

# Westmeath Tourism Strategy 2021 to 2027

## PUBLIC CONSULTATION

### 1: Introduction

Westmeath County Council are preparing a new Tourism Strategy, which will guide and inform tourism development in County Westmeath from 2021-2027.

Tourism is an important indigenous industry, its benefits influencing many different sectors across the wider economy. With considerable heritage and cultural assets, a scenic and rich natural environment, vibrant towns and villages and an easily accessible location, Westmeath has enormous potential to benefit from tourism.

Development and enhancement of our visitor offering has accelerated in recent years. For example, attractions such as Athlone Castle, the Luan Gallery, the Hill of Uisneach Visitor Centre and Belvedere House, Gardens and Park have received significant investment. Our outdoor recreation assets now include nearly 100km of greenway developed along the scenic Royal Canal and historical Old Rail Trail, which will form part of the first coast-to-coast greenway from Dublin to Galway in the coming years. Our main destination towns of Athlone and Mullingar now boast a range of high-quality accommodation and visitor amenities. Communities have also contributed greatly, leading projects to enhance the visitor experience and deliver festivals and events.

In November 2016, Westmeath County Council launched the first-ever strategy dedicated to tourism, which aimed “to develop Westmeath as a first-choice high-quality destination that provides an authentic and memorable holiday experience”. This Tourism Strategy focussed specifically on three priority themes, Destination Athlone, Mullingar: Music, Myths and Legends and Blueways and Greenways. Many objectives have since been realised for the long-term benefit of tourism in Westmeath, including [Visit Westmeath](#) promotional activities reaching national and international markets, further development of the county’s recreational infrastructure and enhancement of the visitor experience at destination towns, villages and attractions.



### The Consultation Process

It's important that the new Strategy fully reflects and responds to the range of opportunities and challenges for our county. This is the first of 5 'Issues Boards', aimed at setting the context and framework for a comprehensive public consultation process:

- 1: Introduction
- 2: Context for the new Strategy
- 3: Athlone and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands
- 4: Mullingar and Ireland's Ancient East
- 5: Developing and Marketing Immersive Visitor Experiences

We are now inviting members of the public to make submissions and proposals which will help to shape the new Tourism Strategy. We are also engaging with stakeholders, including agencies such as Fáilte Ireland and Waterways Ireland, industry representatives and relevant interest groups.

Unfortunately we can't conduct face-to-face consultations at the moment, but should you wish to discuss your ideas or comments before making your written submission, please email us at [tourism@westmeathcoco.ie](mailto:tourism@westmeathcoco.ie) and we would be happy to engage with you by phone, email or online meeting.

### How to have your Say

You can have your say by sending a submission via the [Public Consultation Portal](#), or by emailing [tourism@westmeathcoco.ie](mailto:tourism@westmeathcoco.ie). Please reference the topic to which your submission relates in the heading.

