

Mid Ulster
**Village Spruce Up
Scheme**

Supporting Local Business



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

MID ULSTER VILLAGE SPRUCE UP SCHEME

(PHASE 1)

Completed by Paul Hamill of McCarter Hamill Architects – April 2018

mccarter hamill architects

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1.0 Introduction

This report provides an overview of the Mid Ulster Village Spruce Up Scheme. It presents a breakdown of the applications received, a synopsis of a number of successful projects and the impact of the scheme.

Enabling Town and Village Regeneration is one of the key themes in Mid Ulster District Council's Economic Development Plan 'Our Plan for Growth'. The Mid Ulster Village Spruce Up Scheme was developed as one of the key initiatives to enable the delivery of this theme. The Scheme supported the improvement and enhancement of business and commercial properties within the development limits of forty-six villages within the Council area.

Based on the Mid Ulster Settlement Report as per the development of the Area Plan 'Strategic Settlement Evaluation-Proposition Paper' and Council recommendations, business/commercial properties within the Development Limits of the following Villages were eligible to apply:

Aghaginduff/Cabragh, Annaghmore, Ardboe, Augher, Aughnacloy Ballinderry, Ballygawley, Ballylifford, Ballyronan, Bellaghy, Benburb, Brockagh/Mountjoy, Caledon, Castledawson, Castlecaulfield, Churchtown, Clady, Clogher, Coagh, Desertmartin Donaghmore, Draperstown, Drummullan, Edendork, Eglish, Fivemiletown, Galbally, Granville, Gulladuff, Killyman, Moneymore, Moortown, Moy, Moygashel, Newmills, Orritor, Pomeroy, Sandholes, Stewartstown, Swatragh, Tamnamore, The Bush, The Loup, The Rock, Tobermore and Upperlands.

The Mid Ulster Village Spruce Up Scheme was a Pilot project and offered discretionary grants of up to 75% eligible costs, capped at £5,000 per property for internal and/or external improvements. The Scheme was available to both occupied business/commercial properties and vacant business/commercial properties within the development limits of each village.

The allocation of grant was a competitive process and limited funds were available, therefore only the higher scoring applications were funded.

2.0 Aims and Objectives of the Scheme

The aim of the Mid Ulster Village Spruce Up Scheme was to improve the competitiveness and economic sustainability of the identified villages in the Mid Ulster District Council area by:

1. Making external improvements to the built environment in each village.
2. Encouraging the improvement of the internal appearance of properties visible to the public.

The objectives of the scheme were:

1. To enhance and improve the attractiveness of business/commercial properties by 30 March 2018.
2. To deliver high-quality external and internal improvements to properties in each village
3. To attract new business and investment through improvements to vacant properties.

4. To stimulate private sector investment.
5. To assist businesses in each village to increase competitiveness and sustainability.
6. To improve user perceptions of each village.

3.0 Who Could Apply

Based on the Mid Ulster Settlement Report as per the development of the Area Plan 'Strategic Settlement Evaluation-Proposition Paper' and Council recommendations, business/commercial properties within the Development Limits of the villages listed in 1.0 above could apply.

The grant was available to:

- Business/commercial premises
- Shops (including hairdressers, beauty salons, dry cleaners, clothing retailers etc).
- Financial and Professional services (e.g. estate agents, insurance companies etc).
- Restaurants, Public houses, Cafes and Food takeaways.
- Vacant premises. For a vacant property to be eligible evidence must be provided that:
 - 1) It was previously used as a business/commercial property.
 - 2) That it would be marketed/let as a business/commercial property after improvement works were complete. Evidence had to be provided of how this was to be achieved and actively promoted.

Properties that were ineligible to apply for grant aid included banks, building societies, charity shops, government organisations, political organisations and community groups/clubs.

Application forms were accepted from the property owner/s or tenants as long as the owner was in agreement.

Individual applications from owners/tenants whose properties are adjacent to each other were welcomed. Defined as 'Multiple Applications', these applications were viewed as having a greater positive effect on the appearance of a street and as a result were scored more highly by the assessment panel.

4.0 Scope of Works Eligible for Funding

The property owners/tenants of eligible business/commercial properties in the designated areas could apply for grant-aid to carry out the following:

Internal Works eligible for grant-aid include repair and refurbishment of:

- Walls, ceilings, doors, floors and stairs.
- Internal redecoration work e.g. repainting of walls, ceilings etc
- Rewiring and plumbing.
- Access improvements.
- New interior window display lighting, where shutters are not in use.
- Subdivision to form smaller units.

- Restructuring to form larger units.
- Permanent (i.e. not loose fitted or mobile) display cases/built-in furniture and joinery.
- Please note that internal works to a business/commercial property which is above ground floor level will be considered.

External works eligible for grant-aid include repair and refurbishment of the following:

- Shop fronts, including fascia, signage and lighting.
- Windows.
- Doors.
- Rainwater goods; guttering or downpipes on shopfronts.
- Redecoration (including painting, signage etc.).
- Pedestrian access improvements.
- Security measures (including security glazing/laminated glass which allows window shopping to take place in the evening ,e.g. open or lattice shutters/door grilles-NOT solid shutters).
- Virtual graphics / hoardings.
- Equipment and associated labour costs as deemed appropriate for preparation of work e.g. power washing, hire of lift equipment etc.
- Please note that external works to a business/commercial property which is above ground floor level will be considered.

Ineligible Works included:

- Works which required planning permission which was not in place at the Application stage.
- Routine maintenance such as clearing of debris from gutters, cleaning tarmac, cleaning of roofs, chimneys etc.
- Improvements to residential property, including residential property located above commercial premises.
- Retrospective applications (for work already completed or underway).
- CCTV / Alarm systems.
- Mobile/loose fixtures and fittings or furniture.
- Internal work which was not in the public area of the property.
- Mannequins.

The grant did not include:

- Statutory fees (e.g. Building Control Approval), professional fees etc.
- Insurances
- Interest (on loans taken out to fund your building project)
- VAT (except if the applicant is not VAT registered)

5.0 Procurement

Completed applications had to be accompanied by competitive quotations/tenders from bona-fide reputable contractors. If a contractor is not employed to complete all works, the

appropriate number of quotations/tenders had to be submitted for each element of the scheme.

The scheme required:

- 2 Written Quotations for project elements costing up to £4,999.99
- 4 Written Quotations for project elements costing from £5,000-£30,000

All quotations had to be dated and on headed paper and the funder reserved the right to have an independent quantity surveyor check the validity of quotations/tenders.

6.0 Application Process

Completed application forms were to be returned to McCarter Hamill Architects by 4pm on Friday 15 September 2017. Only fully completed Applications were validated and late submissions were not accepted.

12 No. Business Clinics were held at various public locations spread around the Council area. This provided the opportunity for those interested in applying for funding to drop-in without appointment and receive advice on their application. Representatives from the scheme's Chartered Architect and Mid Ulster District Council were present at each business clinic.

7.0 Assessment of the Applications:

The following criteria was used by the assessment panel to score the application for a grant:

- i) Current Condition of the elements of work requesting funding (25%)
Scoring ranged from 0%-25%, for example, if the current condition of the elements of work requested for funding to the property was considered very poor, the maximum 25% was allocated.
- ii) Impact the proposed element of works will make (30%)
Scoring ranged from 0%-30%, for example, if the proposed element of works would have a transformation impact on the property, the maximum 30% would be allocated.
- iii) Value for Money (25%)
This was calculated based on the formula:- $\text{Impact (points)} \div \text{Grant Sought} = \text{Weighted Criteria}$. Weighted criteria achieved ranged from 5%-25%, with excellent Value for Money allocated the maximum 25%.
- iv) Multiple Application Status (10%)
Multiple applications received a favourable weighting, where individual applications were received from owners/tenants whose properties were adjacent to each other. These applications would be viewed as having a greater positive effect on the appearance of a street and as a result were scored highly by the assessment panel, being allocated a further 10%.

- v) Vacant Business/Commercial Property (10%)
 Vacant Business/Commercial Property favourable weighting, allocated 10%.

All applications had to score a minimum of 40% to be considered for funding.
 All works had to be completed and claimed by **2 March 2018**.

8.0 Successful Applicants

If an Application is successful, the Applicant was issued with a 'Letter of Offer'. This was a form of contract that stated:

- The amount of grant awarded
- The terms and conditions associated with the grant

It was made clear to the successful Applicants that no works could commence until a signed 'Letter of Offer' was returned to Mid Ulster Council within the allotted timescale.

9.0 GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD OF SUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS

Valid Applications were received from the following villages (in alphabetical order):

VILLAGES	NUMBER OF APPROVED SCHEMES – PHASE 1:
Aghaginduff/Cabragh	0
Annaghmore	0
Ardboe	0
Augher	2
Aughnacloy	4
Ballinderry	0
Ballygawley	7
Ballylifford	0
Ballyronan	1
Bellaghy	2
Benburb	3
Brockagh/Mountjoy	0
Caledon	0
Castledawson	0
Castlecaulfield	0
Churchtown	0
Clady	1
Clogher	6
Coagh	0
Desertmartin	5
Donaghmore	4
Draperstown	2
Drummullan	0

Edendork	0
Eglish	0
Fivemiletown	11
Galbally	0
Granville	0
Gulladuff	0
Killyman	0
Moneymore	0
Moortown	1
Moy	4
Moygashel	0
Newmills	0
Orritor	0
Pomeroy	6
Sandholes	0
Stewartstown	3
Swatragh	2
Tamnamore	0
The Bush	0
The Loup	0
The Rock	0
Tobermore	1
Upperlands	5
Total	70

10.0 Payment of Grant

It was stipulated that payment of grant would only be made once Mid Ulster District Council was satisfied that all the terms and conditions in the 'Letter of Offer' had been fulfilled. A site visit was carried out by McCarter Hamill Architects to verify that the works had been completed as stated at application stage and to the required standard.

Payment of grant was be made on receipt of a single claim following a successful site visit. This claim had to include the submission of original invoices and proof of payment.

11.0 Case Studies of selected completed projects

We have selected the following projects for a brief Case Study of Phase 1 of Mid Ulster Village Spruce Up Scheme. These have been selected to use as case studies for the reasons noted below:

- i) Project No 86 – Emily’s Flowers, Aughnacloy - Reason selected: Bringing a vacant property back into use/new business start-up.
- ii) Project No’s 3, 4 & 5 – Main Street, Pomeroy - Reason selected: Multiple Application.
- iii) Project No 114 – New Shoe Shop, Fivemiletown - Reason selected: Bringing a vacant property back into use/new business start-up.
- iv) Project No 60 – Pauls Fashions, Aughnacloy - Reason selected: Scheme with both internal and external works.
- v) Project No 53 – Vacant Butchers Shop, Ballygawley - Reason selected: Scheme where grant money assisted in bringing an important village building back to life.
- vi) Project No 63 - Vacant Premises, Clady. Reason selected: Scheme where grant money assisted in enhancing a vacant property to attract a new tenant. External works have enhanced the streetscape of Clady.

A short case study on each of the six projects outlined above now follows.

11.1 Emily's Flowers, 75 Moore Street, Aughnacloy

Scope of Works. Both external and internal works were carried out. Externally the façade was painted, with new lighting and signage installed. Internally a new reception desk/counter was provided.

Before:



After:



Impact of the Works:

The funding enabled the Applicant to start up a new business, and in doing so provides a new lease of life to a dull vacant building. This has assisted in enhancing the streetscape in Aughnacloy. This project epitomises what can be done within a small budget and is a successful expenditure of grant monies which targeted both external and internal elements.

11.2 Main St, Pomeroy

Scope of Works: External painting, stone cladding and lighting

Before:



After:



Impact of the Works:

This is an excellent example of a Multiple Application. These 3 adjoining properties have been cladded in stone and has provided a comprehensive redevelopment in the centre of Pomeroy village. The finish is much more attractive and provides a positive enhancement to the streetscape.

11.3 New Shoe Shop, Fivemiletown

Scope of Works: External painting and Signage. Internal painting and display shelving.

Before:



After:



Impact of the Works:

The funding enabled the Applicant to start up a new business and has enhanced the appearance of a vacant property and through delivery has enhanced the streetscape of Fivemiletown. Although the business is not open yet, it will complement the other independent fashion shops in the town and assist in encouraging visitors and shoppers from through traffic on their way to/from the West to stop and shop in the village.

11.4 Paul's Fashions, Aughnacloy

Scope of Works: External Windows and Signage. Internal ceilings and wall panelling.

Before:



After:



Impact of the Works:

Externally, this project has made a significant improvement and impact to the property and the village of Aughnacloy. The new shopfront is bold and modern. Internally the customer space is transformed into a much brighter, cleaner and more modern. This scheme is also a good example of the Applicant putting additional financial resources towards the project to complete a more comprehensive scheme; one which may not have happened if the grant aid had not been available.

11.5 Vacant Butchers Shop, Ballygawley

Scope of Works: New Shopfront and Windows.

Before:



After:



Impact of the Works:

The Grant Aid received by this project have helped turn a derelict property in a very prominent position in the village into an excellent opportunity for location of a business premises. It has greatly improved the streetscape in this area of Ballygawley and will entice new business to the village.

11.6 Vacant Property, Clady

Scope of Works: New Hand Railings, Tile Cladding and Window Glazing

Before:



After:

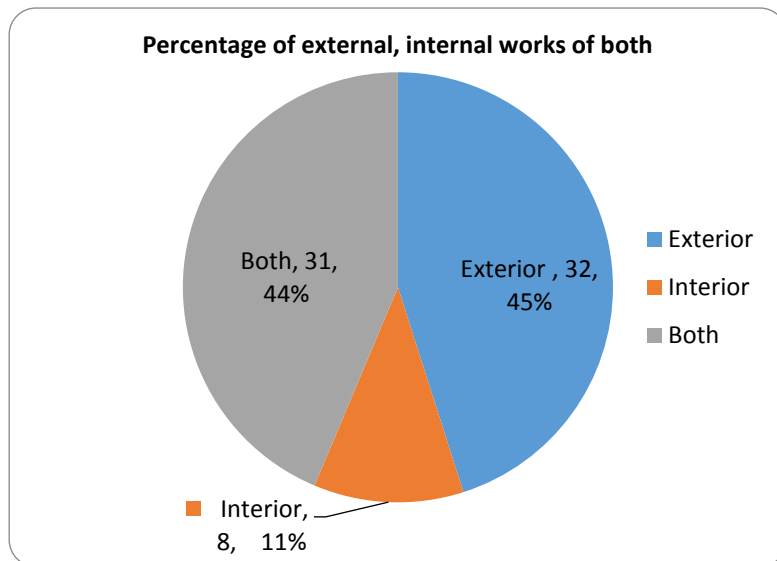


Impact of the Works:

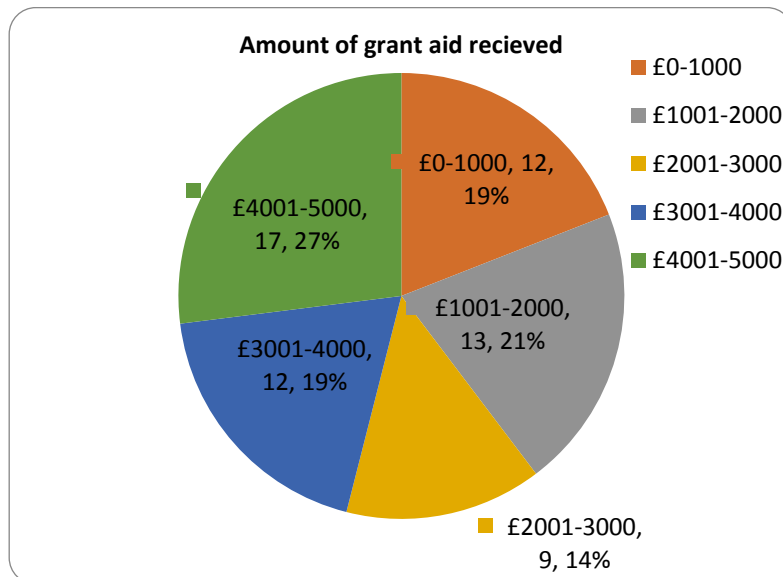
Externally, this project has made a significant improvement and impact to the property and the village of Clady. The tile cladding is excellent quality and has provided a modern frontage to the property. This scheme is also a good example of the Applicant putting additional financial resources towards the project to complete a more comprehensive scheme; one which may not have happened if the grant aid had not been available. An excellent property for a new business in Clady.

12.0 Statistical Data

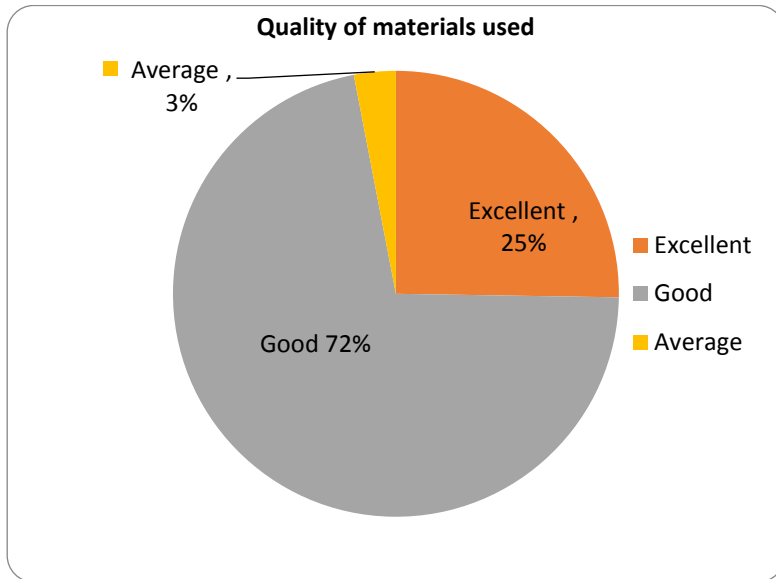
In terms of the ratio of projects that were funded for Internal and External works, 45% carried out External works only, 11% interior works only and 44% carried out both.



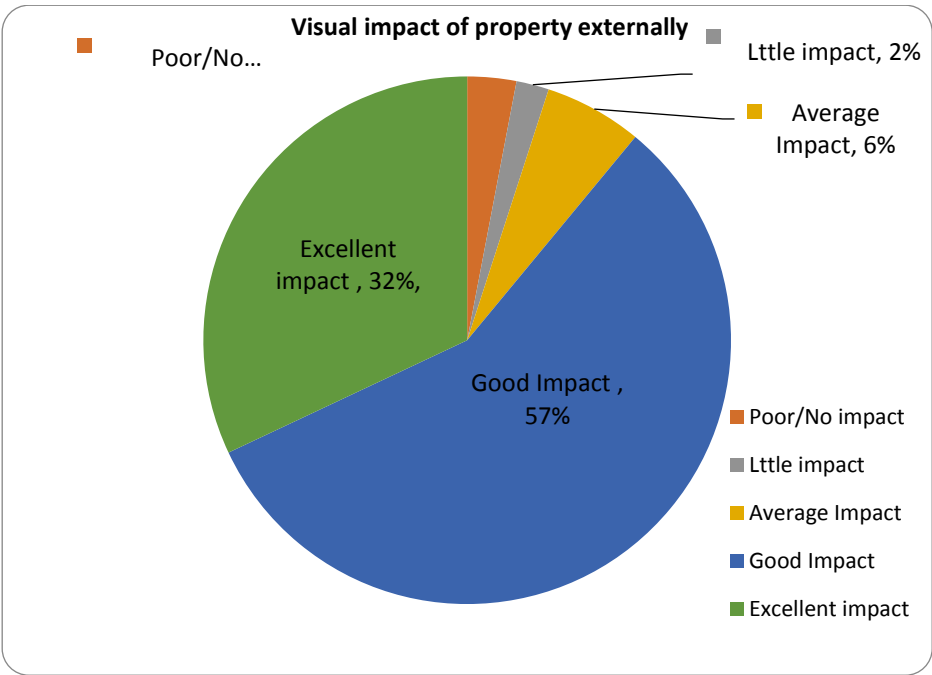
As can be seen from the pie chart below, grant aid was applied for and awarded across the £5,000 which was available for 75% of costs, with £4001-£5000 segment being the largest followed closely by the £1001-£2000 segment.



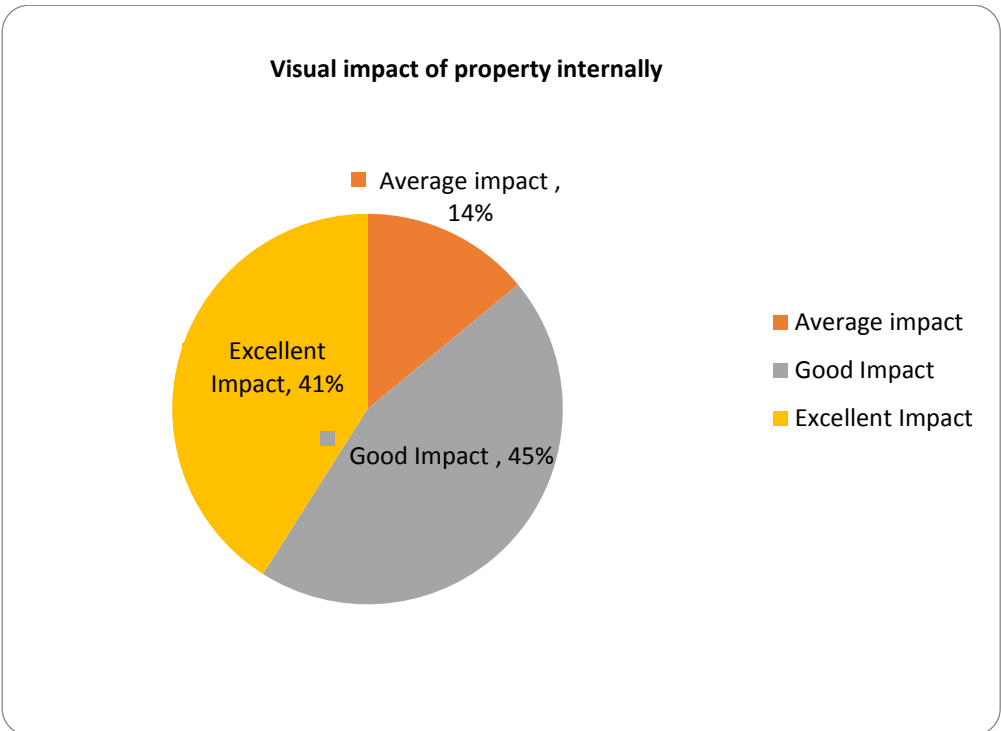
The quality of the materials used overall was good, with 25% deemed as being excellent. Again, quality of workmanship was deemed as being good, with 26% deemed as being excellent.



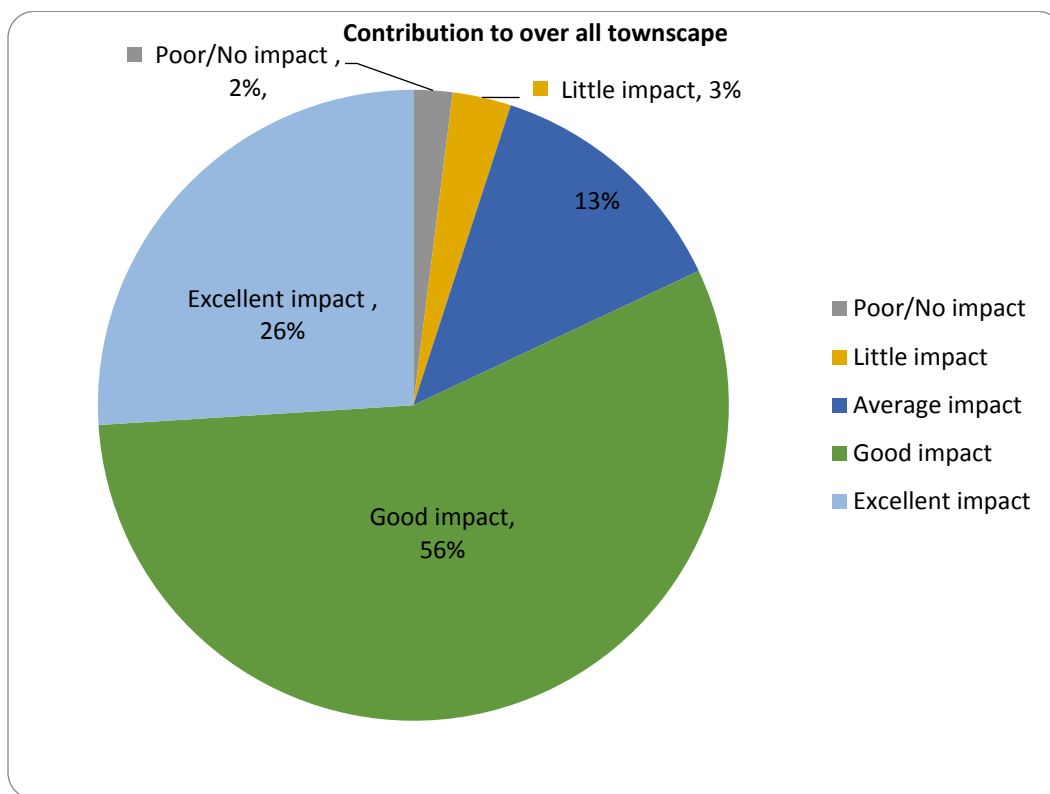
The Visual Impact of the works was rated overall as good (57%), with 32% of schemes rated excellent in this category.



For Internal works, most had either a good or an excellent impact, with only 14% deemed as being average.



An important and key statistic in the delivery of the scheme is the Contribution to the Overall Townscape. 56% of schemes had a good impact and 26% had an excellent impact.



13.0 Overview of Scheme

The Mid Ulster Village Spruce Up Scheme aimed to improve the competitiveness and economic sustainability of the eligible villages. Through the delivery of the scheme properties awarded funding strived to achieve a comprehensive improvement to building frontage, internal repairs and refurbishments. The wider impact on each village aimed to visibly enhancing the townscape and improving local economic infrastructure.

A final evaluation of each completed property was carried out with a score awarded between 1 (very poor) and 5 (excellent) to measure the visual improvement to the property on an individual basis, and also to measure the contribution of the improvement works to the overall townscape. The overall impact of the scheme has been impressive. It is clear to see that each property owner planned each element of the works in relation to how it would benefit their business and the street scape (if works included external elements).

Multiple Applications were encouraged and were rewarded accordingly through the assessment stage due to the impact in the relevant village. The Business Clinics that were held in the various locations were well attended, and many of the successful Applicants had attended these clinics.

In total £195,876.28 of Grant Aid was awarded to 70 properties across the Council area, with private sector leverage of £101,272.10. Grants ranged from £131.25 to the £5,000 maximum with the average being £2,798.23. 8 applications received the maximum £5,000 grant.

McCarter Hamill Architects believe that the relatively small budget for the scheme was put to excellent use as it helped 70 (mostly small) businesses improve their premises and enhance the visual appearance of their village.

14.0 Conclusion

The Mid Ulster Village Spruce Up Scheme has made a significant impact to the properties and contributed to the enhancement of their respective Villages. Phase 2 of the scheme, involving 44 properties, will be rolled out and delivered by 30 September 2018. Following completion, an evaluation will be completed and presented to Mid Ulster District Council. The funding provided by the scheme has unquestionably improved the external frontages and internal areas of each property.

The scheme has certainly succeeded in offering local business a significant and meaningful support. The monetary incentive has encouraged property owners to carry out improvement works to their properties which, in today's economic climate, may not otherwise have been feasible.

The total amount of private investment in Phase 1 of the scheme was £101,272.10, which shows a commitment from the property owners and tenants to successfully deliver the scheme. The impact this had made across the Mid Ulster District Council villages has been significant and will assist the local economy to remain competitive in the current market.

HOME OFFICE – EU SETTLEMENT SCHEME

From: Lisa O'Kane
Sent: 11 April 2018 14:44
To: Fiona McKeown <Fiona.McKeown@midulstercouncil.org>
Subject: Home Office

Fiona,

Further to our conversation before Easter on the EU Settlement Scheme, I spoke to the Home Office yesterday. As I mentioned, they have commissioned Britain Thinks to undertake the survey – they will interview 6 CEs (or delegated person) from across the UK. They have been given a shortlist which includes yourselves and Belfast, so you may or may not get a call.

In relation to an event, they would be keen to do back to back events in Mid Ulster and Belfast **in late June**. These would involve:

1. A meeting with a select group of CEs for them to understand concerns and issues across the UK and to evaluate their service
2. A forum with employers in both council areas – your Skills Forum might be a good vehicle
3. A public information meeting for EU Citizens in the evening

They would envisage a welcome by the Chair / Mayor of council, presentation by the Home Office on how the EU Settlement Scheme will work, followed by Q&A. There could be a role for Citizens Advice or other migrant forums either in having an info stand or possibly a short slot to highlight the services they provide, but they are undertaking some briefing work with national CAB offices at the moment so it will take time for the info to trickle down. They would probably want to have an NIO rep at the event.

In terms of timing, I did mention that you were trying to plan events for the year and June might be too soon, but they are concerned there will be a plethora of activity when the scheme is actually live and want to do something before it is launched. They had suggested early July but I said this was a holiday period here.

Their ask

- To agree a date asap – this will have to be done with BCC as they want to keep travel costs down
- They have to finalise budgets, but asked if council could cover room hire for the employers event and public event. If AV isn't available at the venue they would ask the council to source this and they would cover costs. I am pushing them to cover catering costs. They will of course cover their travel and accommodation costs.
- Council to promote the event via appropriate channels

Can you have a think about this and give me a call when you are free, perhaps with some suggested dates. After this I would approach Belfast who have been hard to pin down to date.

Lisa

Lisa O'Kane
Programmes Manager (Partnerships & Investment)
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APPENDIX 3

Photos of Hong Kong Trade Visit to Mid Ulster – 18/19 April 2018







APPENDIX 4

Mid Ulster Skills Forum

Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 13th December 2017 at 10.00am
Venue: Ranfurly Visitor & Arts Centre Dungannon

Present:

Manufacturing	Liz Kearns – Copeland Ltd
Construction	Jennifer Cruickshank – Henry Brothers Ltd
Sectoral Bodies	Harry Hamilton – NI Food & Drink Association Mairaid McMahon – FSB NI Leanne Doherty Business in the Community
Engineering	Sharon Cain – Edge Innovate (NI) Ltd, Sinead Gaynor – Mallaghan Engineering
Food & Drink	Alan McKeown – Dunbia Ltd Angela Givan - Linden Foods
Retail	Colin Conway – Newell Stores Ltd
Public Sector	Ciara Kilpatrick – Invest NI Ethna McNamee – Invest NI Michael Gould – Dept. for the Economy
Education Providers	John Moss - South West College, Lorraine O'Neill – Northern Regional College, Jacqueline McDowell – South West College, Catherine Devlin - CAFRE Gareth Hetherington – Ulster University
Elected Members	Cllr F Burton Cllr K Ashton

In Attendance:

Guest Speakers	Jonathan Lynas Careers Service, Dept. for the Economy Raymond McAuley, Careers Service, Dept. for the Economy John Clarke – Cogent Michael Denny – Cogent
Council Officers	Fiona McKeown – Head of Economic Development Paul McCreedy – Funding & Investment Manager Sinead McAleer – Corporate Learning & Development Manager (MUDC) Pauline Gallagher – Project Officer

Apologies:	Brian McElroy Genesis Crafty, Karen Trainor – Specialist Joinery Fittings Ltd, Stephen Kelly - Manufacturing NI Claire O'Hare – Northern Trust Jane Millar - SDC Trailers Ltd Stephen Mohan – Cuba Clare O'Neill – Northern Regional College Maria Hackett – South West College Joy Alexander – CAFRE Martin McKendry - CAFRE (Greenmount Campus) Michael McAlister – South West College Anthony Tohill - Chief Executive (MUDC), Adrian McCreesh - Director of Business & Communities (MUDC), Marissa Canavan - Colin McKenna – Economic Development Strategies Manager (MUDC)
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1. **Welcome and Introductions**

Alan McKeown welcomed all to the Skills Forum Meeting, with an extended welcomed to Jonathan Lynas and Raymond McAuley from the Careers Service, Department for the Economy and to John Clarke and Michael Denny Cogent Management Consultancy Ltd.

Papers for meeting were circulated prior to the meeting commencing these included; an Agenda, Minutes from the previous meeting and Presentation slides.

2. **Apologies**

Apologies were noted on behalf of those who could not attend.

3. **Minutes of the last meeting (27th September 2017)**

A McKeown referred to minutes of meeting held on 27th September 2017. All present agreed that these were an accurate account of the meeting.

4. **Matters arising**

No matters arising.

5. **Presentation: Connect to Success NI – Careers Service Department for the Economy**

A McKeown invited J Lynas and R McAuley to make their presentation. R McAuley thanked Forum members for the opportunity. The briefing included:

- 5.1 **What is ‘Connect to Success NI’** – This is a central online system whereby employers can upload information about their work experience opportunities, and users, including young people, parents and career teachers, can search for and view these opportunities via an online portal.
- 5.2 **The Process –**
- STEP 1: Employer Registers via NIBusinessInfo site
 - STEP 2: Department for the Economy (DfE) validate employer details
 - STEP 3: Employer adds information regarding work experience opportunity
 - STEP 4: DfE validate opportunity information
 - STEP 5: Information goes “Live” on citizen search portal on NI Direct site.
 - STEP 6: Pupil searches for work experience opportunity
 - STEP 7: School performs risk assessments and relevant checks prior to a pupil going on placement.
- 5.3 **Employer – Advertising a Work Experience Opportunity** – Required fields to be completed:
- Placement Title
 - STEM/Priority Skill Area
 - Subject Requirements
 - Age Requirements
 - Placement Details
 - Number of Positions available per week
 - Number of days the placement lasts
 - Location
 - How to Apply
- 5.4 **Benefits to Industry -**
- Provides an online platform to advertise opportunities.
 - Raise the profile of the Business - access and inspire the next generation of employees.
 - Increase awareness of the Sector - the different occupations available as well as the skills, attributes and qualifications required.
 - Streamlines the process of securing and organising work experience.
 - Fairer approach for pupils looking for work experience.
 - Corporate Responsibility.
 - FREE to Register.
- 5.5 Presentation completed, R McAuley and J Lynas welcomed questions from the Forum.

A McKeown thanked both representatives for their informative presentation and opened it up to the floor for discussion. Points raised included:

- How many Mid Ulster businesses are currently signed up to the Connect to Success Portal? – 6 Mid Ulster Businesses registered to date, with more interest from schools being generated, the aim is to increase Mid Ulster business representation.
- The importance of linking with Careers Teachers was noted, a window of opportunity existing but this must have the buy in of schools/colleges and industry.
- Clarification was sought in respect of STEP 2 of the registration process – Validation of Employer – Dept reps responded confirming this included checks in relation to Child Protection, and verification of postcode/ contact details to verify businesses. Forum member suggested that if this were a lengthy process with a lot of 'red tape' it would discourage many small businesses from signing up. R McAuley responded by assuring members that the process is simple however must be carried out to ensure all businesses are genuine. M Gould confirmed that they work closely with the Connect to Success NI team and the process is straightforward and is an excellent tool for both education providers and industry to avail of.
- FE College representative reiterated the importance of business development within further education, and asked if the link could be used by FE Colleges? – J Lynas indicated that there was a close link with FE Colleges who advertise apprenticeships on the portal.
- R McAuley and J Lynas referred to information leaflet, which provides contact details for those interested in finding out more about the Connect to Success NI portal - Leaflet was circulated to all members present.

A McKeown thanked department reps and moved to the next item on the agenda.

6. Update on Mid Ulster Skills Report & Action Plan 2017 -2020

A McKeown invited John Clarke and Michael Denny Cogent Management Consulting to provide their update, key points included:

M Denny / J Clarke commenced their presentation, a summary of which is detailed below:

- 6.1 Secondary and Primary research activities now completed these included:
- Reviewed key strategies/policies
 - In-depth research on the external factors

- Review of existing research
- Collation of a range of recently published data and metrics
- Examination of existing provision and interventions
- In-depth consultations with a total of 193 businesses including owners or HR Managers of businesses across the Council area, comprising forum and non-forum members.
- In-depth consultations with Sectoral Bodies, Government Departments, Enterprise Agencies, Education providers, Local Training providers and Focus groups.
- Online survey with businesses operating within the Council area .
- Focus group and in-depth consultations with post primary schools in the Council area.

6.2 Defining 'Skills Needs' in the Mid Ulster Context

1. Access to 'people'
2. Broader 'employability' skills; and
3. Specific technical skills

M Denny highlighted the fact that the issue is not 'lack of skills' but in fact 'access to people', which is consistent across all sectors in Mid Ulster.

6.3 Findings from Desk Research indicates:

- Available labour in the Council area is 1,026 to 2,759
- Estimated labour deficit in the Council area ranges from 1,984 to 3,717

6.4 M Denny / J Clarke reported on business feedback in summary this included:

Businesses stated that, as of 2017, they had 11,734 employees based in Northern Ireland, of which 9,962 (85%) were based within the Council area.

For the core research respondents, three-quarters of all employees were male. This compares with an overall working age male population in the MUDC area of 51%, illustrating a clear gender imbalance with the gender imbalance more pronounced in some job roles than others, for example;

- In Construction (88% of employees are male) and in Manufacturing and Engineering (86%) sectors are particularly skewed towards male employees. However, over half (56%) of workers in the retail sector are female.

Businesses draw heavily upon the Council area's local population for their workforce, with respondents suggesting that over half (56%) of their workforce originally came from the Council area.

However, some sectors are more reliant on drawing employees from outside the area. For example, nearly two-thirds (63%) of the employees in the Food and Agri-Food sector originally come from elsewhere in the EU (other than the UK or the Republic of Ireland), including countries such as Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Hungary.

In terms of principal markets, over two-fifths of the core research respondents indicated that they have 70%+ of their sales in external or export markets, which exposes them to, for example, currency fluctuations.

Businesses reported that the uncertainty associated with Brexit is already having significant consequences for their business operations.

Three-quarters (71%) of the businesses suggested that they had faced challenges in attracting appropriately skilled staff during recent times (e.g. in the last 3 years), whilst nearly four-fifths (39%) respondents suggested that they also experienced issues retaining appropriately skilled staff.

- 6.5 Principal reasons for recruitment and retention related issues include:
- Inadequate supply of applicants – nearly all (84%+) of the businesses stated this had a ‘major’ or ‘moderate’ significance on their skills related problems.
 - Applicants not having the necessary skills (with skills and qualifications less advanced than required for job role).
 - Applicants did not have the necessary experience.
- 6.6 Businesses cited an **inadequate supply of applicants** was primarily due to:
- Competition within the local labour market; and/or
- The small local labour market within the Mid Ulster District Council area; and/or
 - A perception (amongst potential applicants) that the Mid Ulster area is too far away from their homes; and/or
 - The hours associated with the job.
- 6.7 In addition to the above, business also cited the following reasons:
- A perceived lack of career prospects in the job/industry.
 - Potential applicants not having a suitable means of transport to the business’ location (including suitable public transport options).
 - The wages offered being less favourable/competitive relative to those offered elsewhere.
 - Negative perceptions of the industry/sector.
- 6.8 For those businesses that experienced challenges attracting and/or retaining staff with the necessary skills and/or qualifications required for the job role:
- Nearly three-quarters (71%) of the business respondents cited that they required general employability skills and attributes. Broadly consistent across each of the key sectors.
- 6.9 Nearly three-fifths (60%) suggested they required the requisite professional or technical qualifications). More prevalent in the hospitality and manufacturing and engineering sectors.
- 6.10 A similar proportion required the requisite technical/practical employability skills More prevalent in the Food and Agri-food and Retail sectors.

- 6.11 The recruitment and retention related issues have had a range of impacts on businesses, such as:
- Nearly two-thirds (63%) of the business respondents cited that the issues had increased the workload for other staff
 - Just under half (46%) suggested that they have been unable to maintain current operations or to achieve growth in line with projections, whilst a similar proportion (43%) experienced difficulties in meeting customer services objectives.
 - A third (34%) suggested that they had increased operating costs and had experienced delays in developing new products/services.

6.12 Future Employment Scenarios

Business have taken a variety of steps to overcome the problem of having 'hard-to-fill' vacancies, including:

- Half (50%) cited that they have started advertising or are advertising more widely
- A third (34%) suggested that they upskill or train their existing workforce to fill the vacancies, whilst a similar proportion (31%), have increased the salary of the posts to make job more attractive.

The analysis indicates that the above types of practices seem to be more prevalent amongst the core research sample, which perhaps points to some potential solutions to address 'hard-to-fill' vacancies amongst the wider business base.

- Three-fifths (60%) of businesses either strongly agreed (18%) or agreed (42%) that apprenticeships were appropriate for their respective business.
- Conversely, of those that were aware of the apprenticeship levy and responded to this question (24% of businesses), nearly all (85%) either strongly disagreed (41%) or disagreed (44%) that the apprenticeship levy was appropriate for their business.
- On the apprentice levy, respondents were unclear as to how it would operate in practice and viewed it as an additional tax on their business

Businesses quantified (in the context of their businesses' recent performance and current or anticipated changes in the marketplace) the extent to which they considered skills-related issues were having an impact upon their business' growth and performance.

In summary, if the skills issues that these businesses are encountering are addressed, there is potential for them to create an **additional 942 new FTE jobs by 2020** than might otherwise be the case.

Also, there would be **much less reliant on agency/contract workers**, with a suggested reduction in agency staff of 31% by 2020.

If the estimated 942 new FTE jobs to potentially be created is 'grossed up' to for entire business population (i.e. by a factor of 5), this equates to

the potential creation of approximately an **additional 4,710 new FTE jobs by 2020** than might otherwise be the case.

This will have an obvious impact on the previously mentioned estimated labour deficit in the Council area, which ranges from **1,984 to 3,717**.

6.13 Areas that the Action Plan will consider:

- Market proposition for the Council area – e.g. be open to regional and international talent and be an attractive location for such talent, complementing efforts to improve the employability of the area's population and to support the development of the regional sectoral clusters.
- Perception and Inspiration – enhance the image of priority sectors to increase volume and diversity.
- Continue to strengthen employer engagement in the area e.g. through channels such as the Skills Forum.
- Building capacity at a local and workplace level – promote and strengthen strategic and effective linkages and collaboration between employers, education and training providers and public institutions. This needs to happen at a number of levels, including sectorally and Council wide.
- Access to quality information, advice and guidance - provide individuals with support, in a variety of formats and whenever they need it, to make informed choices about their employment and career progression options.

6.14 Next Steps

- Finalise Skills Report and Action Plan in January/February 2018.
- Present Skills Report and Action Plan at Mid Ulster Skills Forum and formal launch event if required.

6.15 A McKeown thanked Cogent reps for update and opened it up to the floor for discussions.

6.16 Members commended the level and approach to research taken place, and highlighted the alarming figures in relation to the deficit of labour force available, with the issue of Brexit contributing to this.

6.17 Members referred to the challenges in attracting appropriately skilled staff particularly those outside the district, stating that people are more widely travelled with other area providing a more attractive enticement to settle in these areas. E McNamee Invest NI representative stated that branding of NI as a place to work, live and play is a key commitment of Invest NI and that prospective companies considering NI look at the available skills base along with social factors.

6.18 It was suggested that Brexit even with its uncertainties, poses an opportunity to market NI to foreign nationals as a place to work, live and play.

With Q&A session ended, A McKeown thanks Cogent representatives for their informative update.

7 Update on Brexit Sub Group

7.1 P McCreedy provided update, summary of which included:

Meeting of Brexit Sub Group took place on Wednesday 22nd November 2017, at which Stephen Kelly (Manufacturing NI) was nominated as lead.

7.2 Presentation made by Kerry Curran (InterTrade Ireland – Brexit Advisory Service) stated the following:

7.3 Figures from recent Intertrade Ireland Quarterly Survey:

- 95% SMEs do not have a plan for Brexit
- 77% SMEs say that uncertainty makes it difficult to plan.
- 38% of businesses with cross border sales have identified the need for additional information on the implications of Brexit for their business.
- 36% of businesses with cross border sales would value one to one Brexit business support and advice.

Tariffs

- A potential risk (although 30% of goods have no tariffs)
- Tariffs can affect profit margins (particularly on businesses operating on small profit margins).
- WTO tariffs are levied on specific product lines and the variation across products can range from 0% to over 80%.
- Although a substantial fraction of products would face no tariff, the small percentage of products that would incur tariffs of over 35% in a WTO scenario make up a significant share of cross-border trade.
- Products with the highest tariffs are mainly in the food, clothes and tobacco sectors.
- As Irish cross-border trade has considerable agri-food content, higher tariffs would apply in a WTO scenario on Northern Irish trade compared to estimates for the UK as a whole. The dairy sector is vulnerable.
- InterTrade Ireland estimate three scenarios - WTO tariffs, WTO tariffs plus non-tariff barrier estimates and a scenario including a 10% change in the exchange rate.

Non-tariff barriers

- A wide-ranging set of mechanisms covering policy measures other than tariffs that act to restrict or inhibit international trade flows. These can include quantity limits, subsidies to domestic production and technical requirements such as licensing, labelling, standards and sanitary and rules designed to protect health and food safety.
- They also cover requirements on customs inspections and documentation (***which will result in an additional customs administration cost for businesses***).

- There could be additional VAT implications
- Supply chains and logistics will be affected – costs and delays impact on business competitiveness.
- ***The overall effect of tariffs and estimated non-tariff barriers is largely driven by their impact on the food sectors and most particularly in the meat and dairy sectors.***

Skills and People

- There is evidence of EU Nationals leaving Northern Ireland following the Brexit vote, which can be due to a variety of reasons; higher value of the euro, eastern European block countries are more buoyant, UK perceived as a less attractive place to live and work.
- 1 in 10 manufacturing businesses are experiencing a lack of skills
- 61% manufacturers are training staff
- 1 in 5 cross border traders have difficulty recruiting the appropriate skills
- 2/3 businesses say that the lack of appropriate skills is impacting on productivity.
- Businesses need to understand their workforce better
- Businesses need to consider proportion of staff and which key roles are currently undertaken by staff with EU citizenship.
- Opportunities for increased automation.

InterTrade Ireland Support – Brexit Advisory Service

- Businesses need to Plan, Act and Engage.
- InterTrade Ireland offer a suite of supports for SMEs, including funding of up to £2000/€2000 vouchers towards professional advice in relation to Brexit matters, through its 'Start to Plan' Service. (This is promoted regularly to Mid Ulster businesses via E-Shot)
- Brexit Events.
- Report on Tariffs available online.
- Latest research and news available online

7.4 Main points

1. There is potential significant costs for businesses;
2. Businesses may have to deal with a heavy administration burden;
3. The issue of access to skills and labour;
4. Potential changes to working practices – supply chains, logistics etc.
5. It was agreed that rather than having an action plan, the sub-group should solely focus on the core objective of "Having Businesses Brexit Ready".
6. The sub-group would consider proposals to organise a Mid Ulster Brexit Summit / Event aimed at directing businesses to Intertrade Ireland's Brexit Advisory Service and voucher scheme. Suggested content for the event to include Skills / Migration (NISMP), additional costs/burdens, logistics/partners/supply chains/contracts, case study of a local business taking action, emerging markets.

7.5 Other points discussed.

- Intertrade Ireland's research is co-ordinated and joined up with other agencies including NISRA and Dept. for the Economy.

Item opened up to the floor for discussion:

- 7.6 Members reiterated the fact that businesses do not know how to plan for Brexit, stating that an opportunity exists and that timing is important to look at potential opportunities.
- 7.7 It was agreed that once the figures from the survey are available these should be furnished to the forum. F McKeown noted the importance of getting figures broken down in terms of the impact on Mid Ulster.
- 7.8 C Devlin gave an overview of the role of the newly established Skills Sub-group under the NI Strategic Migration Partnership. The sub-group is planning to undertake a survey of businesses and following review of the survey form it was recommended that officers should contact Mary Kerr to include the following questions;
1. Do you understand what is meant by the announcement of 8th December 2017 on Brexit negotiations between the UK Government and European Union?
 2. Does this change your opinion on remaining in the UK/NI to work?

8. **Update on Community Plan – Education & Skills Thematic Group (Liz Kearns, Forum representative)**

L Kearns advised that the Thematic Group have met again and agreed to focus on Short Term Actions, which include:

- A mentoring programme for children and young people experiencing low attainment.
- Ensuring accessible preschool places for every child.
- Establish a Mid Ulster Skills Forum bringing together employers, entrepreneurs, enterprise agencies, schools and colleges to plan ahead to improve future employability.
- Deliver a tailored high level Apprenticeship programme to meet the specific needs of Mid Ulster industry
- Scope, develop and deliver a Mid Ulster Engineering Centre of Excellence

She reported that the group would be looking at establishing measurable targets in 2018 through performance monitoring scorecards in order to track progress. It was agreed that the Skills Action Plan would help to inform this and that members have the opportunity to input to the scorecard.

9. **Any other business**
None.

10. **Meeting Schedule for 2018**

A McKeown stated that schedule should be considered in the New Year. Next Forum meeting to take place on Wednesday 28th February 2018 at 10am in Burnavon Arts & Visitor Centre Cookstown.

World
Champions
2018 - 2020

Thanks
Team Ireland.

To:- Fiona & Chair of
Mid Ulster Council &
Councillors

I just want to take this
opportunity to thank you all
very much for sponsoring
our Mid Ulster Event in
Association with World
Butchers Challenge.

The Support was
Amazing & I am a very
proud Mid Ulster Business
woman to have such
great people in our
Council Area.

Many Thanks

Rhonda Montgomery

FROM THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

Noel Lavery

Fermanagh and Omagh
District Council
RECEIVED

12 APR 2018

Referred to:

**DfE**Department
for the Economy
www.economy-ni.gov.ukNetherleigh
Massey Avenue
Belfast BT4 2JP
Tel: 028 90529441
email: noel.lavery@economy-ni.gov.ukMr Brendan Hegarty
Chief Executive
Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
Townhall, 2 Townhall Street
ENNISKILLEN
Co. Fermanagh
BT74 7BA

Our Ref : SSUB-0081-2018

9 April 2018

Dear Brendan

I am writing to you in your capacity as SOLACE NI lead for the draft Programme for Government (PfG) Outcome 11 - We connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure.

I thought it would be helpful, following the recent meeting with the Permanent Secretaries Group, to update you on the Department's current broadband activities and, in particular, on the Confidence and Supply broadband funding.

The Department has recognised the importance of broadband for the consumer and for the development of the economy. Since 2007, DfE has channelled some £70m of public investment into initiatives to encourage private sector upgrade to networks, primarily in rural areas and where the private sector alone would not invest.

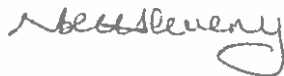
Under the Department's recent NI Broadband Improvement Project, for which the network build is fully complete, some 46,000 premises have experienced improvement to broadband access, ranging from basic 2 Mbps services to superfast services of 24 Mbps or better. The current Superfast Roll-out Programme (SRP), which is due to complete in June 2018, has brought services of 24 Mbps or better to around 42,000 additional premises. We anticipate that approximately 88% of premises in Northern Ireland will have access to superfast services of 24 Mbps or better when the SRP is completed.

There is much more to be done, particularly in improving services in rural areas. This is recognised within the draft PfG, which seeks to improve access to superfast broadband services, measured by an increase in the percentage of premises with access to 30 Mbps or greater. The £150m broadband funding under the Confidence and Supply Agreement offers the potential for the Department to build on our achievements to date.

Preparation work is underway to identify options for delivery and secure the necessary approvals for this significant project. The Department will shortly undertake a programme of engagement with political and industry stakeholders to discuss the proposed way forward, following which we will initiate a procurement process. My officials will, of course, keep their council counterparts abreast of significant developments through established channels and we welcome the opportunity to engage with you, and others, as this process develops further.

I hope this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Noel Lavery', with a stylized flourish at the end.

NOEL LAVERY



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

APPENDIX 7

SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SECTION 2017/18

This Report provides an overview of the comprehensive range of work delivered across the economic development section during 2017/18 and details some of the year's highlights and initiatives under each of the 4 Themes of the Council's economic development strategy, 'Our Plan for Growth' 2015-20.

THEME 1: ENABLING ECONOMIC GROWTH

Business Programmes



Mid Ulster Business Start Programme (Oct 2016/Aug 2017) & NI Business Start Up Programme (Aug 2017/Jan 2021)

In the twelve-month period to March 2018, 326 local entrepreneurs were supported to develop Business Plans. This promoted the creation of 222 new jobs in the Mid Ulster area.

Mid Ulster Crowned Most Enterprising Region in N. Ireland

In November 2017, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) Report produced by Prof Mark Hart (Aston University) was launched in Mid Ulster, and again confirmed Mid Ulster's position as the '**most entrepreneurial region**', which the Council is keen to sustain.



Mid Ulster Engineering Innovation Programme 2017/19

The Engineering Innovation Programmes will provide specialist innovation support to 18 engineering businesses to develop new products, processes and services. By March 2018, 9 engineering businesses were in receipt of support: 5 with the development of new products and 4 with developing new services and processes. Currently, 15 social enterprises are in receipt of support to grow their projects and deliver a wider range of services to their community of interest.



Mid Ulster Social Enterprise Programme 2017/20

This programme was launched in Sept 2017 and seeks to support 40 emerging and established social enterprises in Mid Ulster to stimulate their growth, drive job creation, help secure existing jobs, and leverage additional funding to enable groups to become more sustainable.

We aim by 2020 to start up at least 12 new social enterprises, build the capacity of 21 existing social enterprises and create 15 new jobs.

To date 3 new groups have been recruited and 4 existing groups recruited.

PLATO Mid Ulster

This programme launched in January 2018 provides a growth opportunity to 15 ambitious Mid Ulster businesses, to access support from local industry leaders to enhance their business acumen and facilitate local and cross border networking and learning. Mr Eamon Donnelly (Chair, Urform and Winner Mid Ulster Businessman of the Year at the Mid Ulster Business Awards) has signed up to be one of the Mid Ulster Mentors.



Rural Development Programme (RDP) Business Plan Support Programme 2018/19

12 RDP applicants availed of the opportunity to get assistance to develop Business Plans to support their RDP Application to the Rural Development Programme.

Business Events



Helping Mid Ulster Businesses Maximise Digital Media Opportunities

In autumn 2017, three successful Breakfast 'Digital Media' Seminars were delivered (in Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt areas) by Digital 42 and attended by 142 business representatives. The seminars promoted the use of Digital Media to Mid Ulster businesses and demonstrated how businesses should use this to maximise their potential.

World Butchers' Challenge – Mid Ulster Showcase Event (21 March 2018)

120 International Butchers who were participating in the World Butchers Challenge at Titanic, Belfast visited Mid Ulster to take part in a Mid Ulster Showcase Event involving visits to Agri-Food Companies, visits to Master Butchers, a live 'Nose to Tail' Butchery Demo at and Loughry. Team Ireland won the WBC Global Title.



Celebrating International Women's Day (5th and 7th March 2018)

170 women attended the two events in Dungannon and Magherafelt which featured inspirational speakers and raised awareness and funds for the NI Air Ambulance Service.





Hong Kong Trade Visit (18/19 April 2018)

Council organised this joint initiative alongside Invest NI to bring 6 sets of senior buyers from Hong Kong and Republic of Ireland Agri Food sectors to meet 16 Mid Ulster Agri-Food businesses. The trip involved visits to large agri-food businesses in Mid Ulster, a networking dinner at the Glenavon Hotel, Cookstown and a Meet the Buyer Event at CAFRE's Loughry Campus.



THEME 2: ENABLING EMPLOYABILITY & SKILLS



Mid Ulster Skills Forum

Established in April 2017 by Council, the Mid Ulster Skills Forum is the first industry-led, area-based body of its kind in Northern Ireland. The 30 strong partnership, which draws its membership from local businesses, colleges, universities, enterprise agencies, key sectoral business organisations, government departments and the Council, is speaking as one voice to take forward its skills agenda in a

focused and co-ordinated manner. In order to progress the skills agenda, the Skills Forum have established three sub-groups to consider Brexit, Apprenticeships and Education engagement and linkages.

Council appointed consultants to complete a robust Skills Report and Action Plan for the district which included a comprehensive analysis of the existing skills shortages, gaps and deficits and future skills requirements. To further explore key issues emerging, a major Mid Ulster Skills Strategy & Action Plan and a Research Study into the Mid Ulster Engineering Sector have been undertaken.

European Social Fund (ESF) Programmes (2015-18)

Council continues to provide match funding to the following 3-year programmes:-

1. Step Up to Sustainable Employment (SUSE+)
2. Exploring Enterprise 3
3. Up for Work
4. Job Match

During the past year, Council funding of £74,261 leveraged £721,507 and resulted in:

- Supporting 593 participants
- Helping 211 people into employment
- 1,287 qualifications being achieved
- 135 progressing to Further Education / training

Jobmatch
client Shaun
secures
employment
with Autism
NI



Up For Work
client Joseph
receives help
to update his
CV in
preparation
to apply for
jobs.



THEME 3: ENABLING URBAN & RURAL REGENERATION

Rural Development Programme (£10.1m)

Mid Ulster Rural Development Partnership (MURDP) manages the delivery of a Local Development Strategy for rural areas of Mid Ulster District Council. £10.1m was allocated to the LAG to implement this strategy in Mid Ulster.

Rural Business Investment Scheme

Total grant funding from DAERA of £649,414.34 was distributed to 31 rural businesses in the Mid Ulster area. Overall programme targets are to support 100 Businesses and create 100 jobs. In total from the start of the programme £866,381.84 has been invested from the programme and 124 jobs are currently profiled on Letters of Offer.

Rural Basic Services Scheme

Technical Assistance to the value of £67,035.95 was distributed to 18 rural community groups in Mid Ulster. Following this ten Rural services organisations have successfully secured capital funding under the Rural Basic Services measure to the value of £1,027,971.62. Six letters of offer are currently issued and there has been a drawdown of £74,043 from DAERA funds towards capital projects.

Co-operation

Stage 1 was successfully completed for 2 co-operation projects in Mid Ulster – International Appalachian Trail and Lough Neagh.

Village Regeneration Scheme (in partnership with Council)

Council are responsible for delivering the Village Renewal element of the Rural Development Programme and officers are working with 37 villages to develop projects. Over the period 2018-18, 1 large village enhancement scheme was completed in Ballygawley and 4 playparks were enhanced in Augher, Caledon, Granville and Tobermore.



Ballygawley



Augher



Caledon



Granville



Tobermore

Mid Ulster Council's Village Spruce Up Scheme

70 Schemes were completed in Phase 1 with a total investment of £297,148.38. Council Grant Aid of £195,876.28 has leveraged of £101,272.10 private sector investment. A further 44 schemes are due to commence in April 2018.

Before Picture



After Picture



Public Realm Schemes

Council's Public Health and Infrastructure Dept has worked alongside Council's Economic Development team to deliver three Public Realm Schemes in Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt over the past few years, representing a total investment of £8.5m. Work is underway to progress public realm schemes in Coalisland and Maghera.

Cookstown



Dungannon

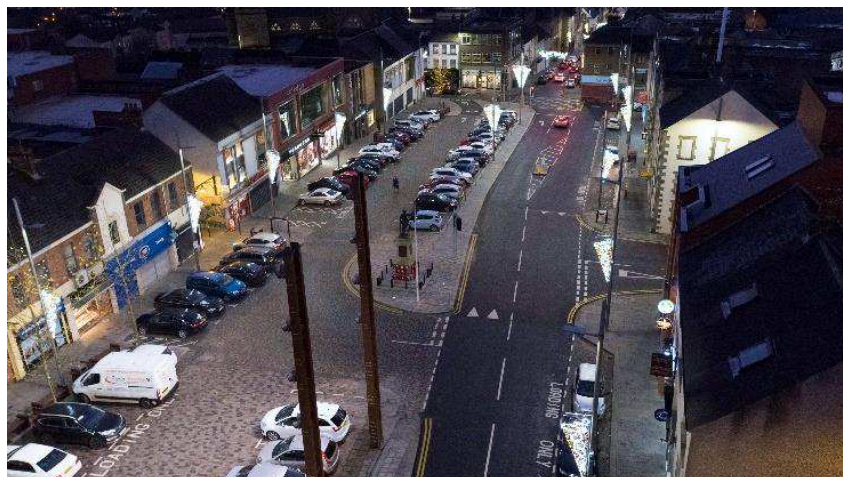


Magherafelt



Market Square Improvement Scheme, Dungannon

Council's Public Health and Infrastructure Dept has worked alongside Council's Economic Development team to complete a programme of improvements in Market Square, Dungannon in November 2017. The works have improved accessibility for pedestrians whilst creating a more relaxed and safer shopping environment.



Seamus Heaney HomeGround Project

Working in partnership with Council's Head of Culture and Arts, the Economic Development team has commenced work on The Seamus Heaney HomeGround Project. The project aims to enhance the Seamus Heaney HomePlace experience by developing a literary and heritage experience linking with the local landscape and local heritage that inspired so much of Seamus Heaney's group. The project being progressed will include Physical Trails, Virtual Trails and an Education Programme.

Town Centre Events

12 public events were delivered attracting 82,600 people into our five large town centres (Cookstown, Dungannon, Magherafelt, Coalisland and Maghera). These events included Cookstown Continental Market, Christmas / Halloween Events, Maghera Walled Garden Event and Community Events in Coalisland.





Town Centre Marketing

A Towns Positioning Study was completed which resulted in the development of new/updated brands and merchandise for Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt.



THEME 4: ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE & CONNECTIVITY

Ann Street Development Site, Dungannon

This prime opportunity site in Dungannon town centre has lain derelict for over 30 years. Following the release of a development brief Council appointed a preferred developer in July 2017 last year to take forward the development of this gateway site to Dungannon. Future plans include a retail led mixed use development comprising commercial, office and leisure uses including a 30 bedroom hotel. Work has been on-going in the intervening period to move the bid to formal contract.



Redevelopment of Maghera High School Site

The former High School site is owned by Council has been identified as a strategic site for economic development purposes within the Maghera Development Framework Plan 2017-30. An Integrated Consultancy Team (ICT) has been appointed to redevelop the site to allow for the construction of a number of industrial units on fully serviced sites by creating a new access road and installing the associated utilities.

Engineering Centre of Excellence, Dungannon

This partnership project with South West College (SWC) will be dedicated to the pursuit of innovation. In February 2018, a joint SWC/Council delegation visited two of the leading Catapult centres in the UK, which the Engineering Centre of Excellence is modelled on. These included the Advanced Forming Research Centre Catapult (AFRC) at University of Strathclyde, Glasgow and the Manufacturing Technology Centre (MTC) in Coventry. These UK centres are a core government strategy for the provision of high-level research and development services to industry. Further meetings are planned in May 2018 for follow up discussions with SWC.

Rural Broadband

Council is making an application to The Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) to their new Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) Challenge Fund calling for projects delivering fibre to the Premise (FTTP). A new call for full applications is expected to open in early summer 2018. There is a specified delivery method i.e. Public Sector Anchor Tenancy whereby all proposed projects start and finish at Council owned buildings with access chambers to access fibre at every 400m. The project must indicate the potential number of Businesses and premises that could avail of FTTP within a 200m radius of the chambers and be capable of stimulating private sector investment especially where it has not been commercially viable to provide it previously.

Cookstown By-Pass

A commitment was secured that plans for the A29 Cookstown Bypass are to progress. Development work will include the undertaking of new surveys and a design review before moving to the production of draft statutory orders and an Environmental Impact Assessment Report.

A6 North Western Transport Corridor

Officers are working closely with Department for Infrastructure (DfI) on the installation of a piece of Public Art as a gateway feature on the pedestrian / cycle bridge that will be constructed at the Castledawson Roundabout.



Gas to the West

Officers are in regular liaison with contractors working to install the gas network in Coalisland, Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt. Significant works have been completed in Cookstown, with gas to be 'live' by December 2018.

HEADLINE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACHIEVEMENTS 2017/2018

The activities the Council's economic development section have undertaken over the last 12 months have resulted in the achievement of some key outputs, which include:

✓ 222 new jobs created through the business start programme
✓ ESF funded projects have; # Recruited 593 participants on to skills and employability training programmes, # Helped 211 people gain employment, # Assisted participants achieve 1,287 new qualifications # Helped 135 participants progress to Further Education / training
✓ 9 engineering businesses are in receipt of bespoke innovation support to develop new products and services
✓ 15 action plans have been developed for social enterprises and we are working with 3 new groups and 4 existing groups to provide them with specialist support to grow their business.
✓ Generated in excess of £3 million external investment leverage (for every £1 invested, the economic development section has levered an additional £7 of other external monies)
✓ Completion of £8.5 million public realm investment in Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt town centres
✓ 70 properties refurbished on the Village Spruce Up Scheme leveraging £101,272.10 in private sector investment
✓ Support being provided to 31 businesses via the RDP's Rural Business Investment Scheme through provision of grant funding totalling £649,414
✓ Technical Assistance funding of £67,035 distributed to 18 rural community groups
✓ Attracted 82,600 visitors to a series of town centre events
✓ 3 business events were hosted locally with 337 attendees
✓ 2 events held to showcase Mid Ulster on a global stage; - Hong Kong Trade Visit - World Butchers Challenge

Watch this space – a range of new business programmes in the pipeline.....