

<b>Report on</b>	Davagh Forest Outdoor Experience (Phase 2)
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Michael Browne
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Mary McKeown

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To inform members of Davagh Forest Outdoor Experience Phase 2 application to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	Mid Ulster District Council successfully submitted an Expression of Interest application to Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2014 -2020 to develop Davagh Forest Outdoor Experience around the Dark Sky.
2.2	The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) invited Council to submit a capital application for this project on 14 <sup>th</sup> February 2018 under the Rural Tourism funding scheme. To bring this project to a full application stage, DAERA offered Council a Technical Assistance grant to develop scoping study for the, Phase II Davagh Forest Outdoor Experience. Council received a Letter of Offer for the Technical Assistance on 11 <sup>th</sup> May 2018. Tandem Design was the successful company appointed to develop a Scoping Study for Davagh Forest Observatory External Visitor Experience and the scoping study is now complete, please see attached.
2.3	The next stage is to prepare and submit the full application, to DAERA before 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2019. In order to complete the full capital application all procurement and planning must be obtained.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	Mid Ulster District Council have been successful in its submission to DAERA to attain funding to develop an outdoor experience at Davagh Forest linking it to the new Observatory and Dark Sky park.
3.2	<p>Within the scoping study it is recommended that the Council consider the following:-</p> <p>(1) Outdoor Audio Visual show with regular programme of screenings projected onto the Observatory building and the surrounding environment. The projector hardware needs to be run on a regular basis for maintenance alone, so it was advised to have between 4-6 content changes within a year (aligned to specific events in the astronomical calendar for example), but with multiple screenings factored into an ongoing programme of events. In the winter months when the nights are longer, there could be multiple screenings for groups of 30 per night if the demand was there and/or increases.</p>

(2) A Riverside activity area, this area functions as a facility for use during daylight hours. From a messaging perspective, it works in tandem with the interpretative exhibition at the Visitor Centre, helping to deliver on the secondary interpretative objectives outlined in the Interpretative Strategy:

(3) Amphitheatre Viewing Area (structural frame timber surface, accommodates approx. 30 people) to view the Outdoor Audio Visual show.

### 3.3 **Secondary objectives:-**

- *Learning and behavioural:* Encourage visitors to compare their own experience in Davagh and the Mid Ulster region and those of our ancestors
- *Emotional:* Promote an appreciation of Davagh Forest's natural resources and outdoor recreation facilities (this objective will have particular emphasis in the Riverside area).

3.7 These objectives will be achieved through the provision of interpretative media featuring themes relating to Natural History, Archaeology and Dark Skies. This will allow the interpretative offer to be extended inwards and outwards between the Visitor Centre and River-side area. The area will consist of a hard-landscaped area to be inserted into a green space located between the car park and the Davagh River. For safety, it will feature a metal railing along the river bank and bollards along the portion that borders the car park. The landscaped area will contain a number of interesting features such as Climbing frame 'Play Planetarium', seating, landscaping and sculptural elements.

### 3.9 Timescales

An indicative programme for development of the external visitor experience at Davagh Forest is approximately 12-18 months in total, allowing for:

Table 1: Proposed potential timescales

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
Procurement	October 2018 until December 2018
Appoint Consultant	December 2018
Submit Rural tourism Application to DAERA	31 <sup>st</sup> January 2019
Design Development	8 months – Complete August 2019
Production	4 months – Complete December 2019
Installation	2 months- Complete February 2020
Project Complete and Launched	February 2020

Table 2: Proposed potential costs

<b>Physical Intervention</b>	<b>£</b>
<i>Site Preparation Works</i>	
Protecting existing features	£ 1,000
Earthworks / excavation & disposal off-site	£ 1,500
<i>Boundary Work &amp; Fencing</i>	
Railing / balustrade (including foundations)	£ 30,000
Interpretation elements on railing	£ 1,250
<i>Hard Landscape</i>	

Feathered stone paving (inc mortar bedding & sub-base)	£ 46,800
Concrete edge to safety surface	£ 600
<i>Soft Landscape</i>	
Grass reinstatement	£ 2,500
Reinforced grass on desire lines	£ 3,000
<i>Fixtures &amp; Fittings</i>	
Wildlife discovery points	£ 3,500
Large timer benches	£ 13,500
Bollards	£ 2,000
Play Planetarium	£ 17,500
Installation (to include impact surface, single colour)	£ 7,630
Amphitheatre Viewing Area (structural frame timber surface, accommodates approx 30 people)	£ 42,000
Preliminaries	£ 7,000
Contingency	£ 10,000
<b>Digital Interventions</b>	£
<i>Hardware</i>	
Projectors (Option 1 or 2), Enclosures and Media Server including Installation and Year 1 Maintenance SLA	£250,000
Content High End Option	£120,000
<b>Architectural</b>	£
Window Screens	£ 2,000
Design fees	£ 30,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£591,780</b>

Figures are excluding VAT.

#### **Other Considerations**

#### **4.1 Financial & Human Resources Implications**

Approval for Financial support to progress the Davagh Forest Outdoor Experience based on the following cost of total project cost £591,780, 75% matched funded by DAERA £443,835, request from council £147,945

Human: Current staff structure sufficient to manage the project.

#### **4.2 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

N/A

#### **4.3 Risk Management Implications**

- The project will be managed in accordance with MUDC policies and procedures
- Specific conditions within the Letter of Offer states that all overrun costs in the development of the projects will be met by council.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failure to apply for the full capital grant may lead to clawback of the Technical Assistance grant award.</li> </ul>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	Approval in principle is sought to progress Davagh Forest Outdoor Experience Project based on scoping study costs of £591,780. Match funding request from council is 25% of project costs £147,945.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Davagh Forest Observatory External Visitor Experience Scoping Study