

<b>Report on</b>	Sliabh Beagh Masterplan
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	7 July 2021
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Michael Browne
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Mary McGee

<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>
	The purpose of the report is to seek Members' approval to establish a Sliabh Beagh Partnership and to progress the Sliabh Beagh Masterplan in partnership with Omagh and Fermanagh District Council and Monaghan County Council.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
<b>2.1</b>	The Sliabh Beagh region stretches across 250 miles square, it spans from Monaghan in the south, across Fermanagh and Omagh and Mid Ulster in the north. Straddling the traditional County borders of Tyrone, Fermanagh and Monaghan. In Mid Ulster the region takes in the villages of Aughnacloy, Augher, Clogher and Fivemiletown and the surrounding Clogher Valley countryside.
<b>2.2</b>	Sliabh Beagh, translated from the Irish as the Mountain of Bith, the Irish King. The area measures some 250 sq. miles and it spans from County Monaghan in the south, to the districts of Fermanagh and Omagh (FODC) and Mid Ulster District Council (MUDC) in the north. There is a point in Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, where the three counties of Fermanagh, Monaghan and Tyrone meet, known locally as "Three County Hollow".
<b>2.3</b>	The Sliabh Beagh landscape is comprised of blanket bog, windswept moors, deep woodlands, lakes and rolling pastures. Shaped by centuries of cultivation, peat extraction and forestry (significant parts in the ownership of Forest Service NI), the area is home to an abundance of flora and fauna.
<b>2.4</b>	Sliabh Beagh is sparsely populated, consisting of a network of small villages and hamlets connected by narrow winding roads. This includes inner gateways (Cooneen, Knocks, Knocktallon) and outer gateways (Aughnacloy, Clogher, Fivemiletown Brookeborough, Maguriesbridge, Newtownbutler, Rosslea, Magheraveely, Clones, Scotstown, Monaghan and Emyvale,).

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
<b>3.1</b>	A Sliabh Beagh Masterplan was jointly commissioned by Monaghan County Council and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council in 2017 to establish a strategic vision for the future of this rural area. The delivery of the Masterplan was coordinated by the Ballybay Clones Erne East Partnership (BCEEP), as there was no partnership group in Sliabh Beagh at this time and this will be one of the actions to be progressed.
<b>3.2</b>	The Masterplan report summarised the findings of the research process and sets out aims, objectives and a series of projects for the future of the region. It seeks to set in place a road map for regeneration, helping the area to fulfil its potential as a visitor destination, while contributing to its needs for continued environmental protection, cultural interpretation and economic and community development. This report includes an action plan of 10 proposed projects for delivery over the short, medium and long term by a range of stakeholders.
<b>3.3</b>	Further to recent meetings held with representatives from Mid Ulster District Council, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, and the County Manager of Monaghan County Council, it was agreed to progress the Sliabh Beagh Masterplan.
<b>3.4</b>	<p>In progressing the Masterplan the following steps will be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition by Mid Ulster District Council that as they did not participate in the preparation of the Sliabh Beagh Masterplan and they will regularise their commitment through Council;</li> <li>• Community and Business representation will be essential to the formation of a Sliabh Beagh Partnership, the entity to agree and progress the Plan. It is suggested that two representatives from each of the three Council areas are identified and invited to participate;</li> <li>• It is proposed that the Sliabh Beagh Partnership will consist of twelve members (Councillors - 6, Community Representatives - 3 and Business Representatives - 3), serviced and supported by Tourism Development Officers from the three Councils, with the proposed first meeting to take place in September 2021;</li> <li>• In the short term, the following actions are to be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ road signage from all main routes (Northern Ireland (NI) and Republic of Ireland (RoI)) and directional signage within the Sliabh Beagh area;</li> <li>➤ discussion on shared branding</li> <li>➤ explore and scope out funding opportunities for capital schemes set out in the Masterplan.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: N/A

	<p>Human:</p> <p>The required support will be included in the work plan for the Tourism team. Due to the wide range of activity set out in the Sliabh Beagh Masterplan, there may be a need for other Council teams (Economic and Community Development) to support this work.</p>
	<p>Risk Management: Virtual meetings and programme delivery are features all members at this stage are comfortable working with.</p>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	<p>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications: The initiatives described above have the potential to further promote equality within the district.</p>
	<p>Rural Needs Implications:</p> <p>All initiatives will support and promote rural businesses.</p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<p>Two Mid Ulster Council members to be nominated to join the new Sliabh Beagh Partnership with first meeting proposed for September 2021.</p>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Sliabh Beagh MasterPlan