



Report on	Mid Ulster District Tourism Development Group
Reporting Officer	Michael Browne
Contact Officer	Allison O'Keefe

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	√

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To present ratified Minutes of Tourism Development Group meeting held on 14 June 2017.
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>Tourism Development Group (TDG) was established to create a working forum between Council and private sector businesses. The TDG will assist with policy development and support the implementation of Council's Tourism Strategy and associated work in order to create economic growth, increase visitor numbers and create employment.</p> <p>The group meet on a bi-monthly basis and as per the agreed Terms of Reference all business will be reported to Council through the Development Committee.</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The ratified minutes of the most recent meeting of the Tourism Development Group dated 14 June 2017 are attached as Appendix 1.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	<u>Financial & Human Resources Implications</u> Financial: NA Human: NA
4.2	<u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u> NA

4.3	<u>Risk Management Implications</u> NA
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	NA
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Appendix 1 – Minutes of Tourism Development Group Meeting dated 14 June 2017.

APPENDIX 1

MID ULSTER TOURISM DEVELOPMENT GROUP

Wednesday 14 June 2017 at 10.30am in Lissan House, Cookstown

Attendees:

Chair Cllr S Clarke – MUDC
Cllr F Burton – MUDC
Cllr N Doris – MUDC
Cllr M Kearney – MUDC
C Lowry - Blessingbourne Estate
N Bell - Lissan House
A-M McFerran - The Old Thatch Inn
H McDermott – Ashbrook B&B
T McCrory – Heraldic Craft
N Somerville – Horses Welcome
B McCormick – Seamus Heaney HomePlace
H McCloy – Jungle NI
J McGrillen – Tourism NI

Apologies:

L Neill – NRC,
G Mullholland – SWC,

Officers:

A McCreesh – Director of Business & Communities
M Browne – Head of Tourism
T McCance – Head of Culture & Arts
M McKeown – Tourism Manager
M McGee - Business Engagement
G Bell - Tourism Officer
G Major – Tourist Information Supervisor
S Arbuthnot - Events Officer
M Beattie – Tourism
A O’Keefe – Business Support

G Bell – Tourism Officer,
C Bell- Tourism Officer

1. Transport NI – T Bratton

Chair welcomed T Bratton from Transport NI to the meeting. T Bratton circulated a Tourist Signing Applications (User Guidance Notes) and a Revised Tourist Signing Policy Factsheet. She discussed the current policy and the new revised Tourist Signing Policy, which has been jointly agreed between Transport NI, DETI and Tourism NI. The revised policy will allow for more flexibility in the tourism products and providers seeking brown tourism signage, subject to criteria being met. She described the 3 phase process of applying for brown signage and the roles of Council, Tourism NI and Transport NI. T Bratton stressed that tourism signage is not intended for advertising but should be used as a means to a destination and where clear benefits are provided for road users.

In response to questions from members T Bratton informed that the cost of a sign is covered by the applicant and depends on the size. She stressed that if the signage is sought for private land then an application must be submitted to planning. When asked if a facility is no longer trading, T Bratton stated that the Council would have a responsibility to inform Transport NI of closures. M Browne explained that an audit of all signage in the district will be carried out and Transport NI informed of the results. He stated that Council will provide assistance to businesses making applications if required. Chair spoke of adequate signage prevents risks to other road users. T Bratton said that while they do not wish to see signage

everywhere there is a need to look at health and safety. She also informed that where a business has changed use, a new application must be made.

Chair thanked T Bratton for attending and she left the meeting at 10.55.

2. Minutes of Meeting held on 5 April 2017

Having been circulated in advance, the minutes of the meeting held on 5 April 2017 were taken as read and correct.

Proposed: H McCloy Seconded: N Bell

3. Matters Arising

None.

4. Cluster Reports

The minutes of Cluster meetings, which took place over May and June, were circulated in advance to members. R Mullholland was nominated to sit as Chair on the Seamus Heaney cluster. Remaining clusters to elect at their next meeting. Within each cluster an exercise was carried out to determine the aspirations and fears of the group, which could be used to develop an action plan in going forward. In addition to the minutes was the following:

4.1 Outdoor Recreation – 25 May 2017

Cllr Cuddy requested that the developers of a new motorbike racecourse in Coalisland be invited to the next cluster meeting to give a presentation on their proposed project. He added that if the project is successful in securing funding then it will expand tourism in the district and everyone will benefit.

4.2 Food – 23 May 2017

G Mulholland, South West College, has been invited to a Food Cluster meeting on 14 July. She intends to examine skills shortages within the hospitality/tourism sector and discuss methods of tackling working conditions, long hours and attitudes, in an effort to encourage more students to follow a career in the sector. A M McFerran suggested the Hospitality Ulster's Skills programme and nominated herself to represent the group on MUDC Skill's Forum.

4.3 Events – 6 June 2017

Events officer to facilitate a funding/sponsorship workshop for members in July.

4.4 History, Heritage & Archaeology - 24 May 2017

A National Trust representative will sit on the cluster from September's meeting. There was a consensus from trade to develop packages across the clusters. As a result Council will facilitate a packaging workshop in September. Members were informed that the Carleton Trail and brochure will be launched at the Carleton Summer School in August. M McKeown gave an overview of the summer marketing campaign and Hidden Heritage tours.

Tourism Manager informed members of the Heritage Angel Awards, noting that Council will be making a number of applications under the categories; Best Rescue of an Historic

Building, Best Contribution to a Heritage Project by Young People, best Craftsmanship or Apprentice on a Heritage rescue of Repair Project and, Best Rescue, Recording or Interpretation of a Historic Place

In response to questions, Tourism Manager informed that Outdoor Recreation NI, (ORNI) are responsible for the old Ulster Way signage and walks, and some could only be renamed if accredited as quality walks by ORNI.

4.5 Seamus Heaney - 1 June 2017

In addition, it was noted that E Kearney, LNP launched a website promoting 3 new Lough Neagh Tours; Western Forts Tour, The Wilderness Tour, Craic 'n Food and Drink Tour, which cover a large area of MUDC.

5. Browne Signage Proposal

Item 5 was covered under Item 1.

6. Mid Ulster Council Tourism Strategy

Head of Tourism reported that outputs for the next 2 years have been incorporated into the MUDC Corporate Plan and once approved will form the action plan for TDG and clusters.

7. Digital Strategy

G Major reported that the Trade Hub will be the central resource to businesses and will allow for interaction and engagement among users. It is expected to go live 28 June 2017. He stated that so far only businesses featured in the Visitor Guide have been uploaded, however, this will expand to all tourism contacts in the near future. Head of Tourism explained that the Digital Strategy will look at making both the industry and Mid Ulster digital.

8. Industry Update

Trade were invited to take the opportunity to share any progressions within their business and the following businesses gave updates; Jungle NI, Clogher Valley Horses Welcome, The Old Thatch Inn and Lissan House.

Tourism Manager congratulated the following businesses on their recent awards and recognitions at the Tourism NI Award Ceremony in Enniskillen. Blessingbourne Apartments won the Non-Serviced Accommodation category and Todds Leap, were shortlisted in the Outstanding Visitor Experience. She also sent congratulations to Lough Neagh Partnership on winning Best Marketing Initiative for Eel Eat campaign.

9. District Wide Monitoring Results

Tourism Manager informed that she will present January – June 17 visitor figures at September meeting. Due to statutory obligations accommodation providers must send figures directly to NISRA, however, attractions and activity businesses may forward to NISRA,

tourism team or digitally through the HUB. She noted that the figures will provide a baseline to increase figures by 2020.

Tourism Manager circulated VIC monitoring figures, and informed that staff have been trained on collating visitor numbers accurately and monitoring streamlined which have been streamlined across the VIC's.

10. Community Planning Forum Representative Nomination

Head of Tourism gave a brief background to the forum. A M McFerron put forward a request sit on the Forum as a representative of TDG. All agreed.

11. AOB

11.1 Bloom Garden Show, Dublin and Royal Highland Show, Edinburgh

Tourism staff promoted at Bloom Garden Show, Dublin with Tourism NI and up to 1,000 competition entries were collated for the database. The show proved very successful with a great deal of interest in visiting Seamus Heaney HomePlace. Staff will be promoting with Tourism Ireland at Royal Highland Show, Edinburgh in June also.

11.2 Tourism NI Board Meeting

Tourism NI are hosting their Board meeting in Seamus Heaney HomePlace on 22 June and members will be staying at Ardtara House the evening before.

11.3 Magherafelt Playing Fields

N Somerville noted that on a recent visit to a sports event at Magherafelt Playing fields, there were no facilities to purchase drinks or confectionary. He enquired that with large numbers of visitors to such events, including ROI, if it would be possible to place vending machines in Meadowbank Sports Arena.

11.4 New Property Manager, Lissan House

N Bell introduced the new property manager, Sharon Ferguson, who gave a brief synopsis on her background and plans for Lissan House. She thanked MUDC on their support and noted that all advice/assistance would be greatly welcomed.

Chair, in closing, thanked N Bell and Lissan House on hosting the meeting and informed that a tour of the house was available following lunch.

Meeting ended at 12.10am.

The next meeting of the Tourism Development Group will be held on 6 September at 10.30am at Blessingbourne Estate, Fivemiletown