

Report on	Walk NI Consortium 2020-21
Date of Meeting	Thursday 9 th July 2020
Reporting Officer	N Hill Head of Parks
Contact Officer	Anne Reid Parks/Countryside Development Officer

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	Council approval to commit to Walking NI Marketing Consortium Campaigns for 2020-21
2.0	Background
2.1	WalkNI.com is delivered by Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI). ORNI successfully established the WalkNI Marketing Consortium to ensure local authorities could continue to benefit from the success of WalkNI.com. By continuing to contribute to the WalkNI Consortium – local authorities can reap the following benefits:
2.2	<p>Solid Foundation: Significant investment has already been made to establish a website, e-marketing and social media channels</p> <p>Engaged Visitors: As indicated by 'WalkNI Key Stats' the website / brand has a strong engagement from the target market.</p> <p>Combined Resources: The small investments from a number of local authority partners can be combined to produce an outcome greater than the sum of its parts.</p> <p>Cross Sell: There will be opportunities to cross sell between destinations i.e. visitors to the Mourne Mountains will be able to learn about the Causeway Coast and Glens and vice versa.</p> <p>Redeveloped Website: A redeveloped WalkNI.com was launched in October 2019. The new look website provides an enhanced user experience, be responsive across platforms (mobile, tablet, desktop) and can avail of the latest interactive mapping.</p>
2.3	Within Mid Ulster District Council – WalkNI.com incorporates detailed information on 29 no walks, ranging from short walks of under 5 miles to longer walks over 20 miles.
2.4	A newly redesigned and mobile friendly WalkNI.com attracted 452,580 users, making 675,190 web visits in 2019/2020 confirming its position as the definitive guide to walking in Northern Ireland. With 53% of visits from Northern Ireland, 34%

<p>2.5</p> <p>2.6</p>	<p>from Great Britain, 11% from Republic of Ireland it is clear the website is an important platform for locals and tourists alike.</p> <p>Walking brings significant tourism and local participation benefits: Local Participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% of all adults in Northern Ireland indicated that they participated in walking for recreation at least once within the last year, increasing from 36% in 2011/12¹. • 63% reported going outdoors for exercise everyday during COVID-19 lockdown, a much higher proportion than the 28% reported in the annual household survey (CHS 2017/18)² • 51% expect to spend more free time outdoors than they did pre-lockdown³ <p>WalkNI.com Key Stats: The followings statistics clearly highlight the reach and engagement level of WalkNI.com:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 452,580 users (2019/2020) • 675,190 web visits (2019/2020) • 25,439 social media subscribers (across Facebook, Twitter & Instagram) • 19,000 e-newsletter subscribers • Key driver of walking product information and content to DiscoverNorthernIreland.com
<p>3.0</p>	<p>Main Report</p>
<p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p>	<p>Partnership Approach: Funding from DAERA (NIEA's) Environment Fund ensures that all Councils receive free walk listings on WalkNI.com. Councils that wish to proactively promote their walking offer to the local population and tourist can avail of the activity of the WalkNI Marketing Consortium. The two available packages are outlined below:</p> <p>Regional Partner An area which has a portfolio of walking product, access, infrastructure and supporting tourism services to meet the demands of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local walkers • Visitors from Northern Ireland or Republic of Ireland on either day trips or short breaks of which walking is a key part of a wider itinerary <p>Partners in the past have included: Ards & North Down Borough Council Belfast City Council Fermanagh & Omagh District council Mid Ulster district Council</p>

<p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p> <p>3.5</p>	<p>National Partner An area which has a portfolio of walking product, access, infrastructure and supporting tourism services to meet the demands of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local walkers • Visitors from Northern Ireland or Republic of Ireland on either day trips or short breaks of which walking is key part of a wider itinerary • Visitors from Northern Ireland or Republic of Ireland on either day trips or short breaks of which walking is the primary reason to visit • Walking Clubs from Republic of Ireland <p>Partners in the past have included: Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council Newry, Mourne & Down District Council</p> <p>Delivery Costs for the WalkNI Marketing Consortium - 1st July 2020 – 31st March 2021: In order to continue the proactive marketing activity for Regional and National Partners, ORNI will dedicate staff time through a combination of ORNI’s Marketing Manager and a Marketing Officer. The anticipated contributions are as follows:</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;">Partner Level</td> <td>2020/21 COVID-19 Reduced Payment</td> </tr> <tr> <td>National</td> <td>£5167.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Regional</td> <td>£2583.75</td> </tr> </table> <p>Accountability: The WalkNI.com consortium will be managed by ORNI’s Marketing Manager who will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree an annual work programme including KPIs • Provide Quarterly progress reports • Hold two meetings per year to report on progress, discuss campaigns etc. 	Partner Level	2020/21 COVID-19 Reduced Payment	National	£5167.50	Regional	£2583.75
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<p>4.0</p>	<p>Other Considerations</p>						
<p>4.1</p>	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p> <p>Financial: Mid Ulster District Council will contribute £2,583.75 as a participating Regional Partner. This is included in Parks 20/21 revenue budgets.</p> <p>This is a 25% reduction in level of support required from Regional Partners to £2,583.75 (previously £3,445.00)</p> <p>Human: Human: Existing staff resources sufficient to coordinate project support. No additional staffing resource required.</p> <p>Risk Management: In conjunction with Council policies and procedures.</p>						

<p>4.2</p>	<p>Screening & Impact Assessments</p> <p>Equality & Good Relations Implications: In conjunction with Council policies and procedures.</p> <p>Rural Needs Implications: In conjunction with Council policies and procedures.</p>
<p>5.0</p>	<p>Recommendation(s)</p>
<p>5.1</p>	<p>Council approval is sought to participate as a Regional Partner with the Walking NI Marketing Consortium and contribute £2,583.75* to 2020-21 campaign.</p> <p>*This is a reduction of 25% from previous years; the campaign will run from July 2020 – March 2021.</p>
<p>6.0</p>	<p>Documents Attached & References</p>
	<p>Appendix 1 WalkNI Marketing Consortium Proposal 2020/2021</p> <p>Information from</p> <p>¹ Continuous Household Survey 2017/18</p> <p>² Engaging with the Outdoors during COVID-19 Lockdown in Northern Ireland 2020, ORNI</p> <p>³ Engaging with the Outdoors during COVID-19 Lockdown in Northern Ireland 2020, ORNI</p>