

# *The Great Drumlin of Adventure*

TRANSFORMING THE MUCKNO ESTATE



A YEAR ROUND ADVENTURE TOURISM AMBITION  
FOR THE 21ST CENTURY



**A VISION FOR THE  
LOUGH MUCKNO ESTATE,  
CASTLEBLAYNEY, COUNTY  
MONAGHAN**



# THE BRIEF

Fáilte Ireland and Monaghan County Council wish to create a vision for the Lough Muckno Estate that is a **“game changing visitor attraction for Castleblayney, Monaghan and Ireland’s Ancient East.”**

**“The overall aim is to build a credible, achievable and realistic vision for the Estate that has a compelling narrative that matches the strategic goals of Ireland in a post-COVID19 environment and can become an exemplar of a new type of tourism development that will be required by communities and tourists in the near future.**

**At the same time, it must ensure the retention of access for the local community.”**



Comhairle Contae Mhuineacháin



Monaghan County Council



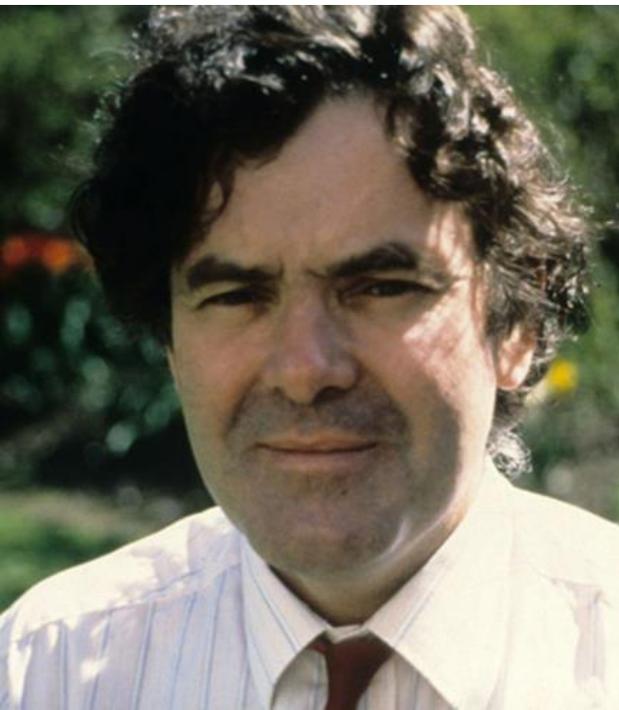
# A CONCEPT INSPIRED BY AN ANCIENT LANDSCAPE OF DRUMLINS AND DOMES





## ILLUSTRIOUS & INTRIGUING OWNERS

Deep rooted stories with  
profound implications for Ireland and beyond



### A CONCEPT INSPIRED BY LOCAL PEOPLE AND THOSE WHO CREATED THE ESTATE'S STORIES

- W S Gilpin, landscape architect (1761 – 1843)
- Robert Woodgate, architect ( N/K - 1805)
- Clare Consuela Sheridan, sculptor and global figure (1885 – 1970)
- Patrick Kavanagh, Poet (1904 – 1967)
- Tom McBride, singer and composer (1936 – 2018)
- Peter Rice, one of the world's best architectural engineers (1935 – 1992)

# INTRODUCTION

The extraordinary natural and heritage of the Muckno Estate at Castleblayney in County Monaghan creates an exciting, unique, opportunity to offer an innovative adventure destination of international class fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This vision will deliver an unprecedented range of adventure activities on a year-round basis generating numerous benefits for the local and regional economy by developing a truly transformational, sustainable, visitor attraction.

Post-COVID global and domestic visitor demand will concentrate on compelling outdoor experiences.

Market research confirms the surge of interest in all kinds of adventure activity whilst international best practice highlights the importance of unique natural and culturally rich settings for these activities.

# THE AMBITION & THE OPPORTUNITY

The **AMBITION** is to:

- Create a truly transformational project that will enhance the competitiveness and appeal of the region whilst making a significant economic impact.
- Be an exemplar of sustainability and innovation.
- Be a market leader delivering world-class activities, hospitality and an extraordinary range of adventure activities.

The **OPPORTUNITY**:

- A vision compatible with the key strategic local, regional and national policy documents.
- There are **TWO** options to deliver this vision:

Option 1 is the Muckno Adventure Estate.

Option 2 is The Great Drumlin of Adventure with the greatest potential to deliver the transformational ambition.

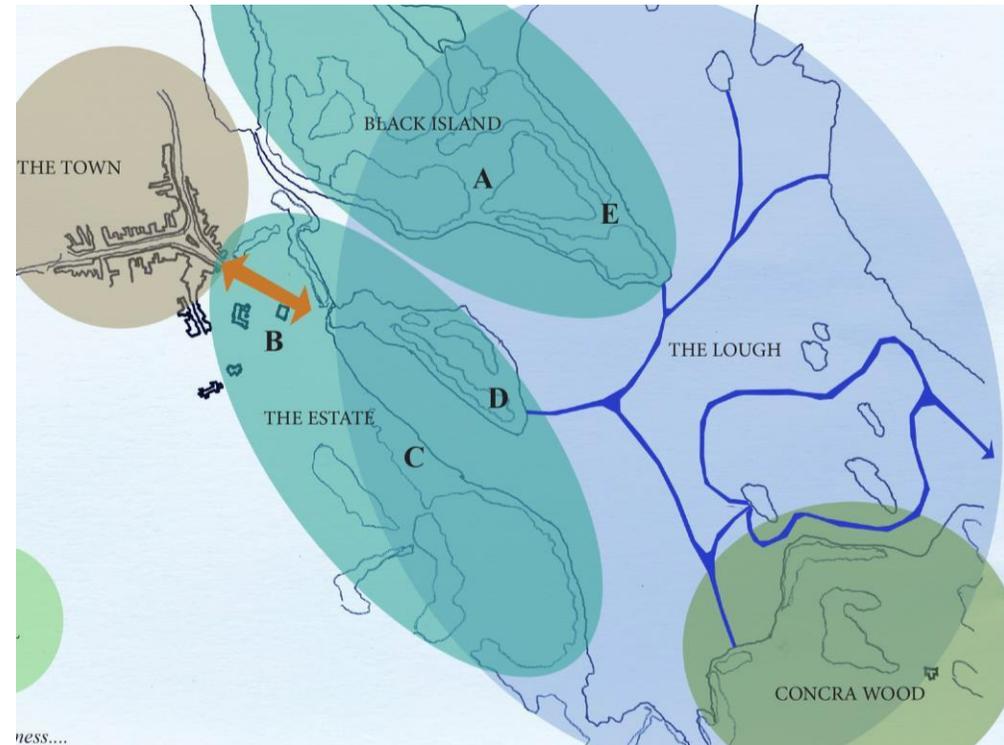
- Both options are aligned to the relevant policies for nature and heritage conservation.
- Both options ensure the retention of access to the park for the local community.
- A comprehensive feasibility study will have to be undertaken to determine the best way forward.

# OPTION 1: THE MUCKNO ADVENTURE ESTATE

A holistic approach combining the historic parkland and castle with the wider environment to create an integrated destination with the Muckno Adventure Estate at its core.

This will involve Lough Muckno and its islands, Concra Wood Golf Club, Black Island, Market House and the town centre as well as the surrounding countryside.

This option consists of **FOUR** connected zones of activity providing over 150 outdoor adventure activities together with heritage, cultural and hospitality experiences.



# THE FOUR ZONES

## ZONE 1:

**THE HISTORIC ESTATE** will be retained for free access for the local community.

It should become a traffic free environment with: (A) Activity Hub; (B) Culture Hub - Hope Castle, the walled gardens, sculpture park; (C) Water Activity Hub; (D) Cruise Tour Centre as well as parkland walks and cycle paths for wellbeing and outdoor recreation and (E) the Fishing Lodge and Conservation Centre. It will feature lake taxis and a ferry service linking islands and the Greenways around the lough shore and countryside.



# THE FOUR ZONES

## **ZONE 2:**

**LOUGH MUCKNO** is the focal point for innovation and the creation of a wide range of water activities. A new concept of a 'Dispersed Hotel' will be developed using the Lough's islands and linked to a boutique hotel on lough shore and other accommodation on the Estate and in the community; there will be a wellness island retreats, a picnic island and cruise tours. The dispersed hotel lodges on the islands will be serviced by a water taxi service.

## **ZONE 3:**

**CONCRA WOOD GOLF COURSE** will build on the community's success of this international standard golf course. The main shore-located hotel should be on land owned by the Golf Club. The Club House can be developed to include spa and wellness centre, cookery school, and lodges.



# THE FOUR ZONES

## ZONE 4:

**CASTLEBLAYNEY** will become fully integrated with the estate through the extension of Muckno Square. Market House becomes the major showcase and centre for innovation of local produce (food and drink) and culture (arts and crafts). The Gatehouses represent the ‘threshold’ connection to the town functioning as information centres (library), booking / ticketing office and retail outlet.

This integrated approach ensures:

- a seamless link between the regeneration of the town and development of Muckno.
- the Golf Club and the Market House become important features of the overall experience.
- create opportunities for the community, angling interests, GAA and College
- provide a platform for additional visitor experiences through new business start-ups and enable existing enterprises to take full advantage of a growing market.



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# OPTION 2: THE GREAT DRUMLIN OF ADVENTURE (THE TRANSFORMATIONAL OPTION)

Option 2 requires the delivery of Option 1 to provide the foundations for real transformation through the creation of The Great Drumlin of Adventure taking Muckno from a national leader for adventure to an internationally significant attraction.

The Great Drumlin of Adventure will become Ireland's home for adventure innovation. It will house a myriad of soft and high-octane activities while also accommodating Ireland's first Deep Space of Adventure – an exciting international collaboration to deliver a unique year-round, state-of-the-art, digital and immersive adventure experience for all the family.



# AN INTERNATIONAL ATTRACTION

The Great Drumlin of Adventure will create a series of enclosed spaces under one dome housing a world class range of year-round adventure activities.

Within this extraordinary adventure venue will be ice climbing walls (homage to the Ice Age), abseiling, high ropes courses, canyoning, flow-riders and deep dive sub-aqua, well-being and spas facilities, a theatre as well as a range of play areas, fitness studios, adventure fashion and equipment stores and cafes.

On its exterior will be climbing walls, grass skiing, canyoning, and skateboarding.

The centrepiece of the vision is an architectural icon that dramatically emerges out of the ancient landscape creating innovatively designed to house this new generation of year-round adventure activities.

It will transform and regenerate Hope Castle into the discovery centre for global adventure experiences.



# GLOBALLY ICONIC AND BEST IN CLASS PLACEMAKING

Within the Great Drumlin of Adventure is the proposed development of The Deep Space of Adventure curated in partnership with the world-leading Ars Electronica Centre based in Linz in Austria.

Delivering eight dimensional immersive experiences visitors can go canyoning in The Great Drumlin of Adventure, paddle board on Lough Muckno, take a canopy walk on Black Island before immersing themselves in The Deep Space of Adventure to experience surfing The Peak (the barrelling huge wave at Bundoran) or white water rafting down the Grand Canyon.

The fluid, natural and abstract form of The Great Drumlin is as much land art as architecture.

The design alludes to the islands in the lough, emerging from the water with patterns of the glazed section being an abstraction of the crystalline form of the Hope Diamond.

The design proposal for the Great Drumlin of Adventure is based upon the glacial effect on the existing landscape – the shaping of the drumlin.

The project will be carbon neutral if not carbon positive.

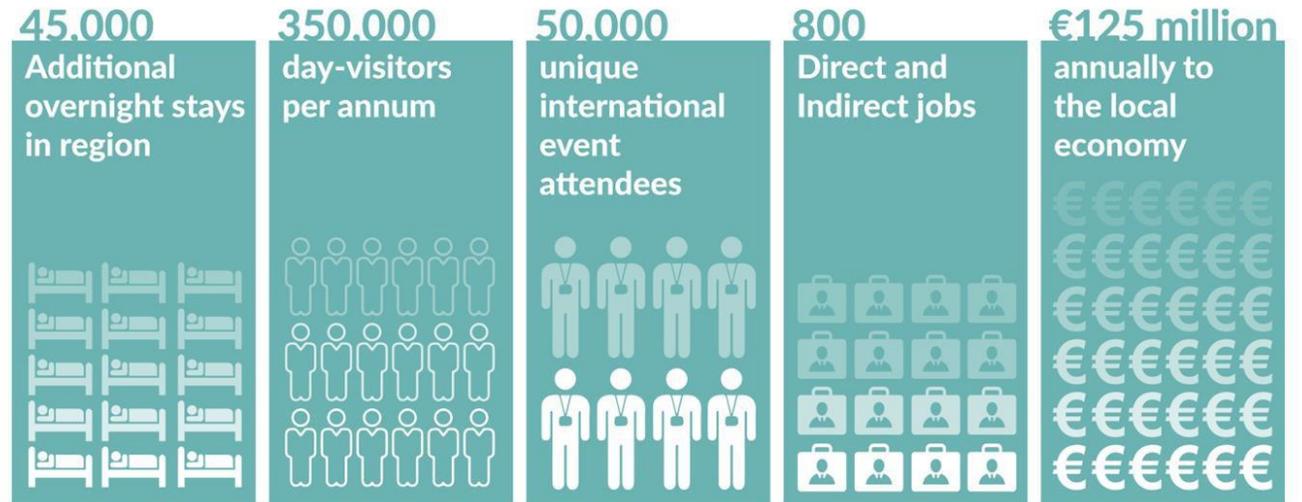


# THE COSTS & IMPACTS

PROJECT DELIVERY - FINANCE AND PROJECT IMPACT

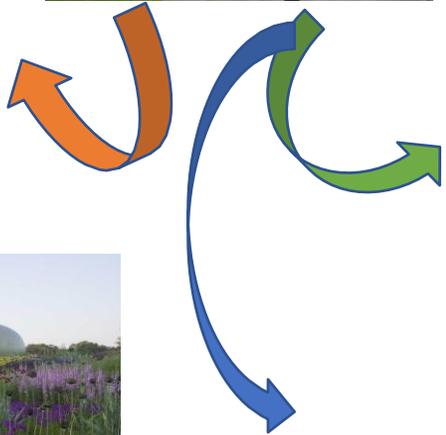
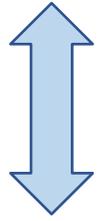
HOW MUCH?

€65m - €100m - A phased investment program



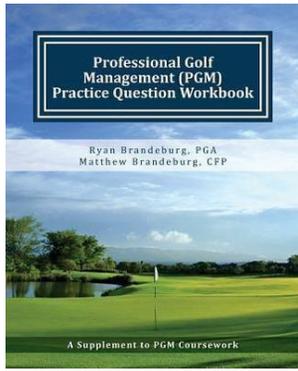
**THE DAY VISITOR'S  
ADVENTURES &  
EXPERIENCES**

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**THE STAYING VISITOR'S  
ADVENTURES &  
EXPERIENCES**

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# CONCLUSIONS

- Option 1, the ‘whole of estate’ model, integrates the experience of the Estate with the town and community contributing to all dimensions of sustainable tourism.
- The Muckno Adventure Estate is the strong foundation for the transformational Option 2.
- When the Muckno Adventure Estate is developed with Option 2, the Great Drumlin of Adventure and the Deep Space of Adventure, the opportunity is internationally significant and iconic.
- It will transform how all elements of adventure are consumed, blending the outdoors with new immersive indoor experiences in an adventure attraction of a scale that will be unrivalled internationally.



# NEXT STEPS

1. The Council should commence a public consultation exercise to gauge opinion and local views.
2. A full feasibility analysis will be now required to market test both options and appraise the financial and operational business case of the Muckno Adventure Estate and the Great Drumlin of Adventure.
3. Funding opportunities should be explored in relation to the Shared Island and the EU 2Peace Plus Programme.



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