

Westmeath Tourism Strategy 2021 to 2027

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

4: Destination Mullingar & Ireland's Ancient East

Destination Mullingar

Mullingar town offers a strong accommodation base with high-quality hotels and guest houses, along with excellent restaurants and cafés. Historically a market town, Mullingar is also known for its boutique style shopping and unique craft and gift shops. This concentration of visitor services can enable Mullingar to serve as a regional Destination Town, acting as a base for multi-day visits and allowing visitors to explore the range of surrounding attractions. Mullingar's musical heritage has been identified as a unique selling point for the town and a distinctive quality that could set it apart from other destination towns in the region. The birthplace of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann and the home of musical legends Joe Dolan, Niall Breslin and Niall Horan, the town's live music venues are bursting with local talent each night. Work is ongoing to explore how visitors can enjoy and engage with this musical heritage in immersive and memorable ways.

Ireland's Ancient East

Most of County Westmeath, including Mullingar is included in Ireland's Ancient East, a brand which promises visitors 'a journey through thousands of years of immersive history, in lush green landscapes and stories told by the best storytellers in the world'. In line with this brand, Westmeath offers a rich heritage, with local storytellers, tours and attractions including the Hill of Uisneach, Dún na Sí Amenity and Heritage Park, Belvedere House, Gardens and Park, Kilbeggan Distillery, Tullynally Castle Gardens and Fore Abbey. The lakes and waterways of Westmeath are also connected with a rich heritage, including the famous legend of the Children of Lir associated with Lough Derravarragh. The Royal Canal Greenway traverses the county, with many preserved original bridges and locks visible to those who travel this route by boat, bike or foot and the Old Rail Trail Greenway brings visitors along the historic Great Western Railway line through the scenic Midlands landscape.

Castlepollard and the north of the county displays a distinctive cultural landscape with a cluster of visitor attractions and points of interest. There is potential for tourism growth in this area supported by the more extensive visitor services provided in nearby Mullingar.

The Hill of Uisneach features as part of Fáilte Ireland's latest Destination Development Plan for Ancient Sites and further development programmes will include the House and Gardens and Activities sectors. Details on Ireland's Ancient East, marketing plans and target market segments can be found on www.failteireland.ie/irelandsancienteast

Collaboration

Collaboration between all stakeholders, agencies and tourism businesses will be essential in order to realise the full potential of this region. A formalised 'Destination Mullingar' structure has yet to be established; but such an industry-led group could undoubtedly achieve significant progress in marketing the distinctiveness of Mullingar as a strong and vibrant visitor destination.

Suggested topics for you to consider

- How can we engage visitors with Mullingar's music and musical heritage?
- How can we bring history, heritage and storytelling into our visitor experiences in line with Ireland's Ancient East?
- How can we increase collaboration among tourism businesses and communities and formalise an industry-led structure for collective marketing?
- How can we encourage and facilitate visitors to stay in Mullingar and the surrounding area for longer?
- How can we make better use of our tourism infrastructure and assets in order to maximise revenue generated from tourism?
- What developments, initiatives or projects could be taken to ensure visitors to Mullingar have an immersive, memorable and brilliant visitor experience? Who should undertake these initiatives and how?
- How can we expand the tourism season beyond the summer months?
- How can we encourage a stronger evening and night-time tourism economy?
- What undiscovered potential or niche tourism activities exist that should be explored further?
- How can we better connect visitors with our local stories, communities and culture?



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.

