

Report on	Tourism Strategy Review
Reporting Officer	Mary McGee/Mary McKeown
Contact Officer	Michael Browne, Head of Tourism

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	To inform members of planned mid-term review of delivery of the Mid Ulster Tourism Strategy and Action Plan, 2016-2021.
2.0	Background
2.1	The Mid Ulster Tourism Strategy and Action Plan provides a framework to guide destination development, planning, management and marketing over the period 2016 - 2021. The Strategy states that it is a living document that should be continuously updated and reviewed, taking into account opportunities and market changes in the area.
2.2	A living strategy is one that is owned by the tourism industry, local authority, local communities and wider stakeholders and embodies the aspiration for Mid Ulster to be a successful tourism destination, given the current climate and factors. The strategy embodies a shared vision for Mid Ulster and reflects the geographical attributes of the area, the characteristics of tourism operators and compelling tourism attractors upon which growth can be built, provided concerted action be taken to build on opportunities and address weaknesses which have arisen.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The aims and objectives of the strategy are as follows:- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To develop three strategic tourism strands, around which the attributes of the area and the industry can cluster and to attract visitors. The three strands or themes are I. Seamus Heaney ii. Archaeological sites, history and heritage iii. Outdoor Activities 2. To grow tourism as an economic driver for Mid Ulster; 3. To manage the destination and create the preconditions for successful tourism; 4. To profile and promote Mid Ulster to enhance the visibility of the area and boost visitation and spend; 5. To support the dispersal of visitor spend and investment across the area.
3.2	The strategy sets out:- The Vision and Strategic Direction for Mid-Ulster Tourism Strategic Aims and Objectives Development of Strategic Tourism Strands including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seamus Heaney • Archaeology, History and Heritage

- Outdoor Activities & Events

The strategy also outlined plans and targets for:

- Tourism as an Economic Driver
- Destination Management
- Promoting Mid Ulster for Tourism
- Dispersal of Visitor Spend and Supporting Local Communities
- Implementation of the Plan
- Set up of the Tourism Development Group
- Role of the Local Authority in Mid Ulster Tourism
- Measuring Performance
- Risk Analysis and a detailed
- Action Plan are also included.

Given the existing Tourism Strategy is now approaching its mid-way point, we now recommend a review of the Tourism Strategy and Action Plan particularly with reference to measuring performance and action plan outputs. As stated, living documents require review and updating mid-way through their delivery.

In the next few months Tourism NI brand programme development. During this time, they will be working with experience and creative agencies to create a new narrative, themes, stories, itineraries for the visitor. The recent Game of Thrones announcements is an early example of these developments. In short, the experience brand will be the vehicle that tourism will use to take product to the international market. The NI product offering will be repackaged into include stories, themes, itineraries and ways that best meet the specific requirements of our core market segments.

Tourism NI have informed us that they want to engage with the industry from January 2019 to share the economic benefits of applying the brand narrative and framework in support of their businesses. Tourism NI also want to ensure that councils, visitor attractions, accommodation providers etc. are aware of the new marketing approach and long-term strategy to sell Northern Ireland, which we feel the Mid Ulster Tourism strategy should reflect and consider future developments within the context of the three core strands.

As part of the review the Council would like to review the following: -

- How it measures success, and in specially look at existing measures, such as the NISRA figures and develop a more accurate method of measuring.
- In light of Tourism NI's new national tourism digital approach, we want to review Mid Ulster Council's digital approach, to consider all digital opportunities going forward.
- To measure and reprioritise existing outputs.
- To review Tourism Development Group and Clusters functions and structures.

4.0	Other Considerations
	N/A
4.2	<u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u>
	N/A

4.3	<u>Risk Management Implications</u> The project will be managed in accordance with MUDC policies and procedures
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Recommend to review the delivery of the Tourism Strategy & Action Plan to date and make recommendations with particular emphasis around the issues of measuring performance, digital and action plan delivery.
6.0	Documents Attached& References