

Report on	Walk NI Consortium 2018-19
Reporting Officer	Head of Parks
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Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	x

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	Council approval to commit to Walking NI Marketing Consortium Campaigns for 2018-19
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>WalkNI.com is delivered by Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI). Its work was previously directed and funded by its four 'core funders' namely Sport NI, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Tourism Northern Ireland and Inland Waterways Unit of the Department of Infrastructure.</p> <p>In 2016 / 2017, ORNI successfully established the WalkNI Marketing Consortium to ensure local authorities could continue to benefit from the success of WalkNI.com. By continuing to contribute to the WalkNI Consortium – local authorities can reap the following benefits:</p> <p>Solid Foundation: Significant investment has already been made to establish a website, e-marketing and social media channels</p> <p>Engaged Visitors: As indicated by 'WalkNI Key Stats' the website / brand has a strong engagement from the target market</p> <p>Combined Resources: The small investments from a number of local authority partners can be combined to produce an outcome greater than the sum of its parts.</p> <p>Cross Sell: There will be opportunities to cross sell between destinations i.e. visitors to the Mourne Mountains will be able to learn about the Causeway Coast and Glens and vice versa.</p>
2.2	<p>Within Mid Ulster District Council – WalkNI.com incorporates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long Distance Walks – 13.3 km of Ulster Way and an additional 8.8 km of Waymarked Way • Medium Distance Walks – 1 walk totalling 9km • Short Distance Walks – 12 walks totalling 30.1km
2.3	<p>WalkNI.com Key Stats:</p> <p>The followings statistics clearly highlight the reach and engagement level of WalkNI.com:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 809,869 + visits per year • 19,346 social media subscribers • 4.5% average monthly Facebook engagement rate

- 25,000 + unique views per year to WalkNI Blog
- 32,442 e-newsletter subscribers
- Key driver of walking product information and content to DiscoverNorthernIreland.com

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Partnership Approach:
 The WalkNI Marketing Consortium was established in 2016 / 2017. The WalkNI.com website and associated promotional campaigns are delivered by ORNI with local authorities contributing at a level based on their walking product portfolio's potential to meet the demands of specific markets.
 ORNI has identified the partner level for each council area, however it is prepared to discuss this further with each potential partner.

3.2 Local Partner

An area which has a portfolio of walking product, access and infrastructure to meet the demands of local walkers.

Potential Partners:

- Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council
- Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
- Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
- Derry City & Strabane District Council

3.3 Regional Partner

An area which has a portfolio of walking product, access, infrastructure and supporting tourism services to meet the demands of:

- Local walkers
- Visitors from Northern Ireland or Republic of Ireland on either day trips or short breaks of which walking is a key part of a wider itinerary
 - This segment will combine walking with other interests e.g. food, photography, wildlife, culture and heritage

Potential Partners:

- Mid Ulster District Council
- Fermanagh & Omagh District Council
- Ards & North Down Borough Council
- Belfast City Council

3.4

National Partner

An area which has a portfolio of walking product, access, infrastructure and supporting tourism services to meet the demands of:

- Local walkers
- Visitors from Northern Ireland or Republic of Ireland on either day trips or short breaks of which walking is key part of a wider itinerary
 - This segment will often combine walking with other interests e.g. food, photography, wildlife, culture and heritage
- Walking Clubs from Republic of Ireland

Potential Partners:

- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
- Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

3.5

Delivery Costs for the WalkNI Marketing Consortium - 1st April 2018 – 31st March 2019:

In order to continue the proactive marketing activity for Regional and National Partners, ORNI will dedicate the equivalent of 2 days per week through a combination of:

- Marketing and Communications Manager (NJC - PO1)
- Marketing Officer (NJC - Scale 6)

Staff Costs including Salary / National Insurance / Employers Pension Contributions Operating Costs Management / Finance Overheads	£27,560.00
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3.6

Partner Support Required – 2018 / 2019

The following support is proposed for partners at each level:

Partner Level	Number of Partners	Support per partner	Total Support
Local*	5	0	0
Regional	4	£3,445.00	£13,780.00
National	2	£6,890.00	£13,780.00
		TOTAL	£27,560.00

*The base level of the project above i.e. local partners is still covered by the funding provided by ORNI's Strategic Partners (primarily Northern Ireland Environment Agency)

3.7

New WalkNI.com Website

Following the website redevelopment (funded within 2016/2017), ORNI will continue to review and improve content including:

- Development of content for sections of websites including new destination section 'Plan Your Visit'
- Consumer testing on mobile and desktop platform
- Upgrade and review walk data e.g. for new 'Trail Update' section
- Addition of contact person and email address for all walks for new 'Report A Problem' section

3.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of website via online PR and advertising campaign <p>Accountability:</p> <p>The WalkNI.com consortium will be managed by ORNI's Marketing Manager who will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree an annual work programme including KPIs • Provide Quarterly progress reports • Hold two meetings per year to report on progress, discuss campaigns etc.
4.0	<u>Financial & Human Resources Implications</u>
4.1	<p>Financial: Mid Ulster District Council will contribute £3,445.00 as a participating Regional Partner and there is provision within the 18/19 Parks budget.</p> <p>Human: Existing staff resources sufficient to coordinate project support. No additional staffing resource required.</p>
4.2	<p><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>N/A</p>
4.3	<p><u>Risk Management Implications</u></p> <p>N/A</p>
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	<p>Council approval is sought to participate as a Regional Partner with the Walking NI Marketing Consortium and contribute £3,445.00* to 2018-19 campaign.</p> <p>*This figure is 23% less than 2017-18 contribution due to last year's one off cost associated to Website development set expenditure.</p>
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix 1 Walk NI Consortium Report 2017-18