

Report on	Business Engagement Programme - Tourism
Reporting Officer	Michael Brown
Contact Officer	Mary McGee

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 update Council on the Business Engagement Programme within the tourism section.
2.0	Background
2.1	The Business Engagement Programme is delivered by the Business Engagement Officer to all tourism businesses across Mid Ulster and includes the management of the Tourism Development Group and facilitation of clusters of tourism product by staff within the tourism section.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Tourism Development Group</u></p> <p>The Tourism Development Group held their last meeting on 6 September at Blessingbourne Estate, Fivemiletown. The meeting was addressed by Tourism NI Chief Executive John McGrillen followed by a comprehensive Q& A session. Issues highlighted included future funding from Tourism NI for product development and capacity building across the region, promotion of the Mid Ulster Region by Tourism NI and the need for closer cooperation and working with Tourism Ireland. The next meeting of the Tourism Development Group is scheduled for 1 November and will be addressed by Aubrey Irwin, Tourism Ireland, Coleraine.</p>
3.2	<p>Business Engagement Programme</p> <p>A new Business Engagement Programme is being delivered throughout the autumn to tourism businesses in Mid Ulster. The programme includes a variety of activities for business and is based on the results of a training needs survey completed by over 40 businesses in September.</p>

Business Engagement Workshops
Tourism Industry Trade

Events Funding Workshop
26th September: The Burnavon Arts & Cultural Centre, Cookstown, 7.00pm - 9.00pm

Tourism Packaging Workshop
5th October: Tullylagan Hotel, Cookstown, 9.30am - 12.30pm

Communication and Sales Skills
24th October: Tower Room, Ranfurly House, Dungannon, 9.30am - 13.00pm

Selling One to One at Trade/Consumer Events
21st November: Committee Room 3, Magherafelt Council Office, 9.30am - 13.00pm

Tourism Business Networking Event
6th February 2018: Event Space, Hill of The O'Neill, Dungannon, 9.30am - 1.00pm

Achieve Online Growth Using Your Website

4th October 2017
Burnavon Arts & Cultural Centre, Cookstown

Registration & Breakfast:
7.30am – 8.00am

Seminar Time:
8.00am – 10.15am

Admission FREE

- Spaces are limited
- Booking is essential

Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

Activities include the delivery of an events funding workshop by the Events Officer, a Packaging Workshop designed to encourage businesses to think more collectively to package and work together. Two industry speakers namely Nuala Saul, Brack Tours and Colm Murphy, Matthews Coaches both with decades of experience in selling Ireland overseas, will lead the workshop. 25 businesses have signed up to attend this workshop and it will also be attended by Brenda Murphy Tourism NI Mid Ulster Regional Manager.

The packaging workshop will be followed by two sales workshop, one very practical and interactive and focussing to making the perfect pitch and improving communication skills and the second developed to give people the skills to be more proactive in selling at consumer events and closing the deal.

These events are complemented by the training being delivered by Economic Development in developing social media and online sales. Staff have worked together to promote the online breakfasts events thereby ensuring that tourism businesses also take advantage of these opportunities.

These training sessions will be followed in the new year by a Tourism Networking Events to which all our tourism businesses will be invited and allowed time and opportunity to sell to one another, network and familiarise themselves with product in the region. This event will also be attended by Invest Ni and Tourism Ni representatives.

Sales and Marketing

3.3

GB – ROI Coach Operators Workshop, 14-15 September

Staff and business representatives have attended the GB-ROI Coach Operators workshop in Titanic, Belfast and presented to 40 incoming and domestic tour operators. Businesses from the region present included Blessingbourne Estate, Fivemiletown and Lough Neagh Tours.



This was followed by the inclusion of The Old Thatch Inn and Seamus Heaney HomePlace on a one day FAM trip to the Northwest. Follow up communications with these operators are ongoing with one Scottish Company already planning to programme Seamus Heaney HomePlace for 2018 plus a Canadian Company also planning to sell Seamus Heaney HomePlace in 2018. The Old Thatch Inn have also secured immediate bookings with two tour operators and again are chasing all leads and contacts made with the support of tourism staff.





Sales Calls Dublin, 2 October.

Tour Operators in Dublin are being targeted by tourism staff as part of a sales calls blitz on Monday 2 October. Businesses targeted include CIE tours (US market), Abbey Group (European Market), Adams and Butler (N America - Exclusive) and Odyssey International (Incentive). Staff will deliver a presentation and host a Q&A with staff in their individual offices with a view to selling into 2018 and 2019 seasons.

This work is being complemented by ongoing work with incoming tour operators and the Irish Tour Operators Association to sell product in this region and upsell businesses in and around our key attractions and locations.

4.0 Other Considerations

4.1 Financial & Human Resources Implications

Financial: NA

Human: NA

4.2 Equality and Good Relations Implications

4.3	<u>Risk Management Implications</u> N/a
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	N/a
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	N/a