

Report on	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Giant Spirit Awards 2022 2. Travel & Tourism Awards 2022 3. Brown Signage Audit in the Mid Ulster Area 4. Annual Contribution to Lough Neagh Partnership (2022-2023) – Draft Service Level Agreement 5. Social Enterprise NI: Council Membership 2022/23 6. Future Business Start Provision Research 7. Coalisland Christmas Lights Switch-On Event 2022
Date of Meeting	15 September 2022
Reporting Officer	Assistant Director of Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes

Is this report restricted for confidential business? If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To provide Members with an update on key activities as detailed below.
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>Giant Spirit Awards 2022 Tourism NI has launched a refreshed and updated annual awards programme aimed at showcasing and rewarding best in class in the tourism and hospitality industry. Renamed The Giant Spirit Awards, the event will build on the successful legacy of the Northern Ireland Tourism Awards, which ran for over forty years until 2019. The Giant Spirit Awards will be more closely aligned to the award winning destination brand Northern Ireland ~ Embrace a Giant Spirit.</p> <p>The 2022 event will recognise and celebrate the resilience and spirit of the industry in facing the challenges of the last two years as well as those who exemplified the values of the destination, innovated and built competitiveness.</p>
2.2	<p>Travel & Tourism Awards 2022 Throughout the year Northern Ireland Travel News organise several major trade events, notably the Northern Ireland Travel and Tourism Awards. For 30 years the Awards Ceremony has been attended by over 300+ decision makers from all sectors of the travel industry while the Awards themselves have become a coveted symbol of success among industry peers.</p>

<p>2.3</p> <p>2.4</p> <p>2.5</p> <p>2.6</p> <p>2.7</p>	<p>Brown Signage Audit in the Mid Ulster Area The signing of tourist attractions and facilities (white on brown signs) is a joint policy, which was devised by Transport NI and Northern Ireland Tourist Board (now Tourism NI) in 2014.</p> <p>At present neither Transport NI nor Tourism NI, hold any form of a database, which details existing brown signs within the Mid Ulster District area or indeed Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Annual Contribution to Lough Neagh Partnership (2022-2023) – Draft Service Level Agreement Over the past number of years, a group of 5 Councils from around the shoreline of Lough Neagh (as listed below) have provided a financial contribution towards Lough Neagh Partnership to support their work; these are Mid Ulster District Council, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and Lisburn and Castlereagh Borough Council.</p> <p>Social Enterprise NI: Council Membership 2022/23 Social Enterprise NI (SENI) is the membership body for social enterprises across NI with the team providing support to members. In addition to social enterprises, membership includes organisations from outside the sector such as private and public sector bodies, including local Councils.</p> <p>Future Business Start Provision Research Last year Members were advised that the 11 Council SOLACE Economic Recovery Group (led and facilitated by Belfast City Council) had established a Working Group to progress research into options for the future delivery of entrepreneurship, start up and growth support. SQW Consultants were appointed to undertake an options analysis and subsequently, developed a Business Case for a future operating model, enabling Councils to understand the potential scale of the financial requirements and also to inform positioning and engagement with DfE, DfC and other potential funders, including the Shared Prosperity Fund.</p> <p>Coalisland Christmas Lights Switch-On Event 2022 CRAIC Theatre Company has submitted a request for funding towards the Christmas Lights Switch-on event 2022 as per previous years. Historically, the legacy Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough supported Christmas events in Coalisland and the annual lights switch-on event was organised by CRAIC Theatre Company. Since 2015, the Council has continued this support and the event was organised by CRAIC Theatre Company.</p>
<p>3.0</p>	<p>Main Report</p>
<p>3.1</p>	<p>Giant Spirit Awards 2022 The aim of the NI Giant Spirit Awards 2022 is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise and celebrate the resilience and Giant Spirit of all those who work in the tourism industry.

- Encourage and reward those who have exemplified the values of our brand spirit over this challenging period.
- Foster innovation and improve business competitiveness by sharing best practice.

Award categories include Best Hotel, Best B&B and Guesthouse, Best Self-Catering, Best Tourism Experience, Best Food and Drink Experience, Most Innovative Business, Most Promising Student and a number of special awards.

Submissions were made for the following Council facilities:

- **Seamus Heaney Open Ground Experience - Most Innovative Business**
- **OM Dark Sky Park & Observatory - Best Tourism Experience**
- **Hill of the O'Neill and Ranfurly House – Best Tourism Experience**

Entries closed on Wednesday 27th July 2022.

Council has been notified that;

- Seamus Heaney Open Ground Experience has been shortlisted for the *Most Innovative Business (Large) Award Category*.
- Council's Tourism Business Engagement Officer has been shortlisted for the *Local Spirit Award Category*.

A **full list of all shortlisted projects** under each Giant Spirit Award Category is shown below. (Mid Ulster projects are highlighted in red).

Best Bed & Breakfast / Guesthouse

Blackrock House Luxury B&B, Portrush
Brook Lodge Guesthouse, Magherafelt
 Kiltariff Hall Country House, Rathfriland

Best Food and Drink Experience, Large

Fish City, Belfast
Friels Bar & Restaurant, Swatragh
 Hinch Distillery, Ballynahinch
 Killeavy Castle Estate

Best Food and Drink Experience, Small

NearyNógs Stone Ground Chocolate, Kilkeel
 NI Food Tours Tracey's Farmhouse Kitchen, Killinchy
 Taste and Tour, Belfast
 The Chocolate Manor, Castlerock
 Walled City Brewery, L'Derry

Best Hotel, Large

Best Western Plus White Horse Hotel, L'Derry
 Bishop's Gate Hotel, L'Derry
 Clayton Hotel, Belfast

Killeavy Castle Estate
The Whistledown Hotel, Warrenpoint

Best Self Catering, Large

Dunamoy Cottages and Spa, Ballyclare
Larchfield Estate, Lisburn

Best Self Catering, Small

Aurora North Coast, Bushmills
Coastguard Boat House, Whiteabbey
Keenaghan Cottage, Belleek
Quarry Hill Church, Strangford

Best Tourism Experience, Large

Friels Bar and Restaurant, Swatragh

Hinch Distillery, Ballynahinch
Montalto Estate, Ballynahinch
National Museums NI - Ulster American Folk Park, Omagh
The Spa at Galgorm
Titanic Belfast, Belfast

Best Tourism Experience, Small

Bakehouse, Bellaghy

Carlingford Lough Ferry, Greencastle
Castle Archdale Boat Hire and Watersports, Irvinestown
Cranfield Alpacas, Kilkeel
Lough Neagh Artisans, Magherafelt
Portrush Surf School, Portrush

Most Innovative Business, Large

Friels Bar and Restaurant, Swatragh

Further Space, Northern Ireland wide
Killeavy Castle Estate
Seamus Heaney HomePlace, Bellaghy
Visit Derry

Most Innovative Business, Small

Castle Archdale Boat Hire and Watersports, Irvinestown
NearyNógs Stone Ground Chocolate, Kilkeel
Paul Cunningham Mourne Larder
The Saint Patrick Centre, Downpatrick
Tumble Circus, Belfast
Banana Block, Urban Scale Interventions, Belfast

Most Promising Student

Hastings Hotels – Marisa King

The Bakery by Yellow Door – Emma Jayne McCartney
Titanic Hotel – Jordan Sloan

Local Spirit Award

Gordon Wilson – Montalto Estate

Jamese McCloy – Mid Ulster Cluster

Jamie Hamill – Coleraine BID

Mary McGee – Mid-Ulster District Council

Mick Boyle – Killeavy Castle Estate

3.2

The Giant Spirit Awards Dinner and Presentation will take place on Thursday 6th October 2022 in Slieve Donard Resort & Spa, Newcastle. Tickets are priced at £65+Vat per person.

Travel & Tourism Awards 2022

During 2022, the flow of travel and tourism has returned to NI after a difficult two years. In Mid Ulster, our visitor attractions are open again showcasing our quality offerings to the local and visiting public from all over the world.

These Awards create greater awareness of NI's tourist attractions and facilities, which provides an opportunity to highlight the wonderful attractions on our doorstep.

Nominations have been submitted for the following Council facilities:

- **OM Dark Sky Park & Observatory – Visitor Attraction of the Year**
- **Seamus Heaney HomePlace – Visitor Attraction of the Year**
- **Magherafelt Visitor Information Centre – Tourist Information Centre of the Year.**

3.3

Nominations close on 30th September 2022. The 30th Annual NI Travel & Tourism Awards in association with Blue Insurance is scheduled to take place on Friday, 14th October 2022 at the Slieve Donard Resort & Spa, Newcastle. Tickets are priced at £170+Vat per person.

Brown Signage Audit in the Mid Ulster Area

In order to update records within the Mid Ulster District, permission is sought to procure external expertise and recruit a suitably qualified company to carry out an audit of all existing white on brown signage and assess the following:

- What's currently there
- What's missing
- What needs removed
- What needs replaced or is in poor condition
- What additional signs may be needed
- List existing sign locations by road name and positioning of signs
- Photograph all existing signs
- Measure existing signs and sizing of lettering and symbols

Subject to Members' approval, it is anticipated the Audit would commence in the Autumn of 2022 and take approximately 6 months to complete.

3.4 **Annual Contribution to Lough Neagh Partnership (2022-2023) – Draft Service Level Agreement**

Lough Neagh Partnership submitted a request (**Appendix 1**) to Mid Ulster District Council for an annual financial contribution of £22,000 towards activities as identified in their action plan for the 2022/23 financial year. The delivery focus continues to be on areas to benefit member Councils. If Members are minded to approve the financial request, it is recommended that a Service Level Agreement (SLA) is issued to Lough Neagh Partnership to cover the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. A draft SLA is attached on **Appendix 2** which has been reviewed by Council's legal team and clearly defines the key outcomes which Lough Neagh Partnership are required to achieve by 31 March 2023.

3.5 **Social Enterprise NI: Council Membership 2022/23**

The responsibilities that were transferred to local Councils in 2015 under the Reform of Local Government included that of the social economy sector. Since 2015, all Councils have signed up as members of SENI. The range of benefits in becoming a member include the following, as a minimum:

- SENI will promote any Council events for social enterprises in their e-zine and social media
- SENI offer free membership to any new social enterprise in the area for the first year if they are not already members of SENI.
- Host joint events with the Council including Pitching Events, Buy Social Events, Entrepreneurship week support etc.
- Free training on topics such as "What is Social Value" with any Council staff or members at any time should you feel that appropriate, or any other relevant training required, in order to better understand the business model.
- Listing as a Corporate Member on SENI's new website
- Access to discounted events for members including Awards and Conferences
- Access to free bursaries that SENI offers to members

Members are therefore requested to consider renewal of Council membership of SENI for a fee of £500 for the financial year 2022/23.

3.6 **Future Business Start Provision Research**

Following the completion of the Business Case, the 11-Council Working Group is now progressing research into the potential delivery of a preferred option which involves the development of a number of work-streams for programme components, to support a future bid for funding. These include a future procurement strategy and cost options analysis for procuring the different programme delivery strands, the development of a cross Council central management information system and the development of a new brand. There will be a requirement for technical assistance support on one or more of these and it is proposed that Councils set aside monies (£8,000 in Mid Ulster's case) to resource this – with this allocation only to be drawn down as required, and by prior agreement. Councils are also liaising with

3.7	<p>government departments and other agencies to explore the potential for funding to be sourced for this work, which, if successful, will reduce the contribution amount required.</p> <p>Coalisland Christmas Lights Switch-On Event 2022 CRAIC Theatre Company has submitted a request for funding towards the Christmas Lights Switch-on event as per previous years (Appendix 3). Officers have requested further information on the proposals and when this is received and if deemed acceptable, it is proposed that Council fund the initiative to the value of £4,200 in Coalisland for a switch-on event on 4th December 2022 and permit officers to work with CRAIC Theatre Company to deliver the event. Funding for the event is included in this year's budget.</p>
	<p>Other Considerations</p>
4.1	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p> <p>Financial:</p> <p>Giant Spirit Awards 2022 Provision has been made for the Council Chair, Tourism Manager and Seamus Heaney HomePlace Manager to attend the Awards Ceremony at a cost of £65+Vat per person.</p> <p>Travel & Tourism Awards 2022 Provision has been made for the Council Chair and one or two staff representing the nominated projects to attend the Awards Ceremony at a cost of £170+Vat per person, if Mid Ulster's projects are shortlisted.</p> <p>Brown Signage Audit in the Mid Ulster Area Provision has been made within the existing tourism budget with costs anticipated to be circ. £5,000+Vat.</p> <p>Annual Contribution to Lough Neagh Partnership (2022-2023) – Draft Service Level Agreement Provision has been made in the Tourism budget for 2022/23 for an annual financial contribution of £22,000 for Lough Neagh Partnership</p> <p>Social Enterprise NI: Council Membership 2022/23 Membership Renewal Fee: £500 is available from the 2022/23 economic development budget.</p> <p>Future Business Start Provision Research Provision has been made for up to £8,000 from the 2022/23 economic development budget for this work. These funds will only be drawn down as required.</p> <p>Coalisland Christmas Lights Switch-On Event 2022</p>

	Total cost of £4,200 within existing Events budget.
	<p>Human:</p> <p>Giant Spirit Awards 2022 Officer's time to attend Awards.</p> <p>Travel & Tourism Awards 2022 Officer's time to attend the Awards, if shortlisted.</p> <p>Brown Signage audit in the Mid Ulster Area Officers' Time</p> <p>Annual Contribution to Lough Neagh Partnership (2022-2023) – Draft Service Level Agreement Officer Time</p>
	<p>Risk Management: Coalisland Christmas Lights Switch-On Event 2022 Risk of losing local community involvement if CRAIC Theatre is not involved.</p>
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	<p>Equality & Good Relations Implications:</p> <p>Annual Contribution to Lough Neagh Partnership (2022-2023) – Draft Service Level Agreement Council policies and procedures will be adhered to in the roll out of this agreement</p>
	<p>Rural Needs Implications:</p> <p>Annual Contribution to Lough Neagh Partnership (2022-2023) – Draft Service Level Agreement Council policies and procedures will be adhered to in the roll out of this agreement</p>
5.0	Recommendation(s)
	Members are requested to:
5.1	<p>Giant Spirit Awards 2022 Approve the attendance of the Council Chair, Tourism Manager and Seamus Heaney HomePlace Manager at The Giant Spirit Awards 2022 in Slieve Donard Resort & Spa, Newcastle on 6th October 2022, at a cost of £65+Vat per person.</p>
5.2	<p>Travel & Tourism Awards 2022 Approve the attendance of the Council Chair and one or two Managers representing Council's nominated projects at the Travel & Tourism Awards 2022 taking place at the Slieve Donard Resort & Spa, Newcastle on 14th October 2022 at a cost of £170+Vat per person, subject to Council's projects being shortlisted.</p>

<p>5.3</p> <p>5.4</p> <p>5.4.1</p> <p>5.4.2</p> <p>5.5</p> <p>5.6</p> <p>5.7</p>	<p>Brown Signage Audit in the Mid Ulster Area Approve that Council seek competitive quotations for a suitably qualified organisation to complete a full brown signage audit of the Mid Ulster District. Provision has been made in the Council’s Tourism budget for this work, with costs estimated to be in the region of £5,000+Vat.</p> <p>Annual Contribution to Lough Neagh Partnership (2022-2023) – Draft Service Level Agreement</p> <p>Approve Council’s annual contribution to Lough Neagh Partnership (LNP) for 2022/23 of £22,000 and release the full payment to LNP subject to Council being provided with the requisite documentation as detailed in the Service Level Agreement.</p> <p>Approve Mid Ulster District Council’s Service Level Agreement with Lough Neagh Partnership for the financial year 2022/23 on Appendix 2.</p> <p>Social Enterprise NI: Council Membership 2022/23 Approve that Mid Ulster District Council renew its membership of Social Enterprise NI for 2022/23 at a cost of £500.</p> <p>Future Business Start Provision Research Approve for up to £8,000 to be set aside to resource technical assistance to support work to progress research into the future delivery of business start provision, with this allocation only to be drawn down as required.</p> <p>Coalisland Christmas Lights Switch-On Event 2022 Approve financial support to the CRAIC Theatre Company in Coalisland to the value of £4,200 to deliver the Coalisland Christmas Lights Switch-on event in 2022, subject to Officers being satisfied with the proposals submitted.</p>
	<p>Documents Attached & References</p>
	<p>Appendix 1 - Lough Neagh Partnership Funding Request 2022-2023</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Lough Neagh Partnership Service Level Agreement 2022-2023 Final Version</p> <p>Appendix 3 - CRAIC Theatre Company 2022 Christmas Proposal</p>