

Report on	Learning Journey to The Midlands For 40 Tourism Cluster Group Members and Lead Officers
Date of Meeting	3 July 2019
Reporting Officer	Michael Browne
Contact Officer	Mary McKeown

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 inform Council of plans to develop a one day Learning Journey to the Midlands on Wednesday 25 th September with Tourism Cluster Business members (40 people) and tourism staff. Cost per person £15.00 to help cover admissions and coach costs.
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>The Mid Ulster Council Tourism strategy states that Mid Ulster has the potential to expand its tourism offer significantly. It will focus on one new tourism strand, currently under development – linked to Seamus Heaney - and two strands that are significant and prominent, relating to Outdoor Activities and to Archaeological sites, the History and Heritage of the island of Ireland, Northern Ireland and the area itself.</p> <p>These strands, or themes, will serve as the strategic core propositions for Mid Ulster, to attract visitors, encourage them to stay longer in the area and ensure that tourism contributes to the local economy.</p> <p>To help deliver on this proposition the Council have established 3 tourism clusters namely Seamus Heaney, outdoor Activities and Events and Archaeology, History & Heritage.</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>The Mid Ulster Tourism Clusters meet once every two months and are developing their plans for the future. One proposal from the Archaeology, History & Heritage cluster would like to deliver is a Learning Journey to the Midlands with the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit three key sites within the Midlands to include: • Centre Parc's in Longford, Virginia Park Lodge in Cavan, Kells Festival group. • Explore the new brand of Irelands Hidden Heartlands, recently launched by Failte Ireland • Generate new ideas and thinking for the cluster businesses individually and as a collective by visiting new examples of innovative heritage and outdoors product development. • Discover how the heritage theme is linked to and runs through tourism product development throughout the Heartlands. • Experience best practise in heritage interpretation, management and marketing through the visits to these sites. • Explore the creation of the Irelands Hidden Heartland brand, its development, creation of brand guidelines, and how it is used and monitored across the region. • Investigate opportunities for the Mid Ulster tourism sector.

	As part of the learning journey, a meeting will be set up with officers from Irelands Hidden Heartland to investigate building a relationship with the group/brand and look at how Mid Ulster District Council could become part of this marketing proposition.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: £1,500 to cover cost of coach, admissions and tour guide for 40 people
	Human: staff members who lead the Cluster to participate in the Learning Journey
	Risk Management: Na
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: All tourism businesses will be invited to participate in the Learning Journey and as a cross border-learning journey it will be an invaluable opportunity to experience and investigate the Midlands and tourism facilities.
	Rural Needs Implications:
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Council support the Midlands Learning Journey proposal.
6.0	Documents Attached & References