

# National Surfing Centre of Excellence

## Feasibility Report and Business Plan

In support of Application to Fáilte Ireland Capital Investment Programme

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Presented by: Strandhill Maritime Company

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. THE PROJECT PROMOTERS</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1. STRANDHILL COMMUNITY MARITIME COMPANY LTD	5
2.2. PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS	6
<b>3. ABOUT STRANDHILL</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1. OVERVIEW OF STRANDHILL	9
3.2. SURFING AT STRANDHILL	10
3.3. SURFING AT STRANDHILL	10
3.4. CURRENT VISITOR NUMBERS	12
<b>4. CURRENT ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>14</b>
4.1. CURRENT MARITIME CENTRE	14
4.2. EXISTING FACILITIES	14
4.3. DEFICIENCIES WITH CURRENT FACILITIES	15
<b>5. PROPOSED MARITIME CENTRE DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>16</b>
5.1. THE CASE FOR NEW FACILITIES	16
5.2. PROPOSED PROJECT	18
5.3. PROPOSED FACILITIES AND SERVICES	20
5.4. PROJECT OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES	23
<b>6. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS</b>	<b>25</b>
6.1. INTRODUCTION	25
6.2. PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS	25
6.3. PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS	26
6.4. INDIVIDUAL STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS	27
6.5. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	29
<b>7. OPERATIONS PLAN</b>	<b>32</b>
7.1. MANAGEMENT	32
7.2. ENSURING SUSTAINABILITY	32
7.3. STAFFING	33

7.4. OPERATIONS	34
7.5. RECORDING OF VISITOR NUMBERS	35
7.6. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	36
7.7. HUMAN RESOURCE POLICIES	37
<b>8. MARKETING, PROMOTIONAL AND SALES STRATEGY</b>	<b>37</b>
8.1. INTRODUCTION	37
8.2. MARKET TRENDS AND ANALYSIS	38
8.3. MARKET POSITION	40
8.4. VISITOR PATH TO PURCHASE RESEARCH	41
8.5. MARKETING ACTION PLAN	42
<b>9. BUSINESS MODEL</b>	<b>44</b>
9.1. OVERVIEW	44
9.2. REVENUE	44
9.3. OVERHEADS	44
9.4. CUSTOMER GROUPS	45
9.5. SERVICES TO SURFERS AND WATER SPORTS	46
9.6. SERVICES TO STRANDHILL SURF SCHOOLS	46
9.7. SUPPORT TO Co. SLIGO SURF CLUB	46
9.8. FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS	46
<b>10. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME</b>	<b>49</b>
10.1. INTRODUCTION	49
10.2. PROJECT SCOPE	49
10.3. PROJECT TEAM	49
10.4. PROJECT ASSUMPTIONS	49
10.5. CHANGE MANAGEMENT	49
10.6. SCHEDULE/TIME MANAGEMENT	50
10.7. MILESTONES	50
10.8. PROJECT SCHEDULE	50
10.9. COST/BUDGET MANAGEMENT	51
10.10. QUALITY MANAGEMENT	51
10.11. RISK MANAGEMENT	51
10.12. PROCUREMENT MANAGEMENT	51
<b>11. SWOT AND RISK ANALYSIS</b>	<b>52</b>
11.1. SWOT ANALYSIS	52
11.2. RISK ANALYSIS AND RESPONSE	53
<b>12. VISITOR EXPERIENCE PLAN</b>	<b>56</b>
12.1. CURRENT VISITOR EXPERIENCE	56
12.2. VISITOR EXPERIENCE - NEW CENTRE	56

# 1. INTRODUCTION

This business plan sets out the commercial viability and sustainability of the proposal of the Strandhill Community Maritime Company to develop a modern, state of the art surf centre in Strandhill, Co. Sligo. This ambitious project will replace the existing maritime centre located at the promenade at Strandhill, but will add significant new services and features.

The existing centre is no longer fit for purpose with the growth in the number of visitors to Strandhill in recent years, especially those seeking a surfing experience via one of the four surf schools, through the Co. Sligo Surf Club or those visiting as independent surfers. The growth in popularity of surfing as a sport and recreational activity is further evidenced by the explosion in membership numbers of the local Co. Sligo surf club located at Strandhill in the recent years. With the growth in numbers using Strandhill as a surfing location, the existing building located on the first floor of the Voya Seaweed Baths building has limited capacity and is no longer suitable as a changing, showering and storage area.

The project will have multiple benefits for Strandhill most notably:

- Provide a new state of the art surfing centre with the most modern facilities at Strandhill to cater for tourists and the local surfing community alike.
- Provide a focal point for all tourism based activities at Strandhill, especially the outdoor activity providers
- Allows the Voya Seaweed Baths business to almost double the size of their premises and capacity, when the surf centre relocates to the new premises.
- Provides a modern club premises for Co. Sligo Surf Club
- Provides a modern and attractive base for the surf schools operating at Strandhill

The new centre will be located at a prime location along the promenade at Strandhill, in the heart of all activities and attractions.

## 2. THE PROJECT PROMOTERS

### 2.1. Strandhill Community Maritime Company Ltd

Strandhill Community Maritime Company Ltd. is a community led company established to take a lease from Sligo County Council on the existing Maritime Centre building and manage this facility to promote water sports and the development of other 'community, tourism, recreational and refreshment facilities in the village of Strandhill'. The company was established in 2000 and has played a central role in the community, commercial and tourism development of Strandhill since that time.

The Board of Directors of the Maritime Company includes representatives of Sligo County Council, the Strandhill Community and County Sligo Surf Club. Current Board members are as follows:

Name	Representing
<b>John Byrne</b>	Strandhill Community Development Association
<b>Stephen Reid</b>	Irish Surfing Association
<b>Michael McEnroe</b>	Strandhill Community Development Association
<b>Declan Bree</b>	Sligo County Council
<b>Derek Parle</b>	County Sligo Surf Club
<b>Sinead Maguire</b>	Sligo County Council
<b>Ciaran Hayes</b>	Sligo County Council
<b>Rosaleen O'Grady</b>	Sligo County Council
<b>Tom McSharry</b>	Sligo County Council
<b>David McCoy</b>	Strandhill Community Development Association

The Company is trading profitably due primarily to ongoing tenancy of the ground floor enterprise space. This is leased to Voya Seaweed baths one of Co. Sligo's premier visitor attractions. The Company receives financial contributions from local surf schools and County Sligo Surf Club for the use of the facility as a changing and showering facility for their customers. Income generated is used to cover the costs associated with the operating of the facility, specifically showers and changing facilities, cleaning and energy costs. Any surplus funds are retained and directed towards supporting local community initiatives. The Company does not currently pay water charges or Council rates on the building, though a charge is applied to commercial space which is paid directly by the tenant. There are no persons employed by the Company at the present time.

The Board of Directors of the company are responsible for activities and governance. Their main role is to establish the culture, values and ethics of the company and ensure that undertakings reflect this. In this respect the company has built a reputation as a community led organisation with the best interests of the Strandhill community reflected while at the same time providing services for the many visitors to Strandhill, thereby enhancing the visitor experience and supporting local businesses.

The Board of Directors is responsible for identifying the nature and extent of the risks facing the organisation in achieving its aims and the risks to its long-term viability. The board in this respect examine and review any potential business risks to their activities at all meetings. Given the nature and scale of the upcoming new development, the Board are putting in place a more formal risk management process to support them to identify and classify risks. This will provide them with internal control and information systems to allow them to make informed decisions that will minimise risk to the company and to its stakeholders that the Strandhill community, visitors to Strandhill and other community and statutory partners in the project.

## 2.2. Project Team Members

### Michael McEnroe

Michael is one of the leading community leaders and activists in Strandhill. His involvement in community activities have seen many major developments in the village over the years. Michael works as Chief Executive of Harmac Medial Products Ltd, a subsidiary of a large US multinational medical device manufacturing company based in Roscommon. Key proejcts that Michael has led over the last number of years include:

Position – Year	Description
<b>Chairperson Strand Celtic FC 1998 – 2010</b>	Project lead for €1.1million development of Strandhill Community Park which included 2 new playing pitches, car park, Astro park/Tennis courts, Floodlighting, Clubhouse/function room, 4 dressings rooms w showers, 2 playgrounds, Dugouts
<b>Chairperson Strandhill Community Development Association 2004 – to date</b>	Overall responsibility for developments projects in the village. Project member for 2015 IPB Pride of Place application where Strandhill won first prize. Volunteer in numerous local festivals including Warriors Run Festival
<b>Secretary/Director Strandhill Community Maritime Co Ltd 2008 – to date</b>	Board member and Secretary with a lead role in the proposed development of a new Surfing centre involving working with Sligo Co Co, local community and local businesses

### David McCoy

David is the general manager of the highly successful and nationally acclaimed Strandhill Lodge and Suites. He is active in many facets of business and community life in Strandhill and a leading member of Strandhill Development Association. He is the Chair and co-founder of Strandhill Business Committee, a sub-committee of Strandhill Development Association, an organisation dedicated to advertising and promoting Strandhill for the mutual benefit of all. He has worked with Sligo Leader and Sligo County Council in developing the tourism project for Strandhill including:

- Three new Looped Walks for area
- Fundraising to improve aesthetic appearance of Village

- Co-ordinate advertising campaign for 10 tourism businesses in Strandhill.

Year	Role
2015	Chaired the IPB Pride of Place Committee for Strandhill and won National award of best Local Community of 2000+ people
2015-2016	Secretary of Strandhill Development Association
2015-2016	Director of Strandhill Maritime Company

### Derek Parle

Derek is a self employed Physiotherapist, practicing locally in Strandhill. He moved to the area primarily because of the surfing and water sports excellence in the area. Since then he has taken a very active role in community affairs and is one of the main drivers behind the growth and success of Co. Sligo Surf Club. He serves in a voluntary capacity with the following bodies:

- Chairman, Co. Sligo Surf Club, 2013 to present
- Treasurer, Strandhill Community Maritime Company
- Head Physiotherapist, Eurosurf 2011
- Head Physiotherapist, Warriors Run, Strandhill (Annual)
- 2012 Irish Masters Surfing Champion and former Irish Team Member

### Alan Mulrooney

Alan is a native of Strandhill and passionate about its development and sustainability. He has founded and led many worthwhile community projects and initiatives, all of which have been hugely beneficial to the tourism and commercial sector of the village.

Alan is Co-founder of GoStrandhill.com, a website that showcases the area to potential tourists and also the founder of The Strandhill People’s Market which has been growing in size and reputation since it was established over 4 years ago. The market now boasts over 40 stalls weekly and one of the highest footfalls in any weekly market in the country with regular weekly attendances of over 3,000.

In 2015 Alan pitched and secured to bring the Web Summit’s spin off event ‘Surf Summit’ to Sligo, where over 250 international business people, interested in the areas of adventure and technology came to Sligo for three days. This brought with it a huge amount of media interest and positive sentiment for Sligo town. He is also the festival co-coordinator for Shore Shots Irish Surf Film festival, now planning the fifth year for April 2017.

His professional experience he has worked as marketing manager for Monster Energy in Ireland while also running all action sports for the company in Europe. He then went on to work for the youth communication agency Thinkhouse in Dublin on digital campaigns for brands such as Movember, Heineken, Three Mobile, Coors Light and Lynx. He then joined Eir as a senior communications manager. Alan also works with some of Europe's biggest surf brands such as Magic seaweed, POW Energy water and Passenger Clothing on other projects.

In 2017 he started a new position with IDA Ireland as a regional communications manager for the North West.

# 3. ABOUT STRANDHILL

## 3.1. Overview of Strandhill

Strandhill is a residential village located on the Coolera peninsula on the shores of Sligo Bay. It has grown to become a satellite community of Sligo town, and noted as the most popular and desirable place to live in Co. Sligo. It had a population of 1,753 persons in 2016, up from 1,596 in 2011, an increase of 9.8%. This is in contrast to Co. Sligo as a whole which saw the population remain static at 65,400 over that inter censal period.

Traditionally a seaside resort, in recent years Strandhill has gained a reputation as an enterprising and innovative place and a great quality of life. It has a young population, many moving there due to the quality and mix of outdoor activities including surfing, water sports and walking. It is a hive of entrepreneurial activity known for the range and variety of start up businesses operating in the area in diverse sectors such as creatives, technology and professional services. The Sligo Enterprise Centre, located at the airport in Strandhill is currently full with over 30 businesses employing over 120 people. In addition there are many small professional businesses operating from Strandhill.

The area has gained an international reputation for being rich in culture and heritage, a superb surfing destination with excellent entertainment and dining options and as a result is now considered a regional hub for adventure tourism. Strandhill boasts many natural tourist attractions such as surfing, many walking trails and heritage sites, including the famous dunes of the Shelly Valley which have their own unique flora and fauna including the pyramid orchid, early marsh orchid and the rare bee orchid.

As well as the breath-taking sand dunes, people can visit the Culleenamore Strand, a beautiful beach with a prominent 330-370 million year old carboniferous limestone plateau known as Knocknarea Mountain overlooking the strand to the East, the burial place of legendary Irish Queen Meave and with a new walking trail recently added tourists may visit her grave with ease.

In addition to the natural attractions that Strandhill possesses, the village itself is bountiful in activities for tourists. This includes the internationally renowned Voya Seaweed Baths, several top class restaurants, pubs and accommodation providers. Visitors can also visit the hugely popular Strandhill People's Market on Sundays or attend the annual Warrior's Run festival which attracts a huge crowd both domestic and international competitors, or enjoy other amenities including Strandhill Golf Course and a caravan and camping park which is a very popular accommodation option during the summer months.



### **3.2. Surfing at Strandhill**

Host to one of Ireland's longest running annual surf competitions, the County Sligo Open surf contest, Strandhill has been attracting surfers from around the world for decades. The most popular of County Sligo's surfing locations due to its more than one kilometre of quality beach break, Strandhill offers ideal surfing conditions especially during the summer and autumn seasons.

Strandhill is home to County Sligo Surf Club whose membership is approximately 250 persons presently. Established in the 1970s, the club now has its home in the Maritime Centre building and is the organiser of the annual Strandhill Surf Festival and County Sligo Open.

### **3.3. Surfing at Strandhill**

Host to one of Ireland's longest running annual surf competitions, the County Sligo Open surf contest, Strandhill has been attracting surfers from around the world for decades. The most popular of County Sligo's surfing locations due to its more than one kilometre of quality beach break, Strandhill offers ideal surfing conditions especially during the summer and autumn seasons. However, the occurrence of sometimes dangerous conditions including swells and rip tides in the area have led to several drownings, resulting in swimming at Strandhill being prohibited and, for the same reason, the renting of surfboards is prevented by County Council By-laws.

The County Sligo Surf Club is based at Strandhill and current membership is approximately 250 families, resulting in approximately 500 active members. Established in the 1970s, the club now has its home in the Maritime Centre building and is the organiser of the annual Strandhill Surf Festival and County Sligo Open.

For decades, Strandhill has been a popular location for those wishing to learn how to surf and presently there are four surfing schools operating in Strandhill representing, according to the ISA, roughly 10% of the total number of Irish schools. These include the following:

- Strandhill Surf School
- i Surf School
- Perfect Day Surf School
- Surf & Stay Surf School

The presence of these surf schools generates considerable additional surfing footfall in the Strandhill area and, for 2017, school proprietors report that between 15,000 to 18,000 persons attended formal instruction. This is delivered through a wide range of programmes from summer camps, individual lessons, group lessons, special weekend events etc.

Three of the four surf schools operate from premises at Strandhill and one, iSurf operates from a van parked on the Promenade when the school is operating. Strandhill Surf School, the largest of the four, operates from a small rented office on the Promenade beside the Strandhill Bar. The school also has access to and use of an adjoining yard, which contains two shipping containers for storing of boards and wetsuits and, as it is fenced in from view, also provides changing and hosing down facilities for surfers. Surf & Stay is co-located with Strandhill Lodge and Hostel on the Shore Road, two hundred metres up from the Promenade. It has its own storage and provides clients with changing and showering facilities. Perfect Day Surf School use a premises based at the Sligo Enterprise Centre, adjacent to the airport.

Due partly to the effect of the by-law prohibiting the rental of surfing equipment at Strandhill there is at present no commercial renting of surfboards. There have, however, been various attempts at operating a surf equipment shop at Strandhill, the most recent being a small venture operating from a unit on the Promenade adjacent to Strandhill Surf School. This shop has operated on a part-time, seasonal basis for the past two years and is a subsidiary of a larger, established Bundoran-based surf shop. In Sligo city there are two businesses, Sunset Sails and Call of the Wild, both of which sell wetsuits and some surf-related equipment.

### 3.4. Current Visitor Numbers

Table 1 shows the approximate number of surfers in Strandhill that use the current Maritime Centre facilities. These figures are based on:

- The maximum capacity of each of the surf schools and customer numbers provided by the surf schools for the plan
- The number of Co. Sligo surf club members and their frequency of usage
- An estimate of the number of independent surfers using the facility based on estimates provided by the surf club, surf schools, local businesses and members of the local community.

Maximum capacity for surf schools throughout the year fluctuate depending on the amount of instructors employed at different times during the year, as well as the number of lessons being held each day throughout the year.

*Table 1: Estimated number of Maritime Centre Users 2017*

	Surf School 1	Surf School 2	Surf School 3	Surf Club	Independent Surfers	Total by month
January	0	0	0	40	30	70
February	480	360	0	60	30	930
March	960	480	120	60	50	1670
April	960	480	300	100	50	1890
May	1440	720	300	120	80	2660
June	2160	960	400	240	120	3880
July	2160	960	400	240	120	3880
August	2160	960	400	240	120	3880
September	960	480	120	100	80	1740
October	480	360	120	60	50	1070
November	0	0	0	40	30	70
December	0	0	0	40	30	70
<b>Total</b>	<b>11760</b>	<b>5760</b>	<b>2160</b>	<b>1340</b>	<b>790</b>	<b>21810</b>
<b>Average capacity at 80%</b>	<b>9408</b>	<b>4608</b>	<b>1728</b>	<b>1340</b>	<b>790</b>	<b>17874</b>

During 2017 there were 4 surf schools in Strandhill, however, surf school 3 is also a hostel and has on site facilities that can be used by their visitors. For this reason, this surf school has been left out when calculating the number of users of the current facility. This school has approximately 1,840 visitors per year and has made commitments to use the new facility after the build is complete.

On average we can estimate that throughout the year the surf schools operate at 80% capacity. Using these figures we can estimate that approximately 17,874 individuals avail of the facilities per annum.

With the new Maritime Centre, this figure is likely to grow by approximately 10% per annum. This is partly due to the increase in demand to surf schools as a result of the increased number of visitors to the area and the increased interest in surfing that will be sparked in the area as a result of this new build.

These new facilities will also increase the maximum capacity of each surf school. Changing rooms will allow surf schools to accommodate more customers at once and will even allow different surf schools to hold lessons simultaneously. This was not previously possible due to overcrowding in changing rooms. With surf schools holding lessons at the same time, it may increase the number of lessons that each school can have per day.

# 4. CURRENT ACTIVITIES

## 4.1. Current Maritime Centre

The current centre was established in 2001, for the purpose of promoting surfing and Strandhill as a major surf destination in Ireland by providing changing, showering and meeting facilities for existing surf schools and local surfers. It also aimed to develop the skills of local surf enthusiasts and attracting domestic and foreign visitors to Strandhill. The current centre has played a key role in promoting Strandhill and Co. Sligo as a major surfing destination along the Wild Atlantic Way and caters for approximately 18,000 visitors per annum who partake in surfing activities alone.

The current Maritime Centre is located along the promenade at Strandhill, County Sligo. It is located on the first floor of what is the well known Voya Seaweed Baths building. The building is owned by Sligo County Council and held on a long term lease by the Strandhill Community Maritime Company. The ground floor is leased to Voya Seaweed Baths. The first floor is managed by the Maritime Company and leased for various uses including:

- Co. Sligo Surf Club as a base, clubhouse, meeting space, equipment storage and changing facilities
- The Surf schools operating at Strandhill, pay rental for use of the showering and changing facilities

Members of the public are also entitled to use the shower and changing facilities should they so wish, however take up this respect is limited due to lack of public knowledge of the facility and access via a rear entrance.

## 4.2. Existing Facilities

The Centre, is accessed by way of an internal stairway at the rear of the building. It consists of male and female showers and changing facilities with a total capacity of 5 showers and changing facilities for approximately 18. A small room is used for meetings, storage and an office for Co. Sligo surf club. The current layout means that those using the facility, whether wearing street clothes or wetsuits, are required to climb a flight of stairs and these, according to local users, are often wet and slippery as a result. While infrequently used in the off peak months the shower and changing facilities for both males and females operate at full capacity during peak summer and weekend periods when local surf schools are in session.

The female changing rooms currently have 2 showers and a maximum capacity of 6 people. The male changing rooms currently have 3 showers and a maximum capacity of 12 people. There is one public toilet, this is located downstairs and can only be accessed by walking through Voya Seaweed Baths. While Voya are happy to accommodate people, this relaxing spa treatment centre suffers slightly from a constant stream of people entering the building to use their bathroom.

There are no facilities for safely storing personal belongings in the building. This means that customers of the surf schools must acquire their wetsuits and other equipment, including surf boards, from the surf schools, walk to the Maritime Centre and climb a slippery stairway in order to get changed, then walk back to the surf school so they can

store their belongings. After the surf lesson they must walk from the beach to collect their belongings at the surf school, carry these back to the Maritime Centre in order to get changed, then bring their wetsuit back to the surf schools to be returned.

### **4.3. Deficiencies with Current Facilities**

The current facilities are not well signposted or advertised. At a glance the building looks only to be occupied by Voya Seaweed Baths. Only on closer inspection can it be noticed that the upstairs of the building has Sligo Maritime Centre advertised on the windows. Even with this window advertising, visitors to the area are still unaware of the public changing rooms that are available for use.

Due to overcrowding at peak times, safety concerns arising from its first floor location, poorly designed female facilities, and general wear and tear, the Board of Strandhill Community Maritime Company Ltd, progressed plans to develop the new purpose-built facilities. This development will bring much added benefit to the area as the relocation of showering facilities, etc., will allow the expansion of the successful Voya Seaweed Baths.

# 5. PROPOSED MARITIME CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

## 5.1. The Case for New Facilities

The numbers visiting Strandhill seeking a surfing experience have grown rapidly in the last number of years. This is due to a number of factors that include:

- The growth of popularity of surfing as a sport and activity
- The growing reputation of Strandhill as a location for surfing and suitability for those of all abilities
- The efforts of the local community and local businesses in promoting the area as a surf destination
- The success of the Wild Atlantic Way and its promotion of Strandhill
- The presence of a number of very successful surf schools operating in Strandhill.

As a result the current Maritime Centre has far exceeded its capacity to deliver a satisfactory service to its users, be they independent surfers, surf schools or the local surf club.

There are three Surf schools with a physical presence in the village and one more that operates from a van at the promenade. The County Sligo Surf Club has a membership of 250 families, giving approximately 500 active surfers. It is estimated that the four surf schools account for 15,000 to 17,000 visitors per year to the village who use their services. In addition, it is estimated that at least an additional 15,000 to 18,000 independent surfers visit Strandhill on an annual basis.

The new centre will provide surf schools with a safe, structured centre in which to provide a professional service to their customers. It will provide a modern and fit for purpose centre with changing, toilet facilities, refreshments, gym equipment, audio visual, off beach training facility. Safety provision for beach users and surfers will be provided for in the new centre with a surf rescue facility that will monitor the beach usage and support the surf club and surf schools.

The volume of visitors arriving to Strandhill for surfing are unable to be serviced adequately at present and thus the area is losing out to the growing revenue of the surfing culture. Strandhill is missing out on hosting National and International surfing 'contests' due to the absence of suitable facilities. The centre will provide a professional home for surfing, an immersive outdoor visitor experience and provide a focal point for the surf coast on the Wild Atlantic Way.

The upstairs space in the centre can be used for a variety of purposes including community use, training, meetings and social space. This upstairs space will contain a meeting room with audio facilities, surfing focused gymnasium, and storage room. As part of the plans for the centre, the Board intent to work with its partners including the local surf schools and the Irish Surfing Association to create a high performance coaching and training area in the centre. A schedule of rental rates will be set by the board which will take account of the users ability to pay (e.g. community versus commercial use).

The main objective of the project is to provide a Centre of Excellence encompassing every aspect of the sport of Surfing.

Strandhill situated on the Surf coast of the Wild Atlantic Way is one of Irelands best known surfing destinations. It experiences more surfing breaks than anywhere else in the country. The centre will provide a professional, efficient experience not only to surfers coming to Strandhill, but also to the many other visitors along the Wild Atlantic Way and Co. Sligo that come there for to enjoy the many outdoor activities that are available.

The project is important in a national context giving the Wild Atlantic Way a signature project relating to surfing and allowing it to promote the surf coast zone as having facilities and product that are comparable to any worldwide. For the Wild Atlantic Way brand of the 'surf coast' it will provide a tangible focal point in which to promote the surf coast region.

From a local community and business perspective the project will impact very positively on Strandhill moving surfing from the 'back of vans' and provide a professional outlook to surfing in the region. A fully functioning and professional centre will provide facilities in terms of changing, showering and provision of services for visitors to the region both for those interested in surfing and those who are actual surfers.

The Centre will work with its partners such as the Irish Surfing Association, Co. Sligo Surf Club and local Surf Schools to develop the sport of surfing and properly provide for adequate training facilities to all from the basic to advanced and high performance levels. The project will give surfing and the outdoor adventure tourism sector a proper base in Co. Sligo. In addition it will showcase the history of surfing in Ireland. From a community and visitor aspect the new Centre will be the main visitor centre in Strandhill, providing an array of visitor experiences not only centred on surfing but also on the rich culture, heritage and outdoor activities that can be enjoyed in the area and the wider Wild Atlantic Way.

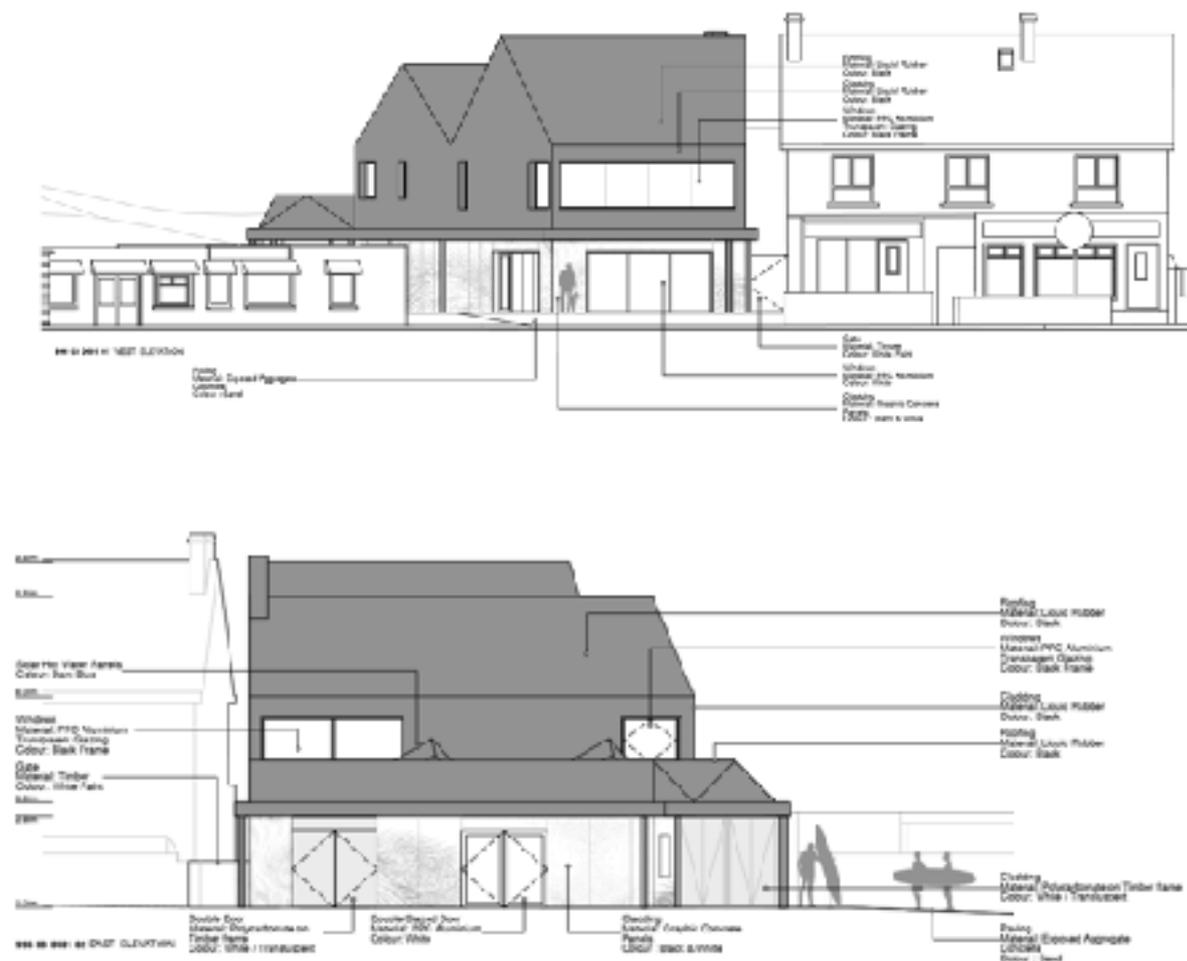
Incorporated in the centre will be the history of the sport of surfing to provide visitors with an immersive experience. Presently in Strandhill there is no tourism centre in which to harness the thousands of visitors yearly – whether there for surfing or not. Therefore it is important that the overall visitor experience can cater for the wide array of interests and motivations of visitors to Strandhill. It will over time increase the popularity of Strandhill as an outdoors destination and bring an increased number of new visitors to the area and to the sport of surfing.

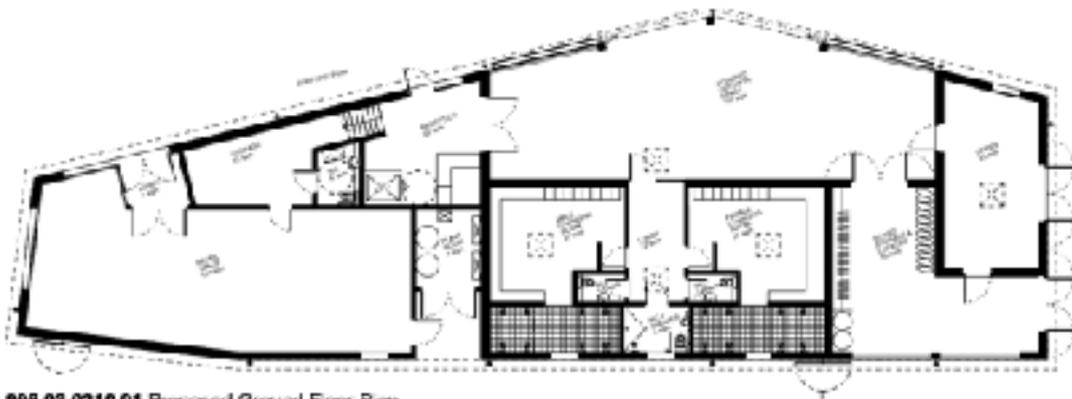
## 5.2. Proposed Project

The Maritime Board have secured planning permission for the construction of the new Maritime Centre on a central site along the beach promenade at Strandhill. It is located a short distance from the current Maritime Centre and in between the busy Shell's Café, Mama Johnson's Ice Cream Parlour and the Strand Bar.

An agreement is in place between the current owners of the site, Strandhill Maritime Company and Sligo County Council for the transfer of freehold ownership of the site to Sligo County Council. Sligo County Council has agreed to lease the site on a long term lease to Strandhill Maritime Company for the development of the project.

Presented below are architectural drawings and elevations of the proposed new centre. These are the drawings upon which planning permission was secured.





996 03 0210 01 Proposed Ground Floor Plan



996 03 0210 02 Proposed First Floor Plan

The new centre will be a much advanced facility from that currently in use. It will consist of a total over 500 sq. meters of space laid out over two floors. It will also consist of 107 sq. meters of outdoor covered space. The proposed layout is:

Ground Floor	First Floor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 107 sq. m covered outdoor space</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 23 sq. m reception and lobby area</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Two 37 sq. m male and female changing rooms</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Two 1.5 sq. m male and female toilets</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 6 sq. m wheelchair toilet and shower room</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Two 15 sq. m male and female shower rooms including 8 showers each</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 15 sq. m storage room</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 101 sq. m social space</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 9 sq. m plant room</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 50 sq. m board and locker storage</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 33 sq. m office space</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> One elevator and staircase</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 16 sq. m landing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 17 sq. m kitchen space</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 128 sq. m mutli-function meeting room</li> </ul>

The building will provide state of the art, safe and comfortable facilities for the ever growing surfing community in Strandhill. It will help solidify Strandhill and Sligo as a must see destination along the Wild Atlantic Way for visitors seeking to partake in water sports. It will act as information hub and visitor focal point for the area with information on local tourism businesses readily available i.e. Seat Trails, Sligo Food Trail, Strandhill People’s Market and local culture and heritage sites.

The centre will build upon the already wide range of services which are offered in Strandhill and the current Maritime Centre which includes:

- A commercially operated surfing and watersports school
- Act as a tourism hub for the local area
- Information on local tourism attractions
- Act as a meeting point for local tourism businesses e.g. walking tours
- Provide changing and shower facilities for local surfers and surf schools
- Public bathrooms
- Provision of facilities to the local community for meetings, etc.
- Computers which can be used by the public
- Phone charging facilities
- Advanced surfing training facilities
- Public vending machines

### **5.3. Proposed Facilities and Services**

The new build will be located on a busy and high footfall area along the Strandhill Promenade, a short walk from the beach and amongst a number of local businesses. On either side of the proposed site is the very popular Shell’s Café and Mama Johnson’s Ice

Cream Parlour. Directly opposite the proposed site is a carpark which stretches along the promenade and a two minute walk from the site is a number of busy bars and restaurants which attract a large number of visitors throughout the year.

The Centre will serve a number of important functions that include:

- National Centre of Excellence for Surfing
- A key flagship point on the Wild Atlantic Way for surfing and watersports
- A hub and focal point for tourism in Strandhill and Co. Sligo where visitors can find information, orientation and experiences.
- Support the tourism industry in Strandhill through providing state of the art services and facilities for surfing schools, surf visitors and others.

From an economic viewpoint the principal focus will be to ensure that the Centre can trade in a financially sustainable manner. This will require that Centre to have a mix of commercial activities to fund its running costs. The Maritime Company are conscious that it must support existing business and users, not displace them. Based on the evidence of visitor numbers available, it is clear that there is under supply of surf experiences (lessons, training, camps etc) in Strandhill especially in the peak periods. Additionally there is no permanent presence of advanced and elite surf coaching and lessons. Therefore for these reasons the Maritime Company will establish and run on a commercial basis a surf school, based at the centre to cater for unmet demand and needs. This will give many benefits including greater choice of experiences and activities for visitors, provide a regular income stream to support the operation of the Centre and ease demand pressure on existing surf schools.

### **Facilities for Surfers and Body Boarding**

The main aim of the centre is to provide a complete range of supports and services for those wishing to engage in surfing and other water sports experiences in Strandhill. While there are many options available to the Maritime Company to achieve this, they have considered carefully how best to provide these services to ensure that:

- All users are catered for on an equitable and fair basis
- The Centre will facilitate the growth and enhancement of services from the local surf school providers in Strandhill
- The Centre becomes a National Surfing Centre of Excellence in Ireland, thereby catering for surfers and watersports users at all levels from beginner to advanced.
- Provides a new modern base for Co. Sligo Surf Club

The services and facilities that will be available are detailed below. The centre will operate a fair usage policy for all users and user groups which will be agreed by the Board of the Maritime Company and individual user groups. These include the local surf schools, Co. Sligo Surf Club, the Irish Surfing Association, the local Community and general public. Additionally the centre and its facilities including shower and locker rooms, training space will be made available for coaching and teaching of surfing and water sports to any party as required.

## **Tourism Hub**

Strandhill is a popular area for tourists and fortunate to have in its vicinity a wide range of excellent outdoor activities and experiences. These include but are not limited to:

- Access to the excellent walking infrastructure of Co. Sligo from coastal walks, to those in scenic inland areas around Lough Gill, Dooney Rock, Sligo City, for example
- Knocknarea mountain and its walks
- Carrowmore megalithic sites which will benefit from a €460,000 investment in 2019.
- Experiences along Sligo food trail
- Many of the sites and experiences associated with WB Yeats

As Strandhill receives a high level of tourism footfall, it is an ideal place for an information and promotional hub for tourism and local providers. The Centre will establish itself as a hub for local tourism experiences in Co. Sligo. Here local experience providers will be able to use the centre as a starting point, meet and greet point for their customers. They will have high visibility and space to advertise and market all their experiences. This service will provide a small revenue stream to the Centre each year.

## **Reception Area**

The reception will be staffed at all times during business hours. Staff will deal with queries of visitors, and all staff will be equipped with customer service skills and possess a thorough knowledge of offerings in the local area. They will be responsible for the management of the changing and shower facilities, bookings of same and sign in of guests. This ensures that the Maritime Centre can keep a detailed record of the number of users each day as well as other details about the visitors such as their age and nationality.

## **Male and Female Changing Rooms**

These will be available for use by all surf schools and their customers, as well as Co. Sligo Surf Club and any independent surfer in the area. Showers are also available for use in the changing rooms, which will function on a pay-per-use token system.

## **Social Space**

The downstairs social space will have a number of different uses throughout the year. This will include:

- Hanging exhibition space to provide local artists and crafts persons an opportunity to showcase their work
- The surf wall will be a dedicated space rented as advertising space to surfing products and brands to advertise. This will be a revenue source for the centre.
- The downstairs public / social space will be used to tell the history of surfing in Ireland, Sligo and Strandhill using an audio visual tour and static displays
- To retail a limited offering of surfing merchandise such as hats, surfing boots and under vests.
- A limited selection of refreshment vending machines
- Virtual reality surfing experience
- Pay per use desktop computers for visitors who need internet access

- Pay per use phone charging facilities
- In this area there will be a space designated to advertise local tourism businesses. This will include a static display for information leaflets, interpretation and information billboards for tourism experiences in the region and linked to the Wild Atlantic Way and a digital terminal to allow users to explore and research options.

### **Board and Storage Room**

This room will be used by Sligo Surf Club to allow them to store their surf boards and equipment. The storage lockers will be available for use by visitors as a safe place to store their belongings. The lockers will also run on a pay per use system

### **Upstairs Multi-Purpose Area**

The large upstairs room will have a diverse range of functions. This will include:

- As surf training facility for beginners to advanced level. The main users identified are Co. Sligo Surf Club, Surf Schools and the Irish Surfing Association. Training can consist of briefings for surf classes, technique training, and high performance coaching and training.
- The area will be available to rent by local community and sporting groups to host many activities from yoga and fitness groups, scouts, award ceremonies, meetings, social events etc.
- The space will also be available to use for the management and coordination of other community, tourism, recreational events in Strandhill such as the Warriors Run, surfing competitions and The People's Market

## **5.4. Project Outputs and Outcomes**

### **Outputs**

- To successfully and consistently deliver a top class visitor experience and become a must stop destination along the Wild Atlantic Way
- To Increase the number of visitors to the region both for surfing and related water activities
- To operate a world class centre of excellence for surfing and watersports
- To operate a business within the scope of tourism that is profitable and creates employment and has consistent and sustainable levels of growth
- To value and enhance the natural environment of the region by being environmentally responsible and enhance the Irish Tourism Product and the Wild Atlantic Way Brand

### **Outcomes**

- To Enhance the Surfing Visitor Experience by providing world class facilities
- Provide focal point for the Wild Atlantic Way for the surf coast zone

- Hosting workshops, training and coaching and assisting other areas locally in the promotion of surfing
- Providing full-time online presence for the promotion of the whole surf coast of the Wild Atlantic Way
- Provide a historical context for Surfing how it evolved and how it has changed the local environment improving the overall product
- Preserve and promote the natural landscape, heritage, culture and tourism experiences of Strandhill and Co. Sligo.

# 6. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

## 6.1. Introduction

All stakeholders and users consulted as part of this study are in agreement that Strandhill currently possess the basic facilities that most surfing locations want, i.e. showers and changing rooms. That said, all those spoken to are also united in their view that these facilities are at best too small and poorly designed to cater to the numbers using them, and therefore not fit for purpose for the current levels of surfers at Strandhill. Some mentioned that they are actually substandard and potentially dangerous due to the first floor location. For this reason, the Maritime Centre's Board of Directors has progressed this project to an advanced stage which will see the development of a new facility designed to best meet the needs of both surfers and the wider community.

## 6.2. Public Consultations

A public meeting of the Strandhill Community was held in August 2017. This meeting was to inform the public and community members of the status of the project and to seek their input / views and opinions on the development of the project, its operations and activities. There were over 50 attendees at the meeting and the feedback is summarised as:

There was agreement that the project was a very welcome addition to Strandhill. It was acknowledged that it would be a large and important part of the community's tourism and community infrastructure. There were many suggestions as to potential uses for the building all of which will benefit and impact positively on tourism and community life. They included:

- Accommodation for visitors upstairs
- Café / restaurant
- Retail area
- Visitor information and interpretation point
- Training rooms and facilities for surfing and other sports
- Social and meeting area
- High performance coaching facilities
- Showers, changing and secure locker storage for surfers

In relation to the management and operation of the centre, it was agreed that the centre will need to be staffed professionally during open hours with personnel available to service users and guests. While this will add substantially to the running costs it was felt that there is sufficient commercial potential in the building to cover these.

It was agreed that the building will also serve an important community engagement function and given its location can act as a hub for community activities in Strandhill. It is important that the facility does not become totally surfing orientated but promotes itself for wider community function. The meeting acknowledged that the tourism industry in Strandhill is inextricably linked to the local community. They place a very important role in developing the industry, its promotion and maintaining the public realm for both visitors and locals. This is very evident for example through the Co. Sligo Surf Club located at Strandhill, the work of Strandhill Development Association in providing

community and public infrastructure such as playgrounds, the local Seal Rescue Ireland branch. The Caravan Park at Strandhill is operated by Sligo Tourist Development Association, a not for profit organisation that invests and operates in tourism facilities in Co. Sligo and partners with local communities in valuable community initiatives.

It was accepted and agreed by the meeting that the facility must first and foremost benefit Strandhill and not compete directly or displace any existing business or enterprise.

### **6.3. Public Submissions**

The County Sligo Surf Club undertook a public submission process using an online survey to allow a wide array of feedback and opinions on the centre. Key data acquired via the survey included:

- The fee paid by the local surf schools for the use of the current centre does not cover its operational costs.
- A conservative estimate of 15,000 commercial non members are using the existing Maritime facilities during the three month summer period.
- Roughly 80% of Co. Sligo Surf Club members never use the shower facilities and club rooms. The main reason is the lack of privacy. Having a club with many young families means child welfare and safety is becoming the club's biggest priority. With family membership numbers looking to increase by 40% in 2018, safety and water education will be the Club's primary focus.

Respondents were asked to provide ideas for activities that could be housed in the Centre, both Tourism related and Commercial Activities. A wide an interesting range of options were submitted which are set out below.

#### **Tourism Ideas**

- Queen Maeve interpretative centre
- Paid showers, cafe, facilities for visiting surfers, storage facilities, surf shop
- Surf equipment shop, coffee shop, facilities for visiting surfers( secure locker, shower and changing facilities, warm/simple meal warm bath/Jacuzzi). Interactive/3D Strandhill experience
- A Strandhill / Sligo themed gift shop with t-shirts, baseball hats, cups, key rings etc for purchase.
- In conjunction with Irish water safety and run beach lifesaving programme from children and adults
- Use facility as a base for Adventure tourism eg Hill walking, biking, hiking, sup, cliff jumping.
- Prime location for use as a restaurant, café, food outlet
- Selling surf and outdoor products
- VR experiences (See NYTimes App), commission based service desk for tourism products
- Surf tours
- SUP fun events, BBQ evenings with music and surf lessons
- Building on the fact that Strandhill is a family destination, use of lockers & showers (at a fee)
- Central booking office for all local activities

- Mini market
- Fáilte Ireland welcome kiosk booking local tours, accommodation taking 10% of tour or room cost.
- Room rental such as for corporate train days/weekends. Physical & mental health lectures
- Arts and crafts daily, adventure activities vendors,
- Yoga surf workshops

### **Commercial Ideas**

- Cafe with coffee tea, snacks.
- Coffee/juice bar
- Surf shop
- Facilities for the education of visiting surfers is a real area for potential growth
- Car parking - what about having a members car park/section of the existing car parking that members would pay a subscription to use? Car parking is becoming such a problem in Strandhill and being able to park near the sea makes going for a surf (especially with kids in tow) much easier so perhaps it is something that people would be willing to pay a small/reasonable fee for.
- Continued surf school revenue
- Surf School/Surf Shop
- Craft shop linking in with the market (but not competing or displacing it. Or a surf shop. Maybe it is a case to run a competition/advertisement for potential businesses looking for a premises to put together a proposal.
- Centre for training, yoga
- Shop along with small coffee outlet and an information centre.
- User pays turnstile for showers and toilets due to running costs and child protection issues, park concerts and sponsorship, guest membership, Celtic nations surf event (Ireland, Scotland. Wales, Galicia).
- Modified retail and vending, possibility in partnership with neighbours, e.g. shells and MJ's.
- Cafe with evening tapas
- Promote membership of club, small charge for 'Hour of power'?
- Hire use of facilities, equipment
- Membership/specialist coaching/training. Beachy surf type Movie and b.y.o. meal nights. Community crèche / playground specialising in environmental and ocean awareness. Room rental. Guided Surf tours.
- Vending machines, coffee dock, surf hire to members introduce daily memberships
- Yoga classes
- Surf festival. Movie nights.
- Room rental, shower fees, charge surf schools a fee-per-head rather than a flat fee.
- Coffee bar within an interactive display of what is available within Strandhill for the tourist.
- Room hire - conferences, meetings, fitness, children's parties, summer camps (e.g. music camp)
- Surf shop

## **6.4. Individual Stakeholder Consultations**

A number of one to one meetings were held with main stakeholders of the current centre and who are foreseen as important users and partners for the new Maritime Centre. These included the local surf schools, the Co. Sligo Surf Club, Irish Surfing Association, Strandhill Development Association and some neighbouring businesses. Each meeting did endeavour to acquire the numbers of customers / users of each business annually; the matter of business confidentiality has to be respected. Therefore only best estimates of user / customer numbers were provided.

### **Strandhill Surf School**

The largest surf school in Strandhill, located along in a prominent position along the promenade and within 30 meters of the site of the new Maritime Centre. While

They explained the current arrangement they have in place with the existing centre and that it works reasonably satisfactorily. Albeit it is a bit small and does present logistical problems for customers, the addition of the new Maritime Centre will be a vast improvement to the facilities in Strandhill and for their customers in terms of the quality, scope of services offered and the location. Strandhill Surf School are fully supportive of the new Maritime Centre. From a business perspective, they will be a large volume user and would like to see an operational arrangement that will not disrupt the running of their business. Ideally this will involve them having access to the shower, changing and locker facilities at all times. They do not favour an increase in the charges levied over present levels. Strandhill Surf School are satisfied that the temporary facilities that the Maritime Board will put in place during the construction phase are suitable and adequate. The school believe that the total surfing visitors to Strandhill in the last number of years has plateaued. The addition of the new surf centre and facilities will provide a new stimulus to grow surf visitor numbers once again and make Strandhill a more appealing destination for casual and serious surfers. It will also greatly enhance the opportunities for Strandhill to bid for and host major national and international surfing competitions.

### **Co. Sligo Surf Club**

The Surf Club representatives expressed their excitement at getting this project through the next stage of the application and are supportive of the project. The club has a continuously growing membership with over 500 members at present and expecting further growth in 2018. The new facilities will add greatly to their offering and provide a much needed state of the art modern facility for their members and activity. Ideally the Surf Club would like to see themselves as the anchor tenant in the building and be in charge of the day to day operations of the building. They expressed concern regarding the overlap in usage between the club and various schools in the changing rooms during the busy summer months. This is mainly due to them having a large number of youth and children members. It will be important to have adequate protection and security measures in place to safeguard club members using the facility. They have some concern regarding the risk of vacation of the current building without a firm guarantee of certainty of the new facility going ahead.

### **iSurf Ireland Surf School**

Owned by Seamus McGoldrick and is also a long-time member of the Surf Club. While he has vested interests in both, Seamus is determined that the Surf Club comes first and would favour them becoming the anchor tenant in the new building. He had many ideas

for revenue streams for the new centre and fully understands that it has to operate on a commercial viable basis. He believes that there will be enough demand within the Surf Centre for advanced training services for more serious surfers. It will add greatly to the visitor infrastructure of Strandhill, from basic services such as public toilets to state of the art facilities for surfing and other adventure tourism related activities. He feels that the current facilities are not of a suitable standard. iSurf are happy to move in to the temporary facilities during the building phase and believe the temporary facilities will be of a better standard than the current facilities on offer. In terms of using the new facilities iSurf are willing to increase their annual fee to the centre by a small, prearranged amount. iSurf are fully supportive of the project.

### **Surf n Stay Strandhill**

Surf n Stay operates a surf school and B & B / Hostel business close to the beach. As they have their own premises, they do not use the current facilities at the maritime centre. They do not in to use the new facilities as Surf n Stay have their own onsite facilities. Surf n Stay are supportive of the project and feel it will add to the attractiveness of Strandhill and help to increase the overall numbers of visitation there.

### **Irish Surfing Association**

The Irish Surfing Association are based in Easky, Co. Sligo. The The Irish Surfing Association is the national governing body for the sport of surfing in Ireland. It is a voluntary organisation comprising of clubs and groups involved in the development, representation and regulation of surfing in its many forms. They are active in areas such as club development, instructor training, surf school regulation, competitive surfing, promotion of safety and protection of our surfing environment.

The Association are in favour of and support the project. The association explained they had originally invested 75,000 pounds into the current maritime centre with money they had received via a grant. They hope to transfer this stake into the new building via a non-formal agreement stating they could avail of the facilities at their convenience, at the same price as any other organisation. The Surfing Association expressed interest in being responsible for the high performance training courses in the surf centre, this would bring additional business, people and visitors to Strandhill and provide revenue for the centre. They agree that proper operational management must be put in place. The Surfing Association has expressed interest in hosting more national surf competitions in Strandhill once the building is operational.

## **6.5. Community Involvement**

The active involvement of community is a hugely important factor in the development of Strandhill as a tourist destination including their involvement in development and promotion of the range of activities and experiences available. There are several examples including:

- The annual International Warriors' Run
- The Community Playground
- Strandhill Peoples Market
- The Caravan Park which is owned and operated by a not for profit organisation

This community involvement has always played a key role in Strandhill and is recognised in the Strandhill Mini-Plan as prepared by Sligo County Council. Collaboration with public and private sector stakeholders is key going forward to manage development and growth in sensitive and sustainable manner. One of the overriding principles of the local community is preservation of the natural and cultural environment for the benefit of all, as the community is the prime guardian of these assets, that the tourism industry is built upon. The fusion between community development and an entrepreneurial approach has served Strandhill well and will continue to do so in the future through new initiatives such as the Surfing Centre of Excellence. Extensive research and consultations undertaken by Strandhill Development Association in 2015 around the extent and importance of community involvement in the development and promotion of the destination demonstrates the important role served by the community. Key findings include:

- The primary asset and factor in the success of Strandhill today as a tourism and hospitality destination is the physical beauty of the area. There was unanimous agreement that protection and enhancement of the natural environment in the area will be fundamental to its continuing success as a tourism and hospitality destination
- Two primary products the place itself and surfing are seen as the leading products. In relation to the place itself, a particular strength identified was the integration of a variety of tourism and hospitality elements in an area with a very definable focal point. The development of the National Surfing Centre of Excellence will add to this feature
- The involvement of community in a variety of aspects of tourism and hospitality offerings are important aspects of its success. The community is clearly seen as a fundamental factor in making the destination work all year 'round.
- In considering future development, most respondents believed that there is significant potential in developing surfing and soft adventure activities as the focus of the offering of Strandhill. A number also mentioned heritage as a particularly undeveloped, but potentially important product.
- All respondents were very aware of the importance of sustainability, economic, social or environmental, and that, in particular, protection and enhancement of the natural environment should be core to every part of future development.
- Many respondents pointed to entrepreneurship in new businesses, such as those in the Enterprise Centre and the Strandhill People's Market as helping to build the case for Strandhill as a desirable location to live, further underpinning its development as a tourism and hospitality location

Strandhill is a vibrant seaside village that has developed steadily during the recession years into a location with a variety of amenities and services, which are integrated in a way that facilitates the development of a reputation for a quality offering and as a desirable tourism and hospitality destination. It now stands at the cusp of a period of rapid development and increase in population that brings both opportunities for the development of a strong, sustainable tourism and hospitality economy alongside a vibrant local community, and threats to long-term sustainability if that development is not carefully considered, planned and delivered. Local community involvement in planning and the development of the village and its hinterland, as well as the development of the tourism and hospitality offering are seen as key to successful, sustainable development. Collaboration by businesses between themselves and with

both the local community and the Local Authority are also seen as fundamental. The development of a shared vision and brand for Strandhill would best facilitate this and could be a very important factor in the drafting and delivery of an effective sustainability strategy (economic, social and environmental).

# 7. OPERATIONS PLAN

## 7.1. Management

The overall responsibility for the management and setting of policy will rest with the Board of the Strandhill Maritime Company. This Board is representative of the various stakeholder interests in Strandhill that include the Strandhill Community Development Association, Co. Sligo Surf Club and the Irish Surfing Association. Sligo County Council as a key stakeholder are also represented on the Board. The Board members have many years experience in community, voluntary and business activities having developed many successful projects in the past and bring years of professional experience across many industries.

The role of the board in relation to the management of the Centre will be:

- Establish and set operational, customer service, business and HR policies for the Centre, including approval of pricing, services and facilities that will be provided
- Recruit and appoint staff and volunteers with the requisite experience and expertise
- Ensure that the centre operates for the purposes of a tourism entity with a focus on surfing, but also promoting the other experiences in the area, in Co. Sligo and along the Wild Atlantic Way
- Put in place proper business, operational and governance policies and procedures
- In conjunction with the centre manager to develop and agree the annual marketing and promotions plan and review its implementation on an ongoing basis
- Ensure the centre is operated and run in a financial and environmentally sustainable manner
- Ensure that the Centre operates primarily as a tourism facility and retains a strong and focussed community ethos.

The Board will meet on a bi monthly basis. A system of reporting of performance will be agreed with the Centre manager, and key data will be presented and reviewed at each meeting. This will include financial performance, visitor numbers, marketing actions and impacts, risk analysis and operational performance. This data will give the board the necessary information to allow them to make informed and evidenced based decisions.

A small executive committee of 3 – 4 members of the board will be appointed. The chairman will be a member of this committee. Its role will be to support the Centre manager between board meetings in implementing the policies and work programme as agreed by the board. It will have delegated responsibility to make decision between board meetings, within policy as set by the board. It will meet as and when required.

## 7.2. Ensuring Sustainability

An important role of the Board of the Strandhill Maritime Company is to ensure the sustainability of the Centre from a financial, tourism and community perspective and ensure that a long term strategy is devised and agreed that will ensure this sustainability. The Board of the Maritime Company have considered this important role and its importance to the project, to Strandhill and the role of the project in driving

future tourism growth in Strandhill. To this end they are committed to putting in place the following sustainability measures.

**Set a Long Term Vision** for the Centre by defining what it will do and represent over the next 10 years. This will help to define the operational and business model for the Centre.

**Integrate sustainability in all aspects of the centre operation.** This is especially important that the business model develops recurring revenue streams from commercial activities related to the function of the centre and builds upon the already existing partnerships with local groups and enterprises who support the current centre. The Board will revise their financial plan on an annual basis and implement the learning and experience of the operating the centre into future plans. Doing this allows the Board to explore and understand the source of revenue streams and the various options that are open to them to implement in order to maximise revenue while providing excellent customer service.

**Effective Marketing and Communication** to ensure the services, role and experiences that the centre deliver can be shared with a wide audience. The will support the growth of visitors to Strandhill and hence user numbers and customers for the centre. The marketing and communication strategy will be reviewed and revised annually based on results achieved. The annual plan will be broken down into a monthly communication plan

**To work closely with and involve key stakeholders** in the ongoing management and running of the centre. These include Sligo County Council as the Centre will be a central part of tourism infrastructure in Co. Sligo and central to the achievement of the goals of the County Sligo Tourism Strategy 2018 - 2022. Other important stakeholders include local businesses and surf schools, the County Sligo Surf Club and the Strandhill Community.

**Creation of an inventory of resources and experiences** that will entice, attract and retain visitors. This will involve working with other tourism and business providers, where the centre can act as a marketing point and a base for other experience providers meet customers and guests. The Board will maintain a flexible approach in response to examining and looking at new opportunities and are prepared to modify priorities to adopt to changes.

**Volunteer and community engagement** is a core part of sustainability. The Board will actively encourage and engage volunteers for performing some activities. They will ensure community involvement at all times through opening and promoting the use of the centre for various community activities. This will encourage ownership of the project, increase usage and community participation.

### **7.3. Staffing**

For the first year of operation the Centre will be open on a 7 day per week basis during the summer months and then reduce opening depending on demand and footfall in the shoulder and off peak months. This will allow management to carefully control costs during the first operational year and learn from the first years operational experience as to how revenue arises and demand patterns. Decisions regarding the opening hours for

year 2 will be based on year 1 outputs, but it is expected that as activity grows, the opening hours will extend. It is planned that a full 7 day per week opening all year round can be achieved after 2 years. Suggested opening times for year 1 are:

Jan – May	Wed – Sun	12.00 – 18.00
June – Sept	7 Days	10.00 – 18.00
Oct - Dec	Wed – Sun	12.00 – 18.00

To ensure the facility is staffed at all required times there shall be employed a full time centre manager and 2 part time staff to supplement in the busy seasons and weekends. As activity and footfall grow, employment levels will grow to two full time and one part time by year 3. Staff shall be supplemented with volunteer community assistance at busy and peak periods. They will work on a rota system to ensure that the centre is manned during all opening hours with higher staffing levels in place during busy times.

The Maritime Centre will employ a Centre Manager on a full time basis and 2 Assistants on a part time basis initially. All staff members will be cross trained so that they can perform all of the functions required to run the centre on a daily basis. All staff will have necessary training in Child Protection, Health and Safety and First Aid. The centre manager will have additional responsibility for:

- Marketing and Promotions
- Financial Management
- Staff and Volunteer Training
- Health and Safety
- Staff Supervision

The core operational and day to day functions that will be undertaken by all staff members.

- Reception – Meet & Greet
- Visitor Information Provision about the local area and supplying suggestions on various tourism activities that are on offer
- Receive monies from guests for services
- Recording of visitor numbers and data
- General cleaning and presentation of Centre
- Recording and taking bookings
- Update of social media presence
- Answering phone calls
- Responding to emails
- Ensuring visitors are greeted in a friendly manner and creating a satisfying visitor experience
- Opening and Closing the Centre

## **7.4. Operations**

The operational functions that are required to be undertaken and how these will be completed are set out in table 2 below.

*Table 2: Operational Functions*

<b>Function</b>	<b>Achieved by</b>
<b>Cleaning</b>	Centre staff will carry out periodic cleaning of the facility throughout their shift to ensure that the Centre meets health and safety requirements and is presented in a professional manner to the public A part time cleaner will be employed to carry out a deep clean on the shower, changing and locker facilities each evening after the centre closes
<b>Equipment and Building Maintenance</b>	All equipment will be under annual maintenance agreements with suppliers. Unscheduled and emergency maintenance will be carried out by professional contractors such as electricians, plumbers, builders as required
<b>Marketing and Promotions</b>	The Centre Manager will be responsible to implement the annual marketing plan as agreed with the Board. All staff will be trained and authorised to maintain the social media presence of the Centre on a daily basis and reply to customer comments and reviews.
<b>Procurement</b>	This will be the responsibility of the Centre Manager working under guidelines as agreed by the Board.
<b>Financial Management</b>	Staff shall be training in cash and payment handling. All monies will be recorded on the electronic POS system immediately and a daily reconciliation carried out each evening. The manager shall maintain the books of account for the company and present a financial report at each Board meeting. The company will be subject to an annual audit and the auditors will be engaged to provide whatever advice and assistance is needed to establish robust financial systems at the outset.

### **7.5. Recording of Visitor Numbers**

Each visitor to the Maritime Centre will be recorded. As there will be different categories of visitor recording methodology will vary so as to capture the best and most accurate data.

#### **Users of Showering / Changing / Locker Facilities.**

Individual and independent groups will be asked to provide name and contact details and home destination will be optional. This will be sought through a sign in sheet, which also acts as an acceptance of terms and conditions from users.

For customer of the surf schools and Co. Sligo Surf Club it may be impractical to have each individual sign in. In these cases the Club or School will provide the a total number of guests and breakdown of originating destination. A single conditions acceptance form will be signed by the Club or School.

## Hire of Facilities

All hirers of the space for training or other purposes will complete a short registration form. It will require details of the activity to be hosted, the number of participants, age groups and destination of origin of the participants.

## Tourists and Other Visitors

The Centre shall maintain a record of the number of bookings taken for the various tourism experiences it sells and promotes on behalf of its partners. This will be done on a continuous basis and give accurate details of the numbers using the centre to engage in other tourism experiences.

While it will be difficult to record details of all visitor numbers and their intentions to the Centre, the management will put in place a sampling system to allow them to estimate with reasonably accuracy the full visitor numbers and their opinions on the centre. This will involve:

During peak months, 4 one-hour observation surveys will be carried per week that will count the numbers visiting. Times and days will be varied to build up an accurate picture of visitor footfall. A sample of persons visiting in these hours will be asked a short verbal questionnaire to provide feedback on the purpose of their visit, their place of origin and opinions on the centre. During off peak times 3 weekly surveys will be completed.

Adding this data to the numbers recorded using the meeting and training facilities and the changing / shower facilities will give a very accurate picture of visitor numbers, reasons for visit, activities engaged in and their feedback on the quality of the Centre. In addition this will be supplemented with online reviews and feedback and feedback given and acquired to staff outside of the formal surveys.

All data will be recorded and amalgamated on a series of spreadsheets or database allowing easy access and interrogation of the data when required.

## 7.6. Environmental Sustainability

The potential impacts on the environment from the Maritime Centre is through the increased usage of natural and manufactured resources including water, paper and energy. The attraction of more visitors to Strandhill as a result of the presence of the Centre places more use and stress on the sensitive environmental habitats and ecology of the area.

To reduce harmful environmental impacts and drive a positive sustainability agenda the Maritime Centre will through its build and operations implement the following measures.

Operations & Build	Protecting the local Environment
Green team approach to business operations including extensive use of recycling and waste segregation	Community impact and engagement - The Centre will lead by example displaying relevant information to reduce waste in paper, power and water.

Staff only give out paper material that is relevant to the enquirer and only if requested	Providing extensive educational and information on the sensitivity of the local habitats and landscape and advice to users on how to treat them
Provide as much information as possible in digital form	
Limiting water usage with dual flush toilets, volume controlled showers and taps	
Control energy usage via motion sensor lights, night rate electricity for heating water and incorporation of renewable energy features into the building such as solar panels	

## 7.7. Human Resource Policies

The Maritime Centre will put in place a recruitment policy and procedure for recruiting staff. The Board with outside expertise where necessary will create a role description for each position around the requirements. Positions will be advertised via local and regional press and online recruitment sites. Interviews schedules will be commensurate with the role being filled, all references checked before appointments are finalised. The staff policy will include a procedure for staff interviews, staff induction and annual staff appraisal. Volunteer position descriptions will also be prepared and all volunteers inducted in accordance. The skills of staff and volunteers will be maintained through continuous training to meet the centres requirements internally and externally. Training needs will be identified in staff and volunteer appraisals. Staff and volunteers will be required to undertake ongoing professional training to ensure efficient business operations and provision of excellent customer service. Such training programmes will include:

- Annual tourism familiarisation programme
- Customer service training
- Online sales and marketing
- Ongoing series of information sessions to keep staff and volunteers updated with any changes

# 8. MARKETING, PROMOTIONAL AND SALES STRATEGY

## 8.1. Introduction

The Strandhill Maritime Centre will be a focal point where visitors and locals can obtain information to enhance the visitor experience of the region. It will be a central hub to service the needs of visiting surfers and clients of the local surf schools and surf club providing them with modern facilities and opportunities to engage in coaching and training from beginner to advanced. The centre will have friendly, knowledgeable staff and volunteers who will focus on meeting the visitor's needs. The centre in addition to

servicing the surfing and water sports tourist, will work in partnership with the local community and tourism providers to:

- Promote and sell their experiences
- Promote Strandhill, Co. Sligo and the Wild Atlantic Way
- Promote local arts, crafts and products
- Take bookings for events, and tourism experiences
- Provide a social space that can be rented for a range of uses including training, meetings social events etc.

## 8.2. Market Trends and Analysis

Before developing a range of marketing and promotional actions for the Maritime Centre it is important to understand who the potential visitors are and what they are looking for.

### Domestic Market Trends

In 2016, 9.3 million trips were taken by Irish residents within the Republic; with an associated expenditure of €1.75 billion – this represents an increase of 1.7% in trips on 2015 while expenditure increased by 2.9%. This demonstrates a continued improvement in holiday trip taking in recent years. Just under a fifth of the population took at least one holiday lasting four or more nights while over half took at least one short break of one to three nights.

With approximately ten hotels located in Co. Sligo, the county is seen as a scenic and attractive location to domestic travellers with growing appeal. It has easy access from Dublin via train and bus services. Sligo Maritime Centre will need within its marketing actions to target the large numbers of domestic visitors that come to Sligo and Strandhill. As importantly is the Northern Ireland market, who are a large proportion of the visitor numbers to Strandhill especially in the summer months.

Understanding how domestic visitors are targeted is important and adopting imagery, writing relevant content and creating packages will be key to winning some of this domestic business. Detailed research, published by Failte Ireland, gives insights about key customer segments within the domestic market. The segments that have been identified as having the most potential for growth and relevance to the Maritime Centre are **Connected Families** and **Footloose Socialisers**.

The key motivations for **Connected Families** are as follows:

- Seeking a variety of things to see
- In a place that feels special
- For the parents it's all about their children being happy and enjoying themselves
- Making the most of the opportunity to really 'be' with their children
- Special memories that they can treasure.

On average **Footloose Socialisers** are in their late forties and well educated. They are made up of groups of friends that enjoy getting away and spending quality time together. The key motivations for Footloose Socialisers are:

- Share experiences with people they can relax and be themselves with
- Experiences that bring people together
- Go off the beaten track
- Try out different places
- Good food and drink
- Tend to be interested in history and culture.

Both of these segments are extremely relevant to Strandhill Maritime Centre. The Centre needs to tailor its business towards enticing these segments within its marketing actions. This can mean simple steps like including the correct imagery, writing the correct content to appeal to the motivations, bundling with other activities to make the Strandhill Maritime Centre and other activities in Sligo relevant to Connected Families.

### International Trends

In 2016, over 8.7 million international visitors came to Ireland; with an associated expenditure of €6.6 billion. Co. Sligo received an estimated total of 192,000 overseas visitors in 2016. Over 60% of all international visitors to the county arrive from Great Britain and Mainland Europe. This makes these two source markets the most important for the county. However as surfing is an international sport, the overseas visitor mix to Strandhill is likely to be much wider than the rest of the county. This is evidenced anecdotally from local business who can establish the country of origin of overseas visitors. Therefore the Maritime Centre will need to create compelling marketing propositions that appeal to a wide international audience. In successfully doing so, the Maritime Centre is contributing strongly to creating a more balanced market mix for overseas tourism right throughout the county of Sligo.

The current priority for tourism in Ireland is to increase international business and revenue. The top performing markets for Ireland are Great Britain, North America, Germany and France. Within these segments Fáilte Ireland have been running successful marketing campaigns which target the '**Culturally Curious**', '**Social Energisers**' and '**Great Escapers**' segments.

The priority propositions for Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland when selling Ireland are Dublin, Ireland's Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way. The new Maritime Centre fits perfectly within the Wild Atlantic Way proposition. It is important for the Maritime Centre to have an understanding of this proposition and the segments it targets. The Wild Atlantic Way focus will be key to attracting international tourism to Strandhill and Co. Sligo.

It is important that the Maritime Centre can align its marketing activities with that of the successful Wild Atlantic Way marketing activities for attracting international and domestic visitors. The more the Maritime Centre can align itself with the Wild Atlantic Way, the more it can keep itself relevant to marketing and sales activity being led by the national tourism agency, which will in turn make the Maritime Centre a flagship tourist destination along the Wild Atlantic Way and bring more tourism to the local area and

wider county. This will also save significant costs for the Centre as it can fall in under many international campaigns that it could never fund itself.

Most visitors to Ireland, display similar expectations, motivations and desires from their 'Ireland' holiday. They all want to get away from it all, have fun, experience new things, meet locals etc. They all seek a city break and enjoy a touring holiday. They enjoy nature, walking and boat trips, local food and music.

For the Maritime, the two segments '**Social Energisers**' and '**Culturally Curious**' have been identified as having the strongest potential for attracting overseas visitors.

**Social Energisers:** Early adopters, trend setters and influenced by brands, reputation and the 'next big thing'... they do not want to miss out.

They are sociable – they are frequent users of digital technology and social media, but also seek out ideas from people they talk to.

Travellers rather than tourists; they travel a lot, experience a lot and do a lot, hence expect easy access, good facilities, relevant, local and readily-available information and a fun, genuine local entertainment scene.

Strong consumers. They are spontaneous and indulgent and believe they should enjoy themselves. They live for today.

There are approximately 35.8m Social Energisers across the four major markets. (Germany, France, GB, USA)

**Culturally Curious:** Curious learners who want to visit new places and expand their travel experience by exploring landscapes, history and culture.

Looking for 'out of the ordinary' travel experiences. They want an interactive, local and personalised experience rather than the usual prescribed tour

Travellers who want to enjoy and explore the natural environment and experience the real Ireland by being active in scenic landscape (walking, cycling etc.). They want to go home feeling they really explored a place and feeling good about themselves socially, physically, mentally and spiritually.

Sociably responsible and environmentally conscious.

There are approximately 57.1m Culturally Curious across the four major markets (Germany, France, GB, USA)

### **8.3. Market Position**

#### **Competitive**

The Maritime Centre will have a positive position in the market place as it will be a single location where all information can be obtained about the whole Strandhill and greater Sligo region. Additionally it will be the premier surfing centre of excellence along the

Wild Atlantic Way catering for the needs of visiting and local surfers of all abilities. There is no direct local or national competitor.

### **Pricing**

The Maritime Centre will set a fair and reasonable pricing policy for its services to visitors. Charges for core services such as locker hire and showers will be in the region of €1 and €2 respectively. These charges will cover the cost of provision of the service and a small profit margin. The sale of a small range of gifts, merchandise, crafts and books will add to the visitor experience. These will in so far as possible be locally made and reflect the heritage, character and culture of the local area. A retail margin in the range of 50% to 60% will be targeted. The Centre will in cooperation with local tourism experience providers sell and promote their experiences. A small commission in the region of 5% will be charged on sales. All operators will pay a small annual licence fee in the region of €100 per annum to be allowed to place marketing collateral at the centre.

### **Growth Potential**

Growth will be driven by the success of the operation of the centre, coupled with excellent service delivery and effective marketing. In addition the centre will benefit from the targeted growth of Visitation to Co. Sligo under the new County Sligo Tourism Plan 2018 – 2023. It will benefit through increased exposure of Co. Sligo and Strandhill as a key visitation point along the Wild Atlantic Way. There is potential for a 10% growth per annum over the first five years of operation.

The Maritime Centre will succeed in the market place through

- Central focal point to obtain information about the whole region
- Providing an unrivalled service to both surfing and non surfing tourists to Strandhill
- Having an in-depth understanding and knowledge of all of the local tourism experiences and the wider experience of the Wild Atlantic Way
- Providing a focal point where locals and visitors can purchase local products and enjoy local activities, culture and heritage
- Coordination of visitor experience packages
- Quality customer service
- Supporting local event and festival organisers
- Service and information point for local tourism experience providers

## **8.4. Visitor Path to Purchase Research**

Fáilte Ireland undertook a major piece of research to understand how the core target segments purchase their holiday. The research shows that once visitors have booked accommodation and flights, they then research things to see and do in more detail. They however tend to book these when on holiday.

The key learnings from this research are:

- Ireland trades in a digital world but is not world class
- Evocative imagery is key to visitor selection
- Activities and attractions are explored before travel and are an important reassurance to the visitor that they have chosen the right destination

- Visitors use social channels while here but only where free Wi-Fi exists
- Paper, TIOs, other tourists, locals, all influence in holiday purchases – practical info is key
- Only the very happy/upset post reviews
- Flights, accommodation, car hire are booked before travelling, the hotel message is a strong destination influencer
- Activities booked when arrive and only booked in advance if discounts to be got
- Front office staff critical for sales success.

### **Learnings for the Maritime Centre**

The Maritime Centre website will very much need to lead out with imagery that targets each of the segments it prioritises. Professional photography is a must and content writing will be key and must appeal to each of the motivations of the visitors. The marketing action plan includes relevant key content for Connected Families and Social Energisers by way of an example. Mobile technology will also be as important as the visitor will tend to research the Maritime Centre the day before they arrive or even on the day they arrive to the area.

## **8.5. Marketing Action Plan**

The detailed marketing action plan for the Maritime Centre is set out in Appendix xx. A summary of the key actions is presented here.

### **Marketing Objectives**

Marketing objectives are a clear expression of what the business wants to achieve in marketing terms in the future planning period. The objectives for the Strandhill Maritime Centre are as follows:

- Increase overall brand awareness and visibility to domestic and international visitors of the Maritime Centre as a major attraction along the Wild Atlantic Way
- Increase the profile of the Maritime Centre locally, informing people of what it is and all the services that it offers to the wider community
- To establish Strandhill Maritime Centre as the surfing centre of excellence for the Wild Atlantic Way and build it as a centre of international reputation
- To ensure that all marketing channels reflect the Strandhill Maritime Centre brand in an accurate and consistent manner to help build brand awareness and quality
- To create a bespoke design for all marketing and promotional information produced for the Centre
- To ensure that practicable working relationships are build and maintained between the Maritime Centre, the local community, county based tourism marketing and development organisations and with Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland
- To put in place a visitor data capture strategy
- To promote Strandhill, Co. Sligo and the Wild Atlantic Way as an exciting destination and highlight the wide range of experiences, attractions, activities and events available
- To instill confidence in the market place that Strandhill and Co. Sligo are exciting and vibrant places to visit
- To provide a warm, friendly and knowledgeable welcome to visitors and provide superior customer service

- To put in place techniques for measurement of visitor feedback.

### Target Markets

A number of different markets have been identified for the Maritime Centre to target and are set out below:

Surfing Community	International Visitors
<p>Surfers of all ages and abilities. These will be from local area, Ireland, Northern Ireland and overseas. The core services provided will be showering, changing and locker facilities. Many will avail of the coaching and training services that partner organisations will provide ranging from beginner to advanced level.</p>	<p>Interested in seeing the local area and experiencing what the local way of life Interested in being active and getting outdoors and engaged with the local people, their culture and way of life. They primarily fall into the categories of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Social Energisers</li> <li>□ Culturally Curious</li> </ul>
Domestic Visitors	Local Community
<p>Interested in water sports, outdoor activities, culture and heritage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Many will be on a short break and want easy to book and buy experiences.</li> <li>□ Connected Families</li> <li>□ Footloose Socialisers</li> </ul>	<p>Members of the local community, businesses and individuals. They may avail of the facilities of the centre such as changing rooms for visiting families or clubs. They may avail of the hire of the social space to run events, festivals, meetings or training.</p>

### Marketing Actions

A range of actions will be required to deliver on the above. These are presented in Appendix xx. They actions are divided across six core areas as follows:

**Action 1:** Brand Development and Identity

**Action 2:** Destination Marketing

**Action 3:** Direct Selling

**Action 4:** Website development and SEO

**Action 5:** Marketing via Social Media

**Action 6:** Online advertising

**Action 7:** Indirect marketing and sales

# 9. BUSINESS MODEL

## 9.1. Overview

The Business Model that will be adopted by the Strandhill Maritime Centre is designed to ensure:

- That the Centre can operate in a financially viable manner and ensure long term financial sustainability of the centre
- It caters and meets the expectations of all customer groups, stakeholders and partners that will use the centre.
- The Centre builds and grows as a Maritime Centre of excellence in a national context and becomes a key part of tourism infrastructure for the Wild Atlantic Way and Co. Sligo

## 9.2. Revenue

Revenue will be earned across a range of income streams, designed to maximise the use of the space in the centre and offering a value for money experience to all users partners and stakeholders. Income streams will be:

<b>Customer Group</b>	<b>Revenue Stream</b>
<b>Surf Schools Irish Surfing Association Co. Sligo Surf Club</b>	Rental of changing rooms, shower facility and locker facility Rental of social space and meeting / training rooms
<b>Independent surfers travelling as individuals or groups</b>	Shower and changing facilities Locker rental Vending machines & snacks Merchandise / Gifts / Surf wear
<b>Tourism Hub</b>	Rental of promotional and visitor reception space by local providers
<b>Non Surfing visitors to Strandhill</b>	Vending Machines & snacks Merchandise / Gifts Booking commission on charged from booking experiences Locker rental / changing facilities
<b>Local Community (Individuals and Organisations)</b>	Hire of social space / training room / meeting room Vending Machines & snacks Locker rental / changing facilities
<b>Other Partners Tourism Experience Providers Commercial Enterprises</b>	Branded advertising wall (e.g. major surf brand) Licence fee to advertise and display brochures for local experiences

## 9.3. Overheads

The following are the identified overheads arising from the operation of the Centre.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Staffing Costs</b>	3 staff including a full time manager. This will allow 7 day per week opening all year round PRSI at 10.75% on staff costs Surfing instructors
<b>Maintenance</b>	Cleaning and routine maintenance costs Annual equipment maintenance such as alarms, safety equipment, electrical equipment etc Rates Buildings and liability insurance Energy costs including heating, hot water
<b>Administration</b>	Marketing and advertising Stationery Phone and communications IT costs Postage Travel costs Staff training Consumables
<b>Cost of Sales</b>	Snacks for vending machines Merchandise and gifts
<b>Financial</b>	Loan interest on any borrowings

## 9.4. Customer Groups

There are a number of distinct customer groups who will use the Centre. While there are commonalities across the services that each will require, there are some different requirements among each. It is important that the Maritime Centre can cater to exceed the expectations of each customer group. This will require:

- Knowledgeable and well trained staff who can provide each group with the desired experience
- A visitor management plan in place that will meet and exceed the expectations of each customer

Providing each customer with a rewarding experience will drive revenue and sales growth. The various identified customer groups are:

- Local and visiting Surf Schools
- Irish Surfing Association
- Co. Sligo Surf Club
- Independent surfers travelling as individuals or groups
- Visitors wishing to learn surfing whether as individuals, groups and those of all surfing abilities
- Non Surfing visitors to Strandhill
- Local Community (Individuals and Organisations)
- Other Partners such as Tourism Experience Providers and Commercial Enterprises

## **9.5. Services to Surfers and Water Sports**

The growth of surfing and other sports such as body boarding not just as a sport, but also as a recreational activity for many is evidenced by the growth in the business of the surf schools at Strandhill. Currently there are four in operation. When consulted as part of the preparation of this plan, all reported growing levels of business over the past number of years, with demand for services outstripping their ability to supply in the summer months.

The main focus of the centre will be towards developing it as a national centre of excellence for surfing, it is highly appropriate that it offers a complete experience and service set to users. This not only includes the provision of locker, changing and shower facilities, but it will facilitate the customers of the local surf schools by complementing their experience by offering best in class facilities. Working in collaboration with stakeholders like the surf schools, the Co. Sligo Surf Club and Irish Surfing Association the centre will:

- Support Strandhill and Co. Sligo towards becoming a national destination of excellence for all surf, water based and outdoor activities
- Provide a much enhanced experience in the market place for tourists seeking a surfing experience
- Expand the range of surfing experiences and other outdoor and water based experiences available in Co. Sligo.

## **9.6. Services to Strandhill Surf Schools**

The surf centre has the ambition to become the national surfing centre of excellence. Here it will provide a range of supports and services to the surfing community. This includes provision of modern and state of the art facilities for the local surf schools who are responsible for building and maintaining the large national and international profile of Strandhill as a surfing destination over the last number of years. They will now have access to modern and secure changing and shower facilities for their customers, allowing them, to offer a much more enhanced experience to their customers. These schools along with Co. Sligo Surf Club bring at least 20,000 visitors to the Strandhill region each year. As the popularity of the sport and of related outdoor activities continues to grow, it is projected that with the presence of the completed Surf Centre, these numbers will increase to at least 30,000 per annum over 4 years.

## **9.7. Support to Co. Sligo Surf Club**

Co. Sligo Surf Club will also benefit significantly from the new facilities. It also will now be able to offer to its members a vibrant and modern club facility. As the numbers at the club have outgrown the existing facility, the new centre will allow the club the room to expand its membership base and numbers. This has many benefits in that it provides increased revenue to support the surf centre, increases the revenue base of the surf club and growing the levels of participation in surfing locally.

## **9.8. Financial Projections**

Detailed financial projections are contained in Appendix xx. A summary of the forecast profit and loss accounts and key metrics is presented here.

## Strandhill Maritime Centre

### Projected Profit and Loss Accounts Summary

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Income Generated	110,620	127,510	142,800	157,090
Staff Costs	39,228	47,534	56,809	75,263
Operational Costs	30,867	32,243	33,874	35,522
Administration Costs	25,550	26,328	27,144	27,999
Financial Charges	3,000	3,000	5,600	3,000
Depreciation	9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000
<b>Total Overheads</b>	<b>107,644</b>	<b>118,105</b>	<b>132,427</b>	<b>150,784</b>
<b>Retained Profit</b>	<b>2,976</b>	<b>9,405</b>	<b>10,373</b>	<b>6,306</b>

Visitor Numbers	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Shower / Changing and Locker Hire	19,500	21,450	23,400	24,960
Co. Sligo Surf Club Members	3,000	3,600	3,960	4,200
Training / Meetings and Events	3,120	4,160	5,200	6,240
Other Visitors and Users	41,600	43,680	45,864	48,157
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>67,220</b>	<b>72,890</b>	<b>78,424</b>	<b>83,557</b>

While a small loss is projected for year 1, points to note here are:

- The sales revenue projections especially for the surf school are projected on a very modest and conservative basis.

- The company will have a starting working capital cash reserve of €55,000 which will be sufficient to absorb any short term losses and fund the operation of the centre in its start up phase.

# 10. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

## 10.1. Introduction

This section presents the project development plan for the Maritime Centre. It documents all of the necessary components of the project, how they will be accomplished and within what timeframes.

## 10.2. Project Scope

The core deliverable is the construction and commissioning of the new Maritime Centre at Strandhill, equipped to deliver facilities and services to the tourism industry and in particular support and develop the surfing tourism and infrastructure at Strandhill.

Key to the success of the project are:

- Securing €900,000 Grant aid from the Fáilte Ireland Capital Grants Programme
- Negotiating the long term lease on the site from Sligo County Council and sale of the existing Maritime Building to raise matching funds
- Having in place interim changing facilities for stakeholders during the build period

## 10.3. Project Team

- The Board of the Maritime Company are the project developers and will retain overall responsibility for managing and oversight of the project.
- They will be assisted through professional support provided by a firm of Architect and Engineering Consulting services who will advise and support on technical aspects
- A competent building contractor will be appointed via a public tender process

## 10.4. Project Assumptions

The following assumptions are used in this project plan.

- That €900,000 in grant aid will be received from Fáilte Ireland
- The site for the building will be satisfactorily transferred to the Strandhill Maritime Company.
- A start date for construction is January 1, 2019
- The Maritime Company will have sufficient working capital of €300,000 available throughout the project which it can utilise as cash flow to pay creditors.
- The Fáilte Ireland grant can be drawn down in stages to supplement working capital as it gets exhausted.

## 10.5. Change Management

All external contractors for professional services and building services will be secured by public procurement. The competition will define minimum standards when appointing these contractors which will ensure that they have the requisite resources to undertake a contract of this size, nature and duration. This will eliminate risk of contractors being unable to fulfil their obligations.

A 3 person sub committee of the Strandhill Maritime Board will be appointed to oversee the project on behalf of the board and work with the appointed contractors. They will report to the board at each meeting. In the event of a member retiring, the remaining members will have full knowledge of the project and ensure continuity of management.

## 10.6. Schedule/Time Management

A final project schedule will be agreed between all parties within two weeks of contract award. Progress will be monitored on a weekly basis by the overseeing project manager, who will be responsible for updating the project schedule, identification of any slippages and addressing same. Variances greater than 10% will be highlighted as soon as known and trigger a project management meeting between the Maritime Company and contracted parties to address and rectify the issue.

## 10.7. Milestones

The table below lists the main milestones for this project, along with their estimated completion timeframe.

Milestone	Estimated Completion
<b>Fáilte Ireland Grant Approval</b>	April 2018
<b>Site legally secured</b>	March 2018
<b>Public Procurement of all contractors completed</b>	August 2018
<b>Final Contract Negotiations completed</b>	September 2018
<b>Build Contract signed</b>	October 2018
<b>Construction Commences</b>	December 2018
<b>Construction Completed</b>	September 2019
<b>Official Opening</b>	October 2019

## 10.8. Project Schedule

The following is the detailed project schedule

Phase	Start	Finish
<b>Stage 2 Grant Application filed to Fáilte Ireland</b>	Dec 2017	28/2/2018
<b>Approval of Stage 2 Grant by Fáilte Ireland</b>		31/3/2018
<b>Appoint design team via tender process</b>	01/04/2018	30/04/2018
<b>Develop brief for eTenders for build phase</b>	01/05/2018	30/05/2018
<b>Tender period and selection of preferred build contractor</b>	01/06/2018	31/08/2018
<b>Contract negotiations with preferred bidder and appointment</b>	01/09/2018	30/09/2018
<b>Siting of Temporary changing facilities at picnic area</b>	01/09/2018	30/09/2018
<b>Vacate existing Maritime Centre</b>		30/9/2018
<b>Construction phase</b>	01/12/2018	30/09/2019
<b>Snagging and building fitout</b>	01/10/2019	30/10/2019

## 10.9. Cost/Budget Management

Budget management will rest with the project management committee of the Maritime Company. The company will aim to have a working capital reserve of €300,000 available throughout the project which will be replenished via Failte Ireland grant drawdowns. The following is a projected project cash flow. 200,000 is the agreed contribution for the sale of the existing Maritime building and a bridging loan facility of 100,000.

	<b>Receipts</b>	<b>Payments</b>	<b>Balance</b>
<b>Opening balance</b>			300,000
<b>December 2018</b>		50,000	250,000
<b>Feb 2019</b>		150,000	0
<b>April – Grant Drawdown</b>	170,000		270,000
<b>June – Payments</b>		200,000	70,000
<b>July – Grant Drawdown</b>	170,000		240,000
<b>September – Payments</b>		200,000	40,000
<b>October – Grant Drawdown</b>	170,000		210,000
<b>December – Payments</b>		400,000	-190,000
<b>Jan 2019 – Grant Drawdown</b>	390,000		200,000
<b>Jan – Loan Payments</b>		100,000	100,000
<b>Jan – Fit out of Building</b>		100,000	0

## 10.10. Quality Management

Quality management for the project development stage will be ensured through the services of the contract Architects and Engineering firms employed by Strandhill Maritime Centre to oversee the technical and engineering aspects of the build and commissioning.

## 10.11. Risk Management

The board of the maritime Company shall delegate responsibility for preparation of a risk management plan to the overseeing consulting engineering company. They will report on a regular basis to the Board of the company regarding risks encountered and the actions taken to eliminate or minimise them.

## 10.12. Procurement Management

All goods, services and supplied under this project shall be subject to the public procurement rules and guidelines in the Republic of Ireland. Strandhill Maritime Company will appoint an Architectural firm and Engineering firm with the necessary expertise with the brief to prepare a complete tender and design pack for the construction phase. They will manage the tender, selection and contract award process with Strandhill Maritime Company Ltd.

# 11. SWOT AND RISK ANALYSIS

## 11.1. SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis examines the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, for a given, project. It helps to determine what the internal and external factors that will impact on the project are and whether that impact will be positive or negative. Strengths and weaknesses represent the internal factors and can be largely in control of the organisation, while opportunities and threats constitute external, environmental factors. A SWOT analysis helps to measure risks and benefits that could accrue while also identifying the key factors related to accomplishing the project. An effective SWOT can support building a strategy for dealing with negative factors while maximising strengths and opportunities.

### STRENGTHS

- Project has full planning permission and in process of securing full legal title to site
- Strandhill Maritime Company is a long and well established entity with experienced management and strong track record
- Strong cross community support for the project
- Strong statutory and agency support for the project from Sligo Co Co and Fáilte Ireland
- Financial resources for project are well defined in terms of sources (FI grant and funds from sale of existing building)
- Strandhill has a strong and vibrant surfing heritage and reputation nationally and internationally which the centre when completed will add to and drive new business
- The Centre will be in an easily accessible and high footfall location in Strandhill, ensuring high levels of footfall and usage
- The project will add to and support the high quality of the destination that is Strandhill.
- The project will add significantly to the quality of the visitor experience along the Wild Atlantic Wat, especially those seeking a water based, surfing or outdoor activity experience.
- High levels of innovative and local entrepreneurial activity and spirit at private and community levels with particular focus on specialisms including gastronomy, crafts, arts and digital sectors.
- The range and diversity of nearby tourist attractions and experiences
- Located centrally on the Wild Atlantic Way
- Reputation of Strandhill as a surfing destination nationally and internationally

### WEAKNESSES

- Full access and legal title to the site not yet secured
- Some amount of uncertainty around interim measures for users of existing surf centre while project is being constructed
- While a robust business plan is prepared that verifies that the Centre can operate on a financially sound manner, the Board at this point have not entered into any binding commercial arrangements with end users that will guarantee the future income streams. It will not be possible to enter into such arrangements until the centre is complete and ready of operation

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- The centre will give Strandhill a new focus with a National Centre of Excellence and act as a significant feature along the Wild Atlantic Way. Hence it will drive and promote more tourism business to Strandhill
- The Centre can be used to promote, sell and market the great diversity of tourist attractions and experiences of Strandhill and surrounds, hence supporting local tourism enterprises
- Provide a base and support from where new tourism product and experiences can be developed and built
- Operating from a stand point of sustainable principles which is a core of the Strandhill tourism offering, the work and role of the centre will support the preservation and enhancement of the unique natural, cultural and build environment of Strandhill
- Showcase the services and work of local enterprises, especially the many operating in artisan, craft, digital and food. It will add new visitor experiences and increase the promote entrepreneurial behaviour among tourism and non
- tourism businesses and stakeholders
- Reinforce and centralise the entire visitor offering in Strandhill into a central location where visitors can receive all information, book activities etc. In addition the centre could act as a catalyst to increase cooperation between businesses

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- Failure to secure full access and title to the site for the Centre
- Cost overruns on construction, due to unforeseen elements or price increases in construction costs
- Failure to secure the necessary grant aid from Fáilte Ireland for the build under the Capital Investment Programme
- Seasonality of the tourism industry presents challenges in terms of operations and cash flow for quieter periods
- Any decreases in tourism business in the future which can be impacted by many factors such as economic recession, decline in water sports popularity etc.
- Damage caused to the environment of Strandhill from weather related incidences could impact negatively on tourism

## 11.2. Risk Analysis and Response

### Environmental Risks

Environmental risks are outside the scope and control of the Strandhill maritime Company. Some of the environmental risks are the coastal erosion, degradation of sea fronts and sand dune system due to extreme weather. This can damage the natural and in some cases the cultural heritage, which is a valuable tourism asset of Strandhill. This risk can be considered on the low scale as significant investment in recent years by Sligo County Council have minimised the risk to the coastal environment.

## **Economic Risks**

The previous economic crisis had a very negative impact on tourism numbers and spend in Ireland. Since then recovery has been at a steady and sustained level. Economic indicators do not point to any major downturn over the next three years. However the unknown impact of the final Brexit deal on tourism to County Sligo is likely to have some impact. During the summer Strandhill has a large influx of Northern Ireland visitors attracted by its caravan park. In terms of minimising the risk from economic factors, Sligo Tourism Ltd have recently launched their 5 year strategy which contain measures to widen the visitor base to Co. Sligo, expand the range of experiences and increase marketing and sales activities. This will work in favour of the National Surf Centre of Excellence in Strandhill.

The development of the Centre of Excellence will not only enhance the surfing at Strandhill, but also act as a central focal point for promotion and delivery of all tourism experiences. The Centre therefore will likely act as a catalyst for the creation and development of new tourism products and experiences, which presents a clear opportunity to diversify, to extend the tourism season, and to further evolve the Strandhill destination. It can help in attracting new visitors or to increase the loyalty of existing visitors.

There are strong possibilities to develop alternative types of complementary tourist products as a result of the establishment of the centre of excellence, not only in surfing or watersports. As the centre will have a strong community focus and act as an overall focal point for visitation to Strandhill, it will encourage and promote greater uptake of other experiences such as walking tours, culinary experiences for example and thereby generate greater use of investments in such facilities by the local authority and private sector in recent times. Being a focal point it will also encourage new investment in products, experiences and visitor services.

## **Centre Management**

The adaptation of stakeholders to embracing new trends and business models is vital for the success of the Centre and for the tourism industry in Strandhill. The emergence and growth of the significant visitor economy of the area is heavily based on active community involvement in driving the development of new projects and infrastructure over the years. This encouraged and supported further private sector investment in services, product and facilities. Destinations are constantly in competition with each other and challenges include changing demand and supply patterns, remaining sustainable and ensuring beneficial cooperation with other destinations and within the destination between all stakeholders. This will require the management of the centre to be proactive in engaging and working with all local stakeholders (public, community and private) to ensure it meets their needs in a fair and equitable manner. The Board of Strandhill Maritime Company are aware of this requirement and fully committed to managing and running the centre on a shared and cooperative basis.

## **Destination Management**

The development of the Centre of Excellent presents a clear opportunity to increase the overall quality of the visitor experience to Strandhill. For the first time there will be a dedicated and purpose built centre to cater for all of the needs of visiting surfers, provide a modern and state of the art facility to the Co. Sligo Surf Club and the local Surf

Schools. The services on offer will cater for beginners right up to the most advanced level surfer. The scope of the project is also much wider in a local and national context in that:

- It will be a key attractor along the Wild Atlantic Way for surfing and watersports
- It will be a central focal point for all tourism and visitor related experiences in Strandhill and surround parts of Co. Sligo.

In doing so it will create a more quality experience for visitors, resulting in pressure being removed from achieving quantity of visitors and creating the opportunity for a significant extension to the tourist season. It will generate a higher quality perception of the area, resulting in more quality and sustainable business for all. With a traditionally short tourist season when the destination carrying capacity is surpassed, the quality of the visit and experience decreases. The development of the centre will help the entire destination and the Wild Atlantic Way to increase the quality of the overall visitor experience, especially in the higher footfall periods.

There is an enormous amount of nature-based and cultural heritage linked to Strandhill that is still unknown to many tourists. Reinforcing its value can generate an increase of special interest tourists, who are willing to spend more during their stay and thus diversifying the visitor base. The Centre will be a key asset in promoting and marketing these attributes of the destination.

The development of the National Surfing Centre of Excellence clearly enhances the attractiveness of Strandhill and the Wild Atlantic Way. Offering new variety, choice and increased quality visitor experience helps to reduce seasonality and its negative consequences on the local business and local community.

# 12. VISITOR EXPERIENCE PLAN

## 12.1. Current Visitor Experience

The current visitor experience for the majority of users begins with the surf schools. Bookings are made in advance with one of the surf schools for lessons or surf camps. Bookings can be made online or via phone or face to face. Each surf school supply their customers with the appropriate equipment which includes a wetsuit, boots, a cap and a surf board.

In order to get changed, customers must then carry all of their equipment from the surf school to the Maritime Centre. They must then climb a flight of stairs which is located at the back of the building. These stairs, during peak times of the year, are busy throughout the day and frequently wet and as a result the tiled stairs can become slippery presenting a hazard.

It is likely that a number of surf schools will be running lessons at the same time during the day. This means that the male and female changing and shower rooms can become crowded. With limited seating areas in the changing rooms, this results in overcrowding and uncomfortable conditions.

Visitors, having changed, must then bring their belongings from the Maritime Centre back to the surf school so they can be safely stored. From here, visitors will then go to the beach for their lesson. After the lesson is complete, visitors must go to the surf school, collect their belongings, and walk back to the Maritime Centre to shower and change. Frequently visitors many have to wait a period of time before a shower becomes available as the male changing rooms only have 3 showers and the female have 2. The provision of an adequate supply of hot water is also an issue with it frequently running short during. After changing, visitors must then walk back to the surf school to return the equipment.

## 12.2. Visitor Experience – New Centre

The visitor experience at the new Maritime Centre calls for the development and implementation of a visitor experience and interpretative plan that provides an enriching and relevant experience for all visitor segments. The visitor experience needs to be focused around the end user and provide them with the tools to get the most out of their visit.

It is important to remember that the centre will receive a wide array of visitors and the focus of the experience should not be solely on the surfing visitor and the provision of modern changing, showering and changing facilities. The Centre will act as much more than this. It will be a hub of learning and information not only on the local tourism experiences, but also for the Wild Atlantic Way and Co. Sligo. It will educate and inform on the local host community of Strandhill, and through its interpretation strategy contribute to the environmental and business sustainability of the resource of Strandhill.

The experience will be presented in four contexts that will be the primary filters for the visitors.

1. Personal Context

2. Social Context
3. Physical Context
4. Community Context

The core of the experience will be "Learning" and "Doing".



**The Personal Context** - Each person arrives with a personal agenda, expectations, and anticipated outcomes from the visit that are unique to that individual. Knowing what a visitor expects from a visit will help the Centre meet expectations and is a crucial step in developing targeted communications and interpretation. This is the key to visitor satisfaction.

**The Social Context** - This defines the way visitor interact with staff at the Centre and how this influences their experiences. Having positive social interactions in place leads to excellent customer service and customer satisfaction.

**Physical Context** - Learning can only be achieved if spaces are designed so that visitors want to stay in the space long enough for learning to happen. This is why the Physical Context is so important. The physical context includes layout, presentation, wayfinding, the overall feel of the building and its aesthetics.

**Community Context** - The tourism sector contributes to the economic growth of a region and job creation. It also produces a large social dividend and benefits to the host region such as community pride and enrichment. The Strandhill Community has always taken a collective approach to its community and tourism development. There is a large community investment in infrastructure, volunteerism and facilities in the community. These include playgrounds, sports facilities, walks and trails, festivals and events. The community also play a key role in the maintenance and preservation of the sensitive natural environment so that it can be enjoyed by locals and visitors. The Maritime Centre being a community endeavour in itself are very aware of the requirement to include the community at the heart of the operation of the Centre and the visitor experiences it gives.

## Visitor and Interpretative Planning

The objectives of the Visitor and Interpretative Plan are:

- To provide for short range through to long range visitor experience planning
- To ensure that interpretive facilities, media, and information / educational programmes work together
- To provide information and education on the protection and sensitivity of the natural, heritage and environmental resources of Strandhill and its environs.
- To devise and implement strategies for promoting and encouraging wider and more positive visitor interactions with the local environment, the local community and local businesses.

Everything that visitors do, think, sense, and feel in the centres constitutes their visitor experience. Interpretive planning defines the desired experiences (outcomes) and will involve interpretive media, displays or activities that visitors can partake in. Key questions that the visitor experience plan will address are:

- What are the likely and desired visitor experiences? (What will visitors want to do, feel, learn, experience and learn, etc.?)
- What are the essential stories and experiences to make available to visitors?
- What are relationships between the areas resources and visitors that we want to develop?
- How can the plan make desirable experiences more accessible to more visitors?
- How the visitor experience plan can discourage activities that are detrimental to areas resources or other visitors experiences, and promote activities that enhance resource protection and visitor enjoyment?
- How can visitor experience goals in the most cost-effective manner, considering long term costs and sustainable values?

Team members should have the experience and knowledge to be able to adequately implement and control the visitor experience. Given that this is a community led and managed project there are a wide array of stakeholder groups that will have to buy into and support the visitor experience plan. These include:

- Staff of the Maritime Centre
- The Board of Management
- The local Community
- Local Businesses
- Partners that include the Surf Schools, Co. Sligo Surf Club, Irish Surfing Association

### 12.3. The Visitor Experience Plan

There are several important general criteria for the form and content of interpretive plans. An interpretive plan should be the best possible representation of that particular planning process, that unique set of resources and visitors, which set of goals and recommendations, those contemporary conditions, and those assumptions about the future.

Those who visit Strandhill come not only for the surf, but also for the rich culture and heritage, entertaining bars and music, restaurants, spas and great accommodation providers in the area. With this diverse range of activities and services, Strandhill attracts a wide array of different tourists every year.

The experiences to be enjoyed in Strandhill and the Sligo coast relates completely with the core idea and offering of the Wild Atlantic Way. For example, how the development of Sligo was shaped by its location on the Atlantic, the heritage and culture associated and built up around this over generations. This is part of the basis to develop memorable visitor experiences.

The Themes are the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting the Centre. They provide the foundation for all interpretation and media developed at the centre. The goal is to produce themes that are understandable, concise, and complete and that are most important to the area.

Since many visitors to the centre will be engaged in outdoor pursuits like surfing and walking, it is appropriate that they are supported by access to these activities. This means having available a range of options for visitors to purchase or access surfing, walking or other outdoor recreational activities at Strandhill. All of this must be readily available to the visitor.

The Visitor experience goals set out the opportunities for visitors to derive meanings and values from resources and experiences at Strandhill and along the wider Wild Atlantic Way. It will identify the important experiences that are available. It is important that the visitor experiences cater for many different target market groups that will use the Maritime Centre. These include for example families, surfers (independent, groups, surfers of various abilities), Culturally Curious, Social Energisers etc. They must encapsulate the emotive, physical and social elements that each experience will give.

### **Objectives of Visitor Experience Plan**

- To Enhance the Surfing Visitor Experience by providing world class facilities
- For the Centre to act as an informational hub for visitors about local tourism experiences and the wider Wild Atlantic Way.
- To increase business of commercial operators including local surf schools and other businesses in the locality
- Extend the overall tourism season

### **Target Markets**

- Social Energisers
- Culturally Curious
- Footloose Socialisers
- Connected Families
- Visitors from the core overseas and domestic markets of Great Britain, North America and Mainland Europe visiting the Wild Atlantic Way

### **Unique Selling Points**

The unique selling points of the Strandhill Maritime Centre include:

- A building which links all activities on offer in Strandhill, including water sports and the unique culture and heritage and visitor experiences of Strandhill
- Experiences that provide connection with nature through active participation in the best water sports in Ireland
- A signature experience point focused on surfing along the Wild Atlantic Way

### Aims and Objectives

The key objective of the Visitor Experience Development Plan is to facilitate the enhancement of and development of new experiences for Strandhill based on its world-class water sports and the history and culture of the area.

Other objectives include:

- Motivate visitors to stay longer and spend more in the area
- Promote the tourism experiences of Co. Sligo and the wider Wild Atlantic Way
- Extend the length of the tourist season;
- Align Strandhill and its product more to the Wild Atlantic Way brand and market proposition
- Sustain and increase job creation in the local area
- Protect the special environmental character of the region.
- Encourage and engage businesses and local partners to work with the project to develop market ready and resonating experiences
- Build lasting links between national partners and local tourism experiences

### Knowledge Development

Appropriate Visitor Experience Planning and Interpretation helps visitors move from tangible experiences to understanding cultures, relationships and environments. It provides them with a much more immersive and engaging experience. The interpretation will use a combination of facts, consideration of different points of view and incorporation of local stories, heritage and culture to present the themes.

## 12.4. Visitor Experience Development Actions

Title	Action
<b>Physical Product</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ To develop and build a state of the art and aesthetically pleasing Maritime Centre.</li> <li>□ Provide comfortable, safe and clean facilities for all surfers and visitors to the area</li> <li>□ Promote local tourism businesses</li> <li>□ Increase the tourism season in the area</li> </ul>

## High Quality Service

Ensuring the physical product is well maintained. This included cleanliness of the facility and general upkeep on the inside and outside of the building.

Ensuring friendly, approachable and helpful staff work in the Maritime Centre providing excellent customer service. This will be achieved through staff development and ongoing training.

## Accessibility when booking and visiting

In order to have an enjoyable visitor experience, it is important that the building is easily accessible information provision and display is easy to understand and find. All information will be provided in English, French and Spanish.

In place a user friendly website that will include:

- Information on what is on offer in the Maritime Centre
- Directions to the Maritime Centre
- The option to book some of the services available i.e. meeting rooms
- Contain branding which will be consistent throughout the building itself
- Website will also have a live video of the surf and details of the current surfing conditions

In house booking and accessibility. A member of staff will always be at reception in order to greet visitors. At reception visitors can enquire about booking, using the facilities, local tourist attractions as well as any other information they require with this member of staff.

**Connecting the region of Strandhill and County Sligo**

This work will be an ongoing to ensure that the impacts of the Maritime Centre can be used to spread tourism benefits throughout Strandhill and Co. Sligo and promote other experiences. Sligo Maritime Company will:

- Ensure information is readily available so visitors can learn of local activities, culture & heritage, attractions, food, festivals and events.
- Ensure all experiences where possible connect to the broader region as they deliver benefits to more places and encourage wider visitation
- All experiences are on-message with the Sligo brand and are aligned to the broader mission of the Wild Atlantic Way
- All experiences are innovative and in so far as possible incorporate many strands of Strandhill and Sligo (e.g. heritage, culture, outdoors, scenery, stories etc)

All experiences will add value to the region and provide a direct and demonstrable link to either extending visitor length of stay, extending the length of the tourist season or developing new markets.

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## ***Appendix 1***

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### ***Financial Projections***

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<b>Strandhill Maritime Centre</b>				
<b>Projected Profit and Loss Accounts</b>				
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Revenue Generated	€ 110,620	€ 127,510	€ 142,800	€ 157,090
LEADER & LEO Operational Grants				
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>€ 110,620</b>	<b>€ 127,510</b>	<b>€ 142,800</b>	<b>€ 157,090</b>
<b>Overheads</b>				
Staff Costs	€ 39,228	€ 47,534	€ 56,809	€ 75,263
Cleaning and Maintenance	€ 5,000	€ 5,000	€ 5,250	€ 5,513
Equipment Maintenance	€ 5,000	€ 5,000	€ 5,000	€ 5,000
Rates	€ 1,200	€ 1,200	€ 1,200	€ 1,200
Insurance	€ 4,500	€ 4,590	€ 4,682	€ 4,775
Energy Costs	€ 6,000	€ 6,120	€ 6,242	€ 6,367
Marketing and Advertising	€ 15,000	€ 15,750	€ 16,538	€ 17,364
Phone & Broadband	€ 2,800	€ 2,828	€ 2,856	€ 2,885
Postage & Stationary	€ 1,000	€ 1,000	€ 1,000	€ 1,000
Travel & Subsistence	€ 2,000	€ 2,000	€ 2,000	€ 2,000
IT Costs	€ 1,200	€ 1,200	€ 1,200	€ 1,200
Sundry Expenses	€ 500	€ 500	€ 500	€ 500
Accounting and Audit	€ 1,800	€ 1,800	€ 1,800	€ 1,800
Staff Training	€ 1,250	€ 1,250	€ 1,250	€ 1,250
Financial Charges & Interest	€ 3,000	€ 3,000	€ 5,600	€ 3,000
Cost of Sales	€ 9,167	€ 10,333	€ 11,500	€ 12,667
Depreciation	€ 9,000	€ 9,000	€ 9,000	€ 9,000
<b>Total Overheads</b>	<b>€ 107,644</b>	<b>€ 118,105</b>	<b>€ 132,427</b>	<b>€ 150,784</b>
<b>Net Profit / Loss</b>	<b>€ 2,976</b>	<b>€ 9,405</b>	<b>€ 10,373</b>	<b>€ 6,306</b>
<b>Net Cash Flow</b>	<b>€ 11,976</b>	<b>€ 18,405</b>	<b>€ 19,373</b>	<b>€ 15,306</b>

<b>Strandhill Maritime Centre</b>						
<b>Labour Costs</b>						
	Hourly Rate	PRSI 10.75%	Total per Hour			
Manager	€ 15.00	€ 1.61	€ 16.61			
Staff 1	€ 12.50	€ 1.34	€ 13.84			
Staff 2	€ 12.50	€ 1.34	€ 13.84			
Year 1	No.	Hours per week	Weekly Gross	Weeks Worked	Annual Gross	
Manager	1	39	€ 648	52	€ 33,690	
Staff 1	1	10	€ 138	20	€ 2,769	
Staff 2	1	10	€ 138	20	€ 2,769	
<b>Total</b>					<b>€ 39,228</b>	
Year 2	No.	Hours per week	Weekly Gross	Weeks Worked	Annual Gross	
Manager	1	39	€ 648	52	€ 33,690	
Staff 1	1	20	€ 277	25	€ 6,922	
Staff 2	1	20	€ 277	25	€ 6,922	
<b>Total</b>					<b>€ 47,534</b>	
Year 3	No.	Hours per week	Weekly Gross	Weeks Worked	Annual Gross	
Manager	1	39	€ 648	52	€ 33,690	
Staff 1	1	39	€ 540	30	€ 16,197	
Staff 2	1	20	€ 277	25	€ 6,922	
<b>Total</b>					<b>€ 56,809</b>	
Year 4	No.	Hours per week	Weekly Gross	Weeks Worked	Annual Gross	
Manager	1	39	€ 648	52	€ 33,690	
Staff 1	1	39	€ 540	52	€ 28,075	
Staff 2	1	39	€ 540	25	€ 13,498	
<b>Total</b>					<b>€ 75,263</b>	

## Strandhill Maritime Centre

### Sales Projections

#### Shower and Changing Facilities

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
No of Users	12,500	13,750	15,000	16,000
Price per User	€ 2.00	€ 2.00	€ 2.00	€ 2.00
Revenue	€ 25,000	€ 27,500	€ 30,000	€ 32,000

#### Locker Hire

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
No of Users	17,500	19,250	21,000	22,400
Price per User	€ 1.00	€ 1.00	€ 1.00	€ 1.00
Revenue	€ 17,500	€ 19,250	€ 21,000	€ 22,400

#### Co. Sligo Surf Club

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
No of Members	250	300	330	350
Fee per member per year	€ 20.00	€ 20.00	€ 20.00	€ 20.00
Revenue	€ 5,000	€ 6,000	€ 6,600	€ 7,000

#### Surf School Contribution

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
No.of Schools	2	2	2	2
Revenue per School	€ 3,000	€ 3,000	€ 3,000	€ 3,000
Revenue	€ 6,000	€ 6,000	€ 6,000	€ 6,000

#### Hire of Social Space/ Meeting and Training Room

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Hours hired per week	12	16	20	24
€ per hour	€ 30	€ 30	€ 30	€ 30
Revenue	€ 18,720	€ 24,960	€ 31,200	€ 37,440

#### Other Revenue

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Vending Machine & Snack Sales	€ 15,000	€ 16,000	€ 18,000	€ 20,000
Merchandise / Books / Gifts	€ 12,500	€ 15,000	€ 16,500	€ 18,000
Booking Commissions	€ 900	€ 1,300	€ 1,500	€ 1,750
Tourism Businesses Rental of Space	€ 5,000	€ 6,000	€ 6,000	€ 6,000
Advertising Wall	€ 5,000	€ 5,500	€ 6,000	€ 6,500

**TOTAL REVENUE** € 110,620 € 127,510 € 142,800 € 157,090

<b>Assumptions</b>				
<b>Surfing Visitors</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>
Annual Surf School Customers	20,000	22,000	24,000	26,000
Independent Surfer Visitors	5,000	5,500	6,000	6,000
<b>Total Surfing Visitors</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>27,500</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>32,000</b>
% using Showers	50%	50%	50%	50%
% Using Lockers & Changing	70%	70%	70%	70%
<b>Co. Sligo Surf Club</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>
No. of Members	250	300	330	350
Usage fee per member per year	€ 20.00	€ 20.00	€ 20.00	€ 20.00

<b>Visitor Numbers</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>
Shower / Changing and Locker Hire	19,500	21,450	23,400	24,960
Co. Sligo Surf Club Members	3,000	3,600	3,960	4,200
Training / Meetings and Events	3,120	4,160	5,200	6,240
Other Visitors and Users	41,600	43,680	45,864	48,157
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>67,220</b>	<b>72,890</b>	<b>78,424</b>	<b>83,557</b>

<b>Strandhill Maritime Centre</b>			
<b>Capital Investment Requirements</b>			
			Fixtures and
	Buildings	Equipment	Fittings
Building	€ 904,335		
Equipment		€ 20,000	
Fixtures and Fittings			€ 50,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 904,335</b>	<b>€20,000</b>	<b>€50,000</b>
Depreciation % per annum (straight line)	0%	20%	10%
Annual depreciation	€ -	€ 4,000	€ 5,000