



Unique Reference Number: MYO-C19-52

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Status: Submitted

Submission: Tourism Opportunities

Consultation:

Pre-Draft Issues Paper - Ballina Town & Environs Plan 2021-2027

The Tourism potential of natural and cultural assets

Chapter: Tourism &
Recreation

Ballina is a urban area rich in natural, cultural and historical assets. Wherever possible such assets should be utilised to promote pride of place and cultivate the unique identity of the town and its hinterland.

Natural Heritage Assets:

Belleek Forest Park

The existing woodlands in the immediate surrounds of Belleek Castle comprise a significant natural heritage asset and are among the largest urban woodlands nationally. The potential to develop the woodlands as a specific Forest Park should be prioritised in cooperation with Coillte and other stakeholders. A model for such development is Lough Key Forest Park Boyle Co Roscommon. Suggested additions to the existing and established woodland trails include a tree canopy boardwalk with views of the river moy and estuary and a designated facility for the provision of light refreshments and sanitary services. There is also potential to develop an outdoor performance space in a natural amphitheatre within the woodlands.

River Moy

The River Moy is recognised internationally as a leading salmonid fishery and the Ballina Local area plan should optimise the potential of the river to contribute to ecosystem services, amenity, Tourism and recreation. An integrated catchment based management approach should be adopted involving stakeholders such as Inland fisheries, River Moy Trust, Boat owners, and others to ensure that water quality is maintained and the rivers rich biodiversity is conserved for future generations. The significant potential of the Quay should also be explored with a view to enhancing facilities for recreational use and leisure and Eco -Tourism.

Cultural Assets

Mary Robinson Centre

The Mary Robinson Centre has considerable potential as a national and international hub for Climate studies, Women's leadership and Human Rights.

The Development of the centre should not be limited but should seek to broaden the output of the project to form a cultural, academic and civic campus within the historic core of the town. Such expansion could include the utilisation of adjacent and ancillary buildings in the immediate vicinity of the proposed centre (Moy Lane, Walsh St etc) as performance spaces, meeting rooms and civic spaces in which both residents and visitors alike can engage with the themes of the centre. Such use could be facilitated under lease arrangements subject to demand. While academic partnerships have been established there is also the potential to develop residential or summer schools of Climate studies, Human Rights and International Development which would actively increase engagement and generate greater income for the local economy and hospitality providers than a more formal stand alone centre.

Documents Attached: No