

Report on	Mountain Bike NI Consortium Proposal 2021-22
Date of Meeting	Thursday 17 th June 2021
Reporting Officer	N Hill Head of service
Contact Officer	Anne Reid Parks/Countryside Development Officer

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	Council approval to commit to Mountain Bike NI Marketing Consortium Campaigns for 2021-22
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>Mountain Bike NI Consortium was established to raise the profile of Northern Ireland's new mountain bike trail centres within the UK and Republic of Ireland markets.</p> <p>Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland (ORNI) have developed marketing expertise and knowledge of the mountain bike market to deliver the MountainBikeNI Consortium (a partnership between three local authorities and the National Trust) with the collective aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Northern Ireland as a World Class Mountain Bike Destination • Oversee activation of MountainBikeNI.com brand across each trail centre to increase 'cross-sell' opportunities • Secure a major sponsor for Northern Ireland's new National mountain bike trail centres • To combine budgets to deliver specialist targeted marketing campaigns in partnership with Tourism Ireland <p>Mountain Bike NI is delivered by Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI), its work was previously directed and funded by its four 'core funders' namely Sport NI, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Tourism Northern Ireland and Inland Waterways Unit of the Department of Infrastructure.</p> <p>With significant cuts in government funding, this is no longer the case, with ORNI delivering its strategic not-for-profit role under a number of new arrangements. In 2016 / 2017, ORNI successfully established the Mountain Bike NI Marketing Consortium to ensure local authorities could continue to benefit from the success of MountainbikeNI.com by continuing to contribute to the Mountain Bike NI Consortium – local authorities can reap the following benefits:</p>

2.2	<p>Outdoor Recreation NI is able to provide the following added value to those councils supporting the MountainBikeNI Consortium:</p> <p>A consortium approach provides the following benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economies of scale in campaign costs, project costs such as MTB Research • The ability to cross sell between trail centres i.e. consumers interested in or visiting the Mourne based trails will learn about the Davagh Trails and vice versa • A greater potential to attract (via tender) a sponsor • Improved brand, destination and product recognition
2.3	<p>Marketing Foundation</p> <p>The following marketing foundation is already in place – reducing the need for supporting councils to further invest elsewhere:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MountainBikeNI.com website attracting 63,449 visits in 2020/21 (37% increase from 2019/2020) • E-marketing Database of 12,807 • Social media following of 26,070 (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
2.4	<p>Expertise & Knowledge</p> <p>Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland is a not-for-profit organisation whose role is to develop, manage and promote outdoor recreation across Northern Ireland therefore those councils supporting the consortium benefit from its significant expertise and knowledge.</p>
2.5	<p>Product knowledge gained from:</p> <p>Proactive campaigning for 10+ years for the development of mountain biking in Northern Ireland</p> <p>Driving the development of Rostrevor, Castlewellan, Blessingbourne, Castle Ward and Barnett Demesne Mountain Bike Trails</p>
2.6	<p>Visitor Safety knowledge gained from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership of Visitor Safety Group (VSG) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Staff training investment including VSG and other relevant workshops • Mountain bike market knowledge gained from proactive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ benchmarking from competitor destinations ◦ Engagement with UK and ROI wide industry experts ◦ Staff training investment including learning journeys and industry conferences
2.7	<p>Marketing expertise gained from:</p> <p>10+ years of proactively promoting outdoor recreation / activity tourism in Northern Ireland via Outdoor Recreation NI platforms such as OutdoorNI.com. WalkNI.com</p> <p>10+ years delivering activity tourism marketing outputs for Tourism Northern Ireland</p>

3.0	Main Report				
3.1	Outdoor Recreation NI will continue to assign staff resources to the MountainBikeNI Consortium in order to continue to promote Northern Ireland as a 'must visit mountain bike destination'. Whilst promotion will take place under the MountainBikeNI umbrella brand each destination will be clearly differentiated within marketing activity.				
3.2	The focus of marketing activity will be within Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in order to deliver on key objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase number of visits within each trail centre• Increase the engagement of mountain bikers with the local economy i.e. increase economic impact				
3.3	Partner	MUDC	NMDDC	BCC	FODC
	Partner Support	£13,000	£16,666	£5,000	£5,000
	Sponsorship Contribution	£5,000	£10,000	0	0
	Partner Total	£18,000	£26,666	£5,000	£5,000
	% of Delivery Capacity	33%	49%	9%	9%
3.4	Campaigns Source		Amount / £	% of campaign delivery	
	Newry, Mourne and Down District Council		2,000	50%	
	Mid Ulster District Council		1,000	25%	
	Fermanagh & Omagh		1,000	25%	
	TOTAL		4,000	100%	
3.5	In 2021 / 2022, proactive promotion in Northern Ireland will be achieved via MTBNI's extensive web visitors, e-zine subscribers and social media followers. A ROI focused campaign is proposed to encourage as allowed by the easing of COVID-19 restrictions.				
	Accountability: The MountainbikeNI.com consortium will be managed by ORNI's Marketing Manager who will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agree an annual work programme including KPIs• Provide Quarterly progress reports• Hold two meetings per year to report on progress, discuss campaigns etc.				

4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: Mid Ulster District Council will contribute £14,000 as a participating Consortium Partner. The expenditure is within current Parks Service revenue budget allocations.
	Human: Human: Existing staff resources sufficient to coordinate project support. No additional staffing resource required.
	Risk Management: In conjunction with Council policies and procedures.
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: In conjunction with Council policies and procedures.
	Rural Needs Implications: In conjunction with Council policies and procedures.
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Council approval is sought to participate as a Consortium Partner with the Mountain Bike NI Marketing Consortium and contribute £14,000 to 2021-22 campaign.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix Mountain Bike Marketing Consortium Proposal 2021/2022 Mountain Bike Marketing Consortium Report 2020-21