



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

Tourism

Business and Communities

SERVICE PLAN - 2020 / 21

Date

Consulted within staff team

18/06/2020

Discussed & signed off by Director

19/06/2020

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1.0 OVERALL PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE SERVICE

1.1 Purpose and Scope of the Service

The Tourism Department is responsible for the successful leadership and management of Tourism Service in Mid Ulster District Council. It plays a lead role in the delivery of the Mid Ulster District Council's vision and values and promotes the achievement of high standards of performance against Corporate and Service specific performance indicators.

Key Functional Responsibilities:-

- Tourism – District Wide
- Visitor Servicing – Located in Seamus Heaney HomePlace, Burnavon, Bridewell and Ranfurly House
- Corporate Events – District Wide
- Tourism Business Engagement

1.2 Responsibilities

The Tourism department is responsible for the following functions:

- Responsible for the development and implementation of Mid Ulster District Councils Tourism Strategy.
- Manage and deliver Visitor Information Services for Mid Ulster through the Visitor Information Centres in Bellaghy, Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt.
- The Culture change of Tourism delivery by becoming more commercially and customer focussed by maintaining and increasing domestic and international visitors.
- Build and develop relationships with a wide range of stakeholders through business engagement.
- Develop the Tourism Service through the delivery of a programme of innovative events and activities that promotes tourism that will make Mid Ulster attractive and competitive.
- Identify sources of external funding for tourism development, formulating fund bids and liaising with funding bodies to maximise the tourism profile in Mid Ulster.

- Promote and support innovative ways of achieving Mid Ulster District Council’s service aims and objectives through the Corporate Planning process and development, delivery and review of business plans and strategies.
- Contribute to corporate developments and initiatives so as to assist the Mid Ulster District Council to achieve its aims and objectives.
- Oversee the project management delivery of Tourism related strategic projects.
- Contribute to the development of Council’s corporate governance frame work and ensure it is consistently implemented.
- Ensure the provision and delivery of high quality and cost effective events.
- Contribute to the development of Council’s policies and procedures which promote high standards of service delivery.
- Provide guidance and professional advice to Stakeholders and elected members, ensuring clear communication, and delivery of Tourism objectives.
- Work with and consult members of the public, partners and stakeholders, to ensure the provision of appropriate, effective and integrated tourism service.
- Communicate to staff the strategic objectives and targets for the Department.

1.3 Customers & Stakeholders

Customers & Stakeholders
• Tourism Northern Ireland
• Tourism Ireland
• National Trust
• DAERA
• Department for Infrastructure
• Sport NI
• Department for the Economy
• Sperrins Future Search
• Lough Neagh Partnership
• Tourism Trade
• Councillors
• Funding Departments
• Event Organisers
• Schools

1.4 Performance Overview in 2019/2020

The following table provides a progress summary and the impact made by last years' Service Plan (2019-2020). It also details key successes, a summary of the end of year progress, remaining challenges for the Service and how it made a difference.

The Tourism Department Improvement Plan for 2019/20 has contributed to the following objective set within the Corporate Improvement Plan.

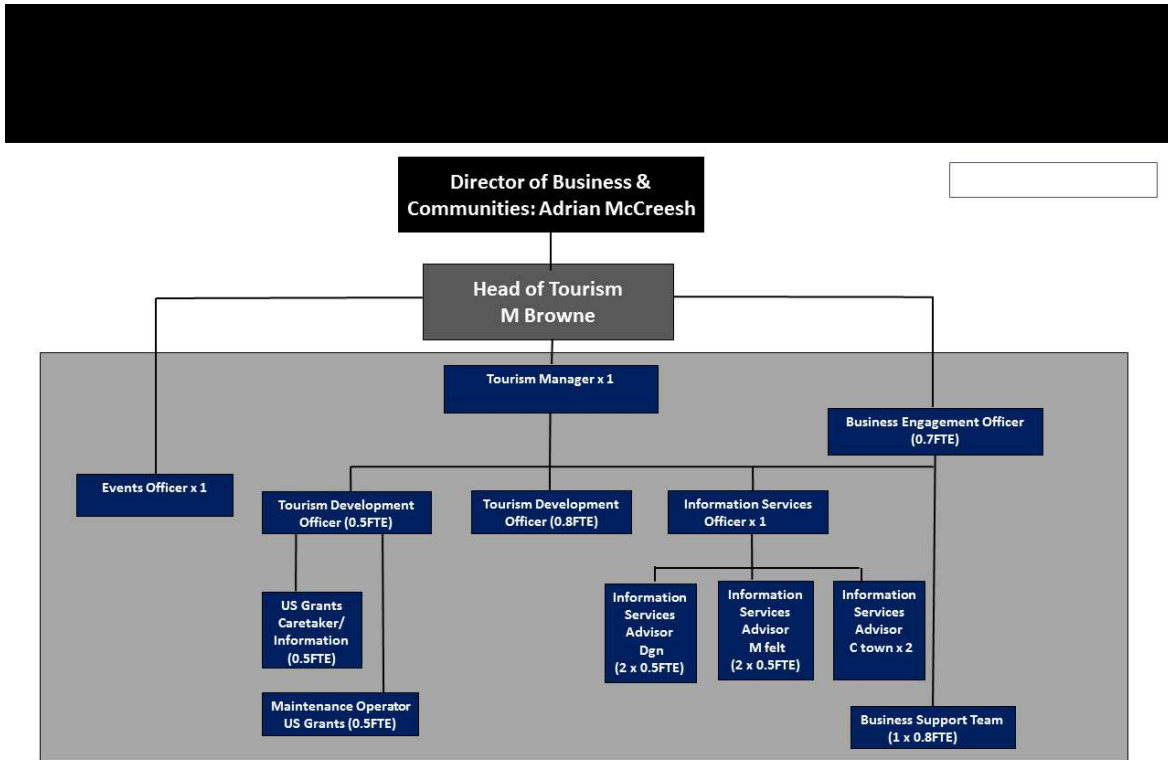
1. To assist in the growth of the local economy by increasing the number of visitors to the district
2. To improve the accessibility of our services by increasing the number available online

2019/20 Performance Overview	End of Year Progress Status: Completed/Commenced/Other
Tourism deliver and support a comprehensive strategic events programme across Mid Ulster Council	All events delivered on budget and on time with targeted numbers achieved.
To deliver Mid Ulster's 5 year tourism strategy.	As a result of the impact of COVID-19, the MUDC Tourism strategy, mid-term review was put on hold, with reviewing and remodelling required to take into consideration COVID-19.
Introduce a performance management approach for the tourism department.	Increase in levels of engagement across all three Culture & Arts facilities identified.
Increase the tourism potential of the Seamus Heaney project by working with the tourism industry and developing programmes and projects that will attract increased visitors to the Mid Ulster area.	During 2019/20 greater effort took place to secure new bookings at Seamus Heaney HomePlace with quality tour operators. New bookings were secured, however as a result of the impact of COVID-19 this has been put on hold.
To establish and develop a tourism industry forum that will engage and that work with the Council in the delivery of its 5 year tourism strategy. This forum will also support and advise the Mid Ulster Council private sector	The Mid Ulster Tourism Forum and the sub thematic clusters have been instrumental to the on-going positive working relationships with the private sector.

<p>and help realise the tourism potential. To offer an integrated multi-channel communications platforms that will improve and enhance B2B & business to customer communications across the Mid Ulster tourism industry.</p>	
<p>Significant progress made on OM Davagh Dark Skies Project throughout 2019/20.</p>	<p>Project scheduled to open to the public April 2020, as per agreements with funder, although it should be noted that this didn't go ahead due to ongoing Covid 19 related issues. The official opening will be rescheduled to a later date in the year.</p>

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2.2 Staffing Complement - 2020/21



Staffing	No. of Staff
Head of Service	1
Managers	1
Officers	8
Casual	2
Total	12

2.3 Service Work Plan - 2020/21

This plan confirms the core activities and actions which will form your Service Work Plan for 2020-21. This should be a high level capture of the Service activities and work which it will focus on throughout 2020-21. The Plan links to the Council’s 2020-2024 Corporate Plan priorities, Annual Corporate Improvement Plan Objectives, Corporate Indicators and Mid Ulster Sustainable Community Plan themes & outcomes.

SERVICE WORK PLAN 2020/21

Service Objective :	To deliver			
Link to Community Plan Theme:	Align to Corporate Plan Theme			
<i>CMP 1.2 Economic Growth - We have more people working in a diverse economy</i>	<i>Economy: 3.6 We will work to deliver tourism investment and employment concentrating on Mid Ulster's three identified tourism strands</i>			
Key Actions	By When	Lead Officers(s)	Outcomes/outputs	Measures
In light of COVID-19 to review and develop a programme of corporate events for the town centres and across the district that consider social distancing with appropriate themes and delivery. .	31/03/2021	S Arbuthnot Town Centre Managers M McKeown	To deliver inspiring, engaging events to enhance Mid Ulster Council's town centres and other event spaces. To be accessible to all visitors of all ages, backgrounds and abilities all taking into consideration COVID-19 guidelines. Maximise participation of our residents. To further develop, promoted and deliver high quality events.	Number of Programmes developed Visitor numbers/audience numbers to corporate events Levels of participant satisfaction surveys.

<p>To maintain support provided to the hospitality sector, particularly in light of COVID-19 pandemic, which will have a lasting impact on this sector.</p>	<p>31/03/2021</p>	<p>M Browne M McGee M McKeown</p>	<p>The Tourism Department within Mid Ulster Council will be working closer with the private sector to ensure all opportunities are maximised.</p>	<p>Number of business programmes delivered. Total Investment secured.</p>
<p>To obtain the required grading for venues and visitor attractions as identified through Tourism NI grading programme for OM Davagh Dark Skies, Seamus Heaney HomePlace, Ranfurly, US Grant, Hill of the O Neill.</p>	<p>31/03/2021</p>	<p>T McCance M Browne M McKeown BMcCormack J Robinson C Sheehy</p>	<p>Tourism NI recognition and visitor recognition of the high quality of Arts, Culture and Heritage programmes and activities delivered within Mid Ulster</p>	<p>Tourism NI Grading obtained for all MUDC culture and attractions.</p>
<p>As part of the experiential brand, Tourism NI have included 22 Embrace the Giant Spirit must do experiences as a focus for its marketing activities. Mid Ulster Council has been successful in securing three local experiences within the twenty-two attractions and activities, Seamus Heaney, Stars and Stones and Sheepdogs at Work. With Mid Ulster's richness in Heritage, further developments in the this area will be explored to develop sustainable products under the brand of 'Embrace the Giant Spirt' and in addition to this area Lough Neagh also presents collective cross Council potential for the development of visitor experiences under 'Embrace the Giant Spirt'.</p>	<p>31/03/2021</p>	<p>M Browne M McKeown M McGee</p>	<p>To development with the Tourism Development Group clusters and Lough Neagh Partnership at least two new visitor experiences under the 'Embrace the Giant Spirt' for both Mid Ulster Heritage and Lough Neagh</p>	<p>The development of at least two new experiences under the 'Embrace the Giant Spirt' brand.</p>

Service Development/Improvement 2020/21	By When	Lead Officer(s)	Outcomes/outputs	Measures
Increased Mid Ulster visitor digital presence. Website presences on Tourism NI 'Embrace a Giant Sprit' website and increase visitor interactive immersive experiences.	31/03/2021	M Browne M McKeown G Major	Increased strategic web presences for all attractions and accommodation.	% Project completed No. of Increased visitor numbers recorded Feedback from Users No. of Increased digital platforms and experiences.
To develop at least two new visitor experiences under the Tourism NI 'Embrace a Giant Sprit' brand with a specific focus under the development heritage pillar and utilising what Lough Neagh has to offer.	31/03/2021	M Browne M McKeown M McKee C Bell G Bell	Increased visitors to the district to access and appreciate Mid Ulster heritage assets, both man-made and natural, including our strategic visitor sites	% Project completed Baseline Visitor numbers being recorded.
Increase commercial tour operator's bookings to Council's attractions: (a).Seamus Heaney HomePlace, (b) The Hill of the O'Neill, (c) U.S Grants (d) OM Davagh Dark Skies	31/03/2021	M Browne M McGee M McKeown T McCance	The tourism offering within Mid Ulster will be further developed, enhanced, promoted and sustained.	% project completed Increased visitor numbers recorded Feedback from visitors
Broaden the visitor appeal of the Council's visitor attractions by increasing the visitor physical and augmented experience at OM Davagh Dark Skies and Ballyronan Marina.	31/03/2021	M Browne M McKeown C Bell G Bell	Tourism offering within Mid Ulster will be further developed, enhanced, promoted and sustained.	% Project completed Increased visitor numbers recorded Monitor usage of digital experience Feedback from visitors
To enhance the visitor experience at US Grants Homestead with new signage and improved visitor flow around the site. Upgrade the welfare facilities at Bridewell Visitor Information Centre in Magherafelt to include disabled toilet and access on the main floor.	31/12/2020	M Browne M McKeown G Bell C Bell	To enhance the visitor experience at U S Grants and The Bridewell TIC.	% Project completed Visitor feedback Increased visitor numbers recorded.

Performance Measures: <i>Should include any measures as outlined in work above and relevant measures from Community, Corporate, Performance Improvement Plan, Statutory, Corporate Health Indicators etc.</i>	Is the Measure, Statutory, Corporate, Existing, or New	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21 Target/Standard
3.1 Visitors to Arts/Cultural Venues/Attractions The numbers of people that use facilities and engage in Arts and cultural activity delivered by MUDC (Seamus Heaney HomePlace, Ranfurly and Hill of the O Neill, Burnavon and Bridewell)	Existing Measure	Baseline year	120,247	135,939	Recovery planning due to Covid 19

3.0 OUR STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

In carrying out our responsibilities, the Service is cognisant of the statutory duties placed upon the council in the delivery of its services. Whilst the Service operates, under various obligations it is however mindful of the changing context in which it operates and endeavours to mainstream the equality and rural needs duties in the design and delivery of our functions.

3.1 EQUALITY DUTY

The council and by consequence our Service is committed to contributing towards its part in working towards fulfilling obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to ensure adequate time, staff and resources to fulfil our duties.

The Service will also work towards adherence to the council's Equality Scheme ensuring equality duties, together with promoting positive attitudes towards persons with a disability and the participation of people with a disability in public life when carrying out our functions.

3.2 RURAL NEEDS DUTY

The Service will be mindful of the rural needs of its customers when carrying out its functions and subsequent responsibilities, particularly in developing any new policies, plans or strategies throughout the year. In line with the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 we will give due regard to rurality in terms of needs in carrying out the activities within our Service.

3.3 RISK MANAGEMENT OF SERVICE

The purpose of risk management is to manage the barriers which prevents the Council from achieving its objectives. This section of the service plan includes space for the Service to input their key risks (in summary form), which have been identified during the business planning process. The Council uses risk management to maximize opportunities and minimize risks. This improves its ability to deliver priorities and improve outcomes. This is why the Council deems it important to link business planning and risk management. Risk Management aims to:

- Help the Council achieve its overall aims and objectives
- Manage the significant risks the Council faces to an acceptable level
- Assist with the decision making process
- Implement the most effective measures to avoid, reduce and control those risks
- Balance risk with opportunity
- Manage risk and internal controls in the most effective way.

This table illustrates the risks identified to deliver Tourism Service business in 2020-21.

Risk Ref Number	Description of Risk	Risk Rating	Mitigation Activity
1.	Failure to miss deadlines for the development of marketing to inform visitors of what is on offer to the visitor.	6	To ensure that there is a robust marketing strategy with resources.
2.	Failure to deliver the tourism strategy action plan	6	Impact of Covid 19, closure of facilities and social distancing requirements as and when theatres and facilities re-open will have a significant impact on the ability of theatres and facilities being used to their full potential. Regular engagement with the sector currently being undertaken. Ongoing engagement with customer base being delivered via online platforms to ensure customer relationships are maintained during Covid 19 lockdown period. Regular team meetings discussing programming. Venue specific marketing staff in place across all three venues.
3.	Limited resources to develop strategic events.	6	Monitor and identify needs and external financial opportunities.

4.	Funding and other opportunities missed for MUDC area.	6	Ongoing scanning being undertaken by all officers. Team meeting agenda item, Officers have been assigned to investigate funding opportunities.
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As part of the recovery of the 1st wave of the Covid -19 pandemic, should a second or further waves occur we will switch to our emergency plans.

Rating	Descriptor
16 - 25	Extreme Risk (immediate action required)
10 - 15	High Risk (urgent action required)
7 - 9	Moderate Risk (action required)
1 – 6	Low Risk (keep under review)