



Submission from Mote Park Conservation Group to Roscommon County Council in relation to the Pre-Draft Consultation Stage of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2021-2027

Mote Park Conservation Group (MPCG) wish to thank Roscommon County Council for the opportunity to make this submission to the Pre-Draft Consultation Stage of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2021-2027.

The current Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020 recognises the very important amenity value of Mote Park in the following statement taken from the plan;

“Mote Park in Roscommon now provides a valued public amenity and area for walking to the people around Roscommon town”

The plan further recognises that trees and woodlands such as Mote Park contribute to the landscape and visual amenity of County Roscommon.

We are of the strong opinion given its important amenity value to Roscommon town and the south County Roscommon area in general that at a minimum these references to Mote Park continue into the new development plan.

Chapter 6 Section 6.4 of the current plan recognises the natural and cultural heritage value of the heritage gardens, demesnes and parks within the county, along with their architectural importance these areas are an important record of landscape design. These values are supported by the following policies and objectives of in the current development plan and must pass into the new plan in the interest of proper planning and sustainable development to protect the built heritage and nature conservation of these historical settings.

Policy in terms of Built Heritage

Policy 6.1	Identify and protect the architectural heritage of the county and to manage any change to that heritage in such a way as to retain its character and special interest.
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Objectives in terms of Built Heritage

Objective 6.1	Conserve and protect structures (i.e. includes conservation, preservation, and improvement compatible with maintaining the character and interest of the structure), groups of structures or parts of structures, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. Preserve the character of a place, area, group of structures or townscape, which is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or value, or contributes to the appreciation of protected structures, taking into account building lines and heights.
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Objectives for Nature Conservation

Objective 7.5	Protect and promote the conservation of biodiversity outside of designated areas, while allowing for appropriate development, access and recreational activity.
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To protect and retain the built heritage of Mote Park demesne, MPCG would be strongly against the removal of any structures associated with the historical demesne from the Record of Protected Structures for the County.

We believe that the importance of the Mote Park Forest Amenity Area to the overall future development of Roscommon town and its hinterland as a place to live, work and visit is no less than that to which Lough Key Forest Park holds to the future development Boyle.

Given the exponential growth in visitor numbers to the Mote Park Forest Amenity Area in the past number of years MPCG would like to see policies and objectives in the new plan that would sustain this growth, enhance the visitor experience and improve the connectivity to Roscommon town and to this end help deliver the following during the lifetime of the plan;

1. Improved wayfinding on the approaches to Mote Park and in particular from the centre of Roscommon town
2. Construction of a new public footpath along the Golf Links Road from Roscommon Golf Club to Hannon's Hotel which will allow pedestrians safe access to the St. Coman's Walk trail via the rear of Roscommon Golf Club and into Mote Park
3. Upgrade the St. Coman's Walk trail which traverses through the Coillte forest to Derrydonnell Wood which would encourage walkers from Roscommon town into Mote Park to use it as a safer alternative to the public road access
4. Provide safety signage along all public roads through the Mote Park area
5. Enlarge the car parking area at the Ballymurray entrance to the Mote Park Forest Amenity Area to provide safe off-road parking
6. Develop two new looped walk trails to enhance the visitor experience in the Ballymurray Wood which would take visitors under Lion's Gate a structure of National importance and along the banks of the River Hind.
7. Develop walkway/cycleway linkage to National greenways and Blueway trails via the proposed Lough Ree Greenway and the Mid Shannon Wilderness Park through Portrunny Bay, the Cloonlarge and the Clooncraff Loop's in Kiltewan, Mote Park Forest Amenity Area, Roscommon Town and onto the Suck Valley Way
8. Support the ongoing sustainable forest management principles in Mote Park forest to ensure the protection and enhancement of the area's rich biodiversity and outstanding landscape.

On a broader scale MPCG would like to see policies and objective in the plan that would support the following;

1. The development of sustainable and affordable housing for people starting out on the property ladder
2. Following on from the successful publication of the County Roscommon Rural Design Guidelines during the lifetime of the last plan, in the lifetime of this plan deliver a Village Design Guidelines publication to encourage a more sympathetic approach to the siting and design of new developments in the villages of our County taking more regard of the traditional building styles and the historical evolution of our villages.

3. Encourage the development of new and improve existing local link public transport in the County and the increased frequency of public transport connections to regional and national centres of population
4. In this new and rapidly developing era of remote working support the provision of infrastructure that would attract people to come live and remote work from the towns and villages in the County
5. Develop sustainable and creative artisan food and drink businesses based on our local agricultural production with the infrastructure to promote their produce on the national and worldwide markets
6. Building the County Roscommon brand based on the unique history, heritage and landscape of the county.
7. The expansion of the Mid Shannon Wilderness Park into the former Bord Na Mona bogs of east Roscommon
8. Encourage proper sustainable forest development to protect the landscape of the County particularly the areas where the creeping afforestation of monoculture Sitka spruce plantations is taking place which if left unchecked will result in the alienating and isolating of the communities in these areas.
9. Protection of native hedgerows and trees which support biodiversity and enhance the landscape of the County
10. Discourage the development of industrial windfarm sites to protect high to exceptional value landscapes in the County from degradation and the residential amenity of its inhabitants.
11. Encourage and facilitate the development of suitably located and appropriate EV charging stations by private sector entities
12. Encourage and facilitate the redevelopment of vacant sites and derelict buildings in our towns and villages
13. Encourage and facilitate the reoccupation of vacant business premises in our towns and villages

Finally, MPCG wish Roscommon County Council success in delivering a new plan which will assist the County to grow and prosper for the next seven years in a sustainable and environmentally sympathetic manner.

Signed on behalf of Mote Park Conservation Group:

Seamus Lough. Chairperson

Seamus Lough

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