

Kinnitty.

A Prospectus for Development

FINAL REPORT

07 | 2019



Rialtas na hÉireann
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Offaly Local
Development Company



The European Agricultural Fund
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Europe investing in rural areas



contents

| | | |
|----|------------------------------|----|
| 01 | About this Plan | 6 |
| 02 | Creating a Destination | 8 |
| 03 | Our Visitors | 11 |
| 04 | The Proposition | 18 |
| 05 | The Action Plan | 22 |

thank you.

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01



About this Plan

The Ambition

This plan is about realising the tourism potential of Kinnitty's location as an important gateway to the Slieve Bloom Mountains. It is about using what is special about this area's natural and cultural heritage – in particular its reputation for cycling – to create a stronger destination that will appeal to visitors and enable the village community to develop its visitor economy. The objective is to welcome visitors, in particular walkers, cyclists and mountain bikers of all ages, to the village and from there encourage them to explore the surrounding countryside, enjoy the new bike trails and spend time in the area. The ambition is to grow day-trip and overnight stays thereby supporting the growth of tourism and cycling-related businesses. The Plan sets out the potential and identifies what needs to be done over the next five years and beyond.

Cycling sits at the heart of this plan. The long-term objective is for Kinnitty to be a cycling hub – a gateway to and northern trailhead for the network of looped mountain biking circuits that will traverse the Slieve Blooms from north to south. Proposed visitor facilities – information, parking, food and drink, accommodation etc – within the village will provide a focal point, not only for bikers, but also for walkers, hikers and casual ramblers exploring the Slieve Blooms.

02



Creating a Destination

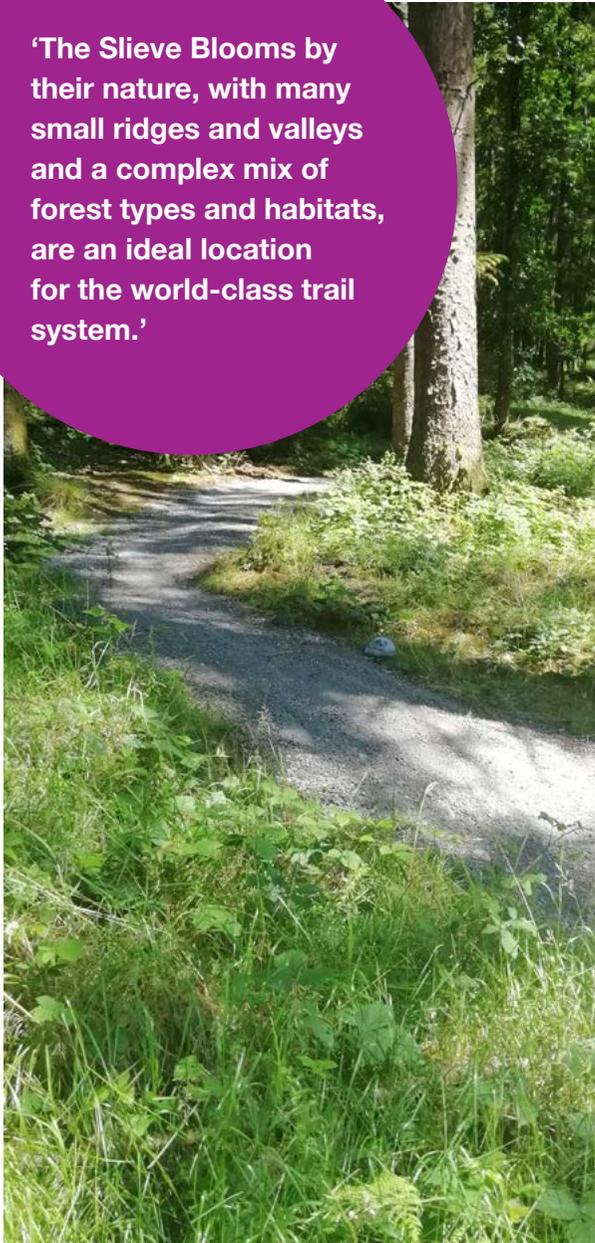
The Starting Point

The village of Kinnitty sits at the foot of Knocknamann on the western slopes of the Slieve Bloom Mountains. As a gateway to the Slieve Blooms it has some excellent natural and built heritage. The present Church of Ireland stands on the site of the monastery founded by St Finian in 557. In the porch, a large sandstone pillar, inscribed with a cross that contains spiralling serpent-like forms, is believed to be of much older origin possibly dating back to Neolithic times. The Kinnitty Pyramid, the burial tomb of six members of the Bernard family, once the owners of nearby Kinnitty Castle, was built between 1830 and 1834 and is an exact replica of the Egyptian pyramid of Cheop. The Community Centre in the centre of the village, is housed in the Old School House and Petty Sessions Court, which were built in 1820. While the village itself may have seen more prosperous days, it has retained its distinctive character and still boasts, as indicated above, a range of architecturally impressive buildings and features of interest.

Public sector and industry partners have recognised that achieving the economic potential of tourism requires investment. Coillte – the State Agency for Commercial Forestry - in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourist Authority, is investing significantly in the development of a world –class, international mountain-biking project in Ireland and the Slieve Blooms project is one of just four national projects being developed to realise this ambition.¹

¹ 'The International Mountain Biking Proposition for Rural Ireland' is funded under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, announced in February 2019.

‘The Slieve Blooms by their nature, with many small ridges and valleys and a complex mix of forest types and habitats, are an ideal location for the world-class trail system.’



Offaly County Council has long recognised the important contribution that tourism makes to the development of local economies. The Council provides infrastructure and environmental management that is essential for a fully-functioning economy such as the provision of roads, recreation and amenity facilities - with consequent benefits for both local people and visitors. More directly, the local authority through the role of Offaly Tourism Marketing, is active in many aspects of tourism, such as the organisation and funding of events, destination marketing and the development of tourism enabling public infrastructure. Within the context of the study on the Development of a Major Cycling Destination in the Midlands of Ireland - see Figure One, Offaly County Council is not only a key player in the realisation of the mountain biking project, but is also concerned to ensure that, along with Offaly Local Development Company, the sustainable development of the local visitor economy through the opportunity which cycle tourism presents, brings social, economic and environmental benefits to Kinnitty.

All the partners – not only within Offaly, but right across the Slieve Blooms and including Laois County Council and Laois Tourism - also recognise that the quality and availability of supporting amenities and services will be critical to realising the full potential of the trail investment.

Maintaining Momentum

There is much work to be done to create a hub destination in Kinnitty – a place with a coherent visitor proposition that uses its cycling and heritage assets to best effect and delivers great visitor experiences that are promoted effectively. While the area is at an early stage in its tourism development lifecycle and it will be important to take a long-term view of the potential, the village community, led by the community development group, shares the ambition of the plan which it has helped to create. The community is anxious to play its part in the realisation of the plan whilst being realistic about what can be achieved both within the timescale envisaged and the resources currently available.



Offaly County Council
Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí



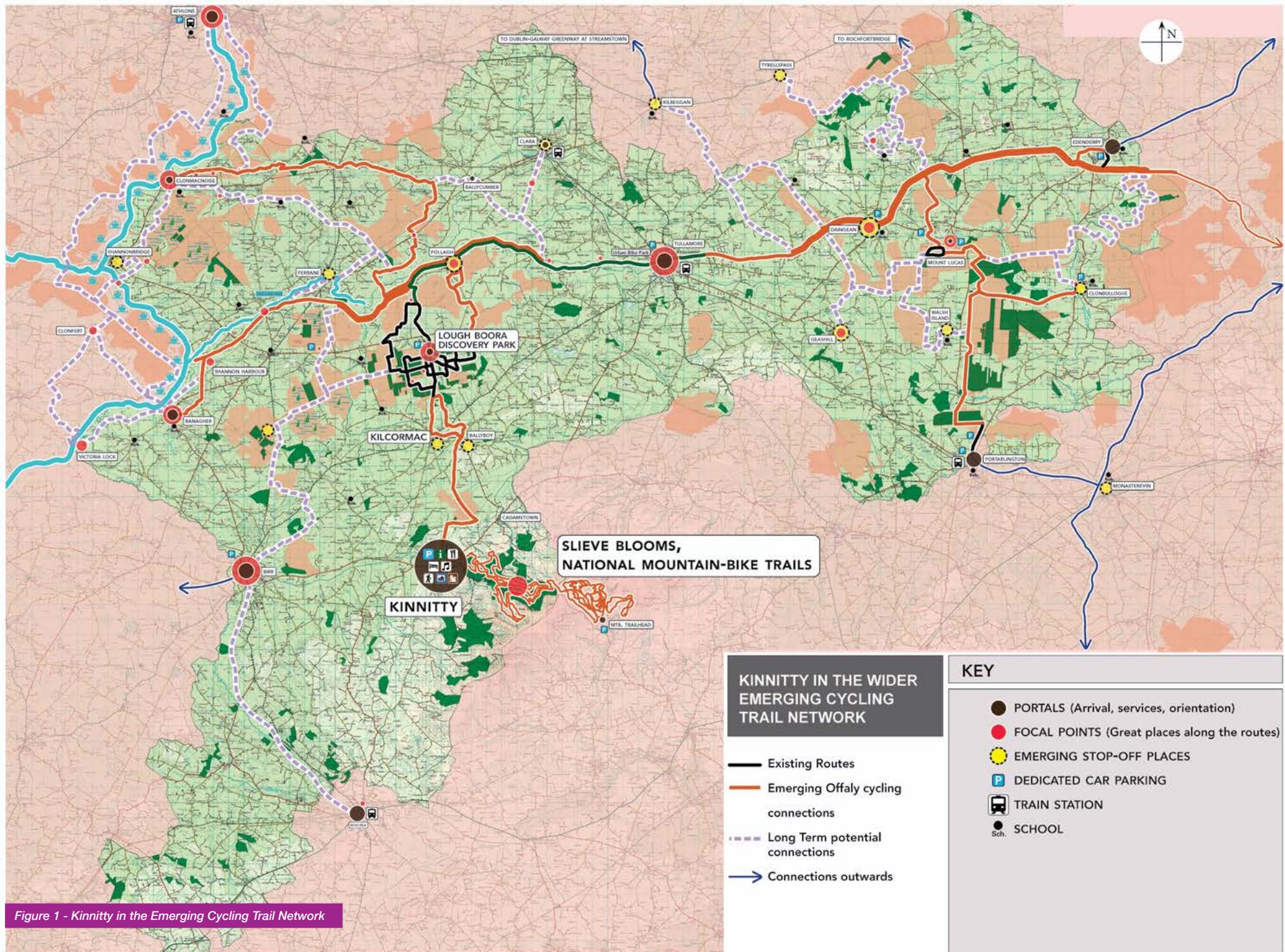


Figure 1 - Kinnitty in the Emerging Cycling Trail Network

03



Our Visitors

The Offer

Cycle tourism is defined in the literature as

“recreational visits, either overnight or day visits away from the home, which involve leisure cycling as a fundamental or significant part of the visit”².

Cycle tourism encompasses many forms of leisure cycling activity. This can be as part of a cycling holiday, where the holiday is entirely motivated by a desire to cycle, either from a base or on an extended tour. Alternatively, it could be holiday cycling where cycling may not be the main activity but is one of several activities engaged in as part of the holiday experience. Day excursions by bicycle can also be considered cycle tourism. An increasingly popular aspect of the leisure cycling market is mountain biking (MTB). It is an activity which involves riding off-road, over natural or purpose-built paths and tracks. It can be enjoyed by a wide range of user groups from young to old and from family groups to serious enthusiasts.

2 Cycle Tourism Information Pack TT21. Sustrans, 1999

Key trends in the market for mountain biking

1



Advances in technology

have translated into significant changes in the types of mountain bikes people are now riding. Technology has made the sport more accessible with entry level bikes becoming more affordable and user-friendly.

2.



There has been a marked increase in the number of **women entering the sport.**

This observation is supported by the increase in bike manufacturers now offering women specific mountain bikes and the emergence of bike clinics, camps and tours catering to women only.

3.



The development of **family-oriented** mountain bike products is also growing, as mountain biking parents look for holiday experiences that give them the ability to get their children involved. Family-oriented amenities at trailheads are a key requirement.

4.



There has been significant growth in the development of smaller scale bike parks such as **pump-tracks.** Following a similar pattern to the establishment of public skateboard parks as recreational amenities in the 1990s, many municipal authorities recognise the importance of catering to the bike related needs of younger participants in the sport as well as motivating beginners to start mountain biking.

5.



Over the last five years there has been growth in the number of **mountain bike specific tour operators.** These companies provide everything from multi-day, all- inclusive mountain bike holidays to the world's most iconic mountain bike destinations through to simple half-day guided tours on local trails.³

³ Sea to Sky Mountain Biking Economic Impact Study 2006, MBTA

Cycling's popularity as a recreational pursuit, coupled with a growing interest in sustainable tourism, health and the environment is making cycling an increasingly popular holiday activity which in turn can generate economic impacts from visitor spending and employment.

Looking more specifically at the mountain biking offer being developed in the Slieve Blooms, it is clear that this 'national' scale centre will be a high profile development aimed at attracting the largest possible market. The ambition is for it to be 'at the peak of tourism activity for off-road cycling in Ireland.'¹⁴ As a primary driver for attracting out-of-state visitors to come to Ireland for mountain biking, it must be of the highest quality and be maintained to the highest standard. In appealing to both domestic and out-of-state visitors, the intention is for it to evolve over time to become a short-break destination in its own right, with Kinnitty ideally placed as the northern trailhead of this national scale centre. As the profile of the mountain biking offer starts to grow, Kinnitty will be expected to have a high level of visitor facilities, with car-parking, toilet facilities, bike wash, café, bike hire and cycling related retail facilities.



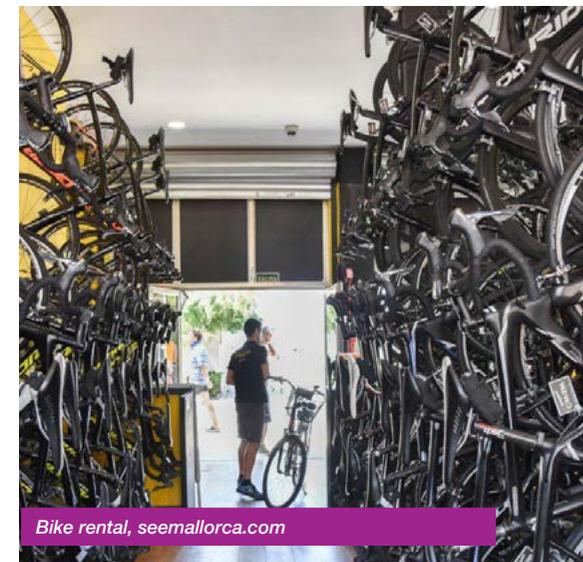
The Art of Cycling, Bike wash & Cafe, Melbourne



Bike parking, Clare



Bicycle Cafe, Berlin



Bike rental, seemallorca.com

4 Off Road Cycling Strategy, Coillte, 2012

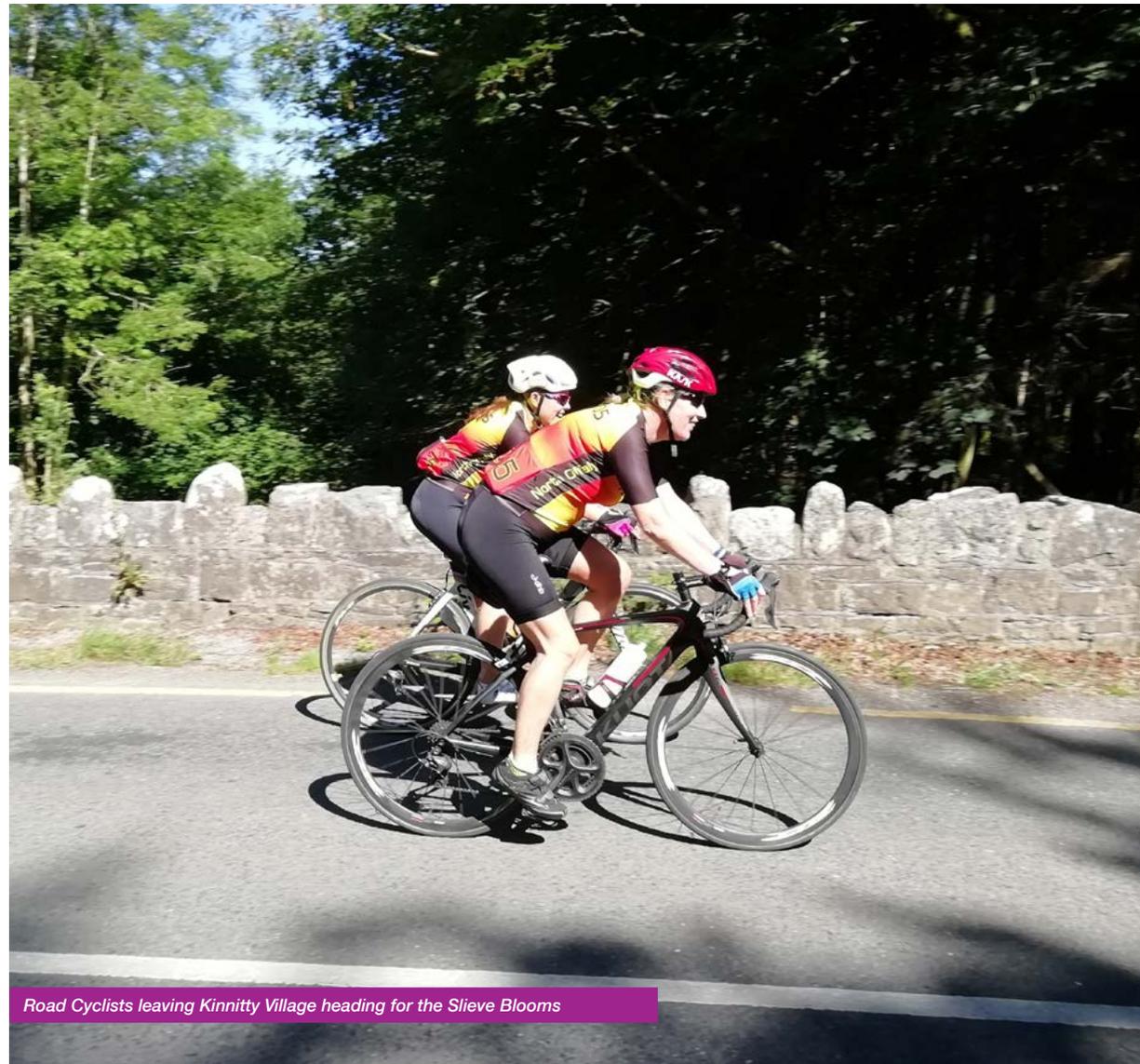
Market Segments

Of key importance in considering the market segments for cycle tourism and the destination services, products and facilities required to satisfy their needs is a deeper understanding of the evolving nature of what motivates cycling activity. In endeavouring to match the cycling offer that is/ will be available in the area, it is possible to identify three distinct types of cyclist⁵ and their respective motivations and needs as follows;

The Road Biker:

Road biking is a sport and leisure activity that primarily motivates males. Measuring their own performance and competing against others is a central motivation. People who work in an environment where pressure to perform is business as usual are attracted to this sport. Innovation in light-weighted technologies and aerodynamics is still one of the central driving forces in the industry. Total performance monitoring via devices and wearables, sophisticated web services and online communities are all part of the standard equipment. Besides riding their daily training tracks, when on holiday, they like to ride surrounded by nature.

⁵ 'The Future of Cycling Tourism', Institute for Regional Development and Location Management, EURAC, 2015



Road Cyclists leaving Kinnitty Village heading for the Slieve Blooms

The Mountain Biker:

Mountain bikers are motivated by wanting to catch the feeling of real adventure in the great outdoors. The prospect of being exposed to risk creates an adrenalin-driven emotional context. Mountain biking is an action/risk sport and to perform, technique and endurance need to be continuously enhanced. Especially for men, the high tech and on-going innovation in bike design is a key motivator. As bikes become better and better, protector-equipment more widely available and artificially produced trails enable a certain level of risk management, mountain biking overall has become more downhill-oriented.

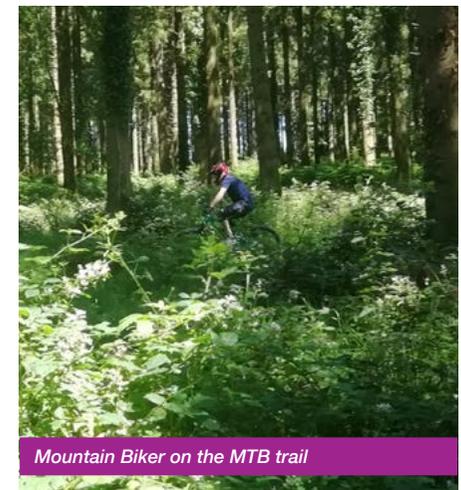
However, the variety of experiences that mountain biking can offer in terms of mountains, landscapes, action, local food, events and culture will ensure that the travel experience is always going to be part of the mountain bike culture. This is evidenced by the number of 'hot spots' around the world that have become a mecca for mountain biking. In addition to this, 'lifestyle' is a key consideration. Several companies have enlarged their product range to create a life-style that goes far beyond the pure, cycling activity, the objective being to create a life-style – in terms of food, drinks, apparel, equipment – that works as a symbolic code to show others what it means to be a mountain biker.



A family of Mountain Bikers arriving back from the trail at Kinnitty Castle



Mountain Biker exiting the MTB trail



Mountain Biker on the MTB trail

The Trail Trekker:

Doing some physical activities during holidays and weekends to maintain a good level of fitness and health is what motivates this category of cyclist. The 'learning experience', the opportunity to 'slow down' and the sensation of 'personal freedom' on holidays are all important aspects of the experience. The bicycle, a slow motion vehicle, is regarded as being a good way to explore a rural holiday destination or new region. The development of infrastructure, dedicated literature, maps and online services and bicycle navigation devices, have all worked to lower the entry-barriers to this type of cycling experience and make it possible, not only for individuals, but for the entire family to explore what's on offer and enjoy a healthful holiday together. The trekking bikers' satisfaction is inspired also by ethical issues whereby travelling around a destination by bike serves to reduce the impact of emissions. Competitor destinations are witnessing a growth in the demand for rail and bike services and also long-distances coaches have caught the opportunity to offer bike transport free of charge. For many of the products labeled 'eco-tourism', cycling is an integral part of the product-bundle.



Glenveagh, Donegal (irelandbybike.com)



Donegal Cycle-Tourism, irelandbybike.com



Lightweight and Waterproof front and rear pannier bags for long-distance and self-sufficient travel (www.cycletrekkers.com)

Food for Thought

In light of these three distinctive market prospects the direction of travel over time for Kinnitty as a hub destination and gateway to the Slieve Blooms may be summarised as follows;



- **Be bike-friendly** and use this disposition to give the destination a characteristic identity.
- **Specially designed** visitor parking, signage, bike rental, maps, places to eat, places to stay and features to explore provide plenty of possibilities to provide cyclists with a 'warm welcome.'
- Develop **one-stop-shop** accommodation offers that focus on nutrition and perhaps, special therapies pre-event/post activity.
- **Events**, either for races or car-free fun days are a great way to motivate bikers to visit the destination.
- Build up a cycling and walking **path network** that includes secondary routes and trails – not everyone can be a hero.
- Make sure to offer **attractive routes** with great views.
- Develop **camps/special offers for women** in co-operation with industry or other special interest partners.
- Try to position at least one trail as a '**must-do**' for every ambitious biker.
- **Clear regulation** regarding the use of trails has to be established coupled with clear communication in order to sensitise visitors to know what to expect/how to behave.
- **E-powered mountain bikes** are a good idea and holidays are an excellent occasion on which to try out something new. State of the art rental will be key to this.
- Find synergies with the **biking industry** to have access to direct communication and sales channels, some of which actually sell travel packages. General destination management organisation (DMO) communication tools may not reach cyclists effectively.
- **Educate the market.** The MTB target group can be limited so the plan should also focus on motivating people to start mountain biking through beginners' courses, the inclusion of pump tracks etc.

04



The Proposition

'For new formal trail systems developed on Coillte lands, the trail centre model will be used. This allows for visitor facilities to be concentrated at one location (trailhead) to create the opportunity for revenue generating opportunities at the trailhead. All waymarked trails will lead out from and return to the trailhead usually in a stacked-loop layout. By adopting this model, it should be possible to create income streams that can assist with the ongoing management and maintenance of trails.'⁶

The Slieve Bloom Mountains rise in stark contrast to the rest of County Offaly and afford the visitor a range of spectacular views, forests and riverside walks, picnicking, historic and archaeological sites. While there is already a range of long distance and looped walks available, the mountain-biking project will open up the mountains to cyclists.

The proposition is for Kinnitty to be a destination hub for cycling and walking and, in developing as the northern trailhead for the mountain biking offer, establish itself as a key gateway to the Slieve Blooms - see Figure 2.

TRAILHEAD ARRIVAL AND FLOW



ARRIVAL and core facilities

- signage
- car and bike parking
- shelter
- toilets
- changing rooms
- bike storage

“front of house” TRAILHEAD SERVICES

- visitor information, maps and guides
- food and drink
- retail
- bike hire/repair
- bike wash
- pocket recreation facilities (play opportunities, pump track)
- guiding - walking, cycling
- interpretive signage and way-finding
- accommodation

from M7/Birr



Kinnitty

R422

R421

straight to trail?

high quality cycle friendly public realm - “safe and perceived to be safe”

straight to trail?

Figure 2 - Trailhead Arrival and Flow

The destination hub will make the cycling opportunities more visible to visitors thereby creating a stronger visitor destination. The hub will also be attractive to non-cycling visitors, creating a concentration of visitor facilities and places to stay in one location - see Figure 3. The hub will be an important focus for investment because it will;

- Provide a central point of orientation within Kinnitty – a place of welcome - enabling the village to provide information for visitors about the cycling offer, as well as the other experiences available to enjoy.
- Deliver a critical mass of product in one compact location, including places to stay overnight; comprehensive cycling facilities that will encourage visitors to cycle, mountain bike and trail trek; things to see and do; a café, shop and visitor information – all within a short walk of each other.
- Deliver a concentration of complementary business activity that will increase footfall and strengthen the commercial sustainability of existing small businesses and the viability of new enterprises.
- Capitalise on the investment that has been made and is planned for the area's cycling infrastructure.
- Encourage the development of additional cycle-friendly visitor accommodation, other cycling and walking related facilities and services.
- Showcase the landscape and the heritage of Kinnitty and the Slieve Blooms
- Encourage business investment and create the conditions to bring forward new business start-ups thereby allowing businesses to test out new ideas at low risk.
- Facilitate the delivery of a shared agenda – the prospectus for development - for all the partners in this initiative thereby enabling them to work coherently, consistently and confidently with the local community in realising benefit for all.



PROSPECTUS FOR DEVELOPMENT

OPPORTUNITY SITE POSSIBLE USES

— co-locate mutually beneficial uses e.g. bike hire near parking for natural surveillance, cafe near bike parking, bike wash near accommodation etc.

- Information, welcome and orientation
- Secure bicycle storage
- Cycle hire
- Coffee dock
- Maintenance facilities; track/floor pump, cycle maintenance stand
- Retail; puncture repair kits, allen keys and spanners, rags and chain oil, local specialities, guidebooks, maps, local books
- Bike wash; outdoor hose, coin operated machine, dry clean, changing
- Washing/drying facilities
- Cyclist friendly places to eat
- Coffee shop
- Accommodation
- Activities
- Guided walking and cycling
- Cash machine
- Crèche

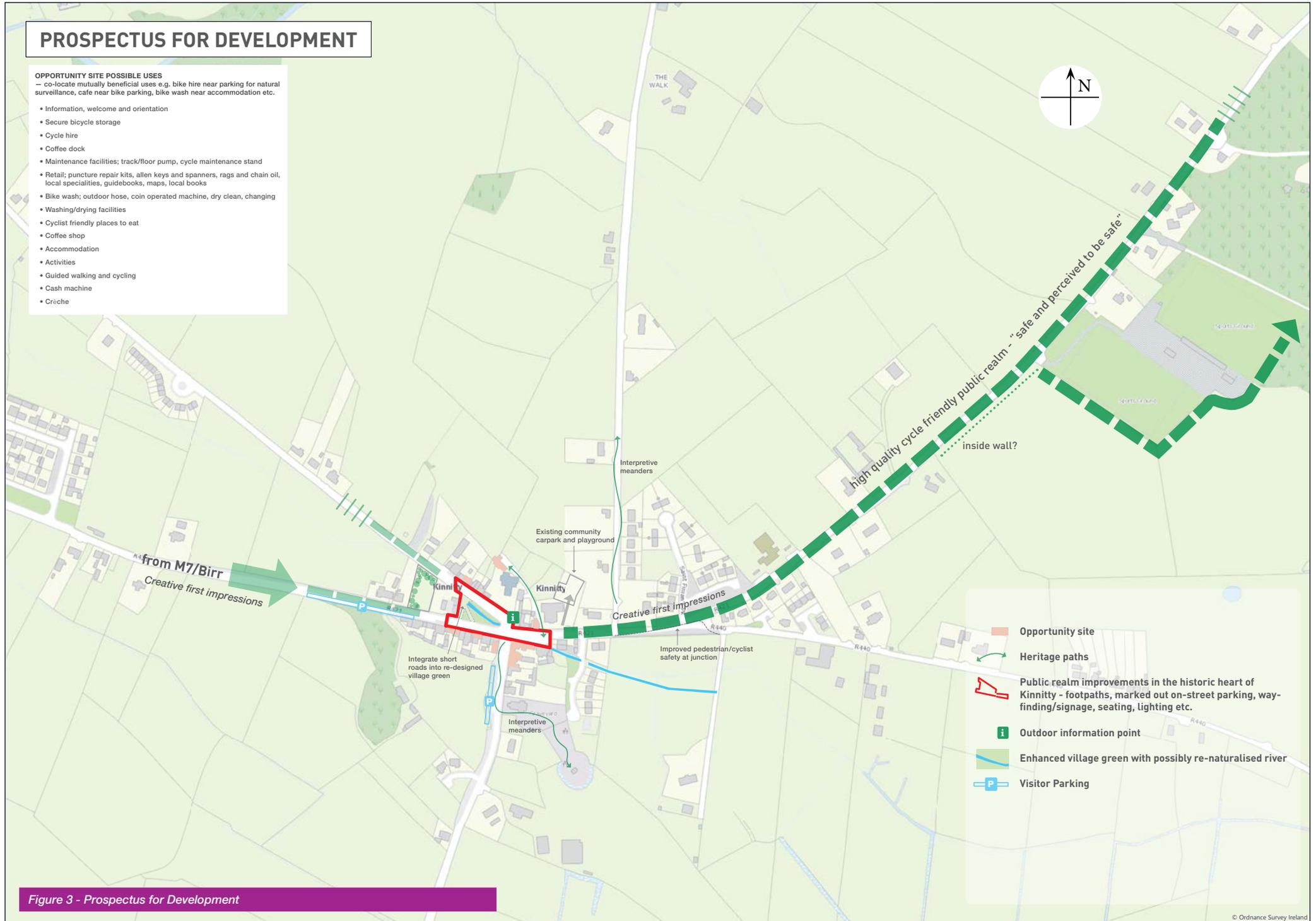


Figure 3 - Prospectus for Development

05



The Action Plan

objective 1

develop a cohesive
proposition for kinnitty
as a cycling hub
gateway to the slieve
blooms

1.1

Work collaboratively with relevant partners to implement an approach to the **online positioning** of Kinnitty in relation to the Slieve Blooms which creates an awareness of the village in the mind of the visitor and reinforces its connection with the cycling offer.



Outcome

Seamless, effective profiling of the Kinnitty Cycling Hub across a range of platforms that will dovetail with and provide substance for the local authority and the statutory agencies – in particular Coillte - in the run up to the opening of the first phase of trails.



Key Project

A project that will focus on Kinnitty's story and its communication through images, anecdotes, features etc to substantiate the positioning, feed into promotional campaigns and begin the process of re-imaging and re-positioning Kinnitty as the gateway to the Slieve Blooms.



| actions // | | Priority | Responsible Authority |
|------------|---|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1.1.1 | Ensure Kinnitty as a key gateway to the Slieve Blooms cycling offer is substantially profiled within the online presence being developed at www.slievebloom.ie , the main portal for the Slieve Bloom Mountains; visittoffaly.ie and laoistourism.ie . | critical; immediate | (OCC/OTM/LT/ KCDA) |
| 1.1.2 | Use and build on the 'prospectus for development' as a basis to develop, deliver, curate and communicate content – key messages, anecdotes, the promise of great cycling, memorable moments etc that will appeal to visitors – in particular cycle enthusiasts - pique their interest and capture their imagination. Work with relevant partners, including Offaly Tourism Marketing and Laois Tourism, to position this content on relevant platforms including www.slievebloom.ie ; visittoffaly.ie and laoistourism.ie . | critical; immediate | (OCC/OTM/LT/ KCDA) |
| 1.1.3 | Commission a series of high quality effective imagery to align with and support the communication of the messages. | important; immediate | (OCC/KCDA/OLDC) |
| 1.1.4 | Commission copy editorial that will provide a compelling 'call to action' for prospective visitors and users of the trails. | important; immediate | (OCC/KCDA/OLDC) |
| 1.1.5 | Explore the use of video as a key tool for raising awareness of the destination brand. | important; medium term | (OCC/GOILLTE/ KCDA/OLDC) |
| 1.1.6 | Bring the positioning to life through social media channels which amplify the voice of visitors, residents and businesses as advocates for Kinnitty's role as the gateway to the Slieve Blooms and the starting off point for a range of cycling experiences on offer in the area. | important; medium term | (OCC/ KCDA) |
| 1.1.7 | Explore the opportunities for face to face communication of the Kinnitty proposition by all those who come in contact with visitors through the delivery of a 'Cyclists Welcome' Training Initiative'. | important; medium term | (OCC/FI/KCDA/ OLDC) |
| 1.1.8 | Work with strategic tourism partners to target with relevant content those platforms which provide direct access to prospective visitors such as discoverireland.ie ; irelandsancienteast.com ; visittoffaly.ie ; laoistourism.ie ; loughboora.com and midlandsireland.ie | critical; immediate. | (OCC/FI/TIL/MI/ OTM/LT) |
| 1.1.9 | Make it easy for intending visitors to source information about Kinnitty and its relationship with the Slieve Blooms – building on the online platforms detailed at 1.1.8 above. | important; medium term | (OCC/FI/TIL/MI/ OTM/LT) |

OCC: Offaly County Council
 OLDC: Offaly Local Development Company
 KCDA: Kinnitty Community Development Association
 TIL: Tourism Ireland Limited

FI: Fáilte Ireland I MI: Midlands Ireland
 OTM: Offaly Tourism Marketing
 LT: Laois Tourism



1.2

Create a **sense of arrival** at key approaches and arrival points in line with the proposition to raise awareness of what is on offer to encourage visitors to stop, stay, explore and return.



Outcome

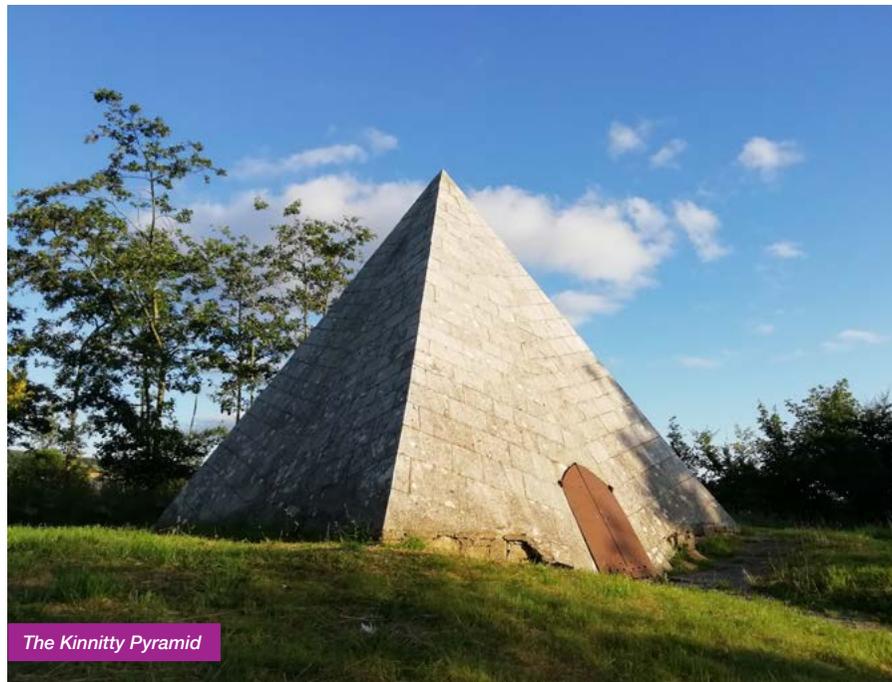
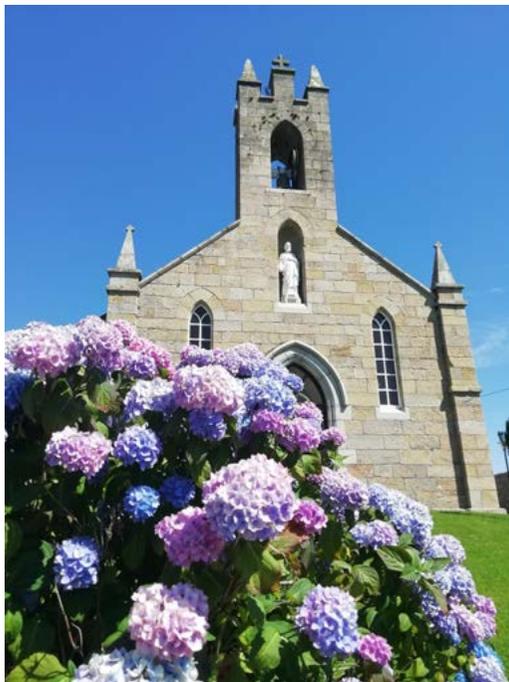
Visitors know that they have arrived, feel welcome and are confident about where to go and how to access the cycling experience.



Key Project

Creative First Impressions - a project that will focus on all the approach routes and points of arrival to ensure that there is a great welcome, that information is available, signage works, public realm conveys a sense that this place is geared up for cyclists; the curiosity of those passing through is aroused and people feel confident about accessing the offer in general and the trails in particular. Particular attention needs to be paid to the 'route to the trails' from the various 'pocket car parks' which have been identified within the village.

| actions // | | Priority | Responsible Authority |
|------------|---|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1.2.1 | Ensure that priority is afforded the 'route to the trails' (from the centre of the village to the GAA grounds / start of the trail system) in terms of a safe, dedicated, marked route; the sympathetic treatment of the public realm, the calming of traffic, crossing points etc so as to convey a sense that walkers and cyclists have priority. | critical; immediate | (OCC/Coillte) |
| 1.2.2 | Provide dedicated visitor parking cum visitor information and orientation at the locations identified. | critical; immediate | (OCC) |
| 1.2.3 | Provide 'heads up' mapping of the village and wider area in relation to the cycling offer and the mountain bike trails in particular at a central location in the village. Include visitor parking locations; journey times on foot / bicycle and recommended routes including focal points, vantage points, places of interest along the way. | critical; immediate | (OCC/Coillte/OLDC) |
| 1.2.4 | Provide visitors with clear, welcoming, place-specific, regularly maintained and updated visitor information. Reproduce the information specified in 1.2.3 in the form of a 'tear off' A3 visitor guide to be made available at key outlets throughout the village. | critical; immediate | (OCC/Coillte/OLDC) |
| 1.2.5 | Explore the potential to mark the approach routes with public art of a scale / other design interventions that will create interest, showcase the heritage of the area and act to calm traffic. | important; immediate | (OCC/KCDGA) |
| 1.2.6 | Review current wayfinding arrangements to identify gaps, adequacy and appropriateness of signage / interpretation and develop a branded way-finding strategy to join the dots. | important; medium term | (OCC/ KCDA) |
| 1.2.7 | Initiate a programme of enhancement of the public realm in Kinnitty to improve streetscape, revisit the lighting strategy, and enhance the attractiveness of public spaces – including the environment of the river- to strengthen its heritage features, sense of place and sense of arrival. | important; medium term | (OCC) |
| 1.2.8 | Raise awareness of the calendar of events in the wider area – particularly in nearby towns and villages whereby Kinnitty can prepare for, liaise with and leverage off events being organised by others and to attract the interest of passing traffic/visitors. | important; medium term | (OCC/LCC/KCDA) |



The Kinnitty Pyramid



1.3

Create a series of **interpretive meanders** that lead to off-road (ideally) or safe on-road looped interpretive journeys through and beyond the village for walkers.



Outcome

Visitors will be encouraged out of their cars, into the village to explore on foot following, where possible, dedicated off-road routes which take in places of interest where the particular story is told through interpretation.



Key Project

Develop a network of off-road Looped Walks & itineraries which will tell the story of Kinnitty - its heritage & associations.

| actions // | | Priority | Responsible Authority |
|------------|---|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1.3.1 | Review the scope for developing / updating a walking trail around the village which links into a wider network of off-road loops geared towards the needs of walkers. | important; medium term | (OCC/KCDA/OLDC) |

objective 2

Grow a visitor economy -
realise and live the brand

2.1

Deliver visitor information services



Outcome

Visitors are well-informed about the offer of value available in the village, in the surrounding area and, in particular, the mountain bike trails.



Key Project

Develop a coherent & cohesive visitor orientation, information & welcome point.



| actions // | | Priority | Responsible Authority |
|------------|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2.1.1 | <p>Identify an appropriate visitor reception/welcome point, to provide information services in relation to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the location of the trails offer – a user friendly, clearly laid out map in a prominent location that is accessible 24/7 which can be photographed on a smart device and called up by users when out on the trails. Weather proof hard copy of the mapping, supplemented on the reverse side with more general information about the places to go, things to see and do in Kinnitty including key events ■ the availability and location of bike hire/maintenance/ bike wash ■ the availability and location of food and beverage provision within the village with opening hours clearly indicated ■ the availability of a self-service coffee dock / mobile solutions (horse box for example) to cater for out-of-hours visitors and at event time ■ the availability and location of cycling related opportunities ■ the availability and location of play facilities ■ the location of public toilets ■ the availability, contact details of guiding services | critical; immediate term | (OCC/KCDA/OLDC) |
| 2.1.2 | Deliver visitor information through a network of mobile and digital services thereby aiding the self-guided exploration of the village and wider area. | important; medium term | (OCC/MI/KCDA/ OLDC) |
| 2.1.3 | Ensure visitor information is readily available through face-to-face services that are already provided for residents and will also cater to the interests of visitors. | important; medium term | (KCDA) |
| 2.1.4 | Ensure that those providing visitor information services are equipped to meet the changing needs and interests of the area's visitor priority markets. | important; medium term | (KCDA) |
| 2.1.5 | Ensure that the branding of all material is in line with the new proposition for Kinnitty. | critical; immediate term | (OCC/MI/OTM/ KCDA/Coillte) |

OCC: Offaly County Council
 OLDC: Offaly Local Development Company
 KCDA: Kinnitty Community Development Association
 TIL: Tourism Ireland Limited

FI: Fáilte Ireland I MI: Midlands Ireland
 OTM: Offaly Tourism Marketing
 LT: Laois Tourism

2.2

Deliver **visitor support services** geared towards the particular needs of different visitor markets



Outcome

The particular needs of target audiences are delivered



Key Project

Identify and promote business development opportunities in line with the Cycling Hub proposition; the repositioning of Kinnitty and the development of particular activities.



DMBiS initiative to provide secure storage for equipment, in accomodation in Scotland

| actions // | | Priority | Responsible Authority |
|------------|---|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2.2.1 | <p>Identify the scope for small enterprises to take advantage of particular market opportunities relative to the cycle tourism business and the mountain biking opportunity in particular, through the provision of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ bike hire ■ cycling kit including helmets, lights, GPS, rucksacks ■ bike maintenance ■ the sale of emergency first aid kits, bike pumps etc ■ the offer of secure baggage storage for day visitors who may be carrying all their luggage on their bike ■ a drop off and pick up service. ■ food and beverage outlets ■ pump track / skills area for younger cyclists/novices to practice, under supervision, prior to tackling the trails | critical; immediate | (KCDA/OLDC) |
| 2.2.2 | Develop a modest retail offer geared towards the visitor market including the sale of maps, route cards, guide books, and a selection of prints depicting the history and heritage of the village and its association with the Slieve Blooms so as to support visitors in their exploration of the village and their exploration of the mountains whether on foot or two wheels. | important; medium term | (KCDA/OLDC) |
| 2.2.3 | Develop a How to Make Cyclists Welcome Toolkit for those existing and prospective businesses catering for visitors to the village. | desirable; medium term. | (KCDA/FI/OLDC) |
| 2.2.4 | Explore the scope for offering guided tours – walking and cycling - around the village and within the Slieve Blooms, incorporating ‘things to do’ enroute. | important; medium term | (KCDA/OLDC) |
| 2.2.5 | Explore the scope to bundle activities – mountain biking plus – to extend the dwell time and promote longer stays. | important; medium term | (KCDA/FI/OLDC) |
| 2.2.6 | Explore the scope to package accommodation with an activity offer and/or an event. | important; medium term | (KCDA/FI/OLDC) |
| 2.2.7 | Audit existing vacant premises and sites to determine their suitability for accommodation provision; their status relative to ownership; the willingness of owners to consider visitor accommodation use and the feasibility of such provision. | important; medium term | (OCC/KCDA/ OLDC) |
| 2.2.8 | Develop a prospectus for accommodation development at candidate sites in the village and the wider area, highlighted during the consultation process, and test the market appetite for interest in providing same. | desirable; longer term | (OCC/KCDA/ OLDC) |
| 2.2.9 | Develop a Basic Guide to Developing a B&B and recruit potential candidates for Fáilte Ireland’s Bed & Breakfast Development Programme. | desirable; longer term | (KCDA/FI/OLDC) |



2.3

Encourage the development of a more diverse range of unique product offerings and authentic experiences for visitors incorporating local heritage, local produce, local craft and cultural encounters



Outcome

Visitors are informed about and provided with opportunities to explore the natural and cultural heritage of the destination.



Key Project

Develop a programme of themed walks and talks on the following topics -

- people, place & built heritage
- wildlife & biodiversity
- history & heritage

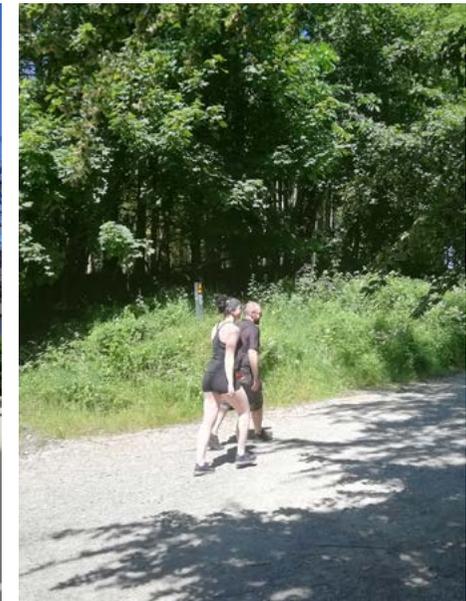
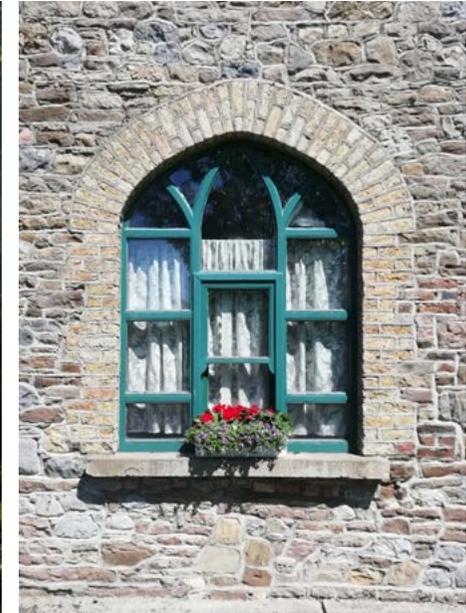
| actions // | | Priority | Responsible Authority |
|------------|---|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2.3.1 | Audit the existing provision of walking routes/ heritage trails which originate in and extend beyond the village and identify the scope for enhancing their accessibility, connectivity, appeal and interpretation. | important; medium term | (OCC/KCDA/ OLDC) |
| 2.3.2 | Undertake an audit of prospective guides and deliver appropriate training. | important; medium term | (OCC/KCDA/ OLDC) |
| 2.3.3 | Develop the itineraries based on the outcome of the audit. | important; medium term | (OCC/KCDA/ OLDC) |
| 2.3.4 | Ensure tourism 'experiences' - e.g. walking tours, guided walks, cycles- which feature local businesses are readily available at the stage when people are booking their travel arrangements online. | desirable; longer term | (OCC/FI/ KCDA) |



Key Project

Develop opportunities to use heritage to promote the health & well-being of local people & visitors.

| actions // | | Priority | Responsible Authority |
|------------|---|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2.3.5 | Develop a programme of activities that engage local people, including volunteering, conservation, outdoor recreation and heritage events which will help to improve health, well-being, wealth and social cohesion. | important; medium term | (OCC/KCDA/OLDC) |





Key Project

Initiate a "Welcome to Tourism Excellence" Programme.

| actions // | | Priority | Responsible Authority |
|------------|---|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2.3.6 | Engage with business and stakeholders to unify and grow business capacity and to continue to drive up the quality of the visitor experience by providing a consistent standard of facilities, services and welcome that meets the needs of all visitors, and creates quality, consistency, professionalism, innovation and influence. | desirable; longer term | (OCC/FI/ KCDA) |



Kinnitty.

A Prospectus for Development



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Funded by the Department of Rural & Community Development

LCDC

Coiste um Thraitníocht Pobail Áitiúil Usháil Fhailí
Offaly Local Community Development
Committee



Offaly Local
Development Company



The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development
Europe investing in rural areas

Louise Browne
Associates

dba

Deirdre Black Associates



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