

Minutes of Meeting of the Development Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 16 November 2023 in the Council Offices, Burn Road, Cookstown and by Virtual Means

Members Present

Councillor Clarke, Chair

Councillors Bell, Black, W Buchanan, F Burton*, Corry, Forde, Gildernew, McLernon, McQuade*, Milne*, Molloy*, Monteith*, Quinn*, Wilson

Officers in Attendance

Mr Black, Strategic Director of Communities & Place (SD: C&P)

Mr Gordon, Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing (AD: HL&W)**

Ms McKeown, Assistant Director of Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes (AD: EDT&SP)**

Ms Fox, Arts & Facilities Development Manager (A&FDM)**

Mr Curran, ICT Support

Mrs Grogan, Committee and Member Services Officer

Others in Attendance

Deputation:

Outdoor Recreation NI - Sliabh Beagh Feasibility Study

Ms Diane Crookes

* Denotes Members present in remote attendance

** Denotes Officers present by remote means

*** Denotes Others present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm.

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor McNamee, the Vice-Chair, Councillor Clarke took the Chair.

The Chair, Councillor Clarke welcomed everyone to the meeting and those watching the meeting through the Live Broadcast. Councillor Clarke in introducing the meeting detailed the operational arrangements for transacting the business of the committee in the chamber and by virtual means, by referring to Annex A to this minute.

D164/23 Notice of Recording

This meeting will be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast on the Council's You Tube site.

D165/23 Apologies

Councillor McNamee.

Ms Linney, Assistant Director of Development (AD: Dev).

D166/23 Declaration of Interests

The Chair, Councillor Clarke reminded Members of their responsibility with regard to declaration of interest.

Councillor Clarke declared an interest in Sperrin's Partnership.

D167/23 Chair's Business

The Chair advised that Councillor Wilson wished to raise a matter under Chair's Business.

Councillor Wilson advised that he was a regular visitor to Mid Ulster Sports Arena (MUSA) and for anyone which had visited the venue this week, they would have seen the serious flooding, but would have to say that this was the first time he had witnessed this type of flooding since it as built. The member said that he appreciated that this was being looked into at this moment but believed the MUSA wasn't the Centre of Excellence that we all think it is now. He said that he noticed a number of things whilst spectating on a Friday night when his Granddaughter is playing with Mid Ulster Ladies, the GAA 3G/4G pitch was utilised by Cookstown Youth, the whole pitches on a Friday night and Saturday morning are all youth which was absolutely brilliant. The member raised concern regarding no pathway around the pitch and with such a crowd, there is only one side for viewing and if watching children playing at the far side, the grass is really long and posts needing painted. The member suggested that it may be beneficial to arrange a meeting on site or would Officers be happy to look at the path, goals and state of the pitch themselves and bring back a report.

The Strategic Director of Communities and Place (SD: C&P) said that Officers would be happy to look at both issues. The SD: C&P concurred with Councillor Wilson in relation to the flooding at MUSA which was certainly unusual and agreed that Officers would look at concerns raised by member. The SD: C&P advised that a DEA meeting in relation to MUSA was going to take place over the next number of weeks and members will be updated at that point on how things progressed.

D168/23 Deputation - Outdoor Recreation NI - Sliabh Beagh Feasibility Study

The Chair advised that deputation from Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI) was in attendance tonight to present to committee.

The Strategic Director of Communities and Place (SD: C&P) advised that Ms Diane Crookes was in attendance to join virtually to take members through the presentation. The SD: C&P said that just to make members aware that the presentation would be on Sliabh Beagh Ecotourism Feasibility Study, but there is also an item on the agenda tonight which is going to be specifically deal with this which the Assistant Director of Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes (AD: EDT&SP) is going to raise later in the meeting. He said that if

members had any questions specifically relating to the project raised in the presentation, then comments can be raised with Ms Crookes then and deal with the formal report when committee comes to that item on the agenda.

The Chair invited Ms Crookes to make her presentation on Sliabh Beagh Feasibility Study to the committee.

Ms Crookes advised that ORNI and partners were appointed by Monaghan County Council on behalf of the Sliabh Beagh Partnership Committee (comprising Mid Ulster District Council, Monaghan County Council and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council). She advised the aim of the project was to develop a package of projects to collectively enhance rural tourism and outdoor recreation provision. A feasibility study was undertaken to investigate options to develop Sliabh Beagh as an eco-tourism destination through delivery of an exciting range of outdoor experiences that supports both the understanding and conservation of this special landscape. A number of inter-connected work packages were considered to build on the existing services and facilities in Sliabh Beagh area, one of which was identifying opportunities for a new 'hero' attractor.

Ms Crookes stated that Eco-tourism is defined as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education".

Principles of Eco-tourism:

- Minimise impacts
- Build awareness and respect
- Financial benefits of conservation
- Financial benefits of communities
- Visitor experiences that help raise awareness/sensitivity
- Low-impact facilities and services

Ms Crookes updated members on "The Hero Attractor: Sliabh Beagh as a Multi Activity Destination" which included a variety of outdoor activities scattered across different locations e.g. swimming, kayaking, walking, cycling, outdoor challenges, horse riding. Some of these activities will be free to access and other would be paid for. The proposal is to work with existing operators, infrastructure and towns/villages in the first instance before adding any additional activities and accommodation. Shared focus will be based on a shared brand and vision for the area that towns/villages and operators can participate in. There will be opportunities to develop small scale eco and unique off-grid accommodation.

Existing Initiatives;

- Clogher Valley Cluster
- Knockatallon
- Cooneen/Coonian
- Donagh – the community is activity looking at developing Airbnb & RV site
- Knocks – development of lakeside glamping and hub for walkers/cyclists

- Rosslea – revamping the heritage centre and providing simple facilities for walkers/cyclists would enhance the wider area
- Derrygannon – building on existing initiatives for walkers and the community

New Opportunities;

- Horse riding experiences in partnership with Clogher Valley Horses Welcome
- Infrastructure to support water access at key locations for kayaking and wild swimming e.g. Lough More
- New conservation and wellness experiences
- Building on existing recreational trails
- Weather-proofing/phased development of Cooneen/Coonian Murphy Ghost House

Recreational Trail Development provides the infrastructure to allow access to outdoor activities scattered across different locations:

- Walking, Cycling (Gravel Cycling), Equestrian
- Sustainable Trails include: Land use, Landscape, Habitats, People and Communities, Management and Maintenance

Ms Crookes updated members on:

- Some recreational trails within the feasibility study had been taken to RIBA Stage 2 (concept stage) whilst a number of others were progressed to RIBA Stage 3 (shovel ready)
- Concept Public Artwork
- Exploring Sliabh Beagh

Sliabh Beagh Multi-Activity Destination – Next Steps includes:

- Progress recreational trails through planning
- Signage procurement
- Development of concept public artwork
- Five-year plan that addresses:
 - Vision and objectives
 - Coordinated development and marketing under the umbrella of Sliabh Beagh
 - Identification of key priorities for development of the visitor experience, required infrastructure, marketing and management
 - Detailed action plan for delivery
 - Potential to seek 3-year Project Officer to lead momentum, secure funding and coordinate
 - eProspectus to encourage operators and funders to participate

The Chair thanked Ms Crookes for her very comprehensive presentation and for one who lives quite a bit from that area, it has been very informative.

The Chair invited any questions members may wish to raise with Ms Crookes.

Councillor Gildernew thanked Ms Crookes for her presentation and stated that it was great to see the Shared Island Funding coming into Mid Ulster and Clogher Valley. The member said that it would be interesting to see the project develop and the opportunities that it would bring to the area.

Councillor F Burton thanked Ms Crooks for her presentation and as one who sits on the Sliabh Beagh Partnership, it is fantastic to see this 5-year plan and some of the projects which were shovel ready at this stage. The member said that one of the things that she would like some reassurance on was in relation to Lumford's Glen as this was a project on the Council's books for a very long time, it sits very well with Knockmany Forest and the work that we along with the community have been involved in. Over the period of covid, people were walking these open glens and our previous Head of Parks, Mr Nigel Hill took members up and around Lumford's Glen which was one of the most beautiful places within Clogher Valley. The member said that this was something that she dearly wanted to push for in relation to the close proximity of Knockmany Forest and how it would just tie in with the whole package up there. The member said that it was great to see Favour Royal, Fardross and other outdoor places getting this opportunity, even with equestrian it brings a whole new element of people being able to go out on horseback which would also link into other equestrian areas within Fivemiletown including Blessingbourne. The member sought reassurance that whilst these other projects were shovel ready and were at RIBA Stage 3, Lumford's Glen currently sits at RIBA Stage 2 and would be keen to know within the 5-year plan going forward, how Lumford's Glen can be progressed so that it was shovel ready and hoped that there was some good news on that score as people in that locality were really pushing for this and really want this to happen. The member felt that this was the only time that we were going to get progressed for the local area if we work through this partnership.

The Assistant Director of Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes (AD: EDT&SP) in response to Councillor Burton advised that this matter would be raised under point 12 of tonight's agenda and would be picked at that point.

The Chair thanked Ms Crookes for her attendance tonight at which she withdrew from the committee at 7.28 pm.

Matters for Decision

D169/23 Update on Department for Communities Access and Inclusion Programme 2023/24

The Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing (AD: HL&W) presented previously circulated report to:

- Provide Members with an update on the 2023/24 Department for Communities (DfC) Access and Inclusion Funding Programme
- Provide Members with the list of projects approved for funding by DfC
- Seek approval to set up specific finance codes to incur expenditure for each project where required

- Seek approval to utilise the approved Council framework contractors, where required

Councillor Molloy said that it was a good project but sought a brief update on what a pool pod actually does.

The AD: HL&W said that traditionally for people with mobility issues or disabled customers to get into the pool, this normally required a manually operated pool hoist to get into the water, which may be seen as an undignified way of getting into the pool. The AD: HL&W advised that there were 2 pool pods in Greenvale and one in Cookstown Leisure Centre which gives the user the independence. There is also accessible wheelchairs which are fit for purpose for the water, so the customer can use the pool pod themselves with a click of a few buttons, the pool pod will lower the customer down into the water and when ready to get out of the pool again, the pool pod provides the assistance to get out again independently. The AD: HL&W stated that Dungannon Leisure Centre was a different makeup of pool in the way it was constructed, so up until this year, the type of equipment that could be used in Dungannon didn't exist on the market. The AD: HL&W advised that equipment required for Dungannon has now been made available and Council were happy to receive this funding opportunity from DfC to bring this project forward.

Councillor Molloy said that Council were lobbying for inclusive access into Dungannon pool for a long time, but was difficult to get that accessibility as it as a deeper pool. The member said that it was an excellent project and would be happy to propose the recommendation.

Councillor Corry said that she would be happy to second the report as it was a great project and had seen some great work last year with our accessible benches, tables etc and was lucky to see for herself the pool pod in Magherafelt with Minister Hargey at the time. The member advised that this was very welcome news regarding the enhancement at Cahore Pavillion and she was aware that this something that was needed to bring the area up to date and make it fully accessible for users.

Councillor Burton in referring to this new addition at Dungannon Leisure Centre, advised that in the past Council had worked with the Trust in relation to patients who had taken strokes. The member said that this rehabilitation was beneficial through pool work as this was something that could change people's lives as they are able to travel easier in water and asked if this was something that could be looked at.

The AD: HL&W advised that the GP referral programme is still in operation across all of our Leisure Centres and specific eligibility criteria that people can get referred to over that. The AD: HL&W confirmed that link in with various Trusts can be done again just to remind them that this service is still available. He was aware that there were still some capacity issues and return to some of those key critical services as emerging from the Covid pandemic and it was his understanding that not all the programmes from the Trust has come back yet but could certainly reach out and engage with them again.

Councillor Burton said that this would be really welcome news.

Proposed by Councillor Molloy
Seconded by Councillor Corry and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to agree to -

- Accept the Letter of Offer from DfC for £55,591.05.
- Approval to set up specific finance codes to incur expenditure for each project identified in section 3.3, where required.
- Approval to utilise the approved Council framework contractors, where required, to deliver the projects identified in section 3.3 of this report
- Approval to allocate the 10% Match funding for projects approved for funding by the Department for Communities through its 2023/24 Access and Inclusion Programme with funding to be met from within existing resources that will be responsible for the management and delivery of each project.

D170/23 Sperrins Outdoor Partnership

The Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing (AD: HL&W) presented previously circulated report to and sought Council approval to contribute £4,000 per year for 2-year period commencing April 2024 up to September 2026 to support continuation of The Outdoor Partnership Project in the Sperrins.

Councillor Corry said that this was a brilliant project and a long time in the making.

Proposed by Councillor Corry
Seconded by Councillor McLernon and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to note the contents of the reports, permit the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding and give approval for Mid Ulster District Council to make a contribution of £4,000.00 per year for 2-year period (April 2024 up to September 2026) to support continuation of The Outdoor Partnership Project in the Sperrins as outlined within this report and subject to confirmation of the reciprocal financial contribution of all partner Councils.

D171/23 Partnership Proposal

The Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing (AD: HL&W) presented previously circulated report to update Members on a proposal received from St Patrick's College Maghera for a partnership to be developed.

Councillor Corry said that she would be happy to propose the recommendation as it was an exciting opportunity going forward for other schools, leisure centres and other facilities as well i.e. football pitch at Maghera Leisure Centre which may not be fully subscribed or used Monday to Friday during the day and the school can make use of that and likewise for the school in the evening time or weekend where our leisure needs some of their facilities then it would be mutually beneficial. The member said that this would be very useful as there was no wastage of community buildings and felt that this was a good pilot project and hoped that everything would go well.

Councillor Wilson said that he was all for partnership working however this one give him concern. He said that Council could end up with the dearest carparking charges anywhere and didn't even think that school carpark at Maghera was even used for the fireworks display at Halloween and felt that the school was getting away fairly lightly. The member referred to what AD: HL&W alluded to where other groups cannot access facilities within the Maghera area and would have to tie in with this and felt he would really need to see what the school use, if they were booking a pitch from 9am to 5pm with a concession, that is £600 per week and now all of a sudden it's £1,000 for a year. The member felt that there were a lot of other schools that use our facilities and asked if we were setting a precedent here as he knows for a fact that Holy Trinity and Cookstown High School uses Cookstown Leisure Centre and Council also avail of the High School carpark. The member said that he was unsure about this proposal and although this was a pilot scheme, he felt that other schools would be screaming, but would like to see figures on how often the school uses it and how often we use their grounds and work it out that way.

The AD: HL&W agreed that the member made a number of valid points which has been given due consideration with conversations back and forth with the school. In terms of historical usage at different times, Officers estimate that this was in the region of £1,800 per year therefore this proposal for a fixed fee of £1,000 per annum represents a a net reduction of around £800 per annum. If members look back towards the strategic recommendations within the recently approved Pitches Strategy, we do talk about a greater desire to collaborate with the education sector and also vice-versa in terms of how we are able to maximise our shared facilities and how we are able to allow each other to make those facilities more accessible to also include the wider community as well. The AD: HL&W said that this was the first school that he was aware of in recent times which has approached Council in regard to this and took on board what the member had alluded to in regards to precedent, but this proposal could be used as an opportunity to see if this has mutual benefits and to have those discussions with other schools and make those cases that they are relevant also as there would be those reciprocal benefits not only for ourselves but for the education sector also. The AD: HL&W said that from an Officer team, that they would be happy to engage with other schools and areas and certainly open to having a conversation to explore other opportunities.

Councillor Buchanan said that this was all well and good but looking at the figures, we were losing £800 as the Council were taking in £1,800 and now deal done to get £1,000 and asked if Council were really able to afford losing that money. He said that it was good to see the Council and school-working together but really sought clarification if it was really good value for the ratepayer as he was aware of Leisure Centres losing a lot of money and asked if we could afford to lose another £800.

Councillor Gildernew said that by listening to the conversation and update from the AD: HL&W, she would be happy to second the proposal, the fact that the partnership working between the school and leisure centre can be rolled out, and although this is a trial this year, this could be rolled out to other schools and leisure centres in the area.

Councillor Wilson agreed that this was all about partnership working in which this Council is very good at, but by what the AD: HL&W was saying, it was his understanding that if any other groups want to use the school facilities, then there will be a charge. The fact that Council is giving discount on it for £1,000 and getting use of all the school facilities i.e school hall etc, then someone will have to pay us as there would be a charge to us. It is Council that is striking up the partnership agreement and taking over the school rather than someone else.

The AD: HL&W said that the intention of this proposal was particularly to provide further space for the youth service sector in Maghera area which was raised through our Community Development team whereby they have been advising that additional facilities were being sought to run their youth service programmes and that available accessible space in Maghera area was limited. The intention behind this proposal would be to open up the school premises so that those rooms and halls could be made available for the wider community use as this could potentially free up some capacity in the leisure centre so that some of these concessionary bookings could go potentially across to the school and avail of their premises resulting in the leisure centre having additional slots to sell at the full rate. The AD: HL&W advised that the purpose of it would be kept under review for both parties, particularly for us as a Council and keep a close eye on it should members be minded proceeding with this and if it doesn't have the anticipated benefits for Council and the wider community, then it would be brought back to committee for reconsideration. The AD: HL&W believed that there was an identified need within the community and an opportunity to make use of each other's facilities in a more efficient way.

Councillor Molloy felt that this was an excellent opportunity as he had been raising this for years. When we look at the freetime or downtime at our leisure centre, he was sure that the pitches were ideal during the day for numerous hours and other facilities and when you look at the school estate after school and how long this sits idle, it's a perfect working relationship if we can get both of those working together. Out of hours for school, usage within the community and school to avail of leisure facilities during the day resulting in being freed up at night for other users and felt that this was an excellent idea to work in partnership.

Councillor Wilson on a point of clarification, enquired if there was over capacity at the leisure centre, those booked on a concessionary rate would be moved across to Maghera High School so would be paying Council anyway. He felt that overcapacity in the leisure centre was another point to this and the other issue was if some of the schools wished to use the Sports Arena, there is a concessionary rate on it but they could be linked in to some of our schools that offer other facilities like afterschool's etc.

The AD: HL&W said he wished to clarify the comment regarding overcapacity. What he had meant wasn't necessarily overcapacity at the leisure centre, but we do know from discussions with Community Development team that there was the intention from the youth sector and youth service within that area to run additional programmes and would require additional space to do that. He advised that our concessionary rates are a bit prohibitive for them to be able to do that and would like to explore the use of the school premises for them to run their programmes as part of this opportunity and where they could potentially benefit from partnership working.

The AD: HL&W stated that this was not taking away from any income that was being received in the leisure centre but just adding another mean for accessibility of space which we couldn't provide within the rates and budgets we are working to.

The Chair said that this idea and suggestions has been mentioned at different times regarding additional provisions and better access. He felt that it was worthwhile

The AD: HL&W said that the intention of this was particularly for the youth sector in Maghera area which was raised through our Community Development team advising that additional facilities were being sought to run their programmes. The intention behind this would be open up the school premises so that those rooms and halls could be made available as this could potentially free up some capacity in the leisure centre so that some of these concessionary bookings could go potentially across to the school and avail of their premises resulting in the leisure centre having additional slots to sell at the full rate. The AD: HL&W advised that the purpose of it would be kept under review for both parties, particularly for us as a Council and keep a close eye on it should members be minded proceeding with this and if it doesn't have the anticipated benefits for Council and the wider community, then it would be brought back to committee for reconsideration. The AD: HL&W believed that there was an identified need within the community and an opportunity to make use of each other's facilities in a more efficient way.

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The Chair said that this idea and suggestions has been mentioned at different times regarding additional provisions and better access. He felt that it was worthwhile progressing with the pilot scheme and was hypothetical until it was actioned, but when it was worked out it may set a template for other places.

Proposed by Councillor Corry
Seconded by Councillor Gildernew and

- Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to note the contents of this report and agree to:
- A partnership agreement between the School and Council with an annual fee of £1,000 payable to Council
 - Partnership to be trialled for a period of 12 months initially and reviewed for effectiveness should it be beneficial to continue on beyond the initial trial period with annual reviews thereafter.

D172/23 Consultation on Creating a Smoke Free Generation and Tackling Youth Vaping

The Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing (AD: HL&W) presented previously circulated report to agree the draft response to the Department of Health and Social Care Open Consultation: Creating a smokefree generation and tackling youth vaping: your views.

Councillor McLernon wished to take the opportunity to address the disposal of vapes as it was evident in our towns and villages the littering caused by disposable vapes. She said that obviously there was an environmental health and health and safety issue with this and asked if there was anything the Council could do or possibly include in the consultation to explore an initiative regarding the recycling and safe disposal of vapes e.g. safe collection points outside shops and stores that are selling vapes within our towns and villages.

Councillor Monteith said that he would be fairly supportive of what was within the report but had one concern. The member referred to where it was stated within the report about the difference in expert opinion in relation to the flavouring where there does seem to be an argument for restricting tobacco flavouring and for another argument being put forward by some of the experts to expand the flavouring to help people who wish to stop smoking. He said that he was aware of people and as a former smoker himself who used vapes to stop smoking, some had found the tobacco flavour nauseating so did get a lot of benefit out of the different flavours that were available. The member said that he was a bit concerned that opportunities were being closed down for people who wish to stop smoking. He also felt the issue of restricting marketing, making bland packaging, not using brand names, reduced colours, increasing the price would go a lot more to discouraging use by youth than particular flavours but did not feel massively on it but felt that there was a section of people out there that may feel unable to use this as a valuable asset to stop smoking if they are restricted to the one flavour.

Councillor Wilson said that he was happy with the proposal, but it was a legal requirement for retailer premises to display the following statement of being illegal to

sell tobacco produce. The member said that we are looking at a rise and trying to tackle youth vaping and suggested that it be included that all schools display signage in relation to the dangers of vaping within in schools.

The AD: HL&W confirmed that all three members comments were noted and could be fed into responses.

Proposed by Councillor W Buchanan
Seconded by Councillor McLernon and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to agree the content of Mid Ulster District Council's draft response to the DHSC's open consultation on 'Creating a smokefree generation and tackling youth vaping: your views'. Members comments to be fed into response.

D173/23 Consultation on Private Tenancies Act 2022: Section 8 and Section 10

The Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing (AD: HL&W) presented previously circulated report to agree a response to the Department for Communities' consultation on the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Act 2022, 'Section 8 - Smoke, Heat and Carbon Monoxide Alarms' and 'Section 10 - Electrical Safety Standards'

Councillor Gildernew said that she would be happy to propose the recommendation as this would make houses and private tenancies safer which would be good for everyone.

Proposed by Councillor Gildernew
Seconded by Councillor McLernon and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to agree the content of Mid Ulster District Council's draft response to the technical matters of the Department for Communities' consultations on Sections 8 and 10 of the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Act 2022 as set out in Appendices 5 and 6.

D174/23 Regional and Minority Languages

The Strategic Director of Communities & Place (SD: C&P) presented previously circulated report to update Members on the following –

- Irish Language Policy Review
- Irish Language Plan 2023 – 27
- Irish Language Signage Plan
- Irish Language Working Group
- Ulster Scots Language and Culture

Councillor Corry was happy to propose the recommendation and stated that the last Working Group meeting was really good and was great to see the figures coming

back from the census that Mid Ulster was one of the highest growth areas and highest number of people fluent in Irish language which was great to see the increasing use of the language.

Councillor Corry wished to propose as well as that of the exciting opportunity in the papers for the language hubs and her own area Carrtogher is very strong there also. She referred to possible new ones wanting to come on board like Cairdre Uí Néill and may be useful for them to come in and do a presentation on their future plans.

Councillor Monteith said that similarly to what Councillor Corry had alluded to, he and a few others had talked about trying to put together a proposal for an urban Gaeltacht initiative and hoped that this would fit in to what was being talked about moving forward over the next number of year.

Councillor Monteith referred to issue that needs to be tackled around settlement signage which is being continuously raised to him by people and seems to be an understandable stand off over the last number of years with moving forward on it, but this now needs tackled. The member stated that there was signage within his own DEA which were the old Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council signage at settlements which are falling down and not in a position to restore them and felt that a call was needed on this. The member said that there was quite a number of settlements who wanted bi-lingual signage in relation to settlement entrances and was aware that this was not going to be an easy process but this cannot be kept being put off forever. The member said that he had no difficulty with what was in the programme but would state his usual objection to the use of the working group for moving forward with the project as it politically discriminates against himself and other councillors.

Councillor W Buchanan enquired what was the annual budget for Regional and Minority Languages.

Councillor Wilson said that when he read the report and headline under Regional Minority Languages and Ulster Scots got all of three sentences which said enough. The member said that he had an issue in that there is an Ulster Scots Week from 20-25 November, the Ulster Scots Agency in which is a member off wrote to this Council on the 6th June asking if they wished to get involved, a letter was issued to members from the Communities and Place directorate in October stating that a few events would be taking place at The Hill of The O'Neill and Grant Homestead, nothing to do with language, just two talks which he was not happy about. Last Monday a member of Community Network received a phone call enquiring if she could do something for Ulster Scots Language Week in two weeks' time which was brought to Council on 6th June. The member felt that this was unacceptable and was very disappointed.

The SD: C&P in referring to comments made from members advised that in terms of Councillor Monteith's concern around settlement signage, as per the report Officers were investigating one overall programme to look at rollout of signage across the district which would include the main towns, settlements and the remainder of our assets which need to be completed. The SD: C&P said that there was work continuing in the background to pull this together with a one overall programme which will come in front of the members at the right time.

In relation to Councillor Buchanan query regarding budget, the SD: C&P advised that he didn't have that information tonight but would certainly try and get it after this meeting.

In response to Councillor Wilson's query, the SD: C&P advised that the report in relation to Ulster Scots was only a pre-empt to let members know that a further detailed report in relation to the work we are doing will come back in front of committee. The SD: C&P said that engagement has been taking place with Ulster Scots Agency with a number of conversations taking place. He advised that Catherine Fox, Arts & Facilities Development Manager (A&FDM) was in attendance tonight and would be happy to provide an update to members on the engagement which is taking place.

Ms Fox, Arts & Facilities Development Manager (A&FDM) advised that Council had been liaising with Ulster Scots but did find it quite difficult to get speakers and had also been liaising back and forth with Jane Barr of the Ulster Scots and our own Education Officers from Ranfurly House & The Hill of The O'Neill. The A&FDM said that she also had been liaising with David Gilliland from Ulster Scots Agency and were due to meet last week but had to be rescheduled at short notice due to a family bereavement.

Councillor Wilson said that he accepted what has been said, but in regard to Ulster Scots Language Week he was disappointed as contact has only been made with facilitator two weeks before the event asking that something be put on.

The A&FDM said that there had been a real difficulty in trying to secure a facilitator, one of the talks which was in Ranfurly House was based on Alister McReynolds and tried to focus on US Grants Homestead, which was going back and forward for a few weeks which was difficult. A speaker could not be located and even contact had been made with Queen's University, our Education Officer has a list of people who were contacted to get that speaker. She advised that they couldn't advertise before that was confirmed.

Proposed by Councillor Corry
Seconded by Councillor Gildernew and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to –

- Note the update report.
- Approve the Irish Language Plan 2023-2027.
- Agree that Cairde Uí Néill be invited to a future meeting to provide a presentation on Irish Language Hubs.

D175/23 Economic Development Report - OBFD

The Assistant Director of Economic Development, Tourism & Strategic Programmes (AD: EDT&SP) presented previously circulated report update on key activities as detailed below –

- Tullaghoge Fort Access and Interpretation Feasibility Study
- Sliabh Beagh Eco Tourism Feasibility Study
- Draft Consultation Response on the Department for the Economy's Approach to 10x Technologies and Clusters

The AD: EDT & SP said that in relation to Labour Market Partnerships (LMPs): NI Multiply Programme Bid, that Council Officers received notification this week that the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities has paused funding for this initiative and therefore, she would be withdrawing this agenda item until Council receives a further update. The AD: ED&SP advised that the Committee would be updated if funding becomes available again to progress the project.

Councillor Gildernew said that she was happy to propose the recommendation as Sliabh Beagh was a great project. She said that she was disappointed regarding the funding being put on hold for LMP's Multiply Programme Bid and hoped in time that this would come to fruition. The member referred to the LMP celebration event held yesterday in Cookstown and said that it was a great success for businesses and residents in the area and hoped that this was something that would come through.

Councillor Burton seconded the proposal and referred to 5.2.2 Lumford's Glen and said that she was happy to see this going forward as she would hate to see it fall at this stage as Officers had fought very hard for it.

Councillor Monteith referred to LMP and said that it was a brilliant scheme, but felt that this would be amenable to South West College in regards to adult education. The member said that although it states that it was of no cost to Council, felt this was not the case as it does cost us i.e. line management costs, staff accommodation costs etc and not as simple to say that it was of no cost to Council. The member felt that Council may not be best suited to deliver this programme and more amenable to South West College to deliver.

The AD: EDT & SP advised that LMPs were selected to deliver part of the Multiply Programme and she understood that colleges and universities were selected to deliver the remainder of it. The AD: EDT & SP said that the Council team is building capacity through the work of the Labour Market Partnerships, forging strong links with businesses and communities etc. and the LMP celebration event held last night was testament to that and evidences the work Council has achieved in progressing the employability and skills agenda across Mid Ulster. The AD: EDT & SP advised that a separate report would be taken to P&R Committee to fund a dedicated Officer to progress the Multiply Programme, provided funding is made available in the future from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. She furthermore agreed that there would be line management responsibilities to manage the staff member if they came on board, but indicated she believed this was a worthwhile project.

Councillor McLernon left the meeting at 8.14pm and returned at 8.15 pm.

Councillor Monteith advised that he was only making a point and would not be arguing against it but felt that Council was not best placed to deliver this programme.

Proposed by Councillor Gildernew

Seconded by Councillor Burton

Resolved That it be recommended to Council –

- Tullaghoge Fort Access and Interpretation Feasibility Study
 - (i) **Approve** the Tullaghoge Fort Access and Interpretation Feasibility Report.
 - (ii) **Approve** this scheme is added to Council's Capital Planning Framework as an emerging project; and pursue external funding opportunities to help develop a funding package to deliver the scheme.
- Sliabh Beagh Eco Tourism Feasibility Study
 - (i) **Approve** the content of the draft final version of the Sliabh Beagh Eco Tourism Feasibility Report. A final version will be brought to Committee at a later date for noting.
 - (ii) **Approve** the additional studies and drawings required to bring Lumfords Glen up to RIBA Stage 3, to maximise the potential for Shared Island Capital Funding at this site. If agreed, the Committee will be required to make a recommendation to the Policy & Resources Committee seeking a reserve release of £24,875 +Vat.
- Draft Consultation Response on the Department for the Economy's Approach to 10x Technologies and Clusters
Approve Council's draft response for submission to the Department for the Economy regarding 10X Technologies and Clusters on Appendix 4B.

Matters for Information

D176/23 Minutes of Development Committee held on 12 October 2023

Members noted Minutes of Development Committee held on 12 October 2023.

Councillor McLernon referred to D152/23 and asked if there was any update in relation to Blackwater barmouth.

The Strategic Director of Communities & Place (SD: C&P) advised that he would seek an update and update the member.

D177/23 Environmental Health Service Update

Members noted previously circulated report which advised that at the meeting of the Development Committee in September 2023, Members resolved that a regular update on the work of Mid Ulster District Council's Environmental Health Service

should be provided to committee. This report is the first in a series of reports to provide Members with an update on the work of the Environmental Health Service in October 2023.

Councillor Gildernew referred to item 3.1 – Air Quality Diffusion Tubes over 28 sites and said with the ongoing odours and continual complaints living in the Cabragh and Killeeshil area, enquired where the 28 sites were located and what were they actually checking for in terms of odour and air quality. The member said if there is none in the Killeeshil/Cabragh area with that whole complaint going on asked if it would be beneficial to have them there and asked if this could be investigated.

The Strategic Director of Communities & Place (SD: C&P) the Diffusion Tubes locations are detailed in our Air Quality Report which we are required to publish and that information is available online and can certainly provide members with a link. He advised that a report is brought periodically through this committee on this matter. He also advised that it was his understanding that tubes measure nitrogen dioxide pollutants which is mainly come from idling vehicles and at those areas where there is a lot of traffic build up at various points of time during the day and where cars are sitting idling and mainly measuring that level of pollutant.

Councillor Monteith referred to Air Quality Report which is produced every year and nothing any different or changes. He said that there was a meeting in relation to proposals in what we may or may not do at the two sites which are always top of the list for the worst air pollution in the Council area – Newell Road, Dungannon and Charlemont Street, Moy.

Councillor Monteith proposed that there be another meeting as there were a number of ideas which were put forward and was unsure what had happened to them and presumed nothing happened but did not want to be too presumptuous. He felt that reports were just continually being produced and the people who live in the area, the air quality gets no better and felt that it was counterproductive to continually keep doing this without taking any action on it. The member said that there were things that can be done which we have talked about before and wasn't done and proposed that a meeting be held in relation to air pollution and to include any other area which needs talked about also, but raising the two areas within his own DEA as they were constantly above safe limit recommended by Public Health Authority.

Councillor Monteith referred to report on inspections and would be helpful and good to see housing standard, inspections on behalf of the Housing Executive as it would be good to get an idea from our own Environmental Health Department on whether they are detecting any trends and issues which keep coming up all the time. The member said that he had raised at full Council the issue of black mould and would be interesting to see if our Officers are seeing anything regarding this issue and may be useful exercise for some of our consultation responses when we are trying to lobby for changes in legislation in housing fitness and housing standards.

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that a meeting be held in relation to air pollution at Newell Road, Dungannon and Charlemont Street, Moy.

D178/23 Drinking Water Quality Report for Northern Ireland 2022

Members noted previously circulated report which provided information on the recently published Drinking Water Quality Report for Northern Ireland 2023.

D179/23 Mid Ulster Council Area Community Resuscitation Group Action Plan 2019 – 2023

Members noted previously circulated report which provided an update on the “Creating a Community of Lifesavers in Mid Ulster Council Area, Community Resuscitation Group, Action Plan 2019 – 2023”.

D180/23 Economic Development Report - OBFI

Members noted previously circulated report which provided an update on key activities as detailed below:

- Coalisland Town Centre Forum Minutes – 20 March 2023
- Maghera Town Centre Forum Minutes – 29 March 2023

Councillor Monteith referred to town centres and advised that some work needed to be done due to the high level of vacant properties in our towns and high streets. He said that it was disheartening to see Dungannon town centre losing one of our leading chemists and felt that these issues needed to be addressed. The member said that he was aware that this was no quick fix but asked that this be given real consideration as people were really concerned.

Councillor Monteith proposed that a workshop for Councillor be arranged in relation to vacancies in High Streets and Town Centres as there was an onus on Council to look at this as people were very concerned and suggested that this workshop be arranged for early in the new year.

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that a workshop be arranged for members early in the New Year in relation to vacancies in High Streets and Town Centres.

D181/23 Development Report

It was agreed in Confidential Business that the below items within the Development Report be returned to Open Business for Decision.

The Strategic Director of Communities & Place (SD: C&P) presented previously circulated report to seek approval for the following:

- Community Grants Rolling Programme
- Letter of Support Request from Tyrone GAA
- Development Update

Councillor Monteith declared an interest in Mid Ulster Advice Service.

Councillor Monteith referred to item 2.3 – Request for Letter of Support from Tyrone GAA and said that it was important that the group are made aware of the importance

of making their facility at Garvaghey being made available to other groups like Camogs, Hurling etc and not just for Gaelic football.

Councillor Monteith referred to item 2.5 – The Hill of The O’Neill and Ranfurly House and said that it was not catering for guests who attend plays or other events as there was no means of acquiring refreshments. The member suggested that in the interim some sort of method be put in place like vending machines to allow users to avail of refreshments.

Councillor Monteith said at the last two meetings he had raised the issue of Railway Park and still there has been no meetings arranged. The member also raised the issue of the mast on the Hill of The O’Neill emphasising that this must go as a matter of urgency. He said if The Hill of The O’Neill is to achieve its full potential, then this eyesore must be removed now.

The Strategic Director of Communities & Place (SD: C&P) in response to query regarding refreshments advised that hopefully that this can be done shortly as a catering contract was due to be put out to procurement. The SD: C&P in referring to Railway Park and the mast at Hill of The O’Neill advised that a Dungannon DEA meeting is in members diaries for Wednesday 29th November which were specifically focussing on these two issues.

In response to Councillor Forde’s query regarding festival grants, the SD: C&P advised that any grants which were recommended would be processed but stated that festival grants were fully exhausted and would remain closed unless money was made available that could be availed off. The SD: C&P advised the Department for Communities had been approach about additional funding.

Proposed by Councillor Gildernew
Seconded by Councillor McLernon and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council

- (i) Agree the Community Grants Rolling Programme awards and retention of £10,000 budget for Good Relations Small Grants
- (ii) Agree to provide a Letter of Support to Tyrone GAA for their application to Heritage Lottery Fund
- (iii) Note the Development Update

The live broadcast ended at 8.30 pm.

Local Government (NI) Act 2014 – Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor McLernon and

Resolved In accordance with Section 42, Part 1 Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 that Members of the public in accordance with Section 42, Part 1 Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI)

2014 that Members of the public be asked to withdraw from the meeting whilst members consider items D182/23 to D189/23.

Matters for Decision

- D182/23 Tender for Play Park Facilities
- D183/23 Tender for Active Travel Project
- D184/23 SHHP Bellaghy Bawn Writers Residency Project
- D185/23 Connecting Pomeroy - Forest Building and Magical Forest Interim Governance Mode
- D186/23 Development Report
- D187/23 Seamus Heaney HomePlace – Catering Contract
- D188/23 Economic Development Report – Cbfd

Matters for Information

- D189/23 Confidential Minutes of Development Committee held on 12 October 2023

D190/23 Duration of Meeting

The meeting commenced at 7pm and concluded at 9.15 pm

Chair _____

Date _____

Annex A – Introductory Remarks from the Chairperson

Good evening and welcome to the Council's [Policy & Resources/Environment/Development] Committee in the Chamber, [Dungannon/Magherafelt] and virtually.

I specifically welcome the public watching us through the Live Broadcast. The Live Broadcast will run for the period of our Open Business but will end just before we move into Confidential Business. I let you know before this happens.

Just some housekeeping before we commence. Can I remind you:-

- If you have joined the meeting remotely please keep your audio on mute unless invited to speak and then turn it off when finished speaking
- Keep your video on at all times, unless you have bandwidth or internet connection issues, where you are advised to try turning your video off
- If you wish to speak please raise your hand in the meeting or on screen and keep raised until observed by an Officer or myself
- Should we need to take a vote this evening I will ask each member to confirm whether they are for or against the proposal or abstaining
- When invited to speak please introduce yourself by name to the meeting
- For any member attending remotely, if you declare an interest in an item, please turn off your video and keep your audio on mute for the duration of the item
- If referring to a specific report please reference the report, page or slide being referred to
- Lastly, I remind the public and press that taking photographs of proceedings or using any means to enable anyone not present to see or hear proceedings, or making a simultaneous oral report of the proceedings are not permitted

Thank you and we will now move to the first item on the agenda

Sliabh Beagh Ecotourism Feasibility Study

Mid Ulster District Council
Development Committee

16th November 2023



the paul hogarth company



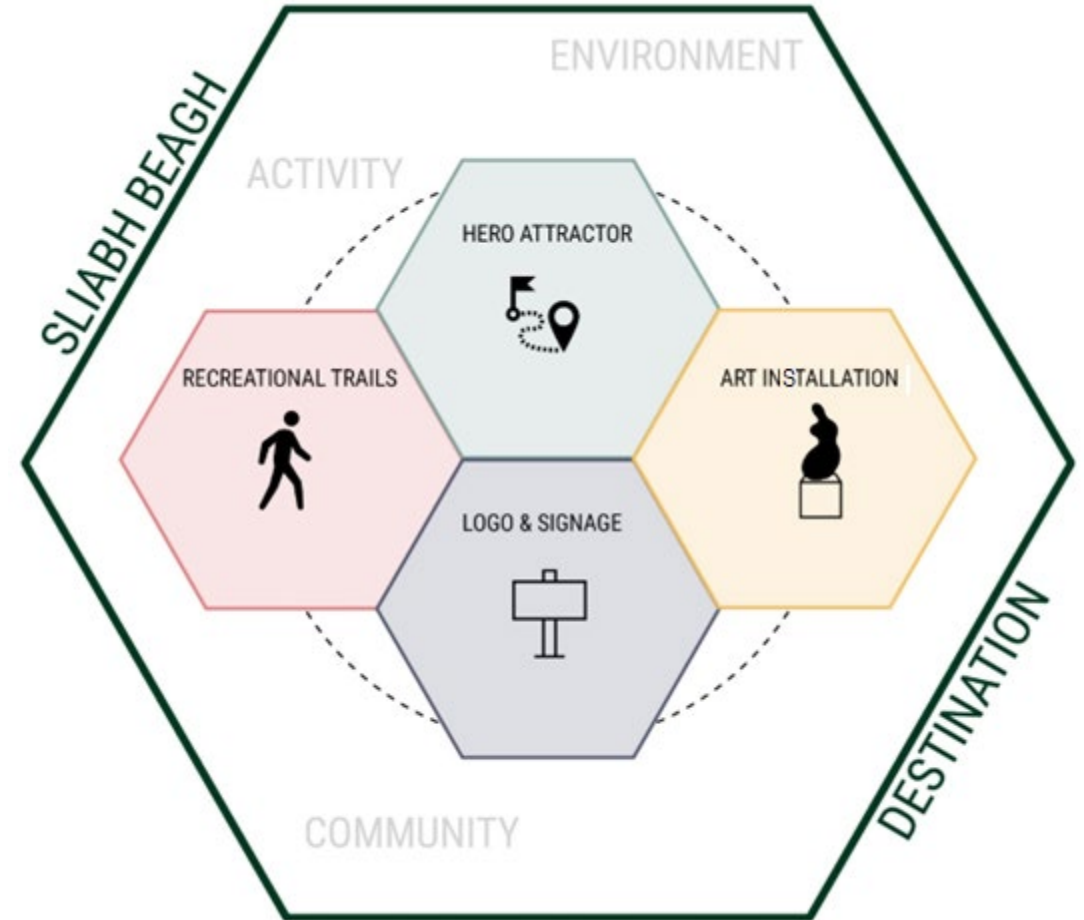
Project Aim

Carried out on behalf of Sliabh Beagh Partnership Committee (comprising Mid Ulster District Council, Monaghan County Council and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council)

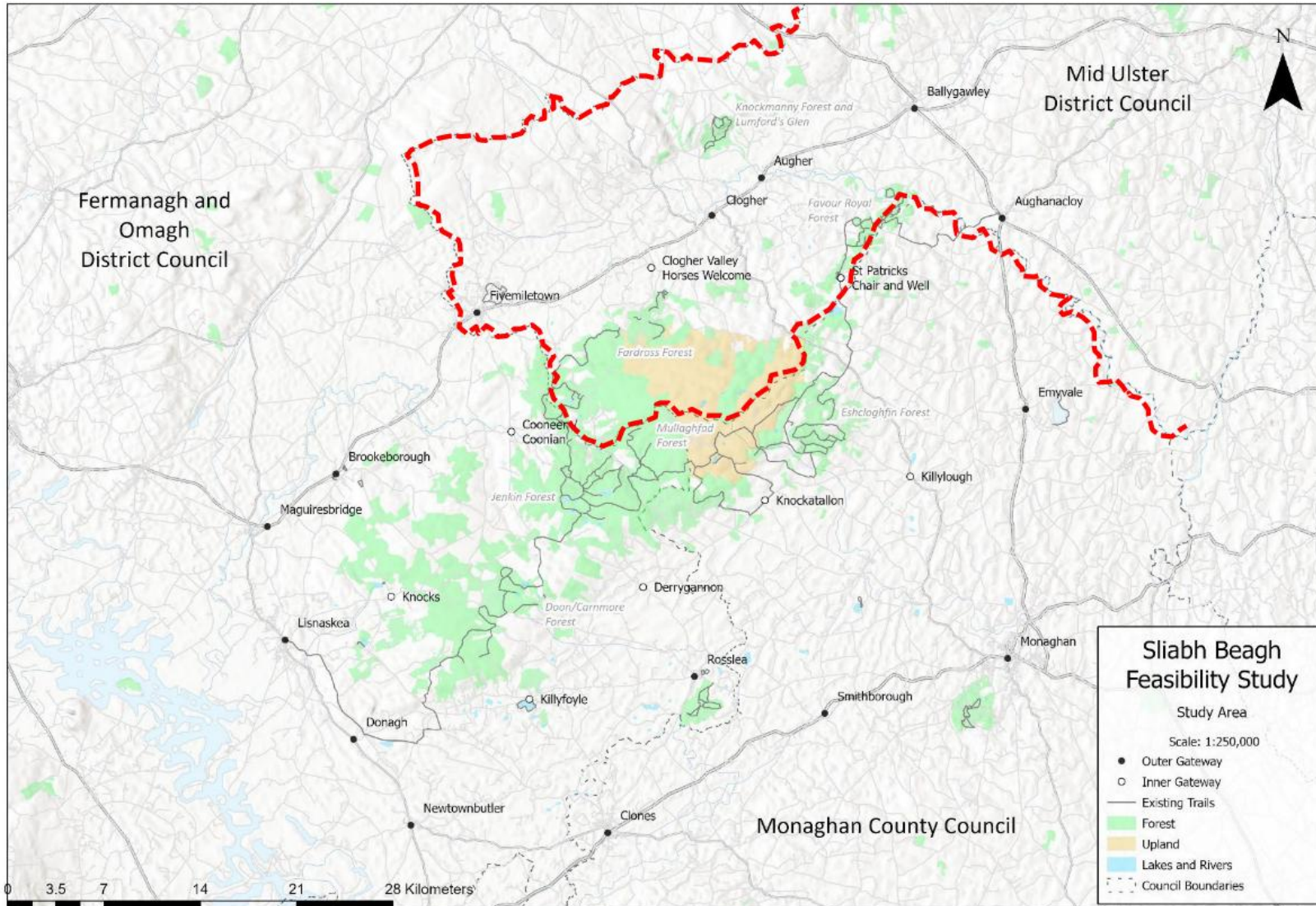
Undertake a feasibility study which investigates options to develop Sliabh Beagh as an ecotourism destination

Sliabh Beagh is recognised and celebrated as an ecotourism destination, delivering an exciting range of outdoor experiences that supports both the understanding and conservation of this special landscape

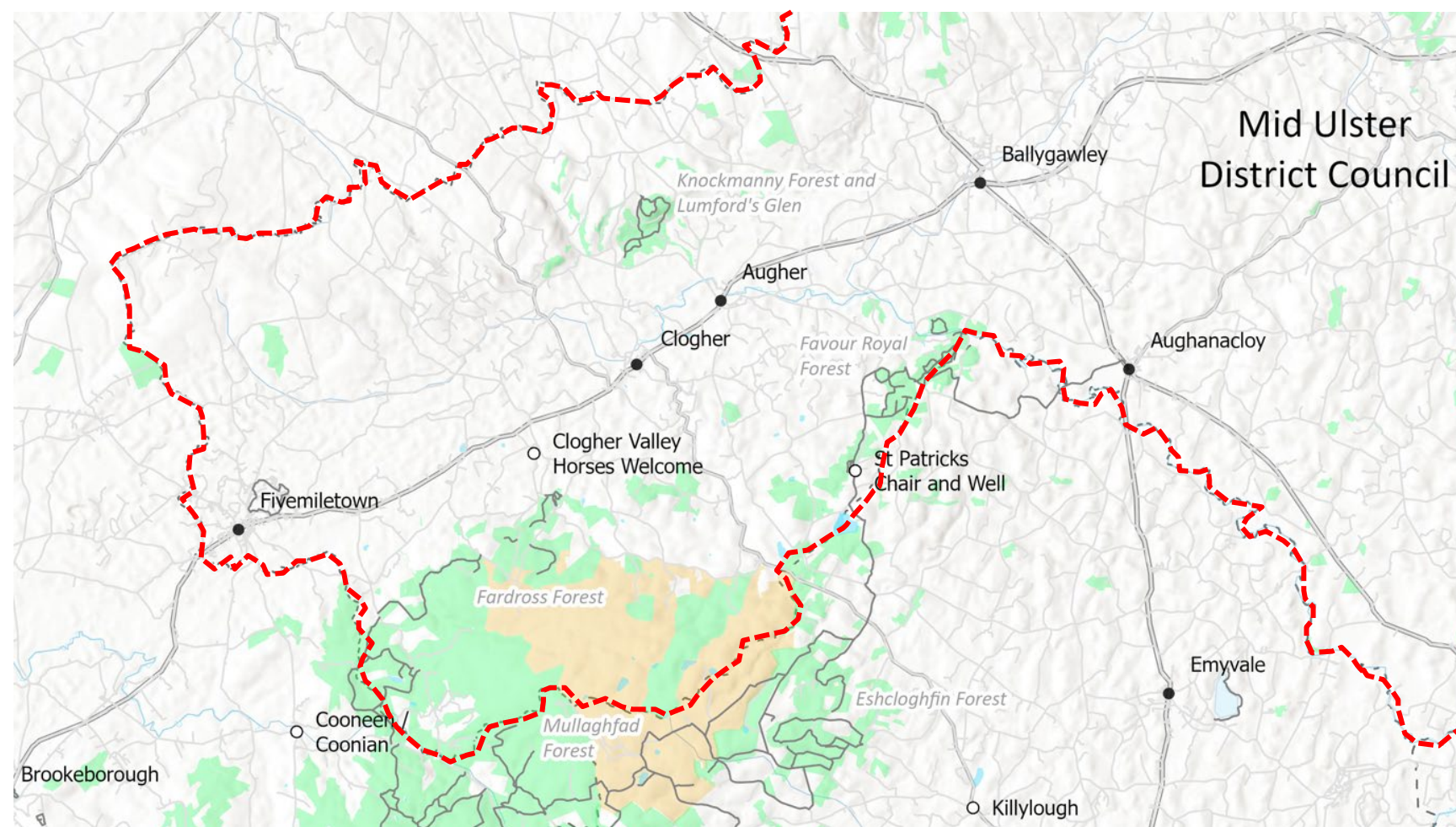
Inter-connected work packages which build on the existing services and facilities in Sliabh Beagh and identify opportunities for new 'hero' products



The Study Area



The Study Area



Mid Ulster District Council area:

- Favour Royal Forest – including St Patricks Chair and Well
- Fardross Forest
- Part of Crocknagrally Forest
- Knockmany Forest and Lumfords Glen
- Sections of the Sliabh Beagh Way

About Ecotourism

Ecotourism is defined as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education.”

Principles of ecotourism:

1. Minimise impacts
2. Build awareness and respect
3. Financial benefits for conservation
4. Financial benefits for communities
5. Visitor experiences that help raise awareness/sensitivity
6. Low-impact facilities and services



The Hero Attractor: Sliabh Beagh as a Multi Activity Destination

A detailed screening process identified this proposition as the one with the best potential to generate tourism growth for Sliabh Beagh.

What is a Multi Activity Destination?

- A destination that offers a wide variety of outdoor activities scattered across different locations, e.g. swimming, kayaking, walking, cycling, outdoor challenges, horse riding. Some of these activities will be free to access and others would be paid for.
- It works with existing operators, infrastructure and towns/villages in the first instance before adding any additional activities and accommodation.
- The focus is on a shared brand and vision for the area that towns/villages and operators participate in.
- There will be opportunities to develop small scale eco and unique off-grid accommodation.

Building on what is there

Existing Initiatives

- ***Clogher Valley Cluster***
- Knockatallon
- Cooneen/Coonian
- Donagh - the community is actively looking at developing Airbnb & RV site
- Knocks - development of lakeside glamping and hub for walkers/cyclists
- Rosslea - revamping the heritage centre and providing simple facilities for walkers/cyclists would enhance the wider area
- Derrygannon - building on existing initiatives for walkers and the community

New Opportunities

- ***Horse riding experiences in partnership with Clogher Valley Horses Welcome***
- ***Infrastructure to support water access at key locations for kayaking and wild swimming e.g. Lough More***
- New conservation and wellness experiences
- Building on existing recreational trails
- Weather-proofing / phased development of Cooneen/Coonian Murphy Ghost House



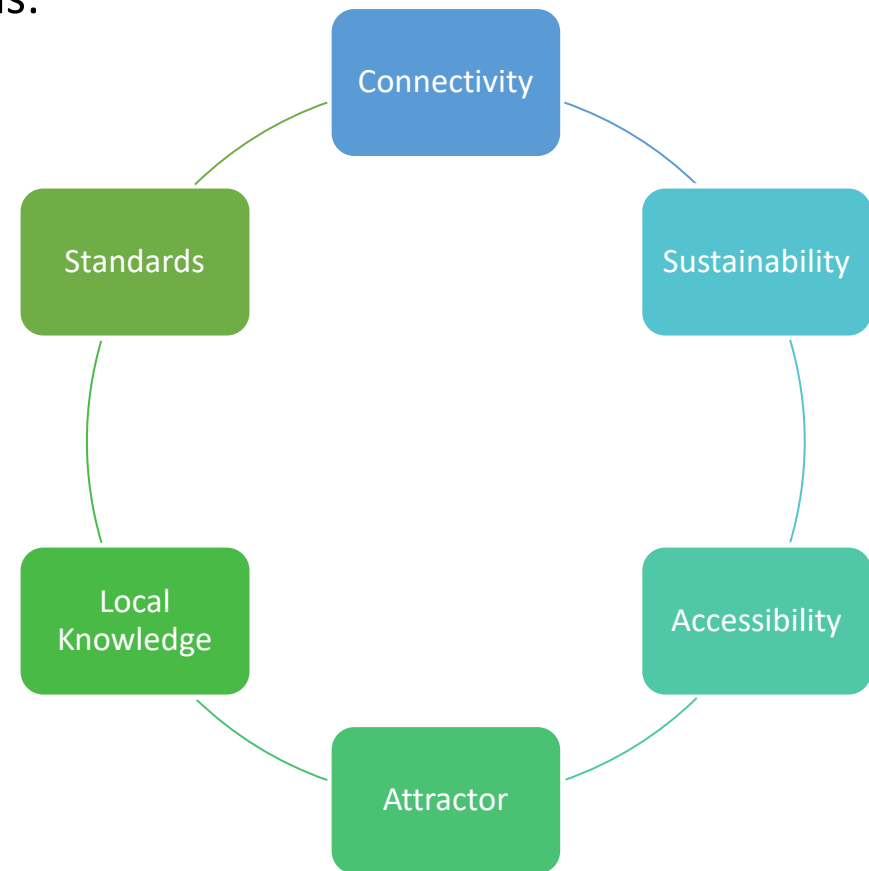
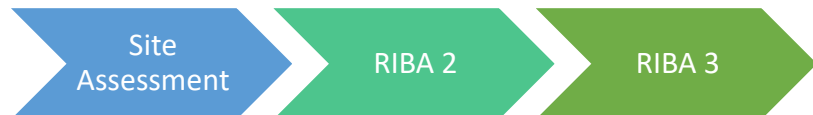
Recreational Trails

Recreational Trail Development provides the infrastructure to allow access to outdoor activities scattered across different locations:

- Walking
- Cycling (Gravel Cycling)
- Equestrian

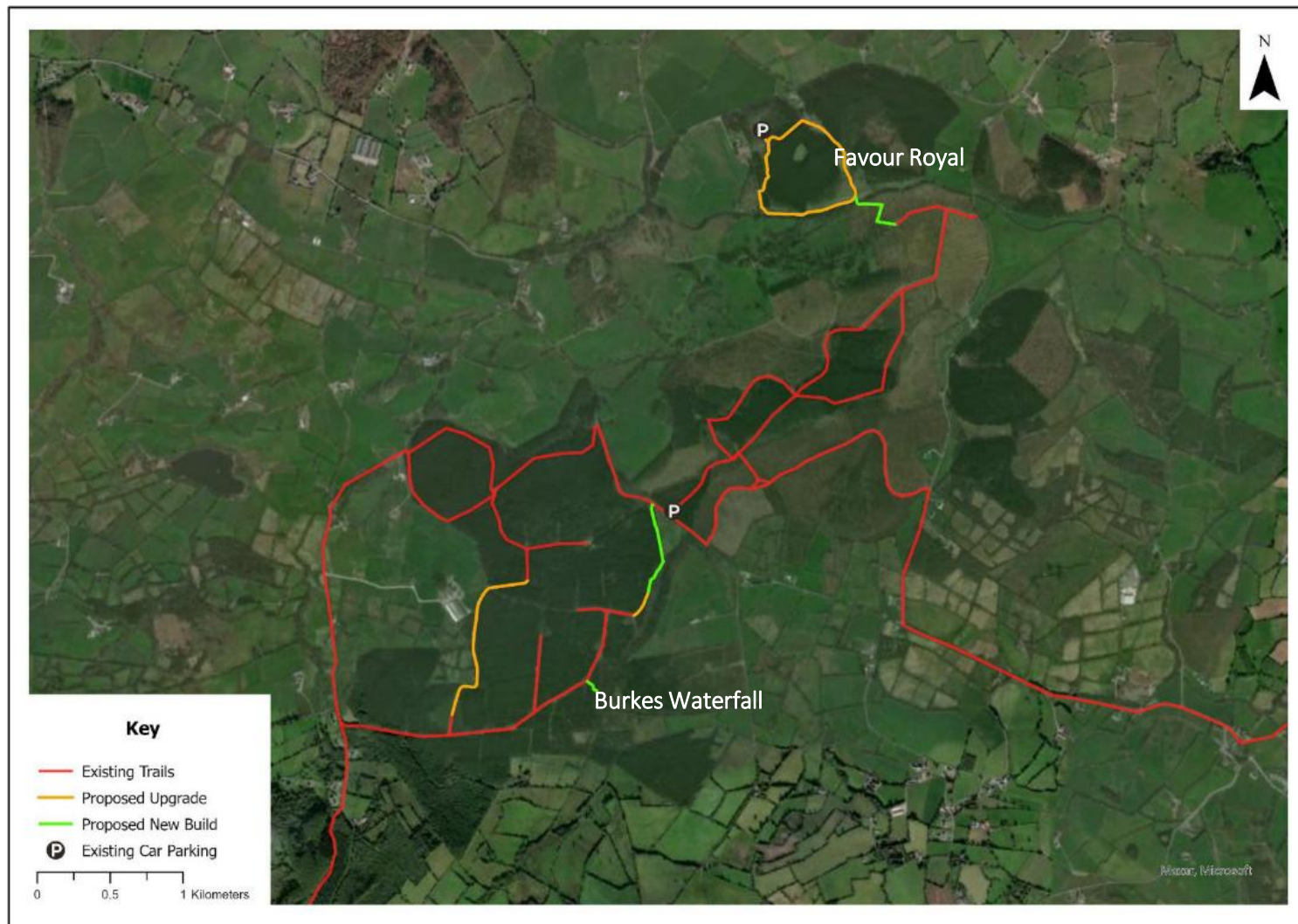
Sustainable Trails

- Land use
- Landscape
- Habitats
- People and Communities
- Management and maintenance

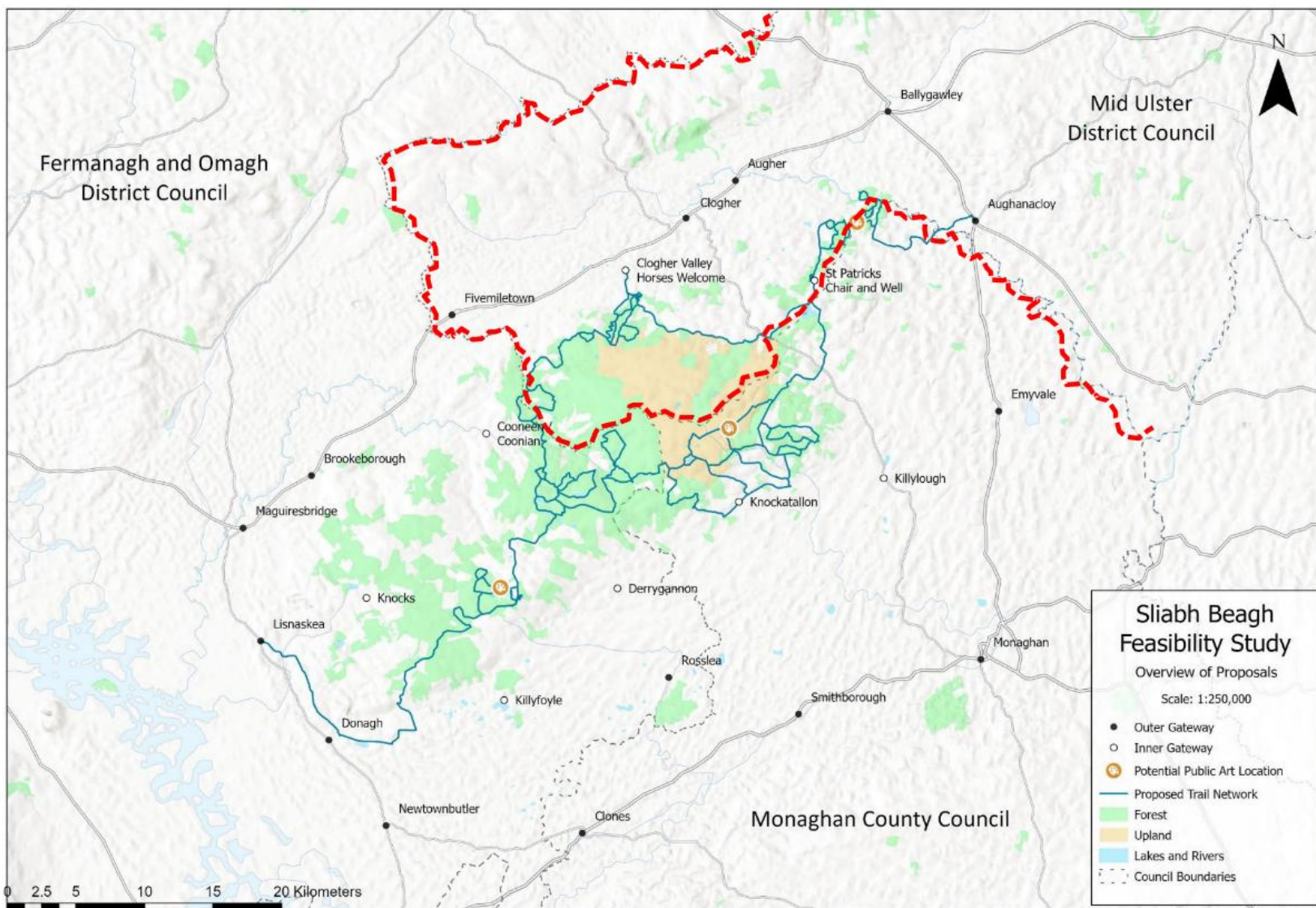


Recreational Trails – RIBA Stage 2 Proposals (MUDC)

Council	Route Name	Requirements
MUDC	Favour Royal Link	New build and upgrade Large footbridge required
	Burkes Waterfall	New build and upgrade
	Fardross Equestrian Loop	New build
	Fardross Arc	New build and upgrade
	Browns Hill	New build and upgrade
	Knockmany Forest / Lumfords Glen	New build Earthworks and infrastructure required
	Crockaclevan Lough	New build
FODC/MUDC	Mullynavale Loop	Replacement stiles and waymarking only



Recreational Trails Overview – RIBA Stage 3 (MUDC)



Marketable loops:

- Gravel Cycling – 74km
- Walking - 73km
- Equestrian – 12km

Combines existing, new build and upgrade trails across the study area.

Opportunities within MUDC:

- Equestrian trails in Fardross Forest
- Upgrade to trails in Favour Royal (including to St Patrick Chair and Well)
- Gravel trails within Crocknagrally Forest

Recreational Trails Overview – RIBA Stage 3 (MUDC)

Council / County	Trail Name Forest Name	Section ID
Mid Ulster District Council	Burkes Waterfall Favour Royal Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 1 – 410m 1.5m wide gravel trail with steps
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 3 – 85m 1.5m wide gravel trail with steps
Mid Ulster District Council	Fardross Arc Fardross Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 2 – 425m 1.5m wide gravel trail
Mid Ulster District Council	Fardross Equestrian Fardross Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 1 – 1475m 2.5m wide gravel trail
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 2 – 300m 3.0m wide gravel trail
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 3 – 270m 2.5m wide gravel trail
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 4 – 445m 2.5m wide gravel trail



Concept Public Artwork

ARTWORK PRINCIPALS

- Based on sustainable and circular economy principles.
- Linked to the natural and cultural heritage of the Sliabh Beagh area.
- Spread across the 3 Council areas.
- Become a Target and a Reward for visitor exertion.
- Deliver on the Bith Story in 3 collectable instalments.
- Visually connect to / interact with the landscape.
- Be photogenic and 'shareable' via social media.
- Be robust and easily maintained.



Concept Public Artwork

Public Art - Location Overview



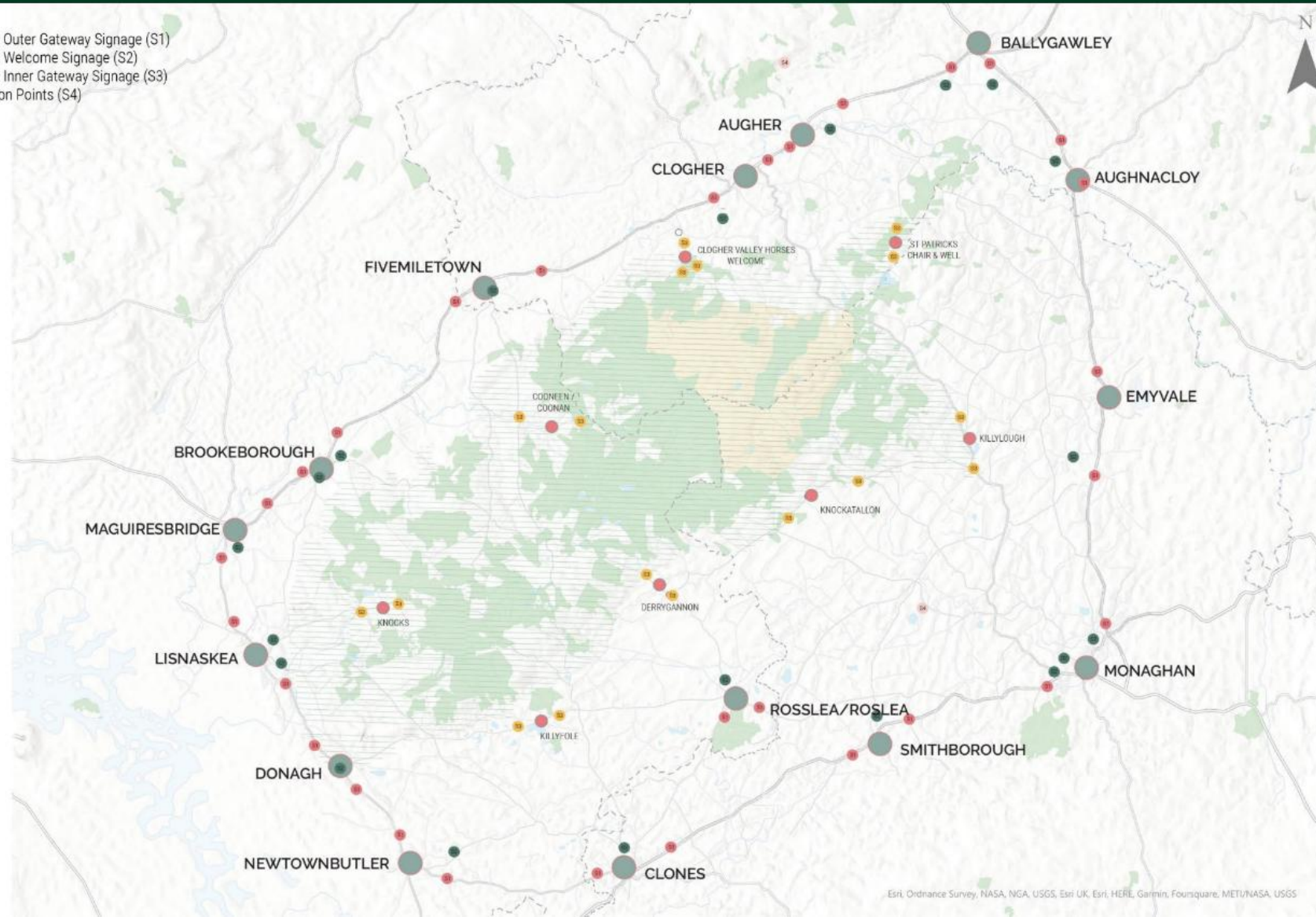
Concept Public Artwork



Exploring Slabh Beagh

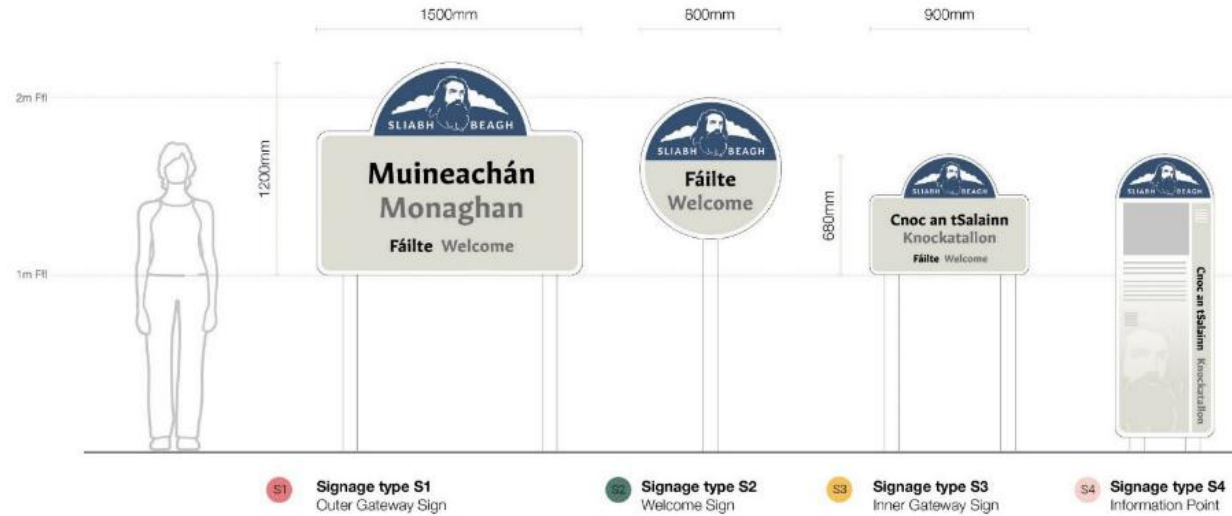
KEY

- Proposed Outer Gateway Signage (S1)
- Proposed Welcome Signage (S2)
- Proposed Inner Gateway Signage (S3)
- Information Points (S4)



Exploring Sliabh Beagh

Signage Types

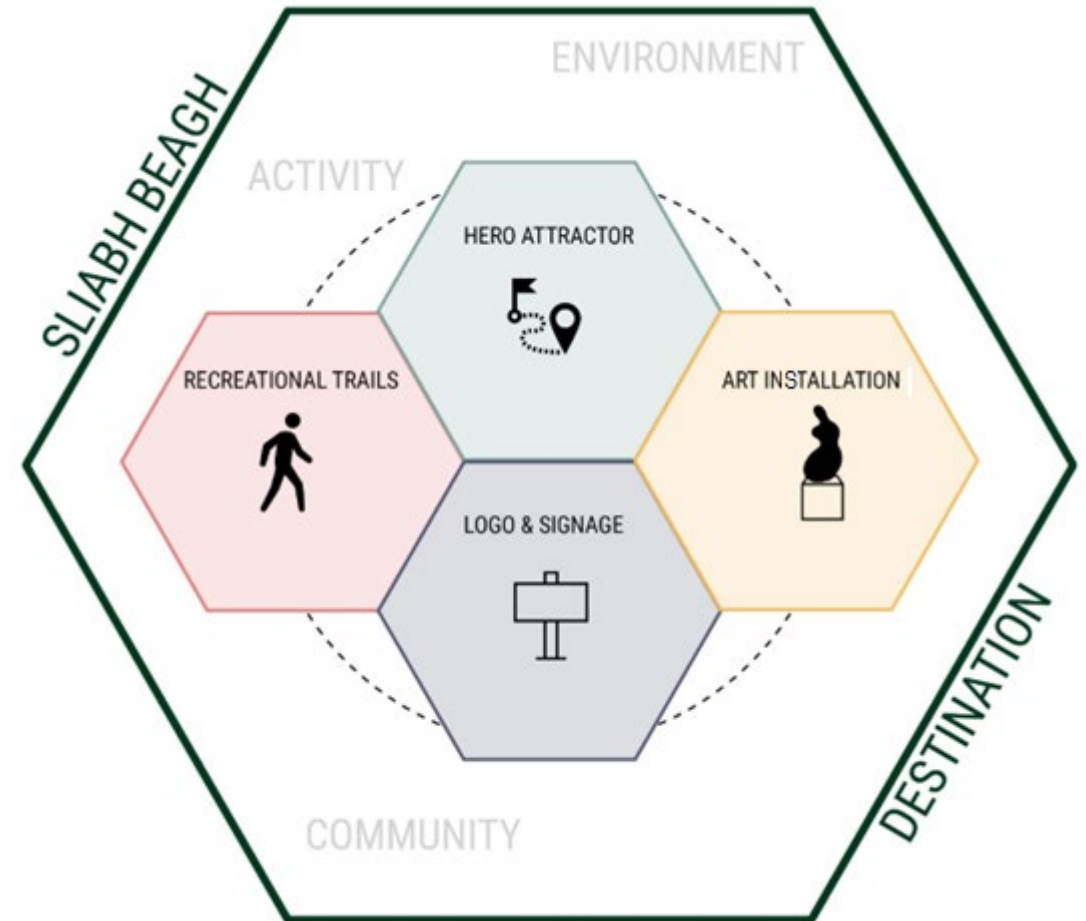


Signage Colour Options



Sliabh Beagh Multi-Activity Destination – Next Steps

- Progress recreational trails through planning
- Signage procurement
- Development of concept public artwork
- Five-year plan that addresses:
 - Vision and objectives
 - Coordinated development and marketing under the umbrella of Sliabh Beagh
 - Identification of key priorities for development of the visitor experience, required infrastructure, marketing and management
 - Detailed action plan for delivery
 - Potential to seek 3-year Project Officer to lead momentum, secure funding and coordinate
 - eProspectus to encourage operators and funders to participate



Thank you

