

Report on	1) Research Study into the Engineering Sector in Mid Ulster 2) Rural Development Programme Business Plans – Select List 3) Mid Ulster Digital Seminars Report 4) NIBSUP (NI Business Start Up Programme) Update 5) Mid Ulster Village Spruce Up Scheme 6) Village Renewal Project 7) Coalisland Public Realm 8) Market Square Improvement Project, Dungannon 9) Magherafelt Town Centre Forum Minutes 10) Ofcom NI Broadband Discussion Forum 11) Mid Ulster Skills Forum Minutes 12) Irish Central Border Area Network 13) LED Outdoor Mobile Screen – Amendment to Purchasing Arrangements 14) Dungannon Branded Bags
Reporting Officer	Fiona McKeown, Head of Economic Development

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To provide Members with an update on key activities as detailed above.
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>Research Study into the Engineering Sector in Mid Ulster Upon receipt of Council approval a specification was prepared to recruit an organisation to carry out a 'Research Study into the Engineering Sector in Mid Ulster'. Six organisations were invited to provide quotations for this work. By the deadline of 12 noon on 30 November 2017, two quotations were received.</p>
2.2	<p>Rural Development Programme (RDP) Business Plans – Select List Quotations A key issue impacting on the success of applications to the Rural Development Programme has been identified as the quality of Business Plans submitted with applications. To assist applicants to develop high quality Business Plans to support their applications, on 3 November 2017, the Council invited 10 organisations to provide quotations to be part of a Select List for the provision of approximately 40 Business Plans</p>

	for existing businesses invited to apply to the RDP between November 2017 and March 2019. By the deadline of 12 noon on 14 November 2017, three quotations were received.
2.3	<p>Mid Ulster Digital Seminars Report</p> <p>Following the success of the three Digital Seminars delivered in February and March 2017, Council recommended a further three to be delivered in Autumn 2017. Following a procurement exercise, 42Digital were appointed to co-ordinate and deliver three seminars (in Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt) supported by Council staff on 4 October, 25 October and 22 November 2017. These seminars demonstrated in practical terms how businesses in Mid Ulster can integrate and maximise the use of digital media in their companies to help them generate greater growth potential.</p>
2.4	<p>NIBSUP (NI Business Start Up Programme) Update</p> <p>From 1 September 2017, the Contract for the Programme is being delivered by Enterprise NI (ENI) and managed regionally by Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) on behalf of the 11 Councils. In Mid Ulster, Workspace Enterprises is the lead co-ordinator for the programme locally.</p>
2.5	<p>Mid Ulster Village Spruce Up Scheme</p> <p>Council approval has been granted to deliver Mid Ulster Village Spruce Up Scheme to offer businesses/commercial properties grant aid of up to 75% per property for eligible works, capped at £5,000 per property. The villages eligible to apply are based upon the proposed Mid Ulster Settlement Report as per the development of the Area Plan 'strategic settlement evaluation – position paper', with the additional village of Moygashel.</p>
2.6	<p>Village Renewal Project</p> <p>Council is leading on the Village Renewal Scheme included within the Rural Development programme 2014-2020.</p> <p>Council will make an application to the Local Action Group for the village renewal programme and will lead on development and delivery. The LAG has allocated a budget of £2.15m in grant aid to the Village Renewal Scheme for the implementation of strategic and minor works within agreed villages. Council will contribute match funding of 25%, to complement the funding from RDP.</p>
2.7	<p>Coalisland Public Realm</p> <p>A design team has been appointed for the £2.75 million redevelopment of Coalisland town centre. The scheme will include works to The Square, Main Street, Lineside, Dungannon Road, Stewartstown Road, Barrack Street, Barrack Square, Station Rd and Washingbay Road. The overarching aim of the project is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a safe, high-quality pedestrian-friendly environment; ▪ Revitalise and reinvigorate the town to help encourage more visitors and shoppers into the town centre; ▪ Be accessible to pedestrians and vehicles; ▪ Have free flowing traffic and retain most on-street car parking. <p>The works will include the provision of new high quality natural stone paving, street furniture, tree planting, signage, lighting and drainage and will be developed in compliance and co-operation with the Department for Infrastructure and to current DDA standards.</p>

2.8	<p>Market Square Improvement Project, Dungannon Mid Ulster District Council has been working with a number of stakeholders in a bid to resolve problems which arose from the first phase of Public Realm works in the town in 2012. This scheme sets out to address pedestrian safety, traffic flow and parking in the Market Square.</p>
2.9	<p>Magherafelt Town Centre Forum Minutes Magherafelt Town Centre Forum was re-established in January 2017. The forum meets on a quarterly basis to act in an advisory capacity, playing a fundamental role in the development and delivery of key town centre initiatives.</p>
2.10	<p>Ofcom NI Broadband Discussion Forum This is a key forum whereby the Private Sector (BT, Virgin Media, B4B etc) and the Public Sector (Department for the Economy, NILGA and BDUK) are invited to discuss the future roll out of broadband in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Northern Ireland is now at a cross roads regarding broadband. The rollout of Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC) model is almost at an end. It is now time to take this opportunity to consider how best to reach those people who still don't have decent broadband speeds. This is the purpose of the Forum.</p>
2.11	<p>Mid Ulster Skills Forum Minutes In recognition of the importance of skills to the economic development of this sub-region, Mid Ulster District Council has identified this as one of the four Strategic Priorities in its Economic Development Plan 2015-2020. To further progress this the Council had previously requested that initial research is undertaken into the potential skills issues affecting the District. A Mid Ulster Skills Forum was set up to help drive forward this work.</p>
2.12	<p>Irish Central Border Area Network In July 2017, the Council recommended the provision of an annual contribution towards ICBAN of up to £10,000 for the financial year 2017/18.</p>
2.13	<p>LED Outdoor Mobile Screen - Amendment to Purchasing Arrangement Approval was granted to make provision of £50,000 for the procurement of a large LED Outdoor Mobile Screen to be used widely at events across the Council area. During the Christmas, Halloween and Summer periods, Council organised numerous events where an LED Mobile screen was hired in. Following a very successful series of Christmas events where screens and related equipment were used it has now come to light that there are many hidden costs and issues related to LED mobile screens which Council staff were unaware of. Therefore we have some concerns around the outright purchase of an LED mobile screen, and as a result other options have been explored.</p>
2.14	<p>Dungannon Branded Bags A total of 7,000 new Dungannon branded bags were distributed to businesses and shoppers in Dungannon during November/December 2017 to launch the new town brand. These were extremely well received in the town and provide an excellent way to communicate and embed the brand in the local community.</p>

3.0	Main Report																				
3.1	<p>Rural Development Programme (RDP) Business Plans – Select List Quotations</p> <p>By the deadline of 14 November 2017, three organisations had submitted Quotations for the work: BD Consultancy, Bernie Teggart Consultant and Mid Ulster Enterprise Partnership.</p> <p>These were assessed on 15 November 2017 by a Panel consisting of Council’s Rural Development Programme Manager, Programmes and Policy Officer and Project Officer.</p> <p>Following assessment of the Stage 1 Eligibility Criteria, two of the submissions were deemed to have met the criteria and proceeded to the next Stage of Technical Evaluation with 50% allocated to quality weighting with the Financial Section carrying a weighting of 50%.</p> <p>Results are detailed in the table below:</p> <table><tr><td></td><td>Stage 1</td><td>Stage 2</td><td>Financial</td><td>Total</td></tr><tr><td>BD Consultancy</td><td>Pass</td><td>46.00</td><td>50</td><td>96</td></tr><tr><td>Bernie Teggart</td><td>Fail</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>Mid Ulster Enterprises</td><td>Pass</td><td>42.00</td><td>50</td><td>92</td></tr></table> <p>The Panel recommended the appointment of BD Consultancy and Mid Ulster Enterprises to the Select List to undertake the provision of Business Plans for Rural Development applicants at a cost of £500 per Plan (including expenses and excluding vat).</p>		Stage 1	Stage 2	Financial	Total	BD Consultancy	Pass	46.00	50	96	Bernie Teggart	Fail	-	-	-	Mid Ulster Enterprises	Pass	42.00	50	92
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3.2	<p>Research Study into the Engineering Sector in Mid Ulster</p> <p>By the deadline of 30 November 2017, two organisations had submitted Quotations for the work: Cogent Management Consulting LLP and Locus Management.</p> <p>These were assessed on 5 December 2017 by a Panel consisting of Council’s Funding and Investment Manager, Programmes and Policy Officer, Community Development Officer and Project Officer.</p> <p>The two submissions passed the Stage 1 criteria and proceeded to the next Stage of Technical Evaluation with 80% allocated to quality weighting, with the Financial Section carried a weighting of 20%. Results are detailed in the table below:</p> <table><tr><td></td><td>Stage 1</td><td>Stage 2</td><td>Financial</td><td>Total</td></tr><tr><td>Cogent MC LLP</td><td>Pass</td><td>80</td><td>19.96</td><td>99.96</td></tr><tr><td>Locus Management</td><td>Pass</td><td>37</td><td>20.00</td><td>57.00</td></tr></table> <p>The Panel recommended that Cogent Management Consultancy LLP should be appointed to conduct the Study at a cost of £27,500 (including expenses and excluding vat).</p>		Stage 1	Stage 2	Financial	Total	Cogent MC LLP	Pass	80	19.96	99.96	Locus Management	Pass	37	20.00	57.00					
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3.3	Mid Ulster Digital Seminars Report																				

	<p>Mid Ulster's Digital Seminar series was attended by 142 people from local businesses, and feedback from delegates was extremely positive. An overview of the three Seminars, and their respective Workshops, is provided at Appendix 1.</p>
3.4	<p>NIBSUP (NI Business Start Up Programme) Update The delivery of the new Programme has now completed month 3 (November 2017) and based on cumulatively figures for the 3 months, Mid Ulster is currently the strongest performer, delivering 71 new Plans during that period against a target of 54.</p> <p>ASG were appointed to deliver the Regional Marketing Contract and they are currently finalising a new regional marketing campaign (TV, radio, and outdoor media), using the 'Go for It' brand, to be rolled out from January 2018. In addition to this and also to maintain Mid Ulster's current position of 'most entrepreneurial region', the Council will work with Workspace (lead partner in Mid Ulster) to strongly promote and raise the profile of the Programme's success at a local level.</p>
3.5	<p>Mid Ulster Village Spruce Up Scheme A further 16 Letters of Offer were issued on Monday 27 November 2017, numbers 56-71 on the ranked reserve list detailing their award of funding and advising that works must commence by Monday 8 January 2018. A total of 71 Letters of Offer have been issued to date.</p>
3.6	<p>Village Renewal Project A number of Village projects are currently in the procurement process to appoint construction companies as outlined below -</p> <p>Maghera – PQQ currently being assessed Ballygawley – Application submitted to LAG and Letter of Offer received Upperlands – ITT documents issued with closing date mid-December</p> <p>Playparks – Caledon, Granville, Augher and Tobermore – Application and Business Case submitted to LAG on 5th December 2017.</p> <p>Legal agreements are being processed through the legal team. Economic Development staff are currently compiling all the leases and completing the application forms and business cases to be submitted to the LAG.</p> <p>Economic Development staff are also currently working on the next phase of Villages which indicatively at this stage incudes – Ardboe, Newmils, Castlecaulfied, Clady, Gulladuff, Swatragh, Churchtown & Lissan, Benburb, Moortown, The Loup, Desertmartin, Clonoe, Clogher, Ballinderry & Balylifford, Orritor and Broughderg.</p>
3.7	<p>Coalisland Public Realm Consultations are now complete with submissions from members of the public, all interested parties and stakeholders in the area. Consultation included public information sessions with public display of the draft plans. Sessions have also being held with the Town Traders, Neighbourhood Renewal, Residents and the Mid Ulster Special Disability Forum. The Design Team will now review and report on all responses.</p>
3.8	<p>Market Square Improvement Project, Dungannon</p>

	<p>Work has completed on the scheme to address pedestrian safety, traffic flow and parking in Market Square, Dungannon. The scheme has been driven forward by the Public Health and Infrastructure Department with support from the Business & Communities section. This scheme has resolved the key issues arising from the first phase of public realm works commissioned by Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council in 2012.</p> <p>Northstone (NI) Ltd, the appointed contractor, delivered the most recent improvement works to Market Square during a 10 week period, completing the scheme within the agreed timeframe, ie, 23rd November 2017.</p>
3.9	<p>Magherafelt Town Centre Forum Minutes</p> <p>The minutes of Magherafelt Town Centre Forum Meeting held on Monday 7 August 2017 are attached at Appendix 2.</p>
3.10	<p>Ofcom NI Broadband Discussion Forum</p> <p>The starting point for this Forum was agreement that FTTC is now almost exhausted as a model of providing broadband in Northern Ireland. This model has also contributed to widening the urban – rural divide. 17% of premises in Northern Ireland don't have access to Superfast broadband (ie, 30mbits+). In the Mid Ulster area, 18% of premises cannot receive 10mbits.</p> <p>It is expected in the near future that 10mbits will be the new Universal Service Obligation (USO) which is the minimum broadband that premises must be able to avail of. 10mbits is regarded as an important threshold.</p> <p>The significant point from the Forum was that Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) is now the key objective. It is reliable and faster than any other solution. This solution provides future proofing further developments and has lower maintenance costs than FTTC or Wireless. Satellite is no longer regarded as a solution to broadband problems, according to Ofcom.</p> <p>BT, as the main provider, agreed that FTTC will no longer be the model for broadband rollout. They see FTTP as the way forward. Virgin Media provides coverage to approximately 30% of Northern Ireland using FTTP. They admitted that they are not in the rural areas at present but under a new 5 year plan being drafted they may consider it. B4B4 stated that they were an alternative provider for niche type of networks e.g. Business Parks.</p> <p>The Department for the Economy (DfE) stated that in terms of the announcement of the £150m broadband fund from the UK Government, they don't as yet know who the lead Department will be to take this forward and to date have been given no clear direction.</p> <p>Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK), part of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, who are delivering superfast broadband and local full fibre networks agreed with DfE that it will be impossible to spend this funding in a 2 year period as indicated. It is expected that the £150million funding will leverage in further substantial funding from the private sector.</p> <p>The policy to date for delivering broadband in Northern Ireland is "Best value for money", as directed by the former Minister. To ensure a rural proofing policy is implemented, this will require a directive from any future Minister.</p> <p>NILGA also advised they are frustrated at the lack of a joined up approach to broadband in Northern Ireland. They indicated it is time for a new Broadband Strategy to be</p>

	<p>produced. The current situation has left the Councils holding back in many regards, especially in relation to using the Rural Development Programme funds until it is clear where the £150million funding will be spent.</p>
3.11	<p>Mid Ulster Skills Forum Minutes</p> <p>The Mid Ulster Skills Forum is made up over 40 industry representatives from across all sectors including; Manufacturing, Construction, Food & Drink, Retail, Public Sector and Education Providers. The minutes of the Mid Ulster Skills Forum meeting held on 27 September 2017 are attached on Appendix 3.</p>
3.12	<p>Irish Central Border Area Network</p> <p>ICBAN has submitted a Report on work completed during the period April – December 2017 (Appendix 4), and approval is requested to release the second (and final) 50% instalment of the contribution. A Final Report will be submitted for the year in April 2018.</p>
3.13	<p>LED Outdoor Mobile Screen - Amendment to Purchasing Arrangements</p> <p>In the process of engaging with several suppliers of LED screen technology, it has come to light that ownership of this technology requires more than an outright purchase. We have been informed that the maintenance of a large LED Screen will be very expensive as there are regular issues with screen panels which are easily damaged and constantly needing repair. That extra warranty for 3 years is available but at a price.</p> <p>It has also come to light, that the ongoing skill set to configure and operate the LED screen the way we want it, is likely to be beyond the skills of our in house teams. In addition to this we have also discovered that this technology is moving at a rapid speed and the shelf life of a current product maybe up to 24 months.</p> <p>With further probing of providers we discovered that the industry have a terminology called “Cost of Ownership” which includes the maintenance and servicing costs including set up. For items such as large LED screens the cost of ownership is 25% over a three year period, which in the case of the proposed screen is an extra £12,500.</p> <p>Taking all this new information into account, it is now recommended that a more prudent solution for Council is to lease or contract hire this equipment and to do so, the following accounting treatment has been discussed with the Director of Finance and agreed, subject to Committee and Council approval.</p> <p>Council has identified funding of £50,000 in 2017/18, which in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting 2017 and the Department for Communities Accounts Direction may be reserved for application in 2018/19 and beyond. Reserving the funds in this manner will result in Council technically having a £50,000 underspend in 2017/18 in its year end accounts which will be matched by a technical overspend in subsequent years when the funds are released. Council’s management reports, however, will show neither an under or overspend but will apply the reserved funding in the financial period in which the screen is hired and Council derives economic benefit therefrom.</p>
3.14	<p>Dungannon Branded Bags</p> <p>To maintain Dungannon’s brand longevity post launch, there is a need to sustain its current high profile within the town, and therefore it is recommended to allocate a budget of up to</p>

	<p>£25,000 from Council's existing economic development budget to purchase a further batch of jute bags which can be distributed throughout 2018 at key events in the town.</p> <p>Once the updated town brands are finalised for Cookstown and Magherafelt in January 2018, an order for bags for both towns will be placed also, with funds emanating from Council's existing economic development budget for 2017/18.</p>
	Other Considerations
4.1	<p><u>Financial & Human Resources Implications</u></p> <p>Financial:</p> <p>Research Study into the Engineering Sector in Mid Ulster Budget of up to £27,500 is available from the economic development budget</p> <p>Provision of Rural Development Programme: Business Plans Budget of approximately £20,000 available from the economic development budget.</p> <p>LED Outdoor Mobile Screen - Amendment to Purchasing Arrangement Council has identified funding of £50,000 in 2017/18, which in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting 2017 and the Department for Communities Accounts Direction may be reserved for application in 2018/19 and beyond. Reserving the funds in this manner will result in Council technically having a £50,000 underspend in 2017/18 in its year end accounts which will be matched by a technical overspend in subsequent years when the funds are released. Council's management reports, however, will show neither an under or overspend but will apply the reserved funding in the financial period in which the screen is hired and Council derives economic benefit therefrom. This accounting treatment has been discussed with the Director of Finance and agreed subject to Committee and Council approval.</p> <p>Irish Central Border Area Network Provision of second (and final) 50% payment of £5,000 is included in Council's economic development budget.</p> <p>Dungannon Branded Bags Provision of up to £25,000 to purchase a further batch of new branded jute bags for Dungannon town from Council's economic development budget.</p>
4.2	<p><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>N/A</p>
4.3	<p><u>Risk Management Implications</u></p> <p>N/A</p>

5.0	Recommendation(s)
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5.1	<p>Research Study into the Engineering Sector in Mid Ulster Members to note the appointment of Cogent Management Consultancy LLP at a cost of up to £27,500 (including expenses and excluding vat) to deliver the Research Study to be completed by March 2018.</p>
5.2	<p>Rural Development Programme Business Plans – Select List Members to note the appointment of BD Consultancy and Mid Ulster Enterprise Partnership at a cost of £500 per Plan (including expenses and excluding vat) to the Select List to deliver high quality Business Plans for applicants to the Rural Development Programme until 31 March 2019.</p>
5.3	<p>Mid Ulster Digital Seminars Report Members to note Report on Digital Media Seminars.</p>
5.4	<p>NIBSUP (NI Business Start Up Programme) Members to note progress</p>
5.5	<p>Mid Ulster Village Spruce Up Scheme Members to note progress.</p>
5.6	<p>Village Renewal Project Members to note progress</p>
5.7	<p>Coalisland Public Realm Members to note progress</p>
5.8	<p>Market Square Improvement Project Members to note progress</p>
5.9	<p>Magherafelt Town Centre Forum Minutes Members to note minutes of Magherafelt Town Centre Forum, dated 7 August 2017</p>
5.10	<p>Ofcom NI Broadband Discussion Forum Members to note progress.</p>
5.11	<p>Mid Ulster Skills Forum Minutes Members to note minutes of Mid Ulster Skills Forum, dated 27 September 2017</p>
5.12	<p>Irish Central Border Area Network Members to approve release of 2nd (and final) 50% payment of £5,000 for 2017/18 to ICBAN.</p>
5.13	<p>LED Outdoor Mobile Screen - Amendment to Purchasing Arrangements Members to approve that instead of using the budget of £50,000 to outright purchase the LED Outdoor Mobile Screen that it be more prudent to lease/contract hire the screen over a three year period. The following accounting treatment has been discussed with the Director of Finance and agreed subject to Committee and Council approval.</p> <p>Council has identified funding of £50,000 in 2017/18, which in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting 2017 and the Department for Communities Accounts Direction may be reserved for application in 2018/19 and beyond. Reserving the funds in this manner will result in Council technically having a £50,000 underspend in 2017/18 in its year end accounts which will be matched by a technical overspend in subsequent years when the funds are released. Council's management reports, however,</p>

5.14	<p>will show neither an under or overspend but will apply the reserved funding in the financial period in which the screen is hired and Council derives economic benefit therefrom.</p> <p>Members to also approve the tender of an LED Outdoor Mobile Screen lease/contract hire for key events over the next three year period.</p> <p>Dungannon Branded Bags</p> <p>Members to approve a budget of up to £25,000 towards purchase and procurement of a further batch of new branded jute bags for Dungannon town.</p>
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix 1 – Mid Ulster Digital Seminars Report
6.2	Appendix 2 –Magherafelt Town Centre Forum Minutes – 7 August 2017
6.3	Appendix 3 - Mid Ulster Skills Forum Minutes – 27 September 2017
6.4	Appendix 4 – ICBAN Report (April – December 2017)