

Report on	Outdoor Recreation Five Year Strategic Plan
Date of Meeting	Thursday 12 th March 2020
Reporting Officer	Head of Parks
Contact Officer	Nigel Hill

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	x

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To seek Member approval for the Outdoor Recreation Five Year Strategic Plan.
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI) was commissioned by Mid Ulster District Council (MUDC) to prepare an Outdoor Recreation Strategy for the Council area which will provide direction for the sustainable development, management and promotion of future outdoor recreation facilities, programs, infrastructure, resources and investment over the period 2020-2025 within the Mid Ulster District Council area.</p> <p>Given the special qualities of the area, it is vital that any Outdoor Recreation Strategy for the area takes a balanced approach to ensure that the very resource which provides the opportunities for recreation and enjoyment is protected and managed appropriately. It is well recognised that outdoor recreation realises significant benefits both in personal terms to individual participants and in wider terms to society, the economy and the environment. More specifically this includes getting more people active and therefore generating cost savings to the health service, improving the educational attainment of children and young people, supporting people into education, employment and training for example, through volunteering, increasing social capital and creating economic prosperity through tourism.</p> <p>MUDC area covers an area of some 1714 km², straddles two counties, running from Swatragh in the north to Fivemiletown in the south and from the Sperrin Mountains in the west to the shores of Lough Neagh in the east. The MUDC area is divided into 7 District Electoral Area (DEA) namely; Carntogher, Clogher Valley, Cookstown, Dungannon, Magherafelt, Moyola and Torrent.</p> <p>The outdoors of the MUDC area has undoubtedly a high-quality natural resource base, both spatially extensive and diverse in nature. The area includes forests, woodlands, loughs, wetlands, canals, rivers, uplands and open land. This extensiveness and diversity of the resource base lends itself to the provision of opportunities for a wide range of outdoor recreation activities for both the local population and for an increasing number of visitors to the area.</p>

	<p>Within the area, the key providers of outdoor recreation are Forest Service NI (FSNI), MUDC, NIEA, Waterways Ireland, DAERA, RSPB, Woodland Trust, National Trust and the Ulster Wildlife Trust. In addition, a significant contribution to the provision of outdoor recreation within the Mid Ulster area is made from community associations, private sector activity providers and through initiatives such as the Sperrins Gateway Landscape Partnership, the Blackwater Regional Partnership and the Lough Neagh Partnership.</p> <p>An extensive process of consultation was carried out with individual Council Officers, Council elected members, national governing bodies of sport (NGBs), public and statutory agencies, public and private landowners, outdoor activity providers, community associations and groups, clubs, SORF members and the general public. In addition, seven public consultation events took place, one in each of the Council's seven DEAs.</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>The overall aim is to prepare a strategy that will provide direction for managing and developing outdoor recreation facilities, programs, infrastructure, resources, and investment over a projected 5 year period. The Strategic Plan process has assessed the status of countryside and green spaces within the Council area and planned a future that reflects the Corporate Priorities of the Council and needs of the community.</p> <p>Main Recommendations relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management Arrangements • Master Planning • Product Development • Promotion/marketing <p>A programme of actions and works based on key recommendations has been identified. The strategy has identified a projected spend of £4,763,047 over the five year period of the action plan. The strategy will be reviewed in year three to assess progress and profile the remaining two years.</p> <p>This Outdoor Recreation Strategic Plan for the Mid Ulster Council area sets out a strategic framework for the next five years in order to help reposition our outdoor recreation opportunities across Mid Ulster District Council. It will help improve co-ordination, collaboration, capacity and the Councils' capability to meet the current and future challenges in a way that maximises opportunities, benefits, investment and resources. In addition, it will help consolidate into one joined up Plan previous pieces of work undertaken by the legacy Councils.</p>
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	<p>Financial: Outdoor Recreation Five Year Strategic Plan will require Council resourcing for the period of the programme that equates to £4,763,047 over a five year period as scheduled in the action plan. Council have agreed the Capital Framework 2020-2024, which includes Council expenditure detailed for the Outdoor Recreation Strategy of £250k per year of the Strategy. The framework also agreed expenditure limits for specific projects included in the Outdoor Recreation Strategy. Additional funding will be sought from other sources for specific projects. The Outdoor Recreation Strategic Plan may be subject to variables and</p>

	change associated to opportunities of external funding that may enhance or re-prioritise the delivery objectives over the life of the strategy.
	Human: Current staff structure sufficient to deliver on the Outdoor Recreation Strategic Plan in conjunction with the appointment of appropriately qualified and experienced consultancy (ICT) and supply team (IST).
	Risk Management: The strategic plan will be managed and monitored by the Parks Services in line with Council's risk management governance procedures
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: Considered in conjunction with Council policies and procedures associated to Equality and Good Relations.
	Rural Needs Implications: Considered in conjunction with Council policies and procedures associated to rural proofing.
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Members are asked to note the content of the report and approve the Outdoor Recreation Five Year Strategic Plan as presented.
5.2	Approval is sought to seek the appointment of suitably qualified Integrated consultancy and supply teams (ICT and IST) to assist council with a phased delivery of the programmed action plan.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix 1 - Outdoor Recreation Five Year Strategic Plan