# BALLYHOURA COUNTRY

## Destination & Experience Development Plan

DRAFT May 2026

Fáilte Ireland

BALLYHOURA DEVELOPMENT CLG

Comhairle Cathrach & Contae Luimnigh
Limerick City & County Council

Cork County Council
Comhairle Contae Chorcaí

Ireland's Hidden HEARTLANDS

# TABLE OF CONTENTS


**Overview & Context** . . . . . 3

**1.1** Introduction & Overview . . . . . 4

**1.2** A New Era for Irish Tourism, National Tourism Policy Statement . . . . . 6

**1.3** Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Regional Tourism Development . . . . . 9

**1.4** Delivering a Regenerative Tourism Ambition for Ballyhoura . . . . . 10

**1.5** What we have learned . . . . . 12

**1.6** Opportunities & Challenges . . . . . 15

**Ballyhoura – A Shared and Connected Destination** . . . . . 17

**2.1** A Shared and Connected Destination . . . . . 18

**2.2** Destination Maturity . . . . . 22

**2.3** Visitor Strategy – Ballyhoura . . . . . 23

**Ballyhoura DEDP Summary** . . . . . 24

**3.1** Our Vision 2035 . . . . . 25

**3.2** Strategic Objectives . . . . . 26

**3.3** Ballyhoura Destination & Experience Development Framework . . . . . 27

**Delivering the Ballyhoura DEDP** . . . . . 28

**4.1** Delivering the Ballyhoura DEDP . . . . . 29

**Measuring Success** . . . . . 40

**5.1** Key Performance Indicators . . . . . 41

**Ballyhoura DEDP – Summary of Action** . . . . . 44

**6.1** Ballyhoura DEDP Implementation . . . . . 45

**6.2** Action Plan . . . . . 46

**Appendices**

**Appendix 1** – Environmental . . . . . 56

**Appendix 2** – Supporting Current Policy and Planning . . . . . 62


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Ireland's Hidden HEARTLANDS

# SECTION ONE

## Overview & Context

Fáilte Ireland

# 1.1 INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

The Ballyhoura Destination and Experience Development Plan (DEDP) is a five year, place based tourism development plan designed to deliver value led, sustainable economic growth for the communities of Ballyhoura. Developed in alignment with the Tourism Policy Framework 2025–2030, Failte Ireland's corporate strategy 2026–2029 and the Hidden Heartlands Regional Experience Development Strategy (RTDS), the plan is structured to support national objectives under the economic, environmental, and social sustainability pillars, with a particular emphasis on increasing economic value per visitor, strengthening regional balance, and supporting long term economic resilience.

In line with national tourism policy, the plan focuses on actions that drive greater economic impact at local level, including visitor dispersion, season extension, and increased dwell time. These measures are intended to maximise the contribution of tourism to local enterprises and employment, and concentrating growth in a way that is balanced and sustainable. This value over volume approach directly supports the economic objectives of the Tourism Policy Framework 2025–2030.

Ballyhoura's evolution as a tourism destination is rooted in community leadership, following the establishment of Ballyhoura Fáilte in 1986 as Ireland's first community tourism cooperative. This legacy of community led tourism directly aligns with the social sustainability pillar of national policy, ensuring that tourism development supports community wellbeing, local pride, and quality employment. The Ballyhoura destination plan builds on this foundation by embedding local knowledge, partnership working, and collaborative governance at the core of its delivery model.

The plan adopts a regenerative tourism approach as its guiding lens, ensuring that economic growth is achieved alongside environmental protection and community benefit. Building on Ballyhoura's established community infrastructure and strong natural and heritage assets, the plan seeks to enhance and protect the environment while developing high quality visitor experiences that are rooted in place and culture. This approach aligns with the environmental sustainability pillar of the Tourism Policy Framework and reinforces the long term competitiveness and viability of the destination.

To support delivery, the Ballyhoura destination plan is organised around five development objectives, each directly aligned with the regional objectives for

Ireland's Hidden Heartlands and the national priorities set out in the Tourism Policy Framework 2025–2030. These objectives focus on strengthening market awareness in domestic and international markets, positioning Ballyhoura as a leading outdoor and activity based destination, building tourism industry capacity, and growing the economic contribution of tourism in a sustainable and resilient manner.

The plan has been informed by extensive engagement with over 200 stakeholders, including local communities, tourism enterprises, Local Authorities, and strategic partners. This inclusive process has resulted in a shared vision for Ballyhoura that reflects national policy priorities while remaining grounded in local aspiration and delivery capacity. The plan is underpinned by a clear implementation framework, supported by catalyst and enabling projects, and measured through KPIs aligned with Fáilte Ireland's performance framework and the VICE model, ensuring accountability across all three national policy pillars.

The Ballyhoura destination plan translates the Tourism Policy Framework 2025–2030 into a coherent, place based programme of action that delivers economic value, community benefit, and environmental stewardship in equal measure and is supported by clearly defined objectives and a five year action plan designed to achieve a series of targeted outcomes. The framework for the Ballyhoura Destination and Experience Development Plan is structured around the following core components:

- **A 10 year shared destination** vision that articulates what differentiates Ballyhoura from other destinations and how it contributes to the broader Ireland's Hidden Heartlands vision.
- **Five year development objectives which reflect the objectives of the Hidden Heartlands Regional Tourism Development Strategy** (RTDS) and take account of destination maturity, visitor strategy, priority product development, and the need to build the capability and capacity of the tourism industry. These objectives are designed to support sustainable economic growth and align with regional targets outlined in the Tourism Policy Framework 2025–2030. A strong emphasis on tourism industry skills development and capability building is recognised as a key driver in increasing the economic impact of tourism across local communities. Continued partnership working and a collaborative approach to tourism development will build on the successes of Ballyhoura's community led model to date. In line with Ballyhoura's commitment to a regenerative tourism approach, the fifth development objective reflects the collective ambition for Ballyhoura to become one of Ireland's leading sustainable and regenerative tourism destinations, consistent with one of Ireland's Hidden Heartlands' strategic objectives and firmly aligned with national tourism policy direction.
- **Catalyst projects**, comprising a suite of agreed priority projects to be delivered over the five year DEDP period, build on Ballyhoura's established reputation for outdoor recreation and rural tourism. These projects leverage existing strategic initiatives such as Fáilte Ireland's Beara Breifne Way and the Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan, while broadening the destination's appeal through the development of heritage, cultural, and food based visitor experiences. Collectively, these initiatives will enhance the quality, and overall appeal of the Ballyhoura visitor experience, giving more reasons for visitors to come and to stay in the area. A final catalyst project focuses on the development of a destination route, designed to create a more integrated, connected, and immersive visitor experience across the Ballyhoura area.
- **Supporting projects** that enable tourism enterprises and local communities to maximise the opportunities created by the catalyst projects and strengthen commercial resilience. These include initiatives focused on skills development, training, and capacity building, as well as actions to grow the scale and impact of the local tourism network and in doing so keep a focus on tourism generated economic return for the area.
- **Measurement and KPIs**, developed in alignment with Fáilte Ireland's KPI Performance Framework and structured around the VICE sustainable tourism model. In recognition of Ballyhoura's strong community led ethos, additional KPIs focused on community wellbeing and regenerative tourism outcomes have also been incorporated. These indicators may be refined as the DEDP moves into implementation, with overall success measured through regular assessment of KPI performance and data.

*Throughout the plan growing or building the capabilities and capacity of the tourism industry and / or community will be referred to as capability building.

# 1.2 A NEW ERA FOR IRISH TOURISM, NATIONAL TOURISM POLICY STATEMENT

The National Tourism Policy Statement (December 2025) 'A New Era for Irish Tourism' has established an overarching objective of ensuring tourism contributes to broader government goals in areas such as climate action, digital transformation, competitiveness, market diversification, and regional balance. The National Tourism Policy is structured around five strategic pillars;

1. Delivering the Best Visitor Experiences
2. Promoting a Vibrant and Creative Tourism Enterprise Sector
3. Empowering Communities
4. Growing a Sustainable Future
5. Implementation and Data

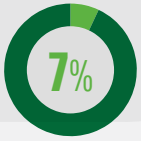
## Tourism Performance Targets:

**€9bn**

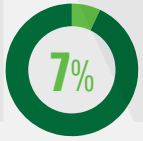
**Overseas tourism revenue to grow to €9 billion by 2031**

**€5.8bn**

**Domestic tourism revenue to grow to €5.8 billion by 2031**




**Target annual growth per annum in domestic overnight trip revenue**




**Minimum annual increase in visitor numbers in less mature tourism destinations**

**250,000**

**Target employment in tourism industries by 2031**

**% of tourism-related SMEs adopting advanced digital tools by 2031**

Among the key policy commitments in the policy statement most relevant to the Ballyhoura destination plan include;

- Develop a balanced regional spread of tourism throughout the country, prioritising investment in less mature tourism destinations.
- Enhance seasonal distribution through a focus on initiatives that provide year-round attractions for visitors including investing in festivals such as 'Home of Halloween' and strengthen linkages and strategic partnerships in the development of tourism product including with the Office of Public Works, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Coillte and BnM, among others.
- Develop a Tourism Accommodation Strategy that will guide the provision of an appropriate mix of accommodation options, across all regions with particular focus on less mature tourism destinations.
- Support our tourism-related SMEs to grow and scale to compete on the domestic and international markets and harness the full potential of digital and AI. Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland and the LEOs will work with SMEs to grow competitiveness, skills, and digital transformation, to drive sales, profitability and resilience.
- Promote sustainable business practices along the tourism value chain to ensure tourism plays its part in achieving our national climate and biodiversity targets and invest in amenity and nature restoration including through the EU Just Transition Fund.
- Ensure Ireland's night-time economy and Ireland's unique heritage and sport are recognised and coherent in terms of development as key assets in terms of attracting overseas and domestic visitors.
- Assist less mature tourism destinations to benefit from tourism growth by ensuring the delivery of DEDPs for all areas and ensure local tourism enterprises continue to have a central role in the development of these plan.
- Review all tourism data sources to identify gaps to be addressed and develop enhanced sets of indicators on performance and outcomes for the tourism sector.

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A number of specific opportunities identified in the national tourism policy statement will be pursued through the delivery of the Ballyhoura destination plan. These include leveraging the food heritage of the area to grow the opportunity for culinary tourism. Developing more visitor experiences across Ballyhoura will be key to motivating visitors to consider Ballyhoura as a visitor destination and contribute to increasing the regional spread of tourism. There will be a sustained emphasis on building commercial resilience among tourism SME's and developing their commercial and operational capabilities.

## Commercial Resilience

The national tourism policy statement places an emphasis on supporting tourism SMEs in building resilience and enhancing the competitiveness and long-term sustainability of tourism enterprises. This will include supporting SMEs to ensure they can respond to market challenges such as digital transformation, sustainability requirements, and shifting consumer expectations. The policy states 'Fáilte Ireland and LEOs ensure a coordinated approach in providing tourism SMEs targeted, relevant, and timely support aligned with their specific stage of development and growth potential as appropriate.'

The shared destination vision for Ballyhoura is to develop its appeal as an outdoor activity destination. It presents businesses with an opportunity to develop a destination that attracts visitors on a year-round basis. In developing the commercial resilience of the destination and local businesses, it will require a focus on ensuring the destination meets consumer expectations and the delivery of a quality visitor experience.

To achieve this, building the capabilities of the Ballyhoura tourism industry forms one of the strategic objectives of the destination plan. Growing awareness of the destination in the domestic and international markets forms one of the catalyst projects. This is supported by a number of projects designed to strengthen the commercial resilience of the tourism industry. Over the five years of the plan, projects such as digitalisation and network development will be implemented. These will create a focal point for industry training and skills development.

Additional projects such as developing the tourism appeal of destination towns and creating community 'basecamps' to access outdoor activities will include a capability building focus. They will provide businesses with a platform to strengthen their commercial capacity and leverage new opportunities as destination projects are implemented.

## Food Tourism

Food and drink accounts for over a third (34%) of total visitor spend, highlighting its importance to the overall tourism experience and the revenue generated by visitors. The national tourism policy statement highlights the future focus on marketing the uniqueness and provenance of Irish food including chefs and culinary experiences. It proposes to enhance customer engagement through practical supports while addressing operational and commercial challenges. The ambition is to ensure a compelling seven-day offering that will enrich the visitor experience and drive regional growth.

Food and drink will form a central element of the Ballyhoura DEDP, leveraging the heritage of generations of food production and its location in the Golden Vale. Developing food tourism will be one of the catalyst projects within the destination plan. The Ballyhoura food story and the opportunity to grow the number of agri-tourism visitor experiences will be key to diversifying the visitor experience mix in the destination. This will include exploring opportunities through initiatives such as the Farm Diversification Training Programme designed to support farm families to diversify and strengthen income streams while preserving their agricultural heritage. The increased focus on food will also create a platform to grow the variety of food service and dining options available to visitors. The development and profiling of the destination towns will include an emphasis on food and drink to grow the value of the day and evening time economy.

The development approach will result in an immediate focus on growing the number of saleable food tourism experiences available across Ballyhoura. As the number of visitor experiences develop, this will evolve into a Ballyhoura Food Experience Trail. This will subsequently link with any future county or regional food trails in Limerick and Cork. The food tourism approach in Ballyhoura and North Cork will also play an essential role in Cork's ambition to become an international Region of Gastronomy by 2030.

## Transport

The Ballyhoura destination is largely defined as rural with a number of larger population hubs including Kilmallock, Mitchelstown and Charleville. These key towns, who operate as destination accommodation hubs, have limited connectivity with local attractions and amenities.

The destination assessment suggests the area is largely viewed as a 'transient' destination, where visitors pass through between other destinations. Despite the proximity to the larger population bases of Limerick City and Cork City, public transport to and around the destination is limited. Current public transport options restrict visitors' consideration of exploring more of the destination and staying for longer, unless using private transport.

The approach within the destination plan will see an examination of options such increased integration with Local Link services and exploring how to link visitors with the communities of Ballyhoura. Opportunities presented by large scale transport infrastructure investments i.e. the M20 motorway, has the scope to include 'active travel' type projects and cycleways on adjoining roads. The approach will include exploring how to improve access to information on public transport options while also addressing the challenge of the 'last mile' link to sites and communities. The R512 tourism route catalyst project will explore the potential of the R512 to link local communities and attractions. This will include an examination of the transport and access options required to develop it into an orientation route that will make a sustainable economic impact on local communities.

# 1.3 IRELAND'S HIDDEN HEARTLANDS REGIONAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Regional Tourism Development Strategies – 2023–2027 (RTDS) were developed for each of Fáilte Ireland's four Regional Experience Brands (Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, Ireland's Ancient East, Wild Atlantic Way and Dublin). The Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Regional Tourism Development Strategy represents a ten year vision for the sustainable development of the region, together with a five year strategy to guide the achievement of that vision. It identifies the elements required at a strategic level to unlock the commercial potential of the region while protecting the environment, enhancing the lives of local communities and exceeding the expectations of our visitors.

The RTDS provides a guiding strategic framework for other more detailed tourism development plans that will be prepared within the region over the next five years. These include Destination and Experience Development Plans (DEDPs), County Tourism Strategies and the tourism sections of County Development Plans. This approach will also help identify priorities for future funding that becomes available in the region.

The Ballyhoura destination plan has been developed to contribute to the overarching regional objectives for Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. The following regional objectives provide the basis for the strategic approach reflected within the DEDP:

1. Raise awareness and recognition of the region and brand among domestic and international visitors and increase the duration of visitor stays, particularly within the domestic market.
2. Enhance the range and quality of our visitor experiences to underpin the Hidden Heartlands brand proposition, leveraging the natural and cultural assets of the region in a sustainable way with a focus on eco-tourism.
3. Grow the economic impact of tourism and create jobs in local tourism by supporting the tourism industry (private, public and community sectors) to develop its capacity and capability while reducing its carbon footprint.
4. Establish the region as one of the leading regenerative tourism destinations in Europe in which tourism results in net positive outcomes for communities and nature.
5. Build a committed industry and stakeholder coalition to guide and co-ordinate the sustainable development of destinations across the region.

# 1.4 DELIVERING A REGENERATIVE TOURISM AMBITION FOR BALLYHOURA

## A Regenerative Approach

For Ballyhoura, a pioneer in community focused development, regenerative tourism is not a new concept. As global tourism trends increasingly value authenticity, place-based experiences and opportunities to meet and 'live like locals', the Ballyhoura destination plan represents an opportunity to further integrate the regenerative approach into destination development. It will build on what represents a strong differentiator for Ballyhoura and harness the sense of destination authenticity that the community places such significant value on.

In continuing the community focused tourism journey, a Community Led Regenerative Tourism Development Model was developed between Ballyhoura Development CLG and Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark. The model is grounded in a bottom-up methodology emphasising the active involvement of local residents in designing and implementing tourism strategies.

This Ballyhoura destination plan builds on the legacy of the community tourism approach combined with this new community led model. The approach focuses on ensuring the impact of tourism will improve the wellbeing of local communities, enhance the natural environment and protect the socio-economic eco-system of the area for future generations.

Based on the community led model, the regenerative tourism approach will provide the opportunity to continuously rethink tourism. The regenerative tourism approach will create new opportunities to enhance the appeal of Ballyhoura through experience development, leading to increased visitor satisfaction and more rewarding visitor experiences.

The creation of a regenerative visitor economy in Ballyhoura will increase the focus on community based experiences linked to local culture e.g. food, heritage. It will ensure tourism will leave a beneficial footprint on the communities of Ballyhoura. As identified throughout the community consultations, people and place will be central to the destination narrative and associated experiences.

This approach builds on what makes Ballyhoura unique and attractive to domestic and international visitors while also contributing to sustainable job creation, conservation of Ballyhoura's cultural heritage and enhancing the quality of life for locals. In achieving the ambition for a regenerative tourism approach the areas of focus within this destination plan include;

- Work with local businesses to develop and promote transformational visitor experiences that benefit the environment and local communities.
- Motivate visitors to explore more Ballyhoura communities and increase the value of tourism by retaining them for longer in the destination.
- Place people and place at the centre of the Ballyhoura visitor experience and how the destination is promoted to domestic and international visitors.
- Promote sustainability and the heritage of local food producers to tell the food story of Ballyhoura and support regenerative farming.
- Increase visitor awareness of Ballyhoura as a tourism destination with regenerative tourism practices central to all destination activity.
- Promote visitor stewardship of the local environment and educate visitors on how to reduce their carbon footprint.
- Grow the tourism industry's capacity to contribute to collective Climate Action goals through annual reductions in waste, water and energy use.

# 1.5 WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED

## Building Destination Awareness

Growing the profile of Ballyhoura as a visitor destination and how it connects with the adjoining larger urban centres will be a strategic priority. Almost a quarter of Ballyhoura tourism businesses (24%)* have no website, rendering them invisible online with another 10% only having a very limited presence on a third party website. Promotion of other businesses on individual sites was rare, representing a missed opportunity for effective cross-promotion that could strengthen the destination's overall appeal. Increasing destination visibility will require a collective effort and must consider an internal and external approach in future communications. The awareness building process must also account for increasing community awareness of the importance of tourism and the opportunity it represents for the locality. The community survey suggested low levels of awareness of the importance and impact of the sector.

## A Consistent Vision for Tourism

There is a significant level of consistency on the vision for tourism in Ballyhoura among all stakeholders. Across the various stages of consultation and engagement with the local community and the tourism industry, a focus on 'value over volume' and growing the recognition of Ballyhoura as a sustainable tourism destination underpin the vision held by all stakeholders. The community feedback stressed the need for tourism to support local employment while also recognising the importance of ensuring tourism development does not impact negatively on the area's natural environment.

From a product development perspective, outdoor activities and enhancing the cycling and walking infrastructure is key to growing the year round appeal of Ballyhoura. The heritage of food production in Ballyhoura needs to be leveraged as part of the wider development of agri-tourism across the destination. There is a collective recognition that the destination must grow its profile in an increasingly competitive market. Equally important for stakeholders is the necessity to feature local people and local communities at the heart of all destination marketing and communications.

* Fáilte Ireland 2025 Digital Survey Ballyhoura

## Connecting Visitors with Ballyhoura Communities

Community based tourism in Ballyhoura has traditionally represented the approach for tourism development in Ballyhoura. This adherence to the ethos of community tourism has led to numerous community led initiatives and partnerships that reinforce the commitment of all stakeholders to a regenerative based approach to destination development. The development of the community led tourism model in association with Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark in addition to the MTU accredited Sustainable Tourism Destinations Special Purpose Award completed by 20 local businesses reflects the continued commitment to a regenerative tourism approach.

The destination is committed to delivering authentic local experiences with people, place and their stories at the centre. From a visitor perspective, a more coherent orientation approach is required linking north and south of the destination. This will require greater clarity for the visitor on what represents the destination, understanding the geography of the area and providing reasons for visitors to engage with the communities across Ballyhoura. Equally, the ability to increase the level of connectivity between existing trails and local communities ('the last mile') needs to be considered.

It needs to communicate the ease of access from the larger urban hubs and how the various outdoors, heritage, community and rural experiences are integrated into a clear destination proposition. The R512 represents the spine of the destination. The route has been advocated for through the community consultation process as a logical means of connecting the destination spatially and linking the many experiences that will motivate visitors to explore more and stay for longer. The approach within the DEDP will leverage all main access routes into and adjacent to Ballyhoura accounting for visitor flows around the region and neighbouring areas. This will account for the opportunities presented Ballyhoura's proximity to national road infrastructure and international air access points such as Cork, Shannon and Dublin.

## Addressing the Accommodation Challenge

One of the key challenges for Ballyhoura is the level of accommodation stock in the destination. There are currently 1,480 bedspaces in the destination. In the absence of future accommodation development, a key risk is Ballyhoura will continue to be considered a transient 'pass through' destination or 'day trip'. In the short term, growing the value of tourism for local communities will necessitate maximising the existing bedstock and strengthening the connectivity with the larger urban centres and accommodation hubs.

Based on the Fáilte Ireland accommodation assessment, it is unlikely the area will see any new supply in the immediate term (0–3 years). While there are 50 bedspaces with plans granted, these may not progress to under construction. In the Medium to Long Term, encouraging the development of new bedspaces through incentives / streamlined planning processes could assist in addressing the supply gap. It can take 5 to 7 years to deliver a new build hotel. Alternative accommodation solutions, such as glamping or repurposing of existing buildings, may be more commercially viable and could provide additional capacity in the medium to long term.

## Digital Capability Development Focus

A 2025 digital audit of Ballyhoura conducted by Fáilte Ireland assessed 42 tourism businesses evaluating the businesses across five pillars: Leadership & Governance, Customer Experience, Operational Capability, Technology and People. Tourism businesses have an overall digital maturity score of 40%, categorised as "Basic Capability". Ballyhoura's greatest asset is its people; reflected with a 55% score for the People pillar.

A two-part approach includes a Foundational stage followed by pursuing strategic growth opportunities. The Foundational recommendations are designed to close the three critical gaps identified in the audit to bring Ballyhoura's digital infrastructure up to a competitive standard. These include:

1. Accessible Website Development & Digital Measurement: Support businesses in modernising websites and implementing analytics tools (e.g., Google Analytics 4) to track performance and revenue.
2. Online Booking System Technology: Address low adoption of booking systems among attractions and accommodation providers.
3. Digital Skills Development, including Generative AI: Encourage all tourism businesses to register on Fáilte Ireland's learniFI platform for free training in: SEO, GA4 analytics, CRM, digital marketing, accessibility and AI for Tourism & Hospitality.

To pursue the strategic growth opportunities within the DEDP, strengthening the digital infrastructure will enable the destination convert interest into revenue and underpin key DEDP catalyst projects to include:

Marketing & Publicity: High-quality websites that are essential to drive conversion from marketing campaigns.

Heritage Attractions Cluster: Creating a professional, bookable online presence, noting OPW-managed sites are sold via heritageireland.ie.

Beara Breifne Way & Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan: Exploring how to develop themed itineraries with direct booking links, hosted on DMO and partner sites. Amplify reach through cross-promotion and user-generated content.

## International benchmarking – Alignment with a community driven vision

A programme of international benchmarking included Bregenzerwald, Saalfelden-Leogang (both Austria) and Losinj (Croatia). The destinations were selected based on a comparable rural product base, alignment with outdoor activities and a community led approach to tourism development.

Key learnings included the need to enable visitors to engage with the local community through distinctive local experiences and ensure a collective commitment to a community vision for tourism. Each of the destinations examined maximised their product base with an emphasis on the outdoors and how they leveraged community experiences to target specific markets.

Bregenzerwald's regenerative process was built on a bottom-up, multi-community approach integrating tourism, agriculture, artisan craft and local food production. The destination strongly integrated rural tourism with a community-led destination development to craft a bold contemporary rural identity. The approach highlighted how rural destinations can grow the year round value of tourism by building distinctive year-round experiences rooted in local people. A collective regenerative project focused on the heritage of cheese production formed the basis for a food trail (Cheese Route) and experience development.

Saalfelden-Leogang's regeneration began with a community-driven vision (the Bikepark project initiated in 2001). Saalfelden-Leogang adopted the bold, unifying brand theme "Rich in Contrasts", expressed through its architecture, raw materials (wood/stone), wellness and activities. The destination transformed from a drive-through area to a 365-day experience hub by developing Europe's leading bike park, profiling a broad range of outdoor activities, hosting cultural events (e.g., jazz festival), and developed targeted family, youth and female-focused experiences.

Losinj is a destination with a health and wellness tourism tradition for over 120. Across the destination the outdoor and nature based assets are all curated and interpreted. Nature is positioned as active infrastructure for wellbeing, not just passive scenery. The destination experience development focus is focused on encouraging tourism businesses to develop generic and tailored vitality and wellness itineraries for guests to grow the length of stay in the area. In Losinj, tourism is embraced as a tool for long-term community resilience with tourism investment linked to retaining young people in the community, local skills development and ensuring stable, year-round employment opportunities.

# 1.6 OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

## Opportunities we are pursuing

- Adopt the regenerative tourism theme to attract new members to the tourism network and collectively increase the profile of Ballyhoura as a sustainable tourism destination.
- Developing food tourism linked to the Golden Vale's food heritage and the regenerative food tourism opportunity
- Destination linkages through north Cork with Cork's ambition to become a World Region of Gastronomy by 2030.
- Creation of a new tourism route using the R512 as a means of orientating visitors across the destination and enhancing the links to local communities.
- Develop Ballyhoura as a national outdoor activity destination building on the heritage of Ballyhoura and outdoors experiences.
- Grow the connectivity with the Béara Breifne Way and the Ballyhoura Way and its links to National Way marked trails product development.
- Increase the year round demand for outdoor activities by appealing to visitors who want to 'Learn to' and 'come and try' slow adventure experiences on land and on water.
- Grow the appeal of the upland areas and enhance visitor management by creating community 'Basecamps' and ensure responsible engagement with the uplands environment.
- Develop the diaspora tourism opportunity building on the success of the inaugural week-long Ireland Canada Peter Robinson Settler Emigration Scheme homecoming commemoration hosted in 2025.
- Growing the tourism focus in core destination towns and developing them as gateways to the rural tourism experience.
- Developing the night time economy building on the theme of authentic community based evening activities across the destination.
- Strengthen the association of Ballyhoura as a mountain bike and off-road cycling destination.
- Increase the connection with Ballyhoura and accommodation hubs in Cork and Limerick to motivate visitors to explore the rural Ballyhoura experience.
- Develop new visitor experiences in key visitor attractions to create additional indoor experience options.
- Grow the appeal of Ballyhoura as a family destination through the range of outdoor activities across the destination.

## Challenges we are addressing

- Limited accommodation stock availability across Ballyhoura with minimal planned accommodation and low potential for hotel accommodation development.
- Low levels of market awareness of Ballyhoura as a tourism destination and visitor understanding of the geography of the destination
- Competing brand recognition for Ballyhoura with link destination links to a wide of consumer-focused brands (Ballyhoura Country, Limerick, Cork, Pure Cork, Munster Vales).
- Low number of saleable experiences available across the Ballyhoura destination.
- Destination towns don't see themselves as tourism towns or linked with the Ballyhoura destination.
- Visitor attractions not delivering on their product and experience development potential.
- Low concentration of activities/experiences available in northern end of the destination to disrupt current visitor flows.
- Limited public transport connectivity and access into and around the destination.
- Low number of ancillary visitor services across the destination e.g. food options and evening time dining, evening time activities.
- Increasing the number of tourism businesses participating in the tourism network.
- Addressing the existing destination development capacity of Ballyhoura Development and limited resources to support the implementation of catalyst and supporting projects.

Ireland's Hidden HEARTLANDS

# SECTION TWO

## Ballyhoura – A Shared and Connected Destination

Fáilte Ireland

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# 2.1 BALLYHOURA – A SHARED AND CONNECTED DESTINATION

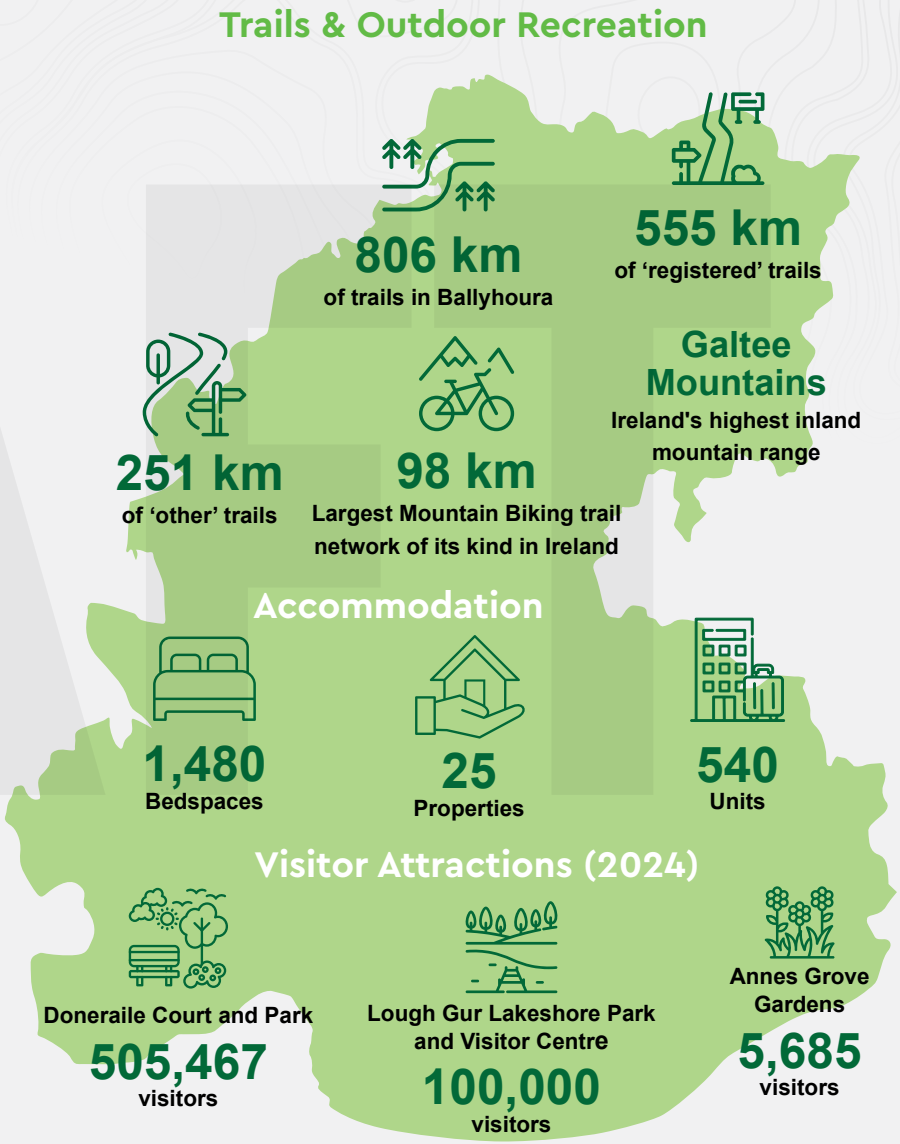
Ballyhoura is often referred to as the *Crossroads of Munster,* reflecting its strategic geographic location and ease of access from larger urban centres such as the cities of Limerick and Cork. The destination is positioned at the southern end of Fáilte Ireland's Hidden Heartlands regional experience brand. The area is made up of 54 local communities across South & East Limerick and North Cork on the borders of Counties Limerick, Cork and Tipperary. The area derives its name from the Ballyhoura Mountain range overlapping both sides of the Limerick-Cork border.

Ballyhoura shares its eastern border with County Tipperary and overlaps with the Munster Vales, a marketing region promoting five mountain ranges located in Tipperary, Cork, Limerick, and Waterford.

In 1986, Ireland's first rural tourism cooperative was established in Ballyhoura and the destination continues its development focus underpinned by a long-standing tradition of community led tourism. This is enabled by the strength of its community structures, led by Ballyhoura Development CLG and Ballyhoura Fáilte DAC.

## Key Milestones

- **Ballyhoura Development CLG:** Formed as a community-led local development organisation in 1989.
- **Ballyhoura Mountain Biking Centre:** Established in 2006 as Ireland's first purpose-built mountain bike park.
- **Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan:** A 15-year Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan (2024–2039) published, aligning with national and local development goals.
- **Community-Led Regenerative Tourism Destination Model:** Developed as a collaboration between Ballyhoura Development CLG and Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark in 2025.
- **Hosting of first Ireland Canada Homecoming event in 2025 generating €6.8million in economic impact for local communities with a PR reach of 5.3 million people.**
- **2026** – Ballyhoura Development CLG and Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark commence a cross-border initiative aimed at strengthening collaboration between tourism communities – Connecting Tourism Communities: Cuilcagh Lakelands and Ballyhoura Country



The destination continues to grow its profile as a hub for outdoor recreation excellence. Ballyhoura is home to an extensive network of walking, cycling and mountain biking trails that are integral to local lifestyle and its identity. Among the main outdoor attractions include the Ballyhoura Mountains and the Galtee Mountain range. The development of the long-distance national way marked trail, the Beara Breifne Way, will incorporate the Ballyhoura Mountains as the trail is developed. Slieve Felim and the Clare Glens provide a trails counterbalance to southerly located uplands experiences, forming part of the estimated 806 km of trails in Ballyhoura. This includes 555km of 'registered' trails (Trails that are formally acknowledged by Sport Ireland as part of the National Trails Register) and 251km of 'other' trails i.e. trails that are unregistered and include community trails, forest roads and informal trails and tracks.

In 2006, Ballyhoura Mountain Biking Centre was established as Ireland's first purpose-built mountain bike park with the largest trail network of its kind in Ireland providing almost 100km of trails. In 2024, the Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan (2024–2039) was published providing a roadmap for the development ambition for the trails network and visitor experiences aligned with national and local development goals. This incorporates projects such as establishing a national mountain bike trail centre, leveraging the Beara Breifne Way opportunity for local communities and enhancing the trails experience across Ballyhoura. The destination features Ballyhass Adventure Centre which is the first Adventure Centre in Ireland to achieve BCorp Certification and whose mission is to inspire an outdoor generation.

Ballyhoura is home to a number of significant publicly owned and community-based heritage attractions. These include Doneraile House & Gardens, Annesgrove House & Gardens and Lough Gur, the only site in Ireland with evidence of the Neolithic age extending to the modern day period. The Lough Gur area features Grange Stone Circle, Ireland's largest stone circle while Kilmallock is home to a large number of significant medieval sites and national monuments including the Kilmallock Dominican Priory.

Food production is part of the fabric of local rural life with a nationally recognised food heritage linked to the Golden Vale. As the basis for destination commitment to sustainability and climate leadership food and rural tourism experiences represent a considerable area of opportunity. At a strategic level, food plays an important role in the development of the visitor experience in addition to its alignment to Corks county wide ambition to become a global Region of Gastronomy by 2030. Ballyhoura is one of two pilot sustainable tourism networks supported by Fáilte Ireland in Ireland Hidden Heartlands (in partnership with Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark).

## Accommodation in Ballyhoura

There are 1,480 bedspaces across 25 properties in the Ballyhoura area, based on the National Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF) in the Ballyhoura area. These bedspaces differ from Short Term Letting (STL) stock, which is both seasonal and transient in nature and therefore may not be considered permanent stock. The distribution of the accommodation stock in Ballyhoura is dominated by Hotels which account for 85% of bedspaces. The next highest category is Self-Catering, at 7% of NQAF bedspaces. In terms of property numbers, Holiday Lets dominate with a 40% share, followed by Hotels at 28%.

In the adjoining visitor hubs, the estimated combined stock of Co. Limerick is 7,940 bedspaces, with stock in Co. Cork at 30,370 bedspaces. The estimated combined stock is heavily weighted towards Hotels in Co. Limerick, accounting for 70% of bedspaces. Hotels dominate to a lesser extent in Co. Cork, with a 41% share of bedspaces.

*Fáilte Ireland's National Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF) comprises a combination of statutory and non-statutory tourist accommodation registers. The statutory registers contain all tourist accommodation in Ireland, which uses prescribed terms, such as hotel. The non statutory register is composed of voluntary schemes where the proprietor chooses to become quality approved under the NQAF.

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## ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TOURISM IN BALLYHOURA REGION*

In line with the National Tourism Policy, creating economic impact through tourism development is a key focus of the Ballyhoura DEDP and will be assessed through various KPIs. In order to benchmark tourism's current contribution, the Ballyhoura DEDP is informed by a baseline assessment of economic impact, as outlined in the Ballyhoura Tourism Impact Assessment. Due to the scale and cross-county nature of the destination, this baseline is drawn from a combination of Fáilte Ireland tourism performance data, CSO statistics and local visitor information. It estimates current visitor numbers, tourism-related spend and employment across the region, including both overnight and day visitors. This provides a clear and credible reference point for the Economic KPIs and allows the impact of DEDP actions to be tracked and measured over the lifetime of the plan.

**225,000**
Total number of day visitors to Ballyhoura

**€6 million**
Value generated by day visitors to Ballyhoura

**162,000**
Total holidaymaker bednights

**30,500**
Overseas holidaymaker bednights

**131,500**
Domestic holidaymaker bednights

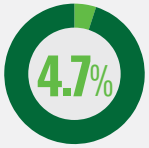
**€5 million**
Total direct overseas holidaymaker expenditure in Ballyhoura

**€13 million**
Total direct domestic holidaymaker expenditure in Ballyhoura

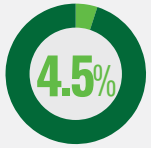
**€18 million**
Total direct holidaymaker expenditure in Ballyhoura

**€24 million**
Total value of Direct Visitor Expenditure in Ballyhoura (day visitors and overnights)

**470**
Tourism related jobs



Limerick City & County



Cork City & County

### Distribution of employment in Ballyhoura: Accommodation & Food Service

| CSO Census 2022 | | Accommodation & Food Service |
|---|---|---|
| | No. Employed | % of Labour Force |
| **Limerick City & County** | | **4.7%** |
| Caherconlish | 28 | 4.2% |
| Castleconnell | 53 | 4.5% |
| Annacotty | 69 | 3.8% |
| Kilmallock | 29 | 3.9% |
| **Cork City & County** | | **4.5%** |
| Mitchelstown | 106 | 6.0% |
| Charleville | 69 | 4.0% |

**Sources:**
Failte Ireland: Ireland's Hidden Heartland Key Tourism Facts (2024), Key Tourism Facts (2024), Hotel Survey Reports (2024), Accommodation Supply (2025), Visitor Attractions Dashboard (2024), "Ballyhoura Tourism Impact Assessment"

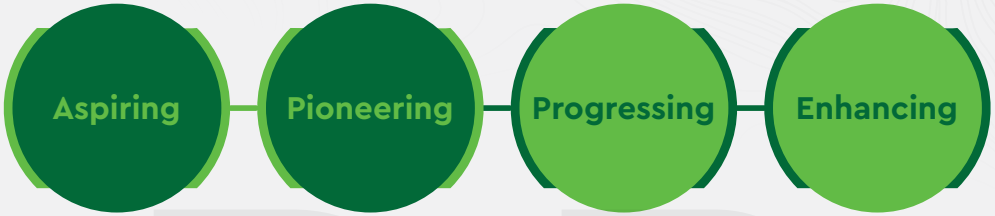
# TOURISM IMPACT SUMMARY

Visitor accommodation in the Ballyhoura area generates 162,000 holidaymaker bednights each year. The domestic holidaymaker market is estimated to account for 131,500 bednights with overseas holidaymakers contributing 30,500 bednights. The total direct expenditure by visitors holidaying in the Ballyhoura Region is estimated at €18.0 million annually. This includes €13 million in domestic tourism direct expenditure and €5 million in overseas visitor spend.

Based on 2024 tourism performance, there is an estimated 225,000 day visitors to the Ballyhoura Region who generate €5.6 million in direct expenditure in the local community. This includes visitors to Ballyhoura Region who take part in one or more tourism experiences including local attractions, amenities or avail of ancillary services. This data only represents expenditure by visitors to the area and discounts local usage of amenities and facilities.

The total direct visitor expenditure in Ballyhoura Region is estimated at €24 million. This expenditure is estimated to support 470 jobs1 in tourism related employment in the region.

# 2.2 DESTINATION MATURITY




Ballyhoura possesses the characteristics of both an Aspiring and Pioneering tourism destination. This hybrid classification reflects the pioneering community tourism characteristics of Ballyhoura based on the long established Ballyhoura tourism network and existing tourism development structures.

Destinations viewed as 'Pioneering' are largely reliant on the domestic market with lower recognition among overseas visitors. They tend to be driven by small pockets of tourism activity with lower levels of product and experience availability. Tourism activity is dominated by the daytime economy while pioneering destinations usually contain a number of potential clusters linked by mix of experiences and sites / attractions.

The inclusion of the Aspiring classification largely reflects the maturity of the destination from a product and experience perspective. This destination maturity categorisation shares many of the characteristics of a Pioneering destination in addition to considerations such as limited accommodation provision and a low number of visitor experiences. Destination packaging and promotion aligned with consumer needs is limited. These areas are largely characterised as 'transitional' areas for visitors i.e. travelling from one destination to the next.

The destination maturity assessment establishes a number of areas of focus for the development of tourism in Ballyhoura. This includes growing awareness of the destination in the domestic market and developing an international market presence. There is a need to grow the number of saleable experiences that will appeal to domestic and international and retain visitors for longer. In the immediate term, developing the tourism industry network's commercial development and digital capabilities will be essential to growing the value of tourism.

## Destination Development Focus

### 'Aspiring / Pioneering' Destination Maturity Levels

**VISITOR – (Demand)**

- Grow the appeal of the destination to domestic visitors
- Identify and maximise the USP's of the Ballyhoura destination
- Identify and align with consumer needs and future demands
- Identify and evaluate routes to market
- Identify a clear USP and strategic direction in destination development

**INDUSTRY – (Supply)**

- Place an emphasis on industry capacity and capability building
- Improve service delivery and develop quality standards
- Growth in the numbers participating in the industry network
- Enhance the core infrastructure and product development
- Increase appeal of the destination among overseas and domestic visitors

**Community**

- Grow community awareness of the importance of tourism for their community
- Ensure tourism development activity engages with the wider community
- Develop the 'Sense of place' across the destination
- Improve industry networks and collaboration

**Environment**

- Visitor and stakeholder sustainability education
- Sustainable destination visitor management
- Stakeholder implementation of sustainable practices
- Increased adoption of regenerative tourism processes

# 2.3 VISITOR STRATEGY – BALLYHOURA

The Ballyhoura DEDP has been developed to appeal to the interests and motivations of visitors in the domestic and international markets. The domestic market visitor strategy for Ballyhoura reflects the domestic market motivations developed through the Fáilte Ireland Travel Motivations Framework.

Growing the appeal for the destination among international visitors is based on the emerging Tourism Ireland visitor segmentation and additional visitor analysis of market preferences for the type of experiences provided in the destination.

## Domestic Visitors

Based on the destination maturity of Ballyhoura, and the Fáilte Ireland Travel Motivations Framework, the immediate opportunities for Ballyhoura are based on appealing to the following visitor motivations Destination alignment with these travel motivations highlight the need for additional focus on experience and service development requirements i.e. growing food options, developing more family based experiences.

### 1. ADVENTURE

**Key motivation:** Availability of a wide range of outdoor activities.

- Visitors who travel for Adventure travel as a couple or alone for general leisure, holiday, recreation.
- Important factors include local food and drink and of the location and access to activities.
- Top activities are hiking/cross-country walking and visiting a heritage/ interpretative centre.

### 2. BONDING

**Key motivation:** Activities that allow families bond particularly in the outdoors.

- Visitors who travel for Bonding travel as couples or with family for general leisure, holiday, recreation.
- Important factors include access to activities and activities specifically for children.
- Top activities are visiting a nature reserve / national park, swimming in a pool and visiting gardens.

### 3. TIME OUT

**Key motivation:** Motivated by low-key tone and range of slow-paced activities.

- Visitors who travel for Time Out travel with family for general leisure, holiday, recreation.
- Important factors include convenience of the location and availability of accommodation.
- Top activities include walking (<5km) and touring around by car.

## International Visitors

**'Enrichment Explorers'** present Ballyhoura with the greatest opportunity in targeting international visitors. In the short to medium term, growing awareness of Ballyhoura in the international marketplace will focus on the destination USP of the outdoors experience while differentiating itself through the commitment to regenerative tourism practices and unique Ballyhoura community based visitor experiences.

Enrichment Explorers typically travel as a couple or with friends. They tend to be from medium income households and take longer trips (+4 days).

They like to go on touring holidays where they see a few different places and are drawn to lesser-known destinations and meaningful experiences. They seek genuine encounters with welcoming locals to satisfy their curiosity for learning.

They embrace their natural surroundings, venturing into unexplored nature trails, immersing themselves in local art, culture and cuisine and discovering historical landmarks. They are characterised as visitors who are entering a new life stage with more time, money and freedom.

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SECTION THREE
Ballyhoura DEDP Summary
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## 3.1 OUR VISION

# Vision 2036

It's 2036 and Ballyhoura has established a reputation as one of Ireland's leading basecamps for outdoor recreation and rural exploration, with a focus on walking and cycling. Decades of community-based tourism have added a unique flavour to outdoor recreation here, rooted in authentic community engagement and participative events.

As a pioneering sustainable tourism destination, our commitment to regenerative tourism places our community, our stories and our inspiring landscapes are at the heart of the Ballyhoura experience. Local stories are embedded into every visitor experience from our food provenance, linked to generations of producers and our rich farming landscapes, to how we connect the story of place with our trails, attractions and outdoor activities.

Implementation of the Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan is well underway, developing a strong network of walking and cycling trails throughout the destination. The mountain-biking trails and the Beara Breifne Way (Ballyhoura Way) have gained a reputation internationally. There are lots of ways for visitors to easily connect with locals in welcoming, authentic and vibrant market towns and villages.

The overall appeal of Ballyhoura has been widened through the development of the destination's heritage, cultural and food-based visitor experiences which complement its outdoor activities.

Tourism businesses are highly networked and the accommodation base in the destination has been expanded, with accommodation types that meet the needs of our visitors. Every key business has a professional, bookable, and measurable online presence, with all of these businesses cross-promoting digitally.

Ballyhoura has become renowned for its sustainability credentials, and the businesses have reduced their carbon footprint in line with national targets.

# 3.2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

## Strategic Objective 1:

### TO GROW MARKET RECOGNITION AND VISITOR AWARENESS OF THE BALLYHOURA DESTINATION

**Goal:** To increase market awareness and recognition of Ballyhoura as a sustainable tourism destination differentiated by its outdoor activity offering, its authentic community tourism story and by placing locals at the centre of all communications.

## Strategic Objective 2:

### TO ESTABLISH BALLYHOURA AS A LEADING OUTDOOR ACTIVITY DESTINATION, SUPPORTED BY A WELL-CONNECTED SERIES OF CULTURAL AND HERITAGE BASED VISITOR EXPERIENCES TELLING THE STORY OF THE PEOPLE AND THEIR PLACE

**Goal:** To implement the Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan, placing a focus on outdoor adventure and exploration and slow tourism with a strong community flavour, in particular community-walking festivals; to expand the overall appeal of the destination by developing a series of heritage, culture and food-based experiences through the destination to help increase dwell-time, and to foster greater north-south connectivity within the destination.

## Strategic Objective 3:

### TO GROW THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TOURISM BY BUILDING THE CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY OF TOURISM BUSINESSES

**Goal:** To ensure that businesses are supported to increase their capacity and capability, including the creation of more saleable experiences and improving their online presence.

## Strategic Objective 4:

### TO ESTABLISH BALLYHOURA AS A LEADING SUSTAINABLE AND REGENERATIVE TOURISM DESTINATION

**Goal:** To ensure Ballyhoura continues to be recognised as a national pioneer in community-led tourism development and achieves international recognition in sustainable / regenerative tourism. As such, the destination will be developed to deliver net-positive benefits for communities and for nature, and satisfy a greater demand among visitors for more responsible tourism choices.

## Strategic Objective 5:

### TO BUILD SUCCESS THROUGH NEW LEVELS OF COLLABORATION AND A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

**Goal:** To build on existing levels of collaboration among businesses to improve cross-promotion and cross-selling (particularly online) by leveraging existing networks, and to strengthen existing stakeholder partnerships, including linkages with Munster Vales, Limerick.ie, Cork County Council and Pure Cork.

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# 3.3 BALLYHOURA DESTINATION & EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

## VISION

ONE OF IRELAND'S LEADING BASECAMPS FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION AND RURAL EXPLORATION, WITH A FOCUS ON WALKING AND CYCLING. OUR COMMITMENT TO REGENERATIVE TOURISM PLACES OUR COMMUNITY, OUR STORIES AND OUR INSPIRING LANDSCAPES ARE AT THE HEART OF THE BALLYHOURA EXPERIENCE.

## DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

**OBJ 1.** MARKET RECOGNITION AND VISITOR AWARENESS OF THE BALLYHOURA DESTINATION

**OBJ 2.** ESTABLISH BALLYHOURA AS A LEADING OUTDOOR ACTIVITY DESTINATION, SUPPORTED BY A WELL-CONNECTED SERIES OF VISITOR EXPERIENCES THAT HELP TELL THE STORY OF THE PEOPLE AND THEIR PLACE.

**OBJ 3.** GROW ECONOMIC IMPACT THROUGH SUPPORTING CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

**OBJ 4.** A LEADING SUSTAINABLE AND REGENERATIVE TOURISM DESTINATION

**OBJ 5.** SUCCESS THROUGH NEW LEVELS OF COLLABORATION AND A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

## DESTINATION CATALYST PROJECTS

- BUILD AWARENESS (MARKETING & PUBLICITY)
- BALLYHOURA TRAILS MASTERPLAN, INCLUDING MOUNTAIN BIKE CENTRE & BEARA BREIFNE WAY
- DEVELOPMENT OF HERITAGE ATTRACTIONS CLUSTER
- R512 – SPINE OF BALLYHOURA EXPERIENCES AND ORIENTATION
- GOLDEN VALE FOOD INITIATIVE – FOOD TOURISM

## DESTINATION SUPPORTING PROJECTS

- OUTDOOR DESTINATION EXPERIENCES
- BALLYHOURA EVENTS & FESTIVALS
- DEVELOPING TOURISM HUBS
- TRANSPORT & ACCESS
- ACTIVITY BASECAMPS - COMMUNITY HUBS
- INDUSTRY DIGITAL-ISATION
- SUSTAINABLE TOURISM NETWORK DEVELOPMENT
- ACCOMMODATION THAT MEETS NEEDS OF TARGETED VISITORS

## TARGET OUTCOMES

- TOURISM NETWORK GROWTH
- DIGITALISATION OF TOURISM BUSINESSES
- INCREASED DESTINATION AWARENESS
- DESTINATION ADOPTION OF REGENERATIVE TOURISM APPROACH
- INCREASE IN SALEABLE VISITOR EXPERIENCES
- VIBRANT COMMUNITY TOURISM HUBS
- FOOD TOURISM EXPERIENCES
- VISITOR GROWTH IN ATTRACTIONS CLUSTER

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SECTION FOUR
Delivering the Ballyhoura DEDP
Fáilte
Ireland

# 4.1 DELIVERING THE BALLYHOURA DEDP

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1:

### TO GROW MARKET RECOGNITION AND VISITOR AWARENESS OF THE BALLYHOURA DESTINATION

**GOAL:** To increase market awareness and recognition of Ballyhoura as a sustainable tourism destination differentiated by its outdoor activity offering, its authentic community tourism story and by placing locals at the centre of all communications.

### Strategic Goals

- Grow the capabilities of Ballyhoura tourism industry, networks and tourism clusters to increase visitor awareness of Ballyhoura.
- Increase the Ballyhoura tourism industry's engagement with the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands and Ballyhoura Country brands to collectively grow awareness and recognition of the regional brand to grow its share of the domestic and international market.
- Increase the profile of Ballyhoura as a leading outdoor activity destination and grow its appeal in the family market.
- Differentiate the destinations approach to marketing by placing local people, telling the local story, at the core of destination communications.
- Maximize the potential of festivals and sport tourism events for marketing impact.
- Work with the tourism industry in neighbouring urban destinations such as Limerick and Cork City to encourage visitor flows into the area from the main accommodation hubs.
- Promote access into the Ballyhoura destination from existing and future transport infrastructure such as the M20.

**BUILD AWARENESS (MARKETING & (PUBLICITY**

## CATALYST PROJECT 1.1: BUILD AWARENESS (MARKETING & PUBLICITY)

**AIM: Increase market awareness and recognition of Ballyhoura as a year round sustainable tourism destination in domestic and international markets.**

### Overview:

Growing market recognition and visitor awareness is a key priority for the Ballyhoura destination. The focus over the coming years will be to ensure a co-ordinated marketing approach, collective brand adoption and growing industry capabilities around demand generation.

Tourism industry training will focus on growing the recognition of Ballyhoura as a tourism destination. The approach will align destination marketing and communications to reflect the authentic character of Ballyhoura and leverage the destination strengths e.g. outdoor activities, community tourism. A coherent marketing approach will integrate the activity of all stakeholders. This will include Ballyhoura Fáilte, Pure Cork, Cork County Council, Limerick City and County Council and Munster Vales to ensure consistency in all destination messaging to domestic and international audiences.

An Ireland's Hidden Heartlands and Ballyhoura Country brand adoption and education programme will build a shared understanding of the regional brand opportunity and how it can be leveraged by local businesses. Strengthening the commercial capabilities of the tourism industry will enable a more strategic approach to marketing and sales and increasing the recognition and awareness of Ballyhoura in the domestic market. The opportunity presented through digital and AI driven search capabilities will form a key area of focus in growing destination visibility and contributing to commercial resilience.

## Successful outcomes under the VICE framework would include:

### VISITOR – (Demand)

Grow awareness of Ballyhoura as a visitor destination among domestic and international visitors

### INDUSTRY – (Supply)

Grow the digital capabilities of the tourism industry to promote Ballyhoura in domestic and international markets.

### COMMUNITY

Communicate the essence and character of Ballyhoura communities through Ballyhoura brand and destination storytelling.

### ENVIRONMENT

Promote the destination in a way that advocates responsible visitor engagement with the local environment.

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# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2:

## TO ESTABLISH BALLYHOURA AS A LEADING OUTDOOR ACTIVITY DESTINATION, SUPPORTED BY A WELL-CONNECTED SERIES OF CULTURAL AND HERITAGE BASED VISITOR EXPERIENCES TELLING THE STORY OF THE PEOPLE AND THEIR PLACE

**GOAL:** To implement the Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan, placing a focus on outdoor adventure and exploration and slow tourism with a strong community flavour, in particular community-walking festivals; to expand the overall appeal of the destination by developing a series of heritage, culture and food-based experiences through the destination to help increase dwell-time, and to foster greater north-south connectivity within the destination.

### Strategic Goals

- Implement the Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan to unlock the outdoor activity potential of Ballyhoura.
- Deliver the Ballyhoura elements of the Beara Breifne Way to maximise the opportunity presented by the international walking route.
- Grow the level of accessibility between trails and local communities and the creation of community basecamps with a focus on the Ballyhoura Mountains, Galtee Mountains and Slieve Felim.
- Strengthen the appeal of indoor visitor attractions in Ballyhoura through the enhancement of their visitor experiences and approaches to demand generation.
- Develop the appeal of Ballyhoura as an off road cycling destination.
- Grow the year round appeal of Ballyhoura as an outdoor activity destination through sport tourism participation events and festivals.
- Develop Ballyhoura as water-based activity destination to include locations such as Ballyhass, Castleconnell and locations on the River Awbeg and River Maigue and future experience links with the River Blackwater.
- Develop Ballyhoura as 'learn to' activity destination where visitors can access activities that appeal to all abilities and levels of interest in the outdoors.
- Adopt a heritage attractions cluster approach to highlight the range of heritage experiences across Ballyhoura.
- Build on the food and agricultural heritage of Ballyhoura and the Golden Vale and grow the value of food tourism experiences for Ballyhoura and its role in developing the night time economy.
- Develop the leisure tourism potential of golf and equestrian experiences in Ballyhoura.

**BALLYHOURA TRAILS MASTERPLAN, INCLUDING MOUNTAIN BIKE CENTRE & BEARA BREIFNE WAY**

# CATALYST PROJECT 2.1: BALLYHOURA TRAILS MASTERPLAN INCLUDING MOUNTAIN BIKE CENTRE & BÉARA BREIFNE WAY

**AIM: Deliver the first phase of projects within the Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan to grow the appeal of Ballyhoura as an outdoor activity destination.**

### Overview:

The Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan is a fifteen year framework with the objective of improving the quality and quantity of recreational trails for residents and visitors within the Ballyhoura region. A number of key projects have been identified within the Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan that will play an important role in establishing Ballyhoura as a leading outdoor activity destination.

The plan aims to develop a balanced network of community trails, activity hubs and signature clusters to attract domestic and international visitors while generating sustained socio-economic benefits for the community. The immediate project focus will be the sustainable development of community trails, activity hubs and signature clusters to be achieved through collaboration with agencies, communities and industry in Ballyhoura.

A key focus will be the completion of the Ballyhoura Way elements of the Béara Breifne Way and linking the destination to the national way marked route. Developing the Mountain Bike Trail Centre with pump tracks, community and visitor facilities will support the profiling of Ballyhoura as a national mountain biking destination. The plan also emphasizes the development of activity hubs such as Kilfinane, Doneraile, and Mitchelstown. The creation of signature clusters in the Ballyhoura Mountains, Galtee Mountains, and Slieve Felim will be the focus for engaging visitors in the uplands areas.

## Successful outcomes under the VICE framework would include:

### VISITOR – (Demand)

Disperse visitors across the destination through the quality and range of Ballyhoura trails and retain them for longer in the area.

### INDUSTRY – (Supply)

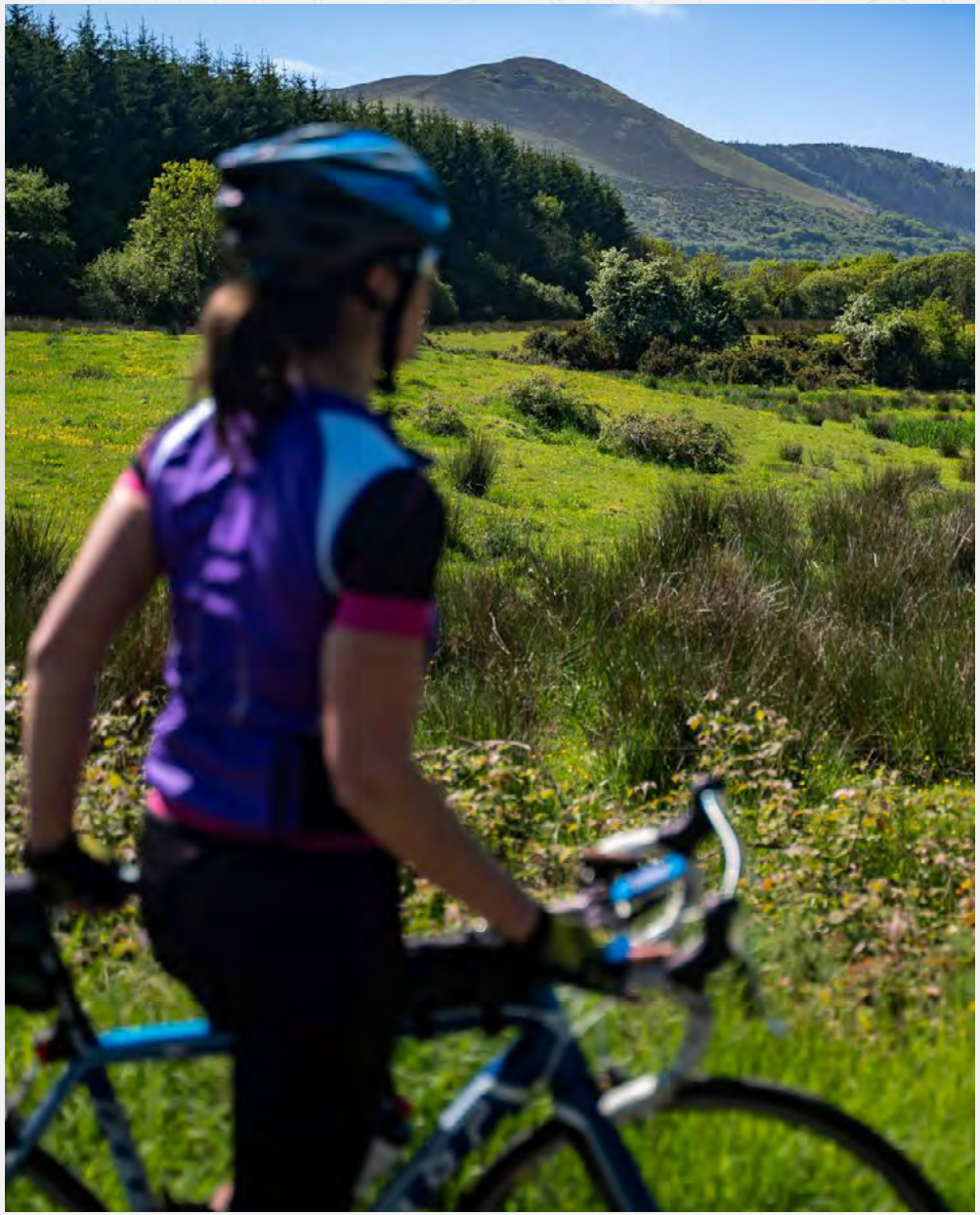
Grow the capabilities of the industry to maximise the opportunity presented by the outdoor trails product across Ballyhoura.

### COMMUNITY

Connect visitors with local communities through the implementation of the Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan and linkages through activity hubs.

### ENVIRONMENT

Promote responsible engagement with the natural environment through the enhancement of Ballyhoura recreational trails.



Ireland's Hidden HEARTLANDS

**DEVELOPMENT OF HERITAGE ATTRACTIONS CLUSTER**

# CATALYST PROJECT 2.2: HERITAGE ATTRACTIONS CLUSTER

**AIM: Grow the capabilities of visitor attractions in the destination to enhance their visitor experience and achieve incremental growth in visitor numbers.**

## Overview:

The cluster of existing heritage and indoor attractions in Ballyhoura have the capacity to grow their visitor appeal and influence visitor flows across the destination. The enhancement of the visitor experience at a number of heritage sites has the potential to develop them into signature attractions for the Ballyhoura destination. Doneraile Court and Gardens and Anne's Grove Gardens are at different stages of experience development. A focus on enhancing the visitor experience and leveraging the shared promotional and developmental opportunities will provide the destination with an alternative experience base and counterbalance to the outdoor proposition.

This future focus will include enhancing Doneraile House and Gardens to become a signature indoor attraction for Ballyhoura. The implementation of the Annes Grove Gardens Development Plan will focus on restoring additional historic structures, such as the house and enhancing visitor facilities. The visitor experience opportunities linked to the unique heritage and archaeological features of Lough Gur will be assessed through a masterplanning process. This will incorporate the natural heritage of the area, Grange Stone Circle and the Lough Gur Visitor Centre. A development plan will be undertaken for the Merchant House / Stone Mansion in Kilmallock identifying its cultural, visitor orientation and tourism role in the interpretation of the town's medieval heritage.

## Successful outcomes under the VICE framework would include:

### VISITOR – (Demand)

An enhanced cluster of indoor and heritage attractions that motivates visitors to explore more of Ballyhoura.

### INDUSTRY – (Supply)

Enhancement of heritage and indoor attractions and embedding the character of the local community into the visitor experience.

### COMMUNITY

Create new opportunities for community based attractions to deliver an authentic community experience.

### ENVIRONMENT

Promote responsible visitor engagement with the built and natural heritage of Ballyhoura.

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GOLDEN VALE FOOD CLUSTER

# CATALYST PROJECT 2.3: GOLDEN VALE FOOD TOURISM CLUSTER

**AIM: Grow the potential of food tourism by increasing the number of saleable food experiences in Ballyhoura and the creation of a destination food trail.**

## Overview:

Ballyhoura has a long standing association with food. Located in the Golden Vale, the area is synonymous with generations of food production. The opportunity to introduce visitors to the Golden Vale food story and interact with rural communities will be achieved by growing the number of food tourism experiences. The development of a food tourism clusters will focus on agri-tourism and 'meet the maker' experiences.

The sequencing of the food tourism cluster will start by growing the number of saleable food tourism experiences and evolve into the Ballyhoura Food Experience Trail. This will also contribute to Cork's ambition to become an international Region of Gastronomy by 2030 and develop the linkages between North Cork and other parts of the county Cork (identified in other Cork specific DEDPs) and how food is integral to the Cork visitor experience.

## Successful outcomes under the VICE framework would include:

### VISITOR – (Demand)

Motivate visitors to explore our rural communities through the development of food tourism experiences and promotion of Ballyhoura as a sustainable food destination.

### INDUSTRY – (Supply)

Grow the number of food tourism experiences and cluster approach to growing the profile of Ballyhoura for food tourism.

### COMMUNITY

Disperse the benefits of tourism by profiling rural tourism experiences linked to the food production heritage of the destination and contribute to Corks ambition to be a Region of Gastronomy by 2030.

### ENVIRONMENT

Promote sustainable food production as part of the destination credentials for sustainable and regenerative tourism.

DRAFT

## Supporting Projects:

**BALLYHOURA EVENTS & FESTIVALS**

## Ballyhoura Festivals & Events

A range of supporting projects will be delivered to contribute to the objective of establishing Ballyhoura as a leading outdoor activity destination. The development of destination activity basecamps is linked to the Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan ambition to create community based visitor hubs linked to the uplands. This approach will also include the establishment of a pilot water activity basecamp and build on the opportunity for Ballyhoura to become a leading 'learn to' destination for outdoor and eco-tourism activities.

Understanding the requirements to develop the Galtee Mountains into a signature destination experience will require an appraisal of previous Galtee Mountains masterplanning and feasibility studies. This will assess the immediate to long term future requirements. The development of the basecamp concept reflects how each project integrates with each other and the development of a best in class outdoors destination.

The heritage of hosting major events in Ballyhoura in addition to events aligned to the theme of the outdoors will result in an examination of new event opportunities and enhancing existing events that offer growth potential. In developing the profile of Ballyhoura for outdoor activities and in line with comparable destinations, a calendar of signature events will be a key consideration. The events focus will also examine non activity based opportunities such as gardens, food, heritage and cultural events.

# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3:

## TO GROW THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TOURISM BY BUILDING THE CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY OF TOURISM BUSINESSES

**GOAL: To ensure that businesses are supported to increase their capacity and capability, including the creation of more saleable experiences and improving their online presence.**

### Strategic Goals

- Grow the demand generation capabilities of the Ballyhoura tourism industry based on understanding the needs and motivations of visitors aligned with the Fáilte Ireland Visitor Motivations Framework and Tourism Ireland's visitor segmentation.
- Improve the digital capabilities of the tourism industry to increase the online visibility of the destination.
- Increase the number of saleable Ballyhoura visitor experiences aligned with achieving the destination's tourism vision and focus on the outdoors, rural exploration, nature, culture and heritage.
- Grow the number of rural tourism experiences linked to food, gardens, bio-diversity, 'meet the makers' and agri / farm experiences.
- Implement a tourism cluster approach for capability building and new experience development.
- Develop the tourism potential of the urban hubs to grow the value of the day and evening time economy to include Kilmallock, Mitchelstown and Charleville.
- Ensure all education and training agencies align tourism industry training with ongoing and future investment in Ballyhoura.

### Supporting Projects:

- DEVELOPING TOURISM HUBS
- ACCOMMODATION THAT MEETS NEEDS OF TARGETED VISITORS
- INDUSTRY DIGITALISATION

The key objective for the Ballyhoura destination plan is to increase the value of tourism for the community. Growing the economic impact of tourism requires a multifaceted approach linking the activities of the tourism trade with local community and ensure alignment with the needs and motivations of the visitor. This requires a focus on growing the number of visitor experiences available, retaining visitors for longer in the area and ensure they are provided with enough reasons to explore more of the area. It requires the urban and rural communities to act as hubs for visitors to base themselves and explore the destination and grow the value generated across the day and evening time economy.

A strategic approach to new accommodation development will be pursued. The development of tourism towns that will act as gateways into the Ballyhoura destination will deliver a cluster of destination hubs. The day time opportunity will be maximised by working with the larger urban accommodation hubs to encourage more consideration of Ballyhoura among visitors to Limerick and Cork. Stimulating visitor demand for Ballyhoura on a year round basis will see a focus on the digital presence of the destination. It require an industry wide programme to grow the destination's visibility online and maximise the online search opportunities presented through AI.

# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4:

## TO ESTABLISH BALLYHOURA AS A LEADING SUSTAINABLE AND REGENERATIVE TOURISM DESTINATION

**GOAL: To ensure Ballyhoura continues to be recognised as a national pioneer in community-led tourism development and achieves international recognition in sustainable / regenerative tourism. As such, the destination will be developed to deliver net-positive benefits for communities and for nature, and satisfy a greater demand among visitors for more responsible tourism choices.**

### Strategic Goals

- Implement the Ballyhoura Sustainability Action Plan to guide the development of Ballyhoura as a leading sustainable tourism destination.
- Grow the tourism industry's adoption of sustainable tourism practices reflected in their daily operations and commitment to sustainability.
- Develop the capacity of the tourism industry and community tourism groups to develop sustainable visitor experiences, profiling the destination's commitment to sustainability and embracing the regenerative approach to tourism as a platform for innovation.
- Build on the success of Ballyhoura regenerative tourism training programmes to grow the capabilities of the community tourism sector and realise the socio-economic potential of tourism for their community.
- Work with Ballyhoura communities to prepare them for emerging tourism opportunities arising from the Ballyhoura DEDP and planned investment in the destination.
- Grow the agri and rural tourism opportunity for Ballyhoura through the delivery of farm, meet the maker and food based experiences.
- Ensure responsible visitor engagement with all trails and nature-based amenities through visitor education and in destination awareness building of responsible tourism.
- Collectively achieve the reduction in carbon targets identified through the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Regional Tourism and Development Strategy as part of the destination's ambition to become a leading sustainable tourism destination.

**R512 – SPINE OF BALLYHOURA EXPERIENCES AND ORIENTATION**

# CATALYST PROJECT 4.1: R512 – TOURISM ROUTE

**AIM: Create a tourism route to influence visitor flow into and around the destination and connect with local communities.**

### Overview:

The R512 road runs through the spine of Ballyhoura connecting with in excess of forty tourism experiences and attractions. It provides the basis for visitors to understand the geography of Ballyhoura, linking rural boundary communities close to Limerick city extending to north county Cork. It has the potential to become a signature route across Ballyhoura, dispersing the visitor around the destination and providing ease of access to local communities and experiences.

The opportunity will be explored by examining the potential of R512 becoming a tourism route linking local communities, rural experiences and links to destination attractions. The creation of the R512 route can deliver a community focused alternative to the development of the new M20 route. It will form a focal point for the sustainable and regenerative tourism ambitions of the Ballyhoura tourism industry, adhering to the community led approach.

The creation of R512 orientation route will contribute to visitors understanding and awareness of the destination and promote more visitor engagement opportunities with local communities. A feasibility study will examine the concept and the requirements to develop the R512 as the destination spine and how it will orientate visitors into the Ballyhoura communities.

## Successful outcomes under the VICE framework would include:

### VISITOR – (Demand)

Create a clear visitor understanding of the geographic reach of the destination and ease of orientation across Ballyhoura using the themes of community and regenerative tourism.

### INDUSTRY – (Supply)

Develop a signature route connecting visitors with community based experiences and activities, establishing Ballyhoura as a leading regenerative tourism destination.

### COMMUNITY

Motivate visitors to engage in slower exploration of Ballyhoura and increase the economic value of tourism for communities.

### ENVIRONMENT

Promote the destination commitment to sustainable tourism through the creation of a community tourism focused route.

## Supporting Projects:

**SUSTAINABLE TOURISM NETWORK DEVELOPMENT**

To establish Ballyhoura as a leading sustainable and regenerative tourism destination, growth in network participation and a collective approach to developing the regenerative tourism opportunity will be delivered. This will be achieved through targeted training and engagement programmes and strengthen the collective approach to sustainable and regenerative tourism for the area.

The development of the tourism network across the destination will be central to growing visitor awareness of geography of the destination and providing reasons to explore more of Ballyhoura. Growing balanced participation in the network from across the destination will be a key objective and ensure a regional spread of businesses involved in tourism development and marketing activities.

# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5:

## TO BUILD SUCCESS THROUGH NEW LEVELS OF COLLABORATION AND A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

**GOAL: To build on existing levels of collaboration among businesses to improve cross-promotion and cross-selling (particularly online) by leveraging existing networks, and to strengthen existing stakeholder partnerships, including linkages with Munster Vales, Limerick.ie, Cork County Council and Pure Cork.**

### Strategic Goals

- Grow participation in the Ballyhoura tourism network and strengthen the collective approach to developing the tourism opportunity for the area.
- Deliver a co-ordinated marketing approach in partnership with Ballyhoura Fáilte, Pure Cork, Cork County Council, Limerick City and County Council and Munster Vales to ensure a coherent destination message is communicated to domestic and international visitors.
- Adopt a partnership approach to future event and product development funding opportunities for the Ballyhoura destination.
- Adopt a multiagency approach in the delivery of catalyst projects that will grow the profile of the area as a leading outdoor activity destination e.g. Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan, Ballyhoura Mountain Bike Trail Centre, Beara Breifne Way.
- Implement a sustainable model to resource the development of community tourism and grow destination network participation.
- Ensure Local Authority participation in the development of the Ballyhoura destination to include Limerick City and County Council, Cork County Council and Tipperary County Council.
- Adopt a collective stakeholder approach to facilitate the growth of the accommodation product base in Ballyhoura.
- Grow the level of access and transport options for Ballyhoura working with existing providers such as Local Link to enhance visitor access to local communities, attractions and activities.
- Develop a destination wide approach to ensure future placemaking activity in Ballyhoura towns and villages is aligned with the community vision for how the Ballyhoura story is told at every visitor touchpoint e.g public realm projects, town and village enhancements.
- Align with regional projects or tourism development opportunities such as food and connectivity with the themes of other DEDPs and tourism plans in Cork and Limerick.

### Supporting Projects:

A partnership approach to destination development will underpin the delivery of the DEDP. It will support the continued development Ballyhoura tourism network and build on the success of the network to date. The focus will include growing participation in the network in areas that have not traditionally engaged as strongly as others.

A collective approach is required to create the scale of marketing and communications required to grow visitor awareness in national and overseas markets. The partnership approach to destination profiling will ensure brand and destination narrative consistency across all communications platforms used to promote the Ballyhoura experience. This will require increased levels of collaboration between all existing brands with a role in profiling the Ballyhoura area.

The partnership approach will also form the basis for sustainable transport development and explore opportunities provided by partnerships with Local Link, Active Travel and TFI infrastructure. The large scale transport infrastructure investment required to deliver the M20 motorway offers opportunities to explore in the context of 'active travel' type projects and the inclusion of cycleways on adjoining roads.

Ireland's Hidden HEARTLANDS

# SECTION FIVE

## Measuring Success

Fáilte Ireland

# 5.1 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (DRAFT KPI'S)

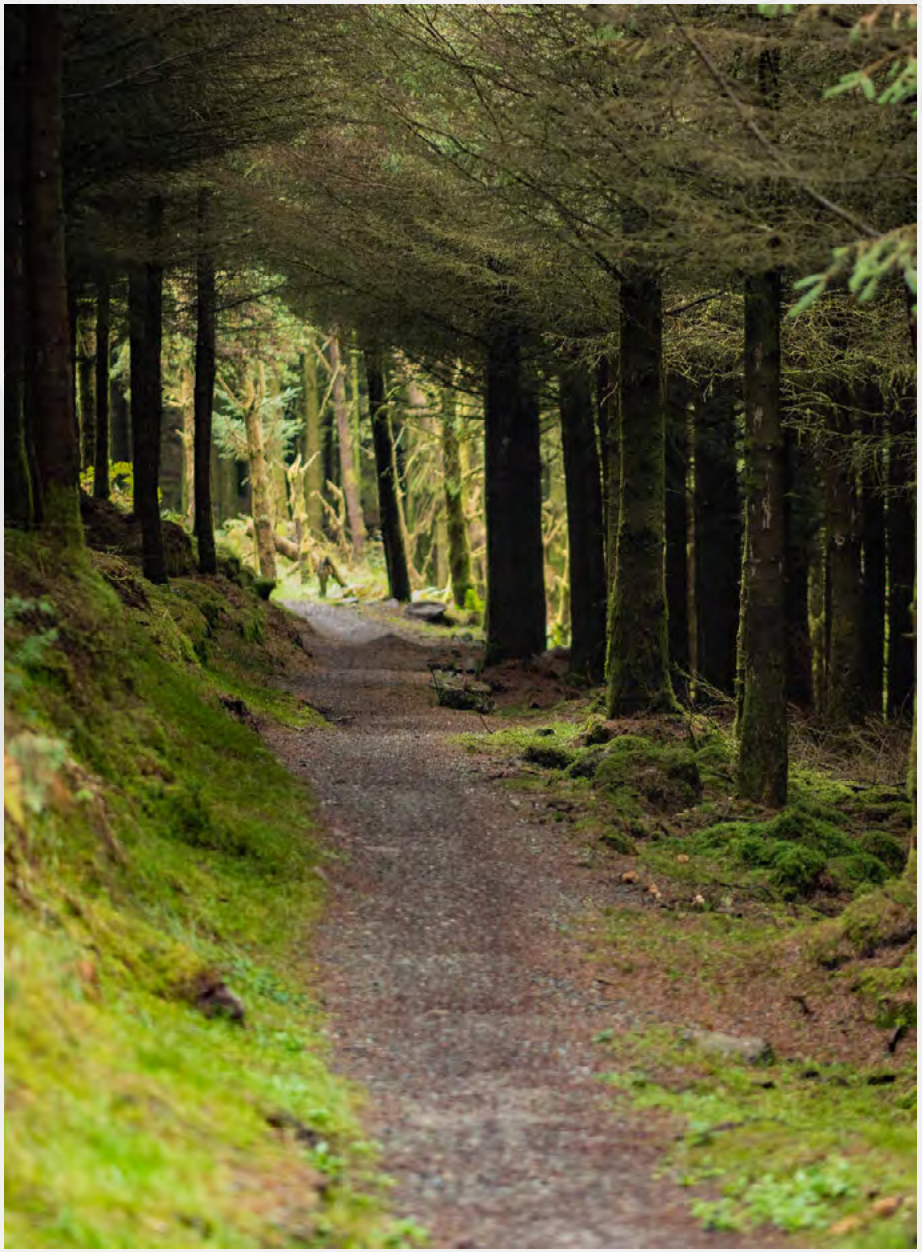
Given Ballyhoura's position at a geographical crossroads, this DEDP has been developed with regard to, and in alignment with, a number of other strategic initiatives currently being implemented or progressed across the wider area, including the recently published Limerick City and County Council Tourism Plan 2025–2030 and the North Cork DEDP (in development). This approach supports coherence and complementarity across destination planning efforts

Fáilte Ireland has developed a set of regional sustainable indicators as a framework to provide a balanced scorecard on regional tourism performance linked to these plans. These indicators developed for the Destination and Experience Development Plans are a performance monitor across the following five key areas:

- Governance and management indicators
- Visitor indicators
- Industry (economic) indicators
- Community indicators
- Environmental indicators

Key performance indicators have been developed to provide information on the impact of the Ballyhoura DEDP using plausible and meaningful measurement parameters. These indicators are drawn from a range of data sources including Central Statistics Office (CSO), Fáilte Ireland surveys and a range of external and new data sources. These indicators are supplemented with additional impact measurement approaches across these five categories linked to the VICE model for sustainable tourism and ensuring good governance. This approach ensures further alignment with the Fáilte Ireland performance framework and the 'golden performance' KPI's featured within the Corporate Plan.

The indicators will address what can be measured immediately with readily available information. It is noted that the measurement of the impact of the DEDP may require the development and use of new primary data sources and measurement techniques where necessary. Specific KPI's will be baselined and monitored throughout the lifecycle of the plan. CSO data will be used as the baseline data for Ballyhoura destination and the statutory areas that make up the area.



# Draft Key Performance Indicators (KPI) – V I C E Model

* Indicates a Fáilte Ireland Golden Performance KPI

## Governance and Management Structures

| | Indicator | KPI | How is it measured? |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01 | Governance and Management Structures | Increase in the levels of satisfaction, collaboration and effective partnerships arrangements with destination stakeholders (including Local Authorities, Public bodies etc. | DEDP Governance Survey |

## Visitor

| | Indicator | KPI | How is it measured? |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01* | Business Performance (impacting on Regional & Seasonal Growth) | Grow domestic tourism revenue by 8% in Ballyhoura. | Monthly CSO.<br>Accommodation occupancy through Ballyhoura sustainable tourism network. |
| 02* | Business Performance (impacting on Regional & Seasonal Growth) | Increase the number of international visitors to Ballyhoura. | Fáilte Ireland's (SOT).<br>Monthly CSO.<br>Accommodation occupancy through Ballyhoura sustainable tourism network.<br>Number of New Bedspaces with FI standards / quality assurance. |
| 03* | Business Performance (impacting on Regional & Seasonal Growth) | Increase the number of domestic visitors to Ballyhoura by 7% as per national policy. | Monthly CSO. |
| 04* | Business Performance (impacting on Regional & Seasonal Growth) | Grow the shoulder season at 1% versus high season. | Monthly CSO<br>Accommodation occupancy through Ballyhoura sustainable tourism network.<br>Number of New Bedspaces with FI standards / quality assurance. |
| 05* | Visitor Satisfaction | Annual improvement in DAS satisfaction levels to over 85%. | Fáilte Ireland's Destination Attitudes Survey. |
| 06 | Business Performance (impacting on Regional & Seasonal Growth) | Visitors find ease of accessing high-quality information about what there is to see and do in Ireland's Hidden Heartlands prior to visiting. | Fáilte Ireland's Behaviour and Brand Tracker (BBT) / Survey of Overseas Travellers (SOT). |
| 07 | Business Performance (impacting on Regional & Seasonal Growth) | Increase in trails usage. | Monitoring Ballyhoura trails counters. |

## Industry

| | Indicator | KPI | How is it measured? |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01 | Business Performance (impacting on Regional & Seasonal Growth) | Increase in the number of Saleable Products. | New or improved saleable experiences per annum – Key Account Management monitoring.<br>Saleable Experiences Portal. |
| 02* | Industry Competitiveness (impacting on revenue reg & seasonal) | Level of industry adoption of advanced digital is at 90% by 2030. | Key Account Management monitoring.<br>Digital Industrialisation Metrics.<br>Regions / FI Business Supports data. |
| 03* | Industry Competitiveness (impacting on revenue reg & seasonal) | 25% of tourism industry will have adopted AI by 2030. | Key Account Management monitoring.<br>Digital Industrialisation Metrics<br>Regions / FI Business Supports data. |
| 04* | Business Performance (impacting on Regional & Seasonal Growth) | Increase in tourism employment across Ballyhoura. | CSO employment data. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 05* | Industry Competitiveness (impacting on revenue reg & seasonal) | Increase the digital capabilities of the tourism industry to position them for growth based on the findings of the Ballyhoura Digital Audit. | Key Account Management monitoring.<br>Digital Industrialisation Metrics.<br>Enterprise Development metrics.<br>Regions / FI Business Supports data. |
| 06 | Industry Competitiveness (impacting on revenue reg & seasonal) | Growth in the number of accounts taking up training programmes and engaging in Fáilte Ireland platforms. | Key Account Management monitoring.<br>Digital Industrialisation Metrics.<br>Enterprise Development metrics.<br>Regions / FI Business Supports data. |

## Community

| | Indicator | KPI | How is it measured? |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01 | Community Sentiment | Impact of tourism on the local community. | Annual community impact survey and facilitated community forum review assessing key metrics agreed by the community. |
| 02 | Community Sentiment | Increased Community Wellbeing. | TAR Survey* – Annual community survey measuring quality of life, pride of place and perceived fairness of tourism benefits (*while TAR is an online survey conducted at a national level, data at a county level will be extracted where possible). |
| 03* | Community Sentiment | Secure an average TAR of 67% across Ballyhoura. | TAR Survey* |
| 04 | Sustainable Tourism Practices / Climate Action | Number of visitor experiences that actively contribute to the Ballyhoura regenerative tourism principles. | Assess the annual outputs of the Ballyhoura Regen Group (established through partnership between Fáilte Ireland and Ballyhoura Development CLG following the delivery of the MTU Regenerative Tourism programme) to be used as proxy sample for regenerative tourism impact. |

## Environment

| | Indicator | KPI | How is it measured? |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01 | Sustainable Tourism Practices / Climate Action | Develop effective management of the environment, including natural, cultural and heritage assets through the progression of a DEDP SEA Environmental Monitoring. | Strategic Environmental Assessment, Appropriate Assessment & Fáilte Ireland's National Environmental Monitoring Programme 2021 – 2026. |
| 02 | Sustainable Tourism Practices / Climate Action | Ballyhoura DEDP demonstrates full compliance with all relevant requirements arising from EU and Irish planning and environmental legislation. | Strategic Environmental Assessment, Appropriate Assessment & Fáilte Ireland's National Environmental Monitoring Programme 2021 – 2026. |
| 03* | Sustainable Tourism Practices / Climate Action | Tourism businesses are on track to meet their carbon reduction targets of 45% as per the Carbon Budget and in line with the Climate Action Plan 2021. | Fáilte Ireland CAP Data, Earth Check Market Review, Fáilte Ireland Regional sustainability indicator data. |
| 04 | Sustainable Tourism Practices / Climate Action | Year-on-year increase in the uptake by industry of sustainability/ environmental training. | Key Account Management monitoring.<br>Digital Industrialisation Metrics.<br>Enterprise Development metrics.<br>Fáilte Ireland CAP Data, Earth Check Market Review.<br>Fáilte Ireland Regional sustainability indicator data. |
| 05 | Sustainable Tourism Practices / Climate Action | Climate Action Scheme and carbon emissions. | Uptake of Fáilte Ireland Climate Action Scheme.<br>Reduction by clients of carbon emissions of 45% by 2030 – Key Account Management monitoring. |
| 06 | Sustainable Tourism Practices / Climate Action | Community led sustainability actions. | Percentage of tourism businesses implementing their sustainability plans and achievement of targets developed by participating businesses in the MTU led regenerative tourism certification programme.<br>Fáilte Ireland CAP Data, Earth Check Market Review.<br>Fáilte Ireland Regional sustainability indicator data. |

Ireland's Hidden HEARTLANDS

# SECTION SIX

## Ballyhoura DEDP – Summary of Actions

Fáilte Ireland

# 6.1 BALLYHOURA DEDP IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the Ballyhoura DEDP is based on stakeholder commitment to project delivery. It represents a five-year operational plan creating a destination development focus for Ballyhoura. It builds on existing project plans, integrating all related activity for a coordinated series of outputs. These include projects that are being implemented, projects featured in existing plans and new concepts to build the destination's capacity for new visitor experience development.

A list of actions relating to all proposed projects has been devised. All stakeholders will be consulted in relation to the delivery of the identified actions. Each of the stakeholders listed below will be tasked with delivering on actions which will help to shape the plan and ultimately ensure the success of the project over the next five years.

The implementation of the Ballyhoura destination plan will be overseen by the creation of an implementation team that will operate until 2030. The Ballyhoura destination plan implementation team is tasked with supporting the following objectives:

- Support the delivery of the Ballyhoura DEDP.
- Drive growth as per the agreed KPI's in the action plan.
- Lead and manage the action plan ensuring alignment around the prioritisation and delivery of key projects.
- Creation of a representative area wide body which ensures there is a mechanism in place that allows two-way communication between the implementation team and any sub groups which may be formed.
- Ensure that the destination catalyst and enabling projects support the delivery of experiences identified in the plan and are delivered within the five year timeframe.
- Provide a space where stakeholders can share new ideas with partners.
- Creation of a common tourism voice and a powerful tourism network that promotes each other's interests.

The Ballyhoura DEDP implementation team will form will represent key stakeholders and representatives from the area. It will be chaired by an independent chairperson with the ability to focus the group on the delivery of the actions required to implement the Ballyhoura DEDP

## Stakeholder Partners Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| **BD** | Ballyhoura Development |
| **BF** | Ballyhoura Fáilte |
| **BHCC** | Bruff Heritage Centre Committee |
| **BHE** | Ballyhoura Heritage & Environment |
| **BI** | Birdwatch Ireland |
| **BRN** | Ballyhoura Regeneration Network |
| **CCC** | Cork County Council |
| **COILLTE** | Coillte |
| **DLD** | Discover Limerick DAC |
| **ETB** | Education Training Board |
| **FI** | Fáilte Ireland |
| **IHH** | Ireland's Hidden Heartlands |
| **KCC** | Knocklong Community Council |
| **KG** | Kerry Group |
| **LCCC** | Limerick City and County Council |
| **LCG** | Local Community Group |
| **LEADER** | Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale |
| **LEO** | Local Enterprise Office |
| **LGC** | Local Golf Clubs |
| **LL** | Local Link |
| **LMTB** | Local Mountain Bike Clubs |
| **MI** | Mountaineering Ireland |
| **MTU** | Munster Technological University |
| **MV** | Munster Vales |
| **MWP** | Murroe Wood Park |
| **MWRA** | Mid West Roads Authority |
| **NPWS** | National Parks and Wildlife Service |
| **OPW** | Office of Public Works |
| **PC** | Pure Cork |
| **PS** | Private Sector |
| **SRCB** | Shannon Region Sport & Conference Bureau |
| **TCC** | Tipperary County Council |
| **TFI** | Transport For Ireland |
| **TII** | Transport Infrastructure Ireland |

# 6.2 BALLYHOURA DEDP ACTION PLAN

## OBJECTIVE 1: Market recognition and visitor awareness of the Ballyhoura Destination

### CATALYST PROJECTS

**Catalyst Project 1.** Build Awareness (Marketing & Publicity)

| | PROJECT | ACTION | Time Frame (Implementation ST/MT/LT) | Lead | Stakeholder Partners (See acronyms list in Tab 1) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.1 | IHH Brand Adoption and Education Programme | Deliver an IHH brand adoption and education programme for the Ballyhoura tourism industry partners to ensure a collective understanding of the regional brand opportunity and how to leverage it for sustainable growth in tourism. This will also include a focus on increased use of the Ballyhoura brand. | ST-LT | FI | BD, BF |
| 1.2 | Growing Domestic Tourism – Demand Generation | Grow the capabilities of Ballyhoura tourism industry to implement a commercial approach to marketing and sales generation for their business and collectively increase the level of destination recognition in the domestic market. | ST-LT | FI | BD, BF |
| 1.3 | International Profile Development | Work with the Ballyhoura tourism industry to implement a phased approach to marketing and demand generation to grow destination awareness in international markets. This will include B2B sales training, sales task force identification, preparation for sales events and leveraging the opportunities that arise in the Ballyhoura DEDP. | ST-LT | FI | BD, BF |
| 1.4 | Grow the Digital Profile of Ballyhoura | Convene stakeholders to review the findings of the Digital Survey conducted by Fáilte Ireland as part of the DEDP process, with a focus on addressing digital infrastructure gaps and training needs, exploring AI's role in community tourism, and identifying opportunities to enhance Ballyhoura's online presence through digital supports, social commerce, and AI-driven search. | ST | FI | BD, BF, LEO, LEADER, PC, MV, LCCC, CCC |
| 1.5 | AI and Digital Skills Capability Building | Undertake a co-ordinated programme of training and capability building focusing on digital skills development, enhancing Ballyhoura's digital infrastructure and the opportunities presented by AI for Tourism & Hospitality. | ST-LT | FI | BD, BF, LEO, LEADER, LCCC, CCC |
| 1.6 | Ballyhoura Content Creation | Undertake tourism industry training on content creation to align destination marketing and communications with the character of the place and the essence of the Ballyhoura destination i.e. local people, communities and local stories. | ST-LT | FI | BD, BF, LEO, LEADER, PC, MV, LCCC, CCC |
| 1.7 | Co-ordinated Marketing Approach | Commit to a co-ordinated marketing planning approach in partnership with Ballyhoura Fáilte, Pure Cork, Cork County Council, Limerick City & County Council and Munster Vales to ensure consistency in delivering the destination message to domestic and international audiences. | ST-LT | FI | BF, PC, CCC, LCCC, MV |

## OBJECTIVE 2: Establish Ballyhoura as a leading outdoor activity destination, supported by a well-connected series of visitor experiences that help tell the story of the people and their place.

### CATALYST PROJECTS

**Catalyst Project 2.** Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan, including Mountain Bike Centre & Beara Breifne Way

| | PROJECT | ACTION | Time Frame (Implementation ST/MT/LT) | Lead | Stakeholder Partners (See acronyms list in Tab 1) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.1 | Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan Implementation | Work with all relevant agencies, local communities and the tourism industry to implement the Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan. This will include the enhancement and development of the trails network and the sustainable development of: Community trails, Activity hubs and Signature clusters. (Actions below are included in Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan). | ST-LT | BD | FI, LCCC, CCC, COILLTE, LCG, NPWS |
| 2.2 | Seefin Summit Path | Promote the sustainable and environmentally sensitive development of the Ballyhoura Uplands to grow the trails connectivity and links to the Beara Breifne Way and bike trails. This will include re-building sections of trail sections near the summit of Seefin East, maintaining and re-routing sections of trail giving utmost consideration to environmental sensitivities and engaging with the NPWS, Coillte and Mountaineering Ireland to adopt an integrated approach to management of access in upland areas. | ST-LT | BD | LCCC, NPWS, COILLTE, MI |
| 2.3 | Beara Breifne Way | Deliver the Ballyhoura components of the Beara Breifne Way, supported by an activation programme that enables the tourism industry to engage with the opportunity and ensures strong integration with the wider Ballyhoura trails experience. | ST-LT | FI | BD, LCCC, CCC |
| 2.4 | Mountain Bike Trail Centre Visitor Experience | Develop Visitor Facilities at the mountain bike Trail Head, inclusive of toilets, showers, shop, pump tracks. The approach will enhance the visitor experience on the mountain biking trails to establish Ballyhoura as an international mountain biking destination. Support this ambition by assessing the feasibility of installing cycling amenities such as pump tracks, enhancing the quality of trails and delivering a quality visitor experience in the trail head centre. | ST-LT | COILLTE | FI, BD, PS, LMTB |
| 2.5 | Developing Cycling Amenities - Pump Tracks | Undertake a scoping and identification project into potential sites for developing additional cycling pump tracks in local communities across Ballyhoura. | ST-MT | BD | |

**Catalyst Project 3.** Heritage Attractions Cluster

| | PROJECT | ACTION | Time Frame (Implementation ST/MT/LT) | Lead | Stakeholder Partners (See acronyms list in Tab 1) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.6 | Doneraile House & Gardens Visitor Experience | Promote the OPW cluster development of Doneraile House and Gardens and Anne's Grove to reflect their promotional and developmental interdependencies. This will include enhancing the visitor experience at Doneraile House & Gardens to become a signature indoor attraction for Ballyhoura and to optimise the promotion of the Changing Places. | ST-LT | OPW | FI |
| 2.7 | Anne's Grove Gardens Development Plan | Implement the Anne's Grove Gardens development plan to include the restoration of further historic structures (e.g. the house) and visitor facilities (e.g. pathways, cafe, toilets). Support the cluster development and interdependencies with Doneraile House and Gardens to also include demand generation. | ST-LT | OPW | FI |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.8 | Lough Gur Masterplan | Develop a comprehensive Masterplan for Lough Gur that integrates the Visitor Centre, surrounding heritage assets such as Grange Stone Circle, and planned enhancements including the Lough Gur Walkway and Bird Hide projects, with the objective of creating a coherent and enriched visitor proposition for Lough Gur. | MT | DLD, LCCC | |
| 2.9 | Kilmallock Merchant House / Stone Mansion Develop-ment Plan | Undertake a development plan for the Merchant House / Stone Mansion project to create a viable multifunctional space that will include: 1. Building restoration requirements 2. Community spaces and uses and 3. Tourism role combining the interpretation of the local heritage story and ability to signpost visitors to experiences across the destination. | MT | LCCC | |
| 2.10 | Mitch-elstown Georgian Quarter | Develop a visitor proposition for the Georgian Quarter and experience development plan to maximise the impact of future town regeneration investment and enhancement of Mitchelstown as a planned Georgian town. This will include a focus on day and evening time visitor experience development linked to the theme of the Georgian Quarter and maximising the role of heritage and cultural assets such as the Saint George's Arts & Heritage Centre. | LT | FI | CCC |

**Catalyst Project 4.** Golden Vale Food Tourism Cluster

| | PROJECT | ACTION | Time Frame (Implementation ST/MT/LT) | Lead | Stakeholder Partners (See acronyms list in Tab 1) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.11 | Ballyhoura / Golden Vale Food in Tourism Cluster | Develop a cluster of Ballyhoura food experiences that will contribute to Cork's ambition to become a World Region of Gastronomy by 2030. The cluster will be the focus for a food tourism visitor experience development programme and will evolve into a Ballyhoura Food Experience Trail linking to day and evening time activity based around food. | ST-LT | FI | LCCC, CCC, Teagasc, BD, LEO, LEADER |
| 2.12 | Food tourism experience develop-ment | Implement a 'food in tourism' saleable experience development programme to grow the number of food and drink experiences in Ballyhoura. | ST-LT | FI | LCCC, CCC, Teagasc, BD, LEO, LEADER |
| 2.13 | Ballyhou-ra Food Experience Trail | Explore the potential for Ballyhoura Food Experience Trail showcasing food and drink experiences. | LT | FI | LCCC, CCC, Teagasc, BD, LEO, LEADER |
| 2.14 | Food & Drink in destination events | Examine opportunities to incorporate food and drink experiences into existing and future Ballyhoura festivals and events. | ST-LT | BD | LCG, PS |
| 2.15 | Agri tourism and food experienc-es | Host an 'introduction to tourism programme' linked to agri-tourism opportunities followed by saleable experience development supports. This will include exploring opportunities such as farm visits, meet the maker and food experiences. | ST | FI | |

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| 2.16 | Kilfinane Market House Feasibility Study | Assess the opportunities to be considered for the Kilfinane Market House to include its use as an enterprise hub that will include a visitor experience e.g. food or the inclusion of alternative accommodation options. In preparation for a Category 1 RRDF application develop a brief that scopes out the range of opportunities to be considered. | LT | LCCC | BD |

## SUPPORTING PROJECTS

### SUPPORTING PROJECTS – Ballyhoura Community Hubs – Activity Basecamp Hubs

| | PROJECT | ACTION | Time | Lead | Partners |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.17 | Ballyhoura Community Hubs - Outdoor Activity Basecamp Pilot Site | Develop a 'Community Hub / Basecamp' roadmap and development action plan to develop a visitor services hub / trail head in local communities linked to the uplands areas. The assessment will identify one location in the short term to be developed as the Ballyhoura pilot Basecamp to layer onto existing local community facilities, social enterprises and / or private sector involvement. The roadmap will incorporate the learnings of the Fáilte Ireland basecamp development pilot programme. | MT | FI | LCG |
| 2.18 | Water Activity Hubs - Water Activity Basecamps | Build on the destinations community hub and activity basecamp positioning to create a pilot water activity basecamp in Ballyhass Adventure Centre as part of the enhancement of their learning and development experience. The learnings from this pilot will be used to develop the water activity opportunity in other locations across Ballyhoura. | MT | FI | PS |
| 2.19 | Developing Ballyhoura Activity Hubs as 'Learn To Experience' Destinations | Leverage the opportunity for the community hub / activity basecamps to positions themselves as 'learn to' destinations for all abilities and interests i.e. introduction to outdoor and eco-tourism activities e.g. on foot, bike, water or horse. This will build on existing outdoor education experiences in Ballyhoura. | ST-LT | FI | ETB, PS, BD |

### SUPPORTING PROJECTS – Outdoor Destination Experiences

| | PROJECT | ACTION | Time | Lead | Partners |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.20 | Galtee Mountains Masterplan Review and Roadmap | Undertake an audit / assessment of previous plans relating to the Galtee Mountains. The outputs of the audit process will be used to create a Galtee Mountains experience development roadmap identifying the actions and emerging opportunities required to enhance the Galtee Mountains as a signature visitor experience for the Munster Vales and Ballyhoura Country, The roadmap will include the implementation of the key actions identified in Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan. | ST | MV | TCC, LCCC, CCC, FI, BD |
| 2.21 | Cycling / Walking Route - M20 Corridor | Deliver a safe cycling / walking route linked to the development of the M20 corridor and following agreed mapping in the M20 masterplan. | LT | TII | LCCC, CCC |
| 2.22 | Greenway - Limerick to Montpelier | Assess the feasibility of developing a Greenway from Limerick to Montpelier. | LT | LCCC | MWRA |
| 2.23 | Golf Tourism | Develop the leisure tourism potential of golf in Ballyhoura by creating a cluster of golf courses to maximise the opportunity presented by the hosting of the Junior Ryder Cup in Ballyneety Golf Club. | ST | FI | LCCC , LGC |

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| 2.24 | Ballyhoura Water Trail Feasibility | Assess the feasibility of developing an accessible water based trail in the Ballyhoura destination based on the Sport Ireland water trail guidelines. | LT | LCCC | LCG |
| 2.25 | Clare Glens Trails & Slieve Felim | Assess the trails upgrade requirements for the Clare Glens and Slieve Felim. (Pending: confirmation subject to meeting with Tipperary County Council). | LT | LCCC, TCC | BD, BHE |
| 2.26 | Rural Tourism Experiences | Deliver a rural tourism saleable experience programme to grow the number of saleable rural tourism experiences in Ballyhoura and examining agri-tourism opportunities such as Open Farms and the Farm Diversification Training Programme. | ST-MT | BD | FI, Teagasc |

## SUPPORTING PROJECTS – Ballyhoura Events & Festivals

| | PROJECT | ACTION | Time | Lead | Partners |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.27 | Ballyhoura Walking Festival | Create an event development plan to grow the economic impact of the Ballyhoura Walking Festival as a signature event for the destination. | ST | FI | BD, BF, BHE |
| 2.28 | Ballyhoura Series – Outdoor Events | Identify the requirements on how to attract a festival / event organiser or create local capacity to deliver the Ballyhoura Active Series over a 3–5 year timeframe and subject to securing funding. | MT | BD | BF |
| 2.29 | Ballyhoura Event Development Opportunities | Explore all available funding and festival event opportunities for Ballyhoura to include seasonal, outdoor events or partnerships with bid organisations to attract events to Ballyhoura aligned with the destination commitment to sustainability. | ST-LT | LCCC | BD, CCC |

## DESTINATION PROJECTS

| | PROJECT | ACTION | Time | Lead | Partners |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.30 | Network Development & Sustainable Tourism | Develop and grow participation in the Ballyhoura Tourism Network with an increased emphasis within the network on developing new sustainable tourism experiences. | ST-LT | FI | BF |
| 2.31 | Murroe Sports Complex | Assess the community space opportunity for Murroe Sports Complex to operate as a future community basecamp providing access to visitor facilities linked to local trails. | MT | BD | BHE, MWP |
| 2.32 | Kilmallock Medieval Town – Walled Town Walkways | Develop the medieval visitor proposition through the development of animated walkways and necklace of trails with points of interest extending to the West Wall Walkway. | LT | LCCC | OPW, FI |
| 2.33 | Charleville Moatville House | Assess the outputs of the feasibility analysis of redeveloping Moatville House in Charleville into a sustainable community space and visitor experience / facilities. | LT | BD | KG, CCC |
| 2.34 | Charleville Schoolyard Theatre | Assess the feasibility of developing the second floor of the Schoolyard Theatre building in Charleville into a cultural space. | LT | Schoolyard Theatre | BD |
| 2.35 | Knocklong Railway Heritage Project | Assess the feasibility of the Knocklong Railway Heritage Project. | LT | KCC | BD |

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| 2.36 | **Diaspora Tourism** | Create a Ballyhoura Diaspora Tourism Development Roadmap to leverage existing diaspora events, international networks and local heritage centre experiences. This will include maximising the profile of bi-annual diaspora events such as the Ballyhoura Robinson Homecoming Event, Canada Ireland 180, and the Rose Kennedy Autumn School as the basis for future development. | MT | BD | FI, LCCC, CCC |
| 2.37 | **Diaspora Centre** | Examine the feasibility of developing a diaspora centre or enhanced diaspora visitor experience in Ballyhoura. | LT | BD | |
| 2.38 | **Thomas Fitzgerald Centre** | Review the visitor experience at the Thomas Fitzgerald Centre in Bruff and develop a visitor experience plan to support its development as a destination attraction. | MT | BHCC | BD |
| 2.39 | **Ballyhoura Outdoor Recreation Destination** | Support the development of Ballyhoura as an outdoor recreation destination through the delivery of the Ballyhoura Masterplan, Limerick County Outdoor Recreation Plan and the Cork County Council Recreation and Amenity Policy to enhance the outdoor amenity base and positively impact on the visitor experience. | ST-LT | LCCC, CCC | BD, BHE |
| 2.40 | **Trail Maintenance** | Assess the requirements and funding gaps for annual trails maintenance and establish strategic partnerships to manage and maintain local trails. | MT | BD, FI | LCCC, CCC, COILLTE, LCG |
| 2.41 | **Accessible Activity Destination** | Undertake a review of existing trails and activities across Ballyhoura to assess future accessibility requirements to ensure Ballyhoura is a best in class accessible outdoor destination. | MT | BD | LCCC, CCC, BHE |
| 2.42 | **Griston Bog Conservation Management Plan** | Support the delivery of the Griston Bog Conservation Management Plan. | ST-LT | BHE | BD, BF |
| 2.43 | **Ballyhoura - Visitor Services Gap Analysis** | Undertake a destination gap analysis on existing tourism and visitor infrastructure to understand the current levels of provision of visitor services and ancillary services that are expected from a well performing tourism destination (e.g. food and beverage, non product elements such as universal toilets). | MT | FI | |
| 2.44 | **Kilmallock Cycle Hub** | Review the Kilmallock Cycle Hub route signposting and clean existing and replace missing signage. **(Pending: confirmation subject to meeting with Limerick City & County Council).** | LT | LCCC | |

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## OBJECTIVE 3: Grow economic impact through supporting capacity and capability development

### SUPPORTING PROJECTS

#### SUPPORTING PROJECTS – Accommodation

| | PROJECT | ACTION | Time Frame (Implementation ST/MT/LT) | Lead | Stakeholder Partners (See acronyms list in Tab 1) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.1 | Accommodation Development | Build on Failte Ireland's Supply and Pipeline review to ensure that the Ballyhoura destination avails of any potential public or private capital investment in accommodation opportunities over the duration of the DEDP. | ST-LT | LCCC, CCC, FI | |
| 3.2 | Growing Alternative Accommodation Supply | Support the sustainable provision of alternative forms of accommodation in Ballyhoura to include options such as camping, Glamping and Agri-tourism based accommodation. | ST-LT | LCCC, CCC, BD | FI |
| 3.3 | RV / Campervan Site Assessment | Identify potential sites for sustainable RV / Camper accommodation development in Ballyhoura. | ST-MT | LCCC, CCC, BD | FI |
| 3.4 | Accommodation Workshop | Host a half day workshop for accommodation providers and potential new businesses based on investigating the opportunity to develop accommodation in Ballyhoura. | ST | IHH | FI |
| 3.5 | Destination Hubs - Cluster Development | Create a number of tourism clusters in key destination towns to strengthen their role as year round visitor hubs for Ballyhoura with a focus on day and evening time opportunities and itinerary development. | ST-MT | FI | |
| 3.6 | Ballyhoura at Night - Evening Economy Experience development | Create a 'Ballyhoura at Night' evening time pilot programme in the destination hubs to grow the value of the night time economy across Ballyhoura. Host a workshop to support a pilot initiative to focus on creating a calendar of evening events with individual venues hosting evening activity on a weekly or monthly basis to grow the overall Ballyhoura at Night schedule. This will include cultural programming, traditional music, rambling houses and use of event venues for evening time activity as part of the local visitor experience. | ST | FI, PS | BD |

#### SUPPORTING PROJECTS – Industry Digitalisation

### DESTINATION PROJECTS

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| 3.7 | Visitor Itineraries | Work with the tourism industry in neighbouring urban destinations such as Limerick City and Cork City to develop Ballyhoura itineraries and influence visitor flows into Ballyhoura from the main accommodation hubs. This will include family focused and special interest itineraries i.e. outdoor activities, food, heritage. | ST-MT | FI | PC, LCCC, MV |
| 3.8 | Resourcing Destination Activation - Exploring Funding Options | Explore potential funding models that could support an activator-type role in the delivery of the Ballyhoura DEDP, drawing on models and lessons learned from other DEDPs and initiatives country wide. | St | BD | FI, LCCC, CCC |
| 3.9 | Creative and Cultural Sector Linkages | Design and pilot an initiative to increase the linkage between visitors to the area and local cultural, craft and creative services and product providers collaborating to optimise visitor economic and social impact. | ST- MT | BD | FI |

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| 3.10 | **Creative and Cultural Visitor Experiences** | Promote creative and cultural opportunities and experiences linked to tourism development in Ballyhoura that include linking to cultural spaces and venues and integrating with the development of the night time economy across the destination. | ST-LT | BD | FI |

## OBJECTIVE 4: A leading sustainable and regenerative tourism destination

### CATALYST PROJECTS

**Catalyst Project 5. R512 – Tourism Route**

| | PROJECT | ACTION | Time Frame (Implementation ST/MT/LT) | Lead | Stakeholder Partners (See acronyms list in Tab 1) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4.1 | **R512 – Tourism Route** | Undertake feasibility analysis into the development of the R512 as a tourism and orientation route for Ballyhoura. This will include the scoping of a tourism route concept using the R512 as the spine of destination and marketing platform with links to local communities, attractions, experiences and the platform for destination marketing. | ST | FI | BD, LCCC, CCC |

### SUPPORTING PROJECTS

**SUPPORTING PROJECTS – Sustainable Tourism Network Development**

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| 4.2 | **Ballyhoura Sustainable Tourism Network** | Grow the level of participation in the Ballyhoura tourism network through targeted training and engagement programmes to strengthen the collective approach to sustainable and regenerative tourism for the area. | ST-LT | BD | FI, BF, BHE, BRN |

### DESTINATION PROJECTS

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| 4.3 | **Ballyhoura Sustainability Action Plan** | Implement the Ballyhoura Sustainability Action Plan to guide the development of Ballyhoura as a sustainable tourism destination. | ST-LT | BD | FI, BF, BHE |
| 4.4 | **Fáilte Ireland Climate Action Programme** | Promote participation in the Fáilte Ireland Climate Action Programme by hotels and visitor attractions across the destination. | ST-MT | FI | BD, LCCC, CCC |
| 4.5 | **Carbon Reduction** | Work with Ireland's Hidden Heartlands to achieve the reduction in carbon targets identified in the IHH Regional Tourism and Development Strategy. | ST-LT | FI, IHH | PS, BD, BF, BHE |
| 4.6 | **E-Charging Network** | Undertake an audit of the existing e-charging network to become a baseline for the destination and supporting targeted growth of the network of e-charging points for bicycles and cars to meet future demand. This will include examining both public and private provision and future needs. | MT | LCCC, CCC | |
| 4.7 | **Sustainability Training** | Deliver annual sustainability training to grow the number and capability of tourism businesses to become more sustainable and act as regenerative tourism ambassadors within and for the Ballyhoura destination. | ST-LT | FI | BD, BF, BHE, BRN, MTU |

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| 4.8 | **Kilcolman Nature Reserve** | Support Birdwatch in the delivery of a feasibility study for developing the Kilcolman Nature Reserve at the house and outbuildings on the original site. | LT | BD, BI | CCC |
| 4.9 | **Agri-tourism Development** | Support the sustainable development of Agri-tourism, rural tourism and rural wellbeing experiences and exploring opportunities through initiatives such as the Farm Diversification Training Programme and other available opportunities with Teagasc, LEADER and LEO. | ST-LT | FI | BD, TEAGASC, LEO, LEADER |
| 4.10 | **Towards a Green and Just Transition in Ballyhoura' Plan** | Implement the actions in the 'Towards a Green and Just Transition in Ballyhoura' plan to develop Ballyhoura as a leading sustainable tourism destination. | ST-LT | BD | |
| 4.11 | **Business Events – Regenerative Impact** | Explore niche business events related tourism opportunities with the Shannon Region Conference Bureau and Visit Cork to encourage business tourism groups visiting Limerick and Cork to engage with regenerative tourism experiences and 'giving back to nature' experiences as part of their ESG programmes. | ST-LT | PC, SRCB | LCCC, CCC |
| 4.12 | **Regenerative Tourism & EU Projects** | Engage with Third Level Research Centres with a focus on Regenerative Tourism and build collaborative research and development proposals and projects with EU partner regions. | ST-LT | BD | MTU, BRN |
| 4.13 | **Regenerative Tourism Living Lab** | Develop a broad stakeholder Living Lab focused on Regenerative Tourism to engage as a pilot region to test innovative solutions that can improve the quality of the visitor experience across the Ballyhoura area. | ST-MT | BD | MTU, BRN |
| 4.14 | **Local Guide Training** | Work with training agencies to deliver guide training programmes to grow the number of local people delivering 'meet the local' guided walking, hiking and biking experiences in Ballyhoura. | MT | BD | LEADER, LEO, FI |
| 4.15 | **Community Tourism Awareness Development Programme** | Deliver a tourism awareness programme with existing and emerging community groups to enable them to contribute to and leverage the IHH regional brand opportunity for the benefit of their community. | ST | FI | BF, BHE |
| 4.16 | **Community Tourism Experience Development** | "Draw on the Community Tourism Toolkit to deliver a community tourism pilot programme with existing and emerging community groups as the basis for developing future community tourism training. This will<br>a) Deliver a regenerative approach among local community groups interested in pursuing tourism opportunities.<br>b) Ensure that new and existing community tourism enterprises are equipped with knowledge and capabilities around commerciality and effective, sustainable governance." | ST | FI | BD |
| 4.17 | **Discover Science Outdoor Classrooms** | Create an outdoor classroom cluster and build capabilities to market the range of Discover Science Outdoor Classrooms across the Ballyhoura area. | MT | BHE | BD |

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## OBJECTIVE 5: Success through new levels of collaboration and a partnership approach

### SUPPORTING PROJECTS

**Supporting Projects – Transport & Access**

| | PROJECT | ACTION | Time Frame (Implementation ST/MT/LT) | Lead | Stakeholder Partners (See acronyms list in Tab 1) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5.1 | Public Transport Access | Work with Local Link to improve visitor access to and within the Ballyhoura region linked to destination hubs, attractions and activity basecamps. | ST-LT | LL | FI, BD, LCCC, CCC |
| 5.2 | Ballyhoura Sustainable Transport Network | Examine the requirements to maximise the potential of TFI's national sustainable travel development plans for tourism across the destination. | ST-LT | FI | TFI |
| 5.3 | Active Travel | Leverage Active Travel investment in the Ballyhoura destination hubs to grow the sustainable travel connectivity across the destination. This will also include consideration of how to increase connectivity between trails / outdoor amenities and local communities, addressing the 'last mile ' local connectivity challenge. | ST-LT | LCCC, CCC | |
| 5.4 | Destination Signage and Visitor Orientation | Develop a consistent destination wide approach to placemaking, signage, public realm and visitor orientation and use the opportunity to raise the profile of the destination brand. | MT | LCCC, CCC | FI |
| 5.5 | M20 Access | Promote access and erection of signage to the Ballyhoura destination from existing and future transport infrastructure investment such as the M20 to ensure ease of access off future motorway projects. | LT | BD | LCCC, CCC |

### Destination Projects

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| 5.6 | Community Tourism Impact Measurement System | Scope and design a community tourism impact measurement model to measure the impact of tourism in Ballyhoura. | MT | BD | LCCC, CCC, MTU |
| 5.7 | Destination Collaborations | Build on the learnings from the Shared Island collaboration between Ballyhoura and Cuilcagh Geopark to foster destination development and alliances with other areas within the IHH region. | MT | BD | FI |

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1:

### Environmental

Ireland's Hidden HEARTLANDS

Fáilte Ireland

# 1.0 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The Ballyhoura DEDP provides an opportunity to ensure that all existing and future tourism projects and initiatives within the Plan area are planned, developed and managed in a sustainable and integrated manner. The V.I.C.E. (Visitor, Industry, Community and Environment) Model for Sustainable Tourism is the approach the Ballyhoura DEDP is developed from and strives to implement.

Fáilte Ireland recognises the need to integrate environmental considerations into this Plan in a way that responds to the sensitivities and requirements of the wider natural environment. Environmental considerations including inland and coastal water quality and amenity, climate change, traffic, biodiversity, built and cultural heritage, landscape, critical infrastructure and communities, all play a vital part in our tourism sector.

The protection, enhancement and promotion of our most important tourism asset – the natural environment has been an integral part of the formation of this Plan as is evidenced in this section.

## Guiding Principles for Sustainable and Responsible Tourism

Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development. A suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability. Thus, sustainable tourism should:

1. Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity
2. Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to intercultural understanding and tolerance
3. Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation

Sustainable tourism development requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and it requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary.

Sustainable tourism is also required to maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them.

Promoters/businesses shall adopt a responsible and sustainable tourism approach with ongoing monitoring of environmental impacts as appropriate. Through the implementation of best practice and/or tourism guidelines: e.g. key relevant Fáilte Ireland guidance includes:

- Climate Action Programme – empowering your business to become more sustainable. Development Guidelines for Tourism Destination Towns
- Tourist Accommodation Quality Assured – code of ethics
- Sustainable Festival Guidelines 2023, developed by Fáilte Ireland
- Measurement of the KPIs set out in this Plan
- All subsequent updates to above as well as future FI guidance relating to visitor management, sustainability & environmental protection.

## 1.1 Environmental Assessment

Consideration has been given to the requirement to undertake an environmental assessment of this Plan in order to ensure full legal compliance and to further integrate sustainability, protection, enhancement and promotion of the environment in developing and implementing the Plan.

The environmental assessments undertaken to inform the development of this Plan include Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA).

### 1.1.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The Plan was screened for the need to undertake a SEA. The process established the need to undertake a full SEA which was completed having regard to SEA Directive 2001/42/EU and to Statutory Instrument No. 435/2004 as amended.

The outcome of this process can be reviewed in the SEA Environmental Report (ER) and, once the plan is finalised, the SEA Statement that will accompany this draft Plan.

### 1.1.2 Appropriate Assessment (AA)

The Plan was examined for the need to undertake an Appropriate Assessment (AA). On initial examination of the Plan and in completing screening for AA, it was determined that Stage 2 AA would be required as the possibility of significant effects on European sites could not be excluded. The assessment process was undertaken having regard to the Council Directive 92/43/EEC, the Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and the Birds Directive. The outcome of this process is the AA Screening Report and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) that accompany this draft Plan.

## 1.2 Key Findings of the SEA and AA Process for the Draft Plan

Having completed the full SEA and AA on the draft Ballyhoura DEDP, it is evident that these processes have had a positive influence on the evolution of the Plan and integrating environmental protection as part of the plan-making process. The SEA process will also continue to have a positive environmental influence as the plan enters its implementation phase.

The outcome of completing the above environmental assessments has resulted in the following:

- Identifying and mitigating, where relevant, potential environmental effects resulting from the Plan through making changes to the Plan itself, embedding the principles of sustainability and protection of the natural environment into the Plan text and projects.
- Identifying and promoting potential positive environmental effects arising from the Plan and promoting environmental protection, enhancement and restoration of the natural and built environment. This is carried out through for example the development of visitor management plans, project-level environmental assessments and sustainable tourism education and training.
- Developing mitigation measures to ensure that any potential negative environmental impacts are avoided, reduced or mitigated at plan implementation stage. These mitigation measures include the requirement to comply with all relevant planning and environmental legislation and policy as part of the statutory decision-making process and/or consent process and also to relevant policies and guidance developed by Fáilte Ireland. Particular emphasis is placed on the following:
    - Requirements for undertaking environmental assessments at project level including but not limited to: Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Appropriate Assessment (AA) and site-specific floodrisk assessment (SSFRA);
    - Compliance with the policies and objectives of the Limerick County Development Plans 2022–2028 and the Cork County Development Plan 2022–2028;
    - The Climate Action Plan 2025 and subsequent updates;
    - The National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023–2030, The Limerick Biodiversity Action Plan 2025–2030, relevant Cork County local biodiversity action plans as relevant;
    - Preparation of visitor management plans, as appropriate in line with current and upcoming guidance documents from Fáilte Ireland;
    - Consideration for critical infrastructural capacity at tourism sites;
    - Promotion of blue and green infrastructure including integration of nature-based solutions that can also provide eco system services, and
    - Development and execution of an SEA Environmental Monitoring Programme for the Plan during implementation and operation.

## 1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING OF THE PLAN

The SEA Directive requires that the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes are monitored. The table below details the measures that have been selected in order to monitor the likely significant effects of implementing this Plan.

Monitoring can demonstrate the positive effects facilitated by the Plan and can enable, at an early stage, the identification of unforeseen adverse effects and the undertaking of appropriate remedial action. The occurrence of persistent significant adverse environmental effects which are directly attributable to this Plan would necessitate consideration of the effects in the context of the Plan and a possible review of part(s) of the Plan.

The environmental monitoring programme will have targets and indicators that allow for a quantitative measurement of trends and progress over time relating to the Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) developed during the SEA process.

A variety of sources of information will be used to undertake the Environmental Monitoring. The responsibility for monitoring is with Fáilte Ireland. Monitoring will be undertaken at key stages as part of the implementation phase of the Plan. It will be reported on to the Plan's implementation group where relevant information sources allow, and the findings of the monitoring will influence the actions of the plan as it progresses.

Refer to Chapter 10 of the accompanying SEA Environmental Report for a proposed monitoring programme.

## 1.4 IMPLEMENTATION AND CONSENT

This DEDP is a non-statutory tourism plan, it does not provide consent, and/or establish a framework for granting consent.

Fáilte Ireland provides funding for sustainable tourism projects that emerge as part of specific, competitive, themed and time-bound grant schemes or as part of wider strategic partnerships.

This Plan has been informed by and is situated alongside a hierarchy of statutory documents setting out public policy for land use development, tourism, infrastructure, sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management. These include (but is not limited to) the National Planning Framework (NPF), Climate Action Plan (CAP),the National and County Biodiversity Action Plans, the Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020–2032 (SRRSESs), the Limerick County Development Plans 2022–2028 and the Cork County Development Plan 2022–2028; and local area plans located with the plan area.

Implementing the DEDP will involve Fáilte Ireland working collaboratively to facilitate, promote, support and coordinate stakeholders (including local authorities, other government agencies, tourism operators, communities and visitors) in their activities in a way that is consistent with existing and emerging plans.

In order to be realised, projects included in this Plan will have to comply, as relevant, with the various provisions of legislation, policies, plans and programmes. (including requirements for project level Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form part of the statutory decision-making and consent granting framework, of which this Plan is not part and does not contribute towards.

Such legislation, policies, plans and programmes include:

- Compliance with statutory higher-level plans and policies including the NPF, RSES, Climate Action Plan, etc.
- Compliance with statutory land use plans that form part of the statutory decision making and consent granting framework (e.g. Development Plans, such as REELVANT County Development Plans) as appropriate.
- Requirements for project level environmental assessment, including EIA, AA & SSFRA, as required.

# 1.5 INTEGRATING REQUIREMENTS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, MANAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION INTO THE PLAN

The SEA and AA team worked with the Plan preparation team at Fáilte Ireland to integrate requirements for environmental protection and management into the Plan. This process included changes to text in the plan and inclusion of new actions/projects in order to embed sustainability into the plan itself. Projects are varied and relating to land use, infrastructural development and land use activities and attractions. Reference made to such projects included in the Plan does not guarantee funding. While funding is provided to certain projects, Fáilte Ireland is not the developer.

Fáilte Ireland is committed to collaborating with relevant stakeholders, including relevant County Councils and the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) to ensure projects and initiatives coming from this Plan consider in full the requirements of project level environmental regulation and are afforded the correct level of environmental management to ensure natural and cultural resources are protected.

The SEA and AA identified the potential significant effects as a result of implementing the Plan. Key considerations for the sustainable development of the tourism sector include ensuring there is sufficient infrastructure capacity; visitor management plans are developed for sites experiencing high demand; and that developers/ promoters protect and provide opportunities for the sustainable development of green and blue infrastructure while also delivering ecosystem services. These areas of focus are discussed in the sections below.

## 1.5.1 Infrastructure Capacity

With respect to infrastructural capacity (including drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) the potential environmental impacts associated with increase visitor numbers and increase pressure on capacities of existing infrastructure (including accommodation) will require careful planning and assessment. The potential environmental effects of the likely increase in tourism volumes resulting from the relevant projects in this plan will need to be considered at project level and mitigated as appropriate. This aspect should be linked to the development of visitor management plans as appropriate.

The promotion of developing visitor friendly supporting infrastructure where it is required will also be encouraged.

## 1.5.2 Visitor Management

Those receiving funding shall seek to sustainably manage existing and any increase in visitor numbers and/or any change in visitor behaviour to avoid significant effects on the environment including loss of habitat and/or disturbance to sensitive species (including human beings and biodiversity). This shall include for example, ensuring that new projects are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities. Visitor management plans will be required for proposed plans, programmes and projects that are to receive funding as relevant and appropriate.

## 1.5.3 Control and Management of Invasive Species

Proposals and the development of Visitor Management plans shall consider the control and management of invasive species having regard to existing objectives contained with the County Development Plan.

Developers and managers of existing tourism or recreational sites and/ or future development should adhere to best practice and facilitate the development of appropriate facilities to minimise the spread of invasive species including along blueways and greenways. Further information and resources on "Check, Clean, Dry, Disinfect" should be sought on invasives.ie.

Fáilte Ireland shall work with partners to encourage greater awareness of potential threats caused by invasive species and how they can spread.

### 1.5.4 Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services

Those receiving funding shall contribute towards the maintenance of existing green infrastructure and its ecosystem services, taking into account the output of the Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystem Services project being undertaken by the NPWS (NPWS – Ecosystems Services Mapping & Assessment). Proposals for the development of any green infrastructure should demonstrate the synergies that can be achieved with regard to the: provision of open space amenities; sustainable management of water; protection and management of biodiversity; protection of cultural heritage; and protection of protected landscape sensitivities

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Ireland's Hidden
HEARTLANDS
Appendix 2:
Supporting Current Policy and Planning
Fáilte
Ireland

# SUPPORTING CURRENT POLICY AND PLANNING

In order to support the ambition for sustainable destination growth, the Ballyhoura DEDP is designed to guide the destination and its stakeholders through a five year development focus through continuous destination improvement and experience innovation. The Ballyhoura DEDP is aligned with a number of existing strategies, policy and industry reports. They include;

- A New Era for Irish Tourism, National Tourism Policy Statement, Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment
- Tourism Policy Framework 2025 – 2030 Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment
- Fáilte Ireland Corporate Plan – 2026
- Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023–2027
- Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021–2025
- National Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2023–2027
- Limerick Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2025 – 2030
- National Physical Activity Framework 2024–2040
- Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan
- Limerick DEDP
- Limerick City and County Council ReThinking Tourism: Limerick Tourism Strategy 2025 – 2030
- Limerick Development Plan 2022–2028
- Cork County Development Plan 2022
- Limerick Outdoor Recreation Plan
- Limerick Sports Plan

## A NEW ERA FOR IRISH TOURISM, NATIONAL TOURISM POLICY STATEMENT, DEPARTMENT OF ENTERPRISE, TOURISM AND EMPLOYMENT

The National Tourism Policy Statement (December 2025) 'A New Era for Irish Tourism' has established an overarching objective to ensure tourism contributes to broader government goals in areas such as climate action, digital transformation, competitiveness, market diversification, and regional balance. The National Tourism Policy is structured around five strategic pillars;

1. Delivering the Best Visitor Experiences
2. Promoting a Vibrant and Creative Tourism Enterprise Sector
3. Empowering Communities
4. Growing a Sustainable Future
5. Implementation and Data

## TOURISM POLICY FRAMEWORK 2025 – 2030

The Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment's Tourism Policy Framework sets out strategic objectives to ensure the resilience and growth of the tourism sector to 2030. The framework seeks to balance economic growth with environmental and social considerations to the benefit of communities all over Ireland. Climate change is one of the key environmental impacts identified in the strategy from the sector's contribution to climate change and impact of climate change on the tourism sector.

## FÁILTE IRELAND CORPORATE PLAN & REGIONAL TOURISM STRATEGIES

Fáilte Ireland's Corporate Plan is the basis for national tourism development supported by Regional Tourism Strategies (2022–2027) for each of the four regional brands.

## IRELAND'S HIDDEN HEARTLANDS REGIONAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2023 – 2027

The Regional Tourism Development Strategy presents a 10-year vision for the sustainable development of tourism in Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, together with a five-year strategy towards the achievement of that vision. It identifies what needs to be done at a strategic level to unlock the commercial potential of the region while exceeding the expectations of visitors, protecting the environment and enhancing the lives of local communities. The strategy provides a guiding strategic framework for other more detailed tourism development plans. Central to the strategy is a new approach to destination-led development which is based on a maturity model which recognises that the issues and challenges facing a destination are directly linked to its level of maturity

## TOURISM POLICY FRAMEWORK 2025 – 2030

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## OUR RURAL FUTURE: RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY 2021–2025

The policy provides a framework for the development of rural Ireland over a five year period. The role of tourism in local and regional economies is recognised as being of an importance that cannot be understated. The aim of growing the tourism offering and developing outdoor activity tourism are highlighted in the policy. Particular relevant policy measures include:

- Maximising resources and strengths in the Green Economy to support employment opportunities for rural communities across a range of areas including sustainable tourism (Policy Measure 26)
- Further development of the Fáilte Ireland Experience Brands including Ireland's Hidden Heartlands by strengthening Ireland's image as an outdoor activity holiday destination for both domestic and international markets (Policy Measure 32)
- Investment in greenways, blueways, walking trails and other outdoor recreation infrastructure to support the growth in outdoor recreation tourism (Policy Measure 36)
- Expansion of the Walks Scheme to achieve a target of at least 80 trails (Policy Measure 38)
- Explore the potential for the development of further tourist trails, including cross-border trails and initiatives (Policy Measure 39)

## NATIONAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FRAMEWORK 2024 – 2040 and associated Action Plan

The vision of the framework is driven by the common purpose of 'no one, or no setting left behind', placing Ireland as the most physically active country in Europe. The approach promoted by the framework seeks to reduce health inequalities and deliver the ability for every person and sector to be part of achieving a Healthy Ireland. The initial action plan of the framework covers the period from 2024 – 2029. This plan provides actions under eight investments in physical activity including sport and recreation for all and community wide programmes.

## NATIONAL OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL STRATEGY 2023–2027

Embracing Ireland's Outdoors provides a strategic, collaborative framework to facilitate the consolidation and sustainable growth of the outdoor recreation sector. The strategy addresses the challenges facing the sector as well as embracing the many benefits of outdoor recreation for our communities, including the mental and physical health benefits, as well as economic and social benefits.

## STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF GREENWAYS

The objective of the Greenway strategy is to assist in the strategic development of nationally and regionally significant Greenways in appropriate locations constructed to an appropriate standard in order to deliver a quality experience for all Greenway users. It also aims to increase the number and geographical spread of Greenways of scale and quality around the country with a consequent significant increase in the number of people using Greenways as a visitor experience and as a recreational amenity.

## LIMERICK DESTINATION EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (DEDP)

The Limerick Destination Experience Development Plan provides a five-year focus to deliver a collective ambition to transform Limerick into a compelling visitor destination and a base for exploring the Wild Atlantic Way. The Plan reflects a new destination focus required in the short- and medium-term to address the 'new normal' operational environment and how domestic and overseas visitors are welcomed back to the destination after the COVID-19 pandemic.

## ReTHINKING TOURISM: LIMERICK TOURISM STRATEGY 2025 – 2030

The plans focuses on Limerick as a vibrant, year-round events destination – defined by the creativity of the community, strengthened by the Ryder Cup legacy, and united as one integrated city and county experience. At the heart of the Plan is the concept of ReThinking Tourism – a commitment to telling the Limerick story in new and creative ways, building on Limerick's reputation for innovation, authenticity, and memorable experiences. The Plan focuses on key project areas that will guide the development of tourism across the city and county. These projects will be delivered collaboratively across multiple Council directorates and with external partners, ensuring that tourism reflects the aspirations of both the local community and the wider industry. It is the partnership approach required to achieve sustainable tourism development.

## BALLYHOURA TRAILS MASTERPLAN

This 15-year (2024–2039) Ballyhoura Trails Masterplan was commissioned by Ballyhoura Development CLG to inform the strategic investment and development of outdoor recreation trails across the Ballyhoura region, aligning with national, regional, and local community aims and objectives.

## LIMERICK DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022 – 2028

The plan sets out the strategic vision to guide the future growth of Limerick underlined by four key ambitions of a green region; embracing the River Shannon; resilient, connected and inclusive communities; and, a sustainable, innovative and competitive economy. In relation to tourism, it is a particular objective of the plan to support and harness the sustainable tourism development potential of existing rural and heritage sites, attractions and amenities.

## LIMERICK SPORTS PLAN

The plan, currently in development, is structured around three strategic development themes of improving our facilities, growing participation in sport and physical and ensuring we communicate all available opportunities to participate to all members of our community.

## LIMERICK OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN 2025 – 2030

The plan seeks to implement the framework of the National Outdoor Recreational Strategy at a local level across Limerick. The plan highlights the high level of outdoor recreation activity and engagement in outdoor recreation in the county, while conversely identifying inconsistencies in distribution of activity. The Ballyhoura destination is recognised for signature outdoor recreation and expertise in the area.

## CORK COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022

The County Development Plan sets out the strategy and policy objectives to deliver sustainable development of Cork over the period of the plan to 2028. In respect of tourism the plan acknowledges the need to distribute tourism growth from established destinations into more rural areas. New tourism products associated with the environment are one of the key focus of the plan.

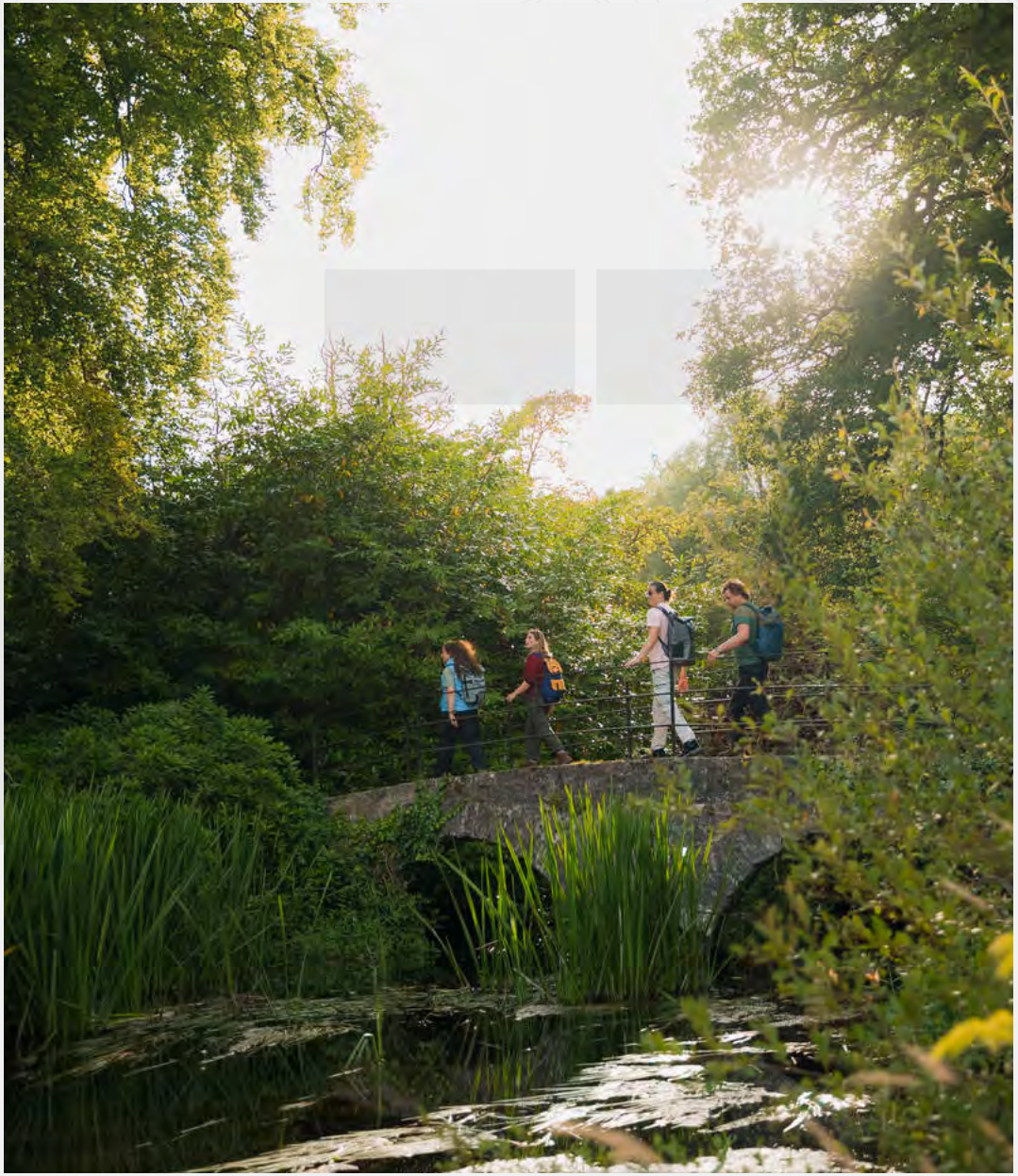
### Cork City, Harbour and East Cork Destination and Experience Development Plan (DEDP)

The DEDP is a five year plan for the sustainable tourism development of the area. It focuses on growing the appeal of the destination, reducing seasonality and increasing visitor spend. The plan recognises Cork's heritage in seafood and agriculture connected to its maritime trading history with an array of food producers from generations of family artisans to global distilleries within the plan's geography. The plan sets out the ambition for Cork to be the Food Capital of Ireland through connecting producers with visitors, increasing food experiences and expanding iconic food markets.

### West Cork Coast Destination and Experience Development Plan (DEDP)

The DEDP provides the roadmap for enhancing the visitor proposition in the destination to motivate people to visit the area, stay overnight and spend more.

The food story plays an integral part in the West Cork proposition, with the quality of food, and the highest number and most diverse local artisan producers found in Ireland. Maximising opportunities provided by the area's strength in its food offering is a key element of the DEDP. Positioning West Cork as Ireland's Premier Food Destination is identified as a catalyst project within the plan.



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