims & Objectives

The Master Plan and Development Framework will consider the wider **social, material and environmental considerations** and connectivity with, and potential impacts on, the town and wider study area, specifically addressing:

- A Vision for Lough Muckno and its environs which reflects the needs of the community and a sustainable model for future development.
- A spatial planning framework to facilitate sustainable development and provide for the integration of Lough Muckno Estate with the town.
- Proposals for additional and/or improved use of public spaces and buildings.
- Proposals for recreational and tourism opportunities.
- Proposals for heritage conservation enhancement and protection of biodiversity.



## Lough Muckno Multi-disciplinary Team

Sub-Consultant  
**Tourism Development International**  
Tourism & Recreation  
Economy Consultancy

Lead Consultant  
**Cunnane Stratton Reynolds**  
Project Management & Public Consultation  
Masterplanning & Urban Design  
Landscape Planning & Appraisal  
Landscape Architecture

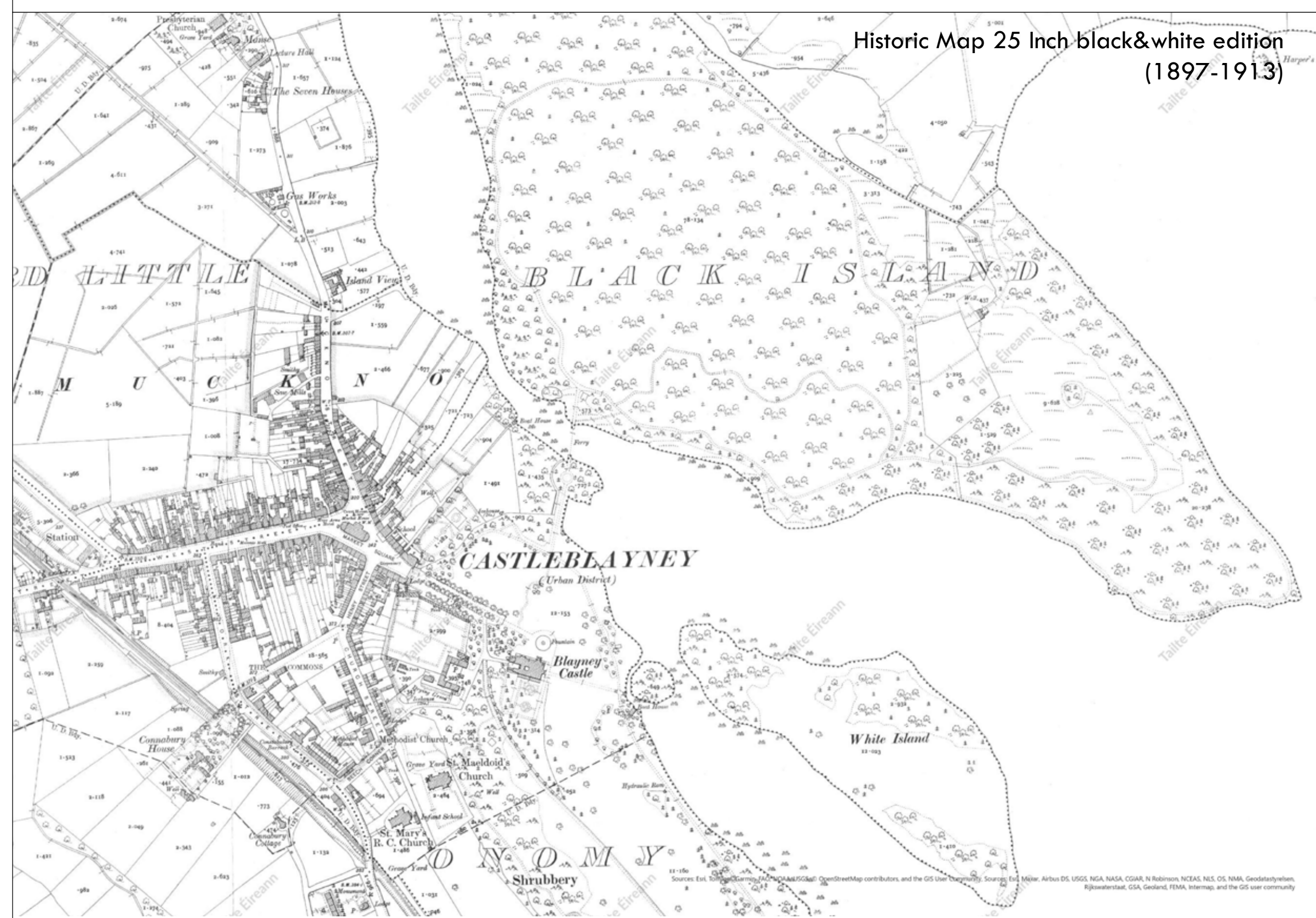
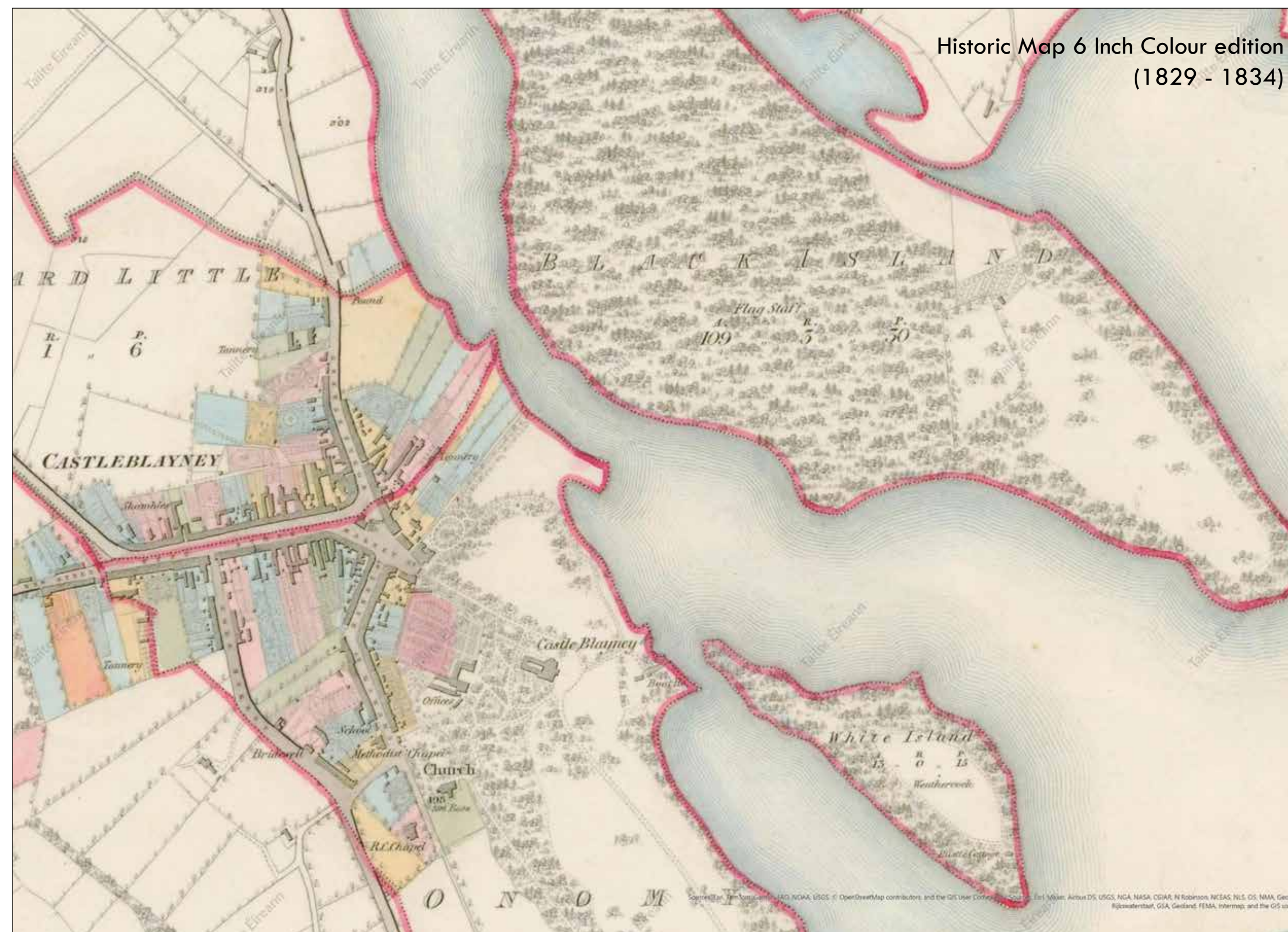
Sub-Consultant  
**Shaffrey Architects**  
Architecture &  
Urban Regeneration

Sub-Consultant  
**Roughan O'Donovan**  
Environmental Assessment (SEA & AA)  
Ecology, Civil & Transport Engineering  
Cost Estimates

Sub-Consultant  
**Jason Bolton**  
Archaeology & Built  
Heritage  
Consultancy

Sub-Consultant  
**John Ruddle**  
Tourism & Recreation  
Economy Consultancy



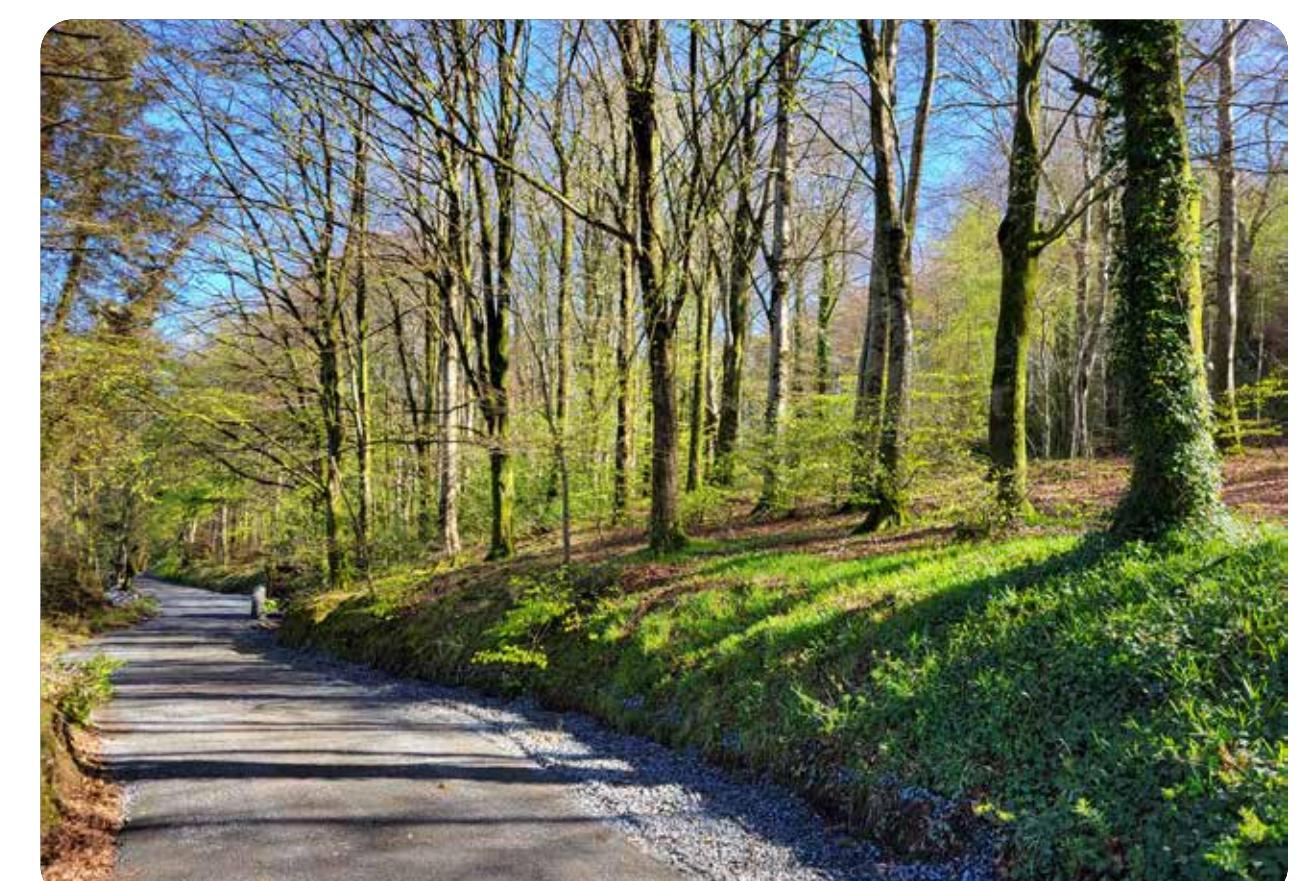
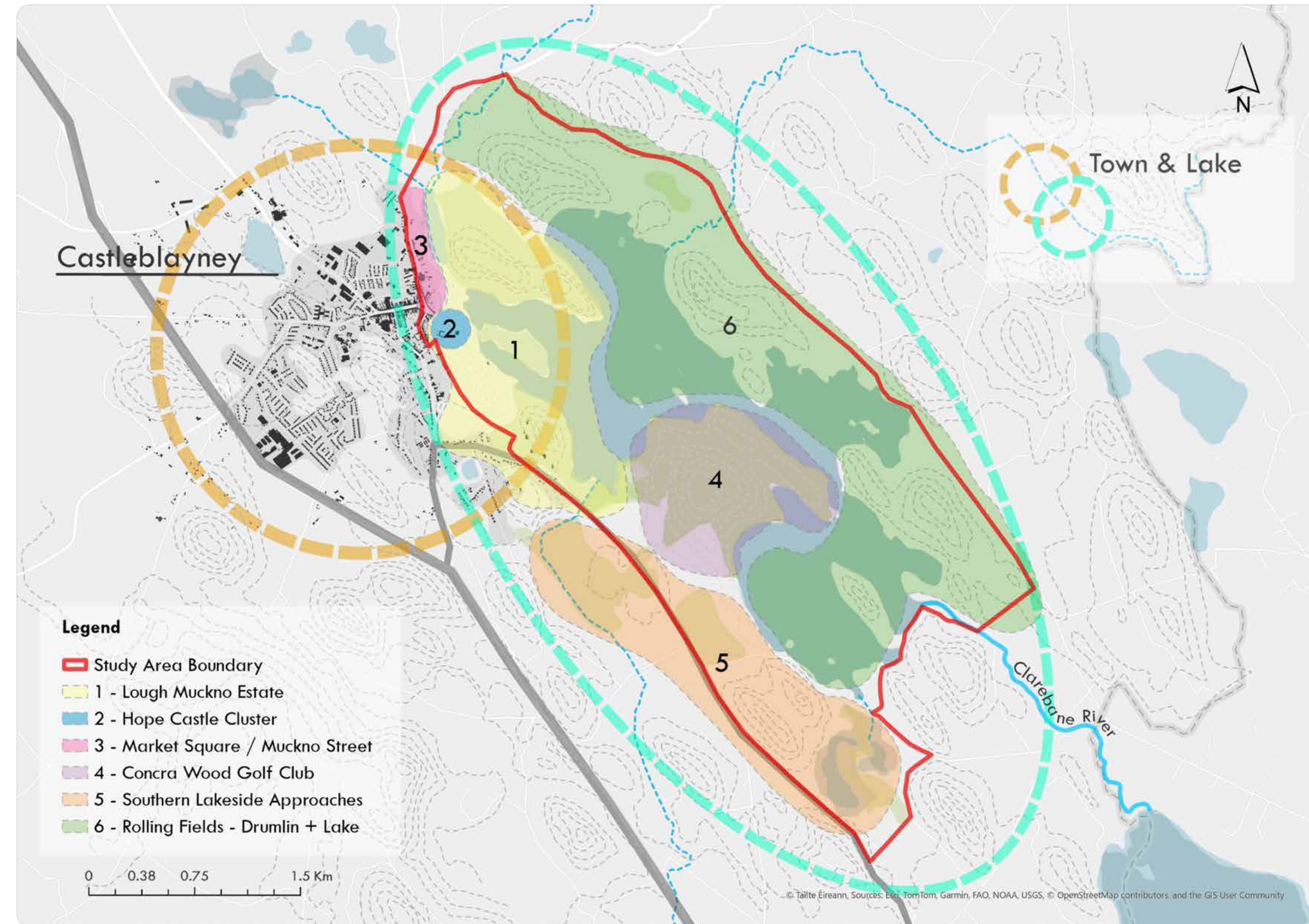




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# The Master Plan Study Area

The study area for the Master Plan encompasses 1,107ha (hectares), in total. The largest areas of land within the study area comprises of private property, mainly in the form of farmland. However, publicly accessible areas primarily entail the historical Lough Muckno Estate (26ha), Black Island (48ha) and White Island (7.7ha), while the lake itself covers almost one-third of the area (325ha).





## Building on previous studies/ plans/ surveys/appraisal etc:

- ✓ Castleblayney Town Centre Lands Regeneration Plan - Shaffrey Architects 2025
- ✓ Strategic Planning & Environmental Appraisal - Fehily Timoney 2023
- ✓ Lough Muckno Water Initiatives: Feasibility Studies - Rivus Ltd 2022
- ✓ A Vision for Lough Muckno - Stevens & Associates 2021
- ✓ A Town Centre for Living in Well - Shaffrey Architects & Space Engagers 2021
- ✓ Local Biodiversity Action Plan - Castleblayney Tidy Towns 2021
- ✓ Hope Castle & Annex Buildings - Options Appraisal - CHL & HHA 2018
- ✓ Hope Castle Walled Gardens Study - Finola Reid 2015
- ✓ Fish Stocks Survey - Inland Fisheries Ireland 2015
- ✓ Hope Castle Conservation Report (various)
- ✓ Archaeological Assessments (various)
- ✓ Mammal Survey Report 2012
- ✓ Other Various

Previous studies have explored potential opportunities for the study area's future development and the relevant information contained within these reports will further inform our current research and analysis programme.

*What have we learned from these that we can now build upon?*





# Understanding the Place & the Project

## The Place - A Brief Overview

Lough Muckno & Environs represent a hugely diverse and aesthetically appealing resource, rich in both the **natural and built heritage**. Consequently, there is the need to protect its health, integrity and future.

The study area is the sum of many parts, with its land use and landscape fabric ranging from urban to agricultural; from public parks to private farmland; from heritage structures to contemporary recreation; from a stunning golf course to a working Coillte forest; from wetlands to islands; from land to lake.

What binds this valuable resource together, however, is its **local community** and their love of it.

The beating heart of the study area is Lough Muckno Estate, centred around Hope Castle and its annexe buildings, its walled garden and refurbished twin gate lodges with library extension. The main avenue of the former estate extends 200 metres from Market Square to Hope Castle. Much like the wider study area, the Estate is an area rich in **beauty and biodiversity**, and one of **archaeological, architectural and cultural importance**.

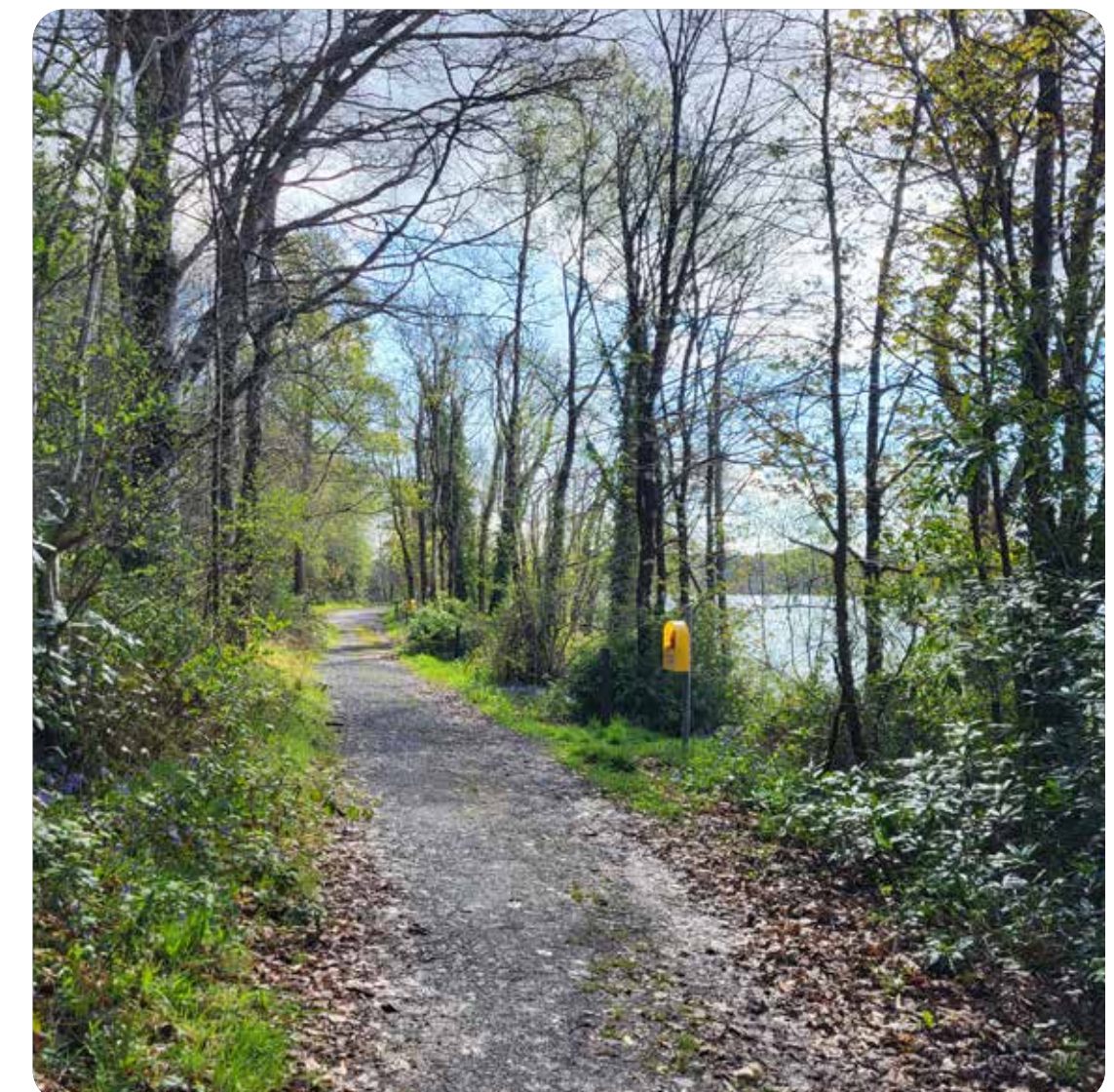
Monaghan County Council has in recent years carried out **substantial improvement works** within the Estate, including the construction of a playground and associated car parking, the redevelopment of the twin gate lodges, as well as the delivery of an international-quality angling infrastructure. In addition, the Council has successfully secured Part VIII planning consent and funding for the redevelopment of Market House and adjoining Market Square. Meanwhile, within the north-western edge of the study area, Muckno Street offers potential opportunities for redevelopment and regeneration, as well as wider access to the Estate.

## The Project - Our Approach

Building on the back of previous studies/reports/plans, our highly-experienced, multi-disciplinary team places a strong emphasis on a **holistic understanding** of this deeply valued resource. The basis of our methodology is to **understand the natural and cultural capacity** of this distinctive landscape, its adjacent town and its local community, to identify the opportunities it presents as a cherished local amenity, a visitor destination and a haven for nature.

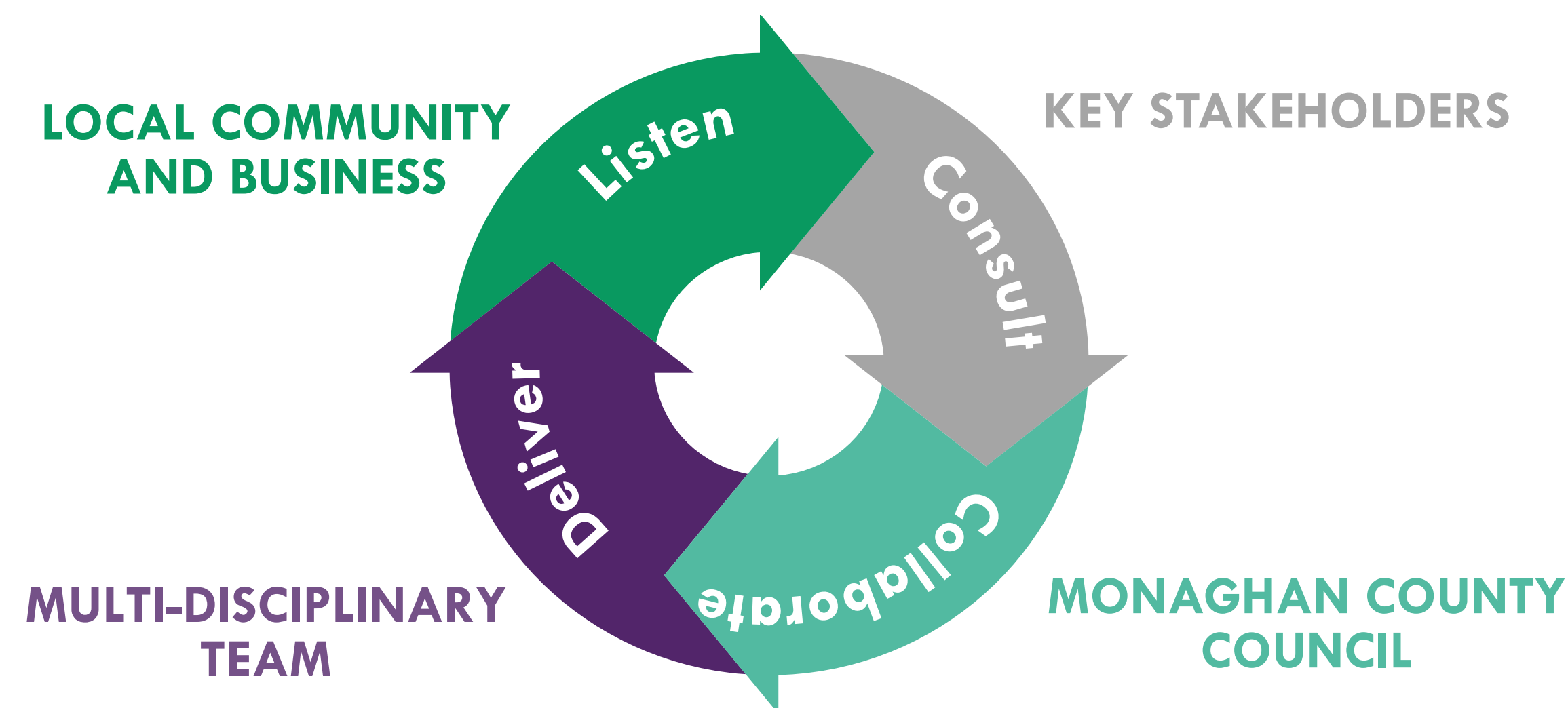
We are currently engaging with Monaghan County Council, numerous key stakeholders, local businesses and the wider local community in order to listen, observe and **better understand** how the study area **currently operates**, as well as hearing about any/all **potential opportunities** for it over the next 10 years that the public may have.

To help safeguard the environment and existing habitats, the project will also be accompanied by a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment Scoping to test the resulting proposals against any potential environmental impact.





## Consultation & Design Process



The Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement process involves a number of levels of communications and involvement to optimise local participation in the project and inform project concepts, actions and outcomes.

In parallel with this process, communication will be ongoing via traditional and online media, as well as press releases and the Monaghan County Council project website.

## Masterplan & Development Framework Programme



## Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Process



# Have Your Say!

Should there be better access and connectivity between the Town, the Leisure Park, Concra Wood Golf Course, the Monaghan Way, and Lough Muckno?

Additional pedestrian access into the Leisure Park and about Lough Muckno from the town centre and its environs?

Should Hope Castle, its Annex buildings and walled garden be renovated and re-purposed?

Improved public lake access from across the study area (e.g. for fisher-folk, kayakers, rowers boaters, swimmers)?

Improved retail/cafe/restaurant options?

Provision of industry-leading music facilities and compelling calendar of events that would secure and enhance Castleblayney's reputation as a leading music destination?

Is improving water quality and biodiversity across the area a priority?

Increase visitor numbers to study area?

A plan that supports and complements the objectives of the redeveloped Market House and Market Square, while propelling the urban regeneration of Castleblayney?

Do you support the creation of more walking and cycling trails across the area?

More appealing recreational opportunities for children/ young people within the Leisure Park? More activities?

Do you know places in Ireland or Internationally that you think Lough Muckno could or should be like?

Is there a need for more and better visitor accommodation in the area?

## PLEASE SHARE YOUR VIEWS

Please scan QR code for community survey and **complete the questionnaire** which will greatly assist us in forming a vision for the future of Lough Muckno & Environs.



**YOUR OPINIONS MATTER.  
SO THANK YOU!**

Project website: <https://monaghan.ie/planning/lough-muckno-and-environs-masterplan/>  
Project email: [mucknoplan@csrlandplan.ie](mailto:mucknoplan@csrlandplan.ie)

