



14 January 2021

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Development Committee to be held in The Chamber, Magherafelt and by virtual means Council Offices, Ballyronan Road, Magherafelt, BT45 6EN on Thursday, 14 January 2021 at 19:00 to transact the business noted below.

In accordance with the spirit of the recent COVID restriction, Members are strongly encouraged to join virtually as the preferred option. Should you need to attend in person then provision will be made at the Council Offices, Magherafelt. Please notify Democratic Services in advance if this is the case.

A link to join the meeting through the Council's remote meeting platform will follow.

Yours faithfully

Adrian McCreesh  
Chief Executive

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## AGENDA

### OPEN BUSINESS

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest  
Members should declare any financial and non-financial interests they have in the items of business for consideration, identifying the relevant agenda item and the nature of their interest.
3. Chair's Business
4. Deputation: ICBAN

### Matters for Decision

- |  |         |
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| 5. Mobile Catering Concessions           | 3 - 10  |
| 6. Community Development Report          | 11 - 28 |
| 7. Sperrins Future Search Project Update | 29 - 36 |

### Matters for Information

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| 8. Minutes of the Special Development Committee held on 29 October 2020 | 37 - 50 |
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9	Minutes of Development Committee held on 10 December 2020	51 - 72
10	Ballysaggart Lough Enhancement Scheme	73 - 76
11	Macmillan Move More Research Update	77 - 102
12	Arts Council of Northern Ireland Survey on Arts and Culture engagement levels during COVID-19 Pandemic	103 - 142
13	Tourism Business Engagement Programme	143 - 148
14	Mid Ulster District Tourism Development Group	149 - 158
15	Santa visit to Primary Schools in the Mid Ulster District	159 - 162

**Items restricted in accordance with Section 42, Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014. The public will be asked to withdraw from the meeting at this point.**

#### Matters for Decision

#### Matters for Information

16. Confidential Minutes of Development Committee held on 10 December 2020
17. Sport NI EBA 2020 Programme
18. DAERA (TRPSI) Rural Business Development Grant Scheme 2020

<b>Report on</b>	Mobile Catering Concessions
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> January 2021
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Nigel Hill, Head of Parks
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Nigel Hill, Head of Parks

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To seek member's approval to procure mobile concession Grab & Go catering services at selected council owned/managed venues and public Parks.
	<b>Background</b>
2.1	Mobile Catering is recognised as the act of selling prepared food or drink from a vehicle or trailer and is often referred to as street food. Mobile catering can offer a wide range of hot/cold food, confectionery and drink options to the passing public. Mobile catering has become especially popular at outdoor venues and green spaces such as town and country parks and in normal times, can provide support of festivals or other events that require a food or drink source for visitors.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	Café and catering concessions across the council parks service collapsed as a result of Covid-19. Catering entrepreneurs have responded to current opportunities with pop-up mobile catering units in public spaces offering Grab & Go services. This approach complies with Covid-19 restrictions as they generally operate in outdoor environments and have the capacity to ensure effective social distancing. Council have been approached by a number of potential providers in relation to offering mobile concession services in public parks. Parks Service have had on hold plans to roll out mobile catering concessions. Taking into consideration current and medium term options for public facing services it is now considered a feasible approach towards fulfilling a current service gap across selected public parks and visitor destinations.
3.1	Mobile caterers are regularly inspected by their local environmental health service to make sure they comply with food safety and food standards legislation. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has produced guidance on food safety management systems for mobile caterers to ensure compliance with food safety legislation and the achievement of best practice.

3.2	It is proposed to seek the appointment of a number of mobile service providers for public facing catering services through an open public tender exercise based on current procurement policy and in line with food safety regulations. Catering providers will be required to comply with current Access NI checks as a condition of the procurement exercise. Tender specification Terms and Conditions are included in the Appendix.
3.3	<p>Individual Mobile Catering Contracts will be valid for an initial period of 6 months with an option to extend for a further two, 6-month periods subject to satisfactory performance. Tendering parties will be invited to make submissions for either single or multiple venues. The council are proposing to offer mobile catering contracts across significant footfall venues, sample locations as listed, subject to amendments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dungannon Park</li> <li>• Ballyronan Marina</li> <li>• Knockmany Forest</li> <li>• Brantry Wood / Game Keepers Lodge</li> <li>• Pomeroy Forest</li> <li>• Portglenone Riverside Path/angling amenity/NewFerry</li> <li>• Washingbay Wetlands Park</li> <li>• Round lake Fivemiletown</li> </ul>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	<p>Financial: Income generation opportunity based on tendered submissions per location.</p>
	<p>Human: Effective communication with the concession providers will ensure that services are monitored regularly and delivered to the required standards.</p>
	<p>Risk Management: Parks Manager will monitor services with the catering providers and address any inconsistencies with a view to these being resolved promptly. An evaluation process will be built into service delivery to ensure that performance feedback is regularly received to address concerns (if any) immediately. Successful tenders will be required to enter into a catering agreement for each site location with Mid Ulster District Council.</p>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	<p>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications: In line with current Mid Ulster District Council policies.</p>
	<p>Rural Needs Implications: In line with current Mid Ulster District Council policies.</p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	Members are requested to note the content of this report.

5.2	Members approval is sought to procure mobile catering concessions for Grab & Go services across selected Council owned/managed venues for an initial period of 6 months with the option to extend for a further two, 6 month periods subject to satisfactory performance and subject to terms and conditions of a Catering Agreement.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Tender specification Terms and Conditions Appendix.



## **MOBILE CATERING GRAB & GO CONCESSION**

### **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

Mid Ulster District Council is seeking Tenders by public advertisement from suitably qualified and experienced Mobile Vending/Hot Drinks/Snack Vendors to trade in either:

1. Dungannon Park
2. Ballyronan Marina
3. Knockmany Forest
4. Brantry Wood / Game Keepers Lodge
5. Pomeroy Forest
6. Portglenone Riverside Path/angling amenity/NewFerry
7. Washingbay Wetlands Park
8. Round lake Fivemiletown

The Council sees the provision of this mobile unit as not only a service to the public but also as an attraction to enhance the visitor experience. Tenderers can apply to trade in one, two, three, four, five, six or eight of the sites listed.

#### **NOTE: A SEPARATE SUBMISSION IS REQUIRED FOR EACH SITE**

The contract period will be for a period from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 until 30<sup>th</sup> September, but there may be an option to extend the contract on an annual basis for further 6 month periods (1<sup>st</sup> March 2022 until 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022 and 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023 until 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023).

The successful tenderer may trade, depending on weather conditions.

Tenderers should note that the above dates are provisional and may be changed at the Council's absolute discretion. The provision of the services above is unlikely to start before the anticipated dates however it is possible that the commencement date may be put back. The anticipated commencement date will be confirmed when the results of the tender are announced. If the dates move from those stated above, appropriate amendments in respect of commencement date will be made to the contract.

### **Specification of Requirements and Conditions of Contract**

- **SITE/LOCATION FOR MOBILE VENDING / HOT DRINKS /SNACK OUTLET TO TRADE**

The site/pitch for the mobile outlet to trade will be:

1. Dungannon Park (location of pitch to be agreed with awarded tenderer)
2. Ballyronan Marina (location of pitch to be agreed with awarded tenderer)
3. Knockmany Forest (location of pitch to be agreed with awarded tenderer)

4. Brantry Wood / Game Keepers Lodge (location of pitch to be agreed with awarded tenderer)
5. Pomeroy Forest (location of pitch to be agreed with awarded tenderer)
6. Portglenone Riverside Path/angling amenity/NewFerry (location of pitch to be agreed with awarded tenderer)
7. Washingbay Wetlands Park (location of pitch to be agreed with awarded tenderer)
8. Round lake Fivemiletown (location of pitch to be agreed with awarded tenderer)

The successful Tenderer will bring their unit to the pitch on a daily basis.

Support vehicles must be parked in the car park unless bringing supplies.

- **SERVICES AND OPERATION**

- **Services to be Provided by the Trader**

The Council now wishes to appoint a suitably qualified and experienced operator to provide and undertake the following services at the Mobile Vending/Hot Drinks/Snack Outlet:

- Provision of a self-contained mobile retail outlet (power and water);
- Liaison with Council staff and Agency workers employed by the Council;
- Provision of catering equipment and utensils to provide the services required;
- Undertake risk assessments/management and hazard analysis prior to trading and adhere to the relevant Health and Safety legislation and requirements;
- Liaison with the public in the provision of the catering/retail snack outlet;
- Advise the Council on any issues or concerns regarding the public;
- Cleaning of the Mobile Unit externally and internally;
- Immediate environment of Mobile Unit to be kept clean and tidy and all litter within 20m radius of the Unit to be collected and appropriately disposed of by the Vendor.

- **Core Items for Sale in the Mobile Unit**

The Council would require the operator to provide a minimum of the following items for sale:

- Soft drinks in cartons or plastic bottles – no glass bottles / bio-degradable products where possible
- Snacks
- Hot tea/coffee, in paper cups with lids, milk and sugar;
- Pre-packaged snacks/pastries;
- Crisps/Popcorn
- Healthy eating options



- A selection of Fair Trade products must be offered at all times

The Council would require the successful Tenderer to provide paper napkins/tissues free of charge.

The following items **must not be sold** in the Mobile Unit:

- Alcohol;
- Tobacco products;
- Chewing gum;
- Newspapers;
- Non-food items
- Fried or deep-fried foods

As part of the tender, the Council will require the Tenderer to state the price for core items for the 6-month period commencing 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021. Should the Council agree to extend this contract to 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022 / 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023 then the Council will require the successful Tender to submit any price changes, to be agreed before they are implemented.

The prices of the core items to be displayed for public view at the Mobile Unit.

- **Operating Times for the Mobile Unit**

The tenderer may trade during the hours when they feel trade is likely to be most brisk Monday to Friday, however there is an expectation from the Council the successful tenderer must provide services to the public every calendar weekend for the duration of the contract. To ensure the public is advised, the operator is to display the opening hours in a prominent position – signage to be approved by the Council in advance.

The Tenderer is asked to note that the Council may at its absolute discretion, suspend services if and when planned or emergency works are required to be carried out, inclusive of weather/storm warnings. No notice is required to be given in the event of emergency works being required. The Council will endeavour to give the Tenderer reasonable notice in respect of planned works.

Should there be a Council event in the Park, the Council would require the Mobile Unit to be open to trade. The Council will endeavour to give the trader at least 48 hours' notice.

The Council will not be paying compensation to the operator if, due to adverse weather conditions or other circumstances, it is not possible to trade.

- **Events where other Food Traders attend**

During the year, the Council and other organisations hold events in the Park where other food traders are in attendance. None of these traders will be permitted to trade from the designated pitch.

- **Collection and Disposal of Waste**

It is the responsibility of the operator to recycle waste and to ensure that there are adequate litterbins within 20m of the pitch and to collect and remove waste generated on a daily basis, as there is no holding facility for waste near the Mobile Unit.

- **Signage provided by the Operator**

Any signage provided or designed by the operator at the Mobile Unit must not be erected without prior approval of the Council.

- **Other Business Activity by Trader**

The trader is not permitted by the Council to carry out any other business activity at the Mobile Food Outlet or in any part of the Park.

<b>Report on</b>	Community Development
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> January 2021
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Claire Linney, Head of Community Development
<b>Contact Officers</b>	Philip Clarke - Community Services Manager, Oliver Morgan – Good Relations Manager, Michael McCrory - PCSP Manager, Martina Totten Community Planning Coordinator

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	Community Grants; to agree the Grants Policy and budgets for 2021-2022
1.2	Emergency Support Funding; to agree the allocation of additional DFC funding.
1.3	Community Development – to note the community development update
2.0	Background
2.1	Community Grants – Council annually delivers community grants programmes across Mid Ulster.
2.2	Emergency Support Funding; DFC has allocated a further £150,000 as additional emergency support, alongside a further 2 new programmes: Warm, Well and Connected with a budget of £24,092 and Volunteering Support Fund of £28,533.
2.3	Community Development includes the following areas: Community Support, Good Relations, PCSP, Connecting Pomeroy and facilitation of Community Planning.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Grants – the Grants Policy 2021- 2022 is proposed to remain as per the previous year with the same budget allocations. <b>Please refer to Appendix 1.</b>
3.2.	Emergency Support  As members will be aware, the following allocations have been received from DFC to date and allocated to groups, PPE provision, foodbanks and community counselling.  Funding not agreed in full and requires allocation:

3.2.1	<p>Financial Poverty Funding £38,421; agreed in October 2020 for £10,000 to go to CAP debt management for October/November to March 2021. It is proposed to allocate the remainder as follows:</p> <p>£10,000 to CAP period April – June</p> <p>£6000 to Mid Ulster Women's Aid to provide specific advice to women dealing with domestic violence which has increased over Covid 19 – February to June 2021</p> <p>£6000 to Rural Support to provide advice to the agri sector and rural isolation – February to June 2021</p> <p>£6000 to Belong to provide further advice and guidance to migrants. February – June 2021.</p> <p>Further funding has been received in December 2020 as follows:</p>
3.2.2	<p>Volunteer Support Fund; £28,533, to be allocated as proposed below.</p> <p>To purchase PPE as previous to support groups as required for the winter period, including continued support to vulnerable people, community and voluntary sector. The previous allocation has been expended.</p>
3.2.3	<p>Warm Well and Connected Funding; £24,092, allocation is as proposed below see below Tranche III.</p>
3.2.4	<p>Tranche III funding can be allocated past end of financial year as long as it is committed to spend; the proposed allocation is as follows:</p> <p>Tranche III £150,000; it is proposed to allocate as follows:</p> <p>Counselling £33,000 April to June 2021</p> <p>Foodbanks £18,500 (£42,500 - £24,000 remaining food funding) April to June 2021</p> <p>Fuel Stamps £98,500 (to be matched with Warm, Well Connected fund £24,000).</p>
3.2.4.1	<p>Community led mental health support (via counselling) £33,000 for April to June 2021 based on the following allocation</p> <p>Magherafelt Hope / The Olive Branch £7,500</p> <p>Cookstown The Hub £7,500</p> <p>Maghera STEPS £3,500</p> <p>Dungannon Vineyard £7,500</p> <p>Clogher Hope for U £3,500</p> <p>Coalisland Mid Ulster Counselling £3,500</p>
3.2.4.2	<p>Foodbank Support (demand led) £42,500 (£24,000 from Food and Essential Supplied fund) for April to June 2021 based on the following allocation</p> <p>Magherafelt Hope and SVP £15,000</p> <p>Dungannon Vineyard and SVP £15,000</p> <p>Maghera Foodbank &amp; SVP £7500</p> <p>Coalisland Foodbank £5000</p> <p>This is based on audited demand. Other areas continue to have a balance of funding from previous allocations for use into the period April to June 2021.</p>
3.2.4.3	<p>Fuel Stamps support is £122,500 (£98,500 Tranche III and Well Warm and Connected funding £24,000), to be allocated as follows:</p>

3.3	<p>Fuel stamps (value £50) to be allocated in partnership with the Post Primary schools (20 schools across Mid Ulster) to young people on FSMs (taking account of one set of stamps per family) – 3200 FSMs as of 2019 – 2020 and 60 – 65% no siblings Total number 2000 Total project budget £100,000</p> <p>Fuel stamps (value £50) to be allocated in partnership with the EA welfare support for primary and post primary young people in the Education Welfare Service and Behaviour Support Service Total number 500 children &amp; young people families Total £25,000</p> <p>Targets approximate 2500 sets vouchers Over 1500 families supported</p> <p>This is complemented by two programmes from the same funding:</p> <p>Community Well Warm Programme – delivered by CWSAN and Costa Budget £93,000 which is proposed to support warm home packs, resilience training for primary schools and fitness and nutrition support for schools.</p> <p>Community Grant Funding Programme – delivered by Cooperation Ireland Funding of up to £5000 to support groups delivering for their area. Council small grants remain flexible for use by groups to support their local communities.</p> <p>Other regional support is available to support volunteers, people in fuel crisis and delivery of large food allocations via Fareshare.</p> <p><b>Community Development Update</b></p> <p>Community Support / Community Planning The Community Support/ Community Planning continues to work with groups regarding the delivery of grants to respond to their communities.</p> <p>DEA meetings with members and community groups have been scheduled as follows:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>CARNTOGHER</td><td>Monday 15/02/21 @ 7pm Virtual</td></tr> <tr> <td>MOYOLA</td><td>Thursday 18/02/21 @ 7pm Virtual</td></tr> <tr> <td>MAGHERAFELT</td><td>Monday 22/02/21 @ 7pm Virtual</td></tr> <tr> <td>COOKSTOWN</td><td>Wednesday 24/02/21 @ 7pm Virtual</td></tr> <tr> <td>TORRENT</td><td>Wednesday 03/03/21 @ 7pm Virtual</td></tr> <tr> <td>DUNGANNON</td><td>Wednesday 10/03/21 @ 7pm Virtual</td></tr> <tr> <td>CLOGHER</td><td>Tuesday 23/03/21 @ 7pm Virtual</td></tr> </table> <p>Good Relations – Good Relations continues to deliver the updated Plan through innovative and flexible models in line with social distancing requirements.</p>	CARNTOGHER	Monday 15/02/21 @ 7pm Virtual	MOYOLA	Thursday 18/02/21 @ 7pm Virtual	MAGHERAFELT	Monday 22/02/21 @ 7pm Virtual	COOKSTOWN	Wednesday 24/02/21 @ 7pm Virtual	TORRENT	Wednesday 03/03/21 @ 7pm Virtual	DUNGANNON	Wednesday 10/03/21 @ 7pm Virtual	CLOGHER	Tuesday 23/03/21 @ 7pm Virtual
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CLOGHER	Tuesday 23/03/21 @ 7pm Virtual														

	<p>The teams are continuing to support in the development and delivery of Mid Ulster poverty plan and initiatives.</p> <p>The PCSP team has commenced delivery of the action plan in alternative formats as agreed by DOJ and NIPB.</p> <p>All of the partnership meetings are continuing via Zoom to accommodate members and external partners.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<p><b><u>Financial &amp; Human Resources Implications</u></b></p> <p>Community Grants – Budget £930,000</p> <p>Emergency Support Funding – Tranche III £150,000 with Food Emergency Fund balance, Financial Emergency Fund balance of £28,000, Warm, Well Connected £24,092 and Volunteering Support Fund £28,533.</p> <p><b><u>Professional Support</u></b></p> <p>None</p>
<b>4.2</b>	<p><b><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></b></p> <p>None</p>
<b>4.3</b>	<p><b><u>Risk Management Implications</u></b></p> <p>None</p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	Grants - To agree the Community Grants Policy and budgets 2021 – 2022
5.2	Emergency Support Funding – to agree the proposed delivery and allocation
5.3	Community Development – to note the update report
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Appendix 1 Community Grants Policy 2021 - 2022

## Appendix 1 Grants Policy 2021– 2022

Category 1 One Grant in Category Community Groups	Category 2 One Grant in Category	Category 3 Sports Groups One Category with exception of *	Category 4
<b>1. Small Grant in Arts &amp; Culture, Heritage Community Dev.</b> Maximum £1200, Budget proposed £130,000  <b>2. Community Venue Grant (incl. activity)</b> Maximum £3000, Budget £80,000 80% Community development & greater than 10 hours weekly activity – 3 year funding  <b>3. Strategic Arts &amp; Culture Grant</b> Maximum £20,000, Budget £85,000 80% arts & culture group & dedicated performance space -3 year funding  <b>4. Strategic Community Development Grant</b> Maximum £8,000 Budget £45,000 3 year funding	<b>5. Strategic Events Grant</b> Maximum £8,000 Minimum 1000 people attending Budget £75,000 (£10,000 GR TBC annually) 3 year funding  <b>6. Good Relations Grant</b> Maximum £1200 Rolling programme Budget £35,000 Rolling Programme  <b>7. Community Local Festival Grant</b> Maximum £1200 Rolling programme New uplift £20,000 to £90,000 Rolling Programme	<b>8. Sports Development</b> Maximum £1500 Budget £30,000 (no EBA funding)  <b>9. *Sports Capital Grant</b> Maximum grant £5000 To be matched 50% One call each year – can only apply every 2 years Budget £120,000)  <b>10. *Strategic Sports Development Grant</b> Maximum £15,000, Budget £75,000 (Governing Bodies only-Salary) 3 year funding  <b>11 Sports Representative Individual &amp; Team Maximum £250-£500</b> Budget £15,000 Selected by their governing body to participate in a representative team or individual sport at provincial, national, all Ireland or international level (outside of NI)	<b>12. Discretionary Grant</b> Up to £50,000 as funder of last resort Budget TBC TBC re opening  <b>13. Festive Lights</b> Allocation as per settlement Budget £105,000 (3 year funding)  <b>14. Schools access to sports facilities Grant</b> Maximum £5000 Schools providing sports facilities to minority sports that do not have their own provision in areas Budget £10,000.

## Grant allocation -

Community (community, arts, heritage, general) Groups can only apply to one programme per year to Categories 1 and 2. Sports groups can apply to Category 3 and 2, and language groups can apply to Category 5 and Category 1.

Council also seeks for annual calls for strategic partnership projects in line with PCSP Action Plan and Good Relations Action Plan and partners on Regional Minority Languages support activities. Publicity of strategic partner projects to be issued January/February 2020 in line with plans.

## Grants Process

1. Application and criteria set through Committee and Council.
2. Public advertisement for all grants.
3. Applications will be online or if required a hard copy can be requested.
4. There will be points of contact for queries on each grant area.
5. Applications will be submitted on line or returned to one central office which will then oversee the allocation to relevant teams for administration.
6. Eligibility will be confirmed upon receipt of applications, with 2 days' notice for ensuring all documentation is in place, telephone and email notification recorded.
7. Grants that meet eligibility will proceed to assessment to be carried out by officer teams, all declarations of interest are monitored.
8. Grants will be presented to Committee for consideration and approval, all declarations of interest are monitored.
9. Grants will be presented to Council for ratification.
10. Letters of Offer (standard template) will be issued to all groups.
11. Claims will be received as previous and verification undertaken.
12. Report to Council on investment of grant funding and groups supported.
13. Publicity of Council must be received for grant support in line with the LOO.
14. Advance payments will be provided, 50% up to £1500 and 25% up to £10,000.



## Grant Eligibility Conditions

1. Groups applying for a grant must be a not for profit constituted community or voluntary organisation with an annual AGM, individuals can apply to the sports representative grant only.
2. Funding cannot be allocated for a project or venue where an existing SLA exists with Council for a project, building or facility.
3. Groups will only be able to apply for a grant as per the categories, this is to maximise the funding allocation to as many groups as possible.
4. The same project cannot be split across different grant categories.
5. Statutory and 'for profit' organisations, activities and recipients (incl. activities that receive statutory core provision are not eligible for grant).
6. Regional groups/organisations are not eligible to apply.
7. Applications that are not completed accurately and in full will not be considered.
8. Religious or political activity cannot be funded under any grant.
9. All applicants must present a project that will take place within the MUDC area (except Sports Representative Grant as detailed within this section).
10. Applicants must present a project that will be delivered between 1<sup>st</sup> April - 31<sup>st</sup> March
11. Evidence of good governance; including annual AGM, Group bank account, financial management practice, insurances, etc. will be required.
12. Successful applicants will draw down grants retrospectively based on vouched expenditure, with procurement adhered to. Advance payments will be 50% up to £1500 and 25% up to £10,000 with final verification of all expenditure.
13. Group recipients should not have a membership charge for its users accessing its community provision greater than £250.
14. Group recipients should have no element of profit gain to any member or individual of its Committee.

The following items are not eligible for funding:

Hospitality greater than 20% of the grant threshold	Bad debt, loans, bank charges, deficits or arrears in payments of any organisation	Flags or bunting Alcohol	Groups or activities that discriminate against any section of the community
Activities, equipment or events that duplicate what already exist or that are covered by other funding	Salaries are available for strategic sports grants only (up to 50% of grant award)	Retrospective funding applications	Residential courses or training greater than 20% of funding sought
Celebrity appearances	Sports kits	Gifts or donations	Reclaimable VAT or other costs

## **Grant Criteria: Category 1**

### **Strategic Arts & Culture Grant**

To support strategic arts and culture organisations that play a key role across the Mid Ulster District Council area in the development and delivery of arts & culture activity through the delivery of their own programmes utilising their own dedicated arts & culture performance spaces. The service must:

1. Provide the structured delivery of an annual arts and culture programme within the organisations own performance space/theatre.
2. Provide accessible arts and culture development opportunities of a strategic nature that is providing for a large number of people across Mid Ulster.
3. Provide 100% dedicated arts & culture activity & be delivered by a dedicated arts & culture group.
4. Provide at least bi weekly arts and culture activities.

### **Strategic Community Development Grant**

To support strategic community development organisations that provide for the Mid Ulster area. Groups delivering to the same area should submit a partner application to avoid duplication.

1. Level of Community Support Activity
2. Level of benefit – number of beneficiaries
3. Targeting of deprivation and social need
4. Quality and level of provision
5. Level of geographic coverage
6. Value for Money

### **Arts, Culture, Heritage & Community Small Grant**

To support local communities deliver a range of local arts, culture, heritage, community projects for their local area.

1. Arts, Cultural, Heritage, Community activity and participation
2. Contribution to arts, culture, heritage, community development in the area
3. Increase and widen participation, addressing social inclusion and diversity
4. Contribution to volunteering and volunteer development

### **Community Venue Grant**

To support local communities to make available their premises and community centres for the use of the wider community. Venues applying to the grant must be used for a minimum 80% community development activities.

1. Beneficiaries (number of beneficiaries and groups)
2. Level of community usage per week
3. Level of community provision – number of rooms and size etc.
4. Shared space usage
5. Value for Money – contribution of grant to overall costs

The venue must be open greater than 10 hours per week and the grant can be used for community development projects at 20% of the funding allocation.

### **Grant Criteria: Category 2**

#### **Strategic Events Grant**

To support a number of strategic events that are providing for the whole of Mid Ulster District and are of a significant nature to bring people to the area and to promote the area at a regional level.

1. Social, Regeneration and Economic Return
2. Event Development
3. Promotion of Mid Ulster & Council
4. Event Management Experience
5. Level of promotion of good relations and Inclusion
6. Value for Money

Note events with a target audience under 1000 people or events that are not receiving regional tourism attendance and coverage would be a local community festival event.

#### **Community Local Festival Grant**

To support local communities deliver a local festival in their area bringing people from across the area together.

1. Level of Community Benefit and Participation (number of days, activities)
2. Number of beneficiaries (local and neighbouring areas)
3. Promotion of Good Relations and Social Inclusion
4. Festival Development

### **Good Relations Grant**

To support local communities deliver on good relations in line with the Government Together Building United Communities Strategy.

1. Contribution to the Good Relations TBUC themes : Our Shared Community, Safe Community, Cultural Expression through increased use of shared spaces and services
2. Contribution to Core Good Relations, addressing sectarianism, racism and prejudice through provision of increased shared space
3. Level of Community Benefit and Participation in existing shared space through increased activity
4. Targeting of Social Inclusion and deprivation through access to shared space and improved access to activities/events.

### **Grant Criteria: Category 3**

#### **Sports Representative Individual and Team Competitive Grant**

To support Individuals who have been selected by their governing body to participate in a representative team or individual sport at provincial, national, all Ireland or international level, with eligible costs (accommodation, travel, food), to a maximum of a £250 grant may be available. Applicants must be resident within the Mid Ulster District Council area for a period of 6 months prior to the period of the grant application.

To assist recognised Sports NI sports clubs (affiliated to their governing body of sport) who are travelling to compete in a recognised (by Governing body) representative (of District/County) sporting competition. A grant for eligible costs (travel, accommodation, food) to a maximum of £500 may be available. The team must have qualified in a recognised competition by the governing body of this sport, and must be representing the District / County. The event/competition must take place outside of NI.

#### **Sports Small Grant**

To support recognised Sports NI sports clubs (affiliated to their governing body of sport) to develop and promote their sports and recreation provision within their club and to seek to increase participation through a range of activity including; Women & Girls, People with Disabilities and Areas of Social Need, and lifelong participation in

sport, health & wellbeing and the non-competitive side of sport that characterises the added value of what many clubs involve themselves in (e.g. Club Health Plans)

1. Level of sports activity and beneficiaries
2. Level of benefit targeting of Women & Girls, People with Disabilities & Areas of Social Need, older people back to fitness and others not in sport and fitness.
3. Contributes to promoting fitness and wellbeing
4. Other general activity provided to the community to engage and increase participation

### **Sports Capital Grant**

To support local sports clubs/groups develop their sporting facilities and provision through capital and equipment funding support. Consideration to be given to clubs that use their facilities to promote lifelong participation in sport, health & wellbeing and the non-competitive side of sport that characterises the added value of what many clubs involve themselves in (e.g. Club Health Plans)

Eligibility:

1. The fund is for not for profit constituted sports groups with the primary objective of providing sports for the Mid Ulster District.
2. All statutory consents and public procurement is in place.
3. Actual project cost quotations are provided with the application.
4. A maximum contribution of £5,000 is available per project, with a minimum match contribution of 50% (e.g. if seeking £5000 it must be a minimum £10,000 project).
5. For sports capital items or a one off piece of equipment of a value greater than £1000.
6. Groups can only apply to this grant once every 2 years.

The Sports Capital Grant is to provide a significant benefit to the local community: Sports Development– supporting the development and enhancement of sports and sports groups across Mid Ulster.

Sports Wellbeing /Provision– increasing the number of beneficiaries of sport, and contributing to the physical fitness and wellbeing of people across the District.

Social Need/Social Inclusion – targeting those most vulnerable and people not currently active in sports to support lifelong participation in sport.

Sustainability – supporting the long term sustainability of sporting facilities & groups.

Council Corporate Plan – contributing to the Council's Corporate Objectives.

### **Strategic Sports Development Grant**

To support Governing Bodies that play a key strategic role across the MUDC area in developing their affiliated Clubs. It aims to provide Grant Aid to those Governing Bodies that provide direct support to Clubs across the area in increasing participation rates and improving playing standards through the employment of a Sports Coach.

The service must:

1. Provide the structured delivery of an annual sports development programme of a main sport.
2. Be delivered through a recognised NI Sports organisation; through or in partnership with a sporting governing body; with no duplication of coverage within the same area or targeting of the same groups.
3. Provide accessible sports development opportunities of a strategic nature that is providing for a large number of people across Mid Ulster.
4. Provide the programme through a partnership approach with local clubs and groups.
5. Provide a minimum of 50% dedicated sports officer to the area of coverage in Mid Ulster. Funding for salary development only.
6. Provide match funding of a minimum 50% to the sports development programme targeted within the Mid Ulster District.
7. Provide for an active sport within Mid Ulster.
8. Liaise with Mid Ulster District Council Leisure Development Unit.

### **Grant Criteria: Category 4**

#### **Capital Discretionary Grant**

To recognise that there are times when a modest amount of capital investment in our community can create the potential for a much larger project to happen. In such circumstances Council could potentially be a discretionary funder of last resort to allow projects to happen and maximise investment to our areas and communities. Any contribution would be a small percentage towards a much larger project.

Criteria:

Capital funding – Council will consider providing financial support for capital projects, which are defined as projects which will provide benefit to the community for a period in excess of five years, examples of which may include a new building or refurbishment/renovation of an existing building. It will not provide support for acquisition of land, buildings or other assets such as equipment other than fixed plant for example permanently installed elevators/lifts.

a. The project funded must be in community ownership (satisfactory evidence of legal title or an appropriate long term lease will be required).

b. Not for Profit - Funding will only be considered for not for profit constituted community and voluntary groups which are involved in progressing a major community capital project which will provide significant benefit to the community within the Mid Ulster District Council area -Groups/organisations must be able to demonstrate that the majority of project beneficiaries (>80%) live within the Mid Ulster District Council area.

c. Community Benefit – A Project Plan must be in place to show community need and benefit and to avoid any potential issues of duplication.

d. Funder of Last Resort - The majority of funding at least 70% should be in place and that all funding avenues have been exhausted. Evidence of this will be required.

e. Statutory Requirements - The project must be at a state of readiness 6 months after letter of offer; with planning permission, land acquisition or lease agreement (if required), and other statutory permissions in place along with accurate costings.

f. Mid Ulster District Council Corporate Aims – The project must clearly demonstrate how it is achieving on Council corporate aims and objectives.

g. The project is a minimum value of £300,000, with Council funding to a maximum contribution of £50,000.

h. The Project must complete within 18 months of letter of offer; phased delivery and invoicing of expenditure can be accommodated.

A Group can only submit one call per project for this Capital Discretionary funding Support and a submission will only be considered by a Group once every 3 years. Groups/Organisations would be required to formally present to a Special Development Committee of Council.

## **Festive Lights Fund (award as per village settlement population – reference Area Plan Settlement report)**

Direct provision of festive lighting will be provided in the main towns of Dungannon, Cookstown, Magherafelt, Coalisland and Maghera.

A grant programme (revenue and capital funding) will be delivered across the remaining settlements under the following criteria -

- I. The grant will be revenue (small items of capital applicable) and will support the supply, installations, maintenance, running cost of providing festive lights and any associated switch-on/launch event. The lights will be in a predominant village location visible to the wider community.
- II. The village settlements and populations will be as per the Mid Ulster Development Plan 2020 - 2030. The grant allocation will be based on village settlement size and range from £1,250 - £3,000:
  - Up to £3,000 settlements greater than 1000
  - Up to £2,000 settlements greater than 500
  - Up to £1,500 all other listed village settlements
  - Up to £1,250 all other listed smaller settlements
- III. Technical support will be available to groups and communities from Council Technical Unit.
- IV. The grant can only be issued to one group per area and the main overall development/regeneration/Chamber group will be given priority.
- V. All grant aid will be paid retrospectively to those successful applicants who submit appropriate paid invoices to Council as vouched expenditure.
- VI. Provision, installation and insurance, liability of lighting and any activity will be the responsibility of the Group applying.
- ix. Small settlements listed in the Area Plan that are not classified as villages will be considered for inclusion within the fund; if they have previously provided festive lights in their area.
- x. Letters will be issued to the main Development Group within the designated settlement with an offer of funding.



## **Schools' Sports Facilities Access Grants**

To bridge the gap until the district Sports Facilities Strategy is available and delivered. It is specifically targeted at clubs which use, or plan to use, schools' sports facilities or at schools which aim to offer access to their sports facilities outside curriculum times.

To Increase access to underutilised school sports synthetic pitch facilities

To contribute to the cost of opening up and maintaining schools' sports facilities, thereby encouraging ongoing usage

To Increase local people's access to training and competitive play opportunities

To enhance access to team sports activities which are under-resourced or underrepresented

The maximum amount available under each strand will be £5,000 per club or school, dependent on level of usage. Up to £4,500 maximum grant for use of school sports facilities which have not previously been available for community use, up to an additional £500 grant on a pro rata basis.

### **Eligibility**

Be a club using, or planning to use, school owned, synthetic pitch, sports facilities; or be a school which plans to provide access to such sports facilities by external clubs (see note below)

Be a constituted and not for profit sports club (although see Note b, below) or school

Be located in the Mid Ulster District Council area

For sports clubs: be participating in a sport recognised by Sport NI. A minimum of 80% of members must be resident in the MUDC area

Not have received any capital funding from Council in the 2018/19 year

Be able to demonstrate difficulty in accessing other suitable sports facilities

Not have benefited in the 2018/19 year from Council's: Sports Strategic Development Grant or Sports Capital Grant

Be able to demonstrate difficulty in accessing other suitable sports facilities

Incur actual documented costs in utilising/providing a schools' sports facility, or, able to provide documentary evidence of voluntary work or maintenance costs involved in maintaining the facility.

### **Appeals Process**

An appeals process will be available for unsuccessful applicants. There will be no right of appeal in relation to the level of funding granted however appeals can be made on the basis of:

- That the stated process has not been followed.
- That the application has been rejected on the basis of eligibility criteria which had been applied incorrectly.
- That the scoring against the criteria for the programme has not been undertaken correctly.

Appeals can be undertaken in two stages if required:

**Stage 1**—an appeal must be lodged in writing within 10 working days of the date of receipt of a rejection letter. In the first instance the appeal should be submitted to the Grants Unit who will take responsibility for allocating this to the relevant senior officer. In all cases the appeal will be reviewed by the senior officer and a determination reached within one week of receipt of the appeal. If the appeal is upheld the project will be reassessed and an appropriate letter of offer issued. If the appeal is not successful the applicant will be informed and given the right to take the appeal to Stage 2 if required.

**Stage 2** – if the applicant is still not satisfied he or she can request a review by the Chief Executive who will review the process and application and present their recommendation.

### **Grant Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation seek to ensure that funding delivers the required outcomes, that it is used as agreed and to provide a feedback mechanism to improve decision making.

Monitoring should seek to ensure that;  
Value for money is achieved.

The predicted outcomes are delivered.

Council has received adequate communication/promotion

Procurement has been met

Where instances arise where outcomes are not being met, the officer will support the Group to address any issues.

Monitoring will include completion of an evaluation and monitoring form. A visit by an officer will be undertaken to 10% of projects that receive funding over £1500 threshold. This will complement the verification visit and will include the same random selection of groups.

Grants applicable – Strategic grants: culture and arts and sports, Strategic Community Development, Strategic Events, and Venues.

10% of small grants will have a project evaluation upon random sample. This will be undertaken by an officer of the Community Development Team, led by the Community Services Manager.

Capital projects; up to £5000 will have to issue evidence (e.g. photographs) of the capital and equipment investment alongside their expenditure return. A 20% monitoring visit will be undertaken on site to view expenditure items.

Discretionary Capital Grants will all be vouched on site for delivery of the capital development.

## **Grant Verification**

Reference DFP Guidance on Grants and Reducing Bureaucracy in funding the community and voluntary sector - The Code applies to revenue grant funding only.

Micro Grants will be paid when valid receipts are received & checked. A 50% advance will be issued to groups with final verification of all invoices before the balance of the grant is paid.

Small grants £1500 - £10,000 financial verification will take place based on valid receipts being checked against agreed project expenditure. A 25% advance will be issued to groups with final verification of all invoices before the remainder of the grant is paid.

Verification will include completion of a claim form, signed by relevant people within the organisation, along with valid receipts and invoices.



<b>Report on</b>	Sperrins Future Search Project Update
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Michael Browne
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Michael Browne

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on current progress of the Future Search initiative and seek approval for items outlined within the report.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>

2.1	Members will recall approving at this committee a proposal to support the delivery of a Future Search conference for the Sperrins in partnership with Mid Ulster District Council, Fermanagh & Omagh District Council and Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council.												
2.2	The conference entitled 'The Sperrins – Reaching New Heights, Realising Our Potential' was held in the Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown on 27 <sup>th</sup> – 29 <sup>th</sup> September 2017. The event brought together a group key stakeholders to draft and agree an action plan for the future development of the Sperrins and in particular the designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).												
2.3	<p>It was agreed to build on the enthusiasm that was so evident at the conference and 5 thematic stakeholders groups emerged from the conference and convened to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Confirm that the draft action plans for each thematic area accurately reflected the discussions held at the conference</li> <li>- Clarify the actions suggested in the action plan to ensure they are stated in a way that can be easily understood</li> <li>- Prioritise actions</li> <li>- Confirm what attendees are ready and willing to do to help deliver the actions</li> <li>- Consider if any additional participants should be part of that thematic group.</li> </ul>												
2.4	<p>Each council was delegated co-ordinate the thematic group meeting as outlined in the table below.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Thematic Group</th><th>Lead Council</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Environment &amp; Heritage</td><td>Mid Ulster</td></tr> <tr> <td>Infrastructure</td><td>Fermanagh &amp; Omagh</td></tr> <tr> <td>Brand &amp; Tourism</td><td>Causeway Coast &amp; Glens</td></tr> <tr> <td>Community</td><td>Derry &amp; Strabane</td></tr> <tr> <td>Management Structures</td><td>Mid Ulster</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Thematic Group	Lead Council	Environment & Heritage	Mid Ulster	Infrastructure	Fermanagh & Omagh	Brand & Tourism	Causeway Coast & Glens	Community	Derry & Strabane	Management Structures	Mid Ulster
Thematic Group	Lead Council												
Environment & Heritage	Mid Ulster												
Infrastructure	Fermanagh & Omagh												
Brand & Tourism	Causeway Coast & Glens												
Community	Derry & Strabane												
Management Structures	Mid Ulster												
2.5	The five thematic working groups agreed their short and long term action plans and the final plan has since been produced. It had been hoped to officially launch the report late last year but it was paused to allow for the recruitment process of officers to conclude and further delayed due to the current Covid-19 crisis. Consideration is being given towards an official launch of the document in the early New Year 2021. Key Stakeholders will be communicated with and kept up to date with information about the official launch event date and reengagement of the thematic groups.												
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>												
3.1	A Sperrins Future Search Project Officer and part time Administrative Support have been appointed and took up their respective roles on 12 <sup>th</sup> October 2020, initially for a period of one year.												

3.2	The Project Officer will aim to preserve, enhance and manage the natural, built and cultural heritage of the Sperrins area through the identified Future Search Action Plans which have been established through four thematic groups. These action plans will assist with the delivery of the project which have been identified within the Sperrins Future Search report. A key part of the Project is to assist with the implementation and delivery of these plans on behalf of the five thematic groups.
3.3	Coronavirus outbreak has created much uncertainty in many aspects of everyday life, constant changes and subsequent restrictions have inadvertently created opportunities to encourage people to engage in local outdoor offering. There has never been a greater opportunity to motivate people to get out and explore their surroundings and the natural, cultural and built heritage that is on their doorstep, all of which is on offer in the Sperrins AONB.
3.4	Members will be aware that funding has only been committed from the partner Councils for one year and while the overall aim of the project will be to roll out the action plan developed due to the short time frame for this stage and the fact that there is a strong desire to capitalise on the wider work done to date that the initial focus will be on reconvening the Brand and Tourism Working Group in the first instance with the initiation of the remaining working groups following at a later stage throughout the tenure of the project.
3.5	There is a need to look more closely at gateway communities that can be further strengthened as destination hubs. Outdoor adventures to challenge and refresh and build on the unique inter-relationship between the area's cultural heritage, the landscape and the activities that take place within this setting, while elevating the linkages between the past and the present and offer an insight into the unique cultural heritage in inspirational settings.
3.6	The project thus far has been referred to as Sperrins Future Search Project, which was the name of the process used to create the report and the associated actions plans. It is suggested that the project going forward will be named Sperrins Partnership Project.
3.7	Current collaborative cross Council partner projects include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Sperrins Sculptural Trail</li> <li>• The International Appalachian Trail</li> </ul>
3.8	<p><b>The Sperrins Sculptural Trail</b></p> <p>The Sperrins Sculptural Trail tourism partnership initiative is a joint partnership project being developed by Derry City and Strabane District Council, Mid Ulster District Council and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council.</p> <p>The Sperrins Sculptural project proposes the installation of three iconic artworks, which will be located at the preselected locations which are the Sperrins Heritage Site, Cranagh, Davagh Forrest, and Mullaghcarn Peak will form an iconic sculpture</p>

	<p>trail and flagship visitor offering for the region while celebrating the unique cultural heritage of the Sperrins.</p> <p>The aim of this scheme is to support investment in natural and built heritage projects that can act as a key driver for encouraging rural tourism and particularly out of state visitors. The Sperrins Sculpture Trail project will provide a focus for and link the many stunning walking, driving and cycling routes that currently exist and showcase the Sperrins AONB. This iconic and unique flagship tourism project will create capital infrastructure, enable increased visitor numbers to the area, encourage investment within our tourism sector and ultimately deliver new jobs while sustaining others. It is envisaged that the Sperrins Sculptural Trail will provide the focus for the Sperrins to establish itself as a must visit destination among local, national and international audiences.</p>
3.9	<p><b>International Appalachian Trail</b></p> <p>The Ulster ~Ireland Chapter of the International Appalachian Trail was established in 2011. The trail is in the province of Ulster and runs from west Donegal in the Republic of Ireland to Larne, Co. Antrim. The route starts at the spectacular Slieve League Mountain and passes through the Blue Stack Mountains in Co Donegal then crosses into Northern Ireland. Here it picks up the Ulster Way where it passes the Giant's Causeway, the stunning northern coastline before traversing the Glens of Antrim.</p> <p>Derry City &amp; Strabane District Council has procured the marketing contract for the entire route and the successful company – Outdoor Recreation NI - has been appointed to deliver.</p>
3.10	<p><b>Workplan and Timescales</b></p> <p>The Project Management Board Meeting will be reconvened early 2021 and scheduled quarterly thereafter. A Director Management Meeting will be convened on a quarterly basis, with the Operational Management Meeting taking place on a twice monthly basis at present. It is envisaged to host an event to officially launch the Sperrins Future Search Report in February 2021 and this event will combine promotion of the International Appalachian Trail and Sperrins Sculpture Trail collaborative projects. A basic outline of the communication plan can be found at ANNEX 1.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<p><b><u>Financial &amp; Human Resources Implications</u></b></p> <p>Financial:</p> <p>Each council has previously committed £23,210 for this project which includes salary and programming costs. It is expected that there will be a further ask to Councils to extend the project to maintain momentum and build on early success.</p>



<b>4.2</b>	<b><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></b>  N/A
<b>4.3</b>	<b><u>Risk Management Implications</u></b>  N/A.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	That Council support the Launch Event planned to take place in early New Year 2021.
5.2	That Council continues to support the delivery of the Sperrins Future Search initiative and collaborative projects.
5.3	That Council support the suggested project name going forward, that being, Sperrins Partnership Project.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	<b>ANNEX 1</b> – Sperrins Project Communication Plan



## Sperrins Project Communication Plan

## ANNEX 1

Communication Type	Objective of Communication	Medium	Frequency	Audience	Owner	Deliverable
Management Board Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce the new team and the update on the project.</li> <li>Review project objectives and Management approach.</li> </ul>	Video Conference call	Quarterly (first meeting to be arranged prior to possible Launch Event Jan/Feb 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Team</li> <li><i>Stakeholders*</i></li> <li>Elected Members</li> </ul>	Project Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agenda</li> <li>Meeting Minutes</li> <li>Actions</li> </ul>
Director Management Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review status of the project</li> </ul>	Video Conference call	Quarterly First meeting 10 <sup>th</sup> December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Directors</li> </ul>	Project Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agenda</li> <li>Meeting Minutes</li> <li>Actions</li> </ul>
Operational Management Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss operational matters</li> <li>Create suggestions to drive project forward</li> <li>Set objectives and timescales</li> </ul>	Video Conference call	Twice monthly First meeting 3 <sup>rd</sup> November 2020 (meeting frequency will be kept under review)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council Partner Leads</li> </ul>	Project Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agenda</li> <li>Meeting Minutes</li> <li>Actions</li> </ul>
Project Status Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report on the status of the project to Council</li> </ul>	Presentation to council(s) via video call	Report 1 to January 2021 Council Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elected Members</li> <li>Project Team</li> <li><i>Stakeholders*</i></li> </ul>	Project Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report</li> <li>Meeting Minutes</li> <li>Actions</li> </ul>
Environment and Heritage WG (MUDC Lead)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver the short term and long term action plan</li> <li>Articulate the needs of Stakeholders</li> </ul>	Video Conference	To be agreed at a later date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elected Members</li> <li><i>Stakeholders*</i></li> <li>Project Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Officer</li> <li>Working Group Chair?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report</li> <li>Meeting Minutes</li> <li>Actions</li> </ul>
Infrastructure WG (FODC Lead)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver the short term and long term action plan</li> </ul>	Video Conference call	To be agreed at a later date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elected Members</li> <li><i>Stakeholders*</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Officer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report</li> <li>Meeting Minutes</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Articulate the needs of Stakeholders</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working Group Chair?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actions</li> </ul>
Branding and Tourism WG (CCGBC Lead)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver the short term and long term action plan</li> <li>Articulate the needs of Stakeholders</li> </ul>	Video Conference call	Early New Year 2021?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elected Members</li> <li><i>Stakeholders*</i></li> <li>Project Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Officer</li> <li>Working Group Chair?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report</li> <li>Meeting Minutes</li> <li>Actions</li> </ul>
Community WG (DCSDC Lead)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver the short term and long term action plan</li> <li>Articulate the needs of Stakeholders</li> </ul>	Video Conference call	To be agreed at a later date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elected Members</li> <li><i>Stakeholders*</i></li> <li>Project Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Officer</li> <li>Working Group Chair?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report</li> <li>Meeting Minutes</li> <li>Actions</li> </ul>
<b>Key Events</b>						
Project Launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Officially launch the Sperrins Future Search report and action plans</li> <li>Hybrid event to also launch collaborative projects (IAT and Sculpture Trail)</li> </ul>	Possibility of a socially distanced event in Ally Theatre. (subject to change in regulations)	Jan/Feb 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elected Members</li> <li><i>Stakeholders*</i></li> <li>Project Team</li> </ul>	Project Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Event Programme</li> <li>Press Release</li> <li>Social Media</li> <li>Other marketing activity</li> </ul>
50 year AONB Celebration Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designated in 2008 under the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (NI) Order 1985</li> <li>Celebrate this significant milestone</li> </ul>	TBC	2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elected Members</li> <li><i>Stakeholders*</i></li> <li>Project Team</li> <li>Local Communities</li> </ul>	Project Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Event Programme</li> <li>Press Release</li> <li>Social Media</li> <li>Other marketing activity</li> </ul>

*\*Stakeholders to be reviewed and confirmed.*

*\*The Sperrins Project Communication Management Plan will be reviewed periodically.*

**Minutes of Meeting of the Development Committee of Mid Ulster District Council  
held on Thursday 29 October 2020 in the Council Offices, Circular Road,  
Dungannon and by Virtual Means**

**Members Present**

Councillor Black

Councillors Ashton\*, Burton\*, Corry\*, Elattar\*, Kerr\*,  
Hughes\*, Kearney\*, McNamee\* Milne\* Molloy, Monteith\*

**Officers in  
Attendance**

Mr Adrian McCreesh, Director of Business & Communities\*\*  
Ms Campbell, Director of Leisure & Outdoor Recreation  
Ms Linney, Head of Community Development\*\*  
Mr McKeown, ICT Support  
Ms Grogan, Democratic Services Officer

**Others in  
Attendance**

Councillor Mallaghan  
Councillor S McAleer\*\*\*  
Councillor S McGuigan\*\*\*

**Deputations**

Causeway and Mid-Ulster Women's Aid\*\*\*  
Mutual Bank Campaign\*\*\*  
All Ireland Health Campaign\*\*\*  
East Timorese Community Group

\* Denotes Members present in remote attendance

\*\* Denotes Officers present by remote means

\*\*\* Denotes Others present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm.

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor McNamee (attended virtually), the Deputy Chair, Councillor Black took the Chair.

*The Chair, Councillor Black welcomed everyone to the meeting and those watching the meeting through the Live Broadcast. Councillor Black in introducing the meeting detailed the operational arrangements for transacting the business of the committee in the chamber and by virtual means, by referring to Annex A to this minute.*

**D168/20      Apologies**

None.

**D169/20      Declarations of Interest**

The Chair Councillor Black reminded Members of their responsibility with regard to declaration of interest.

## **D170/20      Chair's Business**

The Chair advised that questions would be taken after each completed presentation.

## **D171/20      Causeway and Mid-Ulster Women's Aid**

The Chair welcomed to the committee Ms Sharon Burnett and Ms Maggie Bryson from Causeway & Mid Ulster Women's Aid and invited them to make their presentation.

Ms Burnett advised members that in 2015-16 7.4% of women stayed within their refuge for over 4 months and this has now risen to 24.9% in 2019-20. The increased duration of stay equals reduced ability to settle women and children in the community and to move new women and children in. In 2019-20 26.5% of all women refused access to refuge in Northern Ireland because the refuge was full relate specifically to Cookstown refuge. This has risen from 16.1% in 2015-16.

She updated the committee on the progress to date: Lease for 99 years from Mid Ulster District Council; Meeting with Minister for Communities to advocate for support based on Mid Ulster need; Investigation into Housing Association partnership. (Appendix 1).

The Chair thanked Ms Burnett for her impressive presentation and said that he was in no doubt that the corona virus pandemic had made this more challenging and aspirates the challenges which is faced unfortunately by the victims of domestic violence.

The Chair thanked Ms Burnett for her presentation and said that he had a few questions to ask.

The Chair noted comments regarding numbers rising from 7% in Women's Aid care over a 4 month period to 25% and asked if there was any particular reason for this significant increase and asked if she knew why there was a driving force behind this.

He also raised issues around Covid-19 and enquired what impact or if any were on the way services were being delivered and the impact on the people which were presenting to Women's Aid seeking help.

Ms Burnett in referring to the increase in time that women and children stay in refuge, stated that this was something that was happening all over Northern Ireland in the last number of years in every refuge, but the biggest issue was Mid Ulster as it had the most significant rise in the length of stay. She said that the main issue was the availability of accommodation as housing executive houses, housing association and private rental which were the hardest to acquire.

She stated that the impact of Covid-19 resulted in a decrease of referrals during lockdown but there was a significant spike 2 weeks before lockdown as every statutory agency and community association were making sure referrals were made as they were concerned about families they were in contact with and what may happen. She said that for 2 months Women's Aid was very quiet because women were feeling very isolated being at home with a perpetrator as these people had total control over their partners making sure any opportunities for the victim to get out and seek help was

gone. When the restrictions were lifted this resulted in a significant increase of women contacting the organisation seeking help.

Ms Burnett advised that women which were being supported were always looked after and supported through phone calls, additional home safety equipment and other additional responsibilities. The impact on victims during lockdown was very hard due to the fact they could not contact support workers or Women's Aid with many having to call the crisis incidents through the PSNI which was a very different experience for many victims. She stated that Women's Aid did not cold call as the group needed to be sure that women were safe to pick up the phone, but discovered more ingenious ways of making contact with vulnerable women in order to protect them.

The Chair thanked Ms Burnett for her impressive presentation and asked for any members comments.

Councillor Elattar thanked Ms Burnett for her very informative presentation. She enquired where the high number of women which were being turned away go to and asked if they were going into other accommodation, floating support or what was the situation. She also wished the organisation well in their new project and asked if the 24 new houses were for permanent accommodation for women or were they temporary like a stepping stone onto something else for people.

Ms Burnett advised that if a woman contacts Women's Aid and needs refuge and no space available, they are not turned away but the group would work with that person to access available accommodation throughout the region quickly as they had a system to allow this with the hope that the options available would be suitable for her. If the victim has been moved away from her local area and a space becomes available nearer her home, then she can be relocated back to her local area. If there is no available refuge accommodation, Women's Aid will liaise with the NIHE to try and source emergency accommodation which is always a difficult situation as housing is scarce, but had to say that the Housing Executive has been as great asset to work with over her last 20 years regarding homelessness and domestic violence. She advised that it was particularly hard for the Housing Executive to provide local housing as very little is available through the pandemic and it may be the situation of a person having to travel a lot of miles to B&B accommodation to seek safety.

Ms Burnett advised that the most difficult situation was when a mother came in with her children and may not be fortunate in securing local accommodation and as she does not want to move her children from their school and from their friends, she may decide to suffer the consequences and return back to the perpetrator due to the needs of her children.

She said that the new accommodation was meant to be a move on accommodation so there was a flow through, but the reality was that it takes a lot longer to get social housing and longer again for private rental due to the high cost associated with it.

Councillor Burton advised that as a PCSP member she received statistics for the Mid Ulster area on a regular basis and confirmed that the PCSP members were keeping a very close eye and for her especially as a woman and as a mother. She enquired if there was support there for mothers who find themselves in a volatile situation as she

had received statistics on women who had been murdered during the Covid pandemic which was a really scary position to be in for a lot of women and children especially being brought up in that situation. In the past the PSNI and Crime Prevention Officers provided safe rooms within the victim's homes and the PCSP wanted people to know that their doors were always open and to work together more than the current situation allows and wished Ms Burnett well in their new project.

Ms Burnett said that Women's Aid works closely with Crime Prevention Officers and is something the organisation always utilises and uses for referrals. She said that group have an inability to receive funds they always try and get a stock of home safety equipment which was more domestic violence specific i.e. door stops which sets off an alarm if the door is being kicked in, item hanging on door handle if falls to floor will set off an alarm, but agreed that they were fortunate to have a good working relationship with Crime Prevention Officers to make sure victims get what they need to feel secure and protected. She said that sometimes Crime Prevention Officers come into contact with some victims which haven't worked with Women's Aid before and may not want to get involved with the group, but work can be done through these Officers to liaise with the group so the appropriate support and measures are provided to the victim.

In referring to safety rooms, she said that this was known as the Sanctuary Scheme and this can still be something that can be done, but is not done on a very regular basis as it can be extremely high risk, but does happen on rare occasions. She said that they were currently working with the Department for Communities in supporting people on a whole review to see how they could spread out the Sanctuary Scheme as a means of making sure that victims of domestic violence can remain in her own home rather than leaving, although this was in the initial stages the Department is really committed, but there are issues which need to be addressed like accommodation being allocated outside Housing Executive remit etc. but anticipated that this would be something that would become available in the future.

Councillor Monteith thanked Ms Burnett for her presentation and welcome Ms Bryson to the meeting and to pay tribute to the hard work which was carried out by the group in the past. He said that the group's work was second to none and a complete asset to our community and had a strong working relationship with the Dungannon area. He also paid tribute to the group in their working during the Covid response in the area which was to their own personal cost and their working was a credit to the organisation and area.

He said that he had been involved in community work in Dungannon and working with young teenage girls through Youth Services with youth workers delivering projects like health relationships and help in alerting them to the early signs of cohesive relationships. He said that he was aware that this was not a uniform measure within schools and youth clubs in delivering such programmes and would encourage this Council to push this through so this can become mainstream and part of the school curriculum as this was education for life. He said that he would be interested to hear the thoughts of Ms Burnett and Ms Bryson as this was vital as people were in immediate crisis now but there was a need to work with young girls so they were aware of the early signs of such abuse.



Ms Burnett thanked Councillor Monteith for this kind words and said that she was very lucky to inherit such a good team but couldn't take the credit for Mid Ulster as this was down to the previous CEO and their staff who carried out this invaluable work. She said that Women's Aid had been delivering the Healthy Relationship Programme in schools with social guardian training being provided by teachers in Primary Schools which allowed children to identify emotions; unhappy, sad, afraid, anxiety and who they could talk to etc. and this had been rolled out across by the Department of Education and each primary school across Northern Ireland in the last 5 to 6 years with school staff being trained on the rolling out of the programme. She said that she would like to see this programme being rolled out in secondary schools on Healthy Relationships, in terms of what is a healthy relationship and where a person can go to for help but funding was an issue and not consistent as the funding may only allow for 6 months and just some particular schools within Mid Ulster and Causeway areas. She said that this would be a fantastic opportunity to educate secondary school pupils as it was an invaluable measure preparing them for future.

The Chair advised that Councillor Monteith had raised some very good points around the educational aspects of it and would agree that it was a very important piece of work going forward and enquired if Councillor Monteith wished to make this a proposal that Council Officers sit down and reach out to Women's Aid to see if there is anything to be done is trying to move the Healthy Relationship Programme forward.

Councillor Monteith said that he would be happy to make this a proposal as he agreed with it wholeheartedly.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith  
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that officers liaise with Women's Aid to see if anything can be achieved in trying to progress the Healthy Relationship programme in schools.

Ms Bryson advised that before Ms Burnett took on her role as Chief Executive, the Healthy Relationship programme was delivered the last 5 years to 16 secondary schools in Mid Ulster area and before that it was delivered in the Cookstown area through the support of the PCSP and their support continues which Ms Burnett and Councillor Monteith may not be aware of this. She said that year on year the Council had provided funding to carry out the programme but unfortunately due to the pandemic it wasn't delivered this year even though funding was there and wanted to thank the Council for their continued support along with the land for the proposed new accommodation.

Councillor Monteith stated that it was important that the Healthy Relationship programme becomes a mainstream part of the educational curriculum as it was equally important as Maths and English in a child's education and should not be the case where there was funding there or not as these were skills for life and that the Education authority should be looking at making this part of the curriculum.

Councillor Molloy said that he was interested to hear comments around the issue of women being able to stay in their own home after an incident instead of relocating to another house due to domestic abuse and felt that this was something the Council could lobby the DoJ to make moves on this so it goes to legislation.

Ms Burnett advised that while there was a need for refuge accommodation, it is essentially the victim who leaves the house after a serious domestic violence incident and this is not something that Women's Aid wishes to see as they should be the ones which remain in their own home or return safely as soon as possible but this is the way the system is set up. She said if a PSNI Officer comes across a person which is at serious risk then it is up to that officer to make sure that woman is moved into refuge, but Women's Aid preferred option was to return the victim to her own home if was safe but this was not always the case. She said that Women's Aid would be fully supportive of returning women to their homes if this could be done safely and have the perpetrator removed but this is not always the case just because a woman reports domestic violence and ends the relationship, prolonged abuse can still occur, but it is still a string in the bow in response to the needs of victims and making sure that children are safe and settled within their own surroundings and would be more than willing to work with the Council to see if this could be investigated as this would be the preferred option.

The Chair enquired if there was anything that he wished for the Council to do now or could it form part of the conversation between Women's Aid and Officers and an action to follow on the back of that.

Councillor Molloy agreed that this could be something that could be brought forward as part of the discussion and some work done in forming some sort of a motion to be forwarded to the DoJ.

Councillor Black advised that it was a very useful discussion and thanked everyone for their input tonight. He said that it was encouraging to hear that the Council had supported the organisation and hoped that this continued going forward.

*The representatives of Women's Aid left the meeting at 7.40 pm.*

## **D172/20      Mutual Bank Campaign**

The Chair welcomed to the committee Dr Bridget Meehan from Mutual Bank Campaign and invited her to make her presentation.

Dr Meehan advised that a Mutual Regional Bank was:

- An alternative approach to banking as people know it
- Moves away from the privatised system that exists now
- Moves towards a democratised system that gives each of us a say in how our money can be used for our benefit and the benefit of our region

She said that the Campaign have: An Advisory Committee to take the bank through the licensing and development stages; Registered the Northern Mutual with the FCA;

Anticipated to have a business case completed by the end of the year – to present in January. (Appendix 2).

The Chair thanked Dr Meehan for her presentation and said that he had a few questions relating to the overhead slides.

He said that on the slide it showed that how the Mutual Bank would work in practice, on the first slide it showed how a conventional bank worked with a lot of investment going on outside the region, like property and shares which comes back to the customer who deposited money into their accounts and asked if this was part of the model in the Mutual Bank Campaign. He asked if this model allowed for a certain amount of interest to be earned for those who deposited their money within the Mutual Bank.

He also referred to businesses, micro-businesses and social enterprises within the area and asked if this was solely who the Mutual Bank would support or was it open to other organisations within the organisation or other types of business as well.

Dr Meehan stated that when High Street Bank invests and tries to make money and a return, this is not for the account holder but for shareholders as the banks were profit driven and profits not being shared amongst loyal customers but to shareholders and this was the core of what banks must do and answers to its shareholders. She said that the Mutual Bank model changes that because there are no shareholders anyone who wishes to open an account with their bank will become a member and can buy a share for £15 and if someone wishes to buy 100 shares then a return would be provided when it was worked out. She said although Mutual Bank was not profit driven it would still like to make money and would be recycled back into the region and would be shared with the members and would be making enough profit to pay the bills and keep the whole enterprise afloat. She advised that this was the motivation for the Mutual Bank which was completely different to the High Street banks motivation.

In referring to the Chair's query regarding businesses, micro-businesses and social enterprises, Dr Meehan advised that it was going to be like any bank at the minute and if any business wished to do business with it like lending, overdraft and get a current account and this can be achieved if they reside or belong to the region in some way. She said that there was a market for this type of banking as conventional banks were only interested in big companies and not interested in sole traders or small businesses or any other kind of small enterprise which are not being supported by the banking sector. She advised that the Mutual Bank was for everyone who wanted to bank with the group.

Councillor Kearney advised that the Mutual Bank Campaign was very similar to the workings of the Credit Union and was good to see this kind of bank opening and maybe going forwards may look into Post Office opportunities. He asked how the bank would be controlled, in terms of Directors and how accessible would it be to the people in need or haven't got broadband and not access to banks.

Dr Meehan stated that the board was going to be like a 2 tier system as people need to understand banking and have expertise, but the board would be elected by the members and can be volunteers similar to the Credit Union to have that scrutiny and

accountability. She said that the people with the banking experience were there to provide information to board members who were elected as those would be the people who make the decisions as this model had a lot of ethos of the Credit Unions, but it is a bank. She said that people would be getting everything that you would get from a bank but with a Credit Union ethos.

In referring to Councillor Kearney query regarding broadband issues and little access to banks, Dr Meehan agreed that some people do have little access to broadband and can see where there are more branches of banks closing and the closure of ATMs and it is hoped that the Mutual Bank would address these issues. She said that all these major banking authorities were profit driven and if they think they are going to lose money and make savings by closing branches then this is what they will do regardless of their customers' needs. She said that the group's business case model allowed for 17 branches and automated facilities that allows a person to do all their banking if they don't have broadband or online if they cannot speak to anyone and this was done through a virtual screen where you can contact a member of staff at another branch with any concerns or information which may be required.

She stated that technology seems to be the way forward and this saves time queuing in branches but if something goes wrong with the online facility then this would not be good enough and there was a need to speak to someone that can be trusted. High Street banks make decisions centrally and when a person joins the Mutual Bank it would be done locally and not a centralised services with people being made feel very welcome and felt that this was the system which was missing for a long time.

The Chair thanked Dr Meehan for her great presentation and said that it was very thought provoking and wished her well in the future.

*Dr Meehan left the meeting at 8.06 pm.*

## **D173/20      All Ireland Health Campaign**

The Chair welcomed to the committee Mr Conor Redding from All Ireland Health Campaign and invited him to make his presentation.

Mr Redding referred to the crisis of Covid and stated that the early stages of the pandemic saw hospitals across the island on verge of being overwhelmed and this was not just the result of an exceptional set of circumstances. Covid-19 was the perfect storm that highlighted long running deficiencies in healthcare systems with the HSE and NHS now operating in state of "permanent crisis" – shortages of beds, longer waiting times and understaffing. In the South, potential for crisis was so great that the state was forced to take control of private hospital capacity, with some private capacity now being used in the North too. Since then very little has been done to increase capacity in the long term sense. (Appendix 3).

The Chair thanked Mr Redding for his presentation and said that he had made some good points particularly around the NHS and how people were lucky here in Northern Ireland to benefit from that system and although it wasn't perfect there was a commitment from the Northern Ireland Executive to look at reform and with the Bengoa

report being brought forward. He said that in the past there was a deputation from the Northern Trust which showed some of the actions which were beginning to happen to move that process forward, but due to the pandemic things were put on hold but would be confident that there would be light at the end of the tunnel that will allow that process to come to fruition.

Councillor Monteith commended Mr Redding on his impressive presentation and agreed that people up here had a lot of emotional attachment to the NHS which was rightly so, but felt that it was a shadow of what it was envisaged to be due to underfunding and being run down over the years. He said that it would shock people if they knew the true extent of privatisation which actually existed within the NHS and the procurement of services, care services and social services and the outworking's of this was seen during the pandemic we were currently in. People can see the outworking through the lack of investment by which there was less capacity in ICU in March and April and felt that it was sensible for an all-Ireland approach and there was no reason why and Island of this size in Western Europe cannot properly fund an all-Ireland healthcare service which would be free at the point of delivery for all citizens because it does not exist in the 6 counties here and the other 26 counties, then this was the reality. He said that he became aware today of a gentleman having an emergency MRI for a trapped nerve, he's a lorry driver and had to stop work and was on the red flag referral for an appointment with the consultant, he rang the Consultant's secretary and was told it would be 4½ years before he could be seen by the Consultant. He stated that this was not an NHS that was functioning for the citizens of the area as the constituent had to go and pay to see the exact same Consultant and he can be seen within the next 3 weeks. Whilst the NHS can be seen as a great ideal, the reality on the ground for the ordinary people was that it wasn't envisaged to be what it was supposed to be and it was time for a new approach in bringing back free healthcare for all and would have no problem in proposing that Mid Ulster District Council fully support the campaign for a national health service for all the citizens in Ireland.

Councillor Kerr said that he fully supported Councillor Monteith's proposal and stated that he fully supported Mr Redding's campaign as the National Health Service was a fantastic aspiration and thought, but unfortunately there was a large degree of privatisation existing regarding healthcare. He referred to the documentary about the Dirty War in the NHS where there has been a campaign by the Tory Leaders and New Labour over the last 40 years to basically dismantle the NHS and make the NHS more reliant on privatisation. Within the documentary it outlined the first privatised hospital in England as being a disaster where managers were pressured by senior management into kicking patients out and when these managers raised concerns about the patients being too ill, they were told it didn't matter as long as more people were admitted for money. For the size of Ireland there should be adequate one Ireland healthcare system to deal with the pandemic successfully as there were overlaps on timescales etc. as this was the case regarding New Zealand who dealt with the pandemic very successfully.

Councillor Kerr said that Healthcare workers needed to be treated fairly and was disgraceful that the Tory government voted against a pay rise for these invaluable workers and no point going out to clap when they were not getting the recognition they truly deserve for putting themselves at risk during this pandemic to help others.

The Chair said that although the system in place here was not perfect, it was important that people don't lose sight of what we have and the benefit it gives to everybody that lives here.

He enquired if the NHS was something the people of the Republic of Ireland looked upon somewhat with a degree of jealousy on what we have here compared to what currently operates there. He enquired what the response was from the Republic of Ireland government to this initiative of an all-Ireland healthcare approach as a huge tranche of the funding would have to come to move this campaign forward.

Mr Redding said that he wished to thank Councillors Monteith and Kerr for putting their response forward.

Mr Redding said that there wasn't so much to say that people were jealous, but more admiration for the NHS and the principle of the NHS and stated that the points previously made by Councillors Monteith and Kerr stand and although the staff were amazing, unfortunately they cannot provide the quality of care the NHS would like to provide and the quality of care that the people deserve.

In referring to funding, he agreed that the Southern government should pay the majority of what would be required as the majority of the people live in the South. He felt that it should be also funded by progressive taxation as there was a lot wealth on this Island. He said that similar to the Bengoa report there was a process in the South called Slaintecare report which included a cross party committee which had a lot of plausible aims but since the publication it had been sitting on the shelf and no political will to bring forward what was recommended, but the ultimate would be a universal healthcare system. He said that he concurred with Councillor Kerr's comments regarding the pandemic and said that he was an Immunology PHD student himself and would say that without certainty that people should all be treated as one as this was a pandemic and not about politics, borders or identities and the virus didn't stop at the border and there was a need for cross border cooperation.

In response to the Chair query regarding engagement with the Republic of Ireland government, Mr Redding advised that there had been no formal engagement to date as this was a new campaign but they were trying to build support for the idea and when there was enough support for the idea then the government will have to acknowledge it. He said that several political parties in the South had already endorsed the campaign and two Council's in the North had backed the campaign and have supported what they have asked for. He stated that the more support that was generated for the campaign, the more the Southern government would have to address it but would anticipate that they wouldn't like the idea as it would require greater investment. He said that in the South people have to pay a lot for their healthcare which was an ineffective system because of the 2 tier nature and would be confident that it would be hugely popular with the people but not with the government yet.

Councillor Molloy thanked Mr Redding for his presentation and agreed that it doesn't make any sense to have a divided system in health, tourism and energy and that a joined approach would work a lot better. He referred to Regional Centres of Excellence in relation to heart specialism in Dublin and asked for his thoughts on that and whether

there should be a Regional Centre of Excellence for Cancer care and various other treatments.

Mr Redding said that the Regional Centre of Excellence was just a good example of that but unfortunately the way that they were being configured at the minute it means that people have to travel huge distances to access the best of care but this doesn't mean that this shouldn't substitute for the best localised healthcare. He said that some hospitals in the South were losing some of their services like A&E etc. and felt that this was unnecessary as there was a need for local health care also.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith  
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

That it be recommended to the Council to support the campaign for an All-Ireland National Healthcare Service.

Councillor Ashton asked that the paper be circulated to members in advance of the next meeting so members have a chance to look at it with a decision being brought forward to the next committee meeting.

Councillor Monteith stated that he had no issue with Councillor Ashton's request as long as it was agreed in principle.

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to agree in principle to support the campaign for an All-Ireland National Healthcare Service. The matter to be brought to the next Development Committee meeting for decision once members had an opportunity to read the report.

*The Chair thanked Mr Redding for this presentation and he left the meeting at 8.36 pm.*

## **D174/20 East Timorese Community Group**

The Chair welcomed to the committee Mr Felix De Jesus from East Timorese Community Group and invited him to make his presentation.

Mr De Jesus advised that TAIS was officially launched on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2019. It was a non-profit community association with charity ethos which covers electoral wards of Mid Ulster, Armagh and Belfast. The organisation promotes identity, advocacy, diversity and inclusion. (Appendix 4).

He said that TAIS NI offers:

- Information
- Signposting
- Education
- Research
- Social Events
- Fundraising
- Bilingual Service
- Networking

The Chair thanked Mr De Jesus for his presentation and stated that it was evident the good work which was being carried out with other communities which was good to see.

Councillor Molloy advised that the East Timorese Community had provided a great addition to the workforce in the area and would commend their involvement in cultural events within the community like St. Patrick Day and the Hill of The O'Neill festivities. He wanted Mr De Jesus to know that the East Timorese Community were very much appreciated in the community and thanked them for that. Regarding the work the group do and Mr De Jesus pulling the community together in a cohesive unit can only be a good thing and get themselves into a unit which can engage with Council and other bodies and this has been fully appreciated.

Proposed by Councillor Molloy

That the request be brought back to the Development Committee for decision but in the meantime Officers with the group on what help and assistance can be provided through possibly the Good Relations programme or any other programme to provide support and said that it would be useful for a group meeting to be set up to progress this.

The Chair concurred with Councillor Molloy and said that it would be useful for Officers to sit down with the group to see what avenues can be explored and what assistance that can be given by Council and support them in their endeavours.

Seconded by Councillor Monteith

To support Councillor Molloy's proposal.

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that this be brought back to the next Development Committee and that Council Officers liaise with the group on possible funding opportunities which may be available to progress this matter.

Councillor Monteith said that he would be happy to second Councillor Molloy's proposal as the East Timorese were very forthcoming in becoming involved with many initiatives in Dungannon town like St. Patrick's Day events and also within his own club, Thomas Clarke's GAA where children have played and now some of their own children are involved with the club and when Thomas Clarke's won the championship, there was nobody more pleased than the East Timorese community and the club was very proud of that.

He said that he wished to make another proposal in relation to concerns around consular rights and passports etc. but there were also major issues around housing and the conditions associated with that not just for East Timorese people but for other nationalities also which a lot of Irish people wouldn't live in. He proposed to set up a workshop for whichever Councillors wish to attend with Mr De Jesus and his team on issues around housing, workers rights or any other concerns that this may arise. He said that meetings could be done virtually or by writing letters and campaigning on their behalf as a Council as the physical aspect of things may have to wait. He said that this would be very important due to some conditions these people are living through and up



to Council to protect our citizens as no Irish people would live in the conditions that they were expected to live in.

The Chair advised that he was aware of the first proposal and asked if Councillor Monteith proposal could be incorporated into Councillor Molloy's proposal and if the two members would be in agreement with that.

Councillor Monteith said that he would have no issues with that as long as Council Officers liaise with Mr De Jesus and his team beforehand as it was important that these issues were addressed.

The Chair advised that the proposal was being amended so that emphasis be placed on Officers to liaise with Mr De Jesus and his team on issues of concern as a matter of urgency.

### **Amended Proposal**

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that this be brought back to the next Development Committee and that Council Officers liaise with the group on possible funding opportunities which may be available to progress this matter. Officers reach out to Mr De Jesus and his team on other areas of concerns they may have as a matter of urgency.

Councillor Kerr thanked Mr De Jesus for this presentation and said that he was looking forward to working with his organisation on behalf of the Council to enhance the Mid Ulster area.

Councillor Ashton enquired if there were any recent visits by the Consulate as in previous years and asked if this was something that the East Timorese Community reached out to due to Brexit coming up as there was some concerns from communities and asked if this could also be pursued in the coming months.

Mr De Jesus advised that there had been communication with the Consulate due to concerns around passports and settlement status within his community as passports were out of date. He stated that that his colleagues had raised this and with the help of Michelle Gildernew MP there was a team sent over last December for 3 consecutive days to try and address the matter, these people were due to come back in March but this didn't materialise due to the Corona virus pandemic. He said that people within his community were sitting with passports which were out of date and were really concerned about their future as was the case for some other nationalities like the Portuguese who were also sitting without status and concerned about non-renewal of passports.

He said that it was important to speak on behalf of these people and try and help these families with their immigration status.

The Chair advised Mr De Jesus that the Council would help in any way they could to try and help his community.

Mr De Jesus said that his community would be more than grateful for the Council's help on these important matters like dealing with the Consulate to make things happen quickly on behalf of those people.

The Chair advised that these matters of concern would be picked up by Officers and would be in contact to set up a meeting and was happy with what was proposed at tonight's meeting.

The chair thanked Mr De Jesus for this presentation and he left the meeting at 9.14 pm.

**D175/20      Duration of Meeting**

The meeting commenced at 7 pm and ended at 9.15 pm.

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Minutes of Meeting of the Development Committee of Mid Ulster District Council  
held on Thursday 10 December 2020 in the Council Offices, Circular Road,  
Dungannon and by Virtual Means**

**Members Present**

Councillor McNamee

Councillors Ashton\*, Black, Burton\*, Clarke\*, Corry\*,  
Cuddy\*, Doris, Elattar\*, Kerr, Hughes\*, Kearney\*, Milne\*,  
Molloy (7.03pm)\*, Monteith, Wilson\*

**Officers in  
Attendance**

Mr McCreesh, Chief Executive  
Ms Campbell, Director of Leisure & Outdoor Recreation  
Mr M Browne, Head of Tourism\*\*  
Mr Gordon, Head of Leisure\*\*  
Mr Hill, Head of Parks\*\*  
Ms Linney, Head of Community Development\*\*  
Mr McCance, Head of Culture and Arts\*\*  
Ms McKeown, Head of Economic Development \*\*  
Mr McKeown, ICT Support  
Ms Grogan, Democratic Services Officer

**Others in  
Attendance**

Deputation – Sharon Cassidy  
Raising Awareness of Homeless Issues

Councillor Gildernew\*  
Councillor S McGuigan\*

\* Denotes Members present in remote attendance

\*\* Denotes Officers present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm.

*The Chair, Councillor McNamee welcomed everyone to the meeting and those watching the meeting through the Live Broadcast. Cllr McNamee in introducing the meeting detailed the operational arrangements for transacting the business of the committee in the chamber and by virtual means, by referring to Annex A to this minute.*

**D194/20      Apologies**

None.

**D195/20      Declarations of Interest**

The Chair Councillor McNamee reminded Members of their responsibility with regard to declaration of interest.

Councillor Kerr declared an interest in agenda item 6 - Coalisland Community Food Bank.

Councillor Cuddy declared an interest in agenda item 19 – COVID19 Business Grants – Tranche 2.

Councillor Wilson declared an interest in anything related to Enterprise Agencies as Chair of Cookstown Enterprise Centre.

Councillor Monteith declared an interest in agenda item 19 - COVID19 Business Grants – Tranche 2 as family member involved.

*Councillor Molloy entered the meeting at 7.03 pm.*

## **D196/20      Chair's Business**

The Chair congratulated Mr McCreesh on his recent appointment on becoming the new Chief Executive for Mid Ulster District Council. He said that he first worked with Mr McCreesh from he first became a Councillor in 1997 and that all members were aware of all the hard work he has put in the legacy Council and this Council and was held in the highest regard amongst members and staff and wished him well in his new role as Chief Executive and looked forward to working with him.

Councillor Kearney congratulated Mr McCreesh on his new appointment and wanted to say that along with Mr Anthony Tohill, former Chief Executive and other Senior Officers that they have guided Mid Ulster Council through the formative years and now it was an opportunity for the new Chief Executive to put his own stamp on the next phase especially now we were going into the recovery phase and wished him well.

Councillor Monteith congratulated Mr McCreesh on becoming the new Chief Executive and said that he looked forward to working with him.

Councillor Kerr also congratulated Mr McCreesh and said that he was passionate about trying to help the people of the Mid Ulster District area and wished him well in his new role.

Councillor Black concurred with everything that was said and passed on his congratulations to Mr McCreesh and said that he agreed with what Councillor Kerr said regarding his passion for helping the people of the Mid Ulster area and wished him every success for the future.

Councillor Cuddy concurred with all previous members comments and said that he had always found Mr McCreesh a very approachable Officer and hoped that all the good work continues and thanked him for all his efforts in the past and was confident that the place would be a lot better over the next 4 years.

The Chair referred to Agenda Item 17 – Seamus Heaney HomePlace and advised that the Head of Culture and Arts would be providing an update in relation to Seamus Heaney Open Ground Project.

Councillor Wilson said that he had been approached by a number of people regarding concerns relating to the state of the pathways around Lough Fea and felt that this site be given priority as it was the jewel in the crown within that area. He asked that this be done as a matter of urgency in the springtime or beforehand if the weather picks up.

The Chair concurred with member's comment and said as he regularly walked around Lough Fea he also witnessed the need for something to be done as the area was prone to flooding and asked that this be investigated at the first available opportunity.

#### **D197/20      Deputation - Raising Awareness of Homeless Issues**

The Chair welcomed to the committee Ms Sharon Cassidy, Raising Awareness of Homeless Issues to the meeting and invited her to address the committee.

Ms Cassidy advised members that she had started Help the Homeless campaign over two years ago which has grown immensely over that period of time. She said that approximately 30 people including Councillor Kerr slept out for 2 nights at the beginning of August at the front of Cookstown Courthouse to raise funds for sleeping bags for the homeless. The group raised over £16,000 and purchased over 1200 high quality, waterproof sleeping bags with the proceeds being allocated towards two charities in Northern Ireland – Newry Helping the Homeless and Helping Hands Belfast as well as Feed Our Homeless and Feed the People both based in Dublin.

She said that she had witnessed much underlying poverty with the COVID19 pandemic, with homeless in Ireland being an extension of poverty and there was a need to use every avenue to expose it as it was getting out of control. She advised that in Ireland statistics did not add up as it was indicated that 10,000 people were homeless, but in Dublin alone the charities were feeding between 600 and 700 people per night outside the GPO which included children, pregnant women, elderly and working men who go out to work each day on a building site and don't have a roof over their head and sleeping in a doorway with their boots beside them. During COVID so many people and families were in poverty and the problem was only going to escalate within the next 6 months.

She said the campaign started in her own kitchen and would really like some guidance as she really didn't know how to progress, but was aware that she would need to form a committee to bring this campaign to the next level. She advised that Councillor Kerr had put her in contact with a Good Relations Officer and had been in contact with her and hoped that if this committee was up and running that funding could be made available for premises within the Cookstown/Mid Ulster area. She said that she was aware that this was not to help the people of Mid Ulster area at present but hoped that going forward that this would change and help those in the area also as she was currently helping a local Charity in Cookstown called Halo Helping Hands who help families in the Mid Ulster area and she hoped to get them items of food and toys for their toy appeal also.

The Chair thanked Ms Cassidy for her impressive presentation and said that she was doing tremendous work and to raise funds for 1200 sleeping bags was unreal. He said that it was scary to hear that between 600 and 700 people had to be fed each night in Dublin and from the outside no-one realises that this kind of thing was going on. In referring to the Good Relations Officer which she was liaising with, he said that he was confident that this Officer would help Ms Cassidy progress in trying to achieve her aim of acquiring a premises and help form a committee.

Councillor Kerr thanked Ms Cassidy for her presentation and for all that she had achieved this last number of years on highlighting her ability to generate funding towards the homelessness which was something she was passionate about. He said in this given time there were thousands of people without a home or a roof over their head which was a

basic human right and the figure Ms Cassidy outlined was alarming. He said that people trying to emerge from COVID would bring additional hardships relating to mass redundancies and people losing out on income and uncertain futures which lay ahead for many people. He said that he was part of Ms Cassidy's successful campaign which she organised in August for a sleep out to raise funds and hoped that this could become an annual event and was glad to see discussions taking place between Ms Cassidy and Council Officers and hoped that this would progress in the New Year.

Councillor Doris thanked Ms Cassidy for her informative presentation and commended her work in trying to help others in desperate need. She said that there was no doubt that this year has been difficult for many people and have to say that there was a stigma around homelessness as this year she had seen literally people potentially losing their homes over COVID and agreed that it wasn't the peoples fault. She stated that she had previously lived in Dublin and found it hard to source accommodation and in the end shed had to move away from it as she couldn't afford the rent asked or a room in a shared house with 4 or 5 other people.

She said that from 2017 she had been lobbying for support for victims of domestic abuse as she had come across a horrific case and tried to get a woman and her child accommodation through the Housing Executive only to be told that she didn't have enough points. She felt annoyed that she couldn't get her a home and was unable to help the woman in which she deserved, but through Women's Aid temporary accommodation was sourced thankfully. She said that last year alone there was over 80 women and children turned away from Women's Aid because there was nowhere for them to go and found that everyone was quick to judge a woman and say why she hasn't left the abuser, but questions had to be asked where she could go or whether she could afford the rent, near her children's school or beside her job and felt that the stigma around homelessness was something that had to be changed. She advised that she was having meetings with Women's Aid and may be worthwhile for Ms Cassidy to touch base with them as meetings were taking place with Minister Carál Ní Chuilín to try and change the housing points system with the Housing Executive and was aware that there was going to be a huge overhaul on that.

Councillor Doris said if there was anything Ms Cassidy wished members to do or any suggestion to reach out to the Council and wished her well in her endeavors for the future as she was doing a tremendous job.

Councillor Corry also commended the work being carried out by Ms Cassidy and said that Councillor Doris had referred to some of the work being carried out by Minister Carál Ní Chuilín and today she had raised the issue of homelessness and for the rights of support, the rights of safety and the right to a home and hoped that the plight of homelessness would be addressed as a policy was being currently worked upon.

Ms Cassidy thanked the committee for allowing her the opportunity to speak and said that she just loved helping people and hoped to continue doing this in the years to come and would also like her 5 boys to carry on her legacy.

The Chair thanked Ms Cassidy for her tremendous work ethic and said there was total support for her campaign from members tonight. He told her if she needed any guidance or support to contact Officers or Councillors who would be only too willing to provide any assistance they could.

Ms Cassidy left the meeting at 7.19 pm.

## **Matters for Decision**

### **D198/20      Draft Response to the Department of Education – Consultation on Special Educational Needs (SEN) Regulations and SEN Code of Practice**

The Acting Chief Executive presented previously circulated report to agree the draft response to the Department of Education - Consultation on Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice.

Councillor Corry said she welcomed the consultation and thanked Officers for their input of work. She agreed with what the Chief Executive had said and the point made within the report that there needed to be Learning Support Coordinators (LSC), should be within senior management teams of the school and the need for support within that team, with all teachers being trained in Special Educational Needs (SEN). There was also the need to reflect the timeframes and the length of time for support needs to be correct also to compare to see if there was significant gaps there which still needs campaigning.

Councillor Monteith said he welcomed the report as it was an issue all members would be aware of on a continuous basis regarding many parents in the area having major concerns. He felt that this may be something that this Council could progress on behalf of our residents in the area, but not just respond on this consultation, as there was a need to be seen as being proactive on other issues like poverty etc. He suggested that it would be beneficial for the Council to take a lead role in as there was a good mix of urban and rural perspectives and this could be put into place. He felt the biggest issue would be the waiting game which goes on and as a board of governor he felt that one of the most frustrating things for him, but more importantly for families was the restrictions on children each school can refer to a psychology service and this was just a crazy scenario where a monetary figure was placed on each school on the amount of children that could be referred and felt that this was no reflection on real life for families and young people that need support.

He said that within the last few days, figures for the six counties revealed that there were 67,000 school children with SEN needs, which was one-fifth of the scoping population and only 19,000 children has statements which was stark figures. In referring to CCMS, he advised that although he wouldn't be a massive supporter, in fairness they had produced a report in the last week or so, but the most important thing within the report and quoted to the committee their statement as it was something that everyone was trying to come across and stated CCMS stated "*the need to move away from a culture where everything must be fought for to one which assumes service as a right*" and said that this should not be the case that parents of children with special needs have to torture, email, phone Councillors, phone schools and torture teachers in order to get the educational rights their child is entitled to. He said that this needs to be the mindset towards Special Needs provision and parents shouldn't have to fight for this as this should be a right and something that needs to be strived for. The referred to the umpteen reports produced and advised that even the Audit Office produced a report which outlined a very damning situation in September and said that the chamber could be filled with the amount of reports which have been produced on problems relating to SEN provision and there was a need for urgent action now. He concluded by saying that the quote by CCMS was very apt as

this was a right and not seen as a battle for families to get the correct provision for their child.

Councillor Kearney said as a former Principal it was a burden he carried for 33 years and many other of his colleagues also and commended Officers for the excellent report as it was very timely and very well researched. He said that it was time for this service to be overhauled as it was outdated for decades and there was a need to provide teachers with proper training and resources and less red tape as so much was sent to schools that it turned the teachers off. He said that people were waiting for the 5 stages now becoming 3 which would be a very positive step as there would be less red tape. He advised that he still kept in contact with teachers especially teachers in smaller schools and they have put their hand in their own pockets and paid for psychologists to move the thing forward, so this was where education was at the moment. This year children with Special Needs have had a very tough time during the period of lockdown and said that during his time he wished there was a Council which took a stand as we have to stand up for a community and commended that. He said that he would like to propose the recommendation.

Councillor Kerr seconded the recommendation and welcomed what Councillors Monteith and Kearney had said as it was extremely frustrating for parents and anything that the Council could be to assist moving this forward would be greatly welcomed.

Councillor Burton agreed with previous comments and said that in rural schools parents were fighting and arguing in trying to get their child the education they deserve. She said that 9 times out of 10 a child with special needs was sent miles away from their home to a specialist unit which can be very unsettling for a child with autism. She felt that there was a need to look at these concerns going forward.

Proposed by Councillor Kearney  
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to agree Draft Response to the Department of Education - Consultation on Special Educational Needs (SEN) Regulations and SEN Code of Practice.

The Chief Executive advised that as this issue was a critical part of the Community Plan that it would be beneficial for a meeting to be convened with Department of Education Officials on concerns raised tonight.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith  
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to convene a meeting with Department of Education officials who are responsible for the designing these of regulations, implementation and resourcing and invite any interested member who wishes to attend.

## **D199/20 Community Development**

The Head of Community Development presented previously circulated report to update members on the following:



- Community Support – proposal for additional DFC Food Funding
- Peace IV – to note the Peace IV update
- Good Relations and support to the East Timorese Community
- Community Support Funding and Fivemiletown Community Annex
- Community Planning - Proposed Community Forum
- Community Development – To note the update

**(i) Community Support – proposal for additional DFC Food Funding**

Proposed by Councillor Kerr

Seconded by Councillor Cuddy and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to approve the proposal for additional DFC Food Funding support (£90,000), pending confirmation and letter of offer.

**(ii) Peace IV – to note the Peace IV update**

Note update.

**(iii) Good Relations and support to the East Timorese Community**

Councillor Molloy said that he welcomed the report and that engagements have been very good to date, unfortunately he had missed the last one but there has been a number of issues which had been raised and these were being worked through. Issues around passports was becoming a critical issue due to possible renewal for some of the community. He has become aware of consul support in Manchester where residents can travel, unfortunately this remains difficult for local residents with out of date travel documentation and felt that some kind of letter of comfort being in place to support travel would be beneficial in those circumstances.

Councillor Monteith concurred with Councillor Molloy and stated that engagement was key at present. In referring to the letter of comfort advised that the situation of COVID pandemic meant that an agreement was implemented by government here that driving licenses would be valid until a certain point and felt that the quickest, easiest way at present would be the a representative on behalf of the East Timorese community approach these authorities who deal with these documents as this would take a lot of pressure of them and result in a good long lasting relationship between the Council and the East Timorese community.

Councillor Cuddy agreed with previous comments and said that the East Timorese was a large community in Dungannon which provided a large scale of energy to the town and was good to reach out to them and provide any help we can and agreed that it was good to continue the good relationship between Council and them.

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to agree the proposals of support to the East Timorese Community.

**(iv) Community Support Funding and Fivemiletown Community Annex**

Note update.

**(v) Community Planning - Proposed Community Forum**

Councillor Kerr advised that it is good to get as many groups involved as possible and to propose that this be advertised in our social media and other local outlets or the most appropriate way there was. He was aware of great groups in Coalisland like Friends 2 Talk and Mid Ulster Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy would may be very interested in an initiative like this. He asked that consideration be given to the appropriate advertising methods so other organisations were made aware of it and the consideration of it being on an annual basis.

The Head of Community Development advised that one of the things which was done was to have all the community groups on the community database and then any of the meetings which will take place will invite the groups from this to meet with the relevant DEA members.

Councillor Corry in referring to the DEA meetings enquired if this would involve the smaller community groups rather than the main ones which were mentioned.

The Head of Community Development advised that the larger strategic ones were the ones that would be brought together as strategic support agencies, but DEA meetings would be held for all the smaller groups who members would have regular interaction with.

Proposed by Councillor Corry  
Seconded by Councillor Doris and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to agree the new community group engagement process.

Councillor Monteith advised that he had received an email regarding healthcare and its provision and the anticipated closure of the Valley Nursing Home in Clogher. He said that he had been approached by concerned family members of a resident of the Home regarding the issue and content of the email and felt it would be appropriate for Council to write to Southern Trust on their processes as there were significant concerns around this and would dispute that families have been kept informed on proceedings.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith  
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to write to the Southern Trust in relation to concerns relating to the process re the Valley Nursing Home in Clogher and that all legal requirements and protocols have been adhered too.

Councillor Cuddy said that he would totally agree with Councillor Monteith's comments as he had also been approached by the same family and felt that a proper process should be followed.

Councillor Burton advised that she had been working behind the scenes on this issue also and there has been real concerns for some time. She said that this was a Home which served the community and the powers that be have to make sure that it was up to the mark to provide care for the vulnerable residents that should be cared for in the way they should be and wanted to make sure that this was the outcome here because we don't want to lose this provision from this rural area.

The Head of Community Development in relation to the earlier issue in terms of community support said if members were happy that Fivemiletown Food Bank would partner Hope for You for taking forward.

## **D200/20      Community Development – All Ireland Health Campaign**

The Head of Community Development presented previously circulated report and advised members that at the Special Meeting of Development Committee on the 29th October, it was recommended that Council agree, in principle, to support the campaign for an All-Ireland National Healthcare Service. The matter was to be brought to the next Development Committee meeting for consideration, once members had an opportunity to read the report.

Councillor Monteith said that he hoped that this would be here last month but was good to have the presentation in front of members tonight and may be something that officers could try and ensure that emailed copies of presentations be forwarded to members in advance of the meeting as it was sometimes difficult to see or hear the virtual presentations on the night. He said that the case was well made on the night where a good discussion ensued and felt that there should be no barrier and a sensible approach for the provision of adequate healthcare for all the people of Ireland and proposed to go forward with the recommendation.

Councillor Kerr seconded the proposal for an All Ireland NHS, which was an aspiration as there was a need for a new innovative system for all of the people on this island as this was clearly demonstrated through the pandemic this year. He said that in the 26 counties he often heard of people paying for health but as a socialist he believed that access to free healthcare should be from the point of entry to discharge and should be based as a human right. He said that universal healthcare should be what it was and no privatisation should be allowed and referred to the comments he raised at the last Development Committee regarding the documentary directed by John Pilger on "The Dirty War on the NHS" where Tory and New Labour governments were trying to dismantle NHS and treat people as a commodity.

Councillor Black said that he could understand why Republic of Ireland citizens would be keen to progress this campaign when they look to Northern Ireland and see the benefits we have in being able to access the NHS and whilst no perfect, it was important that people do not lose sight of the great organisation that the NHS is and when Mr Redding himself was delivering his presentation, he acknowledged that many in the Republic of Ireland would look onto our system with admiration. He advised that there were many incidents of cross border co-operation currently and recognise the benefit that this could bring and he would agree that co-operation with our nearest neighbour was in the best interest of all our people, however there was a difference between co-operation and full integrated health system and didn't think that reinventing the wheel for an All Ireland Healthcare system was the way forward or the best use of our energies. He believed that

such a step would undermine the NHS and the benefit that this brings to the citizens of Northern Ireland as being part of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland parties has agreed to work together to address the recommendations of the Bengoa Report, so his party believes that the direction of travel should be for the Assembly and Executive to work together and build upon the great system that we have already have for the benefit of all of the citizens of Northern Ireland rather than pursue the path as outlined in the recent deputation and the subsequent report before members tonight.

Councillor Doris said she didn't know what Councillor Black was referring to in terms of the NHS and would agree it was a great model, but only a great model when it was properly funded. She said that there were two broken healthcare systems in Ireland and this was what the issue was and that an All Ireland Healthcare system just makes sense as during COVID a lot of lives were lost because the two healthcare systems were unable to share information on the two sides of this Island.

Councillor Wilson advised that committee that when Sinn Féin had the health ministry of healthcare they didn't pump the money into the system. He said that this Council needed to look at what their competences really were because the last time he looked healthcare was the responsibility of Stormont and the Ulster Unionist Party had long been in favor of cross border co-operation and being good neighbours, but these proposals do not take into account several very fundamental realities. He stated that there were two different countries on this Island and two very different health systems as a result as Northern Ireland was served by the United Kingdom's National Health Service and the Republic of Ireland had chosen a very different path in terms of healthcare and all political campaigning in the world cannot change these realities as one of the greatest benefits of the UK is the National Health Service and one of the least attractive benefits of the Republic was the lack of it. It is thanks to the fact that we are in a position to be part of the UK and Northern Ireland was able to benefit from the UK's position of the world's fifth strongest economy in addition to the huge economic benefits this brings and in health terms this allows people in Northern Ireland to share the access of UK's PPE stock and also this week the share of the vaccine for the COVID19 away ahead of our neighbours in the Republic of Ireland but hoped that everyone would get the opportunity to vaccinate within their own countries. He said that people were glad to see co-operation with the Republic which already takes place with regards to Cardiology, but this was very different calling for a single system from Cork to Coleraine and was not for us in Northern Ireland to dictate to the people of the Republic on what type of healthcare they should have or can afford as this was entirely a matter for them alone and has been since 1921. He advised that the Ulster Unionist Party was very clear that they would not be party to any efforts that risks the National Health Service as it was far too important to play politics with and therefore would be opposing it.

Councillor Cuddy said he completely agreed with Councillor Wilson as there never was enough money for any sector especially healthcare which was so important to us all. In referring to the healthcare systems advised that the NHS in Northern Ireland was certainly not perfect but was closer to where we all want to be. He felt that this should be more about the people of Republic of Ireland trying to change their direction regarding healthcare and investing more money into the system. He said that we are as close as we were currently going to be with the funding available and there was a need to realistic as nothing was perfect and the need to lobby for more funding to make the NHS a better system to meet the needs of the changing population as nothing stood still and new diseases arising like COVID this year. He said that the Republic of Ireland had a bigger

job to protect the people they represent, but there was a need for Councillors to look after the people they represent especially the people of Mid Ulster and he wouldn't be agreeing with the proposal either.

Councillor Kearney advised that the committee was only after having a discussion regarding crisis in Education and felt that this was only a worthy idea and consideration and surely if the pandemic had taught people something, that there was a need to work closely together for the better.

Councillor Molloy advised that there were two tiers regarding health on the Island, but was not North and South but more the case of who can afford healthcare and who cannot regardless of what system it was as this was evident on a daily basis due to the long, long waiting lists on both sides of the Island. A good example of this was Cardiology as this could indicate what an All Ireland Health Service could look like and eliminate some or all the costs to provide Centres of Excellence across the Island and made a lot more sense and his party would be supporting the recommendation.

Councillor Elattar agreed with Councillor Molloy and didn't see the report as something that was going to happen overnight and more of an aspiration that was there for an All Ireland Healthcare Service and as someone that works within the NHS, she didn't see this report or proposal demeaning or taking away from the NHS. She said that it was absurd that it was a fact that there were two health services running in a country of this size and population with a lot of money being wasted between the two healthcare services and it was evident already with other things done in co-operation that things were working well and sees this as an aspiration and something to move towards and she would definitely be supporting it in the fact that hopefully it would make health care better for the people on this Island and not just for the people who could afford it.

Councillor Clarke agreed with comments and referred to Councillor Elattar comment about needing a better healthcare system in the North and South and agreed that there was a two tier system in both areas. He enquired what the life expectancy was in each area and it was his understanding that it was much longer in the South and felt that this was the proof of the pudding.

The Chair put Councillor Monteith's proposal was put to the vote:

For	10
Against	5

Councillor Monteith's proposal was carried.

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to agree to support the All Ireland Healthcare Campaign.

## **D201/20 Economic Development – OBFD**

The Head of Economic Development presented previously circulated report to provide an update on key activities and sought approval for the following:

- (i) Renewal of Membership with NI Chamber of Commerce (Jan-Dec 2021)**
- (ii) Collaborative Digital Transformation Business Programme**

Councillor Wilson enquired if Councils were approached to collaborate together.

The Head of Economic Development advised that through the European Regional Development Fund where Council's would normally all bid in for their Business Programmes in which Invest NI would normally be the administrative body and they would be willing to co-fund the programme if one could be found along with the Council's and European money. She said as Invest NI were the administrative body responsible for the European funds.

Councillor Wilson thanked the Head of Economic Development for her update but said he had a concerning issue that he wished to iron out and enquired if Invest NI were asking the Councils to collaborate and put in for a programme they were tendering for and running, then how does this square up with the Conflicts of Interest.

The Head of Economic Development advised that this would be a programme that an elite Council would take forward if consensus was agreed from collaborative Councils if members were in agreement that this would be delivered like the rest of the programmes and seek to find a lead Council for it with Invest NI having the same role as with the rest of the other programmes which they work on regularly.

Councillor Wilson said he appreciated what the Officer had said but his question was that if the Council was approached by Invest NI to collaborate with all the other Councils to collaborate for a programme they were running and delivering and seems to him that it looks like this Council going to another Council stating that they run the tender and then they would be successful and he just wanted clarity as it was unclear to him.

The Head of Economic Development advised that this would be run exactly the same as we would be tendering for it and if we put our bid in for potential programme and how we wished for it to be developed similar to the rest of the other programmes, then they would be asked to come forward with match funding. She said that this Council would also be bidding for the European funding and match funding from Invest NI and would not be done in any different kind of way than the other funding as each Council had been allocated indicative funding each Council get for each programme. She advised that there was still funding left over from the Regional Development Fund and this was a way for them to use the money to involve all the Councils and give them a benefit as there wouldn't been enough money for each of the Councils otherwise. She stated that there was £600k in the pot and Councils had been asked to collaborate to receive a share of the funding.

Councillor Wilson said that he would have concerns regarding a company approaching the Council to tender along with others for a programme they have received the money for delivering and asked what was to stop a challenge coming into the programme from the FE Colleges. He said that he had no issue as it was only for £820 but just wanted clarification on the governance.

The Chief Executive advised the member's query was very valid, but the difference was that there was no profitable rationale to Invest NI as they were coordinating a group of 11 Councils to come together to submit a bid for mutual benefit to the businesses who avail of the programme. He stated that this wasn't a commercial tender but more of a public sector collaboration of Councils and a Government Agency and whilst what Councillor Wilson had said was true, this was probably the sign of the future and working together across

Economic Development, Infrastructure and Health on these types of collaborative arrangements and had to be the way forward if and when the European Union goes in 18 months, there was a need to collaborate together to maximise resources in order to achieve any sort of an impact. He said that he could see where Councillor Wilson was coming from but couldn't see any Conflict of Interest or neither would Invest NI otherwise they wouldn't be invited the 11 Councils to get involved.

Proposed by Councillor Doris  
Seconded by Councillor Kearney and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that approval be granted to:

- (i) Renewal of Membership with NI Chamber of Commerce**  
Mid Ulster Council's annual Corporate Membership Renewal with NI Chamber of Commerce, costing £2,500+Vat for the period of 1 January to 31 December 2021
- (ii) Collaborative Digital Transformation Business Programme**  
The development of the Collaborative Digital Transformation Business Programme and provide a contribution of £820 towards technical assistance costs to prepare a comprehensive bid to Invest NI.

**D202/20 Lease of Lands at Murley Road – MUDC – Blessingbourne Estate**

The Head of Parks presented previously circulated report and sought approval for the following:

- (i) To enter into an agreement with Blessingbourne Estate to lease lands on the Murley Road, Fivemiletown.
- (ii) To extend the current Mountain Bike Trails lease agreement with Blessingbourne Estate to include the walking trails.

Councillor Burton proposed to proceed with the recommendation due to the length of time that this footpath had been lobbied for by the residents of Fivemiletown and a real safety issue. She said that this concerns had been raised from 2005 at every opportunity with Road Service and was happy that funding and agreement was got from Blessingbourne and for us to maintain the walkway was a small price to pay for something that was really welcomed by the community.

Councillor Cuddy seconded the recommendation and stated that it was a good project but enquired if there was a requirement for the Council to go back to LPS to seek approval or was it a case of carrying on.

Blessingbourne Estate have indicated that they have enough lease agreements with the Council and the amount of money being suggested, they are not particularly interested in opening up new leases in relation of any new additional lands as they would see our products as partnerships on what was available in Fivemiletown in relation to Round Lake, Walking Trails and Mountain-bike trails as being galvanised by taking this approach to provide a viable tourist attraction.

The Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation advised that if the Council was going ahead with the actual lease of the lands in terms of the monetary value then we would

have to go back to LPS, but because it was now a maintenance issue being entered into and there is no call to go back to them on that matter.

Proposed by Councillor Burton  
Seconded by Councillor Cuddy and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that approval be granted to:

- (i) Review current lease agreements with Blessingbourne Estate, Fivemiletown.
- (ii) The lease of lands on Murley Road from Estate to facilitate improved public access to the Round Lake.
- (iii) Amend current Mountain Bike Trail lease agreement to include the addition of walking trails including liability, management and maintenance.
- (iv) Cover all reasonable legal costs incurred by the other party.

## **D203/20 Mobile Catering Concessions**

The Head of Parks presented previously circulated report and sought approval to procure mobile concession Grab & Go catering services at selected council owned/managed venues and public Parks.

The council are proposing to offer mobile catering contracts across significant footfall venues, sample locations as listed, subject to amendments.

- Dungannon Park
- Ballyronan Marina
- Railway Park
- OM Dark Skies Park/ Davagh Forest
- Knockmany and Pomeroy Forest Parks
- Lough Fea
- Brantry Wood Trails
- Round Lake, Fivemiletown
- Coalisland Canal
- Glenone Riverside Trail
- Washingbay Wetlands Park
- Hill of The O'Neill, Dungannon
- Meadowbank, Magherafelt
- Fairhill, Cookstown
- Drum Manor
- Polepatrick
- Walled Garden, Maghera

Councillor Wilson advised that there were two carry out food establishments located at Fairhill, Cookstown and wouldn't be confident that a mobile catering unit would be wise choice at this location and also referred to Drum Manor and asked if the Council had the right to allow someone to operate at this location or was it still within the remit of Forestry Service.

The Head of Parks advised that the Council had a lease agreement in relation to the carpark and the footprint of the playpark at Drum Manor. In relation to Fairhill, he stated that these were sample sites with regards to identified footfalls to the site and where the



service might well be welcomed in relation to the facilities which were currently there as it was extensively used by families due to the play facilities.

The Chair said he would also have concerns about mobile catering units being located at places close to local traders in urban areas as it would cause competition to established businesses and would be more suited to rural areas like Davagh.

Councillor Monteith said that he would have similar concerns and appreciated that the list circulated to members tonight were only samples but felt there needed to be a lot of deliberation given to possible concerns before agreeing to this proposal i.e. timescales on hours of trading and the management around the sites. He felt that there was a need to look at the risk for the potential litter and the management of sites approved and asked where the responsibility lay and asked where the provider would be responsible or the Council. He referred to these sites and parks and said that there was the potential for anti-social behavior as people could congregate for the fast food element and not for the recreational aspect and asked that careful consideration be given around the management and timescales of the site before agreeing to the proposal. He asked that a report be brought back to the next committee on concerns raised before a decision was made.

The Head of Parks advised that consideration would be determined on the terms and conditions within the catering agreement and the successful applicant would have to sign up to terms which would be suitable to the park or location including trading hours. He said that it would be up to vendors to be responsible for their base and if other factors like litter would be part of that agreement to make sure that it wasn't a burden on the Council to clean up after them. He referred to the locations and if it was deemed that there was a Conflict of Interest in relation to a Vendor then these sites would not be made available.

He advised that there had been some general enquires received from the public regarding facilities at more rural forestry locations and at some locations where there were previous catering concessions, unfortunately not operational due to the restrictions in place and advised that these would be done with a timeframe to allow for the more established businesses to resume trading when the time arises. He said that he took on board member's comments and concerns raised.

Councillor Black sought clarity on a financial figure for the rental figure and what it was envisaged that it would generate and sought clarification on whether this was an annual income across all sites and asked where the figure had come from and what was it going to be benchmarked against.

The Head of Parks advised that these would be collective figures as in the past ice cream vendors in the legacy Council generated £1,000 plus to the rent offered which was quite achievable. He said that this wasn't about generating income but more about providing some of the services which are currently missing at present as an interim provision and this figure would depend on the site.

Councillor Kearney said he now understood that there was both urban and rural settings and referred to Glenone Riverside Trail which was very rural but has huge footfall. He advised that he had been approached by some people indicating that this would be worthwhile and a degree of interest shown as it was a very popular as it's along the River Bann.

Councillor Molloy advised that some good points had already been made but was wondering about sites on Council owned property as this would make it less attractive to get tenants and how was this achievable when we have our own facilities.

The Head of Parks advised that consideration would be given to a 12 month contract with this being reviewed thereafter. He stated that a clause could be incorporated into the contract advising of termination depending on when we wish to go ahead. He advised that there had been a number of queries received about potential rural sites.

Councillor Burton said that she would be supportive of this initiative and believed that many businesses were curtailed and this would be an opportunity for the Council to get it right. She said that Brantry Lough was a prime example where this type of mobile catering would be beneficial as there wasn't a shop within a 6 mile radius and a huge footfall and would be welcomed. She said that going forward that some of the events like the huge one that's annually held each August in Dungannon Park should be looked at due to the extortionate costs for food prices, which was unacceptable for families and our elderly people.

The Head of Parks advised that the nature of the proposed provision for mobile catering would be coffee and Grab and Go convenience options, not a food establishment.

The Chief Executive stated that there was enough clear direction for the Head of Parks to consider and agreed that the Council didn't want to cause direct competition by taking the business of established businesses. He said that this would be the case for Fairhill and Coalisland Canal and other locations as there were numerous shops nearby but this would be a benefit to rural areas for families and he would be happy for the Head of Parks to progress the rural aspect of the issue.

Councillor Monteith said that it was a good idea but would still be reluctant to put his name to something that may turn to mayhem after 6 weeks within a 12 month contract. He said that one size doesn't fit all and this would be the case here and would be more comfortable for a report to be brought to the next committee on the proposed sites and how they could be properly managed and timescales.

The Chair agreed that more work could be done around this matter.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith  
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that a report be brought back to committee on concerns raised relating to the management before approval be given to procure mobile catering concessions for Grab & Go services across selected Council owned/managed venues.

## **Matters for Information**

### **D204/20      Minutes of Development Committee held on 12 November 2020**

Members noted Minutes of Development Committee held on 12 November 2020.

Councillor Doris sought an update on Drumcairn and Altmore Forest initiatives.

The Head of Parks advised that Drumcairn and Altmore were 2 of the 3 sites which were going out to quotation as previously agreed for the development of scoping studies and project plans. This documentation was almost complete with the quotation being issued before Christmas and a return date by 18 January 2021.

Councillor Monteith referred to item D176/20 Community Development Report regarding the issue of Medical Hubs, Oakridge and GP Provision and said that last week it was reported that the Trust were not in a position to provide answers. He suggested that a meeting be sought to raise issues as there were ongoing works around the bypass and driven along by committees of this Council and felt that issues around these needed to be given priority also.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith  
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that a meeting be sought with the Southern Trust on concerns relating to Medical Hubs, Oakridge, GP Provision and other strategic health issues in Mid Ulster area.

#### **D205/20      Business & Communities External Investment Leverage Report 2019/2020**

Member noted update on the external investment leveraged by the Business and Communities Department to support Council priorities in 2019-20.

#### **D206/20      Economic Development – OBFi**

Members noted updates on the following matters:

- Coalisland Town Centre Forum Minutes 12.10.20
- Mid Ulster MEGA (Manufacturing and Engineering Growth & Advancement) Network
- DAERA (TRPSI) Rural Business Development Grants Scheme 2020

#### **D207/20      Project Stratum Update**

Councillor Clarke advised that there had been a joint meeting between the working groups on Project Stratum during the week and felt that a number of figures need to be looked at within the report brought tonight. He said that in 2018 it was established that there were approximately 98,000 premises needing intervention and now it was down to 79,000 resulted in nearly 20,000 addressed. He said that when he thought about the discussions which had taken place he wasn't happy at all because at the time of the intervention and the proposal of £150m plus the £15m from DAERA making it £165m for this project, Fermanagh & Omagh and Mid Ulster were the two worst Councils for the percentage of people to connect to fast broadband. He said that this proposal says that they would improve it massively in these two areas and across the board, but there was still approximately 340 addresses in Mid Ulster which will not be serviced and 612 in

Fermanagh and Omagh out of a total of 2,500 across the six counties, resulting in 40% of those which will not be serviced.

He said that given the figures that were given originally as 98,000 and now 79,000 and at that time and were given number something similar which was to be excluded, so he said he was concerned that the Council were not getting bang for the buck because this project was being delivered through Fibre and this company were already on the ground and they were proposing 1,600km per quarter which means that in the Spring quarter, they reckon that they would be passing 4386 customers who would be able to connect at that point and the cash flow already coming in. He said that on Tuesday night there was too many people congratulating on this great project but not a great project for those people who have missed out and wondered how these figures worked as £165m project based at that time on the 98,000 and now 79,000, felt that full coverage should be evident.

He said that one thing that drew his attention to it was one of the biggest investors was pension funds and it was his thought that these look to get guaranteed good returns in short periods of times and his feeling was that they must be getting from here. He said that we had enough examples over the recent period of where the public purse had been drained to put millions into individuals pockets and would not like to be ever associated with projects like Project Stratum if it delivered the same as there was no clarity on what sort of margins were in this and massive profits for this company but yet there was going to be substantive amount people left out of the circle and this needed investigating. He said if it was made known where these addresses weren't going to be covered could we discover how much it would cost to cover them and this would be absolutely wrong that this was the case, yet the company which was awarded the contract walks away with millions as a result.

He asked that a Broadband Working Group be arranged for the start of the year with proper information and this be investigated further as it wasn't as good as it looked and wouldn't be happy with the situation. He requested that maps be produced as there wasn't a clue with the knot spots were going to be and there was need for accurate maps and information because they can advise what they were currently doing and what they intended to do next but they cannot say what they were going to do at the finish. He concluded by saying that he would not be happy to leave people behind because if they weren't going to be covered now, then when were they going to be covered and if they were going to be covered by some sort of service like satellite or wireless, the costs and quality of service not there and felt that the people with a telephone would be the most disadvantaged as they would be the most remote and paying more costs for an inferior quality service.

The Chair agreed that there was a lot to think about and would be some work for the Broadband Working Group in January.

Councillor Kerr advised that Wi-Fi was very much needed as this was very evident this year during the pandemic and people having to adapt through working from home. He said that a lot of people had been in touch with him regarding issues relating to inadequate broadband and Wi-Fi provision for children and school work and many areas within the Torridge area which were affected. He asked that it be investigated that a mechanism be put in place for Councillors to enter address details into a database so they can provide any help they could to constituents as it indicated within the report that 2,500 people were in the white list and postcodes which were meant to be guaranteed under Project Stratum and he would be afraid to provide a commitment to his constituent when this was not the

case. He asked that a mechanism was in place where a Councillor could add an address to get more clarity for constituents.

The Head of Economic Development agreed with Councillor Clarke's comments and said that there was no enough information provided on the breakdown on where these areas area, map was available but not clear at all and information being drip fed which was not good enough and was pointless sending it out. In relation to the 2,500 premises which were out of scope, they said that they would be trying to source additional funding for them but cannot confirm it would be Fibre and don't want to be in a position of having a phone line or satellite and if we don't press for Fibre then these households will never see it. She said that this was the responsibility of the Department but they were indicating that they would need between £10m - £15m to cover the 2,500 households and agreed that they should be held to account and the Council would continue to do that. She agreed that it would be beneficial to hold a Broadband Working Group in the New Year.

In response to Councillor Kerr's query in terms of the addresses, she advised that if there were addresses that still were not getting a service to the equivalent to 30mb superfast broadband then the Council would need to know about it. She advised members that there was a website address which was in the report <http://hyperfastni.com/> which was the new address for Stratum and as of January they would be putting a postcode checker on their website so anyone can tap in their postcode and can see if you were in a white area and when you would anticipate to get it, a timeline and whether a person was eligible to get it within the timeframe outlined within the report. Stratum were stating that the other households which were dropped off which Councillor Clarke alluded to of 20,000 being knocked off from the original study and when they were questioned on that, they indicated that those households would be now receiving it from other providers, so the question would be where the other providers were at and how many households would be affected within Mid Ulster of the 20,000. She advised that she had spoken to them in advance of this meeting on concerns and they advised that this was subject to confidentiality and confidential clauses that they couldn't release and said that she most definitely wouldn't be happy leaving the situation there.

In response to Councillor Kerr's suggestion about relaying the website address to Councillors, the Head of Economic Development advised that this would be emailed to members.

The Chief Executive concurred with Councillor Clarke and said that there was still a lot of work to be done and the meeting on Monday night was excellent because it made very clear to the Fibrus and the delegation that Fermanagh & Omagh were not accepting second best, but it has to be said on what was being proposed was a massive benefit to this part of the world. He said although there were limitations and concerns, the Head of Economic Development and himself had been fighting this cause along with members for the last 10 to 15 years and off the premises which were going to be impacted by the 30mb, 21% was in Mid Ulster, 27% were in Fermanagh & Omagh and nearest to that would be Newry & Mourne with 16%. He advised that Mid Ulster was second at the top of the list and we deserve to be as we had the worst broadband and we should be thanking Fibrus as it was greatly needed and welcomed with 94.4% of all our households being able to get a minimum of 30mb, but we will not rest until the other 300 houses by some mechanism are equally supplied. In referring to the Growth Deal discussions, members have already made it clear on the technology and picking up the gaps was what the Growth Deal was designed to do, so no house would be wanting in any shape or form and agreed there was a lot of work to be done but there has been a lot of progress made.

## **D208/20 Sports NI Corporate Plan Consultations.**

Members noted update on Sport Northern Ireland Draft Corporate Plan for 2020 to 2025 and associated consultations.

*Live broadcast ended at 8.41 pm.*

## **Local Government (NI) Act 2014 – Confidential Business**

Proposed by Councillor Molloy  
Seconded by Councillor Doris and

**Resolved** In accordance with Section 42, Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 that Members of the public be asked to withdraw from the meeting whilst Members consider items D209/20 to D215/20.

### **Matters for Decision**

- D209/20 Department for Communities Access and Inclusion Programme 2020/21 additional projects
- D210/20 Seamus Heaney HomePlace Library Refurbishment Tender Report
- D211/20 Seamus Heaney Trails Update
- D212/20 Drum Manor Play Park - Inclusive Play
- D213/20 Covid19 Business Grants – Tranche 2

### **Matters for Information**

- D214/20 Confidential Minutes of Development Committee held on 12 November 2020
- D215/20 Contract Performance Review: Transform Programme

## **D216/20 Christmas Greetings**

The Chair wished members a very Happy Christmas and New Year and said that he hoped that next year would be much better.

## **D217/20 Duration of Meeting**

The meeting commenced at 7 pm and concluded at 9 pm.

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_





<b>Report on</b>	Ballysaggart Lough Enhancement Scheme
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> January 2021
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Nigel Hill Head of Service
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Paul Bailie Parks Manager

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To update members on recent works to upgrade and enhance visitor facilities at one of Dungannon's best known local beauty spots, Ballysaggart Lough.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	The forty-two acres of Ballysaggart Lough, or better known locally as the 'Black Lough' is recognised by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust as a significantly important wetland area in the District after Lough Neagh. Ballysaggart Lough is one of a large number of eutrophic (nutrient rich) lakes occurring in inter-drumlin landscapes of South Tyrone providing a distinctive element of natural biodiversity. Ballysaggart lough is of particular value for birds demonstrated with a recorded annual peak count of over 500 migratory wildfowl across 19 species.
	<p>Ballysaggart Lough became an asset of Mid Ulster District Council from April 2015 under the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure transfer of Water Recreation facilities. The importance of the site at Ballysaggart is recognised under the Local Landscape Policy Area (LLPA 03 Ballysaggart Lough).</p> <p>The LLPA is designated at Ballysaggart Lough and adjacent landscape, to help protect the area's visual amenity, nature conservation interest and recreational use. It is important that its banks and surrounding land are kept free from inappropriate and visually intrusive development. The northern bank of the Lough is overlooked by a localised hill, which contains significant areas of woodland around the historic 'Manse'. The open undeveloped northern slopes of this hill are important when viewed from Dungannon town centre, providing a backdrop of mature woodland on steeply rising ground.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>

3.1

Parks Service conducted a condition audit and walk over inspection of the site on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October. A schedule of works was developed and communicated to Property Services for costing and coordination. The main scope of the works was to reinstate existing public paths back to their original width. Years of encroachment and erosion had resulted in the narrowing of the paths, in some areas to almost single file. The range of enhancement actions conducted by the Councils Grounds Maintenance function included –

- Enhancement works involving the scraping of existing path surfaces and the relay and rolling of approx. eighty tonnes of gravel.
- Cut back and clearance of overhead branches and a number of diseased trees were removed on the advice of a qualified arboriculturist.
- Contractual works were conducted to repair and resurface erosion in the public carpark area.
- Litter bins, picnic tables and seating were deemed as sufficient and will remain under review.
- New and additional dog fouling/control signage was erected.
- The painting of access gates and fencing has also been scheduled and will be completed, weather dependant.

Before and after photographs provides evidence of the quality and scope of works carried-out at Ballysaggart Lough, which has significantly improved the visual impact and quality of experience for visitors to the site.

3.2



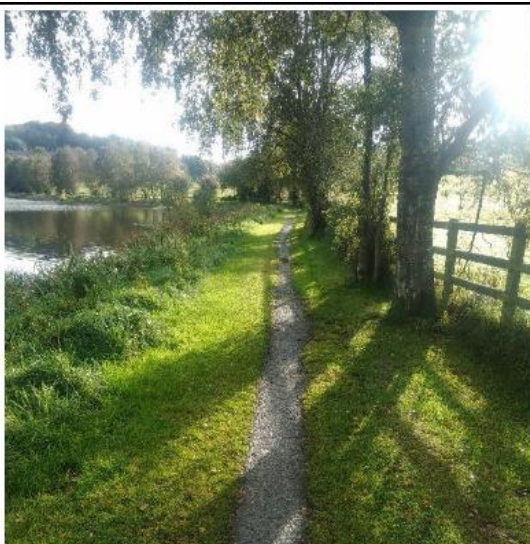
Before



After



3.3



Before

After

3.4



New Dog Control Signage



Carpark resurfacing and repairs

3.5



On-site seating, picnic tables and litter bin provision will continued to be monitored

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	<p>Financial: The scheme undertaken to date has incurred an expenditure of £3,500. An additional £1,500 is required to address stock proof boundary fencing and pedestrian access gate improvement works to be completed within current financial year.</p>
	<p>Human: Council's Property Service staff provided the majority of the labour for the scheme.</p>
	<p>Risk Management: The works completed will reduce the risk of potential slip, trip and fall injuries associated to poor surface conditions. The improved surface will enhance council efforts for increased accessibility and inclusiveness targets for access to the countryside.</p>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	<p>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications: In line with Council Policy and Procedures</p>
	<p>Rural Needs Implications: In line with Council Policy and Procedures</p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	The report is for the purposes of updating members and associated information.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	N/A

<b>Report on</b>	Macmillan Move More Research Update
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> January 2021
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Kieran Gordon, Head of Leisure
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Leigh Gilmore, Participation Manager

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To provide an update on a research and evaluation report completed in partnership with Queens University Belfast and Macmillan, demonstrating how proactive the Macmillan Move More programme has been throughout the Covid pandemic. The initial findings of the research was circulated for noting at Development Committee in September 2020.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	Macmillan Move More NI (MMNI) is a physical activity referral programme in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support and the eleven district councils / leisure providers across Northern Ireland, each containing a MMNI coordinator.
2.2	Mid Ulster District Council support the funded 3 year Macmillan project by employing and hosting a MMNI Coordinator and Mid Ulster District Council provide access to leisure facilities for the Coordinator to deliver physical activity sessions for people with cancer, and providing a range of incentives (e.g. discounted membership rates)
2.3	The MMNI Coordinator plays a key role in the development and delivery of the project by facilitating consultations with people with cancer, supporting them to access physical activity opportunities (both cancer specific, and non-cancer specific), and providing ongoing behaviour change support to each individual for a minimum of 12 months.
2.4	This report focuses on an updated service evaluation of the Macmillan Move More programme during the COVID-19 lockdown / restrictions, from a user perspective.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	The prescription of exercise remains an integral aspect of cancer treatment and survivorship to manage treatment-related side effects and improve physical / mental well-being and quality of life.

3.2	Throughout this pandemic, disruptions to cancer exercise services such as MMNI removed an important supervised and supportive environment for cancer survivors to participate in group exercise.
3.3	Due to this, it has been argued that cancer patients risk regressing to a sedentary lifestyle which may have a negative impact on their physical and psychosocial wellbeing.
3.4	Results from the evaluation confirmed the impact of reduced face-to-face MMNI services and subsequent reductions in exercise frequency.
3.5	Respondents reported both physical and psychosocial impact of restrictions including loneliness, loss of social support, loss of motivation, deterioration in fitness / health, and negative changes in body composition.
3.6	The research recommends that the learning and development evolving from the mixed methods of exercise delivery should be considered when seeking to maximise the reach and engagement of people living with cancer, from their diagnosis onward, to support an individualised person-centred approach to exercise and behavioural change.
3.7	Given the rapid response and subsequent versatility of the MMNI programme, it could be considered an example of best practice or model to follow for other cancer support services.
3.8	Technology used alongside face-to-face sessions has the potential to reach a larger population, including those who report competing interests and programme location as barriers to participation in community exercise programmes.
3.9	The research found that exercise programmes for cancer survivorship must adapt to engage participants in continued exercise. The Move More Programme has been proactive and successful in responding to the needs of subscribers during this difficult time.
3.10	The analysis within this report will be used within Mid Ulster District Council to review and adapt the Macmillan service where required.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: Delivered within existing funded programme as agreed between Mid Ulster District Council and Macmillan.
	Human: Facilitated within existing staffing resources – ie. the funded Move More NI Coordinator.
	Risk Management: In line with Council Policies and Procedures.

<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: RNIA completed. Programme delivery will continue to be available via Maghera, Fivemiletown, Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt. Participants have a choice of what facility to attend or can choose to attend virtually. If technology is inaccessible, one to one interaction is still available under strict covid guidance were a participant requests.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	To note the contents of this report and the evaluation report completed in partnership with Queens University Belfast and Macmillan.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	Appendix A – QUB and Macmillan Report





# **Evaluating the Impact of COVID-19 on the Macmillan Move More Service for Northern Ireland: Results from an Exploratory Survey**

Malcolm Brown<sup>1</sup>, Dominic O'Connor<sup>1</sup>, Claire Murphy<sup>2</sup>, Maura McClean<sup>2</sup>, Alexandra McMeekin<sup>2</sup> and Gillian Prue<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> School of Nursing and Midwifery, Queen's University, Belfast, Northern Ireland

<sup>2</sup> Macmillan Cancer Support, Belfast, Northern Ireland

## **Abstract**

### *Purpose*

The recent coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) and societal restrictions have altered the delivery of routine cancer care and supportive services. The Macmillan Move More Northern Ireland (MMNI) programme provides support to people affected by cancer and access to physical activity opportunities and behavioural change support before, during and after treatment. This service evaluation aims to provide an account of the impact of the pandemic on the MMNI participants and identify potential methods to develop and adapt service delivery.

### *Methods*

A multiple-choice and short answer online survey was sent to 730 MMNI participants (over 18 years of age; received a diagnosis of cancer). The purpose of the survey was to investigate the impact of the initial, national COVID-19 lockdown. Specifically, the survey examined physical activity patterns, the physical / emotional / social impact of restrictions and attitudes towards digitally supported exercise. Some participants opted to complete telephone consultations, to maximise uptake. Free text responses were analysed thematically with findings verified and discussed within the research team.

### *Results*

377 participants completed the survey (52% response rate). 50% of respondents received a diagnosis of breast cancer, with the remainder of the sample comprised of 36 other diagnoses (82% of respondents were female). Service users widely praised the MMNI response to the pandemic in free text responses. Participants reported physical activity levels decreased during COVID-19 restrictions, citing isolation; declining health / fitness; lack of access / provision and decreased motivation as reasons. The dataset trended towards women and those with a diagnosis of breast cancer, given their representation. Seventy-one percent of respondents reported the pandemic had impacted their physical (n = 119) and / or psychosocial (n = 231) wellbeing. The majority of respondents were availing of digitally supported exercise to maintain contact with the service, whilst nearly half of males sampled do not currently engage digitally (46%). Finally, 80% of respondents indicated that they would be interested in using a MMNI smart application to participate.

### *Conclusion*

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions have impacted the physical activity levels of MMNI service users. Supervised MMNI classes were the most popular mode of activity (pre-pandemic) but enforced leisure centre closures perhaps prompted the observed reduction. The pandemic has negatively affected the psychosocial wellbeing (mental health) of participants, compounded by the restrictions imposed on the traditional delivery of MMNI. This impact is felt equally across cancer types. Digitally supported exercise can facilitate remote, supervised exercise classes and overcome some of the issues presented. Participants with breast cancer (61%) are the most engaged in using digital technology to access exercise (then colorectal [59%] and prostate [54%]). Although underrepresented, men require greater targeting to ensure equality in access to online services. As COVID-19 restrictions are being implemented globally, this evaluation may help guide service innovation for similar programmes.

### **Keywords**

COVID-19 • Cancer • Macmillan Move More NI • Physical activity • Service evaluation.

## Introduction

Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) is the viral strain responsible for the novel 2019 coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Since its emergence in Wuhan City (Hubei Province, China) in December 2019, the virus has subsequently swept across the globe with the World Health Organisation (WHO) declaring the outbreak a public health emergency. COVID-19 is associated with lethal respiratory infections in humans and appears to affect people of all ages; however, older adults and those with comorbid medical conditions are at higher risk of severe medical complications [1]. The virus is primarily spread through direct (person to person) or indirect (surfaces) contact transmission via respiratory secretions, which can infect an individual by entering their mouth, nose or eyes [2].

As of 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2020, there has been 1.51 million confirmed cases in the UK (49,784 in Northern Ireland) with ~ 55,000 deaths [3]. The UK government has responded to the surge in cases (presently a secondary wave) by implementing widespread transmission prevention measures. To date, without an effective vaccine, physical distancing used alongside good personal hygiene (hand hygiene, face coverings etc) appear to be the most effective measures to limit the spread of the virus [4, 5]. The UK entered a national lockdown in March 2020 to control the spread of the virus and in recent months restrictions have been gradually relaxed and been implemented again (October 2020). However, the measures introduced to contain the virus have severely impacted the provision of clinical services including routine cancer care and supportive services (e.g. allied health and supportive care interventions) [6], normally relied upon by individuals living with and beyond cancer. In fact, the extent of the pandemic has created a backlog of 50,000 undiagnosed cases, that even significant extra resources will take approximately 20 months to rectify, with additional surges extending this timeline further [7].

Each year, over 360,000 (>9,400 in Northern Ireland) new cancer diagnoses are reported in the UK, with numbers estimated to increase by 2% by 2035 [8]. With increasing numbers of cancer survivors, effective supportive care interventions are required. Accumulating evidence recognises regular exercise as an effective supportive care intervention which can induce many physiological and psychosocial benefits. These include improved tolerance to cancer treatment-related toxicities, improved disease outcomes and better quality of life throughout survivorship [9]. Exercise training has been shown to improve cardiorespiratory fitness,

muscular strength, body composition, fatigue and overall quality of life in individuals with cancer before, during and following treatment, with supervised exercise preferred due to larger improvements than self-directed exercise [9, 10]. However, the restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic prevents the delivery of face-to-face exercise sessions. In response, exercise providers have been forced to innovate using digital technology to provide individuals with cancer access to exercise programmes [6], whilst service users have had to embrace these technological innovations to stay active.

Macmillan Move More NI (MMNI) is a physical activity referral programme in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support and the eleven district councils / leisure providers across Northern Ireland, each containing a MMNI coordinator. The referral pathway can be through a healthcare professional or self-referral. The MMNI coordinators, as qualified physical activity and exercise specialists, are responsible for implementing the Macmillan Physical Activity Behaviour Change Care Pathway. The overarching aim of the programme is to *‘ensure that everyone living with cancer in Northern Ireland is aware of the benefits of physical activity and is enabled to choose to become and stay active, at a level that is right for them’*. This is achieved by providing a personalised plan of supervised physical activity and exercise, information and support to empower individual behavioural change. The programme aims to help people become and remain active, improve their general fitness, better manage the consequences of their cancer treatment, and improve their quality of life, ultimately enjoying the many physical and psychosocial benefits of exercise [9]. Traditionally this service is delivered face-to-face at local leisure centres throughout NI, by specialist coordinators that tailor the physical activity and exercise prescription. As a result of the COVID-19 restrictions, the MMNI service has adapted (remotely using digital technologies e.g. Zoom, YouTube etc) to enable continued service delivery. Whilst these changes have been forced by the COVID-19 pandemic, it underscores the need for scalable remote interventions in the longer term [11]. Innovative technological solutions are cost-effective and have the potential to improve future service delivery, while broadening population reach and accessibility. Providing a dual service of face-to-face classes (once restrictions are lifted) and remote access via digital technology, may help improve long-term service delivery.

However, the impact of COVID-19 on the MMNI programme and the effects of modified service delivery on its users is unknown. Consequently, a service evaluation was conducted, detailing the impact of the COVID-19 restrictions on service users. As COVID-19 restrictions

are currently being implemented globally, the results of this survey may help guide service innovation for similar community-based physical activity and exercise programmes. As detailed above, learning from the transition to remote service delivery and the service user experience, during a global pandemic or similar public health crisis, could be useful in designing and delivering a person-centred service (using mixed delivery methods) to improve access for all.

## **Methodology**

### **Design and Participants**

A cross-sectional sample of participants were actively recruited over a 3-week period, from 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020 to 28<sup>th</sup> June 2020 by the MMNI team. Participants were eligible for inclusion if they (1) had received a diagnosis of cancer and (2) directly participated in the MMNI programme. All eligible participants voluntarily provided informed consent online, prior to accessing the survey questions. Consent was sought after participants reviewed the purpose of this service evaluation and a privacy statement, permitting access. All participants were at least 18 years of age, with responses stored in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act (2018) and EU General Data Protection Regulation (2018). Prior to commencing this service evaluation, advice was sought from research governance pertaining ethical review. As this is a service evaluation, it does not fall under the usual ethical procedures and instead we completed a Data Privacy Impact Assessment (DPIA), under the direction of the University Information Compliance Unit. The research team at Queen's University Belfast were blinded to patient identity and all data collection, with anonymity maintained throughout.

### **Procedures**

Participants were identified by the MMNI team via their user database. Initial eligibility was determined by the Macmillan group and confirmed by the lead investigator. Eligible participants received an anonymous multiple-choice questionnaire and short answer online survey, investigating the impact of COVID-19 on the MMNI service for Northern Ireland. The questionnaire and short answer survey was developed by researchers at Queen's University Belfast, using Microsoft Forms and refined through consultation with the MMNI team prior to

a piloted release. Upon review of the pilot data and satisfactory feedback, the questionnaire and short answer survey was distributed to service users via the MMNI coordinators. Participants received a hyperlink to access the online survey through their email. Data was collected and stored electronically for the duration of the recruitment period. Following distribution, participants were sent weekly reminders by email, WhatsApp, text or telephone to ensure maximal uptake. Each participant completed the survey once. For inclusiveness, if participants were unable to access the survey directly (e.g. technological barriers), a Move More coordinator had the capacity to complete on the participants behalf over the telephone.

The online survey was provided in English and consisted of 21 questions in total (5 open-ended questions). Participants were required to provide a response for each question. Limited, non-identifiable demographic data was collected (i.e. gender; cancer diagnosis). Participants were asked to report the frequency and type of exercise (i.e. closed questions) completed prior to and during COVID-19 restrictions. Two open-ended short answer items then provided participants the opportunity to describe in detail the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on their life and any concerns regarding a return to MMNI services when restrictions are eased. The emphasis of the remainder of the survey focused on digitally supported exercise. Participants were asked to simply report if they presently used digital technology to access physical activity / exercise (i.e. yes / no) and if they might consider using digital platforms (e.g. Zoom, FaceTime, mobile apps) for physical activity / exercise delivery in future (i.e. yes / no). Finally, participants were asked to rate on a Likert scale (not at all - very much) the influence of common barriers on exercise participation during COVID-19 restrictions. Participants received no incentive to partake in this service evaluation.

## **Data analysis**

Demographic information was summarised using descriptive statistics. Participant responses obtained from the Likert scale were also summarised descriptively and average scores were calculated. The full free text response data set was analysed thematically according to Miles and Huberman' [12] techniques of labelling, coding, categorising and theme development. The process involved identifying commonalities in the data set and searching and comparing the free text responses to identify relationships and themes. Constant comparative techniques were used to ensure all perspectives were represented in the analysis, and deviant cases examined. In an attempt to eliminate subjectivity, findings were verified and discussed by the research

team at each stage to assess accuracy and credibility of the interpretation, promote inter-rater reliability and ensure rigour [13]. The report uses verbatim comments to illustrate the themes, but any identifiable data has been removed.

## Results

### Participants

In total, 377 (52% response rate) MMNI service users responded to the survey over the 3-week recruitment period (325 completed by participants; 52 completed by MMNI coordinators on behalf of participants). Participant demographics can be observed in Table 1. Participants were predominantly female (82%), with breast cancer reported as the most prevalent primary cancer site (n = 190). Twenty-six additional cancer sites were reported by 4 participants or fewer (not reported in Table 1.)

Table 1.

Parameters	No. of participants (%)
Gender	
Female	309 (82)
Male	68 (18)
Tumour site	
Breast	190 (50.3)
Prostate	28 (7.4)
Colorectal	22 (5.8)
Lymphoma	18 (4.8)
Ovarian	14 (3.7)
Lung	10 (2.7)
Endometrial	9 (2.4)
Uterine	8 (2.1)
Thyroid	7 (1.9)
Kidney	6 (1.6)
Oesophageal	5 (1.3)

### Exercise frequency

Exercise frequency before COVID-19 restrictions and during COVID-19 restrictions are reported in Table 2. The percentage of participants who were not regularly active increased from 4% prior to COVID-19 restrictions to 21% during COVID-19 restrictions. The number of participants reporting physical activity levels of 1 – 2, 3 – 4, and 5 – 6 days / week decreased by 4, 9 and 5 % respectively during COVID-19 restrictions. The number of participants reporting physical activity everyday increased by 1% during restrictions.



Table 2.

	Physical activity level prior to COVID-19 restrictions		Physical activity level during COVID-19 restrictions	
	No. of participants	%	No. of participants	%
Not regularly active	15	4	77	21
1 – 2 days / week	99	27	87	23
3 – 4 days / week	137	36	101	27
5 – 6 days / week	65	17	47	12
Everyday	61	16	64	17

### Exercise location

Prior to restrictions the primary setting for exercise was MMNI classes in a leisure facility (n=344). During restrictions, indoor (n=216) and outdoor (n=217) home-based exercise were most common. Forty-four (12%) participants reported no exercise during restrictions.

### Type of physical activity / exercise under COVID-19 restrictions

During COVID-19 restrictions participants reported walking (n=283) as the most common form of physical activity completed. Other popular forms of physical activity included gardening (n=149), online MMNI classes (n=137) and their own form of home-based activity, not provided by MMNI (n=159).

### Impact of COVID-19 restrictions

Most participants (n=268, 71%) felt the pandemic did have an impact on them, whilst 45 (12%) reported no impact, and 64 (17%) participants were not explicit in their response. To determine the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on MMNI service users, data from the survey answers were coded and grouped into two main categories: (1) Psychosocial, and (2) Physical (see Table 3.)

### Psychosocial impact

Most participants highlighted the psychosocial impact of COVID-19 restrictions (n=231, 61%). Psychosocial themes included 1) loneliness, 2) lack of social support 3) decreased motivation to exercise 4) fear, and 5) anxiety. Loneliness and lack of social support were the

most reported psychosocial issues during restrictions. Included below are sample extracts, detailing the psychosocial impact of restrictions:

*“Whilst I have been lucky enough to get out for a walk each day and keep physically active, I have not been able to meet or interact with family and friends and I feel this has impacted on my mental wellbeing. That is where meeting up with groups such as the Move More group and a local Tai Chi class I had been attending are so invaluable” (female, breast cancer).*

*“Missing our regular move more class, missing the social interaction with the rest of the group and our coordinator” (male, prostate cancer).*

*“At times I feel very isolated, it’s affecting my mood. I feel I am back to after my double mastectomy when I had no contact with people. I miss my friends” (female, breast cancer).*

*“The restrictions have made an impact socially; the MM class was a great way of keeping each other motivated and encouraged. This is now not happening and does have a mental effect” (female, endometrial cancer).*

*“My routine for physical activity has been completely changed, which has been very challenging to my motivation and physical health and well-being. But more than that it’s the social aspect and support that I really miss. Move More is more than just exercise, it’s community, it’s solidarity, it’s inspiration” (male, kidney cancer).*

*“Feeling more anxious shopping. Groundhog Day feelings. Disturbed sleep & vivid dreams” (male, prostate cancer).*

*“I am more unsettled, nervous. I felt closed in and frighten at times. I believe Covid-19 effected my mental health” (female, breast cancer).*

### Physical impact

The physical impact of COVID-19 restrictions was reported by 32% of the participants. Physical themes included 1) deterioration in fitness, 2) deterioration in health, 3) increased pain, 4) increased body weight, and 5) changes in dietary habits. Included below are sample extracts, detailing the physical impact of restrictions:

*“My mobility has got worse, my health has deteriorated, and I have had a hospital stay for 9 days (not COVID)” (female, leukaemia).*

*“I have been unable to lose weight which I planned to do. Therefore, my mood swings are more frequent. I also feel as though my body is not as strong. There has been an overall change in my physical and mental health” (female, lymphoma).*

*“Not able to join the social group means I’m not as motivated, less physically activity, more likely to not exercise” (male, chronic lymphocytic leukaemia).*

*“Put on a stone in weight. Bad back and joint problems came back. Feel teary and depressed. I stay longer in bed and going to bed later at night. Consuming more junk food, alcohol. Etc its awful” (female, breast cancer).*

*“My level of fitness has fallen” (male, oesophageal cancer).*

*“Going from trying to set up a routine which was mentally and physically beneficial was setback greatly” (male, prostate cancer).*

*“Yes, because we don’t have a coach I’m not doing right exercises and now my body needs toned all over again” (female, ovarian cancer).*

Table 3.

Impact	
Psychosocial impact	Loneliness
	Lack of social support
	Decreased motivation to exercise
	Fear
	Anxiety / Depression
Physical impact	Fitness deterioration
	Health deterioration
	Increased pain
	Increased body weight
	Dietary changes

### Returning to Move More services

Most participants (61%) reported positive feelings about returning to MMNI services when restrictions permit, with no concerns raised (provided COVID-19 mitigation measures are strictly adhered). In contrast, 36% of participants reported concerns of safety, social distancing and hygiene. The following are sample extracts, relating to returning services:

*“I don’t have many concerns, as long as we are confident that all the sports equipment, we use to carry out our exercises has been thoroughly cleaned for use. The hall is large and social distancing can be achieved. All participants are in the same boat and I trust that they too will be as vigilant as myself, look after each other” (female, breast cancer).*

*“Yes [concerned], would be nervous about getting the virus” (male, kidney cancer).*

*“No [concern], feel confident that measures will be put in place, so we have a safe environment.” (male, prostate cancer).*

*“No [concern] because I am confident strict safety measures will be put in place by Macmillan and adhered to by coordinator and participants” (female, breast cancer).*

*“On one hand I’m so looking forward to returning on the other I am concerned about how social distancing etc will happen” (female, breast cancer).*

*“Yes [concerns], but I have complete faith in Macmillan, and my co-ordinator to mitigate against any potential problems.” (male, kidney cancer).*

*“Some concerns with regards to circuit training which I love, and these concerns would relate to hygiene...really the use of weights & handling of other equipment” (female, breast cancer).*

#### Using digital technology to access physical activity / exercise

Most participants (n = 233) were currently using digital technology to undertake physical activity or exercise. The devices and applications / software used are reported in Table 4. The most common device used was a smart phone (n = 71), whilst Zoom (n = 60) and YouTube (n = 50) were the most common applications used to access exercise. Of the 144 not currently using digital technology, 62 (43%) stated they were interested in using digital technology in the future.

Table 4.

Digital technology	No of participants
Device	
Smart phone	71
PC / laptop	28
Tablet (i.e. iPad)	52
Smart watch	9
Smart television	11
Fitbit	24
Application / software	
Zoom	60
Facebook	9
YouTube	50
WhatsApp	20
Mobile apps (e.g. Strava)	14
Microsoft Teams	1
Internet	26
DVD	1

#### Preferred method of Move More class delivery under COVID-19 restrictions

Most participants (n = 183) stated that they would prefer to access MMNI classes digitally via the MMNI YouTube channel which has a library of exercise sessions pre-recorded and uploaded. Move More exercise sessions delivered in real-time via platforms including Zoom and Microsoft Teams and through smartphone apps were also preferences amongst 155 and 108 participants, respectively.

#### Barriers to exercise during COVID-19 restrictions

Most participants (n=194, 52%) reported that they did experience difficulties engaging in exercise during COVID-19 restrictions, whilst 182 participants reported no difficulty in exercising. Most participants (n = 52) reported isolation as a barrier to exercise during COVID-19. Declining health / fitness was reported by 44 participants, with a lack of access (n = 40) and motivation (n = 38) the next greatest barriers.

#### Evaluation of the Macmillan response to COVID-19 restrictions to increase participation

There was widespread recognition that the MMNI programme were providing options for service users to engage in physical activity / exercise, with most participants (n =263, 70%) happy with Macmillan's proactive response to initial and ongoing restrictions. Extracts relating to the response:

*"Our coordinator has done a good job of providing a weekly class on Zoom where we are able to chat and then do our exercises. We can also access a range of exercises provided by various coordinators through YouTube" (female, breast cancer).*

*"Our exercise class on Zoom is great if I use my laptop, I can see about 5 other participants. And it's good that the coordinators are doing this for us" (female, ovarian cancer).*

*"With the online classes being streamed and the quiz recently I believe they are doing a great job" (male, prostate cancer).*

*"Apart from my lack of motivation I feel that my coordinator has been very supportive in what Move More has been able to do and although I haven't been able to join in I do appreciate being kept informed and I am thankful for what exercises are being offered which means I can do these as and when I feel that I am able to" (female, breast cancer).*

*"Good, versatile engagement and encouragement and as always non-judgemental" (male, colorectal cancer).*

*"Our coordinator has been excellent as she has organised weekly zoom exercise classes which are fabulous and has also had a 1-1 session with me, via zoom, to direct me to other online sources on YouTube, which are run by the Move More coordinators and the District Councils" (female, ampullary cancer).*

*"I think my instructor is doing a brilliant job" (male, prostate cancer).*

Of the 86 participants (23%) who felt more could be done to help them participate, common themes included outdoor exercise classes, more flexibility with online 'live' (i.e. Zoom) exercise classes, and technological support. Further sample extracts, relevant to the response, are included below:

*“More outside activities during restrictions e.g. park exercise etc” (female, breast cancer).*

*“It would possibly help if we had difficulty with the technology ...that as older participants we would have someone to put our queries to if we were ' stuck ' at any point”(female, breast cancer).*

*“Outdoor activities in small groups” (male, prostate cancer).*

*“As the majority of my class are in their 50s/60s technology is not one of our strengths so if there was any way of making it easier to take part in online classes it would t appreciated” (female, breast cancer).*

### Development of a MMNI App

The majority of participants (n = 300, 80%) reported that they would be interested in using a MMNI smartphone App to receive or participate in live exercise. When asked how they would feel about using an App, the majority of participants (72%) were positive. Common positive themes revolved around facilitating group contact and providing flexibility around current lifestyle:

*“I feel this would be very beneficial not only in the present situation but also at times when it is difficult to attend classes due to illness or travelling problems” (female, breast cancer).*

*“It would be useful to have such an app” (male, prostate cancer).*

*“Would have no problem with using this form of technology” (male, colorectal cancer).*

*“An app is good because you can exercise anytime, anywhere and also maybe do 2 or 3 types of exercise depending on what the app offers. It would be good for me when I return back to work especially if Move More classes are on during the day. Participating in live supervised exercise classes are great too. People need encouragement and social interaction. I would need to know that I'm doing the exercises properly for a start. A mixture of both would be great!” (female, uterine cancer).*

Although some individuals (16%) did express negative emotions towards an App. Common negative themes which emerged focused on lack of technological proficiency and a preference towards face to face classes:

*“I would try it, but I'm limited to my technology skills” (female, breast cancer).*

*“I would struggle to use an app due to being of the older generation” (female, breast cancer).*

*“Possibly, but face to face interaction and social side is as important to participants as exercise itself” (male, chronic lymphocytic leukaemia).*

*“I like people close by and with technology friendships would be difficult to make. I think new participants couldn’t gel into the group and get the support they might require. I would miss the banter, the jokes and speaking with a number of people in the group” (male, prostate cancer).*

## **Discussion**

The aim of this service evaluation was to detail the impact of the COVID-19 restrictions on people living with cancer, who engage in the MMNI programme and to evaluate perceptions on alternative approaches to service delivery. The societal restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have limited the ability of exercise programme providers to deliver supervised face-to-face exercise. This may have significant effects on wellbeing, since frequent exercise is recommended to help people living with cancer maintain both physical and psychosocial wellbeing [9]. The current study demonstrates the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on the physical and psychosocial wellbeing of MMNI service users, which has been further compounded by the restrictions imposed on MMNI capabilities to deliver face to face exercise classes. To continue MMNI services and promote exercise during restrictions, the Move More coordinators responded with service adaptations involving ‘live’ exercise sessions, facilitated through digital technology (e.g. Zoom), and the development of recorded exercise sessions uploaded to YouTube, accessible at any time. This response was welcomed by MMNI service users with a positive, large-scale adoption of digital technology for exercise provision, and further interest in digital based solutions.

Although interest and engagement in home-based exercise in the general population surged briefly when restrictions were originally implemented [14], disruptions to cancer exercise services such as MMNI removed an important supervised and supportive environment for cancer survivors to participate in group exercise. Due to this, cancer patients risk regressing to a sedentary lifestyle which may have a negative impact on their physical and psychosocial wellbeing [15]. Results from the evaluation confirmed the impact of reduced face-to-face MMNI services and subsequent reductions in exercise frequency. Respondents reported both physical and psychosocial impact of restrictions including loneliness, loss of social support, loss of motivation, deterioration in fitness / health, and negative changes in body composition. Even though breast cancer was heavily represented, possibly as a result of a fine-tuned referral pathway to the service or the strength of the evidence base for exercise in breast cancer survival - lending to greater engagement, these themes were typical across gender and all cancer

diagnoses. However, with the enforced loss of such essential community cancer exercise services during restrictions and the physical and psychosocial impact on wellbeing, this highlights the need for the rapid development of alternative interventions which can safely, and reliably deliver tailored exercise in participants homes whilst providing a social network of support [15].

Data from pre-COVID-19 studies in prostate cancer suggests that switching from supervised to home-based exercise may not confer any additional benefits to physical and psychosocial outcomes including fatigue and quality of life, and body composition [16–18]. Detrimental changes in body fat may also occur during a COVID-19 imposed lockdown [19] and may negatively impact metabolic health, and disease prognosis, highlighting the necessity for continued exercise support. Optimising an exercise stimulus and facilitating the intervention through digital technology, may help increase contact with participants and maintain motivation and adherence [15, 20]. The new age of COVID-19 restrictions means cancer exercise services will be required to adapt quickly to the changing environment. MMNI responded to the COVID-19 challenge and reductions in their service with innovative service provision. This included a bank of pre-recorded exercise sessions uploaded to YouTube. Sessions created and uploaded to internet servers (e.g. YouTube) offer convenient access to unsupervised exercise for those with regular exercise habits, but may be unlikely to promote adherence in the majority of people affected by cancer [15]. Facilitating exercise with digital technology and offering supervised group-based exercise ‘live’ via digital platforms (e.g. Zoom), can introduce remote supervision, camaraderie and peer support normally associated with this approach and may drive greater adherence and effectiveness [21]. The success of these service changes is reflected in their widescale adoption. The results from this survey highlight a positive adoption of new exercise behaviours, with most participants accessing technology facilitated exercise, through Zoom. This is likely influenced by the ubiquity of digital / mobile technology for health, and its convenience and flexibility [22].

Although largely positive data supported the response of MMNI during restrictions, some concerns were raised by participants regarding a lack of technological support. The need for more technological support is unsurprising given that most cancer survivors are over 65 years old [23], and despite the growing ubiquity of mobile technology in this age group, many may not have the technological proficiency to effectively use the technology to support exercise [24]. Supplementary technology-specific support (e.g. access and navigating digital platforms)



is required to enable participants to fully utilise novel technologies, to facilitate their remote exercise programming. Indeed, the current data highlights an eagerness within the sample to adopt new technologies with the majority (n = 300) keenly backing the development of a MMNI mobile app. This overwhelmingly positive response may have stemmed from their experiences of using digital technologies to support their exercise regime during restrictions (62%) or indeed the continued need to avail of support in general, using the medium of technology as an outlet. Since a lack of instruction and guidance is a common barrier to technology adoption in older adults [25], for an App to be successfully implemented, appropriate education and support is necessary. In addition, the involvement of all stakeholders in a user-centred design approach would likely optimise the App. Such an approach would ensure the App is evidence-based, theoretically informed and practical, including all the information and features to enable early uptake and implementation [26]. Given people with cancer may at times live with numerous side effects of treatment (e.g. fatigue; neuropathy; immunosuppression etc) which may inhibit commuting for exercise classes, as well as the present restrictions imposed, investment in a smart application may prove advantageous to ensure remote engagement, allowing participants to continue to avail of the benefits of the MMNI service. The current circumstances (i.e. COVID-19 restrictions) have forced users to become innovative and embrace technology, so this may prove an optimal time to develop app-based delivery, whilst participants are receptive to change. For as long as restrictions persist, it could provide a pragmatic, cost-effective alternative for exercise delivery.

## **Limitations**

This service evaluation is not without limitations. The inclusion of free text questions within the survey aims to provide a deeper understanding of participants experiences as quantified in numerical responses of a survey. The results of these questions should, however, be interpreted with caution. Free text responses were often limited to one or two sentences which may reduce the potential to understand the context of the participant experience. In addition, a small number of participants did not provide free text responses. This may be indicative of participant burden in relation to survey completion or indeed it may be that these participants were uneasy documenting negative experiences. We are reasonably confident the latter was not the case though, given the reporting of both positive and negative experiences within. A further and important limitation is the representation of the sample. Females with a diagnosis of breast cancer comprise half the respondents, with males underrepresented and accounting for only

18%. This suggests, that while common themes were reported for both genders, the results are more representative of female experiences within the MMNI service. Lastly, the self-reported nature of physical activity levels, might also present a limitation (e.g. over/under-reporting). Despite these limitations, this study provides an evaluation of the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on MMNI service users in Northern Ireland, and the response of this service to national adversity.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Findings have confirmed a reduction in exercise participation amongst regular users of the MMNI service when face-to-face sessions ceased in response to restrictions imposed by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Although, the adoption of digital technology to help access exercise remotely was reported, service users described the negative impact of the restrictions on their physical and psychosocial wellbeing. Alternative methods of delivery introduced by MMNI to continue service provision, were positively welcomed and an eagerness was evident for the continued development of tailored digital technology to deliver targeted exercise to Move More users. Such technology used alongside face-to-face sessions (when restrictions permit) has the potential to reach a larger population, including those who report competing interests and programme location as barriers to participation in community exercise programmes [27] and would bring added benefit alongside the current MMNI model post-COVID-19 restrictions. However, concerns were raised regarding technological proficiency and a lack of education in technology use amongst this group. As such, below we outline recommendations for future practice of MMNI services in the changing COVID-19 environment based on the results of this study.

1. Some participants reported a negative response to the use of digital technology to facilitate exercise delivery. These concerns focused on a lack of education and technological proficiency to adopt technology effectively. Additional resource and / or support to ensure all participants receive basic educational materials and practice on using digital applications is required to facilitate remote exercise delivery.
2. Participants reported an eagerness to adopt digital technology provided appropriate education was provided. As such, the development of a mobile app appears a feasible

option in this cohort. Considerations should be given to including all stakeholders in the development of a MMNI app, through a user-centred design approach.

3. Loneliness, isolation and loss of social support have been mentioned as psychological issues throughout the report by many participants. Therefore a buddy system or MMNI champion should be explored / considered, to enable the provision of peer support in addition to the support from MMNI coordinators.
4. A number of responses stated a willingness to partake in physical activity sessions outdoors, whilst indoor activities were prohibited. For as long as restrictions persist and where Government guidelines permit, a suitable outdoor MMNI programme should be considered, developed and implemented.
5. Whilst adopting digital / remote support in response to COVID-19 was readily received by both MMNI coordinators and participants, many participants are not technically proficient or have access to such technology and given that many people living with cancer are over 65 years old [23], providing written physical activity information (including suitable activities) by post, should be considered.

The learning and development evolving from the mixed methods of exercise delivery should be considered when seeking to maximise the reach and engagement of people living with cancer, from their diagnosis onward, to support an individualised person-centred approach to exercise and behavioural change. Given the rapid response and subsequent versatility of the MMNI programme, it could be considered an example of best practice or model to follow for other cancer support services.

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<b>Report on</b>	Arts Council of Northern Ireland Survey on Arts and Culture engagement levels during COVID-19 Pandemic
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> January 2021
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Tony McCance, Head of Culture & Arts
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Tony McCance, Head of Culture & Arts

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To provide members with the findings of research commissioned by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland that demonstrate levels of Arts and Culture engagement in Northern Ireland during Covid-19 Pandemic
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	The Arts Council of Northern Ireland commissioned Social Market Research (SMR) in October 2020 to undertake a survey to establish the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the consumption of the Arts in Northern Ireland.
2.2	The survey captured the opinions of more than 1,000 people from a broad range of ages and backgrounds to gain an understanding of the extent to which engagement in the arts has enhanced education provision and supported mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic.
2.3	It is important to note that the research and survey undertaken represents a snapshot of views and opinions taken during the month of October 2020, and obviously at other times, the opinions and views expressed may have been different and influenced by the circumstances and Covid restrictions that would have been applicable at the specific time when the survey was carried out.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	The new survey commissioned by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland reveals the high numbers of people turning to the arts for solace and relief during the Covid-19 pandemic.
3.2	Responses showed that many are choosing to turn to books, crafting, playing a musical instrument, photography and painting, as a source of comfort and distraction, while more people than ever are switching to online sources to access concerts, theatre performances and classes.

3.3	<p>The report (see appendix 1) found that in the year prior to lockdown:  <b>76%</b> of respondents attended an Arts activity or event  <b>24%</b> had gone to a play or drama  <b>76%</b> had taken part in an arts related activity  <b>51%</b> stated that reading for pleasure was the most common activity</p> <p>Since lockdown:  <b>60%</b> participated in or viewed online Arts activity  <b>31%</b> stated that the Arts activity they took part in online or via social media were from Northern Ireland</p>
3.4	<p>Interestingly, of those engaging with the Arts during lockdown, <b>13%</b> did so for the first time.</p>
3.5	<p>When respondents surveyed were asked as to the reasons for engaging with the Arts during lockdown:</p> <p><b>68%</b> stated that it was for their personal enjoyment and well-being  <b>33%</b> stated that it was to satisfy their curiosity and to try something new  <b>21%</b> stated that it was a means of engaging with friends/family not in their household  <b>15%</b> stated that it was a resource for engaging their children and young people in their care  <b>12%</b> stated that it extended their social circle and  <b>5%</b> stated that it was a resource for engaging older people in their care</p> <p>In terms of likelihood of attending Arts events in an indoor space in specific circumstances:  <b>64%</b> stated they would, if masks were worn by staff and audience members  <b>66%</b> stated they would, if the venue adopted a rigorous cleaning regime  <b>65%</b> stated they would, if social distancing measures were strictly enforced  <b>66%</b> stated they would, if hand sanitisation was in place  <b>54%</b> stated they would, if ticket prices were reduced and  <b>67%</b> stated they would attend if there were fewer people in the venue</p>
3.6	<p>With regard to attitudes of those surveyed as to the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown on Arts attendance:</p> <p><b>55%</b> agreed that “since lockdown, I’ve really missed the opportunity to go to cultural events and venues”  <b>48%</b> agreed that “since lockdown, I have a greater appreciation of the role the arts can play in my life”  <b>34%</b> stated that they “feel more inclined to get involved in the arts now there is an opportunity to do so online or via social media.”</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>



	Financial: N/A
	Human: N/A
	Risk Management: N/A
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	Members are asked to note the findings of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland survey on arts and culture engagement levels in Northern Ireland during the COVID-19 Pandemic
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Appendix 1 - Survey to establish arts and culture engagement levels in Northern Ireland during the COVID-19 Pandemic





**Survey to establish arts and culture engagement levels  
in Northern Ireland during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

**23 November 2020**



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## Executive Summary

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland commissioned Social Market Research (SMR) to undertake a survey to establish the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the consumption of the Arts in Northern Ireland. The survey is based on a representative sample of 1000 Northern Ireland adults using an online panel methodology. The survey was conducted in accordance with the ISO20252 Standard and fieldwork was carried out in October 2020.

### Key Findings

#### Member of the Audience or Visitor to Arts Activities or Events Pre-lockdown and Since lockdown

- 76% of respondents had attended an arts activity or event *in the year prior to lockdown* in March 2020, with this falling significantly to 23% in the period since lockdown
- 53% had gone to a cinema in the year leading up to lockdown with this falling to 12% in the period since lockdown
- Those more likely to have been a member of an audience or have attended an arts activity since lockdown include: men (male, 28%: female, 19%); those in younger age groups (18-34, 38%: 35-59, 21%; 60+, 12%), those with a disability (29% vs. 20%), and those living in urban areas (urban, 25%: rural, 18%)

#### Taking part in Arts Activities Pre-lockdown and Since lockdown

- 76% had taken part in an arts-related activity in the 12 months leading up to lockdown, with this falling (significantly) to 70% in the period since lockdown
- Reading for pleasure was the most common arts-related activity (51%) that respondents had engaged in the year leading up to lockdown, with the same holding true for the period since lockdown (47%)
- Those more likely to have taken part in arts-related activities since lockdown include: younger respondents (18-34, 76%: 35-59, 68%; 60+, 66%), those in higher social classes (ABC1, 75%: C2DE, 66%), economically active respondents (active, 71%: Inactive, 66%), and those with a higher level of educational attainment ('low', 60%; 'medium', 71%; 'high', 76%)

#### Online Arts

- 60% had participated in or viewed online arts activity:
  - ✓ 43% watched live social media streams/ broadcasts (e.g. of music events)
  - ✓ 28% watched filmed performances of theatre, concerts and /or dance shows online
  - ✓ 18% looked at art, paintings, and photographs online (e.g. from a virtual collection)
  - ✓ 14% participated in an online arts class / group / tutorial (e.g. via zoom or Microsoft teams)
- 31% said the arts they took part in online or via social media were from Northern Ireland

#### Engaging with the Arts During Lockdown

- Among those engaging with the Arts during lockdown, 13% did so for the first time, 25% engaged more than they used to, 32% less than they used to, 20% engaged to the same level and 9% were unsure
  - 68% engaged with the Arts for personal enjoyment and wellbeing
  - 33% did so because they were curious and wanted to try something new
  - 21% did so to engage with friends and family not in their household
  - 15% did so to engage children and young people in their care
  - 12% did so to extend their social circle
  - 5% did so to engage older people in their care

- 11% attended (in person) cultural events, activities, or venues (e.g. attended a gallery, an outdoor show etc.) since some cultural organisations began to re-open *[most commonly those who had attended a cultural event had attended a music concert, event or opera, 18%]*

#### Comfort Attending Arts Events in Light of COVID-19

- 65% would be comfortable attending street art
- 61% would be comfortable attending music or other outdoor performances
- 59% would be comfortable attending museums
- 55% would be comfortable attending indoor art galleries
- 49% would be comfortable attending cinemas
- 45% would be comfortable attending music or a talk in a seated indoor venue
- 38% would be comfortable attending indoor concert halls

#### Likelihood of Attending Arts Events in an Indoor Space in Specific Circumstances

- 67% likely to attend if there were fewer people in the venue
- 66% likely to attend if hand sanitisation was in place
- 66% likely to attend if the venue adopted a rigorous cleaning regime
- 65% likely to attend if social distancing measures were strictly enforced
- 64% likely to attend if and, masks were worn by staff and audience members
- 54% likely to attend if ticket prices were reduced
- 53% likely to attend if venues have been open for a few months
- 28% said **social distancing measures** being strictly enforced is the **most important factor**
- 27% said if they can **attend an indoor event in the usual way** is the **most important factor**

#### Consumption of the Arts and Subscribing to Different Models

- 83% supported a free to view model for the consumption of the arts
- 31% would subscribe to pay for view to consume arts
- 24% were supportive of a donations based model

#### Attitudes to the Consumption of the Arts During Lockdown

- 55% agreed that *'since lockdown, I've really missed the opportunity to go to cultural events and venues'*
- 48% agreed that *'since lockdown, I have a greater appreciation of the role the arts can play in my life'*
- 44% agreed that *'since lockdown, the arts have had a positive impact on my mental health and wellbeing'*
- 34% agreed that *'I feel more inclined to get involved in the arts now there is more opportunity to online or via social media'*

#### Conclusions

The evidence from this survey demonstrates that COVID-19 has led to a significant fall in attendance at arts related events and activities in Northern Ireland. However, participation in the Arts although significantly down in the period since lockdown compared with the 12 month period leading up to lockdown, is relatively close to the level recorded in the pre pandemic period (70% vs. 76%).

The survey has found that the public have engaged with the arts via online platforms with 60% saying they have watched, viewed or participated in online arts activities. Personal enjoyment and wanting to try something new were the main reasons for engaging with the arts during lockdown.

The evidence from the survey also shows that the public would be more comfortable attending arts events or activities in outdoor settings, although a majority did say they would attend an arts event in an indoor space if public health measures were in place, with social distancing being the most important.

Most respondents in the survey supported the a 'free for view' model of consuming arts with limited support for pay for view or donation based models.

The survey results underscore the importance of the arts to Northern Ireland society, with a majority of the public saying that since lockdown they have missed the opportunity to go to cultural events and venues. Finally, the survey provides evidence of the benefits of the Arts to health, with a significant number of respondents, and particularly younger respondents, saying that since lockdown the Arts have had a positive impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

## 1. Introduction

Anecdotal evidence indicates that a larger than normal proportion of the Northern Ireland population engaged with arts and culture online during the COVID-19 pandemic but that there is a high degree of concern amongst audiences about returning to physical arts venues and theatres post lockdown.

In order to substantiate claims of increased on-line consumption, inform measures to re-open venues and build a strong evidence based policy platform to address the impact of COVID-19, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland commissioned Social Market Research to undertake a survey of the NI general public to establish levels of engagement in arts and culture at an adult population level in Northern Ireland.

### 1.1 Survey Focus and Content

The aim of the survey was to establish background trends in engagement with the Arts (including both attendance and participation), motivations and methods. Specifically, the survey sought to understand the extent to which engagement in the Arts had enhanced education provision and supported mental health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The survey focused on:

- Attendance at arts events in the year leading up to lockdown;
- Attendance at arts events during lockdown;
- Participation in arts activities in the year leading up to lockdown;
- Participation in arts activities during lockdown;
- Participation in online arts activities during lockdown;
- Taking part or participating in NI arts during lockdown;
- Reasons for engaging in the arts during lockdown;
- Level of engagement with the arts during lockdown;
- Attendance at arts events since lockdown began to ease;
- Attending arts events in the future in different venues;
- Factors influencing attendance at arts events in an indoor space;
- Subscribing to different models regarding the consumption of the arts;
- Lockdown and the impact of the arts;

A copy of the survey questionnaire is included as Appendix 1.



## 1.2 Survey Methodology

This current survey is based on 1003 interviews with the Northern Ireland general public aged 18+. The survey was conducted using an online panel methodology with results representative of the NI adult population. The survey has a margin of error of +/-3.1% (at most). Fieldwork was conducted between 20 October and 31 October 2020. The research was conducted in line with ISO20252 of which Social Market Research (SMR) is fully accredited.

### 1.2.1 Sample Profile

Table 1.1 presents the sample profile achieved and weighted by age, sex, and social class.

Table 1.1 Sample Profile [n=1003]					
		Achieved Sample		Weighed Sample	
		%	n	%	n
Sex	Male	47	475	49	486
	Female	53	528	51	517
Age	18-34	34	341	28	282
	35-59	45	452	43	430
	60+	21	210	29	291
SEG	ABC1	55	550	47	471
	C2DE	45	453	53	532

## 1.3 Notes on Reporting

Please note that due to rounding, row and column totals in tables and figures may not sum to 100. Also, please note that any differences between sample subgroups (e.g. age, gender, social class etc.) alluded to in the report commentary are statistically significant to at least the 95% confidence level. The use of [-] within tables denotes less than 1%. Prior to analysis the data have been weighted by age, sex, and social class in line with NI census estimates.

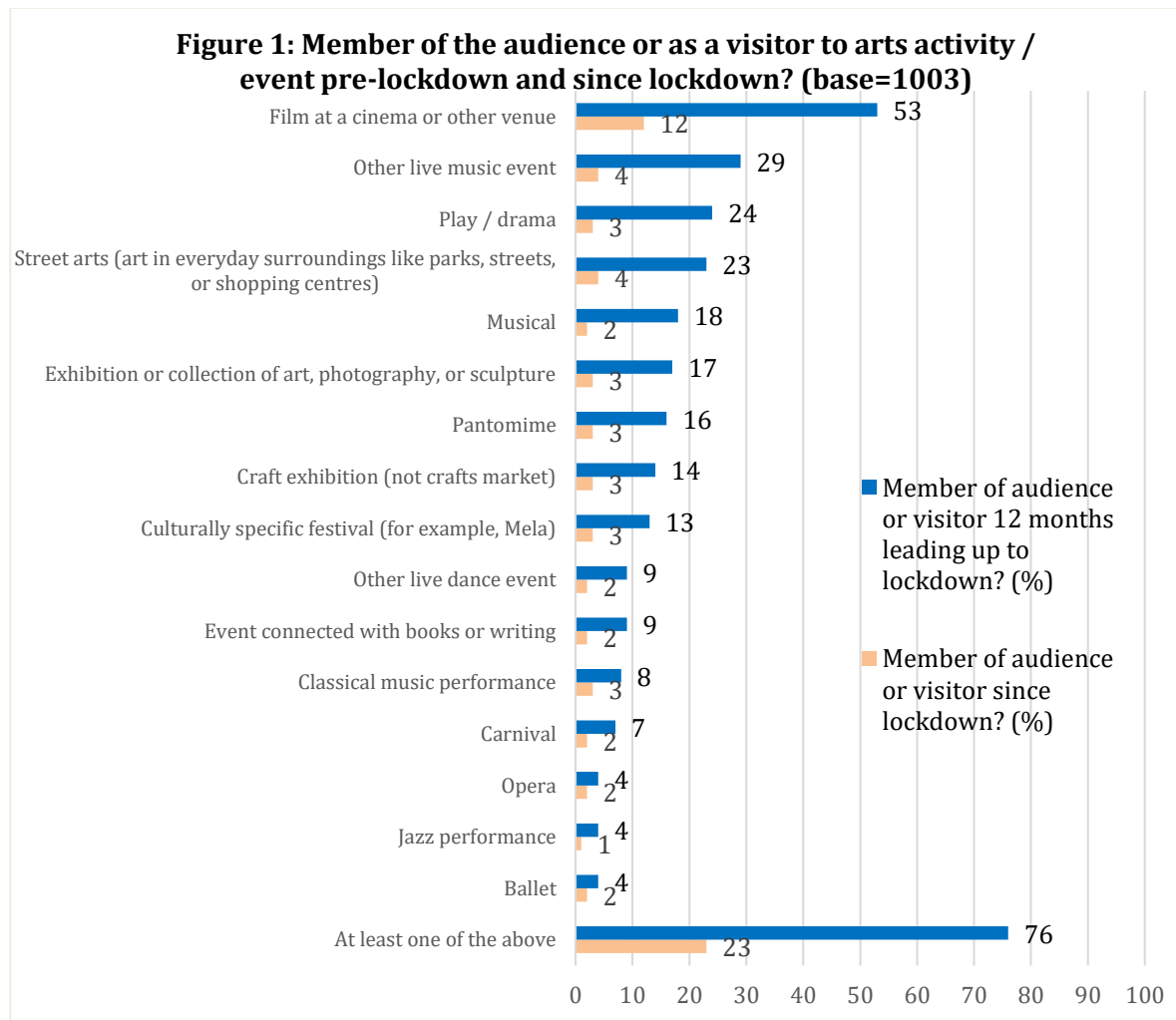
## 2. Survey Findings

### 2.1 Member of An Audience or Visitor to Arts Activities or Events Pre and Since Lockdown

Figure 1 compares attendance at a range of arts activities and events in the year prior to lockdown in March 2020 and the period since lockdown.

In relation to each activity / event there was a statistically significant fall in the proportion of respondents saying they were either a visitor or an audience member. For example, just over half (53%) of respondents reported going to see a film at a cinema or other venue compared with 12% in the period since lockdown.

Figure 1 also shows that the proportion of respondents saying they had been a member of an audience or a visitor an arts event / activity fell significantly from 76% in the 12 months leading up to lockdown to 23% in the period since lockdown.



#### 2.1.1 Member of an Audience or Visitor in 12 Months Leading up to Lockdown

##### Differences between Respondent Groups (Audience or Visitor to at Least one Event or Activity)

Figure 1 shows that 76% of respondents indicated that **in the 12 months prior to lockdown** they had been a member of an audience or a visitor to at least one of the events / activities listed in Figure 1. There were a number of statistically significant differences in response between different respondent groups

- **Gender:** There was no statistically significant difference in response by gender (75% of males had attended an event / activity in the year prior to lockdown compared with 78% of females)

- **Age:** Significantly fewer older respondents had attended an event / activity in the year prior to lockdown (18-34, 80%; 35-59, 79%; 60+, 69%)
- **Social class:** Those in higher social classes were significantly more likely to have attended an event / activity in the year prior to lockdown (ABC1, 84%; C2DE, 70%)
- **Disability:** There was no statistically significant difference in response between those reporting a disability and those not (74% vs. 78%);
- **Economic Activity:** Economically active respondents were significantly more likely to have attended an event / activity in the year prior to lockdown (Active, 81%; Inactive, 68%);
- **Educational Attainment<sup>1</sup>:** Those with the highest level of educational attainment were significantly more likely to have attended an event / activity in the year prior to lockdown ('low', 63%; 'medium', 78%; 'high', 85%);
- **Urban / Rural:** Those living in rural areas were significantly more likely to have attended an event / activity in the year prior to lockdown (Urban, 74%; Rural, 82%)
- **Community background:** There was no statistically significant difference by community background (protestant, 78%; catholic, 81%)

### 2.1.2 Member of an Audience or Visitor Since Lockdown

#### Differences between Respondent Groups (Audience or Visitor to at Least one Event or Activity)

Figure 1 shows that 23% of respondents indicated that since lockdown they have been a member of an audience or a visitor to at least one of the events / activities listed in Figure 1.

There were a number of statistically significant differences in response between different respondent groups

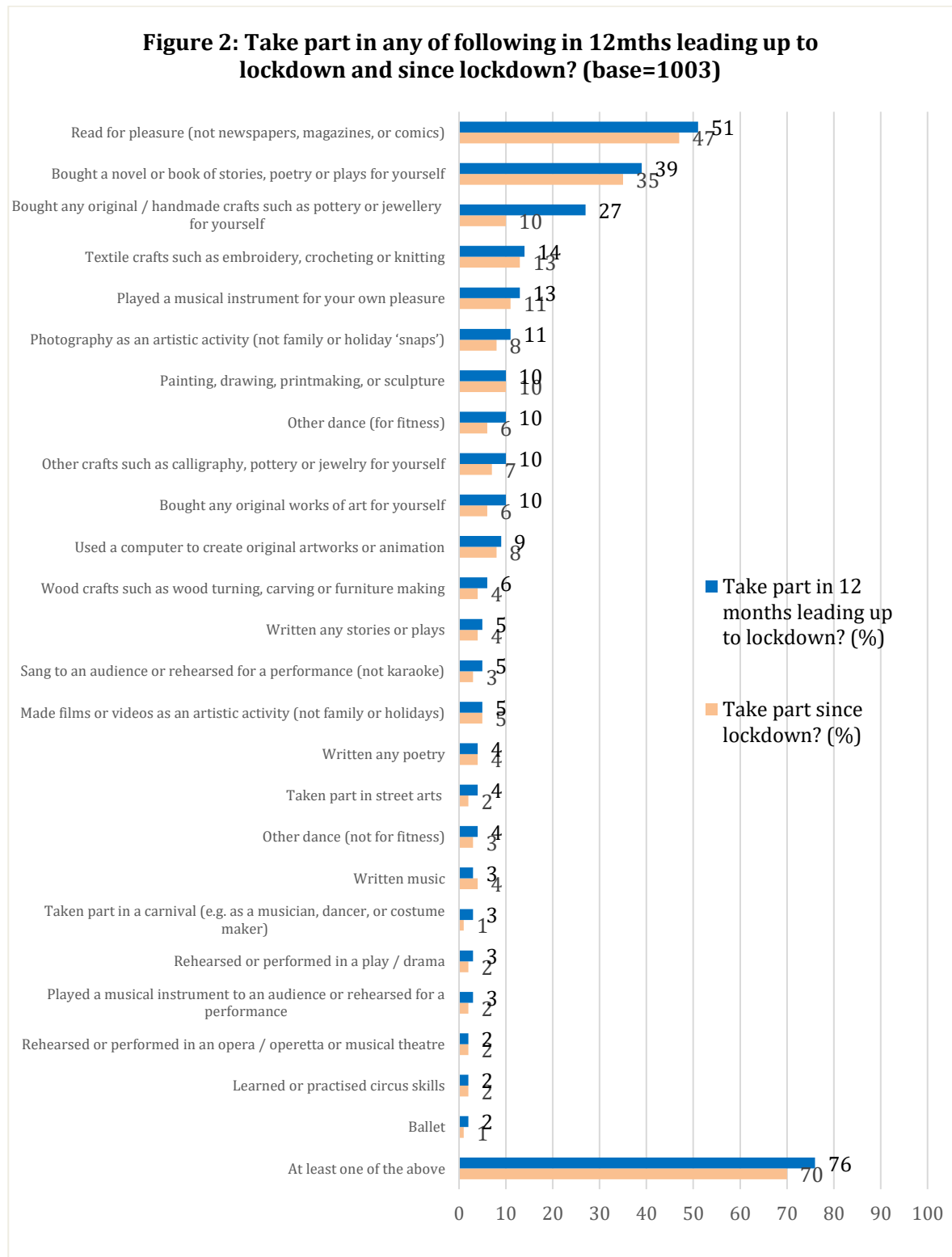
- **Gender:** Males were more likely to report attending an arts event / activity as an audience member or visitor since lockdown (male, 28%; female, 19%);
- **Age:** More younger respondents reported attending an arts event / activity as an audience member or visitor since lockdown (18-34, 38%; 35-59, 21%; 60+, 12%)
- **Social class:** There was no significant difference in terms of social class (ABC1, 21%; C2DE, 25%)
- **Disability:** More respondents with a disability reported attending an arts event / activity as an audience member or visitor since lockdown (29% vs. 20%);
- **Economic Activity:** There was no significant difference in terms of economic activity (Active, 25%; Inactive, 20%);
- **Educational Attainment:** There was no significant difference in terms of educational attainment level ('low', 19%; 'medium', 26%; 'high', 25%);
- **Urban / Rural:** Those living in urban areas were significantly more likely to report attending an arts event / activity as an audience member or visitor since lockdown (Urban, 25%; Rural, 18%)
- **Community background:** There was no statistically significant difference by community background (protestant, 24%; catholic, 26%)

<sup>1</sup> Educational attainment level - High: Degree Level or higher or BTEC (Higher), BEC (Higher), TEC (Higher), HNC, HND; Medium: GCE A 'Level (including NVQ Level 3) or BTEC (National), BEC (National), TEC (National), ONC, OND; low: GCSE (including NVQ Level 2), GCE O' Level (including CSE Grade 1), Senior Certificate, BTEC (General), BEC (General), CSE (Other than Grade 1) or No formal qualification

## 2.2 Taking Part in Arts Activities Pre and Since Lockdown

Respondents were asked if they had taken part in a range of arts related activities in the year prior to lockdown in March 2020 and the period since lockdown. Figure 2 shows that most commonly respondents said they read for pleasure (51%) in the 12 months leading up to lockdown, with 47% saying they read for pleasure since lockdown. For each specific activity there was no significant difference in participation levels in the period pre lockdown and the period since lockdown.

Figure 2 shows that 76% of respondents indicated that they had taken part in an arts-related activity in the 12 months leading up to lockdown, with this falling (significantly) to 70% in the period since lockdown.



### 2.2.1 Taking Part in Arts Activities Pre Lockdown

#### Differences between Respondent Groups (Participation in an Arts-Related Activity Pre Lockdown)

Figure 2 shows that 76% of respondents indicated taking part in at least one of the events / activities listed, with a number of statistically significant differences in response:

- **Gender:** There was no statistically significant difference (74% of males had taken part in at least one arts related activity in the 12 months leading up to lockdown compared with 78% of females)
- **Age:** Younger respondents were more likely to have taken part in at least one arts related activity in the 12 months leading up to lockdown (18-34, 82%; 35-59, 75%; 60+, 73%)
- **Social class:** Those in higher social classes were more likely to have taken part in at least one arts related activity in the 12 months leading up to lockdown (ABC1, 82%; C2DE, 71%)
- **Disability:** There was no statistically significant difference in response between those reporting a disability and those not (79% vs. 75%);
- **Economic Activity:** Economically active respondents were more likely to have taken part in at least one arts related activity in the 12 months leading up to lockdown (Active, 79%; Inactive, 72%);
- **Educational Attainment:** Those with the highest level of educational attainment were more likely to have taken part in at least one arts related activity in the 12 months leading up to lockdown ('low', 65%; 'medium', 78%; 'high', 83%);
- **Urban / Rural:** There was no statistically significant difference (Urban, 76%; Rural, 78%)
- **Community background:** There was no statistically significant difference by community background (protestant, 77%; catholic, 79%)

### 2.2.2 Taking Part in Arts Activities Since Lockdown

#### Differences between Respondent Groups (Participation in an Arts-Related Activity Since Lockdown)

Figure 2 shows that 70% of respondents indicated taking part in at least one of the events / activities listed, with a number of statistically significant differences in response:

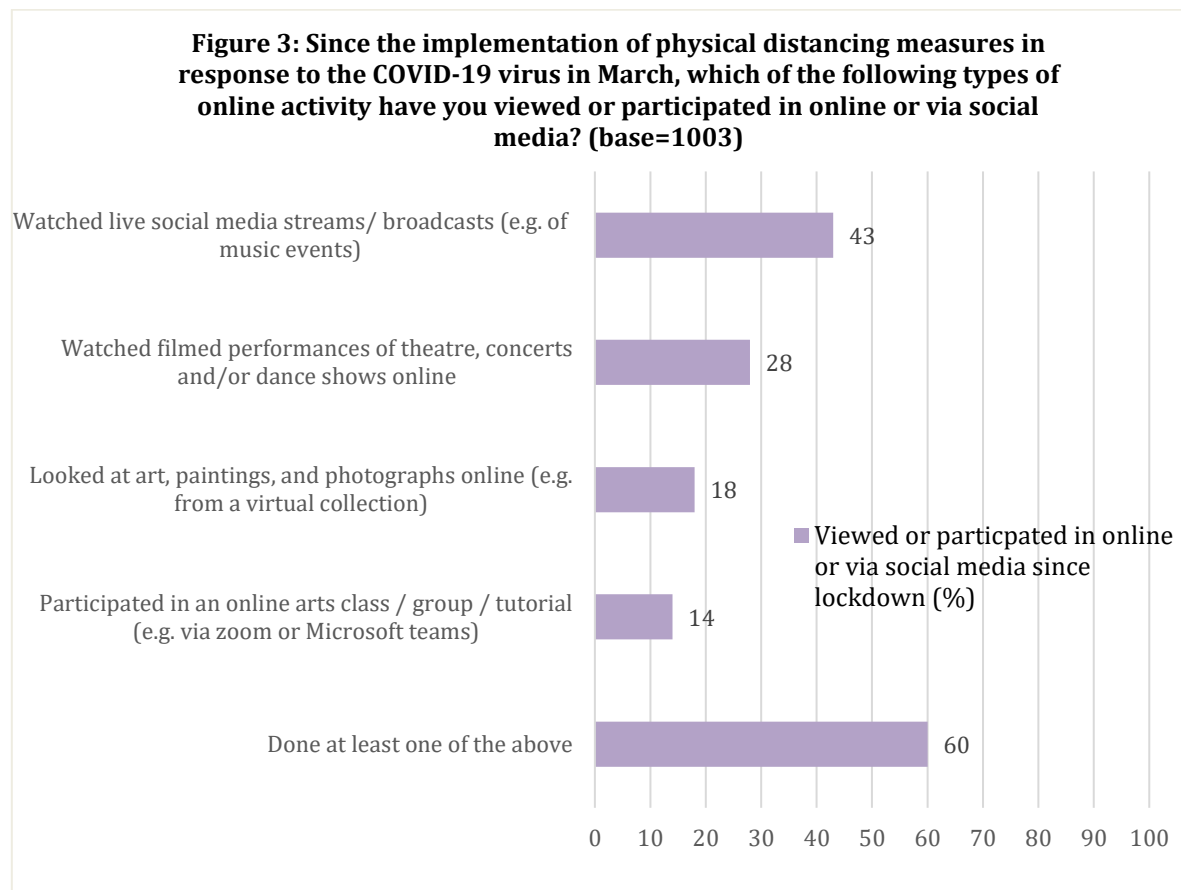
- **Gender:** There was no statistically significant difference in response by gender (68% of males had taken part in at least one arts related activity since lockdown compared with 72% of females)
- **Age:** Younger respondents were more likely to have taken part in at least one arts related since lockdown (18-34, 76%; 35-59, 68%; 60+, 66%)
- **Social class:** Those in higher social classes were more likely to have taken part in at least one arts related activity since lockdown (ABC1, 75%; C2DE, 66%)
- **Disability:** There was no statistically significant difference in response between those reporting a disability and those not (73% vs. 68%);
- **Economic Activity:** Economically active respondents were more likely to have taken part in at least one arts related activity since lockdown (Active, 71%; Inactive, 66%);
- **Educational Attainment:** Better educated respondents were more likely to have taken part in at least one arts related activity since lockdown ('low', 60%; 'medium', 71%; 'high', 76%);
- **Urban / Rural:** There was no statistically significant difference (Urban, 71%; Rural, 67%)
- **Community background:** There was no statistically significant difference by community background (protestant, 71%; catholic, 72%)

### 2.3 Online Arts Activity Viewed or Participated in Since Introduction of Physical Distancing

Respondents were asked if they had viewed or participated in a range of arts activities online or via social media since the implementation of physical distancing measures in response to the COVID-19 virus in March.

Figure 3 shows that respondents had most commonly watched live social media streams/ broadcasts (e.g. of music events) [43%], with 28% having watched filmed performances of theatre, concerts and /or dance shows online.

Relatively fewer respondents reported looking at art, paintings, and photographs online (e.g. from a virtual collection) [18%] and participating in an online arts class / group / tutorial (e.g. via zoom or Microsoft teams) [14%].



#### Differences between Respondent Groups

Figure 3 shows that six out of ten (60%) respondents reported having viewed or participated in at least one of the activities listed in Figure 3 since the implementation of physical distancing measures in March 2020. However, there were a number of statistically significant differences in response:

#### Watched filmed performances of theatre, concerts and/or dance shows online

- **Gender:** There was no statistically significant difference in response by gender (male, 28%; female, 28%);
- **Age:** Older respondents were less likely to have done so (18-34, 33%; 35-59, 30%; 60+, 20%)
- **Social class:** Those in higher social classes were more likely to have done so (ABC1, 31%; C2DE, 25%)
- **Disability:** Those with a disability were less likely to have done so (24% vs. 31%);

- **Economic Activity:** The economically active were more likely to have done so (active, 31%: Inactive, 23%);
- **Educational Attainment:** Those with the lowest level of educational attainment were less likely to have done so ('low', 21%; 'medium', 30%; 'high', 32%);
- **Urban / Rural:** There was no statistically significant difference (Urban, 29%: Rural, 27%)
- **Community background:** There was no statistically significant difference by community background (protestant, 28%: catholic, 29%)

#### Looked at art, paintings, and photographs online (e.g. from a virtual collection)

- **Gender:** There was no statistically significant difference in response by gender (male, 18%: female, 17%);
- **Age:** Older respondents were less likely to have done so (18-34, 26%: 35-59, 15%; 60+, 14%)
- **Social class:** There was no significant difference (ABC1, 19%: C2DE, 16%)
- **Disability:** There was no significant difference (20% vs. 16%);
- **Economic Activity:** The economically active were more likely to have done so (active, 20%: Inactive, 14%);
- **Educational Attainment:** Those with the lowest level of educational attainment were less likely to have done so ('low', 12%; 'medium', 20%; 'high', 21%);
- **Urban / Rural:** There was no statistically significant difference (Urban, 18%: Rural, 16%)
- **Community background:** Catholic respondents were more likely to have done so (protestant, 15%: catholic, 22%)

#### Watched live social media streams/ broadcasts (e.g. of music events)

- **Gender:** There was no statistically significant difference in response by gender (male, 44%: female, 41%);
- **Age:** Older respondents were less likely to have done so (18-34, 55%: 35-59, 44%; 60+, 29%)
- **Social class:** There was no significant difference (ABC1, 43%: C2DE, 43%)
- **Disability:** There was no significant difference (40% vs. 45%);
- **Economic Activity:** The economically active were more likely to have done so (active, 48%: Inactive, 33%);
- **Educational Attainment:** Those with the lowest level of educational attainment were less likely to have done so ('low', 33%; 'medium', 52%; 'high', 45%);
- **Urban / Rural:** There was no statistically significant difference (Urban, 43%: Rural, 44%)
- **Community background:** Catholic respondents were more likely to have done so (protestant, 39%: catholic, 51%)

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**Participated in an online arts class / group / tutorial (e.g. via zoom or Microsoft teams)**

- **Gender:** Women were more likely to have done so (male, 11%: female, 17%);
- **Age:** Older respondents were less likely to have done so (18-34, 21%: 35-59, 13%; 60+, 8%)
- **Social class:** There was no significant difference (ABC1, 15%: C2DE, 13%)
- **Disability:** There was no significant difference (13% vs. 15%);
- **Economic Activity:** The economically active were more likely to have done so (active, 16%: Inactive, 10%);
- **Educational Attainment:** Those with a higher level of educational attainment were more likely to have done so ('low', 10%; 'medium', 11%; 'high', 19%);
- **Urban / Rural:** There was no statistically significant difference (Urban, 14%: Rural, 14%)
- **Community background:** Catholic respondents were more likely to have done so (protestant, 13%: catholic, 16%)

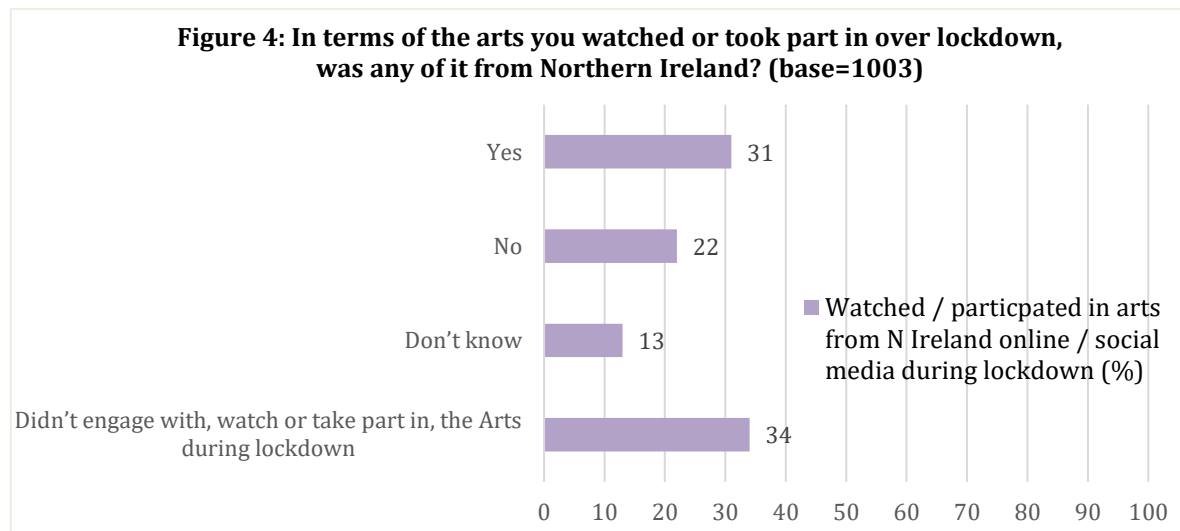
**Participated in or Viewed at Least One Online Arts Activity**

- **Gender:** There was no significant difference (male, 62%: female, 58%);
- **Age:** Older respondents were less likely to have done so (18-34, 75%: 35-59, 60%; 60+, 44%)
- **Social class:** There was no significant difference (ABC1, 63%: C2DE, 57%)
- **Disability:** There was no significant difference (57% vs. 62%);
- **Economic Activity:** The economically active were more likely to have done so (active, 65%: Inactive, 49%);
- **Educational Attainment:** Those with the lowest level of educational attainment were less likely to have done so ('low', 47%; 'medium', 69%; 'high', 64%);
- **Urban / Rural:** There was no statistically significant difference (Urban, 59%: Rural, 61%)
- **Community background:** Catholic respondents were more likely to have done so (protestant, 56%: catholic, 67%)



## 2.4 Watching or Taking Part in Northern Ireland Produced Arts Activities Online or via Social Media

Figure 4 shows that 31% of respondents said that the arts they took part in online or via social media were from Northern Ireland (no, 22%: don't know, 13%). Thirty four percent of respondents said they didn't engage with, watch or take part in the arts during lockdown.



### Differences between Respondent Groups

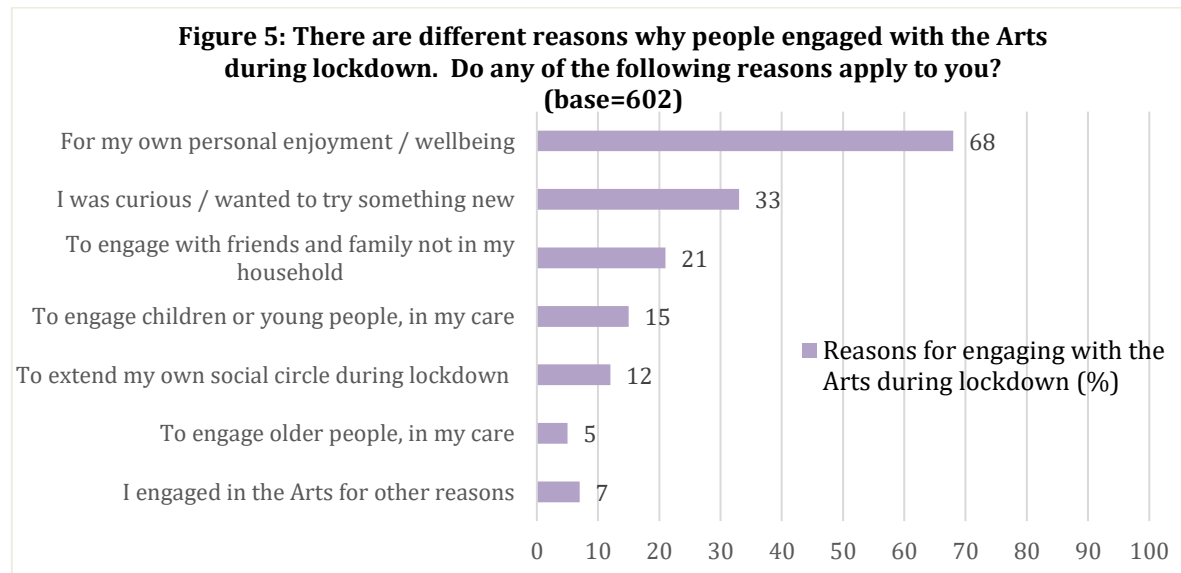
There were a number of differences in the likelihood of watching or taking part in Northern Ireland arts online or via social media between different respondent groups:

- **Gender:** There was no statistically significant difference in response by gender (male, 32%: female, 30%);
- **Age:** Older respondents were less likely to have watched or took part in Northern Ireland arts online or via social media (18-34, 41%: 35-59, 31%: 60+, 22%)
- **Social class:** There was no significant difference (ABC1, 33%: C2DE, 29%)
- **Disability:** Those with a disability were more likely to have watched or participated in N Ireland arts online or via social media (35% vs. 28%);
- **Economic Activity:** Economically active were more likely to have watched or participated in N Ireland arts online or via social media (active, 36%: Inactive, 22%);
- **Educational Attainment:** Those with the lowest level of educational attainment were less likely to have watched or participated in N Ireland arts online or via social media ('low', 22%; 'medium', 36%; 'high', 35%);
- **Urban / Rural:** There was no statistically significant difference (Urban, 30%: Rural, 31%)
- **Community background:** There was no statistically significant difference by community background (protestant, 30%: catholic, 36%)

## 2.5 Reasons for Engaging in the Arts During Lockdown

The most common reason why respondents engaged in the Arts during lockdown was for personal enjoyment and wellbeing (68%), with one in three (33%) doing so because they were curious and wanted to try something new.

Relatively fewer respondents cited the following reasons for engaging with the Arts during lockdown: to engage with friends and family not in respondent's household (21%); to engage children and young people in the care of respondents (15%); to extend my social circle (12%); and, to engage older people in my care (5%). Seven percent engaged in the Arts for other reasons.

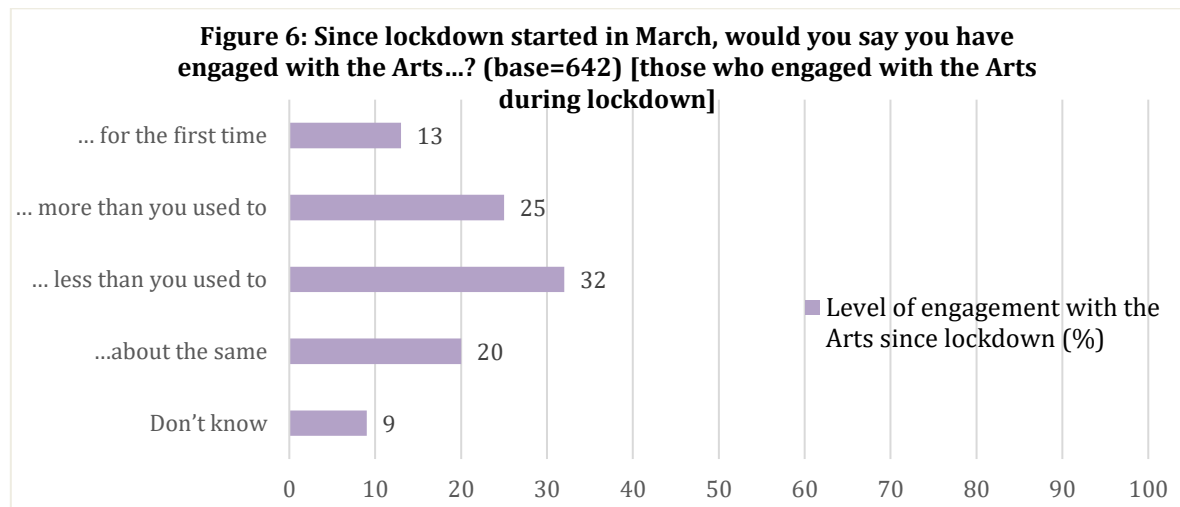


### Other reasons for engaging with the Arts during lockdown

- Support / support friends who are artists (n=6)
- Bored / out of boredom / nothing to do (n=4)
- For entertainment (n=3)
- Fun / pleasure / relaxing (n=3)
- Trying something new outside my comfort zone / curiosity (n=2)
- Collaborative writing experience
- Curiosity
- Daughters 2nd solo art exhibition
- During lockdown it was a way I could be emersed in live music
- For my own pleasure, I have read and watched YouTube video on music and philosophy.
- Friends recommendation
- Furthering my artistic practise
- I engaged in arts to take up a new hobby
- I knew the people who were part of the event.
- I volunteer with an arts therapy group
- I work in the arts
- Passion
- Personal ambition
- Philosophy
- Self-satisfaction
- Social and political awareness
- Song written
- Teacher
- This was a live (online) reading of the hobbit, the wife is a Lord of the Rings fan.
- To use the time productively and make sure that I was coping
- To revisit a portrait I studied at College
- Unique opportunity
- You learn something new

## 2.6 Level of Engagement with the Arts During Lockdown

Among those who engaged with the Arts during lockdown (n=642), 13% said they did so for the first time, 25% said they engaged more than they used to, 32% engaged less than they used to, 20% described their engagement as about the same and 9% answered, 'don't know'.



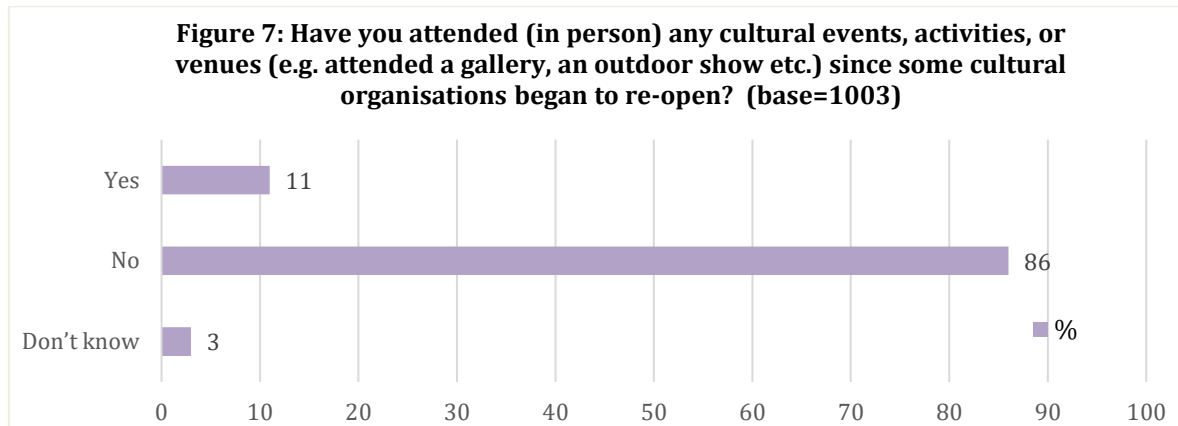
### Differences between Respondent Groups

Among those who engaged with the Arts during lockdown there were a number of significant differences in the level of engagement recorded between different respondent groups:

- **Gender:** There was no statistically significant difference in response by gender
- **Age:** Older respondents were more likely to say they had engaged with the Arts for the first time (18-34, 11%; 35-59, 12%; 60+, 20%) whereas younger respondents were more likely to say they had engaged with the Arts more than they used to (18-34, 33%; 35-59, 25%; 60+, 13%)
- **Social class:** Those in C2DE social classes were more likely to say they had engaged with the Arts for the first time (ABC1, 8%; C2DE, 19%) whereas those in the higher social classes were more likely to say they had engaged with the Arts less than they used to (ABC1, 42%; C2DE, 22%)
- **Disability:** Those with a disability were more likely to say they had engaged with the Arts for the first time (18% vs. 10%)
- **Economic Activity:** Economically inactive were more likely to say they had engaged with the Arts for the first time (active, 12%; Inactive, 16%), whereas the economically active were more likely to say they had engaged with the Arts more than they used to (27% vs. 20%)
- **Educational Attainment:** Those with the highest level of educational attainment were less likely to say they had engaged with the Arts for the first time ('low', 16%; 'medium', 22%; 'high', 8%) and more likely to say they had engaged with the Arts less than they used to ('low', 24%; 'medium', 25%; 'high', 40%)
- **Urban / Rural:** There was no statistically significant difference
- **Community background:** There was no statistically significant difference by community background

## 2.7 Attendance at Cultural Events, Activities or Venues Since Cultural Organisations began to Re-Open

Approximately one in ten (11%) respondents reported attending (in person) cultural events, activities, or venues (e.g. attended a gallery, an outdoor show etc.) since some cultural organisations began to re-open.



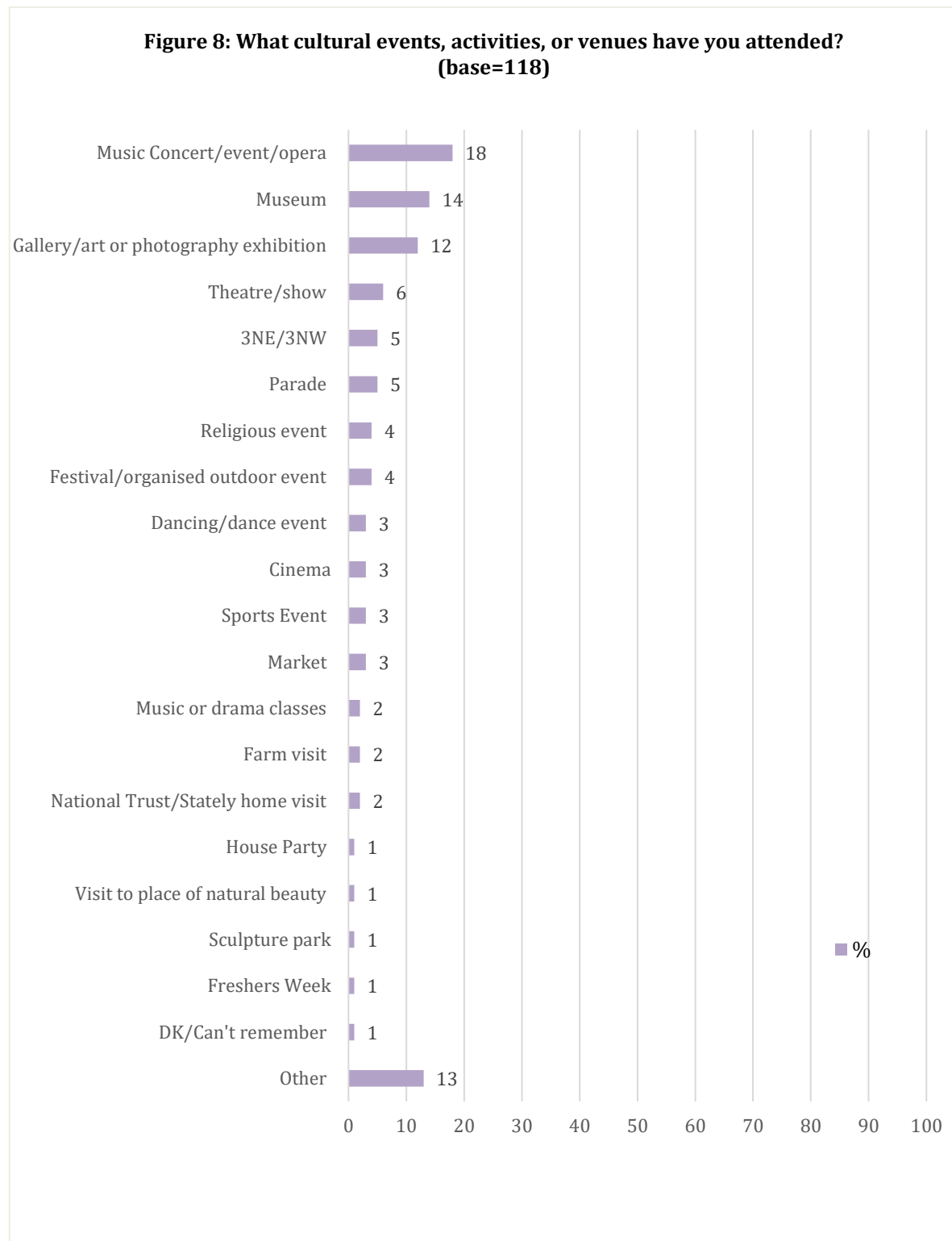
### Differences between Respondent Groups

There were a number of statistically significant differences by respondent groups:

- **Gender:** There was no statistically significant difference in response by gender (male, 14%: female, 9%)
- **Age:** Younger respondents were more likely to say they had attended (in person) cultural events, activities, or venues (18-34, 20%: 35-59, 9%; 60+, 6%)
- **Social class:** There was no statistically significant difference in response by social class (ABC1, 11%: C2DE, 12%)
- **Disability:** Those with a disability were more likely to say they had attended (in person) cultural events, activities, or venues (18% vs. 7%)
- **Economic Activity:** Economically active were more likely to say they had attended (in person) cultural events, activities, or venues (active, 14%: inactive, 7%)
- **Educational Attainment:** There was no statistically significant difference in response by educational attainment level ('low', 10%; 'medium', 13%; 'high', 11%)
- **Urban / Rural:** There was no statistically significant difference (urban, 12%: rural, 10%)
- **Community background:** There was no statistically significant difference by community background (protestant, 11%: catholic, 15%)

### 2.7.1 Cultural Events, Activities, or Venues Attended

Among respondents (n=118) who said they attended a cultural event, activity or venue, 18% had attended a music concert / event / opera, 14% had attended a museum and 12% attended a gallery / art or photography exhibition.

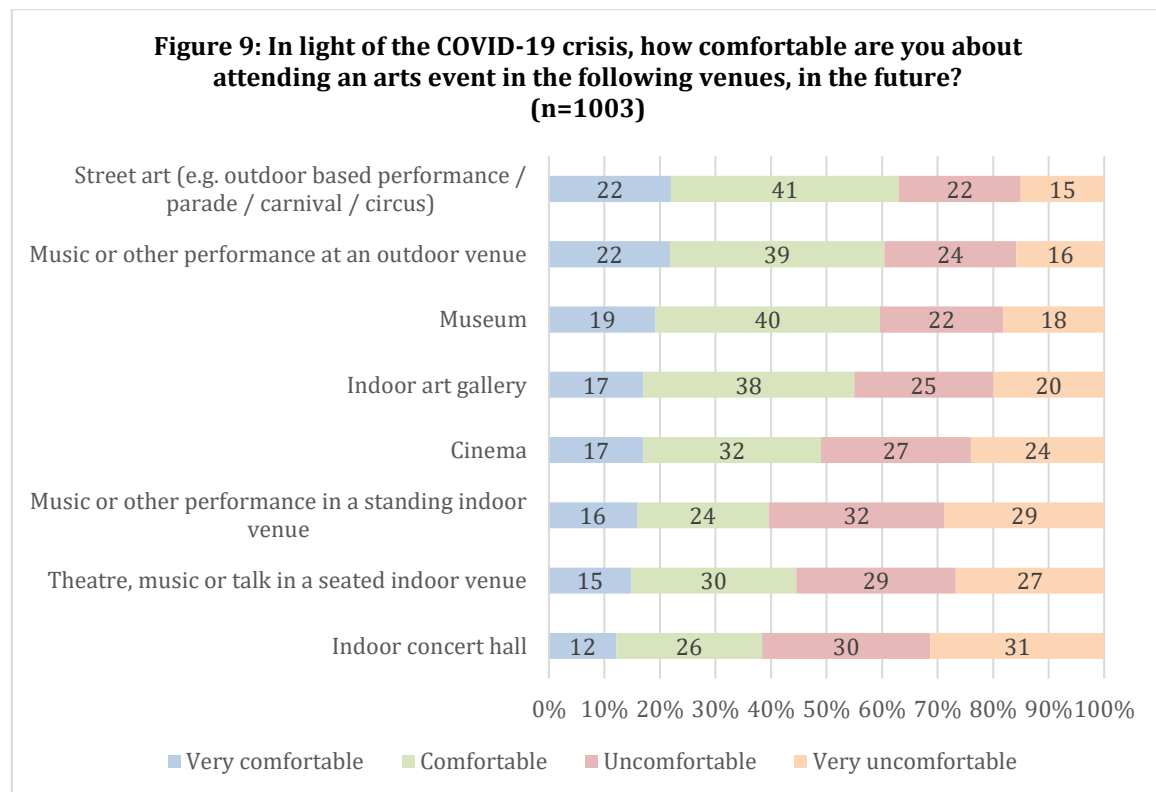


## 2.8 Level of Comfort with Attending Different Arts Venues

In light of the COVID-19 crisis, respondents were asked how comfortable they are about attending an arts event in different venues in the future.

Figure 9 shows that respondents were most likely to say they would be either very comfortable or comfortable attending street art (63%), with relatively higher levels of comfort also recorded for attending music or other outdoor performances (61%), museums (59%) and indoor art galleries (55%).

Relatively lower levels of comfort were recorded for indoor concert halls (38%), theatres, music or a talk in a seated indoor venue (45%), music or other performance in a standing indoor venue (40%) and cinemas (49%).



### Differences between Respondent Groups

#### Music or other performance in a standing indoor venue

- **Gender:** Men were more likely to feel comfortable (male, 44%: female, 35%)
- **Age:** Younger respondents were more likely to feel comfortable (18-34, 53%: 35-59, 38%; 60+, 28%)
- **Social class:** C2DEs were more likely to feel comfortable (ABC1, 33%: C2DE, 45%)

#### Indoor concert hall

- **Gender:** No significant difference (male, 42%: female, 36%)
- **Age:** Younger respondents were more likely to feel comfortable (18-34, 51%: 35-59, 36%; 60+, 30%)
- **Social class:** C2DEs were more likely to feel comfortable (ABC1, 33%: C2DE, 44%)

#### Theatre, music or talk in a seated indoor venue

- **Gender:** No significant difference (male, 47%: female, 42%)
- **Age:** Younger respondents were more likely to feel comfortable (18-34, 59%: 35-59, 42%; 60+, 33%)
- **Social class:** C2DEs were more likely to feel comfortable (ABC1, 40%: C2DE, 49%)

#### Cinema

- **Gender:** No significant difference (male, 52%: female, 47%)
- **Age:** Younger respondents were more likely to feel comfortable (18-34, 66%: 35-59, 49%; 60+, 33%)
- **Social class:** C2DEs were more likely to feel comfortable (ABC1, 46%: C2DE, 52%)

**Museum**

- **Gender:** Men were more likely to feel comfortable (male, 63%: female, 56%)
- **Age:** Younger respondents were more likely to feel comfortable (18-34, 73%: 35-59, 60%; 60+, 46%)
- **Social class:** No significant difference (ABC1, 58%: C2DE, 62%)

**Indoor art gallery**

- **Gender:** No significant difference (male, 58%: female, 53%)
- **Age:** Younger respondents were more likely to feel comfortable (18-34, 68%: 35-59, 56%; 60+, 42%)
- **Social class:** No significant difference (ABC1, 52%: C2DE, 57%)

**Music or other performance at an outdoor venue**

- **Gender:** Men were more likely to feel comfortable (male, 63%: female, 57%)
- **Age:** Younger respondents were more likely to feel comfortable (18-34, 71%: 35-59, 61%; 60+, 49%)
- **Social class:** No significant difference (ABC1, 60%: C2DE, 61%)

**Street art (e.g. outdoor based performance / parade / carnival / circus)**

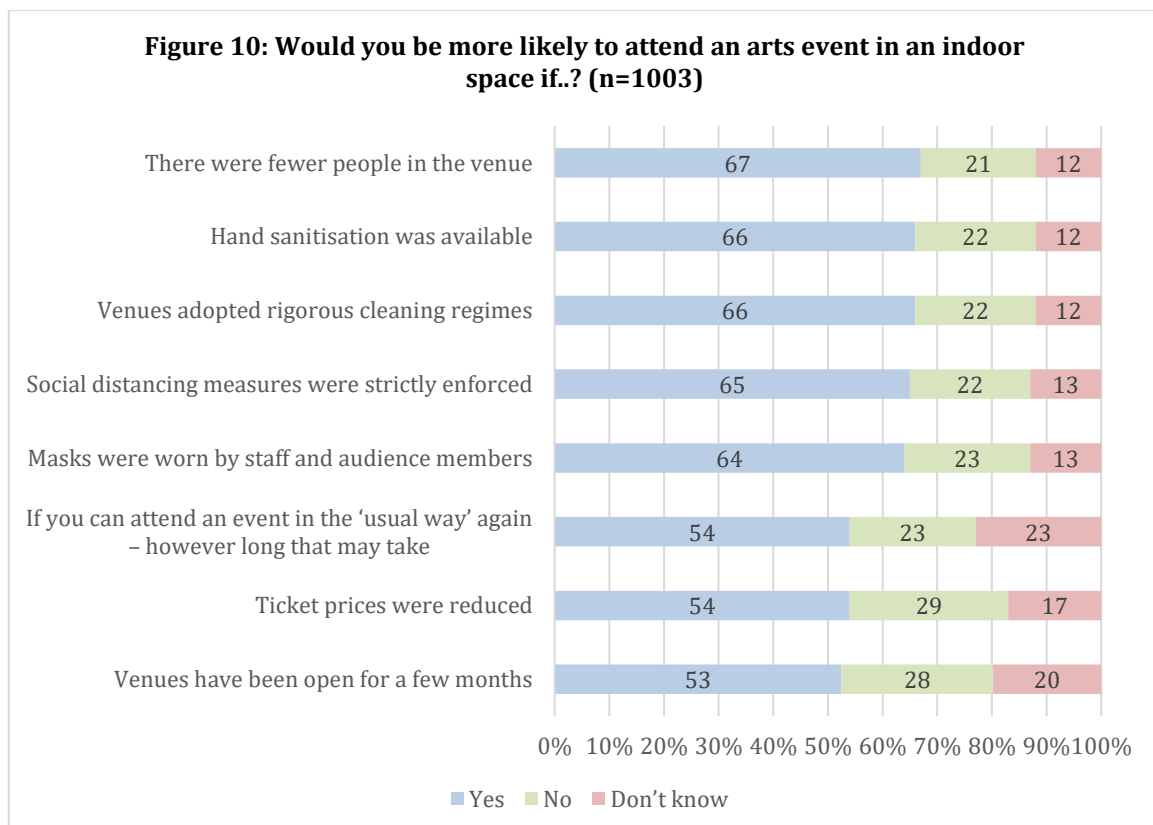
- **Gender:** No significant difference (male, 65%: female, 62%)
- **Age:** Younger respondents were more likely to feel comfortable (18-34, 74%: 35-59, 65%; 60+, 51%)
- **Social class:** No significant difference (ABC1, 62%: C2DE, 65%)

**2.9 Factors Encouraging Attendance at Arts Events in an Indoor Space**

Respondents were asked if they would attend an Arts event in an indoor space if a range of public health protections were in place.

Figure 10 shows that respondents were more likely to say they would attend an Arts event in an indoor space if: there were fewer people in the venue (67%); hand sanitisation was in place (66%); the venue adopted a rigorous cleaning regime (66%); social distancing measures were strictly enforced (65%); and, masks were worn by staff and audience members (64%).

Conversely, relatively fewer respondents said they would attend an Arts event in an indoor space if: venues have been open for a few months (53%); and, ticket prices were reduced (54%).



## Differences between Respondent Groups

### Social distancing measures were strictly enforced

- **Gender:** There was no significant difference (male, 65%: female, 66%)
- **Age:** 18-34 year olds were more likely to say they would attend (18-34, 77%: 35-59, 63%; 60+, 57%)
- **Social class:** ABC1s were more likely to say they would attend (ABC1, 74%: C2DE, 58%)

### There were fewer people in the venue

- **Gender:** There was no significant difference (male, 64%: female, 69%)
- **Age:** Older respondents were less likely to say they would attend (18-34, 71%: 35-59, 70%; 60+, 59%)
- **Social class:** ABC1s were more likely to say they would attend (ABC1, 73%: C2DE, 62%)

### Ticket prices were reduced

- **Gender:** There was no significant difference (male, 52%: female, 56%)
- **Age:** Older respondents were less likely to say they would attend (18-34, 64%: 35-59, 52%; 60+, 46%)
- **Social class:** No significant difference (ABC1, 55%: C2DE, 53%)

### Venues adopted rigorous cleaning regimes

- **Gender:** Women were more likely to say they would (male, 61%: female, 69%)
- **Age:** Older respondents were less likely to say they would attend (18-34, 73%: 35-59, 66%; 60+, 58%)
- **Social class:** ABC1s more likely to say they would attend (ABC1, 71%: C2DE, 61%)

### Hand sanitisation was available

- **Gender:** Women were more likely to say they would (male, 63%: female, 70%)
- **Age:** Older respondents were less likely to say they would attend (18-34, 73%: 35-59, 67%; 60+, 58%)
- **Social class:** ABC1s more likely to say they would attend (ABC1, 71%: C2DE, 63%)

### Masks were worn by staff and audience members

- **Gender:** No significant difference (male, 63%: female, 64%)
- **Age:** Older respondents were less likely to say they would attend (18-34, 70%: 35-59, 64%; 60+, 58%)
- **Social class:** ABC1s more likely to say they would attend (ABC1, 79%: C2DE, 59%)

### Venues have been open for a few months

- **Gender:** No significant difference (male, 51%: female, 54%)
- **Age:** No significant difference (18-34, 53%: 35-59, 51%; 60+, 55%)
- **Social class:** No significant difference (ABC1, 54%: C2DE, 51%)

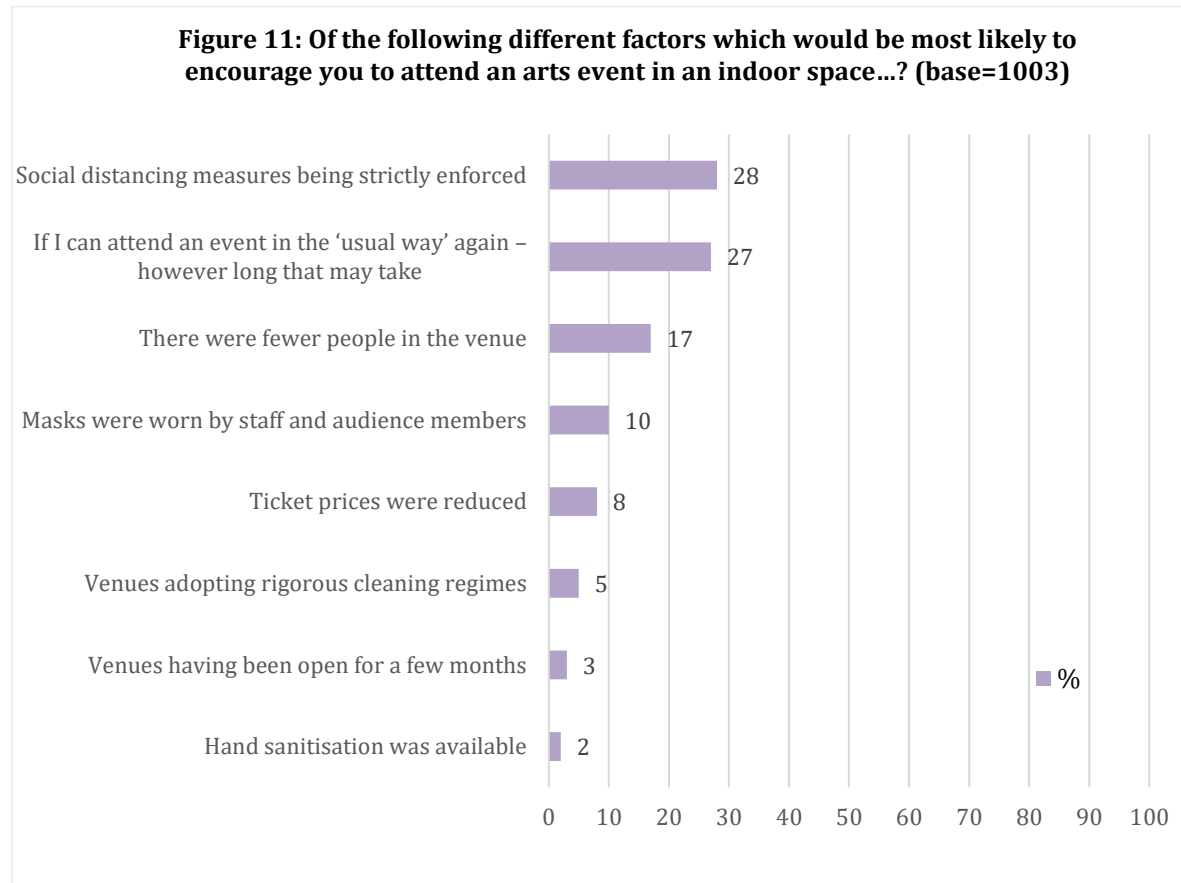
### If you can attend an event in the 'usual way' again – however long that may take

- **Gender:** No significant difference (male, 52%: female, 55%)
- **Age:** Older respondents were less likely to say they would attend (18-34, 60%: 35-59, 54%; 60+, 47%)
- **Social class:** No significant difference (ABC1, 56%: C2DE, 52%)



### 2.9.1 Most Important Factor Encouraging Attendance at Arts Events in an Indoor Space

Figure 11 shows that social distancing measures being enforced (28%) and being able to attend an event in the usual way again (27%) were found to be the most important factors that would encourage respondents to attend an arts event in an indoor space. The least important factor was found to be the availability of hand sanitiser (2%).



#### Differences between Respondent Groups

There were a number of significant differences between respondent groups:

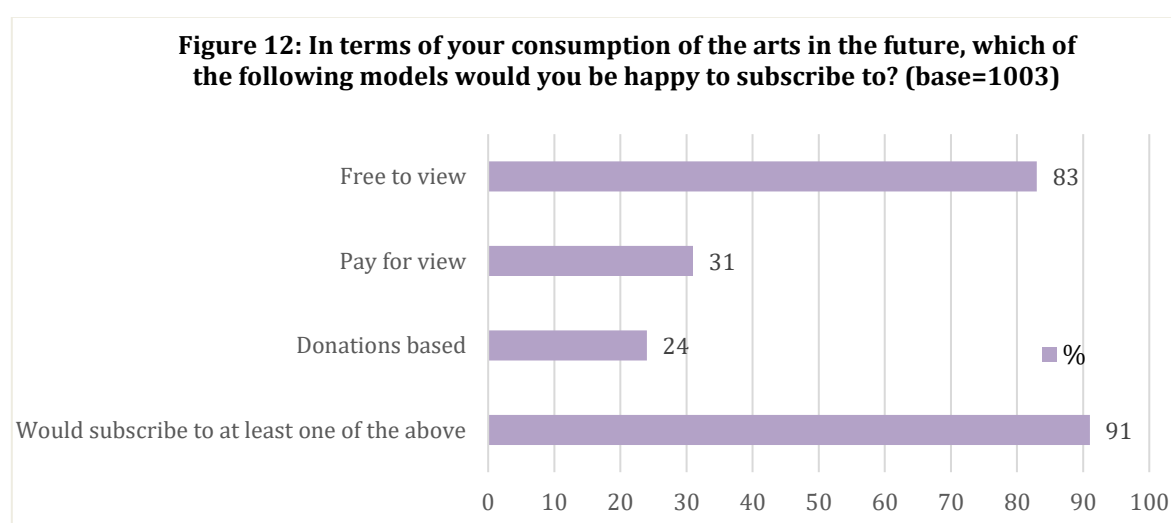
- **Gender:** There was no statistically significant difference in response by gender
- **Age:** Older respondents were less likely to say that having fewer people in a venue would be the most important factor (18-34, 17%; 35-59, 23%; 60+, 8%), whereas younger respondents were proportionately more likely to say that reduced ticket prices would be the most important factor (18-34, 13%; 35-59, 8%; 60+, 6%)
- **Social class:** Social distancing measures was the most important factor for proportionately more ABC1 respondents (ABC1, 32%; C2DE, 24%) whereas being able to attend an event in the 'usual way' was the most important factor among proportionately more C2DE respondents (ABC1, 21%; C2DE, 32%)
- **Disability:** Those with a disability were proportionately more likely to say attending an event in the 'usual way' was the most important factor (32% vs. 23%)
- **Economic Activity:** The economically active were more likely to identify fewer people in a venue as being the most important factor (active, 14%; inactive, 7%)
- **Educational Attainment:** Those with a higher level of educational attainment were proportionately more likely to identify social distancing as the most important factor ('low', 22%; 'medium', 26%; 'high', 33%) whereas those with lower levels of educational attainment were proportionately more likely to

cite being able to attend in the 'normal way' as being most important ('low', 37%; 'medium', 22%; 'high', 22%)

- **Urban / Rural:** There was no statistically significant difference
- **Community background:** Protestant respondents were proportionately more likely to say attending an event in the 'usual way' was the most important factor (protestant, 30%; catholic, 22%)

## 2.10 Consumption of the Arts and Subscribing to Different Models

Among all respondents, 83% said they would support a free to view model for the consumption of the Arts, with 31% saying they would subscribe to pay for view to consume Arts. Twenty four percent were supportive of a donations based model. Most respondents said they would be happy to subscribe to at least one of the models listed.



### Differences between Respondent Groups

There were a number of significant differences in terms of the importance of different factors encouraging respondents to attend an arts event in an indoor space:

#### Free to View

- **Gender:** No significant difference by gender (male, 82%; female, 85%)
- **Age:** No significant difference (18-34, 84%; 35-59, 84%; 60+, 81%)
- **Social class:** No significant difference (ABC1, 83%; C2DE, 84%)
- **Disability:** No significant difference (disabled, 83%; non-disabled, 83%)
- **Economic activity:** No significant difference (active, 84%; inactive, 81%)
- **Educational Attainment:** No significant difference ('low', 81%; 'medium', 85%; 'high', 84%)
- **Urban / rural:** No significant difference (urban, 84%; rural, 81%)
- **Community background:** No significant difference (protestant, 85%; catholic, 84%)

#### Pay for View

- **Gender:** No significant difference by gender (male, 32%; female, 30%)
- **Age:** Younger respondents more supportive (18-34, 37%; 35-59, 30%; 60+, 26%)
- **Social class:** ABC1 respondents more supportive (ABC1, 35%; C2DE, 27%)
- **Disability:** No significant difference (disabled, 29%; non-disabled, 32%)
- **Economic activity:** Economically active more supportive (active, 33%; inactive, 26%)
- **Educational Attainment:** Less well educated less supportive ('low', 23%; 'medium', 34%; 'high', 35%)
- **Urban / rural:** No significant difference (urban, 31%; rural, 30%)
- **Community background:** No significant difference (protestant, 31%; catholic, 29%)

**Donations based**

- **Gender:** No significant difference by gender (male, 22%: female, 25%)
- **Age:** No significant difference (18-34, 27%: 35-59, 25%; 60+, 19%)
- **Social class:** ABC1s respondents more supportive (ABC1, 27%: C2DE, 20%)
- **Disability:** Disabled less supportive (disabled, 20%: non-disabled, 26%)
- **Economic activity:** No significant difference (active, 24%: inactive, 23%)
- **Educational Attainment:** Less well educated less supportive ('low', 14%; 'medium', 25%; 'high', 29%)
- **Urban / rural:** No significant difference (urban, 24%: rural, 23%)
- **Community background:** No significant difference (protestant, 24%: catholic, 23%)

**Would subscribe to at least one model**

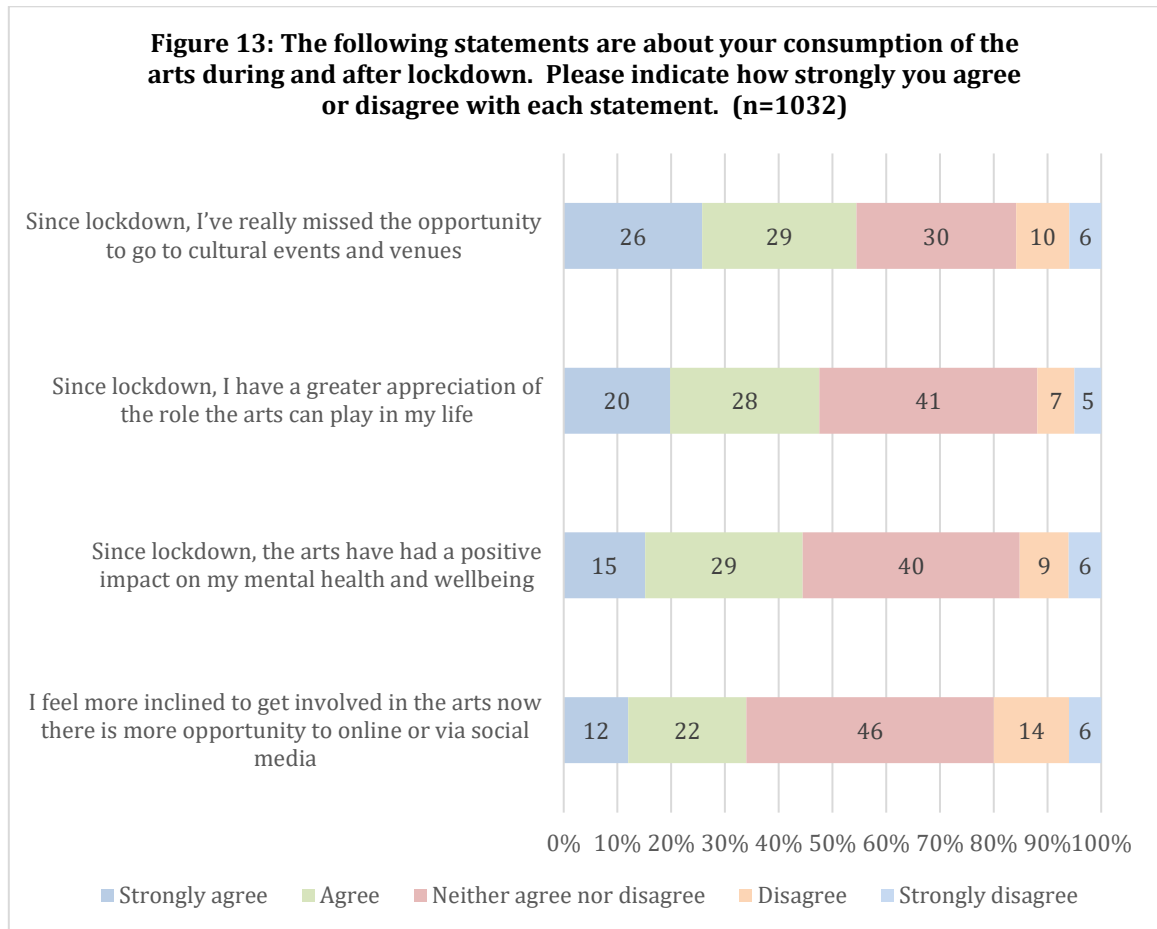
- **Gender:** No significant difference by gender (male, 89%: female, 92%)
- **Age:** No significant difference (18-34, 93%: 35-59, 90%; 60+, 88%)
- **Social class:** No significant difference (ABC1, 92%: C2DE, 89%)
- **Disability:** No significant difference (disabled, 91%: non-disabled, 90%)
- **Economic activity:** No significant difference (active, 91%: inactive, 90%)
- **Educational Attainment:** No significant difference ('low', 88%; 'medium', 93%; 'high', 91%)
- **Urban / rural:** No significant difference (urban, 91%: rural, 90%)
- **Community background:** No significant difference (protestant, 91%: catholic, 90%)

## 2.11 Attitudes to the Consumption of the Arts During Lockdown

Respondents were presented with a number of statements about their consumption of the arts during and after lockdown and asked if they agreed or disagreed with each.

Figure 13 shows that 55% either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement: *'since lockdown, I've really missed the opportunity to go to cultural events and venues'* with 48% either strongly agreeing or agreeing with the statement: *'since lockdown, I have a greater appreciation of the role the arts can play in my life'*.

In contrast relatively lower levels of agreement were recorded for the statements *'since lockdown, the arts have had a positive impact on my mental health and wellbeing'* (44% either strongly agree or agree) and the *'I feel more inclined to get involved in the arts now there is more opportunity to online or via social media'* (34% either strongly agree or agree).



### Differences between Respondent Groups

**Statement: *'Since lockdown, I have a greater appreciation of the role the arts can play in my life'***

- **Gender:** Men were more likely to disagree / strongly disagree (males, 15%; females, 8%)
- **Age:** younger respondents were significantly more likely to strongly agree /agree (16-39, 71%; 40-64, 45%; 65+, 29%)
- **Social class:** ABC1's were significantly more likely to strongly agree /agree (ABC1, 53%; C2DE, 43%)
- **Disability:** No significant difference (disabled, 46%; non-disabled, 49%)
- **Economic activity:** Economically active respondents more likely to strongly agree /agree (active, 53%; inactive, 37%)

- **Educational Attainment:** Less well educated less likely to strongly agree / agree ('low', 33%; 'medium', 53%; 'high', 55%)
- **Urban / rural:** No significant difference (urban, 47%; rural, 49%)
- **Community background:** Catholics more likely to strongly agree / agree (protestant, 42%; catholic, 57%)

**Statement:** *'Since lockdown, the arts have had a positive impact on my mental health and wellbeing'*

- **Gender:** No significant difference (males, 44%; females, 45%)
- **Age:** younger respondents were significantly more likely to strongly agree / agree (16-39, 66%; 40-64, 42%; 65+, 27%)
- **Social class:** No significant difference (ABC1, 45%; C2DE, 44%)
- **Disability:** No significant difference (disabled, 43%; non-disabled, 45%)
- **Economic activity:** The economically active respondents were more likely to strongly agree / agree (active, 51%; inactive, 33%)
- **Educational Attainment:** Less well educated less likely to strongly agree / agree ('low', 32%; 'medium', 48%; 'high', 51%)
- **Urban / rural:** No significant difference (urban, 45%; rural, 42%)
- **Community background:** Catholics more likely to strongly agree / agree (protestant, 39%; catholic, 53%)

**Statement:** *I feel more inclined to get involved in the arts now there is more opportunity to online or via social media*

- **Gender:** No significant difference (males, 32%; females, 35%)
- **Age:** younger respondents were significantly more likely to strongly agree / agree (16-39, 51%; 40-64, 32%; 65+, 20%)
- **Social class:** No significant difference (ABC1, 35%; C2DE, 33%)
- **Disability:** No significant difference (disabled, 33%; non-disabled, 34%)
- **Economic activity:** The economically active were more likely to strongly agree / agree (active, 39%; inactive, 25%)
- **Educational Attainment:** Less well educated respondents were less likely to strongly agree / agree ('low', 25%; 'medium', 33%; 'high', 40%)
- **Urban / rural:** No significant difference (urban, 35%; rural, 30%)
- **Community background:** Catholics more likely to strongly agree / agree (protestant, 30%; catholic, 40%)

**Statement:** *Since lockdown, I've really missed the opportunity to go to cultural events and venues*

- **Gender:** Men were more likely to disagree / strongly disagree (males, 18%; females, 12%)
- **Age:** Younger respondents were significantly more likely to strongly agree / agree (16-39, 67%; 40-64, 55%; 65+, 43%)

- **Social class:** ABC1s were more likely to strongly agree /agree (ABC1, 62%: C2DE, 47%)
- **Disability:** No significant difference (disabled, 52%: non-disabled, 56%)
- **Economic activity:** The economically active were more likely to strongly agree /agree (active, 61%: inactive, 43%)
- **Educational Attainment:** Less well educated less likely to strongly agree /agree ('low', 39%; 'medium', 56%; 'high', 65%)
- **Urban / rural:** No significant difference (urban, 55%: rural, 53%)
- **Community background:** Catholics more likely to strongly agree / agree (protestant, 52%: catholic, 64%)

## Appendix (Questionnaire)



**Questionnaire:**

**Survey to establish arts and culture engagement levels  
in Northern Ireland during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

**6 October 2020**



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## Survey on the Arts in Northern Ireland

The aim of this survey is to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the level of public engagement with Arts and Culture in Northern Ireland. The survey also aims to find out what methods the public have used to engage with the arts during lockdown and whether public attitudes towards the arts are changing. Finally, the survey also seeks to determine what factors may be inhibiting a return to physical engagement with the Arts.

- A1A. In the 12 months leading up to lockdown (i.e. between March 2019 and March 2020), which of the following (if any) have you been to either as a member of the audience or as a visitor? (Select all that apply)

Ballet	1
Carnival	2
Classical music performance	3
Craft exhibition (not crafts market)	4
Culturally specific festival (for example, Mela)	5
Event connected with books or writing	6
Exhibition or collection of art, photography, or sculpture	7
Film at a cinema or other venue	8
Jazz performance	9
Musical	10
Opera	11
Pantomime	12
Play / drama	13
Street arts (art in everyday surroundings like parks, streets, or shopping centres)	14
Other live dance event	15
Other live music event	16
None of these	17

- A1B. And since lockdown in March of this year which of the following (if any) have you been to either as a member of the audience or as a visitor? (Select all that apply)

Ballet	1
Carnival	2
Classical music performance	3
Craft exhibition (not crafts market)	4
Culturally specific festival (for example, Mela)	5
Event connected with books or writing	6
Exhibition or collection of art, photography, or sculpture	7
Film at a cinema or other venue	8
Jazz performance	9
Musical	10
Opera	11
Pantomime	12
Play / drama	13
Street arts (art in everyday surroundings like parks, streets, or shopping centres)	14
Other live dance event	15
Other live music event	16
None of these	17

A2A\_1. In the 12 months leading up to lockdown (i.e. between March 2019 and March 2020), did you **take part** in any of the following activities? **(Select all that apply)**

Ballet	1
Bought a novel or book of stories, poetry or plays for yourself	2
Bought any original / handmade crafts such as pottery or jewellery for yourself	3
Bought any original works of art for yourself	4
Learned or practised circus skills	5
Made films or videos as an artistic activity (not family or holidays)	6
Other crafts such as calligraphy, pottery or jewelry for yourself	7
Other dance (for fitness)	8
Other dance (not for fitness)	9
Painting, drawing, printmaking, or sculpture	10
Photography as an artistic activity (not family or holiday 'snaps')	11
Played a musical instrument for your own pleasure	12
Played a musical instrument to an audience or rehearsed for a performance	13
None of these	14

A2A\_2. And what about the following activities. Did you take part in any of these in **the 12 months leading up to lockdown** (i.e. between March 2019 and March 2020)? **(Select all that apply)**

Rehearsed or performed in a play / drama	1
Read for pleasure (not newspapers, magazines, or comics)	2
Rehearsed or performed in an opera / operetta or musical theatre	3
Sang to an audience or rehearsed for a performance (not karaoke)	4
Taken part in a carnival (e.g. as a musician, dancer, or costume maker)	5
Taken part in street arts (an artistic performance that takes place in everyday surroundings like parks, streets, or shopping centres)	6
Textile crafts such as embroidery, crocheting or knitting	7
Used a computer to create original artworks or animation	8
Wood crafts such as wood turning, carving or furniture making	9
Written any poetry	10
Written any stories or plays	11
Written music	12
None of these	13

A2B\_1. **Since lockdown in March** of this year, have you **taken part in** any of the following activities? **(Select all that apply)**

Ballet	1
Bought a novel or book of stories, poetry or plays for yourself	2
Bought any original / handmade crafts such as pottery or jewellery for yourself	3
Bought any original works of art for yourself	4
Learned or practised circus skills	5
Made films or videos as an artistic activity (not family or holidays)	6
Other crafts such as calligraphy, pottery or jewelry for yourself	7
Other dance (for fitness)	8
Other dance (not for fitness)	9
Painting, drawing, printmaking, or sculpture	10
Photography as an artistic activity (not family or holiday 'snaps')	11
Played a musical instrument for your own pleasure	12
Played a musical instrument to an audience or rehearsed for a performance	13
None of these	14

A2B\_2. **And again, since lockdown in March of this year, have you taken part in any of the following activities? (Select all that apply)**

Rehearsed or performed in a play / drama	1
Read for pleasure (not newspapers, magazines, or comics)	2
Rehearsed or performed in an opera / operetta or musical theatre	3
Sang to an audience or rehearsed for a performance (not karaoke)	4
Taken part in a carnival (e.g. as a musician, dancer, or costume maker)	5
Taken part in street arts (an artistic performance that takes place in everyday surroundings like parks, streets, or shopping centres)	6
Textile crafts such as embroidery, crocheting or knitting	7
Used a computer to create original artworks or animation	8
Wood crafts such as wood turning, carving or furniture making	9
Written any poetry	10
Written any stories or plays	11
Written music	12
None of these	13

A3. Since the implementation of physical distancing measures in response to the COVID-19 virus in March, which of the following types of online activity have you viewed or participated in online or via social media? **(Select all that apply)**

Watched filmed performances of theatre, concerts and/or dance shows online	1
Looked at art, paintings, and photographs online (e.g. from a virtual collection)	2
Watched live social media streams/ broadcasts (e.g. of music events)	3
Participated in an online arts class / group / tutorial (e.g. via zoom or Microsoft teams)	4
Not done any of the above	5

A4. In terms of the arts you watched or took part in over lockdown, was any of it from Northern Ireland? **(Select one only)**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3
Didn't engage with, watch or take part in, the Arts during lockdown	4

A5. There are different reasons why people engaged with the Arts during lockdown. Do any of the following reasons apply to you? **(Select all that apply)**

I was curious / wanted to try something new	1
For my own personal enjoyment / wellbeing	2
To engage children or young people, in my care	3
To engage older people, in my care	4
To extend my own social circle during lockdown	5
To engage with friends and family not in my household	6
Didn't engage with, watch or take part in, the Arts during lockdown	7

A6. Since lockdown started in March, would you say you have engaged with the Arts...? **(Select one only)**

... for the first time	1
... more than I used to	2
... less than I used to	3
...about the same	4
Didn't engage with, watch or take part in, the Arts during lockdown	5
Don't know	6

- A7. Have you attended (in person) any cultural events, activities, or venues (e.g. attended a gallery, an outdoor show etc.) since some cultural organisations began to re-open? **(Select one only)**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

**ANSWER IF A7 EQ 1**

- A8. What cultural events, activities, or venues have you attended?

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- A9. In light of the COVID-19 crisis, how comfortable are you about attending an arts event in the following venues, in the future? **(Answer for each statement)**

Very comfortable	1
Comfortable	2
Uncomfortable	3
Very uncomfortable	4

1	Music or other performance in a standing indoor venue
2	Indoor concert hall
3	Theatre, music or talk in a seated indoor venue
4	Cinema
5	Museum
6	Indoor art gallery
7	Music or other performance at an outdoor venue
8	Street art (e.g. outdoor based performance / parade / carnival / circus)

- A10. Would you be more likely to attend an arts event in an indoor space if...? **(Answer for each)**

		Yes	No	Don't know
1	Social distancing measures were strictly enforced	1	2	3
2	There were fewer people in the venue	1	2	3
3	Ticket prices were reduced	1	2	3
4	Venues adopted rigorous cleaning regimes	1	2	3
5	Hand sanitisation was available	1	2	3
6	Masks were worn by staff and audience members	1	2	3
7	Venues have been open for a few months	1	2	3
8	If I can attend an event in the 'usual way' again – however long that may take	1	2	3

- A11. Of the following different factors which would be most likely to encourage you to attend an arts event in an indoor space...? **(Select one only)**

1	Social distancing measures being strictly enforced	1
2	There were fewer people in the venue	2
3	Ticket prices were reduced	3
4	Venues adopting rigorous cleaning regimes	4
5	Hand sanitisation was available	5
6	Masks were worn by staff and audience members	6
7	Venues having been open for a few months	7
8	If I can attend an event in the 'usual way' again – however long that may take	8

- A12. In terms of your consumption of the arts in the future, which of the following models would you be happy to subscribe to? **(Select all that apply)**

Free-to-view	1
Pay for view	2
Donations based	3
Wouldn't subscribe to any of the above	4

- A13. The following statements are about your consumption of the arts during and after lockdown. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement. **(Answer for each statement)**

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5

1	Since lockdown, I have a greater appreciation of the role the arts can play in my life
2	Since lockdown, the arts have had a positive impact on my mental health and wellbeing
3	I feel more inclined to get involved in the arts now there is more opportunity to online or via social media
4	Since lockdown, I've really missed the opportunity to go to cultural events and venues

## SECTION B: ABOUT YOU

- B1. Are you...? **(Single Code)**

Male	Female	Prefer not to say
1	2	3

- B2. What age are you?

- B3. What is your current employment status? **(Single Code)**

Self-employed	1
Working full-time	2
Working part-time	3
Seeking work for the first time	4
Unemployed, i.e. not working but actively seeking work	5
Not actively seeking work but would like to work	6
Not working and not seeking work	7
Looking after home and family	8
Unable to work due to permanent illness or disability	9
Student (full time)	10
Student (part time)	11
On a government or other training scheme / apprenticeship	12
Retired	13
Other (please specify)	14

- B4. What is your occupation or what was your last job?

- B5. Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted or is expected to last, at least 12 months? Include problems which are due to ageing. **(Select one only)**

Yes, limited a lot	1
Yes, limited a little	2
No	3

- B6. How would you describe your community background? **(Select one only)**

Catholic	1
Protestant	2
Neither	3
Other (please specify)	4
Prefer not to say	5

- B7. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a unionist, a nationalist, or neither? **(Select one only)**

Unionist	1
Nationalist	2
Neither	3
Prefer not to say	4

**THANK AND CLOSE**

<b>Report on</b>	Tourism Business Engagement Programme
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> January 2021
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Michael Browne
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Mary McGee

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
	To outline the business engagement work ongoing through our tourism forum, webinar series and whats app group.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
	<p>This tourism forum has been up and running since Monday 16th March in response to the onset and predicted impact of Corona Virus on local businesses. Established by Tourism Development Officer, the Group now has 130 participants representing business from every sector of hospitality and tourism across Mid Ulster.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<p>The tourism forum has been posting regular updates on supports for businesses in the sector including financial, human resource, legal and is a one stop shop for up to date information in an evolving and rapidly changing situation for businesses. Businesses can post questions, scroll through previously published information and search on links to some of the following: nibusinessinfo, tourismni, hmrc and the public health agency.</p> <p>This Business Engagement Officer over the past 9 months has hosted 45 webinars to date targeting issues relating to our tourism and hospitality sector.</p> <p>We have hosted experts from right across the sector including:</p> <p>Niall Gibbons CEO, Tourism Ireland  John McGrillen, CEO Tourism NI  Colin Neil, Hospitality Ulster  Joanne Stuart, NI Tourism Alliance  Janice Gault, NI Hotels Federation</p> <p>We have on an ongoing basis hosted law experts from Cleaver, Fulton, Rankin (CFR) and accountants from FPK/FPM covered through Tourism NI TED Scheme.</p>

	<p>Businesses have been encouraged to sign up for the Embrace a Giants Spirit brand with TNI Business Solutions Team.</p> <p>The Tourism Ireland digital team have presented on content and social media planning and outlined their industry opportunities programme.</p> <p>We have also profiled over a series of webinars Mid Ulster Council supports in terms of Covid grants and Economic Development Programmes, many of our tourism and hospitality businesses have taken advantage of these programmes. We have also delivered training on selling on social media in particular Instagram, Facebook and building your business profile on LinkedIn.</p> <p>An average of 25 businesses dial in to each session and the Q&amp;A to these experts that follows means the sessions last on average 1 hour and 15 minutes.</p> <p>The webinars are working so well as businesses get an opportunity to get advice from some of the top law, tourism and accounting experts in the country, it is tailored to the tourism and hospitality sector hence it is relevant plus the social aspect of interacting one to one is also vital. Businesses have also used the contacts to draw down innovation vouchers through Invest NI and win other supports.</p> <p>Many have used the contacts made to appeal negative decisions on Covid supports and successfully overturned these. Participants who regularly dial in have also cited the mental health benefits of the webinars.</p> <p>All webinars are recorded, and Tourism NI use the Q&amp;A on their websites to populate their FAQ section.</p> <p>The tourism team plan to continue the webinars into 2021 starting with a focus on mental health and resilience in mid-January and into February and then looking at recovery planning in line with Tourism Ireland and Tourism NI plans for March and April and into Q2.</p> <p>All businesses in the hospitality and tourism sectors are welcome to join the WhatsApp group or webinars.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial:
	Human:
	Risk Management:
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications:



	Rural Needs Implications:
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	For information.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Record of MUDC Business Engagement programmes



<b>WEBINAR</b>	<b>FACILITATOR</b>	<b>DATE</b>
NI Tourism Alliance	Joanne Stuart ``	02/12/2020
MUDC Digital Programme	Daryl Conway	04/11/2020
MUDC Gearing For Growth Programme	Patricia Elliott	21/10/2020
Hospitality Exchange	Janice Gault	14/10/2020
Michael Black CFR Law	Michael Black, CFR Law	07/10/2020
Facebook Marketing	Danial McCarry - Counter Digital	29/07/2020
Learn How to Sell on Facebook	Danial McCarry - Counter Digital	29/07/2020
Changes to the Furlough Scheme plus Tax and PAYE	Aveen McShane & Ruth Emery PKF FPM	22/07/2020
Storyteller Masterclass	Liz Weir, MBE	15/07/2020
Good to Go Certification Scheme & Re-Opening Practical Guidelines	Claire, TNI / Gary NICIEH	08/07/2020
Flexible Furlough Scheme	Michael Black, CFR Law	02/07/2020
Risk Assessments and Standard Operating Procedures for Hospitality and Tourism sector	Kathleen Lavery-Boulouha, Hospitality Management Solutions	24/06/2020
Tourism Ireland Promoting the Ireland Internationally Post Covid 19	Niall Gibbons, CEO, Tourism Ireland	18/06/2020
Hospitality Ulster	Colin Neill	16/06/2020
Travel Intentions - Who will visit, when, where, what to do, what measures reassure	Gary Quate, Experience Development Officer, TNI	11/06/2020
Tourism Northern Ireland Update on Reopening, Marketing Campaigns and Steering Groups to Recover	John McGrillen, CEO, Tourism NI	10/06/2020
Pivoting your Business and Planning for the Future	Nuala Saul and Colm Murphy, Brack Tours	05/06/2020
Draft Guidelines for Reopening	Janice Gault, CEO, Northern Ireland Hotels Federation	01/06/2020
Reopening Irish Tourism and Business Expectations	Tina O'Dwyer, Tourism Space and Maura Bell, Irish National Heritage Park	27/05/2020
General Tourism Catch Up	Mary McGee and Hugh McCloy	22/05/2020
Ideas and Themes for Future Marketing Campaigns - Communications Plan Consultations	Lara Goodall, Goodall Consulting and Rachael Harriott, Harriott Communications	20/05/2020
Intertrade Ireland, NI Micro-Business Hardship Fund, Furlough Scheme update	Michael Black, CFR Law	18/05/2020
Instagram for Business	Danial McCarry - Counter Digital	15/05/2020
Tourism NI Business Solutions Team	Eimear Callaghan and Gwen Beveridge	13/05/2020
Changing Personas and Mind-sets. Skills Focus and Innovate Us Programmes	Valentina Salaris, TIL Milan and Nicola Quinn, SWC	11/05/2020
General Tourism Catch Up	Mary McGee and Hugh McCloy	08/05/2020
Embrace a Giant Spirit Brand	Sarah Field, Tourism NI	06/05/2020
Thinking Tours and Packages	Hugh McCloy	06/05/2020
Tourism NI TED Webinars / Update on Financial Support to Businesses	Michelle Hawkins and Aveen McShane, PKF FPM Accountants / Claire McNaughton, TNI	04/05/2020
Innovation and Support	Lara Goodall, Goodall Consulting / Broagh Duffin, The Bakehouse, Bellaghy	01/05/2020
Innovation in Tourism - Digital Sector	Stephen McPeake, Civic Dollars and Michael McGlade, AR360 Smart City Tourism	29/04/2020
Practical Perspectives on Re-Starting your Tourism Business	Tina O'Dwyer, Tourism Space and Nuala Mulqueoney, Ailwee Cave & Birds of Prey Centre	27/04/2020
LinkedIN Training	Martin Murtagh	24/04/2020
Emergency Response and Recovery Planning for our Tourism and Hospitality Sector	Rosemarie McHugh, Tourism NI	22/04/2020
Overview of Changes to job Retention Scheme	Martin Black, CFR	20/04/2020
Grants and financial Support to Businesses during Covid 19	Michelle Hawkins and Aveen McShane, PKF FPM Accountants	17/04/2020
Scenario Planning: best case scenario, what does success look like now	Lara Goodall, Goodall Consulting	15/04/2020
Mobile Movie Making Workshop	Niamh McAuley, Purple Dot	10/04/2020
Looking into the Italian situation and way forward for Tourism in Mid Ulster	Valentina Salaris, International Marketing Consultant	08/04/2020
Looking at the effect of Covid on tourism businesses and operators worldwide	Geraldine Egan, Tourism Ireland	06/04/2020
Supporting Businesses and Employees through Covid 19 crisis	Colin Neill, CEO, Hospitality Ulster	03/04/2020

Discussing support for businesses and Furlough Scheme	Michael Black, CFR Law	27/03/2020
Discuss Q&A to put forward to Tourism NI & Michael Black, CFR	Michael Black, CFR Law	23/03/2020
Core Rescue Package to retain key staff and doors open	Tourism NI	19/03/2020
Crisis response discussions	Mary McGee, MUDC and Hugh McCloy	17/03/2020
**WhatsApp Group launched 16 March in response to Covid 19 Crisis		

<b>Report on</b>	Mid Ulster District Tourism Development Group
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Michael Browne
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Allison O'Keefe

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To present Minutes of Tourism Development Group meeting held on 22 September 2020 and approved at Tourism Development meeting held on 9 December 2020.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	<p>Tourism Development Group (TDG) was established to create a working forum between Council and private sector businesses. The TDG will assist with policy development and support the implementation of Council's Tourism Strategy and associated work in order to create economic growth, increase visitor numbers and create employment.</p> <p>The group meet on a bi-monthly basis and as per the agreed Terms of Reference all business will be reported to Council through the Development Committee.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	The ratified minutes of the most recent meeting of the Tourism Development Group dated 22 September 2020 attached Appendix 1.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
4.1	<p><b><u>Financial &amp; Human Resources Implications</u></b></p> <p>N/A</p>
4.2	<p><b><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></b></p> <p>Mid Ulster Council is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity in all its activities with a focus on all citizens living within the Mid Ulster.</p>
4.3	<p><b><u>Risk Management Implications</u></b></p> <p>N/A</p>

<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	N/A
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	Appendix A – Minutes of Tourism Development Group Meeting dated 22 September 2020 and Officers Cluster Report

**MID ULSTER TOURISM DEVELOPMENT GROUP**  
**Tuesday 22 September 2020 at 10.00am via Zoom**

**Present**

Cllr Francis Burton (Chair)	Mid Ulster District Council
Cllr Sean Clarke	Mid Ulster District Council
Cllr Niamh Doris	Mid Ulster District Council
Colleen McGrath	Education & Skills NRC
Simon Wiggins	Education & Skills SWC
Tanya Purvis	Education & Skills SWC
Norman Bell	Visitor Attractions
Claire Murray	Local Food Producers/ Farmers Markets
D Friel	Vintners

**In Attendance**

Michael Browne	Mid Ulster District Council
Tony McCance	Mid Ulster District Council
Mary McKeown	Mid Ulster District Council
Mary McGee	Mid Ulster District Council
Charmain Bell	Mid Ulster District Council
Genevieve Bell	Mid Ulster District Council
Graeme Major	Mid Ulster District Council
Sharon Arbuthnot	Mid Ulster District Council
Martha Beattie	Mid Ulster District Council
B McCormick	Seamus Heaney HomePlace
K Gordon	OM Dark Sky and Observatory

	<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>ACTIONS</b>
<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Apologies</b> Terry McCrory, Craft Sector</p> <p>Cllr Burton welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked businesses for their continued input. She asked that it be recorded that she has commended staff within Council, on their continuing work to provide assistance and support to businesses and acting as a lifeline to many.</p>	
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Minutes of Meeting held on 28 April 2020</b> Having been circulated in advance of the meeting the minutes were taken as read and correct.</p> <p><i>Proposed:</i> N Bell                      <i>Seconded:</i> H McCloy</p> <p>Cllr Burton thanked H McCloy for standing in as Chair at the previous meeting.</p>	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>	

3.1	<p><b>Brown Signage</b></p> <p>M Browne provided an update and stated that having contacted Transport NI (TNI) who have informed him that they do not have a definitive list of brown signage within the district. He stated that the purpose of an audit was to ensure signage within the district was current and any no longer fit for purpose would be removed. Cllr Doris suggested other businesses who may be interested in brown signage. M Brown responded that this is a challenging piece of work considering the size of the district and felt with other priorities on staff and resources due to covid-19 this matter would be put on hold for review in early 2021.</p>	<p><b>Cllr Burton and Cllr Doris to request signage audit is included on committee agenda when TNI SRO's next attend.</b></p>
4.	<p><b>Cluster Reports</b></p> <p>Officers' report was circulated in advance of the meeting and the following was in addition.</p> <p><b>4.1</b> <u>Seamus Heaney Cluster</u> M McGee reported that the cluster had completed stage 1 of Invest NI Collaborative Growth Programme and are progressing to stage 2 funding application.</p> <p><b>4.2</b> <u>Outdoor and Events Cluster</u> G Major provided details on a programme of guided hills walks, within the district, led by B Adams and I McCorry. He informed that these would take place on the last Sunday of each month, with the first held on 28 September and could be booked at the Bridewell. Officers currently in talks with Walk NI to package further unguided walks with a focus on health and wellbeing.</p> <p>H McCloy raised concern that landowners were closing access in parts due to issues, such as, destruction of fencing and littering. Cllr Burton replied that this was understandable Council are trying to encourage more visitors to take rubbish home rather than providing more bins. H McCloy added that there needs to be more co-ordination with landowners.</p> <p><b>4.3</b> <u>Archaeology, History and Heritage Cluster</u></p> <p><b>4.3.1</b> <u>National Trust</u> N Bell raised concern over reduced opening hours or possible closure of National Trust properties, Wellbrook Beetling Mill and Springhill House. He asked if it was possible for Head of Tourism and Cllr Burton to meet with the National Trust CEO. M Browne informed that a meeting was being arranged between DEA members and National Trust prior to consultation ending. He agreed that the closure of two NT properties would be a terrible loss to mid ulster. M McKeown informed that a meeting is to take place by 8 October. H McCloy added that he had approached Springhill offering to run events on site.</p>	<p><b>Officers to co-ordinate with landowners for accessibility on walking routes</b></p> <p><b>Meeting to take place with officers, Cllr Burton, HOT and Tourism Manager prior to meeting National Trust.</b></p>



<p><b>4.3.2</b></p>	<p><u>OM Dark Sky Park &amp; Observatory</u></p> <p>M McKeown introduced K Gordon, Duty Officer at OM Dark Sky &amp; Observatory. She announced that a launch would take place on 16 October. Local community group, councillors, media and other guests were invited and would be staggered throughout the day due to covid restrictions. The site will open to the public 17 October. M McKeown added that Brian Cox, who was to attend an event previously, would be rescheduled for some time in the future.</p> <p>M McKeown updated the meeting on a series of free promotional opportunities that have taken place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RTE Radio – April 20</li> <li>• Jeff BBC – Aug 20</li> <li>• BBC Radio Ulster – Sept 20</li> <li>• Irish Times</li> <li>• IDA Accreditation – Sept 20</li> <li>• New website launched including online bookings – Sept 20</li> <li>• Tourism NI, Dublin</li> <li>• Meet the Buyer – Presentation to 500 plus American and Canadian tour operators looking to schedule itineraries 2022</li> <li>• Tourism Ireland – German Ezine</li> </ul> <p>Future scheduled opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virginia Media – Ed Finn</li> <li>• Barra on the Foyle – Feb 21</li> </ul> <p>She added that a week long campaign to promote Tyrone week on CoolFM ended with a prize donated by the Observatory and was the only paid marketing to date.</p> <p>K Gordon gave a brief introduction and stated that she looked forward to welcoming everyone to OM. She reported that since the website launched on 14 September online bookings have been very positive as well as telephone call, social media and visitors to the area.</p> <p>Cllr Burton looks forward to visiting the site and reported that the first bus tour from England visited Blessingbourne, Fivemiletown where she and Council Chair met with the group.</p> <p>G Bell informed that council have secured DAERA funding to develop augmented reality at Davagh solar walk and Ballyronan, as well, as the first on-water glamping village. Funding was successfully secured through RDP.</p> <p>N Hill also reported that a significant refurbishment and upgrade to existing offering will take place at Fivemiletown Round Lake and Blessingbourne in terms of accessible facilities, camping and</p>	<p><b>M McKeown to organise a visit for TDG to OM when suitable.</b></p>
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4.4	<p>caravanning, car park and cycling. Cllr Burton welcomed the news as the site was well used by both local people and visitors.</p> <p><u>Hotelier Cluster</u></p> <p>C Bell delivered her report and added that many establishments are looking to extend the Eat Out to Help Out scheme across mid ulster during October to improve customer confidence. Businesses will offer individual promotions but market collectively for the area. It was suggested speaking to council communications to tie into the Reconnect campaign. However, this will be reviewed due to circumstances.</p>	
5.	<p><b>Business Engagement Programme</b></p> <p>M McGee reported that business engagement continued online with up to 128 members on the WhatsApp group. She added that Hospitality Ulster, Tourism NI and Tourism Ireland use it as a go to resource and webinars continue to be responsive to issues.</p> <p>M McGee informed that L Goodall delivers two webinars to assist businesses who were successful to application stage of Tourism NI's Experience Development Programme. 15 applications across mid ulster have successfully made it through to next stage. She also gave a brief rundown of funding that was available to businesses in recent months to assist with covid. Cllr Burton stated that the forum and webinars have proved a lifeline to many businesses. M Browne added that speakers included Tourism NI CEO and Tourism Ireland CEO, legal and financial experts provided by Tourism NI and experts from across the sector.</p> <p>M McGee asked that thanks to H McCloy for his support and assistance was recorded.</p>	
6.	<p><b>District Wide Monitoring</b></p> <p>M McKeown delivered District Wide Monitoring results, circulated in advance of the meeting, for the first two quarters of 2020. She reminded members that due to the covid pandemic some facilities were closed and therefore figures reduced.</p> <p>G Major reported that VIC figures for 2020 were greatly reduced in comparison to 2019 due to closure of facilities during lockdown. He informed that all VIC's within the district are now re-opened. He added that bespoke enquiries have increased from Dutch, German and Canadian markets, whilst local enquiries with regards to open spaces have increased.</p> <p>M Browne informed that touchscreens have been positioned in Dungannon, Cookstown and Magherafelt and currently looking at software to roll out 24 hour visitor access.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Industry Updates</b></p>	

	All business representatives present gave an update on business and any feedback on their sectors.	
<b>8.</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b> - None	

Date of next meeting - Wednesday 25 November 2020 at 11am.  
Meeting ended at 11.21am

**Mid Ulster Council Tourism Development Group  
Officers Cluster Report – Tuesday 22 September 2020**

**1. SEAMUS HEANEY CLUSTER – MMC GEE/C BELL**

The group met on 3 September 2020 via Teams. They have agreed to pursue stage 2 funding for the Collaborative Growth Programme. In order to do this they have invited current programme facilitator on the Causeway Coast and Glens – Taste Causeway - Sharon Scott to their next meeting and hope to follow up with Linda Jamison Invest NI on this. A number of members of the group have completed the Virtual Meet the Buyer event and feedback from this has been positive to date. The rural nature of Mid Ulster is now certainly a selling point with operators and it is important to continue to highlight this. Members also commented on how across the week of Meet the Buyer the cross selling amongst Mid Ulster businesses was key and sent out a very strong message to operators that we are ready for business.

**2. OUTDOOR & EVENTS CLUSTER – G MAJOR/S ARBUTHNOT**

COVID disrupted and halted Wild Adventure Weekend 2020 preparations that were agreed during early March meeting. Event still to go ahead but needs commitment from cluster members which is uncertain at this time due to the current and evolving situation. A series of guided hill walks as lead by Brendan Adams and Ita McCory are due to get underway as below with booking through the Bridewell priced at £10 each or £40 for all five. This will accompany a marketing campaign to highlight all public walks within the district.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Walk</b>	<b>Meeting Point</b>
Sunday 29 Sept 2020	The Carntogher Way (Derry/Londonderry)	An Carn Centre, 132A Tirkane Road, Maghera. (2 miles from Maghera)
Sunday 25 Oct 2020	Moydamlaght Forest and Bohilbreaga (Derry/Londonderry)	An Dubh Centre, 53 Moneyneany Road, Moneyneany.
Sunday 29 Nov 2020	Slieve Gallion (Derry/Londonderry)	Iniscarn forest entrance, Iniscarn Road, Desertmartin (The forest is off the A29 Tobermore to Moneymore road. As you reach Desertmartin take the left turn before the shop. Follow this road for three miles until you come to a T-junction. Turn left. The forest is half a mile on the right.)
Sunday 31 Jan 2021	Crockmore / Crockbrack (Derry/Londonderry)	An Dubh Centre, 53 Moneyneany Road, Moneyneany.
Sunday 28 Feb 2021	Knockmany Forest Augher (Tyrone)	Forest car park on Knockmany Road. (Follow brown forest sign from roundabout in Augher and forest 1.9 miles on left hand side.)

**3. ARCHAEOLOGY, HISTORY & HERITAGE CLUSTER – G BELL/M MCKEOWN**

**3.1 Experience Development Programme 20/21**

The Cluster Group were informed about the Experience Development Programme 20/21 launched by Tourism Northern Ireland. The Programme is designed to provide financial assistance to tourism organisations to support them in creating experiences that embrace our giant spirit and stimulate

demand for Northern Ireland tourism to benefit the wider economy. Benburb Priory Ltd. and Killymoon Castle have both submitted applications for the Programme.

### 3.2 Visitor Itineraries

A number of visitor itineraries are being worked up which include:

- 3 Sisters Tour taking in the big houses of Springhill, Lissan House and Killymoon Castle,
- Stars and Stones taking in Beaghmore Stone Circles, Davagh Forest and OM Dark Sky Park and Observatory,
- Famine Trail – which takes in the original famine pot in Friels, Swatragh,
- Maghera Heritage Trail which will take in a visit to the Glen Chapel, Maghera where you will see the Famine Plot and a headstone that remembers the large number of people who died in the parish during the famine,
- President and Queens which includes U S Grant Ancestral Homestead, Knockmany Chambered Cairn and the East Tyrone Driving Route.

### 3.3 OCN Level 2 Training in Tour Guiding

This is an 8 week course which will be delivered remotely/online. This qualification is designed to provide the learner with the skills in the Travel and Tourism industry to enable them to develop a tour commentary and lead groups on a guided tour. Any interested participants should contact G Bell asap.

### 3.4 OM Dark Sky Park and Observatory

The launch and opening of has been scheduled to open to the public on 17 October 2020. Barra Best recently visited the area which will feature in ‘Barra on the Foyle’ to be televised next year. He interviewed Mary McKeown who acted as the representative for OM, spoke with local tour guide Sean Clarke and stayed in Sperrin View Glamping pods during his time in the area.

MUDC has successfully secured DEARA funding for The Solar Walk in Davagh Forest and for the development of Glamping pods and an AR experience at Ballyronan Marina. Work will begin on these in the next month.

## **4. HOTELIERS CLUSTER – CBELL/MMCGEE**

The group met online where Roisin McKee, manager of the new Hotel & Tourism Sector collaboration (HATS), gave a presentation. Roisin outlined the new apprenticeship model which is being delivered by all the colleges.

The incentive is available to all employers to support the recruitment of new apprentices. An employer will be eligible for up to £3,000 for each new apprenticeship opportunity created from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. This bonus will apply to all new apprenticeship opportunities and includes apprentices who have been made redundant:

- Payment 1 - £2,000 after 90 days retention
- Payment 2 - £1,000 after 200 days retention from first employment

Roisin also explained the new 100% funding model for all short courses and training. The group also discussed the new challenge fund for the sector being launched by government. This fund will launch in late September and support innovative approaches and new collaborations to increase apprenticeship opportunities in Northern Ireland. Successful applicants could receive one off awards of up to £50,000.



<b>Report on</b>	Santa visit to Primary Schools in the Mid Ulster District
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Michael Browne
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Mary McKeown

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To inform members of a special visit from Santa to all the Primary School children in Mid Ulster, Christmas 2020.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	Since March 2020 the country has witness a pandemic like no other. Covid- 19 has affected everyone from young and old with restrictions and lockdowns and most certainly had a major impact on the normal Christmas celebrations delivered by the Council.
2.2	<p>Due to the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic the Council took the prudent decision to cancel all corporate events in the lead up to Christmas, which included the Santa's Grotto in the Burnavon and all the town centre Christmas events normally planned.</p> <p>In addition to the Virtual Switch on the tourism department decided to organise a socially distance visit from Santa, distributing chocolate treats to all 106 primary schools in Mid Ulster District.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	Santa's visit to all the primary schools commenced during the last two weeks in November and the first week in December. All primary schools were contacted and were given a date and time when Santa and his helper would be calling for a visit to their school. Restrictions due to Covid-19 were also issued stating the duration of the visit and the current Covid-19 guidelines.
3.2	During the time all schools were visited with excellent feedback from both parents, teachers and off course the children.
3.3	In previous years during the town centre Christmas events, chocolate has been circulated out to crowds, and this year when Santa visited the schools, chocolate treats were distributed to the school children, therefore this project did not incur any additional costs.

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b><u>Financial &amp; Human Resources Implications</u></b>  Financial: Budget found with the existing events budget.  Human: Current staff structure sufficient to manage the project.
<b>4.2</b>	<b><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></b>  N/A
<b>4.3</b>	<b><u>Risk Management Implications</u></b>  The project was managed in accordance with MUDC policies and procedures
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
<b>5.1</b>	N/A
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	Feedback from some of the schools in the District  Hello Mary I just wanted to pass on our thanks- the children thoroughly enjoyed the visit today- I had sent a text to parents saying there would be a treat but didn't say what it would be- the children were really thrilled and the selection boxes went down very well too! I have received a few messages from parents this evening to pass on their thanks- I had shared a video clip for parents on our Seesaw account and photos on our website. Thanks again Catherine St. Joseph's Killeenan



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**Derrychrin PS** @Derrychrin... · 18 Nov

Big thank you to @MidUlster\_DC for ensuring Santa & his elf got to visit all the boys & girls in @DerrychrinPS - we promise to be very good! 🎄👶



1 10



**Mid Ulster Council**  
@MidUlster\_DC

Replying to @DerrychrinPS

Oh Santa knows you will be!! 🎄👶

11:37 am · 18 Nov 2020 · Twitter Web App



11:58 • 4G

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**St. Peter's Moortown** @Stp... · 18 Nov  
There was great excitement on Tuesday 17th November when Santa and his helper came to visit the lovely boys and girls in St. Peter's and deliver selection boxes for all. Many thanks to Mid-Ulster District Council @MidUlster\_DC



1 11

**Mid Ulster Council** @MidUlster\_DC

Replying to @StpetersMoor

Ho Ho Ho! 🎅 Glad everyone enjoyed the visit!

11:45 am · 18 Nov 2020 · Twitter Web App