

Report on	Walk NI Consortium Proposal 2023-24
Date of Meeting	14 th September 2023
Reporting Officer	Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing
Contact Officer	Martin Conlan, Recreation & Countryside Officer

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To seek Council approval to commit to Walking NI Marketing Consortium Campaign for 2023-2024.
2.0	Background
2.1	WalkNI.com is delivered by Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI), a not-for-profit organisation with the vision 'To create a happier, healthier society where enjoyment and appreciation of the outdoors improves wellbeing.'
2.2	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.
2.3	With significant cuts in government funding, this is no longer the case, with ORNI delivering its strategic not-for-profit role under a number of new arrangements including delivering for Strategic Partnerships, Consortia, Service Level Agreements and on a project by project basis.
2.4	In 2016 / 2017, ORNI successfully established the WalkNI Marketing Consortium to ensure local authorities could continue to benefit from the success of WalkNI.com. The consortium is therefore entering into its sixth year and it could be argued that by continuing to contribute to the WalkNI Consortium, local authorities can reap the following benefits: Solid Foundation: Significant investment has already been made to establish a website, e-marketing and social media channels Engaged Visitors: As indicated by 'WalkNI Key Stats' the website / brand has a strong engagement from the target market. 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. Cross Sell: There will be opportunities to cross sell between destinations i.e. visitors to the Mourne Mountains will be

<p>2.5</p> <p>2.6</p> <p>2.7</p>	<p>able to learn about the Causeway Coast and Glens and vice versa.</p> <p>Redeveloped Website: A redeveloped WalkNI.com was launched in October 2019. The new look website provides an enhanced user experience, be responsive across platforms (mobile, tablet, desktop) and can avail of the latest interactive mapping.</p> <p>Within Mid Ulster District Council – WalkNI.com and Outmoreni.com incorporates detailed information on 29 walks, ranging from short walks of under 5 miles to longer walks over 20 miles.</p> <p>Further details on the WalkNI Marketing Consortium Proposal is contained within Appendix A.</p> <p>Previously in November 2022, Members at the Development committee resolved to approve Mid Ulster Districts Council's continued participation as a regional partner for the 2022/23 year with financial support totalling £3,617 (minute reference: D173/22). Annual report for 2022/23 is included in Appendix B.</p>
<p>3.0</p>	<p>Main Report</p>
<p>3.1</p>	<p>Funding from DAERA (NIEA's) Environment Fund ensures that all Councils receive free walk listings on WalkNI.com. Councils that wish to proactively promote their walking offer to the local population and tourist can avail of the activity of the WalkNI Marketing Consortium. Councils can choose to avail of a specific package of support as outlined below:</p> <p>(1) Regional Partner</p> <p>This package seeks to support an area which has a portfolio of walking product, access, infrastructure and supporting tourism services to meet the demands of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>Partners in the past have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ards & North Down Borough Council • Belfast City Council • Fermanagh & Omagh District council • Mid Ulster District Council <p>(2) National Partner</p> <p>This package seeks to support an area which has a portfolio of walking product, access, infrastructure and supporting tourism services to meet the demands of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Visitors from Northern Ireland or Republic of Ireland on either day trips or short breaks of which walking is the primary reason to visit • Walking Clubs from Republic of Ireland

<p>3.2</p>	<p>Partners in the past have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council • Newry, Mourne & Down District Council <p>Delivery Costs for the WalkNI Marketing Consortium 2023/24: In order to continue the proactive marketing activity for Regional and National Partners, ORNI will dedicate staff time through a combination of ORNI's Marketing Manager and a Marketing Officer. The anticipated contributions for both options for the 23/24 year are as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="231 582 766 705"> <thead> <tr> <th>Partner Level</th> <th>2023/24</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>(1) Regional</td> <td>£3,617</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(2) National</td> <td>£6,890</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Partner Level	2023/24	(1) Regional	£3,617	(2) National	£6,890
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<p>3.3</p>	<p>Leading on from previous Council commitment towards this partnership for the 22/23 year, it is recommended to continue the partnership with the regional package with a Council contribution of £3,617 for the 23/24 year.</p>						
<p>3.4</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. 						
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Other Considerations</p>						
<p>4.1</p>	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p> <p>Financial: Proposal to contribute £3,617 as a participating Regional Partner. Can be derived from existing revenue budgets.</p> <p>Human: Existing staff resources sufficient to coordinate project support. No additional staffing resource required.</p> <p>Risk Management: Considered in line with relevant Council policies and procedures.</p>						
<p>4.2</p>	<p>Screening & Impact Assessments</p> <p>Equality & Good Relations Implications: None anticipated at this juncture.</p> <p>Rural Needs Implications: None anticipated at this juncture.</p>						

5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	To note the contents of the reports and give approval for Mid Ulster District Council to participate as a Regional Partner with the Walking NI Marketing Consortium with a contribution of £3,617.00 towards the 2023-2024 campaign.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix A: WalkNI Marketing Consortium Proposal 2023 - 2024 Appendix B: WalkNI Consortium Year in Review 2022 - 2023