

January 13th, 2017

Notice Of Meeting

You are invited to attend the Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee meeting to be held on **Monday, 16th January 2017** at **5:00 pm** in the **Boardroom District Council Offices Monaghan Row Newry.**

Chair: Cllr R Burgess

Vice: Cllr D Curran

Members: Cllr T Andrews

Cllr N Bailie

Cllr P Brown

Cllr W Clarke

Cllr S Ennis

Cllr G Hanna

Cllr H Harvey

Cllr T Hearty

Cllr D McAteer

Cllr B Quinn

Cllr M Ruane

Cllr G Stokes

Cllr Tinnelly

Agenda

1) Apologies and Chairmans remarks.

2) Declarations of Interest.

3) Action Sheet - ERT Committee Meeting December 2016. (Copy enclosed)

[Item 3 - ERT Action Sheet - Dec 2016.pdf](#)

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Enterprise, Employment and Regeneration Items

4) NI Business Start Programme. (NIPSP). (Copy enclosed)

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5) Marine Task Force. (Copy enclosed)

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Tourism, Culture and Events Items

6) International Ice Swimming Association Bid. (Copy enclosed)

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7) Allocation of Mooring Licence for Newcastle Harbour. (Copy enclosed)

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8) Lighting of Holm Oak. (Copy enclosed)

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9) Sea Flag 2. (Copy enclosed)

10) Holiday World Dublin 2017. (Copy enclosed)

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11) Kilbroney Cafe. (Copy enclosed)

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12) Derrymore Partnership. (Copy enclosed)

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For Noting

13) Tour of 'In the Footsteps of St Patrick' exhibition to the State Archaeological Museum Warsaw. (Copy enclosed)

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14) Merchant Town Project. (Copy enclosed)

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15) Development Plan - Tourism Issues. (Copy enclosed)

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16) Mourne Mountain Gateway Study. (Copy enclosed)

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17) Grow Your Horizons Programme. (Copy enclosed)

Item 17 Rpt re Grow Your Horizons Programme.pdf

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18) Green Tourism Programme. (Copy enclosed)

19) Actions Tracking Update. (Copy enclosed)

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**20) Correspondence from Transport NI re Newry City NSM Corridor A1
Belfast to Dublin Road Safety Improvements. (Copy enclosed)**

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Invitees

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Cllr John Trainor	john.trainor@nmandd.org
Cllr William Walker	william.walker@nmandd.org
Mrs Marie Ward	marie.ward@downdc.gov.uk

ACTION SHEET – ENTERPRISE REGENERATION & TOURISM COMMITTEE – MONDAY 12 DECEMBER 2016

AGENDA ITEM	SUBJECT	DECISION	FOR COMPLETION BY DIRECTOR – including actions taken/date completed or progress to date if not yet completed
ERT/191/2016	Coastal Communities Fund	(a) Advance the Coastal Communities Fund application to Stage 2 of the process (b) The Council to go to tender for the appointment of a delivery agent, if successful at Stage 2 of the process.	Ongoing
ERT/192/2016	St Patrick's Festival Parade 2017	(a) Council Officials to examine the possibility of providing assistance for the production, development and delivery of the St Patrick's Day Festival Parades within the Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism Departmental structure and establish if the necessary assistance can be provided 'in house'. (b) A report to be tabled at the ERT Committee Meeting in January 2017.	Officers considering ways to address the issue in line with how legacy DDC delivered the Parade in Downpatrick. Ongoing.
ERT/193/2016	Policies Down County Museum Accreditation	To approve the following policies for the Down County Museum Accreditation application: Collection Development Policy Documentation Policy Collections Care and Conservations Policy Access Policy Environmental Sustainability Policy	Complete

ERT/194/2016	Armstrong Hut Ballykinler Camp	<p>(a) To approve the development of initial plans and to seek costs for the project to reconstruct an Armstrong Hut from Ballykinler Camp at Down County Museum in order that should funding become available from Peace IV, or an alternative source, the project can proceed.</p> <p>(b) Progress reports regarding the project to reconstruct an Armstrong Hut from Ballykinler Camp at Down County Museum, be tabled at the Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting in due course.</p>	Ongoing
ERT/195/2016	Tourism Travel Trade Opportunities	Council to host part of a drinks reception for ITOA in January 2017 at a cost in the region of £4,000.	Ongoing
ERT/196/2016	Tourism Strategy 2017 - 2021	<p>(a) To adopt the Tourism Strategy 2017-2021.</p> <p>(b) To consider the Summary Action Plan for 2017/2018 and agree the review of the ERT Directorate Business Plan in early 2017.</p> <p>(c) To arrange an official launch of the Tourism Strategy in early 2017.</p>	<p>Actioned</p> <p>This will be completed and submitted in February to ERT</p> <p>Launch date confirmed as 21 February.</p>
ERT/197/2016	Land at Slieve Croob – Walking Trails	(a) No further action be taken by Council regarding the development of walking trails and acquisition of land in Slieve Croob, until such times as the study being carried out by ORNI regarding a community trails plan for Slieve Croob and Mourne DEA, is completed.	ORNI anticipate that a final draft of the report will be available by the end of January/early February for consideration by the

		(b) An update report regarding the development of walking trails in Slieve Croob to be tabled at a future meeting of the ERT Committee.	Countryside Officers. Full report to be tabled at future Committee meeting
ERT/198/2016	DOE Environment Fund – Ring of Gullion	To accept and return the Letter of Acceptance form from NIEA in respect of an offer of funding from the Environment Fund for 2017/18 for Strangford Lough, Lecale & Down Coast AONB, Ring of Gullion LPS nad Ring of Gullion AONB.	Grant Acceptance form signed and posted to NIEA
ERT/199/2016	NI Chamber Membership	The Council join NI Chamber of Commerce for an initial 12 month period with review thereafter.	Work in progress
ERT/200/2016	Overseas Results for Newry Mourne & Down District Council Area	The Council enter into an Agreement with Overseas Results Ltd to run a programme of export sourcing for 20 companies in the Newry Mourne & Down District Council area.	Work in progress
END			

Agenda Item:	
Report to:	Enterprise Regeneration and Tourism Committee
Subject:	Northern Ireland Business Start Programme (NIBSP) – New Go For It Programme: 2017 - 2020
Date:	Monday 16 th January 2017
Reporting Officer:	Marie Ward Director Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism
Contact Officer:	Jonathan McGilly Assistant Director of Enterprise Regeneration and Tourism
Decisions Required To note the content of the report and recommendation at section 3.0	
1.0	Purpose and Background As agreed previously by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, an 11 Council collaborative funding bid was submitted to the ERDF Investment for Growth & Jobs Programme (2014-2020) for the delivery of a Northern Ireland wide business start-up programme (NIBSP). The application for the programme was submitted in 2015. Invest NI have completed their assessment and the NI Business Start Up Programme has now been approved by Invest NI who are now in a position to issue a Letter of Offer for the programme.
2.0	Key Issue On the basis of previous approvals through Council, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council have signed the Legal Agreement with all other 11 Councils, and will proceed to sign the Letter of Offer which has been received in draft form. Once the Letter of Offer has been signed, the procurement for the required delivery agents will commence.
3.0	Recommendation To Note that Newry, Mourne and Down District Council have received and signed a Legal Agreement for the NI Business Start Up Programme, and will also accept and sign the associated Letter of Offer to be received from Invest NI, in line with the details of the programme as outlined under Option 1 of the project assessment, and detailed in the Legal Agreement.
4.0	Resource Implications (for the 3 ½ year programme) Total Cost of the Programme to Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is as below. This budget is in place through the 'transfer of functions' budget. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1: £81,132 • Year 2: £69,689 • Year 3: £67,333 • Year 4: £36,507
5.0	Equality and good relations implications This programme has an open door policy to all applicants and meets all of the criteria.
6.0	Appendices N/A

Report to:	ERT Committee
Date of Committee Meeting:	16 January 2017
Subject:	Recommendations from NM&D DC Marine Task Force Working group – 19 th December 2016
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Marie Ward – Director ERT
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Caroline Nolan –Manager SLLP

1.0	Purpose and Background:
1.1	The NM&D DC Marine Task Force Working Group met on 19 th December 2016. Recommendations listed in paragraph 2 are presented for Committee consideration. DAERA Consultation on EU Bathing Waters in NI 2017
2.0	Recommendations for consideration by Committee:
2.1	Newry, Mourne and Down District Council should respond to the DAERA consultation to support the designation of Kilclief and Ballyhornan as EU Bathing Waters as proposed by DAERA and seek to have Killough reconsidered for designation in 2017. Draft attached
2.2	The Council should allocate resources to the designated sites to cover the one off capital costs of signage and the ongoing annual costs of £540. The Council should keep the H&S requirements at these sites under review, including the potential requirement for lifeguards.
2.3	The Council should pursue the potential for using community lifeguards and volunteers at these sites and other amenity beaches.
2.4	Community engagement with communities in Kilclief, Ballyhornan and Killough wrt litter collection and shore activities should be included in the AONB Management Action Plan
3.0	Appendices
	NMDDC Marine Task Force proposal in relation to EU Bathing Waters and draft response to the DAERA Consultation

Appendix 1

NMDDC Marine Task Force proposal in relation to EU Bathing Waters and draft response to the DAERA Consultation

Proposal:

Newry , Mourne and Down District Council should support the designation of Kilclief and Ballyhornan as EU Bathing Waters as proposed by DAERA and seek to have Killough reconsidered for designation in 2017. Cost implications have been identified for council consideration and associated resources should be allocated.

The Capital cost is £3,000 for information panels and this has been submitted in the 2017/18 Capital budget by SLLP .

The ongoing annual costs to meet the legislative requirements are £540

If the Council wishes to introduce lifeguards as an additional safety measure then the annual costs increase to £12,540.

The Council has access to extensive integrated coastal management expertise within the Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership Office and related community engagement work in Kilclief, Ballyhornan and Killough should be prioritised within the AONB Action Plan to make best use of existing resources.

The MTF have drafted a response to the DAERA consultation on behalf of the Council – below:

David Steele
Marine and Fisheries Division
DAERA

David.steele@daera-ni.gov.uk

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Response to DAERA Marine and Fisheries Division Consultation Document – 2017 Review of Bathing waters in Northern Ireland.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council nominated Kilclief, Ballyhornan and Killough as EU Bathing waters to recognise existing and historic usage of these sites for bathing and to ensure that government maintains a high standard of water quality at these sites into the future. This nomination has strong support from the related communities who have campaigned over the past two years.

DAERA have put forward Kilclief and Ballyhornan as candidate EU Bathing Waters but not Killough, as the DAERA usage survey over the past bathing season found that it did not reach the required usage levels. NMDDC queries these findings which are at odds with local opinion.

We request that DAERA reconsiders the designation of Killough as a Bathing Water as it has a long tradition of use by the public, there is evidence to show that it is widely used and there is strong support for its designation. Moreover, its proximity to Killough and the related infrastructure means it has the potential for future development as a centre for bathing and water sports contributing to the local economy. The Council has sponsored a number of events on the beach at Killough which attracted over 100 people.

Please find attached evidence provided by local people on the use of the beach over the past year and letters of support from many different groups. (To be supplied) We appreciate, however, that you may be required to base your decisions on the Department's findings and if that is the case then **we request that you re-survey Killough in the coming summer** while proceeding with the designation of Kilclief and Ballyhornan in time for the 2017 bathing season.

The Council welcomes the proposed designation of Kilclief and Ballyhornan as EU Bathing Waters, but seeks clarification with respect to the beach at Ballyhornan.

The Council notes that under the legislation there is not a requirement for the operator ie the council to own the beach, only the adjacent access. Under the legislation "bathing water operator" means "*any person who controls the land immediately adjacent to a bathing water which is normally used to access the bathing water from the landward side and where the bathing water is tidal, the person who controls such land above the high water mark;*"

At Ballyhornan the beach is owned by DAERA / NIEA, while the council owns and manages the adjacent car park and picnic facilities. **Our understanding is that the Operator's ie the Council's, only requirement relevant to managing the actual beach would be to ensure that it is kept free from litter.** We would propose to do this through regular community led clean-ups and checks, working with local

volunteers. **All other aspects of the ownership and responsibility for the beach would remain with the owner ie DAERA / NIEA. Please clarify that this is the case.**

The council will ensure at both sites that:

- Relevant Bathing Water signage is erected and maintained in the council owned car park
- That weekly updated information on water quality provided by the Department will be posted on site
- That litter bins will be provided and emptied as required during the bathing season . Bins are currently monitored daily over the summer and emptied as required. Some new bins have recently been installed and there is appropriate provision at each site.
- The proposal is that beach litter clean-ups will be carried out 4 times per year through local volunteers organised by Council / SLLP staff and with the council collecting the bags – a service we currently provide for volunteers throughout the district.
- Liaising with local communities to organise at least 4 clean-ups per year and to provide the recommended monitoring and communication will require a staff resource estimated at approximately 3 weeks equivalent of staff time and travel costs, estimated at £1500 per year. This is potentially a role for SLLP staff if it is included in the AONB Management Plan and identified as a priority action.
- The council will implement the recommendations of the RNLI's beach safety assessment (attached) and will ensure that appropriate safety information and equipment is on site.

Our understanding is that under the Bathing Water legislation there is no requirement to clean the beaches of seaweed.

Please clarify if there are any other requirements relevant to the Council under the legislation.

The Council is aware that if these beaches became the focus of a campaign to substantial increase usage (especially numbers of people at peak times) as a tourism asset then this in turn could create a need for additional facilities and a reassessment of safety requirements which could require lifeguards, toilets, increased parking, traffic assessment etc. There could also be environmental concerns if the human pressure on the environment became too great.

The Council will therefore be taking a balanced approach and the current priority is to meet the needs of existing usage for the health and well-being of people locally and also the local economy through existing levels of visitors.

RNLI Suite of Recommendations at Kilclief and Ballyhornan

- Complete centre disk on Public Rescue Equipment (PRE) housing regarding reference points
- Update signage to meet national guidelines – 2 new signs required. (*These will describe the area, point out dangers on the beaches, such as, hidden rocks and strong currents, and they will also carry updated water quality information from DOE.*)
- Ensure unique location codes on existing signs are linked to the emergency services
- Review Public Rescue Equipment (PRE) to ensure it meets new national guidelines
- Consider creating a register and system for checking the existing PRE
- Record incident statistics and visitor/activity numbers for future analysis –
- Ensure suite of standard and local operating procedures are in place for all activities performed or managed
- Participate in National Beach Safety working group
- Provide beach safety information to targeted groups such as school groups and Tourist Information Centres
- Establishing volunteer codes of practice – *this will be associated with engaging local people in coastal clean-ups and general monitoring.*
- Review byelaws to manage potential activity conflict
- Use National Water Safety forms for recording of incidents and actions.
- Consider adding Killclief and Ballyhornan beaches to the beaches ni website

The RNLI further recommended that the following additional reports are undertaken:

- Signage recommendations report
- Public Rescue Equipment (PRE) recommendations report – part of wider NMDDC operation.

We look forward to hearing from you and understand we will be able to continue to liaise with you after 3 February to clarify any outstanding issues before designation.

Agenda Item:	
Report to:	Economic Regeneration and Tourism Committee
Subject:	IISA World Championship 2019
Date:	16 January 2017
Reporting Officer:	Marie Ward
Contact Officer:	Michelle Boyle
Decisions Required 1.The Council to provide a letter of support to the Camlough Lake Water Festival (CLWF) to host the International Ice Swimming Association (IISA) World Championships 2019 in Newry Canal or at Camlough Lake. 2. ERT and AHC department will work in partnership with CLWF Festival to facilitate this project	
	Purpose and Background Camlough Lake Water Festival are submitting a bid to host the International Ice Swimming Association (IISA) World Championships 2019 in Newry Canal or at Camlough Lake. The event will take place in January 2019 over a 5 day period The estimated entry numbers are: World championship – 150 competitors representing 28+ countries Ice Sprint championship 300+ competitors representing 28+ countries As a dry run for the event it is proposed to run the National Championship in 2018. The Estimated cost for the world championship is £120,000 – £150,000 with the National Championship estimated at £12,000
2.0	Key Issues The bid to host will be made by Camlough Lake Water Festival in partnership with the Council To support the event costs An application will be made by the partners to ERASMUS+ Programme for Sport Erasmus+ is the European Programme for education, training, youth and sport for the period 2014-2020. The deadline for applications is 6 April 2017. The ERT and AHC department will work jointly with Camlough Lake Water Festival to facilitate this project
3.0	Recommendations 1.The Council to provide a letter of support to the Camlough Lake Water Festival (CLWF) to host the International Ice Swimming Association (IISA) World Championships 2019 in Newry Canal or at Camlough Lake. 2. ERT and AHC department will work in partnership with CLWF Festival to facilitate this project
4.0	Resource Implications Funding submissions to be made
5.0	Equality Assessment All necessary consideration will be taken account in the overall proposal and project
6.0	Appendices N/A

Report to:	Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism
Date of Meeting:	16 January 2017
Subject:	Allocation of Mooring Licence for Newcastle Harbour
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Marie Ward Director Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Michelle McKeown Assistant Tourism Development Officer

Decisions required:

Approval for suggested 3 yearly process to be carried out in 2017 and continued for 2018 and 2019.

Mooring charges for 2017 to be approved and approved on a yearly basis thereafter on a basis of a 5% increase per annum.

No pontoon provision at Newcastle Harbour during the summer.

1.0	Purpose and Background:
1.1	<p>Council have agreed to allocate moorings at Newcastle harbour on a 3yearly basis.</p> <p>Process The process will be that all existing Harbour users will be informed of the new process and asked to indicate what mooring they would like to have for the next 3 years – 20 Feb 2017</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advert in local newspapers – week beginning 27 Feb 2017 • Application process - drop in day Friday 10th March 2017 at Warrenpoint Town Hall - for accepting applications, insurance and payment from each boat owner for 2017. <p>2018 and 2019 will be an Admin process for accepting up to date Insurance and payment as the moorings will remain the same.</p> <p>Mooring charges for Newcastle Harbour. Attached proposed charges for 2017 for approval</p> <p>Provision of pontoon during summer months. The pontoon that was used for the Skiffies is not available for use at Newcastle harbour as it is hoped to be used at another location.</p>
2.0	Key issues:
2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The annual process is a lengthy and time consuming and would prove more efficient to operate on a 3 year basis • The process of issuing moorings causes issues annually with the first come basis and the mooring allocated- this will dealt within in Year 1 • Provision of pontoon – disability group have requested this item.

3.0	Recommendations:
3.1	<p>Approval for suggested 3 yearly process to be carried out in 2017 and continued for 2018 and 2019.</p> <p>Mooring charges for 2017 to be approved and approved on a yearly basis thereafter on a basis of a 5% increase per annum.</p> <p>No pontoon provision at Newcastle Harbour during the summer.</p>
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	NA
5.0	Equality and good relations implications:
5.1	At this stage it is considered there are no equality or good relations issues to consider.
6.0	Appendices
	Proposed Charges for 2017

NEWCASTLE HARBOUR MOORING PRICES

2016

Feet	Metres	2016 Price	PROPOSED 2017 CHARGE 5% INCREASE
5 feet	1.524	£13	£14.00
6 feet	1.8288	£16	£17.00
7 feet	2.1336	£18	£19.00
8 feet	2.4384	£21	£22.00
9 feet	2.7432	£23	£24.00
10 feet	3.048	£26	£27.00
11 feet	3.3528	£28	£29.00
12 feet	3.6576	£32	£34.00
13 feet	3.9624	£34	£36.00
14 feet	4.2672	£37	£39.00
15 feet	4.572	£39	£41.00
16 feet	4.8768	£42	£44.00
17 feet	5.1816	£44	£46.00
18 feet	5.4864	£47	£49.00
19 feet	5.7912	£49	£51.00
20 feet	6.096	£53	£56.00
21 feet	6.4008	£55	£58.00
22 feet	6.7056	£58	£61.00
23 feet	7.0104	£60	£63.00
24 feet	7.3152	£63	£66.00
25 feet	7.62	£65	£68.00
26 feet	7.9248	£68	£71.00
27 feet	8.2296	£70	£74.00
28 feet	8.5344	£74	£78.00
29 feet	8.8392	£76	£80.00
30 feet	9.144	£79	£83.00
31 feet	9.4488	£81	£85.00
32 feet	9.7536	£84	£88.00
33 feet	10.058	£86	£90.00
34 feet	10.363	£89	£93.00
35 feet	10.668	£91	£96.00

Commercial Boats

Feet	Metres	2016 Price	PRPOSED 2017 CHARGE
16 feet	4.8768	£58	£61.00
30 feet	9.144	£58	£61.00
31 feet	9.4488	£58	£61.00
32 feet	9.7536	£58	£61.00
33 feet	10.058	£66	£70.00
34 feet	10.363	£66	£70.00
35 feet	10.668	£66	£70.00
36 feet	10.973	£66	£70.00
37 feet	11.278	£75	£79.00
38 feet	11.582	£75	£79.00
39 feet	11.887	£75	£79.00
40 feet	12.192	£83	£87.00

NB: Please note that the length of the boat in feet will be rounded.

Report to:	Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism
Date of Meeting:	16 January 2017
Subject:	Floodlighting of Holm Oak Tree at Kilbroney Park, Rostrevor
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Marie Ward
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Michelle McKeown

Decisions required:	
To consider the below report and provide a recommendation as how to proceed.	
1.0	Purpose and Background:
1.1	<p>Council have received a request to floodlight the Holm Oak Tree at Kilbroney Park, Rostrevor, which has recently been awarded the Northern Ireland Tree of the Year.</p> <p>Quotation has been sought to carry out this work which would cost in the region of £3,292.00+ Vat</p> <p>Works would include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Digging and reinstatement of a trench from the Mini Pillar at the back of the road side stone wall to the new floodlight position. (Reseed by council in the 2017 planting season) 2. Supply and installation of additional switchgear in the existing Mini Pillar as required. 3. Supply and installation of swa supply cable from the Mini Pillar to the Floodlight location (trial sitings on site to gain maximum covering of uniquely shaped tree) 4. Supply and installation of suitably sized floodlight c/w protective galvanised wire guard and concrete base. <p>Running Costs:- Based on standard tariff the floodlight running costs would be less than one pound per twenty four hours.</p>
2.0	Key issues:
2.1	<p>2 options for consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Floodlight the Holm Oak Tree - Don't floodlight the Holm Oak Tree <p>If tree is to be floodlighted please note this will incur an additional electricity charge of approx. £1 per day.</p> <p>No other trees in Kilbroney Park are floodlighted.</p> <p>Is this a permanent or a short term arrangement.</p>

3.0	Recommendations:
3.1	Council currently have no budget available to progress therefore no action recommended
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	Additional cost to install lights Additional running costs No budget available in this current financial year
5.0	Equality and good relations implications:
5.1	Good relations implications – Tree has won the title of the Northern Ireland Tree of the Year and will go forward to be included in the European Tree of the Year Competition.
6.0	Appendices

Report to:	Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee
Date of Meeting:	16 January 2017
Subject:	Union Priority 4 (SEAFLAG)
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Marie Ward, Director
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Margaret Quinn, Project Development Manager

Decisions required:	
To note the contents of the report and approve the recommendation at point 3.	
1.0	Purpose and Background:
1.1	Officers have recently held meetings with officials from DAERA Fisheries Unit to progress the delivery of the new SEAFLAG programme, now titled Union Priority 4. Indicative funding of 2.7 M Euros, representing 75% EU funding and 25% National funding, will be available to stimulate economic activity in fishing dependent communities. The issue of BREXIT has been addressed and DAERA has confirmed that the Priority Union 4 projects will have until 2022 to complete spend.
2.0	Key issues:
2.1	As with SEAFLAG 1, DAERA will advertise for a delivery agent to deliver the programme. It is expected that a call will be made in late January 2017. Council will need to complete and submit a bid to deliver the funding programme by the end of February. In order to submit a bid Council will be required to procure some consultancy assistance to develop the strategy and to undertake necessary consultation. This work will be at risk but will be eligible for reimbursement by DAERA.
3.0	Recommendations:
3.1	That approval be given to officers to submit a bid to DAERA to deliver the new round of funding and also that approval be given to procure the necessary consultancy work.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	It is anticipated that consultancy costs will be in the region of £5,000 and officer time to develop proposals will be required.
5.0	Equality and good relations implications:
5.1	All EU programmes must recognise Section 75 legislation.
6.0	Appendices
	N/A

Agenda Item:	Holiday World 2017
Report to:	Economic Regeneration and Tourism Committee
Subject:	Council attendance at Holiday World 2016
Date:	16 January 2017
Reporting Officer:	Marie Ward
Contact Officer:	Michelle Boyle

Decisions Required	
1. Any Councillors who wish to have a rota on the stand to advise M McKeown	
1.0	<p>Purpose and Background</p> <p>The Council as part of its Marketing Activities will be attending the Holiday world, Belfast & Dublin promotions</p> <p>Details are as follows Belfast – 20 – 22 January</p> <p>Dublin - 27 – 29 January</p>
2.0	<p>Key Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will have staff allocated to each day of the shows • Tourism businesses will be offered the opportunity on a first come first service basis • The Council will be taking a wide range of print • To encourage visitors to the stands a competitions with a prize will be offered which assists with data collection for future marketing and helps promote local businesses
3.0	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>As per decisions required</p>
4.0	<p>Resource Implications</p> <p>Cost of stand and staff attendance included in Councils marketing budget</p>
5.0	<p>Equality Assessment</p> <p>No issues</p>
5.0	<p>Appendices</p> <p>N/A</p>

Agenda Item:	
Report to:	Economic Regeneration and Tourism Committee
Subject:	Kilbroney Park Café
Date:	16 January 2017
Reporting Officer:	Marie Ward
Contact Officer:	Michelle Boyle

Decisions Required

1. To advertise the licence for the renewal of the café for a period of 3 years
2. To provide a new licence agreement to the existing café operator to operate the café from 1 February 2017 – 30 September 2017 to facilitate the procurement exercise to complete
3. To undertake a valuation to establish a Licence Fee reflective of the current market for the licence period 1 February 2017 – 30 September 2017

1.0	Purpose and Background The current licence at Kilbroney Park has expired and a procurement exercise is require to provide a new licence
2.0	Key Issues The Council intends, as per its requirements in terms of procurement, to carry out a procurement exercise in respect of Kilbroney café. It is recognised that it will not be possible for the Council to complete this procurement within the timescale of the notice period to the existing tenant therefore approval is sought for the existing tenant to have use of the property for the delivery of catering facilities at the Park from 1 st February 2017 - 30 th September 2017. Any such Licence will be subject to terms and conditions to be agreed between the parties. A valuation will require to be carried out to establish a Licence Fee reflective of the current market value
3.0	Recommendations As per decisions required
4.0	Resource Implications Revenue cost of advertising. Generate income for the licence
5.0	Equality Assessment All necessary consideration will be taken account
6.0	Appendices N/A

Agenda Item:	[This is the number the item will be given]
Report to:	Enterprise Regeneration and Tourism Committee
Subject:	Derrymore Estate
Date:	16 th January 2017
Reporting Officer:	Marie Ward, Director Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism
Contact Officer:	Jonathan McGilly

Decisions Required

To note the contents of the report and recommendation at Section 3

1.0	<p>Purpose and Background</p> <p>Update: Council are continuing to work with National Trust (site owners) and Friends of Derrymore toward the regeneration of Derrymore Estate for the recreational benefit and enjoyment of the local communities.</p> <p>This 3-way Partnership has identified a potential funder (SEUPB: Shared Space and Services) for the development of pathways / trails. The fund will support the development of green space which is for recreational use, by the local community.</p>
2.0	<p>Key Issue</p> <p>SEUPB will close for Stage 1 Applications on 25th January 2017. Council is currently preparing cost estimates for the trail development project. The maximum grant available is £120,000, with a match funding requirement. A match funding requirement from Council will be approx. £140,000 in 2017/2018 if the application is successful.</p>
3.0	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council to submit an application for Trail facility development to SEUPB before the stage 1 deadline of 25th Jan 17, and if successful at stage 1, to progress a stage 2 application by the relevant deadlines.
4.0	<p>Resource Implications</p> <p>SEUPB Shared Space and Services funding is offered at 100% cost</p>
5.0	<p>Appendices</p> <p>N/A</p>

Report to:	Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee
Date of Meeting:	16 th January 2017
Subject:	Tour of 'In the Footsteps of St Patrick' exhibition to the State Archaeological Museum, Warsaw
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Marie Ward, Director, ERT
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Michael King, Museum Curator, Down County Museum

Decisions required:	
Committee is asked to note the invitation from the State Archaeological Museum, Warsaw to tour Down County Museum's EU PEACE III funded exhibition 'In the Footsteps of St Patrick' to Poland in 2017.	
1.0	Purpose and Background:
1.1	The purpose of this report is to inform Committee of the invitation from the State Archaeological Museum, Warsaw, to tour Down County Museum's 'In the Footsteps of St Patrick' exhibition to Poland in 2017 (Appendix 1).
1.2	The 'In the Footsteps of St Patrick' exhibition was produced in phase 2 of the Museum's EU funded PEACE III programme in 2014 and has been displayed at the St Patrick Centre and Down County Museum during 2015-16. The display was produced in English and Polish in order to engage with the Polish community and consists of 12 large pop-up panels (2m x 2.5m). The exhibition features dramatic images of local Early Christian sites such as Saul Church and Down Cathedral, and is now in storage.
1.3	Down County Museum and the State Archaeological Museum, Warsaw, have run an exhibition exchange programme over 10 years, with exhibitions of treasures of prehistoric and medieval Poland being loaned free of charge to Down County Museum in 2007 and 2013 respectively.
1.4	Down County Museum's bilingual 'Megaliths of Northern Ireland' exhibition, produced in phase 1 of the PEACE III programme, has been on display in 8 Polish venues since 2011, and features local monuments such as Legananny Dolmen and Ballynoe Stone Circle. The display has been seen by over 98,000 people during its 5-year tour of Polish museums (Appendix 2).
1.5	The tour of the 'In the Footsteps of St Patrick' exhibition to the State Archaeological Museum has been planned as the fourth project in the successful exchange programme, which has seen many cultural and community benefits for both partners.
1.6	The State Archaeological Museum will open the exhibition on St Patrick's Day 2017 and will publicise it widely in the city and further afield. Warsaw has its own Church of St Patrick and Ireland's patron saint is well known in Poland. Newry Mourne and Down District Council will be credited in all publicity.
2.0	Key issues:
2.1	The costs of transporting the exhibition to Poland will be covered by the State Archaeological Museum, Warsaw, and there will therefore be no cost to the Council.
2.2	The State Archaeological Museum will tour the exhibition to other venues free of charge after its initial showing in its temporary exhibition gallery. This exhibition has the potential to attract over 100,000 visitors over several years and will provide Tourism Ireland with a major opportunity to market Newry, Mourne and Down District to Polish audiences.
2.3	There is the potential to create the same exhibition with text in other languages in order to target other European markets through partnerships with museum and heritage

	venues.
3.0	Recommendations:
3.1	This report is for noting by Committee.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	The costs of transporting the exhibition to Poland will be met by the State Archaeological Museum, and there are no other costs to Council anticipated.
5.0	Equality and good relations implications:
5.1	The Museum has a track record of managing cross-community projects, programmes and activities and is active in maintaining good relations. This exhibition was produced using EU PEACE III funding and is designed to improve local and international relations with Polish people.
6.0	Appendices
6.1	Appendix 1: Letter dated 16 th December 2016 from Dr Wojciech Brzezinski, Director of the State Archaeological Museum, Warsaw, formally inviting the tour of the 'In the Footsteps of St Patrick' exhibition to Poland to open on 17 th March 2017.
6.2	Appendix 2: Letter dated 5 th December 2016 from Dr Wojciech Brzezinski, Director of the State Archaeological Museum, Warsaw, providing visitor figures for the touring exhibition 'Megaliths of Northern Ireland' between 2011 and 2016.



Państwowe Muzeum Archeologiczne

State Archaeological Museum
Poland

00-950 WARSZAWA 1, skr. poczt. 69, 00-241 WARSZAWA, ul. DŁUGA 52 - ARSENAŁ
tel. (48)(22) 50 44 800-centrala, (48)(22) 831 27 17-sekretariat, (48)(22) 831 51 95-fax, www.pma.pl, e-mail: pma@pma.pl

PMA-DYR-66-5-2016

Warsaw, 16.12.2016

Mike King
Museum Curator
Down County Museum
The Mall, English Street
Downpatrick BT30 6AH

Dear Dr King,

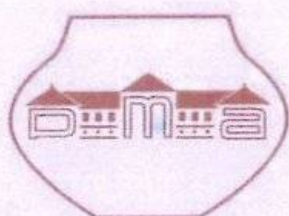
On behalf of the Państwowe Muzeum Archeologiczne w Warszawie I hereby invite the exhibition „In the footsteps of St Patrick” from Down County Musuem to be presented in our seat in 2017. I plan to launch the exhibition on 17th March 2017 and display it during next 3 months.

I going to organize a tour of the St Patrick exhibition in other museums in Poland.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely

DYREKTOR
Państwowego Muzeum Archeologicznego
w Warszawie
dr Wojciech Brzeziński



Państwowe Muzeum Archeologiczne

State Archaeological Museum
Poland

00-950 WARSZAWA 1, skr. poczt. 69, 00-241 WARSZAWA, ul. DŁUGA 52 - ARSENAŁ
tel. (48)(22) 50 44 800-centrala, (48)(22) 831 27 17-sekretariat, (48)(22) 831 51 95-fax, www.pma.pl, e-mail: pma@pma.pl

PMA-DYR-66-4-2016

Warsaw, 5.12.2016

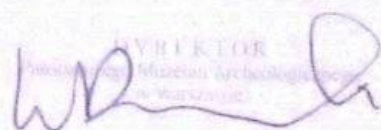
Mike King
Museum Curator
Down County Museum
The Mall, English Street
Downpatrick BT30 6AH

Dear Dr King,

I enclose herewith a list of venues of the exhibition „The Megaliths of Northern Ireland” in museums in Poland between 2011 and 2016.

- 1) State Archaeological Museum, Warsaw – 28.09.2011 – 10.04.2012 (52 568 visitors)
- 2) Jacek Malczewski Museum, Radom – 11.05 – 01.10.2012 (5 500 visitors)
- 3) Mazovia Museum, Płock – 01.10.2012 – 25.02.2013 (6 200 visitors)
- 4) Historical Museum, Przasnysz – 17.04 – 04.09.2013 (5 000 visitors)
- 5) Museum of Mińsk, Mińsk Mazowiecki – 17.09.2013 – 07.01.2014 (7 200 visitors)
- 6) Archaeological Museum, Gdańsk – 01.07. – 30.09.2014 (20 000 visitors)
- 7) Antoni hr. Ostrowski Museum, Tomaszów Mazowiecki – 12.01 – 09.03.2015 (600 visitors)
- 8) Stanisław Sankowski Regional Museum, Radomsko – 31.03. – 09.05.2016 (1000 visitors)

King regards
Yours sincerely


DYREKTOR
Państwowego Muzeum Archeologicznego
w Warszawie

dr Wojciech Brzezinski

Agenda Item:	
Report to:	Enterprise Regeneration and Tourism Committee
Subject:	Securing of funding for conservation of items for exhibition on local businesses – 'Merchant Town project'
Date:	12 th December 2016
Reporting Officer:	Marie Ward, Director Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism
Contact Officer:	Noreen Cunningham, Museum Curator

Decisions Required

To note the contents of the report and approve recommendations at Section 3

1.0	<p>Purpose and Background</p> <p>Newry and Mourne Museum is planning an exhibition scheduled to open on 24th May 2017 looking at the development of business and commercial life in the Newry and Mourne area.</p> <p>Newry has been known as a 'Merchant town' for hundreds of years, and since the Cistercian foundation in the 12th century, as a market town.</p> <p>In the 18th century Newry was more important than Belfast and one of the premier ports in Ireland. The Newry Canal completed in 1742, consolidated this supremacy.</p>
2.0	<p>Key Issues</p> <p>An application was made in November to the Northern Ireland Museums Council for conservation of 17 key artefacts for display in the exhibition. Grant assistance of £2,340 or 65% of the total cost has been secured.</p> <p>These items include original architectural plans of R. Foster, Hill Street Newry dated 1900, material from Quinn's of the Milestone, a poster from Sloan's shop, Kilkeel c.1900.</p>
3.0	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>That the above information be noted.</p>
4.0	<p>Resource Implications</p> <p>None – the remaining 35% is funded through the Museum's existing conservation budget.</p>
5.0	<p>Equality and Good Relations implications</p> <p>The exhibition will have a positive impact as it will look at a number of family run businesses from across the community and district.</p>
6.0	<p>Appendices</p>

Agenda Item:	
Report to:	Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee
Subject:	Newry, Mourne and Down Local Development Plan Preparatory Studies Paper 7: Tourism
Date:	16 January 2017
Reporting Officer:	Anthony McKay, Chief Planning Officer
Contact Officer:	Andrew Hay, Principal Planning Officer

Decisions Required

Note the content of this report.

1.0	<u>Purpose & Background</u>
1.1	A programme of preparatory work is being undertaken as part of the Local Development Plan (LDP) process. Preparatory studies are essential in providing the evidence base for preparing the Local Development Plan (LDP). A reliable and comprehensive evidence base is vital to informing and justifying the 'soundness' of the LDP documents (Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan) and to show how planning policies and proposals help to achieve the social, economic and environmental objectives for the plan area.
1.2	The SPR Committee is responsible for the Local Development Plan. All LDP papers are reported to the SPR Committee for noting or decision. All LDP papers will also be presented to the Planning Committee for noting. Depending on the subject matter, a LDP paper will also be presented to any other relevant Council Committee for noting.
1.3	Given this Committee's responsibility for Tourism, the purpose of this report is to present 'Paper 7: Tourism' for members consideration.
1.4	The paper provides members with an overview of matters relating to tourism in the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area, including the area's tourism assets and growth areas.
1.5	The paper builds on the existing evidence base and provides information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The regional policy context for tourism; • The key Government Department, agencies and other bodies with a role in tourism in Northern Ireland and their related strategies and plans; • An overview of tourism policy within the existing local area plans and masterplans; • An overview of the tourism base and growth areas in Newry, Mourne and Down; and • Key findings and conclusions.
1.6	Members are asked to note the content of this report. Any comments received will be considered. The paper will be subject to any changes considered necessary in response to any valid comments received at this or any other Committee to which it is presented.

2.0	<u>Key Issues</u>
2.1	'Paper 7: Tourism' informs members about tourism within the District, by providing information on the existing tourism infrastructure and current and proposed tourism initiatives. This will assist the Council in the development of the LDP.
2.2	The paper allows members to commence consideration of the priorities for formulating a sustainable tourism policy, in the context of planning and the LDP, to grow tourism in a manner which, in line with the Regional Development Strategy (RDS), balances the economic benefits of tourism with the environmental and social impacts.
2.3	Through utilising existing environmental, historical, cultural and geographic assets, tourism can be a key economic driver capable of stimulating further growth and development opportunities. Tourism can benefit the assets on which it depends for example through assisting in the financing of conservation or enhancement initiatives. In towns and cities, tourism can contribute positively to urban regeneration. In rural areas tourism is important to the development of the rural economy by offering, for example, opportunities for farm diversification.
2.4	Sustainable tourism development is brought about by balancing the needs of tourists and the tourism industry along with protecting the assets of the destination. This requires management and the land use planning system has a key role in managing tourism-related development through planning policies that provide a framework for identifying appropriate development opportunities and safeguarding tourism assets from harmful development.
2.5	The information gathered and the key findings will be used to inform the preparation of the LDP. The LDP will also take account of the Council's Community Plan and Tourism Strategy.
2.6	The LDP will contain policies to safeguard tourist assets, together with policies for tourism development such as tourist accommodation and amenity facilities, and the criteria for consideration of such proposals.
2.7	In accordance with the RDS, the LDP will promote a sustainable approach to the provision of tourism infrastructure to conserve, protect and where possible enhance the District's natural environment and built heritage.
2.8	Data gathered as part of this and other preparatory studies will be used to establish the baseline of the social, economic, and environmental characteristics of the plan area and enable the Council to identify the issues which need to be addressed by the LDP. Furthermore, it will provide a sound basis on which to formulate the plan strategy, policies and proposals within the LDP that will be subject to independent public examination.
3.0	<u>Recommendations</u>
3.1	Members are requested to note the content of this report.
4.0	<u>Resource Implications</u>
4.1	N/A
5.0	<u>Appendices</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper 7: Tourism



Comhairle Ceantair
an Iúir, Mhúrn
agus an Dúin

Newry, Mourne
and Down
District Council

**Local Development Plan
Preparatory Studies**

Paper 7: Tourism

January 2017

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Purpose: To provide Newry, Mourne and Down District Council with an overview of Tourism in the district including the area's tourism assets and growth areas and how this fits in the context of regional and local plans.

Content: The paper provides:

- i. An overview of the regional policy context for tourism.
- ii. Identification of Key Departments, Agencies and bodies with a role in tourism in Northern Ireland and their related strategies and plans;
- iii. An overview of tourism policy within existing local area plans and masterplans;
- iv. An overview of the tourism base and growth areas in Newry, Mourne and Down; and
- v. Key Findings and conclusions

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to inform members about tourism within the District, by providing information on the existing tourism infrastructure and current and proposed tourism initiatives. This will assist the Council in the development of the Local Development Plan (LDP). It also provides an overview of regional planning and policy context in relation to tourism and includes other Government policy objectives in relation to this key sector, namely; the NI Executives Programme for Government 2011-15 (PfG), the Economic Strategy (2012), the Draft Tourism Strategy (2010) and the Council's vision taken from its Corporate Strategy (2015-2019) in addition to the current Draft Community Plan and Draft Tourism Strategy. It also identifies a number of key Departments, agencies and bodies with a tourism role in Northern Ireland and provides an overview of their strategies and plans for the District.
- 1.2 The paper allows members to commence consideration of the priorities for formulating a sustainable tourism policy in the context of Planning and the LDP to grow tourism in a manner which, in line with the Regional Development Strategy (RDS), balances the economic benefits of tourism with the environmental and social impacts.
- 1.3 There was a downgrade to the global Travel & Tourism outlook for 2016, compared to the forecast reported in 2015, with direct Travel & Tourism Gross Domestic Product (GDP) now expected to grow by 3.3%. This is in line with macro economy revisions (the world GDP growth forecast for 2016 is down from 3.1% last year to 2.8% under current forecasts). Despite this downgrade, Travel & Tourism sector growth is still expected to outpace global economic growth for the sixth consecutive year.
- 1.4 Tourism statistics published by NISRA show that in the year to June 2016 visitors spent £789m in the NI local economy with 72% coming from external visitors - making tourism worth £571m as an export business. This is an increase of 5% in overall visitor spend when compared to the year to June 2015. Figures indicate that visitors have generally been staying longer and spending more leading to an increase in overall visitor expenditure in both the first half of 2016 and the year to June 2016. The increases in nights and spend have been driven by a continued increase in external visitors particularly from GB and overseas. Total visitor numbers fell slightly during January to June 2016 driven mostly by falls in domestic overnight trips.
- 1.5 Through utilising existing environmental, historical, cultural and geographic assets, tourism can be a key economic driver capable of stimulating further growth and development opportunities. Tourism can benefit the assets on which it depends for example through assisting in the financing of conservation or enhancement initiatives. In towns and cities tourism can contribute positively to urban regeneration. In rural areas, tourism is important to the development of the rural economy by offering, for example, opportunities for farm diversification.

- 1.6 The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) promotes sustainable tourism and defines this as: *"tourism that meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future"*. It goes on to state that: *"the objective of sustainable tourism is to retain the economic and social advantages of tourism development while reducing or mitigating any undesirable impacts on the natural, historic, cultural or social environment."*
- 1.7 Sustainable tourism development is brought about by balancing the needs of tourists and the tourism industry along with protecting the assets of the destination. This requires management and the land use planning system has a key role in managing tourism-related development through planning policies that provide a framework for identifying appropriate development opportunities and safeguarding tourism assets from harmful development.

2.0 Regional and Local Policy Context

(a) Programme for Government 2011-2015 (PfG)

- 2.1 On 12 March 2012, the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) published the Programme for Government: Building a Better Future. Included within the key commitments and strategic priorities set out for the Assembly term 2011 to 2015 is a key commitment to increase visitor numbers from 3.2 million to 4.2 million and tourist revenue to £676 million by December 2014. Through various Government Department Strategies, frameworks have been put in place to achieve the aims underpinning the PfG, which is to grow a sustainable economy, invest in the future, tackle disadvantage, improve health and wellbeing, protect people and the environment, build a strong and shared community and deliver high quality services. The Government therefore recognises the potential of the tourism industry to deliver significant economic growth in the future.
- 2.2 A draft PfG 2016-2021 was published on 28 October 2016 and was out for consultation until 23 December 2016. It recognises the economic importance of tourism and the huge growth potential in the tourism and hospitality industry. One of the key indicators is 'to improve our attractiveness as a destination' and will be measured by the 'total spend by external visitors'.
- 2.3 Aligned with the PfG the former Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) published the 'Economic Strategy: Priorities for Sustainable Growth and Prosperity' on 13th March 2012. The Strategy sets out the economic vision including a framework for growth and key priorities for growth and prosperity.
- 2.4 The Strategy reaffirms the PfG and includes developing the potential of the tourism industry through focusing investment on strategically significant areas and developing the quality of the visitor experience. The Strategy sets a collective goal for the sector to double the income earned from tourism by 2020.
- 2.5 DETI also published a draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020 which is outlined in section 4 of this paper.

(b) The Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)

- 2.6 The Regional Development Strategy 2035 was published in March 2012. It provides an overarching strategic planning framework to facilitate and guide the public and private sectors and ultimately shall influence Council decisions and investments for years to come. The RDS aims to protect and enhance the environment for current and future generations. It recognises that Northern Ireland's environment is one of its greatest assets which benefits in terms of the economy and quality of life. All new plans and planning policies must take account of the RDS. The following Regional Guidance (RG) in the RDS is relevant to this paper:
- 2.7 RG 4 – Promote a sustainable approach to the provision of tourism infrastructure by:
- Promoting a balanced approach that safeguards tourism infrastructure while benefiting society and the economy;
 - Improving facilities for tourists in support of the Tourist Signature Destinations, including The Mournes and the St. Patrick and Christian Heritage Trail, as identified in the former Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment's draft Tourism Strategy 2010;
 - Encouraging environmentally sustainable tourism development.
- 2.8 RG 11 – Conserve, protect and, where possible, enhance our built heritage and our natural environment – which are key assets for attracting tourism and would continue to make a valuable contribution to our Tourism economy, as well as to the wider environment and society.
- 2.9 The spatial framework of the RDS identifies The Mournes, Strangford Lough and Coast and the Ring of Gullion as Strategic Natural Resources. It identifies Newry as a main hub and as the South Eastern City gateway due to its land border with the ROI and the major port of Warrenpoint which it has potential to cluster with. It also has potential to cluster with Dundalk given that both are located on the Belfast-Dublin corridor.
- 2.10 The RDS also recognises Downpatrick as a key tourism centre of regional significance due to its historical and archaeological interest largely connected to St Patrick. It notes it has potential to cluster with Newcastle which, with its surrounding natural landscape, has year round activity based tourism opportunities for walking, climbing, fishing, cycling and golf. However, it notes that Newcastle's location positioned between 2 Special Areas of Conservation, the Eastern Mournes and Murlough National Nature Reserve means that any development in and around the town needs to take account of the potential environmental impact.
- 2.11 The RDS also recognises that the expansion of rural tourism and associated development that is both sustainable and environmentally sensitive should be encouraged as it can provide further jobs and opportunities in rural areas (SFG13).

(c) Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)

- 2.12 The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) was published on the 28th September 2015. The SPPS reduces 20 separate planning policy statements to one. This provides the policy on key issues including tourism.
- 2.13 The Regional Strategic Objectives for tourism are:
- Facilitate sustainable tourism development in an environmentally sensitive manner;
 - Contribute to the growth of the regional economy by facilitating tourism growth;
 - Safeguard tourism assets from inappropriate development;
 - Utilise and develop the tourism potential of settlements by facilitating tourism development of an appropriate nature, location and scale;
 - Sustain a vibrant rural community by supporting tourism development of an appropriate nature, location and scale in rural areas; and
 - Ensure a high standard of quality and design for all tourism development.
- 2.14 In preparing Local Development Plans (LDPs) the SPPS recommends that Councils should consider how best to facilitate the growth of sustainable tourism in their areas and bring forward a Tourism Strategy. This will be tailored to the needs and assets of their local area and informed by early engagement with relevant stakeholders. Such a strategy should reflect the wider Government tourism initiatives (e.g. Signature Destinations) and may address the following: how future tourism demand is best accommodated; safeguarding the key tourism assets; identification of potential tourism growth areas; environmental considerations; and contribution of tourism to economic development conservation and urban regeneration.
- 2.15 The SPPS states that policies to safeguard tourist assets will be contained in the LDP, together with policies for tourism development such as tourism accommodation, amenity facilities, and holiday parks, and the criteria for consideration of such proposals. There should be a general presumption in favour of tourism development within settlements.
- 2.16 In the countryside there is a need, in the interests of rural amenity, and wider sustainability objectives, to manage the level of new build for tourism purposes. The guiding principle should be to facilitate tourism development where it supports rural communities and promotes a healthy rural economy and tourism sector.

(d) Planning Policy Statements (PPSs)

- 2.17 Planning Policy Statement 16 Tourism (PPS 16) was published in 2013 and is the main planning policy document relating to tourism development. It aims to manage the provision of sustainable and high quality tourism developments in appropriate locations within the built and natural environment and shares the objectives of the

SPPS. PPS16 allows for: appropriate tourism development in settlements; tourist amenities in the countryside where it is in association with a particular tourism attraction or the activity itself requires a countryside location; hotel, guest house and tourist hostels in the countryside where it replaces an existing rural building or new build on the periphery of a settlement; major tourist development in the countryside in defined exceptional circumstances; and self-catering accommodation in a number of scenarios.

- 2.18 Due to the importance of our natural and built heritage assets in relation to the tourism industry both Planning Policy Statement 2 Natural Heritage (PPS 2) and Planning Policy Statement 6 Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage (PPS 6) are frequent key policy considerations in planning applications for tourism. Other Planning Policy Statements that provide scope for tourism development in the countryside are Planning Policy Statement 8 Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation (PPS 8) and Planning Policy Statement 21 Sustainable Development in the Countryside (PPS 21).

(e) Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Corporate Plan

- 2.19 The Council's mission as detailed in the Corporate Plan 2015-19 is to lead and serve a District that is prosperous, healthy, as well as sustainable from an economic, environmental and social perspective. The Council's responsibilities in relation to the environment will also play a key role in contributing to the tourism success of the District as well as making it an attractive place to live. The Corporate Plan recognises that the tourism potential is enormous in this district with three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in Strangford & Lecale, Slieve Gullion, and the Mourne, numerous Blue Flag beaches, and an unrivalled link to St Patrick. The Council's challenge is to increase visitor numbers, dwell time and spend as part of an overall economic growth plan.

- 2.20 The Corporate Plan places a strong emphasis on tourism with a key strategic objective being:

"By 2019 we will have become one of the premier tourism destinations on the island of Ireland". Achievement of this ambitious objective depends, not only on the Council, but also on a wide range of businesses, organisations and individuals within the local area, and on statutory agencies that operate in the area.

- 2.21 The Council's 'Economic Regeneration and Investment Strategy 2015-2020' identifies tourism as one of five integrated themes. The tourism objectives of this strategy are to become the destination of choice in NI, to become NI's premier outdoor/ adventure destination and to become one of NI's finest events destinations.

(f) Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Draft Community Plan 'Living Well Together'

- 2.22 Community Planning came into operation on 1st April 2015 as part of the full implementation of local government reform. The new duty of community planning requires councils as the lead partner to be responsible for making arrangements for

community planning in their areas and it requires statutory bodies to participate in the process. The Council, statutory bodies and local communities will develop and implement a shared vision for promoting the well-being of the area, promoting community cohesion and improving the quality of life of its citizens.

- 2.23 The Community Plan is to be the overarching strategic plan for integrated planning and delivery of services in Newry, Mourne and Down. It provides a framework for the other strategies and plans the Council will put in place to contribute towards the outcomes in the community plan and it is based on a detailed analysis of future risks and opportunities for Newry, Mourne and Down.
- 2.24 A key outcome for the draft Community Plan is that all people in Newry, Mourne & Down benefit from prosperous communities. The level of tourism revenue in the District has been identified as indicator for achieving this outcome with the level of overnight visitors, average spend per trip by visitors and hotel occupancy level being used to measure progress.
- 2.25 The Local Government Act (2014) introduced a statutory link between the community plan and a Council's Local Development Plan. The preparation of the LDP must take account of the community plan. It is intended that the LDP will be the spatial reflection of the community plan and that the two should work in tandem towards the same vision for a council area and its communities and set the long term social, economic and environmental objectives for an area.

(g) Newry, Mourne and Down Draft Tourism Strategy 2017-2021

- 2.26 The Council published its Draft Tourism Strategy for the District in December 2016. It is a 5 year strategy that sets out the strategic direction for the tourism industry within the District. The draft strategy aims to build upon the strengths and opportunities of the district and overcome the challenges by:
 - developing EPIC (Experiential, Personalised, Iconic and Immersive and Creative) moments,
 - Building a unified and entrepreneurial industry that is customer focused,
 - Ensuring the development of tourism is undertaken sustainably and contributes to the enhancement of social, cultural and environmental values.
- 2.27 The vision of the draft strategy is: By 2021 *'NMD is a premier, year-round mountain and maritime destination in Ireland recognised for its EPIC experiences in outdoor adventure, its rich tapestry of cultural heritage, myths and unique stories, and its authentic local life'*.
- 2.28 The strategic framework of the draft strategy seeks to target the GB and overseas market segments that are identified as the best prospects for international tourism growth at NI level and within NMD ie. the 'Culturally Curious', 'Great Escapers' and 'Social Engineers' with the development of the area as a 'destination under the headline of 'Mountains, Myths and Maritime'.

2.29 The Destination Experiences are:

- The Mourne- Gullion Experience- catalyst projects include applying to UNESCO for Geopark designation for Mourne, Slieve Croob AONB and Gullion AONB; Newcastle uplift facility to higher Mournes; Lift assisted access for mountain biking and expanding training facilities and capacity; The Newry Canal 'Blueway' opportunity to open the canal to small boats and canoes between Pontzpass and Lough Neagh (21miles); and connecting with the Great Eastern Greenway to link Newry and Carlingford (approx. 13.8miles).
- The Mourne Coastal Experience- catalyst projects include improving access to water and a focus on coastal flavours.
- Gateway Communities- the strategy recognises the role of towns and villages in the creation of the destination. It identifies Downpatrick, Newcastle, Newry, Warrenpoint/ Rostrevor and Crossmaglen as gateway and hub communities. It aims to build upon the existing masterplans for these communities (which, with the exception of Crossmaglen, are outlined in section 3 below). The draft strategy notes Crossmaglen is a strategic gateway into NMD from South Armagh and has a stronger association with the 'Story of Ireland' and its myths and legends than many other established destinations in NMD or indeed Ireland. It aims to continue to build the local arts, culture and heritage along with outdoor recreation and water based activities.

3.0 Area Plans and Master Plans

- 3.1 The Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 and the Banbridge/Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015 are the current statutory plans for the District and provide the framework against which to assess development proposals.

The Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 (ADAP)

- 3.2 The ADAP recognises the District has excellent growth potential which rests firmly on the beauty of the landscapes and variety of interests and heritage features to be enjoyed. One of the Plan's principal objectives was to encourage the development of the District's tourism potential however no specific plan policies with regards to tourism development were included. It refers to the signature projects of St Patrick/ Christian Heritage and The Mournes and identifies Strangford Lough as a growth opportunity. The principal attractions of the District were listed as follows:
- Strangford Lough/St. Patrick's country
 - The Lecale Coast
 - Slieve Croob and the Mourne Mountains

The Banbridge/Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015 (BNMAP)

- 3.3 The BNMAPs overall Tourism Strategy includes the promotion of the development of sustainable tourism. This means facilitating tourist development in suitable locations without adversely impacting on environmental and man-made assets

which attract tourists. The Plan has not generally sought to designate local policy areas for tourism as proposals for tourism development will be considered in accordance with the prevailing regional policies. The plan offers no specific plan policies with regards to tourism development in the area. It does however note cross border trade and shopping as a growth opportunity. It also notes development opportunity sites were identified to accommodate tourist and leisure facilities in towns.

- 3.4 Newry City and the five main towns within the District also have their own Town Centre Masterplans which were completed by the former Department for Social Development (DSD) in conjunction with the local government and concerned with urban regeneration initiatives in each respective town centre.

Downpatrick Masterplan

- 3.5 The Downpatrick Masterplan was published in July 2010. The Masterplan focuses on achieving the agreed vision for the town by 2030, which is that *"Downpatrick will be rejuvenated as an energetic, vibrant and forward-thinking Town in which all its residents can take pride. Its unique historic environment, particularly its early Christian heritage, will be leveraged and complemented by exemplary development, establishing Downpatrick as a special visitor destination. The Town and surrounding area will also take advantage of its natural setting. Its buildings, streets and spaces will be attractive, safe and friendly, providing a focus for community life and an attraction to the increasing numbers who visit"*.
- 3.6 The Masterplan states that Downpatrick has an immensely rich heritage and is also blessed with substantial qualities in its natural environment. As such it considers the Town to have enormous potential to become one of the leading tourist destinations in the UK and Ireland. However, it noted that analysis found that visitors stay for very short periods of time and do not explore the historic Town beyond the Cathedral and Saint Patrick Centre. The limited hotel accommodation in Downpatrick was identified and it was deemed necessary to address this to encourage longer visits from tourists. The evening economy was also noted as being in need of improvement.
- 3.7 The Masterplan states that tourism development will be comprehensively supported through the development of the Town's heritage offer as well as wider environmental, transport and retail developments. It intends that tourism should be the primary driver of the rejuvenation of the Town Centre. It recognises that making the most of the Town's rich cultural and historic assets to grow a sustainable visitor economy will be a challenge and it sets out an ambitious plan to achieve this.
- 3.8 The main proposals in the Downpatrick masterplan included:
 - A major new retail development in the Grove area to create a first class shopping environment in the heart of Downpatrick;
 - New people friendly streets to improve linkage throughout the town;
 - Continued support for public realm improvements and development opportunity sites;

- Redevelopment of the Gaol site for schools and a hotel;
- A Quoile River Country Park. This will introduce a network of walking and cycling links between key destinations such as St Patrick's Centre, the Mound of Down and Inch Abbey with wetlands, boardwalks, greenways and linear parks;
- An extension of Quoile wetland and open water;
- Protection and enhancement of the Downpatrick and County Down Railway (NI's only standard gauge heritage railway) with extended railway lines, and;
- A range of proposals to reduce traffic congestion to make the town centre more accessible.

3.9 The Masterplan also notes that Downpatrick is well situated within a wealth of tourism opportunities many of which are located within Newry, Mourne and Down district including the St Patrick's Trail, Strangford Lough and the Mourne Mountains. It recognises the potential to capitalise more fully on this location.

Ballynahinch Masterplan

- 3.10 The Ballynahinch Masterplan was published in October 2014. Like many towns and villages across Northern Ireland, Ballynahinch faces certain challenges such as difficult town centre trading, a lack of high quality public open space and town centre vehicular congestion. On the other hand, the strong sense of community, rich history, attractive main streets and wonderful surrounding landscape presents significant opportunities for this historic town.
- 3.11 The Masterplan was commissioned to help address these challenges and identify opportunities. It provides the format for taking a fresh look at the town in a holistic manner so that key aspects of its social, physical and economic character can be understood and appreciated.
- 3.12 Ballynahinch has a relatively limited tourism market. The pivotal focus of the town is the market square and market house which was built in 1795. A £2million Public Realm upgrade project completed in 2015 included the upgrade of the Square which plays a vital role within the Town.
- 3.13 Further development and expansion of the popular farmer's market provides an opportunity in tourism and food sectors and could attract more visitors and extend dwell time within the town with the promotion of the Town as a premier food destination. The evening economy within Ballynahinch is also somewhat limited.
- 3.14 The masterplan recognised the importance of conserving the built heritage and enhancing Ballynahinch's character. It identified the opportunity provided by the Drumlin landscape to provide public access and create a high quality parkland and a unique visitor attraction.
- 3.15 The main proposals included:
- Providing access to the Drumlins to create a high quality parkland and a unique visitor attraction,
 - Refurbish historic buildings and monuments such as the Old Mill and ruins of the Old Windmill and co-ordinate themed events from them.

- Bypass to reduce congestion,
- Develop and promote an events programme promoting the history of the Town (Battle of Ballynahinch, The historic market and the old railway) to increase footfall and potential spend.
- Improved public realm and frontage improvements,
- New street and river park
- LOTS (living over the shop) to increase vibrancy and occupancy, and;
- Proposes exploring the merit of designating a Town Centre Conservation Area.

Newry City Masterplan

- 3.16 The Masterplan for Newry was published in October 2011 and is a key reference for regeneration and development decisions relating to Newry City Centre over a 10 – 15 year period. It sets out short, medium and long term actions that will enable the City to achieve its aims and objectives. Tourism is key to a number of these including: realising Newry's potential as an international tourist destination as a hub to explore the wider area; capitalising upon its role as a gateway to the island of Ireland from the sea and to NI via its land border; keeping the city centre as vibrant as possible, and; sustaining its role as a retail destination.
- 3.17 It recognises that Newry's location and surrounding rich landscape is ideally suited to tourism. It has excellent transport connectivity with Belfast and Dublin (and their three airports) with both being accessible by road and rail within almost an hour. Warrenpoint Harbour immediately to the south is also becoming an increasingly important freight terminal (following the publishing of the masterplan the port has also been docked at by three cruise ships). While it is set within a particularly attractive landscape with the Mourne, Gullion and Cooley Mountain ranges all within close proximity, along with the dramatic Carlingford Lough a few kilometres to the south. It also notes that the city performs relatively well in retail benefitting from its cross border catchment area.
- 3.18 However, it also noted the city faces a number of challenges such as the survival of independent retail alongside high street chains, the successful accommodation of vehicles whilst maintaining environmental quality and the means by which to prevent its older buildings falling into disrepair.
- 3.19 The Masterplan proposals for the city centre included:
- Creating a world class waterfront by capitalising on the Clanrye river and the Newry canal that runs through the city centre. This was to include the re-opening of the Newry Canal to boat traffic as part of a national connection between Lough Neagh and Carlingford Lough with a view to bringing an influx of visitors and building upon the success of the canals towpath which is recorded as one of Ireland's most visited attractions;
 - Nurturing a unique, creative quarter for the arts and culture around the Town Hall, Basin Quay and the Arts Centre;
 - Regenerating Newry's primary streets including Hill Street and Abbey Way with public realm upgrades and improving the connections from attractions such as Bagenal's Castle and St Patrick's Cathedral with the rest of the city centre;

- Revitalising key areas through health and education at Monaghan Street and Upper Edward Street;
- Establishing a new network of city parks to include commissioning archaeological works at Heather Park with a view towards a potential tourist attraction based on its location on Gallows Hill where public hangings traditionally took place;
- Integrating the Buttercrane and the Quays into the city centre as evidence suggests visitors fail to visit other parts of the city centre, and;
- Developing a new flagship city quarter comprised of high-quality mixed-use development in the Albert Basin.

3.20 Other city wide proposals included:

- Developing a policy to afford a degree of protection to the setting of Newry's City Centre from inappropriate development given the visual prominence of the valley slopes;
- Newry super greenway to link the majority of Newry's neighbourhoods with each-other and the city centre, and;
- A number of initiatives aimed at reducing congestion in the city e.g the Southern Relief Road to link Warrenpoint Road and A1 bypass, city centre gateway car parks and additional signage.

South East Coast Masterplan

3.21 The Masterplan for the South East Coast was published in January 2013. It provides guidance on the future strategic development of the South East Coast as well as specific guidance on the location and form of development in the Town Centres of Newcastle, Kilkeel and Warrenpoint over the next 20 years.

3.22 The South East Coast Masterplan vision is *"to become an area with a strong national and international reputation for being a high quality coastal landscape of great scenic, natural, historic and leisure value; and an area that provides an enjoyable place to live, to work, to explore, and to play in"*.

3.23 The delivery of this statement is to be achieved by enabling the key towns of Newcastle, Kilkeel and Warrenpoint to collectively and individually embrace and prosper from their association with both their coastal setting and the wider character of the Mourne Mountains as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It takes account of the Mourne Coastal Trail which is part of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and former DETI's strategic approach to developing the Mournes as a signature destination and aims to develop a distinctive proposition for each of the centres to entice visitors.

3.24 The proposals included:

- In Newcastle, the plan proposes to build on the success of the new promenade by expanding the range of beachside activities available, showcasing local arts and crafts talents, introducing new play areas and establishing a programme of annual events; all of which will be designed to encourage overnight stays and extend the tourism season. It also notes the

development of the proposed 'Donard Gondola', as a premier tourist attraction will allow all visitors to explore and enjoy the Mourne Mountains.

- In Kilkeel, home to one of the largest fishing fleets on the island of Ireland, the plan proposes to promote the working harbour as an attraction for tourists to visit and experience the fish market for themselves. The redevelopment of the Nautilus Centre which incorporates a seafood cookery school, a maritime visitor attraction and tourist office will be complemented by the promotion and development of the profile of Kilkeel's seafood to international recognition. Creating a new improved state of the art play park and improved esplanade and access points to the beach will help to drive year round interest in the town.

The masterplan also references 'Sustainable Kilkeel 2020' that identifies new opportunities for fishing and engineering sectors. It states that developments in the fishing, renewable energy and aquaculture sectors should take account of Kilkeel as a centre for tourism and help the region develop as a centre for eco-tourism.

- In Warrenpoint, the plan seeks to promote and develop the town's reputation as a hub for watersports and activities, utilising its location on Carlingford Lough. Developing a marina would be a major attraction for the town as it would support boat trips and visiting cruise ships. While extending the promenade would link the Town Square and retail hub to the water's edge. The plan also seeks to revitalise the public spaces within the town centre, creating event space and making it more attractive, people friendly and less car dominated.

- 3.25 The town centre initiatives detailed in the Masterplan include shop front improvement schemes, retail performance programmes, development of vacant and derelict sites, introduction of town centre markets, restore projects, town centre revitalisation projects, urban development grants, vacant unit animation schemes, and a purple flag programme focusing on entertainment and hospitality.
- 3.26 The potential of the proposed Narrow Water Bridge to open up the entire South East corner for tourism was noted as significant while the potential for additional cross border tourism generated from plans for a new car ferry from Greencastle, Co. Down to Greenore, Co Louth was noted.

4.0 Departments, Agencies and Organisations with roles regarding tourism

(a) Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) now Department for the Economy (DfE).

- 4.1 The Department for the Economy is the key player in the formulation and delivery of economic development policy in terms of tourism in Northern Ireland as it hosts Tourism NI (trading name of the NI Tourist Board). In February 2010, it published 'A Draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020'. The aim was to provide strategic direction and targets for the development of NI's tourism experience to the year 2020 and a targeted Action Plan to deliver it. At the core of the strategy was the intention to grow income from visitor numbers with tourist revenue increased from £536 million in 2010 to £1 billion by 2020.
- 4.2 The Draft and associated Action Plan set out priorities for action under three pillars of People, Product and Places, and Promotion along with a cross-cutting theme of Partnership through a multi-stakeholder approach to lead and partner each action.
- 4.3 The Draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020 identified nine key tourism destinations, two of which are applicable to the District:
 - Mourne Mountains
 - Strangford Lough (St. Patricks Trail)

Each of these destinations also has a Management Plan. Both '*The Destination Mourne Mountains Management Plan 2013 – 2018*' and '*The Destination Strangford Lough Management Plan 2013 – 2018*' objectives are to maximise the potential to attract and encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more, by strengthening tourism performance and appeal across the whole of the plan areas.

- 4.4 The Draft Tourism Strategy for NI to 2020 was due to come into effect on 1st April 2011; however, it has not yet received clearance from the Executive due to the instigation of the Hunter Review- an independent review of the NI Tourist Board and wider tourism structures commissioned by DETI.
- 4.5 The Hunter Review was published in June 2014 which resulted in a rebranding of the NITB has since been rebranded to Tourism NI. The Review made a number of recommendations which fell into 3 themes:
 - i. Setting the strategic direction for tourism
 - ii. Building closer relationships within the tourism sector; and
 - iii. Closer alignment with Invest NI.
- 4.6 It was anticipated that Tourism NI will have a much greater presence at local level, developing strong relationships and increasing its knowledge of the needs of local tourism partners particularly in light of the recent changes in local government which has seen Councils assume increased powers and responsibilities for Community Planning and Local Development Plans, including local economic development. Collaborative working with the new Councils and the establishment of

strong partnerships are considered essential ingredients for Tourism NI in order to maximise the tourism potential of each of the 9 Key Tourism Destinations.

(b) Department for Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) now Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

- 4.7 Other Government Departments also play an important role in Tourism Development. DAERA is the overarching body responsible for the Forestry Service of NI and the Loughs Agency, each of which hold a role in the promotion of tourism in Northern Ireland through their management of important natural assets.
- 4.8 Forestry Service encourages access to, and the use of, forests within Northern Ireland, while at the same time protecting and conserving them and associated areas of special natural and heritage interest. Such uses include the sustainable use of timber but also includes maintenance of open access to forests for both recreational and tourism purposes.
- 4.9 DAERA also manage the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014 – 2020. The latest Rural Development Programme for Northern Ireland will run from 2014 – 2020 and a budget of up to £623 million has been agreed with the Northern Ireland Executive for its implementation. The RDP evaluates the current economic and social situation within the rural areas of Northern Ireland and as a result the document identifies key areas for support. One such area that is deemed worthy of support is the promotion of economic growth in rural areas by supporting rural businesses and rural tourism. This should be enabled by the observation and support of the following priorities as indicated in the RDP:
 - Encouraging farm diversification in rural areas as a way of stimulating further income generation. The incidence of diversification is considerably lower in NI (10%) than is the case for England where, using a similar definition, about 18% of farms were found to have some diversified activity in 2010 (Source: DARD 2007 EU Farm Survey).
 - Encouraging tourism in rural areas.
 - Increasing recreational access to woodland.
 - Help preserve the cultural and social uniqueness and beauty of rural villages.
 - Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.

(c) Department of the Environment (DoE) now Department for Communities (DfC) and DAERA.

-NIEA

- 4.10 The Department of the Environment (DoE) was responsible for the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) which has a role to play in regards to tourism given

their role in the protection of our monuments and built heritage which are important tourism assets. This responsibility has now transferred to DfC while others noted below have transferred to DAERA.

- 4.11 The District has more than 280 scheduled sites and monuments protected under planning policy for their historical value. In addition, there are 42 State Care Monuments that are maintained for both public amenity and conservation. Monuments and sites in both urban and rural environments are a tangible link to our past; they hold information on how our predecessors lived. For this reason, they are fascinating places that we need to protect and cherish for future generations.

In Newry, Mourne and Down, these sites include:

- Ballykeel Dolmen and Cairn
- Slieve Gullion Passage Tomb
- Jordan's Castle, Ardglass
- Ballynoe Stone Circle
- Dundrum Castle
- Inch Abbey
- Narrow Water Castle
- Struell Bath Houses and Wells
- Loughinisland Churches

-Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy (NIBS)

- 4.12 The DoE's Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy (NIBS) 2005–2009, set out the Executives commitment to conserve and enhance Biodiversity whilst striving to halt Biodiversity Loss by 2016. The NIBS 2002 set out three recommendations for the Tourism Sector in Northern Ireland in regards to setting and impact on Biodiversity assets. These were;
- Prepare and implement integrated rural development, tourism development and environmental conservation strategies, where wildlife interests and tourist potential coincide.
 - Implement Integrated Sensitivity Zones and carrying capacity estimates into all strategic and area planning

- Ensure that the impacts of recreational activities are well understood and that these impacts are ameliorated through the development of codes of conduct for individual recreational activities or bylaws.

4.13 The DoE published a new Biodiversity Strategy for Northern Ireland in July 2015. The mission statement of the strategy is *'To make progress towards halting overall biodiversity loss, establish an ecosystem approach and help business and society in general have a greater understanding of the benefits that nature can bring to everyday life in Northern Ireland'*. A number of the associated actions are due for completion by 2016 therefore the intention is to review the strategy following this. The review will look at what has been achieved, what has been successful and changing circumstances. It will identify key challenges and any new initiatives or threats that have emerged. Newry and Mourne Council published a Biodiversity Plan in 2009 and Down District Council published a plan in 2012.

4.14 The District contains a plethora of environmental assets. Among these assets are the Mourne, Strangford and Lecale and Ring of Gullion Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the sand dune landscape at Murlough Nature Reserve and the wetland habitats and species found on Carlingford Lough. With 62 Areas of Special Scientific Interest, this region contains some of Northern Ireland's most precious natural environment features, habitats and wildlife. There are many more valuable assets located throughout the district, including those that are not given special protection. Magnificent beaches, such as Murlough, sensitive coastal habitat, forests like Tollymore – these and the area's many other open spaces all require similar attention so that we sensitively manage and utilise these assets to their full potential.

- Outdoor Recreation NI

4.15 The NIEA also supported (through competitive Natural Environment Fund Grant Programme) Outdoor Recreation NI, an umbrella organisation for Walk NI, Mountain Bike NI, Canoe NI and NI Orienteering to deliver a number of activity tourism projects which adds to the quality of the regions reputation as an activity holiday destination.

(d) Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) now Department for Communities (DfC)

4.16 The former Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) was the Government Department responsible for arts and creativity, museums, architecture and built environment policy and through its role in these fields has a direct hand in influencing cultural tourism to Northern Ireland and also through its role in the organisation of festivals and events. Many of its responsibilities have now transferred to the Department for Communities. The District benefits from facilities such as The St. Patrick's Centre in Downpatrick and Bagenals Castle in Newry,

which each have a dedicated Visitor Centre providing information about opportunities to explore the heritage and culture of the region and wider afield.

(e) Department for Social Development (DSD) now Department for Communities (DfC)

- 4.17 The former Department for Social Development (DSD) now Department for Communities (DfC) has strategic responsibility for urban regeneration and community and voluntary sector development amongst other roles. The Regional Development Office, a Department within DfC, is responsible for developing, promoting and implementing programmes to help regenerate towns and villages outside Belfast and the North West. Its responsibilities include town centre reinvigoration including comprehensive development schemes and environmental improvement schemes.

(f) Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) now Department for the Economy (DfE)

- 4.18 The Department for the Economy is responsible for the promotion of learning and skills in Northern Ireland and for policy in Further to Higher Education, Training and Employment Rights. The Department has a direct role in the provision of employees and employment opportunity in terms of appropriate skills and training, which in turn directly influences all aspects of the economy, including the Tourism Sector.
- 4.19 In recognition of the growth in the tourist sector, DEL established a "Future Skills Action Group" which brought together key stakeholders from the industry, to identify current and future skill trends and growth requirements for the industry. In April 2010, the "Hospitality and Tourism future Skills Action Group Review" was released. This document sets out an action plan to increase skills and training relating to tourism employment within Northern Ireland.

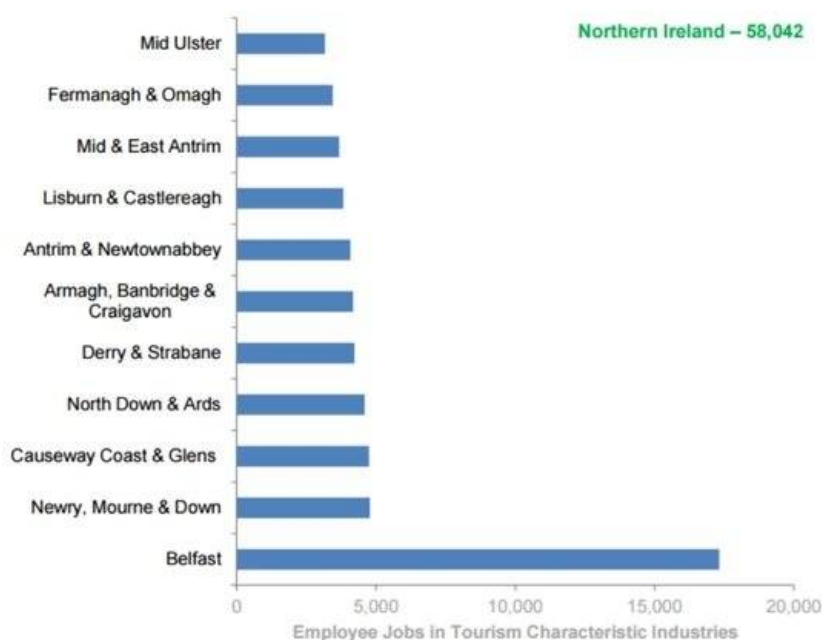
(g) National Trust

- 4.20 The National Trust is a conservation organisation with charitable status that works to preserve and protect historic places and spaces in the public interest. The Trust owns a number of heritage properties including historic houses, gardens and estates. It is one of the largest landowners in the UK, owning many beauty spots, many of which are open to the public free of charge. The Trust owns a number of properties in the District- Rowallane Gardens, Castle Ward, Strangford Lough, Murlough National Nature Reserve, The Mournes, and Derrymore House. (Additional information on these properties is included in Appendix 1).

5.0 Northern Ireland and Newry, Mourne and Down Tourism Industry

- 5.1 With a population of around 171,500 and a coastline of approximately 100 miles, the District is the third largest Council area in Northern Ireland. Although primarily made up of the former Newry & Mourne and Down District Council areas, the new Council also includes the electoral ward of Ballyward which has transferred from the former Banbridge District Council area.
- 5.2 The District is an area rich with tourism assets, natural beauty and cultural heritage. The juxtaposition of the Mourne Mountains and the sea is unique. The area also contains many of the provinces main tourist attractions; including the Mourne Mountains, Ring of Gullion, Slieve Croob, Kilbroney Park and Strangford Lough/St. Patrick's country.
- 5.3 The District has a great variety of places to visit including forest parks, historic houses and gardens, historic monuments and visitor centres. These offer opportunities for touring and diverse individual and recreational activities. As a result tourism within the area is based on both the natural and built heritage, which ranges from countryside, forest and coastline to conservation areas, historic buildings and ancient sites.
- 5.4 Tourism is an integral part of the local economy with the sector generating £54m in 2014 and £47.7m in 2015. In 2013 there was an estimated 4,780 tourism related jobs across the District accounting for 9.3% of total employee jobs within the District. Figure 1 below shows how this compared to the other Local Government Districts (LGDs) with the District being second only to Belfast in terms of the number of jobs in Tourism Characteristic Industries.

Figure 1: Employee Jobs in Tourism Characteristic Industries in LGD's 2013



Source: NISRA

- 5.5 Figures released by the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA), coupled with Tourism NI research, show that 2015 was positive for the tourism sector. In 2015 there were 4.5 million overnight trips in Northern Ireland. This figure includes trips to Northern Ireland by external visitors and domestic trips taken by local residents. The number of overnight trips shows no change on 2014. Expenditure associated with these trips was £760million, up 1% on 2014. In 2015 overnight trips to Northern Ireland by external visitors stood at 2.3 million. This is the highest number on record and a 5% increase on 2014.
- 5.6 More than 400,000 visitors from overseas came to Northern Ireland during the first quarter of 2016, according to Tourism Ireland. The figures were compiled by NISRA and represent an 8% growth on figures from the same period last year. As well as the increase in overseas visitors, there has been a marked increase of 10% in revenues, which meant that £93m was brought into the local economy.
- 5.7 The strength of the tourism market in the District can be measured in terms of the number of trips, nights and spend. Figure 2 (below) shows the number of overnight trips, nights and expenditure in the District for 2012-2015. It shows that expenditure from overnight trips accounted for £47.7m in the District in 2015. Figure 3 (overleaf) shows how this compared to the 11 Local Government Districts (LDGs) with the District being ranked fifth. It also accounted for 6% of the overall spend in Northern Ireland. However, the average spend per overnight trip in the District was £118.03 compared to the Northern Ireland average of £168.60. As a result the District ranked last of the 11 Local Government Districts in terms of overnight expenditure per trip (NISRA, 2015). This suggests that the District attracts lower spending markets. Figure 4 (overleaf) shows that the District performed well in terms of the number of overnight trips with it being ranked third of all LGDs. However, despite having a high number of trips the average length of the trips at 2.6 nights is lower than NI average of 3.25 nights.

Figure 2: Estimated no. of Overnight Trips/ Nights & Expenditure in Newry, Mourne and Down and Northern Ireland 2012-2015

	2012		2013		2014		2015	
	NI	NMD	NI	NMD	NI	NMD	NI	NMD
Trips	4,024,505	454,092	4,069,440	453,109	4,513,136	571,000	4,531,618	404,442
Nights	13,857,763	1,424,090	14,393,835	1,464,543	15,082,371	1,488,281	15,470,769	1,056,896
Spend	£686.3m	£64.8m	£715.2m	£49.8m	£744.9m	£54m	£764.1m	£47.7m

Source: Northern Ireland Passenger Survey

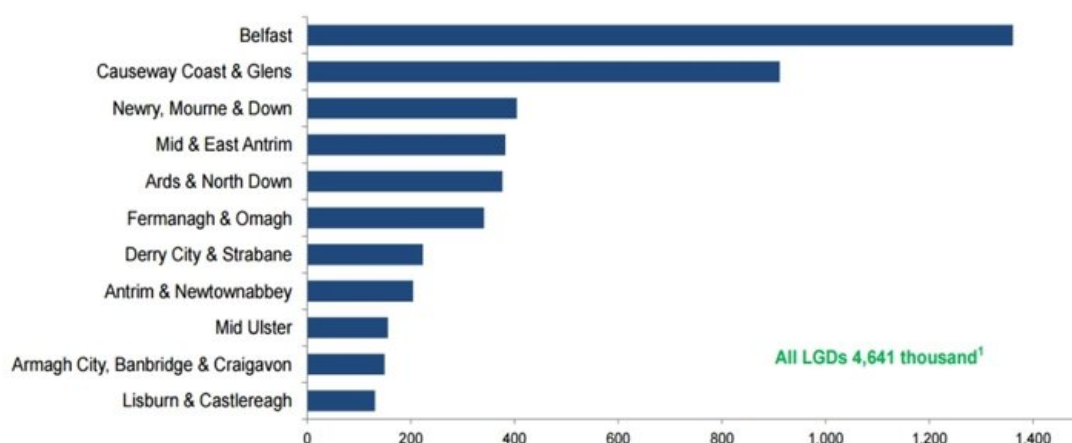
Figure 3: Expenditure (£) on Overnight Trips by Local Government District, 2015



Expenditure (£Million)

Source: Local Government District Tourism Statistics 2015, NISRA

Figure 4: Overnight Trips by Local Government District (thousands), 2015

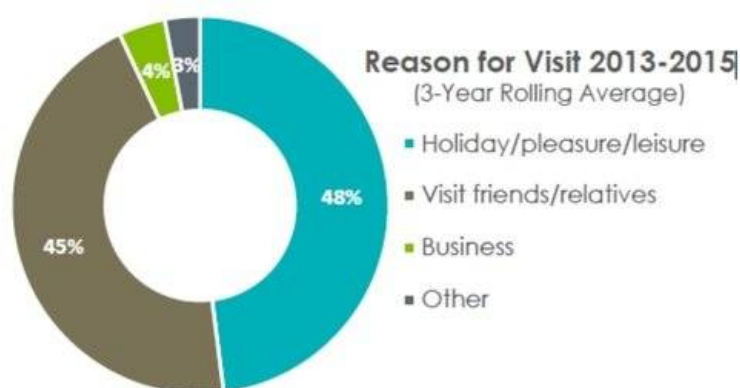


Overnight Trips (Thousands)

Source: NISRA, Northern Ireland Passenger Survey 2015

- 5.8 Figure 5 below shows the breakdown of the trips taken in the district and the reason for them. It shows that the top reason for an overnight stay in the District was for holiday/pleasure/leisure purposes with 48% of people visiting the District between 2013 and 2015 staying for this reason. This was above the Northern Ireland average of 44%. The second biggest reason for visiting was visiting friends or relatives at 45% again above the Northern Ireland average of 41%. The figure also shows that the District had a lower than the NI average number of people visiting for business purposes with only 4% of overnight trips being for this purpose compared to the NI average of 9%.

Figure 5: Reasons for visiting in Newry, Mourne and Down, 2013-2015



Source: NITB

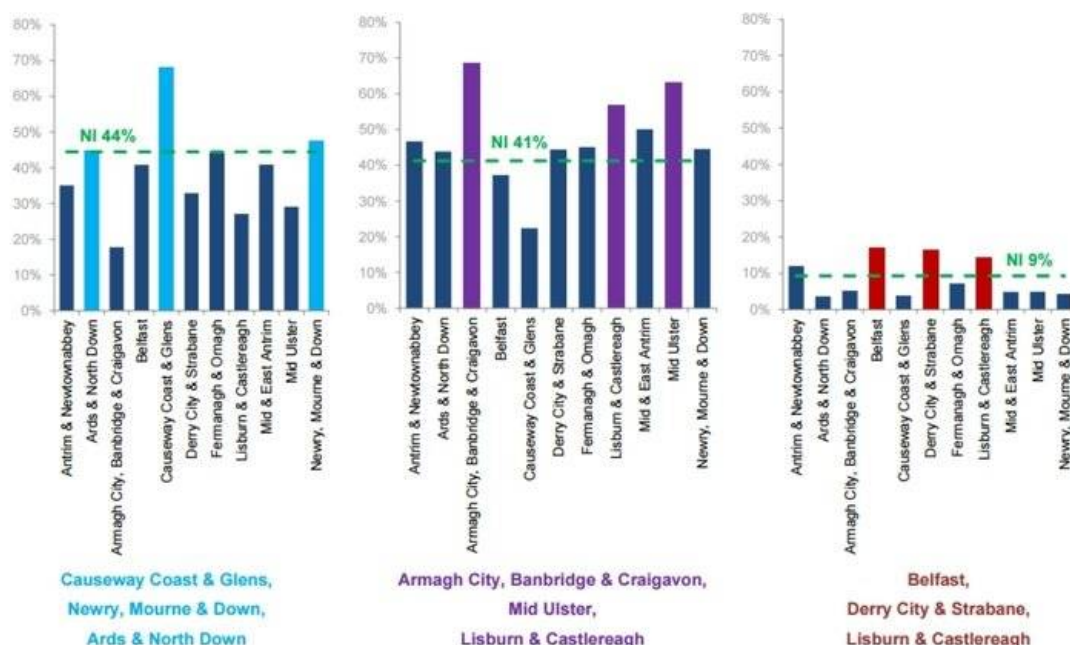
- 5.9 The graphs overleaf (Figure 6) show the breakdown of the trips taken and the reasons for them for the 11 LGDs. It shows that the region is clearly a popular destination with people visiting for holiday/ pleasure/ leisure purposes with the district being ranked 2nd only to Belfast in this category. It also shows the district is ranked 7th and 9th respectively for the number of trips taken for visiting friends/relatives and business purposes.

Figure 6: Reason for Overnight Trips in Northern Ireland within Local Government District (3 year rolling average)

Holiday/Pleasure/Leisure

Visiting Friends/Relatives

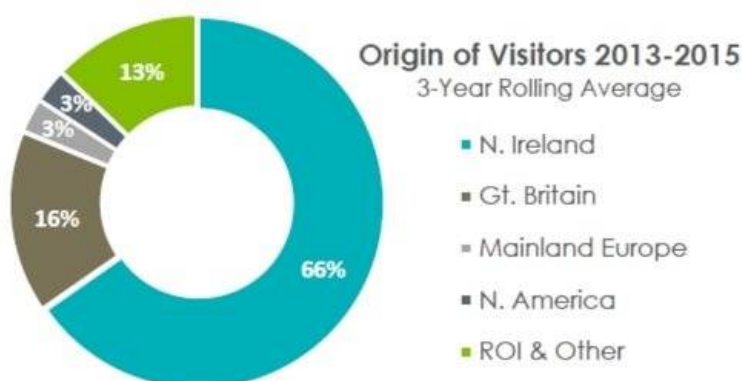
Business



Source: Local Government District Tourism Statistics 2015, NISRA

- 5.10 As shown in Figure 7 below tourists from within NI account for the majority of the tourism market in the District with 66% of visitors during the period 2012-2015 coming from NI. It also shows 16% coming from GB, 13% from ROI and the remaining 6% share being from mainland Europe and North America combined.

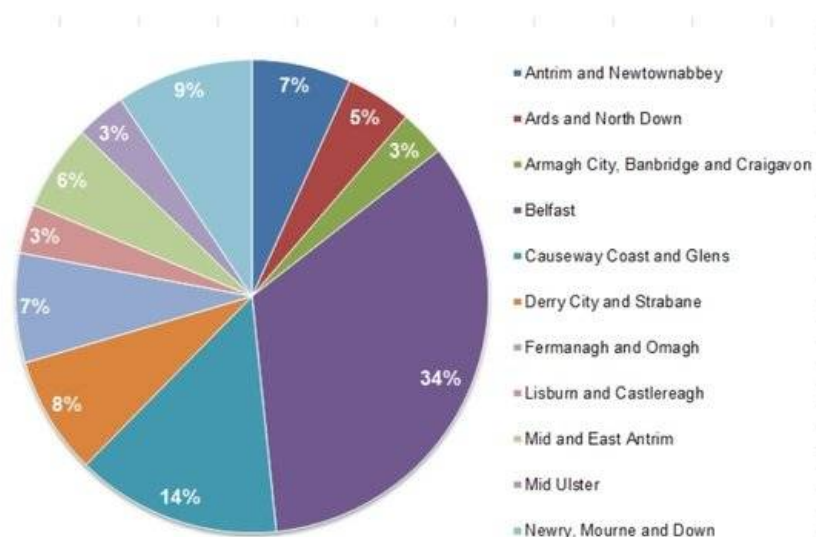
Figure 7: Origins of visitors to Newry, Mourne and Down, 2013-2015



Source: NITB

- 5.11 The availability of commercial accommodation is an indicator of the supply side of tourism. Figure 8 below shows that Belfast accounted for the highest share of accommodation rooms with 34% of the rooms stock in Northern Ireland. Causeway Coast and Glens accounted for the second highest room stock (14%) with Newry, Mourne and Down third (9%).

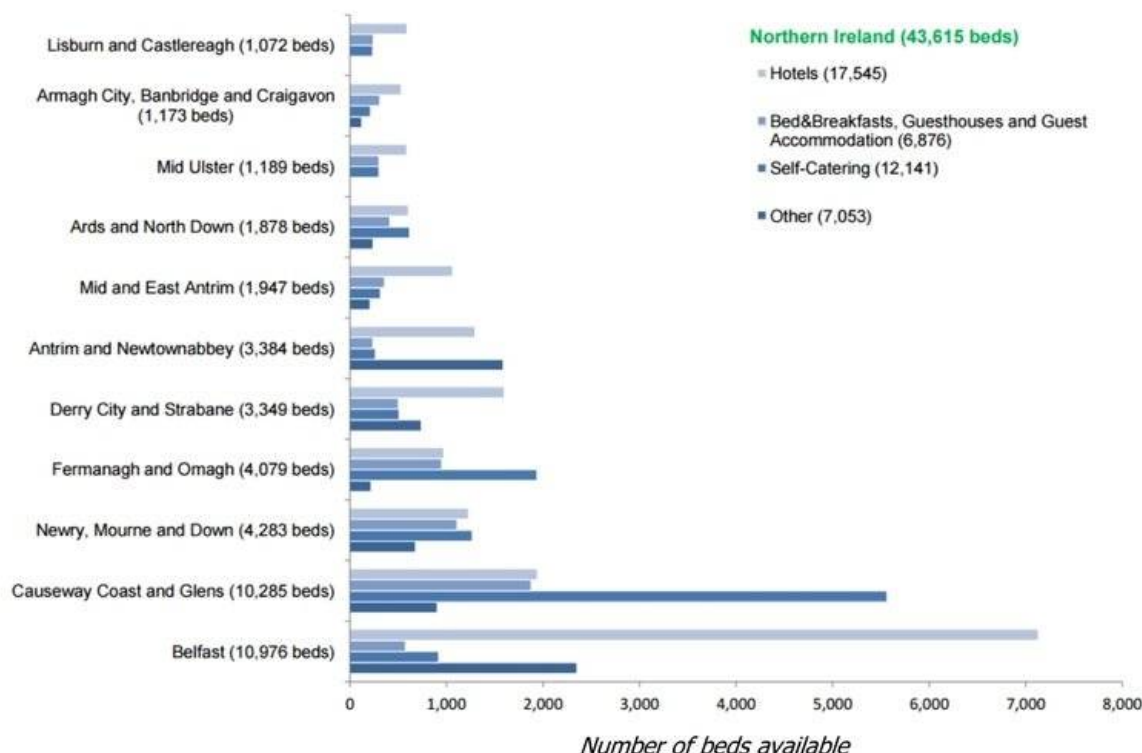
Figure 8: Room Stock within Local Government Districts, 2015



Source: Local Government District Tourism Statistics 2015, NIRSA

- 5.12 Figure 9 (overleaf) shows the number of beds available in licensed accommodation by type for the LDGs. It shows that the District has the second highest number of beds available in Bed and Breakfasts, Guesthouses and Guest Accommodation of all Government Districts. Using the figures in the graph below shows that the District accounts for 9.8% of the total number of beds available in licensed accommodation in NI in 2015.

Figure 9: Number of Beds available in Licensed Accommodation by Accommodation Type and Local Government District, 2015



Source: Local Government District Tourism Statistics 2015, NISRA

- 5.13 Accommodation occupancy rates are an indicator of the demand for accommodation in the District. The average annual hotel room occupancy rate for the District in 2015 was 55% and in 2014 it was 52% (NISRA). During 2015, the demand for hotel bedrooms in the district was broadly on a par with the Northern Ireland average in the summer season (May to September). However, outside of these months, the demand for bedrooms in the District lags some way behind the benchmark results. There was a significant decline in bedroom demand in the District, such that the average annual occupancy rate was 55% as against 67.3% across Northern Ireland.
- 5.14 Figure 10 (overleaf) shows the breakdown of accommodation stock in the District by type up to the end of 2015.

Figure 10: Accommodation Stock by type in the District- Year End 2015

NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL	TOTAL	UNITS	ROOMS	BED-SPACES
HOTELS				
5 STAR/4 STAR	3		358	827
3 STAR	2		37	87
2 STAR	1		18	49
1 STAR	1		16	33
UNCLASSIFIED	5		100	231
TOTAL	12		529	1,227
GUESTHOUSES	16		147	349
BED & BREAKFASTS	81		246	534
SELF-CATERING	173	254	625	1,267
HOSTELS	10		177	645
GUEST ACCOMMODATION	17		92	227
BUNKHOUSE	2		7	34
TOTAL	311		1,823	4,283

Source: NITB

- 5.15 The Council commissioned an Accommodation Needs Analysis Study (September 2015) in which consultations were carried out across the District with current accommodation service providers, attractions, Council senior management, DETI, Tourism NI, Tourism Ireland and selected Tour operators, along with an assessment of current visitor trends. The following accommodation recommendations were made based on the findings on this report:
- More licensed guest inns required
 - Mid-market hotel – Downpatrick with Spa
 - Killeavy Castle, Hotel and wellness Centre – Ring of Gullion
 - Multi-choice accommodation options (i.e. in forest parks)
 - Budget hotel in Newcastle or upmarket hostel
 - Possible budget hotel in Newry
- 5.16 The accommodation needs analysis and the recommendations are important to identify where gaps exist in terms of accommodation provision and to assist, where possible, in order to provide the right conditions for people to set up businesses in terms of planning, locations, job creation, rates, and incentives to encourage people to invest in the area.

6.0 Newry, Mourne and Down Tourism Assets

- 6.1 The potential to attract tourism and to sustain interest and investment has been historically based on a mixture of both private and public interests and investments. Natural and built heritage resources are often deemed to be the key players in the ability to generate and attract tourism and revenue; however the ability to attract visitors through cultural tourism such as the hosting of events and activities also plays an important role. This section of the paper will provide an overview of the districts tourism assets and growth areas.

-Activity Tourism

- 6.2 Activity Tourism was identified by the NI Tourism Strategy as a key target market. It is estimated to be worth £90-100million per annum in revenue for NI tourist businesses (Source: Activities Tourism-Sharing Success, NITB 2011). It covers a range from active holidays involving canoeing, climbing, horse riding and mountaineering, to the less physical, yet still activity-focused areas of nature walking, food trails, or local culture and heritage trails. DETI and Tourism NI identify Activity and Special interest breaks as a key target market worthy of support in NI. Activities include golf, angling, walking and cycling amongst others. A number of these activities will be further investigated below. First it is important to note that the country parks, parks and forests in the district have an important role to play in the provision of activities and as an attraction for visitors. NISRA (2015) showed that country parks, parks and forests accounted for 43% of all visitors in NI 2015. Delamont Country Park which features an adventure playground, walking trails, boat trips, a shop, bbq area and visitor centre had 212,000 visits in the same period meaning it was one of the top 10 visitor attractions in this category in NI. (Additional information on this and other parks and forests in the district is included in appendix 1).

-Golf

- 6.3 The Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland 2020 highlights the opportunity for growing golf tourism nationally and internationally to position NI as a premier golf destination. There are currently eleven Golf Courses in the District; Ardglass, Downpatrick, Kilkeel, Warrenpoint, Royal County Down, Cloverhill, Mayobridge, Bright Castle, Crossgar, Spa and Ashfield.
- 6.4 Tourism NI developed a golf tourism strategic plan in March 2015 focusing on the success of golfing in Northern Ireland which aims to maximise the potential of Golf Tourism in NI by 2020. Golf tourism currently generates £33m a year for the economy, but the Tourism NI Golf Strategy aims to boost that figure by at least £17m.
- 6.5 The Dubai Duty Free (DDF) Irish Open, hosted by the Rory Foundation, returned to Royal County Down, Newcastle in May 2015 for the first time in 76 years. This is a prime example that demonstrated that Newry, Mourne and Down Council, in partnership with others, have the capacity to host major events within the District.

- 6.6 The Irish Open in Newcastle had an audience of over 100,000 and was seen by an estimated 400 million people around the world. It generated over £11 million into the local economy, particularly into the hospitality sector. By providing a visitor experience, which included accommodation, food and drink, culture, a quality natural environment and local hospitality, the District experienced increased visitor numbers as a result of hosting this professional golfing tournament.

-Angling

- 6.7 Angling represents a key product to deliver growth and competitiveness for tourism in Northern Ireland and the District. Angling is the 6th biggest sport in the UK according to the "A Strategic Review of Angling in Northern Ireland, 2013" commissioned by DCAL. Although angling does not have the visibility of many other activities, such as walking and cycling, based on the number of licences issued, the number of visiting anglers from outside NI appears to be slowly increasing. Evidence shows that the visiting angler is as valuable to the NI economy as a visiting golfer, walker, cyclist or horse-rider and all these groups spend more than the average 'non sporting' visitor.
- 6.8 The District has some of the country's best waters for angling which places it in a prime position to avail of the tourism opportunities that angling can bring. The main beneficiaries of increased angling tourism in the District would be service providers including pubs; restaurants; hotels; holiday lets; and B&Bs. With some notable exceptions there is a lack of awareness among these providers of the potential opportunities to service visiting anglers which would attract new summer business and also extend their season.
- 6.9 Fishing communities in Kilkeel and Ardglass received a major boost in October 2015 through a Maritime Heritage Tourism initiative with the project providing benefits such as Heritage guide training, signage, seating, information panels, free Wi-Fi and media Apps. The aim of the project was to attract and retain visitors who will bring revenue into the ports and their wider communities.

-Hiking and Walking

- 6.10 The district offers numerous locations and opportunities for hiking and walking while enjoying the distinctive landscape. The most well-known location within the district is likely to be the Mourne which contains 12 peaks and includes Slieve Donard, NI's highest mountain. The area is partly owned by the National Trust and sees a large number of visitors every year for hiking, cycling and rock climbing. Walk NI identifies the Mourne Mountains as one of six top walking destinations in NI. (Strangford Lough is also identified making the District particularly popular for this activity).
- 6.11 The Mourne tourism profile is made up mostly of day visitors and visitors from within NI with 61 % of visitors being families while 21% are couples and 30% of all those visiting participates in hiking/ walking.

- 6.12 The Destination Mourne Mountains Tourism Management Plan 2013-2018 aims to achieve the vision of the Mournes as 'The Outdoor Playground for the North of Ireland'.
- 6.13 Tollymore Forest Park is an example of how parks are important in the provision of activities. There are four official walking trails within the forest. All trails start and end in the car park. They offer a range of distances and difficulties from the Arboretum Path which is half a mile long to the Mountain and Drinns Trail which can be combined to a total of 8.5miles. The Ulster Way also passes through the forest.
- 6.14 An example of a tourism project in the District is Bunkers Hill, Castlewellan. Bunkers Hill is a small, recently felled forest at the edge of Castlewellan Town. In November 2014 a new 2km multi-use trails and play trail was officially opened at Bunkers Hill Forest. The project was developed by Outdoor Recreation NI on behalf of Down District Council. The new trail is designed for use by the local community and visitors from further afield, and takes in the most glorious views of Dundrum Bay, Slieve Croob and the Mourne Mountains.

- Mountain biking

- 6.15 Mountain biking and cycling generally is experiencing a surge in popularity. There are now approximately 100km of official purpose built mountain bike trails across Northern Ireland with an estimated visitor usage of some 100,000 people a year. (Source: "Mountain Biking Guide" as produced by NITB in January 2013).
- 6.16 Two of Northern Ireland's three National Mountain Bike Trails are located in the District; Rostrevor Mountain Trails which offer a 27km red trail and 19km black loop, both packed full of technical trail features and panoramic views of mountains and coast; and the Castlewellan Mountain Trails which offer 9km red trail and a 4km green trail, 4.5km blue and purpose-built pump track making it the ideal destination for all ages and mountain biking abilities. There is also a Regional Trail located in Castle Ward as well as a local facility based in Tollymore.

-Watersports

- 6.17 With over 100 miles of coastline the District is home to Strangford Lough, Carlingford Lough and a number of beaches that offer water-based activity opportunities. Strangford Lough is the largest sea lough in the British Isles, covering an area from Angus Rock to the sand flats at its northern end, some 20miles (33km) away. It is one of only three Marine Nature Reserves in the UK and is a popular tourist destination offering activities such as leisure sailing, kayaking, fishing, bird watching and diving. It is one of nine canoe trails in NI (Source: Canoe NI) and covers 80 nautical miles taking in the beautiful surroundings, heritage and wildlife. The District also benefits from the South East Coast Canoe Trail.

- 6.18 Beaches are popular tourist attractions as they offer family friendly activity. Beaches in the District include Murlough, Cranfield, Tyrella, Warrenpoint and Newcastle. (Additional information on these beaches is included in Appendix 3). Murlough is the most visited beach in the District with 241,000 visitors in 2014 making it one of the top 10 tourist destinations in NI (excluding country parks, parks and forests, NISRA 2014). The blue flag beach is 5 miles in length and is a key attraction that is popular for swimming, sunbathing and other forms of recreation. The beach is backed by ancient sand dunes that are designated as a National Nature Reserve.
- 6.19 There are a number of other water-based activities that are available at the other beaches for example kayaking, banana boating, jet skiing, pier jumping and canoeing.
- 6.20 The inland rivers and lakes also provide opportunities for water based activities such as wet bouldering, open canoeing, kayaking and canyoning.
- 6.21 Access to Strangford Lough, Carlingford Lough and a number of beaches in the District is limited and as a result prevents the potential for activities such as boating and yachting from being fully realised.

-Activity Centres

- 6.22 There are numerous facilities within the District offering a wide selection of activities in the Mourne and Ring of Gullion area. These range from climbing, coasteering and bouldering, high ropes and zip lines to mountain biking, 4 x 4 off road driving, zorbing, paintballing orienteering and archery. These facilities offer activities to youth/ sports groups, hen/ stag groups and corporate team building. (A list of popular facilities can be found in Appendix 4).
- 6.23 The District has plenty on offer to suit children and families. With many activities throughout the District, suitable for all age groups, such as canoeing, climbing or kayaking there are also centres that cater for children and families. (Additional information on some of the facilities available is in Appendix 5).

-Cultural tourism

- 6.24 Cultural tourism has been described by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development as 'one of the largest and fastest growing global tourism market... [it is] increasingly being used to promote destinations and enhance their competitiveness and attractiveness'. Cultural tourism is said to include movements of people 'to specific cultural attractions such as heritage sites, artistic and cultural manifestations, arts and drama outside their normal place of residence (Richards, 1996). Some examples of the districts cultural tourism assets are noted below.

-built heritage

- 6.25 Built heritage refers to Listed Buildings, Monuments, Parklands, Gardens, Demesnes, Conservation Areas and Local Landscape Policy Areas. The district has an abundance of built heritage assets which are a strong attraction for outside visitors to come to the area. There are a total of 2016 archaeological sites and monuments, 643 listed buildings, 35 historic parks, gardens and demesne, 924 industrial heritage sites, 33 Areas of Significant Archaeological Interest/ Areas of Archaeological Potential, 10 Conservation Areas, 27 Areas of Townscape Character and 216 LLPAs in the district.
- 6.26 Examples include the National Trust estate of Castle Ward House and Demesne which is located on the Shore of Strangford Lough. It includes an eccentric 18th Century mansion and estate with 820 acres of landscaped gardens, a fortified tower, Victorian laundry, theatre, restaurant, shop, saw mill and a working corn mill. The estate was the No. 1 destination in the District in 2015 (NISRA, 2015) which demonstrates the importance and draw of built heritage assets in generating visits.

-natural heritage

- 6.27 The District enjoys a wealth of natural assets, many of which have special designations afforded to them to protect their distinctiveness and quality. As previously noted the Mourne Mountains and the Strangford Lough (St Patrick Trail) were identified as two of the nine key destinations within the Draft Tourism Strategy for NI to 2020. The Mourne Mountains, Strangford Lough and the Ring of Gullion were also identified as Strategic Natural Resources in the RDS 2035.
- 6.28 In addition to these there are a number of sites that are significant in terms of their natural heritage value and as a result have various designations in order to protect their distinctive character. These designations are noted in more detail in the Environmental Assets preparatory Environmental Assets paper. In brief they include 3 Special Protection Areas (SPAs), 11 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), 4 Ramsar Sites, 62 Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs), 2 National Nature Reserves, 5 Nature Reserves, 1 Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) (Strangford Lough), 1 proposed MCZ (Carlingford Lough) and 3 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).
- 6.29 The ability of natural heritage to attract visitors is evident in the number of visits to some of the Districts assets. For example Murlough National Reserve which is a fragile 6000 year old sand dune system at the edge of Dundrum Bay and the Mourne Mountains was the No. 1 attraction in the District in 2014 (NISRA). It consists of a network of paths and boardwalks through the dunes, woodland and heath. It is an excellent area for walking and bird watching due to its spectacular location.

-Christian Heritage

- 6.30 The District enjoys an unrivalled link to St Patrick and Christian heritage which offer significant tourism potential. The St Patricks Trail is a 92 mile signed tourist driving trail that connects the key sites with strong links to St Patrick's life, landscape and legacy. It is an excellent way of telling the story of St Patrick's journey and is identified as one of five signature destinations identified by Tourism NI as offering the best opportunities for tourism growth and to create world class excellence for Northern Ireland. The attractions along the Saint Patrick's Trail for the District area include;
- 6.31 St. Patrick's Centre is a permanent interpretative exhibition centre featuring interactive displays on the life and story of Saint Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. It provides the only permanent exhibition centre in the world devoted to Saint Patrick. In the exhibition, entitled *Ego Patricius*, Saint Patrick's own words are used to illuminate the arrival of Christianity in Ireland and its development through his mission. It also reveals the artwork and metalwork which were features of the Early Christian period, as well as the major impact of Irish missionaries in this period in Europe. The St Patrick centre acts as a hub for tourism in the area, and a focal point for a wide range of educational, religious and cultural interest.
- 6.32 Down Cathedral is a Church of Ireland cathedral located beside the St Patrick Centre. It stands on the site of a Benedictine Monastery, built in 1183. St Patrick's remains are buried in the graveyard. The Cathedral hosts major festivals and services for the Diocese, the highlight being the annual St Patrick's Day celebrations on 17th March.
- 6.33 Down County Museum is located in the restored eighteenth century County Gaol of Down. The museum collects, conserves and interprets those objects which best illustrate the history, culture and environment of County Down. Every year the museum also organises, a range of special exhibitions on a variety of topics. The museum also has an extensive education programme with activities for school and community groups.
- 6.34 Inch Abbey and Quoile Pondage. Inch Abbey is a large, ruined monastic site situated on the edge of the Quoile River with the buildings mainly dating back to the 12th and 13th centuries. Quoile Pondage, where the river joins Strangford Lough, is a freshwater nature reserve with a visitor centre next to the ruined Quoile Castle.
- 6.35 Struell Wells is a remarkable complex of holy wells, set in a secluded rocky valley along the line of a flowing stream. Though known as St Patrick's Wells, the association is traditional rather than historical, arising from their nearness to Saul, 1.5 miles away. The waters were believed to have curative powers and the site has a ruined church, 2 bath-houses (one for men, one for women) and two roofed wells, all fed by the stream.

- 6.36 Saul Church is a restoration building on the site to commemorate the 1500th anniversary of the landing of St Patrick and was opened on All Saint's Day 1933. Throughout the year visitors and pilgrims, intrigued by the history and beauty of this locality are welcomed. The high point each year is the celebration of St Patrick's Day on 17th March when the Church welcome visitors of all Christian backgrounds to worship.
- 6.37 Bagenal's Castle is a sixteenth century fortified house and adjoining nineteenth century warehouse located in Newry. The legacy of Patrick's work can be found in Bagenal's Castle. It was at this site, in 1157, that the Cistercian abbey was founded. Little remains of the abbey today, but excavations have revealed human remains, pottery and a 12th century slab of granite bearing a Celtic cross. In 2015 Bagenal's Castle were awarded a Silver Award in the Green Tourism Business Scheme.

-Festivals and Events

- 6.38 Festivals and events are very useful tools to help drive tourism, extend the tourism season and enhance the District's profile; they are also good at facilitating networking and links with global brands. The showcasing of events, such as home-grown festivals, to major international events such as the Irish Open 2015 is a major driving force at attracting visitor numbers to an area. In terms of the impact of the economy, there is a direct correlation between the ability to attract visitor numbers to the generation of increased spend. In terms of lasting legacies and social impact, such forms of tourism also provide platforms for the visitor to interact with the local culture, local people and explore our scenic landscapes and settlements.
- 6.39 The district delivered an extensive programme of events last year (2016) with highlights including the staging of the Skiffie World Rowing championships on Strangford Lough, the annual Festival of Flight in Newcastle and a new 'Wake the Giant' event in Warrenpoint based on a myth of a sleeping giant reposing on the Cooley Mountains.
- 6.40 The season of 'Giant Adventures' also played host to a number of other music and cultural gatherings across the district including the Mourne International Walking Festival, Fiddlers Green International Music Festival, Blues on the Bay, Soma Arts and Cultural Festival, Lur Cinn Fleadh, Rostrevor Choral Festival, Ballynahinch Game and Harvest Festival, Hans Sloane Chocolate Festival and Hallowtides. (Additional information on some of the festivals and events held is included in Appendix 6).

-Food Tourism

- 6.41 Food is a vital part of the tourism experience for visitors coming to Northern Ireland. In 2008, the Northern Ireland Passenger Survey indicated that more was spent on food and drink than on any other category, including accommodation with 33% of the £540 million spent by overseas and domestic tourists being spent on food and drink. Actions have already been taken to boost food tourism with the launching of the Mournes Food Cycle Trail, the Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership' Seafood Report and the work of the Mourne Seafood Cookery School.
- 6.42 Tourism NI has sought to benefit from the growth of this category by designating 2016 as the NI Year of Food and Drink. As part of this campaign the District showcased its fantastic range of local food and drink through its own 'Taste Junction' Initiative.

-Screen

- 6.43 According to statistics published by DCAL in 'Experience of the arts by adults in Northern Ireland 2013/14', the most popularly attended art form in NI was to a film at a cinema or other venue (58% of respondents).
- 6.44 There are two multi-screen cinemas in the District, namely at Downpatrick and Newry. There is also a voluntary run non-profit led cinema based in Newcastle that screens lesser known films and older movies.
- 6.45 The District has also provided a number of filming locations for the Game of Thrones (one of the most popular and successful fantasy TV series ever made) including Leitrim Lodge, Tollymore Forest, Inch Abbey, Quoile River, Castle Ward and Audrey's Field. Guided and self-guided tours now operate and act as a draw to these and to other filming sites throughout NI.

-Theatre

- 6.46 Theatre is Northern Ireland's most popular art form, accounting for 60% of all ticket sales from 6,661 art form performances in NI in 2010-2011. The Arts Council of NI annual contribution to the entire arts sector is approximately £13 million a year. Theatre, as one part of that sector, annually accounts for ticket sales revenue in excess of £10 million.
- 6.47 The District has several hubs for theatre activity which include;
- The Down Arts Centre and Down County Museum;
 - Sean Hollywood Arts Centre;
 - Newry Town Hall;
 - Warrenpoint Town Hall; and
 - Newry & Mourne Museum.

- 6.48 These venues are host to various arts, drama, music, theatre and dance programmes and performances as well as being a centre for arts and craft workshops. Unlike other sectors of the Creative Industries, Professional Theatre and Performing Arts, make a further economic contribution to night-time economies.

-Literature

- 6.49 Literature was identified as one of seven sectors of significance by Tourism NI. C.S Lewis is possibly the most well know author to have connections to the District. He is believed to have found the inspiration for his Narnia depicted in 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' from the Mourne Mountains. He is also reported to have said 'that part of Rostrevor which overlooks Carlingford Lough is my idea of Narnia' (source: Discover NI). This connection is built upon with the Narnia Trail through Kilbroney Forest Park in Rostrevor where the story of Narnia is brought to life in a short family loop trail. The trail is entered like the magical world itself, through a Wardrobe, and leads to several interpretative stations with themes including The Tree People, The Beavers' House, the Citadels and many more.

-Pubs and Nightclubs

- 6.50 The night time economy of the Districts larger towns are largely fuelled by the popularity of pubs and nightclubs in the region. The Purple Flag project was initiated in Northern Ireland by Pubs of Ulster and the Association of Town Centre Management with funding support through NITB's Tourism Innovation Fund. Purple Flag is a new accreditation scheme that recognises excellence in the management of town and city centres at night. Purple flag status is similar to Blue Flag for beaches. Purple flag towns and cities must be welcoming to everyone, offer safe ways for visitors to travel home, provide a good mix of venues and be appealing in the evenings.
- 6.51 Newry was granted Purple Flag status in December 2013 and joined the four other Northern Ireland towns and cities of Belfast, Enniskillen, Bangor and Derry-Londonderry. Newry was particularly recommended for their approach to planning and policy, as it has implemented a shared data based planning tool which allows all of the different partners in the community, including local businesses and the Council, to feed into the planning tool and identify opportunities for collaboration. The centre was also commended for having an excellent dining offer, late night venues, high levels of co-ordination between partners and clear leadership.

-Visitor Information Centres

- 6.52 Visitor Information Centres (VIC) provide access to a wealth of detailed, up-to-the-minute information, as well as numerous useful services such as accommodation and tour bookings. All the offices perform to national and regional standards and offer free help and advice from trained tourism experts. There are a number of important VIC's found in the District:

- Newry VIC is situated in Bagenal's Castle, a 16th century house and adjoining 19th Century warehouse sympathetically restored to house the Museum and the VIC.
- Downpatrick VIC is situated in the St Patrick Centre, Market Street. In addition to providing visitor information the centre is also a local distributor of DAERA Fishing Licence & Permits.
- Newcastle VIC is located on Central Promenade in the centre of the town.
- Kilkeel VIC is located in the Nautilus Centre which also houses the Mourne Maritime Visitor Centre, Tracing your Mourne Roots Exhibition and the Mourne Seafood Cookery School.

7.0 Key Findings and Conclusions

7.1 Below is a summary of the key findings that will be used to inform the Local Development Plan.

The District:

- benefits from a wealth of built, natural and cultural heritage assets including an unrivalled link to St Patrick which are strong incentives in attracting visitors.
- is a popular destination but primarily with domestic visitors from NI who visit the area for holiday/ pleasure/ leisure purposes.
- experiences a high number of visits however, a lower than average number of nights are spent per stay and the lowest average spend per trip of all LGDs.
- ranked second of all LGD in terms of the number of jobs in tourism characteristic industries in 2013.
- is recognised for its adventure and outdoor based recreation and its world renowned golf courses and further potential for growth exists particularly as this is a highly seasonal market.
- has the potential to grow boating and yachting opportunities that are currently limited by poor access to waterways and coastline.
- is strategically located between Belfast and Dublin and has port access at Warrenpoint which has further potential to attract the cruise market.
- accounts for 9.8% of available beds in licensed accommodations in NI and although it experiences lower than the NI average occupancy research has indicated that there is a need for additional accommodation in the District including a hotel in Downpatrick to enable visitors to stay and explore the Town and surrounding area.

7.2 These key findings will be used to inform the preparation of the LDP. The LDP will also take account of the Council's Community Plan and Tourism Strategy that are currently in draft form.

7.3 As previously noted the LDP, in line with the SPPS, will contain policies to safeguard tourist assets, together with policies for tourism development such as tourism accommodation, amenity facilities, and holiday parks, and the criteria for

consideration of such proposals. It can also give consideration to identifying potential growth areas.

- 7.4 In accordance with the RDS 2035 the LDP will promote a sustainable approach to the provision of tourism infrastructure to conserve, protect, and where possible enhance the District's natural environment and built heritage.
- 7.5 There are many benefits to be gained from adopting a more sustainable approach to tourism:

Environmental Benefits:

- Safeguarding the resource for the benefit of future generations, and
- The protection and enhancement of the special landscapes and features that together form much of Northern Ireland's appeal to visitors.

Community Benefits:

- Real opportunities for community involvement in tourism and the creation of a better climate for development.
- Supporting the local economy and local services – for example, helping to support local transport systems in rural areas.
- Creating new business opportunities.

Benefits to the Tourism Industry:

- Enhanced appeal of Northern Ireland for visitors from those market areas which have a high proportion of discerning and ecologically aware consumers, for example North European countries.
- Opportunities for the development and promotion of environment friendly activity tourism such as cycling, walking, birdwatching, many water based activities, and newer interests including conservation holidays.

Benefits to the Visitor:

- The development of a quality tourist service;
- Better relationships with the local community, and
- Closer involvement with, and better understanding of, both the people and the holiday destination.

(Source: NITB - A Sustainable Approach)

- 7.6 Proper management and conservation of the resources of the District in a sustainable way is vital if future generations are not to be denied the opportunity to use and enjoy them. This is of particular relevance in the context of sensitive landscapes such as the Ring of Gullion and other locations, which are being threatened by a combination of visitor pressure and an associated demand for

development. The District contains some of Northern Ireland’s most dramatic scenery, and has a rich natural and man-made heritage. If the potential of these resources is tapped successfully, there could be a substantial spin-off to other sectors of the local economy.

Appendix 1: National Trust Assets

Rowallane Garden

- A1.1 Rowallane Garden is located immediately south of Saintfield, County Down. The gardens are a mix of formal and informal spaces with many unusual vistas and unique plants from across the world. The Garden, of some 50 acres in total, features a walled garden, a natural Rock Garden Wood, wildflower meadows, a Farmland Walk (taking in the summit of Trio Hill) and a Woodland Walk, as well as a tea-room in the old farm stables, which features a bell-tower. The estate house is the headquarters of the National Trust in Northern Ireland.

Castle Ward

- A1.2 Castle Ward is an eccentric 18th-century mansion and estate looking out over the tranquil waters of Strangford Lough. Castle Ward is open to the public and includes 332 hectares (820 acres) of landscaped gardens, a fortified tower house, Victorian laundry, theatre, restaurant, shop, camping pods, saw mill and a working corn mill. It has a shore on Strangford Lough. Castle Ward was the Winner of Highly Commended Best Visitor Experience, NI Tourism Awards 2014. Events held at Castle Ward include: Pumpkinfest, International Bread Festival, Santa's Grotto and many various Craft Fairs.
- A1.3 Castle Wards sprawling medieval walls and castle gate entrance together with stunning surrounding landscapes have attracted many Hollywood film production companies to film onsite, namely; Game of Thrones TV show, Dracula Untold movie and Frankenstein Chronicles TV show.

Strangford Lough

- A1.4 The largest sea lough in the British Isles, covering an area from Angus Rock at its mouth on the Irish Sea, to the vast sand-flats at its northern end 20 miles (33 kilometres) away. It is one of only three designated Marine Nature Reserves in the United Kingdom. Strangford Lough is a popular tourist destination noted for its fishing and scenery. Strangford Lough is used for activities of leisure - sailing, kayaking, bird watching and diving. There are canoe trails in place and a 'Strangford Lough Activity Map' has been launched as a part of a series of maps produced by the Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland.

Murlough National Nature Reserve

- A1.5 Murlough National Nature Reserve is a fragile 6000 year old sand dune system located at the edge of Dundrum Bay and the Mourne Mountains. It consists of a network of paths and boardwalks through the dunes, woodland and heath. It is an excellent area for walking and bird watching due to its spectacular. In 2014, Murlough attracted 241,000 visitors making it the No. 1 visitor attraction in the Newry, Mourne and Down Council area. There are two car parks at Murlough, one public with no facilities and the other owned by the National Trust. The National Trust car park includes a toilet block and café. Although a very popular destination,

the National Trust's priority for the site is conservation and consequently there are no plans to increase the site's facilities. The existing facilities provide a welcome destination and point of interest for walkers.

The Mournes

- A1.6 The Mourne mountains contain twelve peaks and include Slieve Donard, Northern Ireland's highest mountain. The area is partly owned by the National Trust and sees a large number of visitors every year. The Mournes are visited by many tourists, hill walkers, cyclists and rock climbers. The Mournes are also one of the nine designated destinations within Northern Ireland.

Derrymore House

- A1.7 Derrymore House is an 18th-century thatched cottage and estate located in Bessbrook. Derrymore is surrounded by unique parkland of magnificent oaks and is full of history, beauty and enchantment. Part of the Ring of Gullion waymarked trail, there are a number of walks to enjoy and breath-taking vistas of the Newry Viaduct and the Mourne Mountains.

Appendix 2: Country Parks, Parks and Forests

Slieve Gullion Forest Park, Adventure Playpark and The Giant's Lair

- A2.1 Slieve Gullion Forest Park covers an area of 2500 acres. The Forest Park offers walking trails, a scenic drive, an Adventure Play park, Giant's Lair children's story trail and Courtyard with coffee shop. The area has some of the best biodiversity in the region and has a multitude of protected areas and visitors have the chance to see wildlife on the Red Squirrel Safari.
- A2.2 The Slieve Gullion Forest Adventure Park provides award winning play facilities for children and young people and has also attained the 'Green Apple Environment Award' and 'NITB Best Tourism Partner Initiative Award'.

Also located within the forest park is The Giant's Lair. The Giant's Lair is an innovative magical living storybook. The Trail takes visitors on a journey of intertwined fairy house and arts features creating a fantastical childhood land of mystery, dragons, giants, witches and fairies. The art in the Giant's Lair is all inspired by the rich tapestry of local legend and mythical folklore on over a mile of woodlands within the Forest Park.

Kilbroney Park

- A2.3 Kilbroney Park is 92 acres in area and offers a wide range of facilities and services, which includes tennis courts, children's play area, playing fields, an arboretum, barbeque and picnic areas and cafe and a well serviced caravan and camping site. There are three waymarked trails, which vary in length from two kilometres to seven kilometres, and take the visitor to various areas within the forest to enjoy the many magnificent views and beauty of the woodlands.
- A2.4 These trails in Kilbroney Park bring to life the story of Narnia and other stories, myths and legends associated with this special area of the Mourne. The Narnia legends are interpreted along a short family loop trail, entered like the magical world itself, through a Wardrobe, and leading the visitor to several interpretative stations with themes including, The Tree People, The Beavers' House, The Citadels and many more. A more challenging walk has been created to the legendary Cloughmore Stone, linking another important legend - that of the Giant Fionn McCumhaill - to the Narnia theme.
- A2.5 The Council produced a draft Masterplan (August 2015) for the park which identifies proposals for the development of Kilbroney Park and Rostrevor Forest. The Masterplan draws focus on projects which have a spatial dimension and sets out how different areas of Kilbroney Park and Rostrevor Forest will work together to provide an enhanced resource for local people and a compelling experience for visitors.

Donard Forest Park

- A2.6 There are currently no facilities for recreational activities provided in Donard Forest but the public are welcome to visit this forest on foot. Donard Forest was planted in 1927 and consists of scots and corsican pine, with herbaceous plants and woody shrubs hidden below the tree canopy. This area is the habitat for the Holly Blue butterfly and a wide range of bird species. The Glen River Bridge provides a picturesque viewpoint for the many cascades and waterfalls. Nearby are some ornamental trees including monkey puzzle and giant red wood.

Tollymore Forest Park

- A2.7 Tollymore Forest Park was the first state forest park in Northern Ireland, established on 2 June 1955. Tollymore Forest Park caters for many outdoor activities including walking, caravanning/camping, horse riding and orienteering and the park has designated areas for camping and caravans.
- A2.8 There are four official walking trails within the forest each marked with different coloured sign posts. All the trails start and end in the main car park. The blue trail (Arboretum Path) is half a mile long and passes through the arboretum. The red trail (River Trail) is three miles long and follows the Shimna River up one side as far as Parnell's bridge and then back along the other side. The black trail (Mountain Trail) is five and half miles long and the black trail 1 (The Drinns Trail) adds another three miles to the black trail by passing behind The Drinns (two forested hills) and following the boundary wall. The Ulster Way also passes through the forest.
- A2.9 In March 2015 Tollymore opened a new Nature Play Space for the kids called the 'Big Deer' which is designed for four to eleven year olds. It consists of an impressive wooden play space featuring a giant timber Fallow Deer, castle turret, folly tower and hollow tree all connected through a series of rope-bridges, tunnels, spider webs, basket swings and slides. There are also picnic facilities available.

Castlewellan Forest Park

- A2.10 Castlewellan Forest Park caters for many outdoor activities including walking, caravanning and camping, horse riding, orienteering and many others. The park offers camping and caravanning sites with tarmac and grass pitches for the caravan or camping enthusiast.
- A2.11 One of the Forest Park's key attractions, the Peace Maze, is one of the world's largest permanent hedge mazes, representing the path to a peaceful future for Northern Ireland. Planted in 2000 with community involvement, it is maturing quickly and visitors attempt to solve their way to the peace bell in the centre of the maze.

- A2.12 A brand new play structure has recently been installed in the forest park (March 2015). 'Animal Wood' is designed for four to eleven year olds and is located beside the Peace Maze. Featuring a short path, Animal Wood provides lots of opportunities for playing on wild woodland animals including a badger and its den, a red squirrel and a giant spider. In addition it boasts a wooden play structure with a tower in the image of The Moorish Tower where children can enjoy the climbing wall, fireman's pole and rope-bridge over to a hollow tree stump slide and Red Kite nest.

Delamont County Park

- A2.13 The Park features an adventure playground, walking trails, boat trips, a shop, bbq area and visitors centre. It also features a miniature Thomas the Tank Engine Railway. There are five waymarked walks: Mullagh Walk 1km; Garden Walk 1.2km; Strangford Walk 2km; Corbally Walk 4km; and Longwalk 7km. It also provides all year round events such as Magnificent Birds of Prey Display, Silly Tilly Magic Show, Model Aircraft Display, Medieval Artisan Food & Craft Market and Crossgar Vintage Tractor Club. Statistical figures show that Delamont was rated within the top 10 for Country Park/Park/Forest/Gardens in Northern Ireland, attracting 221,000 visitors in 2014.

Drumkerragh

- A2.14 There are currently no facilities for recreational activities provided at Drumkerragh but the public are welcome to visit this forest on foot. Drumkeeragh Forest is seven miles south west of Ballynahinch on the lower slopes of Slieve Croob. The forest has mixed coniferous trees. From the forest there are extensive views across County Down. An extensive forest road system allows walkers to access most of the forest.

Mournes

- A2.15 The Mournes are visited by many tourists, hillwalkers, cyclists and rock climbers. The Destination Mourne Mountains Tourism Management Plan 2013-18 was published by the Destination Forum Group made up of public and private stakeholders including the former Down District Council, Newry and Mourne District Council and Banbridge District Council. It outlines a collective vision and set of actions to grow tourism at a local level within the signature destination and also fulfil national targets set out in the draft 2020 Tourism Strategy.
- A2.16 The Mournes tourism profile is made up of mostly day visitors and visitors from within Northern Ireland with 61% of visitors being families while 21% are couples and 30% of all those visiting participate in hiking/walking. The Tourism Plan identifies that the Mourne Mountains' strengths are:

- Walking and Climbing,
- Scenery, beautiful landscape and views,
- Mountain biking and cycling,
- Seaside, beaches and Newcastle,
- The Mourne and other mountains,
- Silent Valley and
- Outdoor recreation and activities.

A2.17 Playing on these strengths, the vision for the Mourne is "The Outdoor Playground for the North of Ireland" and the objective is to "maximise the Mourne potential to attract and encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more".

To achieve this vision, key actions are listed under 4 strategic themes:

1. Investment & Infrastructure,
2. Marketing & Promotion,
3. Distinct Visitor Experiences and
4. Building Business Engagement & Sustainability.

A2.18 Key locations in the Mourne Signature Destination are;

- Newcastle
- Silent Valley and Ben Crom
- Tollymore Forest Park
- Dundrum Castle
- Slieve Croob
- Castlewellan Forest Park
- Slieve Donard Resort & Spa Slieve Donard
- Rostrevor Forest
- Tollymore Mountain Centre
- Dundrum Bay Murlough
- Nature Reserve
- Kilbroney Forest Park

Appendix 3: Beaches

Murlough National Nature Reserve

- A3.1 This 5 mile stretch of golden sands is still a key attraction and is hugely popular for swimming, sunbathing and other forms of recreation. In 2014, there were 241,000 visitors to Murlough, a drop of 33% on the previous year figures. However, as detailed in section 6.18, Murlough is still the current most popular beach in County Down and is also rated in the top 10 tourist destinations within Northern Ireland in the NISRA 2014 statistics.

Cranfield Beach

- A3.2 Cranfield beach is an attractive sandy beach with Blue Flag status. Due to the estimated 4000-5000 caravan users who stay in the area over the summer, the beach, the café and local amenities are well used. On many days in the summer Cranfield struggles to cope with the number of visitors. East Coast Adventure host outdoor activities at Chesnutt Caravan Park every summer at the weekends but this is open to the public as well as people staying in the caravan park. Tourists regularly walk from Cranfield to Greencastle on an informal path but few go north towards Kilkeel.

Tyrella Beach

- A3.3 Tyrella Beach is a small, enclosed beach within Dundrum Bay, Downpatrick, County Down. It is a wide, flat, sandy beach two kilometres long and backed by 25 hectares of mature dunes in a conservation area offering scenic walks and an insight into the habitat of local flora and fauna. Tyrella Beach has been awarded the prestigious Seaside Award annually since 1997 and has also maintained the Blue Flag award in 2011 due to the management and cleanliness of the beach. It has also retained its Green Coast Award since 2008. An ideal destination for locals and visitors alike, the clean waters invite water sport enthusiasts and the beach provides a safe haven for families and groups who wish to picnic in a clean environment. The beach boasts a car free zone, off-beach parking facilities and a lifeguard on duty for safe bathing in the summer months and holidays. There is also a tourist information centre nearby offering advice to visitors on the immediate and surrounding area.

Warrenpoint Beach

- A3.4 Warrenpoint Beach is located alongside the Mourne Mountains on the shores of Carlingford Lough. It is a gently sloping shingle beach with well-developed facilities that include shopping and a promenade popular with all types of walkers. It is host to a range of activities including Kayaking, Banana Boating, Jet Skiing, Pier Jumping and canoeing. It is also home to a large salt water swimming pool, one of the last remaining in Northern Ireland.

- A3.5 A planning application, LAO7/2015/0369/F, was submitted on 29th May 2015 for the proposed refurbishment of the saltwater swimming pool. The proposal includes the restoration of the Edwardian kiosks with a new public event space, units for a café, additional space for water sport activities and modernised changing facilities. No decision has been made on the application but it is currently recommended for approval (correct as of 9th January 2016).

Newcastle Beach

- A3.6 Newcastle Beach is a popular tourist destination located on the South Down coast. Newcastle Beach comprises of sand, pebbles and larger stones and is approximately 2.5 km in length. The major part of Newcastle Beach is backed by a promenade and the seaside town of Newcastle, which has lots of shops, amusements and other attractions. The beach has a very gentle slope with the Mountains of Mourne in the background.

Appendix 4: Activity Centres

East Coast Adventure Centre

- A4.1 East Coast Adventure Centre has a mountain centre nestled just outside the village of Rostrevor, a water sports centres on the shores of Carlingford Lough in Warrenpoint, a Mountain Bike Hire and Uplift service located at the Rostrevor MTB Trails in Kilbroney Forest Park and a Driving Range, Archery and Zip Line Centre located on the grounds of Mourne Park, Kilkeel.

Tollymore National Outdoor Centre

- A4.2 Tollymore National Outdoor Centre is Sport Northern Ireland's National Outdoor Centre. It offers a range of one day and weekend courses in rock climbing skills, learning to lead and multi pitch climbing, Canadian canoeing, kayaking and sea kayaking, mountain biking, orienteering and coasteering. The centre also offers accommodation.

Acton Adventures, Poyntzpass

- A4.3 Acton Adventures was established in 2005 to open the game of paintball to the people of Northern Ireland. However over the past number of years it has expanded and now offers a full range of corporate and team building activities. Action Adventures offer packages for clubs and team, stags and hens, corporate events and group of friends. Catering and accommodation can also be provided.

Greenhill Y.M.C.A. National Centre

- A4.4 Greenhill YMCA is an outdoor education and residential centre set in a 17 acre site on the slopes of Slieve Donard. Greenhill deliver programmes for schools, colleges, youth groups, cross community groups and church groups and have been established for over 100 years. Activities take place either in the extensive grounds on site or the surrounding area: i.e. The Mourne Mountains, Castlewella Forest Park and Lake and Tollymore Forest Park. Greenhill has been awarded the Adventure Activity Associations 'Adventuremark' which is awarded only to those Activity Centres that have been inspected and proven to have met the necessary standards for the safe delivery of Adventure Activities as defined by the Adventure Activities Industry Advisory Committee. Accommodation can also be provided within this centre.

Life Adventure Centre, Castlewella

- A4.5 Life Adventure Centre provides activities such as canoeing and Kayaking, Hill Walking and Rock Climbing, Trail and Mountain Biking, Wet Bouldering and Coasteering, Archery and Clay Pigeon Shooting, Raft Building and Team Quests and camping. The Centre is an 'Adventure Mark' accredited provider, members of the

Institute of Outdoor Learning, affiliated to the 'Association of Mountaineering Instructors' and Silver Recipients in the 2015 'Irish Responsible Tourism Awards' for Best Adventure Provider. They have also been awarded Gold in the Green Tourism Awards 2014.

26 Extreme, Warrenpoint

- A4.6 26 Extreme specialise in the planning of some of the largest outdoor events in Ireland including the Causeway Coast Marathon, The Mourne Way Marathon and the Coast to Coast Multisport Race across Ireland.
- A4.7 On 12th June 2016, the Council in association with 26 Extreme, presented a new Mountain Bike event 'In the Red' for the Rostrevor Trails, as part of the Northern Ireland Festival of Cycling 2016.

Rock and Ride Outdoors, Kilcoo

- A4.8 Rock and Ride Outdoors is Ireland's leading outdoor company providing Mountain Biking, Rock Climbing and Mountaineering courses, coaching and qualifications throughout Northern Ireland and beyond. It is located in Kilcoo and is comprised of three of Ireland's most qualified instructors, Rock and Ride Outdoors offers programmes for anyone from total beginners looking to start a new sport to aspiring instructors looking to make their living in the outdoor industry.

Flagstaff Adventures, Newry

- A4.9 Flagstaff Adventures provides the following Outdoor Activities located in the beautiful Ring of Gullion. It is set on a 120 acre site offering activities such as 4 x 4 Off Road, Clay Pigeon Shooting, Archery and Paintballing. The centre provides these activities for Large Youth / Sports Groups, on a Hen or Stag parties, or Corporate or Team Building activities from work.

Clearsky Adventure Centre

- A4.10 Clearsky Adventure Centre is an outdoor pursuits centre located in the medieval 'Old Castle Ward' area of the Castle Ward Estate on the shoreline of Strangford Lough. A vast range of outdoor activities are on offer at the activity centre for schools, groups, family fun days, businesses & individuals. These activities include; archery, rock climbing, raft building, laser clay pigeon shooting, orienteering, climbing and abseiling, coasteering, Kayaking and safari boat tours are also on offer. The Centre has recently been awarded the 'Adventuremark' Accreditation.

Appendix 5: Children and Family

Sheepbridge Family Entertainment Centre, Newry

- A5.1 Sheepbridge centre has a state of the art children's indoor play area, called Cheeky Monkeys with a 4 tiered climbing frame, ball pools, bumper boats, battery operated go karts and slides. There is also a Space Quest laser tag arena and the centre has the only bowling alley in Newry and the surrounding area with 10 state of the art, glow in the dark lanes and a retro bowling theme.

Newcastle Rock Pool

- A5.2 The Rock Pool in Newcastle has been open for more than 80 years and is the last open-air sea water swimming pool in Ireland. The pool is open for eight weeks during the summer months.

Coco's Adventure Playground, Newcastle

- A5.3 Coco's consists of an adventure playground, sports court, snake slide, Free Fall, tube slides, assault course and toddlers area including bouncy castle. Coco's is open all year round and is popular for hosting kids birthday parties.

Funky Monkeys, Downpatrick

- A5.4 Funky Monkeys combines a fun playground with a yummy "healthy-eating" cafe offering stay and play, birthday parties and weekly educational classes. The centre is specifically for children aged 0-8 years old, and has an arts and crafts area, and a separate toddler area too.

Funny Farm Adventures, Castlewellan

- A5.5 Funny Farm Adventures is a park with a 6 acre themed Maize Maze, which is the only one of its kind in Northern Ireland. Also available, Mini Digger, Football Wall, Rope Maze, Garden Games, Barrel Train, Laser Clay Shooting, Archery etc.

Mourne Archery Centre, Castlewellan

- A5.6 A place where you can learn the sport of archery with the help of trained archery leaders.

Seaforde Gardens and Tropical Butterfly House

- A5.7 The Tropical Butterfly House is set in beautiful grounds, with hundreds of free flying tropical butterflies, also parrots, reptiles and insects. There are avenues of mature trees, a maze set in the middle of an old walled garden and a children's play area.

Formula Karting: Indoor Grand Prix Kart Racing, Newry

- A5.8 Formula Karting, Newry is one of the biggest indoor karting track in Europe. It has tracks on 2 Levels available for racing with overpasses, tunnels, underpasses, ramps, bridges and banked corners. Suitable for teen parties, kids parties, youth or school groups, family day out or just an evening out with friends.

Appendix 6: Festivals and Events

B/E Aerospace Festival of Flight

- A6.1 The B/E Aerospace Festival of Flight is one of the major highlights in Northern Ireland's event calendar, attracting many thousands of visitors. The Festival is a full programme of events in Newcastle that take place in August. The airshow is the centre piece of the Festival where the crowds watch as the sky over Dundrum Bay is filled with the roar of engines.

St Patrick's Day

- A6.2 St. Patrick has been identified as a key signature destination by Tourism NI that will give stand out for Northern Ireland in out of state tourism markets. Downpatrick has been identified as a core hub for this project. Downpatrick boasts a seven day programme of events for the St Patrick's Celebrations including the St Patrick's Day Cross-Community Carnival Parade which attracts over 30,000 spectators. With over 50 events to choose from and a wealth of free entertainment on offer, Downpatrick's St Patrick's Celebrations has something for everyone including a range of concerts, exhibitions, sporting and family events. Tourism NI has recently agreed to award 3 years financial assistance in connection to the St. Patricks festival to the District, in partnership with Armagh, Craigavon and Banbridge Borough Council.
- A6.3 St. Patricks Day in Newry also provides family entertainment with live music, street entertainment, street theatre, comedy, and street performances of Irish Dancing.

Kingdom of Mourne Festival, Kilkeel

- A6.4 This is a two-week festival that is held annually mid-July and mid-August. This festival improves local community relations and it is also a major attraction for holidaymakers. Events include sheep dog trials, street hockey, children's fancy dress, sand castle competitions, vintage vehicles, live open air & pub entertainment, tennis coaching, exhibitions and demonstrations, fishing competitions and a fireworks display.

Warrenpoint Blues on the Bay Festival

- A6.5 The Blues on the Bay Festival takes place in Warrenpoint over the last bank holiday weekend in May. It attracts Blues & Jazz performances and includes many acts throughout the weekend in the selected bars. Music workshops also feature throughout the weekend.

Walking festivals

- A6.6 The Mourne International Walking Festival in June and the Wee Binnian Walking Festival in September offer a wide variety of walks ranging from excellent road and track walks to guided mountain rambles and hikes.

Fiddler's Green Festival, Rostrevor

- A6.7 Fiddler's Green Festival is a family-established annual celebration of Irish music and culture with an international flavour, which takes place in the village of Rostrevor. The Festival includes the annual Hall of Fame award, presented to the person or group who has made a significant contribution to Irish music or culture. The nightly folk club features the best of Irish & International Folk performances.

Hallowtides

- A6.8 Hallowtides is a programme of events with both private and public organisations getting behind the successful and popular festival. It runs in both Newcastle and Downpatrick. The programmes include live music and entertainment, fancy dress completions, pumpkin contests and fire work displays.

Warrenpoint International "Maiden of the Mourne" Festival

- A6.9 This is a two-week festival that happens somewhere between mid-July and mid-August. This festival offers something for all the family, with a range of events including band concerts, outdoor entertainment, sporting events & top celebrity performances, parades, children's events and The Maiden of the Mourne Competition featuring entrants from across the world.

Felie Chamlocha

- A6.10 The South Armagh village of Camlough hosts an action packed festival of music, dancing, storytelling, as well as a series of fun events for all including a tug-of-war, waiter races, duck derby, and of course a fancy dress donkey derby. There are also traditional music workshops, children's art workshops, bus trips, and street parties and are lots of sporting events, including soccer & GAA tournaments, lake swims, road bowls, fishing and shooting contests.

Annalong Harbour Hooley

- A6.11 Annalong Harbour Hooley is a weekend festival beginning mid-August. The main event is the Mackerel Massacre (a fishing competition), followed by a raft race, street theatre, vintage car show, talent competition for children and the Solid Gold Show. This event attracts people on a local and national basis.

Sticky Fingers Festival 'A celebration of Arts for Early Years'

- A6.12 Sticky Fingers Annual Festival based in Newry runs throughout the month of October and offers a whole month full performances, workshops and music. The Festival is offered to children from 0 to 12 years old and it has become a landmark event.

Boley Fair Hilltown

- A6.13 The Boley Fair celebrates rural traditions and aims to bring rural skills and past-times of a bygone era to a wide audience of local people and visitors alike. Over the five-day period, fair goers can participate in a wide variety of events including music, dancing, sports, traditional skills and family events. The annual festival is centred on the Sheep Show that traditionally takes place on the second Tuesday in July.

Kilbroney Vintage Show

- A6.14 The Kilbroney Vintage Show has been running since 1985, and is now recognised as the premier event of its kind in Ireland. Over 1,500 old vehicle enthusiasts descend on Kilbroney Park with their vehicles; there is also a funfair and novelty shows for children, including Clowns, Magic Shows and Face Painters. 2015 marked the 30th Anniversary of the Kilbroney Vintage Show.

Circuit of Ireland

- A6.15 In March 2015, Downpatrick held the launch of the Circuit of Ireland, one of the top five sporting events in Northern Ireland. Large crowds gathered to see off the 140 rally cars in the morning followed by rally competitors arriving in St Patrick Square. There was a full programme of entertainment, including a bouncy castle, face painters, balloon modellers, live music and a climbing wall.

Ballynahinch Harvest and Country Living Festival

- A6.16 This event, set up to celebrate the pig, potato and pageantry, which Ballynahinch town was once popular for gives children the chance to get up close and personal with their favourite animals. Visitors are entertained by live music, street performers, and face painting. This year's festival took place on Saturday 19th September 2015, and included The Great Ballynahinch Bake Off which saw baking enthusiasts compete for the best apple tart and scones in town.

International Clowns Festival, Downpatrick

- A6.17 This event has been held in different locations all over Europe in recent years but this is the first time it has come to Ireland and arrived in Downpatrick for 2015. More than 40 acclaimed clowns descended on the town, entertaining locals and visitors. In addition to the clowns, there were also be pantomimes, jugglers,

magicians, puppeteers, acrobats, bubble artists, stilt walkers, balloon sculptors and face painters.

A6.18 **Herring Gutters Festival, Harbour Inn, Newcastle**

This local festival is suitable for all the family and runs for one weekend over the summer months July or August. The entertainment includes, The Big Wheaten Bread Bake-off, craft stalls, car treasure hunt, Irish dancers and live traditional folk music.

Agenda Item:	Mourne Mountains Gateway Study
Report to:	Enterprise Regeneration and Tourism Committee
Subject:	Mourne Mountains Gateway Study
Date:	Monday 16 January 2017
Reporting Officer:	Marie Ward, Director Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism
Contact Officer:	Mark Mohan, Senior Tourism Initiatives Manager

Decisions Required

For Noting

1.0 Purpose and Background

It is the corporate aspiration of Newry Mourne & Down District Council to develop the Mourne Mountains & Ring of Gullion as the premier tourism destination of choice in Ireland. This project is being developed as a 'game changer' to deliver this aspiration, unique to this part of Ireland.

LUC, in association with Tourism Resources Company and Mullin Design Associates were commissioned by Council in October 2016 to undertake a 'Mourne Mountain Gateway' study. The purpose of the study is to generate and assess imaginative proposals and to produce a vision and development plan which will develop visitor infrastructure for sustainable enhancement of access from the town of Newcastle to the Mourne Mountains, foothills and forests, and broaden the visitor and recreational activity provision therein.

A presentation on the current position of this project was made to the Strategic working group of Council on 20 December 2016.

Key Issue

This project support the Council's aims by potentially attracting investment through tourism; creating jobs in the development and running of the attraction; and add to Newcastle's status as a premiere activity resort in Northern Ireland. **The Council's Corporate Plan** clearly acknowledges this area to *"Become one of the premier tourism destinations on the island of Ireland"* In addition the councils recently completed Tourism Strategy for the District has identified the need to develop 'a game changer' project in line with our Corporate plan and emerging TourismNI strategy which will focus on the need to be 'Experience' Led rather than 'product' led in order to connect with visitor segments. It would also produce investment and infrastructure through its development; produce a distinctive visitor experience to compete on the global stage; and would potentially attract a wider range of tourists to the area by providing variety to the already existing facilities.

It will support the implementation of other key agency strategies and action plans

	<p>linked to the area, namely:</p> <p>Mourne AONB Management and Action Plan (2010) which is structured around four interconnecting themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mountain, Countryside and Coast; • Historic Environment • Sustainable Communities; • Enjoying, Appreciating and Understanding the Mourne AONB. <p>This project provides support for these themes by providing potential to draw more visitors to the Mournes area, which provides stunning natural beauty comprised of various terrain.</p> <p>Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) Strategic Priorities (2012-2022) The project provides an opportunity for DEARA to work with statutory agencies such as Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and TourismNI to invest in assets with the most significant nature conservation and historic interest; while also supporting sustainable tourism through encouraging the sustainable use and reuse of the historic environment and local materials.</p> <p>TourismNI are an active partner in this proposal and have committed 50% of the project costs estimated at £100,000</p>
3.0	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>For noting</p>
4.0	<p>Resource Implications</p> <p>Funds to deliver this project have been allocated in the 2016/17 budget estimates.</p>
5.0	<p>Appendices</p> <p>Current position paper</p>

Mourne Mountains Gateway Study

Position Statement

Prepared by LUC in association with Tourism Resources Company
December 2016



www.landuse.co.uk

Tender title: Mourne Mountains Gateway Study

Client: Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Version	Date	Version Details	Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by
1	05/12/2016	Draft	NE	SO	SO



www.landuse.co.uk

Mourne Mountains Gateway Study

Position Statement

Prepared by LUC in association with Tourism Resources Company
December 2016

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The following paper sets out the current position with regard to progress to date and future planned work for the Mourne Mountain Gateway Study. It makes reference to the study Brief, included at **Appendix A** of this Position Statement and to the list of background documents contained within it.
- 1.2 LUC, in association with Tourism Resources Company (TRC) and Mullin Design Associates (MDA) was commissioned by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (NMDDC) in October 2016 to undertake the study. The purpose of the study is to generate and assess imaginative proposals and to produce a vision and development plan which will develop visitor infrastructure for sustainable enhancement of access from the town of Newcastle to the Mourne Mountains, foothills and forests, and broaden the visitor and recreational activity provision therein.
- 1.3 The primary study area for the project is Thomas's Quarry and Donard Park on the northern slopes of Slieve Donard to the south of Newcastle. Linkages to Tollymore Forest Park, Murlough Nature Reserve and the Bloody Bridge within the secondary study area are also being explored.
- 1.4 An Inception meeting was held on the 12th October 2016 to meet members of the steering group which also included representatives from Tourism NI (TNI) and the Mourne Heritage Trust (MHT).
- 1.5 The remainder of this paper covers:
 - Section 2 – progress to date;
 - Section 3 – future planned work; and
 - Section 4 – updated draft programme.

2 Progress to Date

2.1 The following table sets out details on work which has been carried out to date:

Table 2.1 Steering Group

Task	Dates	Output
Task 1 - Inception	November 2016	Following the inception meeting, an updated method statement and programme was circulated to the project steering group (NMDDC, NIT and MHT).
Task 2 – Desktop review and research	October to December 2016	Findings from key documents identified in the Invitation to Tender Document ¹ have been summarised in the 'Issues Report'. TRC has been gathering information on tourism projects and speaking to various providers to gather information on visitor numbers and capital costs. This has not involved discussing the specifics of the Mourne Mountain Gateway Study to date. LUC is continuing with background research. MHT has shared a number of materials with the team which have also been reviewed.
Task 2 - Fieldwork	October to December 2016	Two field visits have been undertaken to date, focusing on the primary and secondary study areas. Baseline photography and analysis of high level opportunities and constraints, for each of the key landscape features within the primary and secondary study area, are summarised in the draft 'Issues Report'.

¹ITT Documents

- South East Coast Masterplan for Department for Social Development, January 2013
- Feasibility Study for Slieve Donard Gondola Lift Project, RSM McClure Watters for Down District Council, October 2014
- Destination Mourne Mountains Tourism Management Plan 2013 – 2018
- Mourne Coastal Route Masterplan, April 2016, Aecom for Tourism NI
- Mournes Strategic Path Network Review, Daffyd Davis Trails for Mourne Heritage Trust, 2012
- Mourne Outdoor Recreation Strategy, Outdoor Recreation NI for SportNI, 2014
- Feasibility studies on Donard Park Leisure Centre for Down District Council
- Newcastle Tourism Development Strategy and Action Plan Locum destination consulting for Down District Council, May 2004
- Forest Service NI Forest Management Plans for Donard and Tollymore Forests, 2016
- Tourism NI Mountain Bike Study, 2016

Task	Dates	Output
Task 2 – contact with stakeholders	November to December 2016	<p>Early introductory meetings with the key stakeholders of the Forest Service and NIEA have been undertaken, and minutes from these meetings circulated. A telephone call with the National Trust is also scheduled for the 15th December.</p> <p>The list of review panel members (key project stakeholders) has been sent for agreement with the steering group, and following the Committee meeting on the 20th December, the team will begin to make contact with the review panel to set up the first consultation event.</p>
Task 3 - Mapping the baseline information and developing a strategic vision, conceptual masterplan and preliminary ideas	November to December 2016	<p>A series of draft boards have been produced which will be presented at the consultation event.</p> <p>The first two boards provide spatial information on the primary and secondary study area.</p> <p>For each of the key landscape features (Thomas's Quarry; Donard Forest and Park; Tollymore Forest Park; Murlough Nature Reserve; and Bloody Bridge), a board has been produced which provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline photography and mapping; • High level opportunities and constraints; and • Precedent images with ideas on how each area could be developed. <p>The draft boards have been included in the presentation to be put to the Committee on the 20th December 2016.</p>

3 Future Planned Work

- 3.1 The following sets out details on future planned work, in line with the methodology provided in the Issues Report.

Task 1: Inception

- 3.2 Complete - refer to Section 2.

Task 2: Baseline review, analysis and field work

a) Desk review and analysis

- 3.3 Underway – refer to Section 2.

b) Field work

- 3.4 Initial phase complete – refer to Section 2.

c) Contact with stakeholders

- 3.5 Underway – refer to Section 2.

Task 3: Mapping the baseline information and developing a strategic vision, conceptual masterplan and preliminary ideas

- 3.6 Underway – refer to Section 2.

Task 4: First stakeholder consultation event and public survey

- 3.7 A twin-track approach to public consultation is proposed, comprising the Review Panel made up of local key stakeholders and a wider questionnaire survey to elicit information about people's views.

Review Panel

- 3.8 It is expected that the Review Panel will meet twice over the course of the project to:
- (i) review the preliminary ideas / conceptual masterplan identified in Task 3, and generate further ideas; and
 - (ii) review the preferred options identified in Task 5 (see below), prior to the finalisation of the draft development plan.

- 3.9 It is anticipated that these workshops will be held in Newcastle and attended by representatives from LUC, TRC and MDA, along with key members of the steering group.

Public survey

- 3.10 An on-line map has been developed which will allow people to state where they go, what they do there, explain their favourite places, identify an issues or problems they

encounter, and record their ideas. The details will be sent to interested parties as well as being advertised to the wider public in the local newspaper and on the Council website. The data collated through this consultation will be used to inform the analysis of preferred options.

- 3.11 The draft online survey has been set up and is ready to roll out following the Committee meeting.

Output from Task 4: Summary of the key issues and opportunities across the study area, based around a series of maps.

Timing: January 2016

Task 5: Analysis of preferred options and draft development plan for steering group review

- 3.12 The results of the options appraisal in Task 3 and consultation in Task 4 will be critically analysed, to identify preferred options that are considered feasible. These options will be selected to best fit with steering group objectives, as well as reflecting the interests of land owners and other interest groups. For each preferred option, the team will provide a location plan, schematic diagram and overview of anticipated environmental, statutory and economic constraints and considerations. Allowance has been made for five key preferred options, dependant on the level of detail required for each option, to be developed. The options will focus on a 'game changing' international tourism attraction. However, and as appropriate, smaller interventions will also be developed.

Output from Task 5: Draft development plan with supporting maps and plans for steering group review.

Timing: February 2017

Task 6: Second stakeholder consultation event

- 3.13 The team will hold a second stakeholder consultation event to review the preferred options (to be presented as a series of A1 boards), covering the following: recap on project aims and objectives; summary of issues and opportunities identified at the first workshop; overview of preferred options; group discussion to review proposals in detail; and next steps and implementation.

Output from Task 6: Written summary of consultation event.

Timing: March 2017

Task 7: Development of preferred ideas

- 3.14 Following the second consultation event, the preferred ideas will be further developed as sketch proposals, with written descriptions. For outline costing purposes the team will limit the number of preferred development options to a maximum of five. However, this can be reviewed, following the consultation event. At this stage, the team will also revisit the vision and masterplan to ensure that this takes consideration of feedback received during consultation events.

Output from Task 7: Sketch proposals and written descriptions of each preferred option. Updated vision and masterplan.

Timing: April 2017

Task 8: Appraisals and outline costing of preferred ideas

- 3.15 The team will further add to the development plan, describing each of the preferred options and a reasoned justification for their selection, including outline costings for each proposal. As part of this stage, TRC will provide an indication of the visitor numbers and the likely visitor mix that a gateway site or elements of the site could attract, based on comparators and the consultant's own professional experience and judgement. TRC will also prepare a Tourism Impact Matrix, a qualitative matrix of potential tourism impacts covering social, cultural, and environmental issues.

Output from Task 8: Draft development plan including figures for steering group review.

Timing: May 2017

Task 9: Final reporting, graphics and recommendations

- 3.16 Following review of the draft development plan by the project steering group, the team will finalise the plan, as well as the accompanying graphic materials. The vision and development plan will be illustrated with maps, photographs and sketches, as appropriate. Workshop summaries will be included as appendices. A final teleconference meeting for project handover, between the steering group and key members of the project team is also planned at this stage.

Output from Task 9: Final development plan including figures.

Timing: June 2017

4 Remaining Programme

- 4.1 Table 4.1 provides a draft programme for the remaining work. The programme will, in part, be driven by the availability of key stakeholders and the final dates agreed for the two consultation events (*), currently proposed in January and March 2017.

Table 4.1 Draft Programme

Task	Jan 2017	Feb 2017	March 2017	April 2017	May 2017	June 2017
TASK 4: First stakeholder consultation event*	Event likely to be mid Jan					
TASK 5: Analysis of preferred options and draft report for steering group review						
TASK 6: Second stakeholder consultation event*			Event likely to be early March			
TASK 7: Development of preferred ideas						
TASK 8: Appraisals and costings of preferred ideas						
TASK 9 Final reporting, graphics and recommendations						

Appendix A – Project Brief



Invitation To Tender (ITT)

Tender Ref: 11/2016
(TCE/TS/17)

Mourne Mountains Gateway Study

Contents:

- Notes for Suppliers
- Tender Process
- General Guidance
- Freedom of Information
- Specification

1. BASIC DETAILS OF YOUR ORGANISATION.....	
2. FINANCIAL INFORMATION.....	
3. BUSINESS ACTIVITIES.....	
4. INSURANCE.....	
5. QUALITY ASSURANCE.....	
6. HEALTH & SAFETY.....	
7. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES.....	
8. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT.....	
9. PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS STANDING.....	
10. RELEVANT CAPABILITY (Relevant to this Tender).....	
11. AWARD – PROJECT SPECIFIC QUESTIONS.....	
12. TENDER COSTING.....	
13. DECLARATION.....	

Please return this form online at www.newryandmourne.gov.uk/procurement along with your tender, ensuring it is uploaded in its entirety before the designated deadline.

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Notes for Suppliers:

The purpose of this questionnaire is to assist Newry, Mourne & Down District Council in deciding which, if any economic operators (any Tenderer) to award the contract to.

This document needs only to be completed by either deleting the relevant prompt (Yes/No) or by typing in an answer (N/A or N/K) but ALL questions should be addressed.

Files can be uploaded to the online secure portal before the deadline and edited, but once the deadline has passed any editing or additional files will result in your tender being marked late.

We intend to use this format for other tenders so it may be considered practicable to keep a completed copy for future tenders as requested, ensuring that it is kept updated with any changes.

In order to simplify this process, you do not always need to provide supporting documents, for example, accounts, certificates, statements or policies with this questionnaire, unless specifically requested, but you will need to clearly identify and reference them. However, we may request to see the original documents at a later stage and failure to supply the suitable requested documents, within a reasonable deadline, could result in potential exclusion from the process and/or future processes.

Clarification questions on the requirement can be asked, using the Clarification Process under the relevant tender, during the process, although may not be addressed if only requested within the last 5 days before the deadline.

Any new documents, amendments, clarifications or updates that are uploaded during the process will be advised by email to the registered users who have expressed an interest in this tender. It is the users' responsibility to monitor such correspondence. If no expression of interest has been registered before these have been updated, they will be available under the tender documents or as clarification questions as usual.

Your details, contact details and relevant categories of interest on the portal are only managed by yourselves. It is your responsibility to ensure these details are suitable and maintained as they will be used by us to identify suppliers, for competition and general correspondence along with Purchase Orders, we don't have access to modify your details.

Any problems with the process online, whether access, uploading or downloading phone e-Hub on freephone **0800 731 6575**.

Tender Process:

It is our intention to follow the following stages:

- 1. After close of tender all candidates will have their return assessed according to the criteria disclosed.**
- 2. The successful candidate(s) will be selected based on the advised award criteria contained within this document.**

Remember you are entitled to feedback, irrespective of your result, this is both of benefit to you and ourselves.

We also would appreciate feedback, so as to be able to monitor and improve the process to suit all parties.

You may also be asked to clarify your answers or provide more details.

"Authority" means the purchasing organisation(s) that is seeking to award a contract.

"Council" means the Newry, Mourne & Down District Council, unless specified to the contrary.

"Economic Operator" means any Tenderer, can also be referred to as supplier or contractor who tenders a return.

"Organisation" means the economic operator offering a tender, along with their respective supply chain partners/members.

"Public Contract Regulations 2015 (PCR2015)" See: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/102/contents/made>

Please return this form online at www.newryandmourne.gov.uk/procurement along with your tender, ensuring it is uploaded in its entirety before the designated deadline.

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General Guidance:

You are invited to submit a tender and for your guidance, the notes and instructions for tendering are detailed below and should be read in conjunction with our Standard Terms and Conditions:

1. Tenders should be returned via the e-Portal (www.newryandmourne.gov.uk/procurement) against the relevant tender, to be received not later than 12 noon on the day of closure specified on the portal for the relevant tender or as advised. Signatures and Details can be typed in when returned to this secure on-line e-Portal against the relevant tender. Using the e-Portal the Max upload file size is 4mb, although multiple files are allowed.
2. You must ensure sufficient time for uploading your Tender. Tenderers are encouraged not to leave uploading their returns until the last day, in case they have difficulties in meeting the on-line requirements and need to seek guidance or assistance. You can access your tender returns and edit them on-line, although do not edit them after the deadline as they will be marked as late.
3. It is emphasised that in the interests of equitable tendering, the Council may not consider tenders received or modified after the advised deadline and cannot accept any responsibility for any delays or otherwise, not reported before the deadline.
4. To help ensure an equitable competition where Page, Word or Character counts or other limits are advised for your reply to questions or parts of questions that form part of the disclosed scored adjudication, if you exceed this limit your score will be marked down against the relevant question(s) by the percentage over the advised limit, which may then be rounded to the nearest whole figure. Where formatting was advised and changed, it will be adjusted back and a similar deduction will be made. This does not apply in the opposite if below the limit. In all cases you can't score less than zero.
5. Tenderers are to ensure that documentation submitted with their completed tender does not contain, or bear printed thereon, terms and conditions or general restrictions which conflict with the conditions prescribed in the Councils standard conditions of contract or special conditions in connection with the contract, which have preference, unless formally agreed with all parties in advance otherwise your tender may be rejected on the grounds of inequitable and non-transparent tendering.
6. All publications, documents and other material(s) provided during or as part of the tendering exercise or as part of the delivery of the tendered or contracted work, service or goods by the successful and/or contracted tenderer will have their copyright and ownership rights passed to the Council as part of the tendering process or at the time of the tendered contract's completion, unless clearly indicated to the contrary at the time of tender. All publications, documents and other material(s) provided in a tendering exercise by the successful tenderer who retains copyright still allows the Council free use and free publication of all publications, documents and other material(s) provided in the exercise of the tendered project or contract or future associated projects or contracts.

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7. All Qualifications, Certification and Standards contained or referred to in these tender documents are as a guide, any equivalent or higher Qualifications, Certifications or Standards can also be accepted, the proof and details of the equivalence is the responsibility of the tenderer and is to be supplied with their Tender returns.
8. The Council has an Environmental Policy, certified to ISO14001 accreditation and requires all contractors and/or suppliers and their various sub contractors and/or suppliers to adhere to the Council's Environmental Policy; a copy is available on our website.
9. All Tenders to be carried out by bona fide tenderers with all their personnel holding the relevant Health and Safety Training for the particular services/goods/works they are undertaking or requested to undertake.
10. Tenderers may tender for the whole or any of the articles specified in the tender form but the Council does not bind itself to place the entire contract with any one contractor or to accept the whole or any number of services/goods/works offered.
11. The Tenderer shall be deemed to have satisfied itself, before tendering it's submission, as to the accuracy and sufficiency of the rates and prices stated in the submission which shall (except in so far as is otherwise provided in the Contract) cover all their obligations under the Contract and they shall be deemed to have obtained for themselves all necessary information as to risks and any other circumstances which might reasonably influence or affect their tendered submission
12. No guarantee can be given that any of the goods/services/works tendered for will be required during the period covered by the tender or that any particular quantity will be ordered or that the lowest priced tender is accepted. i.e. you undertake to tender an offer for this tender at your own risk.
13. The Council reserves the right to extend or amend this or any contract subject to the circumstances set out in Regulation 72 of PCR2015.
14. The Council highlights the provision to also terminate this or any contract on the grounds specified under Regulation 73 of PCR2015.
15. All invoices are only to be forwarded to Accounts Department, O'Hagan House, Monaghan Row, Newry, BT35 8DJ.
16. The Council may disclose with other Public Sector Contracting Authorities any of the Tenderer's information/documentation (including any that the Tenderer considers to be confidential and/or commercially sensitive such as specific tender information) submitted by the Tenderer to the Council during this Procurement. The information will not be disclosed outside of the public sector. Tenderers taking part in this competition consent to these terms as part of the competition process.

Freedom of Information

Tendering Procedures Guidance Notes



Tenderers should be aware that the information provided in the completed tender and contractual documents could be disclosed in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act. We will proceed on the basis of disclosure unless an appropriate exemption applies. No information provided by Tenderers will be accepted “in confidence” and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council accepts no liability for loss as a result of any information disclosed in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has no discretion whether or not to disclose information in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act, unless an exemption applies. Disclosure decisions will be taken by appropriate individuals in Newry, Mourne and Down District Council having due regard to the exemptions available and the Public Interest. Tenderers should be aware that despite the availability of some exemptions, information may still be disclosed if the Public Interest in its disclosure outweighs the Public Interest in maintaining the exemption. Tenderers are required to highlight information that they include in the tender documents, which they consider to be commercially sensitive or confidential in nature, and should state the precise reasons, why that view is taken. In particular, issues concerning trade secrets and commercial sensitivity should be highlighted. Tenderers are advised against recording unnecessary information.

In accordance with the Lord Chancellors Code of Practice on the discharge of public functions¹, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council will not accept any contractual term that purports to restrict the disclosure of information held by the Council in respect of the contract or tender exercise save as permitted by the Freedom of Information Act. The decision whether to disclose information rests solely with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council will consult with tenderers, where it is considered appropriate, in relation to the release of controversial information. Tenderers will be notified by the Council of any disclosure of information relating to them.

¹Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the discharge of public authorities functions under Part 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 Issued under Section 45 of the Act.

Requirement / Specifications / Terms of Reference

Mourne Mountains Gateway Study

Requirement:

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council require the services of a highly skilled multi-disciplinary team to generate and assess imaginative proposals and to produce a vision and development plan for the 'Mourne Mountains Gateway'.

Purpose:

- 1) To develop visitor infrastructure within Destination Mourne Mountains and Ring of Gullion as Ireland's outdoor activity capital by generating and assessing imaginative proposals and producing a vision and development plan – including outline design and costings – for;
 - a) the sustainable enhancement of access from the town of Newcastle to the Mourne Mountains, foothills and forests and
 - b) for the broadening of visitor and recreational activity provision therein.
- 2) To produce creative and innovative visions and plans that have the potential to:
 - a) deliver a step change in the visitor experience in the Mournes,
 - b) provide stand out in the tourism market and
 - c) impact significantly on the tourism performance of Newcastle, the wider destination and Northern Ireland.
- 3) To include specific assessment of the potential for and nature of a 'game changing' iconic attraction, development and/or developments.

The Issue

- The Mournes is Northern Ireland's most important location for outdoor recreation pursuits including walking, climbing, mountain biking. It is also an important tourism destination, particularly for the domestic market in Northern Ireland. However, it is considered that significant potential exists to grow tourism particularly - given the strategic position on the island of Ireland between Belfast and Dublin and proximity to these and other key gateways - from the Republic of Ireland and overseas.
- The town of Newcastle is one of NI's leading seaside resorts. Recent investments have

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enhanced its attractiveness and tourism performance.

- While proximity of mountain, sea and forest is one of the Mourne area's distinctive features, infrastructure for access to, activity in and interpretation of these natural assets remains underdeveloped by comparison to both the facilities available at other key natural heritage sites and/or 'gateways' and to the quality and utility of the Newcastle promenade and townscape developments.
- 'Permeability' between the seaside town and open country is somewhat limited by infrastructure deficits. For example access to the high Mournes from the north is largely restricted to a small number of key corridors, notably the Glen River, Trassey and Bloody Bridge, which are poorly connected to each other. Some visitor management issues including erosion are evident.
- Facilities for access to and appreciation of the environment for people of lesser mobility, the young and older people are somewhat limited as is provision for outdoor recreation activities other than walking and climbing. Focal points for interpretation of the distinctive natural and cultural heritage of Northern Ireland's highest mountains and for visitor orientation and services are also somewhat underdeveloped.
- Several opportunity sites exist in and between Newcastle town and the landscape including Donard Park, Castle Park, Islands Park (Council owned), Donard Forest and Tollymore Forest Park (Forest Service) along with some of the most used upland paths in Northern Ireland.
- Thomas's Quarry (on Thomas's mountain beneath Slieve Donard and owned by National Trust) is an already modified/ man made location at a 200m elevation and is considered potentially to be a particular opportunity site for a distinctive and iconic visitor offering, with access by a gondola style uplift among the suggestions that previous studies have presented.

Previous Studies

As well as the broader policy and market context, the study should take particular cognisance of and build on a number of previous relevant studies particularly:

- South East Coast Masterplan for Department for Social Development, January 2013
- Feasibility Study for Slieve Donard Gondola Lift Project, RSM McClure Watters for Down District Council, October 2014
- Destination Mourne Mountains Tourism Management Plan 2013 – 2018
- Mourne Coastal Route Masterplan, April 2016, Aecom for Tourism NI
- Mournes Strategic Path Network Review, Daffyd Davis Trails for Mourne Heritage Trust, 2012

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- Mourne Outdoor Recreation Strategy, Outdoor Recreation NI for SportNI, 2014
- Feasibility studies on Donard Park Leisure Centre for Down District Council
- Newcastle Tourism Development Strategy and Action Plan Locum destination consulting for Down District Council, May 2004
- Forest Service NI Forest Management Plans for Donard and Tollymore Forests, 2016
- Tourism NI Mountain Bike Study, 2016

Account should also be taken of corporate plans and strategies of Forest Service, National Trust and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council in respect of tourism, access to the countryside and outdoor recreation.

Study Area:

The primary focus for the study will be Donard Park (owned by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council) and the adjacent lands on the northern facing slopes of Slieve Donard and Slieve Commedagh (owned by, respectively Forest Service and National Trust) with a particular focus on Thomas's Quarry.

Secondary sites include Castle Park and Islands Park (Council owned) and other opportunity sites in and around the town of Newcastle that may be identified. Linkages to Tollymore Forest (to the west) Bloody Bridge (to the south east) and Murlough National Nature Reserve (NNR) should also be examined.

It should be noted that the study area contains a considerable amount of land that is under conservation designations, notably the Eastern Mournes Special Area of Conservation and Area of Special Scientific Interest. Murlough NNR is also a Special Area of Conservation. Maintenance of the inherent quality and appeal of the landscape is paramount, for conservation and for tourism, in any proposals.

Some of the lands in the study area are in private ownership and used mostly for the purposes of farming. Consideration of access rights and engagement with these private landowners is likely to be required in relation to linkages from the Donard / Commedagh area to locations including Bloody Bridge and Tollymore.

Outputs:

Key outputs should include the following

- Analysis of the role and potential of Newcastle and surrounding area as a gateway for the Mourne Mountains landscape and as a significant tourism 'hook' for the Mourne Mountains and Ring of Gullion Destination.
- A vision – agreed through consultation - for how the gateway function and visitor offering and experience should be enhanced and integrated
- Assessment of potential and options for a signature visitor attraction or attractions

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- Assessment of the potential and options for new and enhanced countryside access and outdoor activity related infrastructure
- Generation and presentations of concepts and ideas for development, including initial outline visuals where appropriate
- High level feasibility assessment of ideas generated taking account of stakeholder views, relevant planning and environmental policies and constraints, likely costs and benefits (financial and other) and operational feasibility issues¹
- Creative designs and drawings for preferred options accompanied by outline costings
- Detail of further assessment/ technical work required on preferred options

In keeping with the scale of the ambition for the town and the Mourne Mountains and Ring of Gullion destination and the quality of the natural environment and existing built environment, a high degree of creativity and innovation should be brought to bear in generating proposals. Along with this creativity, a degree of critical analysis will be required to identify preferred options that are considered feasible (subject to further assessment). The report and associated outputs should present a robust rationale for the developments proposed in a format easily reproduced as a business case for both capital funding and resources for further technical assessment.

This exercise is likely to attract a significant degree of public and media attention and participation which adds to the opportunity presented. The Mourne Mountains – previously proposed as Northern Ireland's first National Park - inspire strong emotions in many and a diverse range of stakeholders need to be considered in any proposals for development of experiences and facilities in and around this valuable and valued landscape. Therefore thorough, agreed, inclusive and participative consultation will be required both locally and potentially in a wider context.

Approaches and skills required

It is envisaged that the study will include the following approaches. (Please note this is intended neither to be prescriptive nor exhaustive):

- Situational/ contextual analysis, including tourism and outdoor recreation market trends, needs and opportunities
- Consultations with key stakeholders, including public and private land owners and statutory bodies
- Public consultations
- Visioning/ Master Planning

¹ It is not envisaged that full environmental impact assessments, economic appraisals etc will form part of this commission but rather that appropriate consideration of the various environmental, statutory and economic constraints and considerations should inform the development of options and be reflected where appropriate in outline design.

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- Infrastructure outline design and costing (including, among other things visitor attractions, visitor centres, trails and other forms of access infrastructure, adventure/activity infrastructure/including specialised design)
- Environmental expertise, including landscape and visual impact and compliance with relevant statutory planning policy and environmental designations
- Outline cost benefit/ tourism market impact analysis

Accordingly the project will require a highly skilled multi-disciplinary team.

AWARD CRITERIA

Criteria	Weighting %
PART A – Project specific questions	85%
PART B – Price	15%
Total Weighting	100%

PART A

Assessment	Marks	Interpretation
Excellent	5 marks	Excellent approach and capability to managing and delivering the project
Very good	4 marks	Very good approach and capability to managing and delivering the project
Good	3 marks	Good approach and capability to managing and delivering the project
Satisfactory	2 marks	Satisfactory approach and capability to managing and delivering the project
Poor	1 marks	Poor approach and capability to managing and delivering the project
Nothing addressed	0 marks	No approach to managing and delivering the project

PART B

The Council is not bound to accept the lowest or any quotation, nor will the Council be involved in expenses incurred in the preparation of the quotation.

Response to Quantitative Requirements – Cost:

The following formula will be used to determine the scores for Cost:

$$\frac{\text{Lowest Price}}{\text{Tenderers Price}} \times 15\% = \text{Weighted Score}$$

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Adjudication Criteria:

(Please ensure you address the Criteria in full in your tender returns to maximise your chance of award)

Section		Weighting
1. Organisation Details		N/A – For Completion
2. Financial Information		N/A – risk based assessment – For Completion
3. Business Activities		N/A – risk based assessment – For Completion
4. Insurance		N/A – risk based assessment – For Completion
5. Quality Assurance		N/A – risk based assessment – For Completion
6. Health and Safety		N/A – risk based assessment – For Completion
7. Equal Opportunities		N/A – risk based assessment – For Completion
8. Environmental Management		N/A – risk based assessment – For Completion
9. Professional and Business Standing		N/A – risk based assessment – For Completion
10. Relevant Capability (Applicable to this Tender)		For Completion
11. Project Specific Questions (Part A)	1.	25%
	2.	25%
	3.	25%
	4.	10%
12. Costing / Tendered Price (Part B)	1.	15%
13. Declaration		For Completion
14. Tender Form		For Completion

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1. BASIC DETAILS OF YOUR ORGANISATION		
1.1	Name of the organisation in whose name the tender would be submitted:	
1.2	Contact name for enquiries about this bid:	
1.3	Contact position (Job Title):	
1.4	Address: Post Code:	
1.5	Telephone number:	
1.6	Fax number:	
1.7	E-mail address:	
1.8	Website address (if any):	
1.9	Company Registration number (if this applies):	
1.10	Charities or Housing Association or other Registration number (if this applies). Please specify registering body:	
1.11	Date of Registration:	
1.12	Registered address if different from the above: Post Code:	
1.13	VAT Registration number:	

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1.14	Is your organisation: (Please tick one) Note: While none preferred, however for entering into and performing the contract, Tenderers will require to form a legal entity recognised under Northern Ireland law. There is no preferred form of economic operator but each individual in any group is to be jointly and severally liable for the contract. In the event of an associated group of companies being successful, the Council will require each company to be jointly and severally liable for the satisfactory performance of the contract.	i) a public limited company? ii) a limited company? iii) a partnership iv) a sole trader v) a consortium (please provide structure /responsibilities with contacts) vi) other (please specify)	
1.15	Name of (ultimate) parent company (if this applies):		
1.16	Companies House Registration number of parent company (if this applies):		
1.17	Construction and related businesses only. Are you registered with Constructionline and hold a SafeT Cert or equivalent?	Yes / No Yes / No	
1.18	If "Yes" , what are your registration details and/or details of your equivalence accreditations, along with supporting evidence of equivalence?		
1.19	Provide evidence that all Play Development Workers have received proper Child Protection Training and POCVA checked.	Yes / No	

2. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

2.1	What was your turnover in the last two years (if this applies)?	£/€..... for year ended --/--/----	£/€..... for year ended --/--/----
2.2	Has your organisation met the terms of its banking facilities and loan agreements (if any) during the past year?	Yes / No	

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2.3	If "No" what were the reasons, and what has been done to put things right?				
2.4	Has your organisation met all its obligations to pay its creditors and staff during the past year?	Yes / No			
2.5	If "No" please explain why not:				
2.6	What is the name and branch of your bankers (who could provide a reference)?	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Name:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Branch:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Contact details:</td> </tr> </table>	Name:	Branch:	Contact details:
Name:					
Branch:					
Contact details:					
2.7	If <u>asked</u> , would you be able to provide at least one of the following?				
	<i>A copy of your most recent audited accounts (for the last two years if this applies)</i>	Yes / No			
	<i>A statement of your turnover, profit & loss account and cash flow for the most recent year of trading</i>	Yes / No			
	<i>A statement of your cash flow forecast for the current year and a bank letter outlining the current cash and credit position.</i>	Yes / No			

3. BUSINESS ACTIVITIES		
3.1	What are the main business activities of your organisation?	
3.2	How many staff does your organisation have? (If you are a sole trader, please say so)	

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4. INSURANCE		
	Please provide details of your current insurance cover	Max Value
4.1	Employer's Liability:	£
4.2	Public Liability: (normal minimum requirement is £5m)	£
4.3	Other (please provide details):	£

5. QUALITY ASSURANCE		
5.1	Does your organisation hold a recognised quality management certification for example BS/EN/ISO 9000 or equivalent?	Yes / No
5.2	If not, does your organisation have a quality management system*?	Yes / No
5.3	If you do not have quality certification or a quality management system, please explain why:	

6. HEALTH & SAFETY		
6.1	Does your organisation have a written health and safety at work policy? (<i>see notes at end of questionnaire</i>)	Yes / No
6.2	Does your organisation have a health and safety at work system*?	Yes / No
6.3	If " No ", to either of the above please explain why:	

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7. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Does your organisation have an equal opportunities and/or race relations policy?	YES / NO
Does your organisation require its staff to receive training on equal opportunities?	YES / NO
Is it the policy of your organisation as employers to comply with their statutory obligations under the Race Relations Order (Northern Ireland) 1997, the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 as amended, the Equal Pay Act (Northern Ireland) 1970 as amended, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Equality (Disability etc) (Northern Ireland) Order 2000, Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 and the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 (i.e. seeking to establish that Contractors, will comply with the relevant Northern Ireland legislation or equivalent legislation, where applicable.)	YES / NO
In the last three years has any finding of unlawful discrimination in the employment field been made against the Contractor and/or its named supply chain members (sub-contractors) by the employment tribunal, the employment appeal tribunal, or any court or in comparable proceedings in any other jurisdiction?	YES / NO
If the answer to the previous question is "Yes", what steps have been taken by the Contractor and/or its named supply chain members (sub-contractors) as a result of that finding(s)?	

8. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

8.1	Does your organisation have an environmental management system*?	Yes / No
-----	--	----------

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9. PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS STANDING

(Includes all sub-contractors and supply chain – can be completed separately or as a group/consortium.)

9.a) Within the past five years from the date of issue of this tender, has your organisation/supply chain, or to (any of) the director(s) / partner(s) / proprietor(s) or any person(s) who have powers of representation, decision or control been convicted of any of the following offences, orders or proceedings outlined below and detailed in the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (PCR2015) under reg57.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/102/regulation/57/made>

Any changes to your disclosed position throughout the contract period must immediately be advised.

9.1	Convicted of – [reg57(1) cites the details & relevant legislation]: a) Conspiracy relating to participation in a criminal organisation. b) Corruption. c) Bribery. d) Fraud affecting any of the financial interests of the European Communities. e) Money Laundering f) Any other offence within the meaning of the Public Sector Directive as defined by the national law of any relevant state.	Yes / No
9.2	Is in a state of bankruptcy, insolvency, compulsory winding up, receivership, composition with creditors, or subject to these proceedings	Yes / No
9.3	Has been convicted of a criminal offence related to business or professional conduct	Yes / No
9.4	Has committed an act of grave misconduct in the course of business	Yes / No
9.5	Has not fulfilled obligations related to payment of social security contributions	Yes / No
9.6	Has not fulfilled obligations related to payment of taxes (Reg 57(3,4,5))	Yes / No
9.7	Is guilty of serious misrepresentation in supplying information	Yes / No
9.8	Is not in possession of relevant licenses or membership of an appropriate organisation where required by law	Yes / No
9.9	Any other committed offence, orders or grounds as detailed under the Public Contract Regulations 2015 regulation 57 (1,2,3,4,5)	Yes / No
9.9	Does your organization have any convictions for cruelty to animals under the Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 2011?	Yes / No
9.11	If the answer to any of these is "Yes" please give brief details below, including what has been done to put things right or to address these matters.	

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10. RELEVANT CAPABILITY (relevant to this tender)

Please provide details of your capability to undertake this project(s).

- Please provide details of one recent similar contract to generate and assess imaginative proposals and produce a vision and development plan – including outline design and costings.
- If you cannot provide a reference to the above, please explain why and clearly demonstrate an understanding of your approach to the requirement. Please complete Table 10.1 below

10.1 Details:

Description of works	Please give details of one recent contract (including identifying your Company's role).
----------------------	---

Max 2 x A4 page Arial font size 12

11. AWARD - PROJECT SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Max 4 x A4 page per question
in Arial font size 12

11.1	Demonstrate your understanding of the key issues and opportunities associated with this study and what broad approaches are required to address these.	Scored 1- 5 (25% Weighting) Submission required
11.2	Methodology Your proposed methodology to successfully complete this contract.	Scored 1- 5 (25% Weighting) Submission required
11.3	Give full details of your planned approach to the management, organisation and delivery of the works for this project. Please supply gantt chart (this can be a separate page(s))	Scored 1- 5 (25% Weighting) Submission required
11.4	Outline available staff, labour, equipment and other resources to successfully complete this contract: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior Staff• Other relevant staff• Indicate current total available staff• Indicate total and type of equipment and other resources available	Scored 1- 5 (10% Weighting) Submission required

12. Tender Costing – Cost for this contract should not exceed £100,000 (+ VAT)

A full breakdown of costings should be supplied.

Stg £

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12.1		
	Total cost	
	Total Weighting 15%	

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information or to raise any issues on the Tender process please address at www.newryandmourne.gov.uk/procurement using the clarification questions option for this process request.

All completed Tender Returns should be made online at:

<http://www.newryandmourne.gov.uk/procurement>

All Tender submissions to be lodged on-line on or before 12.00 Noon on Friday 22nd July 2016.

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13. DECLARATION

Signatures and Details can be typed in when returned to the secure online e-Portal against the relevant tender.

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge, the answers submitted in this document and any supporting documentation forming this issued and referenced competition are correct and I have read and understood in full all the notes, guidance, requirements, specifications, terms and conditions that have been available to me as part of this process. I understand that the information will be used in the evaluation process to assess my organisation's suitability to be invited to meet the Authority's tendered requirement and any subsequent changes may result in my tender being disqualified and/or invalidate any subsequent awards arising from this tender.

FORM COMPLETED BY

13.1	Name:	
13.2	Position (Job Title):	
13.3	Date:	
13.4	Telephone number:	
13.5	Signature:	

Notes:

* "system" means processes and procedures to ensure that the subject is properly managed. This includes making sure that legal requirements are met.

Health and Safety Policies

Any business employing **five** or more people has, by law, to prepare and bring to the attention of employees a written Health and Safety Policy Statement.

A Health and Safety Policy usually consists of three distinct sections namely:

1. **General Policy Statement** – a short statement outlining the organisation's commitment to Health and Safety, **signed and dated** by the senior organisation official (for example, the Managing Director).
2. **Organisation** – how the organisation addresses health and safety; lines of communication between managers and staff; and any specific duties/responsibilities assigned within the organisation - this should be relatively straightforward for smaller organisations
3. **Arrangements** – the systems and procedures in place for ensuring employees' health and safety at work

Agenda Item:	Grow Your Horizons Programme
Report to:	Enterprise Regeneration and Tourism Committee
Subject:	Grow Your Horizons Programme
Date:	Monday 16 January 2017
Reporting Officer:	Marie Ward, Director Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism
Contact Officer:	Mark Mohan Senior Tourism Initiatives Manager

Decisions Required

For Noting

1.0	<p>Purpose and Background</p> <p>The legacy council of Down District, jointly with Ards Borough Council, Banbridge District Council and Newry & Mourne District Council, were successful in securing funding for the development and implementation of a Grow your Horizons – Exporting Tourism Programme under the European Sustainable Competitiveness Programme for NI 2007-13.</p> <p>The Grow your Horizons Programme was match funded by Invest Northern Ireland and the four legacy local authorities. Down District Council was the lead Council partner.</p> <p>The project aimed at enhancing competitiveness, performance and the sustainability of the tourism/services businesses in the Mourne Mountains, Ring of Gullion, Saint Patrick's Country and Strangford Lough tourism destinations and prepare them to export their tourism businesses and services to out of state markets. This will be done through developing and adopting best marketing practices as advised and developed by marketing professionals and the Incoming Tour Operators Association. The programme helped develop and build the capacity of the participating businesses to become more competitive in the export of their business to out-of-state markets and visitors, and to establish, manage and maintain working partnerships</p>
2.0	<p>Key Issues</p> <p>The programme which is now complete was a great success. It yielded the following results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engaged 60 businesses (57 of which completed the programme) - 14 Collaborative business partnerships were established and remain operational - 93 part time and seasonal new jobs were created (FTE 46) - Business turnover amongst participating businesses showed increases between 10% - 100% - Overseas visitors in one instance increased by 300% - 8 new product/services and/or diversations were created <p>The project evaluation report has now been completed.</p>
3.0	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>For Noting</p>

4.0	Resource Implications N/A
5.0	Equality and Good Relations implications This has a very positive message in terms of our equality and good relations in that the tourism destinations are representative of our entire district and participating businesses came from across the district and all our communities within.
6.0	Appendices End of programme evaluation report

Grow Your Horizons Programme

**for tourism businesses in
Destinations Strangford Lough and
Mourne Mountains & Ring of Gullion**

**Post Project Monitoring Report
September 2015
Updated December 2016**

Grow Your Horizons Programme Post Project Monitoring Report

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1 Introduction

This is the Post Project Monitoring Report for the Grow Your Horizons Tourism Programme in Destinations Strangford Lough and Mourne Mountains & Ring of Gullion.

The report was prepared in mid-2015 with further updates in December 2016.

1.1 Background

Down District Council in conjunction with Ards Borough Council, Banbridge District Council and Newry & Mourne District Council had successfully secured funding for the development and implementation of a Preparing for Market – Exporting Tourism Programme. This project was part financed by Invest Northern Ireland and the European Regional Development Fund under the Sustainable Competitiveness Programme for Northern Ireland, together with the four councils referred to above. Down District Council was the lead Council partner.

BTS was commissioned in July 2013 after tender to deliver the programme.

The title of the programme was adapted to Grow Your Horizons to help with recruitment of tourism operators and to give it a stronger marketing identity.

1.1 Target Market

The Programme was aimed at assisting 60 tourism enterprises across the tourism destinations of Strangford Lough, St Patrick's Country and the Mournes to plan, prepare and export their products and services to tour operators in key out-of-state markets. Tourism is the biggest industry in the four Council programme areas. It generated £353m for the local economy, delivered 6.5m bed nights and generated 4.3m visitor trips across the 4 Council partner areas (Source: 2011 LA STEAM figures).

1.2 Programme Objectives

The programme was seen as an important component in the tourism strategies for these areas – adopted by the former NITB, the LAs and the tourism trade. Helping build the viability and success of tourism and hospitality business was seen as crucial to the competitiveness of the destinations.

This project aim was to train 60 operators to be able to work with tour operators, who are essential communication and sales channels to getting product into overseas, off-island (i.e. GB and Europe) and into Republic of Ireland markets. If tourism is to be a key driver in the economy, it was seen as essential that SME tourism businesses were appropriately equipped and knew how to offer their products and services more widely afield than just to the domestic markets of NI.

The Preparing for Market – Exporting Tourism Programme was aimed at providing specialist advice, training and practical assistance to tourism enterprises to enhance their competitiveness, performance and sustainability. This is to be achieved by developing and adopting best marketing practices. Specifically, the Programme was designed to help develop and build the capacity of the participating businesses to become more competitive in the export of their business to tour operators in out-of-state markets.

In more detail, The Programme had the following aims and objectives:

- To help tourism enterprises plan and prepare for market and in doing so develop their business to increase efficiency, profitability and an ability to appeal to a variety of important market sectors, in line with the core attributes of the tourism destinations;
- To help tourism enterprises, establish, manage and maintain working partnerships with key incoming tour operators from across the world; and
- To develop and build the capacity of the participating businesses to be more competitive in their export to out-of-state markets and visitors.

Specific objectives of the Programme included:

- To offer a number of local tourism enterprises the opportunity to accelerate their growth through strategic partnerships with key incoming tour operators from across the world;
- To enhance the knowledge of the industry through a bespoke destination business support programme which link tour operators with the industry in a co-ordinated way;
- To develop an educational 'To do' guide for the industry, as a reference and 'guide' in preparing for market (both on and off line);

- To assist businesses in implementation of relevant actions;
- To develop a centralised web portal (basecamp) for the communication of ideas and learning as part of the respective Destination websites: www.visitstrangfordlough.co.uk, www.visitmournemountains.co.uk and www.stpatrickscountry.com.

The early planning of the project included a recruitment phase (to ensure 60 operators participate, and that they are “export-ready”). This was followed by a series of topics delivered through a workshop methodology. Two best practice visits to other destinations were planned take place in 2014; and tour operators were then to be invited to NI and the businesses encouraged to work with them to prepare their product for ROI, off-island and overseas markets.

1.3 Strategic Context

The strategic context for tourism development and delivery of the Grow Your Horizons programme was as contained in the (draft) DETI Tourism Strategy:

- Increase visitors in NI from 3.2m (in 2010) to 4.5m by 2020;
- Increase earnings from tourism from £723 million in 2013¹ to £1 billion by 2020;
- Progressively accelerate spend by visitors;
- Target specific markets and market segments;
- Support indigenous high quality businesses to grow; and
- Be “visitor inspired” in all our actions, by which we mean visitor responsive and aware.

1.4 Programme Outputs and Impacts

The aims and objectives of the project were translated into the following Outputs and Impacts:

SMART Objectives

- At least 60 tourism related small businesses trained and “Prepared for Market”; RESULT: 60 started the programme, 57 completed it;
- At least 6 destination specific training workshops/modules developed and delivered in line with industry sector/target group needs and tour operator requirements; RESULT: 7 workshops delivered, as on page 6;
- An industry sector “Preparing for Market” reference/educational manual to be produced (on and offline); RESULT: delivered;
- An industry sector “Preparing for Market” reference/educational web portal developed as part of the respective tourism destination websites; RESULT: delivered;
- At least 2 best practice benchmarking visits organised and conducted; RESULT: delivered
- An Incoming Tour Operators Association familiarisation visit to Strangford Lough, St Patrick’s Country and Mourne Tourism destinations. RESULT: delivered.

Project Economic Impacts

- At least 12 collaborative partnership projected developed by 31 March 2016;
- At least 6 new product/service offerings within the region by 31 March 2016;
- Increase in turnover by at least £315,000 by participant businesses by 31 March 2016;
- At least 6 additional jobs to be created by participant businesses by 31 March 2016.

Section 3 highlights progress towards these targets as at summer 2015.

A further analysis was undertaken in December 2016 to see what progress participating businesses had made towards the KPIs and outcomes of the project. These are reported on in section 4.

¹ NISRA data; 2013 result is 5% more than in Jan – Dec 2012

2 Programme Delivery

A number of tasks were identified as being included within the Grow Your Horizons Programme:

- Recruitment of 60 tourism operators to the programme;
- Baseline data collected on participants;
- Business support programme, delivered through a series of workshops to programme participants;
- Two benchmarking visits to view and learn from projects elsewhere;
- A tour operators' incoming familiarisation visit to familiarise them with the destinations, product in the areas for their customers and to meet businesses on the programme, with a view to long term relationships being set up;
- Preparation of an export market manual/reference guide to combine the learning from the programme;
- Development of a web portal that was envisaged would be used by programme participants as a combined learning and networking resource.

2.1 Recruitment Phase

The objective was to recruit 60 tourism related operators to the programme. The components carried out in this phase included:

- Advertising of the programme in local media across the 4 local authority areas was undertaken by the local authorities themselves.
- A web site and brand for the project were developed, the web site URL being www.businesssolutions.com/grow-your-horizons.htm
- A database of tourism businesses was created by the local authorities and first communications by email were undertaken by them
- An E-marketing campaign was then undertaken by BTS to businesses who had expressed interest in the programme – giving benefits and details of the programme
- To raise the awareness of the programme a series of e- invites were distributed to the database to attend recruitment workshops:

The proposition was developed and delivered that free places were available on the programme.

An initial recruitment workshop was held in January 2014 at Ballynahinch. 62 tourism businesses registered for the programme and 87 individuals from these businesses initially participated in the programme.

2.2 Baseline Data Collection

Participants were invited in October 2013 to contribute to a benchmarking survey, conducted electronically, to provide a baseline of activity and to help identify topics and subject matter that should be included in the programme, determined in part by the level of existing travel trade contacts, web site activity etc. and in part by their ambitions to be met by the programme.

57 respondents participated in the survey; key characteristics were that they employed 295 people full time and 507 part time between them; 30 respondents indicated that they had 691 bedspaces between them and 32 respondents gave us their last year's turnover at £8,733,399 in total, or an average of £272,919 (32 respondents were prepared to answer this question). (We caution that smaller operators will have been inhibited from contributing to this question and the "average" would reflect the larger turnover companies/operators.)

We also discovered that the marketing activity and understanding and contact with the travel trade to get their tourism product to market was very limited.

2.3 Business Support Programme

The programme of business support, mentoring and training for programme participants comprised:

Workshop	Topic	When	Where
1	Introduction to international Markets	29th January 2014	Millbrook Lodge Hotel, Ballynahinch
2	Regional Workshops	11th February 2014	Canal Court Hotel, Newry
		12th February 2014	Tollymore National Outdoor Centre, Newcastle
		13th February 2014	Ards Art Centre, Newtownards
5	Growing your business by working on-line	26th February 2014	Millbrook Lodge Hotel, Ballynahinch
6	The web portal (plus introduction to Kilkenny)	12 th May 2014	On Kilkenny benchmark visit
7	Final workshop - Completing your international tourism markets action plan	14 th October 2014	Millbrook Lodge Hotel, Ballynahinch

2.4 Benchmarking Visits

2 benchmark journeys were undertaken, as follows:

- 31st March – 2nd April 2014: Visit to Breadalbane in Perthshire, Scotland.
- 11th May - 13th May 2014: Visit to Kilkenny, Ireland

With 40+ participants on each, the participants benefited from a tailored experience, with visits to outstanding tourist businesses within their sector, whether that was outdoor activity, hotels, National Trust, B&B, coach operators, or food and drink it proved memorable for all. With presentations by leaders of tourism within the area, with outstanding hospitality from the hotels in the area, all objectives were achieved.

It also helped the businesses to bond and form partnerships and subsequently collaborations within their areas to help achieve the aim of increased visitors to their area.

The survey of participants yielded over a 95% satisfaction rate on the following areas,

- Good use of your time
- Helped to consolidate your own business learning
- Contributed to collaboration with others
- The organisation and management of the visits
- The overall experience

All participants stated that the benchmark learning journeys had been a resounding success.

2.5 Tour Operators' Incoming Familiarisation Visit

A tour operators' familiarisation visit was held on 2-4 November with 14 individuals from 12 companies participating. The invitation to participate went to 292 tour and coach operators in the UK and Ireland.

An intensive programme of activities was undertaken and there were several opportunities for the Preparing for Market – Exporting Tourism Programme businesses to meet the tour operators. Already several business opportunities have been identified and the businesses are following through with these.

2.6 Preparation of an Export Market Manual/Reference Guide

The Grow Your Horizons programme included as one of the actions the preparation of a Tourism Export Manual, a toolkit with references and contacts as well as key facts, especially about the travel trade and how programme participants can access them. It was developed to be a pdf and web based, and (subject to client group's agreement) could be made available to a wider audience.

Updating was identified as an issue that the client group needed to address.

The structure developed included:

1. Introduction
2. Why export?
3. Getting your product right
4. The markets (needs to be short and sharp, with references for further information)
5. Requirements of different markets (needs to be short and sharp, with references for further information)
6. The travel distribution system
7. Are you export ready?
8. Staying up to date
9. Collaboration - working with others
10. Contacts
11. References

2.7 Web Portal (Intranet) Development

The objective of the web portal is as an intranet to allow tourism operators to communicate with tour operators and so build business that way.

Testing the concept and practicalities of the web portal with the tour operators (through the Incoming Tour Operators Association Ireland) resulted in a response that suggested that it would not be used by tour operators.

Review with the client group suggested that this element of the programme should be adapted to produce a web portal for operators in Strangford Lough and Mourne Mountains & the Ring of Gullion. This would then provide a consistent flow of regular information about events within the Tourism Industry and travel trade and that will keep businesses and stakeholders informed about what is happening at any time in the industry both locally and further afield.

BTS then worked with the client groups web designers to develop the portal, whose URL is <http://www.mourne-strangford.org/>. BTS was not responsible for populating and maintaining the web portal and reviews have been held with the client about how this would be resourced internally.

2.8 Profiled Grant Drawdown

Quarter	Project fee drawdown
01.01.14 – 31.03.14	£73,493
01.04.14 – 30.06.14	£13,520
01.07.14 – 30.09.14	£13,151
01.10.14 – 31.12.14	£ 6,280
Total	£106,444

3 Evaluation

In mid-2015 a further survey was conducted of the programme participants. The response rate was disappointing, despite 3 electronic and telephone reminders and phone calls to generate participation, with only 35 of the participants contributing to the survey. Despite this, the data is useful to see what progress had been made and participants' attitudes towards the Grow Your Horizons Programme.

The original Project Economic Impacts of the Grow Your Horizons Programme and the results as at September 2015 were:

- At least 12 collaborative partnerships projected developed by 31 March 2016; RESULT as at September 2015: 14 respondents indicate such collaborative partnership (see section 3.3.)
- At least 6 new product/service offerings within the region by 31 March 2016; RESULT as at September 2015: 11 respondents indicate such new product/service offerings (see section 3.4.)
- Increase in turnover by at least £315,000 by participant businesses by 31 March 2016; RESULT as at September 2015: turnover seems from our survey work to have increased markedly, despite caveats, (see table below)
- At least 6 additional jobs to be created by participant businesses by 31 March 2016. RESULT as at September 2015: 4 new jobs seem to have been created, despite caveats on the survey results, see table below).

The mid 2015 survey shows what progress is being made towards these objectives.

The original baseline data (at section 2.2 above) and the mid 2015 results are compared in the table below:

	Baseline data (Oct 2013)	2015 data (mid 2015)
Number of respondents	57	35
Full time employed	295	299
Average per respondent	5.17	8.54
Part-time employed	507	252
Average per respondent	8.89	7.2
Turnover	£8,733,399 (32 respondents)	£15,500,952 (21 respondents)
Average turnover/ respondent	£272,919	£738,140

Without drilling down deeper to individual research interviews with respondents, we cannot explain the contradiction that fewer respondents in 2015 (21) had more employees than 32 respondents in 2013.

Our question in 2015 about the impact of the Grow Your Horizons Programme on employment yielded the following comments, but only 4 additional staff are identified.

- *It has helped us to be careful about biting more than you can chew, excusing the expression. Having more casual staff which are flexible and employed as and when required*
- *no change*
- *nil*
- *N/A*
- *increase in tour guides, casual*
- *No change*
- *No change*
- *0 (Early days)*
- *No change in numbers*
- *None, yet*
- *5%*

- *We didn't employ any more staff*
- *We have recently employed 4 more drivers*
- *No impact*
- *none so far, but realisation of what may be required in due course*
- *I've been able to do more presentations with very little impact on my business.*
- *My staff are under used as it is! Plenty of capacity.*
- *None*
- *Additional drivers needed to cover tour work x 3*
- *same*
- *none*
- *Same*
- *None No effect*
- *Increased business required increased hours from part time staff*
- *none*

We asked about the impact of the Grow Your Horizons Programme on the number of bedspaces: 5 respondents indicated in mid-2015 that they had increased the number of bedspaces by 41 beds (2013 base = 691, from 30 respondents)

3.1 Turnover

Responses from the 2015 cohort on the impact of the Grow Your Horizons programme on **turnover** yielded the following responses:

- *By being creative and introducing new ideas picked up on the programme we have been able to increase turnover slightly*
- *turnover & bookings increased, mainly due to 2 longer lets off season*
- *nil*
- *went down - due to other factors*
- *It helped*
- *up 12% from 2013*
- *A little increase*
- *5%*
- *Slight increase*
- *We have received work from the GYH Programme*
- *10% INCREASE*
- *New business 2014 first year trading*
- *T/O has increased turnover by 100% from whatever reason*
- *Increased slightly because I haven't attended so many classes.*
- *Slightly up on 2013*
- *up slightly*
- *no effect*
- *None No effect*
- *Increased. Main difference was changing to online bookings*
- *none*

3.2 Origination of Customers

We asked a series of other open ended questions to understand the impact of the Grow Your Horizons programme on participants/respondents. The detail is appended for information and here we pick up on salient points.

On the impact of the programme on the **origination of customers** (i.e. from NI, ROI, GB etc.)?

- Several people said other factors intervened, such as the value of the euro
- A small number of respondents said the impact was positive/useful without qualifying numbers
- At least 6 respondents indicated improvements in the origination of visitors from outside of NI

3.3 Partnerships and Collaboration

On the impact of the programme on **new informal or formal partnerships or collaboration** with others, including the travel trade and tour operators:

- Many respondents said that it had had no impact
- 14 respondents indicated that they were setting up or had already entered into partnerships, with variously SOAK seaweed baths, Clearsky outdoor pursuits centre, East Coast Adventure, Mourne Bikes, various accommodation establishments, with the National Trust's Mount Stewart, wedding venues, restaurants, with Brack Tours (see appendix for detail)
- One respondent indicated that they had tried but it was too hard a task for a small business.
- One respondent indicated that they were targeting the Russian market for customized tours

3.4 New Products and Services

On the impact of the programme on the **development of new products or services** in their businesses, or whether they have

- 11 respondents indicate that they have/ are developing new product and service offers
- 7 respondents indicated that the programme had no impact
- 1 was exploring at present
- A number of respondents indicated quite modest change/development (down to the introduction of home baked scones and fairy cakes), but many others have made interesting and significant changes, e.g.:
 - More aggressive marketing of farm trails and animal hides
 - Engagement in the Green Tourism programme
 - Enhanced the quality of the visitor experience
 - Offering cycle hire
 - Adapting the winter service offer
 - Buying local produce

3.5 Action Plans

On the impact of the programme on businesses **developing an action plan to develop their business**:

- 7 respondents indicated that the programme had no impact
- 4 respondents had developed an action plan, but not implemented (yet)
- 14 respondents indicated that they were making changes within their business, e.g. using commercial letting websites, own booking systems, pricing offers, packages and promotions, more partnerships, exploring new markets (i.e. language schools, group visits, golf)

3.6 Investment Plans

On the impact of the programme on businesses' **investment plans**:

- 5 respondents indicated that the programme had no impact
- Some had invested in building materials, buildings maintenance and one on new ensuite facilities
- Another spent £5,000 on refurbishment and received excellent report on grading in June 2014
- One was investing in a 250Kw wind turbine, another in solar panels and a wood pellet boiler
- One was investing in staff training e.g. WorldHost programmes, webinars with social media sites and TripAdvisor
- One was involved in a cross border initiative

- One estimated €5,000 investment in marketing, another planning on Tourism Ireland overseas promotions, one on a new web site and booking engine
- A small number were considering additional investment in the future
- A coach company had invested approx €600,000 in new vehicles “as a result of programme”

3.7 Concluding Comments

We asked for other comments on the grow Your Horizons Programme:

- One respondent discontinued their business for health reasons
- Several respondents were complementary about the quality of the programme, the speakers and learning journeys and indicated that it had given them good ideas to put into practice and encourage them to develop local networks/partnerships
- Local authority and National Trust participants also indicated the benefits to their organisations, despite e.g. support networks existing internally already
- One indicated no benefit from the programme
- Helpful in building travel trade relationships
- Helpful in developing and diversifying businesses’ products/services
- One respondent said “*Our business has benefited significantly*”
- Several respondents indicated that it was too early to measure the results and impacts of the programme on their business and another would have preferred one-to-one help
- Some indicated that the programme’s relevance for them as a small business or sole operator was limited, although one said “*Excellent programme for small sole traders who quite often feel isolated and overlooked in the overall large scale tourism picture*”
- The programme was considered beneficial for new start operators, just starting up

4 2016 Update

In December 2016 a further analysis was undertaken with a number of participants in the Grow Your Horizons Programme to identify progress towards the achievement of KPIs and outcomes of the programme. A telephone and email interview programme was conducted with 18 participants. Respondent businesses are listed at Appendix 2.

Questions asked comprised:

As a result of the Tourism export programme (Grow Your Horizons Programme):

1. Have you entered into any informal or formal partnerships or collaboration with others, including the travel trade and tour operators? If yes, briefly describe them.
2. Have you developed any new products or services in your business, or diversified in any way? If yes, briefly describe what you have done.
3. Has your turnover increased since 2014 and if so by how much?
4. Has your employment (full and part time) increased at all and if so by how many?

4.1 Responses and Analysis

Partnerships and Collaboration

Half of the 2016 respondents (9) gave very positive responses to the question of whether the Grow Your Horizons Programme had helped them to develop informal or formal partnerships and collaborations.

It is apparent that the Grow Your Horizons Programme has contributed to the way that these operators (who responded positively to this question in December 2016) think about managing their businesses and delivering services to customers. Comments comprised:

- *I have not entered into any formal partnerships but have collaborated with activity providers, food producers and other accommodation providers, to ensure that our guests get the best that is on offer when they visit Co Down*
- *Now involved in the new "tourist cluster" recently organised in Rostrevor, hopefully that will open up new, profitable, doors for all members*
- *We have developed some useful promotional activities with some local business since attending the Grow Your Horizons program*
- *In Jan 15 to June 15 we combined with Mount Stewart Gardens to offer anyone staying for 3 nights or more a free family ticket .This worked well for both parties*
- *We ran from Sept 16 to Dec 16 a joint promotion with 2 local restaurants where we gave a £20 discount for a meal in a cottage occupied for 3 nights. We tied this in with the Year of food etc. We shared the costs of this with the restaurants. It has proved to be successful as we have only one voucher left and we will need 3 more before the year end!!!*
- *Since Exploris is now re opened, I hope to run something with them from Jan 17*
- *Informal arrangement with the Adventure people in Castlewellan Forest Park (But note limited results despite attempt)*
- *Game of Thrones tours and with Clearsky*
- *With Ballydugan Mill and Kilmore Transport. Now can include accommodation and transport for tours*
- *Informal collaboration with Mud Madness, Johnny Davis and working with Council summer schemes*
- *Yes 2 local restaurants and an outdoor pursuits business*
- *Work with 2 other accommodation providers. Have implemented a referral system which is working really well*

New Products or Services

8 respondents catalogued how they had developed new products and services or diversifications as a result of the Grow Your Horizons programme. These reflect the range of operators on the programme, with e.g. smaller accommodation based operators undertaking smaller enhancements to their business and tour guides/activity operators collaborating with others to offer more cohesive experiences to customers.

Comments made comprise:

- *Internal Recycling Bins*
- *I now have an active (but not perfect) social media marketing presence and have introduced Private Celebration Teas which can be booked for between 8-12 people. These have been very well received and I am confident that I can now put more marketing into this area for the future*
- *We now produce our own pressed apple juice!*
- *We have enabled HBO Game of Thrones experience packages targeted to a global market. We work closer with local stakeholders in terms of package offers*
- *Yes we have added an optional add-on provision of breakfast ingredients; we have also upgraded some equipment and linens*
- *Do more Game of Thrones and maritime tours*
- *Yes, new activities including laser tag*
- *No, but have added value to the accommodation. Upgraded business. Now offer discounts to return guests*
- *More specific target marketing. Much more selective*

Turnover

We asked respondents to tell us if their turnover had increased as a result of the Grow Your Horizons programme in 2014². There are very positive indications that the impact of the Grow Your Horizons Programme has had beneficial impacts on a number of businesses (14 respondents). Their comments are as follows:

- *No increase yet but positive for the future*
- *May have slightly*
- *Yes up slightly*
- *Our turnover is up this year, as are the hours worked by our 5 part time staff.*
- *Increased mainly due to Game of Thrones*
- *Overseas visitor numbers have increased by 300% (from 12 countries to more than 50)*
- *Yes by about £2,000 partly through Airbnb and also because we acquired a long-term guest which gave great stability*
- *Yes, 10%*
- *Yes, up 10% 2015 and 8% 2016*
- *Yes, up 28%*
- *Yes, up 30%*
- *Yes, up by about one third*
- *Yes, Turnover has doubled*
- *Turnover has doubled since the beginning of this programme which has been satisfactory*

Employment

We also asked if respondents' full and part time employment had increased as a result of the Grow Your Horizons Programme. It is apparent that 2 operators have increased part time and seasonal employment markedly (up to 84 part timers) and another 4 have taken on 9 part time staff between them.

Detailed responses were as follows:

- *Full, part time and seasonal employment has increased by approximately 50% (39 – 59 excluding volunteers)*
- *Yes part time staff increased from 10 – 25 part time employees*
- *3 additional part-time staff*
- *3 additional part-time staff*
- *1 additional part-time staff*

² We didn't ask for absolute sums since from previous experience we know this deters respondents

- *2 additional part-time staff*
- *Slight increase in part time/seasonal employment*
- *Yes hard to answer use additional people during the busy times*

We should perhaps end with one comment from a medium sized hotel in a rural environment:

"Fiona was so positive about this programme. She was very complimentary about all aspects of it. It (was) so professional; she made great contacts and friendships. It was a programme which worked for her and was not just something to use up funding. Couldn't say enough (positive) about it."

BTS, September 2015, updated December 2016

Appendices

1 Open ended question responses from 2015 survey

Impact of the programme on the origination of your customers (i.e. from NI, ROI, GB etc.)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We now know and ask everyone where they heard about MTA</i> • <i>nil</i> • <i>N/A</i> • <i>Mostly NI, small amount of international</i> • <i>other factors e.g. the Euro impacting</i> • <i>Useful</i> • <i>No great change still customers from all over world.</i> • <i>positive</i> • <i>No change</i> • <i>More from abroad and less from ROI because of the euro</i> • <i>We have expanded our Customer Base</i> • <i>No benchmark (new business), 75% NI, 15% GB, 5% ROI, 5% Other</i> • <i>Increase in GB (inc NI), ROI and considerable increase in European and American (inc Canada)</i> • <i>NI</i> • <i>Percentage of bookings from NI: 6% (2013) 2% (2014); GB: 57% (2013) 66% (2014) Rol: 29% (2012) 19% (2014)</i> • <i>GB and Baltic States</i> • <i>same</i> • <i>no change</i> • <i>Improvement</i> • <i>No Measurable effect either positive or negative</i> • <i>Increased number from outside British Isles</i> • <i>none</i>

As a result of the Grow Your Horizons programme, have you entered into any informal or formal partnerships or collaboration with others, including the travel trade and tour operators? If yes, briefly describe them.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>no</i> • <i>No</i> • <i>No</i> • <i>Good working relationship with SOAK seaweed baths and Clearsky outdoor pursuits centre.</i> • <i>We have developed informal partnerships with various hotels, guest house and self-catering facilities.</i> • <i>We are working on a few options.</i> • <i>Renewed partnerships with accommodation providers</i> • <i>We are running a spring promotion with Mt.Stewart National Trust property that is progressing well. Have been in touch with several other bodies in ROI to promote small group tours.</i> • <i>No</i> • <i>With an activity providers and wedding venues</i> • <i>Yes, have a partnership with restaurants in Annalong. We also work closely with local taxi companies.</i> • <i>Yes we are in the early stage process of collaborating with Brack Tours.</i> • <i>No</i> • <i>Yes, I have obtained the role as NI Administrator for major Dublin based Tour Operator.</i>

Responsible for sourcing guides, restaurants, attractions and routes throughout NI.

- *Have had meetings with Nuala Saul of Brack Tours, and our first guests introduced by Nuala arriving in June (from America) Working with Adventure Leadership Training - 10 Team Leaders from America staying with us in June for 10 nights*
- *No formal partnerships*
- *No*
- *Have made attempts, but nothing came of them. I think it's too complicated for small businesses to plan together. Marketing is so important and we don't do that well.*
- *No*
- *Yes. Working with East Coast Adventure developing packages for Russian market. Working with various levels of accommodation providers for customized tours. Also working with districts councils bringing in tour operators to region to familiarize them to its potential as a tourist destination.*
- *informally we collaborate with a local restaurant as we only do B and B and they do evening meals*
- *no*
- *Informal talks with a pottery school , informal talks with tour guides Belfast*
- *Yes signed up with Holiday Lettings & Irish Tourist board but no great results*
- *Yes, work with Mourne Bikes to make use of the Mountain Bike Trails locally. Work with the local restaurants. If we are full for an enquiry we tend to send our extra business to local companies, e.g. Tory Bush Cottages*
- *no*

As a result of the Grow Your Horizons programme, have you developed any new products or services in your business, or diversified in any way? If yes, briefly describe what you have done.

- *no*
- *No*
- *No*
- *exploring at present*
- *We have been marketing our Farm Trails, natural habitats, Bird and Badger hides more aggressively on both social media and our website.*
- *Involvement with Green Tourism*
- *We diversified just before joining Grow your Horizons and have been developing our new product.*
- *We have decreased the number of beds in some of our rooms and we have increased the quality of our visitor experience*
- *Yes we have developed new packages for the Irish Golf Industry. Short 2 Night 3 Rounds of Golf Packages*
- *About to promote through Destination sites and develop packages*
- *We have introduced a mobile therapist who can deliver a friendly professional and mobile therapist direct to your cottage door. We have also introduced home baked scones and fairy cakes in our welcome pack. We also offer cycle hire in conjunction with Life Adventure in Castlewellan.*
- *I am now a Geotourism Ambassador for Mourne, Cooley Gullion. I am preparing to start serving High End Teas over the winter months when business is quieter. I am all set and ready to go.*
- *No*
- *Thinking about offering an upgrade by providing full breakfast materials (as well as the welcome basket already provided; also making a reservation in local hostelry for the first night of stay, or buying in a ready-made meal.*
- *We have developed educational programmes to attract colleges and educational faculties to*

region for overnight stays

- *buy more local produce*
- *no*
- *Offering different types of classes, am now keen to offer to put together and work with others*
- *No I could have done more of this but my occupancy rates are very high*
- *We have been looking into several options. These include advertising as a wedding location, and working with corporate tourism*
- *no*

As a result of the Grow Your Horizons programme, did you develop an action plan on how to develop your business and work with the travel trade? If yes, briefly describe the contents of the action plan.

- *Have developed more confidence in using Holiday Lettings booking website, and pricing offers, adding feedback etc.*
- *No*
- *No*
- *Yes - created more partner ships in hospitality*
- *Yes we developed an action plan. As we were going through a major restoration and conservation project during the past three years we were developing plans to assist with securing new group and trade business and also ensuring that we target previous groups who haven't been to Mount Stewart for a couple of years. We are beginning to see an impact particularly at weekends with group visits occasionally up to 10 groups on Saturdays*
- *Yes. The action plan was forwarded onto yourself.*
- *Fed into business plan*
- *Travel trade potential has still to be studied.*
- *No*
- *Work more closely with wedding venues and explore accommodation for language and culture schools*
- *We did develop an action plan but have not put it into effect as of yet.*
- *Yes we developed an action plan. The contents deal with how we can continue to target and develop our products to attract the International Golf Tourism Market. The US Market as well as The Irish Market are two of our main target markets. We are also in the process of attracting Scandinavian Golfers to Ireland.*
- *As above, developing packages and promotions*
- *Yes compiled an Action Plan to add extra services to my portfolio. Increase my contacts/attractions/accommodation within the area.*
- *Action plan under development*
- *Increased my bedroom capacity from 3 - 6 bedrooms to help cater for golfing groups and wedding guests (there are now 4 excellent wedding venues within 15-20 minutes of DCH*
- *No*
- *Yes, but it's a slow business and I haven't made contact with the travel trade - as I said I'm not sure that they deal with small self-catering people.*
- *Yes. We have a plan moving forward to develop the off peak market with travel trade partners for region hence creating a year round tourism destination*
- *no - the B and B's in the area all work together as do the hotels if extra accommodation is needed*
- *ceased trading so not applicable*
- *Have done a little into action plan, but would need more help with travel trade*
- *No if I was to do this I would have needed one to one support as with a full time job I could not always attend these courses or trips away on field visits.*
- *Yes, my main aim was to get a working online booking system up and running, and the next*

step is to integrate that with external partners.

- no

Did the Grow Your Horizons programme encourage you to invest in your business in any way? If yes, please say what you have done and how much you might have invested. Tell us if you still plan to invest.

- *This is not my main source of income, hence it does not get my full attention! We have made a big investment in the capital cost, without any grant-aid, so are reluctant I guess to plough more into it. The visitors have been very positive, and we've good feedback from them.*
- *Simply some painting and wall building*
- *N/A - Local Authority service*
- *Investment has mainly been from National Trust and around the restoration project - a total of £8 million*
- *We have spent more money on building materials to push forward the opening date on the village site.*
- *Not as yet*
- *Investing in the Green tourism initiative on site. Planning is being sought for a 250Kw. Wind turbine on our farm.*
- *Not yet*
- *Had invested just before joining Grow your Horizons and currently investing in Green Tourism*
- *We have invested in some staff training e.g. WorldHost programmes, webinars with social media sites and TripAdvisor. Embarking on a programme with Green Tourism and also took part in a Plato EBR programme for marketing which was cross border initiative.*
- *Yes we became an "Industry Partner" with The IGTOA and have attended their annual Gala Golf Industry Day in Killarney. We have also sponsored a local Golf Tournament. We have invested in our website and are developing a new brochure Estimated total investment 5,000 euro. Yes we are still planning to invest further and always looking at ways to improve.*
- *About to make a decision as to whether to double our capacity through extra investment*
- *Yes - I intend to register for possibly two of Tourism Ireland's overseas promotions Autumn/Winter 2015.*
- *We decided to invest in a modern user friendly website, with an easy to use booking engine. We have no immediate plans for further investment until at least year 3 of trading.*
- *Invested in the extra bedrooms, solar panels and wood pellet boiler to cope with the increased electricity central heating and hot water requirements*
- *No*
- *We seriously spent money refurbishing and as a result got a really excellent report when last graded in June 2014. We will continue to invest as necessary in order to maintain standards. We spent about £5,000.*
- *We have invested in new vehicles as a result of programme to develop Northern tourist market. approx €600,000*
- *we have a new building and hope not to need any more investment!*
- *n/a*
- *Yes we have become energy efficiency throughout .offering more to our guests and shall continue to invest. We replaced and put new ensembles decorated*
- *Honestly it was telling me to invest more time and showing me how things could work and some good samples in other markets some good ideas.*
- *Yes. Large investment with online booking. Several cottages have had refurbishment. Wifi to all cottages instead of a single hot spot. This year we aim to have fruit and vegetables growing on site that be purchased by customers. Hopefully set up a "kids club" for wildlife awareness groups.*
- no

Any other comments you have about the Grow Your horizons Programme would be very welcome.

- *I am sorry to tell you that I had to discontinue my start up business Irish Motorhome tours due to health problems I found the information and the visits hugely helpful and would have used the marketing ideas extensively if I had been able to continue in business. I would like to thank you all for the quality of the presentations and speakers and the relevance of the information which was excellent. I would recommend the program to anyone in the tourism industry. Kind regards Ronnie*
- *Talking to the business owners in Scotland was useful. I missed the Kilkenny trip unfortunately.*
- *Engaging. Great Speakers Whilst Ards Crafts is a Craft and Design Centre and as such can be classified as an attraction, it is part of a local authority craft development service which I manage. As such it is difficult to answer the survey questions in the same way as an independent travel or tourism business might. The questions are very much focussed towards concrete statistical information from them. - sorry! I did get some great ideas though on how my craft businesses might 'bundle' or collaborate and will feed this through to them.*
- *The event was a success, it built upon strong relationships in the travel and tour industry*
- *Unfortunately I was unable to gain the full benefit of the programme.*
- *Being a National Trust property we have great support for international, national and local opportunities. GYH provided us with the opportunity to become more involved and develop partnerships with other organisations and share knowledge. It has been good to meet and network with local people and these are partnerships that we plan to work with in the future.*
- *The team has given us greater awareness of our potential and how to sell our product. Although we are not fully operational at this time we already have bookings for activity weekends and are working toward making more improvements on our village site.*
- *It was very worthwhile.*
- *Its early days to measure the potential benefits we will enjoy from the Grow your Horizons program. At this stage we are much more aware of the steps that are necessary to action in order to build up our business. We have to continue to invest our time wisely to maximise the potential benefits that will come from improved marketing.*
- *I find their advice, assistance and commitment very helpful.*
- *The programme was very useful, however, we feel that it is too early to capture the full impact in bookings and increased revenue*
- *It was a very good experience, an excellent networking opportunity for us and an excellent learning experience especially the learning journeys where we could meet and chat to people who own similar businesses in these areas.*
- *As a company we found it very beneficial. The team were extremely helpful throughout and we received excellent guidance and assistance. We have gained some valuable contacts as a result. Our business has benefited significantly.*
- *My business is so small that a lot of the above doesn't relate to it. In other words there is a more positive a picture here than it may seem!*
- *Excellent programme for small sole traders who quite often feel isolated and overlooked in the overall large scale tourism picture.*
- *We were delighted to be part of Grown Your Horizons Programme. As new comers to the industry the programme was very beneficial and informative providing a great opportunity to network with other tourism providers. The team from BTS were very helpful and professional at all times.*
- *I was delighted with the programme and always found something important to take away with me. My eyes were opened to other ways of looking the business, met lots of other local business owners with whom I can help give my guests the extra experience they may not be expecting. It has been an excellent programme and thank you for making it available to us.*
- *I would have preferred one to one help. My business is unique and needs that interaction. I was very disappointed.*
- *We really enjoyed the opportunities to learn about tourism and the travel trade and also, especially, to meet other people in the area who have become friends. I would hope to be able*

to keep in touch with them. Some of the talks were more relevant and also more accessible than others. The atmosphere was very supportive and positive. We would like to know where to advertise so as to attract more Rol clients - they are so close, but the % that come to NI is terribly low. They should be an easy market - no distance away, no sea to cross, very good roads and fantastic places to stay.

- *I found it very good for networking. Lots of information to help with building and promoting are own business. People to connect with. Good ideas from others. Nice to see how other business in different areas work.*
- *I found the programme was very professionally delivered by the BTS Team in all aspects. Great networking opportunities for new tourism providers and will embrace what I have learned to further develop our brand and help promote tourism in the Strangford, Mourne Mountains, Ring of Gullion region.*
- *the programme was interesting and informative but living in a rural situation - most visitors are visiting friends, working or drop ins while travelling so packages for hill walking - golfing – etc. tends to go to the places closer to the Mourne area - also public transport is out in a rural environment if you want to be out and about and see places of interest*
- *Think would have been better to focus on NI businesses as the market and here is a world away from what happens in Scotland.*
- *Enjoyed the programme, but we are small business. A lot of those attending the programme were much bigger. I felt it was more geared to their needs. I am more than happy to improve my skills with Grow your Horizons.*
- *Course was designed for Full time people who could take Days off not part time employees who had full time jobs and I honestly felt that the programme timings that I attended did not start on time they were well presented but presentation notes should have been given out at meeting to build full picture good course but did not tick the boxes I required also no request from Banbridge District Council on how I found the course feedback improvements could have been made to keep interest and actions on going and positive*
- *One of the most important things about GYH was the very focused and detailed information that was given. Quite often talks are very general, and don't apply to your own business. One stand out event was Wayne Denner talking about social media - it was aimed at the right level. The organizers also kept the talks very positive, and that helped people to share information.*

Appendix 2

December 2016 interviews with Grow Your Horizons participants:

1. An Radhairc
2. Barnwell Farm Cottages
3. Barrack Hill B&B
4. Castle Ward (National Trust)
5. Comber Courtyard Apartment
6. Cross Square Hotel
7. Cuan Inn
8. Dunnanelly County House
9. Florida Manor
10. Ganaway Activity Centre
11. Healing Concepts
12. Hemp Cottage
13. Hutt Hostel
14. Loughbrickland Courtyard
15. Mobile Team Adventure
16. The Mourne Lodge
17. Murphy Wildlife and Travel
18. Scion Hill Gate Lodge

Agenda Item:	Green Tourism Programme
Report to:	Enterprise Regeneration and Tourism Committee
Subject:	Green Tourism Programme
Date:	Monday 16 January 2017
Reporting Officer:	Marie Ward, Director Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism
Contact Officer:	Mark Mohan Senior Tourism Initiatives Manager

Decisions Required

For Noting

1.0	<p>Purpose and Background</p> <p>The legacy council of Down District, jointly with Ards Borough Council, Banbridge District Council and Newry & Mourne District Council, were successful in securing funding for the development and implementation of a Green Tourism Programme under the European Sustainable Competitiveness Programme for NI 2007-13.</p> <p>The Green Tourism Programme was match funded by Invest Northern Ireland and the four legacy local authorities. Down District Council was the lead Council partner.</p> <p>The project aimed to provide a range of business development support to help tourism and service related businesses take advantage of the outstanding natural and cultural assets of Mourne Mountains, Ring of Gullion, Saint Patrick's Country and Strangford Lough areas - and to do so in ways that were environmentally, socially and economically sustainable.</p>
2.0	<p>Key Issues</p> <p>The programme which is now complete was a great success, engaging in the first instance 155 businesses across the local authority areas resulting in 108 businesses being awarded 'Green Tourism' Accreditations. There were 19 Gold awards, 38 Silver and 51 Bronze, which now represents 91% of the total accreditations across NI.</p> <p>Furthermore the project won the 2016 award for Sustainable Tourism at last year's TourismNI gala awards. This award was designed to recognise tourism businesses who can demonstrate their commitment to sustainability or environmental best practice. In addition it resulted in Co. Down being recognised as one of the Top 100 Green Destinations in Europe by Global Green Destinations, the leading global network for sustainable tourism destination.</p> <p>The project evaluation report has now been completed.</p>
3.0	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>For Noting</p>
4.0	<p>Resource Implications</p> <p>N/A</p>

5.0	Equality and Good Relations implications This has a very positive message in terms of our equality and good relations in that the tourism destinations are representative of our entire district and recipients' of our Green Tourism accreditations are businesses from across the district and all our communities within.
6.0	Appendices End of programme evaluation report

Newry Mourne and Down District Council

Green Tourism Project: Final Appraisal

Final Report

December 2016

1. Introduction

This report is the final appraisal of the Green Tourism project that took place in the legacy Councils of Ards, Banbridge, Down and Newry & Mourne in the first half of 2015.

The programme comprised a business engagement and development programme focused around green tourism, where 102 tourism, hospitality and tourism related businesses were accredited and gained green tourism awards under the certification programme operated by Green Tourism UK.

The programme also comprised a destination marketing programme for the destinations of Strangford Lough and Mourne Mountains & Ring of Gullion.

The Green Tourism Programme was supported by the four local authorities and Invest Northern Ireland and the European Regional Development Fund under the Sustainable Competitiveness Programme for Northern Ireland.

The programme was delivered by BTS with the support of Green Tourism UK.

2. Key Performance Indicators and Outputs

The formulation of the project, prior to tender stage, included the identification of the KPIs and outcomes that the project should aim to have delivered. These are catalogued fully in this report, the objective of which is to provide a final evaluation of the Green Tourism programme against the KPIs.

In fact, in assessing the outcomes and delivery against the KPIs, we've picked up considerable intelligence about the following and to give a rounded picture of the programme we have included these outcomes in this report:

1. The importance and benefit to businesses and to the destination(s) of the engagement of the operators in the Green Business tourism scheme;
2. Enhanced marketing capability and capacity, including increased traffic to operator web sites; and
3. The water, energy and cost savings made by individual businesses and by the programme as a whole, with sustainability benefits.

3. Background

The Green Tourism Programme aimed at providing a range of business development supports to tourism and service related businesses to take advantage of the outstanding natural and cultural assets of the Mourne Mountains & Ring of Gullion, Saint Patrick's Country and Strangford Lough areas - and to do so in ways that were environmentally, socially and economically sustainable. Two integral components of the programme were:

1. 155 registering for the programme, 129 accepted onto the programme and the evaluation and accreditation of 102 businesses to the green tourism award, the world's largest sustainable certification programme (the original KPI was 60 businesses); and
2. The design and delivery of a green destination marketing campaign to capitalize on the area's natural assets and the alignment of businesses to green quality criteria.

The aim of the programme was to support individual businesses and differentiate the participating destinations¹ from competitors by having tourism and tourism related businesses accredited under the Green Tourism programme (www.green-tourism.com) and promoting themselves along with the area's natural attributes.

The programme ran from the December 2014 and in the first half of 2015.

4. Post Project Monitoring Report, 2015

In August 2015, after completion of the programme, a post project monitoring report was prepared which catalogued how the programme was developed, project-managed and delivered. It also detailed the success of the programme against a number of outputs and KPIs specified in the project funding submission.

155 businesses were initially recruited and registered for the programme and 102 progressed and succeeded in gaining Green Tourism awards, in the following categories:

Green Tourism Project – Business Accreditations		
Gold	Silver	Bronze
18	36	48

5. Project KPIs and Outputs, 2016

The purpose of this final evaluation is to record the impacts and benefits of the Green Tourism project in 2016, one year after the project was completed.

The approach to the project has been to collaborate again with Green Tourism UK Ltd to deliver:

1. An electronic survey of businesses participating in the scheme;

¹ Mourne Mountains & Ring of Gullion, Saint Patrick's Country and Strangford Lough areas

2. Review of NISRA and other data related to tourism performance and deliverables across the legacy Council areas;
3. Talk to Council representatives, key influencers and key accredited business by phone to understand perspectives on the project and specific data related to the KPIs and outputs.

The results of the analysis are displayed below, against each KPI. Also detailed in the tables are:

A benchmarking survey of participating business was undertaken in early 2015 to provide information on employment, turnover etc. as well as softer issues related to business challenges and priorities, to help shape the business support elements of the project. Where this data is relevant, we refer to it in the table below.

In detail, outputs and KPIs achieved in late 2016 were as follows:

Outputs and KPIs	Status
1. At least 120 tourism and service related businesses/small enterprises recruited to the programme by 30 th June 2015	155 Registered
2. Delivery of at least 15 collective workshops by 30 th June 2015	Achieved (see below)
3. Delivery of at least 6 networking events with specialist speakers by 30 th June 2015	Achieved (see below)
4. Green tourism audits and health checks provided for at least 120 businesses by 30 th June 2015	129 Inspections comprising audit and health check
5. At least 120 business action plans developed by 30 th June 2015	102 achieved for those that succeeded in their accreditation. We cannot vouch that other businesses who fell out of the scheme completed their action plans
6. Mentoring provided to at least 80 businesses in order to support implementation of action plans by 30 th June 2015	Mentoring support provided by Green Tourism to 129 businesses who underwent audit and health check (see 4 above)
7. At least 80 businesses inspected for green accreditation by 30 th June 2015	129 Inspections carried out
8. At least 60 green tourism accreditations achieved by participants by 30 th June 2015	102 Green Tourism accreditations were achieved
9. 2 green destination development plans developed and implemented by 30 th June 2015	Completed (see outcomes under Marketing in Section 6 below)
10. Deliver an average increase in turnover of 10% by participant businesses by 30 th June 2017	As at December 2016, from a response rate of 62 respondents to our survey (=60.8% of the 102 Green Tourism accreditations) the following turnover figures have been provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall turnover £23.15m (45 respondents answered this question) • Increase in turnover as a result of the

Outputs and KPIs	Status
	Green Tourism Project - £240,776 (16 companies answered this question)
11. At least 30 new jobs created in businesses participating in the project by 30th June 2017	<p>As at December 2016, from a response rate of 62 respondents to our survey (=60.8%) the following jobs were reported created as a result of the Green Tourism project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 FT jobs • 26 PT (=13FTE) <p>Our estimate is that additional jobs will have been created by non-respondents at December 2016 and that all respondents will have created more jobs to meet this KPI by June 2017</p>
12. At least 30 referrals to Invest NI for relevant businesses development support by 31st December 2015	<p>This KPI has not been tracked and we cannot say with any confidence what the outcome for this KPI would be.</p> <p>The cluster of operators (See appendix 3 for those participating in the scheme as at end of June 2015) provide a cogent client group of tourism related operators in the County Down area for INI to work with in the future on sustainability issues.</p>

Network Events (item 3 in table above)

To introduce the project and the Green Tourism Programme a series of six networking and awareness seminars were held across the region during January 2015. The seminars were introduced by a representative from the project leaders, BTS and delivered by specialist speakers from Green Tourism. The events and locations were:

Date	Venue
Tuesday 20th January 2015	1. Bagenal's Castle, Newry
Wednesday 21st January 2015	2. Cuan Inn, Strangford
Thursday 22nd January 2015	3. Ards Business Centre, Newtownards
Tuesday 27th January 2015	4. Millbrook Lodge, Ballynahinch
Wednesday 28th January 2015	5. Castlewellan
Thursday 29th January 2015	6. Old Town Hall (Banbridge VIC)

Green Tourism Collective Workshops (item 2 in table above)

Collaborative working amongst participants was undertaken in collective workshops on the following dates and venues:

Date	Venue
Wednesday 25 th March 2015	1. Bagenals Castle, Newry 2. Castlewellan
Thursday 26 th March 2015	3. Old Town Hall (Banbridge VIC) 4. Ards Business Centre, Newtownards
Wednesday 22 nd April 2015	Millbrook Lodge Hotel Ballynahinch: 5. Green Tourism Business marketing & communications 6. Energy Efficiency/Renewable Energy/ Eco-Building Techniques 7. How to get the best Green Tourism Award – getting ready for their assessment 8. Resources available to help your green business –
Tuesday 19 th May 2015	9. Bagenals Castle, Newry 10. Castlewellan
Wednesday 20 th May 2015	11. Old Town Hall (Banbridge VIC) 12. Ards Business Centre, Newtownards
Tuesday 16 th June 2015	13. Bagenals Castle, Newry 14. Castlewellan
Wednesday 17 th June 2015	15. Old Town Hall (Banbridge VIC) 16. Ards Business Centre, Newtownards

6. Other Outcomes from the Green Tourism Project

A number of other factors were reviewed in the course of the project, as follows:

Outputs and KPIs	Status
Partnership projects within Destinations of Strangford Lough and Mourne Mountains & Ring of Gullion)	29 (52%) of the respondents who answered this question in the December 2016 survey indicated that they are collaborating or in partnership with other tourism operators. Collaborative partnership activity of participating businesses included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with Mourne Heritage Trust to produce My new Tree Trail for Rostrevor

Outputs and KPIs	Status
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are running a promotion from Sept.to Dec 16 involving 2 local restaurants, with a £20 voucher when guests stay for 3 nights or more • We work collaboratively with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council. Projects include Taste Junction in which we held a number of cookery demonstrations • Working with Peak Discovery at Castle Ward in relation to Game of Thrones products • Collaborating with Life Adventure Castlewellan, E-bike hire • I have brought local and environmentally friendly produce/arts and crafts to the shop/retail area • St Patrick Centre, Downpatrick - combined tours of Hill of Down sites and centres
The number of new products and services developed by enterprises and research centres as a direct result of the project:	The number of new products and services developed by enterprises is estimated on the 56 respondents who answered this question in December 2016 as 38 (see appendix for details.

There are a number of other benefits and outcomes resulting from the establishment and delivery of the Green Tourism project in County Down, through the legacy Councils. These relate to:

- Water, Energy and Costs Savings
- Sustainable business behaviours
- Business engagement and networking
- Marketing
- Recognition of the area

Water, Energy and Costs Savings: Based on projects easily identified from site Visits such as lighting changes, water flow rates, cisterns and urinal improvements as well as some medium term projects like insulation upgrades, some planned renewables etc., the Green Tourism project identified savings amounting to:

- £162,933 per annum amongst the participating businesses
- 23,614 cubic metres of water
- 274,215 kg Co2

This represents a saving of an average of more than £1,500, over 230 cubic metres of water and 2,688 kg Co2 of per business per year².

Sustainable business behaviours: the behavior of the businesses evaluated and certificated by Green Tourism has also been judged to have changed significantly between the Advisory Visits and the Assessments. Below is a summary of the main measures now implemented (as at the end of the project in June 2015):

County Down Green Tourism Project; Changed Sustainable Business Behaviours ³	
78%	Are recycling/reusing more
64%	Are involved with local social projects
61%	Have good information on walking/cycling etc.
57%	Have improved staff awareness
49%	Now have a Green Action Plan
47%	Now have a Green Policy
44%	Are using sustainably sourced paper for housekeeping products
43%	Are using chlorine free cleaners
43%	Are promoting nearby public transport
41%	Are using more Local meat & dairy
40%	Are composting their kitchen waste
40%	Are composting their garden waste
39%	Are using Green marketing materials
39%	Are using phosphate free soaps
38%	Are using Local drinking water
38%	Are promoting car free activities
37%	Are using dispensers/dosing systems
36%	Are using Fairtrade food & drink
35%	Are supporting natural/cultural initiatives
34%	Are monitoring energy
33%	Are using Local/seasonal fruit & veg
32%	Have installed wildlife habitats
31%	Have put in place food waste controls
30%	Are using less processed food

Business engagement and networking: it is apparent that many of the operators that participated in the Green Tourism Project and its predecessor, Preparing for Market - Exporting Tourism Programme (titled "Grow your Horizons", within which programme there were 60 participating businesses) have continued to be engaged and to work together. Evidence from speaking to

² Data taken from Green Tourism Certification Programme report, June 2015 and BTS Green Tourism Programme, Post Project Monitoring Report & Presentation, August 2015

³ Green Tourism Certification Programme report, June 2015

individual operators and representatives of the local authorities and Tourism NI suggest that the Green Tourism programme was both very well regarded by participants and served as a useful foundation for operators to collaborate and network.

Marketing:

The Green Tourism project included an integral marketing campaign whose objective was to launch the area as a Green Destination and as part of the rationale, increase awareness of the distinct features of the Strangford Lough and Mourne Mountains & Ring of Gullion destinations, and engage and drive new traffic to the two new area websites, while capturing data of the visitors, from the GB markets. The strategy developed for the campaign was to use transparent and accountable media and thus the communication channels were 100% digital, allowing a cost-effective and accountable route to reach the target demographic via multiple digital channels, while allowing the participating businesses to directly benefit from the links.

The Green Tourism Digital Marketing campaign, launched on 22nd May and ended on 30th June 2015, achieved the following headline results:

- 21,978 unique visits to the campaign page
- 4,788 competition entrants (to aid data capture)
- 160,000+ reach on social media
- 1,923 social media followers
- 100 app downloads (as at end of June 2015)
- 1,672 additional visitors driven to Mournes & Strangford web sites via paid search
- The campaign has contributed towards 80% increase in sessions (compared to the prior 6 weeks) to the Visit Mourne & Strangford sites.

Many of the green actions taken by participating businesses included upgrading of web sites and presentation of green credentials to customers.

It is evident that operators are still looking for more marketing to take place for the destination (see section 7 below).

Recognition of the area: the Green Tourism project in County Down has increased the number of green certified businesses in NI to 117, of which 107 are located in the green tourism project area (with two preexisting and 3 subsequent accreditations). On late 2016, County Down therefore has 91% of the green accredited businesses from throughout NI.

The Green Tourism project has also won sustainability awards as follows:

1. Northern Ireland Tourism Award, Winner: Sustainable Tourism Award, 2016
2. 2016 (global) Sustainable Destinations Top 100 (<http://greendestinations.info/top100-2016/>)

7. Marketing Next Steps

On completion of the Green Tourism project in June 2015, there were a number of next steps that might have been tried and tested for marketing the destination. In the event, apart from adaptation

of the Strangford Lough and Mourne Mountains & Ring of Gullion web sites (and of course marketing activity undertaken by the businesses themselves), there was only limited destination-wide “green” marketing delivered in the period after the project finished in 2015.

We took advantage of the opportunity to ask green tourism participants for their views on what should be done next to market the destination(s)⁴, while conducting this 2016 evaluation of the Green Tourism project against the KPIs.

The key suggestions and recommendations are as follows: (the verbatim responses are appended.)

- Target UK, Germany, France and Italy
- Target Greater Belfast as well as out of state visitors
- Collaborative marketing
- Web and social media
- Toolkits to help operators with their marketing, including follow up local session(s)
- Access to photography
- Promoting the benefits of ecotourism with a link to green tourism providers in area
- Promote area as a film/tv location
- Representation at key events, showcasing members
- Promotion through Tourism NI website
- Packaging of the green proposition in the area

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

The analysis of the outcomes and KPIs met through the Green Tourism project is demonstrated in the report. Specifically, the project significantly exceeded the number of businesses that were targeted to gain green accreditation (60 was the target, successful accreditation of 102) and to support opportunities for future development (target 80 businesses, 129 supported).

Most outcomes and KPIs were achieved as well as other significant benefits and outcomes from the Green Tourism project:

- Savings amounting to the following will have been made:
 - £162,933 per annum amongst the participating businesses
 - 23,614 cubic metres of water
 - 274,215 kg Co2
- Sustainable business behaviours within participating businesses will have changed significantly;
- Strengthening of business engagement and networking across the area;
- Green marketing of the businesses themselves through enhanced web sites;
- Enhanced recognition of the area for its green credentials and awards.

⁴ We asked: We’re also interested in your views on what you would like to see happen with additional green marketing of the destination. Please feel free to comment as widely as you would like on issues such as collaborative marketing, web and social media etc.

Recommendations and Way Forward: the Green Tourism project has attracted significant investment in the strengthening of the sustainable infrastructure and appeal of the destinations of Strangford Lough and Mourne Mountains & Ring of Gullion.

The reorganization of local government in NI makes the green focus on the former legacy council areas harder to sustain, except for Newry Mourne and Down which has absorbed its former legacy councils in their entirety. This will make the following recommendations easier for this Council to take forward but we urge the other new authorities to focus in on and prioritize these green recommendations:

1. Support the green accredited businesses to network and collaborate together to help each other with product and service developments and joint marketing;
2. Integration of sustainable messaging in all tourism and destination marketing for the area;
3. Development of concerted marketing activity to promote the destinations, with an annual marketing plan to include:
 - Campaign – primarily digital and online
 - Social media content
 - Smartphone App
 - Trade engagement
4. Collaborate with Tourism NI and Tourism Ireland to get the messaging and marketing to out of state audiences;
5. Cross council coordination of the above.

IB/BTS

12th December 2016

Appendix 1 - Products and service enhancements from respondents

1. Aromatherapy diffusers and refills
2. Currently introducing natural soaps
3. Better signage for recycling
4. Electricity usage awareness
5. Ecover products
6. Fresh herbs from garden
7. Google translation on our menus into 36 languages
8. Green Products
9. Healthy options/locally sourced food in Tearoom
10. Fairtrade products
11. Increased Golf Tours
12. Equestrian tours as a result with new clients
13. Lights/ Bins/Recycling/awareness
14. Local and environmentally friendly produce
15. Arts and crafts
16. Low energy lighting
17. Eco soap n detergent
18. New electric bulbs and appliances: dishwasher, washing machine, microwave and oven/hob
19. Recycling bins
20. We have now a very comprehensive recycling system at our cottages that our guests are now embracing. Our % recycling is now up by 70%
21. New Biomass heating system across the upper area of the estate - work is to commence Jan 2017 and it will save us relying on oil
22. The toilets are also being looked at and new cisterns / water saving devices are being fitted
23. Café, food sourced
24. Encouraged guests to engage in environmentally friendly activities while the stay with us.
25. More community initiatives and events
26. Recycled & upcycled products
27. New toiletries ,laundry products and toilet cleaners
28. Recycled ash trays & clocks
29. City breaks of Ireland & Scotland using local bus services between destinations
30. Developed our FIT department using various local driver/guides at each area to cut down on carbon footprint
31. Outdoor Activity Tours - Hiking/Biking and Walking Tours incorporating our local Green Tourism Hotels, BBs and visitor attractions
32. Full page on our website dedicated to Green Tourism
33. Wild Atlantic Way Tours with Meet the locals....
34. Far more recycling, shorter washing cycle so saving money & energy
35. Changed 80% of the light bulbs to LED again saving money over the year
36. Even more energy-efficient lighting, 2 new composters
37. Home-grown & home-pressed apple juice, more locally sourced products
38. More 'green' cleaning products

Appendix 2 – Green Marketing response from 2016 survey of participants

Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative marketing including events, web and social media.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am contemplating introducing a birdwatching feature for guests to try
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make more of the destination being nominated in the top 100 in the world
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market whole area and attractions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing social media support and tool kits to help with this such as photos
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target UK, Germany, France and Italy to promote Ireland as a Green destination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The B&B business on NI is not ready/interested in green tourist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As we are an inbound Tour Operator offering all of Ireland and Scotland we need assistance to reach our target audience overseas both in Europe and USA/Canada. Perhaps a list or introduction to fellow Green Tourism agents overseas so we could set up a data base to keep them updated on upcoming and sample tours.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't have enough marketing - preferably done by larger entities than ours. Individual marketing is a waste of time.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please keep up the excellent work on promoting our beautiful region as widely as possible, in as many ways as possible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More advertising on the benefits of ecotourism with a link to Green Tourism providers in each area.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The green tourism program has delivered in many areas firstly in changing the way we run our business, implementation of environmentally friendly working practices thus saving money. Like the Grow your Horizons Programme created a network of like-minded businesses in the tourism sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the last year the area has seen a significant increase of use as a film/tv location. Example, 'My Mother and Other Strangers' (currently Sunday, 9pm, BBC-1) was filmed throughout Northern Ireland and mostly at Kearney Village, Portaferry.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We find it difficult to find the time to implement a lot of the suggested changes, plus not best value for money using green cleaning products etc. Also, difficult to find the time to update web and social media and work on collaborative marketing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would like to see a lot of marketing of the individual businesses participating in the scheme as well as more of them working together in the local area to spread the word further afield and to help attract more visitors to the area. It doesn't feel like much was done in terms of promotion once the

<i>awards were achieved.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>It is very difficult to gauge the impact of our Green initiatives as people do not usually mention it as a reason for choosing a destination. Nevertheless we do feel that it is very important to be proactive in preserving our environment.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Direct representation at key events, showcasing members. Higher profile of Green Tourism so that there is wider recognition of it and its members.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I find it very difficult to quantify how much the Green Tourism status affects prospective customers - if at all? Certainly no one mentions it! I have probably not made the effort to make sure my business was properly advertised on the green Tourism website as I find my computer is very slow, things don't load up so my time and patience runs out and I move on thinking I'll do it later but later never comes! Having said that I love everything about Green Tourism. It just clicks with everything I do, it has kind of become an obsession with me, I am trying to make my own cleaning products, cosmetics etc. I spend lots of time avoiding toxins and researching natural remedies for everything. I know this is not what you asked and I haven't really any ideas to improve marketing, I only know that I am more busy with bookings than I was last year</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>My company did not benefit from participation. It just seemed like yet another box ticking exercise.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>We have been engaging in green tourism projects for over ten years now so a lot of the above is hard to quantify recently however we feel in general conference terms the question of what we do is often asked</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>See comments above on collaborative marketing re. Mt. Stewart. The new staff are unaware of the potential mutual benefits which is disappointing.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Promoting more the tourism trade and B&Bs to a wider market, USA, France, Germany, etc. Giving information on where I may find funding to grow my business in a Green way? Things like I need a new heating system, solar panels for free electricity.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>After the initial push, it seems that Green Tourism has taken a back seat as far as NI is concerned. Have pushed Tourism NI on their own green tourism website content, and we promote it heavily but continued awareness online is key, not just from GT the business but from Tourism NI.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I don't see any economic benefit from the project. There are some environmental benefits. I don't think the designation delivered any tangible business but it does have a feel good factor for visitors when they see the plaque.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I have not been aware of any green marketing for the area. We need to see more emphasis on this wonderful area in a similar way to areas in the south of Ireland which are so well-promoted, e.g. 'The Ring of Kerry', 'The Atlantic Way' ...</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I would love to say that people are booking because of the green credentials of the business. I think though they are drawn to the 4 stars and the green element is a bonus. We are educational to green living.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Maybe approaching new start ups and highlighting Green Tourism would advance tourism products</i>

<i>in region.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>The Green offer for the area needs to be packaged with all the Green improvements listed. This marketing needs to be directed as much to the Greater Belfast area as out-of-state visitors. I am not aware how out-of-state visitors actually know about the Green offer here in detail.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>It would be good to see more social media coverage on green tourism in my local area - South Armagh - Slieve Gullion.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>I would like to find out more about possibilities of green marketing using web and social media. Also look to opportunities for collaborative approach. A follow up local session would be useful</i>

Appendix 3 - List of Businesses for Assessment and Award Level (as at end of June 2015)

Business Name	Business Type	Location	GTBS Award Level
Airmid Therapies	Visitor Attraction	Newry	Gold
Amble In B&B	B & B	Newcastle	Awaiting Grading
An Radhairc	Self-Catering	Restrevor	Bronze
Ardbrae Country House B&B	B & B	Portaferry	Gold
Ardglass Golf Club	Golf Club	Ardglass	Bronze
Ards Arts Centre & Town Hall	Art Gallery	Newtownards	Awaiting Grading
Ards Leisure Centre	Leisure Centre	Newtownards	Bronze
Ards VIC & Ards Crafts	VIC	Newtownards	Silver
Ark Open Farm	Visitor Attraction	Newtownards	Bronze
Ballydugan Cottages	Self-Catering	Downpatrick	Awaiting Grading
Ballyrone Cottage B&B	B & B	Banbridge	Silver
Ballyrusley B & B	B & B	Portaferry	Silver
Banbridge VIC	VIC	Banbridge	Bronze
Bannville House Hotel	Hotel	Banbridge	Bronze
Barnwell Farm Cottages	Self-Catering	Greyabbey	Gold
Bear Cottage	Self-Catering	Banbridge	Bronze
Beech Lodge	Self-Catering	Newtownards	Silver
Blackwell House	Guest House	Armagh	Silver
Brack Tours	Tour Operator	Newry	Gold
Burrendale Hotel	Hotel	Newcastle	Bronze
Cafe Mauds	Café	Newcastle	Bronze
Caitlins Cottage Holiday Home	Self-Catering	Armagh	Silver
Clandeboyne Lodge Hotel	Hotel	Bangor	Silver
Comber Courtyard Apartment	Self-Catering	Comber	Bronze
Comber Leisure Centre	Leisure Centre	Newtownards	Silver
Cross Square Hotel	Hotel	Newry	Awaiting Grading
Crotlieve Barn	Self-Catering	Newry	Gold
Crowes Nest	Retail	Crossgar	Bronze
Dan White's Cottage	Self-Catering	Restrevor	Bronze
Denvir's Coaching Inn	Hotel	Downpatrick	Awaiting Grading
Donard Hotel	Hotel	Newcastle	Bronze
Down County Museum	Visitor Attraction	Downpatrick	Silver
Down DC Downpatrick VIC & St Patrick Centre	VIC	Downpatrick	Bronze
Down DC Newcastle Visitor Information Centre	VIC	Newcastle	Silver
Downpatrick Golf Centre	Golf Club	Downpatrick	Bronze
Drumlin Lane	Self-Catering	Hillsborough	Gold
Dufferin Coaching Inn	B & B	Killykeagh	Bronze

Business Name	Business Type	Location	GTBS Award Level
Dunnanelly Country House	B & B	Downpatrick	Gold
East Coast Adventure	Tourism Training	Warrenpoint	Silver
F.E. McWilliam Gallery & Studio	Art Gallery	Banbridge	Silver
Fernhill Lodge	Self-Catering	Banbridge	Bronze
Fiddlers Green	B & B	Portaferry	Bronze
FishCity	Restaurant	Ballynahinch	Silver
Florida Manor	Serviced Apartments	Killinchy	Bronze
Garden Apartment	Self-Catering	Newtownards	Bronze
Grange Cottage	Self-Catering	Kilkeel	Bronze
Greenacres Guesthouse	Guest House	Banbridge	Gold
Grounded Slieve Gullion	Café	Newry	Awaiting Grading
Grove Fort Self Catering Cottage	Self-Catering	Dromore	Silver
Happy Vale	Self-Catering	Newcastle	Gold
Harbour House Inn & Stone Boat Restaurant	Inn	Newcastle	Bronze
Harbour Inn Annalong	Self-Catering/ Restaurant	Annalong	Bronze
Hilltop Lodge	B & B	Banbridge	Bronze
Hillyard House	Guest House	Castlewellan	Bronze
Hunters Lodge B & B	B & B	Killinchy	Awaiting Grading
Hutt Hostel	Hostel	Newcastle	Bronze
Irish Landmark Trust - Helens Tower	Self-Catering	Bangor	Bronze
Irish Landmark Trust - St Johns Point (lighthouse)	Self-Catering	Whitehead	Awaiting Grading
Irish Landmark Trust - Tullymurry	Self-Catering	Newry	Bronze
Kilkeel Development Association	Visitor Attraction	Kilkeel	Silver
Kings Inn	Guest House	Castlewellan	Bronze
Kirkistown Castle Golf Club	Golf Club	Cloughey	Awaiting Grading
Kribben Cottages	Self-Catering	Annalong	Silver
Lackan Cottage Farm	Self-Catering	Banbridge	Gold
Life Adventure	Activity Centre	Castlewellan	Gold
Limewood	Self-Catering	Banbridge	Bronze
Loughbrickland Courtyard	Self-Catering	Loughbrickland	Silver
Magherally Cottage	Self-Catering	Banbridge	Awaiting Grading
Marr Cottage	Self-Catering	Portaferry	Bronze
Matthews Coach Hire	Tour Operator	Monaghan	Silver
McBrides On The Square	Restaurant/ Pub	Comber	Bronze
Merrion Mews	Self-Catering	Newcastle	Bronze
Mountain View	Self-Catering	Newry	Awaiting Grading

Business Name	Business Type	Location	GTBS Award Level
Mountains Mourne Country Cottages	Self-Catering	Kilkeel	Silver
Mourne Seafood Bar	Restaurant/ Pub	Dundrum	Awaiting Grading
Narrow Water Castle Self Catering Accommodation	Self-Catering	Warrenpoint	Silver
National Trust - Mount Stewart	Visitor Attraction	Newtownards	Awaiting Grading
Newry & Mourne DC – Annalong Corn Mill Hostel	Hostel	Newry	Bronze
Newry & Mourne DC – Kilbroney Park	Caravan Park	Rostrevor	Silver
Newry and Mourne Museum	Visitor Attraction	Newry	Silver
Newry City Tours	Tour Operator	Newry	Silver
Newry Conference & Banqueting Centre	Conference Venue	Newry	Bronze
Newry Visitor Information Centre	Visitor Attraction	Newry	Silver
No. 35 The Quay	Self-Catering	Dundrum	Silver
Pier 36	Restaurant/ Pub	Donaghadee	Silver
Quails The Vault	Food Producer	Banbridge	Awaiting Grading
Ring of Gullion AONB Project Office	Corporate Office	Newry & Mourne	Bronze
Ross House Bed and Breakfast	B & B	Rostrevor	Silver
Rostrevor Holidays	Self-Catering	Rostrevor	Bronze
Sandend Cottage	Self-Catering	Ballywater	Awaiting Grading
Scion Hill Gate Lodge	Self-Catering	Banbridge	Bronze
Slieve Donard Resort and Spa	Hotel	Newcastle	Gold
Slievemoyle Cottages	Self-Catering	Downpatrick	Silver
Soak Seaweed Baths	Visitor Attraction	Newcastle	Bronze
Somme Association	Visitor Attraction	Newtownards	Bronze
Spy Pond Photo Space	Arts & Craft	Newcastle	Bronze
Strangford Arms Hotel	Hotel	Ards	Bronze
Stronfjord Viking Experience	Visitor Attraction	Downpatrick	Silver
Sugar Supper Club	Restaurant	Newry	Silver
The Briers Country House B&B	B & B/ Self-Catering	Newcastle	Silver
The Carriage House	B & B	Dundrum	Bronze
The Cuan Licenced Guest Inn	Inn	Strangford	Silver
The Governor Rocks	Restaurant	Donaghadee	Silver
The Halfway House	Restaurant	Banbridge	Bronze
The Haven	Guest House	Newcastle	Awaiting Grading
The Hill Cottage	Self-Catering	Downpatrick	Gold
The Hub Newry	Corporate Office	Newry	Gold
The Mourne Lodge	Guest House	Newry	Gold
The Narrows Social	Guest House	Portaferry	Awaiting Grading

Business Name	Business Type	Location	GTBS Award Level
The National Trust - Castle Ward	Visitor Attraction	Downpatrick	Silver
The Old Post Office Tea Rooms	Café	Newtownards	Silver
The Old Schoolhouse Inn	Inn	Comber	Bronze
The Oystercatcher B&B	B & B	Rostrevor	Silver
The Villager	Restaurant	Crossgar	Bronze
Ti Chulainn Cultural Centre & Accommodation	Visitor Attraction	Mullaghbane	Awaiting Grading
Timpany Nurseries & Gardens	Garden	Ballynahinch	Bronze
Tory Bush Cottages	Self-Catering	Newry	Gold
Turnip House	Retail	Banbridge	Gold
Welig Heritage Crafts & Hands on Workshops	Arts & Craft	Portaferry	Gold
WWT Castle Espie	Visitor Attraction	Comber	Gold

ACTIONS TRACKING UPDATE

ENTERPRISE REGENERATION AND TOURISM COMMITTEE

ITEM	SUBJECT	DECISION	REFERRED TO	ACTION TAKEN
		ERT – MONDAY 11 JANUARY 2017		
ERT/176/2016	Game of Thrones – Tourist Ireland – Great Campaign	<p>(a) Approval to process with the implementation of the Game of Thrones Tourism Ireland Great Campaign</p> <p>(b) Approval to use Tourism Ireland's Design and Media buying agencies to assist in the delivery of the campaign.</p> <p>(c) Approval to use the services of Jason Powell Marketing to assist in the trade development of Game of Thrones Experiences.</p>	Project on-going	
ERT/177/2016	Policy & Procedures Access to the Countryside in Newry Mourne & Down District Council	<p>To note a policy document was currently being prepared on Access to the Countryside in the Newry Mourne & Down District Council area, as outlined in Report dated 21 December 2015 from Ms C Murphy and Ms Heather Wilson, Countryside/Rights of Way Officer.</p> <p>The policy document will be a framework for merging the differing policies within the legacy Councils and ensuring the Council's compliance with the implementation of the Access to the Countryside (NI) Order 1983.</p> <p>When the policy document is completed it will be brought to the Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism Committee for consideration in due course.</p>	Work on going to complete the policy including seeking legal advice.	

		ERT – MONDAY 14 MARCH 2016		
ERT/34/2016	Heritage Lottery Funding - Townscape	<p>(a) To approve the development of a proposal for Irish Street Downpatrick as an initial project for a Townscape Heritage Scheme for submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund.</p> <p>(b) That a phased approach to future Townscape Heritage Schemes is adopted with projects being ranked in order of feasibility and the level of commitment from property owners with potential match funding, etc.</p> <p>(c) Consideration to be given to the development of project ideas in those areas where Heritage Lottery Fund Projects have not been delivered or where previous plans have been developed but not delivered but could be revisited from the following areas:</p> <p>Scotch Street Downpatrick Castlewellan Killough Killylea Ardglass Bessbrook Newry Strangford</p>	Work in Progress	
ERT/36/2016	Hotel Development	The Council commission site option appraisal and business case/appraisal for hotel provision in Downpatrick and Newcastle.	Work in Progress	
		ERT – MONDAY 9 MAY 2016		
ERT/81/2016	Café Franchise Sean Hollywood Arts Centre Newry	The Council proceed to seek expressions of interest from caterers for a new three year Licence of the Café facility at the Sean Hollywood Arts Centre to be effective from June 2016 – May 2019 and review the rental value of the Café area at the Sean Hollywood Arts Centre, incorporating the payment of rates as per addendum to Licence.	Work in Progress	

		ERT MONDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2016		167
ERT/131/2016	Warrenpoint Baths	<p>(a) A further detailed options report be tabled at the ERT Committee Meeting following the outcome of the Warrenpoint Baths planning application process. This will include prioritisation and financial implications for options 1 and 2, as option 3 and 4 are seen at this stage as last resort options.</p> <p>(b) Tourism figures for 2015 and 2016 to be circulated to Members for information.</p>	<p>(a) In progress with Planning Service</p> <p>(b) Actioned</p>	
ERT/136/2016	Newry Town Hall Schedule of Works	<p>(a) To close Newry Town Hall for Main Hall bookings from 15 May – 15 September 2017.</p> <p>(b) Mood Boards be produced to inform all groups and others of progress of works.</p> <p>(c) Meeting be convened at later date with Director of ERT, user groups and Theatre consultant, to inform them of proposed works.</p> <p>(d) Consultation process to begin in Autumn with Arts Groups/relevant bodies for Audience Development Strategy.</p>	Ongoing	
		ERT – MONDAY 10 OCTOBER 2016		
ERT/155/2016	Tender re: Arts Culture Heritage Strategy & Action Plan	The Council tender for the Development of an Integrated Culture Arts & Heritage Strategy 2017 – 2021 and Action Plan 2017-2019 for Newry Mourne & Down District Council, as per Report dated 10 October 2016 from Mr J McGilly Assistant Director ERT.	In progress	
ERT/156/2016	Mooring Licence Newcastle Harbour	(a) Allocation of mooring at Newcastle Harbour will be done on a 3 yearly basis in future.	To be brought back to ERT in December 2016	

		<p>(b) A report to be submitted to the next Meeting of the ERT Committee regarding the following:</p> <p>(i) Options on what process can be used to allocate mooring at Newcastle Harbour.</p> <p>(ii) Details of mooring charges for Newcastle Harbour.</p> <p>(iii) Provision of moorings, float and pontoon during summer months to facilitate disabled people as per request from Disability Sailing.</p>		
ERT/158/2016	Youth Golf Competition	To hold a Youth Golf Competition in April 2017 on the championship course at Royal County Down with a qualifier competition to be held at Ardglass Golf Club, as per Report dated 10 October 2016 from Ms T Mooney Assistant Tourism Development Officer.	In progress	
ERT/160/2016	Lease: Slieve Gullion	<p>To approve lease of Slieve Gullion Forest Park from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to Newry Mourne & Down District Council, for a 25 year period, subject to the following key issues being addressed, as per Report dated 10 October 2016:</p> <p>Lease term 25 years A nil yearly rental figure – Forest Service to prepare a Business Case that determines this rental) Prior to signing of Lease, Forest Service are to confirm risk areas in the forest for management. Forest Service to provide most recent tree survey Forest Service to confirm Council obligations in relation to the management of woodland under Forest Service Act (NI) 2010.</p>	In progress	

		ERT - MONDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2016		
ERT/169/2016	Derrymore Estate Partnership	<p>(a) Council Officials to continue to progress the delivery of projects that seek to develop the recreational potential of Derrymore Estate.</p> <p>(b) Council to submit an application for Trail facility development to Sport NI before the deadline of February 2017, and if successful, to make available the required match funding towards this project of approximately £140,000 in 2017/18.</p> <p>(c) Council Officials to commence work on preparation and submission of a planning application for above project to ensure project delivery is not delayed if a Letter of Offer for funding is awarded.</p>	In progress	
ERT/172/2016	Castlewellan Forest Park	<p>(a) To procure and pay facilitators for the purposes of consultation workshops, events and road-shows.</p> <p>(b) To plan and hold a number of consultation workshops, events and road shows.</p>	In progress	
ERT/175/2016	Downpatrick PSNI Station	Agreed the Council support Downpatrick Community Collective Group in their efforts to secure the site via Community Asset Transfer and Council to offer advice and support to the Group to develop the initiative, as per Report dated 14 November 2016 from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Enterprise, Regeneration & Tourism.	In progress	
ERT/176/2016	Sean Hollywood Arts Centre Café Franchise	<p>(a) The Council to not proceed on the basis as outlined in Point 2.0 for the reasons as outlined in Point 3.0 in Report dated 14 November 2016 from Ms J Turley Facilities Administrator.</p> <p>(b) Council Officials to enter back into negotiations regarding the Café franchise at Sean Hollywood Arts Centre.</p>	In progress	

ERT/177/2016	NIRDP Rural Tourism Scheme Slieve Gullion Forest Park	<p>(a) Submit an application for the funding deficit to potential funders, ie, Heritage Lottery Fund, when the Slieve Gullion Forest Park Economic Appraisal is complete.</p> <p>(b) Invite to tender to prepare a planning application for project, assess tenders, appoint supplier using the ME process.</p> <p>(c) Submit planning application for project.</p> <p>(d) Proceed to tender the proposed Augmented Reality Project.</p> <p>(e) Submit the round two application to NIRDP 2014-20 Priority 6 Rural Tourism Scheme.</p>	In progress	
ERT/178/2016	Caravan and Campsite Management	<p>(a) To agree a joint process between Council and Forest Service to appoint external expertise to prepare the Business Rationale and Specification to seek competent providers for the management of Tollymore Castlewellan and Kilbroney Park Caravan/Camping provision with the option to consider some additional tourism recreational services which would enhance the tourism offering.</p> <p>(b) To revert to Council with the completed Business Rationale and Specification prior to progressing to seek Expression of Interest.</p>	In progress	
ERT/181/2016	Delamont Railway Tearooms	<p>Agreed the Council approve the proposal to construct Tea Rooms at Delamont Railways, but not extend the current Lease, as recommended in Report dated 14 November 2016 from Mr S Boyle Delamont Country Park Manager.</p> <p>The above decision be subject to:</p> <p>(1) Council's Valuer reviewing the Rent to take into account additional investment and extended facilities on offer at Delamont.</p>	In progress	

		(2) The completion of legal formalities.		
ERT/184/2016	Maintenance – Struell Wells	This issue would be reported back to the ERT Committee following completion of discussions between Historic Environment Division and Council.		
		ERT – MONDAY 16 JANUARY 2017 (Not available yet)		

Liam Hannaway
Chief Executive



Comhairle Ceantair
an Iúir, Mhúrn
agus an Dúin
**Newry, Mourne
and Down**
District Council

Newry City – NSM Corridor A1 Belfast to Dublin Road Safety Improvements

Newry and Mourne District Council (*the Council*) and Newry Chamber of Commerce and Trade (*the Chamber*) are pleased to offer support for the above mentioned project.

The Council views this project as a key driver in promoting economic development across the region and its delivery is aligned closely to the strategic objectives of the Council's Economic Development Strategy and the wider Newry and Mourne Area Planning Framework. Council has identified poor connectivity to and from the region as being a major barrier to developing the economic and tourism potential of the area; completion of this project (particularly when placed in the context of the Department for Infrastructure's global objectives of the ongoing development of Northern Ireland's TEN-T road network) will alleviate this problem.

In supporting this project, the Council has worked closely with the Department for Infrastructure to ensure that the department's development intentions are consistent with, and complementary to, the Council's strategic plans. The project has been subject to a full public consultation and the views of stakeholders have been heard and, where required, taken into account. The Council continues, as the statutory body responsible for local Planning matters, to work closely with the Department for Infrastructure to ensure that all permissions are correct and in place as required by law.

The Chamber is a key stakeholder in promoting and maximising economic development for the Greater Newry Area and is the leading business networking and strategic lobbying organisation along the Eastern Seaboard Corridor of Northern Ireland. It promotes business between its members and others and it represents the interests of the business sector at local, regional and national level.

Both the Council and the Chamber recognise the significant benefits of the major road improvements that will arise from this proposal and its potential to practically contribute to the improved efficiency and safety of the North Sea-Mediterranean core corridor.

From a cohesion point of view, the project will, through its successor works, enable more efficient, safer, connectivity between the city of Newry (and its environs) to other centres of commerce, employment and recreation both locally and in cross-border terms by making more efficient use of existing infrastructure. It is also clear that the project will, in the longer term, create the conditions to deliver significant user benefits by improving mobility and accessibility while also significantly improving the safety of road users.

Signed

Liam Hannaway
Chief Executive
Newry and Mourne District Council

Michael McKeown
President
Newry Chamber of Commerce and Trade