

<b>Report on</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Outdoor Information Touch Screen – Coalisland Town Centre</li> <li>2. Signing of Tourist Attractions and Facilities</li> <li>3. Nordics B2B Workshop</li> <li>4. Sperrins AONB Management Plan</li> </ol>
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	12 January 2023
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Assistant Director of Economy, Tourism & Strategic Programmes

<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 provide Members with an update on key activities as detailed below.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
<b>2.1</b>	<p><b>Outdoor Information Touch Screen – Coalisland Town Centre</b></p> <p>In September 2019, Council agreed to purchase and install Town Centre Information Digital points in Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt and these are now in-situ and provide a 24 hour visitor information service to the local community / visitors, etc. These are an extremely useful method to inform the public of forthcoming Council events, tourism attractions, facilities, etc.</p>
<b>2.2</b>	<p><b>Signing of Tourist Attractions and Facilities</b></p> <p>On 9 November 2022, the Council Chair, Councillor Corry, issued correspondence to the Permanent Secretary for Department of Infrastructure to express concern in relation to the current policy and procedures for acquiring brown signs and requested that DfI undertake an urgent and immediate review of the policy and procedures (see <b>Appendix 1</b>).</p>
<b>2.3</b>	<p><b>Nordics B2B Workshop</b></p> <p>Tourism NI in partnership with Tourism Ireland and Visit Britain have furnished Council with details of a Nordics B2B Tourism Workshop in February 2023. (see <b>Appendix 3</b>). Tourism NI has invited one member of the tourism team to attend this event</p>
<b>2.4</b>	<b>Sperrins AONB Management Plan</b>

	<p>One of the recurring matters that has been continuously highlighted as a key priority is the fact that Sperrin AONB does not have a strategic management plan in place to preserve, protect and manage the landscape and everything within it.</p> <p>AONBs are valuable not just for their scenery but also for their cultural heritage, biodiversity and increasingly, as an economic asset. It is therefore important that they are properly recognised and managed in a positive and coordinated way.</p> <p>Sperrins AONB is the only one out of a total of eight AONBs in Northern Ireland that does not have a management plan. If this current position continues, the landscape will remain unprotected and vulnerable to climate change and damage.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<p><b>Outdoor Information Touch Screen – Coalisland Town Centre</b></p> <p>With a view to expanding the project, Council Officers have identified Coalisland as the next location for a Digital Touch Screen, taking into consideration footfall and availability of services, including electric and internet, both of which are required for this solution and were upgraded during the recent Public Realm Scheme.</p> <p>If approval is provided, Officers will identify the specific location for the Touch Screen and seek the relevant planning &amp; DFI approval, if required.</p> <p>As with the other touch screens throughout the district, the interactive content will act as an extension to the Mid Ulster District Councils website, which will keep the screens updated on such areas as events, attractions and accommodation.</p> <p>The key objective of this project is to build an interactive information kiosk that will provide visitor information in Coalisland town. The digital information screen will provide information about WHAT'S ON, SEE+DO and STAY.</p>
<b>3.2</b>	<p><b>Signing of Tourist Attractions and Facilities</b></p> <p>The Permanent Secretary has responded on 24 November 2022 (see <b>Appendix 2</b>) to state that DFI have been in contact with their partners to the policy and indicate there are a number of areas they believe are worthy of consideration and are happy to explore these further.</p> <p>The Permanent Secretary also suggests it would be beneficial for Council to write to Tourism NI to outline our concerns to them also regarding the current policy and procedures for acquiring brown signs.</p>
<b>3.3</b>	<p><b>Nordics B2B Workshop</b></p> <p>A member of the Council's tourism staff has been invited to meet with the Nordics' key trade in a B2B workshop in Copenhagen providing an efficient meeting opportunity to do business. This is a full one day workshop + networking opportunity.</p>

	<p>It will be the first year that this B2B workshop is held with Visit Britain. As in previous years, Tourism Ireland (and Visit Britain) will be flying in trade partners from Sweden, Norway and Finland to participate at the workshop.</p> <p>Taking part in the event is an excellent opportunity for the island of Ireland Industry partners to promote their product to key trade from the Nordic region, and to take advantage of the direct flight access into the region.</p> <p>The full cost of participation at the Nordics Workshop is €650 excluding VAT. In 2023 Tourism Ireland will offer Event Support of 50%, so the cost of participation to Mid Ulster Council is reduced to €325 excluding VAT, per person.</p> <p>Successful partners are responsible for any additional personal costs associated with attending the workshop, including costs of flights/travel, accommodation and any meals outside of those offered as part of the event.</p>
<b>3.4</b>	<p><b>Sperrins AONB Management Plan</b></p> <p>In line with the outcomes of the Sperrins Future Search initiative and objectives of the Sperrins Partnership Board, an application has been submitted to the DAERA Environment Fund Strategic Strand 2023 – 2028 with a view to commence the development of a 10-year management plan and 5-year action plan.</p> <p>Development of a management plan for the Sperrin AONB will create a mechanism to allow for more efficient and streamlined ways of working that achieve more sustainable, long-term delivery of outcomes through delivery coalitions and partnership working. A plan will minimise duplication of work and maximise additionality and create opportunities to draw down funding. It will provide a platform for shared expertise and sharing of knowledge.</p> <p>The management plan will provide leverage to reach sectors of society and in turn effect long-term change in behaviours benefitting the environment. A management plan will encourage sensitive and sustainable use of the landscape, setting out shared priorities of all vested stakeholders and identify actions to protect, promote and enhance these assets.</p> <p>If the Sperrins Partnership application to DAERA's Environment Fund Strategic Strand 2023-2028 is successful, Council approval is sought to accept the Letter of Offer. Members will be kept up to date on developments in relation to the management plan. If there are any additional financial requirements, these will be brought back to Council for consideration.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	<b>Financial:</b>

	<p><b>Outdoor Information Touch Screen – Coalisland Town Centre</b> - A budget of up to £10,000 (excl Vat) will be required to purchase the hardware and software for the digital information point in Coalisland from the existing Tourism Budget.</p> <p><b>Nordics B2B Workshop</b> - The subsidised cost to attend this event is €325 excluding Vat, plus costs of flights/travel, accommodation and any meals outside of those offered as part of the event. Costs to be subsumed within the existing tourism budget, subject to Members approval.</p> <p><b>Sperrins AONB Management Plan</b> - At present there is no financial contribution or match funding requirement from partner councils towards development of the management plan however this position is subject to the outcome of the application to the Environment Fund. If further funding is required the matter will be brought back to Council for Members consideration.</p>
	<p><b>Human:</b></p> <p><b>Nordics B2B Workshop -</b> Recommended Council's Tourism Manager attend the event.</p> <p><b>Sperrins AONB Management Plan</b> It is envisaged that development of the management plan will require staff input and resource across a range of service areas.</p>
	<p><b>Risk Management:</b> N/A</p>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	<p><b>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications:</b> N/A</p>
	<p><b>Rural Needs Implications:</b> N/A</p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
	<p>It is recommended that Members;</p>
<b>5.1</b>	<p><b>Outdoor Information Touch Screen – Coalisland Town Centre</b> <b>Approve</b> the purchase and installation of one visitor information kiosk to be located within Coalisland town centre.</p>
<b>5.2</b>	<p><b>Signing of Tourist Attractions and Facilities</b> <b>Approve</b> that the Council Chair write to Tourism NI to express concern in relation to the current policy and procedures for acquiring brown signs.</p>
<b>5.3</b>	<p><b>Nordics B2B Workshop</b> <b>Approve</b> attendance of Council's Tourism Manager at the Nordics B2B Workshop in Copenhagen from 15 to 17 February 2023 for the discounted fee of €325 excluding VAT. In addition, Council to also pay for additional costs related to the Officer's flights/travel, accommodation and any meals outside of those offered as part of the event.</p>

5.4	<p><b>Sperrins AONB Management Plan</b></p> <p><b>Approve</b> that Council accepts the letter of offer, if the Sperrins Partnership application to DAERA's Environment Fund Strategic Strand 2023-2028 is successful. Members will be kept up to date on developments in relation to the management plan. If there are any additional financial requirements, these will be brought back to Council for consideration.</p>
6.0	<p><b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b></p>
	<p><b>Appendix 1</b> - Letter sent to Permanent Secretary, DFI re Brown Signage – 9.11.22</p> <p><b>Appendix 2</b> – Letter from Permanent Secretary, DFI re Brown Signage – 24.11.22</p> <p><b>Appendix 3</b> – Nordics B2B Tourism Workshop Invitation</p>