

# Dublin Mountains Way Vision

Orientation & Animation Analysis

## 1. THE PROJECT

### INTRODUCTION

Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority, have appointed The Paul Hogarth Company (Landscape Architects and Urban Designers) along with Storyline (Interpretation Planners) to identify potential opportunities to enhance the visitor experience of the Dublin Mountains Way and to develop a vision for the trail that demonstrates this potential. The scope of potential opportunities is focused on orientation (how visitors can find and access the trail) and other aspects that help animate and bring the trail to life for people (signage, interpretative or storytelling material, ways to engage the user along the way). A vision for the trail will help to demonstrate these opportunities and can underpin proposals for potential future investment.

This project will review how the Dublin Mountains Way trail is performing from a visitor perspective (both local and international) and what the key opportunities might be to enhance the experience for all users. The long-term goal is to develop a shared vision that guides how the experience of the Dublin Mountains can be improved over the coming years, ensuring that visitors can orientate themselves easily, better understand, and enjoy the area in a sustainable and responsible way.

Fáilte Ireland's Regional Tourism Development Strategy (RTDS) for Dublin represents a 10-year vision for the sustainable development of tourism in the county, together with a 5-year strategy to guide the achievement of that vision. It identifies the elements required at a strategic level to unlock the commercial potential of Dublin, while exceeding the expectations of our visitors, protecting the environment and enhancing the lives of local communities.

Fáilte Ireland are keen to explore potential improvements that would enhance the overall experience of the Dublin Mountains Way, and of the nearby looped walks, for locals and visitors alike. The Dublin RTDS commits to the development of a five-year Destination and Experience Development Plan (DEDP) to unlock the sustainable tourism development potential of the Dublin Mountains. This project will help establish the potential of the Dublin Mountains Way and the looped walks as part of the DEDP.

To develop this project and to understand the area, the input and insight of the communities who live in, walk in, work in, and care for the area will be valuable. It is essential that we hear the local perspective in relation to developing a vision for the trails. This consultation process is an open forum to raise any issues, opportunities, or concerns regarding the current Dublin Mountains Way trail, or any potential changes, with the consultants.

### PROJECT ROADMAP

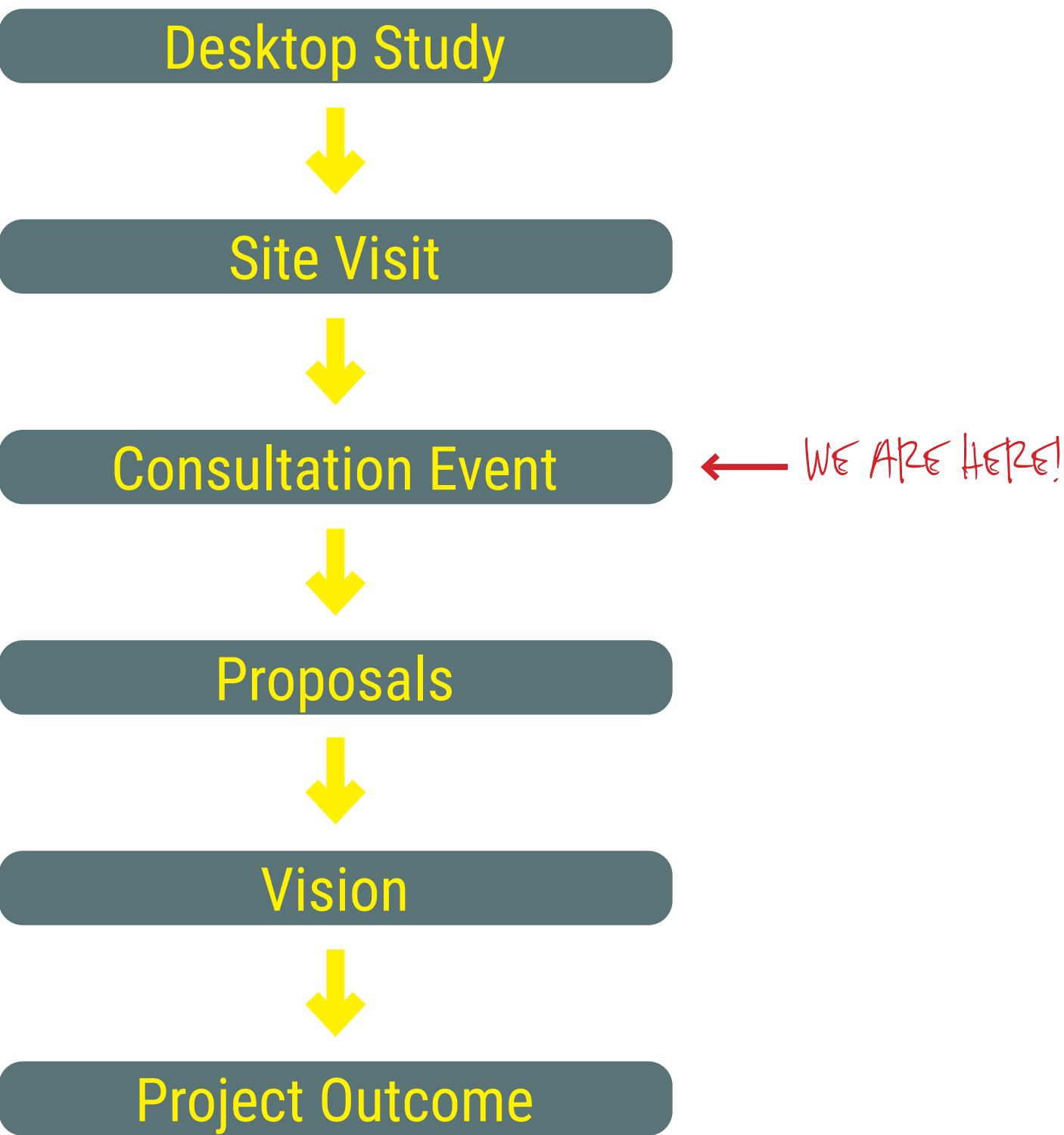


Image 1: View over Dublin Bay from Fairy Caste and Two Rock, Ticknock.

### The Dublin Mountains Way



Illustration 1: The Dublin Mountains Way in context of Dublin



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## 2. THE DUBLIN MOUNTAINS WAY

### WHAT IS THE DUBLIN MOUNTAINS WAY AND WHERE IS IT?

The Dublin Mountains Way, Slí Shléibhte Bhaile Átha Cliath, is a waymarked long-distance walking trail that crosses the Dublin Mountains from Shankill in the east to Tallaght (Sean Walsh Park) in the west, passing through South Dublin and Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown county council areas.

The trail was opened in October 2010 and is managed by the Dublin Mountains Partnership.

It passes through a number of current recreational sites including Rathmicheal, Carrickgollogan, Barnaslingan, Ticknock, Tibbradden, Cruagh Woods and Bohernabreena Reservoir and borders Montpelier Hill, Massey’s Estate and Kilmashogue.

Throughout the trail there are a number of features that showcase the history and heritage of the area such as Henry Chichester Hart and William Connolly of Castletown House who have influenced the mountains and the natural environment that makes this place special.

### Could you tell us...

- 1. Were you aware of the Dublin Mountains Way before this consultation event?
- 2. Do you walk the Dublin Mountains Way?
- 3. If you walk the Dublin Mountains Way, how far do you walk normally?

**Dublin Mountains Way**  
Start/End: Shankill  
Start/End: Tallaght  
Distance: 42.6km  
Elevation Gain: 1,252m  
Route Type: Point to Point  
Level: Hard

Did you know?

...that the Dublin Mountains Way is 14 years old?

... that the Dublin Mountains Way overlaps with the Wicklow Way?

... how close the Dublin Mountains Way is to the city centre of Dublin?



Image 2: The Dublin Mountains Way board walk at Tibbradden to protect the sensitive landscape.



Image 3: Trail section at Ticknock on the ascent.



Image 4: Landscape restoration through woodland planting at Featherbed Forest.



Image 5: The Dublin Mountains Way on-road walking section.

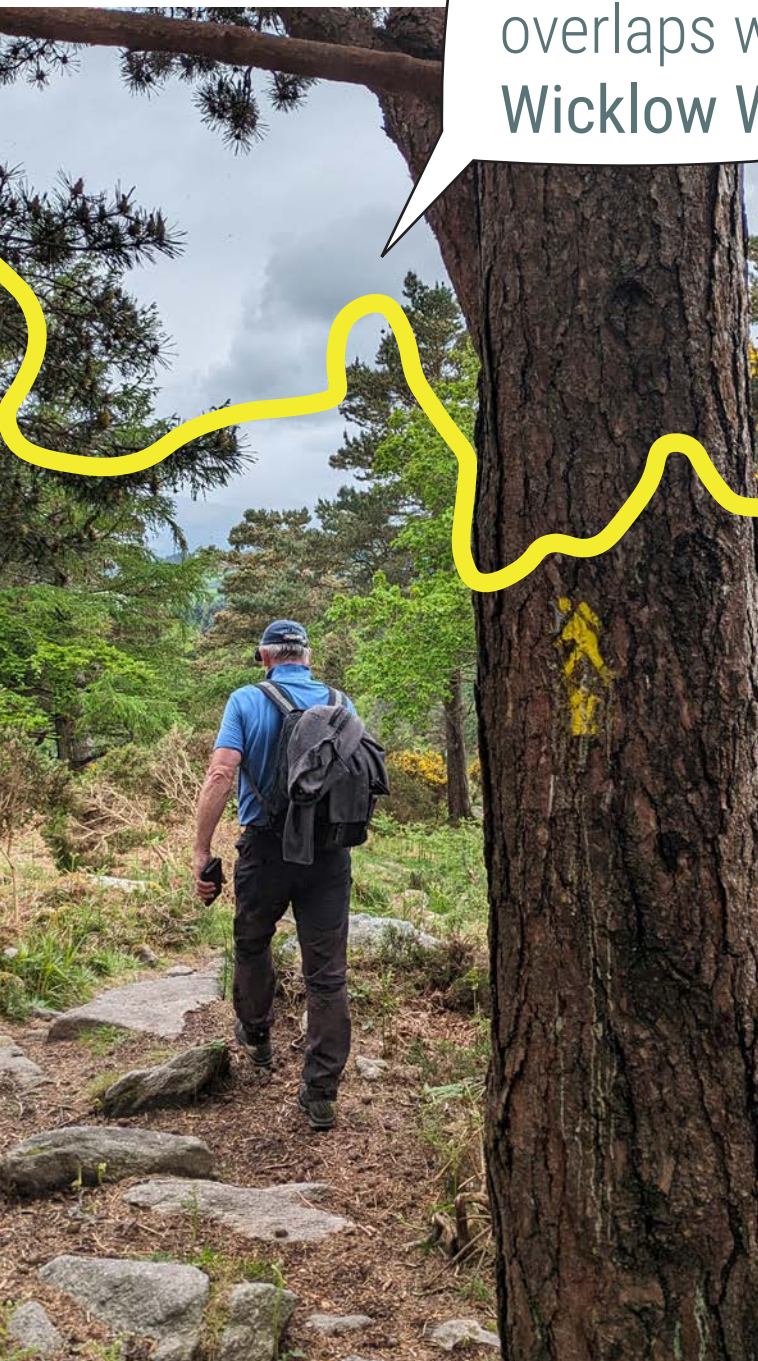


Image 6: Trail section through Barnaslingan Forest.



Illustration 2: The Dublin Mountains Way on and off road analysis illustration.

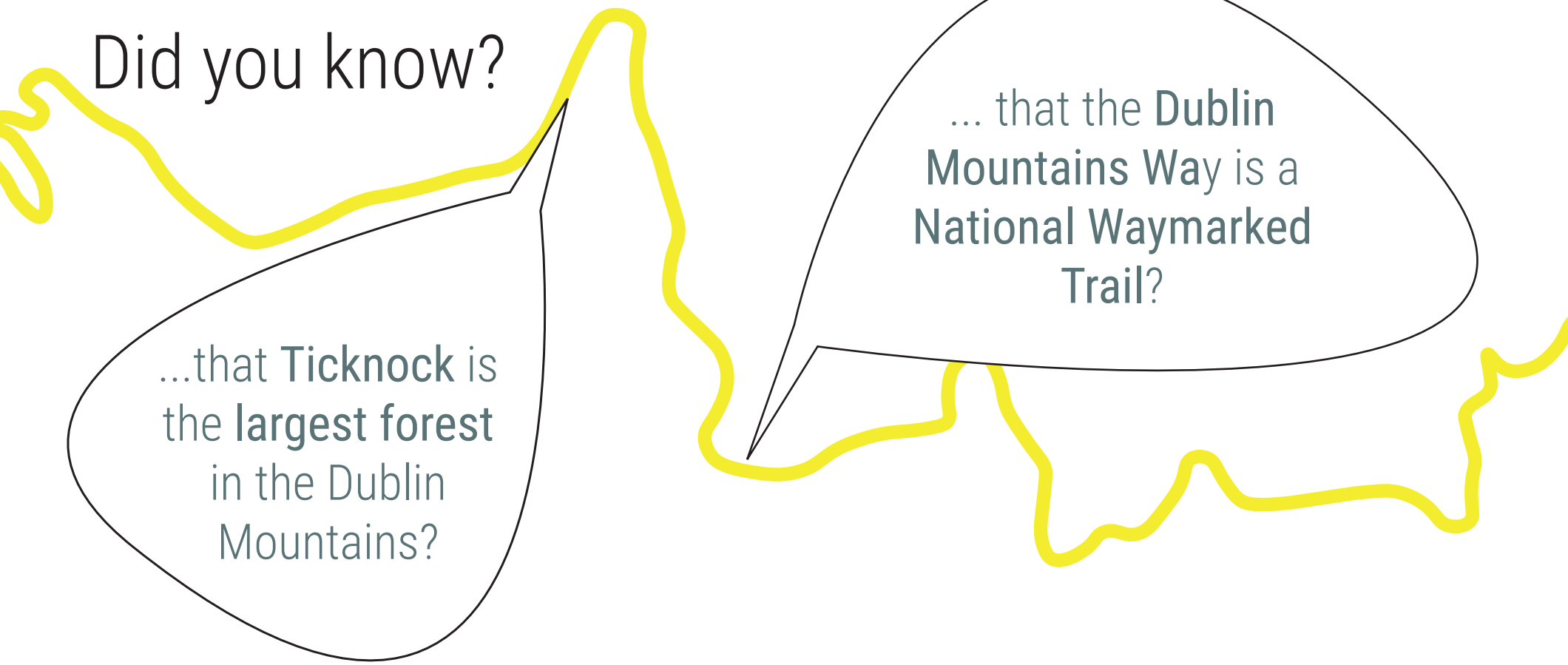


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## 3. THE EXPERIENCE

We have captured our experience and observations from walking the Dublin Mountains Way on this page, and our discussions with representatives from Dublin Mountains Partnership, Coillte, South Dublin County Council, and Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council.



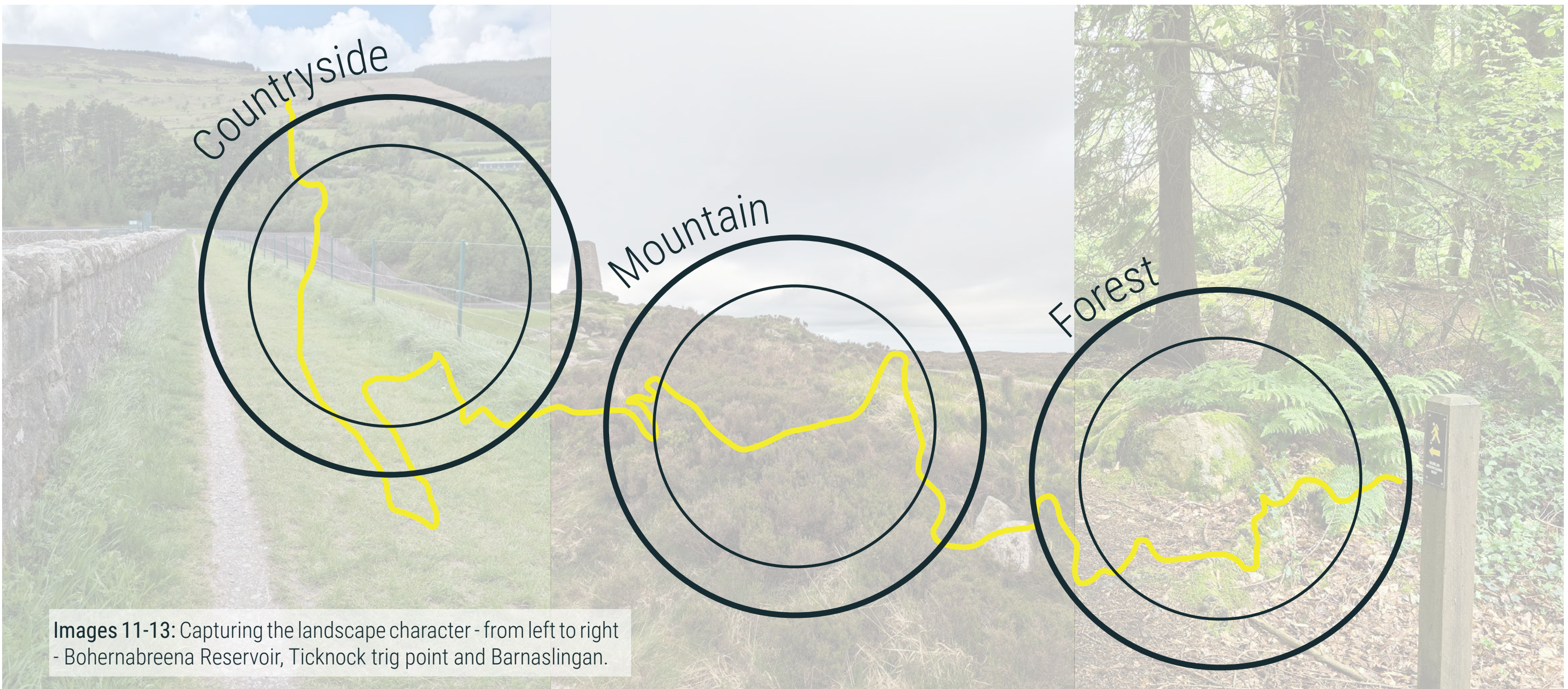
### Could you tell us...

4. What do you like the most about the Dublin Mountains Way?
5. If you bring children to walk the Dublin Mountains Way (or any of the looped walks), what is there currently for them to engage with?
6. Do you think that the orientation signage along the Way is sufficiently comprehensive?
7. Do you think that mapping and interpretation signage could be improved?



### KEY FEATURES

Along the extent of the Dublin Mountains Way, there is a number of significant features that showcase how the landscape has evolved over time. They are also the setting for many of the key stories that make the mountains so interesting to the local community and visitors. Many of these sites are sensitive environments due to their natural or built heritage and it is important to protect them for future generations as well as sharing them with local and international visitors.



### CHARACTER

Upon walking the full route of the Dublin Mountains Way, we feel that the route is divided naturally into 3 sections by its landscape character. This includes a rural countryside feel with hedges, walls and grass verges, an upland (but not quite mountainous!) character and an area of more enclosed and shaded forest. This variety is a positive aspect of the Dublin Mountains Way and it could be said there is something for everyone and a reason to visit more than once.



### SIGNAGE

Signage plays a big role in the accessibility and enjoyment of an experience for visitors. It helps with planning a visit, creates reassurance once there and promotes further exploration. The Dublin Mountains Way is a well way-marked trail from an orientation perspective. At key trailheads mapping and general information exist but the accessibility of maps, text and image content could be improved to engage and motivate visitors about what there is to experience and explain the range of opportunities to explore. Along the route interpretation and engagement opportunities are sparse.



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## 4. THE EXPERIENCE

This Page outlines some of the other aspects of the Dublin Mountains which directly interact with the Dublin Mountains Way

### Could you tell us...

- 8. Have you completed any of the looped walks?
- 9. Do you take part in any activities on the Dublin Mountain Way, other than walking?



Illustration 5: Map showing the main recreational sites and looped walks in relation to the Dublin Mountains Way.

### LOOPED WALKS

Across the entirety of the Dublin Mountains Way, the long distance walking route interacts with a number of recreational sites and looped walks. These looped walks vary in distance and grades and each one offers a different experience, and often one that is more accessible and engaging than the long distance route that they spur off from. They provide a more mountainous character and include some of the most impressive sites and viewpoints.

Did you know?



Images 19-22: Different looped trails and features that are not directly on the Dublin Mountains Way, from left to right - Carrickgollogan, Mountpelier Hill, Cruagh Woods and Massey's Estate.

... that over **600,000** people visit the Dublin Mountains a year?

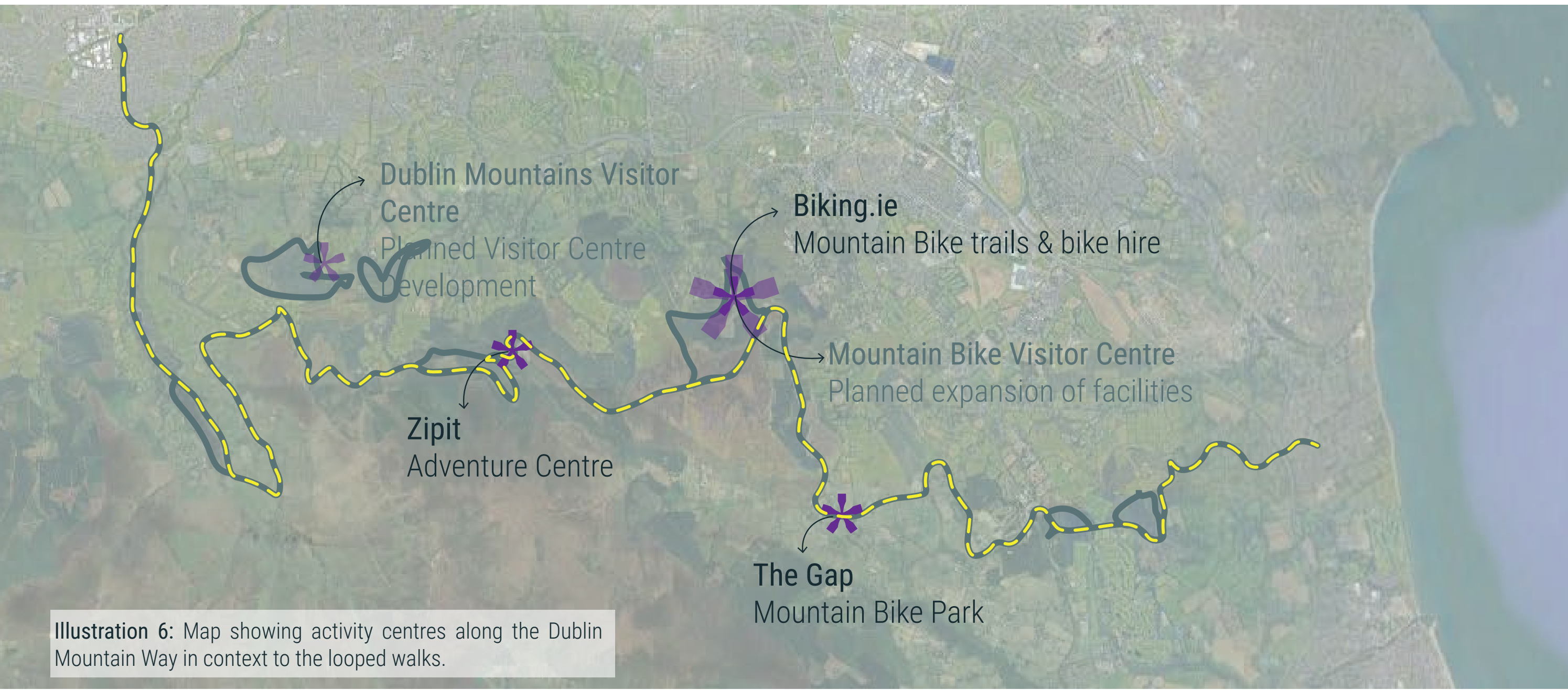


Illustration 6: Map showing activity centres along the Dublin Mountain Way in context to the looped walks.

### ACTIVITIES

It is clear that the Dublin Mountains has many recreational activities, from walking (various distances and grades) to mountain biking and outdoor adventure centres. These are a focus for the existing infrastructure which exists along the Dublin Mountains Way including car parking, toilets and opportunities for refreshments. Having these activity hubs located throughout the Dublin Mountains is a brilliant asset but it also presents a challenge in integrating walking activities with faster and high adrenalin pursuits along trails

- Existing activity hubs
- Proposed activity hubs
- Dublin Mountain Way



Images 23-25: Online images of activities within the Dublin Mountains.



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## 5. THE EXPERIENCE

This Page outlines the important role that events and management of the Dublin Mountains Way play in the experience that visitors have.

### Could you tell us...

10. Have you been to any events in the Dublin Mountains?

11. Are there events or activities you would like to see in the Dublin Mountains?

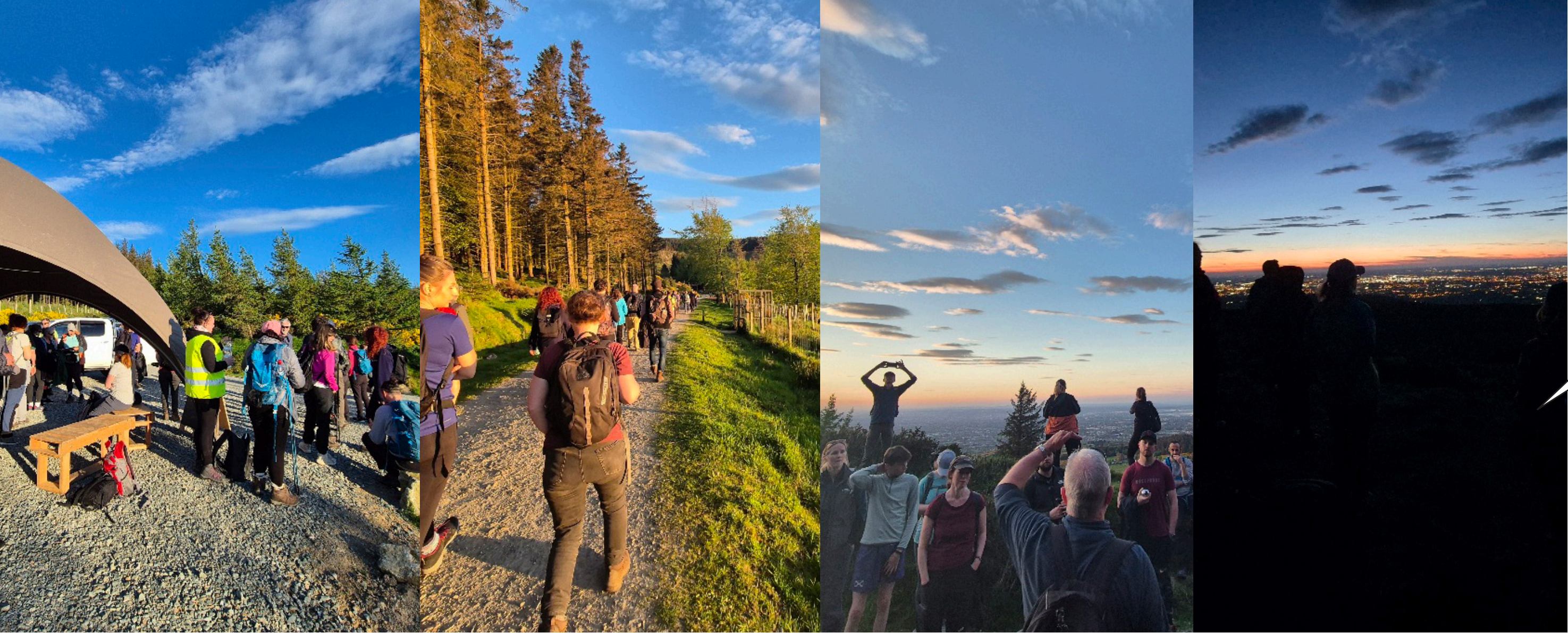


#### EVENTS

The Dublin Mountains plays host to a number of events throughout the year, from group walks to educational sessions and engagement opportunities for locals and visitors. These are managed and curated by the Dublin Mountains Partnership and based on our review are a unique and amazing aspect of the trail and the area. Guided tours and events are often the best way to give visitors an immersive experience and engage people with what is special and the sensitivities of a place. They have proven successful on a sustained basis in the Dublin Mountains and bring life to the landscape and heritage.

### Did you know?

...that the majority of the guided tours are free and open to everyone?



Images 30-33: Photos taken from the Dublin Mountain Festival in May 2024.



Illustration 7: The Dublin Mountains Way within context of Dublin City Centre and surrounding areas.



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## 6. YOUR DUBLIN MOUNTAINS

### WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS?

This page outlines how you can engage in this process of reviewing the Dublin Mountains Way and help inform potential opportunities. This includes new ideas, things that need fixed and things that should stay the same!

With our review of the current situation almost complete we want to hear if you agree with our initial findings and hear your views about YOUR Dublin Mountains. This may include your stories, your memories and what the mountains mean to you.

Please help us in understanding the local perspective, by filling in the questionnaire and letting us know what you think.



Please scan this QR code to fill out our questionnaire.



Images 34-36: Vast views from the Dublin Mountains, from left to right - Carrickgollogan, Montpelier Hill and Ticknock.

### NEXT STEPS

Once we have integrated your feedback into our analysis we will outline the opportunities to make positive change where appropriate and present this as a vision to help guide future decision making.

### Could you tell us...

- 12.What type of stories would you like to hear more of about the Dublin Mountains?
- 13.What do the Dublin Mountains mean to you?
- 14. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the Dublin Mountains Way that we haven't already covered?



Illustration 8: The Dublin Mountains Way and the Wicklow Way with context of Dublin.