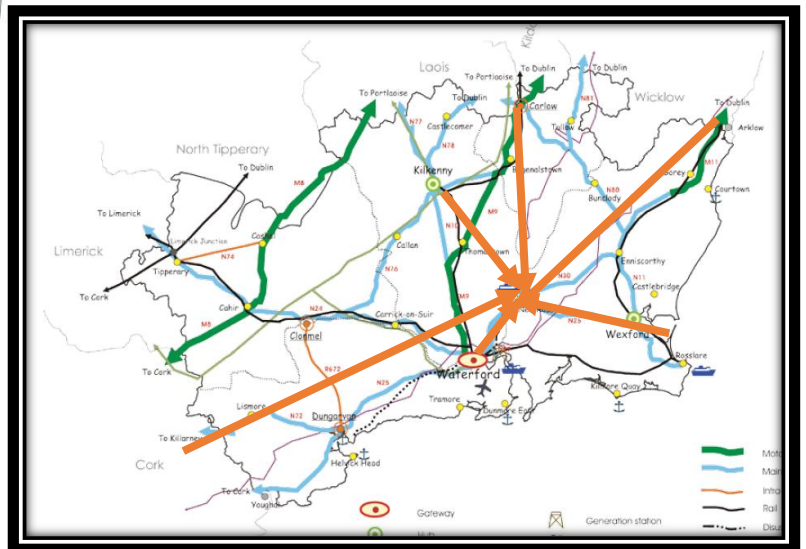




**New Ross
& District
Chamber**

Advancing business together

**Submission to the Draft
Regional Spatial Economic Strategy**



**A submission by New Ross Chamber of Commerce Incorporated
T/A New Ross & District Chamber – March 2019**



UNCOVER
hidden talents



New Ross is situated in the Heart of the South East and is well located to benefit from the ongoing development of the surrounding major towns of Wexford and Carlow and both Waterford and Kilkenny cities. Once a thriving port town with an industrial base and a thriving retail sector supported by the surrounding rural hinterland, New Ross has seen a decline in industrial jobs and been adversely impacted by the decline in Main Street retail.

The New Ross by Pass is currently under construction and will have a positive impact on the traffic flow in the region but particularly for New Ross which has been very badly impacted over the last 25 years with long tail backs and delays impacting the quality of the lives of commuters living in new Ross and its environs. It is expected that the bypass will be completed in 2020 and will complete the linking up of the major road networks in the southeast.

It is the strongly held opinion of New Ross and District Chamber that the Draft Regional and Economic Spatial & Economic Strategy has categorised the Town of New Ross incorrectly and it is hoped with the aid of this guiding document that the classification will change in the final Regional and Economic Spatial & Economic Strategy.

New Ross is not alone a Key Town within Wexford and the South East Region; it is of National / International importance. With Brexit in some shape or form becoming a reality, transport of goods throughout the country and into Europe will be an imperative to the future of Ireland Inc.

New Ross is uniquely poised to play a major part in this endeavor that is vital to our Countries Economic survival. With Dublin Port coming under much additional pressure, requiring major additional funding from Government this together with Rosslare Port investment may not be delivered in time to deal with the demand that will arise should the Land bridge through England become unworkable. While Waterford Port will also shoulder much of the burden, time to implement major infrastructure project may cause untold damage to our countries exports.

While our Port caters for smaller shipping, New Ross stands ready to increase the frequency of vessels and even at a more cost effective rate than the larger Ports. At present the Port is a vital hub in the economics of Ireland Inc; this in tangent with New Ross being logistically well placed, with motorway connectivity to Dublin, Waterford, Limerick, Cork and Rosslare.

It is the base of many of the Largest National and International Haulage Firms in Ireland all of whom have chosen New Ross as their base of operations and are uniquely placed to not alone address the National Transportation of goods throughout the Country but into Europe.

In recent years New Ross & District Chamber of Commerce has been working hard with its many stakeholders such as Wexford Co Council, Failte Ireland and the John F Kennedy Trust to prepare the Town for future development following the completion of the New Ross By Pass, a number of reports have been completed and we are working towards the implementation of the various strategies and recommendations identified in these documents, we have attached copies of the reports as part of our submission.

With the Launch of the Dunbrody Famine Ship in 2001 New Ross has been developing the tourism sector in the town attracting 70,000 visitors and establishing a major international tourism attraction building on the Kennedy connection and working with the Ros Tapestry and the attractions on the Hook Peninsula to develop and grow the Tourism sector and become a destination town and important location in Ireland's Ancient East proposition.

Transport Links

New Ross is the home to some of the largest transport companies in the country and is ideally located approx. 45 mins from Rosslare Europort, we would like to see the ongoing development of Rosslare as we see the port as a vital component in the ongoing development of the region. We would also like to see the further development of Waterford Airport and regular scheduled flights with a major carrier, we would see this as an area that the region should be at one in terms of lobbying the Government to ensure a major carrier is encouraged to create a series of scheduled flights from the Region to the UK and some European cities. The completion of the New Ross Bypass will see the motorway network almost completed in the South East Region we would like to see the motorway continued and completed from New Ross to Sliverue and of course from Enniscorthy to Gorey and from Rosslare to N25.



Infrastructure

New Ross is well served with services but lacks a connection to the Natural Gas Grid, the opportunity now exists to avail of the recent development of a Gas Turbine Power generating station at the Great Island and the Natural Gas is now due to be extended to Wexford town, we want this pipeline to travel via New Ross, current proposals are weak and costly and may result in New Ross being left out of the grid this would be very shortsighted and will have an impact on the ongoing plans for future industrial development and the potential for job creation along with our commitment to tackling Climate Change. Broad band is always an issue in New Ross and District with patchy coverage and no coverage in some areas, this is vital to the ongoing opportunities for job creation and the option of working from home for many people, we would ask that we lobby to ensure that the latest and most up to date technologies are used to ensure that we can avail of high speed Broadband throughout the region.

Tourism & Leisure



With the launching of the Dunbrody in 2001 New Ross was catapulted onto the tourism stage and we have continued to develop and grow the town with a particular focus on the tourism product, The Dunbrody has been the catalyst for the redevelopment of our Quay front and there is ongoing work on completing a Quayside plan which has recently benefited from the addition of a new river walk which was completed in conjunction with flood protection measures. Work is ongoing at enhancing the visitor experience to our town and there are now advanced plans for a major development of the tourism product and offering in New Ross incorporating the Ros Tapestry and developing the role out of the Norman Trail with New Ross focusing on the establishment of the Town by William Marshal and the Towns Norman background and working with Wexford County Council, Failte Ireland the John F Kennedy Trust and with community groups & organisations such as the excellent New Ross Street Focus, Mount Carmel Lace, Ros Tapestry to bring a world class Tourist attraction to the region, making New Ross a Tourism Destination Town and a must visit on the Irelands Ancient East Trail.



Norman Activation Plan



New Ross and District have been working with Failte Ireland on a Norman Activation Plan involving all of the key stakeholders in New Ross and The Hook Peninsula with an objective of increasing visitor numbers to 250,000 visitors in the coming years. Key attractions such as the Dunbrody Famine Ship Experience the Kennedy Homestead, Ros Tapestry, Hook Lighthouse, Loftus Hall and the OPW sites of John F Kennedy Arboretum and Tintern Abbey have all been included in the ongoing work.

Accommodation



We have identified the need for an increase in Bed nights in the region and this is something that should be pursued to ensure a good mix of quality and affordable accommodation.

The completion of the Kilkenny Greenway linking New Ross and Waterford is also key to our strategy of developing the tourism product we would also like to see a joined up plan where New Ross is linked with the Waterford Greenway, the Blue Way heading north from the town through St Mullins and a safe cycle route linking New Ross and the Hook Peninsula with access onto the future greenway linking Rosslare to Waterford.

Our River



Linking Waterford to New Ross by the operation of river ferry is currently in the planning and with excellent Marina facilities in New Ross we are ideally placed to take advantage of a coherent inland waterways tourism plan something which we would also like to see considered and developed.

Work has started on the development of Campervan Park on the outskirts of New Ross and this would enable overnights for Campervans heading to or from the Ferries in Rosslare but also would support New Ross as an ideal location from which to tour the South East Region. Tourism will be a key part of any future strategy and it is important that we focus on this sector in any future development plans for the region.

International Festivals

New Ross has also established a series of International Festivals listed below



Kennedy Summer School,

A festival of Irish & American History, Culture & Politics

New Ross Piano Festival, an internationally recognized festival of musicians from across the world which provides an exciting programme of piano concerts, featuring original collaborations between artists across a variety of classical genres, plus a whole day dedicated to jazz piano.

The Eugene O'Neill International Festival of Theatre is both a cultural and a civic celebration of the strong ties between Ireland and the United States exemplified by O'Neill's Irish heritage.



Retail

In terms of Retail New Ross like many smaller towns throughout Ireland is finding the high street retail sector very challenging, retail is changed radically over the last 20 years and this change needs to be acknowledged and accepted, the future for retail in towns like New Ross will be in providing niche shopping experiences and providing top quality services and working on the development of the Tourism product which will require accommodation providers, restaurants and cafes to meet the needs of the visitor. New Ross is well serviced with schools and leisure activities and is an attractive town to live in from an affordable and location perspective and an increase in residential population would further enhance the retail potential of our town. We would like to refer to Wexford County Council Economic and Investment Programme for 2018 -2022 which identifies the proposed works programme for New Ross and District.



Industrial

New Ross is still active as a port town but this has been impacted with the development of the facilities at Belleview Port which gives deep water port facilities which are vital to the continuing of port development and services to the region, New Ross sees this as an opportunity to develop the tourism and leisure market with the River Barrow being the gateway to the inland waterways.

We have and continue to have a number of major companies operating in New Ross in particular INTEGER Lake Region Medical and Green Bio Fuels Irl who employ almost 1000 people between them and are key to the economy of our town.

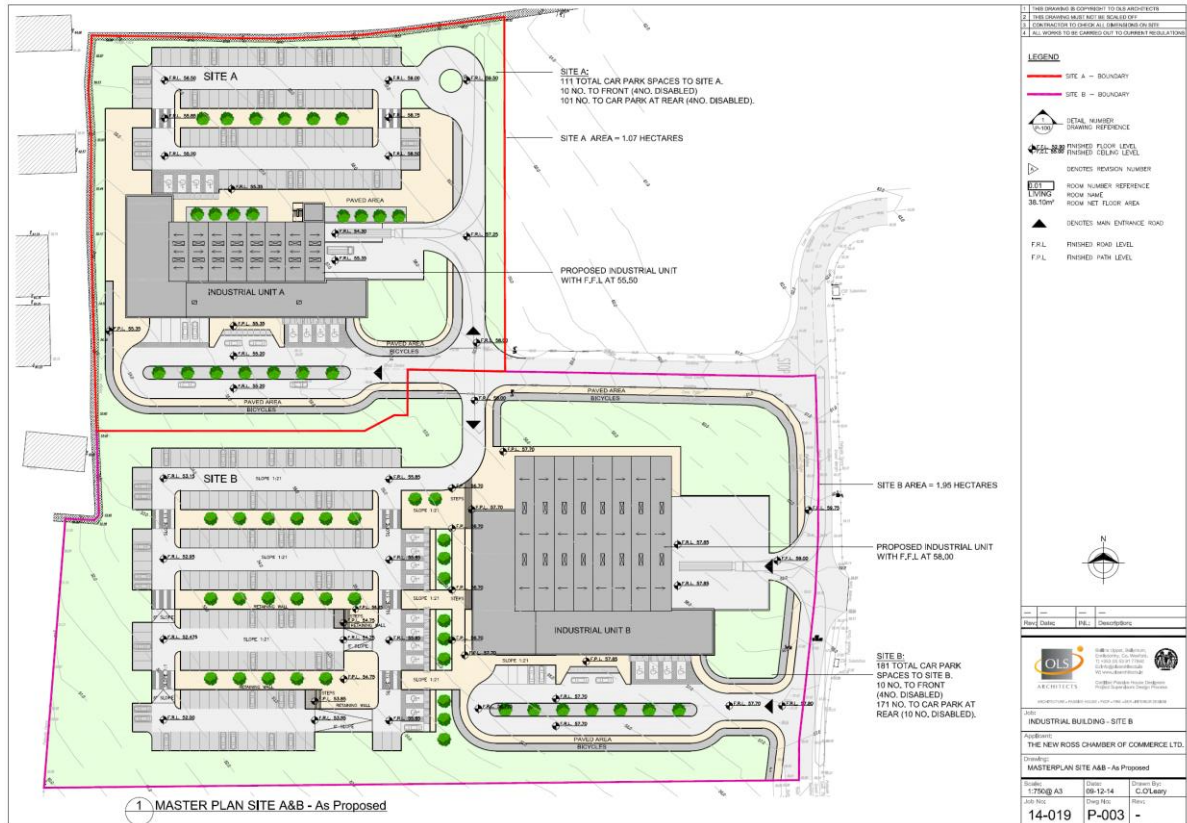


We are well serviced with business parks and we have one Business incubator center in the Rising Tide Building in South Street New Ross and there are further plans for the development of a technology Hub in North Street New Ross which will be developed by Wexford Co Council,



Advanced Factory

Proposals are also in place for the delivery of an Advanced Technology Building at our Industrial Park located in Butlersland New Ross. The issue here is to ensure that there is a balanced spread of job opportunities throughout the South East Region in complying with a balanced Spatial Strategy.



Educational

New Ross has always supported the University for the South East campaign and we continue to see this as another vital component to successfully attracting investment and job opportunities to the South East Region. New Ross and District is very well serviced with first class primary and secondary schools all of a high standard and beneficiaries of major investment in recent years, we would like to see an outreach Campus located in New Ross which would be beneficial for our town and district.



Documents Attached

- New Ross District & Hook Peninsula Scoping Report
- Wexford County Council Economic & Community Investment Programme
- Norman Activation Plan Note



Comhairle Contae
Loch Garman
Wexford
County Council

“OUR AMBITION, YOUR FUTURE”



WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL
ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY
INVESTMENT PROGRAMME
2018 – 2022



Message from the Cathaoirleach of Wexford County Council

The Members of Wexford County Council, working alongside the Executive, have developed this ambitious and targeted Economic and Community Investment Programme which will see the delivery of dozens of major infrastructure projects, job-creation opportunities and flagship community facilities across County Wexford. It is expected that investments totalling more than €50M by Wexford County Council will unlock further public and private funding in multiples of this amount over the next 5 years.

Much of the work is already under way and with the continued support of relevant Government Departments, state agencies and local development organisations. Wexford County Council will oversee the implementation of this programme which will transform our county.

As a county, we are deficient in our economic and community infrastructure and this ambitious investment programme is a strong message from the Council that not only do we recognise this deficiency, but we are absolutely committed in our duty as Elected Members to address it.

It is our ambition that these investments will impact positively on every part of County Wexford helping us to promote our unique heritage and rich culture and creating real opportunities for our talented workforce to gain access to employment right here in County Wexford.



John Hegarty, Cathaoirleach

Message from the Chief Executive of Wexford County Council

As Wexford continues to experience economic recovery, it is important that the Council acts decisively to lead the development and delivery of a range of targeted initiatives that will help the county to realise the huge potential it has in terms of jobs, quality of life and environment.

We must have ambition and vision for the future. Wexford County Council has carried out detailed research on the social and economic profile of the county. County Wexford, with its many great attributes, should not have such a high level of unemployment, should not be exporting our young talented people and should not have some of the most socially deprived areas in the country.



Tom Enright, Chief Executive

We need to take decisive action to address these challenges and place Wexford in a position to maximise growing opportunities. We must invest in commercial property solutions which will attract significant new jobs and investments; we must invest in tourism infrastructure in order to capitalise on the growing tourist market and our greatly improved road connectivity; we must support communities throughout the county to develop their local areas to become vibrant and thriving centres.

Brexit will no doubt create challenges for the Irish economy. However, with our direct connection to France from Rosslare Europort and our strong cluster of financial services and food producing companies, Wexford is in a unique position to avail of the opportunities that will arise.

Many of the infrastructure investments set out in this Programme would not be possible without the continued financial support of the people of Wexford and the strong leadership shown by the Elected Members of the Council. Recent modest increases in Local Property Tax and Commercial Rates have been the catalyst to drive forward the delivery of these strategic investments by providing the additional income necessary to fund this ambitious investment programme which I am very confident will create a better future for County Wexford and all its citizens.

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

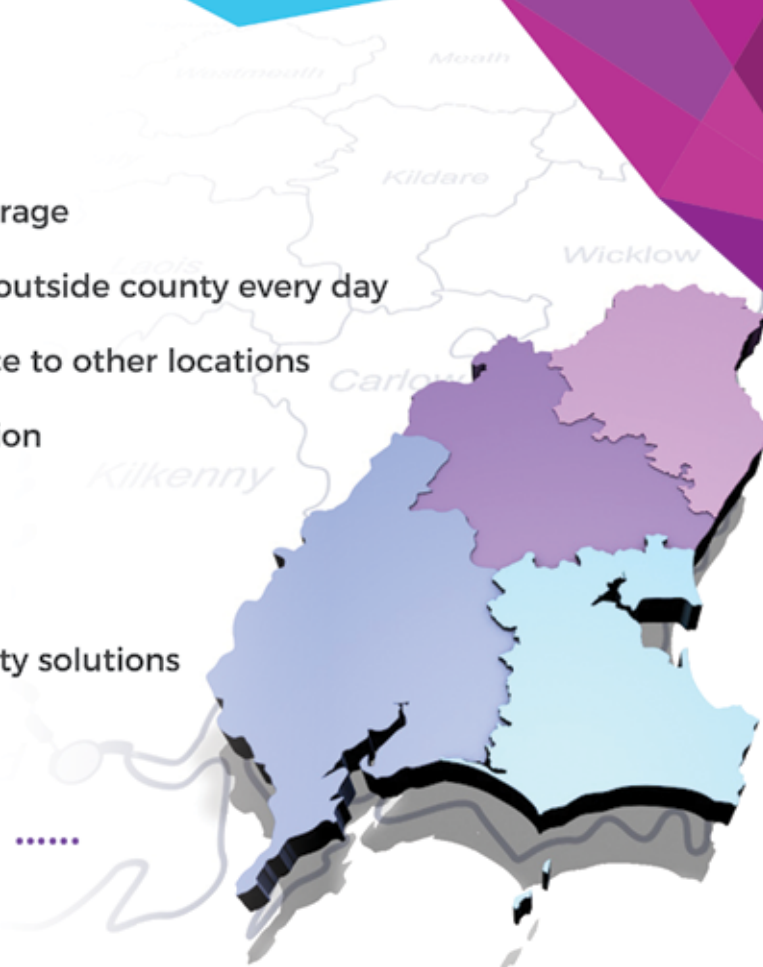
2018 – 2022

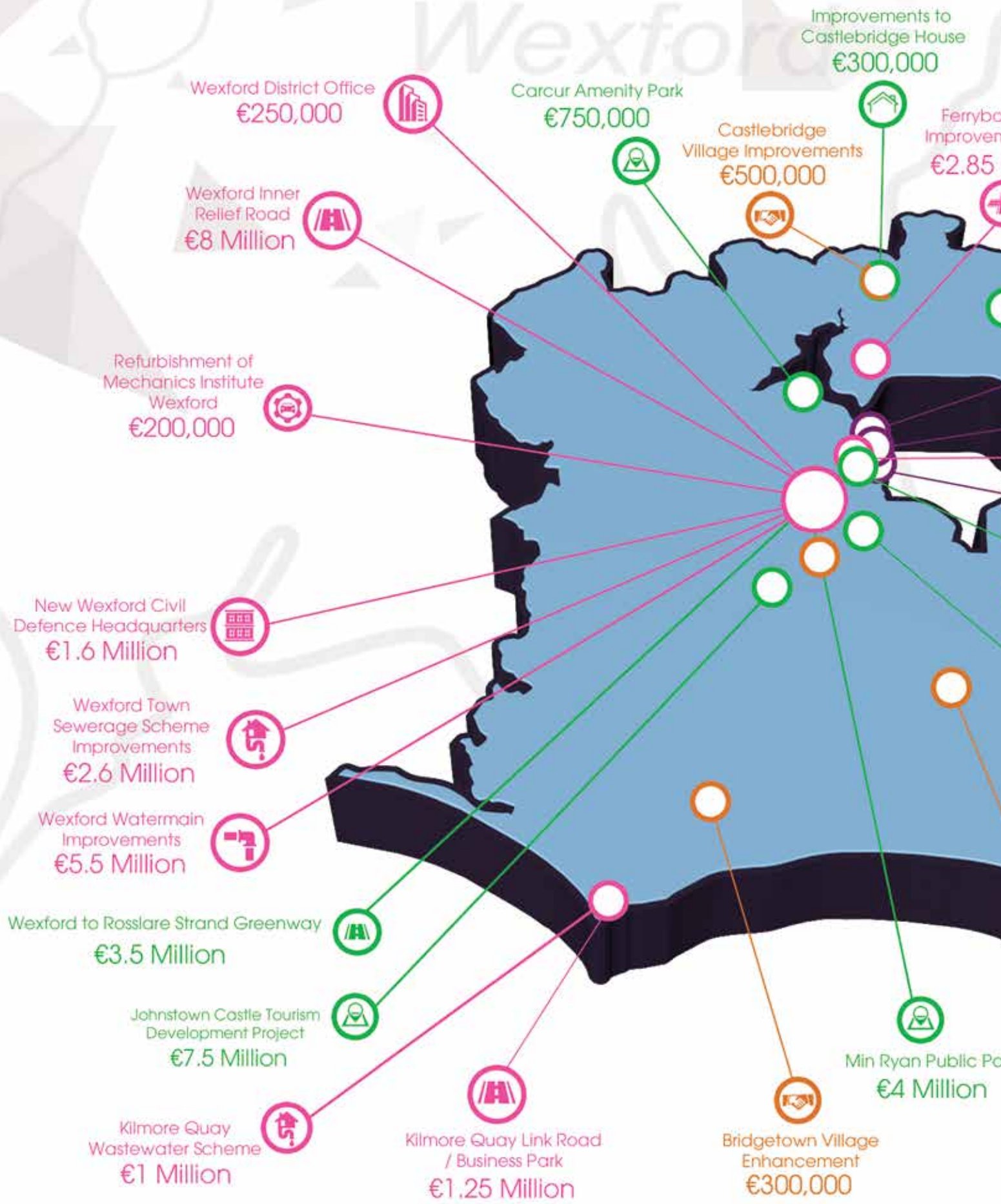
The Challenges for Wexford.....

- Unemployment 2% above national average
- 18.4% of workforce commute to work outside county every day
- Losing young people & skilled workforce to other locations
- Relatively high levels of social deprivation
- Access to private and public housing
- Underdeveloped infrastructure
- Shortage of quality commercial property solutions
- Brexit

The Opportunities for Wexford

- ✓ Improving road connectivity
- ✓ Council-led investment in commercial property solutions
- ✓ Availability of natural gas & high speed broadband
- ✓ Capacity for growth in our quality food sector
- ✓ International port at Rosslare Europort
- ✓ Affordable house prices when compared to Dublin region
- ✓ Brexit
- ✓ Vibrant Arts and Culture sector
- ✓ Opportunities to grow tourism, particularly in heritage and outdoor activities
- ✓ Great people, great climate, great quality of life!



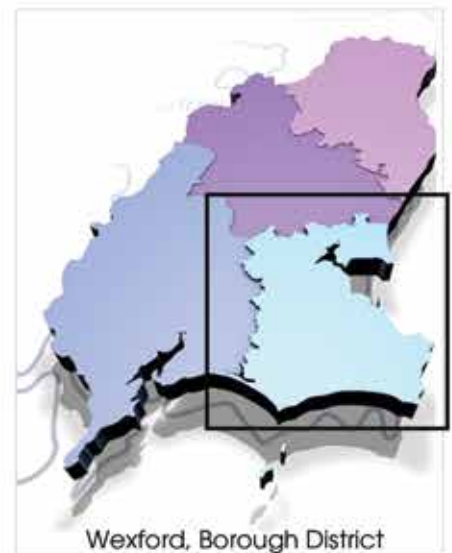
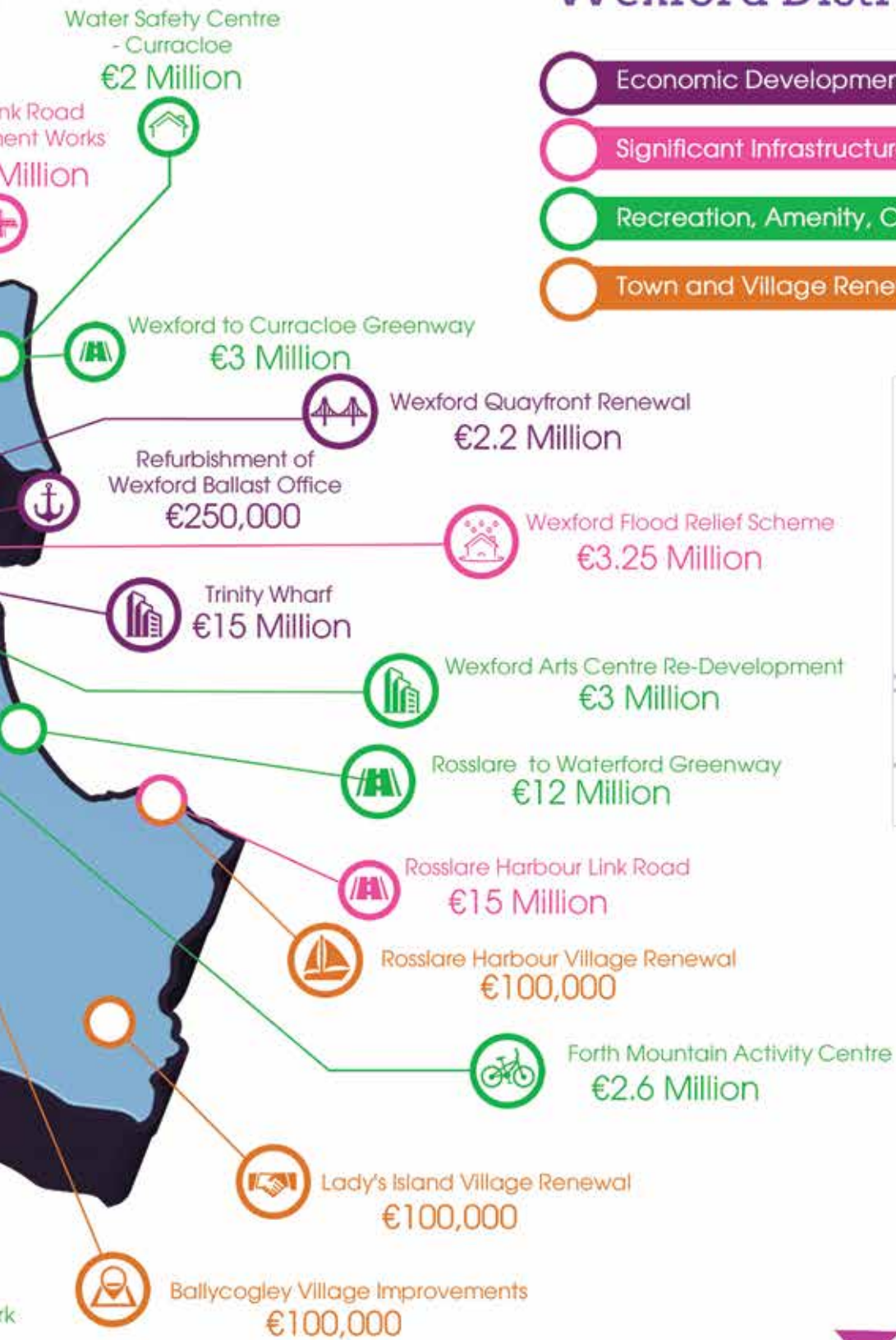


The rollout of this Programme has the capacity to transform Wexford Borough and District. Projects such as Trinity Wharf and Kilmore Business Park will offer exciting and innovative job opportunities while our recreational projects such as Min Ryan Park and Forth Mountain Activity Centre will provide much needed recreational facilities, increasing the attractiveness of Wexford as a place to live, work and visit.

Councillor Jim Moore, Mayor of Wexford

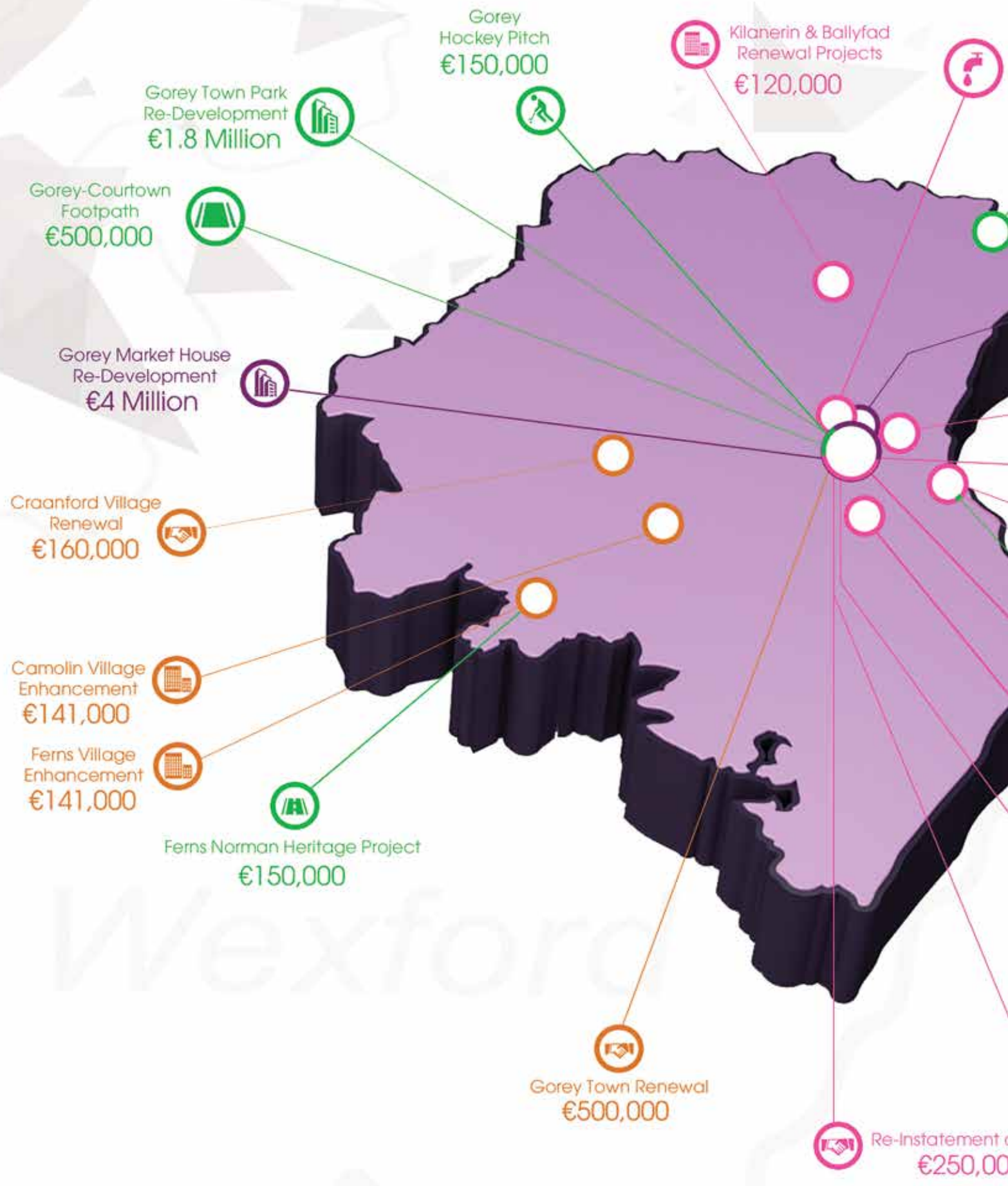
Wexford District

-  Economic Development
-  Significant Infrastructure Developments
-  Recreation, Amenity, Community and Tourism
-  Town and Village Renewal



Wexford & District Chamber of Commerce pledges its full support to Wexford County Council as it drives forward this ambitious and comprehensive programme of investment across the District over the next 5 years.

Niall Reck, President, Wexford & District Chamber of Commerce



Wexford County Council, through this programme of strategic investment, is working to provide further job creation opportunities across Gorey Town and District, while ensuring that the necessary recreational facilities are planned and provided to sustain and support our growing population into the future.

Councillor Joe Sullivan, Chairman, Gorey Municipal District.

Gorey District

- Economic Development
- Significant Infrastructure Developments
- Recreation, Amenity, Community and Tourism
- Town and Village Renewal

Gorey Regional Water Supply
€9 Million

Wexford Coastal Path
€3.3 Million

M11 Business Campus &
Hatch Lab
€5 Million

Gorey Minor Flood Works
€300,000

Gorey Town Public Realm Plan
€100,000

Gorey / Courtown Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade
€7.75 Million

Courtown Harbour Refurbishment
€1.7 Million

Courtown Community Complex
€1.1 Million

Courtown Coastal Protection & Marina
€1 Million

N11 Cycle Path
€200,000

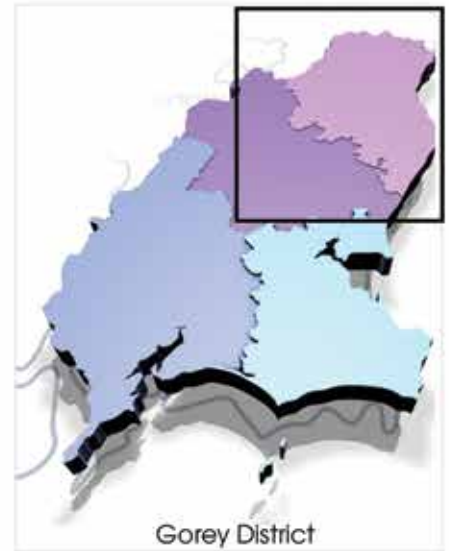
Red Row Footpaths, Courtown
€160,000

Gorey Inner Relief Road
€600,000

Improvements at Gorey
Fire Station
€350,000

Esmonde St Improvement Works, Gorey
€600,000

of the Avenue, Gorey
0



Gorey & District Chamber of Commerce is proud to work alongside Wexford County Council in the delivery of these projects. We respect and support the ambition shown by the variety and scale of the planned investments and our members eagerly look forward to the early delivery of these projects.

Jim Hughes, President, Gorey & District Chamber of Commerce

SOME OF OUR RECREATIONAL PROJECTS....



Forth Mountain Activity Centre €2.6m

Wexford County Council in partnership with Waterford & Wexford Education & Training Board proposes to construct an Activity Centre on Forth Mountain to meet a demand for recreational, social, health & well-being activities for locals & visitors.

It will create a hub for outdoor activities in Wexford and throughout the southeast.

Significant timelines for the project:

- Q1 2018 Design service infrastructure
- Q2 2018 Tender for Construction of Services Infrastructure
- Q4 2018 Commence Works
- Q2 2019 Complete Works



Town Park Gorey €1.8m

Gorey District Park will see the redevelopment of the existing town park and showgrounds. The project will cost in the region of 1.5m. The new park will have extensive landscaping and planting with many extra attractions; a cafe, amphitheatre, circuit training area, boules, additional seating, picnic and leisure area, splash pool and wetlands area.

The re-developed park will attract new visitors to the town and it will be a high quality amenity for the district's growing population..

- Q1 2018 Appoint Contractor
- Q2 2018 Commence Works
- Q1 2019 Completion



Min Ryan Park - Wexford Town €4m

This new 18 acre landmark public park will complement the quality of life for people in Wexford by providing a high quality, attractive, public open space accessible to all. It will boast an array of attractive features including playground, picnic sites, walking trail, wetland water features, arts / sculptures displays.

Significant timelines for the project.

- Q4 2017 Procurement of Construction
- Q1 2018 Contract awarded
- Q2 2018 Commencement of construction
- Q4 2018 Park Opens to Public
- Q1 2019 Complete All Works

SOME OF OUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS....



M11 Business Campus, Gorey €5m

New Business Park with employment capacity in excess of 1000 people across 100,000 sq. ft. of prime office development.

Includes the Hatch Lab, an Innovation, Technology & Start-Up Space creating an IT eco-system in the region to develop and grow new business in this area.

Hatch Lab already in place and open for business.



Advance Technology Buildings, New Ross €2.5m

The site for a proposed Advanced Technology Building is owned by Wexford County Council and is located in the Butlersland Industrial Estate in New Ross. The proposed building will be approx 2,400sq metres & will incorporate an Advanced Technology/Office Building to be developed using a Works Concession Contract and lease of the Unit.

- Q4 2017 Pre Qualification Procedure
- Q2 2018 Selection of Preferred Bidder & Contract Award
- Q1 2019 Commence Construction
- Q3 2019 Complete Construction



Enniscorthy Business & Technology Park €2.5m

Development of new 35 acre Business Park adjacent to St. Senan's Enniscorthy.

For businesses primarily in the science and technology areas

- Q3 2017 Site Purchase Complete
- Q1 2018 Complete site Master Plan/negotiate with interested parties/ lodge planning applications
- Q2 2018 Complete Planning Process

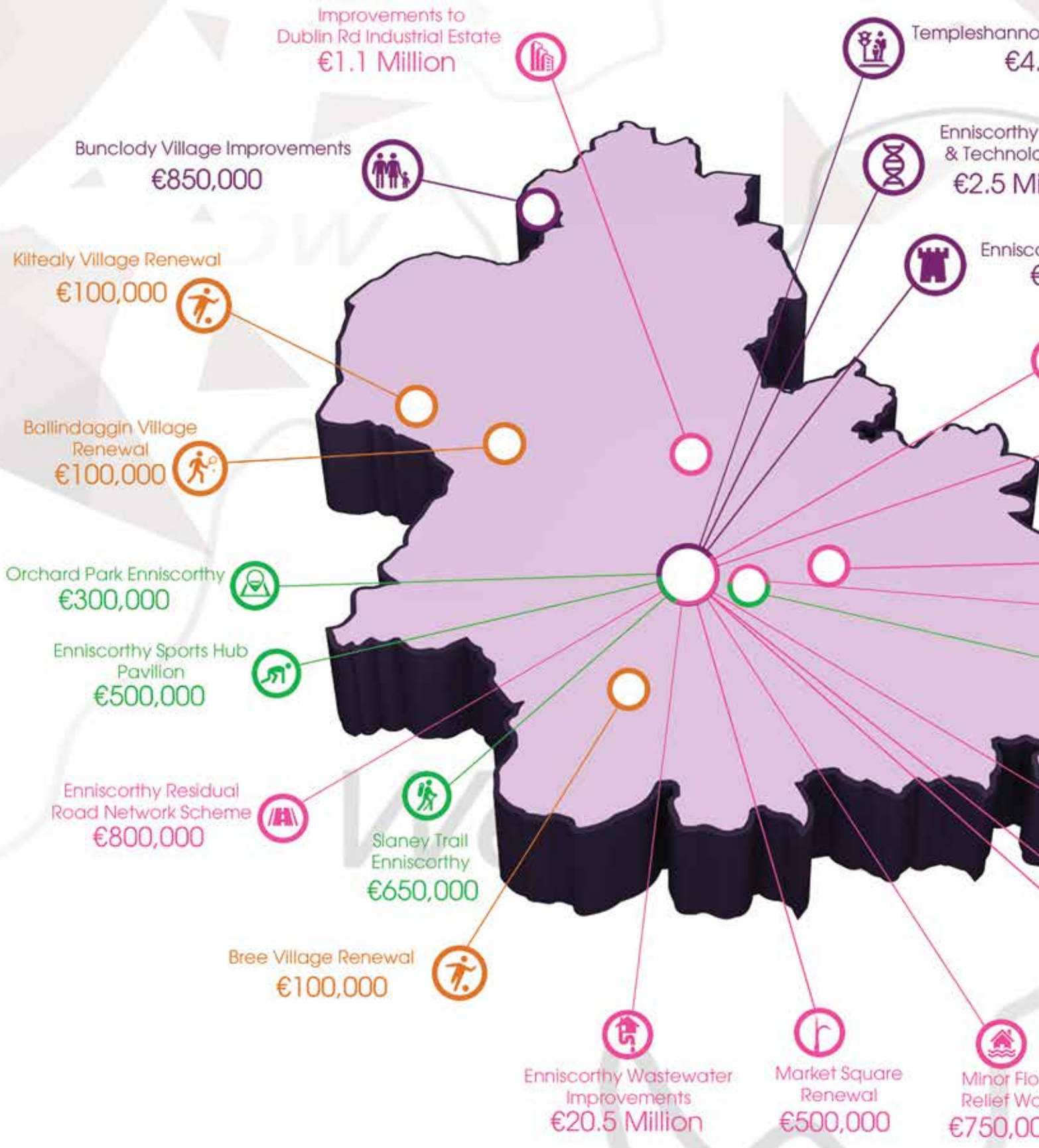


Trinity Wharf €15m

Development of new 10 acre town centre mixed-use site, including office, leisure and residential with primary objective of employment creation.

Already attracting strong interest from investors.

- Q1 2018 Complete Master Plan
- Q4 2018 Complete Planning Process
- Q1 2019 Commence Construction of site Infrastructure



This Investment Programme has identified very significant projects for development within Enniscorthy Town & District. Projects such as the Enniscorthy Bypass will greatly enhance connectivity between Enniscorthy and major population centres, while improvements to Enniscorthy Sewerage Scheme Enniscorthy will allow the town to expand into the future.

Councillor Keith Doyle, Chairman, Enniscorthy Municipal District

Enniscorthy District

in Regeneration Strategy
3 Million

Business
ogy Park
illion

orthy Tourism Project
€5 Million

-  Economic Development
-  Significant Infrastructure Developments
-  Recreation, Amenity, Community and Tourism
-  Town and Village Renewal



New Enniscorthy Library
€3 Million



Enniscorthy Courthouse Redevelopment
€1.1 Million



Enniscorthy Bypass
€341 Million



Clonhaston Water Supply Enniscorthy
€1 Million



Vinegar Hill Archaeological Project
€150,000



Enniscorthy Municipal District Office
Refurbishment
€1.2 Million

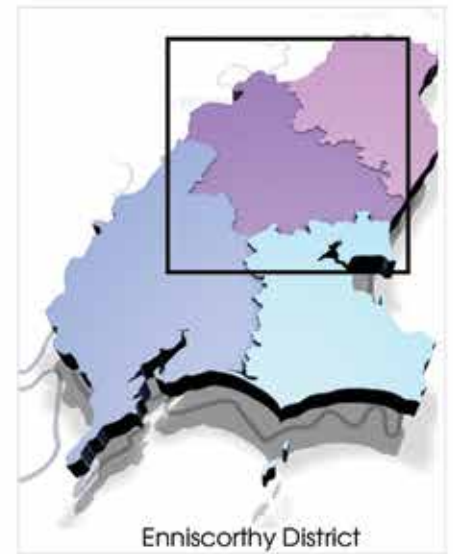


Enniscorthy Flood
Relief Scheme
€41.5 Million



Enniscorthy Traffic
Management Plan
€200,000

od
orks
00

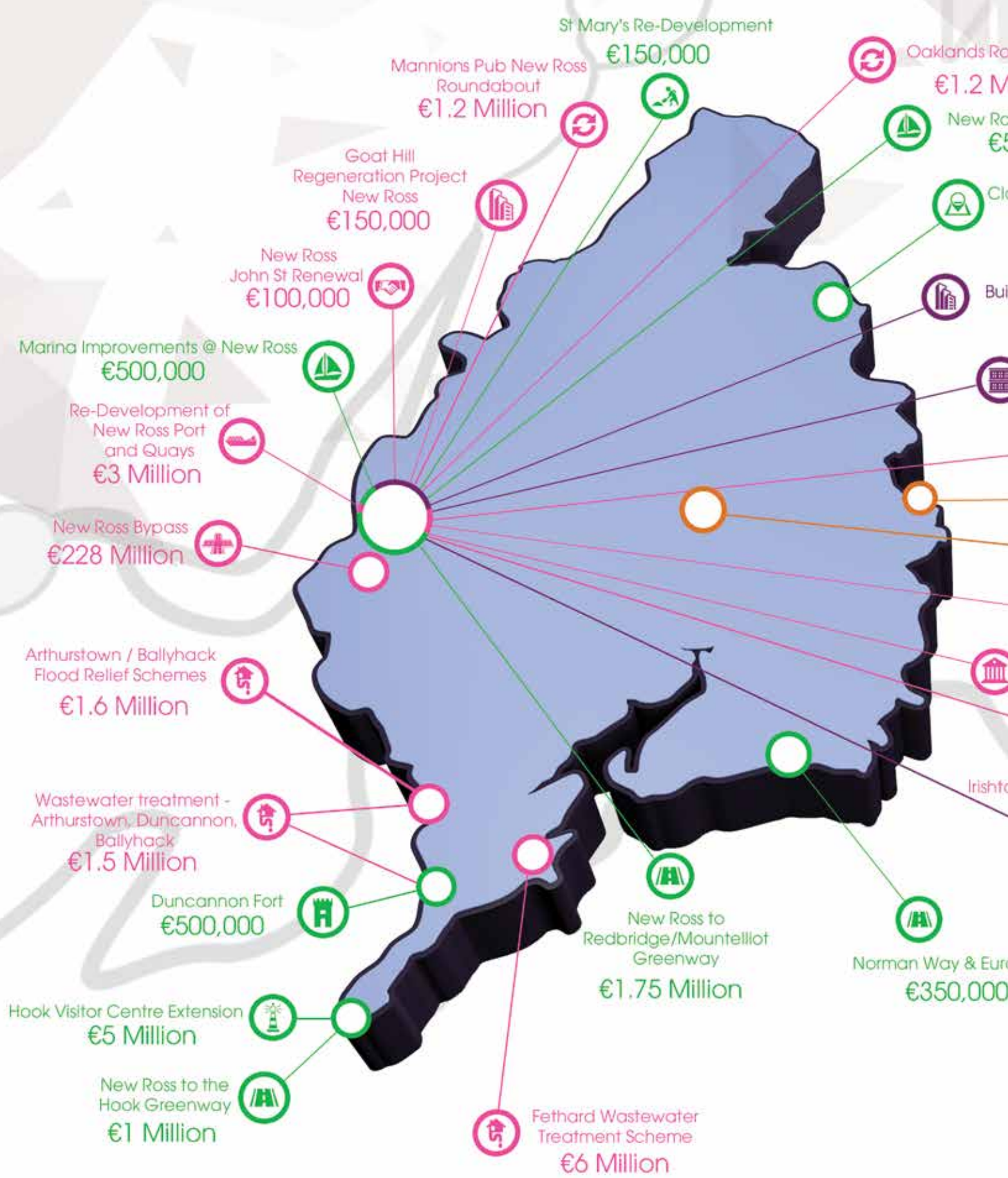


Enniscorthy District



Enniscorthy & District Chamber of Commerce fully supports this fantastic investment programme. We are confident that these developments will enhance business confidence in our Town and District and significantly improve Enniscorthy's access to and from all of Ireland.

Maree Lyng, President, Enniscorthy & District Chamber of Commerce.



This ambitious planned programme of investment in the New Ross District will do much to redress the economic decline experienced in the area over the past number of years. The Programme includes Advanced Technology Buildings on the Council's industrial lands at Butlersland and a comprehensive urban regeneration project in New Ross Town Centre, plus a wide range of tourism related projects.

Councillor Willie Fitzharris, Chairman, New Ross Municipal District.

Wexford Tourism Project
€5 Million

Donroche Public Park
€500,000

Advance Technology
Buildings Butlersland, New Ross
€2.5 Million

New Ross Town Centre
Enhancement
€1 Million

New Ross Interim Flood
Relief Scheme
€2.5 Million

Taghmon Amenity Area
€500,000

New Fire Station at New Ross
€1.2 Million

New Ross Library - Refurbishment
€2 Million

Down/Bawnmore Road Works, New Ross
€700,000

N25 Road Improvements
€5.1 Million

New Ross to Waterford
Greenway
€6.5 Million

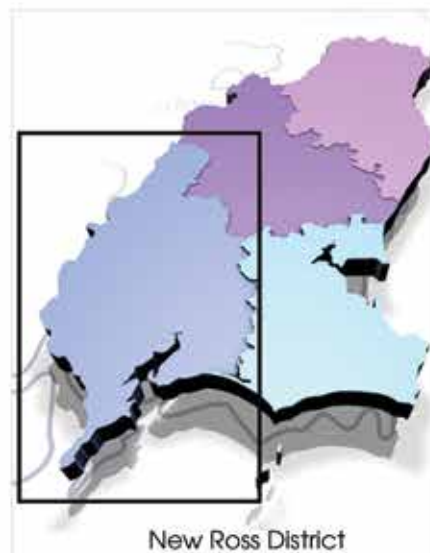
Great New Ross
Riverside Walk
€400,000

High Hill Regeneration Project, New Ross
€500,000

New Ross Enterprise Centre
€1 Million

New Ross District

- Economic Development
- Significant Infrastructure Developments
- Recreation, Amenity, Community and Tourism
- Town and Village Renewal



New Ross & District Chamber of Commerce fully supports the continuing efforts of Wexford County Council to bring further job creation opportunities to our District, to increase overall economic activity, and to provide appropriate recreational and social facilities for the communities of our district.

John Mc Sweeney, President, New Ross & District Chamber of Commerce

Wexford County Council's SOCIAL HOUSING PROGRAMME 2017-2019

The provision of good and appropriate housing solutions for those seeking Social Housing Support is a highly important priority for Wexford County Council. To address this, Wexford County Council has developed an ambitious 3-Year Housing Capital Programme.

The Programme, which will be delivered at an estimated cost of €200 million, will see our stock of social houses grow from a current level of 5,224 units to more than 8,000 units by 2019, an increase of almost 2800 properties.

This substantial increase will be achieved by meeting (and where possible exceeding) the ambitious targets set earlier this year when the Programme was developed and agreed with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, who will provide the funding for the Programme.

In 2017, more than 850 units of the overall target of 2,787 units were delivered. Wexford County Council will continue to apply the necessary resources to ensure that we meet our obligations and achieve the challenging targets set out in this three year programme, and in turn significantly reduce the numbers of families seeking housing support.

Since mid-2017, Wexford County Council has been to the forefront in the implementation of the nZEB (nearly Zero Energy Building) design standard, with all of our new residential projects now designed to meet the energy efficiency design standard. The nZEB standard equates to a BER (Building Energy Rating) of A2 or better, and is obligatory for all new public buildings commencing construction after 1st January 2019, and all other new buildings commencing construction after 1st January, 2021.



5224
Existing
Housing Units



Provide another
2800
Units

Total cost of delivery
€200m

WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

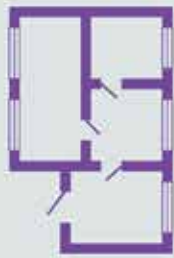
2018-2022

OTHER COUNTYWIDE INVESTMENTS

Public Lighting Improvements	€4,500,000	Recycling Facilities	€500,000
Footpath Improvements	€2,400,000	Community Developments Works	€1,000,000
Water Conservation Works	€2,000,000	Community Playgrounds Plan	€500,000
Destination Playgrounds	€1,500,000	Mobile Library Services	€750,000
Improvement to Public Conveniences at Beaches	€500,000	Arts Supports (including Capital works)	€3,500,000
Coastal Protection Projects	€1,500,000	Improvements to Coastal Harbours	€5,200,000
Village Sewerage Schemes - Improvements	€11,000,000	Burial Grounds Improvement Scheme	€1,000,000
Swimming Pools Improvement Works	€1,000,000		



€441,133 in grant aid given by our Local Enterprise Office (LEO) to 96 Businesses



111

Planning enforcement cases were investigated



300

New tenancies were offered to Housing Applicants



2,510

Illegal dumping incidents were investigated and cleaned up



350+

Community groups received an Amenity Grant



900+

Fire Brigade Callouts



1020

Environmental pollution cases were investigated

WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL SERVICES PROVIDED IN 2017



5,850

Tonnes of materials were collected for recycling



8,056

Housing Maintenance repairs were carried out



13,450

Public Lights were maintained



1,691

Planning Applications Received



611,000

Items were borrowed from our public libraries

1,501,578

Pages were viewed on our website www.wexfordcoco.ie



14,450,000

Cubic Metres of drinking water were produced



Codd-Nolan, Kathleen - Fine Gael
Tombrick, Ballycarney,
Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford.
086 3452736
kathleen.coddnolan@wexfordmcc.ie



Doyle, Keith - Fianna Fáil
Weaver Street,
Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford
086 2629195
keith.doyle@wexfordmcc.ie



Kavanagh, Paddy - Fine Gael
Drumgoold Lr, Enniscorthy,
Co. Wexford.
087 2785273
paddy.kavanagh@wexfordmcc.ie



Kavanagh, Willie - Fianna Fáil
Slaney Inn, Oylegate
Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford
087 0546803
willie.kavanagh@wexfordmcc.ie



Murphy, Barbara-Anne - Fianna Fáil
Ballinavocran, Bunclody,
Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford.
087 6736966
barbara-anne.murphy@wexfordmcc.ie



Mythen, Johnny - Sinn Fein
Ballyorri, Enniscorthy,
Co. Wexford.
087 9847278
johnny.mythen@wexfordmcc.ie



O'Rourke, John - Non Party
58 Ross Road, Enniscorthy,
Co. Wexford
086 8420609
john.o'rourke@wexfordmcc.ie



Walsh, Oliver - Fine Gael
Inch, Blackwater, Co. Wexford
087 6322667
oliver.walsh@wexfordmcc.ie



Connick, Anthony - Non Party
3 Millbanks Grove, Rosbercon,
New Ross, Co. Wexford.
Y34 T682 087 2338350
anthony.connick@wexfordmcc.ie



Fitzharris, Willie - Fine Gael
Clonmines, Wellingtonbridge,
Co. Wexford.
087 2550052
willie.fitzharris@wexfordmcc.ie



Fleming, John - Fianna Fáil
Mountain View, Palace West,
Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford.
087 2036069
john.fleming@wexfordmcc.ie



Murphy, Martin - Non Party
Corderrau, New Ross,
Co. Wexford.
087 6774262
martin.murphy@wexfordmcc.ie



O'Brien, Larry - Fine Gael
Ballinamona, Campile,
New Ross, Co. Wexford.
087 2538547
larry.obrien@wexfordmcc.ie



O'Connell, Oisín - Sinn Fein
The Lodge, Raheenduff Park,
Foulkesmill, Co. Wexford.
085 7338595
oisin.oconnell@wexfordmcc.ie



Sheehan, Michael - Fianna Fáil
8 Cross Street,
New Ross, Co. Wexford.
085 1349020
michael.sheehan@wexfordmcc.ie



Whelan, Michael - Fianna Fáil
33 St. Martin's Pk, Ballycullane,
New Ross, Co. Wexford
087 2388156
michael.whelan@wexfordmcc.ie



Breen, Pip - Fianna Fáil
Curraduff, Killenagh, Gorey,
Co. Wexford.
086 8139817
pip.breen@wexfordmcc.ie



Byrne, Malcolm - Fianna Fáil
14 The Chase, Ramsgate
Village, Gorey, Co. Wexford.
086 2237102
malcolm.byrne@wexfordmcc.ie



Donohoe, Anthony - Fine Gael
Annagh, Gorey, Co. Wexford
087 7736083
anthony.donohoe@wexfordmcc.ie



Farrell, Mary - Non Party
Coshier, Kilmuckridge, Gorey,
Co. Wexford
087 2740679
mary.farrell@wexfordmcc.ie



Hegarty, John - Fine Gael
Strand Road, Crosstown,
Wexford.
087 2971304
john.hegarty@wexfordmcc.ie



Ireton, Robert - Labour
Seamount, Courtown,
Gorey, Co. Wexford.
087 2531916
robertireton1@eircom.net



Ó Súilleabháin, Fionntán - Sinn Fein
Cnoc Bhaile Thomáis, Guaire,
Loch Gorman
087 6013877
fionntan.osuilleabhain@wexfordmcc.ie



Sullivan, Joe - Fianna Fáil
Daru House, Ballywilliam,
Gorey, Co. Wexford.
087 2416375
joe.sullivan@wexfordmcc.ie



Carthy, Ger - Non Party
Airdownes, Ladys Island,
Co. Wexford
087 6255934
ger.carthy@wexfordmcc.ie



Hynes, David - Non Party
48 Davitt Road South,
Wexford,
087 2290248
david.hynes@wexfordmcc.ie



Moore, Jim - Fine Gael
Crianona, Kilmore Quay,
Co. Wexford
087 2858278
jim.moore@wexfordmcc.ie



Dempsey, Tony - Fianna Fáil
Ardbracan House,
Bartown, Wexford.
087 2754031
tony.dempsey@wexfordmcc.ie



Lawlor, George - Labour
12 Richmond Drive, Wexford
086 8164128
george.lawlor@wexfordmcc.ie



Roche, Mick - Sinn Fein
Orchard Heights, Bridgetown,
Co. Wexford
086 1004550
mick.roche@wexfordmcc.ie



Tony Walsh
14 Thomas Street,
Wexford.
Phone: 087 1232855
tony.walsh@wexfordmcc.ie



Tom Forde - Sinn Fein
85 Liam Mellows Park,
Wexford, County Wexford
085-8421627
tom.forde@wexfordmcc.ie

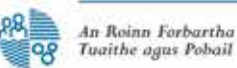


McDonald, Lisa - Fianna Fáil
"Bearswood", Murrin town,
Co. Wexford
087 9184034
lisa.mcdonald@wexfordmcc.ie



Staples, Frank - Fine Gael
Cregg, Ballycogley,
Co. Wexford
086 2305050
frank.staples@wexfordmcc.ie

Main funding partners



7th March 2019

To whom it may concern,

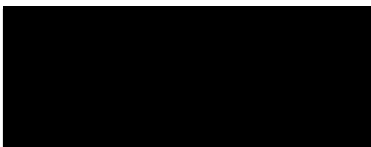
Fáilte Ireland has identified Wexford as a destination with potential for tourism growth particularly from the international markets. New Ross and the Hook Peninsula, in Ireland's Ancient East, has been identified as a destination with significant potential for growth because of the rich Norman history and heritage in this area. To realise this potential the area needs development and key areas to be addressed are quality of the visitor experience on the ground, sense of place for the visitor, having a range of things to do by day and by night along with places to eat and stay.

Fáilte Ireland is working with stakeholders and industry on the ground to address these areas of development through a shared plan with a programme of activity including:

- Developing the capacity and networks of local stakeholders to ensure a fit-for-purpose, engaged and connected community
- Creating a credible and compelling Norman Story proposition for New Ross and the Hook Peninsula
- Developing the products, experiences and events that bring the Norman story to life for visitors
- Ensuring the public realm, amenities and infrastructure supports the Norman story proposition
- Raising awareness of and promoting the Norman story locally, nationally and internationally, motivating domestic and international visits

Through this Development Plan the goal is for New Ross and the Hook Peninsula to become a renowned, thriving destination within Ireland's Ancient East, attracting 25% more international visitors by 2023 whilst continuing to welcome significant numbers of domestic visitors.

Yours faithfully



Officer – Ireland's Ancient East | Fáilte Ireland

4th Floor, Wallace House, Maritana Gate, Canada Street, Waterford X91 PP2R



W www.failteireland.ie

NEW ROSS DISTRICT & HOOK PENINSULA SCOPING REPORT



Report Status: **FINAL REPORT**
CONFIDENTIAL

Date: August 2015

Report commissioned by:
Wexford County Council

Prepared by



Acknowledgements

We would like to express our gratitude to the following agencies who offered advice and guidance during the preparation of this scoping report for the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula: Wexford County Council; Wexford Local Enterprise Office; and Wexford Local Development.

We would also like to acknowledge the advice and guidance that was so kindly shared by all those who participated in interviews; completed the online survey; attended the seminar or submitted proposals for consideration.

We would also like to show our appreciation for the excellent support and guidance that was provided by [REDACTED] throughout the collation of this report.

For further information on this scoping report contact:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Wexford County Council,
Carricklawn,
Wexford.

Report directed by [REDACTED], Wexford County Council and prepared by [REDACTED], Rural Development Consultancy

© W E X F O R D C O U N T Y C O U N C I L

Disclaimer:

While reasonable care has been taken in carrying out this study, the authors shall take no responsibility and accept no liability whatsoever for any inaccuracy, errors or omissions or for the consequences arising from the use of the information in this report.



Contents Page

Acknowledgements.....	1
Contents Page	2
Executive Summary	5
Section 1. Introduction	10
1.1 Background	10
1.2 New Ross District and Hook Peninsula Area	10
1.3 Socio-Economic Profile of the Area	11
1.4 Tourism Strategy for County Wexford	11
1.5 Tourism Strategy for the South East of Ireland	12
1.6 Tourism Strategy for Ireland.....	13
1.7 Overseas Tourism Trends.....	13
1.8 Domestic Tourism Trends.....	15
1.9 Tourism Attractions.....	18
1.10 Study Remit.....	19
1.11 Methodology	20
1.12 Structure of the Report.....	20
Section 2. An Audit of the Current Tourism and Related Assets in the Area.....	22
2.1 Background	22
2.2 Accommodation & Dining Assets	24
2.3 Attraction Assets	25
2.4 Activity Assets	28
2.5 Event Assets	29
2.6 Coastal Assets.....	30
2.7 Community Activity Assets	33
2.8 Summary	35
Section 3. Future Tourism Assets of Relevance Planned for the Area, County and South East Region	37
3.1 Background	37
3.2 New Ross and Hook Peninsula	37

3.3	County Wexford	41
3.4	South East Region.....	42
3.5	Summary	43
Section 4. Case Studies of Best Practice in Europe		45
4.1	Background	45
4.2	Island of Ireland Case Studies.....	46
4.3	International Case Studies	52
4.4	Summary	61
Section 5. Community Consultation Process		63
5.1	Background	63
5.2	WCC.....	63
5.3	Methodology	63
5.4	Consultation Findings	64
5.5	Summary	74
Section 6. SWOT Analysis		77
6.1	SWOT Table	77
6.2	Summary	81
Section 7. Conclusions & Potential ‘Step Change’ Options		83
7.1	Conclusion.....	83
7.2	Potential Framework Model	84
7.3	The ‘Big Picture’ Moving Forward	88
7.4	Summary	91
Section 8. Recommendations.....		93
8.1	Recommended List of New Initiatives.....	94
8.2	Summary	111
Section 9. Strategic Partners and Funding Opportunities.....		114
9.1	Background	114
9.2	Fáilte Ireland.....	114
9.3	Wexford County Council (WCC)	115
9.4	The Office of Public Works (OPW)	115
9.5	Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport	116

9.6	Wexford Local Development (WLD)	116
9.7	Local Enterprise Office (LEO).....	116
9.8	Heritage Council	116
9.9	Interreg Funding.....	117
9.10	FLAG.....	117
9.11	Summary	117
Appendices.....		118
Appendix 1:	Interview Schedule	118
Appendix 2:	References.....	119
Appendix 3:	Seminar Workshop Programme	121
Appendix 4:	On-line Survey	127

Executive Summary

This scoping report deals primarily with the potential of the tourism sector within the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula area of Co. Wexford to develop and deliver growth in visitor numbers in the years ahead. The report was commissioned by the Economic Development section of Wexford County Council (WCC) in spring 2015.

Why a Scoping Report?

Tourism development is very important to County Wexford and is a critical driver of economic activity. One of the strategic aims identified within the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019 produced by WCC is to *'Continue to develop the role of tourism and the development of a high quality and diverse tourism product throughout the county in a balanced and sustainable manner'*.

The Council wants to clearly understand the strengths and weaknesses of the overall tourism offering in the area and the opportunities that exist to grow tourism, and to use that knowledge to consider where encouragement, support, and resources should be targeted in the immediate and mid-term future. Using the scoping report as a catalyst the aim is to target an expansion of the 'product' base, engage effectively with the market, and deliver a meaningful increase in international and domestic visitors to the area and to County Wexford.

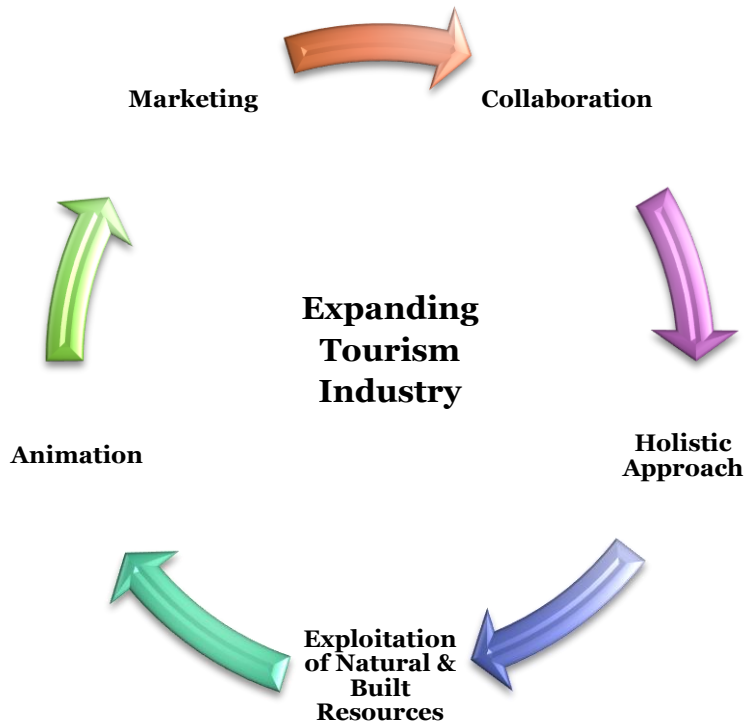
The Tourism Offering Currently in the New Ross District and the Hook Peninsula

Since the year 2000 the Hook Peninsula and New Ross have very successfully developed its tourism product offerings. The JFK Trust, Hook Rural Tourism, the Brandon House Hotel, Dunbrody House Hotel, New Ross Chamber, the Office of Public Works (OPW), Hook Heritage, and many other tourism interests, actors, and providers in the area have worked to develop very good tourism offerings.

Well established attractions such as the Hook Lighthouse; Tintern Abbey; Duncannon Fort; JFK Arboretum; Dunbrody Abbey; and Kilmokea Gardens attract many thousands of visitors to the region. In recent years, there has also been a host of new attractions that have significantly increased the profile of the area as a major tourism destination and these include Loftus Hall; Colclough Walled Gardens; the JFK Homestead; Dunbrody Famine Ship and the Ros Tapestry. New Ross town has also seen substantial public investment in tourism infrastructure like the quay front and exciting other projects are planned for the immediate future. In addition the wider area has a range of award winning restaurants, accommodation types, activities, beautiful villages, and stunning landscape and coastline. This has led to the area's emergence as one of the leading geographical tourism locations in County Wexford.

It is now appropriate to leverage the achievements already secured by advancing tourism activity to a new level, working together under a shared vision and utilising all the combined assets, tangible and intangible of the area, to develop a new common tourism strategy based on great visitor experiences.

It is vital that such development aligns itself with Fáilte Ireland's and Tourism Ireland's product offering development strategies e.g. Ireland's Ancient East, and customer segmentation both internationally and nationally. It is also critical to ensure alignment with local and regional initiatives like Visit Wexford and new inter-county product offerings to maximise the county's ability to engage, attract and hold international and domestic visitors.



Mapping out a positive future

The challenge is to hold visitors longer in the area i.e. to adapt and implement an 'Attract, Hold-& Disperse' tourism strategy. This can be achieved in two ways:

- Make compelling the reason for visitors to want to experience more in the area from a number of activities or attractions where visitors are on a short timeframe.
- Make compelling the reason for visitors to choose to select the area as their main holiday base involving accommodation, experiences and recreational activities.

The tourism sector in the area have great ideas to bring the tourism offering to a new level. As part of this report, extensive consultation with interested parties has taken place, and these ideas have been captured and feature strongly in a list of recommendations which has been developed by the authors. The focus is to ensure that the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula area are prominently promoted as part of Fáilte's Ireland's brand, Ireland's Ancient East which is strategically very important for attracting overseas visitors to the area. The timing of this report is also very opportune as it ties in with the new EU Rural Development Programme, which will commence from 2015 to 2020 and in the past has provided invaluable support to the tourism sector in the county.

As part of the work undertaken in the preparation for this report the authors examined a number of case studies of Best Practice in Ireland and internationally. These case studies offer an insight into how capital investment and collaborative partnerships can very successfully create world class tourism destinations. They also highlight how essential it is to have the basic elements of the tourism experience right if it is to successfully grow the sector. Fundamentals such as quality accommodation; things to see and do; good signage; a warm welcome reinforced by the highest standards of customer care and service; and high environmental standards are now core aspects of visitor expectations.

Delivering on the potential

These are some of the initiatives this report is recommending:

- Creation of a Norman Trail centre in the area with linkages to the cities of Waterford and Kilkenny and other areas within Ireland's Ancient East
- Major investment in Duncannon Fort and a waste water treatment plant thereby supporting the creation of a Family Hub Hot Spot in Duncannon
- Villages and town infrastructural works to visually enhance New Ross Town and the villages of Duncannon, Fethard on Sea and Slade. These improvement works would promote the heritage of these areas
- Establishment of Tourism Co-ordinating Group
- Training and mentoring for tourism businesses in collaboration, product bundling, cross-selling
- Supports to animate the 'story' of the area through the Ireland's Ancient East Initiative
- Greenway between New Ross and Waterford and the Redbridge Greenway
- Blueway between New Ross and Waterford and the establishment of the River Explorer Ferry Experience (River Hub Hot Spot)
- Walking trails along the coast. Prioritise opening up routes between Duncannon and Arthurstown and securing permissive rights agreements to develop new walking trails on the Hook Peninsula.
- Major investment in St. Mary's Church and four town parks in New Ross as part of the development of a Norman Quarter in the town (Urban Hub Hot Spot)
- Major investment in Fethard on Sea harbour (Marine Hub Hot Spot) to create parking, improved access and watersport facilities
- Liaison with the OPW and Coillte regarding the continued development of all year round facilities in Tintern Abbey (Heritage Hub Hot Spot)
- Investment in the infrastructure at the Hook Lighthouse so that it can promote its unique geological formations (Geological Hub Hot Spot)
- Co-ordination of evening entertainment to ensure cultural activities are available every evening during the summer season
- Support the development of campervan facilities at Baginbun / Carnivan and other appropriate locations
- Continued developed of JFK Arboretum; Hook Lighthouse; Rosegarland Estate; Dunbrody Abbey and other major attractions on the Peninsula
- Support for private developments in the accommodation sector including hotels; leisure facilities, hostels and campervan sites
- A series of new festivals and events
- Signage strategy and implementation across the whole area
- Once the area is 'fit for purpose' launch a major marketing campaign under the Visit Wexford and Ireland's Ancient East initiatives

The New Ross District and the Hook Peninsula can and should deliver significant tourism growth in the coming five years, with the resultant benefit in economic activity and growth in jobs. It has the foundation in place to build that future but strong leadership and collaboration is essential to ensure it fulfills its upmost potential.

This scoping report, prepared by the authors, will be submitted to Wexford County Council – Economic Development Section to help inform future planning and expenditure decisions in the tourism area.



Dunbrody Famine Ship



Tintern Abbey



Duncannon Beach



Waterford Estuary



JFK Arboretum



Loftus Hall

Section 1

Introduction



Section 1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Since 2010, overseas visitors to Ireland has increased year on year and the total tourism revenue for the economy in 2013 was around €5.7 billion. The tourism sector supports 140,000 jobs in the accommodation and food sector alone, and overall employment in tourism is estimated to be in the region of 200,000 nationally. The tourism industry also has a multiplier effect with increased spend in the local economy in supermarkets and local shops.



Dunbrody Famine Ship

Tourism development is very important to County Wexford and is a critical driver of economic activity. One of the strategic aims identified within the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019 produced by Wexford County Council (WCC) is to ‘*Continue to develop the role of tourism and the development of a high quality and diverse tourism product throughout the county in a balanced and sustainable manner*’. The challenge is to develop a tourism model for County Wexford that can rival the West Coast’s ‘*Wild Atlantic Way*’. This can be achieved through utilising its wealth of historic attractions and abundant natural resources so that it draws a greater number of international and domestic visitors to the South East all year round.

1.2 New Ross District and Hook Peninsula Area

Since the year 2000, the Hook Peninsula and New Ross have very successfully developed its tourism product offerings and credit is due to the substantial achievements of the JFK Trust, Hook Tourism, the Brandon House Hotel, New Ross Chamber, the Office of Public Works (OPW), Hook Heritage, and many other tourism interests, actors, and providers in the area in developing exceptional tourism offerings. There are well established attractions such as the Hook lighthouse; Tintern Abbey; Dunbrody Famine Ship; the JFK Homestead; Duncannon Fort; JFK Arboretum, Dunbrody Abbey and Kilmokea Gardens that attract many thousands of visitors to the region. There has also been a host of new attractions that have significantly increased the profile of the area as a major tourism destination and these include Loftus Hall; Colclough Walled Gardens; and Ros Tapestry.

This has led to the area’s emergence as a leading geographical tourism area in County Wexford. It is now appropriate to leverage the achievements already secured by advancing activity to a new level, working together under a shared vision and utilising all the combined assets, tangible and intangible of the area, to develop a new common tourism strategy.

The scoping report also needs to closely align itself with, and be relevant to, Fáilte Ireland’s and Tourism Ireland’s product offering development strategies, customer segmentation, and market focus, as well as alignment with industry trends in domestic and international visitor preferences.

For the purpose of this report the predominant geographical areas of focus includes New Ross Town and its environs and the Hook Peninsula. There are areas within the New Ross Electoral District that have not been considered in this report because it is of our opinion that they are more logically addressed in subsequent tourism reports linked to either the Enniscorthy or Wexford District.

1.3 Socio-Economic Profile of the Area

In 2011, the unemployment rate for County Wexford was 24% compared to the national unemployment rate of 19% in the 2011 census. The number of people on the live register peaked in September 2011 at 19,938 but has declined over the last 3 years to 16,268 in September 2014. There is a spatial distribution with highest rates of unemployment concentrated in the settlements of Enniscorthy, New Ross and Bunclody.

“Like any other part of the country, Wexford has massively been affected by the economic downturn after 2007, reflected in the drop in the absolute deprivation score from -4.0 in 2006 to -12.1 in 2011. This represents a drop of 8.1, compared to a nationwide drop of 6.5. This also implies that the relative position of Wexford has significantly worsened from the ninth to the third most disadvantaged county in Ireland.” (Engling & Haase, 2013)

The high unemployment rate in County Wexford indicates the importance of initiatives such as this scoping report so that employment can be created in New Ross and the Hook Peninsula through a further expansion of the tourism industry.

1.4 Tourism Strategy for County Wexford

The tourism industry is very important to County Wexford and the British and Domestic Markets are key target groups for the County and the South East region and this should be kept in mind when planning new initiatives and focused marketed interventions.

It is our understanding that this scoping report will map out a ‘Step Change’ strategy for tourism development for the New Ross District including the Hook Peninsula. The term ‘Step Change’ means a concerted accelerated advancement beyond current activities and scale. In the context of this project, step change is likely to be delivered in the areas of new product developments, integrated collaboration, enhanced market-aligned memorable visitor experiences, bundled offerings, new market penetration and development, increased visitor numbers, and increased prosperity and growth of the overall tourism sector in the area.

Based on the work that emanated from ‘Step Change’ using Kotter’s 8 ‘Step Change’ model the requirements for real step change is to (1) create urgency; (2) form a powerful coalition; (3) create a vision for change; (4) communicate the vision; (5) remove obstacles; (6) create short-term wins; (7) build on the change; and (8) anchor those changes in the culture of the organisation or grouping. Our methodology for this project is therefore framed by those principals.

1.5 Tourism Strategy for the South East of Ireland

Research by the Economic Development Section of WCC, 2013, identified that tourists who come to the South East Region have the following characteristics:

- Come for a Holiday (60%), Business & Conference (27%)
- Travel in Summer months
- Travel by Air from Mainland Europe or Britain
- Stay with Friends/Relatives, followed by Hotels, Guesthouses & B&B's
- Also visit the Dublin; South West; and West regions
- Mostly travel alone or as a couple
- Are 45+ years old
- Are White collar, Managerial & Professional

Specifically for the East and South of Ireland, Fáilte Ireland announced its new initiative 'Ireland's Ancient East' in April 2015. This utilises the wealth of historical and cultural assets in the region so that it becomes a touring area in its own right rather than a transit zone. Fáilte Ireland's emphasis is on built heritage as opposed to natural landscapes along the Wild Atlantic Way and it is hoped that this will make the South and East a very attractive proposition for those interested in understanding the relationship between local place, past and people.

"With the great amount of history and heritage in such a relatively compact area, 'Ireland's Ancient East' will allow us to seriously build on the assets we have in the East and South – and the significant investment which has been made in tourism attractions in the region over the last few years. While appealing to a different type of a visitor, I am confident that Ireland's Ancient East will prove as effective and popular as the Wild Atlantic Way and will deliver significant additional numbers of visitors, revenue and jobs to the region"
(Minister Donohoe, Minister for Tourism, Transport and Sport, 2015)

Ireland's Ancient East is based on comprehensive research in overseas markets which has defined the product offering around four thematic pillars:

- Ancient Ireland - The Dawn of Civilisation
- Early Christian Ireland
- Medieval Ireland
- Anglo Ireland



Arising from this market research the Ancient East proposition is aimed at two market segments who have indicated they would be more likely to come to Ireland for this kind of experience:

The Culturally Curious - older visitors (over 45) who want to broaden their minds and expand their experience by exploring new landscapes, history and culture. This audience is compatible with the research undertaken by WCC which revealed that overseas visitors in the South East are typically over 45 and travel either alone or as a couple.

Great Escapers - tend to be younger, early thirty-somethings and want time out from their busy lives and careers to connect with history and nature and their place within. This appears to be a new type of overseas visitor for the South East and if the marketing is undertaken successfully this could attract a different kind of visitor to the region.

The target is to deliver an extra 600,000 overseas visitors (growth of more than 20%) to the South and East region and increase visitor revenue by almost 25% to €950m in total by 2020. The challenge for County Wexford is to ensure that it entices a significant proportion of these visitors to this county by offering a unique, awe inspiring range of attractions and experiences.

1.6 Tourism Strategy for Ireland

In March 2015, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport launched its report '*People, Place and Policy, Growing Tourism to 2025*'. This states that the overall tourism goal of Government is that:

- By 2025, revenue from overseas visitors, excluding carrier receipts, will increase to €5 billion in real terms (i.e. excluding the effects of inflation). This compares to overseas earnings of €3.3 billion in 2013 (excluding carrier receipts – airfares and ferry costs).
- Employment in the tourism sector will be 250,000 by 2025, compared with 200,000 presently.
- There will be 10 million visits to Ireland annually by 2025 compared to 7.6 million in 2014.

1.7 Overseas Tourism Trends

Figure 1 illustrates the favourable increase in overseas visitors to Ireland over the last four years.

Figure 1. Overseas visitors (000) to Ireland 2011 – 2014

	2011	2012	2013	2014
Britain	2,878	2,774	2,929	3,164
North America	987	1,017	1,158	1,329
Mainland Europe	2,283	2,347	2,463	2,638
Other	357	379	436	474
Total	6,505	6,518	6,986	7,604

Source: Central Statistics Office - Overseas Travel, 2015

These statistics are extremely positive and demonstrate the real opportunity to develop the tourism industry to create additional employment across Ireland. It also reveals the important of the British and the mainland European markets with France and Germany representing the two most significant markets.

When this data is analysed at a county level in figure 2 it can be seen that Wexford attracts the highest number of overseas visitors within the South East. The British and Mainland European markets are the two most important to County Wexford. It is also interesting to note that County Waterford and County Kilkenny attracts significantly more visitors from North America than County Wexford experiences. In

2013, County Wexford only had 22,000 visitors from North America compared to 61,000 visitors in County Waterford and 72,000 in County Kilkenny. We recommend that a strategic goal should be to develop a stronger iconic product offering in the New Ross District so that the American visitors are attracted to County Wexford whilst they are travelling around the South East of Ireland.

Figure 2. Overseas visitors (000s) to counties in South East Ireland, 2012 and 2013

S.E. County	Total		Britain		Main Europe		N. America		Other	
	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013
Carlow	69	68	41	39	16	17	8	9	5	9
Kilkenny	211	207	49	42	76	75	74	72	13	18
Tipperary (S.)	124	117	62	55	33	32	21	21	8	9
Waterford	225	225	82	79	59	61	62	61	22	24
Wexford	229	229	122	119	64	65	25	22	18	22
S.E. Total	792	785	337	319	219	224	176	172	60	70

Source: Fáilte Ireland, Regional Tourism Performance in 2012 and 2013, Oct 2013 & Oct 2014

*Total visits to region are less than the sum of visits to the counties because overseas visitors can visit more than one county.

These statistics also reveal no change between 2012 and 2013 in terms of overseas visitors to County Wexford despite the 7% increase nationally. However, County Wexford has done well to maintain its overall position as overseas numbers visiting the South East declined between 2012 and 2013. Closer analysis of the statistics reveals that the South West, West and North West regions all experienced an increase in overseas visitors between 2012 and 2013 illustrating the effectiveness of the ‘Wild Atlantic Way’ initiative. If similar success can be achieved through ‘Ireland’s Ancient East’ initiative this would prove to be very beneficial for County Wexford and the wider South East region.

Fáilte Ireland also analysed overseas revenue in the period 2012 to 2013 and County Wexford experienced a decline from €65 million in 2012 to €60 million in 2013 as illustrated in figure 3. This mirrors the trends witnessed by all of the other counties in the South East who all saw a decline in their revenue from overseas visitors in 2013. However, the national trend was an increase in revenue and regions such as the South West, Shannon, West and North West all experienced a growth in visitor revenue in 2013 compared to 2012.

Figure 3. Overseas visitor revenue (€mn) to counties in South East Ireland, 2012 and 2013

S.E. County	Total		Britain		Main Europe		N. America		Other	
	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013
Carlow	37	30	11	10	13	14	5	4	8	2
Kilkenny	36	30	11	11	10	9	11	9	4	2
Tipperary (S.)	39	34	18	17	14	11	6	5	1	1
Waterford	55	49	19	24	15	12	11	9	10	5
Wexford	65	60	39	38	15	16	6	4	5	2
S.E. Total	232	203	98	100	67	62	39	31	28	12

Source: Fáilte Ireland, Regional Tourism Performance in 2012 and 2013, Oct 2013 & 2014

The success of the western regions to attract greater visitor numbers and increased revenue in 2013 is largely attributed to the Wild Atlantic Way.

“With its capacity to drive extra visitor footfall, mobilise communities and showcase the best of the West Coast of Ireland, the Wild Atlantic Way is set to be one of the most significant developments in modern Irish tourism and to be a significant engine of regeneration for rural Ireland. I have no doubt that this project will prove to be a game-changer for tourism in the west and will lure ever greater numbers of visitors to Ireland as they seek to explore the longest defined coastal route in the world.”

(Shaun Quinn, CEO, Fáilte Ireland, 2015)

The opportunity for County Wexford is to embrace Fáilte Ireland’s new initiative - Ireland’s Ancient East so that it maximises the benefit from the international promotion of the region. The annual statistics compiled by Fáilte Ireland is an important mechanism for tracking the county’s performance to ensure that visitor numbers and revenue are increasing over the next ten years as this new initiative is rolled out.

1.8 Domestic Tourism Trends

Fáilte Ireland research indicates that the domestic tourism market is performing well. In 2013 there was a volume growth of 2% and value growth of 7% when compared to 2012 nationally.

This domestic market is very important to County Wexford and it is ranked 5th in the country in terms of numbers of trips. However, the total number of domestic visitors has been declining to this county. In 2010, Wexford had 580,000 domestic visitors and this declined to 455,000 visitors by 2013. It is therefore important that the tourism industry attracts investment in new products and markets itself successfully so that this downward trend is reversed.

To attract a greater number of domestic visitors to the county it is important to gain an insight into the type of activities Irish people like to participate in. Figure 4 illustrates the type of activities domestic holiday makers typically engage in based on Fáilte Ireland research.

Figure 4. Domestic Holidaymakers Preferred Activities

Activities engaged in by domestic holidaymaker	(%)
National parks	23
Houses/castles	22
Hiking/walking	22
Watersports	22
Visits to spas	20
Heritage/ interpretive centres	18
Gardens	17
Museums/art galleries	14
Golf	9
Cycling	9
Angling	5
Attending horse racing	5
Equestrian pursuits	3

Source: Fáilte Ireland Domestic Omnibus, 2012 cited in Tourism Facts, 2012

Figure 4 illustrates that domestic tourists value wild landscapes, heritage sites, walking and watersports. These are available in the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula but there is scope to develop these further, particularly in the areas of walking and water sports.

A large number of domestic tourists are also from the Dublin area and typically travel to north Wexford or along the east coast. There is a major incentive to encourage these domestic tourists to travel on day trips to the New Ross District and motivate them to spend a longer period in the county because of the range of attractions on offer.

Fáilte Ireland also recommends that to drive growth in the domestic market it is important to understand the different market segments because this enables efficient and focused marketing strategies to be implemented. It thereby ensures that you get the maximum return on your marketing investment and provides a basis to make decisions in relation to product, service and experience development. Fáilte Ireland identify that there are three segments that make up 52% of the domestic market and these are:

- **Connected Families** are made up of families with young children. Their core motivation is to spend quality time together and grow as a family. This group makes up 23% of the domestic market and they require lots of things to do nearby and the accommodation and facilities must really suit their needs. This group typically stay in hotels or holiday homes for up to a week and use hotel/accommodation websites, review websites, social media and personal recommendations when deciding on where to holiday. One of their main barriers are the price of accommodation and activities.
- **Footloose Socialisers** tend to travel as groups of friends, for them holidays are about sharing experiences with people who are of the same mindset. This group make up 15% of the domestic market and are typically in their late forties. They tend to like good food and drink and are interested in the history and culture of the place they are visiting. On average their breaks tend to be for between one to three days and they demonstrate a stronger tendency to stay in holiday

homes/rentals than other segments. They are strongly influenced by value for money and they are the most likely segment to select Dublin City, although they do like travelling off the beaten track.

- **Indulgent Romantics** are made up of couples that are seeking a romantic getaway through which they can reconnect while enjoying wonderful surroundings. This group makes up 14% of the market and are likely to be aged between 45 and 64. On average their breaks tend to be for between one to three days and they prefer to stay in nice hotels with fine food.

Figure 5 illustrates the 10 reasons that would motivate each target group to revisit a destination.

Figure 5. Target Group Motivation

Connected Families	Footloose Socialisers	Indulgent Romantics
I feel comfortable there	Easy to organise holidays	High quality hotels
Has spectacular landscapes	Variety of activities available	Fascinating history
Has a 'wow' factor	Easy to get to	Easy to get to
Relaxing	Is relaxing	Romantic destination
Great outdoor activities	Good value for money	Full of Character
Variety of activities available	Spectacular landscapes	Authentic
Has great food options	Where I feel comfortable there	Unspoiled nature
Full of character	Great outdoor activities	I feel comfortable there
The locals make me feel welcome	Unspoiled nature	Relaxing destination
Authentic	Good food options	Easy to organise holidays

Source: Fáilte Ireland, 2014

This Fáilte Ireland domestic market research, gives a clear picture of the relevant target groups that the New Ross District and the Hook Peninsula area should target and what they are looking for. In section four of this report a number of case studies illustrate the value of cleverly directed marketing campaigns at core target audiences.



Dunbrody Abbey



New Ross Town

1.9 Tourism Attractions

Well known tourist attractions are very useful for drawing people into an area. It is therefore important to get an insight into visitor numbers at the top attractions in Ireland and compare this to the attractions in the South East and within County Wexford itself.

Figure 6. Top Visitor Number Attractions in Ireland

	Attraction	Location	Visits	Adult Price*
1	Guinness Storehouse	Dublin	1,087,209	€16.50
2	Dublin Zoo	Dublin	1,029,417	€16.50
3	Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience	Clare Shannon	873,988	€ 6.00
4	National Aquatic Centre	Dublin	813,406	€14.00
5	Book of Kells	Dublin	561,259	€ 9.00
6	Tayto Park, Meath	East & Midlands	391,000	€13.00
7	St Patrick's Cathedral Dublin	Dublin	385,000	€ 5.50
8	Fota Wildlife Park, Cork	South West	377,500	€14.50
9	Blarney Castle, Cork	South West	329,000	€12.00
10	Kilmainham Gaol	Dublin	310,910	€ 6.00
11	Bunratty Castle & Folk Park	Clare Shannon	286,270	€10.00
12	Rock of Cashel, Tipperary	South East	240,406	€ 6.00
13	Kilkenny Castle, Kilkenny	South East	238,244	€ 6.00
14	Old Jameson Distillery	Dublin	228,117	€14.00
15	Powerscourt House & Gardens, Wicklow	East & Midlands	204,109	€ 8.50
16	The House of Waterford Crystal, Waterford	South East	163,000	€12.00
17	Christ Church Cathedral	Dublin	157,486	€ 6.00
18	Dublin Castle	Dublin	157,253	€ 4.50
19	Phoenix Park Visitor Centre	Dublin	147,539	free
20	Dublinia	Dublin	145,741	€ 8.50
21	Clonmacnoise, Offaly	East & Midlands	138,481	€ 6.00
22	Aquadome, Kerry	South West	136,471	€15.00
23	Brú na Boinne, Newgrange, Meath	East & Midlands	132,649	€ 6.00

Source : Fáilte Ireland, 2014. (Note: The information in this table is from the Fáilte Ireland Visitor Attractions Survey 2012)

*Adult Admission Price is 2014 prices as detailed on line.

Figure 6 reveals that County Wexford has no attractions in the top list of 23 sites detailed above and there are only 3 listed from the South East (Rock of Cashel, Kilkenny Castle & House of Waterford Crystal). These sites all have in excess of 130,000 visitors which is significantly greater than any attraction in County Wexford.

If we now look more closely within the South East (figure 7) it can be seen that there is a diverse range of tourism attractions. Interestingly the top five tourism attractions within the region saw an increase in their numbers between 2011 and 2012, whilst the five attractions at the bottom of the table saw a decrease in their numbers over the same period. The John F Kennedy Arboretum and the Hook Lighthouse are the top 2 attractions in County Wexford, both of which are in the New Ross District.

Figure 7. Visitor Attraction Numbers in the South East in 2011 and 2012

Attraction	County	2011	2012
Rock of Cashel	Tipperary	233,038	240,406
Holy Cross Abbey	Tipperary	240,000	240,000
Kilkenny Castle	Kilkenny	206,277	238,244
The House of Waterford Crystal	Waterford	148,000	163,000
Nicholas Mosse Pottery	Kilkenny	92,000	105,000
J F Kennedy Arboretum	Wexford	86,007	95,215
Cahir Castle	Tipperary	59,822	62,818
Altamont Gardens	Carlow	47,514	44,862
Bishop's Palace (Waterford Museum of Treasure)	Waterford		40,000
Medieval Museum (Waterford Museum of Treasures)	Waterford		40,000
Hook Lighthouse	Wexford	33,744	35,163
Dunmore Cave	Kilkenny	30,024	34,258
Reginalds Tower	Waterford	29,368	29,184
Waterford and Suir Valley Railway	Waterford	29,000	27,400
Jerpoint Abbey	Kilkenny	21,534	20,032
Cashel Heritage Centre	Tipperary	25,000	20,000
Rothe House & Garden	Kilkenny	14,125	13,665

Source: Fáilte Ireland's Visitor Attractions Survey, 2012

To promote a 'step change' within the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula it will be important to create a number of top attractions that pull over 150,000 people to them annually. This would have spin off benefits for the smaller sites in the region as the visitors are encouraged to stay longer in the South East due to a wide diverse product offering.

1.10 Study Remit

This study involved an extensive consultation exercise; research into best practice within Ireland and abroad; and detailed recommendations on projects and initiatives that could be developed in the area so that the tourism revenue and visitor numbers would be significantly increased within a 5 year time frame.

The remit of this study is to:

- Undertake an audit on current tourism related infrastructure, assets and community.
- Engage with the community, tourism sector, and key tourism stakeholders to identify key themes of importance.
- Develop an evidence-based SWOT analysis of the tourism sector in the area.
- Identify a prioritised list of potential development opportunities in the tourism sector to bring about a step-change for the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula. These projects are guided by the current and predicted trends in domestic and overseas visitors to Ireland and based on market segmentation research generated by national tourism bodies and agencies.
- Explore the potential and challenges for initiatives in the following areas in consultation with WCC:
 - Accommodation provision and infrastructure
 - Coastal infrastructure and development
 - Built heritage
 - Tourism enterprise development

1.11 Methodology

This study has been directed by Tony Larkin, Carolyne Godkin and Siobhan O'Neill and prepared by Tony Ennis & Co. Business Consultants & Dr. Yvonne Byrne. Consultation with key stakeholders took place between April and July 2015. National and regional publications were analysed during the compilation of this study and incorporated into this report where relevant.

1.12 Structure of the Report

This report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 details an audit of current tourism related activities in the region;
- Section 3 outlines future tourism assets planned for the area;
- Section 4 reviews case studies of best practice in Europe;
- Section 5 details the community consultation process;
- Section 6 presents a SWOT analysis for the region;
- Section 7 illustrates our conclusions and big vision for the tourism industry;
- Section 8 details the recommended list of new initiatives; and
- Section 9 outlines the funding options.



Slade Castle



Colclough Walled Gardens



Fethard Harbour



Carnivan Beach

Section 2.

An Audit of the Current Tourism and Related Assets in the Area



Section 2. An Audit of the Current Tourism and Related Assets in the Area

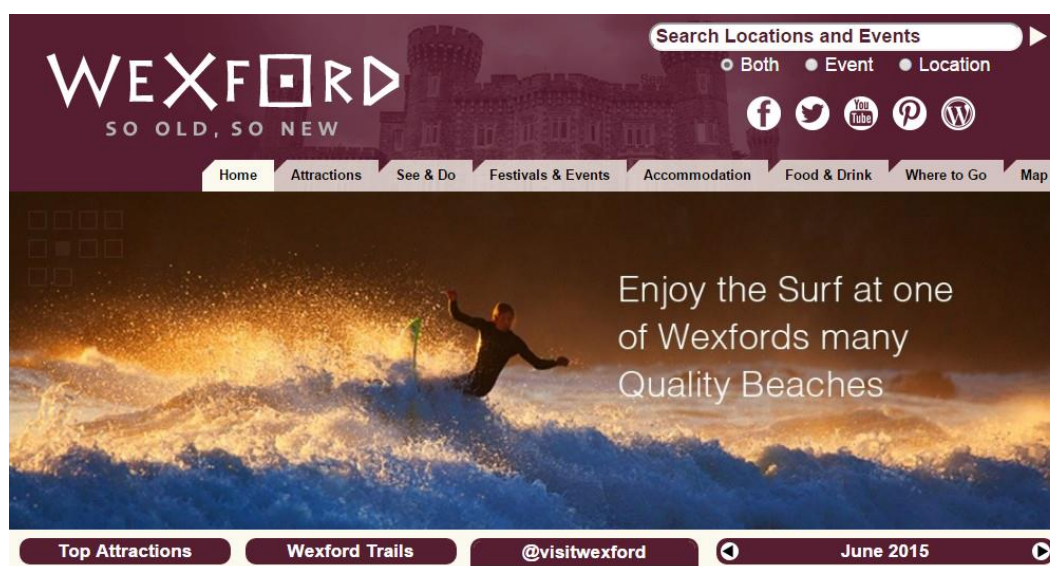
2.1 Background

The tourism sector has been one of the great success stories of the Irish economy over the past two decades. This period saw considerable and sustained growth with major investment in key infrastructure and a move from a focus on low cost to quality, and a greater awareness of what makes Ireland different. However, this situation changed dramatically between 2007 and 2010, with the impact of the global recession resulting in a significant drop in overseas visitors to Ireland. Nevertheless, the tourism industry has bounced back over the last four years and the future is now looking very promising with total overseas trips to Ireland for the period March to May 2015 up by 13% on the corresponding period in 2013 and up by 12% for the period January to May 2015. (Fáilte Ireland, 2015)

“These are very strong figures for the tourism sector and confirm what the industry has been saying to us over the last few months – business is very good and we may be looking at a record year for overseas visitors in 2015. Tourism businesses around the country are certainly upbeat with most of them telling us in Fáilte Ireland that they expect their business to grow this year.” (Shaun Quinn, Fáilte Ireland, 2015)

In County Wexford the major tourism stakeholders collaborate to market the county to domestic and overseas visitors to ensure Wexford receives its share of this growth. Visit Wexford is a Destination Marketing Organisation (DMO) made up of individual operators in the tourism industry in County Wexford, WCC, Wexford Local Development (WLD), and Fáilte Ireland, who work together to promote tourism in County Wexford regionally, nationally and internationally.

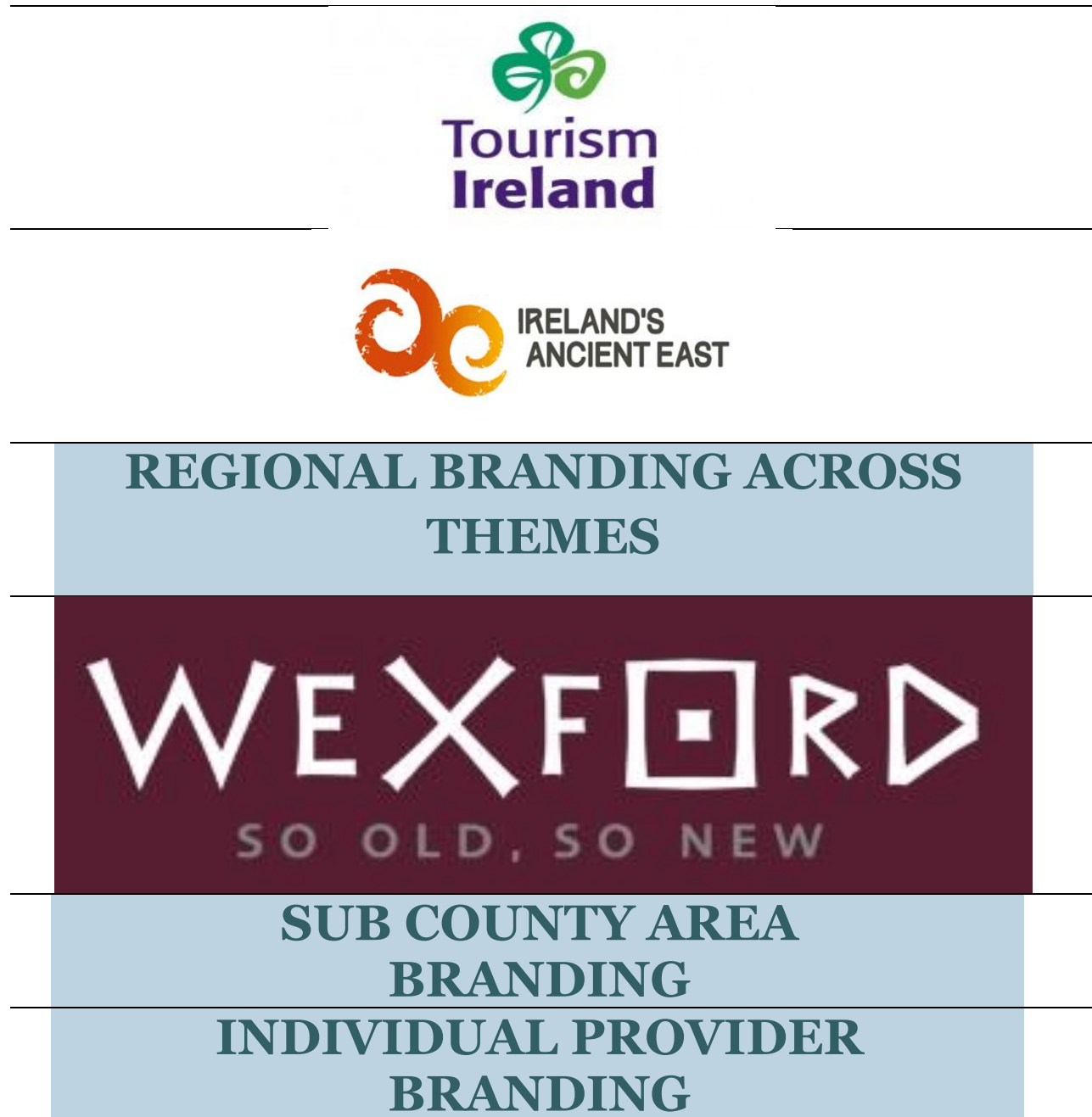
Its website, www.visitwexford.ie is a self-populating website designed to market County Wexford as the best tourist destination in Ireland to potential visitors from Ireland and abroad. [Visitwexford.ie](http://www.visitwexford.ie) is the county’s shop-window and gives everyone an opportunity to showcase their product online.



Source: <http://www.visitwexford.ie/>

The Visit Wexford initiative is about creating awareness of tourism offerings in Co. Wexford under a collective brand (WEXFORD SO OLD SO NEW) which resonates with potential visitors and visitors who are holidaying in the county. The visit Wexford 'Brand' sits within the hierarchy of Irish tourism brands as illustrated in figure 8.

Figure 8. Hierarchy of Tourism Brands



Within the New Ross and Hook Peninsula area there is a wide range of tourism offerings and this section details these assets, many of which are profiled on the Visit Wexford website. These are listed under the themes of: Accommodation & Dining; Attractions; Activities; Events; Coastal; and Community.

2.2 Accommodation & Dining Assets

The following are the main accommodation assets within the area:

Hotels

The Brandon House Hotel New Ross 4* Hotel, Eco Spa, and Leisure Centre - conveniently situated on the N25 in historical New Ross, nestled between Wexford and Waterford. This 4 star Old Country House Hotel is set within the tranquility of beautifully landscaped gardens and Brandon Woods.

Dunbrody Country House Hotel 4* Hotel set in 200 acres of beautiful parkland, Dunbrody Country House Hotel is an enchanting, intimate 1830s Georgian manor which is now among Ireland's finest holiday destinations.

Fort Conan Hotel Fáilte Ireland approved, small hotel. It is located in the sea-side village of Duncannon and is two minutes from the beach.

The Cedar Lodge Hotel 4* Country Hotel and restaurant situated in a tranquil setting beneath the slopes of historic Carrigbyrne Forest.

Country Houses

Kilmokea Country Manor and Gardens, Great Island, Campile

Glendine Country House, Arthurstown

Self Catering Holiday Homes

The self-catering industry is a key driver in the area with many holiday homes located in the Hook area alone and there is also self-catering accommodation around the town of New Ross. The summer trade for accommodation alone for these is estimated to be worth €4.3 million with the tourism multiplier effect to local supermarkets, tourism facilities and local attractions estimated to be even more (WCC, 2015). The largest single enterprise is Hookless Holiday Homes on the Peninsula with 65 self catering units together with associated leisure facilities.

Guest Houses and B&B's

The New Ross District and the Hook Peninsula has a range of guest houses and B&B's.

Food & Dining

In New Ross there are award winning restaurants including the French Restaurant 'Et Voila' and the Brandon House Hotel. Food on the Peninsula has also developed to an impressive standard over the last number of years. The Aldridge Lodge Restaurant and Guesthouse was awarded Leinster's Best Chef award in 2014 and is holder of a prestigious Michelin Bib Gourmand since 2007. Kevin Dundon is a national celebrity chef and his Dunbrody House Hotel has three times been awarded Restaurant



Dining Experience

of the Year. Pubs and Restaurants which have been finalists or won national awards include Neville's Bar, The Strand Tavern and Sqigl Restaurant.

Holiday Parks & Camping

The New Ross District and the Hook Peninsula has a range of holiday caravan parks (some with camping facilities), mainly situated in the coastal areas.

2.3 Attraction Assets

The following are the main attraction assets within the area:

The Dunbrody Famine Ship.

Since February 2001, the Dunbrody has been moored at the Quayside in New Ross. Providing a world-class tourist experience, the Dunbrody entertains and educates in equal measure. By drawing tens of thousands of tourists to New Ross every year the project has increased the international profile of the town and brought concrete and continuing benefits to the local economy. The Famine Ship is managed by the JFK Trust.



Dunbrody Famine Ship

JFK Arboretum

Dedicated to the memory of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, President of the United States from 1960 to 1963, the Arboretum is a plant collection of international standing. It covers 252 hectares (623 acres) on the southern slopes and summit of Slieve Coillte. It contains 4,500 types of trees and shrubs from all temperate regions of the world. The Arboretum is managed by the OPW and there is a recently developed orienteering course on site and a weekly 5km Park Run.

Tower of Hook Lighthouse

The present structure is about 800 years old and is the oldest intact operational Lighthouse in the world. Hook Lighthouse offers guided tours of the lighthouse tower all year round and is one of the top things to do in Wexford and Waterford. Climb the 115 steps to the spectacular view from the balcony. The lighthouse is operated by the Commissioners of Irish Lights (CIL) but the tourism attraction is managed by Hook Heritage Limited. The lighthouse marks the eastern entrance to Waterford Harbour.

Loftus Hall

Loftus Hall is a large mansion house on the Hook Peninsula. It is said to have been haunted by the devil and by the ghost of a young woman. It was privately owned by Devereaux's surviving family until late 2011, when it was sold to its current owners, the Quigley family from Carrig on Bannow.

Kennedy Homestead

The Kennedy Homestead, birthplace of President John F. Kennedy's great-grandfather Patrick Kennedy, celebrates the story of five generations of the Kennedy dynasty and is still today farmed by his descendants. The Kennedy Homestead, a unique cultural museum is dedicated to "the Kennedys who went away and the Kennedys who stayed behind" and plays a vital part in the continued preservation of the Kennedy legacy in Ireland. The Kennedy Homestead is managed by the JFK Trust.

Tintern Abbey

A Cistercian Abbey, founded c. 1200 by William Marshall, the first Earl of Pembroke and named after Tintern in Wales. The remains consist of a nave, chancel, tower, chapel and cloister. It was partly converted into living quarters after 1541, and further adapted over the centuries. The Abbey was occupied by the Colclough family from the 16th century until the 1960s and is now managed by the OPW.

Colclough Walled Gardens

This Georgian Walled Garden was built by the Colclough (pronounced Coke-lee) family over 200 years ago, before 1814. Restoration work by volunteers, organised by Hook Tourism, began in July 2010, after a five-year licence was signed with the landowner, Coillte.

Kilmokea Country Manor and Gardens

Kilmokea, is a beautiful Heritage Garden of 7 acres. It offers accommodation and the gardens and tea rooms are open to the public. It hosts events, outdoor theatre and guided walks and is privately owned.

Ros Tapestry

The Ros Tapestries depict events around the Anglo-Norman arrival in the South East of Ireland, specifically the founding of the town of New Ross, Co. Wexford by William Marshal and Isabel de Clare.

Duncannon Fort

Duncannon Fort is a star shaped fortress situated in the village of Duncannon on an important promontory in Waterford Harbour and is part of the Hook Peninsula. It was built in 1588 in the expectation of an attack on the area by the Spanish Armada. All the major buildings in the Fort surround a parade ground. A walk around the outer ramparts afford spectacular views across the estuary to Waterford Harbour and down to Hook Head. Located at a lower level than the moat is the crosby boy cell. This Fort is currently closed for renovation works.

Dunbrody Abbey Visitor Centre

Dunbrody Abbey, founded in 1170, is one of the finest examples of a Cistercian Monastery in Ireland. Attractions include the Abbey, the Maze with Pitch & Putt, Craft Shop and Tea Room. The OPW are responsible for the care of Dunbrody Abbey.

Rosegarland Estate

Rosegarland Estate is privately owned and is a unique hidden gem steeped in history located in South Wexford. It is an old secluded, privately owned, 650 acre country estate which is uniquely unspoilt and untouched by time. It offers self-catering accommodation and gives visitors the opportunity to step back in time and enjoy some peace and tranquility.

Slade Castle

Located in the picturesque fishing village of Slade on the Hook Peninsula this remarkably well-preserved castle was built by the Laffan family. Of Anglo-Norman stock, the Laffan's were among the first wave of colonists to arrive in Ireland after Strongbow's invasion of 1169/70. They quickly became established in Wexford and were ensconced at Slade since at least the 15th century.

New Ross Marina

The New Ross marina is an ideal base for those sailing around South East Ireland. Located 18 nautical miles from Hook Head, New Ross is an established commercial port. The River Barrow itself is the second longest river in Ireland and serves as an important link to the Inland Waterways Network throughout Ireland.

New Ross Course Angling (Oaklands)

Oaklands Lake is a magnificent 4.5 acre man-made lake situated just outside the town of New Ross. It is stocked with Carp, Tench, Rudd and Bream.

The Dunbrody Irish Immigrant Centre

As well as the Ship's Tour, the Dunbrody Visitor Centre houses a charming river-view café and the Irish America Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame commemorates the critical contribution of Irish men and women to US history, as well as acknowledging the continuing contribution of contemporary Irish-Americans. The Centre is managed by the JFK Trust.

Walking, Craft, Garden Trails and Heritage Trails

There are four walking trails in the area that are part of the Wexford Walking Trail group. These include Carrigbyne Hill, Tintern Woods, Kelly's Wood and Lacken Hill. In addition the area has a number of other 'attractions' which hold interest for visitors but are not exclusively tourism offerings such as members of the Craft Trail e.g. Ceadogan Rugs, Gilly Thomas Sculpture Gallery, Terry The Weaver, Mad4Hats, etc. The Garden Trail is also well represented in this area e.g. Colclough Walled Garden, J.F.K. Arboretum, Kilmokea Gardens, and Woodville House Gardens. The Heritage Trail is also very active in this area e.g. Dunbrody Famine Ship, New Ross Town, Kennedy Homestead, Ros Tapestry, Duncannon Fort, Ballyhack Castle, Hook Lighthouse, Tintern Abbey, Colclough Walled Gardens, Loftus Hall and Dunbrody Abbey.



Wexford Trail Brands

2.4 Activity Assets

The following are the main activity assets within the area:

Figure 9. Examples of Activity Assets in the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula

Marine	Food, Beverage, Entertainment	Adventure & Activities
River walks	Shopping	Creacon Lodge Wellness Centre
Hooked Kite Surfing	Music	Holistic Haven – Yoga, Wellness etc
River Explorer Water River Cruise (launching 2016 – Waterford to New Ross daily)	Entertainment	Walking Trails
Galley River Cruise Restaurant	Restaurants	Heritage Trails
South East Charters Sea Angling and Scenic Boat Trips	Crafts	Garden Trails
Hook Sub-Aqua Club	Bars	Craft Trails
Scuba South East Freedom Surf School & Adventure	Cafes and Tea Rooms	Cycling
Sea Angling	St Michael’s Theatre	3D Archery
Course Angling		Shielbaggan Outdoor Education Centre
Whale Watching		Hook Head Safari
Scuba Diving		Exploration of Natural Environment
Kayaking		Geology of Natural Environment
Coastal Drive		Golf Courses
		Equestrian
		Swimming Pools
		Others

2.5 Event Assets

The following are the main event assets within the area:

Hook Lighthouse

- Easter Egg Hunt and Kids Games: April
- Maritime Matters Festival: May Bank Holiday
- Family Fun: June Bank Holiday
- Hook Lighthouse Pirate Festival: 5th July
- Family Fun: August Bank Holiday
- Halloween: October

New Ross Festival

A two day festival in summer 2015 featuring live music and other activities, based around celebrations for the 4th of July.

Duncannon Sand Sculpting Festival

This sand sculpting event every August has gained national recognition and includes fireworks, beach party, magic and puppet shows, beach games, street theatre and awesome sand sculptures.

Duncannon Military Re-Enactment Festival

The Duncannon Military re-enactment and vehicle show takes place over the June bank holiday weekend. The event has become one of the biggest and longest running events of its kind in Ireland and attracts one of the largest gathering of military re-enactors in the country (due to circumstances in Duncannon, this event was relocated to Wexford Town for 2015).

South East Dive Rally

The South East Dive Rally is a scuba diving and snorkeling event that is affiliated with Comhairle Fo-Thuinn (CFT) and takes place in July in Hook Head.

Tri the Hook

This is the 5th year that Tri-the-Hook is taking place on the Hook Peninsula in August. The sprint triathlon comprises of a 750m swim, a 20km cycle on a technical course and a 5km run.

Hookamuck Challenge

Hook Tourism is running a Mud Run event on 27th June 2015 – HOOKAMUCK!! The course is 10k of challenges, water, mud and determination. The course is run through 200 acres of forestry with over 35 obstacles, all with the intention of testing your mental and physical strength and ability.

Hooked Kite Fest & Irish Kite Surfing Championships

The Festival and Championships will offer spectators the opportunity to witness kite surfers from across Ireland and the globe as they compete over the weekend in the course racing events. This event takes place on Duncannon beach every August.



Hooked Kite Surfing

New Ross Piano Festival

An international festival of music focused on the piano and pianists, held over a long weekend in September each year. The festival is presented in the historic confines of St. Mary's Church of Ireland in New Ross.



New Ross Piano Festival

Traditional Irish Music Sessions

There are traditional Irish music sessions every Thursday night with “Hal’s Ceili band” in the Strand Tavern, Duncannon during the summer months.

Phil Murphy Weekend

The village of Carrig on Bannow is the venue for the Phil Murphy Memorial Weekend which takes place annually in July. This picturesque parish can be traced back to pre-Christian times but is most famous for the Norman invasion in 1169 in Bannow Bay.

New Ross Boat Club

Great River Run: New Ross Boat Club: March 2015

Sheilbaggan Outdoor Education Centre Courses

A range of challenging outdoor educational activities held throughout the year at the Centre and at other locations in the area.

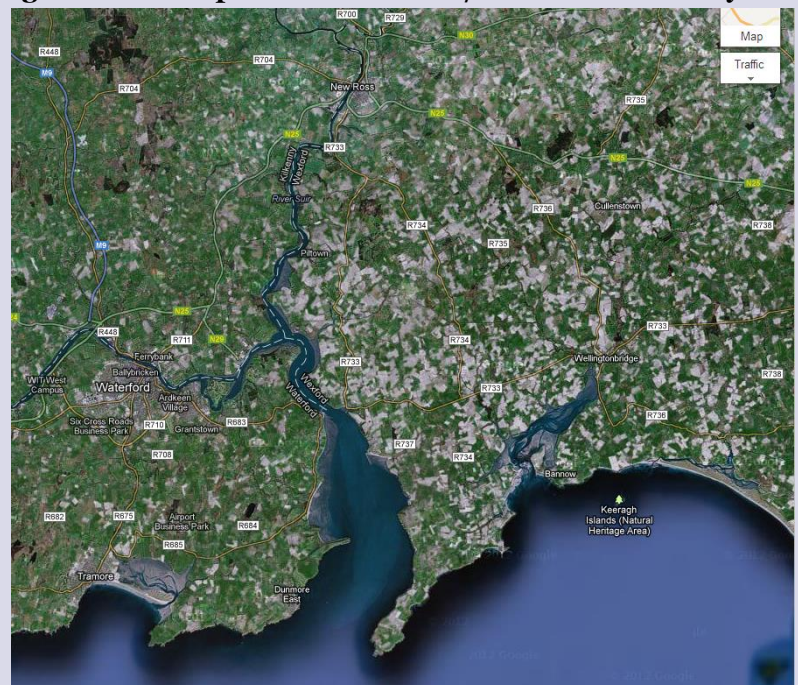
Within the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula there are also a number of other smaller themed festivals and locality events in villages and locations throughout the area occurring on an annual basis.

2.6 Coastal Assets

2.6.1 Background

The New Ross District and Hook Peninsula have a very significant coastal resource that in our opinion is currently under-utilised. This section of the report will profile the marine infrastructure resources and amenities that are currently available. Figure 10 illustrates the dominance of the marine environment in this area.

Figure 10. Map of the New Ross / Waterford Estuary



Source: Google Maps, 2015

2.6.2 *Marinas*

There is the ‘Three Rivers Marina’, in New Ross on the river Barrow which is located 18 nautical miles from Hook Head. This marina provides fresh water; overnight visitor berths; annual, seasonal, short term berths; shore facilities; toilets; showers; and car parking. There are also marinas relatively close to New Ross, located in Waterford City and Kilmore Quay.



New Ross Marina

2.6.3 *Harbours*

There are a number of small harbours on the Hook Peninsula including:

- Duncannon
- Ballyhack (also the location for the Ballyhack to Passage East car ferry)
- Arthurstown
- Slade
- Fethard on Sea

There are also other harbours in close proximity to the New Ross District which are worth noting.

- Cheekpoint
- Dunmore East
- Passage East
- Waterford City
- Kilmore Quay

2.6.4 *Rivers*

The River Barrow itself is the second longest river in Ireland and is an important link to the Inland Waterways Network throughout the island, connecting New Ross to Dublin, Limerick, Carrick on Shannon, Enniskillen and the North West. Attractive villages along the River Barrow include St Mullins and Graiguenamanagh.

The River Barrow also connects with the River Nore to Inistioge and the River Suir which links to Waterford & Carrick on Suir. A recent publication titled ‘*The Three Sisters Guide*’ documents mooring points and channels as well as information on attractions and amenities to be found in the towns and villages on the three rivers which was funded under the INTERREG 4A Programme.

The Passage East Ferry operates between Passage East and Ballyhack and is strategically important for bringing visitors from County Waterford directly to the Hook Peninsula.

2.6.5 Sea

Fáilte Ireland predicts an increasing demand for adventure tourism based on international statistics and recognises the marine sector as a very important part of the total ‘adventure’ product. In 2010, the spend by overseas visitors in the marine sector was €69 million. However, Fáilte Ireland predicts that this could be expanded further through the development of more marine festivals, sailing, angling and marine wildlife tours. Although to facilitate this growth, it is acknowledged that additional investment is required in the marine infrastructure.

“The industry in Ireland has the expertise, products, landscape and seascape... we now just need to tap into the potential in a sustainable way and make sure Ireland becomes a top global adventure tourism destination” (Fáilte Ireland, 2012).

2.6.6 Beaches

The Hook Peninsula has 14 beaches including Grange Beach in Fethard on Sea which was awarded the Green Coast Award in 2015 in recognition of its clean environment, excellent water quality and natural beauty.

Fáilte Ireland research identified that 24% of Irish people participated in water sports in 2007 and this increased to 26% in 2008. In recognition of the value of water based tourism, Fáilte Ireland developed a classification to rank the most important sites in Ireland. In County Wexford, four sites were in the top 100 including Waterford Harbour and the tidal sections of the Suir and Barrow (94) Kilmore Quay & Saltees Ireland (98) Courtown (99) and Hook Beaches (100). This report then assessed the water quality for each of the top 104 sites in Ireland and results for the Hook indicated that the water was unpolluted in 2005 and compliant with EU bathing water quality standards. This is of particular importance if an area is intending to promote high contact water sports such as sailing, rowing and swimming.

Examples of attractive beaches on the Hook Peninsula include:

Duncannon Beach

Duncannon beach is a 1 mile long strand of sandy coast which visitors are allowed to drive and park on for easy access. Duncannon caters to surfing and kite surfing and is set in the village of Duncannon which has shops, cafés, public toilets and pubs within walking distance. Duncannon Fort serves as an impressive backdrop to the beach and there is also a sand sculpting festival every August bank holiday which has national recognition. However, in 2015 Duncannon was classified as having Poor Water Quality based on the assessment of bacteriological results for the period 2011 to 2014.

Dollar Bay and Booley Bay

Dollar Bay and Booley Bay are situated beside each other and are very secluded beaches on the Duncannon to Hook Head road. The two beaches are great for swimming, body boarding as the waves are small and fishing as large quantities of flatfish, dog fish and bass group here.

Carnivan Beach

Carnivan Beach is an attractive, clean and secluded beach located near the village of Fethard on Sea. The entrance to Carnivan beach is a narrow lane along the coast line with two parking areas. The beach is enclosed with cliffs on either side which makes it very sheltered against the northerly winds and ideal for surfing, body boarding and wind surfing.

Baginbun Beach

Baginbun is another sheltered beach located close to the village of Fethard on Sea and was the landing point for the Normans in 1170. The remains of earthworks and fortifications can still be seen at Baginbun Head dating back to this period.

2.7 Community Activity Assets

Community leadership is very well developed in the New Ross District and the Hook Peninsula and examples include the following:

2.7.1 Hook Rural Tourism Ltd.

In existence for nearly 50 years on the Hook Peninsula, Hook Rural Tourism Ltd has initiated or led numerous projects which have achieved outcomes ranging from local community development, reducing social exclusion, through to developing the area's tourism offering. It is a membership organisation and is a limited company overseen by a voluntary board of directors. The Board operates to the requirement of the Companies Act and has an action plan to work towards achieving full compliance with the Governance Code; a code of practice for good governance of community, voluntary and charitable organisations in Ireland. Some examples of initiatives led by Hook Rural Tourism include:

- Working with the Office Public Works (OPW) to increase the opening hours of Tintern Abbey and to issue joint ticketing with Colclough Walled Gardens
- Restoring and operating the Colclough Walled Gardens as a visitor attraction which welcomes over 10,000 visitors through its doors annually
- Operation of the Hook Tourism Office in Duncannon village
- Management of the Hook Tourism Website
- Feasibility study to assess the viability of building a replica 'Helen Blake' lifeboat
- Developing the Ring of Hook Drive

2.7.2 J.F.K. Trust

New Ross, Co. Wexford, is the ancestral home of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy. The J.F.K. Trust was founded in 1988 to commemorate his historic legacy. This is done through involvement in community projects that enrich the lives of local people and invigorate the local economy. The JFK Trust is responsible for the management of the Dunbrody Famine Ship, the Kennedy Homestead and the Irish Emigration Database.

2.7.3 New Ross & District Chamber

The chamber provides supports to businesses and the community in the area such as networking and office administration. The chamber has initiated and/or supported numerous initiatives with a tourism element for the area including:

Marina	Marketing	Festivals
JFK Trust	Historic Plaque Walking Trail	Others

2.7.4 Hook Heritage Ltd.

This community company is responsible for the management of one of the oldest Lighthouses in the world. The company has spearheaded a series of innovative tourism initiatives, utilising the site, over many years.

2.7.5 Duncannon Village Renewal

The group was formed in 2012 and is a registered charity dedicated to the improvement of social and amenity aspects of the village. It completed a five year plan in 2013 which had six key objectives:

1. Develop tourism opportunities in the village and within Duncannon Fort.
2. Encourage integrated marine activity development in the river estuary.
3. Further develop the range of activities and events that take place on Duncannon beach.
4. Create coastal walks and long distance trails in collaboration with neighbouring communities.
5. Enhance the attractiveness of the village and extend the range of attractions in the amenity park.
6. Support existing and new business opportunities in the village.

2.7.6 St Kearns Rowing Club

This rowing club has over 70 members and is based in Saltmills on the Hook Peninsula. This Club trains in the waters around Carrick on Bannow, Cullenstown and Wellingtonbridge all year round and has extensive knowledge of the marine conditions in this area.

2.7.7 Fethard on Sea Boat Club

The Fethard on Sea Boat Club was established in 2007 for the purpose of encouragement of all forms of marine activity in the area of Fethard-on-Sea and the promotion of suitable facilities for such activities. Membership is open to all who have an interest in using the waters around Fethard on Sea whether it be for work or for play.

2.7.8 GAA Clubs

There are thriving GAA clubs with good sporting facilities in the following locations on the Peninsula:

- Fethard on Sea – St Mogue's Club
- Duncannon / Arthurstown – St James Club
- Bannow / Ballymitty

2.7.9 South West Wexford Community Development Group (SWWCDG)

SWWCDG was established in 1989 by members of the local community who recognised the need to tackle the problems of unemployment, exclusion and disadvantage in the South West Wexford ('Hook') area. This group is based in the Ramsgrange Centre and operates a wide range of community services.

2.7.10 Tidy Towns

Many of the communities in the Hook Peninsula have Tidy Towns Committees which play a very valuable role in enhancing the visual appearance of these attractive coastal communities. The active role of the Tidy Towns groups is essential for promoting the tourism industry in this area.

2.7.11 Hook Residents' Association

In 2007, the Hook Residents' Association launched a ten year restoration programme to repair the original limestone walls which are part of the Loftus Hall demesne and are such a striking heritage feature on the Hook Peninsula.

2.7.12 Hook Sub Aqua Club

The Hook Sub Aqua Club was founded in 1982 and is based at its club house in Slade. It has state of the art equipment and is one of the top diving clubs in Ireland.

2.7.13 Ros Tapestry

The Ros Tapestry Project is a community initiative which commenced in 1998 and involved over 150 volunteers who stitched fifteen embroidered panels (6 ft x 4 ft each). This project was researched and designed by Ann Bernstorff and the Ros Tapestries depict events around the Anglo-Norman arrival in the South East of Ireland, specifically the founding of the town of New Ross by William Marshal and Isabel de Clare. The Ros Tapestry exhibition is open to the public and is located on the Quay in New Ross.

2.7.14 St. Louis Stitchers: New Ross School of Lace

In 2014 the St. Louis Stitchers had 50 registered members. The skills of the members are highlighted throughout the year with examples of beautifully made crochet and knitted garments and other craft items such as jewellery and handbags.

2.7.15 New Ross Boat Club

The New Ross Boat Club was founded in 1876 and promotes sport and tourism on the River Barrow and River Nore.

2.8 Summary

This section has demonstrated the significant range of assets (tangible and intangible) within the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula. There is a mix of accommodation types both within the town and across the Peninsula but there are deficiencies that could be improved upon.

This area has significant quality attractions across a range of interest groupings. These are located within a small geographical area which makes it very appealing to the visitor and provides real opportunities to pursue bundling and cross selling.

The area has a diverse range of activities including marine, food, beverage, entertainment, and adventure. However, additional activities should be developed in the area matched to visitor need, segmented by various target markets. In tandem with the need to pursue development of additional activities infrastructural improvements to aid this development also needs to take place.

The area has a number of small to mid-scale events held on an annual basis which garners national recognition and awareness. However, the area needs a series of events on a larger scale, spread throughout the year, which will attract a significant number of visitors to the area and will contribute to the recognition of the area as 'a go to' location.

The area has stunning landscape, marine and coastal environment, and river assets. There is infrastructure in this area including a marina and a necklace of harbours. However, scope for marine adventure attractions is seriously curtailed due to limitations in this infrastructure such as a lack of pontoons, moorings and adequate slipways.

The community sector has significantly developed the tourism sector in the Hook Peninsula and New Ross District. Their role in further enhancing the tourism product offering in the next five years will continue to be essential. In addition to the community organisations noted the area contains a number of special interest communities and groups which, although not mainstream tourism related, do contribute significantly to the community fabric of the area and as such make a contribution to the tourism offering.

Section 3.

Future Tourism Assets of Relevance Planned for the Area, County and South East Region



Section 3. Future Tourism Assets of Relevance Planned for the Area, County and South East Region

3.1 Background

Significant investment has been directed at the tourism industry within the South East over the last five years. It is important to get an overview of these major initiatives and to also get an indication of tourism attractions that are currently being planned so that any new proposals recommended in this report are set in the appropriate context.

3.2 New Ross and Hook Peninsula

There are a number of projects that are at varying stages of development in this area that have a bearing on this report.

New Ross Town & Environs

- Construction of the New Ross bypass which is due to start in mid-2015. This has potential to be a tourist attraction in its own right as it will be the longest bridge in Ireland crossing the River Barrow. This is a €220 million project which will create 13.6km of dual carriageway and 1.2km of single carriageway. The project hopes to remove a bottleneck in the South East and improve access from Cork and Waterford to the port of Rosslare. Appropriate signage to tourism attractions, off the New Ross bypass, is essential so that people travelling from Rosslare to the West are encouraged to visit the historic attractions in New Ross and on the Hook Peninsula.
- Once the New Ross bypass commences a Task Force for New Ross will be set up to explore opportunities for socio-economic regeneration of the town. This will consider issues such as derelict buildings, presentation of the town's historic Georgian buildings, pedestrianisation, links between the Dunbrody Famine Ship and the high street, the artisan food experience, promotion of St Mary's Church, town parks and urban walking trails.
- Opening up of the Greenway along the disused railway line between New Ross and Waterford. This is at pre-planning stage and will be available for public consultation during the summer of 2015. Funding needs to be secured to implement this project.
- The Redbridge Project involves the opening up of the disused railway line between Rosbercon, the bridge over the River Barrow and through a tunnel. This project could be developed in a number of phases depending on funding being available.
- There are plans to remove the oil tanks on the Quay of New Ross and establish the Dunbrody Migration Centre on this site next to the Dunbrody Famine Ship. This is important to New Ross as this town was the focal point for emigration in the South East and historically was an important shipping port dating back to the Norman period. This iconic centre will be advanced in collaboration with Waterford Institute of Technology who aim to develop an out-reach building for part-time courses in tourism and migration research programmes. The centre will also be connected to other migration centres in Ireland such as Cobh.

- Plans are substantially advanced for the proposed new full experience daily ferry service between New Ross and Waterford City. This proposed venture is an excellent example of discussion and collaboration between the public and private sector. This waterway development could significantly enhance the scope for New Ross to become a day trip destination for people living or staying in Waterford City. It would also appeal to overseas visitors who would be interested in the proposed Migration Centre, the Dunbrody Famine Ship and the historic town of New Ross.
- Unlocking the River Barrow is a regional initiative involving Co. Kildare, Co. Carlow, Co. Kilkenny, Co. Wexford, OPW and Inland Waterways. The aim is to open up the waterway between New Ross and the Grand Canal in Dublin. This is likely to be a phased river and land initiative so that this route is opened up to the public for walking, kayaking and long boats etc.
- New Ross was founded in the 4th century when St. Abban of Magheranoidhe founded a monastery in Irishtown. However, it came to prominence in the 13th century when it was reputed to be Ireland's busiest port. St Mary's Abbey, was built at this time which was to become one of the largest churches in Ireland. St. Mary's Church, commonly called St. Mary's Abbey was built in 1811 on the site of the nave of the Abbey. WCC has been collaborating with the Church of Ireland community to erect interpretation signs and open this site to the public. The vision would be to further develop St Mary's Church as a major heritage attraction in the town due to its historical significance. The historical connection between St Mary's Church and Kilkenny Castle needs to be promoted at both locations as they were both founded by William Marshall and represented the Norman occupation of the region.
- Developing New Ross as a Norman Town would create synergy with the other major urban centres in the South East such as the Viking Triangle in Waterford City and the Medieval Mile in Kilkenny. This vision requires the creation of an attractive townscape including 4 town parks; enhancement of the Georgian architecture; outdoor amphitheater for events and plays; restoration of the town walls; and plaques erected at historical sites. A series of 18 plaques were erected around the town by New Ross Street Focus in March 2015. This illustrates the level of pride and interest in the history of the town.
- New Ross was internationally renowned for its lace work and recent initiatives have been undertaken to revive this craft. There are also aspirations to exhibit some of the original lace pieces within the town so that this important part of New Ross's heritage is not lost.
- The Ros Tapestry commenced in 1998 and involved the research, design and creation of fifteen 6 ft x 4 ft embroidered panels. This exhibition is located on the Quay of New Ross and would significantly benefit from additional investment in the building to ensure this initiative meets its full potential.
- Festivals and events play a major role in attracting visitors to an area and the Piano Festival and the Kennedy Summer School are very effective at drawing people into the town. A two night summer festival is planned for New Ross in 2015 which will be based on the Quay. If successful this will be repeated annually. There are also plans to create a stunning Christmas experience in the town focusing around Christmas lights and the best Santa visit in the South East.



New Ross Quay

- There is potential to further develop the accommodation sector in New Ross town and this could include a mix of hotel and apartments. This would need to be of significant scale to be profitable.
- There are 3 major attractions on the Emigrant Trail including the Dunbrody Famine Ship, the John F Kennedy Arboretum and the Kennedy Homestead. There are plans to develop this trail further through the creation of attractive viewing points between these sites.
- There are plans to erect the JFK flame lamps that were used as part of the 2013 anniversary memorial event, at strategic locations in the USA to raise the profile of the Irish – American connection.
- The John F Kennedy Arboretum attracts the greatest number of visitors annually in the county (95,215 visitors). To add to this attraction, in August 2014, a permanent orienteering course was launched with four maps, Short (1.8km), Medium (2.4km), Long (3.5km). As part of Heritage Week annually the John K Kennedy Arboretum runs a series of exciting events including children’s activities, guided walks, medicinal plant events, 1798 re-enactments, craft & food fair, music, bat walks, orienteering etc. This Heritage Week programme illustrates the huge potential for events at the Arboretum which also encompasses Slieve Coillte.



JFK Arboretum

Hook Peninsula

- A Ring of Hook signage scheme is to be erected in 2015 to assist in the marketing of the Hook Peninsula. Utilising the strong iconic brand image of the lighthouse is important for the promotion of this area. There is a requirement for sites to be open all year round if they are to be well sign-posted.



Hook Lighthouse

- The opening up of Colclough Walled Gardens to the public in 2013 has resulted in a very attractive new tourism initiative on the Hook Peninsula. There are further plans to develop the gardens including installing water and electricity and re-instating the glass house. A joint ticket between Tintern Abbey and the gardens is now available for annual membership cards which is very much welcomed. The Abbey is currently open from 2nd April to October 28th and the toilets are closed out of season. There is a long term vision to open up the Abbey and facilities all year round.



Colclough Walled Gardens

- The opening up of the 650 acre Rosegarland Estate to visitors in 2012 is a welcome new tourism initiative on the Peninsula. This commenced with a cross country course for local horse owners in 2012

and then progressed to four self-catering units with four star Fáilte Ireland approval in 2014 targeted primarily at the family market. There are plans to open to the general public and further potential capital investments could be undertaken in a Norman Castle, walking trails or the restoration of the empty house.

- The opening up of Loftus Hall as a major new attraction on the Peninsula in 2013 offering haunted house tours. This is a significant new initiative and greatly enhances the range of attractions in the area.
- The opening up of a new pub on the grounds of the Dunbrody Country House Hotel in 2013 in response to the closure of the village pub in Arthurstown. There are also plans to develop a coastal path between Duncannon village and Arthurstown with the generous permission of the landowners.
- Capital investment at the maze at Dunbrody Abbey and further developments are planned to present the family history story at this attraction.
- The major investment to the Hook Lighthouse in 2012 including restoring the cobbled yard area, installing a raised viewing gantry and a movable outdoor performance stage, repairs to the Lighthouse Keeper houses and the addition of a dedicated area displaying both Coast Guard and whale and dolphin exhibitions and items of local nautical interest. Hook Lighthouse is considering developing new facilities at Hook Head.
- The Hook Residents' Association has been restoring the famine walls on the Peninsula for the last ten years. To develop this work further there are plans to stabilise the Salt Mill at Slade and undertake protection work on the Church at Hook Head. There is also a vision to develop a website documenting the historical information on the area and expand on successful festivals and events such as the 'blessing of the boats'.
- In recognition of the unique geological, fossil and heritage status of the Hook Peninsula there is some interest in exploring the possibility of designating the area as a UNESCO world heritage site.
- The re-opening of Hookless Holiday Homes in 2014 which offers 65 (3 bedroom) units. Hopefully the leisure facilities will be open in 2016.
- There is interest in increasing the range of accommodation provision on the Hook Peninsula and this includes the development of campervan facilities at either Carnivan or Baginbun beach.
- The development of a marine hub in Fethard on Sea could substantially expand the adventure tourism product offering in the area. However, investment in infrastructural works such as a slipway extension, moorings, toilets and shower facilities would be required. Due attention to adequate parking facilities would need to be addressed if significant numbers of visitors were encouraged to this harbour.



Dunbrody Abbey

- Hook Rural Tourism recently commissioned a feasibility study into the viability of building a replica 'Helen Blake' lifeboat as a community tourism initiative based in Fethard on Sea.
- Infrastructural works are required at Ballyhack to support the on-going operation of the car ferry service between Ballyhack and Passage East. When this work is carried out there is an opportunity to also develop pontoon facilities. This would facilitate visiting yachts and also support potential boat trips from Waterford and New Ross to Ballyhack.
- Temporary closure of Duncannon Fort, in the interest of health and safety, was announced in April 2015. The Board of Duncannon Trust Company Limited is focusing on devising a response that will secure the earliest possible reopening of the Fort. This response will not only address the health and safety issues raised but will form a strategic plan to develop the Fort's real potential as a high quality tourism attraction that will advance and underpin tourist development for Duncannon and the wider area.
- In spring of 2015, Duncannon was classified as having Poor Water Quality based on the assessment of bacteriological results for the period 2011 to 2014. Water quality classifications are now made using results covering a four year period rather than just the past season's results and against more stringent bacterial limits designed to increase the protection of bather health. WCC has prepared a management plan for improving the water quality of Duncannon. A summary of the main pollution issues are: 1. Waterford Estuary including Barrow, Nore and Suir Rivers. 2. There is no waste water treatment plant (WWTP). 3. Four surface water pipes outfall onto the bathing area & there are two adjacent outfalls. 4. Two streams discharge to the east of the bathing water. There are plans to install a temporary waste water treatment plant in 2016 at the earliest and it will take four to five years for a permanent treatment plant to be constructed in Arthurstown. It is imperative that the water quality issue at Duncannon is resolved as quickly as possible.

3.3 County Wexford

- Redevelopment of Johnstown Castle so that it can expand its product offering and become a major tourism attraction within Ireland.
- The Enniscorthy by-pass will have significant implications for the town of Enniscorthy and could increase the tourism potential of this area.
- The improvements to the N11 road will result in reduced journey times for visitors from either Northern Ireland or Dublin to Wexford opening up greater possibilities for day trips or short breaks.
- The major investment in the Wexford Opera House which was officially recognised as Ireland's National Opera House in 2014.
- Major other tourism initiatives led by WCC are planned for on a county wide basis over the next five years. Some of these initiatives are at advanced planning phase.



Strawberry Festival, Enniscorthy



Wexford Opera



Johnstown Castle

3.4 South East Region

A number of significant tourist developments have emerged over the last five years in the South East which should attract a greater number of visitors to the region and have a beneficial impact on all counties. These include:

- The Viking Triangle in Waterford City Centre. Waterford City Council commissioned a report in 2011 to provide a framework for the development of this area as a ‘Cultural and Heritage Quarter.’ The vision was to create an experience in the city centre that will bring a powerful new dimension to the visitor, resident and business experience.
- The creation of the Waterford Greenway between Dungarvan and Waterford City. Phase one (4km) has been completed and the next phase (18km) will be opened in 2015. The remaining section has planning approval and is awaiting development.
- The Medieval Mile in Kilkenny City. This was launched in 2014 and is a major milestone in the future development of Kilkenny as a cultural tourism destination of international stature. The aim is to attract the ‘culturally curious’ market segment to the South East and ensure that Kilkenny attracts a significant proportion of these international visitors.
- The River Barrow Trail runs across a number of counties. It has been identified as holding significant potential for the South East and this potentially touches on the New Ross area as the River Barrow flows through the town and onward by the Peninsula into the Waterford estuary.



Kilkenny Castle



Waterford Viking Triangle



River Barrow, Graigueenamanagh



Waterford Viking Triangle

3.5 Summary

There are an important number of major tourism initiatives in the planning phase for the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula which will hopefully come to fruition over the next five years. These projects are of significant scale and could substantially enhance the tourism profile of the region. They include:

- The historic townscape of New Ross to be significantly developed;
- A greenway to be opened between Waterford and New Ross;
- A blueway created along the river Barrow and Hook Peninsula coastline;
- Duncannon developed as a major tourism attraction with blue flag beach status and the Fort revamped as a magical, awe inspiring attraction; and
- On-going investment at many of the tourism attractions in the area.

The inclusion of the Hook Lighthouse and the Dunbrody Famine Ship on Ireland's Ancient East map is strategically important for the region. Ensuring that a number of other significant attractions are developed over the next 5 years so that the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula are prominently promoted as part of Fáilte's Ireland's brand is strategically very important for attracting overseas visitors to the area. The timing of this report is very opportune as it ties in with the new EU LEADER Rural Development Programme, which will commence from 2015 to 2020 and in the past has provided invaluable support to the tourism sector in the county.

This report will now consider case studies of best practice within Ireland and abroad to gain an insight into additional developments that could be recommended for the New Ross and Hook Peninsula that would significantly enhance the existing and planned tourism offering for the region.

Section 4.

Case Studies of Best Practice in Europe

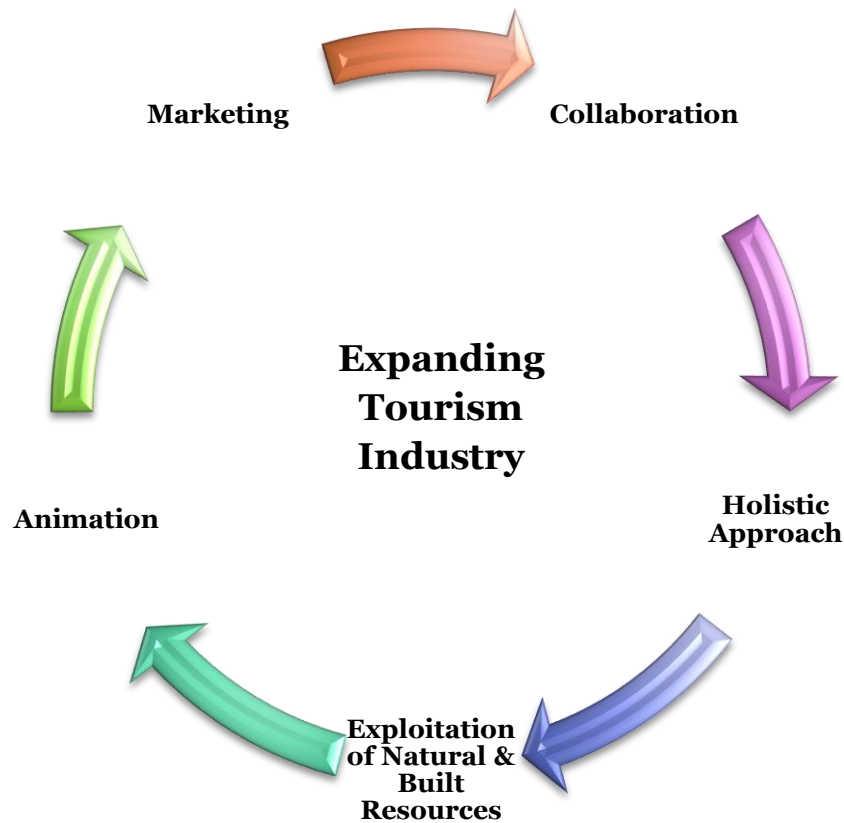


Section 4. Case Studies of Best Practice in Europe

4.1 Background

In response to the economic crisis the Government has placed tourism at the centre of its economic recovery. The tourism industry offers many advantages because it is regionally dispersed and the range of skills required in the sector could play a significant role in reversing the increase in unemployment seen over the previous three years in Ireland. This is particularly important for County Wexford, which has suffered significantly as a result of the recession, and now has the 3rd highest level of unemployment across the Local Authorities in Ireland.

This section of the report will now consider best practice within Ireland and abroad to examine how the tourism product for the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula could be further developed to attract a greater number of visitors to the area and generate additional employment. These case studies were selected because they offer insights into the development of the tourism industry under the following themes.



4.2 Island of Ireland Case Studies

The challenge for the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula is to surpass competitors and emerging destinations by capitalising on the region's assets to create a desirable and unique must-visit / must-return destination. This vision can be informed by reviewing successful case studies across the island of Ireland.

Great Western Greenway: Co. Mayo

The Greenway traverses Ireland's Atlantic coast between Westport town and Achill Island and visits the picturesque villages of Newport and Mulranny. The 42km Great Western Greenway is the longest off-road walking and cycling trail in Ireland which follows the route of the renowned Westport to Achill railway which closed in 1937. It passes by some of the West of Ireland's most dramatic mountains and offers magnificent views of Clew Bay and its many islands.



Great Western Greenway, Mayo, Ireland

Source: www.greenway.ie

This initiative has won several awards including:

- The European Destination of Excellence award (EDEN)
- Prize for best public project at the Local Authority Members Association (LAMA) awards, 2012.

This development was made possible by agreement of local landowners who gave permissive access to users to pass through their lands. The first 14km stage of the Greenway opened in 2010, while the extension opened in June 2011, lengthening the route to 42km, all off-road. This initiative was possible because of the collaboration between Fáilte Ireland/Department of Transport/Department of Rural Affairs who provided the funding; Mayo County Council who secured access, developed the route and provided funding; and local landowners who gave permissive access which eliminated the need for a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) for the route.

The initial success was the completion of the route from Newport to Mulranny in 2010 as stage one which helped to ensure that the rest of the route was secured and developed. Estimates derived from the study suggest that all direct expenditure associated with the Greenway would contribute to a projected €7.2m in spend in the local economy over a full year in 2011.

This initiative could be replicated in the Hook Peninsula so that walking and cycling off-road could be developed as a major tourism attraction for the area. For this to proceed initial informal discussions would need to take place with landowners to ascertain the viability of securing permissive access to their land to enable a walking / cycling greenway be developed on the Hook Peninsula. However, the potential would be very significant as it would give visitors an opportunity to explore the wealth of attractive villages, beaches, and tourism attractions that are located on the Peninsula. The disused railway line between Rosslare Harbour and Waterford City also merits consideration for development as a greenway due to the strategic location of this route.



Source: www.greenway.ie

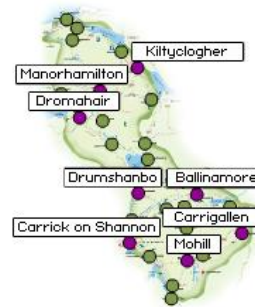
Ireland's Blueway Trails:

A network of water trails along the west coast of Ireland has been created and titled the 'Blueway'. These stretch from North West Mayo to South Galway and these beautiful trails offer a host of activities like kayaking and snorkelling. There are five Blueway sites - Keem Beach, Old Head, Inishbofin, Killary Fjord and Mannin Bay. Each site has an information board with trail maps, safety details and information on equipment hire and tuition.



A Blueway has also been established in County Leitrim on the River Shannon between Drumshanbo and Carrick-on-Shannon. This includes over 16km of canoe trail and 10km of approved walking route.

The Blueway is a developing, multi-activity trail running alongside water which links walking, cycling, canoeing, paddle boarding, fishing and cruising with local towns and villages. There are 2 or 3 day tours on offer which costs €100 per person for the accommodation, canoe hire and drop off.

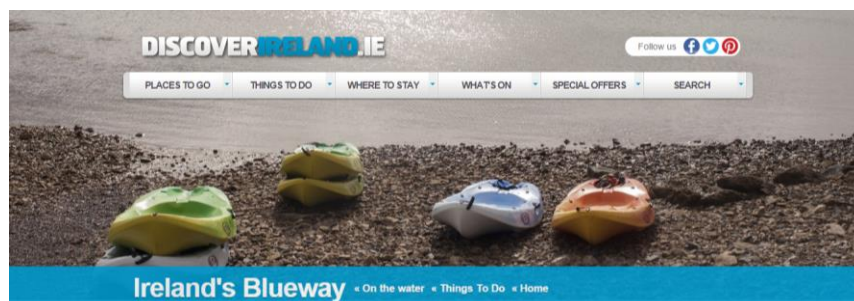


Map of the Shannon Blueway from Drumshanbo to Leitrim village

The Blueway builds on the huge potential provided by the existing waterway infrastructure. This is enhanced by the geography of the area with Carrick-on-Shannon, Drumshanbo, Leitrim Village and Dromod all closely located along the waterway. This also makes the Shannon Blueway immensely attractive for short duration activity breaks as it offers a wide range of affordable pursuits in a safe and friendly family environment.

This initiative was launched in October 2014 and was winner of the Best Tourism Initiative at the Local Authority Members Association (LAMA) awards in 2015. There are further plans to extend this Blueway to other waterways in the area and to also connect up with main accommodation providers so that it can cater for clubs and large groups. The Shannon Blueway is being delivered by Waterways Ireland in partnership with the National Trails Office, Canoeing Union, Leitrim County Council and Leitrim Tourism and is being marketed under the Blueways Ireland Banner. The CEO of Waterways Ireland stated that the key to success was partnership between all of the different agencies and that there is significant opportunity to build on this success and develop further Blueways into Roscommon, Longford, and Cavan.

This initiative has huge potential for replication in the New Ross / Hook Peninsula area because of the Waterford estuary and the string of harbours that are dotted along the Peninsula which to date are very under-utilised from a tourism perspective.



Source: www.discoverireland.ie/Things-To-Do/Ideas-for.../Ireland-s-Blueway

Causeway Coastal Route: Co. Antrim

In 2003, the Causeway Coast and Glens region was identified as one of five ‘Signature Projects’ which would be used to market Northern Ireland to the international market. The vision was to create ‘A must see, world class tourism destination’ that would be known for its scenic beauty, its spectacular coastline and its key jewels including the Giant’s Causeway, Rathlin Island and the Glens of Antrim. The aim was to position the Causeway Coast with the Ring of Kerry, the Pacific Drive in California and the Garden Route in South Africa.

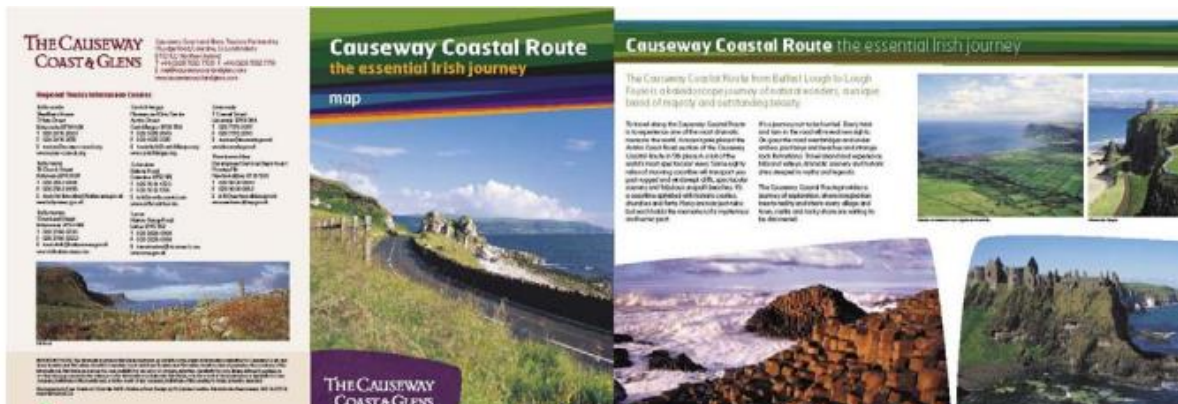
This 129km coastal route features the Giants Causeway which received 782,000 visitors in 2012 and is the number one tourist attraction in Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency).

The development of this vision involved a detailed tourism report which assessed all of the sites along the coast. This report considered: disability access, parking, existing interpretation and animation, visitor amenities including retail and catering, signing to and within the sites and landscape treatment. A cost schedule was then drawn up to ensure that all sites on this trail were of a high quality in keeping with the ‘world class’ destination profile that was being marketed.

This case study offers an insight into the creation of a long distance driving trail and how this Northern Ireland destination has capitalised on its natural, built and cultural assets to make it a world class tourism region. Its three objectives in its five year plan are:

- To establish the Causeway Coast and Glens as a ‘Must Visit’ destination – sustaining and increasing the number of tourists visiting the area;
- To create an excellent experience for the visitor, motivating them to stay longer, spend more and generate positive word of mouth;
- To manage co-ordinate and deliver tourism development and marketing across the destination, in order to spread the benefits of tourism across the region, address seasonality and ensure best financial value for public and private stakeholders.

These objectives match a lot of the feedback that we received during the consultation phase of this report and their experience is worthwhile learning from and applying to the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula area where applicable.



Boyne Valley: Co. Meath

The Boyne Valley is known as 'Ireland's Ancient Capital' and it has developed a driving route which encompasses all of the major historic attractions in the area as depicted on the map below. Sites of international significance include the 5,000 year old Newgrange passage tomb, the High Kings of Tara, the Battle of the Boyne at Oldbridge and Trim Castle.



Source: <http://www.boynevalleydrive.ie/>

Brú na Bóinne was inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 1993 in recognition of its outstanding universal value. The scale of passage tomb construction, the important concentration of megalithic art as well as the range of sites and the long continuity of activity were cited as reasons for the site's inscription. In 2014 visitor numbers to the major sites in the Boyne Valley was as follows:

- 139,173 visitors to Newgrange.
- 71,137 visitors to the Battle of the Boyne Site.
- 76,511 visitors to Trim Castle.

During the consultation phase of this report there was interest expressed in applying for World Heritage Site designation for the Hook Peninsula and it is evident from the statistics that Boyne Valley attracts significant visitor numbers. They also market their historic attractions very professionally and this map illustrates how the visitor can very easily move from one site to another. This model of depicting all of the attractions on a map is undertaken by Hook Rural Tourism for the Peninsula.

Dingle Peninsula: Co. Kerry

The Dingle Peninsula was highlighted during our interviews for this study as an example of best practice in developing tourism on a Peninsula. Fáilte Ireland commissioned some research in 2013 to understand more about visitor attitudes to this experience and the key results were as follows:

- The most popular reason why visitors choose the Dingle Peninsula was for the scenery.
- The internet was the most important source of information used prior to booking the holiday.
- Once people were on the Peninsula the local tourist office was the most important source of information.
- Hotels and B & B's were the most popular accommodation type.
- Hiking / walking was the most favoured activity.
- The scenery and the friendliness of the people were the two most popular reasons for recommending the Dingle Peninsula.

This research provides an insight into what visitors look for in a holiday destination and provides guidance on what should be replicated on the Hook Peninsula.

The Dingle Peninsula website illustrates the wide range of facilities and attractions on offer.



Source: www.dingle-peninsula.ie/

Elizabeth Fort, Cork City: Co. Cork

During the research phase of this report, the re-development of Duncannon Fort was identified as a major opportunity for the region. To inform this major refurbishment, it was felt useful to review other similar developments around Ireland. One recent example is the proposed transformation of Elizabeth Fort in Cork City. The plans are to recreate a replica Cork Street from the 1600s inside the Fort. The plans include a full multimedia interpretive museum, exhibition space for concerts, cafe and wheelchair lift access to the fort's ramparts.

The proposed cost of this redevelopment is approximately €4 million with a target of 100,000 visitors annually. This project is being led by the City Council who are hoping to secure funding from Fáilte Ireland for this initiative.

It is envisaged that this attraction will be a 'must do' for tourists and for locals as a programme of events will be scheduled in the Fort that will make it a major cultural venue for the city.

These concepts can be readily applied to Duncannon Fort as it could usefully serve as a major cultural venue for spectacular events and shows on the Hook Peninsula. It also has huge potential to be developed as a multimedia interpretive museum depicting its vibrant heritage. It is our recommendation that WCC liaise with Cork City Council as there could be opportunities for sharing expertise in developing a Fort as a major tourism attraction.



A computer-generated view of the replica Cork street in the revamped Elizabeth Fort.

Source: www.eveningecho.ie/cork-news/plans-to-transform-elizabeth-fort-into-top-e4m-tourist-attraction/

4.3 International Case Studies

The challenge for the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula is to surpass competitors and emerging destinations by capitalising on the region’s assets to create a desirable and unique must-visit / must-return destination. This vision can be informed by reviewing successful international case studies.

Love Loch Lomond: Scotland

Love Loch Lomond is an industry-led Destination Management Organisation (DMO) that operates in the Loch Lomond, Strathendrick, West Dunbartonshire and Clyde Sea Lochs areas of Scotland. It is supported by West Dunbartonshire Council, Stirling Council, Argyll Council, Visit Scotland, Scottish Enterprise, and the Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs.



It was established in 2011 as a DMO in order to fully capitalise on the potential economic benefit of such iconic scenery and location. The group was formed of tourism businesses across all sectors, from B&Bs and luxury hotels to activity providers and visitor attractions. It is dedicated to working on a collaborative basis to capitalise on the area's strong tourism potential.

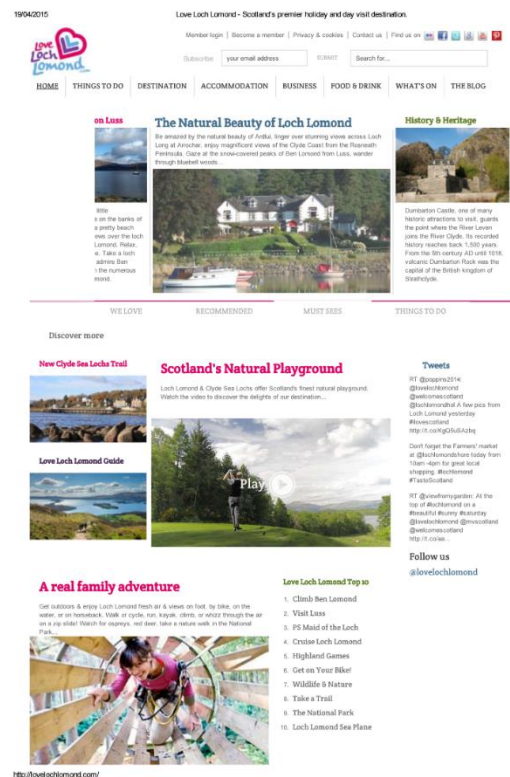
In 2013 the DMO implemented a marketing campaign (spend stg£85,000) with funding support from the Visit Scotland Growth Fund initiative (funding of stg£42,500).

This Growth Fund 2013 Love Loch Lomond project included:

- Year of Natural Scotland themed leaflet with itineraries and map
- Organic promotion of business offers across social media networks
- Press and PR activity
- Themed online and print advertising
- Themed video shorts

Some result highlights of the project included:

- Approximately 70 different business offers promoted across the year
- Over 75% of web traffic from new visitors
- 63% increase in Facebook followers
- Over 100,000 pick-ups of new leaflet
- 7 video shorts developed for online use
- PR value estimated to be £80,000 plus featured in a Belgian TV travel show
- Nearly 6,000 additional overnight stays and 85,000 day visitors



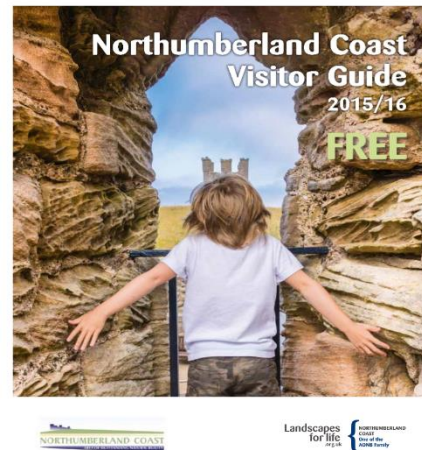
Further information: <http://lovelochlomond.com/destination>

Northumberland Coast: England

With more than 30 miles of beaches the Northumberland Coast is simply spectacular. Promenade along piers, play at penny arcades and tuck into fish and chips whilst enjoying the sea view at retro-chic seaside towns such as Seahouses. Visit Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, a seaside village making artistic waves with ‘The Couples’, Britain’s first permanent coastal sculpture. Discover picturesque fishing communities, clustered around sandy coves, like Newton-by-the-Sea.

Northumberland has more castles than any other county in England. Many of these castles, including Warkworth, Dunstanburgh, Bamburgh and Lindisfarne, stand guard along the dramatic coast. Drive across the causeway to the unique Holy Island of Lindisfarne, the birthplace of the magnificent Lindisfarne Gospels. At the Lindisfarne Centre you can turn virtual pages of a facsimile version of the Lindisfarne Gospels.

Northumberland’s coast is a giant adventure park where you can enjoy adrenaline-pumping sports like coasteering, kite and wind surfing. Or relax with a deckchair while the children build sandcastles and go rock pooling. Channel your inner David Attenborough with a visit to one of Northumberland’s amazing coastal nature reserves like the Farne Islands, Coquet Island and Druridge Bay.



Inland, head to the medieval market town of Alnwick, with its castle, celebrated garden and vintage shops. A visit to Howick Hall and Garden, the home of Earl Grey tea, is highly recommended for garden and tea lovers alike.

Northumberland’s Northern area offers some thrilling history, with the Berwick Walls and ancient battlegrounds. Berwick-upon-Tweed has a rich culture, and inland you’ll find rolling hills and beautiful villages. Tap into a rich seam of history and celebrate Northumberland’s mining heritage at the award-winning Woodhorn Museum.

Northumberland’s golden beaches encourages unforgettable summer holidays, however Northumberland is brimming with opportunities for a break whatever the time of year as they have developed an all year round tourism offering.

Autumn (Find out more: visitnorthumberland.com/autumn)

At a time when many destinations are winding down, Northumberland’s food scene comes alive. Autumn is the ideal time for an indulgent trip, with major food festivals taking place in Alnwick and Berwick in September, against the exquisite back drop of Northumberland’s autumnal landscapes. Don’t miss ‘Heritage Open Days’ in September and the Conjunction of Venus, Mars & Jupiter in the Dark Sky Park.



Winter (Find out more: visitnorthumberland.com/winter)

A whole new side of Northumberland can best be enjoyed in Europe's largest International Dark Sky Park where it is the ideal place to discover the night skies. Billions of shimmering stars, a plethora of planets, dazzling meteor showers and the glow of galaxies like Andromeda can all be seen. This could potentially be developed on the Hook Peninsula as it has minimal light pollution.

Don't miss:

- Alnwick Garden's Big Winter Adventure & Kielder Winter Wonderland
- Annual Leonids, Geminids & Quadrantids meteor showers in the Dark Sky Park

Spring (Find out more: visitnorthumberland.com/spring)

Northumberland really does blossom in the spring with the country's most tranquil National Park, two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and many Nature Reserves waiting to be explored.

Don't miss:

- The Snowdrop festival at Howick Hall, Gardens & Arboretum in February
- The Annual Lyrids Meteor Shower in the Dark Sky Park

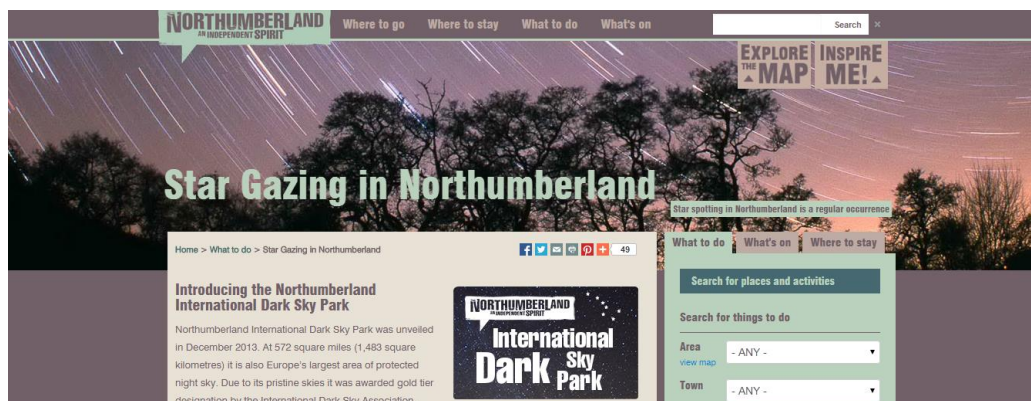
Summer (Find out more: visitnorthumberland.com/summer)

Visitors to Northumberland are spoilt for choice in summer, with an abundance of attractions and activities to choose from. Stay beside the seaside and explore miles of golden sandy beaches, enjoy fantastic freshly caught seafood and take in the unrivalled vistas that only the Northumberland Coast offers.

Don't miss:

- Traditional Country Fairs throughout the summer
- Saturn at opposition in the Dark Sky Park

This case study illustrates the tourism potential for an area based on the development of events and attractions cleverly designed to capture what is special in each season. There is also a very extensive Northumberland Coast Visitor Guide which conveys the wide range of offerings available to the visitor. (<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/idoc.ashx?docid=14fa9823-70b4-43ec-8f03-1e8f2bcb073b&version=-1>)



Source: <http://www.visitnorthumberland.com/darkskies>

Sculpture Trails: England

Visit England website has a dedicated section to outdoor art and sculpture trails. Find out more: <http://www.visitengland.com/things-to-do/outdoor-art-and-sculpture>. The site states:

‘One of the wonderful thing about sculptures and statues is they can be viewed in truly glorious surroundings. Grand houses, manicured parks and picturesque trails form the backdrops to an array of sculpture gardens and collections. Marvel at the sheer variety of mediums in which sculptures come, including brass, bronze, ceramic, lead, metal, plaster, wood and wire’.

Featured locations include:



Escape To Another Place

Forget crumbly sand sculptures; Antony Gormley's 'Another Place' is seaside art on a whole new level.

Location: Crosby Beach, Merseyside

The WANDER art trail is the first of its kind in the country encompassing a series of public art installations on the 79 mile national walking trail.

Location: Malton, East Riding of Yorkshire



Celebrate 200 of the world's greatest artists at 4 leading arts venues in Yorkshire.

Location: Wakefield, West Yorkshire



Montana Office of Tourism - "There's Nothing Here": America

Montana launched a provocative marketing initiative in 2010 to boost visitors to the state based on the bold message: 'There's Nothing Here'. This campaign won a major tourism award for its effectiveness at generating additional tourism revenue to the region, as a direct result of its marketing strategy.

"We've learned through marketing studies that those that have seen our advertising are up to three-times more likely to want to visit Montana than those unaware of the advertising. In addition, \$424 million in visitor expenditures have been directly attributed to our campaigns." (Montana Office of Tourism, 2011)

These statistics powerfully illustrate the effectiveness of marketing campaigns and the pictures illustrate the irony of the caption.

This marketing campaign was cleverly targeted at an audience called the 'Geotraveller' who wants to create their own itinerary, connect with nature, immerse themselves in the local culture and find new experiences. These stunning, big, bold images were placed in urban landscapes on placards, buses and trains etc. They also hired top journalists to write engaging articles in publications with national and international circulation. 'There's Nothing Here' film clips were previewed at large events prior to major concerts.

The u-tube clip demonstrates the creativeness of their advertising strategy and the Montana Tourist Office recognised that the key to their success was targeting the right audience with the right message. The experiences from this case study can be readily applied to the New Ross and Hook Peninsula area which could significantly benefit from a very strong visual image campaign promoting the unique historic and natural attributes of the area. Find out more: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDyzyw1ob_o

Images of Montana's 'There's Nothing Here' Campaign



Source: <http://montanatourismnews.org/news/2011/07/28/nothing-here-but-award-winning-tourism-campaigns/>

Mornington Peninsula: Australia

The Mornington Peninsula has a very comprehensive website which includes an easy 'own trip planner'. This allows you to select all of the activities you wish to participate in and then it creates a route map and allows you to print off your own unique itinerary brochure. <http://www.visitmorningtonpeninsula.org/>

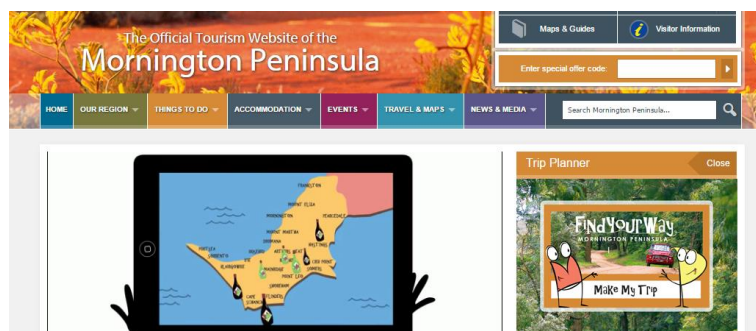
In 2014, the Mornington Peninsula won the Victorian tourism awards with eight tourism businesses winning top awards. The event recognises not only the efforts of individual operators but also the collaborative efforts of the Victorian tourism industry.



"Our region has been an active supporter of the awards for a number of years. It is terrific to see the industry embrace the spirit of co-operative competition and come together to celebrate the best Victoria has to offer. The Mornington Peninsula Tourism Industry continues to evolve and it is pleasing to see new businesses and first time entrants participate. These awards play a critical role in Mornington Peninsula's growth as a tourism destination. It is terrific to see the region represented in such a positive and prolific way."
(Tracey Cooper, Executive Chair, Mornington Peninsula Regional Tourism Board)

The Mornington Peninsula region has recognised the importance of collaboration and the bundling of activities through the integrated nature of their website which also has a translation feature into many different languages. This is a feature that could be introduced into the VisitWexford website as well as the Hook Tourism and the Experience New Ross websites.

The Mornington Peninsula is also very comprehensively promoted in a 100 page tourism guide that is available from their website and details include: Planning your Trip; Seaside Villages; Featured Towns and Villages; Transport and Touring; Top Trails; Spas and Wellbeing; Food and Wine Experiences; Golf Events; Arts, Culture and Shopping; Attractions, Parks and Gardens; Wildlife, Adventure and Marine; and Accommodation. This type of guide could be replicated for the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula area as it is an excellent way of illustrating the scope of tourism opportunities that are available in the locality.



Source: <http://www.visitmorningtonpeninsula.org/Home.aspx>

Visit Falkirk: Scotland

Visit Falkirk is the brand name of a group led by a partnership between the local authority and the BID (Falkirk Towns Ltd), along with key tourism partners in the area. In recent years their activity had mainly focused on joint attendance at VisitScotland EXPO and the development of a tourism leaflet which features all the attractions in the Falkirk Council area.



In 2013, Visit Falkirk implemented a marketing campaign (spend £102,000) with funding support from the Visit Scotland Growth Fund initiative (funding of £51,000).

Motivation

The group had realised that the majority of visitors to the Falkirk region were not moving within the area, but rather visiting one key attraction, such as the Falkirk Wheel, and then leaving. By taking a 'string of pearls' approach, they wanted to change that perception and promote the area as family friendly, with a range of activities and attractions on offer along with places to eat and drink.

Implementation

The Growth Fund, Visit Falkirk, campaign included:

- Posters at stations, on trains and on bus ends
- New itineraries developed
- Family bloggers and online marketing
- New printed material
- Advertising through ATM cash machines

Getting Results

Some highlights of the project included:

- An increase of over 80,000 visitors
- Estimated additional spend of over £800,000
- Over 16 million opportunities to see campaign
- Very eye catching brand colours
- Over 14,000 promotional ATM receipts printed
- Family bloggers reached audience of over 12,000
- 20,000 A6 offer booklets distributed by street teams



What's next?

This was the first comprehensive campaign for the Falkirk region in several years and the timing was perfect as it built on the success of the multimillion pound Helix project which was opened in 2013.

The group are planning to build on the awareness raising campaign and partnerships developed to focus on conversions and also target the overnight market. They aim to do this by working in conjunction with accommodation providers within the district. They have also identified potential collaboration opportunities with nearby destination groups. Find out more: <http://www.visitfalkirk.com>

Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape - World Heritage Site: England

Since its inscription on the **World Heritage List** in 2006, the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Property has brought together an impressive range of partners to increase understanding and celebrate the cultural importance of its global industrial heritage. The site itself covers a large geographical area including coastal, towns, and mine sites.



At 19,710 hectares over ten areas, crossing from Cornwall into Devon, the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site - or 'Cornish Mining World Heritage Site' as the popular title - is the largest World Heritage Site in the UK. Stretching from St Just in the West to Tavistock in the East, the site is a series of areas comprising the distinctive patterns of buildings, monuments and sites which together form the coherent series of distinctive cultural landscapes created by the industrialisation of hard rock mining processes in the period 1700 to 1914.

UNESCO World Heritage status is a designation for places of outstanding value to all humanity. These sites have been chosen and 'inscribed' on the World Heritage List through their natural and/or cultural significance to be protected for future generations to appreciate and enjoy. The Site is the property of the country on whose territory it is located, but its protection and preservation becomes a concern of the international community as a whole and is administered by the World Heritage Centre in Paris. UNESCO has also prepared a World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Toolkit that provides practical advice on how to maximise the tourism potential of a site whilst minimising the negative impact. Find out more: <http://unesco.tcc.demo.faelix.net/guide-6-%E2%80%93-case-study-cornwall-and-west-devon-mining-landscape-united-kingdom>



The diverse site needed an effective tourism infrastructure to address challenges of multiple ownerships, limited core resources, and unlocking the full potential of the World Heritage site. Furthermore, these issues had to be addressed and implemented during one of the most severe global financial crises in history.

What did they do?

A substantial coordinated investment was needed to begin building the proper visitor infrastructure for this new World Heritage Site (WHS). In 2007, the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) opened a funding programme and the World Heritage site submitted an Expression of Interest. Their submission identified the need for proper infrastructure using an integrated approach not simply for tourism, but also product improvement, business, engagement, and promotion. With the invitation for a formal bid, the site was able to secure £2.4m, which resulted in the 'Discover the Extraordinary' (DtE) project. This initiative began in January 2010, and over £1m was invested into improving visitor facilities at 11 partner mining attractions, as well as refining interpretation of the wider landscape as a whole, with the aim to help tourists understand the story of Cornish mining and its significance as World Heritage.



Strategic Priorities:

- Improve the World Heritage site destination "product" and the visitor's experience through improved visitor facilities and enhanced information, interpretation, and orientation.
- Implement the World Heritage site Key and Area Centres to provide strategic World Heritage site interpretation and orientation for visitors.
- Build relationships across the wider tourism industry and enable rural tourism businesses to benefit from World Heritage site status.
- Communicate the enhanced tourism offer to target markets.
- Convert awareness into increased World Heritage site landscape motivated visitors to Cornwall and West Devon.
- Encourage visitors to choose environmentally sustainable options.

What worked?

The investment in infrastructure allowed for the DtE project to put money towards developing a highly functioning integrated marketing strategy that focused on building connections across the tourism sector and widely promoting the site as a cultural tourism destination. This had a significant impact on the 11 visitor attractions within the site, and also resulted in business growth across the tourism sector throughout the supply chain. Their activities have produced concrete numbers that have shown increased exposure, visitor spend, job creation, and an upward trend for continued growth. For example, throughout the implementation of the project the visitor spend grew 20% among heritage related businesses in the area. Visitors also cited World Heritage site specific information as their reason for visiting Cornwall, which saw an increase from 14% to 32%, with 8 out of 9 attractions expecting to see an increase in visitor numbers.

What was tough?

The Cornwall and West Devon WHS was forced to initiate plans and operate amidst one of the most extreme financial crises in history. It found itself navigating through the turmoil and confusion of a swiftly changing and extremely unpredictable economic environment in regards to: visitor behaviour, visitor interests, and visitor spend. Furthermore, the programme also had to deal with unstable data. Local authority resources were not what they had previously been, and local businesses were forced to re-prioritise to meet the challenges brought on by the economic recession.



How did they get buy-in?

Those working in the DtE project knew that success of this project relied largely on continued strategic communication with all relevant stakeholders, encouraging involvement and engagement, especially with the special economic situation in which they would have to work. This open dialogue allowed for local businesses and governing authorities to get involved at step one and become owners of the initiative, building the necessary relationships across the value chain.

What are the results?

The 3 year project has resulted in benefits for the community of Cornwall and West Devon across all sectors leading to improved physical infrastructure of facilities, wider stakeholder engagement, and participation in multiple fields (heritage, arts, tourism, landscape, and community partnerships). Over

400 local businesses are currently active and directly working together within the programme. This has resulted in the creation and access to high quality digital tools for both the visitor and local businesses, as well as providing a platform to communicate a deeper understanding and quality experience of the WHS. The World Heritage Partners were recognised for the second year in a row for its achievements at the Cornwall Tourism Awards including a double gold champion as a self-catering, sustainable tourism destination.

What lessons can others take from this?

When developing an infrastructure for a World Heritage site, consider what relationships will be necessary to make this process a smooth transition. It is not only securing investment for improvement that is important in optimising the visitor experience. Cornwall and West Devon recognised this fundamental aspect. Funds would pay for changes, but the pace would be much slower without buy-in and support from local businesses and authorities.

With community and business cooperation across all sectors, Cornwall and West Devon were able to implement and execute a clear and achievable integrated marketing strategy throughout an economic recession—not only surviving, but thriving. This theme of ‘community buy-in’ is discussed thoroughly throughout the Toolkit for a reason. It leads to success. This case study emphasises that it is a necessity to secure ‘community buy in’ when you are formulating a Tourism Strategy and Implementation Plan.

Find more information about the "Discover the Extraordinary" (DtE) in their Project Evaluation Summary: <https://www.cornish-mining.org.uk/>

4.4 Summary

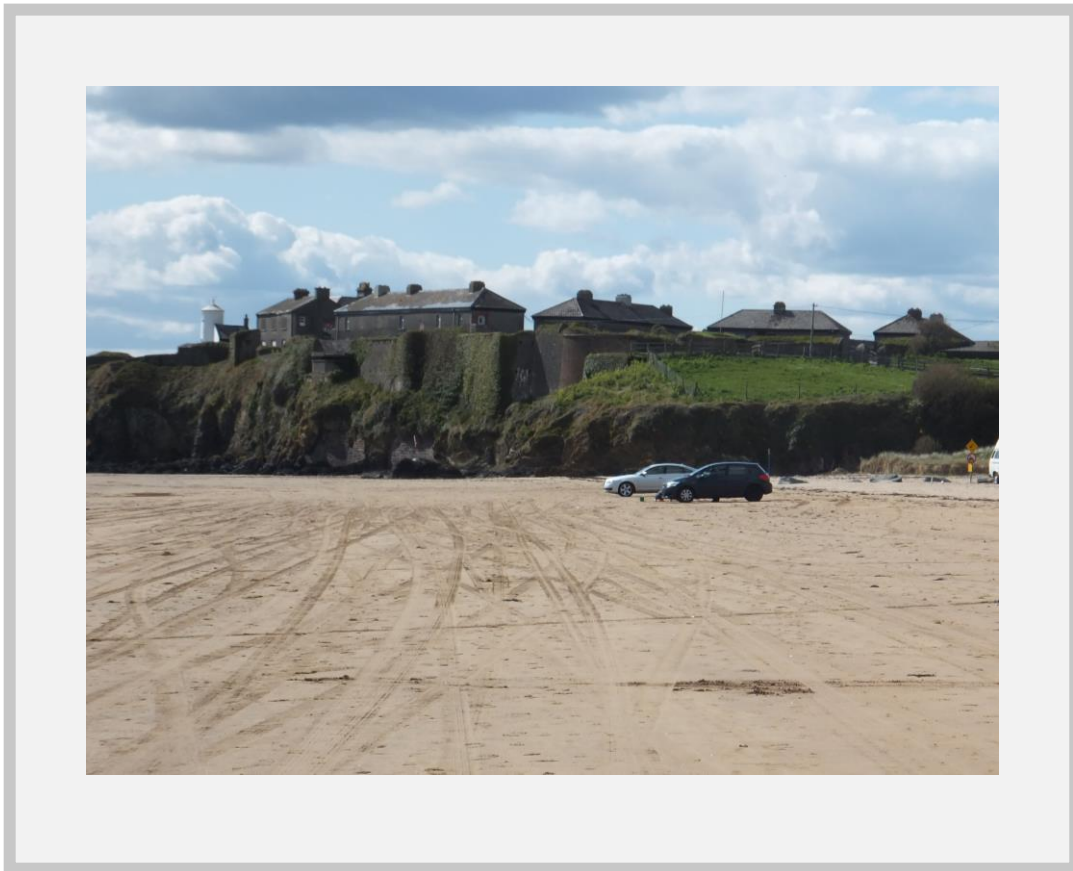
These case studies offer an insight into how capital investment and collaborative partnerships can very successfully create world class tourism destinations. However, capital investment is not enough on its own, as it is essential to also have the basic elements of the tourism experience right if it is to successfully grow the tourism sector. Fundamentals such as quality accommodation; things to see and do; good signage; a warm welcome reinforced by the highest standards of customer care and service; and high environmental standards are now core aspects of visitor expectations and not optional extras.

Whilst these aspects may not be the primary reason for visiting an area, growth in tourism against competing destinations can only be sustained if the quality of the natural and built environment which underpin the region’s appeal is maintained and visitors are welcomed by the communities which they visit. These core aspects are the responsibility of partner agencies and the private sector alike and will be critical to the success of implementing this plan.

The case studies also strongly underline the critical role creative, effective marketing, utilising online and offline channels, matched to compelling engaging images and stories play in visitor engagement and preference choice for experience and destination decisions.

Section 5.

Community Consultation Process



Section 5. Community Consultation Process

5.1 Background

An important dimension to this scoping report is the consultation process. It is important that the views of those engaged in the tourism industry are sought and that the vision of those directly involved in the tourism sector are articulated. This section will detail the consultation process undertaken in this study and the views that were expressed.

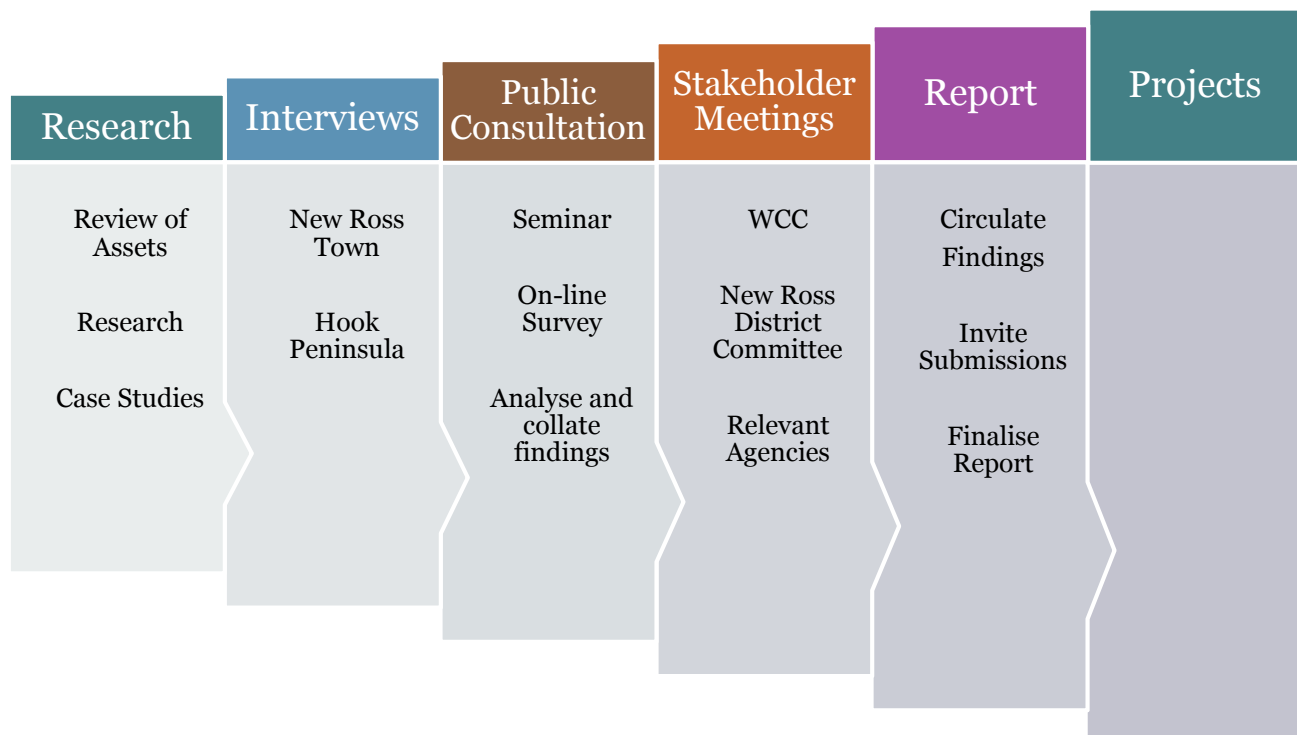
5.2 WCC

The Economic Section of WCC commissioned this scoping report to identify and prioritise tourism opportunities for the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula with the aim of increasing visitor numbers and revenue to the county.

5.3 Methodology

The consulting team reported monthly to the Economic Section of WCC. The diagram below illustrates the public consultation process that took place over a 3 month period.

Figure 11. Consultation Process



Desk top research and analysis of case studies was undertaken at the early phases of this report to inform and guide the interview and consultation process.

A seminar was held in the Brandon House Hotel on the 6th May, 2015 which was attended by 46 participants. The findings from this event were used to inform the on-line survey which was circulated to businesses and community groups involved in tourism in the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula.

125 on-line surveys were returned

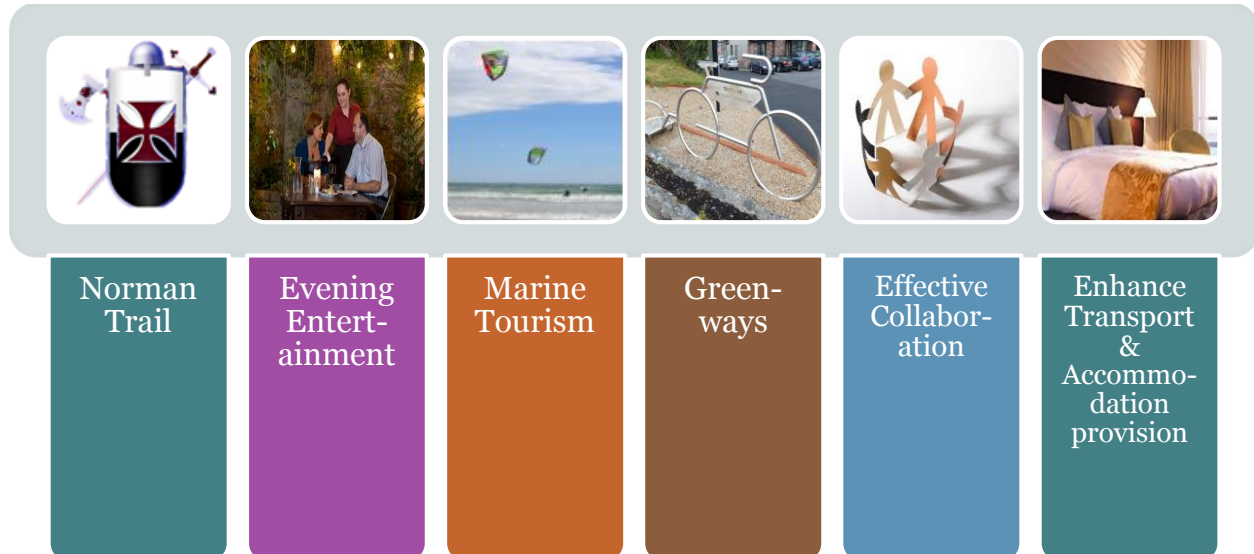
Promotion and awareness of the plan, seminar and on-line survey was undertaken through articles in the local newspapers, radio advertisements, WCC website and through collaboration with New Ross Chamber of Commerce, Hook Rural Tourism and WLD.

The draft plan was submitted to WCC for consideration and meetings with key stakeholders were held to discuss the recommendations. Advice was sought on the possible development of these initiatives, potential funding sources and other relevant issues.

5.4 Consultation Findings

The aim of this report is to identify initiatives that can create a ‘step change’ in the tourism industry in the area. The opportunity is to pinpoint the new ideas that will create the maximum impact in terms of visitor numbers and provide the best return on investment. A wide range of suggestions emanated from the seminar event and these are illustrated in figure 12.

Figure 12. Emerging Themes for Development in the New Ross and Hook Peninsula area



These themes were then captured in the on-line survey under three categories:

- New project ideas for the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula area
- Marketing initiatives
- Collaboration

A summary of the key findings under these headings will be considered next.

5.4.1 New Project Ideas for the New Ross and Hook Peninsula Area

Figure 13 illustrates the 20 project ideas that emerged from the seminar that were incorporated into the on-line survey. This illustrates very clearly that there is a strong preference for prioritising walking, cycling, good quality food, entertainment and the overall urban infrastructure of the villages and town in the area. These results are compatible with the case study research because in Dingle the Fáilte Ireland research highlighted that walking / hiking was the most favoured activity for holiday makers. The Causeway Coastal Route also emphasised the need to visually enhance all of the villages and towns along their driving route so that a ‘world class’ tourism destination was created.

These findings from the tourism stakeholders are very compatible with a significant number of projects that are currently being developed by WCC. Work is significantly advanced on the creation of greenways leading out of New Ross to Waterford City and also across the River Barrow. Major investment has also taken place on the Quay’s of New Ross over the last five years and further enhancements in the town infrastructure is planned through the creation of new parks.

There is a great opportunity under the new Rural Development Programme to significantly enhance the villages on the Hook Peninsula through collaboration between WLD, WCC, Hook Rural Tourism and local community groups and this funding should be available from the last quarter of 2015 onwards.

The area is developing a reputation for award winning restaurants and these survey results would indicate that there is significant interest to develop this further through the development and promotion of high quality, local artisan food. Fostering links between local food producers, accommodation providers and tourism attractions could be very beneficial.

The participants at the tourism seminar also expressed significant willingness to collaborate to develop the family entertainment offering in the area over the summer months. It was suggested that this could be developed at different locations on a rotational basis. A leadership role is required to facilitate this co-ordinated summer programme of entertainment across the New Ross / Hook Peninsula area.



Lacken Hill

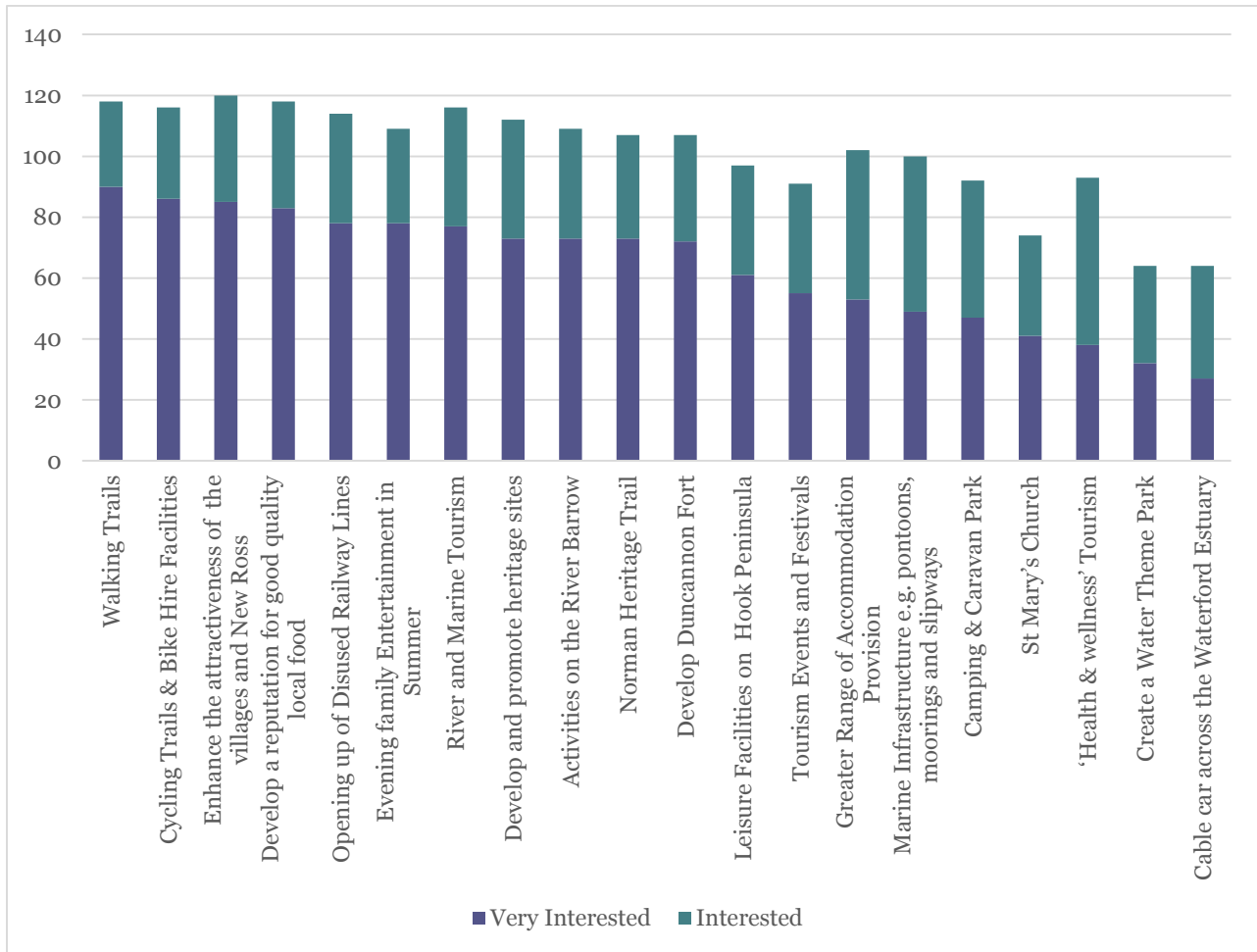


New Ross Town



Tintern Trails

Figure 13. Participants' Opinions on the Following Ideas



Source: On-line Survey, 2015

There was a recognition, that if this tourism scoping report was implemented, then investment would be needed in the road and parking infrastructure in the area to cope with this increase in visitor numbers. This would have to be undertaken very sensitively with due regard to the fragile, unique landscape of the Hook Peninsula.

Respondents were also asked if there was additional 'big ideas' that should be considered for the area and a significant number of suggestions emerged which are represented in figure 14 under different themes.

Figure 14. 'Big Ideas' for the New Ross District and the Hook Peninsula Area

Marine

<p>Development of Duncannon village. Improvement of water quality in Duncannon. Facilities on the beaches. Develop watersports at Duncannon. Improve safety and introduce speed and traffic restrictions on Duncannon beach.</p>	<p>Develop a submarine attraction in the clearer waters off the Hook. Check out website below. http://www.submarinesafaris.com/</p>	<p>To promote water sports. The South East already has the infrastructure in place.</p>
<p>There are some great marine activities in the area and the potential for further marine related activities except for adequate infrastructure. Rather than develop new tourist attractions we need to focus on what we have and develop that. If there were pontoons / marinas sailors would be encouraged to visit and explore. As well as that local businesses could offer more to visitors if adequate marine infrastructure was in place.</p>	<p>Open a scouting centre. Accessibility for them to camp, bonfires etc. Use Shielbaggan OEC to our advantage!</p>	<p>Link with Bannow and New Ross via sea/river systems.</p>
<p>I think you have a lot of great ideas. If they are all achieved there will be many successes and it will be a fantastic boost for the entire region. The River Barrow north of New Ross in Co. Wexford is very beautiful and is underdeveloped when compared to the riverside amenities in Co. Carlow and Co. Kilkenny. Poulmounty for example is a beautiful area with a lot of history attached. Boating is a popular activity on the river Barrow and possibly a couple of well-located jetties, picnic areas, riverside walks, camping parks etc could be developed.</p>		

Walking & Cycling

<p>There are already a number of signs and maps for Sli Charman which could be developed further, for instance a walk from Baginbun past the Hook Lighthouse through to Duncannon. There is huge interest in walking trails and why not use what is prepared to a certain extent already.</p>	<p>Where's the New Ross app and the Wexford app? There's a Longford app (for android) - the data is not up to date but the app is a good start. We should have walking tours of New Ross and the app set up so that users download a file at a WiFi hotspot, then they use their GPS to navigate around or scan a QR code at sites of interest and they get a localised narration of what's significant about the area.</p>	<p>Definitely improve the standard of road networks for bikes. With so many roads in Wexford some could be closed off on Sundays for families to use with bikes ie the cars could use alternative roads just from 10 am to 9 pm on a Sunday on certain routes.</p>
<p>A safe cycle route. The railway line could be fantastic.</p>	<p>Replicate Greenway on disused railway lines</p>	

Heritage

<p>Developing a Norman Trail is one of the most important points. This area has such strong connections with the arrival of the Normans in 1169, and so many medieval buildings in the South East area, especially the Hook Peninsula and New Ross. With the Ros Tapestry, and St. Mary's Church as the central point to show and interpret the richness of medieval history. We have two important Cistercian Abbeys, tower houses and other medieval attractions, which if linked together in an interesting way would be very interesting.</p>	<p>I am biased towards Duncannon Fort and the Hook Peninsula in general. Duncannon Fort has so many potential uses and would be a great way to garner some local, sustainable employment. It is the ideal location for a youth hostel, and /or a summer camp for scouting or adventure orientated groups. It has the space, the buildings, the history and with investment, the facilities. The fact that the beach and village are so close is also a big plus.</p>	<p>History Tours for school kids (Oliver Cromwell) (Normans) etc. (Shipwrecks) - or like in Tenerife they have butterfly farms maybe we could have a marine life farm (Sea horses or urchins) at the Hook. More effort has to be made to include people with disabilities in tourism activities not just visually but attractions should be more sensory.</p>
<p>Duncannon Fort. I know work is going to happen there but not enough is made of the fact that King James and William of Orange left Ireland from there.</p>	<p>Eugene O Neill the great Irish/American Playwright's Father was originally from Rosbercon perhaps this could prove to be an attraction. Perhaps a writers' summer school could be developed.</p>	<p>Use the National Treasure that is the Ros Tapestry as the focus point for a Centre of Excellence for the interpretation of our Norman heritage. A Norman Museum with museum status and artefacts from the National Collection.</p>
<p>Apply to be recognised as a World Heritage site. Capitalise on link with Tintern Abbey in Wales.</p>	<p>Regarding the Norman fortifications in Baginbun head, they could be developed as a tourist attraction.</p>	<p>Properly mapped tour of Norman sites, castles and abbeys.</p>
<p>The flora and fauna of the Hook area needs to be highlighted and perhaps a pamphlet published containing a trail. The birds could also be taken into account.</p>	<p>Develop a Norman trail from Bannow to Waterford.</p>	<p>There's huge tourism potential in military history and battle re-enactments with lots of historical sites and trails including Duncannon Fort.</p>
<p>Not enough done to promote our natural heritage and our castles. We should really be celebrating our castles with tours etc. Americans don't have castles so that is a market you could look at i.e. Johnstown Castle, Castle Tours of Wexford, Heritage Tours e.g. Tintern /Dunbrody/ Hook/ Clonmines etc</p>	<p>Real concern regarding the development/non development of Duncannon Fort. Huge potential that will be lost if not acted upon quickly. Future development needs to be included in the plan and to develop a phased programme of work to bring it to a top class facility within 5/6 years.</p>	<p>Joined up thinking and practical thinking is essential. Duncannon Fort was not run to its full potential. Tintern Abbey needs to be pro-active in increasing / improving facilities. It should have a longer tourist year. The coffee shop should be open to the public.</p>

<p>Huge regret that Duncannon fort and all the facilities within it have closed.</p>	<p>We are about to open a new Norman theme (historic, educational & family friendly) woodland archery trail which we hope would be a significant part of "Norman" Heritage Trail which we are very much interested in. I believe this new networking and collaborating is a great initiative.</p>	<p>For Duncannon the Re opening of the Fort would be of vital importance, and the re-opening of the Cockleshell Gallery within the complex.</p>
<p>The Camino de Santiago is a well marketed and popular tourist amenity. The towns, villages, other tourist amenities, little craft industries and artisan food producers along the way all benefit from the tourist traffic. It might be worth considering a similar venture eg - opening up old walking routes like the old route to Dublin for example or old mass paths. Also, historical societies hold vast amounts of local knowledge and tapping into and linking up the societies might be an idea. Well done – it is great to see the area being promoted.</p>	<p>Ros Tapestry offers tremendous possibilities, in Art, Craft, Heritage and Educational tourism. Not without its own vision for the future, when it hopes to encompass New Ross Lace and broaden its appeal through creating a school of excellence within the Needlecraft community. It will offer courses to those interested locally, nationally and overseas.</p> <p>It is hoped that this will encourage visitors to avail of local accommodation during there stay and visit many of the other great attractions in the area. After the investment of millions of euro's in the Dunbrody Ship and the Quayside Boardwalk, it is imperative to build on the now 60,000 people visiting the Ship each year. This level of investment has to be harnessed for the greater good of all other attractions.</p> <p>With New Ross soon to be By-Passed, it has to become a destination attraction not an infill attraction on the way to the Ferry or the likes of Killarney!</p>	

Urban Infrastructure

<p>New Ross as a town needs to be more open for business. Parking costs are too expensive. Shops closing for lunchtime is ridiculous. There is nothing to attract people to the town.</p>	<p>I feel there needs to be a vibrant atmosphere at night time, like you find in Kerry tourism. Our towns are empty at night and tourists wander around like they are lost. We have so much more to offer than most counties and our assets are not being promoted enough.</p>	<p>Take tourists into the main streets of the town. An AIRE would be ideal near the Marina / Town Park. Consider a Tourist Trolley.</p>
<p>Food choices in New Ross in evenings very limited. Ros Tapestry closed on Sundays....why? Tourists stopping at Dunbrody Famine Ship are encouraged to do Emigrant Trail and Town/Ros Tapestry left out.</p>	<p>Good policing around New Ross town. Reduce the price for the Apex pool. Better road markings - cat's eyes etc (tourists often not used to driving at night). Continue to improve signage.</p>	<p>Simple things like bins on beaches and in playgrounds seats and picnic tables. Outdoor ping pong tables skateboard park, mini golf in Duncannon.</p>
<p>Ideas need motivated drivers and obviously Big ideas require highly motivated confident persons such as the gentleman who managed to entice the Eurovision song contest to the little village called Mill-street in County Cork. Even very good ideas mostly start small for example the Wexford Festival Opera or the Rose of Tralee amongst many more. In the town of New Ross, voluntary efforts by its inhabitants have livened up some of the streets. I attended meetings when the John F Kennedy trust was suggested, out of which the Dunbrody ship was spawned. Unfortunately or fortunately the hilly make-up of the town can be a draw-back however we have an excellent hotel as well as two award winning hairdressers, a championship pipe band and many more notable matters within the region and those interested and have it within their thinking should be capable to accommodate positively the needs of tourists and locals alike.</p>		

Events

<p>Open Hook Lighthouse in evenings during busy periods and do evening tours. I am sure there are plenty of people who would like part time jobs in evenings and we are losing potential markets. Also BBQ evenings could be another big draw but again only at peak times. Or seafood evenings and night-time walks from Slade to Lighthouse.</p>	<p>Music Festivals - Amazing!!!! The boys from the Spiegel tent were looking at Grangeville last year, Great Locations. We had a few Irish bike rallies in Loftus Hall grounds way back in the day, would be a great spot for a camping festival.</p>	<p>JFK park needs to expand in more ways, the concert for JFK celebrations was fab yet was never repeated! Concerts are sold out when held in Hook Lighthouse. Look at Wells House, major attraction with little spend-gruafflo/fairy themed walk.</p>
<p>Introduce family activities at Tintern Abbey.</p>	<p>Events to attract the over 50's.</p>	<p>Bbq areas in JFK park and outdoor events at JFK park.</p>
<p>Gastronomy</p>	<p>Cinema on the beaches. Ask anyone from the 'West of Ireland' where do they know in Wexford & they will tell you Curracloe or Courtown, yet we all know Bunratty!</p>	<p>Children's crafts. Organised children's events. Music concerts in JFK park.</p>

Source: On-line Survey, 2015

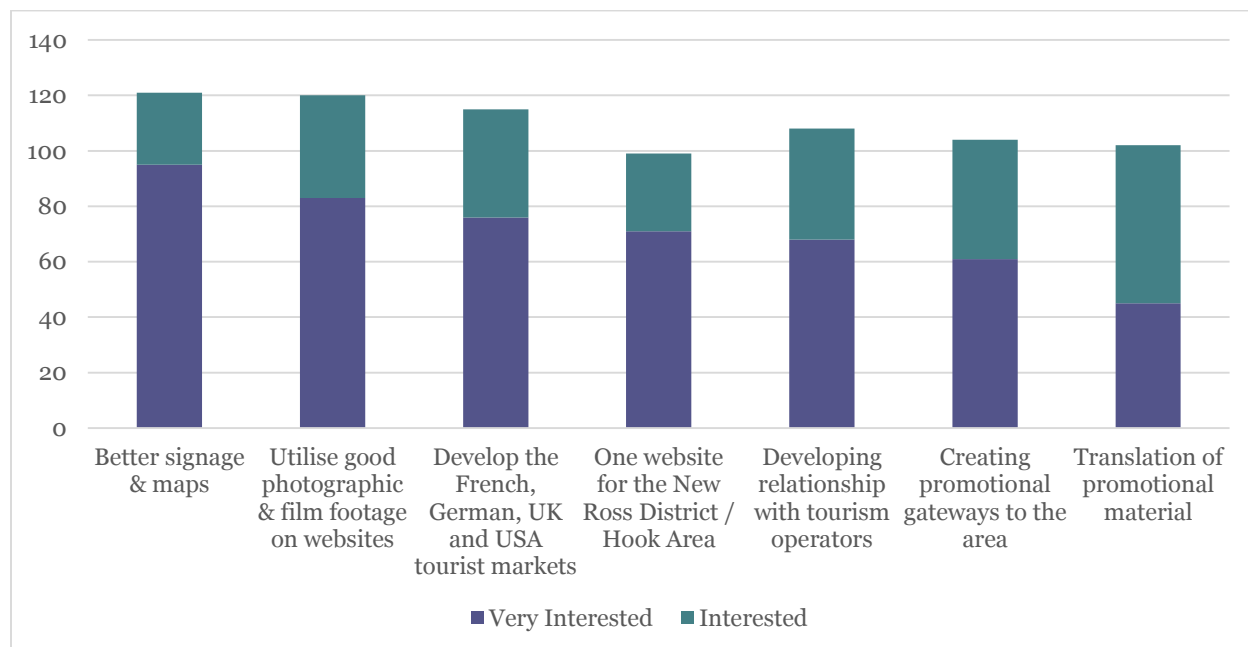
Note: These are edited extracts from the on-line survey

5.4.2 Marketing Initiatives

The case studies illustrated the importance of well-researched, targeted marketing and when well delivered can very effectively draw in significant additional visitors to a region. This was recognised at the tourism seminar and in the on-line survey results.

Figure 15 illustrates the tourism stakeholders preferred marketing options for the New Ross and Hook Peninsula area.

Figure 15. Marketing Options for the New Ross and Hook Peninsula Area



Source: On-line Survey, 2015

If we look at the trend for the ‘very interested’ responses we can see that better signage is the most popular response, closely followed by the use of good photographic and film footage on websites. There was also a number of marketing comments in the survey and these are highlighted in figure 16.

Figure 16. Marketing & Signage Suggestions

<p>Develop the JFK Arboretum and surrounding areas. The park is stunning but not marketed enough. There is no-where local to stay and there is no-where local for the 100k visitors to have a glass of wine or a bite to eat in the evening. The park is 625 acres so if a small section could be turned into a dog park where the dogs can be let off leash. Work to bring back the US visitors as there used to be many Americans and now I see very little.</p>	<p>I was in Canada recently and my first place to go was the tourist office and before I left I had purchased three different trips due to the girl serving and her enthusiasm for what we would enjoy. We don't do enough of that and no tourist office at lighthouse or Fethard on Sea so if I don't stop at Dunbrody ship or Duncannon where do I get my info.</p>	<p>A lot of the above has been done, but needs tweaking. The parochialism is prohibiting collaboration and buy in As for accommodation... More variety, but bed nights in hotel WAY below national average due to proximity of Waterford and Kilkenny, and needs to be taken into consideration. The region is at heart and paramount to whole of South East.</p>
--	---	---

Tourism Scoping Report - New Ross District & Hook Peninsula Area: Wexford County Council

Signage off R733 for Duncannon no indication that there are beaches etc. Should be a huge sign for beach and playground at R737 intersection.	Target groups of interest, ie historical groups, gardening groups, foodie circles etc.	Get all accommodation providers to collaborate and help each other.
Waterford airport is on our door step yet not highlighted abroad! Travel to London in less time than it takes to go to Dublin!! Advertised in South East & Waterford city but where are signs on the ferries & on buses in London.	Mega Draws to bring people home for holidays from other countries, with prize to include seven nights accommodation, free tours of the local amenities, evening meals in selected restaurants.	You can't have enough local information for people. A website giving examples of things you could do with prices etc and having links to attractions in the area.
Promote the 'West Coast of Wexford' as a separate and unique attraction.	Initiatives to capture new Cruise Liner visits in summer.	Invite more foreign dignitaries to show off area.
South East promoted as a place to retire to.	Tourist information available on Stena and Irish ferries.	Signage or tourist information at Rosslare – imperative.
Ambassador programme - educating locals on how to interact with the visitors. This could be done for summer months, Christmas time- perhaps engaging with the schools to participate to some extent.	It is understandable that each tourist attraction have their own product to sell but we need to see the managers and staff of these attractions enthusiastically promoting all other attractions in our area.	If people in tourism are not aware of the existence of organisations that purport to have oversight of tourism in their area there is obviously something wrong and questions should be asked.
Nothing BIG, just Cooperation.	Signage needs improving.	Promote more within region.
Ensure shops get brochure stands with amenities in the area and what's on. If you are in New Ross, how long to JFK, Hook, Duncannon? Advertise for school tours, how many locals have gone kitesurfing in Duncannon? Boat trips up our rivers? We have amazing chefs but do we highlight them? How far is Waterford over the unused Barrow bridge?	Need joined up thinking as we have a lot to offer and have a coastline which should give us an advantage. We work too much in isolation and it is to our detriment. We have beautiful villages, fishing, rivers, sea and we need to work together. There could be financial gain and sustainability as a result.	The biggest thing is that all tourism sector must work together. Promote each other. Not to let tourist out of the area if you cannot accommodate them but someone else can. Get the Céad míle fáilte back in to the tourism industry that Ireland is known for.
Encouraging all areas of the tourism industry to work together to promote the area. Obvious, I know, but it still does not seem to be happening.	If you want to attract more tourists you need to involve the local people. This is a good start.	Keep people talking /meeting/networking to keep the interest going.
Need to bring businesses together and do packages. I.e. Loftus Hall and Lighthouse, Templers or Nevilles dinner and Lighthouse. Need to think outside of the box more.	Promote Wexford better on social media. Collaborate better. We have a stunning county but we are behind compared to the West.	All the attractions we have are brilliant but a collaborative effort required. We need to keep tourists for a few days not just a whistle stop tour.

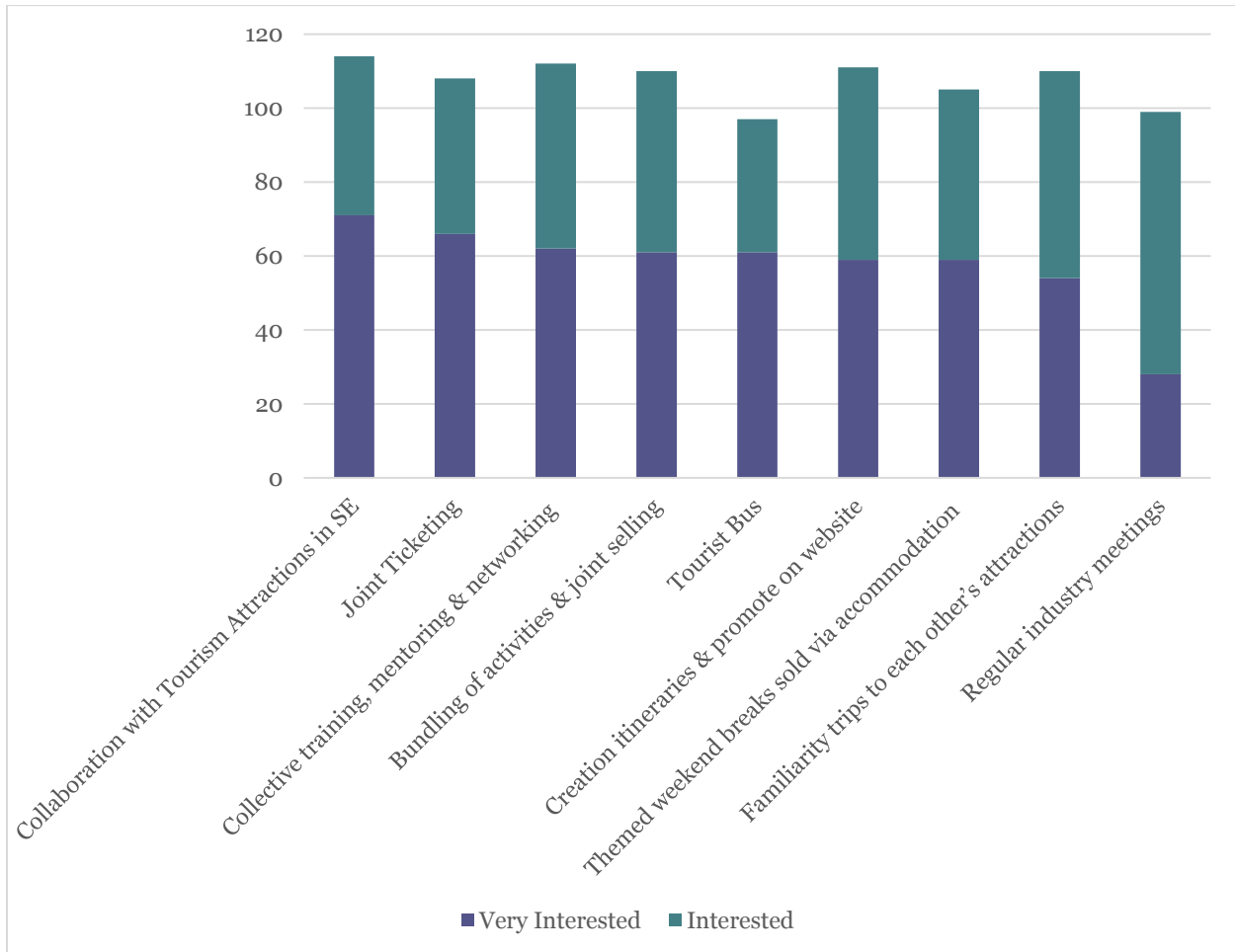
Source: On-line Survey, 2015

Note: These are edited extracts from the on-line survey

5.4.3 Collaboration Initiatives

At the seminar, the tourism stakeholders recognised that significant developments in the tourism product could emerge through closer collaboration within the industry. This was explored in the on-line survey and figure 17 illustrates these results.

Figure 17. Opportunities for Collaboration



Source: On-line Survey, 2015

These results illustrate the interest in collaboration and the preferred options are to link with other attractions in the South East; organise joint ticketing; and participate in collective training, mentoring and networking. For these initiatives to be developed a lead agency would need to be identified to drive these ideas forward.

The stakeholder interviews also considered the current models of collaboration between New Ross and the Hook Peninsula. It was generally felt that 'Experience New Ross' should be re-examined and replaced with a model that better represented all interest groups in the area.

The concept of a tourist bus generated some interesting responses and these are highlighted in figure 18. As suggested in one response, it would be very interesting to pilot a number of initiatives and evaluate the feedback from the participating visitors. There is also scope to link with existing bus tourism operators such as Hook Head Safaris and the Enniscorthy Heritage Trail Bus.

Figure 18. Transport / Bus Tour Ideas

An open top tour bus (Summer Months) similar to London bus to take families who don't have cars or day trippers from the towns out to the Hook area for the day. 14 beaches in total and all amenities are in place. A bus could pick up direct from hotels. Could pilot this with school bus operators who are not in use during school summer hols?	A half day's tour to Duncannon Fort followed by a combined Loftus Hall/Hook lighthouse experience, followed by a meal in Fethard on Sea or Duncannon is a day everybody would enjoy.	Ghost trail, we have Loftus, yet we let another 'ghost' adventure close in Duncannon Fort - the Croppy boy cell. Sell the 'By Hook or By Crooke' line. Cycling tours from Rosslare through South West Wexford, across Passage East back into New Ross. Look what the Tour De France did for Wexford in 1998! Imagine an annual/biannual event.
The New Ross/Hook Peninsula would be an ideal route for tours such as schools, senior citizens etc. This could be promoted with itineraries.	Collaboration between minibus owners, B&B's and hotels to facilitate the smooth running of and access to various activities.	Bus tours. JFK, Arthurstown Brewery, Lighthouse and Loftus Hall.
Transport links between Wexford, New Ross, Kilkenny, Waterford.	Little info. on New Ross at Ferry terminal, on Ferries into Rosslare, Waterford airport.	

Source: On-line Survey, 2015

Note: These are edited extracts from the on-line survey

5.5 Summary

There was a comprehensive response to the request for consultation from key stakeholders, industry providers and public bodies. This included: 20 interviews; 46 participants at the public seminar; and 125 on-line survey responses. This represents a huge interest in tourism and tourism development throughout the area. This is a strategic strength and should greatly assist in the implementation of this report.

General Comments

Keep it simple, don't spoil what you have got.	Lots of great ideas which deserve to be implemented.	Meetings of the top businesses and companies in New Ross.
Fun	Themed park to me is a must.	Overdevelopment would be bad.
Work with sports clubs for Exchange programmes.	Proper camping and shower facilities. Campervans all year round and no-where for them to go. Missing an opportunity.	One of the problems is the amount of wild camping in the area particularly at the Hook Lighthouse.

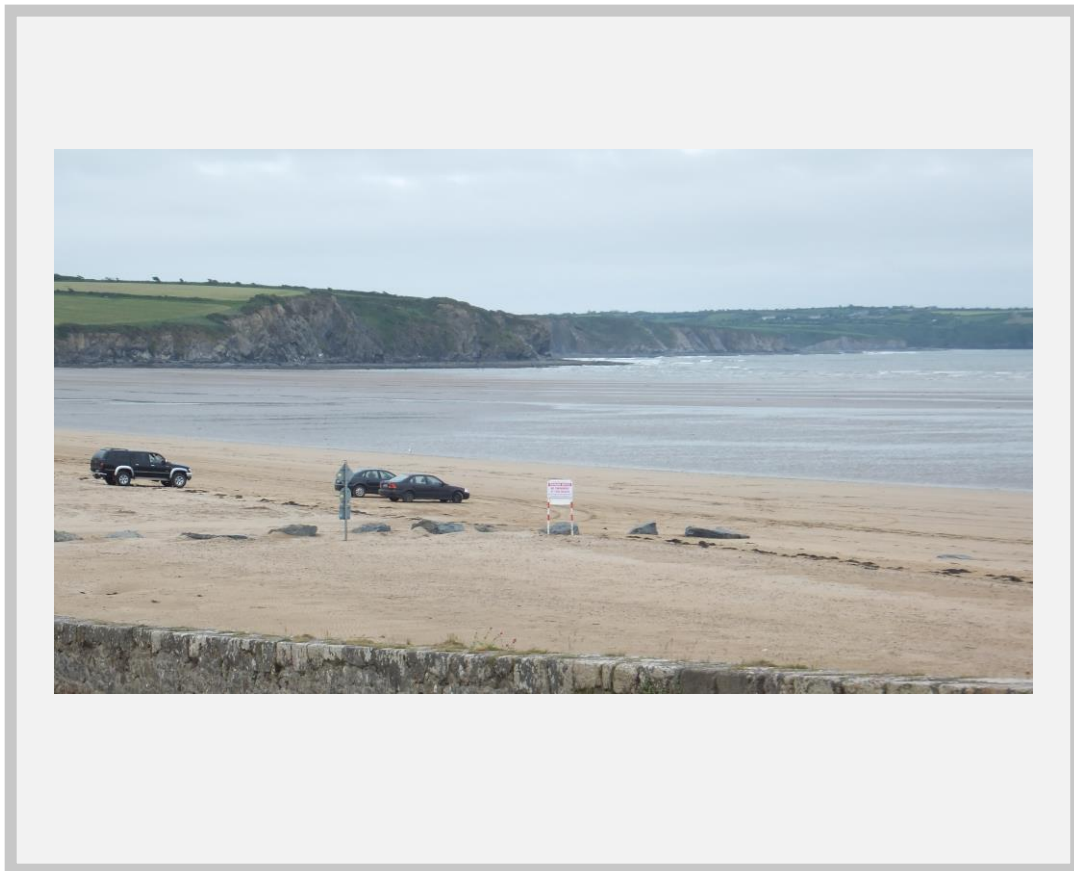
<p>Smaller businesses /attractions /services need to be recognised and included more. Not all visitors want to do the same thing.</p>	<p>The 2 big developments which could take place over the next 5 years are developing the Wexford-Waterford rail line as a walking/cycling track and developing a Normal Trail.</p>	<p>Most of our tourists are from other parts of the country and feel Wexford people don't get out and be tourists in their own towns. I can't understand why buses from Dublin are by-passing Wexford for the west when we have so much more to offer and we are practically neighbours?</p>
<p>Have facilities open all year round.</p>	<p>The South East is just beautiful. Love it.</p>	<p>Link in youth groups/projects as they are our future.</p>
<p>Building and enhancing existing projects and destinations, by bringing added value to them from a visitors point of view; as it's not always necessary to reinvent the wheel. Most projects are more than willing to become part of a singular representative / promotional body. "But" (a) Believe they will be left behind and don't matter as much as the bigger projects (b) They are busy enough just trying to make their own project survive and grow. (c) Waste so much time, energy and funds making applications to funding agencies (for the most part unsuccessfully).</p> <p>It's not enough to have one voice or promotional organisation, what's needed is hands on support and guidance. Regular visits by a knowledgeable and fully briefed representative bringing information on grants and other activities in the area. This person / group would have on hand, all relative data bases on local business, groups and funding bodies. Offer practical assistance with completion of applications.</p>	<p>Tourism flourishes best by motivators who have inherent genes for the good of the industry. Many consider themselves to be tourist orientated, but tourism is a tough and demanding industry.</p> <p>In recent times it has been recognised as a major growth area but it is most competitive between nations and regions in our land. The recent street plaques innovation in New Ross was excellent but local businesses must contribute and capitalise on all voluntary efforts made for the area.</p> <p>At this time it would be unthinkable for New Ross to be without the "Dunbrody" and while it is excellent the operating hours are questionable. An area must embrace a welcoming attitude for all visitors. The feeling of being welcome would undoubtedly satisfy minds that would not only wish for a return visit but would also act in an ambassadorial role on their return home.</p> <p>The region has improved in leaps and bounds. Those in their private capacity who have invested heavily must be complimented as must organisations who have contributed in any way to tourism must be given similar recognition.</p>	<p>A focus on a couple of main areas, e.g. Norman heritage and walking trails, and festivals would be better than trying to do too much.</p>
<p>Need for achievable projects with time scale. Feasibility studies that ignore problems are useless.</p>		

Source: On-line Survey, 2015

Note: These are edited extracts from the on-line survey

Section 6.

SWOT Analysis







Section 6. SWOT Analysis

In this section we present our analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in relation to the development of tourism the New Ross and Hook Peninsula.

6.1 SWOT Table

The table below details the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the area from a tourism perspective.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The natural setting of the Hook Peninsula and the Waterford Estuary • The port town of New Ross which dates from pre - Middle Ages • The abundance of tourism assets of various scale in the entire area including the compelling ‘stories’ which accompany those assets • A number of well-developed tourist attractions with international recognition • Striking coastal landscape and geological formations • Attractive coastal villages • An array of fine sandy beaches • Internationally important fossil records • Proximity to Rosslare Harbour, Kilkenny City, Waterford City, Waterford Port & Waterford / Cork Airports • Harbours, slipways and moorings at a number of sites in the area • Well restored OPW heritage sites which are open to the public including Tintern Abbey, Dunbrody Abbey, JFK Arboretum and Ballyhack Castle • The emigrant trail at New Ross and its environs, including the Dunbrody Famine Ship; Kennedy Homestead and the JFK Arboretum (622 acres) • Tourism related urban and infrastructure development delivered and planned for New Ross • The oldest operational lighthouse in the world, The Tower of Hook • A number of attractive gardens that are part of the Garden trail • An array of sites on the Heritage Trails • Craft studios which are part of the Craft Trail • Food & beverage offerings in award winning pubs and restaurants • The Brandon House Hotel, Eco-spa, and Leisure centre in New Ross 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited co-ordination of initiatives between New Ross and the Hook Peninsula • Recent temporary closure of Duncannon Fort • Poor bathing water quality issues on Duncannon beach • The broadband infrastructure is weak • Lack of sewage treatment facilities • An under-developed visitor experience in New Ross town in the evenings • Lack of marine facilities to support adventure sports • A deficit of sufficient high quality hotel accommodation of scale • A shortage of visitor focused evening entertainment (including for families) • Accommodation occupancy rates low off season • A lack of out of season activities and festivals • Lack of a unified theme across the region • Poor road surface quality in some areas of the Peninsula • Limited public transport infrastructure • Visual presentation of villages and New Ross not developed to their full potential • A lack of marketing at the major transport nodes such as Rosslare Europort • Lack of advertising of the region overseas • Lack of off-road cycling routes in the region • Lack of visitor facilities at sites such as Slade harbour and many of the beaches on the Peninsula • Closure of some tourist attractions during the winter months • Lack of toilet and refreshment facilities during the winter months • Lack of facilities for the teenager target group • Lack of long distance walking trails along the coast

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dunbrody Country House Hotel - Celebrity chef owned award winning hotel/restaurant on the Hook Peninsula• A selection of accommodation providers in the area including hotels, country guesthouses, B&B's, and self-catering units including the largest (65 units) SC option, 'Hookless Holiday Homes• Hook Tourism, the JFK Trust, and Hook Heritage and their track record in developing tourism and marketing the region• The Rivers, Barrow, Noir and Suir and their eco-systems• Good coastal conditions on the Peninsula for kite-surfing, dingy sailing, diving, surfing, kayaking and angling	
	
	

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the area as a ‘Destination of scale’ and implement an ‘attract & disperse’ strategy • Further develop existing ‘experience’ attractions • Add additional quality ‘experience’ attractions • The area should closely align itself to Ireland’s Ancient East initiative - Fáilte Ireland • Animate the ‘story’ of the area and communicate a sense of awe, adventure, heritage, and exploration • Create ‘Hub Hot Spots’ within the area based on themes/markets such as ‘Marine’, ‘Heritage’, ‘Families’, ‘Urban-Retail’, ‘River’ and ‘Geology’ • Encourage a wider range of accommodation types, particularly the addition of a quality Aparthotel, Hostel, and camping/motor home facility • Development of themed tourism trails such as the ‘William Marshall - ‘Norman Trail’ centered at Tintern Abbey as the Heritage Hub • Explore designation for the Peninsula as a World Heritage Site, based on its substantial built heritage, history, and its geology • Attract a greater proportion of international visitors to the area • Create a vibrant tourism industry all year round • Develop better organisational and collaborative structures for the tourism sector in the area • Leverage and maximise the area’s proximity to the cities of Waterford & Kilkenny, and the county areas of both plus Co. Carlow all of whom have developed their tourism offering significantly in recent years • Closer collaboration with tourism attractions in the South East to give a joined up ‘product’ • Increase in coach tour business • Establish a National Diaspora Centre - New Ross • Development of family friendly evening entertainment in a wide variety of locations in the area in a coordinated manner • Encourage more leisure facilities on the Hook Peninsula • Develop a marine offering using the coast and rivers infrastructure • Create a Marine Hub at Fethard on Sea to support water sports and the proposed ‘Helen Blake’ replica lifeboat • Up-grade marine facilities at Ballyhack to facilitate boat trips, river ferries and visiting yachts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not working effectively together with co-ordination to deliver a great tourism product for visitors • Lack of bundling of products to create a joined up tourism experience • An absence of familiarity of other tourism products in the area • Ineffective marketing & branding • Insufficiently strong brand identification of the area • A lack of cohesion in the tourism sector and ineffective links with VisitWexford • VisitWexford not marketing all attractions • Illegal signage and poorly presented roadsides • Lack of infrastructure such as broadband, parking, narrow roads • Lack of evening entertainment • Insufficient capacity of provision of a wide range of market driven activities • Difficult to secure permissive rights agreements to develop walking and cycling trails • Accommodation providers who are not approved • Parking on Duncannon beach • Timescale to install a waste water treatment plant in Duncannon • Investment required to develop Duncannon Fort as a top class heritage attraction • Poor coordinated, effective signage • Seasonal nature of the tourism industry • Low visitor numbers outside the summer months affects the viability of tourism attractions • Ensure that the area is developed sensitively with regard to its heritage • Road and parking infrastructure unable to cope with an increase in visitor numbers • Under investment in the Hook Lighthouse infrastructure and its on-going maintenance • Sufficient capacity and choice within accommodation sector to meet significant expansion of the area as a tourism destination • To not maximise the outstanding natural and built assets that the area possesses • New Ross by-pass and the reduction in traffic passing through the town • Scale of investment required to create the ‘Step Change’

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrianisation of sections of New Ross to create a cultural / heritage quarter and Urban / River Hubs • Enhanced presentation of strategic villages and New Ross Creative re-development of Duncannon Fort • Develop a local food experience and link local food supply into the overall tourism experience • Open up the dis-used railway lines for walking & cycling • Use stunning photography and vibrant film footage to market/sell the area online • Development of more walking trails • Foster links with Wales and joint holiday packages • Marketing through national agencies & tour operators • Innovative use of Waterford estuary for water taxis, cable cars, marine tourism • Creation of a 'Blueway' • Development of a water theme park at Duncannon • Development of Duncannon Village as a Family Tourism Hub for the area • Willingness to work collaboratively • Interest in up-skilling and professionalising the industry • Positive relationship with OPW; WCC & Heritage Council • Creation of tourism map of the region which makes attractions easy to locate • Utilise portable toilet and refreshment facilities at popular beaches and Slade during the summer months • Promote the unique fossil and geological formations with third level institutions and develop the Geological Hub at Hook Lighthouse • Develop the marine eco-tourism industry which extends the tourism season • The prominence of the volunteering ethos and local leadership skills • 100 acres of Coillte woods at Tintern Abbey • Development of the Rosegarland Estate as a major new attraction • Creation of Area Discovery Centres e.g. one located at the Famine Ship Centre in New Ross, one in Duncannon • Develop niche high end tours • Introduce fun bus tours in the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible opposition to infrastructural and tourism developments in the area

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer joint ticketing and discount schemes • Opportunity to utilise the Rosslare to Waterford disused railway for tourism purposes • The Government plans to roll out high speed broadband across Ireland by the end of 2020 	

6.2 Summary

The Strengths and Opportunities of the area far outweigh the Weaknesses and Threats. However, some of the latter have the potential to significantly undermine the tourism potential of the region. These are:

- a. Clarity of purpose to develop the entire area as a holiday destination location, as well as an experience area
- b. Effective efficient collaboration between the Peninsula area and the New Ross Town area
- c. Effective knowledge, collaboration, and cross promotion/cross selling between providers
- d. The scale of investment required for up-grading the infrastructure in the area
- e. Sensitive, sustainable development of the area with regard to its unique natural and built heritage
- f. A lack of appropriate evening entertainment which is a necessary component of a holiday experience
- g. Current seasonal (summer) nature of the tourism industry

In relation to the first threats (a to c) there is considerable divergence of opinion evident during the consultation phase of the work for this report as to whether the New Ross Town area (& its environs) and the Hook Peninsula area could, or should, be seen as (i) a unified tourism offering (ii) two totally separate tourism offerings (iii) two separate tourism offerings but with common goals and clear reasons to work more effectively and collaboratively together. Our opinion is that overwhelming logic, reason and scope exists for (iii) to be the model to pursue.

In relation to threat (d) this report has identified that for a ‘Step Change’ to take place significant investment in both New Ross Town and its environs and the Hook Peninsula need to take place. This includes marine infrastructure; greenways; urban enhancement; sewerage; broadband; and major investment in a number of flagship tourism attractions. This investment would optimise the potential of resources in the area which are currently under-utilised such as the dis-used railway lines, the River Barrow, Duncannon Fort and the Hook Peninsula coast.

In relation to threat (e) the area has outstanding natural and built heritage and therefore all future developments must be undertaken sensitively with due regard to this unique fragile environment.

In relation to threat (f), during the consultation phase, tourism operators expressed an interest in co-ordinating activities so that there was a designated location within New Ross and Hook Peninsula each night for family entertainment during the peak season. Further discussions would need to take place to facilitate this initiative but it is something that could be implemented very quickly.

In relation to threat (g) the problem of the seasonal nature of the tourism industry is not unique to this area. Although with a focus on heritage, eco-tourism, walking, and themed events out of season this can be minimised.

Section 7.

Conclusions

&

Potential ‘Step Change’ Options



Section 7. Conclusions & Potential ‘Step Change’ Options

In this section we present our assessment of the information and opinions obtained and presented in the preceding sections together with our conclusions for ‘Step-Change’ tourism development for the New Ross District and the Hook Peninsula.

7.1 Conclusion

The New Ross District and the Hook Peninsula has made significant progress in recent years in developing and enhancing its tourism infrastructure as evidenced in previous sections of this report. Investment has taken place in public, community and private tourism assets, many supported by public bodies like WCC, WLD, Fáilte Ireland and other bodies. The area has emerged as a premier tourism location within County Wexford for international visitors and in addition attracts considerable numbers of domestic tourists, drawn to the area by the natural beauty of the landscape and seascape, the JF Kennedy connection, famine & migration connections, the quaint villages, the beaches, the geology, and the rich heritage, history, and culture of this part of Ireland.

The area also has significant intangible tourism assets, namely the knowledge and professionalism of its major tourism providers, actors and tourism organisations, credibility within the tourism sector in Ireland and abroad, an established market presence, and a significant ‘stock’ of additional potential stories and associated assets which can be developed in the short to mid-term to emotionally connect with, enthrall, and enhance the overall visitor experience.

The area does suffer at present from a common tourism problem, namely, the volumes of ‘Hit-and-Run’ or ‘Transit’ tourism, i.e. where visitors visit the area for a few hours, usually to a single site location, and then move on to other destinations for accommodation, other experiences, and recreational activities.

The challenge for the area is to hold visitors longer in the area i.e. to adapt and implement an ‘Attract-Hold-& Disperse’ tourism strategy. This can be achieved in two ways:

1. Make compelling the reason for visitors to want to experience more in the area from a number of activities or attractions where visitors are on a short timeframe.
2. Make compelling the reason for visitors to choose to select the area as their main holiday base involving accommodation, experiences and recreational activities.

The area undoubtedly holds the strong potential to deliver on both of the above, and thereby realise real ‘Step-Change’ growth in tourism activity with the resultant benefit of increased employment and economic development.

New Ross town and its environs and the Hook Peninsula each have their own unique strengths and core offerings. Both areas have planned and potential new offerings and ‘infrastructure’ which can, and should be brought forward. But both areas will also collectively benefit from a more collaborative approach to tourism development moving forward, working together to develop new common offerings to add to the menu of tourism experiences already available, as well as greater cross-selling and bundling of products to meet visitor demand, trends and expectations.

7.2 Potential Framework Model

It is our conclusion that the most appropriate solution to deliver tourism growth in the area, over the next 5 years, is to implement the model of development illustrated below.

Figure 19. Proposed Tourism Development Model



Vision

By 2020, the New Ross District and the Hook Peninsula is a tourism destination of first choice for high quality, memorable, visitor experiences and value for money holidays, delivered by passionate, skilled people.

Mission

To develop and lead the growth of destination and experiential tourism in Co. Wexford.

To leverage collaboration with other tourism centres of excellence in the South-East of Ireland and beyond in line with national tourism strategies.

To attract the following geographical markets for holidays and visitor experiences:

Home Soil	Near Neighbours	Other International Markets
Republic of Ireland Northern Ireland	Wales England Scotland	North America France Germany Others

Strategic Action Framework

Provide authentic experience using an interconnected menu of themes e.g.

- Historical facts and information
- Heritage
- Culture
- Time Together – Families, Couples, Groups (Fun, Awe, Discovery & Exploration)
- Outdoor Activities – adventure, walking, cycling, marine and others
- Urban
- Retail
- Food & Beverage
- Entertainment
- Coastal and the Marine
- Natural Environment
- Rivers

Improve the customer journey by:

Developing a 'holistic' destination strategy based on - Travel; Stay; Experiences; Play

Develop a focused experience strategy based on:

- **'Hub Hot Spots' e.g.**
 - **Norman History & Heritage** – centred on the Peninsula, Tintern and its environs. In the case of Norman History linked via a 'Norman Trail' [William Marshal] to New Ross and onwards to Kilkenny City.

- **Families** – Duncannon and its environs with sufficient activities developed in the area to captivate and engage families e.g. flagship attraction development at Duncannon Fort, outdoor water park etc.
- **Marine activities** – centred at Fethard on Sea. e.g. adventure, boat trips, fishing trips etc.
- **Urban / River** - Retail / Entertainment / Kennedy / Emigration / Migration / Norman quarter /and River experiences centred in New Ross
- **Cultural experiences** - centred in Duncannon, Fethard on Sea & New Ross e.g. traditional music, story telling etc
- **Geology experiences** – centred in Hook Lighthouse. The lighthouse experience itself is a strong iconic draw linking history, maritime, ecology and coastal heritage.

- **Great Attractions**
 - Continue to develop existing quality attractions throughout the area
 - Create a ‘Flagship’ attraction of scale and interest at Duncannon Fort
 - Significantly extend the Tintern and Colclough Walled Garden experience
 - New Ross Migration Centre
 - Potentially extend the John F Kennedy Arboretum visitor experience in collaboration with the OPW

- **Compelling Stories**
 - Build a selection of engaging ‘stories’ and communicate a sense of awe, adventure, heritage, and exploration around the history, heritage, culture and natural environment of the area e.g. Norman trails [William Marshall Trail], Religious Trail, natural environment trails (land, sea, and river) etc.

- **Variety of Experiences**
 - Bundling of a variety of experiences matched to target markets across activity experiences, attraction experiences, themes, and timelines.

- **Joined up Delivery**
 - Tourism providers should work more effectively together to offer ‘joined up products’ to visitors and develop cross selling channels to make the visitor engagement a seamless process. This would also involve offerings via on-line channels.

- **Linkage with other ‘Experiences’ - Wexford, Waterford, Kilkenny, Carlow**
 - Proactively develop linkages and ‘shared’ product offerings with quality tourism providers and experiences in other areas of County Wexford, and the Counties of Waterford, Kilkenny and Carlow including the cities of Waterford and Kilkenny. The proximity of New Ross and the Hook Peninsula to both cities enables clear reciprocal arrangements between tourism providers to the benefit of all and most importantly enriches the visitor experiences within the region.

- **Building our Capabilities**
 - Resource and Tourism Asset Development
 - Knowledge and Skill Capability

- Marketing and Sales
- Sustainability and Stepping Stones (a clear priority list of time lined actions)

- **Leadership and Collaboration**

- Establish a collaborative working relationship and structure between both areas which will advance the process of joint marketing, product development, stakeholder engagement, and visitor engagement where such collaboration can deliver results that could not be achieved by an 'on our own' approach. The key components required to advance leadership and collaborations include trust, shared vision, cohesion and communication. The diagram below illustrates a possible model of collaboration for the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula.



- **Great Individual Experiences**

- Continuous improvement utilising knowledge acquisition, training, and experience development to ensure all visitor experiences within the area meet and exceed visitor expectations and demands.

- **Market Driven Bundled Offerings**

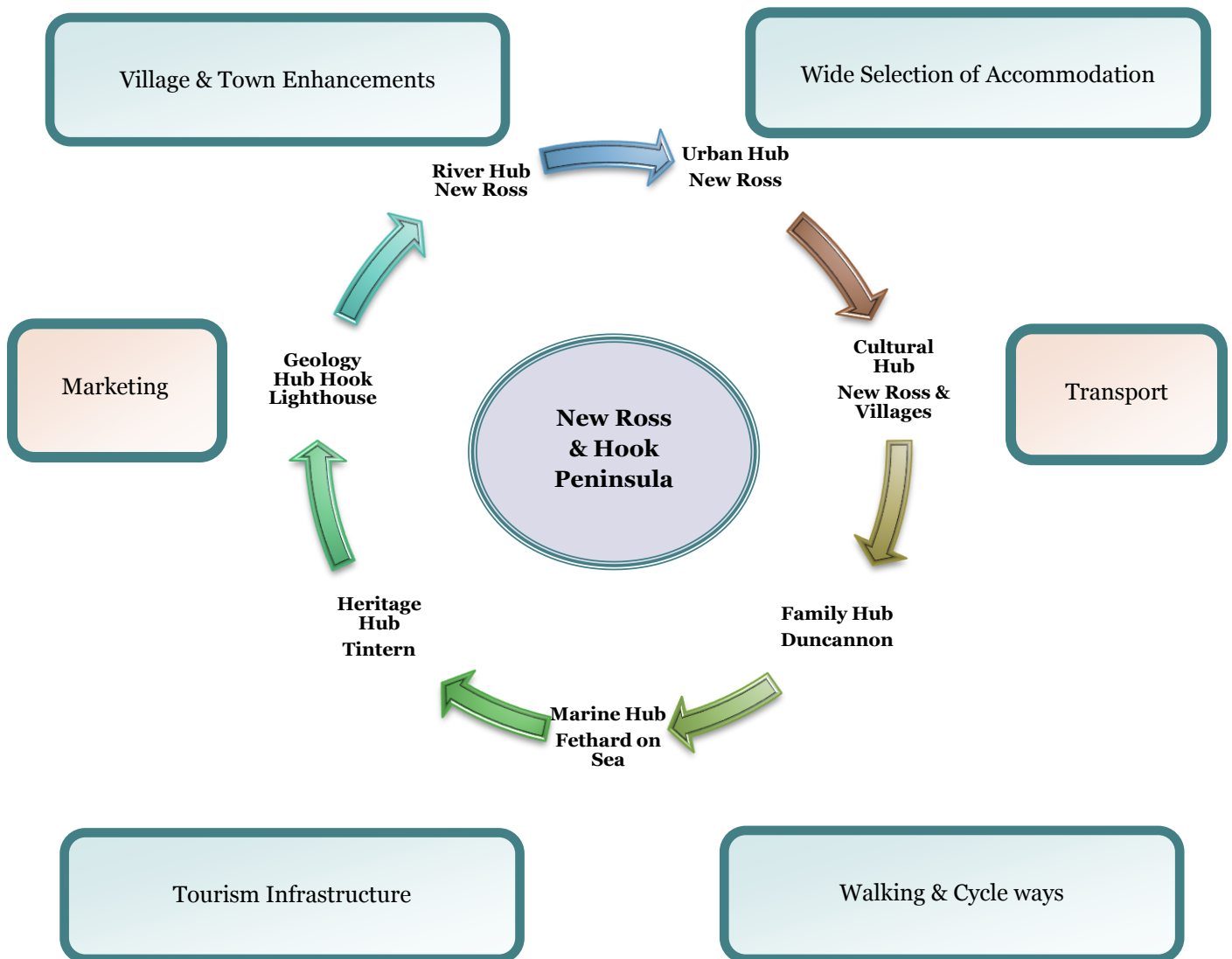
- Continuous research to monitor tourism trends and the development of bundled offerings of scale and suitability across themes, time lines, and geographical areas within the New Ross District, the Hook Peninsula, and other areas.

7.3 The ‘Big Picture’ Moving Forward

There are a range of project initiatives that are recommended for development in this area so that a ‘Step Change’ can take place within the tourism industry within the next three years. These would need to be developed through collaboration between the Local Authority, Tourism Stakeholders, the Community and other relevant organisations. It is our opinion that no single entity can be responsible for delivering on this wide ranging programme of initiatives. It is our recommendation that WCC takes a strong and effective leadership role in co-ordinating, directing and animating the implementation of this report. However, its implementation will require successful partnerships between the public and private sector over a five year period.

Figure 20 illustrates the dominant themes which represent this step change for the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula Area.

Figure 20. Emerging themes for the ‘Step Change’ in New Ross and the Hook Peninsula



Projects	Actions
<p>Collaboration between the tourism bodies in the New Ross Town & its Environs and Hook Peninsula</p>	<p>Proactive engagement with a view to developing a joint, tightly focused structure to enable effective and efficient collaboration in areas such as new product development, joint marketing, and cross selling of visitor experiences and products within the overall area and importantly with other areas in the South East region.</p> <p>This structure may also prove beneficial in promoting the area within the Visit Wexford and Fáilte Ireland hierarchy of brands and strategies.</p> <p>Relationship development with Independent Tour Operators (ITO)</p>
<p>Public Infrastructure</p>	<p>The continued advancement in the infrastructure and visual impact of New Ross town and the villages of the Hook Peninsula.</p> <p>New Ross & Environs Town Parks (include small amphitheater) Norman Quarter River Front River Experience Hub linking to Waterford, Ballyhack and inland New Ross By-Pass Signage Pedestrianisation Attractive Streetscapes Urban Heritage Walking Trail Docking Pontoon</p> <p>Hook Peninsula Sewerage Slipways Moorings Pontoons Exploration & Analysis of World Heritage Site Designation Viewing Points Beach Facilities</p> <p>Combined Areas Broadband Promotional & Directional Road Signage Parking Public or Contracted Transport within the area (perhaps guided)</p>

Projects	Actions
<p>New Tourism Infrastructure</p>	<p>The development of new tourism assets to enhance the capacity of the area to deliver complete product offerings of scale and quality to meet the needs of the target markets identified.</p> <p>New Ross Migration Centre Greenways – Redbridge & New Ross - Waterford River Explorer Ferry Experience & other River Experiences Creation of a Blueway, perhaps in collaboration with other areas and counties St. Mary’s Church Food & Beverage, Retail and Entertainment Experiences Area Discovery Centre – The Quay</p> <p>Hook Peninsula Family & Entertainment Hub Hotspot - Duncannon Marine Hub Hotspot – Fethard on Sea Heritage Hub Hotspot - Tintern & Colclough Urban Hub Hotspot –New Ross Geology Hub Hotspot – Hook Lighthouse River Hub Hotspot – New Ross Development of Duncannon Fort as a major attraction as a venue or possible performance location Duncannon Waterpark Coastal Walking Trail Explore the potential for eco-tourism development and designation Norman Cycling & Walking Trail Food & Beverage and Entertainment Experiences New Adventure Offerings (private providers) Development of the animation of the geology story of the area</p>
<p>Extending Existing Infrastructure</p>	<p>The current main attractions within the area should continue to develop and expand to meet visitor expectations and trends. The specific sites who would benefit from such development include: JFK Arboretum / Slieve Coillte Hook Lighthouse Tintern/Colclough Rosegarland Estate Dunbrody Abbey Ros Tapestry</p>
<p>Accommodation</p>	<p>As identified in the report, the area has a wide selection of accommodation types, however, this would be enhanced by the addition of the following accommodation: Apart Hotel (4* or 5*) Hostel Camping and Motor Home Park (Potentially at Carnivan / Baginbun) Leisure Facilities</p>

Projects	Actions
Artisan Local Foods	Initiatives within the tourism sector to promote and use locally sourced food and food experiences. Examples include farmers markets and family menus.
Events & Festivals	The area should develop events and festivals of scale to complement the existing activity in this area which can be categorised as small to medium in scale. Themes to explore include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Christmas Experience ➤ Music Festivals ➤ Wellbeing ➤ Religious/Spiritual
Marketing	Effective marketing strategies and campaigns to engage emotionally with all target and geographical markets. For example in areas such as specific marketing campaigns centered on themes and /or timelines. Joint ticketing and translation into French & German.
Animation	Comprehensive animation of compelling stories with appropriate imagery to maximise the heritage and visitor experiences of the area. Ideas include animation for all channels and media and outdoor plays
Industry Development	Training and continuous development of community and private providers of tourism products and support, including but not restricted to: Product development; Visitor experience enhancement; and Marketing & Sales. Collaboration and cross-selling of individual and bundled product offerings. Industry familiarisation trips.

7.4 Summary

The recommendations outlined within this section, will in the consultants' opinion, deliver real and substantive 'Step Change' to the tourism industry in the New Ross District and the Hook Peninsula. We do not underestimate the required investment in finance, support, commitment, leadership and effort that will be required to deliver the recommendations.

Some of these initiatives are already in planning and / or development stages and the others are concepts with real potential to deliver on the objective of 'Step Change'. The consultation process illustrated the level of passion, commitment and desire to achieve these goals. The challenge is for public bodies and agencies, community tourism organisations and the industry itself to make decisions on implementation priorities and then to develop clear focused time-lined action plans to pursue and deliver on any or all of the recommendations noted above.

"The road shadowing the long, tapering finger of the Hook Peninsula is signposted as the Ring of Hook coastal drive. Around every other bend is a quiet beach, a crumbling fortress, a stately abbey or a seafood restaurant, and the world's oldest working lighthouse is flung out at its tip." (www.lonelyplanet.com/ireland/county-wexford/hook-peninsula)

Section 8.

Recommendations



Section 8. Recommendations

This report has considered the wide range of project ideas that have emerged through the consultation process and section 7 presents these initiatives under different themes. This section will now consider our recommended investment phases required to achieve this 'step change' in the tourism industry in the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula area.

Phase 1

The integrated development of tourism products is critically important so that projects of scale are developed. The model illustrated in figure 21 depicts our suggested implementation schedule.

Figure 21. Tourism Implementation Model



8.1 Recommended List of New Initiatives

Section 7 profiled the wide range of initiatives that are recommended for development. This section will now consider in detail some of the major projects and illustrate what these could look like.

8.1.1 Duncannon Fort

Develop a spectacular pay-in visitor attraction at the Fort. This attraction should focus and maximise on (1) the physical layout of the fort e.g. drawbridge access, external animation, and rampart walk. (2) develop an internal interactive exhibition, re-enactment display, food & beverage, using where possible local products. (3) showcase the village and the wider Peninsula area e.g. the medieval history of the area, the built heritage, and places of interest on the Peninsula and New Ross through operating an Area Discover Centre.



In addition the fort should operate as an evening venue for a paid banquet and spectacular show 6 days per week in the high season and proportionately in the shoulder seasons. The show should be of professional quality, be anchored on a Norman theme, and gain a reputation as a 'must do' experience for visitors to the region. It should be open for the banquet / show offering to be developed / operated by a private promoter(s). Examples of such banquet / shows internationally are:

Pirates Adventure Show, Mallorca, Spain.

Pirates Adventure is the ultimate dinner show for all ages. The Show runs nightly in Mallorca from April to October. The Pirates Adventure is targeted at the family, individual and group markets. <http://www.piratesadventure.com>



The Medieval Banquet, London, England.

4-course medieval-style banquet plus 2-hour dinner show with knights, minstrels and magicians. The Medieval Banquet is open most days. <http://www.medievalbanquet.com>



Medieval Banquet – Bunratty Castle, Co. Clare, Ireland.

The Banquet relays the history of Bunratty and you can enjoy a medieval madrigal by the Castle Singers. The 4 course meal is accompanied with music and song. Bunratty Medieval Banquet is held twice nightly throughout the year - 1st April 2015 – 31st March 2016.

<http://www.shannonheritage.com/BunrattyCastleMedievalBanquet/>



To Advance this Recommendation:

A decision to explore this recommendation in detail should be made by WCC in consultation with the local community and Fáilte Ireland. Should that decision be positive, a feasibility study together with a business case assessment should be undertaken.

Project Scale:

Large scale development.

Who should be involved?

WCC (lead), Local Community, Fáilte Ireland.

Potential Funding sources:

Fáilte Ireland, WCC, WLD, National Government.

Operational:

Operational service provision by community and/or private providers.

8.1.2 *The William Marshall Norman Trail*

The New Ross District and the Hook Peninsula feature predominately in the Norman invasion of Ireland. The Peninsula was the location for the landings which commenced the invasion and the entire area has historical sites which date from and are strongly linked to this period. The establishment of New Ross town stems from this invasion and its aftermath. Other areas within Co. Wexford also feature strongly in the invasion 'story'.



The Norman influence on Ireland is substantial both in a historical context and in the built heritage which can be seen throughout Ireland's Ancient East area. This invasion and its aftermath holds the potential to be a major story within the context of the development of compelling narratives and stories of interest to international visitors. The New Ross District and Hook Peninsula area should be the core starting point and focus for the development of a Norman trail of substantial scale which can encompass most of the counties in the South and East region.

One focus within the Norman trail story should be the major players in the invasion e.g. Strongbow, Dermot MacMurrough and particularly William Marshall, Crusader, Templar and Kingmaker. William Marshall's presence in Ireland and its influence on Irish history is substantial and County Wexford features strongly within this story.

According to Turtle Bunbury, best-selling author, historian, speaker and TV presenter, William Marshall was the most powerful of the Anglo-Norman lords who came to Ireland in the late 12th or early 13th century. There were others who were very strong, such as de Courcy, de Lacy, FitzGerald and Marshall's father-in-law Strongbow, but Marshall was the most powerful of them all.

He was a jousting champion, a die-hard crusader and pre-Machiavellian tactician who survived life in the turbulent courts of four Plantagenet Kings to become Earl of Pembroke, Lord of Leinster and the richest man in the British Isles by his death in 1219.

Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, declared him 'the greatest knight that ever lived.' An exceptionally talented jousting champion, he claimed to have bested over 500 knights in the course of his life, including Richard the Lionheart.



For the last three years of his life, he was Regent of England, effectively ruling over the Kingdom of England, as well as the lordship of Ireland and parts of Normandy, including the Channel Islands, and most of the Duchy of Aquitaine.

A Norman trail centered on William Marshall, utilising all the assets on the Peninsula dating from this period, linking up to the proposed new Norman quarter in New Ross and including St. Mary's Church should be established. This would then link to other areas within County Wexford like

Wexford Town and Ferns, and then progress further into County Waterford, Kilkenny, Carlow, Dublin and beyond. The starting point for this Norman trail should be Tintern Abbey and the landing sites at Bannow and Baginbun. Sites and linkages in the New Ross District and the Hook Peninsula which should feature on the Trail include:

Type of Site	No.	Norman Aspect
Lighthouse (built from local limestone and burned lime mixed with ox's blood)	1	Hook Head Lighthouse (built 1170-1184)
Stone Castles	2	Ballyhack (Knights Hospitallers of St. John)
	3	Fethard-on-sea
	4	Slade
	5	Tintern Abbey
Abbeys and Churches	6	St. Mary's Church
	7	Dunbrody Castle (Chichester family)
	8	New Ross (Knights Hospitallers of St. John)
Towns and villages	9	Baginbun Fortifications
Earthen sites	9	Newcastle Motte (Foulkesmill)
	10	Rós Tapestry, New Ross
Living History		

Source: *Hook Rural Tourism, 2012*

In addition to the trail itself, detailed planning and sufficient investment will be required to develop engaging animation at each site, effective directional signage throughout the trail and main entry/access points, as well as encouraging the provision of guided tours to engage visitors by either community or private providers.

To Advance this Recommendation:

A decision to explore this recommendation in detail should be made by WCC in consultation with the local community, Fáilte Ireland, and the OPW. Should that decision be positive, wider discussion and consultation should be undertaken with other Local Authorities in the Ireland's Ancient East operational area. Following on from this a business case assessment/ trail development plan should be produced.

Project Scale:

Large scale development.

Who should be involved?

WCC (lead), local community, Fáilte Ireland, OPW, other local authorities in the Ireland's Ancient East operational area, particularly Waterford, Kilkenny, Carlow, and some operational service provision by community and/or private providers.

Potential Funding Sources:

Fáilte Ireland, WCC, Other Local Authorities, Local Development Companies, National Government.

Operational:

Operational service provision by community and/or private providers.

8.1.3 Establishment of Hub Hot Spots within the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula

To significantly expand the tourism offerings within the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula, we recommend the establishment of 6 Hubs to focus development and assist in marketing the area to the international and domestic markets. The Hub Hot Spots we recommend are the following:

Urban Hub

We recommend New Ross and its environs be further developed as the urban activity hub. The urban hub would build upon the existing retail, tourism and entertainment offerings already in place in New Ross with the addition of enhanced experiences tailored specifically for the tourism market. Examples include:

- Retail – more stock geared towards visitors, enhanced customer engagement, more coordinated opening times (to meet visitor requirements)
- Potential phased pedestrianisation within zones of the town
- Enhancement of the walking trails and historic plaques initiative
- Greater provision of night entertainment and food and beverage offerings to cater for visitor requirements
- The progression of the plans for the proposed new Norman Quarter in the town together with access to St. Mary's Church
- The progression of proposed additional town parks
- The progression of plans for the proposed migration centre
- The progression of the expansion of the quay front walk
- The progression of the two proposed new cycling routes



River Hub

We recommend New Ross be developed as the river activity hub. This would build upon the existing river based tourism offerings already in place in New Ross e.g. the Dunbrody Famine Ship Experience, the Galley River Cruise Restaurant, etc. In addition the proposed new River Explorer Water Cruise between New Ross and Waterford is planned to commence in 2016.



The establishment of a river hub at New Ross would allow for additional river based tourism activities of varying scale which would leverage the as yet untapped significant potential of the Barrow and Noir rivers to the South and North of the town. The potential additional activities could include boat trips in both directions, kayaking and canoeing, short time line boat rentals, river exploring experiences etc. Most of these activities could be provided by private operators encouraged to start enterprises utilising New Ross as the base and linking to the Waterford Estuary on the Peninsula or up river towards St Mullins. Considerable exploration of the potential of the rivers has already been undertaken by various organisations in County Wexford, Carlow, Kilkenny and Kildare.

Family and Entertainment Hub

We recommend Duncannon be established as a family hub area to build upon its existing offerings and to develop other offerings which will be attractive to the family market.

The existing offerings include accommodation, food and beverage, the beach, evening entertainment etc. We recommend the establishment of additional offerings e.g. the proposed large scale development of Duncannon Fort (noted in 1) and a new non weather dependent water park facility in the village to cater for the family market. This facility could be based on a smaller scale, Clara Lara (Co. Wicklow) centre.

In addition the existing food/beverage and entertainment operators in the village should be encouraged to continue to focus and develop offerings to meet visitor requirements e.g. family menus, value for money, etc and entertainment providers should have family friendly offerings, particularly during the tourism season and other periods when visitors are in the area. The continuing development of a fun, safe family friendly atmosphere in the village e.g. like Killarney town centre is also important.

Current infrastructural issues in the village e.g. traffic management, sewerage, usage of derelict buildings, broadband, parking, footpath to Amenity Park and other locations, will require attention.



Marine Hub

We recommend Fethard on Sea Harbour be established as a marine hub area to cater for sea centered ‘soft’ adventure activities such as sea kayaking, fishing, whale watching trips, boat sightseeing trips, wildlife tours etc. The operators of such activities are likely to be private providers who should be encouraged to establish enterprises to deliver these services.

The issues of road access i.e. narrowness of the access road to the harbour, and inadequate parking, together with the possible use of the unoccupied buildings at the harbour are areas to be resolved before any significant decision on the use of Fethard on Sea Harbour can be progressed. In addition slipways or access pontoon would need to be installed and toilets / shower facilities.

The development of the marine hub will strongly benefit from a regional ‘Blueway’ linking and leveraging marine assets along the East/South Eastern/South coast, which is currently under discussion by local authorities, Local Development Companies, BIM (Flag), and others.

We recommend the development of marine facilities at Ballyhack to facilitate visiting yachts, boat trips and river ferries to Waterford and New Ross.



We recommend that additional investigations into the cost and feasibility of developing either Fethard on Sea and / or Ballyhack as the marine hub for the area should be explored in detail.

Heritage Hub

We recommend Tintern Abbey / Colclough Walled Garden be established as the heritage hub focal point as it is a major historic attraction on the Peninsula which could be expanded. We believe the site should develop a Norman trail centre to explain and engage visitors with the story of the Norman invasion which will be attractive to the international and domestic tourism market.

In addition we believe it is desirable to utilise the site for tourism on a greatly extended opening period each year, with full access to café & toilet facilities. A pay at exit barrier system e.g. Woodstock Gardens, Co. Kilkenny, Wells House & Gardens and Loftus Hall could be utilised to secure additional income. We also believe that additional site sensitive offerings could be developed in adjacent areas e.g. extension of the walking trails (in association with Coillte), archery, guided tours, and the addition of a possible flat boat experience on the inlet between Saltmills and the Abbey, perhaps operated by a private provider(s).



A subset within the heritage hub which is also worthy of further consideration is the link to the religious sites within the area, this to holds potential for product bundling and development.

Geology Hub

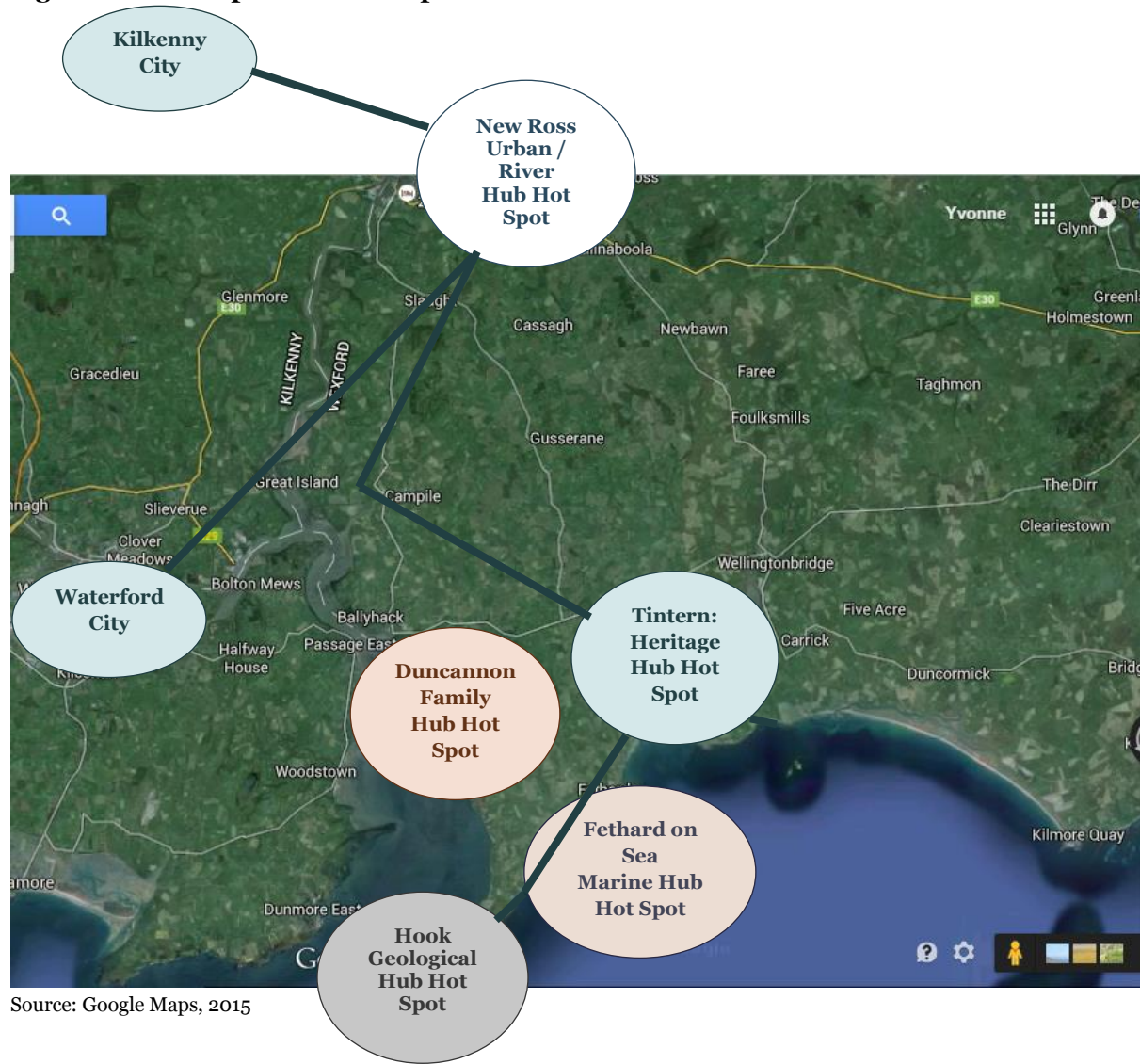
We recommend Hook Lighthouse be further developed as a geology and ecological hub. The Lighthouse already is the focal point on the Peninsula for conveying a sense of the rich geology, flora and fauna and sea life in the area. Significant opportunities exist to expand this area of the Lighthouse's activities to be the focal point for visitors understanding of the natural environment on land and in the sea, eco-tourism is a strong sector within tourism. We believe WCC should have in place a Whale Skeleton preservation plan in the likely event of a whale beaching in the county at some stage, this plan would ensure preservation of the whale skeleton which could then be displayed appropriately at Hook. The area could also leverage the work undertaken already by Irish Universities into the geology of the area, and study and information tours could be expanded.



Rocks at Hook Head



Figure 22 illustrates the hub hot spots on a map of the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula.

Figure 22. Map of Hub Hot Spots: New Ross District and Hook Peninsula Area



Source: Google Maps, 2015

Key:

	<p>Tourism Hubs: New Ross Town: Urban / River Duncannon: Family Tintern: Heritage Fethard on Sea: Marine Hook: Geology</p>
	<p>Norman Trail: Hook to New Ross - Waterford to Kilkenny</p>

To Advance the Hubs Recommendation:

A decision to explore each of these Hub recommendations in detail should be made by WCC in consultation with the local communities, Fáilte Ireland, OPW, BIM, relevant Government Departments, other Local Authorities as applicable, Waterways Ireland.

Project Scale:

Various scale developments.

Who should be involved?

WCC (lead), Local Communities, OPW, Fáilte Ireland, BIM, CIL, and other local authorities in county Waterford, Kilkenny, Carlow, and Kildare as applicable, and relevant Government Departments. Private and community tourism providers for various services provision.

Potential Funding Sources:

WCC, Fáilte Ireland, WLD/Local Development Companies, OPW, other Local Authorities, National Government. Private or community service providers.

Operational:

Operational service provision by community and/or private providers.

8.1.4 Villages and Town Enhancement Works

The physical presentation of the villages on the Peninsula and the town of New Ross is of vital importance to the tourism experience. It is our recommendation that village and town enhancement plans are prepared for Duncannon, Fethard on Sea, Slade and New Ross. This would include the visual enhancement of the streetscapes, street furniture, interpretation of the historic features of these villages and town, development of parks and open spaces, pedestrianisation where appropriate, renovation of derelict buildings and initiatives to foster civic pride. This initiative should also be extended to the beaches on the Peninsula so that improved access, parking and basic services are provided.

Duncannon, Slade and Fethard on Sea could all celebrate their marine heritage through a series of external exhibits throughout these villages. This would elevate them into living open air museums where heritage and sea-related activities are promoted through external display panels, sculptures, external banners and mini scenes. A lovely example of this already exists in Duncannon village at the entrance to the beach and this type of work could be further developed. The major refurbishment of the Quay's in New Ross is another excellent example of town enhancement works that has significantly developed the tourism potential of an urban area.



To Advance the Village and Town Enhancement Recommendations:

WCC to collaborate with local communities to prepare village and town enhancement plans.

Project Scale:

Various scale developments.

Who should be involved?

WCC (lead), Local Communities and WLD.

Potential Funding sources:

WCC, Community, WLD.

Operational:

WCC and Community Groups to maintain these works.

8.1.5 Additional Accommodation Provision

The New Ross District and the Hook Peninsula area already have a selection of accommodation types available. We recommend the addition of 3 further additions to this accommodation base, to broaden the choice available for visitors. These additions are as follows:

- **4* or 5* Hotel or Aparthotel on the Peninsula**

It is our opinion that the Hook Peninsula area would benefit from the addition of a 4* or 5* 'destination' Hotel or Aparthotel offering international and domestic visitors a quality destination experience. We would cite the examples of the Cliff House Hotel in County Waterford or Inchydoney Hotel and Spa in County Cork as the type of experience more suitable to the area. The provision of such accommodation would have to be a commercial decision by a private operator but this could be encouraged by WCC.

- **Camping / Campervan Park on the Peninsula**

The Hook Peninsula area is a popular destination for campervans at present. However no dedicated park is currently available near the most scenic sites and therefore a considerable amount of roadside overnight parking occurs. It is our opinion that the Hook Peninsula area would benefit from the establishment of a dedicated Camping / Campervan Park with appropriate facilities be established on the Peninsula and we would recommend that the Baginbun /Carnivan area holds the best potential as a site location given its natural beauty and its proximity to Fethard on Sea and the attractions in the area. The provision of such a park could be undertaken either by WCC or a private provider. Campervan facilities could also be considered in New Ross town if there was sufficient demand.

- **Modern Hostel on the Peninsula**

It is our opinion that the Hook Peninsula area would benefit from the addition of a registered modern hostel accommodation, perhaps with a food and beverage additional offering. A modern hostel caters for independent travellers and family and other groupings who wish to avail of the hostel experience. We would cite the example of the Rowan Tree Hostel and accompanying cafe in Ennis, County Clare as the type of hostel we have in mind. In our opinion Fethard on Sea is the best location for such a hostel. The provision of such a hostel should be by a private provider, encouraged by WCC.

To Develop the Accommodation Provision in the Area:

Private provision.

Project Scale:

Large scale developments.

Who should be involved?

WCC should spearhead encouragement of private providers to locate the accommodation types noted on the Peninsula, or in the case of the Camping / Campervan Park explore a business case for public provision.

Potential Funding Sources:

Private providers and/or WCC.

Operational:

Operational service provision by private providers and/or public authority (Camping / Campervan Park).

8.1.6 Encouragement of Continuing Development by Existing Tourism Attractions and Experiences

We recommend that existing tourism providers, both community and private be encouraged to continue to expand and upgrade their offerings for visitors. Where possible this should be encouraged and supported by appropriate public bodies and organisations. We would highlight Hook Lighthouse, the Dunbrody Famine Ship, The JFK Arboretum, Loftus Hall, Dunbrody Abbey, Rosegarland Estate, Ros Tapestry, Kilmokea Gardens and other attractions already highlighted elsewhere within this recommendation section as being worthy of continuing support. We would also highlight the need on the Peninsula for non-weather dependent leisure activities and would cite the leisure centre facility, currently not open, at the Hookless Village, as a project worth encouraging to open, in this regard there are considerations by the promoter currently to reopen the leisure centre in 2016.

To Develop Existing Tourism Attractions in the Area:

Private provision.

Project Scale:

Various scale developments.

Who should be involved?

Service providers with appropriate involvement of WCC, Visit Wexford, WLD, Local Communities, Fáilte Ireland and OPW.

Potential Funding Sources:

WLD, Fáilte Ireland, others.

Operational:

Operational service provision by service providers.

8.1.7 Signage and Public Animation

The easy navigation and understanding of the sights and experiences of the New Ross District and the Hook Peninsula for visitors could be substantially enhanced by the provision of engaging signage and public animation pieces throughout the area. Such signage, interpretative displays and animation would deliver positive reactions from visitors. A common design highlighting the area's uniqueness while also accommodating key branding e.g. Ireland's Ancient East should be followed. Visible gateway presence to highlight entry to the area should also be incorporated.

To Develop Signage, Interpretation Displays and Animation:

WCC and private providers.

Project Scale:

Medium scale development.

Who should be involved?

Fáilte Ireland, WCC.

Potential Funding sources:

WLD, Fáilte Ireland, others.

Operational:

N/A.

8.1.8 Area Discover Centres

We recommend that 2 area discovery centres, one located at the Dunbrody Famine Ship experience in New Ross and one located at an enhanced Duncannon Fort facility on the Peninsula should be established. The function of both would be to assist visitors gain knowledge on all the experiences available in the area as well as allowing booking of experiences, individually or bundled.

To Develop Area Discovery Centres:

WCC and private providers.

Project Scale:

Large scale development.

Who should be involved?

WCC, Sites noted, Fáilte Ireland.

Potential Funding Sources:

WLD, Fáilte Ireland, WCC.

Operational:

Operational service provision by community providers.

8.1.9 Festivals

We recommend that the creation of a number of annual festivals of quality be explored for the New Ross District and the Hook Peninsula.

'The roles of festivals in tourism include attracting tourists (to specific places, and to overcome seasonality), contributing to place marketing (including image formation and destination branding), animating attractions and places, and acting as catalysts for other forms of development'. (Professor Donald Getz, 2010)

Examples of potential festivals could be:

Wellness and Alternative Therapies - using the area's natural beauty as a backdrop, create a unique festival where visitors can explore and experience the wide range of wellness and alternative therapies popular with the domestic and international market place currently, perhaps with a music component built in. This could be a standalone festival or it could form a component of a County Wexford wide festival which is currently being examined by Visit Wexford.

Nothing but Nature – Again a festival using the area's natural beauty as a backdrop create a unique festival where visitors can explore and experience the flora and fauna, rich heritage, geology and seascape of the area.

Rainbow on the Peninsula – A festival which celebrates the LGBT Community in Ireland and Internationally using the Peninsula as the location for a host of events including a conference focusing on topics of interest to the LGBT community.

These are just suggested festival possibilities and a range of other possibilities should be explored. There is also scope for a number of small fringe events to be held throughout the year. Examples include opportunities for local artists to showcase their work on either the Quay front or in alleyways in New Ross or night sky events on the Peninsula.

To Develop Festivals:

Tourism Operators.

Project Scale:

Various scale developments.

Who should be involved?

WCC (lead), Local Communities, Fáilte Ireland, Others as appropriate.

Potential Funding Sources:

Fáilte Ireland, WCC, WLD, Festival Organisers.

Operational:

Operational service provision by community and/or private providers.

8.1.10 World Heritage Site Designation

One of the suggestions during the consultation phase was the exploration of a world heritage site designation for the Hook Peninsula. We recommend that this suggestion be explored by Hook Rural Tourism in more detail to determine (1) the requirements and timelines for such an application (2) identify the potential benefit and any restrictions which would come with such a designation (3) the costs associated with such a designation.

To Explore World Heritage Site Designation:

Hook Rural Tourism Ltd.

Project Scale:

Further exploration only.

Who should be involved?

Hook Rural Tourism, WCC, WLD.

Potential Funding sources:

WLD, WCC.

Operational:

N/A

8.1.11 Transport

The area encompassed by the New Ross District and the Hook Peninsula is quite large and is not well served currently by a transport infrastructure. We recommend that the provision of tours and daily transport options within the area, particularly during the tourism season, provided by private operator(s) be encouraged by the local community and WCC. The example of the Dublin Viking Splash Tour offers a fun example of what can be operated as a unique tourism experience.

To Develop Local Transport Tours:

Private operators.

Project Scale:

Small scale development.

Who should be involved?

WCC, Local Communities, Private transport providers.

Potential Funding Sources:

WLD and private providers.

Operational:

Operational service provision by community and/or private providers.

8.1.12 Marketing & Promotion

We recommend continual investment in creative engaging marketing and promotion at various levels including at tourism provider level, the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula level, and at a County level through the Visit Wexford initiative.

A common theme through many of the case studies outlined in this report is the importance that marketing played in creating awareness of, and delivering additional visitors to the areas identified. These initiatives included engaging content, captivating images, clever themes, appropriate bundling, and innovative uses of video and delivery channels both online and offline.

We recommend a joined-up marketing approach and strategy be developed for the New Ross District and the Hook Peninsula area, always being cognisant that such marketing must sit within the hierarchy of brands and initiatives such as Ireland's Ancient East, Regional marketing initiatives, and Visit Wexford.

To Develop Marketing and Promotion:

Tourism operators.

Project Scale:

Various scale development.

Who should be involved?

Visit Wexford, WCC, Fáilte Ireland, Local Communities, Community and Private Providers, WLD.

Potential Funding Sources:

Fáilte Ireland, WCC, WLD, Community and Private Providers.

Operational:

Lead by Visit Wexford, WCC, Area Tourism interests, Community and Private Providers.

8.1.13 Organisational and Individual Provider Collaboration

We recommend a more effective layered approach to organisational and provider (community and private) collaboration in the New Ross District and the Hook Peninsula. At an organisational level in the area, both Hook Rural Tourism and tourism interests in New Ross Town and its environs have done excellent work in terms of tourism development within their own respective areas. However, it is our belief that there is a deficit evident in working and collaborating effectively together, both at an organisational level and at an individual provider level.

To rectify this situation, we believe a small group of equal number of key interests (3 or 4) from each area be brought together under the guidance of WCC to explore and map out an effective collaborative model to work together for the enhancement of tourism across the entire area. Areas for exploration by this group should include:

- Structure for effective collaboration.
- Collective promotion of all tourism assets in the entire area (where this is beneficial).
- Familiarisation initiatives of area offerings.

- Bundling and cross-selling of offerings.
- Supporting the development of new offerings.
- Encouragement to new providers.
- Liaising when appropriate with bodies such as Visit Wexford, WCC, Fáilte Ireland, WLD etc.
- Signage, animation, and translation strategies.
- Skills development – training and mentoring.
- Continuing professionalisation of staff.

At a provider (community and private) level, more active collaborative actions should be delivered across themes, time events and area initiatives. Again the actions of bundling, cross selling, joint marketing, cross promotion, and familiarisation visits should be embraced more actively.

Collaboration:

Tourism operators.

Project Scale:

Various scale development.

Who should be involved?

WCC (lead), Local Tourism organisations, WLD, Providers.

Potential Funding Sources:

WCC, WLD, providers.

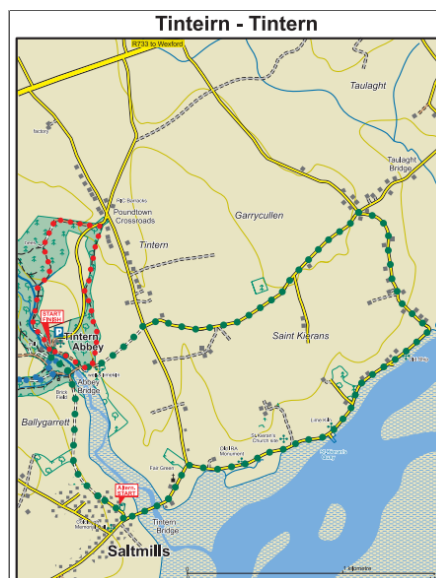
Operational:

New Structure.

8.1.14 Coastal Walking Trail

We highly commend the plans to develop greenways along the disused railway lines between New Ross and Waterford and to the river Barrow. Once completed, this will significantly enhance the outdoor recreational product offering from the town and create a tourism corridor to Waterford City. A series of walking trails have also been recently developed around Tintern Abbey which illustrate best practice in this area.

However, we have identified a considerable lack of walking trails on the Hook Peninsula and we recommend that significant attempts are made to develop more walking trails, particularly along the coastline if possible. This requires discussions with landowners regarding permissive rights agreements and then securing approval from the National Trails Office (NTO). This should be undertaken by



Source: Wexford Walking Trails, 2015

interested communities in collaboration with Wexford Walking Trails, WCC and WLD as they all have significant expertise in this area. It is our recommendation that a walking trail between Duncannon and Arthurstown is progressed, as the landowner is favourably disposed towards this initiative.

To Develop Walking Trails: Community.
Project Scale: Various scale development.
Who should be involved? Community (lead), WCC, WLD, NTO.
Potential Funding Sources: Wexford County Council, WLD, Fáilte Ireland.
Operational: Community in partnership with WCC and WLD.

8.1.15 Cycling Trails

The consultation process illustrated the significant interest in developing off-road cycle trails as a tourism product. The creation of the greenways in New Ross will provide excellent walking and cycle trails, once completed, and will be a major new offering for the area. There is also scope to link in urban cycle routes in New Ross into these greenways.

However, there is substantial interest in cycling on the Hook Peninsula, which is not currently catered for. The disused railway line between Rosslare Harbour and Waterford City offers a very strategic route for development as a cycle route, subject to agreement from Córas Iompair Éireann (CIE). It is our recommendation that this should be explored due to its strategic location and arising from the fact that there is such interest in developing off-road cycle routes on the Peninsula. Innovative ideas to utilise velorails in the short term could be considered as limited infrastructural works would be required to facilitate this initiative. This could be organised as one-off events initially to test the level of interest in such a product. Other options could include one-off railway events.



To Develop Cycling Trails: WCC.
Project Scale: Large scale development.
Who should be involved? WCC, CIE, Department of Transport.
Potential Funding sources: WCC, WLD, Fáilte Ireland.
Operational: Community in partnership with WCC and WLD.

8.2 Summary

To conclude, the research has illustrated a number of major initiatives that could be developed in the New Ross District and on the Hook Peninsula. The challenge is to provide the leadership to initiate these ideas, secure the necessary funding and prioritise which initiatives should be developed first. Listed below is our suggested schedule of projects that could be developed in phase one.

8.2.1 *Projects recommended for investment in the first phase include:*

- Establishment of Tourism Co-ordinating Group
- Training and mentoring for tourism businesses in collaboration, product bundling, cross-selling
- Supports to animate the ‘story’ of the area through the Ireland’s Ancient East Initiative
- Villages and town infrastructural works to visually enhance New Ross town and the villages of Duncannon, Fethard on Sea and Slade. These improvement work would promote local heritage
- Greenway between New Ross and Waterford and the Redbridge Greenway
- Blueway between New Ross and Waterford and the establishment of the River Explorer Ferry Experience (River Hub Hot Spot)
- Walking trails along the coast. Prioritise opening up routes between Duncannon and Arthurstown and securing permissive rights agreements to develop new walking trails on the Hook Peninsula.
- Major investment in St. Mary’s Church and four town parks in New Ross as part of the development of a Norman Quarter in the town (Urban Hub Hot Spot)
- Major investment in Duncannon Fort and a waste water treatment plant thereby supporting the creation of a Family Hub Hot Spot
- Major investment in Fethard on Sea harbour (Marine Hub Hot Spot) to create parking, improved access and watersport facilities. Investment in facilities at Ballyhack should also be considered
- Liaison with the OPW and Coillte regarding the continued development of all year round facilities in Tintern Abbey (Heritage Hub Hot Spot)
- Investment in the infrastructure at the Hook Lighthouse so that it can promote its unique geological formations (Geological Hub Hot Spot)
- Co-ordination of evening entertainment to ensure cultural activities are available every evening during the summer season
- Support the development of campervan facilities at Baginbun / Carnivan
- Continued developed of JFK Arboretum; Hook Lighthouse; Rosegarland Estate; Dunbrody Abbey; Ros Tapestry and other attractions of importance in the area
- Support for private developments in the accommodation sector including hotels; leisure facilities, hostels and campervan sites
- Festivals and events
- Creation of a Norman Trail linking to the cities of Waterford and Kilkenny
- Signage strategy and implementation across the whole area
- Once the area is ‘fit for purpose’ launch a major marketing campaign

8.2.2 *Measurement and Evaluation*

It is our recommendation that every tourism operator in the District records their visitor numbers and profile if possible, annually and submits this data to WCC on an annual confidential basis. This data is then analysed by WCC and is used to inform their tourism strategy moving forward.



St Mary's Church, New Ross



Slade Harbour



Walking Trails, Tintern Abbey



Bannow Bay Estuary

Section 9.

Strategic Partners and Funding Opportunities



Section 9. Strategic Partners and Funding Opportunities

9.1 Background

To ensure that the development of the New Ross District and the Hook Peninsula reaches its full potential, it will be essential to have a large number of agencies collaborating together. Some of the relevant organisations are detailed below.

9.2 Fáilte Ireland

County Wexford has received major capital investment from Fáilte Ireland in recent years, which has substantially developed the tourism offering for the county. The Dunbrody Famine Ship has raised the profile of New Ross and investment in the Irish National Heritage Park has redeveloped this attraction. The Hook Lighthouse also received funding to create an attractive outdoor venue for events and to further develop its range of exhibitions.

Fáilte Ireland also operates a major festival funding programme across the country each year in recognition that these events provide the backbone to the tourism calendar in communities across Ireland and to add to the growth of overseas visitors and revenue. County Wexford typically receives funding for a number of festivals each year and examples include the John F Kennedy Summer School and the New Ross Piano Festival.

In 2015, Fáilte Ireland announced its new umbrella destination for the Eastern region titled '*Ireland's Ancient East*'. This brand can be utilised to support the further development and promotion of the culture and heritage product in the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula area which has significant potential to attract a greater number of overseas visitors to the region.

Fáilte Ireland's research suggests that the '*Ireland's Ancient East*' initiative has the potential to deliver an extra 600,000 overseas visitors (growth of more than 20%) to the region and increase visitor revenue by almost 25% to €950m in total by 2020. The challenge and opportunity is to ensure that County Wexford utilises its significant portfolio of attractions to draw visitors to this area. At the recent launch of this initiative, Minister Donohoe implores everyone to get behind the initiative to ensure that it is a success.

The brand is supported by four thematic pillars including: Ancient Ireland, Early Christian Ireland, Medieval Ireland and Anglo Ireland. The consultation process undertaken for this study acknowledged the historical legacy of the region and identified the Norman heritage as particularly significant. Examples of noteworthy historical events and buildings from this period include the following:

- The first Anglo-Norman invasion landed at Bannow Bay in 1169.
- The second wave landed at Baginbun in early May 1170.
- The Norman knight William Marshall (Earl of Pembroke) and his bride Isabella (daughter of Strongbow) founded the Port Town of New Ross in the early 13th century.
- St Mary's Church, New Ross which was founded early in the 13th century by William Marshall or his wife Isobel. The present Church of Ireland building occupies the site of the nave. The ruined chancel and transepts remain.

- Dunbrody Abbey was founded in 1170 on the instructions of Strongbow and is one of the finest examples of a Cistercian Monastery in Ireland.
- Tintern Abbey is a Cistercian abbey, founded about 1200 by William Marshall and named after Tintern in Wales. The remains consist of nave, chancel, tower, chapel and cloister.
- The Hook Lighthouse tower was built by William Marshall in early 1200 to ensure that ships could reach the port town of New Ross safely.
- Kilkenny Castle was built by William Marshall and completed in 1213.

This legacy connects so many sites and attractions together, that could very effectively form the basis for a Norman Trail promoted under ‘Ireland’s Ancient East’ banner. This has been very comprehensively articulated in the Hook Rural Tourism Ltd. ‘Business Development Strategy 2013-2015’ which advocates an Anglo Norman identity for the whole area. It also recommends a “Norman Ireland: Knights on the Hook” brand.

“The Hook area is an ancient Norman land, where Norman experiences abound. A visitor can become aware of the possibilities of tasting Norman seafood in restaurants, drinking Norman ale in some bars, seeing jousts in action, walking on old Norman coastal trails and taking part in Norman Genealogy events to learn the history of their neighbour’s family names. One area that the Hook is weak in is the Gastronomy experience. It may be worth introducing a Norman Feast or Banquet Weekend on the 1st May each year (the date of the invasion of the Normans with Flemish and Welsh mercenaries). Introducing this could be a game changer as it would be introducing an entirely new node (gastronomy) into its association set.” (Hook Rural Tourism Ltd.)

An annual programme of events could be scheduled in this area around the Norman brand and could include events such as Norman archery classes; Wexford Da Vinci Event Knights Templar; Norman Christmas market; Norman Banquet etc.

9.3 Wexford County Council (WCC)

WCC commissioned this tourism study and are currently progressing a number of major initiatives as outlined in section 3 of this report.

9.4 The Office of Public Works (OPW)

The OPW has a significant role in the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula area as they are responsible for caring for and maintaining heritage sites. Examples include:

- John F. Kennedy Arboretum
- Tintern Abbey
- Ballyhack Castle
- Dunbrody Abbey

The OPW, in association with the owner Patrick Grennan, opened up a new Visitor Centre at the original Kennedy Homestead in 2013. The new facilities at the site include: a new exhibition centre featuring the great achievements of the entire Kennedy Family, together with car/bus-parking, facilities, road improvements and signage.

On-going collaboration with the OPW regarding the further development and promotion of these sites is strongly recommended.

9.5 Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport

In 2014, the Public Transport Minister, Alan Kelly, announced details of a €10 million investment package to develop greenways and cycling routes across the country.

“A €10 million investment programme demonstrates the commitment of Government to cycling infrastructure and greenway development. Cycling tourism is big business globally and we have seen the positive impact that the Mayo greenway has had on the local economy. It stimulates economic activity, much of which is in rural areas. Ireland is swiftly becoming a cycling nation and we are promoting this strongly as a Government.”

(Public Transport Minister Alan Kelly, May 2014)

This report identifies 2 major greenway initiatives that WCC is currently progressing and these will be well placed to seek funding from the Department of Transport in subsequent capital investment programmes.

9.6 Wexford Local Development (WLD)

Since its inception in 1991 the LEADER programme has been instrumental in supporting new tourism initiatives around the county and it is likely to have a major role in the implementation of the findings in this report. WLD was responsible for the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (LEADER) and the new programme will be launched in the Autumn of 2015. This agency is also responsible for a number of social employment schemes including the Tús Scheme and the Rural Social Scheme which can greatly assist in the operation of community tourism initiatives.

9.7 Local Enterprise Office (LEO)

The LEO administers a number of grant schemes and training programmes that are relevant to the private sector involved in the tourism industry in County Wexford. Specific training and mentoring programmes could be designed to support businesses involved in the tourism sector particularly in the areas of collaboration, marketing, social media etc.

9.8 Heritage Council

The Heritage Council works with individuals, heritage groups and Local Authorities to ensure the management of Ireland's heritage. In the Hook Peninsula they have worked successfully with WCC and the Residents Association on the restoration of the famine walls near Slade. The website illustrates a wide range of community projects the Heritage Council has supported but they are currently closed for grant applications.

9.9 Interreg Funding

The new EU inter-regional co-operation programme 'INTERREG' was launched in Italy in December 2014 and the first call was announced in the Spring of 2015. Securing funding under INTERREG could be beneficial to assist in the development of these tourism initiatives.

9.10 FLAG

The Fisheries Local Area Development Scheme is administered by BIM and provides grant aid towards the sustainable development of fishery dependent areas. It is funded under the National Development Plan and Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF). The programme offers funding to promote the sustainable development of coastal areas which could be very relevant to this study due to the marine dimension of this tourism report.

9.11 Summary

The implementation of this plan will only be possible if significant grants and funding is secured. Further discussions with the strategic partners identified in this section needs to be undertaken to identify if there is funding available and under what criteria. The main sources of funding are likely to be directly from WCC or through the capital investment programmes operated by Fáilte Ireland and the LEADER programme administered by WLD. The timing is advantageous because Fáilte Ireland has recently launched its new branding initiative for the East and the LEADER programme will commence shortly for a period of five years.

We recommend immediate discussions with all the strategic partners regarding the implementation of this report. We foresee that to implement this report funding will be required for capital works, events, training, mentoring and animation.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview Schedule

A series of interviews were held between March and July 2015 by Tony Ennis and / or Yvonne Byrne and are detailed below:

Date	Name	Detail
24 th March 2015	WCC	Scoping Meeting
21 st April 2015	WCC	Project Team Meeting
27 th April 2015	Stakeholder Interviews	New Ross
28 th April 2015	Stakeholder Interviews	Fethard on Sea
6 th May 2015	Brandon House Hotel	Half Day Seminar
12 th May 2015	WCC / LEO	Project Team Meeting
26 th May 2015	WCC	District Manager: New Ross
28 th May 2015	WCC	Director of Services: New Ross
17 th June 2015	WCC	Project Team Meeting
8 th July 2015	WCC	New Ross District Committee
27 th July 2015	WCC	Project Team Meeting

Appendix 2: References

- All-Island Research Observatory, (2015)** Wexford Socio-Economic Baseline Report.
- Business Tourism Solutions, (2012)** Causeway Coast & Glens Tourism Partnership: Tourism Area Plan 2012-2017.
- Central Statistics Office (2011)** <http://www.cso.ie/en/census/census2011reports/>
- Central Statistics Office (2015)** Overseas Travel, 2015.
- Kotter, John (1996)** Leading Change.
- Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport, (2014)** Government announces €10 million investment in greenways.
- Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport, (2015)** People, Place and Policy Growing Tourism to 2025.
- Fáilte Ireland, (2013)** Tourism Facts, 2012.
- Fáilte Ireland, (2013)** Regional tourism performance in 2012.
- Fáilte Ireland, (2013)** Visitors to Top Fee-Charging Attractions, 2012.
- Fáilte Ireland, (2013)** Holidaymaker Study 2013 - Dingle Peninsula.
- Fáilte Ireland, (2014)** Regional tourism performance in 2013.
- Fáilte Ireland, (2014)** Driving Growth Through Segmentation: An Introduction to Best Prospect Domestic Customer Segments.
- Fáilte Ireland, (2015)** <http://www.failteireland.ie/Ireland-s-Ancient-East.aspx>
- Fitzpatrick Associates Economic Consultants (2011)** Great Western Greenway –Economic Impact Case Study.
- Getz, D. (2010)** International Journal of Event Management Research Volume 5, Number 1.
- Hook Rural Tourism Ltd. (2012)** Business, Operation, Strategic & Financial Plan 2013-2015.
- Montana Office of Tourism (2011)** Nothing here but award winning tourism campaigns.
- Mornington Peninsula (2015)** <http://www.visitmorningtonpeninsula.org/pdf/2015/>
- Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, (2015)** <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/>
- PriceWaterhouseCoopers (2007)** The costs and benefits of UK World Heritage Site Status.
- Rising Tidy (2012)** The Three Sisters Guide: The Barrow, Nore & Suir Rivers – South East Ireland.
- Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA), (2011, 2012)** Fisheries Landings to Irish Ports, 2011, 2012.

UNESCO (2015) <http://unescost.cc.demo.faelix.net/guide-6-%E2%80%93-case-study-cornwall-and-west-devon-mining-landscape-united-kingdom>.

Wexford County Council, (2013) Tourism in County Wexford 1999-2012. Economic Development Section.

Wexford County Council, (2013) Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019.

Appendix 3: Seminar Workshop Programme

New Ross District / Hook Peninsula Area

Tourism Seminar

Wednesday, 6th May, 2015

Brandon House Hotel

Seminar Programme

10.00 am	Refreshments & Registration
10.30 am	Introduction & Context: Cllr. O'Brien, Wexford County Council
10.45 am	This Project in Context: Siobhan O'Neill, WCC Tourism Officer
11.00 am	Outline of Project: Tony Ennis & Dr. Yvonne Byrne
11.30 am	Workshop 1
12.15 pm	Refreshments
12.45 pm	Workshop 2
1.30 pm	Plenary Session
2.00 pm	Close of Seminar

Workshop 1

What is your idea for expanding Tourism in the area? (Put a Name on it and describe it)

What Market(s) is it aimed at?

Who should be involved [Collaborate]?

Names:



Workshop 1 Feedback Notes – Tourism Seminar

1. Norman History Trail
2. Open Railway Line – Rosslare to Waterford
 - a. Train line
 - b. Cycle path/Walkway
3. Marine Infrastructure
4. Coastal Trail – Co Waterford
 - Co. Wexford Passage East Ferry
 - River Estuary
5. Greenways – Great Eastern Railway
6. Coastal Paths & Blueways – Linked to St. Mullins
7. Norman Trail – Brand for the county
8. Bundling & Joint Selling – On line
9. New Ross – Nature Trail – Disused cycle path
10. Dedicated caravan park e.g. Oaklands Lake
11. Better Agency links to operators
12. Joint Marketing
13. Marine Infrastructure
14. Improve and manage expanded infrastructure to cope with ↑ visitor numbers
15. Better cross selling
16. Hook Experience – Holiday packages on offer
17. Accommodation Porthole
18. Lack of public transport – Need a better transport infrastructure
19. Walking & cycling trails on peninsula
20. Cable Car
21. Experience New Ross & Peninsula needs to be more effective – Golden Ticket
22. ‘Healing’ Tourism
23. ‘Faith’ Tourism – Abbey’s Tours
24. Cruise tourism visitors
25. Experience New Ross website to be more dynamic
26. New Ross – Weekly family events
 - Music
 - Drama
 - Crafts
27. Photo exhibit/museum in New Ross

Workshop 2

List your 3 Project Ideas

1.

2.

3.

Project Idea 1. _____

Outline the actions that are required to progress these ideas.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Project Idea 2. _____

Outline the actions that are required to progress these ideas.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Project Idea 3. _____

Outline the actions that are required to progress these ideas.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Workshop 2 Feedback Notes – Tourism Seminar

General Observation: The need to ‘Know Each Other’

1. Experience New Ross / hook (Response from 3 tables)
 - To be re-launched
 - No membership fee
 - Photo of attraction & Manager
 - Golden Ticket
 - Annual Meeting
 - Industry days
2. Norman Trail – Ancient East (Response from 4 tables)
 - ‘Conquer Wexford by land & sea’
3. Improved Family offering
 - Evening entertainment
 - More organised & structured
4. Range of trails e.g. river, Normans (Response from 2 tables)
5. Integrated tourism – New Ross to Hook (Response from 2 tables)
 - Public transport
 - Hop on bus
6. Maritime infrastructure (Response from 2 tables)
 - a. Summer pontoons
 - b. Marine tows
7. Healing Tourism
8. Steam train – Rosslare to Waterford (Response from 3 tables)
 - a. Railway
 - b. Greenway
9. Know our assets
 - a. Can we better sell what we have
 - b. Circulate the database of names etc to all
10. Accommodation, transport developed
11. Develop & Promote walkways

Appendix 4: On-line Survey

Introduction (used on email with link to the on-line survey)

Your views are VERY IMPORTANT because the tourism industry is essential to County Wexford. The New Ross District and the Hook Peninsula is characterised by stunning golden sandy beaches, rocky headlands, cliffs, well preserved historic sites and a wide range of thriving tourism attractions with international appeal. It is now appropriate to leverage the achievements already secured by advancing tourism activity to a new level, working together under a shared vision and utilising all the combined assets, tangible and intangible, to develop a new common tourism strategy. This will build on the work already achieved by Visit Wexford, Fáilte Ireland, Wexford County Council and all other organisations involved in trying to promote tourism in the county.

We would like to see everybody with an interest in tourism to voice their opinion on how the tourism industry can be developed further so that the area draws a greater number of international and domestic visitors to the South East all year round.

This short survey is about the New Ross District and Hook Peninsula area and what tourism initiatives should be developed for this region. These results will inform the Tourism Scoping Report, commissioned by Wexford County Council which is being prepared by Tony Ennis, Ennis & Co. and Dr Yvonne Byrne.

Please follow the link to the online Survey and all responses will be treated in strict confidence. Please complete this survey by **Friday 29th May** and a summary of the results will be displayed as part of an information event at a later date.

Q1 Please give your opinion on the following ideas? *(please tick the relevant boxes)*

	Very interested	Interested	Hard to say	Not interested
Marine Infrastructure e.g. pontoons, moorings and slipways				
Create a water theme park				
Opening up of disused railway lines				
Developing walking trails				
Developing cycling trails & bike hire facilities				
Developing a Norman Heritage Trail				
Developing river and marine tourism				
'Health & wellness' Tourism				
Developing a series of activities on the river Barrow				
Developing a camping & caravan park				
Developing a greater range of accommodation provision				
Developing leisure facilities on the Hook Peninsula				
Cable car across the Waterford Estuary				
Develop and promote heritage sites				
Develop Duncannon Fort				
Enhance the attractiveness of the villages and New Ross				
Develop a reputation for good quality local food				
Evening Family entertainment during the summer months				
St Mary's Church				
A greater number of tourism events and festivals				
Other initiatives you would like developed?				

Q2 What marketing initiatives would make the biggest impact? *(please tick the relevant boxes)*

	Very interested	Interested	Hard to say	Not interested
Developing relationship with tourism operators				
One website for the New Ross District / Hook Area				
Translation of promotional material				
Creating Promotional gateways to the area				
Develop the French, German, UK and USA tourist markets				
Utilise good photographic & film footage on websites				
Better signage & maps				
Other (please detail)				

Q3 What collaborative initiatives would make the biggest impact? *(please tick the relevant boxes)*

	Very interested	Interested	Hard to say	Not interested
Tourist Bus				
Joint Ticketing				
Bundling of activities & joint selling				
Themed weekend breaks sold via accommodation providers				
Collaboration with Tourism Attractions across the South East				
Regular industry meetings				
Creation of suggested itineraries & promoted on website				
Familiarity trips to each other's attractions				
Participate collectively in training, mentoring and networking courses to up-skill tourism providers				
Other (please detail)				

Q4 Do you have any other BIG ideas to boost tourism in the area that has not been mentioned above?

Please tell us what your project idea is?

Q5 Any other comments?

If you are interested in receiving an electronic copy of the draft Tourism Scoping Report for review, please give your contact details:

Name: _____ Address: _____

Email Address: _____ Tel. Number: _____

THANK YOU

This project has been commissioned by Wexford County Council