



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

Tourism

Business and Communities

SERVICE PLAN – 2021/2022

Date

Consulted within staff team

Discussed & signed off by Director

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1.0 OVERALL PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE SERVICE

1.1 Purpose and Scope of the Service

The Tourism Department is responsible for the successful leadership and management of Tourism Service in Mid Ulster District Council. It plays a lead role in the delivery of the Mid Ulster District Council's vision and values and promotes the achievement of high standards of performance against Corporate and Service specific performance indicators.

Key Functional Responsibilities: -

- Tourism – District wide strategic development
- Visitor Servicing – Located in Seamus Heaney HomePlace, Burnavon, Bridewell OM Davagh Dark Skies, US Grants and Ranfurly House
- Corporate Events – District Wide
- Tourism Business Engagement

1.2 Responsibilities

The Tourism department is responsible for the following functions:

- Responsible for the development and implementation of Mid Ulster District Councils Tourism Strategy.
- Manage and deliver Visitor Information Services for Mid Ulster through the Visitor Information Centres in Bellaghy, Cookstown, Dungannon, Davagh and Magherafelt.
- The Culture change of Tourism delivery by becoming more commercially and customer focussed by maintaining and increasing domestic and international visitors.
- Build and develop relationships with a wide range of stakeholders through business engagement.
- Develop the Tourism Service through the delivery of a programme of innovative events and activities that promotes tourism that will make Mid Ulster attractive and competitive.
- Identify sources of external funding opportunities for tourism development, formulating fund bids and liaising with funding bodies to maximise the tourism profile in Mid Ulster.

- Promote and support innovative ways of achieving Mid Ulster District Council's service aims and objectives through the Corporate Planning process and development, delivery and review of business plans and strategies.
- Contribute to corporate developments and initiatives to assist the Mid Ulster District Council to achieve its aims and objectives.
- Oversee the project management delivery of Tourism related strategic projects.
- Contribute to the development of Council's corporate governance framework and ensure it is consistently implemented.
- Ensure the provision and delivery of high quality and cost-effective events.
- Contribute to the development of Council's policies and procedures which promote high standards of service delivery.
- Provide guidance and professional advice to Stakeholders and elected members, ensuring clear communication, and delivery of Tourism objectives.
- Work with and consult members of the public, partners, and stakeholders, to ensure the provision of appropriate, effective and integrated tourism service.
- Communicate to staff the strategic objectives and targets for the Department.

1.3 Customers & Stakeholders

Customers & Stakeholders
• Tourism Northern Ireland
• Tourism Ireland
• National Trust
• DAERA
• Department for Infrastructure
• Sport NI
• Department for the Economy
• Sperrins Partnership Project
• Lough Neagh Partnership
• Tourism Trade
• Councillor members
• Funding Departments
• Event Organisers
• Mid & South West Economic Engine.
• Outdoor Recreation NI
• Ulster Scots Agency
• ICBAN

1.4 Performance Overview in 2020/2021

The following table provides a progress summary and the impact made by last years' Service Plan (2020-2021). It also details key successes, a summary of the end of year progress, remaining challenges for the Service and how it made a difference.

The Tourism Department Improvement Plan for 2020/21 has contributed to the following objective set within the Corporate Improvement Plan.

1. To assist in the growth of the local economy by increasing the number of visitors to the district
2. To improve the accessibility of our services by increasing the number available online

2020/21 Performance Overview	End of Year Progress Status: Completed/Commenced/Other
Broaden the visitor appeal of the Council's visitor attractions by increasing the visitor physical and augmented experience at OM Davagh Dark Skies and Ballyronan Marina.	Funding secured and Tandem appointed to develop and deliver a full augmented and immersive visitor experience that complements both Ballyronan and Davagh, to be completed August 2021.
To deliver Mid Ulster's 5-year tourism strategy.	As a result of the impact of COVID-19, the MUDC Tourism strategy, mid-term review was put on hold, with reviewing and remodelling required to take into consideration COVID-19 with a new focus on the local staycation market.
Increased Mid Ulster visitor digital presence. Website presences on Tourism NI 'Embrace a Giant Spirt' website and increase visitor interactive immersive experiences.	Council signed up to TNI website development programme.
To develop at least two new visitor experiences under the Tourism NI 'Embrace a Giant Spirt' brand with a specific focus under the development heritage pillar and utilising what Lough Neagh has to offer.	Funding secured from DAERA and Councils approval to develop 2 new experiences, to be completed by March 2022.

<p>To enhance the visitor experience at US Grants Homestead with new signage and improved visitor flow around the site.</p>	<p>Work completed March 2021.</p>
<p>Upgrade the welfare facilities at Bridewell Visitor Information Centre in Magherafelt to include disabled toilet and access on the main floor.</p>	<p>Work completed March 2021</p>

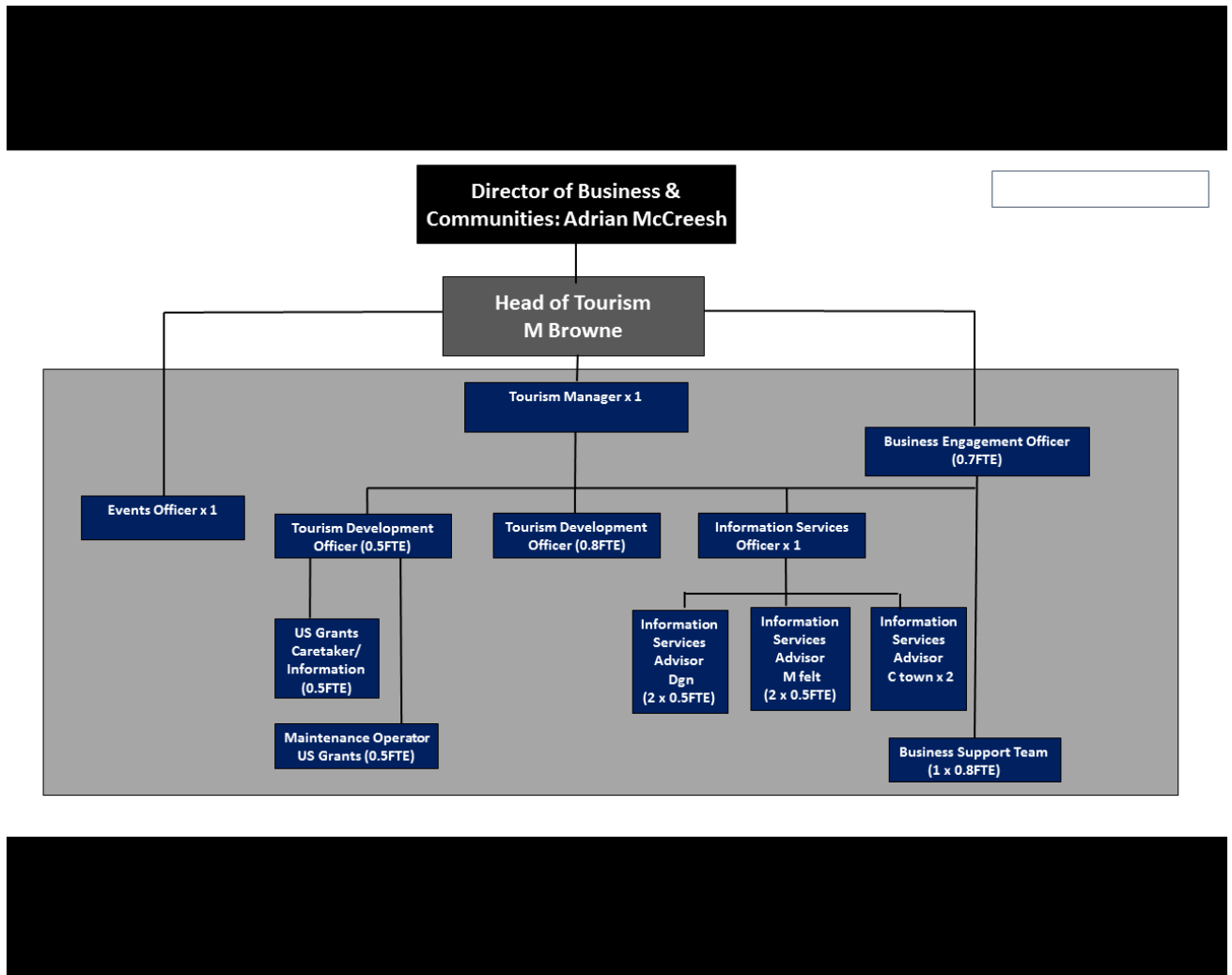
2.0 IMPROVING OUR SERVICE AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE - 2021/22

The following tables confirm the resources, financial and people, which the Service has access to throughout 2020-21 to deliver its actions, activities, and core business.

2.1 Budget 2021/22

Service Budget Headings	£
Bridewell	£65,689
Events	£133,000
Tourism General	£448,645
US Grants	£7,365
Gross Budget	£654,699
Income	£60,486
Net Budget for 2021-22	£594,231

2.2 Staffing Complement - 2021/22



Staffing	No. of Staff
Head of Service	1
Managers	1
Officers	8
Casual	2
Total	12

2.3 Service Work Plan - 2021/22

This plan confirms the core activities and actions which will form your Service Work Plan for 2021-22. This should be a high-level capture of the Service activities and work which it will focus on throughout 2021-22. The Plan links to the Council's 2020-2024 Corporate Plan priorities, Annual Corporate Improvement Plan Objectives, Corporate Indicators and Mid Ulster Sustainable Community Plan themes & outcomes.

SERVICE WORK PLAN 2021/22

Service Objective:	To deliver			
Link to Community Plan Theme:	Align to Corporate Plan Theme			
<i>CMP 1.3 Economic Growth - Our Towns & Villages are vibrant & competitive</i>	<i>Service Delivery: 2.1 We will improve services for our citizens through the development and delivery of an innovation agenda</i>			
Key Actions	By When (Dates)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? Outcomes/outputs	How will we know (Measures)
Considering COVID-19 we will review and develop a new programme of corporate events for the town centres across the district that consider social distancing with appropriate themes for delivery.	31/03/2022	S Arbuthnot Town Centre Managers M McKeown	To deliver inspiring, engaging events to enhance Mid Ulster Council's town centres and other event spaces. To be accessible to all visitors of all ages, backgrounds and abilities all taking into consideration COVID-19 guidelines. Maximise participation of our residents. To further develop, promoted and deliver high quality events.	Delivery of at least 6 corporate events from October – December 2021.* 20,000 visitor numbers/audience numbers attend corporate events.* Achieve a 75% customer satisfaction. *Figures subject to COVID-19 lockdown easing and public events and mass gatherings

What Service Development/Improvement will we undertake in 2021/22 (actions)	By When (Dates)	Lead Officer(s)	What difference will it make? Outcomes/outputs	How will we know? (Measures)
Deliver a portfolio of events and activity programmes at the core MUDC venues.	31/03/2022	Sharon Arbuthnot Regeneration Managers	Programme of varied events and activities across main town centres seeking to engage a broad spectrum of participant and spectator audience	Facilitate at least 6 Corporate Events as part of calendar (reduced from 16) (Halloween & Christmas)

Service Objective:	To deliver			
Link to Community Plan Theme:	Align to Corporate Plan Theme			
<i>CMP 1.1 Economic Growth - We prosper in a stronger & more competitive economy</i>	<i>Economy: 3.2 We will continue to build on our work to generate business diversification, innovation & expansion & increase in employment opportunities</i>			
Key Actions	By When (Dates)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? Outcomes/outputs	How will we know (Measures)
<p>Deliver upon the objectives within the Mid Ulster Council Tourism Strategy (Reviewed 2019).</p> <p>To review and update the Mid Ulster Council Tourism Strategy considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>To review and update the Mid Ulster Council Tourism Strategy aligned and linked to Tourism Northern Ireland's new brand and experiences, under 'Embrace a Giant Spirit'.</p> <p>Increased destination digital presences, website, and social media.</p>	31/03/2022	Head of Tourism & Tourism Team	<p>To deliver the objectives outlined in the MUDC tourism Strategy (Reviewed 2019).</p> <p>Strategic alignment with the national brand.</p> <p>Reinforce the national and local tourism brands.</p> <p>Increased staycation offering</p>	<p>Carry out a COVID-19 review.</p> <p>Develop and deliver a Mid Ulster Council destination brand and web site.</p> <p>Carry out ongoing perception research.</p> <p>NISRA tourism visitor statistics.</p>

What Service Development/Improvement will we undertake in 2021/22 (actions)	By When	Lead Officer(s)	What difference will it make? Outcomes/outputs	How will we know? (Measures)
Deliver upon the objectives within the Mid Ulster Council Tourism Strategy (Reviewed 2019).	31/03/2022	Head of Tourism & Tourism Team	<p>To deliver the objectives outlined in the MUDC tourism Strategy (Reviewed 2019).</p> <p>Strategic alignment with the national brand.</p> <p>Reinforce the national and local tourism brands.</p>	<p>Implementation of the reviewed Mid Ulster District Council Tourism Strategy.</p> <p>Achieve reviewed outputs for 2021-22</p>

Service Objective:	To deliver			
Link to Community Plan Theme:	Align to Corporate Plan Theme			
<i>CMP 1.2 Economic Growth - We have more people working in a diverse economy</i>	<i>Economy: 3.6 We will work to deliver tourism investment and employment concentrating on Mid Ulster's three identified tourism strands</i>			
Key Actions	By When (Dates)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? Outcomes/outputs	How will we know (Measures)
<p>Develop a portfolio of systems and communications channels to keep the tourism sector informed and to ensure that they receive the latest and most current business information.</p> <p>Develop a series of webinars to support and inform the sector as we exit the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Deliver programmes that will support and create opportunities for the sector under one of more of the 'Embrace a Giant Spirit' experiences.</p>	31/03/2022	Head of Tourism and Tourism Team	<p>Greater and more focused support for the tourism & hospitality business sector to ensure their business developments are more efficient.</p> <p>Supporting and developing new local experiences under the 'Embrace a Giant Spirit' branding.</p>	<p>20% increase business participation on Council digital and social media tourism channels</p> <p>Develop and deliver 4 new 'Embrace a Giant Spirit' sub brands.</p>

What Service Development/Improvement will we undertake in 2021/22 (actions)	By When	Lead Officer(s)	What difference will it make? Outcomes/outputs	How will we know? (Measures)
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Service Objective:	To deliver			
Link to Community Plan Theme:	Align to Corporate Plan Theme			
<i>CMP 1.2 Economic Growth - We have more people working in a diverse economy</i>	<i>Economy: 3.6 We will work to deliver tourism investment and employment concentrating on Mid Ulster's three identified tourism strands</i>			
Key Actions	By When (Dates)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? Outcomes/outputs	How will we know (Measures)
<p>Progress and implementation of key capital projects: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultancy and construction teams appointed. Source, apply and agree funding streams. Design programmes of work established and agreed. 	From 1/4/2021 -31/03/2022	Head of Tourism, Tourism Team, Head of Technical Services	Product high quality, innovative and immersive experiences that will attract increased visitors and investment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding sources agreed and in place. Implementation of programme of work at relevant constructions stages.

What Service Development/Improvement will we undertake in 2021/22 (actions)	By When	Lead Officer(s)	What difference will it make? Outcomes/outputs	How will we know? (Measures)
<p>Progress and implementation of key capital projects: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Davagh Solar Walk • Davagh Archaeological Walk • Davagh Giant Sculpture Project • Ballyronan Tourism Project 	From 1/4/2021 -31/03/2022	Head of Tourism, Tourism Team, Head of Technical Services	Product high quality, innovative and immersive experiences that will attract increased visitors and investment.	<p>Development of new high-quality visitor attractions.</p> <p>50% Increased visitor numbers to upgraded visitor attractions.</p>

3.0 OUR STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

In carrying out our responsibilities, the Service is cognisant of the statutory duties placed upon the council in the delivery of its services. Whilst the Service operates, under various obligations it is however mindful of the changing context in which it operates and endeavours to mainstream the equality and rural needs duties in the design and delivery of our functions.

3.1 EQUALITY DUTY

The council and by consequence our Service is committed to contributing towards its part in working towards fulfilling obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to ensure adequate time, staff and resources to fulfil our duties.

The Service will also work towards adherence to the council's Equality Scheme ensuring equality duties, together with promoting positive attitudes towards persons with a disability and the participation of people with a disability in public life when carrying out our functions.

3.2 RURAL NEEDS DUTY

The Service will be mindful of the rural needs of its customers when carrying out its functions and subsequent responsibilities, particularly in developing any new policies, plans or strategies throughout the year. In line with the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 we will give due regard to rurality in terms of needs in carrying out the activities within our Service.

3.3 RISK MANAGEMENT OF SERVICE

The purpose of risk management is to manage the barriers which prevents the Council from achieving its objectives. This section of the service plan includes space for the Service to input their key risks (in summary form), which have been identified during the business planning process. The Council uses risk management to maximize opportunities and minimize risks. This improves its ability to deliver priorities and improve outcomes. Therefore the Council deems it important to link business planning and risk management. Risk Management aims to:

- Help the Council achieve its overall aims and objectives.
- Manage the significant risks the Council faces to an acceptable level.
- Assist with the decision-making process.
- Implement the most effective measures to avoid, reduce and control those risks.
- Balance risk with opportunity
- Manage risk and internal controls in the most effective way.

This table illustrates the risks identified to deliver Tourism Service business in 2020-21.

Risk Ref Number	Description of Risk	Risk Rating	Mitigation Activity
1.	Failure to miss deadlines for the development of marketing to inform visitors of what is on offer to the visitor.	6	To ensure that there is a robust marketing strategy with resources.
2.	Failure to deliver the tourism strategy action plan	6	Impact of Covid 19, closure of facilities and social distancing requirements as and when theatres and facilities re-open will have a significant impact on the ability of theatres and facilities being used to their full potential. Regular engagement with the sector currently being undertaken. Ongoing engagement with customer base being delivered via online platforms to ensure customer relationships are maintained during Covid 19 lockdown period. Regular team meetings discussing programming. Venue specific marketing staff in place across all three venues.
3.	Limited resources to develop strategic events.	6	Monitor and identify needs and external financial opportunities.

4.	Funding and other opportunities missed for MUDC area.	6	Ongoing scanning being undertaken by all officers. Team meeting agenda item, Officers have been assigned to investigate funding opportunities.
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As part of the recovery of the 1st wave of the Covid -19 pandemic, should a second or further waves occur we will switch to our emergency plans.

Rating	Descriptor
16 - 25	Extreme Risk (immediate action required)
10 - 15	High Risk (urgent action required)
7 - 9	Moderate Risk (action required)
1 – 6	Low Risk (keep under review)