

Title of Report:	Sperrins Future Search
Committee Report Submitted To:	The Leisure & Development Committee
Date of Meeting:	16 February 2021
For Decision or For Information	For Decision

Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23)	
Strategic Theme	Protecting and Enhancing Our Environments and Assets
Outcome	All environments in the area will benefit from pro-active decision making which protects the natural features, characteristics and integrity of the Borough
Lead Officer	Head of Tourism and Recreation Coast and Countryside Manager

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	n/a
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES
Capital/Revenue	Revenue
Code	
Staffing Costs	

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 provide Members with an update on the Sperrins Future Search initiative, to seek approval to nominate two Elected Members to sit on the Management Board and to seek support for a suggested project name change.

2.0 Background

At the December 2018 Leisure and Development meeting, Elected Members agreed to make a contribution to Sperrins Future Search for staffing costs. This contribution was equally divided between the five Councils' that make up the Sperrins Future Search project. The funding was originally intended to be for the financial period 2019/2020 but due to delays in recruiting staff this support was not apportioned until the financial year 2020/2021.

The Sperrins Future Search project was initiated in 2017 after a conference entitled 'The Sperrins – Reaching New Heights, Realising Our Potential' was held. The event brought together a group of key stakeholders to draft and agree an action plan for the future development of the Sperrins area, with a focus on the designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Each council was delegated the responsibility to co-ordinate a thematic group as detailed below.

Thematic Group	Lead Council
Environment & Heritage	Mid Ulster
Infrastructure	Fermanagh & Omagh
Brand & Tourism	Causeway Coast & Glens
Community	Derry & Strabane
Management Structures	Mid Ulster

The five thematic working groups agreed their short and long-term action plans and the final plan has since been produced.

It had been hoped to officially launch the project late last year, but it was paused to allow for the recruitment process of Officers to conclude and was further delayed due to the current COVID-19 crisis. The introduction of further COVID-19 Government restrictions has meant the official launch of the project has been pushed back until spring/early summer 2021.

3.0 Progress to date

A Sperrins Future Search Project Officer and part time Administrative Support have now been appointed and took up their respective roles on 12 October 2020, initially for a period of one year.

The Project Officer will aim to progress this project and a key action will be to update the Future Search Action Plans established through five thematic groups. These updated action plans will assist with the delivery of the project.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is acting as the lead in the coordination of the thematic grouping 'Brand and Tourism'. The other thematic working groups will also be convening to review and advance action plans.

The initial working title of Sperrins Future Search Project was used as it evolved from the Future Search process (a principle based on task focused, planning process to help develop actions and cooperation). It is proposed that the original working name is now changed to the Sperrins Partnership Project.

4.0 Early Opportunities for Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

Officers are keen to exploit the benefits from working in partnership with the Sperrins region. Part of the Council area is within the Sperrins AONB, and of particular interest, is the ability to advance common opportunities within the tourism economy. One

collaborative project which links the partnership area is the improvements to the International Appalachian Trail. The delivery of this project is already well under way. The Ulster - Ireland Chapter of the International Appalachian Trail was established in 2011. The trail is in the province of Ulster and runs from west Donegal in the Republic of Ireland to Larne, Co. Antrim. The route starts at the spectacular Slieve League Mountain and passes through the Blue Stack Mountains in Co Donegal then crosses into Northern Ireland where it picks up the Ulster Way. As it passes through the Borough it connects the North Sperrins Way, Causeway Coast Way and Moyle Way.

5.0 Moving Forward

The Project Management Board is due to be convened in the Spring of 2021, with meetings scheduled quarterly. In addition to this, Officers are meeting twice monthly to progress this project. The Sperrins Partnership Project Board is asking for representation from two Elected Members of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.

6.0 Recommendation(s)

The Leisure & Development Committee is asked to make a recommendation for the following;

- 1. That Council agree to the change of name from Sperrins Future Search to Sperrins' Partnership Project.**
- 2. That Council nominates two Elected Members to sit on the Sperrins Partnership Project.**