



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

Tourism

Business & Communities

SERVICE PLAN - 2019 / 20

Date

Consulted within staff team / / 2019

Discussed & signed off by Director / / 2019

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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
• Elected Members
• Culture & Arts Service identified Strategic Partner organisations
• Arts Council of Northern Ireland, DfC (Arts & Culture, Languages, Historic Environment Division)
• Residents of and visitors to Mid Ulster
• Tourism Northern Ireland, Tourism Ireland
• Facility catering Franchisees
• Schools, colleges, universities
• Arts, culture, Heritage groups operating within the Mid Ulster region

1.4 Performance Overview in 2017/18

The following table provides a progress summary and the impact made by last years' Service Plan (2017-2018). It also details key successes, remaining challenges for the Service and how it made a difference.

2017/18 Performance Overview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism deliver and support a comprehensive strategic events programme across Mid Ulster Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deliver Mid Ulster's 5 year tourism strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a performance management approach for the tourism department.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve and enhance the visitor information services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 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.

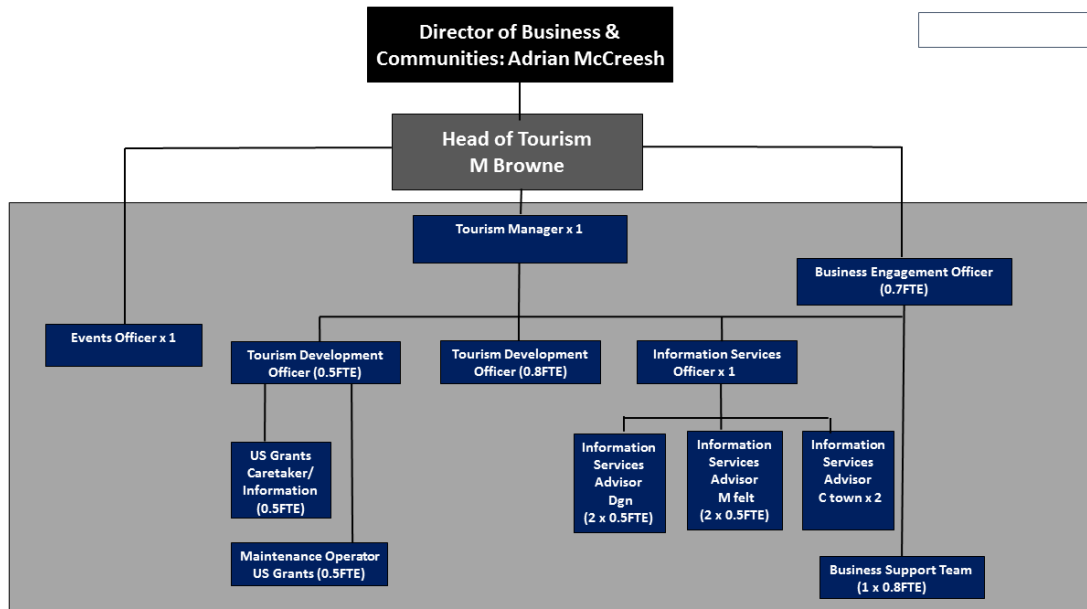
2.0 SERVICE WORKPLAN 2019/20

The following tables confirm the resources, financial and people, which the Service has access to throughout 2019-20 to deliver its actions, activities and core business.

2.1 Budget 2019/20

Service Budget Headings	£
Bridewell	£65,689
Events	£111,000
Tourism General	£504,092
US Grants	£7,365
Gross Budget	£688,146
Income	£83,526
Net Budget for 2019-20	£604,620

2.2 Staffing Complement - 2018/19



Staffing	No. of Staff
Head of Service	1
Managers	1
Officers	5
Remaining Team	9
Total	16

2.3 Service Work Plan - 2019/20

This plan confirms the core activities and actions which will form the Tourism Service Work Plan for 2019-20. This work plan reflects the Service activities and work which our service will focus on throughout 2019-20. The Plan links to the Council's 2015-2020 (Extended) Corporate Plan priorities, Annual Corporate Improvement Plan Objectives and Mid Ulster Sustainable Community Plan themes & outcomes.

SERVICE WORK PLAN

Link to Community Plan Theme:	Corporate Plan Theme						
<i>CMP 1.1 Economic Growth - We prosper in a stronger &</i>	<i>CRP 2.3 Creating Growth - Maximise opportunities to create and grow district wide business and investment</i>						
Service Objective	How Will we measure the impact of our work (PI's)	Where are we now? (Baseline data)	What do we want to achieve? (Targets)	How Will we get there?			
				Key Actions	Dates	Owners	Outcome
To deliver a high standard of Visitor Information services at The Bridewell, The Burnavon and Ranfurly House & Hill of O'Neill	<p>No. of Programmes produced</p> <p>Increase in Visitor numbers</p> <p>Mystery shoppers conducted at 3 existing VIC's p.a. all current VIC's centres to achieve a target score of 90% minimum - develop corresponding action plans to maintain score</p>	<p>2018/19</p> <p>100 % mystery shopper score Burnavon</p> <p>100% mystery shopper score Ranfurly</p> <p>95% mystery shopper score Bridewell</p>	<p>2019/20</p> <p>Maintain a collective average score of 95% ></p>	<p>All MUDC Visitor Information Centres (a). Burnavon, (b) Ranfurly and (c) Bridewell) attain and maintain Tourism Northern Ireland (TNI) minimum standards by 2020.</p> <p>Key Actions: (1) Seamus Heaney Centre only remaining MUDC not to achieve standard - investigate funding streams to bring Centre to minimum standard TNI - Seek funding to upgrade Seamus Heaney HomePlace VIC and other potential sites by March 2019. (2) Mystery shoppers conducted at 3</p>	<p>31st March 2020</p> <p>31st March 2020</p>	<p>M Browne M McKeown M McGee T McCance B McCormick C Sheehy J Robinson N Hill R Lowry</p>	<p>Inspiring, informing and engaging inhabitants and visitors of all ages, backgrounds and abilities in the rich and diverse arts, culture and heritage offering of Mid Ulster</p>

				existing VIC's p.a. all current VIC's centres to achieve a target score of score 90% minimum - develop corresponding action plans to maintain score			
	Seamus Heaney HomePlace Trails Experience Project open to public by 31/03/20	Funding for project approved DAERA. Contractors and designers appointed	5,000 additional visitors to SHHP	To enhance the visitor's experience. To drive greater footfall to The Seamus Heaney HomePlace Centre. To create commercial opportunities for local businesses.	31 st March 2020		
	Complete the Phase 2 upgrading of US Grants to achieve 4/5 star TNI grading by June 2019	Funding for the project approved from Ulster Scots. Contractors and designers appointed	2,000 additional visitors to US Grants	(1) Upgrade the US Grants visitor centre interpretation/experience by end of Q1 2019/20. (2) submit TNI grading application to secure new grade by March 2020 (3) US Grants linked to Ulster Ireland International Appalachian Trail (IAT) available to the international market by March 2020 (Local Action Group - LAG)	31 st July 2020		
	Develop the Dark Skies (Davagh Forest) Visitor Experience to include a visitor centre and supporting facilities.	Funding for the project approved from Land Fill Tax & DAERA, contractors and designers appointed	Open to the public Davagh Forest phase 1 by 31 st March 2020	(1.) Develop the project Dark Skies indoor proposition as part of the Council project team by March 2020- (2.) Appoint design team for Phase 2 Dark Skies outdoor proposition- June 2019 (3.) To develop a project plans to ensure delivery of both Dark Skies propositions by 2020 (4.) Identify and develop marketing	31 st March 2020		

	Mid Ulster to adopt a "digital first" approach to Tourism delivery, marketing and promotion.	Basic online services	(1) Interactive Tourism website pages go live by June 2019 (2) Bespoke learning programme delivered by March 2020 (3) Amount of funding achieved by date	communication plan by Sept 2019 (5.) New Building in situ March 2020 (Phase 1) (6.) Outdoor Projection Experience in place by August 2020 (Phase 2)	31 st March 2020		
	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	396 Tickets sold as a result of Tour Operator sales	Increase tour operators ticket sales by 20% > in 2019/20 Benchmark of visitors to site locations established	(1) Develop a reconfigured interactive Tourism presence on main Council website by Sept 2019. (2) Undertake digital skills/knowledge gaps with trade and the develop /deliver bespoke learning programme by Q4 2020 (3) To seek funding for (116K) innovative tourism visitor experiences/solutions e.g. APP's . (1) Meet and sell attractions to at least 50 Tour Operators by year end through various trade events/promotions . (2) Meet with other departments (Arts & Culture and Parks functions) to follow up Tour Operator leads X 4 internal meetings per year. (3) Establish a Corporate approach to standardise collating/collecting /monitoring and reporting increased bookings throughout the Council functions. (4). Achieve a 20% increase in tour operator bookings at site attraction (a - c) by end of 2019/20 (5) Achieve a 20% increase in tour operator visitor headcount at site attractions (a - c) (6) Develop baseline figures for	31 st March 2020		

				<p>establishing tour operator spend to Council paid attractions and develop a standardised approach to collect/collate/monitor and report spend.</p> <p>Hold monthly service/team meetings/briefing sessions throughout the year - establish through meetings clear MUDC departmental and cross departmental communications responsibilities</p> <p>(1) Council and trade to attend number of (a) travel/trade industry shows and (b) familiarisation visits. And (c) presentations (armchair "FAM" trips) delivered by Council (ACV)</p> <p>(2) Develop and Deliver three learning and development workshops for Council and trade on Business-to-Business and Business to Customer selling.</p>			
	<p>Undertake and participate in a series of travel trade/industry shows/ familiarisation visits and deliver learning and development workshops to upskill Council staff/trade in niche tourism sector sales promotion (i.e. business to business and business to customer).</p>	<p>Staff team meetings held every month.</p> <p>1a.) 8 x travel and trade shows attended in 2018/19 1.b) 3 X familiarisation visits attended in 2018/19 1.c) 1 X presentations given by Council 2018/19 (2) Baseline year</p>	<p>1a.) 6 1b. 3 XQ4 1c. 5 x Q4 2. 3 X Q4</p>		<p>31st March 2020</p> <p>31st March 2020</p>		

3.0 IMPROVING OUR SERVICE AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE

3.1 Annual Improvement Objectives and Associated Programs

The Council has set a number of annual improvement objectives and associated programs (projects and activities) for 2019/20, which aim to bring about improvement. The improvement objectives and key improvement programs, set out Council's contribution to the sustainable Community Plan for the District; against which we can monitor and report progress.

Each Council department provides resources to assist with the improvement activities contained within each improvement project (individual service improvement contribution activity linked to corporate improvement programs can be found in 3.2 of the service plan). The annual improvement objectives also align to the Council's main corporate planning document, which contains the council's strategic direction and main priorities.

The Council will focus on the following improvement objectives for 2019 to 2020:

- 1. To assist the growth of the local economy by increasing the number of visitors to our district.*
- 2. To improve the average processing time of Local Planning Applications (New).*
- 3. To improve the accessibility of our services by increasing the number available online.*
- 4. To support people to adopt healthier lifestyles by increasing usage of Council Recreational Facilities.*

We utilise outcome based accountability methodology to manage our performance. This tells us the impact our services are having on communities. Further detailed information relating to Council's improvement objectives, associated activities, outcome indicators, projects and targets is available at www.midulstercouncil.org/Council/Performance (*Mid Ulster Council's Improvement Plan 2019- 2020*) or by contacting the Democratic Services Team on 03000 132132.

4.0 Equality

The council is committed to fulfilling its obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. This commitment is demonstrated by allocating the appropriate time, people and resources to fulfil our equality duties. The Equality Scheme commits us to implementing our duties effectively and in a timely way alongside implementing this Service Plan. Without impacting upon our obligations, when carrying out our equality duties we will also take into account the desirability of promoting good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. We are also required to take into account the need to

promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability and encourage the participation of people with a disability in public life. Mid Ulster District Council are committed to fulfilling our disability duties and we set out how we intend to do this in our disability action plan.

3.2 Service Contribution to the Corporate Improvement Objectives/Projects

Link to Community Plan Theme:		Corporate Plan Theme						
<i>CMP 2.1 Infrastructure - We are better connected through appropriate infrastructure</i>		<i>CRP 1.2 Delivering for Our People - Increase Access to services and customer experiences across the district</i>						
Improvement Plan Objective	Service Objective	How Will we measure the impact of our work (PI's)	Where are we now? (Baseline data)	What do we want to achieve? (Targets)	How Will we get there?			
					Key Actions	Dates	Owners	Outcome
3.0 To improve the accessibility of our services by increasing the number available online	Provision of Digital Heaney Outdoor App by 31 March 2021	<p>1. % of Seamus Heaney experience project (App) plan delivered by 31 March 2020</p> <p>2. % of Seamus Heaney experience project (App) plan delivered by 32 March 2021</p> <p>3. Numbers of additional visitors to Seamus Heaney Homeplace/ trails Experience (in 2021/22)</p>	<p>Currently the project is underway with funding secured from DAERA Rural Development Programme. High level proposals for the digital element of the project have been approved and are now being worked up.</p> <p>(1) April 2019 grant approval was awarded to MUDC - project commencement April 2019</p> <p>(2) 2018/19 SHHP visitor figures - 30,115</p> <p>(3) March 2021 funders position regarding project completion</p>	<p>1. 50%</p> <p>2. 100%</p> <p>3. 5,000</p>	<p>Actions</p> <p>Lead Officer to develop</p> <p>1. Digital Heaney App</p> <p>(i) Appoint interpretation design team (30 June 2019)</p> <p>(ii) Agree scope and functionality (30 Sep 2019)</p> <p>(iii) App developed (29 Feb 2020)</p> <p>(iv) Council approval obtained (31 Mar 2020)</p> <p>(v) App tested against design</p> <p>(vi) Include with SHHP marketing strategy</p> <p>(vii) Go live</p>	<p>1. Start and end dates</p> <p>01-04-19 to 31-03-21</p>	<p>M Browne</p> <p>T McCance</p>	<p>Seamus Heaney HomePlace experience will be enhanced.</p> <p>Visitor numbers to the facility and region will be increased</p>

Link to Community Plan Theme:		Corporate Plan Theme						
<i>CMP 1.1 Economic Growth - We prosper in a stronger & more competitive economy</i>		<i>CRP 1.1 Delivering for Our People - High performing services focused on customer and value for money</i>						
Improvement Plan Objective	Service Objective	How Will we measure the impact of our work (PI's)	Where are we now? (Baseline data)	What do we want to achieve? (Targets)	How Will we get there?			
					Key Actions	Dates	Owners	Outcome
1.0 To assist in the growth of the local economy by increasing the number of visitors to our district	Increased support for stakeholders via Tourism Development Group	6 Meetings of Tourism Development Group Held P.A. Communications & Engagement Plan developed by	6 X (2018/19)- .	Bi annual s March 19 Date Oct 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake and provide secretariat for Tourism development Group Establish communication & engagement strategy and work plans with agencies and stakeholders Informed Action plan arising from 2 reports specified developed and delivered by March 2019 	31/03/20 March 2020	M McGee, C Bell, G Bell, S. Arbuthnot	Continuing to establish supportive conditions for sustainable tourism products and services within the District.

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 the Services business in 2019-20

Risk Ref Number	Description of Risk	Risk Rating	Mitigation Activity
1.	<i>Failure to miss deadlines for the development of marketing to inform visitors of what is on offer to the visitor.</i>	9	To ensure that there is a robust marketing strategy with resources.
2.	<i>Failure to deliver the tourism strategy action plan</i>	6	<i>To ensure there are realistic targets and resources.</i>
3.	<i>Limited resources to develop strategic events.</i>	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.
5.	Maintaining staff morale, motivation and retention of staff.	8	Robust service improvement interaction with teams.
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)		