



Mid Ulster District Council

Council Offices

Dungannon Office

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Dungannon

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Work & Wellbeing Division
Department for Communities
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street

Belfast BT2 7EG

Email: LMP@communities-ni.gov.uk

Our reference: LMP/ENI/10/23

Date: 27 July 2023

Dear Chief Executive,

LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP (LMP) FUNDING 1st APRIL 2023 to 31st MARCH 2024 – LETTER OF OFFER

I can confirm, on behalf of the Department for Communities a funding offer of £369,005.21 to your Council for the costs associated with the LMP for the period of 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. Following consideration and approval of the LMP Action Plan the funding offer for the total administration and operational costs which is detailed in the attached budget schedule. The Council will be liable for any costs incurred not approved by the Department for Communities.

Please be advised this Letter of Offer Supersedes the previous Letter of Offer issued 16 June 2023.

Specific conditions of the offer:

- 1. The funding provided is to be used solely for running the LMP.
- 2. This offer is governed by the conditions for LMPs funding as detailed in the LMP Financial Guidelines and Funding Agreement.
- 3. This offer is conditional on acceptance of and adherence to the terms and conditions contained in the LMP Funding Agreement.
- 4. The Department reserves the right to recover funding related to subsidies if required to do so.

Acceptance

Please complete the enclosed Letter of Acceptance of funding offer with a copy of the budget attached and return it to:

Secretariat to Labour Market Partnerships
Work and Wellbeing Division
Department for Communities
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG

Alternatively, an electronic copy can be sent via the email of the Chief Executive to <u>LMP@communities-ni.gov.uk</u>. An acceptable format for electronic return can include a scanned copy of the signed Letter of Acceptance, digital signature produced using asymmetric or public key cryptography, or the signatory typing their name in the electronic document.

The Department for Communities requires acceptance prior to authorising the LMP first quarter grant claim.

Yours sincerely

Deirdre Ward

Department for Communities

Derrise Ward.

LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

Secretariat to Labour Market Partnerships
Work and Wellbeing Division
Department for Communities
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG

Date 1 August 2023

LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE OF LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP (LMP) FUNDING 1 APRIL 2023 TO 31 MARCH 2024

Mid Ulster District Council

This Council agrees the funding offer from the Department for Communities for the Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 to administer and run the activities of the LMP in this Council in line with the funding criteria.

The funding will be wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred in running the activities of the LMP as detailed in the LMP Partnership Plan and budget schedule. The Council accept and agree to abide by the Terms and Conditions of the LMP Financial Guidelines and Funding Agreement.

Statement of Financial arrangements and control environment

I confirm the Council:

- has sound financial procedures and controls in place to govern the activities and expenditure of the LMP;
- will ensure all relevant documentation is retained to support all LMP expenditure claims;
- has arrangements in place to satisfy the requirement for providing assurance on the probity and proper use of funds;
- has effective Corporate Governance, Risk Management and operating policies referred to in the Financial Guidelines in place for the LMP; and
- will allow reasonable access to Council records relating to LMP transactions.

This Council:

fully accepts the funding offer

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Signed Caine breach	Date 01.08.2023
partially accepts the funding offer	\square to the amount of £
does not accept the funding offer	

Chief Executive, on behalf of Mid Ulster District Council





Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership 2023-2024 Action Plan









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Background

Mid Ulster District Council established its Labour Market Partnership in October 2021, as part of the Department for Communities' (DfC) Employability NI programme. Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) has built on the success of its original Skills Forum, and Mid Ulster District Council (MUDC) has designed its LMP so that it is inclusive of all relevant government, education, and labour market stakeholders as well as key industry.

Mid Ulster's LMP consists of representatives from all the major employment sectors in the region as well as including schoolteacher representation (through the two Area Learning Partnerships), and representation from the Further Education sector, including South West College (SWC), Northern Regional College (NRC), and the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE). Government representation includes Elected Members, Council officers from MUDC's economic development and community planning teams, along with representatives from Invest NI, Careers Service, Health & Social Care (H&SC) Trust, Mid Ulster Enterprise Partnership, and DfC's three Jobs and Benefits Offices (JBOs) located in the region.

During January/February 2023 the Mid Ulster LMP undertook a Strategic Assessment of employability outcomes and local labour market conditions in the Mid Ulster Council Area. This exercise was undertaken to ensure that the priorities identified continue to reflect priority employability and labour market issues in the area and was informed by analysis of information provided by statutory partners, as well as the results of ongoing borough wide engagement and consultation across the council area.

As a result of this Strategic Planning Exercise, the following Themes have been identified as local priority:

- 1. Economic Inactivity
- 2. Disability
- 3. Skilled Labour Supply

Mid Ulster LMP focused on the above themes as they are the most relevant to the Council area which has a strong local economy, low unemployment, low NEETs (young people who were not in education, employment or training), lower than NI average economic inactivity but considerable problems with respect to disabled and female participation within the local economy.

Key Issues for Mid Ulster Labour Market

Demand for labour in Mid Ulster

Mid Ulster is one the most entrepreneurial regions in Northern Ireland - home to over 9,430 businesses in 2022 and representing the highest concentration of enterprise outside of Belfast. Over the last ten years registered businesses in Mid Ulster have increased by 18%, above the Northern Ireland average of 16%.

Employment in Mid Ulster is significantly different to Northern Ireland as a whole - employment in manufacturing at 28% is almost three times that of the Northern Ireland rate, construction at 10% is double the Northern Ireland rate. Consequently, this means the service sector is considerably lower. Therefore, the skills required by employers, the patterns of recruitment, and pathways to opportunity for residents will also be significantly different. Mid Ulster is the manufacturing centre of Northern Ireland, with key sub-sectors including advanced manufacturing, engineering, agrifood and construction. However, at 32% it also has the second highest proportion of small businesses (below £50,000 turnover) and well above the Northern Ireland rate of 25.5%.

Overall, Mid Ulster had the fastest pace of employee job creation of any council area in Northern Ireland between 2016-21, growing at 13% (6,680 new jobs) compared to a total Northern Ireland growth rate of 7% and this growth has continued into 2022.

Qualifications profile of Mid Ulster population

Compared to other areas, Mid Ulster has high numbers of low and medium qualifications, but less high-level qualifications. The constant challenge for Mid Ulster will be meeting the increasing skills and qualifications demands for the new jobs being created which are increasingly likely to require high-level qualifications – a key concern for the future is how employers meet the danger of the vulnerability of medium skilled jobs by upskilling the population to take advantage of the anticipated new jobs requiring high qualifications. For Mid Ulster to reach the Northern Ireland average for high qualifications (42%) a further 10,000 people would need to attain a degree level qualification.

Gender Employment Gap

In 2021 Mid-Ulster had the lowest employment rate for women in Northern Ireland. At 61% it is considerably below the Northern Ireland average of 68%. Women's employment is influenced by the nature of industries in Mid Ulster and the balance between public and private sector employment - traditionally, women are significantly under-represented in Manufacturing and Construction and are over-represented in the Service sector. Mid Ulster has the smallest percentage of public sector

employment in Northern Ireland and this is likely to be a major cause of the increasing gender gap.

Disability Employment Gap

At just 24%, Mid-Ulster has the lowest employment rate for disabled people in Northern Ireland. There is a large and significant difference between Mid-Ulster and other Council areas – the highest ranked Council (Lisburn & Castlereagh) has double (48%) the disability employment rate of Mid Ulster. Mid Ulster's 'Disability Employment Gap', measured as the variance between the employment rate for those who are disabled and those who are not, is 54.9 percentage points, which is significantly higher than other Councils. the gap has grown by almost 5 percentage points since 2020.

Employer Challenges

Recruitment was highlighted as a major issue and concern for local businesses and the lack of applications for vacancies, as well as an appropriately skilled, experienced labour supply was being experienced across all industry sectors, skill levels and job roles. There is a high level of competition between local businesses for existing labour and as a result of Covid and hybrid / remote working conditions, there is global competition, as people can now work anywhere in the world from their own home.

It was acknowledged that there is a need to move away from traditional recruitment methods which are not working and a need for employers to rethink job roles and working conditions that will attract the economically inactive e.g. flexible and agile working, part time / job share roles, terms and conditions that will attract people into work. There is a need for a cultural change and a mind shift amongst employers which will need supported, to consider opportunities within sectors such as manufacturing, engineering and construction that will attract people from the economically inactive cohort, especially women and people with a disability.

LMP Strategic Priorities

The LMP Action Plan for 2022/23 is summarised under the three strategic priorities set out below.

Strategic Priority 1	To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership
Key Activities: Strategic Priority 2 Key	SP1.1: LMP Delivery and Development - To support the effective partnership delivery of the LMP Action Plan and development of future Action Plans SP1.2: Development of a 3-Year Strategic Assessment and 1-Year Action Plan - To complete a 3 year strategic assessment and develop a 1 year action plan for 2024-25 SP1.3: Construction Sector Working Group - Continue to support the Construction Sector Working Group to enable submission of a Collaborative Growth Project application and support delivery of a 2-3 year Action Plan to increase attractiveness of the Construction Sector within Mid Ulster To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally SP2.1: Sector Based Academies -Target a swift reduction in the number of
Activities:	job claimants and improve economic activity rates through sector focused employability academies to reduce unemployment and encourage the unemployed and economically inactive into the workplace. SP2.2: Women Returners Programme - Improve on Mid Ulster's position as the Council region with one of the largest gender employment gaps in NI by investing in an employer-led employability programme that aims to support women into employment across the MUDC area. SP.2.3: Employer Support Programme - To develop a toolkit which provides a step by step guide to local employers to assist with employment, offer internships and work experience, and develop mentorship roles for those close to or in early retirement; develop appropriate HR policies to assist with recruitment and retention including flexible working and terms and conditions; provide best practice to employee wellbeing. The Toolkit will make it simpler for local employers to offer work experience or placement opportunities. SP2.4: Employer-led Disability Inclusion programme - Improve on Mid Ulster's position as the Council region with the largest disability employment gap in NI by investing in an employer-led employability programme that aims to
Strategic Priority 3	improve employer understanding of special needs and the support services available To support delivery of Employability NI
Key Activities:	SP3.1: Job Fair / Employability Events - Promote the programmes and support / encourage employers and participants to access and implement the schemes through a range events to include employer engagement/education, apprenticeship and jobs fair, partner events, local job fairs Marketing of the LMP

Alignment to strategic priorities

The Mid Ulster LMP Action Plan has been designed to align with the Strategic Priorities (SPs) defined by DfC in the development of Mid Ulster LMP programme, namely:

Strategic Priority 1 – To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership for Mid Ulster

Strategic Priority 2 – To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally.

Strategic Priority 3 – To promote and support delivery of existing employability or skills provision available either regionally or locally.

A range of indicators have been selected to assess delivery under each of these strategic priorities.

Baseline information

The Mid Ulster LMP will impact on the following set of indicators from the baseline position stated below.

Strategic Priorities	Indicators to which Local LMP makes a contribution (Source)	2022/23 Baseline
Strategic Priority 1: To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership for the area	LMP Delivery and Development % LMP members who feel the local LMP is making a positive contribution and delivering effectively (LMP)	2018 0 2019 0 2020 0 2021 0 2022 0 no baseline data to be collected until end Q4 22
Strategic Priority 2: To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally	Economic Inactivity % Economic Inactivity excluding students (NISRA LMI Portal)	2017 17.80% 2018 18.40% 2019 14.70% 2020 15.20% 2021 17.10%
	Disability % Employment rate of people with disabilities (NISRA LMI Portal)	2017 33.7% 2018 41.1% 2019 36.3% 2020 31.8% 2021 24.0%
	Skilled Labour Supply % Working Age: No Qualifications (NISRA – Labour Force Survey)	2017 19.70% 2018 19.40% 2019 17.00% 2020 13.50% 2021 11.70%
	# All Persons Median Wage Annual (NISRA LMI Portal)	2018 £21,345 2019 £21,924 2020 £22,743 2021 £23,366 2022 £24,264
Strategic Priority 3: To promote and support delivery of existing employability or skills provision available either regionally or locally	Increased Awareness Increased awareness of existing regional/local employability or skills provision (LMP)	2018 0 2019 0 2020 0 2021 0 2022 0 No baseline data to be collected until end Q1 23

Membership

Stakeholder Group	Organisation
Local Council	Mid Ulster District Council
Department for Communities	Jobs & Benefits Office Magherafelt
	Jobs & Benefits Office Cookstown
	Jobs & Benefits Office Dungannon
Public Sector	Invest NI
	Department for the Economy
	Southern Health & Social Care Trust
	Northern Health & Social Care Trust
	Mid Ulster Enterprise Partnership
Education sector	South West College
	Northern Regional College
	College of Agriculture, Food and Rural
	Enterprise Magherefelt Area Learning Community
	Magherafelt Area Learning Community Dungannon & Cooktown Area Learning
	Community
Community/Voluntary sector	Mid Ulster Strategic Community Forum
Industry	Bloc Blinds
Industry	Linden Foods
	Henry Bros
	Mid Ulster Tourism Development Group
	Cicli Sport
	Newell Stores
	Emerson
	MEGA
Elected Members	Mid Ulster District Council
Trade Union	NIPSA

LMP Action Plan

Theme	Title of Programme/Project, Aims & Description	Key Activities	Start Date	End Date	Performance Measures	Delivery Quarter
LMP Delivery	SP1.1 LMP Delivery and Development To support the effective partnership delivery of the LMP Action Plan and development of future Action Plans.	Bi-monthly meetings of the LMP Annual survey of LMP members	1 April 2023	31 Mar 2024	 How much did we do? 6 x LMP meetings. How well did we do it? (130/216) 60% attendance at LMP meetings. Is anyone better off? (27/36) 75% of LMP members who think that the LMP is making a positive difference. 	1,2,3,4
Strategic Planning	SP1.2: Development of a 3-Year Strategic Assessment and 1-Year Action Plan To complete a 3 year strategic assessment and develop a 1 year action plan for 2024-25	Complete a 3-year LMP Strategic Assessment for 2024-2027 and Develop a 1-Year Action Plan for 2024-25.	1 Sept 2023	31 Jan 2024	How much did we do? 1 x Action Plan drafted to address identified local needs and approved by Regional LMP 1 x Strategic Assessment developed on time to inform LMP Action Plan 2024/25 How well did we do it? (27/36) 75% of LMP Members who feel that their views have been taken into account with regard to the Action Plan	3,4

					(27/36) 75% of LMP Members who feel that their views have been taken into account with regard to the Strategic Assessment
					Is anyone better off? • (27/36) 75 % of LMP members reporting increased awareness of local employability and labour market issues
Working Groups/Sub Committees	SP1.3: Construction Sector Working Group Continue to support the Construction Sector Working Group to enable submission of a Collaborative Growth Project application and support delivery of a 2-3 year	Bi-monthly meetings of Working Group Submission of Collaborative Growth Application to Invest NI Commence delivery of Construction Sector Action Plan	1 July 2023	31 Mar 2024	 How much did we do? 5 x Working Group meetings. How well did we do it? (25/40) 62.5% attendance of working group members at working groups meetings.
	Action Plan to increase attractiveness of the Construction Sector within Mid Ulster				 Is anyone better off? (6/8) 75% of Working Group members who feel clear on their role (6/8) 75% of Working Group/members who feel that their views have been listened to

Theme	Title of Programme/Project,	Key Activities	Start	End	Performance Measures	Delivery
	Aims & Description		Date	Date		Quarter
Economic Inactivity	SP2.1: Sector Based Academies Target a swift reduction in the number of job claimants and improve economic activity rates through sector focused employability academies to reduce unemployment and encourage the unemployed and economically inactive into the workplace.	Sector-focused Employability Academies co-designed supported by the Project Officer and local employers. 4 academies - 20 participants per cohort (80 total): Tourism and Hospitality, Construction, H&SC and HGV/Coach Driver • Employability facilitator/mentor to engage the participants. • Mentoring, personal employability development plans, CV writing & mock interviews • Industry ambassador led master classes. • Guaranteed interview on completion of academy • Continued Mentorship for 6 months after employment	1 Jul 2023	31 Mar 2024	 How much did we do? 80 participants enrolled 4 Academies provided. How well did we do it? (60/80) 75% academy participants completed the programme (45/60) 75% of participants reported satisfaction with the project. Is anyone better off? (45/60) 75% participants gaining new employment (45/60) 75% of participants who gained a qualification as a result of participation on the project (30/45) 67% still in employment 6 months after completing the programme 	2,3,4
	SP2.2: Women Returners Programme Improve on Mid Ulster's position as the Council region with one of the largest gender employment gaps in NI by investing in an employer-led employability programme that aims to support women into	Women Returners Programme to increase the number of women in paid employment across the council area. Engage 20 prominent local employers on a 1-1 basis in a targeted Employer led and focused programme to increase awareness of benefits of flexible	April 2023	March 2024	 How much did we do? 20 female participants enrolled 20 employers engaged. How well did we do it? (15/20) 75% participants complete the programme 	1,2, 3,4

	employment across the	working policies most beneficial to			• (11/15) 73% of participants	
	MUDC area.	Women Returners			reported satisfaction with the	
		Deliver an awareness programme			project.	
					• (14/20) 70% of employers	
		Engage 20 Female Participants			reported satisfaction with the	
		who are currently Economically			project.	
		Inactive				
		Applicants will receive:			Is anyone better off?	
		1:1 coaching			• (10/15) 67% of participants	
		small group mentoring to			gained new employment	
		include employability support			• (8/10) 80% of participants	
		Mentoring support for a further			sustain employment 6	
		6 month period for those			months after programme	
		successfully placed in			completion.	
		employment				
		Signposted to job roles				
		identified by employers and				
		encouraged to apply for these				
		and other suitable roles within the labour market				
Skilled	SP2.3: Employer Support	To commission external,	1 Jul	31 Mar	How much did we do?	2,3,4
Labour	Programme	professional support to produce a	2023	2024	1 Toolkit provided	2,3,4
Supply	To develop a toolkit which	Toolkit which sets out:	2023	2024	50 employers engaged	
Ouppiy	provides a step by step guide	Frameworks/templates and			30 cmployers engaged	
	to local employers to assist	best practice on benefits of			How well did we do it?	
	with employment, offer	recruiting work such as			• (40/50) 80% of employers	
	internships and work	graduate placements,			reported satisfaction with the	
	experience, and develop	internships, work experience,			project	
	mentorship roles for those	engaging mentors from early				
	close to or in early retirement;	retirees etc			Is anyone better off?	
	develop appropriate HR	■ Employer role – how does the			• (20/50) 40% of employers	
	policies to assist with	employer benefit			creating work placements	
	recruitment and retention					

	including flexible working and terms and conditions; provide best practice to employee wellbeing. The Toolkit will make it simpler for local employers to offer work experience or placement opportunities. This will primarily target Micro businesses within Mid Ulster's Construction and Engineering Sectors.	 Terms, duration, costs, government support etc How and when is best to offer opportunities Legal and insurance obligations Development of draft/sample HR policies relating to recruitment, retention, employee wellbeing and flexible working policies Delivery of the toolkit to at least 50 local employers through enhanced employer engagement via a mixture of small group events or one to one support. 			(30/50) 60% of employers who reported feeling more confident that their business would be more successful.	
Disability	SP2.4: Employer-led Disability Inclusion programme Improve on Mid Ulster's position as the Council region with the largest disability employment gap in NI by investing in an employer-led employability programme that aims to improve employer understanding of special needs and the support services available.	Employer-led Disability Inclusion programme to increase the number of disabled people in paid employment. Engage charitable subject-matter expertise to deliver the initiative. Engage 20 prominent local employers in a targeted Employer led and focused programme to match employers to participants. Deliver an employer education & awareness programme to: • address knowledge gaps & misperceptions about disability • inform on available support (Access to Work; Workable NI)	1 Jul 2023	31 March 2024	 How much did we do? 20 participants enrolled 20 employers engaged. How well did we do it? (16/20) 80% participants complete the programme (16/20) 80% employers complete the programme (12/16) 75% of participants reported satisfaction with the project. (12/16) 75% of employers reported satisfaction with the project 	2,3,4

 provide 2 week training and support specific to their available job roles Develop case studies Applicants will receive: targeted recruitment programme specific to available job roles & access available support packages to place 20 participants. Mentoring and employability support provided to applicants over the life of the programme and for a further 6 month period for those successfully placed in employment Guaranteed Job Interview 	Is anyone better off? • (10/16) 63% of participants successfully secure employment • (6/10) 60% of participants sustain employment 6 months after programme completion.
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Theme	Title of Programme/Project, Aims & Description	Key Activities	Start Date	End Date	Performance Measures	Delivery Quarter
Increased Awareness	SP3.1: Job Fair / Employability Events	Improve employer & participant knowledge and access to existing	1 April 2023	31 March	How much did we do? • 10 Events	1,2, 3,4
	Promote the programmes and support / encourage employers and participants to access and implement the schemes through a range events to include employer engagement/education, apprenticeship and jobs fair, partner events, local job fairs	 employability and skills services by hosting: Minimim of 2 Localised Job Fairs per JBO (Cookstown, Dungannon, Magherafelt) 1 Apprenticeship and Jobs Fair A minimum of 2 employer events 		2024	 1150 Attendees at Events 130 Employers participating How well did we do it? (400/500) 80% of attendees reporting satisfaction with event 	

· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	Retention in today's world and the need for flexible working policies Disability Inclusion – how to remove barriers and myths and tap into a readily available labour pool Up to 3 localised employer events – recruitment and retention/terms and conditions/ flexible working/ employee wellbeing. A minimum of 2 Partner Events – Bring IT On 1 x large school event, 1 x Enterprise Week event Event Attendee Numbers: Apprenticeship and Jobs Fair: 300 Large Employer Events: 100 Localised Jobs Fairs: 450 Localised Employer Events: 30 Partner Events: 400 Marketing of the LMP	• (60/100) 60% of employers reporting satisfaction with event Is anyone better off? • (250/500) 50% of attendees reporting increased awareness of Regional and LMP programmes. • (225/500) 45% of attendees intend to apply for a job as a result of the job fairs • (50/100) 50% of employers participating reported the event would assist in filling vacancies	
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Key Contacts

Shelly Grimes – LMP Manager

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General Enquiries

Email: LMP@midulsterdistrictcouncil.org

Website

https://www.midulstercouncil.org/business/business-support/mid-ulster-labour-market-partnership