

# The Dublin Mountains Project



# Background

Almost one third of people accessing the Dublin Mountains do so through the Hell Fire Club and Masseys Woods, putting the area under growing pressure. It is important that the Dublin Mountains are appreciated by visitors, but also that they are protected for future generations and managed in a sustainable way.

To this end, South Dublin County Council, Coillte and the Dublin Mountains Partnership have recently proposed an integrated plan for the Dublin Mountains through the sensitive, sustainable development of a gateway facility.

The primary goal of the **Dublin Mountains Project** is to welcome people as part of a wider plan around managing access and accommodating differing user needs for the benefit of all. It is envisaged that the facility would provide services such as toilets, parking, food, education and interpretation and act as the gateway to the built and natural heritage of the Dublin Mountains through trails and activities.



# The Concept

The Dublin Mountains Project aims to develop a key recreation site and provide the highest possible quality visitor enjoyment of the landscape and its key cultural, archaeological, geological and natural features. It will act as an access point to the heritage and recreation amenities of the Dublin Mountains in a manner sensitive to the environment, the local community and existing users. The project team has already met with several stakeholders during the process, including local representatives and landowners and the concept continues to evolve.

The concept includes development of a mixed forest, improved networks of trails, conservation measures and sensitive interpretation of heritage. It includes the provision of visitor facilities such as a café, toilets and services to cater for the needs of local people, dedicated ramblers and tourists and opportunities for activity and learning. It will support local and regional tourism, related businesses and employment and will protect the heritage of the Dublin Mountains while sustainably balancing the commercial forestry operations of Coillte with the demand for recreation access in the Dublin Mountains.



# Where is the proposed location for the Dublin Mountains Project?

To identify a suitable site for the Dublin Mountains Project, several steps were taken:

## Step 1

The identification of land areas in the Dublin Mountains, within the South Dublin County area that were potentially suitable for a tourism facility within a general area centred on, but not limited to Montpelier, Killakee and Masseys Wood.

## Step 2

A study was undertaken on the available land parcels in the area to determine which site would be suitable to develop a facility that would act as a key tourism attraction and gateway to the Dublin Mountains and beyond.



## Step 3

The study identified 6 possible sites or options that were considered for further investigation:

**Option 1:** Hell Fire Wood

**Option 2:** Massey's Wood

**Option 3:** Steward's House and Belfry

**Option 4:** Featherbed

**Option 5:** Cruagh Mountain

**Option 6:** A combination of Hell Fire Wood and Massey's Wood

## Step 4

Each of the 6 Options went through a process of further investigation whereby many constraints were used to determine which site might be the best option for the development.

Constraints used included:

- Character, archaeology and heritage
- Ecology and protection of the wider landscape
- Planning and land ownership constraints
- Activity types on site / fulfilling user needs
- Best views to the city / protection of views from the city / orientation
- Potential economic impact
- Access by public transport / own transport
- Connection to existing trails
- Sustainability (transport, resources, energy)
- Site capacity and design opportunity
- Services (electricity / gas / water)



## Step 5

Each of the sites were assessed against each other and a scoring matrix developed comparing each site (with the lowest score being the best). Option 6, the combination of Hell Fire Wood and Massey's Wood was identified as the preferred option.

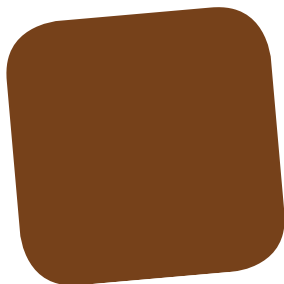
	1. Hell Fire	2. Massey's Estate	3. Steward's House	4. Featherbed	5. Cruagh Wood	6. Combined Options 1-2
Site Appraisal	1.5	2.5	5.2	3.7	3.2	1.2
Transport	1.2	1.0	1.2	5.7	5.0	1.1
Services	1.2	1.7	1.0	5.2	3.0	1.6
Air/Soil/Water	1.0	1.0	1.0	3.0	2.5	1.0
Planning/Environmental	1.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	2.0
Tourism	1.5	3.8	4.3	1.8	1.3	1.2
Total Ranking:	1.3	1.9	2.4	3.7	3.0	1.2



# Why is Option 6 - Hell Fire Wood / Masseys Wood the Preferred Option?

The combination of Hell Fire Wood and Masseys Wood offer two complimentary sites - Hell Fire Wood giving the mountain experience with its elevated views, and Masseys Wood the valley experience, with its mature deciduous forests, streams and waterfalls. They are both rich in archaeology and heritage, with numerous megalithic tombs and protected structures.

The combined site also includes lands that provide flexibility in terms of land use including car-parking and recreational facilities. Siting the Dublin Mountains Project here is not in conflict with the open character of the mountains and the combined site is sufficiently large to accommodate a low-rise visitor building and ensure sensitive design of the building, parking and environs. There are also no adverse impacts on Natura 2000 sites or Wicklow Mountains National Park lands.



# What does the project involve?

The combination of the attributes of the Hell Fire Club and Massey's Woods has the potential to create a gateway facility of regional significance. The preferred site presently used for commercial forestry and recreation, will evolve through the development of an extensive, diverse forest park, interspersed with cultural heritage features. These could include:

- A treetop canopy walk to create a 'wow' factor serving both as an experience and a safe connection to Massey's Woods while bringing together the two contrasting landscape experiences of the mountain and the forest
- A gateway/welcome centre enabling access to the wider trail network and activities of the Dublin Mountains incorporating AV exhibition space / education centre, café and outdoor terraces, toilets and changing facilities and a walker's lounge.
- A small shop providing goods to support visitors and walkers and a small kiosk to provide for the refreshment needs of short-stay visitors and visitors preferring outdoor refreshments at the site
- Extended parking facilities





- Improved trail network, new trails and loops, with signage, picnic benches, natural play area, etc.
- The Project also will deliver conservation for the Hellfire Club and Massey's Estates heritage features
- Existing access and transport challenges will be addressed for example:
  - Proposal to provide a new footpath along Kilakee Road to Stocking Avenue to provide safe pedestrian access from the city direction
  - Bus service to be reviewed in consultation with Dublin Bus
  - Potential Greenway links to the site may be developed at a later stage
- Other ongoing assessments include satellite car parking, shuttling and other features used at other visitor attractions to manage access and visitors
- There are no proposed charges for access to trails, parking or the proposed bridge.



# What is happening now?

South Dublin County Council and its Project Team are at the early stages of design relating to the proposed development and are now seeking engagement and views from the public to inform the proposal, in advance of the lodgement of a planning application.

We would like to know:

- What are your views on the project?
- What do you think of this proposal?
- Is there anything else the proposal should include?

Further information is available on the project on the South Dublin County Councils homepage at [www.sdcc.ie](http://www.sdcc.ie)



# What is happening next?

All feedback received from this phase of public consultation will be reviewed by the Project Team and used to inform the next phase of the project.

There will be information days and ongoing public engagement prior to commencement of statutory consultation which could begin in May / June. This will show a proposed design, layout, detailed model and drawings of the proposed development and will go on public display with further opportunity to make submissions.

Depending on outcomes from An Bord Pleanála, it is intended to lodge a planning application potentially in June / July 2017.





## Have Your Say

Please send your submissions to the **Dublin Mountains Project** by email to [econdev@sdblincoco.ie](mailto:econdev@sdblincoco.ie)

or by post to:

**The Dublin Mountains Project**  
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