

Report on	Regional and Minority Languages Bursary Programme 2021/22 and Irish Language Activity Funding Programme 2021/22
Date of Meeting	Thurs 13th May 2021
Reporting Officer	Tony McCance, Head of Culture & Arts
Contact Officer	Déaglán Ó Doibhlin, Irish Language Development Officer

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To update Council on the proposed Regional and Minority Language Bursary programme 2021/22
1.2	To update Council on the proposed Irish Language Activity Funding Programme 2021/22
1.3	To seek decision from Council regarding approval to publicly advertise both programmes.
2.0	Background
2.1	The Action Plan for the Development of the Irish Language, as approved by Council identified the following key themes: Theme 1: <i>Promoting Opportunities to Learn Irish</i> , funding support would be made available for local people to attend recognised residential language learning courses and Theme 2: <i>Irish Language in the Community</i> , funding would be made available for external language, cultural and sporting organisations for the promotion of Irish language events.
2.2	The purpose of the Regional and Minority Language programme that is delivered across Mid Ulster District Council is to assist residents of the district in attending approved residential summer courses in order to achieve fluency in a regional or minority language.
2.3	The purpose of the Irish language activity funding programme is to identify, to assist and to support groups and organisations seeking to provide events and activities through the Irish language across Mid Ulster from June 2021 to March 2022.
2.4	In 2019, 145 local people availed of a Regional and Minority language bursary from Mid Ulster District Council. Due to Covid19 restrictions no bursaries were

	made available during 2020 as all residential courses were cancelled. There is still considerable doubt as to whether courses will be permitted to go ahead in Summer 2022 but on the basis that they do, it is expected that there will be a high level of interest and uptake.
2.5	In 2020/21, 8 voluntary and community groups, schools, sports, arts and cultural organisations organised events and activities in their local area through the medium of Irish Language with assistance from Council's Irish language activity funding.
2.6	Subject to Council approval, a public call will be issued in relation to the 2021 Regional and Minority language bursary scheme. Individuals will be invited to submit funding applications. Officers within Culture & Arts Services will assess and process applications prior to submission to Council for consideration.
2.7	Subject to Council approval a public call will also be issued with regard to June 2021 to March 2022 Activity Funding Programme. Groups/organisations will be invited to submit expressions of interest applications. The Irish Language Officer team will follow up on Expressions of Interest with all interested groups to discuss their project ideas and to support and develop their projects prior to submission to council for consideration.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Mid Ulster District Council has adopted an Irish Language Policy which commits Council to the implementation of an Action Plan to develop the language in the district, and the above actions are specified within the plan.
3.2	The activities delivered in 2020/21 will be reviewed on completion to measure success and to shape future planning.
3.3	Community events and activities supported will complement existing Council services including Arts and Culture, Tourism and Community Development activity.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	<u>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</u>
	Financial: The required funding to support the delivery of the Regional and Minority Language bursary scheme and the Irish language Activity Funding Programme has been budgeted from the 2021/22 Regional and Minority Language budget.
	Human: Irish Language officers and other relevant staff within Arts and Cultural Services will offer assistance and support in terms of knowledge and experience for all applicant groups and individuals where required.

	Risk Management: Cognisance of the impact of COVID restrictions and how these may impact on residential language tuition in Summer 2021. On this basis, bursaries will be awarded on the basis that the Language schools actually take place.
4.2	<u>Screening and Impact Assessments</u>
	Equality and Good Relations Implications: The implementation of the Activity Funding and the Regional and Minority Language Bursary programmes will strengthen partnerships between Council and community, empowering communities at grass roots level and encourage greater collaboration among groups.
	Rural Needs Implications: None
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Permission is sought to publicly advertise the Regional and Minority Language Bursary Programme 2021/22
5.2	Permission is sought from Council to issue a public call for Expressions of Interest for support under the Irish Language Activity Programme 2021/22
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	n/a