

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Destination Marketing Website</b>
<b>Committee Report Submitted To:</b>	<b>The Leisure and Development Committee</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>17th November 2020</b>
<b>For Decision or For Information</b>	<b>For Information</b>

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23)</b>	
Strategic Theme	
Outcome	
Lead Officer	Head of Tourism and Recreation Destination Manager

<b>Budgetary Considerations</b>	
Cost of Proposal	£13,685
Included in Current Year Estimates	<b>YES</b>
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	

<b>Screening Requirements</b>	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 update Council on the proposed new Visit Causeway Coast and Glens destination website which was agreed by Council in June 2020 to assist as part of the Covid 19 recovery plan for the tourism and hospitality sector.**

## **2.0 Background**

The current destination website was built in 2013 and in this age of rapid digital advancement is considerably out of date in terms of presentation and functionality. A proposal to revamp the website was submitted to Council in June 2020 as part of the destination marketing recovery programme.

Pre-web design research was conducted in 2019 and highlighted the need for a new destination website that would deliver on user expectations and functionality requirements for a tourism site. At that time, it was thought a budget in excess of £30,000 would be required to build a standalone site that would meet the needs of the consumer. Annual maintenance costs and hosting charges would also apply. Concurrently, Tourism Northern Ireland were revamping their destination website [discovernorthernireland.com](http://discovernorthernireland.com) and were investigating options to procure a web development solution that could be replicated across the regional destinations through a licensing agreement.

## **3.0 Limitations of the current destination website**

The research concluded that current [visitcausewaycoastandglens.com](http://visitcausewaycoastandglens.com) site no longer meets the needs of user. Certain elements are no longer working due to technical issues including the data feed link from [discovernorthernireland.com](http://discovernorthernireland.com) which provides much of the content for the site. Again, due to advances in digital technology the site does not allow the flexibility and functionality required for current marketing best practice, including full mobile responsiveness i.e. how it looks on tablets and mobile phones, SEO optimisation, e-marketing opportunities and online booking.

## **4.0 Partnership working with Tourism Northern Ireland**

Following a procurement exercise conducted by Tourism Northern Ireland, a specialist tourism web design company (Simpleview) was appointed to redevelop [discovernorthernireland.com](http://discovernorthernireland.com) and provide a tried and tested ready-made web solution to regional partners under license. Simpleview have designed websites for over 900 destinations worldwide. Following this appointment, discussions took place between Tourism Northern Ireland, Simpleview and Council's destination team to discuss a partnership approach to revamping [visitcausewaycoastandglens.com](http://visitcausewaycoastandglens.com). The proposed licensing agreement included a complete support and training package, negating the need for annual hosting and maintenance contracts with third parties and ad hoc upgrades and refinements at additional costs. The new design proposal offered a fully responsive site across all digital devices and the functionality of the national tourism website, while allowing for individual destination branding and control over content.

## **5.0 Financial Assistance**

Council granted approval to proceed with the partnerships option in June 2020 and a Deed of Indemnity was subsequently forwarded by Tourism Northern Ireland with the added bonus of financial assistance. It was agreed and signed last month. The licensing agreement is in place for an initial period of two years with an option to renew for a further three years. Tourism Northern Ireland will cover the cost of the core replicate site build (without extra features) and the running costs for the first two years up to February 2023. The funding package is valued at is £34,905. .

## **6.0 Timeline for delivery**

At present, four destinations have agreed to sign up as partners with TNI (Visit Derry, Newry, Mourne and Down, Fermanagh Lakelands and Causeway Coast and Glens. The website development for [visitcausewaycoastandglens.com](http://visitcausewaycoastandglens.com) is scheduled for January 2021, with a build timeline of 8 weeks and an expected launch date of March 2021. During this time the current website will continue to be available, supported by active social media platforms for the Visit Causeway Coast and Glens' destination.