

BOYLE TOWN TEAM

Dear Sir/Madam,

Further to our zoom call with Pio Byrnes and subsequent public consultation in Boyle, Boyle Town Team would like to make the following submission in relation to the County Development Plan 2021 -2027

1. We believe tourism is key to the future success of our county and in particular the Boyle region. If tourism is to succeed we need the infrastructure in place and the attractions to entice tourists to visit our town and county. Lough Key Forest Park is the jewel in the crown from a tourism perspective and every effort should be made to further enhance this facility while retaining the link to Boyle town and County Roscommon. In Boyle we do not have a hotel which is a major drawback in getting people to stay in our town. While we accept that pre draft stage is not appropriate to mention zoning, we need to have an area ready, and incentives in place for a potential hotelier to build or renovate a property in Boyle to turn into a hotel. Likewise we need to encourage the development of a high quality hostel type accommodation, ideally in the town centre for those on a lower budget.
2. The recently constructed Lough Key to Boyle cycle path will be a great addition to the town over the next few years. Plans should be put in place to extend this path and to link it up with other proposed cyclepaths throughout the country. In addition, emphasis should be given to providing tourist facilities (ie coffee shops, seating/picnic areas etc) or having areas ready for such along the cycle path and in particular at the Wooden bridge area. The development of a Marina, privately or publicly in this area should also be investigated as it is off the N4, the cycle path and with direct access onto Lough Key. It would make a statement to those travelling along the N4 that Boyle is indeed a tourist area.
3. The lack of an adequate stock of affordable housing for first time buyers or young couples is hindering the growth of Boyle. The actions planned and publicity received with Boyle 2040 has seen an increase in people looking to relocate to Boyle and this has been boosted further since Covid-19 and the opportunities brought by remote working. While we do not have enough housing for the above, we do have a town centre with over shop accommodation and on street houses that are lying idle. For that reason, we believe that town centre living incentives need to be put in place and an emphasis put in the County Development Plan of getting people to live in our town centre once again. The importance of getting our town centres looking good is also key to this and the plans for public realm enhancement to the town need to be maintained and developed further over the next few years.

4. Boyle has been lucky in one regard that it did not have the massive growth that other towns of a similar size in other counties had during the Celtic Tiger era. As such, we believe Boyle can learn from the mistakes of these towns and in particular the growth of out of town developments. Boyle Town Team believe that the town centre first approach should be utilised in towns throughout the county and that future commercial developments, if possible should be located in the town centre.
5. The Boyle 2040 plan is a key document for the town's regeneration and it regularly references the great asset that Boye river is to the town. It is important that the river, it's tributaries and Lough Key are protected from pollution and properly maintained. The river running through the centre of Boyle should also be utilised to attract development in the town centre, especially along the back of Main Street. The Lawn area, west of Boyle bridge is a key tourist attraction along with the Pleasure Grounds and they should remain as public parks.
6. Boyle is on the main Dublin Sligo rail line which is very important. For many years the local Chamber of Commerce, along with their counterparts in other towns like Carrick and Ballymote, have tried to get a morning and evening commuter service to Sligo. This is an idea that should be built into the plan as Boyle can become a dormitory town of Sligo with people living and socialising in Boyle but commuting to work in Sligo. Likewise the upgrade of the N4 to Sligo is welcomed and should assist in Boyle's development.

We hope the above items and suggestions can be contained in the County Development Plan 2020-2027.

Please be assured of the assistance at all times of Boyle Town Team in developing Boyle and County Roscommon,