

Lough Muckno Vision Document - Public Consultation Webinar & Survey

Summary Report

September 2021

Introduction

A public consultation webinar in relation to the Vision for Lough Muckno document was held online on 12th August 2021. It was publicised via press and radio ads, emails to relevant databases, together with signs displayed prominently at Lough Muckno and around the town of Castleblayney.

It was aimed at members of the public and key stakeholders, such as local tourism and business owners and the wider community, with a view to getting their feedback on the vision document that Terry Stevens & Associates had developed for Muckno, in conjunction with MCC and Fáilte Ireland.

A Public Consultation Period then ensued which lasted from Friday 13th August to Friday 10th September.



Vision for Lough Muckno

Monaghan County Council in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland has recently engaged with Terry Stevens and Associates, International Tourism Consultants, to prepare a Visioning Report for Lough Muckno Estate, Castleblayney and the surrounding area. The results of this report will shortly be available for review as part of a public consultation process.

Please join us for an online webinar to get an overview of the vision for Lough Muckno on

Thursday, 12th August at 7pm

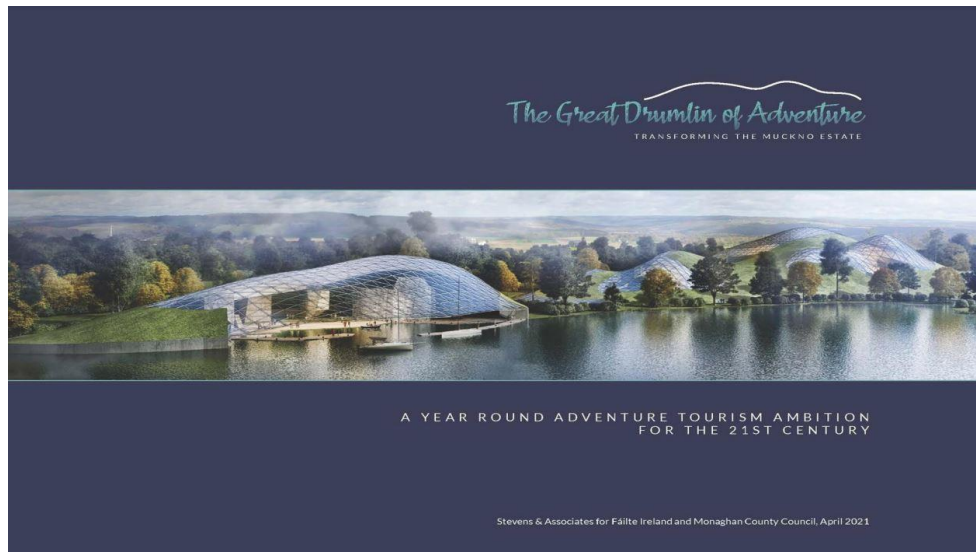
You are invited to log on and join the webinar at

<https://tinyurl.com/MCCpublicevent>

Webinar

The Webinar, on 12th August lasted for approximately an hour and a half, with short introductions from Paul Clifford, Director of Services and Mark Mohan, Regional Manager Fáilte Ireland, followed by a presentation by Terry Stevens, Consultant, of the Muckno Vision. Participants were invited to submit questions via the Chat Box facility and the panel of 3 above provided a response to the questions raised during the Q & A session which followed the presentation.



Participants were also invited to submit a query and were asked to provide contact email addresses so that a written response could issue separately. Where email addresses were provided, responses were forwarded on 18th August. However, there were 6 anonymous questions and 3 more where names were provided, but no email address so it was not possible to forward a written response.

Public Consultation

The webinar was uploaded onto the Monaghan County Council website on 13th August, together with a soft copy of the presentation and an on-line submission form and the consultation period lasted until 10th September.

Submissions

There were several ways in which submissions could be made as follows:

1. *On-line submission forms*
2. *Dedicated email address – Muckno@monaghancoco.ie*
3. *Emails to DoS and Tourism Officer*

1 On-line Submission Forms

During the public consultation period, a total of 71 online submission forms were completed and a summary of these responses can be found in Appendix A.

2 & 3 Dedicated email address, and emails to DoS & Tourism Officer

A dedicated email address – muckno@monaghancoco.ie was set up for this public consultation exercise and 14 submissions were made via this facility. Additional emailed submissions were also forwarded directly to relevant officers.

These emailed submissions are categorised as follows:

- Letters of Support
- Submissions from Organisations
- Submissions from individuals
- Queries

Letters/Emails of Support (6 in total)

Letters/Emails of Support were received from the following organisations:

- Coillte
- Castleblayney Community Enterprise Ltd
- Castleblayney Regeneration Team
- Enterprising Monaghan
- Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN) Ltd
- North East Regional Enterprise Development Office

Submissions from Organisations/Groups (3 in total)

Submissions were received from the following Organisations/Groups

- Inland Fisheries Ireland
- Friends of Lough Muckno
- Annyalla NS – 5th Class pupils

Submissions from Individuals (8 in total)

Submissions were received from/on behalf of 8 individuals

Queries

There were 2 queries received, one querying whether their on-line submission had been successful and this was confirmed by return.

The second query related to a clarification in terms of the ownership of the land to be developed and a response was provided by return email.

Copies of these submissions can be found in Appendix B.



Summary of Key Findings/Issues

There was broad support for progressing to the next stage (66.2%) with 62% of respondents in favour of the proposal in principal, to regenerate Lough Muckno Estate, incorporating Concra Wood and Castleblayney as a world-class tourism destination.

There were a number of concerns highlighted and these are fully incorporated in the Appendices. Key concerns included:

- Impact on Bio-diversity and Environment/Natural Setting of Lough Muckno
- Scale of the project
- Sustainability
- Lack of engagement with Local Community

Substantial thought and effort was put into a number of the submissions received and these have been included in full in Appendix B of this report. Some information has been redacted for GDPR purposes where requested.

All comments provided via the on-line submission form have also been included and these can be found in Appendix A. Names have been redacted for GDPR purposes.

On-line Survey – Overview of Responses

Q.1 Do you support the principle of this regeneration vision proposal for the Lough Muckno Estate, incorporating Concra Wood and the town as a world-class tourism destination?

- Yes - 62%
- No – 38%

Q.2 What would best describe your interest in the Vision Report?

- As a business owner in the area 7
- As a tourism provider in the area 3
- As a visitor/recreational user 16
- As a member of the local community 56
- In an official/administrative capacity 4
- Other/please specify 9

Note: Some respondents ticked more than 1 box.

Q.3 Have we sufficiently outlined the vision for Muckno?

- Yes – 59.2%
- No – 40.8%

Responses regarding what other detail was required are included in Appendix A.

Q.4 Please state your level of agreement with the following statement:

I believe that this vision for Muckno will have a significant positive economic benefit to the local economy & Co Monaghan

- 60.6% agreed (43.7% strongly, 19.7% agreed)
- 19.7% disagreed (14.1% strongly, 5.6% disagreed)
- 18.3% neither agreed nor disagreed and there were 1.4% Don't knows

Q.5 Please state your level of agreement with the following statement:

I believe that this vision for Muckno will be a sustainable tourism development

- 54.9% agreed (18.3% strongly, 36.6% agreed)
- 35.3% disagreed (25.4% strongly, 9.9% disagreed)
- 9.9% neither agreed nor disagreed

Q.6 The Vision outlines a number of proposed developments. Please tick below the 3 elements you like best in terms of a 'fit' for Muckno:

- Dispersed accommodation
- Mix of Adventure Activities
- Cruise Tour Centre
- Integration of Estate, town and golf club
- Domed structures – 'Great Drumlin of Adventure'
- Digital, immersive adventure feature – 'Deep Space of Adventure'
- Other, please specify

The top 3 answers were as follows:

- Mix of Adventure Activities (50)
- Integration of Estate, town and golf club (39)
- Dispersed accommodation (23)

There were some suggestions under 'other' which are included in Appendix A.

Q.7 In terms of the regeneration of Lough Muckno, please rank in order of importance the below, with 1 being the most important:

- Employment
- Economic benefit to the town – job creation, visitor numbers etc
- Integration of the town, golf club and Lough Muckno Estate
- Public access
- Regeneration & re-use of historic fabric of the estate
- Environmentally sensitive developments
- Other, please specify

The top 3 answers were as follows:

- Environmentally sensitive developments (48)
- Public access (45)
- Regeneration & re-use of historic fabric of the estate (31)

Q.8 Please outline any other ideas, issues, or views on the Muckno Vision Report

There were a large number of responses under this question and these can be found in Appendix A.

Q.9 This Vision for Muckno report is step 1 in a long process. Do you support the progression of this to the next level which is feasibility stage – (developing Business Case, more detailed design & environmental analysis)

- 66.2% in favour
- 33.8% against

Reasons provided for not supporting the progression are included in Appendix A