

Report on	Lough Neagh Partnership Core Funding Progress Report
Reporting Officer	Michael Browne
Contact Officer	Allison O'Keefe

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 on Lough Neagh Partnership (LNP) Core funding activities, marketing tourism, recreational, environmental and heritage activities on Lough Neagh (LN) and the shoreline on behalf of Mid Ulster District Council.
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>LNP is the main co-ordinating body for tourism, environmental, heritage and marketing activities on LN, delivering projects and programmes on behalf of local and central government. Mid Ulster District Council agreed an annual contribution of £22,000 towards core running costs and to operate a continuous marketing plan for LN, specifically within Mid Ulster.</p> <p>LNP receives funding toward core running costs from five Council's around the Lough Shore for the co-ordination of substantial development, promotion and marketing of LN.</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Funding primarily contributes towards core staff costs (Manager, Marketing Officer and Admin/Finance Officer), development/ delivery of programmes and office running costs.</p> <p>LNP continue to identify and secure additional investment to the region to assist in addressing social, environmental and economic issues around the Lough. As part of the funding LNP offer Mid Ulster District Council continued coordination and marketing around LN and its Waterways and continue to develop Lough Neagh as a tourism destination.</p> <p>Measurable targets and quantifiable outputs are attached in Appendix 1.</p> <p>£22,000 was identified in the 2020/21 budget, with £13,708.45 having been drawn down for the period April – September 2020.</p>
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	<p><u>Financial & Human Resources Implications</u></p> <p>Financial: £13,708.45 towards Core running and salary costs in first claim submitted to cover period 1 April – 30 September 2020.</p>

4.2	<p><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>Ensure effective co-ordination of activities on LN and its shoreline and deliver social, economic and cultural benefits within MU. LNP is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity in all its activities with a focus on all citizens living within the Mid Ulster area of LN.</p>
4.3	<p><u>Risk Management Implications</u></p> <p>LNP has been in existence since 2003 with experience in managing risk. Funding has been secured with 4 Councils surrounding Lough shore therefore minimising risk to MUDC. Monitoring and verification of original invoices, payslips and corresponding bank statements, as well as, quarterly reports and site visits will be carried out to minimise risk.</p>
5.0	<p>Recommendation(s)</p>
5.1	<p>For information.</p>
6.0	<p>Documents Attached & References</p>
6.1	<p>Appendix 1 - LNP Progress Report</p>

LOUGH NEAGH PARTNERSHIP CORE FUNDING 2020/21 - £22,000 1 April – 30 September 2020
MID ULSTER DISTRICT COUNCIL ANNUAL FUNDING MEASUREABLE TARGETS AND QUANTIFIABLE
OUTPUTS



Targets	Quantifiable Outputs	Progress with Measurable Targets up to 30 September 2020
<p>1. Landscape Partnership Project Deliver Year 2 of the Lough Neagh Landscape Partnership project</p>	<p>Implement projects as agreed in HLF plan for 2020/21 e.g. signage project, manage Brookend and Derryloughan nature reserves.</p> <p>The Partnership is working with local communities and the Council in helping develop a community buy out of Derrytrasna land owned by DEL. This is a major environmental conservation project within the Mid Ulster Area and includes a major effort to conserve Curlews that breed in the bog area. This is one of the last breeding areas for Curlew around the shores of the Lough and an important site.</p> <p>The Partnership has also worked with local communities and Mid Ulster council to address peatland fires at Derrytrasna. This has been a serious problem in the area.</p> <p>The Partnership has also been liaising with the planning section regarding illegal extraction of peat in the area. Overall the Partnership has been working closely with the Council in this area.</p>	<p>Significant progress has been made on the acquisition, implementation of conservation actions and community involvement at the SW Lough Neagh peatlands at Derrylaughan and Derrytrasna. With support from Councillors and Council Officers we have progressed the lease agreement to a stage where transfer to the Partnership is imminent. The Curlew research and conservation programme has been very successful and has received extensive media coverage. We have also completed habitat, species, hydrological and access surveys of the site which will be used alongside the community engagement ‘deep mapping’ reports to develop a 10 year site management plan. This will be used to secure future investment to implement conservation, access and community interventions which will contribute to the wider site restoration. Alongside the branding of the site as a primary Curlew sanctuary, we hope to see the south west peatlands become one of the best community-led restoration projects in N. Ireland. The statutory agencies have now become interested in our work here and have expressed interest in supporting future interventions.</p> <p>At Brookend we have completed 14 acres of scrub management, installed riparian fencing, installed new access gates and provided cattle drinkers. This alongside</p>

		<p>rush management has brought the site into ‘favourable’ conservation condition.</p> <p>The archaeology programme continues to progress well with widespread interest and participation around the Lough. We have successfully delivered a community archaeology event at Ballyeglish Church working closely with TABBDA and the Loup & District Historical Society to investigate the potential for structural remains and a historic routeway thought to be present at the Church. A geophysical survey has been completed and we hope to secure future funding to undertake a more extensive investigation. The project engaged with 45 pupils and members of both organisations and was very well received.</p> <p>As part of our wider community heritage engagement we developed a six-week programme that provided participants and community groups with new skills to read, understand and interpret the features, history and heritage that tell the story of their home area.</p>
<p>2. Destination Marketing Plan Working with Mid Ulster Council and stakeholders, identify and help develop new tourism products on Lough</p>	<p>Develop and promote two new major Lough Neagh Tours, two of which relate to and promote the Mid Ulster Tourism development product.</p> <p>The Partnership has been working closely with the Mid Ulster Council to develop an “Embrace the Spirit” Experiential Tourism project with Mid Ulster. This is building on the work of the Partnership in developing the Food and Craic tours around the western shores of the Lough and Lough Beg. The new potential programme will work with local private businesses in the mid ulster area and at the same time</p>	<p>Lough Neagh Tours have developed three new tour itineraries; two of them feature Mid Ulster tourism businesses. In response to the pandemic, these tour itineraries are promoted as self-drive:</p> <p>https://www.loughneaghtours.com/foodie-road-trip/</p> <p>https://www.loughneaghtours.com/scenic-road-trip/</p> <p>A marketing campaign has just completed 15/10/2020 to promote these itineraries, videos were produced and will be given to each participating business to use on their own channels.</p>

	<p>promote the wider Lough as an important place to visit.</p> <p>The Partnership has also helped Mid Ulster with implementation of their tourism strategy particularly in the area of built heritage and heritage signage. The signage project will be implemented around the shoreline in 20/21 period.</p>	
<p>3. General Marketing and Promotion of Lough Neagh</p> <p>Ensure that VICs provide event information to Tourism NI on regular basis</p> <p>Co-ordination of Tourism NI marketing features for LN work includes co-ordination of marketing features for Tourism NI productions/advertorials. Production & distribution of Lough Neagh E-Newsletter for stakeholders & consumers online.</p> <p>Trade fairs and exhibitions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of 20 events per District • MUDC events submitted to TNI will be featured on Discover Lough Neagh website & app • 2 advertorials - Spring and Autumn • 3 stakeholder newsletters - Quarterly • Minimum 6 press releases • Review other content on website & update • Issue of event updates and press releases. • 200 posts for consumer and trade pages on Facebook & Twitter <p>Lough Neagh Partnership will attend trade fairs and exhibitions with Mid Ulster staff where opportunities arise to promote the destination and its events.</p>	<p>Due to the pandemic events were not promoted and advertorials not used by TNI. Lough Neagh Tours supplied content to TNI for their embrace a giant spirit campaign such as the legend of Finn McCool.</p> <p>Lough Neagh also participated in virtual Meet the Buyer to engage with tour operators and follow up communications are now ongoing in anticipation of the return of international visitors.</p> <p>A series of seven webinars for Tourism Businesses were hosted from April to June to upskill businesses in tourism marketing and in response to covid.</p> <p>Influencer marketing was utilized when lockdown eased to promote the tour Itineraries, Dish You Were Here promoted BakeHouse NI and an article was also facilitated in the NI Travel News for Bakehouse.</p> <p>Weekly posts/stories on Social Media are ongoing, website updated and funding application submitted to TNI for new website & booking system</p> <p>Press clippings report attached.</p>

		https://drive.google.com/file/d/111RZKr6xSnqv7wvKi2cJpbBLi9GaODRn/view?usp=sharing Application also submitted to TNI for an outdoor kitchen under the experience development programme Newsletters issued: 8th April 4th May 11th May 18th May 21st May 28th May 1st June
4. Lough Neagh Artisan Food Programme Implement a Lough Neagh Artisan Food project	Implement an artisan food branding project and help group members in Mid Ulster area. There are six businesses in total, two of which are in the Mid Ulster area. The purpose of the project is to help train the businesses and create a supply chain for the artisan products. It is now in the second year of the programme.	Work on this project went on hold during the pandemic. The group will meet via Zoom 26 th October to work on Christmas Hampers and look at recruiting new membership.
5. Liaison with MUDC Ongoing liaison MUDC	The Partnership manager meets regularly with Mid Ulster Council officers to update on progress and assistance in any joint projects	Regular meetings have been held with Mid Ulster regarding development of DAERA and Tourism NI Experiential project
6. NIEA Shoreline plan Attract new funding and engage with farmers and landowners on the western shore to improve condition of western shore	Lough Neagh Partnership staff will help implement and administer funding of £73,000 which has been secured for a second year from NIEA towards the development and implementation of management plans for Special Protected Areas (SPAs). A large part of this project will relate to the Mid Ulster Council Area. • Monitor all birds on Loughs western shore.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Lough Neagh Ranger started with LNP. • Invertebrate study completed • 4 priority Islands identified for conservation • Weekly bird monitoring counts for WEBs , NIEA and BTO

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor condition of all small Islands on western shore. • Monitor all main important beaches for invertebrates. • Monitor any habitat changes in western shores <p>This is a very important service that could help the Council as it provides an indication of the health of its Lough shoreline in terms of habitats and species.</p> <p>The Partnership has also applied for assistance to carry out a study into the impact of climate change on the Lough and again Lough Neagh Partnership will liaise closely with Council when it is implemented.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application made to develop tarn platform in Mid Ulster Linked to Ballyronan Glamping Pods • Relationships with 3 Gun clubs in Mid Ulster area developed • Receipt of 2 small monitoring boats. • Liaison with NIEA regarding receipt of larger boat
<p>7. Implement 2 Group Farm Schemes on Lough Neagh 2 new Group Farm Schemes set up.</p>	<p>The Partnership manages and administers a £200,000 DAERA Group Farm Scheme for Lough Neagh with main focus area in western shores/ mid ulster area giving help and assistance to over 16 new farmers along the mid ulster shoreline on Lough Neagh.</p> <p>Over 50 farmers within the Council area are included in the scheme which helps farmers better manage their land in an environmentally sensitive way and received income for this. Over £1.27 million of investment has been brought into the area through the Environmental Group Scheme and this offers great value to the Council area. The partnership would be very willing to deliver a presentation to the Council on this project.</p> <p>A new extension farm management programme will begin on 1 September 2000. This will cover the rivers in the east side of Lough Neagh.</p>	<p>52 farmers are now included in the scheme. New East river project has now started with involving 3 rivers</p>
<p>8. Lough Neagh Planning</p>	<p>Lough Neagh Partnership staff to attend any Lough Neagh Planning meetings led by Mid Ulster District</p>	<p>Presentation with Mid Ulster Development Committee to discuss planning issues on southern shore of the Lough.</p>

Assist Mid Ulster Council Planning Group to develop new planning zone designation for Lough Neagh	Council and give advice and assistance on the development of a new co-ordinated Lough Neagh plan. It has also liaised closely with Council regarding the illegal extraction of peat in the southern area of the lough.	
9. EU Life Plus Project and NPA application	Lough Neagh Partnership has applied for a Life Plus project with support from Mid Ulster Council. The Partnership will also apply for 3 other funding projects which have been discussed with Mid Ulster Council.	Life plus application submitted and still awaiting feedback.
10. Coalisland HLF Great Places Project Make application	Lough Neagh Partnership is in the second year of implementing the Great Places project in Coalisland and wider area. Up to £500,000 will be invested in the area working with local people to protect and celebrate its industrial heritage. The Coalisland Museum has been restored and is now open for planned visits. Communities have worked closely to complete this project. The Project has been impacted by Covid, however a great deal of work has been taking place on-line and an extension is expected. It is estimated that the programme will allocate over £100,000 spend in 2020/21.	Lottery have extended the project to September 2021. They have also agreed to an alternative programme of activities and events which will maximise community involvement through socially distanced engagement and the delivery of innovative online resources and performances. The new approach to the project remains anchored in the support and input of local businesses and stakeholders. The original programme remains the core of the project and the legacy outcomes are unchanged. It will now include a three year forward plan, developed using public consultation, with recommendations of how to sustain community heritage assets through the Covid/Post-Covid cultural environment.
11. Lough Neagh Interdepartmental Committee and Ownership	Work with political parties to develop an interdepartmental committee and ownership for the Lough. This is an important project that the Council should become involved in.	Conference was held in March 2020. Meeting held with senior DAERA staff regarding need to develop
12. Moil Cattle Scheme	Develop a Moil Cattle scheme on the shores of Lough Neagh with focus on western shores. The partnership has received a small grant to develop a moil cattle scheme. The intention is to create a bank of 6 farmers	Scheme has now been set up with tender specification for development of supply chain now agreed. Third meeting of group held

	who have moil cattle and create a supply chain. Two farmers will be from the Mid Ulster area.	
13. Navigation scheme and Black water mouth	The Partnership will attempt to improve navigation of Lough Neagh and Mid Ulster Rivers. The partnership will implement feedback from recent Lough Neagh Conference, e.g. dredge mouth of Blackwater to try and develop a Navigation sub authority for the Lough.	Discussions with some Councils regarding navigation needs of the Lough. Meeting with MLA to identify navigation problems and see if a meeting with Minister can be arranged
14. Common Tern Project	Lough Neagh Partnership staff intend to assist with the implementation and administration of Interreg Water Quality Programme (Waterpro) relating to the whole of Lough Neagh but parts will relate to the Mid Ulster area.	Application has been made to the NIEA Challenge Fund. Incudes new tern platform and work to torpedo platform