

GMCE

Business Plan: Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park (Working Title)

Granard Motte Community Enterprise

June 2013



Comhshaoil, Pobal agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Community and Local Government

This project was assisted by Longford Community Resources Ltd. through the Rural Development Programme which is part-financed by the European Union and the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.

Glossary of Abbreviations

AADT	Annual Average Daily Traffic
ACA	Architectural Conservation Area
AIRO	All Island Research Observatory
CDP	County Development Plan
CE	Community Employment
CSO	Central Statistics Office
ED	Electoral Divisions
GMCE	Granard Motte Community Enterprise Limited
GPRS	Granard Public Realm Strategy
HP	Haase and Pratschke
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
LCC	Longford County Council
LCDB	Longford County Development Board
NUIM	National University of Ireland: Maynooth
OSI	Ordnance Survey Ireland
RDS	Relative Deprivation Score
SA	Small Area (CSO)
SAP	Small Area of Population

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Development Name

Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park is the working title of the development project. Granard Motte Community Enterprise has commissioned a local schools competition to choose the final project name.



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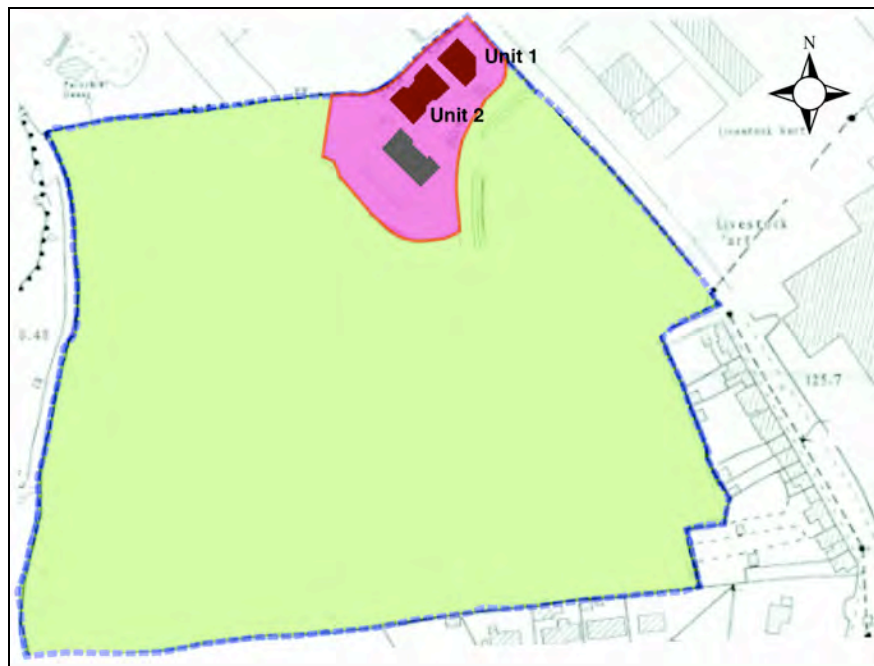
1 Executive Summary

Granard Motte Community Enterprise Limited (GMCE) has been established to develop and manage a new social enterprise for the benefit of the community of Granard, Co. Longford. GMCE has been formed as a community-owned company, limited by guarantee, and has obtained charitable status.

The company is currently evaluating a unique opportunity to purchase a landmark property located at Rathcronan, at the foot of Granard Motte. The property consists of two modern commercial units and some 6ha (15 acres) of land adjoining the N55, and close to the town centre.

The long-term goal of GMCE is to use the property to create social enterprises that will, in turn, create sustainable jobs for the local community¹.

Figure 1 – Rathcronan Site



The initial phase of the development will see the creation of a major tourist, and amenity attraction, taking full advantage of the prominent location of the site. The site has a frontage on to the N55, and is close to the town centre.

The strategic location of Granard places it within a potential catchment of some 300,000 people aged between 15 and 64 within a one-hour (60km) drive, and Dublin city is within a 90km drive. Both Granard town, and the site are located on the N55, which is a major traffic route between the north and the west of Ireland.

¹ In 2011 the male unemployment rate for Granard Urban stood at 28.17%, and 27.47% for female unemployment.

1.1 Proposed Development

The full development of the buildings and site will be undertaken on a phased basis over the coming years. The proposed development is designed to build upon the local cultural and historical assets of the town and the surrounding area, and reflects the identified markets for local, national and international visitor attraction.

Figure 2 – Units 1 and 2



Unit 1 will provide a café and a visitor craft shop. Both of these will be offered for lease to local operators, with an emphasis on the provision of a new outlet for local artisan food and craft products, and to be operated as a social enterprise.

Unit 2 will house the Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre. The unit was originally designed as a crèche, and will readily convert to the new use. The Cultural Heritage Centre will incorporate a flexible exhibition space, themed around a celebration of the Granard Motte and Bailey². Using simple elements, the exhibition will also provide an historical timeline of the development of Granard town, with its unique and extended reach from the Bronze Age to the present day. The exhibition will encourage visitors to visit the town and will integrate with the attractions of Co. Longford and the region.

The Cultural Heritage Centre will offer the opportunity to create and promote an extensive range of themed attractions, including exhibitions of local and regional importance on Brendan O' Reilly, Eddie Macken, Kitty Kiernan, Larry Cunningham, and the Sheridan Clan. Additional seasonal activities will be promoted, including events for young people and families to celebrate Halloween, Christmas and Easter.

Granard Motte Park will provide the opportunity to recreate an early Anglo-Norman settlement as both a 'fun' attraction, but with an educational purpose. The parkland will also be used to develop a range of family activities, including a themed and adapted children's activity space, and an active elderly activity space. The rising ground will also create an ideal setting for leisure walks and for providing an appreciation of aspects of the local flora and fauna.

² Granard Motte is the highest Motte in Ireland and an OPW national monument

1.2 Markets

The facilities being provided are designed to respond to segmented markets in addition to the seasonal family visitor and general tourist.

The Cultural Heritage Centre will incorporate an Education Room, and Schools Programmes will be developed to relate to primary and secondary levels. These Programmes will build on the Cultural Heritage offerings of the Centre, and will encourage young people to explore the history of the Motte, and of the town and its surrounding. This will provide an active learning experience for the young people, and will lead directly to the development of other niche training and awareness building products for foreign students, and for interest groups including older people and specialist groups with an archaeological, historical, environmental and ecological interest.

The Cultural Heritage Centre and Park will provide the opportunity to create visitor attractions that draw on the local area, and will include new cycling, walking and equestrian pursuits, as well as the more traditional fishing-based activities.

1.3 Social Dividend

The development of the Granard Cultural Heritage Centre and Park creates a unique opportunity for the local community to gain from one of the remnants of the *Celtic Tiger* period.

GMCE have the vision and technical capacity to create a multi-dimensional community enterprise from the integration of the two units and the parkland into a celebration of the town and its environs, and present this to a new market.

The social dividend will be measured in terms of the direct employment capacity of the Heritage Cultural Centre, which will be realised through the café and visitor shop, and through the management and operation of the facility. It is envisaged that additional employment will be created in the development and delivery of the training products. Further opportunity for local engagement will emerge from the activities to be developed in the Parkland.

The development creates considerable opportunity for the provision of training and skilling initiatives in the realm of hospitality, customer care and facilities management.

The need for local services to support the new visitor offerings of the Heritage Cultural Centre and Park will generate significant local enterprise opportunity. This will include the provision of increased visitor accommodation at both hostel and hotel level, and the development of new products, such as cycle hire and equestrian activity. Additionally, the creation of new festivals and events will require that the local entertainment and activities sectors develop new and enhanced product offerings.

1.4 Finance

GMCE intend to fund the site acquisition costs through the negotiation of a low-interest loan (mortgage) equal to 80% of purchase price.

GMCE will be seeking capital funding assistance for the conversion of Unit 2 into the Interpretive Centre from Longford Community Resources Limited under the EU Rural Development Programme.

GMCE have been particularly successful in achieving sustained financial support for the development from the local community using a number of mechanisms including a 500 Club Draw.

1.5 Project Assessment

The proposed development is envisioned as a local facility for economic and social regeneration of Granard town for generations to come. The centre will attract visitors of many types – international, national, regional, disability, corporate, education and adventure market sectors, and this will be key to the social enterprise.

The vision of Granard Cultural Heritage Centre and Park is to provide for sustainable, community-owned tourism, heritage, recreational and retail development. All of these dimensions have been captured in the proposal.

Through an extensive consultation process with national, regional and local bodies, the local community, and other key stakeholders, a clear picture of the development needs has emerged. All of the elements were carefully selected to meet these needs, with specific attention to the sustainability of the centre, the management of operational costs and generating income to repay borrowings and fund the following phases.

The centre will be a *'place for every-one'*, provide employment for local people, promote the ethos of inclusivity, and promote Co. Longford and Granard town as a new visitor destination.

- ❑ This is an innovative venture with a unique and exciting mix of elements that will require careful management.
- ❑ The development will enable GMCE to support the local business, community and voluntary sector.
- ❑ The appointment of a strong, dynamic and passionate manager to lead this project is key to its success. This person will drive fundraising, operations, public relations, project design, planning and eventually construction and all other aspects under the guidance of the Board of Directors.

In conclusion, Granard Cultural Heritage Centre and Park has a strong mix of elements to make it a success: -

- ❑ **Strong community support, backed by high profile patrons.**
- ❑ **A well-established Board, with a broad range of business knowledge.**

- ❑ **Strong financial acumen within the community company.**
- ❑ **A realistic financial forecast.**
- ❑ **An excellent location to celebrate local history.**

2 Introduction

The Granard Public Realm Strategy (2011), prepared by Brady Shipman Martin in association with Shaffrey Associates on behalf of Longford Local Authorities and the Heritage Council, concludes that the business and commercial activity in Granard has been declining for some time. The Strategy recommends that the area re-invents itself and becomes a '*destination*' town for visitors. To achieve this, the Strategy suggests that the various cultural, historical, archaeological and scenic features of the area are developed such that visitors would be enticed to stay a while.

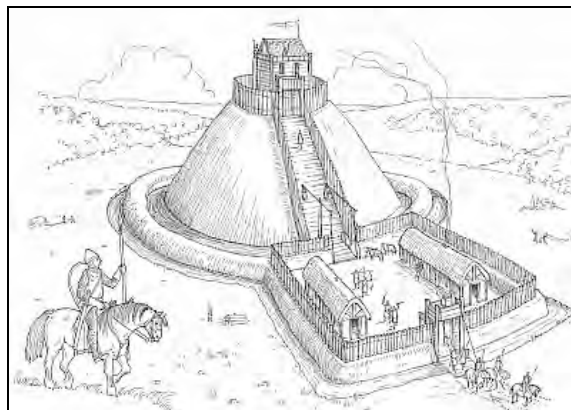


GMCE are evaluating the options to create a visitor-based social enterprise combining the assets of the town together with the Rathcronan site and two of the existing units. The aim of the project is to create sustainable employment, drive visitor revenue and enhance the social and economic wellbeing of the area and region.

2.1 Rathcronan Development Site

To realise the strategic vision, Granard Motte Community Enterprise Limited (GMCE) has been formed as a community-owned company, limited by guarantee. The company is currently evaluating a unique opportunity to purchase a landmark property at the foot of Granard Motte, close to the town centre. The property consists of two modern commercial units and some 6ha of land adjoining the N55, and close to the town centre.

Figure 3 – Typical Motte and Bailey



The site has ample parking space for cars and buses, and the buildings are disabled friendly.

Despite the favourable geographic location, situated close to the centre of Ireland, and its inherent visitor attraction, Granard town and environs has yet to realise its full potential in terms of visitor revenue.

2.1.1 Development Rationale

The buildings (units 1 and 2), located at the north-eastern perimeter of the site and at the foot of the renowned Motte and Bailey, offer many opportunities, including the provision of an exhibition, and cultural heritage centre, as well as a training and education facility, community café, arts and crafts centre, and a community retail space. In addition, the land provides numerous potential opportunities, including the recreation of an early Norman Settlement, a children's activity area, and an activity playground incorporating facilities for children with special needs, nature walks, and cycle paths. The facility will also act as referral point for visitors who may wish to explore the town and its environs.

The potential social dividend emanating from this proposition is considerable. The project will help to provide new employment in an area facing high unemployment rates and economic decline. In addition, it will provide a multi-purpose facility for training and education. It will provide a space to develop community enterprise schemes, Tús community work placement initiatives, and work experience opportunities. Ultimately it will provide people of the area with a pride in their own place, and will help to create a sense of local community.

The purpose of this Business Plan is to examine the rationale for this project, whilst measuring its capacity to be self-sustaining, viable and socially beneficial. It will verify the extent to which the proposal might enhance and complement the local economy, drive tourism, and add a positive dimension for the region.

2.2 Community Support

GMCE has been encouraged by the degree of community support for the proposed development.

A 500 Club Draw was launched in late June 2012, with the first fully subscribed draw having taken place in September 2012. It is anticipated that the draw will operate until any loan and capital costs are cleared. It is projected that over the life of the draw a return of €37,000 will be produced annually.

Some €10,000 has been committed by GMCE as a deposit to secure an interest in the property. This was raised through an interest-free loan from the local community.

Members of the local community have consistently invested in excess of 2,000 hours of voluntary effort per annum into the development of Granard Cultural Heritage Centre and Park.

3 Project Promoters

This section provides a profile of the promoters of the Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park.

Granard Motte Community Enterprise Ltd. (Company No. 514213) was incorporated in Ireland in June 2012 as a company limited by guarantee and without a share capital. The company has obtained charitable status, registration number CHY20494, from the Revenue Commissioners.

The registered address of GMCE is Rathcronan, Granard, Co. Longford.

3.1 Board Members

- ❑ **Chairperson:** Fr. Simon Cadam P.P. Granard - Fr. Simon has many years of experience of working with and for community groups.
- ❑ **Joint Treasurer:** Pdraig McNamara - Occupation - Granard Postmaster - Pdraig is current member and Past President of the National Executive of the Irish Postmasters Union. He is also a board member of the I.P.U Benevolent Fund. His knowledge and experience are very important to the board.
- ❑ **Joint Treasurer:** Sean McElvaney - Occupation - Farmer/Postmaster. Sean has many years of experience of working with the community. He is currently chairman of the local IFA purchasing group.
- ❑ **Company Secretary:** Paul Flood - Occupation - Auctioneer and Insurance Broker. Has served on many community groups and been involved in the establishment of many local projects.
- ❑ **Director:** Seamus Gorman - Occupation: Farmer. Seamus is a board member of Granard G.A.A. He also served for many years on the board of management of a local primary school. He is a tireless voluntary worker with great community spirit and an important board member.
- ❑ **Director:** John Macken - Occupation: Service Station Owner. A tireless worker for the local community. John has been very involved in Granard Chamber and Granard Tidy Towns for many years.
- ❑ **Director:** Andrew Gettings - Occupation: Company Director, GEM Construction Ltd. As chairman of Granard GAA, Andrew has a track record of working with the community. He also has many years experience as a company director of one of the largest construction companies in the midlands.

- ❑ **Director:** Philip Smyth - Occupation: Manager of Piggery Farm. Philip has managed many enterprises over the years and provided the board with valuable guidance.
- ❑ **Director:** Eileen Finan - Occupation: Manager of Family Resource Facility. Through her work, Eileen has first hand knowledge of the social needs of our community. She also has excellent organisational ability and a very good co-ordinator.
- ❑ **Director:** Richard Monaghan - Occupation; Retired Civil Engineering Contractor. Richards years of experience will be invaluable to the group as it develops this project.
- ❑ **Director:** Mairtin Smyth - Occupation; Civil Engineer with Longford County Council, Martin has many years experience as a Civil Engineer with Longford Co. Co. His skill and experience will be very important to the project.
- ❑ **Director:** Padraig McGivney - Occupation: Farmer - Padraig was a member of the interim committee set up to study this project and to purchase the property. His knowledge of local history and his vision are very important for the project.
- ❑ **Director:** William Monaghan - Occupation: Owner/ Director of Engineering Company. - A board member of Ballymore G.A.A., William brings a history of community involvement and knowledge, based on many experience years as a self-employed businessperson.
- ❑ **Director:** Padraig McGauran - Occupation: Self employed Builder - As an experienced and respected builder, Padraig's help and advice is vital to the board.

3.2 Professional Advisors

- ❑ **Accountants:** Ms Carmel Reilly, Reilly and Co., Auditors and Accountants, Main St., Granard, Co. Longford.
- ❑ **Solicitors:** Ms Cliadhna Sheridan, Solicitor, Main St., Granard, Co. Longford.

4 Project Description

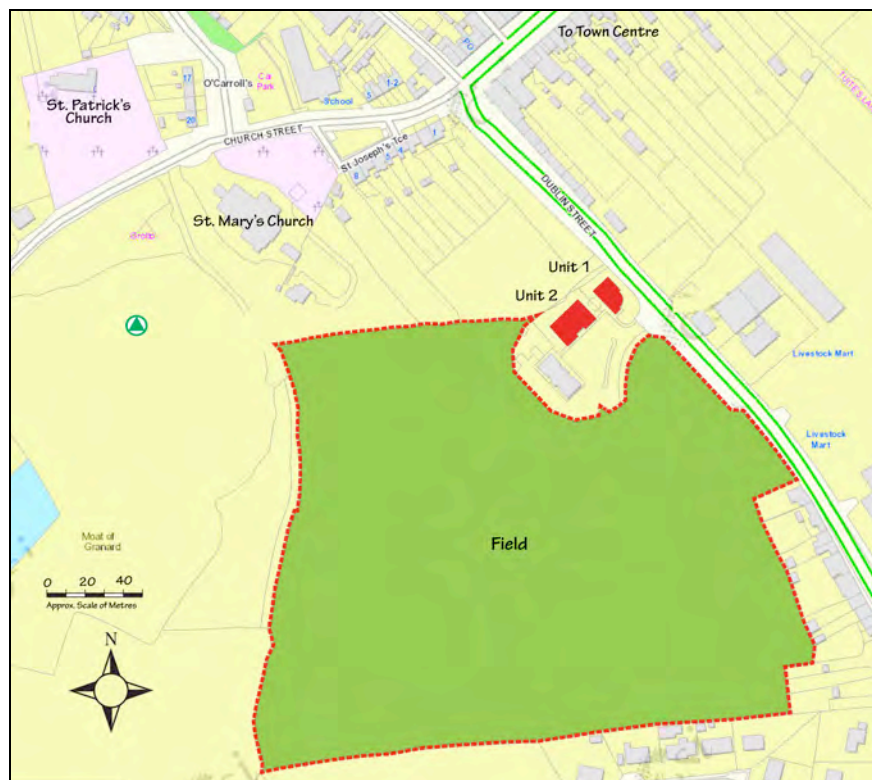
This section provides a detailed description of the proposed Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park.

The site and two buildings are located at Rathcronan on Dublin Street (N55 – Edgeworthstown road). The 6ha (15-acre) parcel of agricultural land, with two commercial units, is currently in the ownership of the National Asset Management Agency (NAMA).

The site rises steeply to the boundary of the Granard Motte property. The lower level of the site was originally intended for a 180-unit housing development.

The existing buildings were originally designed to be a pharmacy (Unit 1) and a crèche facility (Unit 2). Unit 1 has a floor area of 175.37 m², and Unit 2 contains an area of 287.23 m². Before cessation of work, both units were finished to second fix standard.

Figure 4 – Site Plan



Based on the existing structural envelope and location, it is recommended that Unit 1 be used to provide space for a café and a visitor/craft shop. These uses are closely aligned to the original retail pharmacy use envisaged for the unit.

It follows that Unit 2, with its significant open floor spaces, will readily lend itself to exhibition space and the provision of a training facility. Given its location on the

site it is further recommended that this unit should also provide the control point for the external activities that may be developed over time.

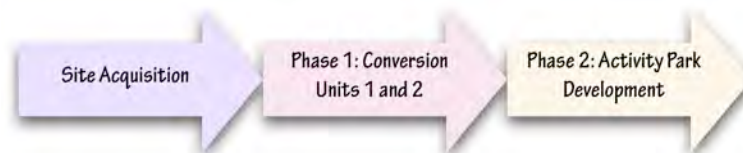
4.1 Site Development

It is proposed that the site will be developed over a number years, and will involve two main phases, in addition to the purchase of the property. The phasing of the development is determined primarily by the financing streams, and by the need to create sustainable business elements.

4.1.1 Phasing Plan

The phasing plan will commence once the acquisition of the land and buildings has been concluded. The acquisition of the land and buildings are to be financed through a combination of community-raised finance, and a low-interest social finance loan.

Figure 5 – Phasing Plan



The phasing of the project is logically suggested by the elements of the development, as follows: -

- ☐ **Phase1:** Conversion of Units 1 and 2 to Café/Retail and Cultural Heritage Centre, respectively – It is proposed that the capital cost of the conversion work will be sourced from the Rural Development Programme.
- ☐ **Phase 2:** Provision of Activity Park – This will require the commissioning and completion of the design work, followed by statutory planning approval.

Short-Term Timeline

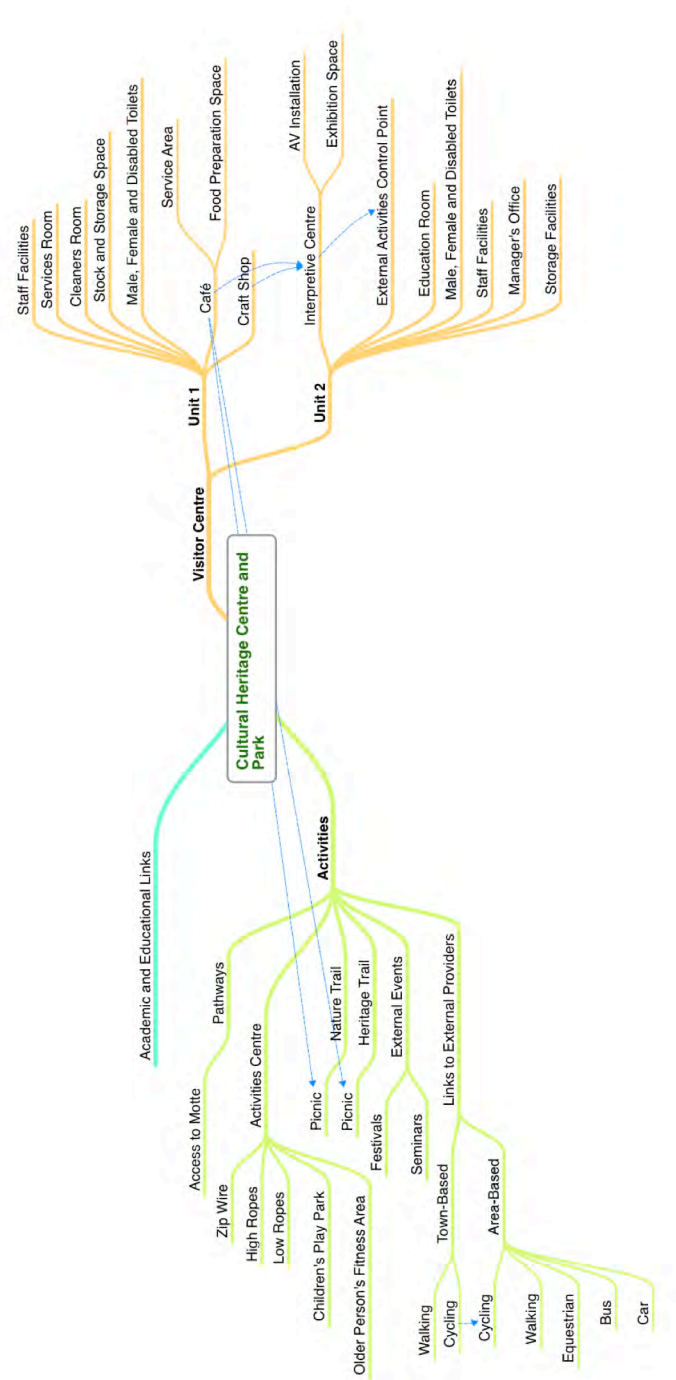
- ☐ It is recommended that the site acquisition be progressed immediately upon the satisfactory conclusion of the low-interest loan facility.
- ☐ The conversion of Units 1 and 2 will be contingent on the preparation of a detailed scheme, and the obtaining of statutory planning permission for the change of use of the site and buildings. It is recommended that the professional team be commissioned as soon as possible following the assurance of the acquisition of the site and buildings.
- ☐ The lease arrangements for Unit 1 (Café and Retail) should be advertised as quickly as possible following the exchange of contracts on the purchase of the land and buildings.
- ☐ 5ha of the land should be leased for agricultural use upon the transfer of the land.

- ❑ A submission must be made to Longford Community Resources Limited in pursuance of Rural Development Programme co-financing of the capital cost of the conversion of Unit 2 prior to 31st December 2013.

4.1.2 Project Development Model

The development of the site is suggested by the various options that can be incorporated into the business. These are itemised in the integrated development model below.

Figure 6 – Project Development Model



4.2 Development Potential

4.2.1 Phase 1: Units 1 and 2 Conversion

Unit 1: Café and Retail Unit

The requirement for the provision of a café has been repeatedly identified in the consultative process. Unit 1 is the ideal location for this provision, based upon the plan form of the unit, and its proximity to the N55 main road and the town centre. By the same token, the unit also lends itself to the provision of retail floor space for the sale of local produce.

The Café and Retail Space will be leased (without equipment, fittings and furniture) to a contracted service provider. The lease will be offered in a simple form for an initial period three years.

Given the need to generate income from the community investment, GMCE will encourage existing local business operators to bid for the operation of the facility, and will encourage the establishment of a social economy enterprise to operate the facilities.

Figure 7 – Café Granard: Impression



It is envisaged that the café will offer a simple range of pre-prepared food and beverages. This will minimise the food preparation facilities required within the establishment. It is estimated that the café will have the capacity to accommodate some 56 covers, giving sufficient to facilitate a full coach load of visitors.

Unit 2: Cultural Heritage Centre

The Granard Cultural Heritage Centre will have to compete in the local market for its visitors.

Extracts from 'Sharing our Stories - Using interpretation to improve the visitors' experience at heritage sites' (Fáilte Ireland)

Target consumers are looking for active involvement in a heritage experience. They want to engage with a destination's heritage

through learning, interacting and doing, rather than simply observing it (Source: Fáilte Ireland Innovation Research, carried out by Genesis Marketing, 2007).

The Cultural Heritage Centre will aim to link the heritage of the town to contemporary life, and will incorporate local festivals and arts performances. The Centre will be designed to bring the past to life so that it resonates with visitors, and gets them thinking and talking. The offerings in the Centre will link factual information to the immediate, first hand experience of the place and to the contemporary lives of visitors. It will be designed to give meaning to the past by linking the themes from history.

Based on experience elsewhere, it is recommended that the centre must make the experience of visiting Granard richer and more relevant. It will welcome visitors into the heritage of the town and environs, and will help them appreciate its treasures. It is recognised that the best presentation is often provided by a well-informed person who is steeped in understanding of the site and passionate about welcoming visitors into its story. The presentation will also use media such as print (panels and leaflets in all their forms), and audio. The use of multi-media will be restricted due to relatively high capital and operating costs.

Unit 2 will also have an **Education Space**, and this same facility will additionally be used as a meeting space, and as a venue for appropriate, small-scale seminars and events.

The **Events and Activities** market can be segmented in many ways, and the Cultural Heritage Centre is well placed to develop a range of outdoor events using its supporting on-site infrastructure. There are a number of themes that will be developed through the Granard Interpretive Centre, including: -

- ☐ **Natural Heritage Offerings** will be developed relating to the geology and ecology of the distinctive local landscape. Tangential potential references can be found, however, both in the development of local tourism opportunities spreading out from the Granard visitor centre, and in the servicing of other attractions that focus on this dimension.
- ☐ **'Soft' Adventure Offerings** will be developed to incorporate a range of activities, some of which are particularly relevant to the development potential of the Granard visitor centre. These include eco tourism, yoga, and short trekking.

It is recommended that during the course of the period 2013-2015 and beyond, GMCE should explore further options for creating additional revenue streams that are sympathetic to the thrust of the Cultural Heritage Centre. It is noted that many of these potential generators will help to break the reliance of the proposed facility on seasonality.

Physical Layout

The physical layout of Unit 2 will be employed to introduce a logical horizontal flow through the interpretive space.





It is proposed that a ticket sales and entry space will be created, and this will be segmented from the exit point.

The subsequent circulation flow through the remainder of the space will be designed to eliminate the possibility of visitor's doubling-back on themselves as

they move through the interpretive spaces. This will create a strong and logical *'timeline'* in the proposed layout of the information on the history of Granard from the Bronze Age to the present day.

Exhibition content will include text panels and illustrations, and where possible photographs and artefacts.

Figure 8 – Examples of Presentation Approaches

	
<p>Lightbox Wall Panel</p>	<p>Bespoke Exhibition Furniture</p>
	
<p>Freestanding Exhibition Units</p>	<p>Innovative AV Unit</p>

Educational Offerings

In addition to the potential for the development of the product offering for the visitor market, considerable opportunity exists to create new education products based on the history of Granard and its environs. Still further opportunity exists if a theme of environmental awareness is also developed for the education market.

The development of these new product offerings is designed to utilise the exhibition/classroom space in Unit 2.

For Primary Schools, the Cultural Heritage Centre is in a position to develop a Primary School Science Day based around the local environment. The day would be suitable for all ages at Primary School level, and would be designed to incorporate activities that explore the local flora and fauna. All activities would be curriculum-linked, and the facility would seek accreditation under the Discover Primary Science Programme.

For Secondary Schools, the Cultural Heritage Centre would be designed as an educational experience, and would cover topics related to the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate History curricula. Leaving Certificate (Applied) students of horticulture could also be accommodated within the Cultural Heritage Centre package.

It is recommended that an appropriately qualified educator would be identified to develop the packages, and be retained to monitor their effectiveness once implemented.

The exhibition/classroom space in Unit 2 will also have the capacity to generate niche offerings to appeal to any group seeking an active learning experience. Experience elsewhere identifies opportunity for the development of niche training and awareness building products for foreign students, and for special interest groups, including older people and those with an archaeological, historical, environmental and ecological interest.

The Cultural Heritage Centre education experience training space will initially be cost intensive to establish, including the origination of all of the teaching materials. The training space will have the capacity to comfortably seat approximately 20 people, and will also have the capacity of servicing small conferences. To operate as a training space or conference venue, the facility will require the following minimum level of equipment: -

- ☐ LCD Overhead Projector
- ☐ Projection Screen
- ☐ Computer
- ☐ WiFi Internet Connection
- ☐ Flip Chart Stand
- ☐ Whiteboard
- ☐ Conference and classroom furniture

The facility will also provide an opportunity to create education packages for the foreign student market.

Meeting Room

It is proposed that a meeting space to accommodate some 15 people in a boardroom style meeting will be provided. It will have a conference-style table, comfortable seating, have a projector and screen, and be fully accessible. This can also be hired out to other clubs/groups/businesses for meetings and/or training.

Office

The centre will require an office for operations management. It is proposed that this will be created within the ancillaries space.

Parking and Road Access

The site has ample car parking space, and has sufficient space to allow buses freely enter, turn and leave, along with the safe disembarkment of disabled persons.

4.2.2 Phase 2: Granard Motte Park

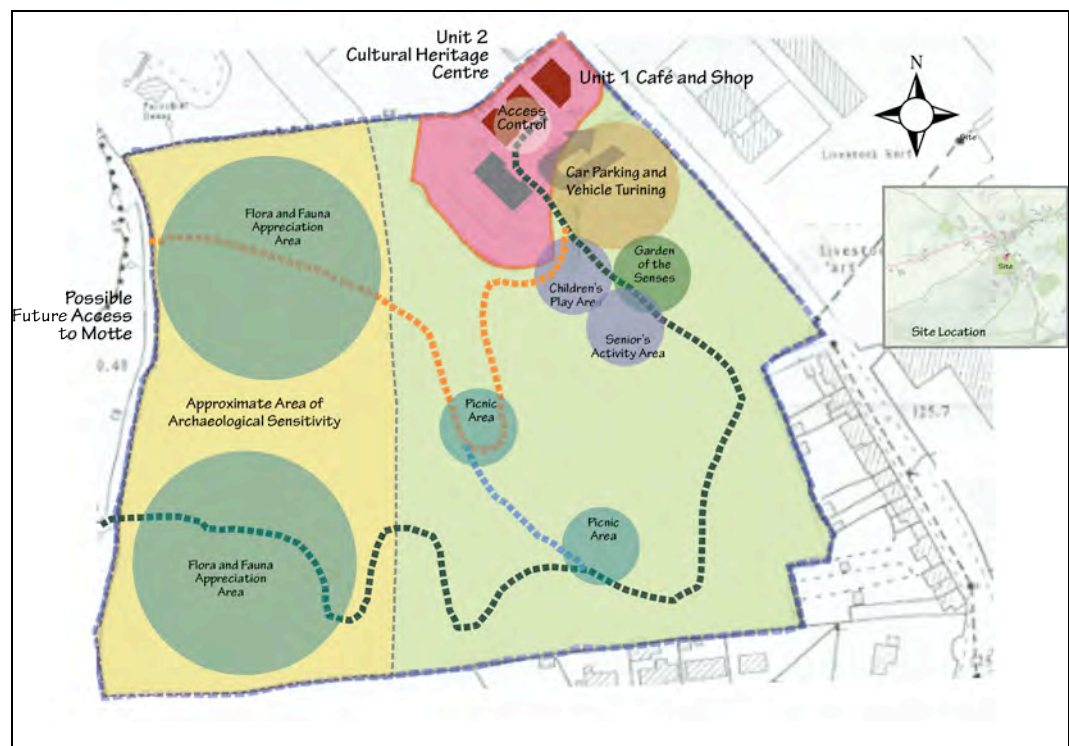
It is proposed that Phase 2 of the integrated development will see the creation of Granard Motte Park. It is noted that the aspiration of GMCE is to provide a

walkway leading from the Cultural Heritage Centre to the Parkland and beyond. The development of the facility will compliment the prospective purchase of the Motte by Longford County Council.

Walkways and Access Paths

It is proposed that a series of walkways and access paths will be created that will be designed to enhance the experience of Granard Motte Park for wheelchair users, and the semi-ambulatory, is based upon the understanding that the ability to move confidently through the landscape is the key to enjoyment. Regardless of vision, dexterity, balance, endurance or mobility, it must be easy to navigate around the development, whilst keeping the design unobtrusive so that it blends with the existing landscape.

Figure 9 – Granard Park Outline Proposal



Wood, stone or slate will be used for the construction of external interpretive panels.

Granard Motte Park will provide the unique opportunity to recreate an early Anglo-Norman settlement. This will be designed both as a '*fun*' attraction, but will reinforce the educational product being offered in the Cultural Heritage Centre.

The creation of this facsimile will also be used as a basis for the development of local events and activities commemorating key dates from the period.

Activity Areas

Walking is still by far the most popular activity, with 70% of those who are active going out for a good walk. An Older Person's Activity Area will be provided within the proposed development to encourage physical activity amongst the older population of the area. Additionally, a Young Person's Activity Area will be provided, calling on the theme of the Motte and Bailey structure.

Both of these activity spaces will provide added interest for the visitor, as well as providing a useful social function.

Hedge Maze

Hedge mazes are the oldest and, probably, still the most common sort of maze. They were often built in the gardens of large country houses to provide fun and entertainment for visitors and guests, and are particularly enjoyed by children.

Figure 10 - Greenan Farm Celtic Maze, Co. Wicklow



The world's largest permanent hedge maze is the Peace Maze at Castlewellan Forest Park, Co. Down, Northern Ireland, which has a total area of 11,215 m² (2.771 acres), a total path length of 3.515 km (2.184 miles). It was opened in September 2001.

It is proposed that a hedge maze be created on part of the site. The hedge maze should be part constructed from Hawthorn and Whitethorn.

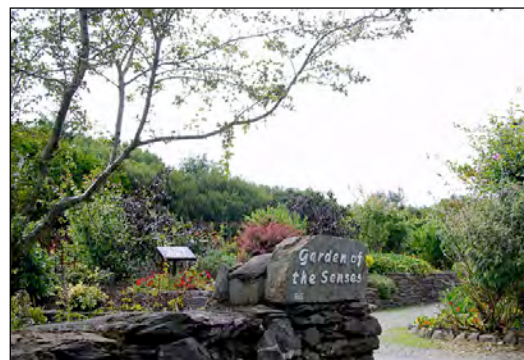
The design of the hedge maze could involve a local schools competition. The maintenance of the maze will be expensive, and will benefit from the availability of Rural Social Scheme, Tús, and Community Employment assistance.

Garden of the Senses

It is proposed that a *Garden of the Senses* be created on the site with features focusing on each of the five senses; sight, touch, taste, sound and scent.

Figure 11 – Garden of the Senses, Sneem

As with the hedge maze, the proposed Garden of the Senses will demand significant maintenance, but will create the necessary contemplative ambiance conducive to attracting people who wish to understand the natural amenity of the area, and the changes that each season brings.



Children's Activities

The installation of an activities course at the site will create a focal point that will serve as an additional revenue generating facility.

The location affords the opportunity to theme this course on the Motte and Bailey legacy, and the uniqueness of the location may prove to be a particular attraction for children and young people.

Best use will be made of the natural gradient on the site to incorporate the activity elements.

4.2.3 Further On- and Off-Site Development

Clear opportunity exists to create reciprocal offsite links with the range of local activities and attractions. In particular, cycling, walking and equestrian activities appear to offer very specific developmental opportunity. Within this envelope there is a clear opportunity to provide a Slí na Sláinte³ walkway to encourage people of all ages and abilities to walk for leisure and good health around the historic sites in the town.

Walks can easily be created from an extensive range of themes related to the site, the town, and its environs. These include: -

- ❑ Archaeological;
- ❑ Architectural;
- ❑ Environmental;
- ❑ Historical;
- ❑ Social; *and*
- ❑ Spiritual

Granard has a considerable package of sites of interest, all reflecting it as an ancient place of settlement and importance. These readily provide the potential for a series of signed walks from the Cultural Heritage Centre, and include: -

- ❑ **Motte of Granard:** The Motte and Bailey at Granard is one of the finest examples of its kind in the country, dating to c. 1200 AD. It is an accessible, well-preserved and physically impressive National Monument, which is under State guardianship but has private owners. From the top of the mound, there is a view over the vast, flat midlands; the deserted village at Granardkille to the south; the modern, and the 17th century town to the north.
- ❑ **Granard to Granardkille:** The fields between the Motte and Granardkille graveyard have a high density of ring forts, earthworks, and henges, and there is a St Patrick's well.
- ❑ **Granardkille:** Evidence exists for up to 25 possible house/hut sites, and grassed over streets can be identified from aerial photographs and 2002 excavations. This is potentially the site of the medieval borough/village established by the Anglo-Normans in the 13th century.
- ❑ **Greville Arms Hotel:** Kitty's Kiernan, who was the fiancée of Michael Collins, was born in Granard in 1892. The Kiernan family owned the Greville Arms Hotel, amongst other businesses in the town. On 31st October 1920 a police officer was shot dead by two masked men in the bar of the hotel. As a reprisal, a convoy of Crown forces entered the town four days later and systematically destroyed the main business premises of the town.
- ❑ **Lough Kinale, Lough Derragh, and Black Pigs Dyke:** In close proximity to Granard are the lake settlements of Lough Kinale, Lough Derragh (Stone Age in date); stone circles and the Iron Age Black Pigs Dyke in Cloughernal.

³ *Slí na Sláinte (Path to Health) is a scheme developed by the Irish Heart Foundation to encourage people of all ages and abilities to walk for leisure and good health.*

Besides the village of Abbeylara, 5km away, and near Lough Kinale are the remains of a 13th Century Cistercian Abbey. The Lough Kinale Book Shrine was found on the bed of Lough Kinale in 1986.

- ❑ **Derrycassan Wood:** 6km distant, the Wood provides a woodland walk with some rare trees, overlooking Lake Gowna. Derrycassan Wood has grown up around the remains of Derrycassan House and its grounds⁴, the seat of the Dopping-Hepenstal family⁵.
- ❑ **Ardaquillion Bog:** The bog is a Special Area of Conservation, and is located 5km north-east of Edgeworthstown. It is a raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover bog, and is a remnant of a much larger bog that is now cutover and afforested.
- ❑ **St. Mary's Church:** The church is one of the finest of its type and date in Co. Longford and is an important element of the architectural heritage of the county. The Spire is a fine architectural element and is located on the axis of the main street.
- ❑ **St. Patrick's Church:** The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage records that St Patrick's Church of Ireland church was built or rebuilt c. 1760, with an extension dating to c. 1930.
- ❑ **Buildings of Architectural Merit:** In addition to the two churches noted above, the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage identifies a further 33 buildings or structures of note in Granard town.

Links

Where possible, reciprocal links will be formed with existing local attractions of regional significance, including (but not limited to) the following: -

- ❑ Abbeyderg Monastery
- ❑ Abbeylara Village
- ❑ Abbeyshrule Village
- ❑ Ardagh Village
- ❑ Aughnacliffe Dolmen
- ❑ Ballinamuck Heritage Centre
- ❑ Clondra Village
- ❑ Corlea Trackway Visitor Centre
- ❑ Newtowncashel and Lake Islands
- ❑ Seán MacEoin's Forge
- ❑ The Royal Canal Way

⁴ *The family had a particularly complex history during the 19th century, including a disappointed father who disinherited his son, internecine lawsuits, dependent spinster sisters who wouldn't let their brothers sell property, and so on. In 1929 the Dopping Hepenstals sold the House to a timber merchant.*

⁵ *The National Library of Ireland Collection List No. 61 contains the Dopping-Hepenstal Papers.*

Events and Activities

GMCE is currently engaged in the promotion of local events and activities. In the future it is noted that additional and niche events and activities could be organised in the town and its environs. Once the acquisition of the site and buildings is complete it is recommended that a number of new events and activities that reference the Cultural Heritage Centre should be devised and implemented. These should build upon the lives and times of a number of notable natives of Granard, including: -

- ❑ Brendan O' Reilly (Broadcaster, journalist, actor, athlete, singer and songwriter);
- ❑ Eddie Macken (Equestrian show jumper);
- ❑ Kitty Kiernan (Fiancé of Michael Collins);
- ❑ Larry Cunningham (Country music singer); *and*
- ❑ The Sheridan Clan (The Sheridan name originated in Granard).

The development of the Cultural Heritage Centre will open the possibility of the organisation of a number of seasonal activities, including events for young people and families to celebrate Halloween, Christmas and Easter.

4.3 Enterprise Potential Summary

The structures and site at Rathcronan present a clear and unique prospect for conversion into an integrated range of facilities that will support the development of new social enterprises for Granard and its environs.

The **Café and Shop** represents an opportunity for a local business to tender for the development and operation of the facility. Alternatively, the local community is actively pursuing the potential to create a social enterprise to manage the facilities.

The **Educational Market** represents a considerable opportunity for the proposed Centre. There are a total of over 126,000 young people within the catchment area who are attending the primary and post-primary education cycles.

The **Activity Market**, as defined by Fáilte Ireland, represents an increasingly important market sector in respect of both domestic and international visitors.

Table 1 – Potential Offerings

Phase	Element	Provision	Detail	Description
1	Unit 1	Café Space	Approx. 87.5m ²	Turnkey condition - space to be leased to provide approx. 56 covers and food preparation area.
1	Unit 1	Retail Space	Approx. 87.5m ²	Turnkey condition - retail space and stock room.
1	Unit 2	Cultural Heritage Centre	Approx. 287m ²	Incorporating: exhibition space, education space, ticket sales and entry space, storage, meeting room and toilet accommodation.
2	Parkland	Granard Motte Park	Approx. 5ha	Initially leased as agricultural land. Developed to provide Motte and Bailey (Norman settlement) reconstruction, walkways, activity areas (old and young), hedge maze, garden of the senses, adventure course.
1 and 2	On-and Offsite Developments	Linkages		Links with other regional and local visitor attractions.
1 and 2	On-and Offsite Developments	Events and activities		Events celebrating local individuals.

4.4 Management

GMCE will employ a Manager to oversee and drive the project at the commencement of Phase 1. This person will report to the Board of Directors of the limited company and would have overall responsibility for driving the project to completion.

An experienced person is required to fill this role and it is advisable that a strong recruitment strategy is put in place to find the right candidate and to put in place a person who has the same vision, passion and drive as the promoters. It is anticipated that the post might initially be offered under an internship arrangement.

4.4.1 Marketing Officer

The appointment of a marketing officer from within the Board is of particular importance to the sustainability of the centre.

Promotion, media, awareness raising, marketing campaigns, targeting schools and other sectors will be key in attracting people to the centre. Word of mouth, media presence, use of social media etc will all be vital tools in the promotion of the development.

Consideration will be given to sourcing this expertise from the Granard Family Resource Centre.

4.4.2 Employment Provision

The development of the facility will see the immediate creation of the initial Manager post, which will take the project from the Feasibility Study stage right through to completion.

Other employment is envisaged in the: -

- ☐ Building works
- ☐ Employment provision for disabled persons
- ☐ Receptionists
- ☐ Café/Shop Employment
- ☐ Education Officer
- ☐ Cleaning staff
- ☐ Maintenance staff
- ☐ FÁS Community Employment Schemes/JobBridge schemes

4.4.3 Indirect Employment

The scope of the Cultural Heritage Centre to the Parkland provides considerable opportunity for the creation and support of indirect and secondary employment for the local economy. This will include the provision of enhanced local services in the hospitality, entertainment and transport sectors, as well new provision afforded by the creation of a new community controlled retail facility for artisan craft and food product.

Additional indirect employment is to be anticipated emerging from the development of links with outlying attractions, and the promotion of these as visitor destination in their own right.

5 Social Dividend

It is a core vision of GMCE that the proposed development addresses the need for enhanced employment opportunities for the people of the town and its environs. In this context, the proposed development will be required to engage in commercial activities to pursue these objectives, and thereby produce social and community gain.

All of the profits or surpluses generated by the enterprise will be reinvested to further the social objective, and GMCE is committed to implementing social justice and social inclusion.

The GMCE community business will be a social enterprise that has a strong geographical definition and focus on local markets and local services. It is being established, owned and controlled by the local community and aims to create ultimately self-supporting jobs for local people and be a focus for local development.

The realisation of the local vision reflects that of the enabling legislation for the National Asset Management Agency, which includes a commitment for a social dividend.

5.1 Employment Capacity

The social dividend will be evidenced through a number of measures, including the capacity of the facility to create new forms of local social enterprise. The driver of this will be the café and visitor shop, and through the management and operation of the Cultural Heritage Centre.

The employment generated will bring the opportunity to provide new and enhanced skilling and training products, with both the delivery of training and the nature of the jobs created targeted at those most distant from the local labour market, including lone parents, and those who are long-term unemployed.

The need for local services to support the new visitor offerings of the Cultural Heritage Centre and Park will generate significant local enterprise opportunity. This will include the provision of increased visitor accommodation at both hostel and hotel level, and the development of new products, such as cycle hire and equestrian activity. Additionally, the creation of new festivals and events will require that the local entertainment and activities sectors develop new and enhanced product offerings.

5.2 Enhanced Voluntary Engagement

Being a community owned and operated facility, Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Parkland will provide the opportunity for the local community to contribute through targeted voluntary and philanthropic effort.

GMCE is currently the beneficiary of very considerable levels of support from the business community of the town and its environs. As the facility develops there will be opportunity for the existing and new corporate sector members to support individual elements and activities. In the first instance it is intended that commercial sponsors will be invited to contribute through a programme of annual advertising in the centre.

5.3 Community Cohesion

The Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park will see the local community become the owners and operators of a facility that requires the production of both a social benefit and a financial return.

One tangible benefit that bridges the social and economic dimensions for the community will be reflected in the development of new and innovative local enterprise that has the capacity to create appropriate employment, particularly for those distanced from the mainstream jobs market. However, the facility will go further through its capacity to work in conjunction with local community-based organisations, such as Granard Area Action Group and Lus na Gréine Family Resource Centre to provide opportunities for enhanced supports, training and shared social activity. In turn, these factors will all impact positively on sense of inclusion within the community, enabling those who may be less advantaged to participate positively in local society.

Based on numerous successful examples elsewhere in Ireland, and particularly the previous work of the Combat Poverty Agency, GMCE foresee that the Cultural Heritage Centre and Park will help to empower the local community by providing them with the skills and infrastructure they need to effect change in the town and its environs. The facilitation tools that will be used to engage with the local community through the Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park will include the following: -

- ❑ Asset-based community development;
- ❑ Community capacity building;
- ❑ Community economic development; *and*
- ❑ Social capital formation.

6 Markets and Marketing

This section identifies the markets for the various components of the Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park, and also assesses their relative size and growth potential. This section also shows how the business will be marketed and the various tools that will be used in the marketing effort.

The Fáilte Ireland 'Tourism Barometer' (September 2012) concludes that visitor attractions enjoyed a fairly positive year. Nearly half (46%) of visitor attractions increased their visitor numbers compared to the previous year, and about a fifth (19%) had achieved the same level. The Barometer identifies 'Irish people holidaying in Ireland' as a key reason for success in the sector compared to most other sectors, with over half (53%) of attractions stating this as a positive factor.

6.1 Market Assessment

Fáilte Ireland notes that the optimal catchment area for a visitor attraction can be defined by travel distance, and consequently travel time. It has been shown that in certain circumstances domestic visitors may travel up to 90km (90 minutes) to visit high-profile visitor attractions, whilst it is more reasonable to project travel distances on 60km (1 hour travel time), which includes the Dublin catchment.

Figure 12 – Visitor Catchment Area



	30km Catchment	60km Catchment	90km Catchment
Total Population	113,879	438,812	1,346,668
Age Band 0 - 14	25,197	96,844	300,336
Age Band 15 - 24	15,603	60,855	195,344
Age Band 25 - 44	33,797	134,525	441,938
Age Band 45 - 64	25,450	96,781	281,764
65 Plus	13,830	49,807	127,285
Age Band 15 - 64	74,850	292,161	919,046

In an all-Island context, Co. Longford is not a recognised tourism honeypot. This view is evidenced by the Longford County Development Board⁶ 'Way Forward' Action Plan, which stated that:

'Longford as an area has little tourism identity within the East Coast and Midlands Tourism Area in which it is located.... Tourism infrastructure in the county is still largely underdeveloped and lacks, in particular, a flagship attraction'.

6.1.1 Local Visitor Performance

The tables below outline the numbers of visitors and associated revenue figures generated in 2010 and 2011, respectively. Whilst other counties are not shown in these tables, Co. Longford has the lowest number of visitors and therefore, revenue stream recorded per county in Ireland.

Table 2 - Co. Longford Overseas Visitors

Co. Longford	Total	Britain	Mainland Europe	North America	Other Areas
2010 No. Visitors	27,000	15,000	8,000	3,000	1,000
2010 Revenue Generated	€9m	€6m	€2m	€1m	>€1m
2011 No. of Visitors	25,000	11,000	7,000	5,000	1,000
2011 Revenue Generated	€7m	€4m	€2m	€1m	>€1m

(Source: Fáilte Ireland)

6.1.2 Local Visitor Attraction Performance

Fáilte Ireland provides visitor attraction performance data⁷ for the period 2007 to 2011. The following table provides the East and Midlands Regional extract.

Table 3 – Regional Visitor Attraction Performance

Name of Attraction	County	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Irish National Stud & Japanese Gardens	Kildare	145,485	135,522	116,497	111,943	114,162
Lullymore Heritage and Discovery Park	Kildare	35,000	44,000	35,000	37,000	35,000
Kildare Town Heritage Centre	Kildare	9,032	9,400	9,669	8,297	12,133
Castletown House	Kildare	15,000	15,000	36,153	36,874	11,432
Maynooth Castle	Kildare	8,793	7,904	7,081	8,799	9,444
Bog of Allen Nature Centre	Kildare	5,000	4,400	4,500	4,500	4,500
The Steam Museum, Straffan	Kildare		5,000	4,000	3,000	3,500
Larchill Arcadian Gardens	Kildare	8,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	3,000

/continued

⁶ LCDB: Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development for County Longford 2002-2011.

⁷ See Appendix for full listing.

Business Plan: **Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park**

/continued

Name of Attraction	County	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Ballitore Library & Quaker Museum	Kildare				1,600	1,800
Leixlip Castle	Kildare	600	1,000	620	600	680
Harristown House	Kildare	38	72	81	24	66
Emo Court House & Gardens	Laois	9,494	7,659	6,092	5,589	5,776
Donaghmore Workhouse Museum	Laois	1,277	1,455	1,345	1,260	1,634
Corlea Trackway Visitor Centre	Longford	6,139	5,307	5,600	5,691	4,937
Mellifont Abbey	Louth	20,841	19,038	12,581	14,315	14,224
Beaulieu House & Gardens	Louth	1,376	1,500	1,800	1,600	1,700
Carlingford Heritage Centre	Louth	460	560	560	450	1,000
Brú Na Bóinne Visitor Centre	Meath	241,265	236,312	222,430	209,270	228,550
Newgrange	Meath	135,361	133,524	130,083	122,785	132,760
Trim Castle	Meath	64,508	62,314	61,240	59,416	59,127
Knowth	Meath	56,465	58,351	51,941	49,414	51,962
Battle of the Boyne	Meath		46,262	41,799	40,334	38,846
Red Mountain Open Farm	Meath			6,000	8,000	17,000
Hill of Tara	Meath	15,284	13,386	11,491	12,878	11,628
Loughcrew Gardens	Meath	8,238	8,022	7,857	7,340	7,491
Sonairte: The National Ecology Centre	Meath	7,000	8,000	9,500	7,000	5,000
Dunsany Castle	Meath	89	76	116	61	52
Clonmacnoise	Offaly	169,967	161,843	144,565	133,015	134,034
Tullamore Dew Visitor Centre	Offaly	15,282	15,786	15,072	17,886	16,060
Charleville Castle	Offaly	8,000	9,000	12,000	12,000	14,000
Ballindoolin House and Gardens	Offaly	2,500	2,400	2,000	2,200	2,000
Belvedere House Gardens and Park	Westmeath	157,048	164,211	158,497	158,107	148,581
Kilbeggan Distillery Experience	Westmeath	39,075	35,454	39,502	32,884	37,147
Tullynally Castle & Gardens	Westmeath	2,800	3,052	3,021	3,388	2,996
Moate Museum	Westmeath	200	300	200	200	300
Powerscourt House & Gardens	Wicklow	245,532	232,257	217,659	201,544	207,446
National Sealife Centre	Wicklow	83,000	90,000	93,000	97,000	100,000
Glendalough Visitor Centre	Wicklow	102,953	96,585	80,336	70,081	80,726
Avondale House & Forest Park	Wicklow	75,000	62,000	60,000	54,000	52,500
Mount Usher Gardens	Wicklow	24,000	27,000	30,000	31,000	31,000
Russborough	Wicklow	40,000	40,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
Altidore Castle	Wicklow	70	66	89	120	100

The table above serves to illustrate the regional attractions with which the proposed development at Granard Motte will have to compete.

In 2011, the attractions in the Fáilte Ireland East and Midlands Region accounted for some 1,634,294 visitors. Other comparable attractions of note within the broader area include the Arigna Mining Experience, with 19,760 visitors in 2011.

6.1.3 Annual Average Daily Traffic

An assessment of the volume and nature of vehicular traffic passing the site of the proposed facility by reference to the National Roads Authority (NRA) National Roads And Traffic Flow Reports.

On 13th August 2012, Longford County Council estimated that the N55 was carrying approximately 5,500 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) with 16% HCV. Meanwhile the R198 was carrying approximately 3,000 AADT with 20% HCV⁸.

6.1.4 Sectoral Assessment

Cultural tourism is described as embracing *‘the full range of experiences on offer to visitors that serve to distinguish one destination from another – experiences that are defined by heritage and landscape, lifestyle and the arts, traditions and customs of that destination, and not least by interaction with its people’*.

Tourism Ireland has identified *Sightseers and Culture Seekers* as an opportunity for tourism growth. Of the 2.9 million overseas visitors to Ireland in 2009, 55% were sightseers and Culture Seekers who are typically interested in sightseeing, learning about, visiting, and experiencing the country and its culture - both living and historic.

Tourism Ireland recommends that messages targeting sightseers and culture seekers should focus on themes which are likely to attract holidaymakers such as: rural culture, heritage, and scenery. All of these themes are of relevance to Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park.

Culture and heritage are key drivers for Irish tourism and Fáilte Ireland research shows that cultural visitors spend almost twice as much as city-break visitors. Furthermore, overseas visitors experience high levels of satisfaction with what Ireland has to offer. Almost four out of every five overseas visitor cites *‘interesting history/culture’* as a motivation for choosing Ireland for a holiday, making it a viable area for the growth in visitor numbers and revenue.

Mainland Europe is a key market for this product, accounting for 45% of those visiting cultural/historical attractions and Britain is the most important market for engaging in genealogy tourism.

⁸ The relatively high HCV estimate is accounted for by the number of commercial premises in the vicinity.

6.2 Market Strategy

For the foreseeable future GMCE will continue to promote a 500 Club Draw as a basic and proven mechanism for enabling the local community to contribute to the purchase of the land and buildings.

Following the purchase of the land and buildings, and particularly following the conversion on units 1 and 2, sectoral experience shows that the most effective way to market visitor attraction is to combine sales activities within the product marketing tactics. In this way sales activities will not only decrease the out-of-pocket marketing expense, but should also add the value of interacting with prospective visitors. In turn, this interaction will provide invaluable customer research information.

A simple example of this approach would be for GMCE to organise and promote a mini-triathlon. Such a venture will create the opportunity to sell the Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park, whilst providing a directed marketing initiative to encourage new visitors.

Based upon the initial information gathered from the consultation process, there are two distinct challenges associated with developing revenue streams from the Cultural Heritage Centre and Park, starting from a green-field situation.

- Challenge 1 – Attracting visitors to the Cultural Heritage Centre and Park; *and*
- Challenge 2 – Providing diverse opportunities for the visitor to spend time and money whilst visiting Granard town and the Cultural Heritage Centre and Park.

To address these two challenges GMCE will encourage the organic growth of its core business in four different ways over the foreseeable future: -

1. Acquiring customers;
2. Persuading each customer to buy products or services;
3. Persuading each customer to buy more expensive products or services; *and*
4. Persuading each customer to buy more profitable products or services

All four of these will generate revenue and, if properly structured, the resulting profit will increase over time.

The first of these is of great importance to the Cultural Heritage Centre and Park since, by generating new customers, the opportunity to create greater revenues increases. It is also noted that the particular challenge is to convert the number of visitors to the facility into customers who are buying products and services. To achieve this, the facility must continue to develop products and services that the customer may wish to spend money on.

6.2.1 Visitor Baseline

Granard sits within a regional catchment area that has a considerable population level, however, there is no current baseline against which to measure the visitor attraction potential of Granard town as a visitor destination. Co. Longford attracted 25,000 overseas visitors in 2011, and Corlea Trackway Visitor Centre attracted 5,000 seasonal visitors in the same year. The national growth rate for

the tourism industry in Ireland is estimated at some 2-3% per annum for the foreseeable future.

Granard is not currently on an existing through route for major visitor coach traffic, although opportunity might exist to engage with providers travelling between the west and north of Ireland. Ulsterbus operate package tours from Belfast to Achill Island, Connemara and Galway City, and to the Burren and Cliffs of Moher.

Visitor Numbers - Estimation

Given that there is no reliable local comparator from which to project the likely number of visitors to be anticipated at the Cultural Heritage Centre and Park, a model has been developed from assessment work undertaken in the UK by the Forestry Commission⁹.

Table 4 – Visitor Number Definitions

Factor	Definition	Observation
Visitor Numbers	Numbers of people who visit by month, year etc.	It is recommended that a monitoring system be established for routinely counting the number of visitors to the facility. This will enable a seasonal profile to be developed.
Visit Numbers	Frequency of people's visits – every day, every week, every month etc.	Given the nature of the facility, local visitors might be anticipated to make return trips at intervals – regular visitors might be anticipated at the café, or using the Park to walk dogs etc.
Total Visit Numbers	A combination of the number of visitors and the frequency of their visits provides information on the total number of visits within a specified time frame e.g. year/month.	The spending patterns of visitors will be largely dependent upon their motivation for visiting the facility.

The CSO Household Travel Survey helps to compare domestic tourism with inbound tourism (i.e. foreign tourists coming to Ireland).

Table 5 – Overseas vs. Domestic Visitors

	Inbound Visitors	Domestic Visitors
Trips	38,285,000	39,068,000
Nights	278,865,000	138,544,000
Spend	€23,955,000	€5,609,000

The table above is extracted from the CSO Report 'Domestic Tourism in Ireland 2000-2005.

From the above it can be seen that the number of domestic visitors over the period was some 2% higher than the number of inbound visitors.

Fáilte Ireland, through the CSO, focus on recording the number of overseas visitors per county per annum. In 2011 there were some 25,000 overseas visitors attributed to Co. Longford¹⁰. From the above it can be estimated that the total number of overseas and domestic visitors in Co. Longford in 2011 was approximately 50,500.

⁹ *Estimating visitor and visit numbers to woodlands, Liz O'Brien & Jake Morris, Forestry Commission Economic and Statistics Group 2010.*

¹⁰ *See section 6.1.1.*

The target number of visitors to the Cultural Heritage Centre and Park for the first year of operation will be set at 5,000. This represents approximately 10% of the total number of visitors to Co. Longford, and represents approximately 50% of the visitor numbers achieved Corlea Trackway Visitor Centre¹¹, given that is only open on a seasonal basis.

Table 6 – Visitor Number Growth

Note	Year	Visitor Numbers	Annual Growth Rate	Average Visitor Charge	Projected Revenue
1	2014	0			€0
2	2015	5,000	n/a	€5.00	€25,000
3	2016	5,500	10	€5.00	€27,500
4	2017	7,500	36	€7.00	€52,500
5	2018	8,000	7	€7.00	€56,000
6	2019	8,400	5	€7.00	€58,800

Notes to above (all relate to Development Scenario 1):

Note	Description
1	2014: Phase 1 conversion works being undertake – no visitors.
2	2015: Phase 1 operational - Cultural Heritage Centre, Café and Retail business open, with limited level of other on-site activities. Target visitor number 5,000.
3	2016: Phase 1 operational with second year of marketing effort to establish the Cultural Heritage Centre, Café and Retail business resulting in estimated 10% increase in visitor numbers. This growth will be matched by a growth in the significance of the educational offerings. Phase 2 works being undertaken. Significant tourist drive anticipated from Fáilte Ireland in 2016 to commemorate the role of Easter 1916 in the foundation of the State, creating increased visitor numbers in the country – significant opportunity for Granard to develop specific visitor offerings to flank this theme.
4	2017: Phase 1 operational with second year of marketing effort to consolidate the business. Phase 2 now operational to complete the integrated Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park, effectively adding significantly to the visitor attraction, resulting in a targeted 36% increase in visitor numbers over the previous year.
5	2018: Consolidation of Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park offerings, both on-site and off-site. With the product becoming more established within the local, regional and national visitor attraction markets, it is anticipated that a target growth rate in visitor numbers of 7% will be achieved. The drive throughout the establishment period will be to maximise the number of overseas visitors, given that their level of spend is some six times higher than domestic visitors ¹² , and they are likely to overnight in the locality.
6	2019: From 2018 onwards it is anticipated that the Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park offerings will begin to mature in the market place, resulting in a relative reduction in the year-on-year increase in visitor numbers. A rate of visitor number growth of some 5% per annum is targeted, although it is appreciated that this figure will be controlled by the overall performance of the tourism industry, and by the domestic economy.

6.2.3 Products and Services

Visitor Attractions

Based on the attributes of the site, and with a focus on quality family and visitor experience, the business plan envisages that the following specific offerings will be developed over the coming years. To capitalise on the integrated nature of the Cultural Heritage Centre and Park, it is proposed that, where possible, discounted packages of offerings will be developed.

¹¹ Corlea Trackway Visitor Centre is open for a 26-week season per annum.

¹² CSO Report 'Domestic Tourism in Ireland 2000-2005.

Table 7 – Visitor Attraction Offerings

Phase	Discounted Offerings	Target Market
1	Cultural Heritage Centre Experience and Picnic	Families and younger visitors
1	Cultural Heritage Centre Experience and Granard Café meal	All visitors
1	Bike Hire	Active visitors
1	Bike Hire and Granard Café meal	Active visitors
1	Hedge Maze	All visitors
1	Hedge Maze and Granard Café meal	All visitors
1	Young Persons Activity Area	Younger active visitors
1	Older Persons Activity Area	Older Active visitors
1	Cultural Heritage Centre Experience, and Anglo/Norman settlement	All visitors
1	Cultural Heritage Centre Experience, Anglo/Norman settlement and Granard Café meal	All visitors
1	Town/Area Walk – historical/cultural theme(s) and Granard Café meal	All visitors
1	Town/Area Walk – natural environment theme(s) and Granard Café meal	All visitors
1	Granard Motte and Bailey Walk – historical talk and Granard Café meal (special events)	All visitors
1	Seasonal offerings and Granard Café meal	All visitors
1	Seasonal offerings and conducted, themed walk	All visitors
2	Adventure Course	Active visitors and Clubs
2	Adventure Course and Granard Café meal	Active visitors and Clubs
2	Adventure Course, Granard Café meal and local accommodation	Active visitors and Clubs

In addition to the above, Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park will develop and host a number of themed events and activities, including seminars and festivals. These may be held off-site. Where appropriate, GMCE will generate revenue from the organisation of such events and activities.

Café and Retail Space

The café, of approximately 88m² with an approximate maximum of 56 covers will be leased to a competent local provider. It is anticipated that the fit-out and operation of the café space will be undertaken by the successful lessee.

Assuming a commercial lease of €1.50 per m² per week, and an operational season of 52 weeks, then the following revenue can be anticipated.

Table 8 – Café Target Revenue

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Weeks in season	52	52	52	52
88m ² floorspace @ €0.85 per m ² per week	€75	€75	€75	€75
Café Revenue per annum	€3,900	€3,900	€3,900	€3,900

Retail Provision

Assuming a commercial lease of €0.85 per m² per week, and an operational season of 52 weeks, then the following revenue can be anticipated.

Table 9 – Retail Space Target Revenue

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Weeks in season	52	52	52	52
88m ² floorspace @ €0.85 per m ² per week	€75	€75	€75	€75
Retail Revenue per annum	€3,900	€3,900	€3,900	€3,900

Educational Product

Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park has the potential to develop a schools product based on the history of Granard, its locality, and the Motte and Bailey themes. Still further opportunity exists if a theme of environmental awareness is also developed for the education market.

For Primary Schools, a day-long offering would be suitable for all ages at Primary School level, and would be designed to incorporate activities that explore the local flora and fauna. All activities would be curriculum-linked, and Granard Heritage Park would seek accreditation under the Discover Primary Science Programme¹³.

For Secondary Schools, the Cultural Heritage Centre and Park might be designed as an educational experience, and would covers topics related to the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate history students. Leaving Certificate (Applied) students of horticulture could also be accommodated within the Park.

The facility will also provide an opportunity to create education packages for the foreign student market, and for the specialist archaeology/historical sectors.

The proposed education products each offer the potential to create a revenue stream to Granard Heritage Park. The following estimates are based on similar offerings including Castlecomer Discovery Park and CloghJordan House.

Course Type 1 - Primary School Annual Trip - 1 day course (3 hour, morning session) charged at €15 per student for a course of 50 students.

Table 10 – Course Type 1 Revenue

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Weeks in season	6	6	6	6
Fee per student	€15.00	€16.00	€17.00	€18.00
No. of students	50	50	50	50
Classes per week	3	4	4	4
Course Type 1 Revenue	€13,500	€19,200	€20,400	€21,600

¹³ Discover Primary Science is a flagship project run by the Discover Science and Engineering awareness programme. Discover Science and Engineering is managed by Forfás on behalf of the Office of Science and Technology at the Department of Jobs, Enterprise, and Innovation. The programme aims to develop creativity in children, show them how important science is to everyday lives, and how much fun it can be.

Course Type 2 - Specialist Event - 1 day course (with overnight) charged at €160 per participant for a course of 10 participants.

Table 11 – Course Type 2 Revenue

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Weeks in season	16	16	16	16
Fee per participant	€160.00	€168.00	€176.40	€185.22
No. of participants	10	10	10	10
Classes per week	0.25	0.5	0.75	1
Course Type 2 Revenue	€6,400	€13,440	€21,168	€29,635

Course Type 3 - Foreign Students Visiting Ireland - 1 day course (summer months only) charged at €30 per participant for a course of 20 students.

Table 12 – Course Type 3 Revenue

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Weeks in season	6	4	4	4
Fee per student	€30.00	€31.50	€33.08	€34.73
No. of students	20	20	20	20
Classes per week	1	1.5	2	3
Course Type 3 Revenue	€3,600	€3,780	€5,292	€8,335

Education Offering Target Revenue

Table 13 - Education Offering Target Revenue

Course	Description	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
1	Primary Annual School Trip	€19,800	€27,720	€29,106	€30,561
2	Specialist	€6,400	€13,440	€21,168	€29,635
3	Foreign Students	€3,600	€3,780	€5,292	€8,335
	Total	€29,800	€44,940	€55,566	€68,531

Educational Offerings: Activity Costs

The following tables indicate the projected activity costs, in respect of promotion, subsistence and activity visits associated with each of the proposed education product offerings.

Course Type 1 - Primary School Annual Trip - 1 day course (3 hour, morning session) with subsistence charged at €4 per student, and an activity visit charged at €6 for a course of 50 students.

Table 14 – Course Type 1 Activity Costs

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Weeks in season	6	6	6	6
Cost per student	€4	€4.2	€4.4	€4.6
No. of students	50	50	50	50
Classes per week	3	3	3	3
Sub Total	€3,600	€3,780	€3,969	€4,167
Cost of Activity Visit	€5,400	€5,670	€5,940	€6,210
Total Cost	€9,000	€9,450	€9,909	€10,377

Course Type 2 - Specialist Weekend Event – 1-day course (with overnight) with subsistence charged at 20% of revenue per participant for a course of 10 students.

Table 15 – Course Type 2 Activity Costs

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Weeks in season	16	16	16	16
Cost per participant	€32	€33.6	€35.3	€37.0
No. of participants	10	10	10	10
Classes per week	1	1	1	1
Sub Total	€5,120	€5,376	€5,645	€5,927
Cost of Activity Visit	€0	€0	€0	€0
Total Cost	€5,120	€5,376	€5,645	€5,927

Course Type 3 - Foreign Students Visiting Ireland - 1 day course (summer months only) with subsistence charged at €4, and an activity visit charged at €6 per participant for a course of 20 students.

Table 16 – Course Type 3 Activity Costs

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Weeks in season	4	4	4	4
Cost per student	€4	€4.2	€4.4	€4.6
No. of students	20	20	20	20
Classes per week	1	1.5	2	3
Sub Total	€320	€504	€706	€1,111
Cost of Activity Visit	€480	€516	€564	€636
Total Cost	€800	€1,020	€1,270	€1,747

Education Offering Summary Activity Costs

Table 17 – Summary Activity Costs

Course	Course Type	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
1	Primary School Annual Trip	€9,000	€9,450	€9,909	€10,377
2	Specialist Weekend Event	€5,120	€5,376	€5,645	€5,927
3	Foreign Students Visiting Ireland - 1 day course	€800	€1,020	€1,270	€1,747
	Total	€14,920	€15,846	€16,824	€18,051

An appropriately qualified educator would be identified to develop the packages, and be retained to monitor their effectiveness once implemented.

6.2.3 Positioning and Branding

Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park will be given an appropriate brand name that combines all of the sectoral elements. This will help the potential visitors to identify and differentiate the Granard offerings. Local schools are currently being invited to enter a competition to provide ideas for the naming of the facility.

- ☐ The proposed development will make virtual and actual associations with the history of Granard Motte and the Motte and Bailey fortification.
- ☐ The site is historic in a national, regional and local context, and has an interesting story to tell.
- ☐ The town of Granard is of national, regional and local interest.

- ❑ Granard and Co. Longford are underdeveloped as visitor destinations, affording opportunity in a market that is constantly seeking new product.

The Cultural Heritage Centre and Park brand will be synonymous with a good family day-out experience, regardless of the weather or season.

6.2.4 Differential Advantage

The differential advantage of Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park has been designed to be: -

- ❑ Unique in the local visitor attraction market;
- ❑ Strong enough to excite the target markets; *and*
- ❑ Incapable of being easily imitated or copied in a local/regional context.

6.3 Marketing Objectives

The marketing objectives are designed to lead to sales.

6.3.1 Product

It is to be anticipated that both the offerings and the visitor will have a life-cycle. A generally recognised challenge of interactive audio-visual presentations is that the material will require changing over time if the customer is to be expected to view it on more than one occasion.

The Marketing Strategy has been devised to support a diversity of offerings. This will suggest to the visitor that there is an opportunity to return to the park on a seasonal basis to experience more of the products. Through this mechanism it is anticipated that the life-cycle of the visitor can be extended beyond a single visit.

6.3.2 Price

A recent visitor survey undertaken by Exodea Consulting suggests that the majority of visitors to attractions of a similar nature to the Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park are currently willing to spend between €10 and €20 per visit.

The approach of offering discount packages identified above should be extended to provide '*seasonal*' tickets that allow free participation in all of the offerings under the control of GMCE, with discounts for the Granard Café and shop.

The national average current price across a number of similar visitor attractions in Ireland suggests the following target prices.

Table 18 – Visitor Target Prices

Visitor	Entry Price:
Adult	€10
Child	€ 6
Pensioner	€8
Student	€ 8
1 Adult and 2 Children	€ 20
1 Adult and 3 Children	€ 25
1 Adult and 4 Children	€ 30
1 Adult and 5 or 6 Children	€ 35
2 Adults and 1 Child	€ 22
2 Adults and 2 Children	€ 28
2 Adults and 3 Children	€ 33
2 Adults and 4 Children	€ 38
2 Adults and 5 or 6 Children	€ 44
Group Rate for 20+ Visitors	€ 7 each

Given that Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park is not an established attraction, it is intended that the initial undiscounted entry price will be based on the following: -

- ❑ Adult: €5.00
- ❑ Senior/Group: €3.00
- ❑ Child/Student: €3.00
- ❑ Family: €20.00

The target visitor numbers for the Cultural Heritage Centre and Park is established in Section 6.2.1 of this report to be 5,000. Based on the visitor profiles from a number of start-up attractions, an initial average charge of €5.00 per visitor will be anticipated in 2015. In 2016 it is projected that visitor numbers will increase by 10%, resulting in a revenue of €27,500. In 2017 it is projected that the Park will be opened and numbers should increase to 7,500 at €7, with numbers increasing to 8,000 in 2018, and to 8,400 in 2019, resulting in the revenue for 2019 being projected at €58,800.

6.3.3 Promotion

Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park will require an integrated suite of promotional materials: -

- ❑ Web and web-based media, including social media will be the preferred marketing tool. The rationale being that the reach of web-based material is worldwide, and the cost of updating, and customising the marketing message through electronic media is small by comparison.
- ❑ Representation at key national trade and consumer shows will be important. This accords with the objective of maintaining local visitor base and increasing the number of visitors from within the identified wider catchment area.

- ❑ Networking will remain of great significance in attracting visitors through promotion. It is noted that *word-of-mouth* was identified as the primary means of attracting visitors in the Visitor Survey.
- ❑ Local and regional shopping centre promotions will be of particular significance, since these can effectively use community and voluntary effort. They also represent a perfect opportunity to promote offers, packages and discounts from within the range of offerings at the Park.

It is intended that an advertising campaign be focused to maximise sales activities as a vehicle for product marketing. The promotion of activities relating to outdoor and competitive events held in the town and the Park will be pursued.

6.3.4 Place

The web represents a considerable opportunity to advertise the Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park. This might include a live camera feed from the Motte and streamed to the web to provide the first signs of spring, or to depict the changes in the seasons.

Educational publications directed at the teaching profession will be used to promote the educational offerings, and leisure angling publications will be used to promote to the sectoral interests.

Local press will be used, and the distribution of brochures to the hotels in the primary and secondary catchment areas will commence.

In terms of physical place, it is envisaged that Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park will focus on its *triple bottom line* into the future. In this context, the optimisation of the social dividend will be partly expressed by the facility fully integrating itself into the community fabric of Granard. This will lead the Cultural Heritage Centre and Park to promote itself within the broader scope of the local area.

6.3.5 Marketing Initiatives

Granard Heritage Park will align with all of the appropriate network marketing initiatives. In particular, full advantage will be made of the Fáilte Ireland marketing opportunities, and links will be made with specialty marketing campaigns.

GMCE will become affiliated to Heritage Island¹⁴. This is a marketing group representing the leading Visitor Attractions and Heritage Towns throughout the Island of Ireland. It is the only marketing organisation dedicated to the promotion of Ireland's major heritage and cultural attractions, North and South.

6.3.6 Operational Controls

To achieve the marketing objectives, the role of the Centre Manager will be focused on determining how the offerings of the facility will respond to day-to-day changes in the business environment. In particular, the General Manager will be empowered to permit variation in the marketing mix to account for changes and

¹⁴ See <http://www.heritageisland.com>

trends in the commercial performance of given offerings. This may involve the development of new or hybridised offerings, or varying the price of offerings in response to seasonal differentials.

Performance Benchmarking

Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park will begin systematically generating and recording baseline data against which the progress of the offerings and services can be measured. The use of EPOS solutions at the interface of the purchase decision with the organisation should be introduced. This is particularly important at the Café, the Visitor Shop, and in the Cultural Heritage Centre.

The car park will require a traffic counter to create seasonal use patterns, and to compare with visitor monitor points at the entry control, and all of the individual offerings that comprise the Cultural Heritage Centre and Park.

In common with accepted industry best practice, GMCE will introduce an independent and verifiable annual visitor survey mechanism to gauge the nature of the experience of visitors, and their profile and expectations.

The above information will be collected to create a benchmark measurement and to provide customer intelligence. Armed with this information the management will be in a position to make informed decisions about likely future trends, and identify unmet customer needs.

In common with best business practice, monitoring of the operations of the business will be undertaken on a daily basis. Evaluation of activities will be implemented annually, and will form the basis of the rolling revisions to the strategic business plan. A comprehensive review of all aspects of the business will be implemented periodically, and the performance of the facility will be measured against the performance of similar visitor attractions.

The objective of all of these management control processes will be to ensure that the targets for the period are met, or if varied, the reason for the variance is understood.

7 Operational Requirements

This section identifies the critical steps necessary to realise the Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park, and includes a timeline against which these are set.

7.1 Predevelopment Activity

GMCE have devised and successfully implemented a predevelopment programme designed to facilitate the acquisition of the site and buildings, and place these under the control of the community to form the infrastructure for the social enterprise.

7.1.1 Priming Funding

GMCE have successfully accessed the EU Rural Development Programme, through Longford Community Resources (LCRL), to secure co-financing for the preparation of the Feasibility Study.

A 500 Club Draw was launched in late June 2012, with the first fully subscribed draw having taken place in September 2012.

It is anticipated that the draw will operate until any loan and capital costs for the proposed development are cleared. This period may extend for seven years. It is projected that over the life of the draw a return of €37,000 will be produced annually.

Some €10,000 has been committed by GMCE as a deposit to secure an interest in the Rathcronan property.

7.2 Site Development

GMCE intend to fund the site and building acquisition costs through the negotiation of a low-interest loan (mortgage) equal to 80% of purchase price. The company is in the process of seeking a low interest loan to secure the site and buildings. These are currently owned by the National Asset Management Agency, with whom GMCE have been in discussions for some period.

7.2.1 Capital Funding

GMCE will be seeking capital funding assistance for the conversion of Units 1 and 2 into the café, retail space and the Cultural Heritage Centre from LCRL under the EU Rural Development Programme (RDP).

The Operating Rules of the RDP in Ireland suggest that the capital funding for the redevelopment will come from Measure 313 of the RDP. All allocations under the current RDP must be made, and a letter of offer issued, before 31st December 2013, with a practical completion of the capital investment to have taken place before 31st December 2014.

To achieve inclusion under the current RDP, GMCE must have successfully completed the following: -

- ❑ Appointment of a professional team, including architects, engineers, quantity surveyors and interpretive designers to advance the conversion of Units 1 and 2.
- ❑ Obtained statutory planning permission for the change of use and conversion of the site and buildings.
- ❑ Secured legal title to the site and buildings, and thus have accessed the necessary financial instrument.
- ❑ Appointment of a professional project director/manager to steer the development through the conversion stage.
- ❑ Conversion of the units on or before 31st December 2014.

Should it not prove possible to achieve these development targets within the tight timeframe noted above, it may be necessary to delay the capital investment in the conversion of Unit 2 until post-2015, when the next EU RDP is projected to commence (see also Section 8.3 of this Business Plan).

7.3 Management

The technical capacity of the existing management team supporting Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park needs to be grown over the coming five years. There is a clear requirement to develop visitor attraction management skills and additional skills in marketing within the managing body.

Based on the current configuration of GMCE, it is proposed that consideration be given to seeking on-going specialist marketing and business support from a combination of sources, (and subject to current availability) including: -

- ❑ Longford County Enterprise Board (future Local Enterprise Office)¹⁵
 - Company Development – through an on-site skills development programme for owners/managers preceded by a diagnostic visit to identify barriers to growth.

¹⁵ All subject to availability.

- Mentors – through on-site counselling to address costing, financial management, marketing, sales, production, standards and systems, and business planning.
 - E-Commerce Mentors - on-site assistance for the development of Internet capability and search engine optimisation, as well as formulating web marketing strategies, and content management.
 - Exhibition Grants Domestic Market - based on 50% of actual expenditure or a qualifying expenditure ceiling of €2,000 whichever is the lesser, the scheme covers exhibition fees such as stand rental, graphics and participation in show catalogues.
 - Web Site Development Grants - grant based on 50% of eligible costs, including design and digital imagery/photography, initial domain name registration and search engine optimisation.
 - Training Grants - available to firms who do not qualify for assistance from FÁS or other bodies.
- ❑ FÁS (future Solás) – Work Placement Programme.
 - ❑ FÁS/Department of Social Protection (DSP) – JobBridge National Internship Scheme.

8 Financial Projections

The following financial projections are based on the prioritised implementation of the elements described previously.

8.1 Property Acquisition

The purchase price of the entire property is €265,000. Stamp Duty will not be payable as GMCE has obtained charitable status. Legal fees for the transfer will be charged at 1% (€2,650). Thus, the total cost of acquisition is anticipated to be €267,650.

Table 19 – Projected Acquisition Costs

Ref.	Element	€
1	Site Purchase Price	€265,000
2	Legal Fees (1% of Purchase Price)	€2,650
	Total Site Acquisition Cost	€267,650
3	Site Reservation Deposit Paid	€10,000

GMCE will fund the site acquisition costs through the negotiation of a low-interest loan (mortgage) equal to 80% of purchase price: €212,000.

Table 20 – Projected Acquisition Cost Financing

Ref.	Element	€
1	Borrowings (Mortgage - 80% of Purchase Price)	€212,000
2	(Acquisition Cost less Borrowings)	€55,650

Table 21 – Projected Source of Balance

Ref.	Element	€
Collected to Date		
1	Interest Free Loans from Local Business Community	€10,000
2	Profit from 500 Club Draw	€37,000
	Sub Total A	€47,000
Projected Income 2013		
3	Carnival Festival (July 5th - 7th 2013)	€10,000
4	500 Club Draw (August-September 2013)	€37,000
5	Community Field Day 2013	€10,000
	Sub Total B	€57,000
	Total (A+B)	€104,000

8.2 Priority Capital Expenditure

The development of the Cultural Heritage Centre and Park will be approached in two phases. This will permit GMCE to generate income from the initial phase to proceed with the following phase. It also gives GMCE the opportunity to build up the profile of the facility whilst gathering expertise in the running of a centre of this scale.

The following construction cost estimates reflects the proposed phasing plan.

- ☐ **Phase1:** Conversion of Units 1 and 2 to retail and interpretive centres, respectively. Creation of Norman Settlement on the grounds.
- ☐ **Phase 2:** Provision of Activity Park.

8.2.1 Phase 1 Unit 1 Development Costs

Unit 1 is in a turnkey condition, enabling the unit to be leased with only the minimum of preparatory refurbishment work.

8.2.2 Phase 1 Unit 2 Development Costs

Table 22 – Unit 2 Conversion

Demolitions and Alterations						
Description		Measure	Unit	Unit Price	Sub Total	Total
	Make good skirting & architrave throughout				€1,000.00	
	New door ope toilets				€3,000.00	
	Remove door ope – block up (plastered b.s. - 215mm thick)	13	m ²	€90.00	€1,170.00	€5,170.00
Joinery, Sanitary Ware and Fit-Out						
	New fire rated doors	2	no.	€650.00	€1,300.00	
	New sanitary ware to toilets (not incl. new pipework etc)	Item		€4,000.00	€4,000.00	€5,300.00
Painting and Decorating						
	Walls	900	m ²	€8.00	€7,200.00	
	Ceilings	250	m ²	€8.00	€2,000.00	
	New Woodworks (Provisional)				€500.00	€9,700.00
Lighting						
	Provisional Sum for feature lighting	Provisional Sum			€7,000.00	€7,000.00
Mechanical	Provisional Sum for General Mechanical work	Provisional Sum				€8,000.00
Total						€35,170.00

It is noted that Unit 2 is in a good condition. Some making good to finishes will be required, and additional work will be required in respect of the sanitary

accommodation, and the conversion of spaces to house the proposed interpretive materials and the training room.

Table 23 – Interpretive Provision Cost Estimate

Exhibits						
Description		Measure	Unit	Unit Price	Sub Total	Total¹⁶
	Technology and computer based exhibits	Provisional Sum			€10,000.00	
	Audio Visual exhibits	Provisional Sum			€81,000.00	
	Exhibition Panels in painted MDF with vinyl printing	Provisional Sum			€10,000.00	€101,000.00
Bespoke Furniture						
	Bespoke cabinets for exhibits	Provisional Sum			€8,000.00	
	Bespoke seating	Provisional Sum			€5,000.00	
	Reception desk	Provisional Sum			€8,000.00	€21,000.00
Total						€122,000.00

It is noted that all of the above prices are estimates only, and will require confirmation subject to a detailed site survey. Additional costs are to be anticipated in general site clearance and external refurbishment of Units 1 and 2.

Table 24 – Unit 2 Total Conversion and Interpretive Costs

Element	Cost Estimate
Unit 2 Conversion	€35,170.00
Unit 2 Interpretive Provision	€122,000.00
Sub Total	€157,170.00
VAT @ 13.5%	€23,575.50
Total	€180,745.50

Early Anglo-Norman Settlement

As an external element to be constructed during Phase 1, it is proposed that the recreation of an early Anglo-Norman settlement will be provided on the grounds at the front of the site. The approach will follow similar examples elsewhere, such as the recreation of the Kerry Bog Village, Glenbeigh, on the Ring of Kerry.

¹⁶ Fáilte Ireland recommend as an interpretive design cost yardstick that €2,500 per sq metre is required to cover structures, electrical, lighting, exhibits, (interactives/models etc.) AV, graphics, copyrights and dressing. The approximate floor area of the interpretive element of the facility is 100 sq metres. Applying the Fáilte Ireland cost yardstick a total interpretation budget of €250,000 would be required to bring the development to international visitor attraction standard.

Table 25 – Recreation of Anglo-Norman Settlement

Element	Summary Cost €
Development Costs, including Construction of Fencing and Buildings	€35,000
Sub Total	€35,000
Contingencies @ 12%	€4,200
Sub Total	€39,200
Professional Fees @ 10%	€3,920
Sub Total	€43,120
VAT @ 13.5%	€5,821
Total Capital Works	€48,941

It is noted that all of the above prices are estimates only, and will require confirmation subject to a detailed design.

Table 26 – Phase 1 Unit 2 Conversion Cost Summary

Element	Summary Cost €
Demolitions and Alterations	€35,170
Interpretive Provision	€122,000
External Works	€10,000
Sub Total	€167,170
Contingencies @ 12%	€20,060
Sub Total	€187,230
Professional Fees @ 10%	€18,723
Total Capital Works Phase 1 Unit 2	€205,953
Capital Works: Recreation of Anglo-Norman Settlement	€43,120
Sub Total	€249,073
VAT @ 13.5%	€33,625
Total Capital Works Phase 1 Unit 2 + Recreation	€282,698

8.2.3 Phase 2 Development Costs

Phase 2 will see the development of a range of relatively low-impact developments. The following represent the basic external works costs.

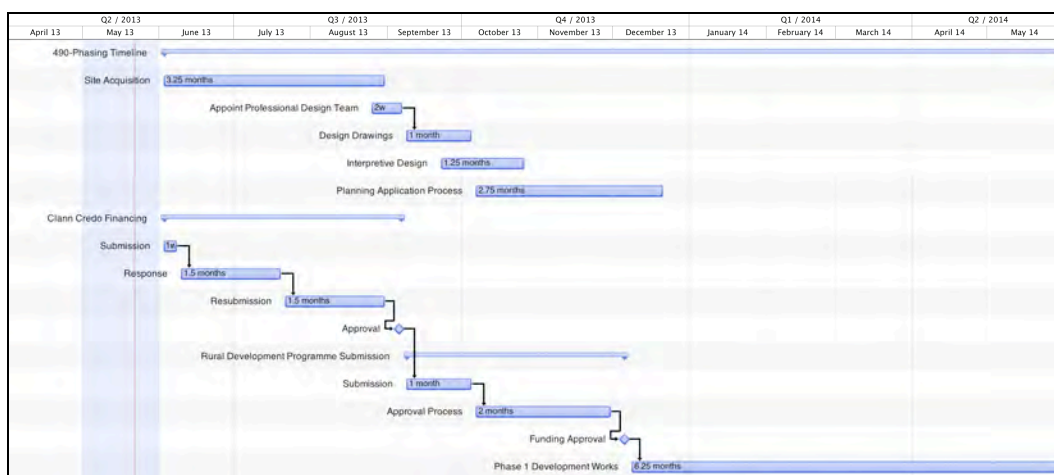
It is noted that the use of Community Employment and the Rural Social Scheme resources to provide training initiatives will offset some of these development costs.

Table 27 – Phase 2 Development Cost Summary

Element	Unit	Cost
Construction of Adventure Walk: Preliminary cost estimate: 400mm surface excavation, geotextile membrane, 300mm appropriate sub-base material, 100mm base clause 804 material, and a bound wearing course.	1.5m wide walkway x 1km @€48,000/km.	€48,000
Provision of interpretive panels and seating areas.	5 No. Panels	€5,000
	3 No. Seating Areas	
Construction of picnic area	1,200 m ²	€15,000
Construction of activity areas	600 m ²	€30,000
Construction of play area for young people with special needs	300 m ²	€30,000
Construction of Hedge Maze	1,200 m ²	€24,000
Construction of Garden of the Senses	3,600 m ²	€20,000
Additional planting	1,000 m ²	€5,000
Security Fencing, Screening and Land Boundary Treatments	Estimate	€20,000
Sub Total		€197,000
Construction of Nature Walk	225 metre	€10,000
Provision of interpretive panels and seating areas.	5 No. Panels	€5,000
	3 No. Seating Areas	
Sub Total		€212,000
Contingencies @ 12%		€25,440
Sub Total		€237,440
Professional Fees @ 10%		€23,744
Sub Total		€261,184
VAT @13.5%		€35,260
Total Capital Works Phase 2		€296,444

8.2 Phase 1 Detailed Plan

Figure 13 – Phase 1 Timeline



The detailed capital investment programme for Phase 1 is provided above. This plan is based on the assumption that the property can be acquired and that all formal requirements for the Rural Development Programme can be met during the course of 2013. To achieve this the following timeline must be achieved.

8.3 Financial Projection

The following financial projections is based on the assumption that GMCE intend fund the site acquisition costs through a low-interest loan (mortgage) equal to 80% of purchase price.

It is proposed that capital funding assistance for the conversion of Unit 2 into the Interpretive Centre will be sought from LRCL under the EU Rural Development Programme 2007-2013. It is noted that following a review of the RDP the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government reduced the programme allocation to LRCL by some €1.7m.

Table 28 – LCRL Funding Reduction 2013

	Indicative Allocation	New Allocation	Change	% Change
Longford Community Resources Ltd.	€8,714,110	€7,026,574	-€1,687,536	-19%

8.3.1 Funding Scenarios

Whilst GMCE is in discussion with LCRL concerning the securing of co-financing for the capital aspects of the Cultural Heritage Centre and Park, some doubt remains as to the likelihood of RDP assistance becoming available under the present programme.

The European Commission's policy framework for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) after 2013 encompasses draft legal proposals relating to the CAP for the period 2014-2020 including the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). The actual design and drafting of the RDP 2014-2020 will largely take place during 2013 but will be dependent on various factors including the agreement of the EU Budget for the 2014-2020 period (Multi-annual Financial Framework), an agreed regulatory framework being in place, and detailed implementing rules from the European Commission.

The proposed date of commencement of the next round of EU Rural Development Programmes is 1st January 2014, although given the level of structural change that is likely to occur in the delivery of the future RDP in Ireland, it is more likely that the next programme will not commence until 2015.

Given these circumstances, two co-financing scenarios have been developed, as follows: -

- ❑ **Scenario 1:** references the availability of RDP co-finance during the present funding period, effectively concluding 31st December 2014.
- ❑ **Scenario 2:** references the availability of future RDP co-financing in the period post 1st January 2015.

It is noted that in respect of the latter scenario, there is a very slight risk that the co-financing of the capital aspect of the Cultural Heritage Centre and Park will fall outside of the eligible measures of the new RDP. However, an additional source of co-financing has been identified.

Business Plan: **Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park**

Table 29 – Scenario 1: Financial Projections

	Scenario 1	Acquisition, Design and Statutory Permissions	Phase 1 Conversion	Phase 1 Operational	Phase 2 Development	Phase 2 Development Operational		
		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
		Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Note	Income	€	€	€	€	€	€	€
1	Lease of 5ha Agricultural Land	€1,000	€2,600	€2,626	€0	€0	€0	€0
2	Cultural Heritage Centre Entrance Fee	€0	€0	€25,000	€27,500	€52,500	€56,000	€58,800
3	On-Site Advertising (20 businesses @€100/business).	€0	€0	€2,000	€2,000	€2,000	€2,000	€2,000
4	Lease of Café Space	€0	€0	€3,900	€3,900	€3,900	€3,900	€3,978
5	Lease of Retail Space	€0	€0	€3,900	€3,900	€3,900	€3,900	€3,978
6	Training Space Rental	€0	€0	€2,400	€2,400	€2,400	€2,400	€2,400
7	Primary School Annual Trip	€0	€0	€13,500	€19,200	€20,400	€21,600	€23,760
8	Specialist Weekend Event	€0	€0	€6,400	€13,440	€21,168	€29,635	€29,931
9	Foreign Students Visiting Ireland - 1 day course	€0	€0	€3,600	€3,780	€5,292	€8,335	€8,418
10	Events and Activities Festival and Field Day (profits from)	€20,000	€20,000	€20,000	€20,000	€20,000	€21,400	€22,898
11	Events and Activities On Site (profits from)	€0	€0	€10,000	€10,500	€11,025	€11,797	€11,797
12	500 Club Draw (profits from)	€37,000	€37,000	€37,000	€37,000	€35,000	€35,000	€0
	Total Gross Income	€58,000	€59,600	€130,326	€143,620	€177,585	€195,967	€167,960
	Direct Costs							
13	Primary School Annual Trip	€0	€0	€9,000	€9,450	€9,909	€10,377	€10,481
14	Specialist Weekend Event	€0	€0	€5,120	€5,376	€5,645	€5,927	€5,986
15	Foreign Students Visiting Ireland - 1 day course	€0	€0	€800	€1,020	€1,270	€1,747	€1,764
16	Staff (Manager)	€0	€16,000	€32,000	€35,000	€35,525	€36,058	€36,599
17	Staff Assistant/Education Officer/Other Part-Time Staff	€0	€0	€5,000	€10,000	€10,150	€10,302	€10,457
18	Phase 2 Granard Park Manager (Seasonal)	€0	€0	€0	€0	€10,000	€17,500	€17,763
	Staff (Expenses)	€0	€3,000	€3,045	€3,091	€3,137	€5,000	€5,075
	PRSI (10.75%)	€0	€1,720	€3,978	€4,838	€5,985	€6,865	€6,968
	Rates (Exempt)	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0
	Repairs and Maintenance	€0	€0	€1,000	€1,010	€1,020	€1,030	€1,041
	Light and Heat	€0	€1,000	€4,000	€4,040	€4,080	€4,121	€4,162
	Telephone and Broadband	€0	€1,000	€2,000	€2,020	€2,040	€2,061	€2,081
	Insurance	€2,000	€2,000	€5,000	€5,500	€6,050	€6,655	€7,321
	Security Alarm Maintenance	€0	€0	€1,000	€1,010	€1,020	€1,030	€1,041
	Accounting and Legal	€0	€2,000	€2,000	€3,060	€3,091	€3,122	€3,153
	Bank Charges	€0	€250	€250	€250	€250	€250	€250
	Marketing	€0	€2,000	€5,000	€5,050	€5,101	€5,152	€5,203
	General Overheads	€0	€2,000	€2,030	€2,060	€2,091	€2,123	€2,155
	Total Direct Costs	€2,000	€30,970	€81,223	€92,775	€106,365	€119,320	€121,498
	Profit	€56,000	€28,630	€49,104	€50,845	€71,220	€76,647	€46,462

Business Plan: **Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park**

Scenario 1	Acquisition, Design and Statutory Permissions	Phase 1 Conversion	Phase 1 Operational	Phase 2 Development	Phase 2 Development Operational		
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
	€	€	€	€	€	€	€
OPENING CASH BALANCE	€37,000	€40,790	€33,186	€60,190	€2	€49,122	€103,669
CASH IN							
RDP Funding Feasibility Study (90%)	€13,815	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0
Community Interest Free Loan	€10,000	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0
RDP Capital Phase 1 (75% of total cost of €282,698)	€0	€212,024	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0
RDP Capital Phase 2 (50% of total cost of €296,444)	€0	€0	€0	€148,222	€0	€0	€0
Low Interest Loan	€212,000	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0
Total Capital Inflow	€235,815	€212,024	€0	€148,222	€0	€0	€0
CASH OUT							
Capital Investment							
Acquisition Cost (Purchase Price)	€265,000	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0
Stamp Duty (0% - Registered Charity)	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0
Phase 1 Unit 2 Conversion + Settlement Recreation (inc professional fees) (€282,698 less 20% Voluntary Labour Contribution)	€0	€226,158	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0
Phase 2 Development (including professional fees) (€296,444 less 20% Voluntary Labour Contribution)	€0	€0	€0	€237,155			
Legal Fees (@ 1% Acquisition Cost)	€2,650	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0
Planning Fees	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0
Capital Investment	€267,650	€226,158	€0	€237,155	€0	€0	€0
Loan Repayments (5% over 15 years)	€5,025	€20,100	€20,100	€20,100	€20,100	€20,100	€20,100
Repayment Community Interest Free Loan	€0	€2,000	€2,000	€2,000	€2,000	€2,000	
Professional Fee Feasibility Study	€15,350	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0
Total Capital Outflow	€288,025	€248,258	€22,100	€259,255	€22,100	€22,100	€20,100
Net Capital In (Out)	-€52,210	-€36,234	-€22,100	-€111,033	-€22,100	-€22,100	-€20,100
Profit/(Loss) from Operations	€56,000	€28,630	€49,104	€50,845	€71,220	€76,647	€46,462
Closing Cash Balance	€40,790	€33,186	€60,190	€2	€49,122	€103,669	€130,031

Business Plan: Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park

Table 30 – Scenario 2: Financial Projections

	Scenario 2	Acquisition		Design & Statutory Permissions Phase 1 Conversion	Phase 1 Operational	Phase 2 Development	Phase 2 Development Operational	
		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
		Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Note	Income	€	€	€	€	€	€	€
1	Lease of 5ha Agricultural Land	€1,000	€2,600	€2,626	€2,652	€2,679	€0	€0
2	Cultural Heritage Centre Entrance Fee	€0	€0	€0	€25,000	€27,500	€52,500	€56,000
3	On-Site Advertising (20 businesses @€100/business).	€0	€0	€2,000	€2,000	€2,000	€2,000	€2,000
4	Lease of Café Space	€0	€0	€0	€3,900	€3,900	€3,900	€3,978
5	Lease of Retail Space	€0	€0	€0	€3,900	€3,900	€3,900	€3,978
6	Training Space Rental	€0	€0	€0	€2,400	€2,400	€2,400	€2,400
7	Primary School Annual Trip	€0	€0	€0	€13,500	€19,200	€20,400	€21,600
8	Specialist Weekend Event	€0	€0	€0	€6,400	€13,440	€21,168	€29,635
9	Foreign Students Visiting Ireland - 1 day course	€0	€0	€0	€3,600	€3,780	€5,292	€8,335
10	Events and Activities Festival and Field Day (profits from)	€20,000	€20,000	€20,000	€20,000	€20,000	€21,400	€22,898
11	Events and Activities On Site (profits from)	€0	€0	€0	€10,000	€10,500	€11,235	€11,797
12	500 Club Draw (profits from)	€37,000	€37,000	€37,000	€37,000	€35,000	€35,000	€0
	Total Gross Income	€58,000	€59,600	€61,626	€130,352	€144,299	€179,195	€162,621
	Direct Costs							
13	Primary School Annual Trip	€0	€0	€0	€9,000	€9,450	€9,909	€10,377
14	Specialist Weekend Event	€0	€0	€0	€5,120	€5,376	€5,645	€5,927
15	Foreign Students Visiting Ireland - 1 day course	€0	€0	€0	€800	€1,020	€1,270	€1,747
16	Staff (Manager)	€0	€0	€16,000	€32,000	€35,000	€35,525	€36,058
17	Staff Assistant/Education Officer/Other Part-Time Staff	€0	€0	€0	€5,000	€10,000	€10,150	€10,302
18	Phase 2 Granard Park Manager (Seasonal)	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€10,000	€17,500
	Staff (Expenses)	€0	€0	€3,000	€3,045	€3,091	€5,000	€5,075
	PRSI (10.75%)	€0	€0	€1,720	€3,978	€4,838	€5,985	€6,865
	Rates (Exempt)	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0
	Repairs and Maintenance	€0	€0	€0	€1,000	€1,010	€1,020	€1,030
	Light and Heat	€0	€0	€1,000	€4,000	€4,040	€4,080	€4,121
	Telephone and Broadband	€0	€500	€1,000	€2,000	€2,020	€2,040	€2,061
	Insurance	€2,000	€2,000	€2,000	€5,000	€5,500	€6,050	€6,655
	Security Alarm Maintenance	€0	€0	€0	€1,000	€1,010	€1,020	€1,030
	Accounting and Legal	€0	€500	€2,000	€2,000	€3,060	€3,091	€3,122
	Bank Charges	€0	€250	€250	€250	€250	€250	€250
	Marketing	€0	€1,000	€2,000	€5,000	€5,050	€5,101	€5,152
	General Overheads	€0	€0	€2,000	€2,030	€2,060	€2,091	€2,123
	Total Direct Costs	€2,000	€4,250	€30,970	€81,223	€92,775	€108,227	€119,394
	Profit	€56,000	€55,350	€30,656	€49,130	€51,524	€70,968	€43,227

Business Plan: **Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park**

Scenario 2	Acquisition		Design & Statutory Permissions Phase 1 Conversion	Phase 1 Operational	Phase 2 Development	Phase 2 Development Operational	
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
	€	€	€	€	€	€	€
OPENING CASH BALANCE	€37,000	€40,790	€74,040	-€2,213	€24,817	-€34,692	€14,176
CASH IN							
RDP Funding Feasibility Study (90%)	€13,815	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0
Community Interest Free Loan	€10,000	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0
RDP Capital Phase 1 (50% of total cost of €282,698)	€0	0	€141,349	€0	€0	€0	€0
RDP Capital Phase 2 (50% of total cost of €296,444)	€0	€0	€0	€0	€148,222	€0	€0
Low Interest Loan	€212,000	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0
Total Capital Inflow	€235,815	€0	€141,349	€0	€148,222	€0	€0
CASH OUT							
Capital Investment							
Acquisition Cost (Purchase Price)	€265,000	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0
Stamp Duty (0% - Registered Charity)	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0
Phase 1 Unit 2 Conversion + Settlement Recreation (inc professional fees) (€282,698 less 20% Voluntary Labour Contribution)	€0	0	€226,158	€0	€0	€0	€0
Phase 2 Development (including professional fees) (€296,444 less 20% Voluntary Labour Contribution)	€0	€0	€0	€0	€237,155	€0	€0
Legal Fees (@ 1% Acquisition Cost)	€2,650	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0
Planning Fees	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0
Capital Investment	€267,650	€0	€226,158	€0	€237,155	€0	€0
Loan Repayments (5% over 15 years)	€5,025	€20,100	€20,100	€20,100	€20,100	€20,100	€20,100
Repayment Community Interest Free Loan	€0	€2,000	€2,000	€2,000	€2,000	€2,000	€0
Professional Fee Feasibility Study	€15,350	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0	€0
Total Capital Outflow	€288,025	€22,100	€248,258	€22,100	€259,255	€22,100	€20,100
Net Capital In (Out)	-€52,210	-€22,100	-€106,909	-€22,100	-€111,033	-€22,100	-€20,100
Profit (Loss) from Operations	€56,000	€55,350	€30,656	€49,130	€51,524	€70,968	€43,227
Closing Cash Balance	€40,790	€74,040	-€2,213	€24,817	-€34,692	€14,176	€37,302

Notes to Financial Tables

Note	Description
1	5ha prime agricultural land leased at nominal €520/ha.
2	Anticipated visitor numbers to rise in second year as the centre becomes established.
3	On site advertising by local businesses (20 @ €100/annum)
4	Café space leased at €0.85/m ² * 88m ² (at a rate to encourage local social enterprise).
5	Retail space leased at €0.85/m ² * 88m ² (at a rate to encourage local social enterprise).
6	Training space available for rental to local groups (€51/week x 47 weeks per annum)
7	Detailed Table 7
8	Detailed Table 8
9	Detailed Table 9
10	Phase 1 events and activities to increase over time
11	Phase 1 events and activities to increase over time
12	500 Club Draw to operate for 6 years.
13	Detailed Table 11
14	Detailed Table 12
15	Detailed Table 13
16	Manager to be appointed as intern for first 9 months.
17	Assistant/Education Officer appointed once centre is operational.
18	Park Manager as seasonal appointment

9 Risk Management

This section provides an assessment of the risks associated with the development of Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park.

9.1 SWOT Analysis

In the table below the strengths and weaknesses reflect the situation internally to the organisation and the concept, whilst the opportunities and threats relate to the external environment within which the proposed facility must exist.

Table 31 – Summary Swot Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> GMCE have demonstrated considerable acumen in devising the development plan. <input type="checkbox"/> Development is predicated on the demonstrable ability of GMCE to raise community funding. <input type="checkbox"/> Unique historical links. <input type="checkbox"/> Strong support from all local and regional agencies. <input type="checkbox"/> Positive response from the local community. <input type="checkbox"/> Creation of new visitor attraction products for the county and for the town – increased tourism numbers equals increased spend. <input type="checkbox"/> The site is within the town envelope. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Granard has no recent history of being a visitor attraction. <input type="checkbox"/> Realisation is dependent on the availability of social finance and co-financing.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Adding value to, and sharing with neighbouring visitor attractions and facilities (clustering effect). <input type="checkbox"/> Provision of employment for the local community within the proposed centre. <input type="checkbox"/> Creation of a centre that is a <i>'place for every-one'</i>. <input type="checkbox"/> The promotion of health and healthy lifestyle is a key strategy of Government. <input type="checkbox"/> Co. Longford has no major visitor attraction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Inability to raise funding levels required. <input type="checkbox"/> Competing centres and facilities. <input type="checkbox"/> Co. Longford has no major visitor attraction. <input type="checkbox"/> The Manager will be the main driver of the project – both in project design, planning, fundraising and operations. <input type="checkbox"/> An experienced board of directors needs to be put in place to support the Manager. <input type="checkbox"/> Planning issues may prevent the realisation of certain components of the proposal (Activity Park).

9.2 Risk Management

From the nature of the proposed development of Granard Motte Cultural Heritage Centre and Park, there are a number of clear risks that are identified in the SWOT analysis.

Table 32 – Key Risk Assessment

Risk	Risk Strategy/Mitigation
Failure to close site and building acquisition.	GMCE to continue dialogue with NAMA.
Failure to obtain social finance approval	GMCE to continue dialogue with Social Finance providers. Satisfactory structuring of proposal.
Failure to obtain RDP Capital Co-finance Approval – RDP 2007-13	GMCE to continue dialogue with LCRL. Accelerate appointment of professional team and Statutory Planning Application.
Failure to obtain Statutory Planning Approval	Pre-planning meeting with Longford County Council was positive in principle. Likelihood of objections considered to be low.
RDP Capital Co-finance Approval – RDP 2014-20	The nature and co-finance arrangements under any future RDP are unknown.

9.2.1 Scenario Planning

Scenario 1 of the Financial Plan assumes that Rural Development Programme co-financing will be available during the current funding period. The RDP current funding period requires that all funding decisions be made on or before 31st December 2013, and that the final draw-down of co-finance (practical completion) takes place on or before 31st December 2014. As noted previously, a number of operational issues make it practically difficult for the project to adhere to these immovable dates.

Scenario 2 of the Financial Plan indicates the situation should RDP co-financing not be available in the current funding period. This scenario see the purchase of the land and property proceed using social finance assistance, with the capital works co-financing being accommodated under the RDP 2014-2020 programming period. There is a reasonable degree of assurance that the RDP will be available in the next programme period, since pre-planning at European and State levels is now in train. The eligibility criteria, ceiling level of co-finance, rates of matching finance, and local delivery vehicle are unknown at present.

Should RDP co-finance not be available in the coming period, or be significantly reduced in scale and capacity, then GMCE remain in an positive position to attract other co-financing streams for the capital works, notably National Lottery assistance. This resource has recently supported the development of Sligo Gaol as a visitor attraction, and the development of Leitrim Sculpture Centre.

Appendix: Photographs

Figure 14 – Photographic Record: April 2013

External



Unit 2



Access to Field



Unit 1

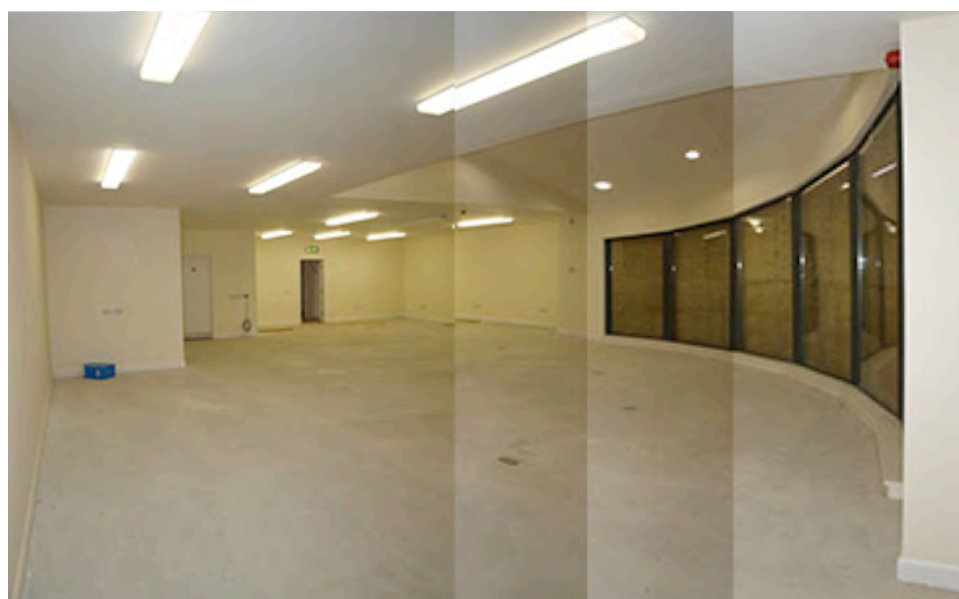


Unit 2



Units 1 and 2

Unit 1 Internal



Unit 2 Internal



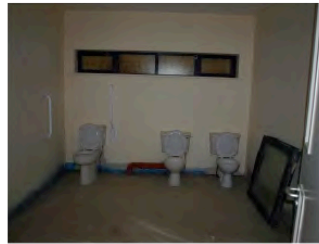
Childcare Space



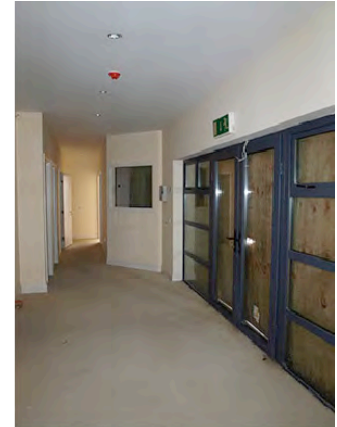
Childcare Space



Staff Room



Toilets



Entrance Corridor