

<b>Report on</b>	Eskra Community Association Ltd - Knockmany Forest
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Head of Parks
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Nigel Hill

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	x

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	Consideration of a proposal from Eskra Community Association Ltd. associated to Knockmany Forest development.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	In June 2013, Outdoor Recreation NI was commissioned by Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council to complete a Forest Recreation Audit for nine forests within the Council area, which included Knockmany Forest. Mid Ulster District Council in April 2015, commissioned a similar audit of the forest product in the former Cookstown and Magherafelt District Council areas. The completion of this second audit provided an overview of the current recreation facilities and future potential for twenty forests within the new Mid Ulster council area.
2.2	The importance of the forests in providing doorstep opportunities for the local community and consequently the direct benefits that this brings in terms of improvements in health and well-being, social capital and protection of the resource cannot be underestimated. It is essential that moving forward local communities are 'bought in' to the future development of the forests in their area and many of these proposals have been captured through the community planning process and are referenced in the draft MUDC Outdoor Recreation Strategy. Knockmany Forest has been identified within the draft Outdoor Recreation Strategy as requiring master planning and improved visitor servicing.
2.3	MUDC are currently progressing Licence Agreements with Forest Service NI regarding Knockmany Forest and have been in consultation with the local community and sporting clubs in relation to a partnership development approach for the site.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	Eskra Community Association Ltd (ECA) confirmed that the Knockmany Forest Project was successful in the Sport NI competitive application process and will receive a capital investment up to £75,000 towards the costs of providing toilets, a meeting room and upgraded pathways in Knockmany Forest, subject to the development of a satisfactory business case.

3.2	Sport NI confirmed that although the application was submitted by Eskra Community Association Ltd, it was possible for the applicant (ECA) to assign the grant over to Mid Ulster District Council.
3.3	Eskra Community Association are requesting that Mid Ulster District Council accepts the grant from Sport NI for capital works in Knockmany Forest subject to agreement that council will deliver the design element and project management responsibilities for the delivery of the capital works.
3.4	Eskra Community Association also wish to request that Mid Ulster District Council makes a contribution of £25,000 match funding towards the project in support of the grant from Sport NI. This would provide for a total project fund of £100,000.
3.5	Under the arrangement Council would agree to manage the procurement and payment for project and then draw down the capital grant directly from Sport NI.
3.6	Eskra Community Association Ltd must rely on council to establish the necessary licence agreements with Forest Service NI in order to progress the partnership project.
3.7	It is proposed to develop an Agreement with the community Association for the sustainable management of the facilities on completion of project.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
	<b><u>Financial &amp; Human Resources Implications</u></b>
4.1	Financial: Development of Knockmany Forest is included in the Council's draft Outdoor Recreation Strategy which is referenced in the Council's Capital Works Programme. Capital contribution to project £27,500. This funding will leverage £75,000
4.2	Human: Council staff resources would be required to manage and implement the project.
<b>4.2</b>	<b><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></b>
	N/A
<b>4.3</b>	<b><u>Risk Management Implications</u></b>
	Project managed and delivered on the basis of committed grant from Sport NI.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	Approval is sought to accept the proposal to project manage the programme of works and that the Sports NI grant is assigned to council.
5.2	Permission is sought to proceed with the procurement and completion of a tender exercise subject to the confirmation of funding from Sport NI.
5.3	That a request be made to Policy and Resources Committee for the release of the funds to undertake these works.

<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Eskra Community Association correspondence Appendix 1