

Title of Report:	Development of New Tourist Trail
Committee Report Submitted To:	Leisure and Development Committee
Date of Meeting:	18 th March 2020
For Decision or For Information	For Decision

Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23)	
Strategic Theme	Accelerating Our Economy and Contributing to Prosperity
Outcome	Development of Visitor Experience
Lead Officer	Head of Tourism & Recreation Destination Manager

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	£3,000 - Capital Works (agreed April 19) £14,071 – Marketing Activities Total Project Cost £171,000
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES
Capital/Revenue	Capital & Revenue
Code	
Staffing Costs	Costed to funders

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek Elected Members approval to make alterations to the implementation of a project approved by Council in 2019 known as Yellow Frames.

2.0 Background

In April 2019, Elected Members approved the advancement of the project known as Yellow Frames. This project entailed the introduction of a tourist trail connecting rural points of interest through the use of a number of sites that featured yellow metal frames that allowed the visitor to view a point of interest and capture the moment through photography. This concept was based on collaboration with the National Geographic magazine and had been successfully implemented in other countries in Europe notably Finland and Estonia.

The total project costs are £170,000 and the costs to Council were £3,000 from Capital contribution and £14,000 from Council's in-year Destination Marketing budget (staff resources were also factored as a contribution to the funding mix).

This project was supported by the Rural Development Programme's Cooperation Projects through DAERA. Its key aims are to enhance the tourism offering by encouraging increased expenditure and overnight stays to the Borough.

3.0 Required Change in Direction

This project was originally brokered through the LAG Cooperation Board prior to being presented to Council as a possible applicant for consideration and ultimately approval. It was based on work in Finland and Estonia, whereby the Yellow Frames would be jointly promoted with the National Geographic publication and online channels. The LAG and DAERA's Rural Development Programme officials were negotiating an agreement with National Geographic to market the trail and Yellow Frame locations within our area.

In the autumn of 2019, National Geographic was bought over by Disney inc. As a result, promoters of the Yellow Frames in Finland, Estonia and now Northern Ireland have been advised that the National Geographic does not wish to retain any partnership through association or promotion of the Yellow Frames concept. This means that the project must either change direction from working with National Geographic through the Yellow Frame approach or not proceed through to completion or promotion.

4.0 Options

The following options are being proposed;

Option 1 - Advise the LAG and DAERA that the Council wishes to withdraw from the entire process.

Option 2 - Develop a new approach to brand and market the tourism trail.

4.1 Outline Proposal for Option 2

If Elected Members wish to retain the tourism trail associated with the former Yellow Frames then Officials would adopt an alternative approach that allows the project to remain viable.

An outline for this approach is listed below:

- Maintain Tourism Trail based on a revised theme and branding.
- Promote Trail as a rural alternative to Causeway Coastal Route.
- Develop experiences that link the eight sites and promote our natural and unspoilt landscapes along with local cultural experiences.
- Develop a two day itinerary that would be promoted in conjunction with Tourism Ireland.

The Council will avail of marketing funding from the cooperation project to launch the tourism trail and promote it for the first 12-18 month period. After this funded period the Council will continue to promote this as part of its Destination Marketing remit.

6.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that Elected Members approve Option 2 allowing this project to proceed through the development of a high quality alternative and viable proposal.