



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Mournes Coastal Route
Date:	8 May 2012
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Northern Ireland Tourism Board (NITB) Strategic Framework for Action for 2004-2008 detailed the work that NITB aimed to deliver in partnership with key stakeholders. This strategy fulfilled the commitment made by Department of Enterprise Trade and Industry to develop a distinctive tourism product and to encourage the co-ordinated marketing of Northern Ireland as a distinctive destination.
1.2	The Strategy centred on three objectives (attracting visitors, enhancing business and communicating effectively) which supported the overall objective to establish a world class visitor experience. Within the Framework there were a total of ten action programmes, four relating to attracting visitors, four relating to business enhancement and two relating to communication.
1.3	Action five of this Framework (within the business enhancement objective) focused on developing Signature Projects and highlighted the following five signature projects that had the potential to deliver international standout for Northern Ireland: <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Causeway Coastal Route– Titanic/Maritime Belfast– The Walled City– St Patrick/Christian Heritage– The Mournes
1.4	In 2005 NITB identified a series of strategic driving Routes which were agreed by Roads Service. These were: <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Causeway Coastal Route– Mourne Coastal Route– St. Patrick's Trail– A strategic connection from Armagh to Enniskillen– A Western Trail from Enniskillen to Derry/Londonderry

1.5	The concept behind the Routes is to get visitors into the main tourist hubs and also into the rural areas of Northern Ireland, spreading the benefits of tourism across a wider area. To date the Causeway Coastal Route and St. Patrick's Trail have been implemented.
1.6	These strategic driving Routes tie together the 5 NITB Signature Projects of Derry/Londonderry, Giant's Causeway, Titanic Belfast, Mourne and St Patrick's/Christian Heritage. The signage is also strategically located at the main entry points to Northern Ireland in Derry/Londonderry, Armagh, Newry and Belfast to maximise visitor engagement.
1.7	NITB, in conjunction with Roads Service, have carried out the detailed design and technical work required to put in place the Mourne Coastal Route from Newry to Belfast (2 way Route). The Councils of North Down, Ards, Down, Banbridge and Newry & Mourne are all supportive of the project and are providing match funding.
1.8	At the Development Committee meeting of April 2005 Belfast City Council agreed to support the development of the Causeway Coastal Route with funding of £7,000.

2	Key Issues																																
2.1	<p>Costs are detailed for each Council area for the implementation of the brown and white tourist signage for the Mourne Coastal Route. NITB is proposing to contribute 75% of the project costs and is seeking a 25% contribution of £12,602.10 from Belfast City Council towards this project.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>COUNCIL</th> <th>TOTAL COST</th> <th>COUNCIL CONTRIBUTION (25%)</th> <th>NITB CONTRIBUTION (75%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Belfast</td> <td>£50,400.00</td> <td>£12,600.00</td> <td>£37,800.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>North Down</td> <td>£57,700.00</td> <td>£14,400.00</td> <td>£43,300.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ards</td> <td>£56,062.47</td> <td>£14,015.62</td> <td>£42,046.85</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Banbridge</td> <td>£19,805.56</td> <td>£4,951.39</td> <td>£14,854.17</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Down District</td> <td>£89,585.83</td> <td>£22,396.46</td> <td>£67,189.37</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Newry and Mourne</td> <td>£97,171.82</td> <td>£24,292.95</td> <td>£72,878.87</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTALS</td> <td>£370,725.68</td> <td>£92,656.42</td> <td>£278,069.26</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	COUNCIL	TOTAL COST	COUNCIL CONTRIBUTION (25%)	NITB CONTRIBUTION (75%)	Belfast	£50,400.00	£12,600.00	£37,800.00	North Down	£57,700.00	£14,400.00	£43,300.00	Ards	£56,062.47	£14,015.62	£42,046.85	Banbridge	£19,805.56	£4,951.39	£14,854.17	Down District	£89,585.83	£22,396.46	£67,189.37	Newry and Mourne	£97,171.82	£24,292.95	£72,878.87	TOTALS	£370,725.68	£92,656.42	£278,069.26
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2.2	A contribution of £12,602.10 from Belfast City Council will deliver a maximum of nine tourism signs.																																
2.3	<p>There are a number of direct benefits for Belfast:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Belfast would be central to both the Causeway and Mourne Coastal Routes and would benefit from visitors on both – Belfast would be seen as natural start or finish of the Mourne and Causeway Coastal Routes – The City is seen as a natural gateway for tourists entering Northern Ireland from the International Airport, City Airport, Harbour and Port of Belfast – Belfast is the end destination for visitors who have joined from alternative gateways. – Places Belfast strategically as the Gateway City. 																																

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The profile of Belfast as the main tourist destination in Northern Ireland would be enhanced - Titanic Belfast would be seen as a magnet to draw visitors from both Routes. This in turn would encourage visitors to stay overnight and spend money within the city.
2.4	It is envisaged that manufacture and delivery of the Mourne Coastal Route signage will take six months and should be installed by December 2012.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	<u>Financial</u>
3.2	NITB is proposing to contribute 75% of the project costs. NITB is seeking a 25% contribution of £12,602.10 from Belfast City Council towards this project.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	No specific equality or good relations considerations.

5	Recommendations
5.1	It is recommended that Belfast City Council approve £12,600 towards the implementation of the Mourne Coastal Route signage.

6	Decision Tracking
To provide Members with project implementation update by Decembers 2012.	

7	Key to Abbreviations
NITB - Northern Ireland Tourist Board	

8	Documents Attached
None.	