

Report on	Tourism Business Engagement Update
Date of Meeting	10 January 2019
Reporting Officer	Michael Browne
Contact Officer	Mary Mc Gee

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 update Council on progress, work and results the Seamus Heaney Cluster have achieved over the last year.
2.0	Background
2.1	The Seamus Heaney Cluster has been developed as part of our Mid Ulster Council Tourism Strategy delivery; it has gone from strength to strength in the past year. The group comprises 13 local businesses and meets every two months. Richard Mulholland from Ballyscullion Park chairs the cluster and through Richard, the group report to the Tourism Development Group every two months.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Invest NI Collaborative Growth Fund (£25,000) This cluster is currently in receipt of £25,000 funding through Invest NI Collaborative Growth Funding Facilitation and facilitators are currently facilitating and coordinating the group and writing a scoping study as part of phase 1 of this process. Delivery of this scoping study in April 2019 can potentially open up further funding of £175,000 for this group. The facilitators who are working with the group have focussed the group together, given them consistency in planning and facilitating meetings, are planning study visits, guest speaker events and adding value to the work of the businesses.</p> <p>Tourism NI Experience Clusters (£70,000) Tourism NI are currently supporting delivery of a TNI funded NI Experience Cluster including an intensive "Get Market Ready" Programme, which is being delivered over a total of 8 days from November 18 to March 19, this will include a comprehensive Sales and Marketing course, a digital audit of online platforms, Brand Storytelling and a Meet the Buyer preparation workshop. The total value of this support is £70,000 and is fully funded by Tourism NI.</p> <p>Tina O'Dwyer, Tourism Space Delivering Brand Storytelling Workshop</p>



Meet the Buyer 2019

Cluster members are now compiling experiences to sell in line with Seamus Heaney HomePlace, one examples of this is “Seasoned on The Scribe” from Bronagh Duffin in Bakehouse NI. This has been forwarded to TNI and we have secured a Meet the Buyer Familiarisation trip of International Tour Operators to come to Bellaghy on Sunday 6th April 2019 and sample this experience plus visit Seamus Heaney HomePlace . This will allow them to programme and sell this into 2020.

Tourism Ireland Industry Co Operation Funding NI – NIICP (£5,000)

Four of the Seamus Heaney cluster members have attended World Travel Market supported by Tourism Ireland, these included: J&K Coaches, Lough Neagh Eels, Lough Neagh Tours and Walsh’s Hotel and have generated an estimated £300,000 of sales to date. The tourism team levered funding support from Tourism Ireland NI Industry cooperation programme to cover travel and accommodation for these businesses.

Cluster members selling at WTM, Excel, London with Tourism Ireland



Coming Home for Christmas

This fund has also supported the Seamus Heaney HomePlace “Coming Home for Christmas” campaign with EasyJet. This includes Seamus Heaney HomePlace imagery and call to action on 11,000 EasyJet boarding passes for flights coming from London to Belfast International airport between Monday 17th and Sunday 23rd December.

TIL Marketing Plans Launch

Seamus Heaney HomePlace Liam Neeson video was profiled and shown at TIL Marketing plans launch on 29th November in The Waterfront ICC, Belfast to over 270 key tourism marketing personnel from across NI . The TIL GB team then visited Seamus Heaney HomePlace and met a number of the cluster members who displayed their

	<p>produce. These included, The Old Thatch Inn, Lough Neagh Eels, Lough Neagh Tours, Bakehouse NI, J&K Coaches and Friels Bar, Swatragh.</p> <p>New Accommodation Start Ups</p> <p>The work of Seamus Heaney HomePlace and the cluster has been invigorated by the development of new accommodation product. There are seven new accommodation business start-ups in the Bellaghy area around SHHP, these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Haven, Self-Catering Bellaghy • Glenshane Country House Self-Catering • Beeches, Self-Catering, Magherafelt • Bann Valley Cottage Self-Catering, Portglenone • Blanket Nook, Self-Catering, Magherafelt • Diamond House, Bellaghy and • Laurel Hill Cottage, Upperlands. <p>In addition to the accommodation development other development include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poet's Corner, a new café in the village • Diamond Pharmacy have renovated and expanded their premises into a previously derelict building. • Brendan Adams is a new Tour Guide and a member of the cluster and is now delivering Heaney Tours. • The new Heaney Brewery is under construction in Bellaghy. • Lough Neagh Fisherman's Coop have just signed off design for their new visitor centre.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial:
	Human: Tourism business engagement officer is working with the cluster on an ongoing basis to support them in their work.
	Risk Management:
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Tourism continue to support the cluster in the next year.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	N/A