



13 January 2022

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Development Committee to be held in The Chamber, Dungannon and by virtual means Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon, BT71 6DT on Thursday, 13 January 2022 at 19:00 to transact the business noted below.

A link to join the meeting through the Council's remote meeting platform will follow.

Yours faithfully

Adrian McCreesh  
Chief Executive

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## AGENDA

### OPEN BUSINESS

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest  
Members should declare any financial and non-financial interests they have in the items of business for consideration, identifying the relevant agenda item and the nature of their interest.
3. Chair's Business

### Matters for Decision

- |     |  |          |
|-----|--|----------|
| 4.  | Update on DfC Access and Inclusion Programme 2021/2022                                     | 3 - 6    |
| 5.  | Community Development Report   | 7 - 34   |
| 6.  | Consultation Response: DfC: Intermediate Rent Development of Policy and Model              | 35 - 48  |
| 7.  | Regional Minority Language Bursary Programme and Irish Language Activity Funding Programme | 49 - 52  |
| 8.  | Purchasing Books for Resale at Seamus Heaney HomePlace                                     | 53 - 54  |
| 9.  | Sports Representative Grants   | 55 - 58  |
| 10. | Consultation DfC: Notice to Quit Periods for Private Tenancies                             | 59 - 98  |
| 11. | Economic Development Report OBFD   | 99 - 206 |

Matters for Information

- |    |  |           |
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| 12 | Development Committee minutes of meeting held on 8 December 2021 |           |
| 13 | Paws for Thought   | 207 - 232 |
| 14 | Economic Development Report OBFi                                 | 233 - 260 |

**Items restricted in accordance with Section 42, Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014. The public will be asked to withdraw from the meeting at this point.**

Matters for Decision

- 15. Economic Development Report
- 16. Consider Letter of Offer from DfC regarding Dungannon Thomas Clarke's Project

Matters for Information

- 17. Development Committee Confidential minutes of meeting held on 8 December 2021
- 18. Mid South West Region Growth Deal

<b>Report on</b>	Update on Department for Communities Access and Inclusion Programme 2021/22
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup> January 2022
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Tony McCance, Head of Culture & Arts
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Tony McCance, Head of Culture & Arts Claire Linney, Assistant Director of Development Anne Reid, Parks and Countryside Development Officer

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To provide members with an update on the 2021/22 Department for Communities Access and Inclusion Funding Programme
1.2	To provide members with the list of additional projects approved for funding by Department for Communities.
1.3	To seek approval to set up specific finance codes to incur expenditure for each project where required.
1.4	To seek approval to utilise the approved Council framework contractors, where required
1.5	To seek approval to initiate a tender process to appoint suitably qualified contractors for the installation of projects as identified in section 3 of this report and where required.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	The Department for Communities (DfC) Access and Inclusion Capital Programme for 2021/22 is designed to improve access to and participation in arts and cultural activity and leisure and outdoor recreational activity by people with disabilities across Northern Ireland.
2.2	The Department for Communities invited Local Councils to apply for funding available through the programme and to assist in the prioritising of project submissions developed by Mid Ulster District Council, prior to submission to the Department for Communities prior to final Departmental assessment.
2.3	The maximum funding available for each project is £30,000 with up to 90% grant funding being provided.
2.4	Council-owned Culture & Arts, leisure, outdoor recreation and tourism projects were eligible to apply.

2.5	Applicants are eligible to apply for amounts up to the maximum of £30,000 per project, with a 10% funding contribution requirement from the applicant.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	12 projects had previously been submitted by Mid Ulster District Council to the Department for Communities (DfC) Access and Inclusion Capital Programme for 2021/22, with 11 of those projects successfully progressing and being allocated 90% funding (total value of projects - £197,182.10)
3.2	Following the identification of underspend by the Department for Communities, an additional 5 projects have been identified by MUDC and which have now also been approved with an additional funding allocation by the Department for Communities of £96,024 (10% funding contribution of £10,670.10 to be met by Mid Ulster District Council).
3.3	<p>The 5 additional projects approved for funding are as follows:</p> <p><b>1. Accessible Benches for community venues throughout the Mid Ulster District</b>  <b>Total Project cost: £29,990</b>  <b>Grant Amount: £26,991</b>  The funding will be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• purchase accessible benches.</li> </ul> <p>Community facilities will apply to the Council for the benches through an open call. These benches will allow for greater disability access to arts, culture and community activities throughout the District.</p> <p><b>2. Glenone Riverside Walk</b>  <b>Total Project cost: £20,175.00</b>  <b>Grant Amount: £18,157</b>  The funding will be used to improve accessibility within the Glenone Riverside Walk (linear path from Portglenone Bridge along the side of the River Bann to the end of Glenone Forest), approx 2km. The funding will be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace the inaccessible gates and restricted access that is currently in place with accessible solutions.</li> <li>• Include accessible picnic tables, bench seating and designated disabled parking bays within the site.</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Newferry Accessible Parking and Picnic Tables</b>  <b>Total Project cost: £19,675.00</b>  <b>Grant Amount: £17,707</b>  Stage 1 of the Lower Bann Blueway from Portglenone to Newferry was completed in 2019 with the provision of 25 additional coarse angling stands installed from the Portglenone Bridge upstream. Further improvements were implemented in March 2021 with the installation of an accessible canoe pontoon and hoist/crew lift at New Ferry.</p>

	<p>Current access at the facilities for car parking and picnic area is restricted due to high kerbs and grass areas, which presents challenges for those who use wheelchairs to move around the site.</p> <p>This funding will be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the access way is improved to cover any gaps on the approach to the slipway.</li> <li>• The dropped kerb leading to the slipway will be tidied up to close the current gap.</li> <li>• The inclusion of an accessible parking bay adjacent to the dropped kerb will be put in place.</li> <li>• A designated picnic area with accessible tables will also be installed adjacent the accessible parking. This will include accessible pathways and access.</li> <li>• Additionally accessible bench seating will be installed.</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Installation of DDA compliant pathways and raised beds at Castledawson Allotments</b></p> <p><b>Total Project cost: £26,980.00</b></p> <p><b>Grant Amount: £24,282</b></p> <p>The funding will be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surface all onsite pathways.</li> <li>• Install raised beds in order to facilitate greater utilisation by people with disabilities and wheelchair users.</li> </ul> <p><b>5. Installation of DDA compliant pathway and two angling stands at Curran picnic site</b></p> <p><b>Total Project cost: £9,874.10</b></p> <p><b>Grant Amount: £8,887</b></p> <p>The funding will be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install DDA compliant pathways.</li> </ul> <p>Provide two assessable angling stands at Curran picnic site Castledawson.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<p><b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b></p> <p>Financial: Projects submitted are required to provide matched funding of 10% (projects are 90% funded through the DfC Access and Inclusion programme 2021/22). The 10% match funding requirement can be met from within the existing budgets of applicant Services within Mid Ulster District Council</p> <p>Human:</p>

	<p>Staff time and staff resource allocated to delivering projects. This can be met from within existing resources within each of the Service teams responsible for delivering each project.</p>
	<p>Risk Management: The additional 5 projects approved for funding by DfC, will be required to be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.</p>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	<p>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications: The Purpose of the DfC Access and Inclusion funding programme 2021/22 is to provide capital funding to ensure that access to arts, culture, leisure and recreational and outdoor activities is equitable throughout all 11 local authority areas.</p>
	<p>Rural Needs Implications:</p> <p>Rural needs are considered as part of the planned activity undertaken by Council Services including Culture &amp; Arts, Leisure, Parks Tourism and Property Services.</p> <p>Rural needs are also considered as part of the delivery of the DfC Access and Inclusion Programme 2021/22</p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	Members are asked to note the update on the 2021/22 Department for Communities Access and Inclusion Funding Programme
5.2	To seek approval to set up specific finance codes to incur expenditure for each project as detailed in section 3 of the report, where required.
5.3	To seek approval to utilise the approved Council framework contractors, where required, to deliver the projects identified and
5.4	To seek approval to initiate a tender process to appoint suitably qualified contractors for the installation of projects as identified in section 3 of the report and where required.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	N/A

<b>Report on</b>	Community Development Report
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> January 2022
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Claire Linney, Assistant Director of Development
<b>Contact Officers</b>	Tony McCance – Head of Arts and Culture, Philip Clarke - Community Services Manager, Oliver Morgan – Good Relations Manager, Michael McCrory - PCSP Manager

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	Community Grants - to approve the Council grants policy 2022 – 2023; to agree the rolling grant awards - Local Community Festivals, Good Relations and Decade of Anniversaries
1.2	Emergency Support funding – to approve the final allocation of the Emergency Support funding.
1.3	Financial Inclusion Funding (Credit Unions Allocation) – to approve the allocation from DfC for its Financial Inclusion initiative to the affiliated network of Credit Unions across the district.
1.4	Charlie Donnelly Winter school – to approve cooperation with the Charlie Donnelly Winter School and Council to Council linkages between Mid Ulster and Madrid with the municipality of Rivas Vaciamadrid, and Taranco region.
1.5	Development - to update on Development.
2.0	Background
2.1	Community Grants – Council annually delivers an open call for its main grants; and then delivers a number of rolling community grant programmes; Good Relations and Local Community Festivals. Council also annually delivers the Decade of Anniversaries Grant.
2.2	Emergency Support funding – DFC has allocated Council emergency Covid 19 support funds to help the community remobilise in light of the Covid 19 pandemic, and support people with regard to the impact of Covid 19.
2.3	Financial Inclusion Funding (Credit Unions) – DfC has allocated Council support funds under its Financial Inclusion initiative to underpin financial education for people. Its purpose is to help build financial resilience and improve overall financial wellbeing through access to good quality advice and skills to support effective money

	management, linking into holistic debt advice services. As part of the delivery of the Poverty Plan and stakeholder engagement workshop with members and local Credit Unions from across the district representative of all the affiliated federations (Irish League, Ulster Federation & The Tyrone Zone) it was recommended if resources became available they could be allocated to Credit Unions to undertake this work.
2.4	Charlie Donnelly Winter school – Council established linkages with the Charlie Donnelly Winter school and region of Rivas Vaciamadrid during the legacy Council of Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council. Continued linkages to the Winter School have taken place annually (due to Covid 19 this has not taken place last 2 years). The Municipality of Rivas Vaciamadrid has formally written to the Chair of Mid Ulster District Council to re-establish links between the regions through the Charlie Donnelly Winter school and other commemorations in Madrid.
2.5	Development includes the following areas: Community Support, Good Relations, Culture, Arts, Heritage, Strategic Community Development, and PCSP.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>The Good Relations grant is a rolling programme – 1 application received and recommended for awards total £840 Community Festival – no application submissions See grant award recommendations in Appendix 1 for approval.</p> <p>The Council opens its main community grants each year in January/February and closes in March. The grants policy is attached at Appendix 2 for approval. Areas to note: Criteria for sports development to give consideration to encouraging people who are not actively involved in sport to participate. Strategic grants will open but applicants must follow guidance as per the NI Executive Office and regulations relating to Covid 19. Schools Sports -Access Grant; delivered in partnership with Leisure; to note a number of updates - the focus of the grant is for minority community sports groups that do not have access to their own facilities, a pro rata process for sports groups accessing the same school facility, and focus on provision of sports pitches.</p>
3.2	<p>Emergency Support funding – In partnership with DFC, the remainder of the emergency support funding of £16,565, is to be allocated to (original budget £134,621 with £118,056 allocated to facilities).</p> <p>It is proposed to work in partnership with the charity Save the Children and the Northern and Southern Trusts to provide support for families with young children in financial hardship under their Family Support Initiative. The referrals to the programme would be via the Mid Ulster Advice Service STEP. The programme was piloted in Antrim and Newtownabbey Council which has proved very positive regarding support to families in need. A support worker will engage the families in need and provide a wrap around service of support with provision for early learning educational toy packs for children, support re accessing services, and support for basic provision such as food and essential household vouchers and support on engaging children early on worries etc. (up to a</p>



	<p>maximum of £340 per family). The programme will support a minimum of 150 families across Mid Ulster.</p> <p>The investment breakdown is  Northern Trust £10,000  Southern Trust £10,000  Council £20,000 (DFC emergency support funding £16,565)  Save the Children facilitation and running costs  Mid Ulster Advice Service STEP referrals</p>
3.3	<p>Financial Inclusion Funding (Credit Unions) – DfC have allocated a resource of £46,740 for the primary purpose to help build financial resilience and improve overall financial wellbeing through access to good quality advice and skills to support effective money management, linking into holistic debt advice services. Following a stakeholder engagement workshops with the Credit Unions network to develop greater collaboration between the local CUs and Council especially in the area of financial support, it is proposed to allocate the available funding to the network of CUs based on a membership pro-rata basis as detailed in Appendix 3.</p>
3.4	<p>This funding will go towards updating and modernising service provision with a partner engagement on outreach to children and young people and schools to encourage greater financial awareness, savings and planning ahead.</p> <p>Charlie Donnelly Winter school – It is proposed to re-establish links between Mid Ulster and Madrid; the region of Rivas Vaciamadrid and Tاراcon through the Charlie Donnelly Winter school and other commemorations in Madrid.  The proposed Charlie Donnelly Winter school will be at Hill of The O'Neill and will include following:  Host and engage with representatives and officials from Ayuntamiento Rivas Vaciamadrid.  A series of cross community activities on poetry, art, tours for Charlie Donnelly (Killybrackey) and Ben Murray (Aughnacloy), a film showing, a music event, a keynote address, talks, update talk by Gearóid Ó Machail (FIBI) and Rev Mark Gray (Bannside Presbyterian Church) on the work in Banbridge to commemorate International Brigaders from the area.</p> <p>It is proposed to support the Winter school with a contribution of £4000 to their programme under Arts and Culture and Good Relations.</p>
3.5	<p>Pending Covid 19 it is proposed to host representatives from the above municipalities during the Charlie Donnelly Winter School and to consider future visit of Mid Ulster officials to the region.</p> <p>Development</p> <p>Community Support  The Community Support team is currently working with groups in the delivery of their grants and in other development activity.</p>

	<p>Good Relations</p> <p>Good Relations is continuing to deliver the Plan for 2021 – 2022. Programmes are being delivered across the three themes of engaging young people together, promoting and delivering shared space and cultural development working with BME and migrant communities, section 75 groups and supporting cultural expression.</p> <p>Peace IV Local Action Plan – the programme is complete a part from the Shared Space Towns Project. Follow up activity re finalising claims and monitoring with SEUPB is taking place.</p> <p>PCSP –Ongoing as guided by the PCSP Partnership. Please see attached minutes in Appendix 4.</p> <p>Arts &amp; Culture – the venues are continuing to deliver their arts, heritage and literary programmes, based on Covid 19 guidance.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<p><b><u>Financial &amp; Human Resources Implications</u></b></p> <p>Grants – budgets as per table in Appendix 2.</p> <p>Good Relations - £840</p> <p>Emergency Support funding - £20,000, with £16,565 of DFC emergency support funding and the remainder within the community development budget.</p> <p>Financial Inclusion funding - £46,740</p> <p>Charlie Donnelly Winter School - £4000 (Arts and Culture and Good Relations)</p> <p><b><u>Professional Support</u></b></p> <p>None</p>
<b>4.2</b>	<p><b><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></b></p> <p>None</p>
<b>4.3</b>	<p><b><u>Risk Management Implications</u></b></p> <p>None</p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	Community Grants - to approve the Council grants policy 2022 – 2023; to agree the rolling grant awards - Good Relations.
5.2	Emergency Support funding – to approve the final allocation of the Emergency Support funding and participate in the partner project to support families in need.
5.3	

5.4	Financial Inclusion Funding (Credit Unions Allocation) – to approve the allocation from DfC for its Financial Inclusion initiative to the affiliated network of Credit Unions across the district.
5.5	Charlie Donnelly Winter school – to approve cooperation with the Charlie Donnelly Winter School and Council to Council linkages between Mid Ulster and Madrid with the municipality of Rivas Vaciamadrid, and Tarancón region.  Development - to update on Development.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	<p>Appendix 1 Good Relations and Local Community Festivals Grant Awards</p> <p>Appendix 2 Community Grants Policy 2022 – 2023</p> <p>Appendix 3 Financial Inclusion Funding to Credit Unions</p> <p>Appendix 4 PCSP Minutes</p>

## Appendix 1

### Good Relations Grant - December 2021 (Maximum £1200)

No	Organisation Name	Aim	Title Of Event/project	Band	Requested	Awarded
1	Belle of Mid Ulster Association	Community	International Women's Day Event	4	£1,200	£840
					<b>Total</b>	<b>£840</b>

Bands	Score	%
7	30-39	40%
6	40-49	50%
5	50-59	60%
4	60-69	70%
3	70-79	80%
2	80-89	90%
1	90+	100%

## Appendix 2 Grants Policy 2022– 2023

Category 1 One Grant in Category Community Groups	Category 2 One Grant in Category	Category 3 Sports Groups One Category with exception of *	Category 4
<b>1. Small Grant in Arts &amp; Culture, Heritage Community Dev.</b> Maximum £1200 Budget proposed £130,000  <b>2. Community Venue Grant (incl. activity)</b> Maximum £3000 Budget £80,000 80% Community development & greater than 10 hours weekly activity – 3 year funding  <b>3. Strategic Arts &amp; Culture Grant</b> Maximum £20,000 Budget £85,000 80% arts & culture group & dedicated performance space -3 year funding  <b>4. Strategic Community Development Grant</b> Maximum £8,000 Budget £45,000 3 year funding	<b>5. Strategic Events Grant</b> Maximum £8,000 Minimum 1000 people attending Budget £75,000 (£10,000 GR TBC annually) 3 year funding  <b>6. Good Relations Grant</b> Maximum £1200 Rolling programme Budget £35,000 Rolling Programme  <b>7. Community Local Festival Grant</b> Maximum £1200 Rolling programme Budget £90,000 Rolling Programme	<b>8. *Sports Development</b> Maximum £1500 Budget £30,000  <b>9. *Sports Capital Grant</b> Maximum grant £5000 To be matched 50% One call each year – can only apply every 2 years Budget £120,000)  <b>10. Strategic Sports Development Grant</b> Maximum £15,000, Budget £75,000 (Governing Bodies only-Salary) 3 year funding  <b>11 *Sports Representative Individual &amp; Team</b> <b>Maximum £250-£500</b> Budget £15,000 Selected by their governing body to participate in a representative team or individual sport at provincial, national, all Ireland or international level (outside of NI)	<b>12. Capital Discretionary Grant</b> Up to £50,000 as funder of last resort Budget TBC  <b>13. Festive Lights</b> Allocation as per settlement Budget £105,000 (3 year funding)  <b>14. Schools Sports - Access Grant</b> Maximum £4500 Schools providing sports facilities to minority sports that do not have their own provision in areas Budget £10,000

## Grant allocation -

Community (Community Development, Arts, Culture & Heritage, general) Groups can only apply to one programme per year to Categories 1 and 2. Sports groups can apply to Category 3 and 2. Category 4 grants are limited to groups meeting very specific conditions with a requirement to contact grants team to discuss.

Council also seeks for annual calls for strategic partnership projects in line with PCSP Action Plan and Good Relations Action Plan and partners on Regional Minority Languages support activities. Publicity of strategic partner projects to be issued January/February 2022 in line with plans.

## Grants Process

1. Application and criteria set through Committee and Council.
2. Public Advertisement for all grants.
3. Applications will be online or if required a hard copy can be requested.
4. There will be points of contact for queries on each grant area.
5. Applications will be submitted on line or returned to one central office which will then oversee the allocation to relevant teams for administration.
6. Eligibility will be confirmed upon receipt of applications, with 2 days' notice for ensuring all documentation is in place, telephone and email notification recorded.
7. Grants that meet eligibility will proceed to assessment to be carried out by officer teams, all declarations of interest are monitored.
8. Grants will be presented to Committee for consideration and approval, all declarations of interest are monitored.
9. Grants will be presented to Council for ratification.
10. Letters of Offer (standard template) will be issued to all groups.
11. Claims will be received as previous and verification undertaken.
12. Report to Council on investment of grant funding and groups supported.
13. Publicity of Council must be received for grant support in line with the LOO.
14. Advance payments will be provided, 50% up to £1500 and 25% up to £10,000.

## Grant Eligibility Conditions

1. Groups applying for a grant must be a not for profit constituted community or voluntary organisation with an annual AGM, individuals can apply to the sports representative grant only.
2. Funding cannot be allocated for a project or venue where an existing SLA exists with Council for a project, building or facility.
3. Groups will only be able to apply for a grant as per the categories, this is to maximise the funding allocation to as many groups as possible.
4. The same project cannot be split across different grant categories.
5. Statutory and 'for profit' organisations, activities and recipients (incl. activities that receive statutory core provision are not eligible for grant, note exception schools facilities in the community grant).
6. Regional groups/organisations are not eligible to apply.
7. Applications that are not completed accurately and in full will not be considered.
8. Religious or political activity cannot be funded under any grant.
9. All applicants must present a project that will take place within the MUDC area (except Sports Representative Grant as detailed within this section).
10. Applicants must present a project that will be delivered between 1<sup>st</sup> April - 31<sup>st</sup> March
11. Evidence of good governance; including annual AGM, Group bank account, financial management practice, insurances, etc. will be required.
12. Successful applicants will draw down grants retrospectively based on vouched expenditure, with procurement adhered to. Advance payments will be 50% up to £1500 and 25% up to £10,000 with final verification of all expenditure.
13. Group recipients should not have a membership charge for its users accessing its community provision greater than £250.
14. Group recipients should have no element of profit gain to any member or individual of its Committee (community interest companies not included due to director contribution).

The following items are not eligible for funding:

Hospitality greater than 20% of the grant threshold	Bad debt, loans, bank charges, deficits or arrears in payments of any organisation	Flags or bunting Alcohol	Groups or activities that discriminate against any section of the community
Activities, equipment or events that duplicate what already exist or that are covered by other funding	Salaries are available for strategic sports grants only (up to 50% of grant award)	Retrospective funding applications	Residential courses or training greater than 20% of funding sought
Celebrity appearances	Sports kits	Gifts or donations	Reclaimable VAT or other costs

## **Grant Criteria: Category 1**

### **Strategic Arts & Culture Grant**

To support strategic arts and culture organisations that play a key role across the Mid Ulster District Council area in the development and delivery of arts & culture activity through the delivery of their own programmes utilising their own dedicated arts & culture performance spaces. The service must:

1. Provide the structured delivery of an annual arts and culture programme within the organisations own performance space/theatre.
2. Provide accessible arts and culture development opportunities of a strategic nature that is providing for a large number of people across Mid Ulster.
3. Provide 100% dedicated arts & culture activity & be delivered by a dedicated arts & culture group.
4. Provide at least bi weekly arts and culture activities.

### **Strategic Community Development Grant**

To support strategic community development organisations that provide for the Mid Ulster area. Groups delivering to the same area should submit a partner application to avoid duplication.

1. Level of Community Support Activity
2. Level of benefit – number of beneficiaries
3. Targeting of deprivation and social need
4. Quality and level of provision
5. Level of geographic coverage
6. Value for Money

### **Arts, Culture, Heritage & Community Small Grant**

To support local communities deliver a range of local arts, culture, heritage, community projects for their local area.

1. Arts, Cultural, Heritage, Community activity and participation
2. Contribution to arts, culture, heritage, community development in the area
3. Increase and widen participation, addressing social inclusion and diversity
4. Contribution to volunteering and volunteer development



### **Community Venue Grant**

To support local communities to make available their premises and community centres for the use of the wider community. Venues applying to the grant must be used for a minimum 80% community development activities.

1. Beneficiaries (number of beneficiaries and groups)
2. Level of community usage per week
3. Level of community provision – number of rooms and size etc.
4. Shared space usage
5. Value for Money – contribution of grant to overall costs

The venue must be open greater than 10 hours per week and the grant can be used for community development projects at 20% of the funding allocation.

### **Grant Criteria: Category 2**

#### **Strategic Events Grant**

To support a number of strategic events that are providing for the whole of Mid Ulster District and are of a significant nature to bring people to the area and to promote the area at a regional level.

1. Social, Regeneration and Economic Return
2. Event Development
3. Promotion of Mid Ulster & Council
4. Event Management Experience
5. Level of promotion of good relations and Inclusion
6. Value for Money

Note events with a target audience under 1000 people or events that are not receiving regional tourism attendance and coverage would be a local community festival event.

#### **Community Local Festival Grant**

To support local communities deliver a local festival in their area bringing people from across the area together.

1. Level of Community Benefit and Participation (number of days, activities)
2. Number of beneficiaries (local and neighbouring areas)
3. Promotion of Good Relations and Social Inclusion
4. Festival Development

### **Good Relations Grant**

To support local communities deliver on good relations in line with the Government Together Building United Communities Strategy.

1. Contribution to the Good Relations TBUC themes : Our Shared Community, Safe Community, Cultural Expression through increased use of shared spaces and services
2. Contribution to Core Good Relations, addressing sectarianism, racism and prejudice through provision of increased shared space
3. Level of Community Benefit and Participation in existing shared space through increased activity
4. Targeting of Social Inclusion and deprivation through access to shared space and improved access to activities/events.

### **Grant Criteria: Category 3**

#### **Sports Representative Individual and Team Competitive Grant**

To support Individuals who have been selected by their governing body to participate in a representative team or individual sport at provincial, national, all Ireland or international level, with eligible costs (accommodation, travel, food), to a maximum of a £250 grant may be available. Applicants must be resident within the Mid Ulster District Council area for a period of 6 months prior to the period of the grant application.

To assist recognised Sports NI sports clubs (affiliated to their governing body of sport) who are travelling to compete in a recognised (by Governing body) representative (of District/County) sporting competition. A grant for eligible costs (travel, accommodation, food) to a maximum of £500 may be available. The team must have qualified in a recognised competition by the governing body of this sport, and must be representing the District / County. For both grants the event/competition must take place outside of NI.

#### **Sports Small Grant**

To support recognised Sports NI sports clubs (affiliated to their governing body of sport) to develop and promote their sports and recreation provision within their club and to seek to increase participation through a range of activity including; Women & Girls, People with Disabilities and Areas of Social Need. It will also support lifelong participation in

sport, health & wellbeing and the non-competitive side of sport that characterises the added value of what many clubs involve themselves in (e.g. Club Health Plans)

1. Level of sports activity and beneficiaries
2. Level of benefit targeting of Women & Girls, People with Disabilities & Areas of Social Need, older people back to fitness and others not in sport and fitness.
3. Contributes to promoting fitness and wellbeing
4. Other general activity provided to the community to engage and increase participation of those not traditionally participating in sports

### **Sports Capital Grant**

To support local sports clubs/groups develop their sporting facilities and provision through capital and equipment funding support. It will also support lifelong participation in sport, health & wellbeing and the non-competitive side of sport that characterises the added value of what many clubs involve themselves in (e.g. Club Health Plans)

Eligibility:

1. The fund is for not for profit constituted sports groups with the primary objective of providing sports for the Mid Ulster District.
2. All statutory consents and public procurement is in place.
3. Actual project cost quotations are provided with the application.
4. A maximum contribution of £5,000 is available per project, with a minimum match contribution of 50% (e.g. if seeking £5000 it must be a minimum £10,000 project).
5. For sports capital items or a one off piece of equipment of a value greater than £1000.
6. Groups can only apply to this grant once every 2 years.

The Sports Capital Grant is to provide a significant benefit to the local community:

Sports Development– supporting the development and enhancement of sports and sports groups across Mid Ulster.

Sports Wellbeing /Provision– increasing the number of beneficiaries of sport, and contributing to the physical fitness and wellbeing of people across the District.

Social Need/Social Inclusion – targeting those most vulnerable and people not currently active in sports to support lifelong participation in sport.

Sustainability – supporting the long term sustainability of sporting facilities & groups.

Council Corporate Plan – contributing to the Council's Corporate Objectives.

## **Strategic Sports Development Grant**

To support Governing Bodies that play a key strategic role across the MUDC area in developing their affiliated Clubs. It aims to provide Grant Aid to those Governing Bodies that provide direct support to Clubs across the area in increasing participation rates and improving playing standards through the employment of a Sports Coach. The service must:

1. Provide the structured delivery of an annual sports development programme of a main sport.
2. Be delivered through a recognised NI Sports organisation; through or in partnership with a sporting governing body; with no duplication of coverage within the same area or targeting of the same groups.
3. Provide accessible sports development opportunities of a strategic nature that is providing for a large number of people across Mid Ulster.
4. Provide the programme through a partnership approach with local clubs and groups.
5. Provide a minimum of 50% dedicated sports officer to the area of coverage in Mid Ulster. Funding for salary development only.
6. Provide match funding of a minimum 50% to the sports development programme targeted within the Mid Ulster District.
7. Provide for an active sport within Mid Ulster.
8. Liaise with Mid Ulster District Council Leisure Development Unit.

## **Grant Criteria: Category 4**

### **Capital Discretionary Grant**

To recognise that there are times when a modest amount of capital investment in our community can create the potential for a much larger project to happen. In such circumstances Council could potentially be a discretionary funder of last resort to allow projects to happen and maximise investment to our areas and communities. Any contribution would be a small percentage towards a much larger project.

Criteria:

Capital funding – Council will consider providing financial support for capital projects, which are defined as projects which will provide benefit to the community for a period in excess of five years, examples of which may include a new building or

refurbishment/renovation of an existing building. It will not provide support for acquisition of land, buildings or other assets such as equipment other than fixed plant for example permanently installed elevators/lifts.

a. The project funded must be in community ownership (satisfactory evidence of legal title or an appropriate long term lease will be required).

b. Not for Profit - Funding will only be considered for not for profit constituted community and voluntary groups which are involved in progressing a major community capital project which will provide significant benefit to the community within the Mid Ulster District Council area - Groups/organisations must be able to demonstrate that the majority of project beneficiaries (>80%) live within the Mid Ulster District Council area.

c. Community Benefit – A Project Plan must be in place to show community need and benefit and to avoid any potential issues of duplication.

d. Funder of Last Resort - The majority of funding at least 70% should be in place and that all funding avenues have been exhausted. Evidence of this will be required.

e. Statutory Requirements - The project must be at a state of readiness 6 months after letter of offer; with planning permission, land acquisition or lease agreement (if required), and other statutory permissions in place along with accurate costings.

f. Mid Ulster District Council Corporate Aims – The project must clearly demonstrate how it is achieving on Council corporate aims and objectives.

g. The project is a minimum value of £300,000, with Council funding to a maximum contribution of £50,000.

h. The Project must complete within 18 months of letter of offer; phased delivery and invoicing of expenditure can be accommodated.

A Group can only submit one call per project for this Capital Discretionary funding Support and a submission will only be considered by a Group once every 3 years. Groups/Organisations would be required to formally present to a Special Development Committee of Council.

### **Festive Lights Fund (award as per village settlement population - Area Plan)**

Direct provision of festive lighting will be provided in the main towns of Dungannon, Cookstown, Magherafelt, Coalisland and Maghera.

A grant programme (revenue and capital funding) will be delivered across the remaining settlements under the following criteria -

- I. The grant will be revenue (small items of capital applicable) and will support the supply, installations, maintenance, running cost of providing festive lights and any associated switch-on/launch event. The lights will be in a predominant village location visible to the wider community.
- II. The village settlements and populations will be as per the Mid Ulster Development Plan 2020 - 2030. The grant allocation will be based on village settlement size and range from £1,250 - £3,000:  
Up to £3,000 settlements greater than 1000  
Up to £2,000 settlements greater than 500  
Up to £1,500 all other listed village settlements  
Up to £1,250 all other listed smaller settlements
- III. Technical support will be available to groups and communities from Council Technical Unit.
- IV. The grant can only be issued to one group per area and the main overall development/regeneration/Chamber group will be given priority.
- V. All grant aid will be paid retrospectively to those successful applicants who submit appropriate paid invoices to Council as vouched expenditure.
- VI. Provision, installation and insurance, liability of lighting and any activity will be the responsibility of the Group applying.
- ix. Small settlements listed in the Area Plan that are not classified as villages will be considered for inclusion within the fund; if they have previously provided festive lights in their area.
- x. Letters will be issued to the main Development Group within the designated settlement with an offer of funding.

### **School Sports Access Grant (Threshold £4,500.00)**

Mid Ulster District Council recognises the importance of participation in physical activity and sport and the need to maximise access to facilities which encourage and support this.

Council recognises that a few underrepresented sports may be constrained by lack of access to suitable facilities, yet these may exist in local schools.

Specifically targeted at clubs using / planning to use a schools synthetic pitch or schools wanting to offer access to their synthetic pitch outside curriculum times.

To increase access for sports clubs to an under-utilized school synthetic pitch.

To contribute to the cost to schools of opening up and maintaining schools synthetic pitch.

To enhance access to team sports activities which are under-resourced or underrepresented.

The maximum amount available to access a school synthetic pitch is £4,500.00 – 1 application per school / club and where 2 or more clubs apply to use the same school synthetic pitch the grant offered will be on a pro rata basis ie 2 clubs up to 50%, 3 clubs up to 33.3% and 4 clubs up to 25%, etc

### **Eligibility**

Be a sports club using or planning to use a school owned synthetic pitch or be a school which plans to provide access to a school owned synthetic pitch by sports clubs.

Incur actual documented costs in accessing / providing a schools synthetic pitch or provide documentary evidence of voluntary work or maintenance costs involved in maintaining a school synthetic pitch.

Not have benefited from Council's: Sports Strategic Development Grant or Sports Capital Grant.

The programme is primarily aimed at team sports.

Council may consider applications by schools on behalf of, and supported by evidence of agreement with, a constituted sports club.

### **In addition for sports clubs:**

Be a constituted and not for profit sports club participating in a sport recognised by Sport NI, located in the Mid Ulster District Council area or a minimum of 80% of members must be resident in the Mid Ulster District Council area.

Sports club should evidence a letter of support/commitment from School Principal that includes agreed hire charges.

**In addition for schools:** Be located in the Mid Ulster District Council area.

## **Appeals Process**

An appeals process will be available for unsuccessful applicants. There will be no right of appeal in relation to the level of funding granted however appeals can be made on the basis of:

- That the stated process has not been followed.
- That the application has been rejected on the basis of eligibility criteria which had been applied incorrectly.
- That the scoring against the criteria for the programme has not been undertaken correctly.

Appeals can be undertaken in two stages if required:

**Stage 1**—an appeal must be lodged in writing within 10 working days of the date of receipt of a rejection letter. In the first instance the appeal should be submitted to the Grants Unit who will take responsibility for allocating this to the relevant senior officer. In all cases the appeal will be reviewed by the senior officer and a determination reached within one week of receipt of the appeal. If the appeal is upheld the project will be reassessed and an appropriate letter of offer issued. If the appeal is not successful the applicant will be informed and given the right to take the appeal to Stage 2 if required.

**Stage 2** – if the applicant is still not satisfied he or she can request a review by the Chief Executive who will review the process and application and present their recommendation.

## **Grant Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation seek to ensure that funding delivers the required outcomes, that it is used as agreed and to provide a feedback mechanism to improve decision making.

Monitoring should seek to ensure that;

Value for money is achieved.

The predicted outcomes are delivered.

Council has received adequate communication/promotion

Procurement has been met



Where instances arise where outcomes are not being met, the officer will support the Group to address any issues.

Monitoring will include completion of an evaluation and monitoring form. A visit by an officer will be undertaken to 10% of projects that receive funding over £1500 threshold. This will complement the verification visit and will include the same random selection of groups.

Grants applicable – Strategic grants: Culture, Arts and Sports, Strategic Community Development, Strategic Events, and Venues.

10% of small grants will have a project evaluation upon random sample. This will be undertaken by an officer of the Community Development Team, led by the Community Services Manager.

Capital projects; up to £5000 will have to issue evidence (e.g. photographs) of the capital and equipment investment alongside their expenditure return. A 20% monitoring visit will be undertaken on site to view expenditure items.

Discretionary Capital Grants will all be vouched on site for delivery of the capital development.

## **Grant Verification**

Reference DFP Guidance on Grants and Reducing Bureaucracy in funding the community and voluntary sector - The Code applies to revenue grant funding only.

Micro Grants will be paid when valid receipts are received & checked. A 50% advance will be issued to groups with final verification of all invoices before the balance of the grant is paid.

Small grants £1500 - £10,000 financial verification will take place based on valid receipts being checked against agreed project expenditure. A 25% advance will be issued to groups with final verification of all invoices before the remainder of the grant is paid.

Verification will include completion of a claim form, signed by relevant people within the organisation, along with valid receipts and invoices.

## Appendix 3

Credit Unions					
Name	Credit Union Network	Adult Membership	Minors	Total Membership	Allocation £
Cookstown	Irish League of CUs	6,102	1175	7,277	3,254
Dungannon	Irish League of CUs	10,011	1521	11,532	5,157
Magherafelt	Irish League of CUs	3,426	304	3,730	1,668
Coalisland	Irish League of CUs	10,120	1798	11,918	5,329
Moy	Irish League of CUs	2,840	510	3,350	1,498
Moyenir	Irish League of CUs	1,909	475	2,384	1,066
Torrent	Irish League of CUs	3,296	1013	4,309	1,927
Clogher Valley	Irish League of CUs	3,472	686	4,158	1,859
Pomeroy	Irish League of CUs	2,282	633	2,915	1,303
Moyola and Toome	Irish League of CUs	4,710	890	5,600	2,504
Desertmartin	Irish League of CUs	1,084	287	1,371	613
Bannvale	Irish League of CUs	5,736	1372	7,108	3,178
Carn Glen	Irish League of CUs	6,798	1615	8,413	3,762
Ballinascreen	Irish League of CUs	5,669	1699	7,368	3,295
Kildress	Irish League of CUs	1,939	652	2,591	1,159
Ardboe	Irish League of CUs	2,884	747	3,631	1,624
Ballinderry Bridge	Irish League of CUs	2,118	627	2,745	1,227
Aghaloo	Irish League of CUs	744	456	1,200	537
Magherafelt and District No.3 CU	Ulster Federation of CUs	Overall Figure Provided		2450	1,096
Benburb and Killyman Districts CU	Ulster Federation of CUs	Overall Figure Provided		2121	948
Maghera CU	Ulster Federation of CUs	Overall Figure Provided		364	163
Fairhill and District CU	Ulster Federation of CUs	Overall Figure Provided		3812	1,705
Annahoe CU	Tyrone Zone of CUs	1500	500	2000	894
Coagh CU	Tyrone Zone of CUs	333	173	506	226
Stewartstown CU	Tyrone Zone of CUs	275	100	375	168
Skea (Pomeroy) CU	Tyrone Zone of CUs	1100	200	1300	581
			<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>104,528</b>	<b>46,740.00</b>

**Minutes of the meeting of Mid Ulster Policing and Community Safety Partnership  
held on Wednesday 8 September 2021 at 2.30pm via Microsoft Teams**

**Present:** Councillor Clement Cuthbertson (Chair), Councillor Frances Burton, Councillor Christine McFlynn, Councillor Brian McGuigan, Councillor John McNamee, Councillor Sean McPeake, Councillor Trevor Wilson

Alexandra Black (Vice Chair), Sue Chada, Grace Meerbeek, Seán MacGoilla Cheara, Ciaran McElhone, Pearse McFlynn, Julie McKeown, Hayley Wilson,

Patsy Begley (NIFRS), Sergeant Mike Clifford (PSNI), Sharon Crooks (NIHE), Sinead Dolan (YJA), Neil Gillan (SH&SCT), Michelle Grant (PBNi), Ryan McGee (EA), Chief Inspector Mervyn Seffen (PSNI)

**Apologies:** Councillor Anne Forde

**In Attendance:** Michael McCrory (PCSP Manager), Annette McGahan (PCSP Officer), Shauna McCloskey (PCSP Officer), Martina McCullagh (PCSP Assistant)

The Meeting commenced at 2.30pm.

**PCSP202/21 WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

**PCSP203/21 DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Members were reminded of their obligation in relation to declarations of interest and the following declaration was made;

*Councillor Frances Burton: Mid Ulster Agewell*

**PCSP204/21 MINUTES OF MID ULSTER POLICING & COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 26 MAY 2021**

The Minutes of Mid Ulster Policing and Community Safety Partnership meeting held on Wednesday 26 May 2021 were approved by Members.

**Proposed by:** Councillor Brian McGuigan  
**Seconded by:** Councillor Frances Burton

**PCSP205/21 MATTERS ARISING**

**PCSP191/21 – MATTERS ARISING – RAPID Bins**

In response to a query from Councillor McGuigan in relation to the RAPID Bin promotional video, the PCSP Manager advised that the video was completed and posted on Facebook on 5 July 2021. The video will be re-posted and shared.

### **PCSP191/21 – MATTERS ARISING – Do-nuts on rural roads**

Councillor Burton raised the ongoing issue of 'do-nuts' on rural roads, a very dangerous activity which will become even more dangerous as autumn and winter approaches.

Chief Inspector Seffen advised that they continue to target this type of activity with 'specific operations' and asked Members to continue to encourage the public to report incidents as they happen.

### **PCSP193/21 – SIDs UPDATE**

PCSP Officer, Shauna McCloskey advised that all SIDs are currently in use at various locations, the two faulty SIDs have now been repaired and returned to us. There are currently 6 towns / villages and 10 schools on the waiting list and the process has now begun to re-assign SIDs to these locations. It was suggested to Members to apportion the SIDs to schools, and towns and villages, having two separate waiting lists, therefore, allowing both areas of concern to progress independently.

Responding to a question from Grace Meerbeek in relation to the period of time a SID remains at a location, the Member specifically referred to a SID located on the Magherafelt / Moneymore Road, the PCSP Officer advised that this particular SID is due to be re-assigned to another location within the next few weeks. If Members are of the opinion that a SID should remain in a particular location for a longer period of time this can be reviewed.

### **PCSP196/21 – BLACKOUT PLAY**

In response to a request from Alexandra Black for an update on the 'Blackout' play, the PCSP Manager advised that the DoJ have stated that it will not be rolled out as a performance. As an alternative, the DoJ have contacted schools across Northern Ireland and offered access to a video of the performance through YouTube for a two week period.

### **PCSP206/21 EXPRESSION OF INTEREST – BEAM CREATIVE NETWORK – e SAFETY PROGRAMME FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

PCSP Officer, Shauna McCloskey referred to the Expression of Interest received in relation to e-safety programme for primary schools submitted by Beam Creative Network and sought Members' approval. This programme is run annually and has proven to be very successful. It would be delivered to 15 primary schools split equally across Mid Ulster. PSNI Schools Officers nominate the schools and any school identified with particular issues will be given priority.

In response to a question from Councillor Frances Burton, the PCSP Officer advised that all schools, both urban and rural are provided with the opportunity to avail of this programme.

Members were in support of the Programme.

**Proposed by:** Councillor Christine McFlynn  
**Seconded by:** Councillor Frances Burton

**PCSP207/21    PCSP STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2025 (Guidance not issued yet, attached is previous guidance and strategic plan for 2019-2022 for reference)**

The PCSP Manager advised Members that the PCSP Strategic Plan for 2022-2025 must be completed by February 2022, but guidance has not yet been issued. PCSPs have been asked for their Strategic points, which will be obtained through consultation with communities, surveys and meetings, this will then be followed up by a planning meeting with Members. Statistics will also have to be garnered.

The PCSP Manager asked Members for feedback on the Community Survey documents which were circulated in the meeting papers, in relation to what groups to meet with and how to promote the consultation.

Members made the following comments;

- Pearse McFlynn stated that he would like more Programmes / Initiatives included in the Action Plan to combat 'Drugs and Addiction' issues, for people who have left post primary school and moved on to college and also for people in the workplace.
- Councillor Burton agreed there should be more initiatives included to combat drug issues as it is very prevalent in both rural and urban areas.
- Councillor Burton also highlighted the level of 'fear of crime' being experienced by older and vulnerable people in our communities and suggested increasing awareness and promotion of the following;
  - Increase awareness within communities that PSNI are available and contactable in their area
  - Increase awareness of PCSP across the district
  - Include initiatives to combat scams, burglaries and rural crime

**PCSP208/21    CONSULTATION SURVEYS**

**MID ULSTER PCSP SURVEY**

The PCSP Manager referred to the Mid Ulster PCSP Survey document and Members made the following comments;

The Chair suggested distributing the Survey to all Neighbourhood Watch Scheme Co-ordinators across the Mid Ulster.

Councillor Burton suggested circulating the Survey to Housing Estate Groups and to PCSP Members who in turn could circulate it to Community Groups, Partners and individuals they liaise with.

Members made suggestions relating to the following questions;

**Question 3 – Please mark any below that you consider to be a major problem in your area**

- The PCSP Manager advised the removal of 'Sexual Abuse / Assault' and combine it with 'Domestic & Sexual Abuse' as this is how these crimes are now recorded.

- The PCSP Manager suggested adding Scams as a separate issue on the Survey, as highlighted by Councillor Burton.
- The Chair suggested adding a section to determine whether the contributor resides in an urban or rural area, by asking for the town or village or postcode to be provided.

Julie McKeown stated requesting a postcode could possibly identify the individual which would breach GDPR regulations.

The PCSP Manager advised that this section would require further work.

Members were in agreement with these amendments.

**Question 5 – Over the last 12 months have you, or any member of your household, personally experienced any of the following?**

- The PCSP Manager advised the removal of 'Sexual Abuse / Assault' and combine it with 'Domestic & Sexual Abuse' as this is how these crimes are now recorded – *as per Question 3*.
- The PCSP Manager suggested adding Scams as a separate issue on the Survey, as highlighted by Councillor Burton – *as per Question 3*.

**Question 6 – Did you report it to the Police**

- Sean Kerr asked if there was scope for further analysis of this question, as it would be good to get feedback why some people are not reporting crimes to the police, this could be done by asking the question; *Why did you not report the crime to the Police; and provide the following options;*
  - No trust in the police
  - Not worthwhile reporting it
  - Tried before, could not get through
  - Had a previous bad experience

The Chair was not supportive of including options, but agreed with a blank box for people to provide their reason for not reporting a crime to the police.

Sean Kerr pointed out that options have been provided for other questions throughout the survey, and it would be very useful to collate this information.

- Councillor Burton stated that she would be agreeable to adding options or leaving a blank box for people to provide their own reason. If options are being included, could an option relating to their experience when calling the non-emergency 101 number be included, as the Member continues to receive regular complaints about difficulty getting through and being put through to the right person.

The PCSP Manager will check other major crime surveys to determine what has been used previously in relation to this question, if options have

been included, these can be included in the survey together with a blank box to allow people to include their own response.

Members were in agreement with this.

**Question 9 – Which, if any, of the following crime prevention measures have you taken in the last two years? (Please mark all boxes that apply)**

- The PCSP Manager to add Scam Prevention to the list of options.

Members were in agreement with this.

**Questions 13 and 14 relates to demographics**

The PCSP Manager advised that a question relating to where the contributor resides to be included, but requires further thought.

The PCSP Manager advised that the revised survey will be circulated to Members digitally and by hardcopy, if required, for onward distribution via Facebook, Websites and also when Members are meeting with community groups, in order to maximise consultation response levels.

Members were in agreement with this.

**AGEWELL SURVEY**

Members were happy with this survey, no amendments required.

**PCSP209/21 PCSP LEAFLET**

The Chair reminded Members that PCSP leaflets are available for collection from three Council buildings, whichever was most suitable.

Grace Meerbeek and Sue Chada both stated that the leaflet content was excellent.

The PCSP Manager asked Members if there was anything further that they could be provided with when out in the community. Members to keep this in mind.

**PCSP210/21 PCSP PROJECT UPDATES**

PCSP Officer, Shauna McCloskey provided Members with an update on the following Projects;

*Hi-Risk Domestic Violence, Positive Relationships, Internet Safety, Trailer Marking, Neighbourhood Watch Schemes, Rapid Bins, Drugs and Alcohol Programme and SIDs.*

Members commented on the following programmes;

**Trailer Marking**

Councillor Burton advised that a number of people had been in touch in relation to getting their trailers marked and asked if it would be possible to

arrange trailer marking events at Clogher Mart, Fivemiletown Mart and a further one at Granville Mark.

The PCSP Officer advised that she would contact Joanne Smyth, CPO and update Members accordingly.

### **BEE Safe**

In response to a question from Patsy Begley, NIFRS regarding the BEE Safe Programme, the PCSP Manager advised that a number of videos have been developed in conjunction with other PCSPs and are currently being taken into schools by one delivery agency for pupils to view. These videos will continue to be utilised as an additional resource post Covid restrictions.

## **PCSP211/21    ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Tamnamore Park and Ride**

The Chair advised that he had received 4 phone calls in relation to a group of Travellers who have based themselves in Tamnamore Park and Ride car park. He informed Members that he has sent an e-mail to DfI Roads informing them of the situation.

The PCSP Manager advised Members that this would not fall within the remit of the PCSP. The owner of the land would have responsibility and they should inform the PSNI of the situation.

### **Designated 'No Drinking Zones'**

The Chair referred to gangs of individuals drinking in various location across the district and wished to raise the issue of reviewing and updating designated 'No Drinking Zones', referring to Dungannon Park, Windmill Wood and Railway Park as areas of concern. This issue has been discussed with Inspector McNeill who is very supportive. The Chair proposed that PCSP write to Council and ask if 'No Drinking Zones' could be updated and also request statistics relating to how many fines have been issued by Council.

Inspector Seffen agreed that this is an issue across the district. The process involves police sending statements to Council which should then result in the issue of a fine.

Councillor Trevor Wilson advised that this issue has been raised with Environmental Health in Cookstown, where there is an appetite to prosecute, but can only take this action upon receipt of a statement from Police. He asked if statistics could be sought in relation to the number of statements received from Police over the previous 12 month period in relation to this type of offence.

The PCSP Manager stated that the number of statements sent by Police to Council could first be ascertained and included in the letter to Council.

Members were in agreement that a letter be written to Mid Ulster District Council regarding updating designated 'No Drinking Zones' across the district and request the number of fines issued by Council during the



previous 12 month period. Statistics relating to the number of statements sent from Police to Council to be included within the letter.

**Proposed by:** Councillor Clement Cuthbertson  
**Seconded by:** Councillor Trevor Wilson

#### **PSNI Stations For Sale**

Councillor Burton referred to a number of telephone calls she received in relation to an announcement regarding the sale of the PSNI station in Aughnacloy (one of three being sold), stating that the announcement has not helped build confidence in police in the community.

Chief Inspector Seffen advised it was not a planned announcement by the PSNI, it was a request from local media. The Assistance Chief Constable (ACC) in the announcement, re-stated the position from a number of years ago, that following consultation the 3 stations were to close and the decision to sell was delayed on the run up to Brexit. The 3 stations are currently not in use.

#### **Superintendent Mike Baird – Retirement**

Chief Inspector Seffen informed Members that Superintendent Baird officially retired on the 14 August 2021 and that he is in post on a temporary basis until the post is officially filled. It will be January 2022 before the recruitment process is finalised and the position filled.

#### **PCSP212/21    DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next PCSP meeting will take place on Wednesday 15 December 2021 at 2.30pm.

The Chair thanked Members for attending the meeting.

The meeting ended at 3.33pm



<b>Report on</b>	Department for Communities Intermediate Rent Development of Policy and Model: Consultation Response
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	13 January 2022
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Claire Linney, Assistant Director of Development
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Martina Totten, Celene O'Neill

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To seek approval for Council's response to the Department of Communities Intermediate Rent Development of Policy and Model: Consultation.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	<p>DfC proposes to develop a policy and model for the provision of high quality, well managed affordable homes for rent for tenants who cannot or do not wish to access home ownership and would be unlikely to attain sufficient points to have a realistic chance of accessing social housing in an area of choice.</p> <p>The consultation on the development of a policy and model for Intermediate Rent closes on 14 January 2022.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p>Intermediate Rent (IR) is a private rental product, situated in terms of tenancy duration and rent cost between social and market private rentals.</p> <p>The Model intends to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a new supply of homes in locations where Intermediate Rent is viable and attractive to deliver and live in</li> <li>• Provide much needed affordable quality housing for lower income individuals and families</li> <li>• Provide homes where people wish to live</li> <li>• Set rent at a level which is more affordable for eligible households</li> <li>• Increase security of tenure to medium to longer term</li> <li>• Require the IR programme operator to make management and support services available</li> <li>• Rollout the IR model where it is viable for the programme operator, subject to approvals and funding</li> </ul>

	<p>Many households currently on the Common Waiting List for social housing are in receipt of the lowest number of points (fewer than 30) and struggle to attain affordable, good quality accommodation.</p> <p>38% of those living in the private rented sector are in poverty, with over half of private renters relying on Housing Benefit to meet their rent.</p> <p>An initial rent profile for Intermediate Rent starting point is to offer homes at up to 80% of the local market rent in the development locality and a tenancy of up to five years.</p> <p>The draft Consultation Response includes points on the IR application process; the setting of IR rent levels; eligibility criteria; tenancy duration; the selection and monitoring of a programme operator; and the implementation and monitoring of the policy and model.</p> <p>The response further highlights the key housing issues faced in Mid Ulster – housing demand and need versus supply; regeneration and PlaceShaping; housing stress; the correlation between poverty and housing; fitness and quality standards, rural issues, land availability and infrastructure.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<p><b><u>Financial &amp; Human Resources Implications</u></b></p> <p>Financial: None</p> <p>Human: None</p>
<b>4.2</b>	<p><b><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></b></p> <p>None</p>
<b>4.3</b>	<p><b><u>Risk Management Implications</u></b></p> <p>None</p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	To approve the draft Council Response to the Department of Communities Intermediate Rent Development of Policy and Model: Consultation.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	Draft Council Response to the Department of Communities Intermediate Rent Development of Policy and Model: Consultation.

**DFC Intermediate Rent Development of Policy and Model Consultation**  
**Draft Mid Ulster District Council Response**  
**January 2022**

**Would an IR home be suitable for me?**

**Q4: To what extent do you agree there is a need for the introduction of a new Intermediate Rental product as described?**

Mid Ulster District Council (MUDC) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Department for Communities Intermediate Rent (IR) Development of Policy and Model: Consultation. Council broadly welcomes the development of an intermediate private rental product that sits between social and private market rentals but wishes to highlight the following key housing issues that face the community in Mid Ulster.

In Mid Ulster, there is a projected Housing Growth Indicator new dwelling requirement of 10,300 for the period 2016 to 2030 for the district, which is well above the NI average of 7,709. The levels of growth, particularly in Dungannon, has had an impact on housing demand and rental values, increasing both substantially.

Mid Ulster has one of the highest levels of social housing need and this is reflected in the level of housing stress. At March 2021, there were 2,158 applicants on the waiting list for Mid Ulster with 1,267 in housing stress and only 283 allocations over the year. Housing stress in rural areas is also increasing on an annual basis since March 2016. At March 2021, there were 650 applicants on the rural housing waiting list for Mid Ulster with 353 in housing stress and only 115 allocations over the year. Demand for intermediate housing aimed at low income households in Mid Ulster is estimated at 1,350 units between 2020-2030.

Mid Ulster has the second lowest number of NIHE and Social Housing properties across all districts. Up to March 2021, NIHE and Housing Associations have sold 7,651 units under the house sales scheme, leaving 3,855 of NIHE housing stock in the

district. NIHE has identified a social housing need of 718 units required for the 2020/2025 period. There were 30 units completed and 93 units onsite at March 2021; and 217 units programmed for the 2020/2023 period, falling well short of what is required by 2025. Almost 60% of all units required are in the Dungannon and Coalisland.

Tackling the clear need outlined above, Social and Affordable housing provision is a key strategic priority, as identified for Mid Ulster in the Community Plan. The allocation of social and affordable, good quality housing is key to achieving many of the objectives detailed in the Community Plan, including poverty, regeneration, health and wellbeing and prosperity. MUDC welcomes the introduction and delivery of a new IR product in addressing these priorities.

**Q5: To what extent do you agree with the proposed application process outlined?**

Whilst MUDC does not disagree with **“a completely separate model, clearly distinguished from the process for securing a social home would be best..... based on a ‘first come, first served’ basis (subject to meeting any relevant eligibility criteria) to be an effective method of matching tenants with properties”**, we seek reassurance that the public, and more importantly those who would benefit most from the IR product, will be well informed on the whole process from the outset. **“Mirroring the arrangements commonly used to access other private rented homes”** does not advocate for best practice arrangements as all too often, securing a rented property locally can come down to ‘who you know’. MUDC does not want to see a process whereby only those that are ‘in the know’ are able to secure an IR property.

**Q6: To what extent do you agree with the listed household descriptions which are likely to benefit most from IR homes?**

Mid Ulster District Council welcomes a housing product that alleviates the financial burden on many of our residents struggling to meet high private rental costs, in all too often low quality housing. Mid Ulster Community Planning is fully committed to reducing poverty and the impact of poverty on individuals and communities within Mid Ulster. The Mid Ulster Anti Poverty Plan aims to provide everyone with a quality home

for life, through affordable rents via rent interventions of increased rent support, adequate social and affordable house provision in mixed tenure developments and quality environments.

Many low income families are being pushed into poverty as the gap between housing related benefits and actual rental cost has resulted in worsening levels of poverty and pressure on the family budget. Working families, unable to achieve the necessary points required for social housing are a key target group for this product. Further investment in social and affordable housing and the removal of the gap between rents and benefits is a necessity to help those caught in the poverty trap caused by housing.

Many people are still completing housing applications by stating their preference of location based on where they know the housing is going to be and not where they would prefer to live. This puts further demand and burden on social housing developments in our towns where the necessary infrastructure required for development is already at capacity. It also creates further social issues and poverty implications, relating to childcare family support and isolation. The Mid Ulster district is especially impacted by this, given the majority of residents live in rural areas, with less opportunity for larger scale social housing schemes. A social housing product aimed at accommodating people to live in the geographical areas of their choice is most welcomed.

### **How will IR levels be set and reviewed?**

**Q7: Based on evidence and research it is proposed that IRs are initially set at up to 80% of local market rents for similar types and sizes of properties. Do you agree this proposal would be reasonable and attractive?**

Mid Ulster District Council seeks further clarity to the 'geographical area' that the 80% of market value will be applied to, to determine the rental value of the IR product. Mid Ulster experiences a significant difference in rental values across its district. A basic analysis of private sector rents in Dungannon at March 2021 indicated average costs of between £625 - £650 per month for a three bedroom semi detached/terraced house. These values have been driven up by a number of factors, such as a chronic lack of social and affordable housing in the town and unregulated multi occupancy accommodation by a significant migrant population. They do not reflect average

incomes and are having a undisputable impact on the financial burdens of our low income families. 80% of an inflated and unrealistic rental market is still too high for an IR product. MUDC would seek assurances that significant market discrepancies within a district will be considered and addressed.

### **What will the Eligibility Criteria be for an IR tenancy?**

**Q10: To what extent do you agree with the proposed initial income bands for accessing an IR home?**

MUDC believes that other factors relating to affordability should also be considered, such as number of dependents, childcare costs, dependents with disabilities, and other cost of living factors which would impact a tenants ability to meet IR criteria. A means test that includes real cost of living expenses may be more appropriate as opposed to simple income related criteria.

**Q11: It is proposed that income can come from a variety of sources e.g. earned income, interest on savings, private pension income as well as housing related benefits. To what extent do you agree these and other types of income should be considered when accessing an IR home?**

**Q12: Do you think the level of savings held by prospective tenants should be considered as part of eligibility and / or an affordability assessment when applying for an IR home?**

Regardless of the source of income, the process for accessing an IR home must fairly balance household income against household expenditure so that the tenant's rental costs do not prevent them from feeding their families, paying their bills and heating their homes. In Mid Ulster, this is unfortunately the position that many people and families currently find themselves in.

**Q13: Do you agree consideration should be given to additional eligibility criteria in such circumstances?**

Mid Ulster Council agrees with the additional eligibility criteria which gives consideration to:

- Those currently live or work in the local area (for example within a 15 mile radius of the dwelling);



- Have close family connections living within the same neighbourhood;
- Are on the waiting list for social housing.
- Lack security of tenure in their current home;

The first three points in particular address issues previously outlined with regards to Mid Ulster's rurality and lack of choice for social housing availability. Again, a social housing product aimed at accommodating people to live in the geographical areas of their choice, is most welcomed.

### **How long would an IR Tenancy Last for?**

Q16: What advantages and challenges can you identify for Intermediate Rent tenancies of (eg up to) five years in duration with an opportunity to renew?

Q17. To what extent do agree with the Department's proposal that Intermediate Rent tenancies should be subject to review with an opportunity to renew after the initial tenancy term?

An initial tenancy of five years seems reasonable, giving people the opportunity to make the property their home, establish their families in the area and provide security and reassurance regarding their housing status. The opportunity to extend the tenancy for those who need to is welcomed as is support for those who wish to move on to home ownership or other rental method.

### **What Tenancy Support and Management Services will be available?**

Q19: To what extent do you agree with the suggested approach of Intermediate Rent programme operators offering support services to tenants?

Q20: What type of tenancy support services, if any, would you suggest are appropriate to be delivered to Intermediate Rent tenants?

*Examples may include how to access benefits advice services, advice around avoiding or managing arrears, advice on how to access healthcare or educational services.*

Given that IR is an intermediate rental product that provides a five year tenancy term, it would be beneficial to provide support to tenants around their future housing needs after their tenancy ends. Support and information on money management, mortgages and loans, saving for a deposit, avoiding arrears, etc would be very beneficial for those

who wish to access home ownership after the five year period ends. Other support services are already available in the social housing sector and tenants can be signposted where necessary.

**Q21: Do you agree with the proposal that a single entity should be appointed with responsibility to act as Intermediate Rent programme operator in delivering Intermediate Rent homes?**

In one respect, a single entity operator would provide a standardised level of quality and service across the board and be singly accountable for the successful delivery and operation of the IR product. However, more than one operator may add some healthy competition to the process and an incentive to deliver the best quality homes for tenants. Some providers may also have more expertise in delivering different types of housing, for example, supported housing. Either way, it is essential that a single, independent body oversees the implementation and delivery of the IR model with the needs of the tenant and their families at the heart of the process.

**Q22: To what extent do you agree with the Department's analysis of the regulatory arrangements for an Intermediate Rent programme operator?**

**Q23: Are there any additional regulatory matters which the Department should seek to apply to delivery arrangements?**

As previously stated, regulation of the IR model must be undertaken by a competent, independent oversight body whose focus is on the housing needs and welfare of the tenant. While it is accepted that it must be viable for the operator to deliver the IR model, we hope that 'viability' is not used as an excuse by operators to not build the type of housing people want and need in the areas they want to live in. The focus should be on the needs of the tenant and the quality of the homes rather than securing maximum return on investment. MUDC are seeing more and more instances where social housing operators are turning down opportunities presented to them by the NIHE for potential sites and identified need for affordable housing due to a perceived lack of viability. In order for this not to happen in the IR market, there needs to be robust regulation around the autonomy of the operator in deciding what, when and where to build.

## Delivering a Core Intermediate Rent Framework

**Q24: To what extent do you agree that the programme operator should be involved in developing the specification for Intermediate Rent Homes (this may include eg the location, rent setting, and the quality standard)?**

As previously stated, MUDC has concerns on how current social housing providers can stipulate when, where and what schemes they will undertake. A Core Intermediate Rent Framework needs to mitigate against this. MUDC welcomes a Framework that incorporates **key statutory bodies, will provide an effective model for the delivery of much needed Intermediate Rent homes of good design and quality in areas of identified need**, that includes NIHE and Councils. MUDC hold the view that the NIHE must provide the strategic lead for social and affordable housing provision in the region. Council believes it is crucial that NIHE sets the strategic principles and best practice examples for social and affordable housing provision for others to follow. It is also important that the Frameworks underlines this.

Mid Ulster Community Planning has initiated a pilot Housing and Regeneration Place Shaping Plan in Dungannon, in partnership with NIHE. This plan will identify 'Place Shaping Principles' that we will seek to have adopted and implemented by Council when assessing social housing planning applications, based on complementing the priorities for regeneration for Dungannon town. The Dungannon Place Shaping principles can broadly be applied across the board to the delivery of any housing development including:

1. Good quality design
2. Housing for families with 2-3 bed provision
3. Parking provision
4. Good quality green space and play areas for children
5. A minimum of 2 bedrooms
6. Locations suitable for family housing, not beside leisure/nighttime economy establishments
7. Housing design and quality to be in character with the area and not of a lower standard
8. Housing that regenerates an area (economy and regeneration)
9. Mixed tenure developments only (private and social/affordable mix)

MUDC advocates that the principles listed above can be used to inform the Framework and partnership work between the Council, NIHE and operator.

### **Delivering Intermediate Rent Homes – Construction, Development and Standards**

**Q27: It is the Department's view that all Intermediate Rent Homes will be required to meet the statutory building standards and statutory housing fitness standard as a minimum. Do you think that additional design and construction standards should apply to Intermediate Rent homes?**

With regards to housing standards and quality provision, MUDC would draw attention to the information previously given on our PlaceShaping Plan and Principles.

Current basic fitness standards require properties to be structurally stable, free from serious disrepair, dampness prejudicial to health, adequate provision for heating, lighting and ventilation, adequate piped water supply and washing/toileting facilities, cooking facilities and wastewater provision. These basic standards provide for adequate living rather than offering the tenant a good quality home that has sufficient green space, is energy efficient, offers a minimum number of two bedrooms, is accessible and embodies the 'home for life' principles.

MUDC would insist on adequate green space provision in housing schemes; a central green space that is accessible to all. Evidence shows that well planned social housing with good green space provision has less social issues in the longer term. Green space needs to be integral to the design for social and affordable housing and to the allocation of the housing grant to build. NIHE needs to have a greater say in the final design that allows for good practice.

MUDC would also strongly advocate for the use of mixed tenure schemes in bringing forward IR homes. There is strong evidence to back up the benefits of mixed developments in promoting quality housing, social cohesion, reducing social exclusion and creating stronger communities. There is a definite need for IR homes in rural areas that provide choice for those who do not wish to leave their own rural communities and families but have to move to urban areas where housing is available. MUDC has been working with NIHE to carry out Latent Demand Tests in rural areas

of Mid Ulster. One recent Latent Demand Test in the small rural area of Gulladuff received expressions of interest from 45 people but only one of these made it onto the social housing waiting list. This is clear evidence of a significant demand for Social and Affordable Housing in the area but is unlikely this will ever come to fruition due to the lack of points needed to make it onto the waiting list. We believe areas like Gulladuff would benefit greatly from an IR scheme and seek assurances that the results of latent demand tests and the housing needs identified in communities will be given foremost consideration in influencing where IR housing will be delivered.

### **Additional Comments**

More low-income families tend to live in the private rented sector, which tends to be more expensive with poorer living conditions. The gap between housing benefit and local housing allowance which has grown since housing benefit cuts were introduced. Rental values in Dungannon and to a lesser extent Cookstown are very high and there is significant difference between actual rental charges and Local Housing Allowance amounts. In addition, the largest number of housing benefit claimants are living in properties belonging to the private sector. There is a real need for intervention. If a solution is not found, the social housing crisis will continue to escalate and the social issues heighten. It will also cause further problems with regard to housing allocation in terms of meeting need, vulnerable people, family unity, strong communities, etc.

Whilst MUDC welcomes an IR model to alleviate some of this need, we still advocate for intervention in the rental market to monitor rental values in our main hub towns and cities (which are where the populations are concentrated) and to intervene where the market is creating real issues of poverty and social deprivation. Good practice models have been developed in the South of Ireland in the form of Rent Pressure Zones and in other EU countries such as Germany, whereby rules introduced in 2015 prevent landlords in certain towns and cities from setting rents for new tenants any higher than 10% above the local average from the previous four years.

Land banking is an issue in Mid Ulster with a number of developments having gone through the Planning process but not materialised in buildings on the ground. This has an impact on the analysis of Waste Water and Sewerage capacity by skewing the figures, which in turn impacts on the approval of future housing schemes. This issue

is mainly experienced in Dungannon, adding further stress to housing demand. Greater use of vesting land by NIHE would not only ensure the release of necessary lands for the development of social and affordable housing but may also discourage other landowners from banking land and holding up the supply of housing.

Mid Ulster District Council is committed to the release of public sector land for the provision of social housing where possible and is working with NIHE to identify appropriate land. Council has already made land available to Causeway and Mid Ulster Women's Aid for the development of over 20 units of Move On accommodation for their clients to help them move forward in their lives. We also continue to encourage other statutory partners to identify unused land assets for social and affordable housing.

The issue of water and wastewater management in Mid Ulster will have detrimental impact on the district's provision of social and affordable housing. Many people living in the Mid Ulster District Council area are facing significant housing stress because of house building not keeping up with housing demand. New housing developments particularly in our urban towns and key settlements are being refused by NI Water, due to lack of upgrading to Waste Water Treatment works and new water mains not being delivered. Significant Waste Water network capacity issues are emerging in our five main hub towns including Magherafelt, Cookstown, Dungannon, Maghera and Coalisland. These towns have been identified within the Area Plan for Mid Ulster for growth status. In addition to the Waste Water Treatment Works, Waste Water network capacity issues are emerging in 20 areas across the district. Because of this, new connections are being declined in parts of the catchment. It is essential that significant investment be prioritised to upgrade and provide new sewerage infrastructure across the District, in order to deliver social and affordable housing to meet the need. MUDC offer any support necessary to seek solutions to this issue.

Finally, government bodies have a responsibility to the citizens of Northern Ireland to intervene in both failing social policies and commercial markets to ensure the provision of quality affordable homes for life. People should live in homes that are of a good quality and standard to ensure good physical and mental health, social wellbeing,

cohesion and the prosperity of society as a whole. MUDC welcome an IR model that contributes to these outcomes.





<b>Report on</b>	Regional Minority Languages Bursary Programme 2022/23 and Irish Language Activity Funding Programme 2022/23
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 13th January 2022
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Tony McCance
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Déaglán Ó Doibhlin

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To update Council on the proposed Regional and Minority Language Bursary programme 2022/23 and Irish Language Activity Funding Programme 2022/23 and to seek approval from Council to publicly advertise both schemes.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	The purpose of the Regional and Minority Language Bursary programme promoted to the public across Mid Ulster District Council is to assist residents of the district in attending approved residential courses in order to develop their language ability and/or achieve fluency in a regional or minority language.
2.2	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 that promote and develop the Irish language across Mid Ulster from April 2022 to March 2023.
2.3	In 2019/20, 145 local people availed of a Regional and Minority language bursary from Mid Ulster District Council. Due to public health restrictions related the Covid Pandemic no courses have taken place in the interim however we anticipate that courses will again be available this incoming summer. It is anticipated that there will be a high level of interest and uptake in 2022/23.
2.4	In 2021/22, 17 voluntary and community groups, schools, sports, arts and cultural organisations organised events and activities in their local areas through the Irish Language with assistance from Mid Ulster District Council Irish language activity funding.
2.5	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.
2.6	Subject to Council approval a public call will be issued in relation to the 2022/23 Regional and Minority Language Bursaries, detailing funding support opportunities available and to

2.7	<p>which individuals will be invited to submit funding applications. Officers within Culture &amp; Arts Services will process applications for submission to Council for approval.</p> <p>Subject to Council approval a public call will also be issued in relation to the 2022/23 Irish Language Activity Funding Support opportunities. Groups/organisations will be invited to submit expression of interest applications. Irish Language Officers will follow up on Expressions of Interest with all interested groups to discuss their project ideas and to support and develop them prior to submission to council for further consideration.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
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 proposed actions will help to fulfil Council's legislative obligations to promote the Irish Language.
3.3	The activities delivered in 2022/23 will be reviewed on completion to measure success and to shape future planning.
3.4	<p>Community events and activities supported will complement existing Council services including Arts and Culture, Tourism and Community Development activity.</p> <p>The Regional and Minority Language Bursary programme 2022/23, may be subject to restrictions, due to COVID implications. All Bursaries awarded to individuals will be allocated on basis that the Regional and Minority Language course to which they have applied, will take place.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<p><b><u>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</u></b></p> <p><b>Financial:</b> The required funding to support the delivery of the Regional and Minority Language bursary scheme and the Irish language Activity Funding Programme has been identified within the proposed 2022/23 Regional and Minority Language budget.</p> <p><b>Human:</b> 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.</p> <p><b>Risk Management:</b> Budget allocations are subject to Council approval. Awards allocated are subject to the levels of demand and the resources available.</p>
<b>4.2</b>	<p><b><u>Screening and Impact Assessments</u></b></p> <p>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,</p>

	empowering communities at grass roots level and encourage greater collaboration among groups.
	Rural Needs Implications: Rural needs implications are considered as part of the delivery of projects and funding support provided to groups and individuals through both the Irish Language Activity Funding and the Regional and Minority Language Bursary programmes.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	It is recommended that Council grants approval (subject to funding) to publicly advertise the 2022/23 Regional and Minority Language Bursary Programme
5.2	It is recommended that Council grants approval (subject to funding) to issue a call for expressions of interest for proposed projects and initiatives under the Irish Language Activity Programme 2022/23
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	N/A



<b>Report on</b>	Purchasing books for resale at Seamus Heaney HomePlace
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup> January 2022
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Tony McCance
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Brian McCormick

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To request approval from Council to purchase books for resale from Grantham Books Services as the sole Northern Ireland Distributor for Faber & Faber (Seamus Heaney's publishers).
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	Seamus Heaney HomePlace, is dedicated to celebrating the life and literature of one of Ireland's, and indeed the world's, most celebrated writers. As part of the facility operation, Seamus Heaney HomePlace sells a range of goods from the facility gift shop to those who visit the facility. The sale of merchandise from the gift shop is a significant income stream for the facility. One of the most popular items purchased by customers has been books, especially the poetry of Seamus Heaney.
2.2	The vast majority of Seamus Heaney's poetry, including all of his main collections, is published by Faber & Faber and is distributed by their sole Northern Ireland Distributor, Grantham Books Services.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	Seamus Heaney's poetry books have proven to be very popular purchase from the gift shop at HomePlace and customer demand and customer sales for this aspect of the merchandise offering at the facility has witnessed a steady increase since the facility opened in September 2016.
3.2	Seamus Heaney HomePlace has negotiated a 35% discounted purchase price on each item purchased through their distribution wholesale company Grantham Book Services. As a specialist supplier Seamus Heaney HomePlace is able to avail of this favourable discount when the books are purchased through Faber & Faber's appointed distribution wholesale Company (Grantham Book Services).
3.3	Approval for the purchase of books from Grantham for resale was granted by members in January 2019 for a 3 year period. Council approved the Direct Award Contract for the purchase of Seamus Heaney book stock (for resale) from Grantham Books Services as the sole distributor for Faber and Faber in Northern

3.4	<p>Ireland for the next three year period, and to avail of the 35% discount price of the book stock purchased.</p> <p>Members should note that no books were purchased for a period of 11 months as a result of COVID related closure of SHHP during this three year term.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
4.1	<p><b><u>Financial &amp; Human Resources Implications</u></b></p> <p>Financial: Within identified and agreed budgets approved by Council</p> <p>Human: Within identified staffing resources agreed and approved by Council</p>
4.2	<p><b><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></b></p> <p>Faber &amp; Faber are the main publisher of Seamus Heaney books, and their distribution company Grantham Book Services, is the sole wholesale distributor for Faber and Faber in Northern Ireland.</p>
4.3	<p><b><u>Risk Management Implications</u></b></p> <p>Grantham Book Services is the sole supplier of Seamus Heaney Faber &amp; Faber publications. Seamus Heaney HomePlace is able to avail of a 35% discount on publications purchased through this wholesaler. To not be able to access publications through this literature wholesaler would limit the types of publications that would be available at Seamus Heaney HomePlace and would have a detrimental impact on retail profits within the Seamus Heaney HomePlace gift shop.</p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	<p>Members are asked to approve the Direct Award Contract for the purchase of Seamus Heaney book stock (for resale) from Grantham Books Services, as the sole distributor for Faber and Faber in Northern Ireland, for the next 3 year period from January 2022 – December 2024, and to avail of the 35% discount price of the book stock purchased from this source.</p>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	N/A

<b>Report on</b>	Sports Representative Grants
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> January, 2022
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Leigh Gilmore, Participation Manager Margaret McCammon Community Development Officer

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To present to Members the proposed community grant allocations for the range of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sports Representative Grant - Team and Individuals (December 2021)</li> </ul>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	The Sports Representative Grants (Individual and Team) is a continuous rolling programme.
2.2	Previously in December 2021, Members approved the recommendation for the period up to November 2021.
2.3	Eligibility criteria compliance was completed by officers followed by grant programme assessment.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	Detailed analysis of the proposed grant awards are attached with Appendix A for information.
3.2	Summary detail is as follows: The Sports Representative Grant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Individual application was received during this period</li> <li>0 Team applications were received during this period</li> <li>Proposal to award a total of £250 in respect of the above individual application.</li> </ul>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial:

	<p>The Sports Representative Grant is a continuous rolling programme with an annual allocation for 2021/2022 of £15,000; however £8,000 was allocated in June 2021 to Small Sports Grants leaving a revised budget of £7,000.</p> <p>£2,275 was approved in September, £1,650 In October, £650 in November; £200 in December leaving a balance of £2,225.</p> <p>Should the grant recommendation contained within this report be approved, £1,975 remains available to be allocated for the remainder of this financial year until March 2022.</p>
	Human: Officer time.
	Risk Management: In line with Council policies and procedures.
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	To note the contents of this report and give approval for the sports grant allocations as recommended within this report.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Appendix A: Grant recipients and amount of grant award.



**Appendix A: Grant recipients and amount of grant award.**

**Sportsperson Representative on eligible cost to a max of £250**

Name		Project Title	Amount Requested	Band	Amount Awarded
Dolores	McGuckin	WHEA World Natural Strongest Woman Championships	£660.00	1	£250
Total					<b>£250</b>

Band	Amount
1	<b>£250.00</b>
2	<b>£225.00</b>
3	<b>£200.00</b>
4	<b>£175.00</b>
5	<b>£150.00</b>

**Sportsperson Representative on eligible cost to a max of £500**

Name		Project Title	Amount Requested	Band	Amount Awarded
Total					<b>£0</b>

Band	Amount
1	<b>£500.00</b>
2	<b>£450.00</b>
3	<b>£400.00</b>
4	<b>£350.00</b>



<b>Report on</b>	DfC Consultation - Notice to Quit Periods for Private Tenancies
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> January 2022
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Anne Caldwell, Principal Environmental Health officer

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to inform members of a consultation by the Department for Communities (DfC) into "Notice to Quit Periods for Private Tenancies" and seek any comments/amendments from Members on the enclosed Mid Ulster District Council draft response and thereafter, approval for response submission by the deadline of 25 <sup>th</sup> January 2022.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	DfC has opened a consultation into "Notice to Quit Periods for Private Tenancies" and the cover letter and the consultation document are enclosed within the appendices.
2.2	A notice to quit is a type of eviction letter which must typically be given to a private tenant in writing before the landlord can take the tenant to court for an eviction hearing.
2.3	<p>The period of notice required by landlords and tenants to validly end a private tenancy is set out in Article 14 of the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. The notice was originally four weeks, but from 30 June 2011 was amended for tenancies longer than five years' duration as set out below. This amendment was made by the Housing (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 weeks' notice, for tenancies up to 5 years' duration;</li> <li>• 8 weeks' notice, for tenancies longer than 5 years and up to 10 years' duration;</li> <li>• 12 weeks' notice, for tenancies longer than 10 years' duration.</li> </ul>
2.4	<p>The required notice period has been temporarily extended to 12 weeks for all tenancies until 4 May 2022, by The Private Tenancies (Coronavirus Modifications) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021. This consultation is not seeking views on any future temporary extension as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic.</p> <p>Prior to this this legislation being passed, tenants in Northern Ireland could be evicted with 28 days' notice from their landlord.</p>

2.5	A Private Tenancies Bill is currently making its way through the NI Assembly which would propose to extend the minimum notice to quit period to 8 weeks for tenancies lasting longer than 12 months. It will retain the 12-week notice period for tenancies of more than 10 years.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p>During 2021, DfC published the response to a consultation on proposals to reform and make the private rented sector safer and a more secure housing option. Due to the urgent need for improved standards in the sector, legislation to bring about reform in the Private Rented Sector is being introduced in 2 phases:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Firstly, those proposals that could be advanced in the time frame available would be brought forward in a Bill to be delivered during the current Assembly mandate; and</li> <li>(2) Secondly, a further phase of work, such as letting agent regulation, grounds for eviction and a review of the fitness standard, to follow as soon as possible in the next mandate.</li> </ol>
3.2	As an initial step, and in line with the original consultation exercise in 2017, a Private Tenancies Bill is currently making its way through the NI Assembly which would propose to extend the minimum notice to quit period to 8 weeks for tenancies lasting longer than 12 months. It will retain the 12-week notice period for tenancies of more than 10 years.
3.3	The Bill contains a power to further increase the Notice to Quit landlords must give tenants up to 6 months for tenancies longer than a year.
3.4	<p>The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) were asked by DfC to carry out research on Notice to Quit periods elsewhere and their research is summarised within this consultation document. A link to the published research Private Rented Tenancies in Northern Ireland and Notice to Quit periods can be found here: <a href="https://www.cih.org/publications">https://www.cih.org/publications</a></p>
3.5	<p>This current consultation will inform the current Bill as it progresses and seeks views on a number of options for the Notice to Quit period, namely if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• landlords should be subject to longer notice periods than tenants</li> <li>• notice periods should differ for longer tenancies</li> <li>• tenancies lasting less than a year should be terminated with just 28 days' notice</li> <li>• there should be any exemptions from longer notice periods and what these should be</li> <li>• tenants in Housing in Multiple Occupancies (HMO) properties should be subject to different notice requirements</li> </ul>
3.6	A draft response to the consultation is attached for members consideration and comment where appropriate.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>

<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: N/A during this current consultation phase.
	Human: Officer time to prepare and submit a consultation response.
	Risk Management: N/A during this current consultation phase.
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: To be considered by the Department coordinating the consultation exercise - A summary of evidence to support the proposed changes is included in this consultation document.
	Rural Needs Implications: To be considered by the Department coordinating the consultation exercise - A summary of evidence to support the proposed changes is included in this consultation document.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	To note the contents of this report and give approval for the enclosed draft consultation response to be submitted to DfC by deadline of 25th January 2022.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Appendix A: DfC cover letter to consultation.
6.2	Appendix B: Consultation Document
6.3	Appendix C: Draft Mid Ulster District Council Consultation response



Housing Division  
Private Rented Branch  
Level 3, Causeway Exchange  
1-7 Bedford Street  
Belfast  
BT2 7EG  
Phone: 028 905105259

01 December 2021

## PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR IN NORTHERN IRELAND – NOTICE TO QUIT CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

Minister Hargey has today launched the above consultation which will run until 25 January 2022.

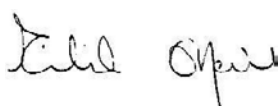
As a result of the Department's consultation on proposals to reform the private rented sector, legislation is being introduced to improve standards in the sector. One of the proposed improvements is to extend the notice to quit period a landlord must give a tenant.

This consultation seeks views on a number of options for the notice to quit period and you are invited to take this opportunity to respond to this document.

A copy of the consultation document can be accessed at the following link –

[Consultation on Notice to Quit | Department for Communities](#)

Yours sincerely,



Eilish O'Neill & Conrad Murphy  
Managers, Private Rented Branch



Department for  
**Communities**

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**Commonities**

[www.communities-ni.gov.uk](http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk)

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## Notice to Quit Consultation

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December 2021



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## Ministerial Foreword

Earlier this year my Department published the response to the consultation on proposals to reform and make the private rented sector safer and a more secure housing option.

Due to the urgent need for improved standards in the sector I decided to introduce legislation to bring about reform in the Private Rented Sector in 2 phases:

- Firstly those proposals that could be advanced in the time frame available would be brought forward in a Bill to be delivered during the current Assembly mandate; and
- Secondly a further phase of work, such as letting agent regulation, grounds for eviction and a review of the fitness standard, to follow as soon as possible in the next mandate.

The Private Tenancies Bill is currently progressing through the Assembly.

The Bill contains a number of proposed improvements including one to extend the Notice to Quit period a landlord must give a tenant. As an initial step, and in line with the original consultation exercise in 2017, I am increasing the Notice to Quit period that a landlord provides to a tenant to 8 weeks. This will come into effect once a tenant has been in a tenancy for more than 12 months and up to 10 years.

The Bill contains a power to further increase the Notice to Quit landlords must give tenants up to 6 months for tenancies longer than a year.

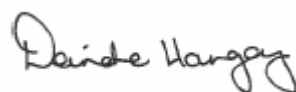
In my view 8 weeks is still an insufficient timeframe to allow tenants to find an affordable, suitable new home and I asked officials to carry out some further research and consultation. The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) were asked to carry out research on Notice to Quit periods elsewhere and their research is summarised within this consultation document. A link to the published research Private Rented Tenancies in Northern Ireland and Notice to Quit periods can be found here:

**<https://www.cih.org/publications>**

This consultation seeks views on a number of options for the Notice to Quit period and will inform the current Bill as it progresses.

I invite you to take this opportunity to respond to the document and help shape the future of the private rented sector.

Is mise le meas



Deirdre Hargey  
Minister for Communities

SCOPE OF CONSULTATION	
Topic of this consultation:	This consultation seeks views on the length of Notice to Quit periods that a landlord or tenant gives to end a tenancy in the private rented sector.
Scope of this consultation:	We are keen to hear the views of all parties with an interest in the proposals so that relevant views and evidence can be taken into account in deciding the way forward.
Geographical scope:	These proposals apply across Northern Ireland.
Impact Assessment:	A summary of evidence to support the proposed changes is included in this consultation document.

## BASIC INFORMATION

<b>To:</b>	This is a public consultation about the length of Notice to Quit periods that a landlord or tenant gives to end a tenancy in the private rented sector.
<b>Body/bodies responsible for the consultation:</b>	This consultation is being run by Housing Division in the Department for Communities.
<b>Duration:</b>	The consultation will be open for response from 1 December – 25 January 2022
<b>Enquiries:</b>	<p>For any enquiries about the consultation please email the Department at: <b><a href="mailto:prs@communities-ni.gov.uk">prs@communities-ni.gov.uk</a></b></p> <p>or write to: Notice to Quit Consultation Department for Communities Private Rented Branch Housing Division Level 3 Causeway Exchange 1-7 Bedford Street Belfast BT2 7EG</p>

**How to  
respond:**

You can respond using the following link:  
**<https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/dfc/notice-to-quit/>**

If you would prefer not to use Citizen Space, the consultation questions can be accessed in a Microsoft Word document on the consultation website. Responses prepared in this format should be sent to the email or postal address below. **In responding to this consultation please do not submit any sensitive personal data or information.**

**You are under no obligation to provide personal details in responding to this consultation.**

In line with good practice and sustainable development this document has been published electronically. Responses are accordingly requested, where possible, in electronic format.

You can email your response to the questions in this consultation to: **[prs@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:prs@communities-ni.gov.uk)**

Written responses should be sent to:  
Notice to Quit Consultation  
Department for Communities  
Private Rented Branch  
Housing Division  
Level 3 Causeway Exchange  
1-7 Bedford Street  
Belfast  
BT2 7EG

When you reply it would be very useful if you could confirm whether you are replying as an individual or submitting an official response on behalf of an organisation.

<b>Consultation Response:</b>	We will consider the responses received and, following that, publish a consultation report on the Departmental website, which will outline feedback received and the Department's next steps.
<b>Accessibility:</b>	<p>A range of alternative formats are available upon request from this Department.</p> <p>Please email the Department at: <b><a href="mailto:prs@communities-ni.gov.uk">prs@communities-ni.gov.uk</a></b></p> <p>or write to: Notice to Quit Consultation Department for Communities Private Rented Branch Housing Division Level 3 Causeway Exchange 1-7 Bedford Street Belfast BT2 7EG</p>

## HOW WE CONSULT

### Consultation Principles:

This consultation is being conducted in line with the Fresh Start Agreement – (**Appendix F6 - Eight Steps to Good Practice in Public Consultation-Engagement**). These eight steps give clear guidance to departments on conducting consultations.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/479116/A\\_Fresh\\_Start\\_-\\_The\\_Stormont\\_Agreement\\_and\\_Implementation\\_Plan\\_-\\_Final\\_Version\\_20\\_Nov\\_2015\\_for\\_PDF.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/479116/A_Fresh_Start_-_The_Stormont_Agreement_and_Implementation_Plan_-_Final_Version_20_Nov_2015_for_PDF.pdf)

### Feedback on the consultation process:

We value your feedback on how well we consult. If you have any comments about the consultation process (as opposed to comments about the issues which are the subject of the consultation), including if you feel that the consultation does not adhere to the values expressed in the **Eight Steps to Good Practice in Public Consultation-Engagement** or that the process could be improved, please address them to:

Email: [prs@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:prs@communities-ni.gov.uk)

or write to:

Notice to Quit Consultation  
Department for Communities  
Private Rented Branch  
Housing Division  
Level 3 Causeway Exchange  
1-7 Bedford Street  
Belfast  
BT2 7EG

**Freedom of Information:**

The Department intends to publish a summary of responses on its website on completion of the consultation process.

All information will be handled in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Respondents should be aware that the Department's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 may require that any responses, not subject to specific exemptions under the Act, be disclosed to other parties on request.

For further information about Freedom of Information and GDPR please contact the Information Commissioner's Office at:  
**<https://ico.org.uk/>**

After the consultation a summary of responses will be published and placed on the Government website at:  
**<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/consultations>**

Information provided in response to the consultation document, including personal information, may be subject to publication or release to other parties or to disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes e.g. Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

When you are responding, if you want information to be treated as confidential, including personal data that you provide, please say so clearly in writing and explain why you need these details to be kept confidential.

If we receive a request for disclosure under the FOIA, we will take full account of your explanation, but due to the law we cannot provide an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as a confidentiality request.

DfC is the data controller in respect of any personal data that you provide, and DfC's privacy notice, which gives details of your rights in respect of the handling of your personal data, can be found at:  
**<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/dfc-privacy-notice>**



## **Introduction / Executive Summary**

This public consultation document follows on from the second stage in the Department's review of the role and regulation of the private rented sector. It asks a number of questions on what is considered a reasonable Notice to Quit period.

The aim of the paper is to seek a comprehensive range of views and opinions which the Department can use to inform its policy position on the extension to Notice to Quit periods, and any possible exemptions to these.

## 1. Part 1 - Summary of Commissioned Research - Notice to Quit in NI

**The CIH research began by looking at the Notice to Quit period and experience of landlords and tenants in NI.**

### Notice to Quit

1.1 The period of notice required by landlords and tenants to validly end a private tenancy is set out in Article 14 of the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. The notice was originally four weeks, but from 30 June 2011 was amended for tenancies longer than five years' duration as set out below. This amendment was made by the Housing (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

- 4 weeks' notice, for tenancies up to 5 years' duration;
- 8 weeks' notice, for tenancies longer than 5 years and up to 10 years' duration;
- 12 weeks' notice, for tenancies longer than 10 years' duration.

**The notice must be in writing.**

1.2 The required notice period has been temporarily extended to 12 weeks for all tenancies until 4 May 2022, by

The Private Tenancies (Coronavirus Modifications) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021. This consultation is not seeking views on any future temporary extension as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic.

1.3 If the notice is given during a periodic tenancy<sup>1</sup>, neither party needs to give a reason. The only requirements are that the relevant notice period is observed and that the notice is in writing. After the Notice to Quit period has ended the tenancy, if the tenant remains in the property it is unlawful for the landlord to enforce their right to recover possession except via court proceedings – this is set out under Article 56 of The Rent (Northern Ireland) Order 1978.

1.4 While fixed term tenancies are outside the scope of this consultation it is useful to point out if the notice is given during a fixed-term tenancy, there are contractual and legal implications. For example, if the tenant wants to end the tenancy before the end of the term the deposit would typically be lost and the tenant continues to be liable for rent for the remainder of the term, unless the landlord agrees to accept the surrender of the tenancy. If the landlord wishes to terminate the lease, they can only do

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1 If a tenant stays on in a property with agreement from the landlord once the initial term of a tenancy agreement ends the tenancy becomes periodic and runs week to week or month to month

so in accordance with a term in the agreement which expressly states that they can retake possession (a right to re-enter/forfeiture). By Article 55 of The Rent (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 the landlord can only enforce this right through a court order which is usually only granted if the landlord serves notice, can show the term has been broken, and the court agrees it is just and equitable to end the tenancy. Most agreements contain standard clauses whereby the tenant forfeits the lease for rent arrears, property damage or anti-social behaviour. But if these are absent (usually because there is no written agreement) the tenant can remain in possession until the end of the term. In all cases if Notice to Quit has not been properly served by the landlord, the judge will likely dismiss a possession case. A Notice to Quit is only required to terminate a periodic tenancy and not to end a fixed-term tenancy (which automatically ends once the end date is reached), but it is accepted good practice that the landlord should notify the tenant at least 28 days before the term ends that they do not intend to renew the tenancy.

### **Estimates of tenants and landlords experience of Notice to Quit**

1.5 In general, the PRS is one of the less well researched parts of Northern Ireland's housing system. It can be

difficult obtaining sufficient response rates to surveys forming part of PRS research. The House Condition Survey has been one reliable source of information on the PRS; most recently the 2016 survey was used to identify private tenants to participate in PRS research that year, which covered their experiences of living in the sector (see link below to published tenant survey). This included questions on reasons for leaving their previous accommodation, as well as the length of time in their current and previous homes.

**<https://www.nihe.gov.uk/Documents/Research/Private-tenants-survey/private-tenants-survey-2016.aspx>**

Recent research also includes the survey of private landlords in 2019, published in October 2020 (see link below to published landlord survey).

1.6 18 percent of respondents said in the past five years that they had evicted, not renewed or ended the tenancies of tenant/s who paid all of their rent themselves or who received housing benefit; the most common reason was "rent arrears caused by reasons other than welfare changes", followed by "damage caused to the property/ furnishings" and "nuisance caused to other neighbours".

1.7 A further two percent said they had done so in the past two years for tenant/s who received the housing

costs element of universal credit, but the numbers were too small to analyse the reasons.

**<https://www.nihe.gov.uk/Documents/Research/Private-Landlords-Survey/survey-of-private-landlords-2019-key-findings-repo.aspx>**

- 1.8 The CIH research suggests that while an incomplete view, the above data supports a view of the PRS as a relatively transient tenure where tenancies largely end due to a variety of tenants' own reasons. Security of tenure issues – such as evictions and non-renewal/cessation of tenancies by landlords – appear to play a small role in the overall reasons behind Notice to Quit, in relative terms.
- 1.9 In quantitative terms, there were 136,000 private rented households in 2016 according to the House Condition Survey, against the abovementioned 20 percent of landlords and nine percent of tenants surveyed who report security of tenure or landlord initiated reasons for leaving the home. This may amount to a sizeable number of tenants experiencing Notice to Quit at any one time.
- 1.10 In 2019-20, over 2,300 households presented to the Housing Executive as homeless due to loss of rented accommodation. While this also includes loss of social rented accommodation, there is of course

no requirement for private tenants to approach the Housing Executive for help with rehousing. Therefore, this number captures some private tenants experiencing Notice to Quit, but it will underestimate the total.

- 1.11 Likewise, data sourced from Housing Rights shows that there were over 3,000 client cases that included a Notice to Quit issue between 2018/19 and 2020/21. The number of these cases rose to an average of 100 per month in 2020/21. The rise is possibly due to clients seeking clarification of the legislative changes brought about due to the pandemic. Over the same three-year period there were an additional 1,200 cases from landlords, featuring a sharp rise in cases during 2020/21.

### **Finding alternative accommodation within current Notice to Quit periods**

- 1.12 Housing Rights research published in the past year highlights some of the reasons that clients are refused a tenancy or have their options restricted when seeking alternative accommodation. Fundamentally, this can add to the time taken to find new accommodation, especially in markets with supply constraints. Low-income, and younger people are particularly affected. A primary barrier is the need to provide a deposit and rent in advance, which in some cases resulted in clients “losing access to a

PRS property simply because they were not able to access a means to pay the deposit or rent in advance, even when the landlord was willing to let to them”.

1.13 Shorter notice periods will impact people’s ability to raise such funds where they have limited means to do so.

1.14 Some clients report being refused PRS accommodation due to being in receipt of benefits. Advisors also cite cases where people have reported being refused properties because of their age and because they have pets.

1.15 The availability of accommodation that is affordable was also an issue for clients in the research. The local housing allowance ‘shared accommodation rate’ particularly restricts options for younger, single people with low incomes. This all highlights the importance of ensuring that notice periods and the statutory framework offer people tenancy security in the first instance and followed by a reasonable period for which to seek alternative accommodation that is suitable for their circumstances.

## **Review of the private rented sector**

1.16 The review of the private rented sector was taken forward in two stages:

- Firstly a discussion paper was published in November 2015 to identify the issues impacting on those living and working in the sector; and

**<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/consultations/review-role-and-regulation-private-rented-sector>**

- Secondly a consultation document issued in January 2017 containing firm proposals for change

**<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/consultations/private-rented-sector-northern-ireland-proposals-change>**

1.18 Both documents included questions relating to Notice to Quit periods with 65 percent of respondents supporting the proposal to extend the Notice to Quit period to two months, while 35 percent were not in favour. Some tenants as well as stakeholder representatives felt that the current 4 week notice was not long enough for tenants to find suitable alternative accommodation, pack up belongings and move to a new property.

1.19 The current Private Tenancies Bill amends the Notice to Quit period that a landlord gives a tenant to 8 weeks for tenancies over 12 months and up to 10 years but the Bill also contains

a provision for the Department to change the Notice to Quit period to 6 months or a period less than that.

context of each country's overall legal framework for tenancies and their security in the PRS.

1.20 In the next section we will summarise the CIH research (a link to the published report is provided) to inform this consultation so that respondents can consider the research in determining their views.

2.3 Comparing NI with these other jurisdictions (see Annex: Tabular summary of types of tenancy and termination rules in different countries) and considering Notice to Quit within the context of the legal framework, CIH assess that the level of security currently provided in NI is low.

## **2. Part 2 - Summary of Commissioned Research - Notice to Quit in NI Other Jurisdictions**

2.1 CIH research looked across a range of other jurisdictions and found that approaches vary greatly from one jurisdiction to the next, with levels of security ranging from low to high. The countries that afford greater security do so through options including fixed-term, open-ended and indefinite tenancies; longer notice periods to end a tenancy; and by limiting the circumstances under which a landlord may terminate a tenancy.

2.4 The research suggests reasons for this are threefold. First, fixed-term tenancies are typically short, normally for an initial period of 12 months, or a default six months if the term is not stipulated in the tenancy agreement. Second, no-grounds termination is allowed for periodic tenancies. Third, the typical length of tenancies falls short of five years as indicated further below, and only four weeks' notice is required in these cases. The current move to increase the minimum Notice to Quit period a landlord has to give to 8 weeks for tenancies lasting longer than 12 months is acknowledged.

2.2 The research explains how Notice to Quit periods for ending a PRS tenancy are part of the process by which tenancies can be brought to an end; they sit within legal frameworks offering greater or lesser degrees of security for tenants. Notice periods therefore need to be viewed in the

2.5 The research concludes that the statutory framework for Notice to Quit and tenancy security is very light and leaves much to the determination of common law largely through freedom of contract, even though balance of power issues arise.

For example, in periodic tenancies, tenants who try to enforce the landlords' repairing obligations under the lease or the law could put themselves at risk that the landlord will respond by serving a Notice to Quit (so called retaliatory eviction).

- 2.6 Details of all the countries that CIH examined can be seen in the table at Annex A. Full case studies on each of the countries (Germany, Australia, Canada, Republic of Ireland, Scotland and England & Wales) are also available in the published report Private Rented Tenancies in Northern Ireland and Notice to Quit periods: <https://www.cih.org/publications>

### 3. Part 3 - Summary of Commissioned Research - New Research

- 3.1 As well as looking across other jurisdictions CIH also carried out some new research on the experiences of Notice to Quit in Northern Ireland and full details including analysis of the results can be found in part 4 of the published report.
- 3.2 A representative online opinion survey was used and this was followed by an online poll hosted by CIH to gather additional/more qualitative data and identify candidates for interview.

- 3.3 The poll was designed to survey people with experience of leaving private rented accommodation and results showed that most tenancies are ended by tenants, the vast majority giving notice and landlord led terminations are small. This corresponds with responses to the prs review that tenancies largely end due to a variety of tenants' own reasons.
- 3.4 The poll also asked questions around duration of stay in private rented accommodation and reasons for leaving private rented accommodation.
- 3.5 Respondents were then offered a series of statements regarding length of notice period to see if they felt it was adequate for them to secure alternative accommodation.
- 3.6 More than three quarters (77%) of respondents said that the notice period was about right to secure suitable alternative accommodation. These people tended to be working (both full time and part time), were living in Belfast, Lisburn & Castlereagh or who owned their house outright whereas those who said that the notice period was too short tended to be people who were:
- Still renting from a private landlord;
  - Unemployed;
  - Living with a disability;



- With caring responsibilities, or
- Living in the Mid and West regions.

## **Qualitative Research with Landlords and Tenants**

3.7 This survey was made available for landlords who have experience issuing a Notice to Quit and for tenants whose most recent home was private rented accommodation and who therefore had experience of a tenancy coming to an end. Two separate surveys were undertaken, one for landlords to complete (104 responses) and another for tenants (25 responses). The underrepresentation of tenants in the survey was balanced by seeking a similar proportion of tenants and landlords for the interviews.

## **Tenant Survey and Interview Findings**

3.8 64 percent of tenants who responded to the survey said that the notice they had to leave their previous home was too short to secure suitable alternative accommodation. Thirty six percent of respondents said that the notice they received to leave their previous home was about right to find alternative accommodation.

3.9 Both the survey results and proceeding qualitative interviews revealed a strong sense from a tenant's perspective that the current Notice to Quit period should be lengthened.

3.10 32 percent of survey respondents considered 'six months or more' to be a reasonable notice period for securing alternative accommodation, while only four percent cited 'less than one month' as being a reasonable timeframe to secure alternative accommodation. Twenty percent of respondents favoured 'two months or more but less than three months' which is roughly the equivalent to the 12-week temporary Notice to Quit period currently in place.

3.11 The qualitative interviews with tenants showed no uniform view as to what the Notice to Quit period should be lengthened to. Whilst some tenants were content to see any reform from the current statutory four week Notice to Quit period, others specifically cited the temporary 12-week Notice to Quit period as a much more appropriate timeframe.

3.12 There was some hesitancy in regard to extending the period longer than the current four weeks without the relevant changes to homeless presentation rules that state you can only be assessed as a 'Full Duty' homeless applicant by the Housing Executive if you are likely to become homeless within the proceeding 28-day period. Thus, the 12-week notice period would be problematic if any persons wanting to present as homeless couldn't do so until the final third of their notice



period. Other concerns included the inability to secure alternative accommodation 12-weeks in advance of vacating the property; the difficulty of securing a new private tenancy due to the competitiveness of the current market; and the financial inability of landlords to hold a new property for that length of time without asking for rent or increasing the deposit.

- 3.13 The vast majority of tenants surveyed cited the difficulty with being able to find alternative rental properties once receiving a notice from the landlord. There was a general agreement that the private market is being out-stripped by housing need. One participant explained that she had placed over 20 applications for rental accommodation and was unsuccessful in securing offers from letting agents or landlords in these instances.
- 3.14 Of tenants surveyed, the most cited reason (24 percent) for receiving a Notice to Quit was the landlord wanting to sell the property. The qualitative interviews revealed that in these instances the tenants had hoped to remain within the property long term.

## **Landlord survey and interview findings**

- 3.15 The overwhelming view of landlords who responded to the survey, and those who were subsequently interviewed, was that the Notice to Quit period should not be lengthened. Of those who responded to the survey, 65 percent ended the tenancy in question less than one year ago and therefore, for those who issued a Notice to Quit would have been impacted by the temporary 12-week Notice to Quit period (in place due to Coronavirus emergency legislation).
- 3.16 40 percent of landlords considered the notice period that was given to be 'too long' (almost three-quarters of landlords who said this had ended the tenancy themselves, by giving notice to the tenant). Forty-eight percent stated that the notice period was 'about right' (in this case there was a mix of tenant- and landlord-led terminations). Only 12 percent of landlords said that the notice period was too short – in almost all these cases the tenant had given notice.
- 3.17 When asked what they considered to be a reasonable notice period to be for ending a tenancy, the majority of landlords (64 percent) roughly opted for the status quo (four weeks), indicating that 'one month or more, but less than two months' was a

reasonable timeframe. Only four percent of landlords consider the current temporary 12-week notice period to be a reasonable timeframe when they selected ‘three months or more but less than four months’. The results also show that no landlord who completed the survey felt that the notice period should be four months or longer. Those landlords who were interviewed also felt strongly that the notice period must be the same for both tenants and landlords and that any asymmetrical notice period would be unfavourable with landlords.

- 3.18 All landlords who were interviewed referenced at least one negative experience of renting to tenants. They advised that in those instances had the Notice to Quit period been longer it would have created further problems for them, such as falling into financial difficulties.

## 4. Part 4 - Summary of Commissioned Research - European Convention on Human Rights

**European Convention on Human Rights: protection of property and ‘control of use’**

- 4.1 The CIH research also examines potential extended Notice to Quit periods may have on the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

- 4.2 It concludes that any change to Notice to Quit periods needs to comply with, in particular the impact on, Protocol 1, Article 1 (Protection of Property) within the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). That is:

‘Every natural or legal person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions. No one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law and by the general principles of international law. The preceding provisions shall not, however, in any way impair the right of the State to enforce such laws as it deems necessary to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest or to secure payment of taxes or other contributions or penalties.’

- 4.3 Any change to Notice to Quit periods involves an interference by way of imposition and control on use of property and the Department must ensure that the imposition of that control is justified and proportionate.

### Exemptions from longer Notice to Quit periods

- 4.4 The CIH report considers this further. From a legal perspective, interference by the state with the contractual notice period represents ‘control of use’ under Article 1, Protocol 1 of the European Convention of Human Rights concerning

protection of property. While it seems unlikely that a court would conclude that a statutory notice period of six months or less would violate the Convention, it is likely to take account of the exact conditions before finding that they are incompatible.

- 4.5 The report gives an example of a court case where the court took into account the fact that emergency laws postponing possession allowed for exceptions such as for rent arrears or for other reasons where the landlord urgently required possession.
- 4.6 While exceptions are beneficial in a legal context, fundamentally landlords need to be reassured that they can regain possession of their property within appropriate timescales in the small number of cases where things go wrong.
- 4.7 An example given in the report is in the Republic of Ireland the landlord is only required to give seven days' notice if a tenant's behaviour is seriously anti-social or threatens the fabric of the property. Eight weeks or more is understandably a long time to wait where serious damage to the property is taking place, potentially storing up more problems to address at the end of the tenancy. Such damages can be costly as is the case when tenants stop paying rent and get into serious rent arrears.

- 4.8 In cases of rent arrears, good housing management practice involves early intervention from the landlord to attempt to address the problem; tenants should be given the opportunity to pay the arrears. However, if arrears persist and become serious, a longer Notice to Quit period may not be appropriate. Faced with a case of serious rent arrears, long notice periods may mean landlords receive minimal rent payments or none at all. This stores up the potential for protracted debt recovery action with uncertain results, as well as problems for individual landlords.

### **The Consultation Proposals**

- 4.9 The Private Tenancies Bill, as drafted, will change the Notice to Quit period that a landlord is required to give a Tenant to:
  - i. Tenancy less than 12 months – 4 weeks' Notice to Quit;
  - ii. Tenancy more than 12 months but less than 10 years – 8 weeks' Notice to Quit; and
  - iii. Tenancy more than 10 years – 12 weeks' Notice to Quit

4.10 It will also change the Notice to Quit period that a tenant is required to give a landlord to:

- i. Tenancy less than 10 years – 4 weeks' Notice to Quit; and
- ii. Tenancy more than 10 years – 12 weeks' Notice to Quit.

4.11 Responses to the 2017 consultation document gave evidence from landlords and agents that most tenancies end at the request of the tenant and on occasion without the tenant giving the landlord or agent notice. Some tenants, however, as well as stakeholder representatives wanted the Notice to Quit period of four weeks extended to eight as they felt four weeks was too short a time to find suitable new affordable accommodation.

4.12 Minister Hargey has made it clear that she thinks 8 weeks' notice is still too short a time for a tenant to be asked to leave their home, find a suitable new house that they can afford, maybe find a new school and childcare for their children and pack up all their belongings.

4.13 The research completed by CIH on behalf of the Department has been provided in this document as a valuable source of information to help inform the consultation.

4.14 Respondents will get the opportunity to choose one of 3 options regarding Notice to Quit periods (for tenancies longer than 12 months):

- 8 weeks' Notice to Quit as laid out in the Private Tenancies Bill
- 12 weeks' Notice to Quit as currently exists due to the emergency legislation
- 26 weeks' Notice to Quit

as well as answer some more general questions including whether there is a need for any exemptions to longer Notice to Quit periods.

4.15 The CIH research and responses to this consultation will assist in providing more nuanced advice on the proportionality balancing exercise required to further amend the Notice to Quit period.

## Annex: Tabular Summary of Types of Tenancy and Termination Rules in Different Countries

Country	Types of Tenancy	Grounds for Termination	Notice Period for Termination by Landlords	Termination by Tenants	Tribunal or Other Arrangement	Level of Security
<b>Australia</b>	Short (6–12 months), fixed-term and periodic tenancies	Prescribed grounds at any time. No-grounds termination allowed once fixed term has ended (except in Tasmania and Victoria)	Vary by state. Range from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tenant's breach – 2 weeks' notice</li> <li>• sale of property – 30–60 days</li> <li>• no-grounds – from 42 days to 26 weeks</li> </ul>	End of fixed term – 14–28 days Before the end of a fixed term, only limited circumstances – up to 21 days. In periodic tenancies – up to 28 days depending	Tribunal decides possession cases	Low-medium
<b>Canada</b>	Mostly short (6–12 months), fixed-term and periodic tenancies	Mostly prescribed grounds only; some allow termination at end of fixed term; no-grounds termination allowed in certain provinces	Range from very short (a few days) for failure to pay rent up to 120 days for major repairs, but vary according to province.	Typically two months' notice.	Practice varies, e.g. tribunals (Ontario); appeal to an officer (Newfoundland)	Low-medium
<b>England &amp; Wales</b>	Short (6–12 months), fixed-term and periodic tenancies	No-grounds termination allowed	Two months for no-fault evictions; shorter periods for rent arrears etc. (2–8 weeks, see text)	For weekly or fortnightly periodic, four weeks; for monthly periodic, one month. For fixed-term, only at end of fixed term unless there is a break clause.	Court decides possession cases	Low

Country	Types of Tenancy	Grounds for Termination	Notice Period for Termination by Landlords	Termination by Tenants	Tribunal or Other Arrangement	Level of Security
<b>New Zealand</b>	Short (6–12 months), fixed-term and periodic tenancies	Fixed-term tenancies cannot be ended early except for prescribed reasons. Periodic tenancies can be ended. No-grounds terminations recently prohibited.	Scale of notice periods from immediate after successive notices for arrears, up to 63–90 days for other specified reasons	Fixed-term tenancies cannot generally be ended; periodic tenancies can be ended with 28 days' notice.	Tribunal decides possession cases	Low-medium
<b>Republic of Ireland</b>	Short fixed-term and periodic tenancies	Prescribed 6-year cycle with fewer restrictions on termination in initial six months, then prescribed grounds only	Sliding scale of notice periods from very short (e.g. 7 days for ASB) to much longer periods, depending on length of tenancy (e.g. 112 days after 4 years, 224 days after 8 years)	Tenants can give notice without having a reason, with notice periods varying from 4–16 weeks depending on the length of tenancy.	Cases can be decided by tribunal, but official mediation and adjudication services also exist	High
<b>Scotland</b>	Private residential tenancies, no fixed term	Prescribed grounds only (but there are more than in RoI)	Minimum 28 days (e.g. for ASB); for most prescribed grounds, notice is 12 weeks once the tenancy has lasted at least 6 months (28 days if less than 6 months)	Tenants can give 28 days' notice	Tribunal decides possession cases	Medium
<b>Austria</b>	Three-year minimum, converted to indefinite on renewal.	Limited prescribed grounds only (e.g. at least 3 months arrears)	One month after court decision	Three months, earliest one year after contract	District court decides possession cases	High

Country	Types of Tenancy	Grounds for Termination	Notice Period for Termination by Landlords	Termination by Tenants	Tribunal or Other Arrangement	Level of Security
<b>Belgium</b>	9-year fixed terms, but most are 3-year terms	Termination allowed at end of fixed term with limited other prescribed grounds	9-year tenancy: 6 months; shorter tenancies:	Three months	District court decides possession cases	High
<b>Finland</b>	Mix of fixed-term and open-ended tenancies	Prescribed grounds only; fixed-term contracts are difficult to terminate within the term	Depending on length of tenancy, either 3 or 6 months	One month	Role of courts limited: decisions made by bailiffs	Medium
<b>France</b>	Fixed terms, 1-6 years	Limited, prescribed grounds only	3-6 months	Three months (unfurnished); one month (furnished)	Cases decided by court if mediation tribunal fails to resolve	Medium
<b>Germany</b>	Little use of fixed-term tenancies; tenancies typically open-ended	Limited, prescribed grounds only	Rules are complex but effectively the shortest notice period is almost 3 months in most cases and can be as long as 9 months if tenancy has lasted 8 years or more; for arrears or criminal behaviour periods are shorter	Tenants can give notice – usually three months	Court decides possession cases	High
<b>Italy</b>	Fixed-term tenancies of four years with option for tenant to extend for four more years	Limited grounds (e.g. sale) in first 4-year period, beyond that no-grounds termination is allowed	Six months' notice	Tenant can give six months' notice but for limited reasons	Tribunal decides possession cases	High

Country	Types of Tenancy	Grounds for Termination	Notice Period for Termination by Landlords	Termination by Tenants	Tribunal or Other Arrangement	Level of Security
<b>Malta</b>	Either short-term (up to six months) or long-term (minimum one year)	Appear to be no prescribed grounds in recently reformed law, but landlords must adhere to notice periods	Short-term: on termination; long-term: three months' notice	Tenants can give 1-3 months' notice depending on length of tenancy, after a determined period from start of tenancy	Adjudication panel decides on landlord-tenant disputes	High
<b>Netherlands</b>	Tenancies typically open-ended	Limited prescribed grounds only	3-6 months	1-3 months	District court or rental committee depending on tenancy type	High
<b>Spain</b>	3-5 year fixed terms with some provision for early termination	Termination at end of and, in limited circumstances during, fixed term	Varying periods up to two months	One month	Tribunal decides possession cases	Medium
<b>Sweden</b>	Little use of fixed-term tenancies; tenancies typically open-ended	Prescribed grounds only	Three months	Three months	Complex picture: both courts and rent tribunals have a role in possession cases	High
<b>Switzerland</b>	Tenancies typically open-ended	Limited, prescribed grounds only	Three months	Three months	Tribunal-type system ('conciliation authority')	High

**Note:** The table has been compiled from a variety of sources, some in translation, therefore it should not be relied on as a definitive description of the tenancy arrangements in each country.





## ANNEX B

### NOTICE TO QUIT CONSULTATION

#### Overview

The Private Tenancies Bill which is currently making its way through the NI Assembly contains a clause to increase the Notice to Quit period that a landlord is required to give a tenant to 8 weeks for tenancies lasting more than 12 months up to 10 years. It also amends the Notice to Quit that a tenant has to give to 4 weeks if the tenancy has not been in existence for more than 10 years and 12 weeks if more than 10 years.

The Department wants to test if 8 weeks is a sufficient timeframe to allow tenants (resident in their homes for more than a year) to find an affordable, suitable new home and has therefore included a range of alternative Notice to Quit options for you to consider.

Minister Hargey asked for some further research to be carried out on a range of Notice to Quit options and this work was recently completed by the Chartered Institute of Housing. This research has been summarised within the consultation document to provide additional context.

**It is important to note that the draft Bill contains a provision which would allow the Notice to Quit to be amended in the future.**

#### Why your views matter

The aim of the public consultation is to seek a comprehensive range of views and opinions which the Department can use to inform its' policy position on any extension to the Notice to Quit period.

The Department will consider the responses received and, following that, publish a consultation report on the Departmental website, which will set out an analysis of responses and the Department's next steps.

The information you provide in completing this survey will be controlled and processed in line with Data Protection Legislation by the Department. To find out more about how we handle your personal information, DfC's Privacy Notice can be viewed online at [www.communities-ni.gov.uk/dfc-privacy-notice](http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/dfc-privacy-notice)

In order to facilitate the survey, Citizen Space, which is not operated by DfC, is used as a data processor. Details of Citizen Space's privacy policy can be found online at [www.delib.net/legal/privacy\\_policy](http://www.delib.net/legal/privacy_policy)

**Further information**

In responding to this consultation please do not submit any sensitive personal data or information. You are under no obligation to provide personal details in responding to this consultation.

We will only use your information for the purposes of analysis of feedback to this consultation.

## Introduction

Please confirm whether you are replying as an individual or submitting an official response on behalf of an organisation:

(Required)

- ☐ I am responding as an individual
- ☒ I am submitting an official response on behalf of an organisation

## Responding as an individual

If you are responding as an individual, which of the following best describes your interest in the consultation? (please tick one)

(Required)

Please select only one item.

- ☐ I am interested from a tenant perspective
- ☐ I am interested from a landlord perspective
- ☐ Other (please specify in space below)

n/a

## Responding on behalf of an organisation

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, which of the following best describes your organisation? (please tick one option)

Please select only one item.

- ☐ Private Landlord
- ☐ Social Landlord
- ☐ Letting agent
- ☒ Local Government/Council
- ☐ A housing sector representative body
- ☐ Charity dealing with housing issues
- ☐ Other (please specify in space below)

Mid Ulster District Council

## Notice to Quit

In responding to the questions below, please try to support your response with facts, data, specific examples or other forms of evidence to substantiate your point of view.

### The purpose of Notice to Quit

Either a tenant or a landlord may end a tenancy by giving a Notice to Quit. This provides time for the landlord to make arrangements to find a new tenant and gives the tenant time to find somewhere else to live. The usual length of a private tenancy Notice to Quit in Northern Ireland is the same for tenants and landlords although it is worth noting this was temporarily amended during the Covid emergency.

When a tenant gives Notice to Quit to a landlord it is normally because they have secured alternative accommodation whereas when a landlord gives a tenant a Notice to Quit that tenant then has to secure suitable affordable alternative accommodation which can be challenging in terms of supply and affordability. Therefore the Department considers that the Notice to Quit a landlord is required to give a tenant should be longer than the notice that a tenant is required to give.

The Department is particularly interested in views on the length of Notice to Quit that landlords should give to tenants.

1. Do you agree that the length of notices to quit for landlord and tenants should be different?

☒ Yes

☐ No

Mid Ulster District Council agrees that when a landlord gives a tenant a Notice to Quit, that the tenant then has to secure suitable affordable alternative accommodation which can be challenging in terms of supply and affordability.

Therefore Mid Ulster District agrees that the Notice to Quit a landlord is required to give a tenant should be longer than the current notice that a tenant is required to be given. The Council would like to ensure that a tenant is given adequate notice so that they may find suitable alternate accommodation which can be difficult in the privately rented sector

Council supports the same period of notice to quit for landlord and tenant. Council have knowledge of both parties experiencing challenges when unexpectedly a tenancy ends. The same length of notice will also avoid confusion. The proposed periods of notice to quit within the Private Tenancies Bill are in the Councils view deemed appropriate.

Use this box for further explanation if required:

**That Notice to Quit should vary depending on the length of time in the tenancy**

The Department considers that the longer a tenant has lived in a private tenancy the more disruption a Notice to Quit will cause as they try to secure suitable alternative accommodation.

2. Do you agree that Notices to Quit should vary depending on the length of the tenancy?

☒ Yes

☐ No

Use this box for further explanation if required:

Mid Ulster District Council agrees that that the longer a tenant has lived in a private tenancy the more disruption a Notice to Quit will cause as they try to secure suitable alternative accommodation.

Mid Ulster District Council agrees that Notice to Quit periods should vary depending on the length of the tenancy.

Where a tenant has occupied a property for a significant period of time, they will have developed strong links to a particular area especially for children attending school and for those who require access to additional community or voluntary support.

The extended period of time will allow tenants more time to find suitable accommodation to meet their needs and individual circumstances.

**Tenancies less than 12 months**

The Department proposes to retain a 4 week Notice to Quit for tenancies of up to a year. There are various reasons for this, including:

- Most tenancies start with a one year contract, so while a Notice to Quit being issued is good practice, the end date of the tenancy is specified from the beginning. The statutory Notice to Quit only applies where there is no written contract or the contract does not contain a fixed term.
- Tenants require short term contracts for a variety of reasons, and these are required to be flexible. The Department does not want to overly constrain the supply of such tenancies, given the need for them.

3. Do you agree that the length of notice for shorter term tenancies of up to 12 months should remain at 4 weeks?

☒ Yes

☐ No

The Council supports the view that 12 month fixed term tenancies should be given more than 4 weeks notice to quit.

Mid Ulster District Council agrees that the length of notice for shorter term tenancies of up to 12 months should remain at 4 weeks where the end date of the tenancy is specified from the beginning.

Mid Ulster District Council agrees that the statutory Notice to Quit should apply where there is no written contract or the contract does not contain a fixed term.

Mid Ulster District Council would welcome additional proposals in respect of grounds for eviction which other jurisdictions have in place to reduce the number of retaliatory evictions. Proposal is welcomed. Council would also welcome additional proposals in respect of grounds for eviction which other jurisdictions have in place in order to reduce the amount of retaliatory evictions.

If no, what length do you think it should be, and what information can you provide in support of this?

### **Tenancies from 12 months to 10 years in length**

The Bill proposes an 8 week Notice to Quit for these tenancies, but it has been suggested that this still may be inadequate for tenants to find alternative suitable accommodation they can afford.

The Department is seeking views on any further extension to the 8 weeks' Notice to Quit contained in the Private Tenancies Bill and if extended whether any exemptions should apply.

4. What do you think the Notice to Quit period that a landlord will be required to give a tenant should be (where the tenancy is between 12 months and 10 years in length)?

- ☐ 8 weeks
- ☒ 12 weeks
- ☐ 6 months (26 weeks)
- ☐ Other

Emergency legislation passed in 2020 increased minimum notice to quit periods from 28 days to 12 weeks. This legislation is currently in effect until March 2022.

Mid Ulster District Council would support the continuation of 12 week notice to Quit Period (where the tenancy is between 12 months and 10 years in length) particularly now that tenants and landlords have experience of a 12-week notice period through the implementation of The Private Tenancies (Coronavirus Modifications) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.

However, a notice period of 26 weeks would in our view be more appropriate for tenancies greater than 5 years duration with exemptions in place. Council would welcome additional proposals in respect of grounds for eviction which other jurisdictions have in place in order to reduce the amount of retaliatory evictions.

If other, please specify.

5. Do you think that there should be exemptions to this notice period?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If yes what should those exemptions be and what should the reduced Notice to Quit period be for those exemptions?

Exemption	Reduced Notice to Quit if this exemption applies
Prolonged/Excessive/substantial (quantified) rent arrears	4 – 6 weeks
Substantial damage to property	4 – 6 weeks
Serious anti-social behavior	4 – 6 weeks
Criminal damage or serious neglect of property	4 – 6 weeks

6. The Notice to Quit specified in legislation will apply across the Private Rented Sector, including to tenancies related to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) properties.

Do you think the length of Notice to Quit for those tenants living in an HMO, or for exemptions to the Notice to Quit, should be different from that of other tenants in the Private Rented Sector?

☐ Yes

☒ No



Mid Ulster Council agrees that the the Notice to Quit specified in legislation should apply across the Private Rented Sector, including to tenancies related to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) properties.

If so in what way?

HMO's accommodation provides affordable housing to a cross section of society, including: -

- homeless persons,
- single people on low incomes,
- victims of domestic abuse,
- people suffering with addictions,
- refugees,
- asylum seekers,
- young professionals, and
- students.

The Council supports the view that tenants of HMO's should be given at least the same legislative protection as other private rented tenants and the department may want to consider strengthening protection for vulnerable groups.



<b>Report on</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. High Street Task Force: Call For Evidence 2021</li> <li>2. Tourism Active Travel Projects</li> <li>3. Covid Small Settlements Regeneration Programme</li> <li>4. DfC Revitalisation Scheme 2021/2022 – Coalisland Town Centre</li> <li>5. Request from the Workspace Group</li> <li>6. All Island Strategic Rail Review Consultation</li> </ol>
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	13 January 2022
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Assistant Director of Economy, Tourism & Strategic Programmes

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To provide Members with an update on key activities as detailed below.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	<p><b>High Street Task Force: Call For Evidence 2021</b></p> <p>The Northern Ireland Executive Office sought views on its initial findings and potential solutions for key issues facing our high streets. The High Street Task Force (HSTF), a group formed by The Executive Office has identified the challenges and issues that our high streets face. The HSTF has been seeking views on solutions to support our high streets and to contribute to the development of thriving and sustainable city, town and village centres.</p>
2.2	<p><b>Tourism Active Travel Projects</b></p> <p>In June 2021, Greenway and Active Travel Projects wrote to Council to advise of a funding initiative through Department of Infrastructure (DfI) to install active travel pods on existing or potential Greenway sites. An application was submitted in July 2021 to look at installing 6 active travel pods along the old railway lines, which take in our 6 main towns in the district. Following assessment of the application, a business case for the project was submitted to the value of £24,480 (excl. Vat). Council is currently awaiting the Letter of Offer.</p>

<p>2.3</p> <p>2.4</p> <p>2.5</p> <p>2.6</p>	<p><b>The Covid Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme</b> Members were informed of the Covid Small Settlements Regeneration Programme at the November 2021 Committee meeting. Council has received further correspondence from the Department for Communities (DfC) requesting submission of a draft Small Settlements Regeneration Plan by 12 noon on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2021. (See <b>Appendix 2a</b>).</p> <p>This Programme is being jointly funded by three government departments – DfC, DAERA and DfI and aims to realise a range of benefits including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical regeneration of small settlements in order to improve place making and aid recovery from Covid-19</li> <li>• Improvements that encourage people to live, work, visit and invest in the area by 2022/23</li> <li>• Improvements that enhance walking, cycling and other associated facilities within the scheme area by 2022/23.</li> </ul> <p><b>DfC Revitalisation Scheme 2021/2022 – Coalisland Town Centre</b> The Department for Communities (DfC) had approved the Revitalisation scheme for Coalisland Town Centre to the value of £250,000, which followed after the completion of Coalisland Public Realm Scheme. DfC will provide 100% funding towards the scheme, with the proviso that all projects must be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.</p> <p><b>Request from the Workspace Group</b> Correspondence was received on 14 December 2021 from Ms Georgina Grieve, CEO, Workspace Group requesting Council support in relation to match funding for the 12-month extension to the ESF Programme starting April 2022 and running until March 2023.</p> <p><b>All Island Strategic Rail Review Consultation</b> The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) is consulting on a document titled “All Island Strategic Rail Review”. The consultation document considers and focuses on how the rail network on the island of Ireland can improve to promote sustainable connectivity into, and between, the major cities, enhance regional accessibility and support balanced regional development. This is a joint consultation with the Irish Government’s Department of Transport.</p>
<p>3.0</p>	<p><b>Main Report</b></p>
<p>3.1</p>	<p><b>High Street Task Force: Call For Evidence 2021</b> The High Street Task Force (HSTF) is seeking views on solutions to support our high streets and to contribute to the development of thriving and sustainable city, town and village centres.</p>

3.2	<p>The vision is “Sustainable city, town and village centres which are thriving places for people to do business, socialise, shop, be creative and use public services as well as being great places to live.”</p> <p>As part of this process, the Executive Office launched a Call for Evidence, which is available on <b>Appendix 1a</b>. The Call For Evidence opened on 25 October 2021 and closed again on 6 December 2021.</p> <p>Six workshops were held across NI, including one in the Burnavon Arts and Cultural Centre, Cookstown on Tuesday 9th November 2021 at which a number of Council’s economic development staff attended.</p> <p>The HSTF identified 14 key thematic areas to which they sought feedback on in their Call for Evidence, these are; Partnerships, Investment, Planning, Public Realm, Fiscal (including rates), Capacity, Energy, Climate Change &amp; Sustainability, Housing the Other Infrastructure, Getting to and from the High Street, Tourism, Digital High Streets, Rural Settlements and People, Localism &amp; Well-being.</p> <p>The HSTF will create a draft report from all the responses received, and provide recommendations, which will be subject to consultation and equality considerations before a final report is presented for agreement by the Executive by Spring 2022.</p> <p>Council officers undertook a series of Traders meetings to obtain their views on the issues above after which they engaged with the respective Town Centre Forums.</p> <p>The feedback received was collated and a Council response formulated and submitted before the deadline of 6 December 2021. Retrospective approval is sought for Council’s consultation response on <b>Appendix 1b</b>. If any Member wishes to include additional comments, these should be forwarded to the Assistant Director of Economy, Tourism &amp; Strategic Programmes by 20 January 2022 after which they will be forwarded to the HSTF.</p> <p><b>Tourism Active Travel Projects</b></p> <p>The application was based on the provision of 6 main stop off points with secure parking, repair stations and cycle shelters along the Greenway. These new active travel sites will allow Council to link in with the objectives of the Northern Ireland Changing Gear Bicycle Strategy and create a new modal shift in the cultural view in which cycling is seen providing a new innovative stop off and service facility.</p> <p>The new shift will aim to make cycling safer, more comfortable, healthy, and enhance the local economy and tourism sector. The focus is to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve opportunities for social interaction and allow people to interact and engage within their area and with other local people.</li> </ul>
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- Improve public health by providing opportunities for increased levels of personal fitness and reducing the number of cars on the roads.
- Increase safety for people using bicycles by providing safe places to park and make repairs on their bicycle therefore enhancing the 'feel safe' factor for cyclists.
- Provide opportunities for new cycling services through the development of linked cycle hubs with shelter, safe parking, and repair facilities.
- Connect people to other cultural heritage and tourism facilities in the area, increasing visitor numbers to other sites and spend in the local economy.

Under this proposal, Mid Ulster Council wishes to provide 6 cycling service hubs along the Dungannon to Coleraine Greenway running north to south and vice versa. This follows the old railway line, but the proposal will also ensure sites are intersected with the other lateral greenways identified in the Northern Ireland Greenway Strategy.

The cycle service sites will be located at;

- Maghera - Maghera Leisure Centre
- Magherafelt - Magherafelt Meadow Bank Leisure Centre
- Cookstown - Mid Ulster Sports Arena
- Coalisland - Gortgonis (beside canal)
- Dungannon - Dungannon Park or Castlecaulfield
- Fivemiletown – Round Lake

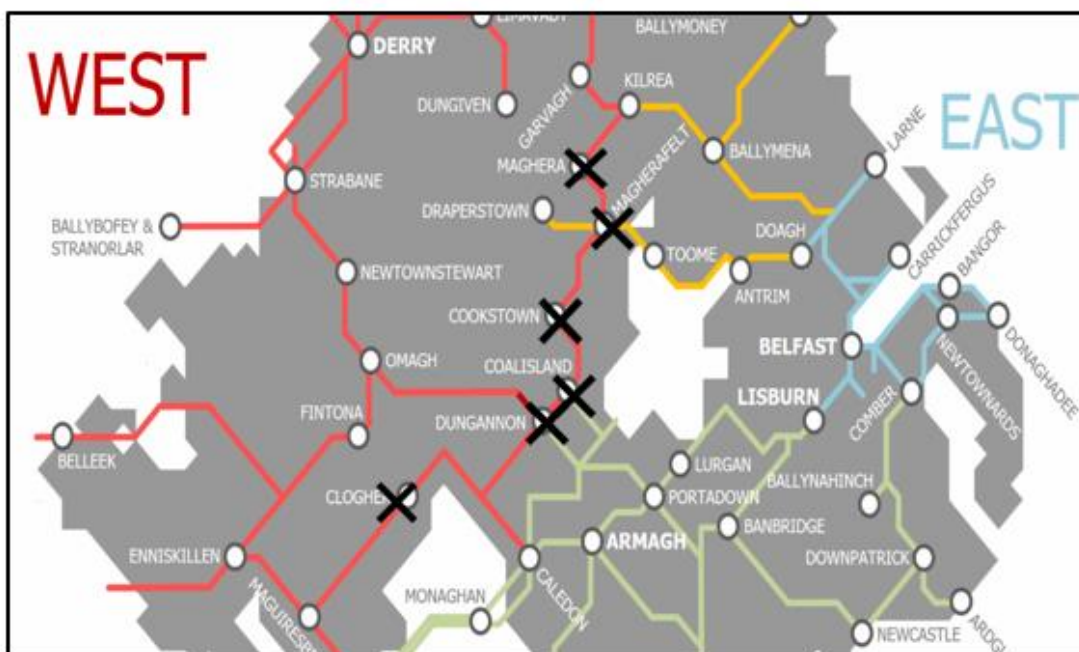
Each of the hubs will be sited within Council land or facilities and will provide three main elements:

- 1) A Cycle Repair facility
- 2) A Cycle Shelter
- 3) A Secure facility

This is an innovative proposal as it combines 3 elements of active cycle travel into one site: security, maintenance, and shelter. Each site will also be close to existing sports and changing /showering facilities and mainly at points where primary and secondary potential greenways meet. It provides an all-in-one cycle travel site.

#### **Location of Mid Ulster Service Cycle Sites**

✕ = Site Location



Approximate cost of £24,480 (excl. Vat) and is 100% funded by DFI subject to business case approval.

3.3

### **Covid Small Settlements Regeneration Programme**

Council was required to submit a draft Regeneration Plan to DfC by 12 noon on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2021. DfC has recognised that this timescale may not allow for normal Council approval processes to be followed prior to submission therefore there will be opportunity for refining draft Plans as they are being delivered.

The objectives of this Programme necessitate full completion of all projects included within the Regeneration Plan by **31<sup>st</sup> March 2023**. As such deliverability is the primary driver for project selection within this Programme period predicated on a number of other critical factors:

- current state of readiness with concrete design concepts agreed;
- location on Council owned property to avoid lengthy land tenure / lease processes;
- the need for planning and other statutory requirements and,
- a full and inclusive engagement process with local stakeholders.

In addition, full consideration will be given to achieving geographical spread in the selection of projects and to previous levels of funding for village regeneration activities across all settlement throughout the district – but within the context of the deliverability factors listed above.

A copy of Council's Small Settlement Regeneration Plan is attached at **Appendix 2b**.

3.4	<p>This includes projects to be delivered in 2022/23 but also lists potential projects to be further developed to a state of readiness in preparation for delivery in 2023/24. A further commitment of funding for 2023/24 will be needed from DfC therefore discussions are ongoing.</p> <p><b>DfC Revitalisation Scheme 2021/2022 – Coalisland Town Centre</b>  At the July 2021 Development Committee approval was granted to the Chief Executive to be awarded delegated authority to accept any Letter of Offer from the Department of Communities (DfC) for the Revitalisation Project.</p> <p>This project is 100% funded by DfC and contains the following initiatives: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Festive Lighting Campaign (Approx. £80,000)</b>  The purchase of reusable Christmas Tree that will be designed and installed and associated festive light motifs, including one for each of the 47 newly erected lampposts throughout the town.</li> <li>• <b>Marketing &amp; Branding (Approx. £25,000)</b>  Developing a new brand for Coalisland and subsequently purchase of new branded merchandise to promote and reinforce the new brand.</li> <li>• <b>Lineside Environmental Improvement Scheme (Approx. £145,000)</b>  This new project will link up the town centre with the soon to be redeveloped Gortgonis Recreation Centre. The area is located at the start of the towpath to Gortgonis entrance and caters for much pedestrian footfall, yet there are no pedestrian rest areas readily available for the public to use to encourage them to spend more time in the town.</li> </ul> <p>Council's application to DfC for £250,000 funding has been successful and a letter of offer was issued to Council on 17 September 2021.</p> <p>By way of update, the Lineside Environmental Improvement Scheme was tendered as per Council procedure and the winning tender submitted was £24,000 over the available budget. Rather than reduce the scheme, DfC were approached to find out if they would meet the funding shortfall and they agreed to do and have since issued Council with a Letter of Variance to include the uplift in funding.</p> <p>The Letter of Variance enclosed on <b>Appendix 3</b> was issued to Council for signature, with the new funding included, now totaling £274,000. DfC required the letter to be signed and returned as soon as possible, hence retrospective approval is sought for the Chief Executive to sign and return the Letter of Variance to DfC to allow work on this initiative to progress.</p>
3.5	<p><b>Request from the Workspace Group</b>  The correspondence from Ms Geogina Grieve (on <b>Appendix 4a</b>) outlines the match funding crisis facing voluntary and community organisations, from across Northern Ireland, who are currently in receipt of European Social Fund (ESF)</p>



3.6	<p>funding. The letter is supported by a briefing report (on <b>Appendix 4b</b>) produced by NICVA on behalf of the ESF Users Group - a representative group of voluntary and community organisations, from across Northern Ireland, who are currently in receipt of ESF funding.</p> <p>The EU agreed to extend the life of the programme by a further year until March 2023 (ESF Call 3 ), pledging £20 million but this is dependent on approximately £14 million match funding from NI government departments and agencies, which is currently not all secured. The current ESF funding will end in March 2022.</p> <p>Network Personnel, have been successful in securing c £2.3 million of Call 3 ESF funding. This funding is for extending the provision of three employability programmes, across five council areas (Mid Ulster; Mid and East Antrim; Antrim and Newtownabbey; Fermanagh and Omagh; and Causeway Coast and Glen) throughout 2022/23. Members will be aware that these Programmes are aimed at supporting the most vulnerable families, young person's not in employment, education or training, unemployed and economically inactive.</p> <p>To be able to draw down the c £2.3 million of ESF funding, Network Personnel need to secure £804k of match funding. Historically, DfE have provided between 29% and 35% of the match funding required for these three projects totalling c £700k per annum, with the remaining c £100k being funding by other sources such as local councils. At present DfE are advising that they no longer have that level of funding available. Specifically, in Mid Ulster this would equate to the loss of £748k in support to local people via programmes delivered by Network Personnel.</p> <p>The correspondence requests Council support to ensure that DfE and DfC, are in a position to provide the match funding required to facilitate the ESF projects in 2022/23 and subsequently draw down and prevent the loss of c £20 million in ESF funding to NI.</p> <p><b>All Island Strategic Rail Review Consultation</b></p> <p>Members were notified of the All Island Strategic Rail Review Consultation at the December 2021 meeting of Council and it was agreed that a draft response be developed by officers for consideration at the next available Development Committee. It was noted that the closing date for submissions is 21 January 2021, before the next Council meeting, and as such Members delegated authority to Development Committee to agree the final response.</p> <p>The Strategic Rail Review Consultation paper is available at <a href="http://www.strategicrailreview.com">www.strategicrailreview.com</a></p> <p>Mid Ulster District Council's draft response to the Consultation is available on <b>Appendix 5</b>.</p>
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	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<p><b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b></p> <p>Financial:</p> <p><b>Tourism Active Travel Projects</b> This project is 100% funded by Department of Infrastructure subject to business case approval.</p> <p><b>Covid Small Settlements Regeneration Programme</b> A minimum 10% match funding from Council is needed on an overall allocation of £2.547m (capital and resource) – as stipulated within the Programme guidance notes – approval for match funding will be sought through Council's P&amp;R Committee in February 2022.</p> <p><b>DfC Revitalisation Scheme 2021/2022 – Coalisland Town Centre</b> Revised funding offer of £274,000 from DfC, which is 100%, funded.</p> <p>Human:</p> <p><b>Tourism Active Travel Projects</b> Officer time to co-ordinate, implement and monitor the planned project in conjunction with the Department of Infrastructure. Ability to deliver within existing staff resources.</p> <p><b>Covid Small Settlements Regeneration Programme</b> Officer time to co-ordinate, implement and monitor delivery of the Regeneration Plan conjunction with the DfC. Ability to deliver within existing resources.</p> <p><b>DfC Revitalisation Scheme 2021/2022 – Coalisland Town Centre</b> Officer time to co-ordinate, implement and monitor delivery of the Revitalisation scheme in conjunction with the DfC. Ability to deliver within existing staff resources.</p> <p><b>Risk Management:</b></p> <p><b>Tourism Active Travel Projects</b> Considered in line with Council Policies and Procedures.</p> <p><b>Covid Small Settlements Regeneration Programme</b> Considered in line with Council Policies and Procedures.</p>
<b>4.2</b>	<p><b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b></p> <p>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications:</p> <p><b>Covid Small Settlements Regeneration Programme</b> NA</p>

	<p>Rural Needs Implications:</p> <p><b>Covid Small Settlements Regeneration Programme</b> This Programme is specifically targeted at rural areas of the District.</p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
	<p>It is recommended that Members:</p>
5.1	<p><b>High Street Task Force: Call For Evidence 2021</b> <b>Retrospectively Approve</b> Council's response to the High Street Task Force - Call for Evidence, which had to be submitted before the deadline of 6 December 2021. If any Member has further comments they wish to add, these should be forwarded to the Assistant Director of Economy, Tourism &amp; Strategic Programmes by 20 January 2022, who will forward them on to The High Street Task Force.</p>
5.2	<p><b>Tourism Active Travel Projects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>Note</b> the contents of this report;</li> <li>b. <b>Approve</b> the project subject to DfI signing off the Business Case.</li> <li>c. Subject to the business case being approved, and DfI issuing Council with a letter of offer, grant authority for the Chief Executive to sign and return the letter of offer and permit staff to initiate the relevant procurement process.</li> </ul>
5.3	<p><b>Covid Small Settlements Regeneration Programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>Retrospectively approve</b> Council's draft Covid19 Small Settlements Regeneration Plan submitted to DfC on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2021;</li> <li>b. <b>Approve</b> that delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive to accept and sign a Letter of Offer from DfC to allow the projects to be progressed as soon as possible, given the tight timeframes for delivery;</li> <li>c. <b>Note</b> a report will be brought to the P&amp;R Committee in February 2022, to seek the necessary approvals for Council's match funding towards the schemes.</li> </ul>
5.4	<p><b>DfC Revitalisation Scheme 2021/2022 – Coalisland Town Centre</b> <b>Retrospectively approve</b> for permission to be granted to the Chief Executive to sign the Letter of Variance from Department for Communities for £274,000, which includes the additional funding of £24,000.</p>
5.5	<p><b>Request from the Workspace Group</b> To consider correspondence from Ms Georgina Grieve, on behalf of the Workspace Group, requesting Mid Ulster District Council support to ensure that DfE and DfC provide the match funding required to facilitate ESF projects in 2022/23 and subsequently draw down and prevent the loss of c £20 million in ESF funding to NI.</p>

5.6	<p><b>All Island Strategic Rail Review Consultation</b></p> <p>Consider Council's draft response to the All Island Strategic Rail Review and provide commentary as necessary to inform the final response to be submitted on behalf of Council by 21 January 2022.</p>
6.0	<p><b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b></p>
	<p><b>Appendix 1a</b> - High Street Task Force 2021 Consultation Document</p> <p><b>Appendix 1b</b> - Mid Ulster Council's Response to High Street Task Force Call for Evidence</p> <p><b>Appendix 2a</b> - Letter from DfC to Mid Ulster Council re Small Settlements Scheme</p> <p><b>Appendix 2b</b> - MUDC 2022/23 Small Settlements Regeneration Plan</p> <p><b>Appendix 3</b> - Coalisland Revitalisation Scheme Letter of Variance</p> <p><b>Appendix 4a</b> - Letter to Chief Executive from the Workspace Group</p> <p><b>Appendix 4b</b> - NICVA ESF User Group Briefing Paper Nov 21</p> <p><b>Appendix 5</b> – Draft Council Response to the All Island Strategic Rail Review Consultation</p>



# High Street Task Force

## Call for Evidence - 2021

# High Street Task Force

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## Call for Evidence 2021

### **The Vision:**

*“Sustainable city, town and village centres which are thriving places for people to do business, socialise, shop, be creative and use public services, as well as being great places to live.”*



The  
**Executive Office**

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# Ministerial Foreword

We have a bold, ambitious vision: “Sustainable city, town and village centres which are thriving places for people to do business, socialise, shop, be creative and use public services, as well as being great places to live.”

High streets and small businesses are the backbone of our economy and we want to see them thrive now and in the future. They are more than simply places to shop: they are a focal point for the community. People care about their local high streets because they are the centres of their community.

We know that our high streets are changing, and the Executive are committed to helping communities adapt. We also know that restoring the vibrancy of our high streets will take a number of phases over a period of years.

The issues that the High Street Task Force has been considering are found all across our towns and cities, but there cannot be a one-size-fits-all solution. Every high street is different. They each have their own character and personality with traits as unique as the village, town or city where they are located, and, they will need bespoke local solutions.

This call for evidence is an important opportunity for people to have their say and will be an essential step in bringing the vision to life and seeing results “at street level”.

We encourage the widest possible engagement and sharing of views and experiences through this call for evidence. Its findings, together with other data, will inform a draft report and recommendations that will be subject to consultation and equality considerations before a final report is presented for agreement by the Executive by spring 2022.

We look forward to your response to this call for evidence and your ongoing engagement.



**Junior Minister Gary Middleton MLA**



**Junior Minister Declan Kearney MLA**

# Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the wide range of individuals who contributed to the development of this Call for Evidence (CfE). This includes, but is not limited to, colleagues from other Departments and representatives from the business sector, local Government, voluntary and community sectors and professional bodies.

We particularly thank the members of the High Street Task Force:

- Business Alliance
- Department for Agriculture, the Environment and Rural Affairs
- Department for Communities
- Department for Infrastructure
- Department for the Economy
- Department of Finance
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Hospitality Ulster
- Mr Chris Suitor (Business Owner)
- NI Council for Voluntary Action
- NI Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions
- NI Local Government Association
- NI Retail Consortium
- Queen's University Belfast
- Retail NI
- Social Enterprise NI
- SOLACE – The Society of Local Authority Chief Executives
- Ulster University
- USDAW – The Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers

# Key Dates and Purpose of this Document

Opening: 25 October 2021

Closing: 6 December 2021

This CfE is open from 25 October 2021 until 6 December 2021. We are keen to hear from a wide range of bodies, groups and individuals across society.

This CfE is the first stage in an ongoing public engagement process. The CfE document sets out the current understanding of the evidence available relating to high street issues and we invite comments and views on this.

Its publication is supported by a series of focused engagement events, including public workshop sessions.

Responses to the questions in this CfE will be analysed along with other evidence and information to form the basis of policy options for the Executive. A summary of findings will be published on the Executive Office website following the completion of the CfE.

**Note that, due to COVID-19 restrictions, all engagement activities may be conducted using a virtual platform.**

# How to Respond

All responses should arrive no later than 6 December 2021 and early responses are encouraged.

There are questions in each section of the document. Please respond to as many, or as few, as you wish.

There are four options available for response. The online option is the easiest and preferred option. If you wish to request a hard copy, please contact us by email or post.

1. Online – Accessible at:  
<https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/dfc-analytical-services-unit/high-streets-call-for-evidence>
2. Email – [highstreet@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:highstreet@communities-ni.gov.uk)
  - a. With “High Street Call for Evidence 2021” as the subject line.
3. Postal – Send responses to:  

High Street Call for Evidence 2021  
High Street Task Force  
Level 4  
Department for Communities  
9 Lanyon Place  
Belfast  
BT1 3LP
4. Workshops – Details on where and when the workshops will be held will be made available on the Executive Office website and can be accessed here:  
[www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/call-evidence-high-street-task-force](http://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/call-evidence-high-street-task-force)

## Accessibility

We can provide information in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable.

We liaise with representatives of young people and disability and minority ethnic organisations and take account of existing and developing good practice. We will respond to requests for information in alternative formats in a timely manner.

We will use a range of communications channels to enable wide access to information. Some members of the public may not have access to a computer to obtain information from websites. The Department will consider a range of communication methods to ensure wide access to its information. We will respond positively to requests for access to information to meet user needs.

## **Privacy, Confidentiality and Access to Call for Evidence Responses**

The Executive will publish responses on the nidirect website at <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/> . If a respondent is an individual acting in a private capacity, they should indicate whether or not they wish their name to be withheld or disclosed when responding.

Where responses from companies and individuals responding in a professional capacity are to be published, the Department will remove contact details only.

Responses to this Call for Evidence may be subject to requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR). All disclosures will be in line with this legislation. If you feel that information that you provide should be treated as private or confidential, please explain why so that we can take this into consideration.

All personal data will be processed in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018/UK General Data Protection Regulations (UKGDPR).

For more information, please see our privacy notice Privacy Notice in Annex A.

# Introduction

Our high streets are changing. The way in which we work, live, shop, access services, enjoy leisure and travel is continually changing and moving away from the traditional high street experience. This change has been and continues to be exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Retail trends, the prevailing economic mood and the broader business landscape create an uncertain backdrop. Businesses, sectors, employees and communities have experienced an unprecedented impact which continues to affect our high streets and beyond.

The Executive Office formed the High Street Task Force (HSTF) with a view to identify the challenges and issues that our high streets face, and to oversee the development of solutions and actions that can be taken to support our high streets with the strategic aim to contribute to the development of thriving and sustainable city, town and village centres. Collectively, the HSTF membership includes a range of business representatives from retail; hospitality; local government; academia; the voluntary and community sector; the culture and arts sector; tourism; and trade unions. Together, they represent considerable experience and expertise, along with economic and social acumen.

The vision of the HSTF is: *“Sustainable city, town and village centres which are thriving places for people to do business, socialise, shop, be creative and use public services, as well as being great places to live.”* It is a vision that will require everyone working together and the broadest possible buy-in from those who live and use our high streets. It will need partnership and a focus on delivery, and it will very much be a long-term project. Transformation will not happen overnight and significant work has already been undertaken in getting us to this point.

Right across society, there is a desire for our high streets to succeed. They are more than simply places to shop: they are a focal point for the community and the HSTF membership will use its networks to ensure a balanced approach that reaches across the entire region.

With this, comes the understanding that it cannot be a one-size-fits-all solution. Every high street is different. They each have their own character and personality,

with traits as unique as the village, town or city where they are located, and they will need bespoke local solutions.

We need to seize control of that change and create a new vision of thriving high streets where retail and hospitality, amongst others, can play their part. This vision is about building something new; not about resisting change or reinventing the past. The key lesson from other places is that no single sector can provide all of the solution. We need to see high streets as diverse business ecosystems that meet the needs of communities.

The HSTF appreciates the size and scale of the challenge ahead but does so with an ambition and a desire to succeed.

This Call for Evidence is the first formal stage in the strategy development and your participation is welcomed and encouraged. The responsibility for high streets rests with many and, therefore, the solutions are something that we must design and tackle together.

Making this happen will require substantial institutional, regulatory and policy change. We recognise that the solutions to these deep-rooted challenges require all of us across government to work together in new ways.



# The Context

The problems facing our village, town and city centre high streets predate COVID-19, the 2007 economic crisis and internet shopping. The way people shop and the way that communities use their high streets is changing. This changes the nature of what makes a high street successful. High streets are having to evolve and adapt.

The impact of the coronavirus pandemic and the resultant impact on village, town and city centres has reinforced the need for a coordinated strategic response to both the immediate and longer-term recovery priorities for our town and city centres.

On 23 March 2020, UK high streets, town and city centres effectively closed for business. Most retailers, offices, restaurants, bars, coffee shops, cultural and leisure destinations shut their doors, as only essential businesses were allowed to stay open. Technology has meant that whilst many office-based businesses have been disrupted, working from home has been possible and new ways of working have materialised.

The impact on retail and hospitality has been much more widespread and damaging. Many have looked to new business models, offering take away options, online delivery or digital services. Others furloughed their staff to survive financially. In addition, other sectors, which play a key role in the vibrancy of town and city centres, such as arts and cultural venues, tourist attractions and event venues, have been impacted.

We need a fundamental reinvention of our high streets. It will require new levels of partnership between the Executive, councils, business and wider society to it. Since the start of the pandemic, leaders in our town centres have been managing its impact with the certainty that the 'old normal' is not a recipe for the long-term future. As habits change, our retail sector and high streets must change too.

# The Task

The HSTF has been established to contribute to:-

- ***developing the strategic approach to delivering the vision and responding to the economic and social challenges facing village, town and city centres;***
- ***building and strengthening the partnerships that will deliver the strategic response; and***
- ***building the capacity needed to achieve the vision.***

The HSTF provides the opportunity to shift the perception of the high street away from the traditional economic model and towards a more complex one that addresses social, environmental and economic sustainability.

The HSTF has looked at problems, challenges, and concerns. It has questioned what good practice is; has developed key principles that can be used across any size of high street and has set out outcomes that it wants to see achieved, including sustainable regeneration. It has examined the outputs needed to deliver those outcomes and considered what best practice looks like locally, nationally and internationally.

It has also asked: “What is a high street? What are the key constituents? Who is the client/user? Can we see a clear trajectory? How does density and scale affect the solution, and, looking to the future, what are the key forces acting on the street?”

This is a rare opportunity to set in tow a model of good capacity practice for the next Programme for Government, for example; with locality-based budgets, cross-departmentally and across government tiers, and drawing on existing work such as Rural Catalyst Pilots, Urban Village Renewal and scoping adaptations tailored for and by each settlement.

# The Vision

The vision of the High Street Task Force is:

***“Sustainable city, town and village centres which are thriving places for people to do business, socialise, shop, be creative and use public services, as well as being great places to live.”***

## A Shared Responsibility

The challenges currently faced by village, town and city centres cannot be addressed by one government Department working in isolation. They require action not just by central government Departments but partnership working that also includes councils, non-governmental bodies and the business community.

No matter how good the government policy is, it needs to be implemented properly, and that will only happen if all key stakeholders are ‘bought in’ – politicians, communities, developers, business and others.

## A Call for Action

The achievement of the HSTF vision will require sustained effort over time; reflected in legislation, policy and strategy, as well as front-line delivery. It will need a collaborative approach, with villages, towns, cities and councils competing for funding. Policies will be required to operate in the same space, multiple funding streams will need a more joined-up approach, and a local focus on delivery will be required. Further to this, we will need to capitalise on uniqueness, build on strengths and recognise that not one size fits all.

# What Does a Good High Street Look Like?

There is a need to define what good practice looks like. However, this cannot be a proscriptive definition but rather should be a set of guiding principles.

A good high street is likely to have many or all of the following characteristics:

- Accessible and connected;
- Easier to get to and move around in;
- Welcoming and safe;
- Has unique characteristics and culture;
- Collaborative, responsible and ongoing;
- Enjoyable;
- Has a diversity of uses and activities;
- Is a nicer place to be;
- Has a better mix of uses so that more people will want to go there, spend time, live and do business there;
- Has found a way of managing them well.

# What are the key issues?

- Recovery from Coronavirus and beyond;
- Developing a new strategic approach;
- Climate change – adaptation and mitigation;
- Planning principles;
- Vacancies;
- Housing;
- Public Transport (including active travel);
- Rates;
- Tourism;
- Digital High Streets;
- Rural settlements;
- People, localism and well-being.

# Themes and Questions

The 14 themes listed in this Call for Evidence provide an overview of the issues that our high streets currently face. The key considerations and issues have been listed in bullet form to show the initial thoughts gathered so far and set the scene for further ideas to be gathered through the Call for Evidence.

The questions for each theme are then listed and mirror those provided in the online version.

## Theme 1: Partnerships

**The HSTF will seek to encourage partnerships with public, private and third sector partners, locally, regionally and nationally. This could require the consideration of:**

- Government, local authorities, the wider public sector, businesses and communities must put the health of village, town and city centres at the heart of decision making and deliver the best local outcomes, align policies and target available resources to prioritise town centre sites, encouraging vibrancy, equality and diversity.
- Champions are needed to lead the way forward and to involve those who live and work in our town centres in the decision making.
- More coordination and joined-up working, partnership and reorganisation of the key statutory functions is needed to bring about effective change more quickly.
- Correct powers, appropriately devolved, need to be in place to deliver interventions.
- A recognition that this a long-term approach.
- Our councils have a key role in the localism agenda and the Executive need to consider the devolution of regeneration and other powers to them so that they can play a fuller role in the recovery process.
- We need interim solutions.
- We need to determine what has worked well and has not worked.

## **Theme 1: Questions**

1. What are the key issues for partnerships?
2. What powers should local partnerships have to make them more effective?
3. What changes to legislation, policies, processes or procedures could transform partnerships on the high street?

## **Theme 2: Follow Best Practice**

**The HSTF approach to developing best practice is to assess good practice from other places and adapt this so that 'best practice' becomes a unique 'right practice' for our local high streets. This could require the consideration of:**

- Looking at best practice locally, nationally and internationally.
- The importance of community planning, in which public sector organisations work in partnership with the private sector, local communities and the community and voluntary sector to identify and solve local problems, improve services and implement a shared vision for promoting the well-being of an area.

### **Theme 2: Questions**

4. What is best practice for the management of the high street?
5. What expert help is needed to develop best practice?
6. What changes are needed to legislation, procedures and processes to improve best practice and transform community planning on the high street?



## Theme 3: Investment

**The high street needs ways of dealing with investment that will support innovation, help renewal and create thriving high streets. Investment is not only needed for buildings and digital infrastructure, but also for developing people and communities. This could require the consideration of:**

- More specific funding streams and schemes are required to promote and encourage residential living
- Funding streams and workforces should be aligned.
- Specific funding schemes to promote and encourage wider provision of community services.
- A better understanding and clarity on the availability of funding streams.
- Place-based budgeting.
- The residential Urban Development Grant scheme should be revived.
- More focused funding for village, town and city centre promotions.
- Incentives to deal with long-term vacancies.
- Clarity on priority investment area(s) is needed.

## Theme 3: Questions

7. What are the key issues for investment?
8. Is information on funding easy to find?
9. Which of the following funds would support the development of the high street? Pick as many or as few as you wish.
  - a. High Street Transformation
  - b. Residential Living
  - c. Urban Development Grant
  - d. Other (Please comment below)

## Theme 4: Planning

**In addressing planning for the high street, our challenge will be to contribute to the delivery of a fair and inclusive planning system for people, communities and businesses. This could require a review of the planning system, its impact on the high street and the consideration of:**

- Village, town and city centre masterplans.
- Promoting a “Town Centre First” principle to encourage the public sector to continue to invest in town centres and help communities thrive.
- More flexible planning policies are required to enable repurposing.
- Strong diversification of town centres is needed to include, but not limited to: housing, community uses, leisure, offices and outdoor spaces.
- Actions are needed to address vacancy and dereliction on the High Street.
- A five-year moratorium on major out-of-town retail applications should be considered.
- A stricter “town centre first” approach, more Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and a joined-up approach to regeneration.
- An approach to increase population living and working in our high street.

## Theme 4: Questions

10. Are you aware of village, town and city centre masterplans?
11. What are the key planning issues?
12. Would you support a temporary ban on out-of-town retail developments?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

If yes, for how long?

13. What changes to legislation, policies, processes or procedures could transform high street planning for the better?

## **Theme 5: Public Realm**

**The Public Realm is defined as the space around, between and within buildings that are publicly accessible, including streets, squares, parks and open spaces. These are the everyday spaces that we move through and socialise within and the places where we live, work and play. This could require the consideration of:**

- Creating better ways of delivering Public Realm that are cleaner and greener.
- Public Realm “smart” towns with green spaces that are decluttered, eco-friendly, sustainable and better connected.
- Promoting high-quality design to ensure that our town centres provide sustainable, attractive, accessible and safe environments.
- Town centres should be clean, vibrant and attractive if visitors are to be encouraged to visit and stay.

### **Theme 5: Questions**

14. What are your views on the high street environment?
15. What could be done to change the perception of the Public Realm?
16. What improvements are needed in your high street?
17. What is a priority for Public Realm projects in the high street?
18. What would make town-centre living more attractive?

## Theme 6: Fiscal - Including Rates

**Fiscal policy is how government taxation and spending policies are used to influence economic conditions. This affects demands on employment, inflation, goods and services, and economic growth. This could require the consideration of:**

- Reform the tax system to ensure that sufficient revenue to pay for public services whilst ensuring that the tax burden is fair.
- A fundamental reform and review of commercial and business rates in village, town and city centres. (NI Reval 2023)
- A targeted approach to rates for small businesses.
- Our high streets have the highest vacancy rates in the UK. We need to develop a policy response to address vacancies and rates.

### Theme 6: Questions

19. What tax and rating reforms are needed to help stimulate the high street economy?
20. What actions should be taken to reduce vacancy rates on the high street?
21. Do you believe that legislation is required to change fiscal policy?

## Theme 7: Capacity

**Capacity refers to the built, social, spatial, and infrastructural strengths and opportunities to transform to produce significant and measurable change. This could require the consideration of:**

- A capacity mapping and pilots exercise similar to that undertaken by the HSTF in England should be developed for our region, utilising Ministerial Advisory Group data and knowledge, and resourced and contemporised by HSTF funds. This should be council area coordinated and community led.
- Greater High Street inclusion for Community Wealth Building Pilots, community planning, with greater formal and allocated cross-departmental investment in each. Community Wealth Building Pilots are an investment model to enable local communities to increase co-operative asset ownership, anchor jobs and resources locally, and ensure local community economic stability and democratic control.
- Develop HSTF capacity by investment in hubs by location, and, if desired at community level.

## Theme 7: Questions

22. What is the priority for capacity mapping and pilot exercises?

23. What capacity skills need to be developed?

24. What should be created to support the development of high street capacity?

- a. Community funds
- b. Locality budgets
- c. Sector schemes
- d. Expert advice
- e. Workshops
- f. Collaborative approach
- g. Other (Please comment below)

## Theme 8: Energy, Climate Change and Sustainability

Our environment is our most important asset and is crucial to each and every one of us. It is one of the main reasons that people from other countries and regions visit, bringing money into the local economy. It affects our economy, our health and well-being, and it facilitates social interaction. Building, through construction, renovation and repurposing, also plays a key role in emissions reduction. This could require the consideration of:

- The carbon impact of interventions during design, to reduce the carbon footprint and increase sustainable development.
- Carbon reduction measures in existing and future infrastructures in our high streets should be dynamically addressed.
- Blue-green infrastructures, which are strategically planned networks of natural and semi-natural areas to enhance the biodiversity designed and managed to support a wide range of ecosystem services, could assist with the greening of our urban environments, facilitate better water management and support safer, cleaner, sustainable spaces. This will allow interconnectivity, provide recreation spaces and help communities to connect and to thrive economically and socially.
- Examine incentives for repurposing existing buildings to address embodied energy, increase energy efficiency and use of renewable energy.

### Theme 8: Questions

25. What actions should be adopted to provide greener urban environments?
26. What incentives should there be for repurposing buildings? (Tick as many or as few as you wish)
- a. Environmental grants
  - b. Loans
  - c. Reduced rates
  - d. Other (if you pick "Other" please expand on your answer)
27. Should existing buildings, including our heritage assets, play an enhanced role in transforming the High Street?
- a. Yes
  - b. No

## Theme 9: Housing and Other Infrastructure

**Good quality, affordable and sustainable housing is central to reducing housing stress, homelessness and improving housing solutions for the most vulnerable. This could require the consideration of:**

- Policies and strategies to address quality, quantity and availability of housing to encourage people to live in and around high streets.
- We should ensure that these are not just transient communities but that they are attractive to families.
- We should consider space standards, access to services and the living over the shops scheme.

### Theme 9: Questions

28. What strategies are needed to encourage people to live in and around the high street?

29. What key services should be available for high street residents?

- a. Health
- b. Housing
- c. Education
- d. Leisure
- e. Other (if you pick "Other" please expand on your answer)

30. How do we engage communities more effectively?

31. How will housing developments improve areas of deprivation in high streets, rural villages, town and city centres?

## Theme 10: Getting To and From the High Street

Getting to and within villages, towns and cities is at the heart of urban regeneration and positively impacts local and regional economies. It unlocks development potential and as a result, many places and communities have seen increased regeneration, investment and employment. This could require the consideration of:

- Ensure that our town centres are well served with public transport provision and supporting infrastructure.
- Promote policies to encourage walking, cycling and the accessibility and quality of environment. This could link to the 15-minute neighbourhood concept.
- Maintain and improve accessibility to, and within, village, town and city centres.
- Parking, including issues such as charging, free or time-limited parking, especially in the levelling-up context.
- Reduce the appeal of commuter and out-of-town parking.
- Incentivise employers to promote the use of public transport.

### Theme 10: Questions

32. How do you get to your high street? (Tick all that apply)

- a. Walk
- b. Car
- c. Bus
- d. Train
- e. Cycle
- f. Taxi
- g. Other (if you pick "Other" please expand on your answer)

33. What would make your journey to and from your high street easier?

34. What changes to legislation, policies, processes or procedures would encourage walking and cycling?

35. What are your views on high street parking?



## Theme 11: Tourism

**Tourism is a major contributor to the economic well-being of our villages, towns and cities. Its development could include:**

- A review of policy and regulations including support for hotels.
- Recognising the importance of sustainable town centres to meet the expectations of the tourist of the future. This will mean being able to provide a critical mass of services for accommodation, hospitality outlets and a thriving night-time economy.
- Develop the unique and visitor attractiveness of our high streets and remodel their marketing to reflect that.

### Theme 11: Questions

36. How do we engage with communities to promote tourism?
37. What changes to legislation, policies, processes or procedures should be made to develop tourism on the high street?
38. Are you aware of an innovative tourism project that could help your high street?

## Theme 12: Digital High Streets

**Online shopping has impacted our high streets. As well as the opportunities, consideration of the concerns and issues could include:**

- Complementing existing business models to allow additional flexibility and resilience to react and survive during what are still uncertain times. Going online will also open up opportunities to reach new markets and new consumer demand.
- In addition to online innovation and diversification, the high street needs to be offering something different that cannot be delivered or experienced online.
- We need data-driven insights into the social media conversations that matter with ways to understand the audience and how to make better connections to reach them, such as their preferences.
- Promoting local products, services and trades.
- Considering the potential for strategies such as data and IT training.

### Theme 12: Questions

39. What aspects of a digital high street are important?

40. What digital innovations would help your high street?

41. What more needs to be done to improve digital skills?

## **Theme 13: Rural Settlements**

Rural development is vital not just for individuals in rural areas but also for economic growth. Rural development will help improve productivity and stability in social and economic development. It enhances the quality of life and financial well-being of individuals, specifically those living in rural areas, but it also has major impacts on those in urban environments. This could require the consideration of:

- Providing support for rural settlements, including consideration of the social, environmental and economic role of settlements in a new era of connected working.
- Maximising the opportunities of the Department for the Economy-led Project Stratum that will bring high-speed broadband and connectivity to rural settlements.
- Invest in and provide a tailored and seamless approach.
- Village high street development

### **Theme 13: Questions**

42. What changes to legislation, process and procedures are needed for village developments?
43. How could funding for rural settlements be made easier?
44. What innovative initiatives would improve village economies?

## Theme 14: People, Localism and Well-being

**Places need to be compelling, to encourage communities to support economies, products and services that promote and improve the health and well-being of residents and the wider community. People need to feel connected, and community networks can support these links. This could include:**

- The High Streets Task Force in England describes this regeneration framework as four Rs: repositioning, reinventing, rebranding and restructuring. These 'four Rs' require a new vision, a changed offer to consumers, better stakeholder communication and changing the governance of our high streets.
- Part of the solution to this challenge lies in fully developing and implementing the concept of 'localism' to repurpose our village, town and city centres as unique hubs at the heart of our community.
- Localism is not just about supporting independent retailers; it is also about empowering people and communities to reshape and repurpose their local villages, towns and city centres and reinvigorate the leadership model.
- Considering the impact of the Living Wage on equality and on people wanting to work on the high street.

### Theme 14: Questions

45. Are you aware of any initiatives that would improve localism in your community?
46. What is the most important aspect for creating well-being in the community?

# Annex A

## Privacy Notice

### High Street Task Force (HSTF)

**Data Controller Name:** Department for Communities

**Address:** Causeway Exchange, 1 -7 Bedford Street, Belfast BT2 7EG

**Email:** [DPO@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:DPO@communities-ni.gov.uk)

#### **Why are you processing my personal information?**

The High Street Call for Evidence, launched on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2021, seeks evidence, data and views on High Street issues. The lawful basis for processing data provided to the Department during this consultation is in the UK GDPR at Article 6(1)(e) and Article 9(2)(g)). The personal data collected in this consultation exercise will be used for analysis and reporting of consultation responses.

#### **Which categories of personal data are you processing?**

The personal data we are expecting to receive and handle will consist of your name, address, email address, and any additional personal data you provide in your responses. If you are responding as a commercial/business entity, then some elements of your contact details may not be personal data.

#### **Where do you get my personal data from?**

If we hold your personal data in relation to this Call for Evidence, then you will have sent it to us when you submitted your consultation response.

#### **Do you share my personal data with anyone else?**

During the Call for Evidence analysis, responses will be analysed and responses may be published on the Department for Communities website.

### **Do you transfer my personal data to other countries?**

No.

### **How long to do you keep my personal data?**

The data you provide in your response will be retained on the Department's Record Management system for seven years in line with the Department's Retention and Disposal Schedule.

### **What rights do I have?**

- You have the right to obtain confirmation that your data is being processed and access to your personal data.
- You are entitled to have personal data rectified if it is inaccurate or incomplete.
- You have the right to have personal data erased and to prevent the processing of personal data in specific circumstances.
- You have the right to 'block 'or suppress the processing of personal data, in specific circumstances.
- You have the right to data portability, in specific circumstances.
- You have the right to object to the processing, in specific circumstances.
- You have rights in relation to automated decision making and profiling.

### **How do I complain if I am not happy?**

If you are unhappy with how any aspect of this privacy notice, or how your personal data is being processed, please contact the Department's Data Protection Officer at:

[DPO@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:DPO@communities-ni.gov.uk)

If you are still not happy, you have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO):

**Information Commissioner's Office**

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire SK9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113

Email: [casework@ico.org.uk](mailto:casework@ico.org.uk)

<https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us>







Comhairle Ceantair  
**Lár Uladh**  
**Mid Ulster**  
District Council

## **Mid Ulster District Council's Response to High Street Task Force Call for Evidence**

**6 December 2021**

Mid Ulster District Council recognises that town centres are key economic drivers in our District and there is evidently a clear need to reboot and support the economy to make them agile in the future. The scale of the crisis facing the retail sector is grave and creative policy thinking and future planning of town centres will be an essential part of the ongoing recovery from Covid 19 and the future. It is vital that town and city centres are reclaimed to their rightful position and role as places that serve their communities, visitors, businesses and key stakeholders. Businesses and our town centres are yet to realise the full impact of the Covid-19 crisis and the need to accelerate action and investment is critical.

Current partnership working between Councils and Government Departments is not strong enough. There is an urgent need for a co-ordinated, joined up financial package that is committed to Councils in NI for a 4 year term to enable the strategic transformation of our High Streets. Joined up Governance is critical whereby Government Departments should be working together, alongside Councils, to develop multi-annual action plans to support our key towns with a financial investment package for 4 years. Piecemeal funding is no longer acceptable for the long-term vitality of our High Streets.

In conjunction to such a measure it is imperative that regeneration powers are devolved to local Councils. Councils currently possess local economic development and planning powers, but our development remit is severely restricted as we do not yet possess "place making powers" to progress a range of transformative initiatives to tackle the seismic issues that impact our towns. This is further compounded by the fact that Councils do not have direct access to strategic financial stimulus packages which are available in other parts of the UK as detailed below. Any financial package must be tailored to suit each town, as a 'one size fits all', is not appropriate.

There is a need to take cognisance of the good practice and funding opportunities that are available especially in the UK. Funding programmes such as the Future High Street Funds and Reopening High Streets Safely Fund are critical to revitalise, rejuvenate our local High Streets, and provide business support packages to stimulate the local economy.



It is therefore welcome that the High Street Task Force has initiated the process of supporting and rejuvenating the High Streets of Northern Ireland and we eagerly await to see the out-workings of this key body.

### **Theme 1: Partnerships**

It is important to identify what defines a partnership. A Partnership needs to offer incentives, authority and funding to make them inclusive and effective. Partnership working has become more difficult since COVID as there are increased demands on people's time. It is important that additional mechanisms are not created but that existing ones are used including the involvement of Town Centre Forums and Regeneration Partnerships, Chambers of Commerce, Community Planning and Public Realm Partnerships.

Communication is also a key ingredient for successful partnership working. Much greater communication between Councils and Government Depts is needed. Silo working still occurs and a more effective joined up approach is required, including cross border engagement. Partnerships must be re-established and enhanced at a local level for the benefit of the High Street. e.g. DFI/Utility providers working with local Councils and traders to avoid disruption to the consumer.

The current High Street Task Force is very Belfast-centred, and needs to extend its reach to have strong rural representation from areas such as Mid Ulster. Another key factor to consider is inclusiveness in relation to those with a disability, which accounts for 21% of our community, young people and older people. It is also important that proper resources be put in place to allow Council led partnerships to access and progress investment opportunities.

### **Theme 2: Best Practice**

Local solutions must be determined at a local level.

Hence urgent decisions are necessary to devolve and transfer regeneration powers to Councils, with the adequate resources alongside to unlock the potential of our town centres, drawing upon a variety of best practice examples from other areas. Key factors are enabling Councils legislatively with place-making powers along with the strategic alignment and transfer of Government's regeneration budgets to Councils to support our urban development efforts. It is critical that Councils possess these regeneration powers, to work in conjunction with our local Town Centre Forums, to access funding to progress urgent initiatives to support our High Streets, given the tumultuous period we have witnessed, having withdrawn from the EU and the accelerated decline of the High Street since the onset of the pandemic.



There are many examples of good practice in Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland and Great Britain. One key example in the Republic of Ireland is 'Tidy Towns initiative'. There needs to be an enabler to ensure that key stakeholders are involved with an adequate funding and personnel capacity.

### **Theme 3: Investment**

**Looking beyond the short-term and towards 'transforming' our towns and high streets to make them befitting for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century shopper, will require a significant funding package by Government, similar to the investment provided in England for example, through the Future High Streets Fund and Reopening the High Street Safely Fund.**

**Only funding of this magnitude will make a difference in our towns and will help us move away from tinkering with minor schemes that provide a "sticking plaster approach" towards town centre development, when in fact properties need a major refit or in some cases raised to the ground and rebuilt as modern retail premises. Such sizable interventions would help breathe new life into our high streets by reconfiguring and re-imagining our town centre assets to make them attractive and fit for purpose today.**

**We can only do so, if Government provides a multi-million pound funding package to help us achieve this much desired aspiration for our towns in Mid Ulster, just like what was afforded to England.**

The key to investment is a co-ordinated approach with the requisite funding streams collaborating together to present a full and effective package of funding over a 4 year period, to ensure effective and efficient delivery on the ground. Piecemeal funding pots and short timeframes are no longer viable and do not lend themselves to providing strategic impact.

The return of the Urban Development Grants, Living Over the Shops schemes and Empty to Occupied Schemes are also useful initiatives that could be introduced as interim measures to encourage urban reinvigoration, however, these do not discount the need for much more seismic stimulus funding to transform our towns which are available in other parts of the UK.

Business Incubation Units are an integral element to the high street and this model has been a proven success. It is important that once new businesses are established in starter units, they are encouraged and supported to move into town centre premises when fully established to allow for business growth.



Neighbourhood investment and services should be developed in accordance with local economic and community planning and development and growth planning priorities of Councils and funding and human resources transferred to achieve this.

#### **Theme 4: Planning**

It is important that the existing legislation be enhanced. The “Town Centre First” approach must be strengthened and implemented. Out of town shopping centres may play a positive role, but only if they are planned and managed accordingly, with rates accounted for equitably in line with our high street retailers.

Towns/Villages need master planning/place shaping/health checks on a regular basis to ensure that priorities are reassessed and addressed as required. A one-size fits all approach does not work and a more tailored solution is needed to align with the unique needs for each town.

#### **Theme 5: Public Realm**

Mid Ulster District Council supports the need to invest in our Public Realm but reinforces the need and aspiration for Council to have regeneration powers and financial resources to ensure the local need is accounted for.

There is often strong resistance to change, which is evitable as a result of Public Realm Schemes (pedestrian zones, parking, traffic management/bypasses etc.); however, the long term outlook needs to be clearly defined. Under Public Realm, car parks and key linkages need to form an integral part of delivery to ensure safe spaces within our High Street. Gateways to our towns/villages should be inviting.

Government Departments (DfC, DAERA and DFI) needs to work more closely with Councils to develop the public realm within our towns and villages. Mid Ulster Council welcomes the introduction of some recent revitalization schemes being funded by the three Government Departments above, however, Council has had no input towards their design but act only as a delivery body. Council would contend that they can provide added value to the design of such schemes, had we been afforded the opportunity to input, ahead of schemes being launched.

It would be Mid Ulster Council's view that greater joined up working needs to occur to develop public realm spaces within our main towns. Currently DfC provide funding to urban areas, classified as settlement populations of 5000+. There is currently no statutory responsibility for any Government Department to support physical



regeneration to settlements below 5000 population. In recent years, DAERA have provided some funding for village regeneration through the Rural Development Programme, however, this is also coming to an end in March 2022 and as a result, a significant funding gap will occur to develop our key village settlements across Mid Ulster. Whilst we are aware of the existence of the Covid Settlement Scheme funded by DFI, DAERA and DfC, this funding whilst appreciated, will not fill the vacuum of financial support needed to undertake public realm works in villages whose population is less than 5000.

In Mid Ulster, we have 3 large towns and 2 smaller towns. Four of the towns receive funding from DfC and have benefited from public realm works. The remaining town, Maghera, has a population just bordering 5,000 inhabitants, but DfC will not provide funding to undertake a much needed public realm scheme in the town, due to the population figures not meeting their 5,000 population threshold. It is essential that DfC offer flexibility to Councils in this position, and permit expenditure to advance public realm works in towns, whose size borders their 5,000 resident threshold. Funding for a public realm scheme in Maghera is of utmost strategic importance as the town is situated on the A29 main arterial route, it acts as a key gateway into Mid Ulster and has on average 9000 vehicles travelling through it every day.

## **Theme 6: Fiscal – Including Rates**

Rates are a controversial subject matter and have been pinpointed as one of the major factors that have caused businesses 'to go under' and stifled new retail start-ups in our town centres. Businesses trading in town centres are at a market disadvantage to out of town developments (such as enterprise parks) because they are paying much higher rates.

Rates are presently the only taxation power of the NI Executive and there are two elements to the rates bill paid by domestic and non-domestic sectors in Northern Ireland; the district rate set by District Councils and the Regional Rate, which is determined by the Executive. It is important that the HSTF consider data from the Covid-19 rates holiday to ascertain the impact that it has had on new business start-ups and potentially the slowdown in shop closure rates. The rates holiday has been positive to retailers in the current pandemic and there is an understanding that this may not be extended. It is clear however, that our High Street businesses cannot afford to go back to 100% rates due to the continuing low consumer confidence and decrease in footfall levels as this pandemic continues- a gradual re-establishment of rates should be considered i.e. 50%, 75%, 100% over a three-year period. Rates relief, based on a level of square footage, must also be considered in any intervention.





It is important that the Rates Review conducted under Máirtín Ó Muilleoir is revisited and key actions considered. Property tax must be equitable to ensure survival, alongside the incorporation of online sales tax to large companies.

Continuation of rate reliefs is important, for example Small Business Rates Relief. Business Start-ups should have a rates incentive implemented for up to 5 years to allow them to establish themselves. Intervention for retail industry is required in line with other sectors such as Agriculture.

Legislation change is also required in respect of the number of licences issued to premises within the High Street. This is currently restricting growth of the Hospitality sector within the Town centres.

### **Theme 7: Capacity**

Capacity needs to be a foundation block for all aspects of our High Streets. People need to be equipped and financially resourced to build capacity and encourage partnership working in order to realise the vision for our High Streets.

Empty units need to be repurposed to meet the business need and an extensive package of incentives introduced to achieve this goal. It is about creating flexible spaces that can be utilised for a number of purposes, not solely business. Leasing terms should be addressed to entice businesses back to our High Streets. Undoubtedly greater public/private partnership working is needed to make this happen.

The Ministerial Advisory Group have developed a Capacity Mapping Toolkit, which needs to be incorporated into the HSTF.

### **Theme 8: Energy, Climate Change and Sustainability**

There is existing and previous work that can be utilised such as Sustainable NI, together with post COP 26 directives at City, Village and Town level.

It would be helpful if a programme of incentives is developed (ie, grants programme) to assist with the practicalities to assist with energy, climate change and sustainability. The sustainability surrounding our heritage assets are restrictive. Buildings underutilised and vacant in our High Streets could be vested for other purposes, such as Government use, and disseminating greater levels of public sector jobs across NI.

Prices for cleaner energy are increasing drastically e.g. gas. Consideration should be given to the reintroduction of the Solar Panel Incentive Scheme, which was a success.



It is important to note that there is a need for bespoke local solutions and the need to soften Town Centre environments to make it aesthetically pleasing.

Active Travel should be given due consideration and prioritisation within local and regional action plans, to ensure schemes are developed and delivered to contribute to a sustainable environment. Greenways must be prioritised and further investment is required to build safe and green routes for people to use going to and from work and for exercise.

### **Theme 9: Housing and Other Infrastructure**

It has become clear over the past number of years that people need to be encouraged to live in town centres. Changes need to occur to incentivize town center living (such as Living Over the Shops), inclusion of more green spaces, more opportunities to socialize and better facilities for people including cafes and shops staying open later to keep the towns alive after 5pm. Our High Streets need to be a place where people feel relaxed and safe to go in the evening - schemes such as 'Purple Flag' strive to achieve this.

Radical action needs to be taken for social housing developments to tackle deprivation in high streets, rural villages, town and city centres alongside the appropriate infrastructure.

Opportunities for existing public buildings to become "one stop shops" as a catalyst for services and information, will attempt to bring life back into town centres.

### **Theme 10: Getting To and From the High Street**

Mid Ulster has a large reliance on cars as the main means of transport. There are a variety of reasons for this reliance, for example, the population is rural and public transport is not easily accessible to everyone, there is no train service and there are very few dedicated cycle lanes in town centres. A joined up approach for cycle planning is required in local areas: - it cannot be seen as a short add on to another project. Dungannon's circular walking and cycling path is a typical exemplar project. Creating routes such as this require joint partnership between shops, new building projects, new businesses etc, so that they are strategically planned to create such pathways, connecting up the entire town with the high street and its neighborhoods.

Parking regulations need a radical review. Businesses view that the space outside their shop is solely for the customer. The whole question of transport cannot be considered in isolation, it must be led by an environmentally friendly policy and localised to suit each rural, urban and suburban place. More public routes will bring some but not all the answers.



### **Theme 11: Tourism**

Tourism and town centres should be closely linked particularly in a rural area like Mid Ulster. The tourist attractions in the area need to link with each other and connect with the town centres. An example of this is Seamus Heaney HomePlace and the recently launched Seamus Heaney Open Ground, which is a series of sites that have been developed for visitors that inspired Seamus Heaney's Poetry. One of the sites developed was a link to the Bus Station in Magherafelt, which Seamus Heaney wrote about in his poem Route 110 a piece of public art and interpretation has been installed to tell this story.

Local Heritage is key to Tourism in Mid Ulster but the regulations make it difficult to develop the sites as they are so restrictive.

Local assets need to be promoted with proper branding and widespread advertising. Interventions need to be bespoke for the area with unique solutions tailored for local problems.

Outdoor attractions are very popular and there are many examples of these throughout the Mid Ulster District. The recently opened Splash Waterpark in a former quarry is an example of a private sector initiative that can have spinoff for the local towns and villages as people will travel to it and then spend time in the area.

Tourism holiday-at-home scheme is a good incentive for the local tourism sector and schemes such as this should be supported in the future.

### **Theme 12: Digital High Streets**

The Covid 19 Pandemic has highlighted how it is possible to work remotely and many companies are adopting this as a policy going forward. There is an opportunity to create "Office hubs" in local towns to allow people to work remotely. This may also offer the opportunity to repurpose derelict buildings within town centres.

To encourage digital high streets it is critical to have proper connectivity in town centres.

There needs to be support for businesses to use technology as in many cases there is a skills gaps that needs to be addressed. There could be opportunities to upskill local people through connections with local colleges. For example in Dungannon digital marketing students were connected with less tech savvy businesses to support them develop new social media sites. It is important that our towns embrace the potential afforded by the 'digital high street' as online shopping continues to grow. In our town centres some retailers understand the value and importance of embracing new





technologies and proving an online offering, however, many do not share the views and the lack of understanding and awareness of the benefits it can provide as a tool.

The parking app – Just Park is a great concept but there are times there is no connectivity to allow people to use it, which causes frustration.

DfE should investigate the opportunity for local independent traders to collaborate on an online platform on an NI wide basis.

### **Theme 13: Rural Settlements**

Any support for local areas must be tailored to specifically suit the needs of the area – a one-size fits all approach does not work, it must be based on need. Like the High Streets, rural areas need support to retain footfall. Rural areas have a strong community focus and community initiatives must be supported for rural communities to thrive.

There needs to be joined up thinking between the government departments. DAERA DFI, DfC have already started this process during COVID and it has worked well. This model needs further development and local government should be added as a willing partner at the design phase, as opposed to being used as just a delivery body. No high street should have any more or less potential or access to opportunities – all are important regardless of size or rurality. The HTSF provides a unique opportunity for transformation.

An integrated approach via each of the eleven councils after a "rural funding scoping exercise". In short, bring it together under one authority and localise the spend.

Further discussion on investment in public realm in villages is included under Theme 5.

### **Theme 14: People, Localism and Well-being**

This past 20 months has shown how important it is for local people to connect with their local town, Localism is at the core of any regeneration project going forward. Consumers have been restricted to remaining local and have utilised outdoor areas such as the local markets for their shopping. It will be vital to connect not only with businesses in the town centre but crucially with the people and communities who use the town centre. Towns will need to focus on keeping the local theme, connecting and creating spaces where local people want to live, work and play.



### **Additional Comments**

The Shop Local Voucher Scheme has been very successful for the High Street. There is a suggestion that it should have been limited to independent local traders and open to younger people to encourage them into the town centres.

The hospitality sector has been particularly hard hit by Covid 19 and is struggling to survive. The implementation of the Covid passport is putting even more pressure on the hospitality sector. More support, advice and guidance is needed for this sector.

Review of membership of the HSTF sub-groups - rural membership is required.

Council would request consideration of a 'Future High Streets Fund' in Northern Ireland (similar to England) to provide funding for Councils to rejuvenate and transform city and town centres through a range of social, economic and physical initiatives including marketing and promotion, events, digital training, improving access and transforming empty units.

Mid Ulster District Council looks forward to further engagement as the High Street Task Force moves forward to the next stages of the process.

### **Conclusion**

As we approach 2022, Mid Ulster District Council, would like to duly note that 2022 will be an extremely fragile environment for our towns, with the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic and the reduction in financial support programmes.

There is an **urgent need** to ensure initiatives such as the Future High Street fund are made available to local authorities in NI, as soon as possible, just like what is available in other parts of the UK.

Our High Streets are an integral element of our local economy - they need to be viable to ensure an economic multiplier effect to our rural catchment area. Currently, NI towns are perceived by retail operators as being unattractive locations from which to trade and this is largely due to the Rates issue. Further Government support is required to help traders withstand this economic tsunami and we would encourage Government to continue their incentives such as the rates relief schemes, as discussed within the paper.

Regeneration, community and loyalty all go hand in hand to create unique, bespoke and viable High Streets. The High Street Taskforce provides an opportunity for a meaningful transformation to occur - let's not waste it!



Comhairle Ceantair  
**Lár Uladh**  
**Mid Ulster**  
District Council

*NB: This paper has been prepared by Mid Ulster District Council in conjunction with 5 Town Centre Forums, wider discussions with town traders and input from Council's elected representatives.*

Adrian McCreesh  
Chief Executive





## Appendix 2a

Mid Ulster District Council

4<sup>th</sup> floor North  
9 Lanyon Place  
Lanyon Quay  
Oxford St  
Belfast  
BT1 3LP

By email:

[Adrian.McCreesh@midulstercouncil.org](mailto:Adrian.McCreesh@midulstercouncil.org)

Telephone: 02890 829307

e-mail: Gerard.Murray@communities-ni.gov.uk

Our ref:

Date: 11 December 2021

Dear Adrian

### COVID RECOVERY SMALL SETTLEMENTS REGENERATION PROGRAMME

I am writing to provide advance notice that on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021, a joint press release from Ministers Hargey, Poots and Mallon will announce the launch of the £21m COVID Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme. I have attached the text of the press release for your information. **Please note that this is embargoed until midnight on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021.**

Building on the success of last year's COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme, officials from all three Departments have been working with your council colleagues to ensure that the Programme is as flexible as possible to enable councils to deliver projects which are tailored to meet locally identified need.

Each Council has been asked to develop a draft Small Settlements Regeneration Plan for review by a Strategic Group of Directors from DfC, DAERA and DfI, to ensure deliverability and strategic fit with the programme. **I have asked councils to return their draft Plans to DfC by noon on 21<sup>st</sup> December.** After the plans have been reviewed and agreed, letters of offer will be issued to councils and once these have been signed and returned to DfC, the full allocation of capital and revenue funding will be released in the current financial year.

The allocation for your council is in line with the indicative figures that have been provided previously, but are set out in the attached Guidance Notes for the programme. Please note that if your draft Regeneration Plan is not submitted to the Department by the deadline, your letter of offer will be delayed.

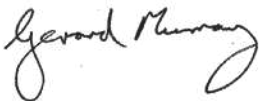
I expect, given the limited time councils will have to develop their Regeneration Plans, and, in some cases, take them through council processes, that further refinement will be required as the plans are being delivered. Your officers should liaise with their DfC regeneration lead official to secure agreement to any changes proposed as the plans are delivered. We will continue to be as flexible as possible in this regard.

Please note that there is also a strong possibility that the capital allocations could be increased. I have therefore advised council officers to work up some reserve projects so that you are able to take advantage of this opportunity should it arise. You may wish to consider having sufficient flexibility to increase your council's 10% contribution in line with this.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank your teams for the excellent work so far on this Programme. Securing approval for the business case took longer than we had hoped meaning that the timelines are challenging. I am very grateful for council colleagues' input and support thus far.

The Guidance Notes for the Programme are attached for your information. Please feel free to contact me directly if you have any queries or require any additional support from me or my team.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gerard Murray', with a stylized, cursive script.

**GERARD MURRAY**

Cc Fiona McKeown  
Eamon Gallogly  
Sharon McGowan



## DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES COVID-19 RECOVERY SMALL SETTLEMENTS REGENERATION PROGRAMME

### COVID-19 RECOVERY SMALL SETTLEMENTS REGENERATION PLAN

Please complete this template and return to [ryan.o'neill@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:ryan.o'neill@communities-ni.gov.uk) no later than noon on 21 DECEMBER 2021

*The form should be completed electronically*

Please note that information provided may be made available to other departments, agencies or funding bodies for the purposes of preventing or detecting fraud.

The completed template may also be subject to requests for disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.

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#### 1. CONTACT DETAILS

Name of Council Mid Ulster District Council

Project Officer/Lead Contact Fiona McKeown

Telephone Number (incl. code) 03000 132 132

E-mail address fiona.mckeown@midulstercouncil.org

Council Address Burn Road  
Cookstown

Post Code BT80 8DT



## 2. DELIVERY OF YOUR COVID RECOVERY SMALL SETTLEMENTS REGENERATION PLAN

*Please identify the individual projects within your regeneration plan, together with information on the nature of the funding (capital or revenue) and how it will be delivered (grant scheme/direct procurement/framework etc). Information on your proposed approach to procurement should also be included, together with proposals for the retention or disposal of assets procured under the fund.*

*You should also indicate how the plan meets the 7 objectives of the fund as set out in Annex A to this document, and also how it will contribute to the delivery of Outcome 10 of the Programme for Government ("We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest.").*

The projects detailed in this Plan have emanated directly from the communities they are intended to benefit. They have been informed by extensive local engagement across the District during the Village Planning process and public consultation exercises carried out during the preparation of our strategies for local economic development, outdoor recreation and tourism.

The projects included below will be designed to meet local needs and achieve maximum impact when delivered. We will utilise Council owned property where possible to ensure delivery within timescale and continue to work in partnership with Forest Service NI to further develop our forests as a source of outdoor recreation – as expressly desired by the community.

The projects listed below are proposed for delivery in 22/23.

In tandem with delivery of 22/23 listed projects, there will be significant time and resource invested by Council to develop further projects to a state of readiness in preparation for delivery in 23/24 (see potential options at Appendix 1). Further commitment from DfC/DAERA and DfI will be needed to provide funding for 23/24 therefore we will continue discussions with all three Departments in this regard.

### Individual Projects

(All require **capital funding** delivered via public procurement.

### Which objective(s) are met (1-7), and how?

(refer to Annex A attached for Objectives)

**Castlecaufield Recreation Area:** Upgrade to current pavilion, this would include a new extension to increase the sports hall usage numbers, upgrade to the existing kitchen & possible increase of kitchen size. Modernize the football changing block, which may require an extension. Develop a Trim Trail with low level lighting (710 metres), possible integration newly completed community river walk (options along river which may require land purchase or transfer/ public footpath on to Council site. This will encapsulate the children's teddy bear picnic walk and also look at developing a bio-diversity area on the grounds. The carpark will also need re-configured to increase car parking spaces and improvements to site lighting. Develop the grass area (old 2nd pitch e.g. additional car parking / pocket park (Council Property)

### Objectives 1,2,3,4,5 are met through the following outcomes:

- Greater community and recreational activity in rural villages/communities
- Increased activities focused on children and young people
- Aesthetics of the village area improved

In relation to objective 5 – positive impact on sales, best endeavours will be made to test this objective however the focus of the project is on village infrastructure for local community use may not translate into any improvement in sales for local businesses.





<p><b>Castledawson (Riverside):</b> develop a Trim Trail around the perimeter of existing pitch, low level lighting, a pocket park area, designated natural area, and remedial works to carpark. Possible extension of current allotment provision to include meeting place/shed. Integration into new site with the current play park leaving a grass space area for locals to enjoy.(Council Property)</p>	<p><b>Objectives 1,2,3,4,5 are met through the following outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater community and recreational activity in rural villages/communities</li> <li>• Increased activities focused on children and young people</li> <li>• Aesthetics of the village area improved</li> </ul>
<p><b>Manor Park, Moneymore</b> - assess and remedy any flooding issues on the main Manor Park site, provide signage integrating Manor Park (provision of pedestrian crossing/ main road) for safe access to play park and trim trail at Recreation area (liaise with DfI re possibilities in this regard). Resurface path network, create accessible picnic area, sluice &amp; weir works to assist with river flow and prevent silting, redevelop maze, install bird beak fencing alongside river, low level lighting will ensure that the site can be safely used in dark evening, carpark lighting.</p>	<p><b>Objectives 1,2,3,4,5 are met through the following outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater community and recreational activity in rural villages/communities</li> <li>• Increased activities focused on children and young people</li> <li>• Aesthetics of the village area improved</li> <li>• Safer access to local amenities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Coalisland Canal</b> - Upgrade to creating a tarred 6.5km mile walking/cycle path from Reenaderry Road to Coalisland. Plan to improve 2 x road crossing, widening and resurfacing of path and associated furniture</p>	<p><b>Objectives 1,2,3,5,6 and 7 are met through the following outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One new walking/cycle path will be created creating to encourage a more active and healthy lifestyle</li> <li>• Improved safety in rural areas.</li> <li>• Greater community and recreational activity in rural villages/communities</li> <li>• Safer access to local amenities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fivemiletown</b> Rugby Club, to assist the new multi-sport development project in the area</p>	<p><b>Objectives 1,2,3,4,5 are met through the following outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater community and recreational activity in rural villages/communities</li> <li>• Increased activities focused on children and young people</li> <li>• Aesthetics of the village area improved</li> <li>• Safer access to local amenities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Clogher:</b> – Ballymagowan Road and Station Road. Creating a cycling and walking path from Ballymagowan Road to Station Road to create a 2km circular cycling &amp; walking route for the Clogher residents.</p>	<p><b>Objectives 1,2,3,4,5,6 and 7 are met through the following outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One new walking/cycle path will be created to encourage a more active and healthy lifestyle</li> <li>• Improved safety in rural areas.</li> <li>• Greater community and recreational activity in rural villages/communities</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safer access to local amenities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Bellaghy:</b> Creation of a new walking and cycling path linking the GAC on Drumanee Road to Long Point Wood thereby increasing the opportunities for outdoor recreation.</p>	<p><b>Objectives 1,2,3,4,5,6 and 7 are met through the following outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One new walking/cycle path will be created creating to encourage a more active and healthy lifestyle</li> <li>• Improved safety in rural areas.</li> <li>• Greater community and recreational activity in rural villages/communities</li> <li>• Safer access to local amenities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Drumcairne Forest:</b> Develop the forest as a local multi recreational hub, a site developed primarily for the local community, to include a range of outdoor recreation and environmental products, accompanied by appropriate visitor servicing.</p>	<p><b>Objectives 1,2,3, 4 are met through the following outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater community and recreational activity for surrounding villages/communities</li> <li>• Increased activities focused on children and young people</li> <li>• Sustainable use of existing natural assets for encouraging more active and healthy lifestyles</li> </ul>
<p><b>Altmore Forest:</b> Develop the forest as a local multi recreational hub, a site developed primarily for the local community, to include a range of outdoor recreation and environmental products, accompanied by appropriate visitor servicing.</p>	<p><b>Objectives 1,2,3,4 are met through the following outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater community and recreational activity for surrounding villages/communities</li> <li>• Increased activities focused on children and young people</li> <li>• Sustainable use of existing natural assets for encouraging more active and healthy lifestyles</li> </ul>
<p><b>Clady:</b> Extend existing play to create a public pocket park. Provide additional parking.</p>	<p><b>Objectives 1,2,3,4,5 are met through the following outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater community and recreational activity in rural villages/communities</li> <li>• Increased activities focused on children and young people</li> <li>• Aesthetics of the village area improved</li> </ul>
<p><b>Kildress Community Breathing Space</b> - A flat, slope-free lighted loop walkway, outdoor open air community activity spaces, fit-for-purpose public realm.</p>	<p><b>Objectives 1,2,3,4,5 are met through the following outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater community and recreational activity in rural villages/communities</li> </ul>



- Increased activities focused on children and young people
- Aesthetics of the village area improved

## APPROACH TO PROCUREMENT

Procurement will be carried out in line with Councils procurement policy with contracts tendered via e-tendersni.

Due to delivery timescales it is considered that the use of a grant aid programme is not the best option for the implementation of this Plan. Council will utilise the services of an ICT to ensure the procurement process commences as soon as possible following receipt of a letter of offer to maximise time for contract delivery.

Council will liaise as required with CPD during the procurement phase.

## CONTRIBUTION TO DELIVERY OF PFG OBJECTIVE 10 –

*(“We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest.”)*

All of the projects listed in this Plan will help deliver Objective 10 the Programme for Government under the Priority Themes of:

### Sports, Arts and Culture:

Providing access to sports, arts and culture and encouraging and facilitating opportunities for people to get involved. Promoting built heritage, eco-tourism and outdoor recreation. Providing spaces and facilities for sports, arts and culture events and activities to take place. (Department for Communities, Department for Infrastructure, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs)

### Planning:

Creating and shaping high quality, sustainable, places for people to live, work and spend leisure time. Furthering sustainable development and supporting positive place making and effective stewardship. (Department for Infrastructure, Department for Communities, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs)



### 3. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

*Please provide details of any stakeholder engagement that has been carried out (or is planned) for this plan. Include details of any working groups or similar fora that have been established or will be established to oversee delivery of your plan.*

Stakeholder engagement in identifying need for the projects listed above has been carried out through:

➤ **The Village Planning Framework** – this encapsulated three distinct phases

Phase 1- Survey and Analysis

- Undertake a detailed socio-economic analysis of the area to include population, age structure, health, education and economic activity and physical assets;

Phase 2- Research and key ideas

- Hold pre-consultation meetings with key members of the community to make connections and understand how each village works.
- Host consultation meeting for the wider public, to provide maps, photographs and presentations to enhance the consultation and to ensure ideas are gathered.
- Questionnaire to gain a further response from the public.
- Analysis of ideas and separate them into groups and priorities.

Phase 3- Village Design and Development

- Highlight key ideas and look at ways to implement these putting in place a robust and realistic integrated village action plan identifying what needs to be done, why it is an issue, how it will be tackled, who will be involved and timescale.
- Validate Plan with those involved.

➤ **Public consultation exercises carried out during the preparation of Council development Strategies including:**

- Mid Ulster Economic Development Plan 2015-2020 “Our Plan for Growth” which identified the enabling of town and village Regeneration as one of four key Themes and,
- Mid Ulster Outdoor Recreation Strategy – which identified strong local community support for the development of recreational opportunities within forests due to the benefits this can bring to surrounding villages as a result of improved local access.
- Mid Ulster Council Pitches Strategy Development
- Mid Ulster Council Public Parks and Plan Five Year Strategy
- Masterplans for forest Development including Drumcairn, Altmore/Cappagh and Dunmoyle.



Stakeholder engagement will continue throughout the design development phase for the projects included in this Regeneration Plan. This allows opportunity for bottom up input on design concepts as they emerge and creates a sense of local buy in needed to meet public expectations.

#### 4.NEED FOR INVESTMENT

*Please describe briefly each proposed project and explain why it is needed. Provide details of other bodies/groups supporting the need for each project and what evidence or metrics are available to demonstrate the need? (E.g. Business Surveys, Chamber of Trade/Commerce request, Shopper/Visitor surveys, Village Plans, research etc.) In particular, please list any baseline data the council has that would be relevant to the objectives of the Programme.*

##### **EVIDENCE OF NEED**

#### **Village Planning Process**

As stated in Section 3, the Village Planning process has provided the framework from which the projects listed have emerged. The case for change in each instance falls under the broad headings of:

- The opportunity to build vibrant and competitive villages;
- The opportunity to improve local recreational opportunities especially for young people;
- The opportunity to improve the natural and build heritage within rural villages and outlying areas;
- The opportunity for residents of the District to live longer, healthier and more active lifestyles.

#### **Community Plan for Mid Ulster**

The headings above resonate with the priority themes identified within the Community Plan for Mid Ulster and reflect the findings of the extensive consultation exercise carried out during its preparation.

The projects within this Regeneration Plan will therefore contribute to achieving the Community Plans Vision for Mid Ulster as ... *a welcoming place where our people are content, healthy and safe; educated and skilled; where our economy is thriving; our environment and heritage are sustained; and where our public services excel.*

#### **Council Corporate Plan**

Addressing rurality is a Corporate commitment for this Council. Close to 70% of Mid Ulster's population live in a rural setting, a fact which has strongly influenced the Council's approach to service delivery, investment and long-term planning. The importance of addressing the needs of a rural region, whether socially or economically, is undiminished and remains one of the Council's corporate commitments.

Theme 5 of the Corporate Plan is about our communities and places a deliberate focus on accessibility of opportunities to help residents lead more active lifestyles. Here the priorities are on opening up opportunities for outdoor recreation tailored to community need which will be facilitated through the delivery of this Plan.



## Mid Ulster Outdoor Recreation Strategy

Linked to the Corporate Plan priorities for encouraging and facilitating active lifestyles, the Mid Ulster Outdoor Recreation Strategy identified forest development as one of the strongest propositions for building the outdoor recreation offer across the district. Utilising local forests for recreation has emerged time and time again within Village Plans which is evidence of local support for pursuing this course of action. This has helped to justify the inclusion of two forest based projects in this Regeneration Plan at Altmore and Drumcaine. In addition there is a strong value for money argument to be made for developing local assets which can be utilised by a number of surrounding villages which helps to maximise the impact of these interventions and the population served.

## Project level deficiencies

For each project, local level deficiencies have been identified within existing arrangements and the scope of each proposed project will be developed to address these deficiencies.

A brief description of each project is provided below:

### Castlecaufield Recreation Area:

Upgrade to current pavilion, this would include a new extension to increase the sports hall usage numbers, upgrade to the existing kitchen & possible increase of kitchen size. Modernize the football changing block, which may require an extension. Develop a Trim Trail with low level lighting (710 metres), possible integration newly completed community river walk (options along river which may require land purchase or transfer/ public footpath on to Council site. This will encapsulate the children's teddy bear picnic walk and also look at developing a bio-diversity area on the grounds. The carpark will also need re-configured to increase car parking spaces and improvements to site lighting. Develop the grass area (old 2nd pitch e.g. additional car parking / pocket park (Council Property)

### Castledawson (Riverside):

Develop a Trim Trail around the perimeter of existing pitch, low level lighting, a pocket park area, designated natural area, and remedial works to carpark. Possible extension of current allotment provision to include meeting place/shed. Integration into new site with the current play park leaving a grass space area for locals to enjoy.(Council Property)

### Manor Park, Moneymore :

Assess and remedy any flooding issues on the main Manor Park site, provide signage integrating Manor Park (provision of pedestrian crossing/ main road) for safe access to play park and trim trail at Recreation area (liaise with DfI re possibilities in this regard). Resurface path network, create accessible picnic area, sluice & weir works to assist with river flow and prevent silting, redevelop maze, install bird beak fencing alongside river, low level lighting will ensure that the site can be safely used in dark evening, carpark lighting.

### Coalisland Canal:

Upgrade to creating a tarred 6.5km mile walking/cycle path from Reenaderry Road to Coalisland. Plan to improve 2 x road crossing, widening and resurfacing of path and associated furniture;

### Fivemiletown Rugby Club:

To assist the new multi-sport development project in the area;

### Clogher:





Ballymagowan Road and Station Road. Creating a cycling and walking path from Ballymagowan Road to Station Road to create a 2km circular cycling & walking route for the Clogher residents.

**Bellaghy:**

Creation of a new walking and cycling path linking the GAC on Drumanee Road to Long Point Wood thereby increasing the opportunities for outdoor recreation. Green Space: develop a trim trail/ low level lighting/ activity area, link the two local developments to a "green space area" & improve the knock about area (Council owned). Planters throughout village.

**Drumcainne Forest:** Develop the forest as a local multi recreational hub, a site developed primarily for the local community, to include a range of outdoor recreation and environmental products, accompanied by appropriate visitor servicing.

**Altmore Forest:** Develop the forest as a local multi recreational hub, a site developed primarily for the local community, to include a range of outdoor recreation and environmental products, accompanied by appropriate visitor servicing.

**Clady:**

Extend existing play to create a public pocket park. Provide additional parking

**Kildress Community Breathing Space:**

A flat, slope-free lighted loop walkway, outdoor open air community activity spaces, fit-for-purpose public realm.

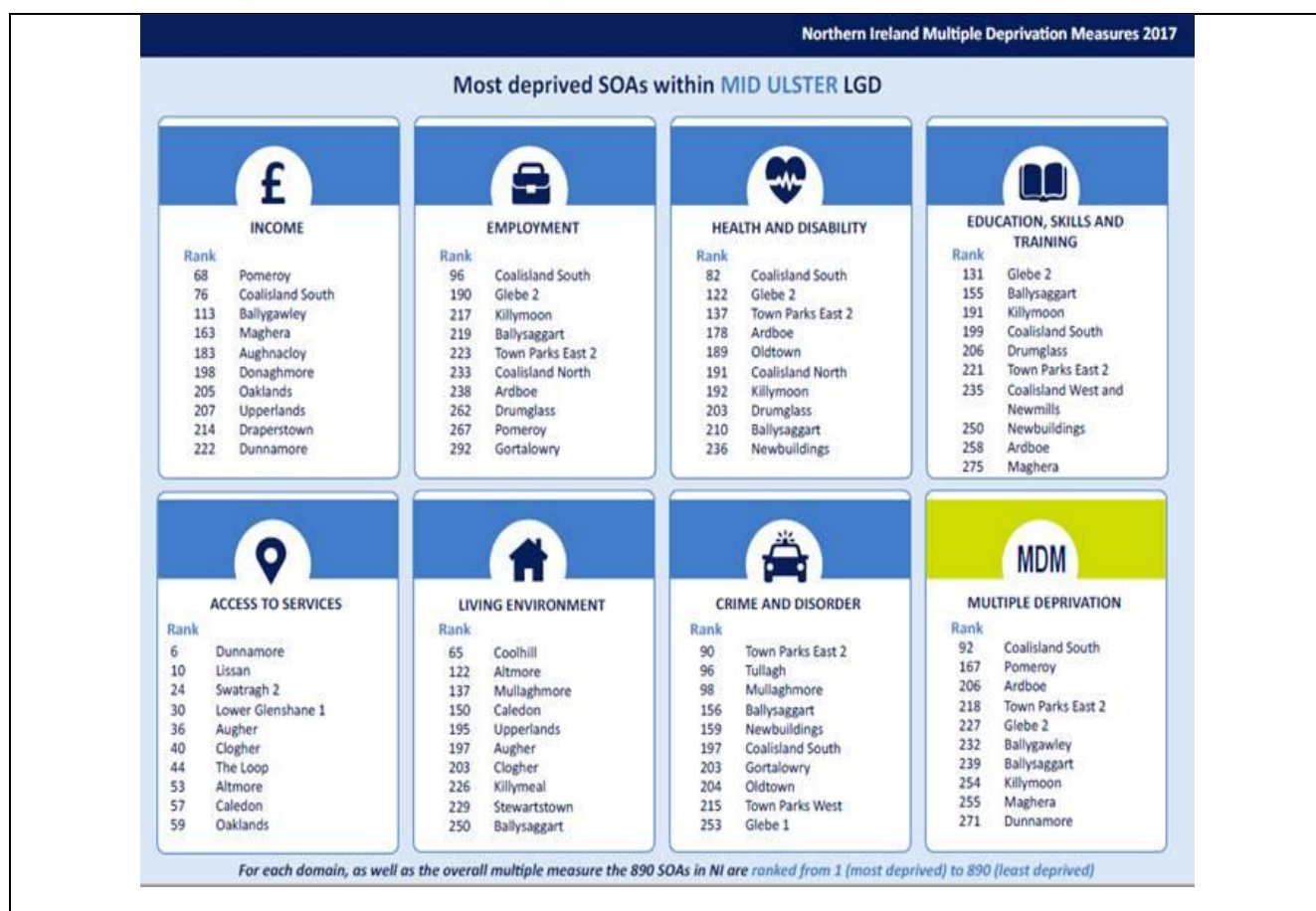
**BASELINE DATA****Rural Population**

- 82 rural village settlements are listed in NISRA settlement population statistics for Mid Ulster with a usually resident population of over 37,000 (this reflects the population within the settlement limits only and not open countryside)
- 70% or approx. 100,000 of the Districts total population live in rural areas (areas outside of the main towns of Dungannon, Magherafelt, Cookstown and Coalisland)
- Mid Ulster has a vibrant rural area consisting of active communities, a strong entrepreneurial spirit which contributes to the overall employment base and rural villages with considerable character and heritage importance. This vibrant rural area needs to be supported and sustained if it is to remain as a vitally important part of our district.

**Deprivation**

At a district level, statistically MUDC has areas of deprivation. At an SOA level, two areas - Coalisland South (rank 92) and Pomeroy (rank 167) - are classified within the most deprived areas within NI. This does not mean deprivation is limited to those areas, or all of those areas are deprived. MUDC has a number of SOAs among the most deprived 25% - 30% in NI.

Access to services deprivation is particularly prevalent in Mid Ulster which reaffirms the case for investment in rural services and facilities. A summary of the top 10 wards by deprivation indicator is show below.



## 5. COSTS

Please provide details of the work to be carried out for each project in your plan. Estimates are acceptable at this stage.

Item	Funding Source (DfC/DAERA, DfI, Council)	Cost
Castlecaufield Recreation Area	DAERA / DFC	£610,000
Castledawson (Riverside	DAERA / DFC	£200,000
Manor Park, Moneymore	DfC/DAERA	£225,000
Coalisland Canal	DFI	£550,000
Fivemiletown Rugby Club	DfC/DAERA	£50,000
Clogher	DFI	£130,000
Bellaghy	DFI	£130,000
Drumcairne Forest	DfC/DAERA	£280,000
Altmore Forest	DfC/DAERA	£280,000
Clady	DfC / DAERA	£100,000
Kildress Community Breathing Space	DfC / DAERA	£75,000
	<b>Capital</b>	<b>£2,630,000</b>





ICT professional fees (via resource allocation to be capitalised)		<b>£180,000</b>

## 6. PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

*Please indicate how the proposed projects will be monitored during and after implementation. It is important to note that an Outcome Based Accountability Framework will be used to evaluate this Programme during and post-delivery to capture how much was done, how well was it done, and the difference it made.*

### MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

Monitoring arrangements will be based on the outcomes based accountability score card included within the guidance notes. The indicator and method of measurement to be used are included below.

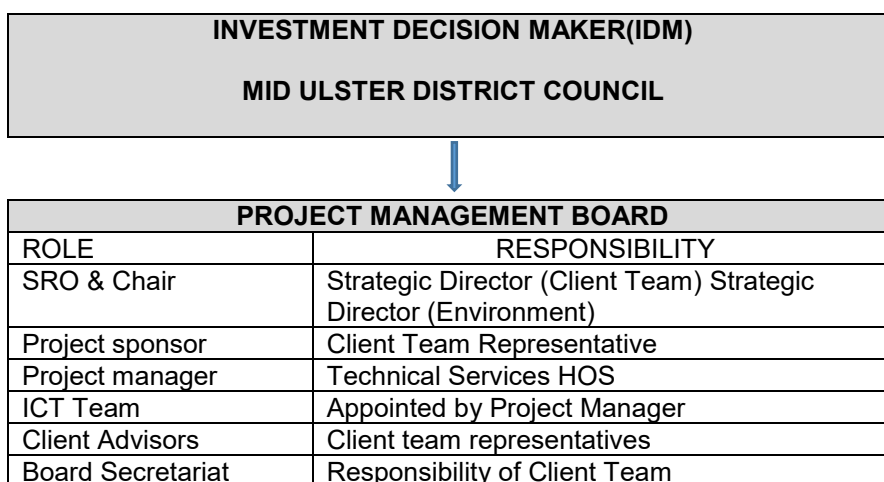
Outcome	Indicator / method of measurement to be used
% of costed Small Settlements Regeneration Plans (SSRP) developed by councils within agreed timescales.	Submitted Regeneration Plan
% of projects completed on time	Works completion certs for each project
% of projects that increased use of land for active travel which connects people with key services and ensures accessibility for all including those with disabilities – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>extended footways</li> <li>cycle ways.</li> <li>connecting pathways.</li> </ul>	Extended footways / cycle ways/ connecting pathways measured within completed projects
% of residents in smaller settlements where projects have been delivered agree that the improvements to the area would encourage people to live, work, visit and invest in the area.	Outcome of a resident's survey carried out in settlements where projects are located.
% of people using smaller settlements where projects have been delivered for work, tourism or leisure, agree that the improvements to the area would encourage people to live, work, visit and invest in the area.	Outcome of a resident's survey carried out in settlements where projects are located.
Number & % of businesses within the scheme areas who reported schemes funded through this Programme have positively impacted on sales figures	Outcome of a business survey carried out in settlements where projects are located.



NOTE: In relation to objective 5 – positive impact on sales, best endeavours will be made to test this objective however the focus of the project is on village infrastructure for local community use and may not translate into any improvement in sales for local businesses.

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Project management arrangements will follow Councils Capital Procedural Guide. The project management structure is shown below:



The project management board will meet at regular intervals (usually monthly) throughout the duration of delivery period. Update reports from these meetings will be used to inform the funders on progress at individual project level.



## 7. CONTRIBUTIONS FROM COUNCIL AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

*Please identify any contribution that council or other stakeholders are making towards this regeneration plan.*

As required, Council will be contributing a minimum of 10% match funding towards the agreed allocation contained within a letter of offer.

Costs included within this Plan are indicative. As a contingency for price increases following procurement, Council is prepared to increase match funding to 20% in order to ensure full delivery of the Plan.



## 8. STATEMENT AND DECLARATION

*Please use the space below to add any additional information in support of your regeneration plan.*

**This projects included in this Regeneration Plan are those anticipated for delivery by March 2023. A degree of flexibility will be required in the event of changes in circumstances which may impact on the delivery of a particular project. Clear lines of communication will remain in place to inform DfC of such changes as they emerge.**

### Declaration

I hereby declare that the information contained in this form is accurate and that all persons party to this project understand their responsibilities regarding the Department's monitoring and evaluation processes.

I agree that this information may be made available to other funders including other Government Departments and Agencies and accept that this information may be published by the Department for Communities.

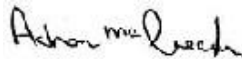
I confirm that any funding requested will be spent in accordance with the Council's procedures for capital expenditure, and will not duplicate any funding provided by other funders. In the event that **MID ULSTER DISTRICT COUNCIL** obtains further funding at a later date I will immediately inform the Department.

I understand I must inform the Department immediately if there are any changes to the information supplied in this form.

I understand that if the information contained in this form is proven to be intentionally false or misleading I or **MID ULSTER DISTRICT COUNCIL** may be prosecuted under the Fraud Act 2006.



I understand that the Department can at any time ask to see any supporting evidence in relation to this COVID Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Plan, and future funding procurement procedures, payment information, minutes of meetings, letters of offer, contracts for funding etc as deemed necessary.

Signature	
Print name in capitals	ADRIAN MCCREESH
Position in Council	CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Date	21 DECEMBER 2021



## **ANNEX A –OBJECTIVES**

### **Objectives**

1. To agree a costed COVID Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Plan for each district council and enable programme spend by March 2022
2. To support each district council to deliver the project outcomes identified in its Regeneration Plan by March 2023.
3. By March 2024, 70% of residents surveyed, in smaller settlements where projects have been delivered, agree that funded works would encourage people to live, work, visit and invest in the area.
4. By March 2024, 70% of people surveyed while using smaller settlements where projects have been delivered for work, tourism or leisure, agree that the improvements to the area would encourage people to live, work, visit and invest in the area.
5. By March 2024, attitudinal surveys completed by businesses indicate that 70% believe that schemes funded through this Programme will have positively impacted on sales figures.
6. By March 2024, attitudinal surveys indicate 40% of the public (residents and visitors) agree that projects supported would encourage people to change from car use to more environmentally friendly choices such as walking and cycling for journeys of under two miles.
7. By March 2024, each Regeneration Plan will support projects which increase the use of land for active travel (i.e. extended footways, cycle ways, connecting pathways) which connects people with key services and ensures accessibility for all including those with disabilities.



## Appendix 1

Potential options for <u>23/24</u> (subject to availability of funding)	DEA	DfC / DAERA	DfI	Total
<b>Bush</b> - Dungannon road realignment - 1.3km £400- (continuation of footpath from Dungannon to Bush to provide a safe walking/cycling route. The aim of this project is to: The outcomes will be as follows: • One new footpath will be created creating connectivity to encourage walking. • Improved safety in rural areas. • Reduced vehicle use in rural areas. Improved connectivity between Bush Village and the urban centre of Dungannon"	D'gannon	TBC	TBC	TBC
<b>Bellaghy</b> (Green Space) - create an outdoor recreational facility to include circular walking route, trim trail, low level lighting, outdoor gym equipment, create linkages to the two local developments to an open outdoor recreational space. Improve the existing kick about area and carparking (Council owned). Explore option to create a walking & cycling route from Bellaghy village to the GAC on Drumanee Road to further increase the opportunities for outdoor recreation.	Moyola	TBC	TBC	TBC
<b>Benburb Recreation Area</b> - upgrade of a new 3g full-size playing surface with lights. This will assist in meeting the high demand for evening hire from the two local clubs. Currently having to travel to other parts of the district for accommodation. The long established club has in access of 300 members/ 17 teams.		TBC	TBC	TBC
<b>Draperstown</b> - Plantin and Fairhill Phase II – renewal of paths, extension of walkway through Plantin, play area at Fairhill	Moyola	TBC	TBC	TBC
<b>Dungannon</b> - Railway Park to Ballysaggart Lough to link Railway Park (a linear green space that runs from Mark Street, Milltown, Dungannon to Lisnahull Road, Dungannon) to Ballysaggart Lough. It further hopes to create a cycling and walking path around the Lough. Phase 1 – Railway Park to Ballysaggart Lough. A new footpath/boardwalk will be required to continue to the path from Windmill Hill Road to Ballysaggart Lough. Phase 2 – Widen & upgrade existing path around the Lough, until it meets the footpath on the Old Eglis Road. Phase 3 – New path along Manse Road. There currently is no footpath infrastructure along the Manse Road.	Dungannon	TBC	TBC	TBC
<b>Dunmoyle Forest</b> - Develop the forest as a local multi recreational hub, a site developed primarily for the local community, to include a range of outdoor recreation and environmental products, accompanied by appropriate visitor servicing.	CV	TBC	TBC	TBC
<b>Fivemiletown (King George V)</b> - site, upgrade pitch 1 to a 3G facility with floodlights, develop a pocket park on the old play park area. (Fields In Trust)	Clogher	TBC	TBC	TBC
<b>Glenone</b> - develop a trim trail and a green space area, with outdoor gym equipment/ pocket park. Develop the green space & leave a knock about area.	Carntogher	TBC	TBC	TBC
<b>Lower Bann Green/Blue way</b> - This proposal is for Phase 3 of the Greenway which will run from Portglenone to Newferry (west) located on the River Bann southwards along the western shore of Lough Beg , where it will connect with the recently developed Lock keepers Cottage Heritage Centre and Café, in Toome	Moyola	TBC	TBC	TBC



Potential options for <u>23/24</u> (subject to availability of funding)	DEA	DfC / DAERA	DfI	Total
Feasibility study completed Cost estimates completed				
<b>Maghera</b> Development of Lands at Mullagh - Feasibility Study currently being worked up. Development of site as an outdoor recreational facility.	Carntogher	TBC	TBC	TBC
<b>Moy</b> 3G Project, with lighting and changing (dependant on location and potential partners)- land issues	Dungannon	TBC	TBC	TBC
<b>Roundlake:</b> to improve path network around the lake, address flooding & drainage issues, install seating and other outdoor gym equipment.	CV	TBC	TBC	TBC
<b>Tullyhogue</b> to Tullyhogue Fort/Loughrey College/MUSA - community trail linking the sites. Feasibility Study currently underway to determine route, landowners etc	Cookstown	TBC	TBC	TBC



Mr Adrian McCreesh  
Chief Executive  
Mid Ulster District Council  
Council Offices  
50 Ballyronan Road  
Magherafelt  
Co Londonderry  
BT45 6EN  
(by email)

North West Development Office  
West Team  
Boaz House  
19 Scarffe's Entry  
OMAGH  
Co. Tyrone  
BT78 1JG

Telephone: (028) 82255516  
Email: Sharon.mcgowan@communities-ni.gov.uk

Our reference: NWDO/W/RV/CLD/01/21

Date: 17 December 2021

Project Reference No	NWDO/W/RV/CLD/01/21
Project Applicant	Mid Ulster District Council
Project Title	Coalisland Revitalisation
Amount of Grant	£274,000
Period of Grant	20 September 2021 – 31 March 2022
Council's level Of Financial Systems and Controls	Robust

Dear Adrian

### 1. Revised Approval

The purpose of this letter is to effect certain amendments and variations to the Contract for Funding constituted by the letter dated 17 September 2021 which was issued to Mid Ulster District Council Accordingly upon the Council's acceptance of this letter as hereinafter provided the said Contract for Funding shall be amended and have effect as if  
for paragraph (2)

**“the Grant”** means a sum up to a maximum of £250,000 of which:

**“capital items”** means Environmental Improvements at Lineside, new festive lighting, development of a new brand for Coalisland and associated merchandise;

**“the project start and completion date”** means the day by which the project must start and be completed so as to achieve the performance outputs as specified in paragraph 3 below.

**“the performance outputs”** means the performance outputs specified in the Schedule hereto (see section 18);

**“the equality legislation”** means the statutory provisions from time to time in force in Northern Ireland in relation to discrimination on the grounds of race, disability, sexual orientation, gender or political opinion;

there is substituted a new paragraph

**“the Grant”** means a sum up to a maximum of £274,000 of which:

**“capital items”** means Environmental Improvements at Lineside, new festive lighting, development of a new brand for Coalisland and associated merchandise;

**“the project start and completion date”** means the day by which the project must start and be completed so as to achieve the performance outputs as specified in paragraph 3 below.

**“the performance outputs”** means the performance outputs specified in the Schedule hereto (see section 18);

**“the equality legislation”** means the statutory provisions from time to time in force in Northern Ireland in relation to discrimination on the grounds of race, disability, sexual orientation, gender or political opinion;

## **2. Acceptance**

This letter is issued in duplicate and accordingly if the Organisation is prepared to accept the variance to the original Contract for Funding please return one complete copy of this letter duly signed and dated on behalf of the Organisation within 4 weeks from the date of this letter. Failure to return the acceptance within this period shall result in the offer being deemed as withdrawn.

## **3. Availability**

The foregoing offer shall remain open a period of 4 weeks from the date of this letter. Failure to return one complete copy of this letter duly signed and dated on behalf of the Organisation within this period shall result in the offer being deemed as withdrawn.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sharon H'Gowan." The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of the printed name "Deputy Director".

Deputy Director

#### 4. OFFICIAL GRANT ACCEPTANCE

Project Reference No	NWDO/W/RV/CLD/01/21
Project Applicant	Mid Ulster District Council
Project Title	Coalisland Revitalisation
Amount of Grant	£274,000
Period of Grant	20 September 2021 - 31 March 2022

I **Adrian McCreesh** have authority **on behalf of**  
***(Name of Chief Executive in Block Capitals)***

**Mid Ulster District Council**  
***(Name of Council in Block Capitals)***

to accept the offer of Grant set out in the letter dated 17 December 2021 and agree to deliver the above project on the terms and conditions therein.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signed by**  
**(Chief Executive)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Witnessed by**  
**(Registered Office Bearer)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name in Block Capitals**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name in Block Capitals**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

## 5. BANK DETAILS

Project Reference No	NWDO/W/RV/CLD/01/21
Project Applicant	Mid Ulster District Council
Project Title	Coalisland Revitalisation
Amount of Grant	£274,000
Period of Grant	20 September 2021 - 31 March 2022

**Please complete Bank details below.**

**Name of Council:**

**Name of Account:**

**Bank Name:**

**Bank Address:**

**Sort Code:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Account Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signed by**  
**(Chief Executive)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Witnessed by**  
**(Registered Office Bearer)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name in Block Capitals**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name in Block Capitals**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

## 6. Project Targets and Output Measures

Target Date:	31 December 2021	Output Measure:	Initial stakeholder consultations held Design agreed
Target Description:	Procure a brand consultant and agree on a design and merchandise		

Target Date:	31 March 2022	Output Measure:	Certificate of practical completion
Target Description:	Complete environmental improvement of (Approx Area of Site 4344m2) scheme at Lineside		

Target Date:	31 September 2021	Output Measure:	Festive lighting procured
Target Description:	Purchase new festive lighting and Christmas tree		

Target Date:	31 March 2023	Output Measure:	Increased Civic Pride
Target Description:	Council to complete all post project surveys and complete a Post Project Evaluation (PPE) within a 12 month period of completion		

Target Date:	31 March 2023	Output Measure:	Businesses using the branding
Target Description:	Implementation of the new Town Centre brand in to 60% of all business in Coalisland		

Target Date:	31 March 2023	Output Measure:	Footfall increasing
Target Description:	To increase footfall by 25% on the Lineside scheme		

## 7. Breakdown of Grant Award (by financial year)

Eligible Expenditure Category and Breakdown	Total Grant Award	Year 1
Capital	From: From:20 September 2021 To: 31 March 2022	From: From:20 September 2021 To: 31 March 2022
<b>Festive Lighting</b>	£80,000	£80,000
<b>Lineside EI Scheme</b>	£169,000	£169,000
<b>Branding &amp; Merchandise</b>	£25,000	£25,000
<b>Total Capital</b>	£274,000	£274,000

## 8. Expenditure Schedule

\* These are anticipated amounts and dates and should only be taken as a guide. Normally Grant will be released on receipt of paid invoices/ receipts up to the maximum as detailed on the Breakdown of Grant Award and paid quarterly during the period of the project.

Date(s) Expenditure Due To Be Incurred	Anticipated Amount	Brief breakdown of Grant amount against eligible expenditure category	Anticipated Payment dates	Related Terms and Conditions (as per CFF)
20 Sept 2021 - 31 March 2022	£169,000	Environmental Improvement scheme – to include Paving & landscaping	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022	Claim form with all supporting documentation
	£25,000	Branding & Merchandise	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2021	Claim form with all supporting documentation
	£80,000	Festive Lighting	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2021	Claim form with all supporting documentation

14<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Mr Adrian McCreesh  
Chief Executive  
Mid Ulster District Council  
76-78 Burn Road  
Cookstown  
BT80 8DR

Dear Mr McCreesh

**Re: ESF match funding**

We are requesting your support to ensure that c **£20 million** of funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) is not lost to Northern Ireland (NI).

With a budget of £168 million for Call 2 (2018-2022), ESF has been a vital source of funding helping to develop the skills of many of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable members of society whose needs are not met by mainstream employability provision.

In the past 7 years (up to March 2022), ESF projects have helped develop the employability and social inclusion of over 77,000 people, of which over 9,000 have entered paid employment and over 10,000 have entered education or training.

As an outcome of BREXIT, ESF funding was due to end across NI in March 2022. However, at the beginning of 2021 the EU agreed to extend the life of the programme by a further year until March 2023, pledging c £20 million in funding to do so. As there is currently no indication from the UK or NI Government as to what will replace ESF funding following March 2022 this announcement was very welcome. The pledge of c £20 million from the EU is, however, subject to match funding of c £14 million being secured.

Following the announcement, the managing agent for ESF funding in NI (Department for Economy) proceeded with a tendering process (ESF Call 3) in the summer of 2021. Providers bid for the funding, under the premise of how the majority of this 35% (c £14 million) match funding was historically provided for by a number of central government sources, over the past number of decades, including the Department for Communities (DfC), Department for the Economy (DfE), Department of Health (via Trusts) and local councils. Approximately 66 projects were successful in their bid, most of whom already deliver ESF projects including ourselves (Network Personnel, part of the Workspace Group, a social enterprise based in Mid-Ulster).

However, with less than **3 months** remaining until the current ESF programme comes to an end (on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022), the match funding position for the 12-month extension, starting April 2022 and running until March 2023, remains totally unclear with DfE and DfC stating that, whilst they have a small pot of funding



available for match funding purposes, the funding available falls far short of the c £14 million required to draw down the c£20 million of European funding needed for Northern Ireland projects.

The impact of not securing this funding would be catastrophic on the 66 projects currently operating throughout NI. Projects that are mostly delivered by voluntary, community and not for profit organisations, like ourselves. This would effectively result in a loss of up to 1,000 jobs and more significantly, the loss of support to the 13,500 people (1,000 families; 2,750 people with disabilities; 2,750 NEET's; 4,000 unemployed and 3,000 economically inactive) who avail of the services of these organisations each year. Individuals who are some of the most disadvantaged in the community and who without support, guidance and upskilling would have great difficulty accessing the labour market.

Having delivered on ESF projects for over 9 years, Network Personnel, was successful in securing c **£2.3 million** of Call 3 ESF funding. This funding is for extending the provision of our three employability programmes, across five council areas (Mid Ulster; Mid and East Antrim; Antrim and Newtownabbey; Fermanagh and Omagh; and Causeway Coast and Glen) throughout 2022/23. Programmes which have been extremely successful in supporting the most vulnerable families, young persons not in employment, education or training, unemployed and economically inactive.

To be able to draw down the c **£2.3 million** of ESF funding we now need to secure **£804k** of match funding. This is in line with the funding required to deliver our projects throughout ESF Call 2.

Historically, DfE have provided between 29% and 35% of the match funding required for our three projects totalling c £700k per annum, with the remaining c £100k being funding by other sources such as local councils and our parent organisation (the Workspace Group). At present DfE are advising that they no longer have that level of funding available.

Failure to obtain this funding will result in the loss of the above programmes leading to a gap in provision and the significant negative impacts throughout the five council areas we deliver in. This gap in provision would arise in what is already an unprecedented time in the economy and a time where barriers to employment are increasing for the most vulnerable.

Specifically, in **Mid Ulster** this would equate to the loss of **£748k** in support to local people via programmes delivered by Network Personnel.

Urgent action is needed to fill the match funding gap necessary to draw down the EU funding which has been secured. The DfE as the managing authority for EU funds, alongside the DfC and other key government departments and agencies must work with providers, such as ourselves, to ensure adequate financial arrangements are in place and to avoid any immediate loss or disruption of provision.

Mid Ulster District Council currently provide a total of £19,877 per annum towards two of Network Personnel's ESF projects (2018 -2022) and we would request that this level of funding is at least maintained and if possible increased in light of the issues outlined and the impact on the local community if funding is not secured.

Whilst the current priority is securing the match funding for 2022/23, the longer-term future of employability provision for the most disadvantaged/vulnerable members of our communities also remains unclear given the uncertainty with regards to the development of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), which is proposed as the 'successor' programme to EU funded projects.

The absence of detailed information about the fund and its future priorities means that the practicalities of providers securing long term funding after ESF monies come to an end are complex, uncertain and present significant challenges. This issue is common to all ESF projects and NICVA has developed a briefing paper providing more detail on the concerns, priorities and actions required. This document is enclosed for your information.

Given the short time frame and the potential loss to NI of c £20 million in EU funding we are requesting your urgent support, and that of your colleagues, to ensure that DfE and DfC, are in a position, as they have done historically, to provide the match funding required to facilitate the ESF projects in 2022/23 and subsequently draw down and prevent the loss of c £20 million in ESF funding to NI.

If you require further information or would like to meet with ourselves or other ESF providers to discuss this further, please contact [kristal@theworkspacegroup.org](mailto:kristal@theworkspacegroup.org).

I would like to thank you for taking the time to consider our request for support and look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Georgina Grieve', with a stylized, flowing script.

Georgina Grieve  
CEO, Workspace Group  
Enc.

# ESF USER GROUP BRIEFING PAPER

## NOVEMBER 2021

### Contents

1. Who We Are
2. Executive Summary
3. Introduction and Background
4. Current Context
5. What Needs to Happen
6. Further Information

*Produced by NICVA on behalf of the ESF Users Group*

## 1. Who We Are?

This briefing has been produced by the **ESF Users Group** - a representative group of voluntary and community organisations, from across Northern Ireland, who are currently in receipt of **European Social Fund (ESF)** funding. Membership of the ESF Users Group includes organisations providing core services to support the long-term unemployed; those with convictions; young people not in education, employment, or training; families and those with a disability. *(A full list of ESF Users Group members can be found in ANNEX 1)*

## 2. Executive Summary

### ***Our Concerns***

1. **The European Social Fund<sup>1</sup> (ESF)**, a vital and unique source of EU funding, **helping 10,000 people each year in Northern Ireland** overcome major obstacles to social inclusion and entering employment, will end soon post-Brexit with no clear replacement agreed.
2. The EU has agreed to extend the life of the programme by a further year until end March 2023 ([ESF Call 3](#)), pledging £20 million but this is wholly dependent on approximately £14 million match funding from NI government departments and agencies, which is currently not all secured. Current ESF funding will end in March 2022.
3. There is **no clarity on how future NI government programmes will meet the social and labour market inclusion needs met for decades by ESF** when its funding runs out.
4. There is also no clarity on how, when, or whether the future promised **UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)** intended to replace ESF will adequately meet these needs.
5. Meanwhile **50 voluntary and community organisations** currently delivering core services to thousands of people via ESF funding, **will be unable to continue their work or retain staffing and expertise** unless clear commitments are given as soon as possible regarding both immediate and longer-term funding for services. This **places at significant risk the future of these organisations** and unless secured, would mean **the loss of over 1,000 jobs** of those employed to deliver key services. This would result in a **critical loss of much needed support to individuals with acute and complex needs**, that has

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<sup>1</sup> The European Social Fund (ESF) (total value €450m with €210.5m contributed by the EU) provides dedicated funding for projects across the United Kingdom (UK) aimed at improving the employability and employment levels of vulnerable and disadvantaged people who are usually overlooked within mainstream provision. The strategic aim of the ESF Programme 2014-2020 in Northern Ireland (NI) is to combat poverty and enhance social inclusion by reducing economic inactivity and to increase the skills base of those currently in work and future potential participants in the workforce.

demonstrated strategic level impact across NI Government departments, specifically Economy, Communities, Health and Justice with no suitable alternative provision in place.

6. An independent report by the Strategic Investment Board<sup>2</sup>, jointly commissioned by the Department for Economy (DfE) and the Department for Communities (DfC), highlighted that **any break in ESF provision would be highly undesirable, leading to unmet need and a 'cliff edge' in terms of access to suitable support at a time of unprecedented social and economic challenge** and therefore must be avoided.

### ***Our Asks***

**Urgent action is needed to meet the match funding gap necessary to draw down the £20M of EU funding available under ESF Call 3 and to ensure that continued and adequate resourcing for ESF-type activities is made available through both domestic NI Government Departments and/or delivery of the UKSPF.**

#### **1. Match Funding/ESF Call 3**

- Urgent clarity is needed regarding the match funding arrangements for those projects who have successfully secured funding through ESF Call 3.
- The Department for Economy (DfE), as the managing authority for EU Funds, alongside the Department for Communities (DfC) and other key government departments and agencies must urgently work with providers to ensure adequate financial arrangements are in place and to avoid any immediate loss or disruption of provision.
- The NI Executive, led by the Department of Finance (DoF) should have oversight of the key issues regarding and take timely and appropriate action to ensure that available EU monies are not lost as a result of adequate match funding not being secured.

#### **2. Domestic Policy and Delivery**

- NI domestic policy and strategy must adequately mainstream, prioritise and address the needs of those previously provided for under the ESF programme, to ensure there is no break, significant reduction in and/or loss of provision.
- The NI Executive and relevant local Government Departments must ensure the full involvement and participation of the voluntary and community sector and those they

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<sup>2</sup> Strategic Investment Board Landscape Presentation Paper for Strategic Insight Lab, Feb 2021

support in the design of current and future domestic programmes to ensure need is adequately prioritised and reflected in programming.

### **3. Implementation and Delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)**

- Urgent clarity is needed as to whether the UKSPF will be a viable ‘successor’ programme to ESF, including the level of funding and timeframe in which this is realistically to be made available.
- The powers to allocate and manage funding through the UKSPF in Northern Ireland should be fully devolved to the Northern Ireland Executive in line with its responsibilities for social inclusion and economic development. This will also help ensure compliance with the statutory duty to promote good community relations and equal opportunities.
- In the absence of this, all efforts must be made by both the UK and NI Governments to ensure that there is significant practical involvement of the NI administration in the preparation, implementation, and management of the UKSPF funds, including determining funding priorities. This is necessary to ensure that resources are most appropriately targeted in NI; that gaps in provision for those with complex needs are avoided; and to prevent any duplication of effort or misdirection of resourcing etc by either government.
- The UK Government must urgently engage with all relevant NI stakeholders, including the full involvement of relevant community and voluntary sector partners, to ensure the UKSPF is fit for purpose in terms of its priorities and plans for implementation and delivery in NI. This is necessary to address the unique landscape of need in NI<sup>3</sup> and to help sustain essential, embedded services.

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<sup>3</sup> As captured in the latest NISRA Labour Market survey (Oct 21) NI had the lowest employment rate and the highest economic inactivity rate of all the UK regions. <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/labour-market-and-social-welfare/labour-force-survey>. The disability employment gap for NI in 2020 was 42.2pps, compared to 27.9pps for the whole of the UK. Since 2014, the disability employment gap has consistently been higher in NI than the rest of the UK. <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/Disability-employment-gap-NI-2020.pdf>. The number of young people who are NEET in NI has increased to 26,000, equivalent to 13.2% of young people aged 16- 24 years and is above the UK rate of 12.4% (LFS November 2020).

### 3. Introduction & Background

Our organisations remain deeply concerned about the absence of any clear plan from both the UK and NI Governments to ensure continuity of funding for European Social Fund (ESF) projects which were formally due to finish in less than 6 months (31st March 2022), with a current proposal [ESF Call 3](#) to extend the programme until end March 2023, remaining wholly dependent upon the securing of adequate match funding.

In addition, the longer-term future of this provision remains unclear, given the uncertainty with regard to the development of the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#) (UKSPF), which is proposed as a ‘successor’ programme to EU funds and the implications therefore for its delivery in Northern Ireland. In addition, current domestic policy and strategy does not adequately prioritise or address the longer terms gaps in provision that shall be left by the ending of EU funds.

For decades, the funding provided by ESF has provided critical support to and developed the skills of many of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable members of Northern Ireland society whose needs have not been met by mainstream public policy and services. It has also uniquely provided outcomes spanning responsibilities in various government departments, such as the Departments for Economy, Communities, Health and Justice.

The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified many of these aspects of social exclusion, with the need for continued and appropriate investment in effective interventions and supports more critical now than ever.

**The current NI ESF budget is £168m delivered across 66 projects<sup>4</sup>.** In the 7 years up to March 2022 ESF projects will have helped develop the employability and social inclusion of over **77,000 people**, over **9,000** of these will have entered paid employment directly, and over **10,000** will have entered education or training. Recent data from the ESF Managing Authority shows that providers have met or exceeded all impact targets for the programme.<sup>5</sup>

ESF supported projects in NI have demonstrated consistent success and expertise in their work to address inequalities and ensure greater social inclusion, and in providing real opportunities to individuals to ultimately achieve meaningful and sustained employment<sup>6</sup>. Delivery of the ESF programme in Northern Ireland has been recognised as an exemplar

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<sup>4</sup> 66 projects (involving 50 organisations across NI), are currently operational under the 2nd Call of the NI ESF Programme 2014-2020. The 66 projects are broken down into the following four categories – unemployment and economic inactive (22), NEET (18), Disability (24) and Community Family Programme (5). <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/66-european-social-fund-call-2-projects-by-constituency-and-council-area>

<sup>5</sup> An Impact Evaluation of the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme, 2014 -2020, Department for Economy, December 2020 [Impact evaluation of the NI ESF Programme 2014-20 \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> Chief Inspector’s Report E2016- 2018, Education and Training Inspectorate



model across Europe in addressing many aspects of social exclusion and economic inactivity. External evaluation and review of the programme has routinely evidenced tangible benefits for both individual participants, the wider community, and the economy<sup>7</sup>.

Those individuals and communities ESF projects have typically supported are among the most socially excluded in NI. They face significant personal, societal, and financial barriers when trying to access employment or learning; these challenges only amplified by the continued impacts of the pandemic and growing economic uncertainty. This includes **young people, particularly those that are not in education, employment, or training; the long-term unemployed; people with disabilities and health conditions; people facing multiple complex barriers to employment, those with convictions and families. To date ESF has been the primary and consistent source of funding for these projects.**

In the context of an exceptionally challenging 'post Covid-19' labour market, there are likely to be further complex societal and employability challenges emerging and ESF provision has routinely demonstrated its capacity to adapt and respond to emerging need, as highlighted throughout the pandemic. An independent evaluation of the ESF programme by Grant Thornton<sup>8</sup> found that ESF projects not only demonstrated excellent value for money but noted key strengths as being flexibility of approach; investment in relationship building; and the provision of tailored, demand driven supports. This includes *'the delivery of 'added value' through a 'wrap around' support approach including intensive mental health and wellbeing supports to cohorts of unemployed people who are particularly distant from the labour market and who have complex needs.'*

#### 4.Current Context

Following the UK's decision to leave the European Union (EU) in 2019, the UK Government committed to keeping in place current ESF arrangements until EU funding came to an end and to create an appropriate 'successor' fund<sup>9</sup>

Despite this, neither the ESF Programme's beneficiaries nor our organisations as providers have been offered any security or assurances on either the immediate or longer-term future of this provision.

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<sup>7</sup> Strategic Investment Board Landscape Presentation Paper for Strategic Insight Lab, Feb 2021

<sup>8</sup> An Impact Evaluation of the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme, 2014 -2020, Department for Economy, December 2020 [Impact evaluation of the NI ESF Programme 2014-20 \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](https://economy-ni.gov.uk/impact-evaluation-of-the-ni-esf-programme-2014-20)

<sup>9</sup> Services in NI are currently being delivered as part of the current ESF funding round for 2018-2022, until March 2022. The UK government stated that in the case of a 'no-deal' departure from the EU, projects will continue to be funded until the end of the current cycle.



Mainstream provision does not meet the needs of those individuals currently supported by ESF funded projects; therefore, the loss of ESF funding and the need to replace it with, as a minimum, the same level of resourcing, is a critical issue.<sup>10</sup> This is particularly important to ensure equity of access to skills development and training and employment opportunities for those most removed from the labour market and excluded from meaningful participation in society.

At present however the future of this vital provision remains more uncertain than ever and as a result there is a need for urgent action to ensure that future delivery is prioritised and protected.

### *ESF Call 3*

In an earlier briefing produced by the ESF User Group in 2020<sup>11</sup> we highlighted the urgent need for a ‘bridging or transition’ period to protect the continued delivery of ESF provision, whilst both domestic and UK Government policy was being further developed, and associated funding secured.

We welcomed the continued efforts and commitments made by the Department for Economy (DfE) as the managing authority for ESF to explore all options regarding, including the announcement of the *ESF Succession Project* in partnership with DfC and in securing a planned one-year extension to the current ESF programme via EU funds to be known as [ESF Call 3](#).

However, decision making by DfE in June 2021 not to continue with the ESF Succession Project due to funding uncertainty and their recent confirmation that they may be unable to meet all Match Funding requirements under ESF Call 3 has left ESF providers in a precarious and uncertain financial position.

Whilst we appreciate the continued efforts of DfE to advocate for appropriate funding for ESF type provision, we are acutely aware they do so in the face of competing internal and cross departmental budgetary pressures and demands. With less than 6 months remaining until the current programme comes to an end and successful Call 3 projects set to come on board in April 2022, the match funding position remains unclear, with a risk that over £20 million in EU Funds may not be able to be drawn down and therefore lost to NI due to this funding gap.

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<sup>10</sup> [ESF Users Briefing on Future Replacement of ESF Funding Post-Brexit | NICVA](#)

<sup>11</sup> [ESF Users Briefing on Future Replacement of ESF Funding Post-Brexit | NICVA](#)

As a recent Strategic Investment Board<sup>12</sup> report commissioned by DfE concluded, any break in ESF provision would be highly undesirable. This report highlighted that such a break would greatly impact people who are deeply disadvantaged socially and economically and who at present do not have access to any suitable alternative provision. The report suggested that any break in provision would lead to unmet need and a 'cliff edge' in terms of access to suitable support at a time of unprecedented social and economic challenge and therefore must be avoided. The report further highlighted that a break or significant delays in securing delivery/provision would also likely mean the loss of providers; their staff and the valuable partnerships, infrastructure and expertise built up via delivery of the ESF programme. The report anticipated that it would be both highly complex and costly to develop this capacity to deliver, from scratch, after or as result of any break in provision.

### *The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)*

There remains significant uncertainty as to whether the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#) (UKSPF), proposed as a successor fund for EU funded projects, will be in any way adequate to address the needs of those previously provided for under the ESF programme, with all policy insight and intelligence to date suggesting that this is unlikely to be the case.

Whilst many practical details of the fund remain unknown, it is clear that the design and operation of the UKSPF has critical implications for how current ESF funded programmes might be funded in both the immediate and longer-term future. Given this, we have fully supported previous recommendations<sup>13</sup> that devolved administrations and their partners should hold responsibility for the detailed design and delivery of relevant parts of the fund, with powers to allocate funding through the UKSPF in Northern Ireland fully devolved to the Northern Ireland administration, in line with its responsibilities for social inclusion and economic development.

It appears however that the UK Government aim to retain responsibility for the design and delivery of this fund, centrally, with the role played by the NI Executive to date<sup>14</sup> in informing its priorities and/or plans for its implementation appearing to remain extremely limited at best. This is despite the fact that the fund will spend money on matters that lie primarily within areas of devolved responsibility for the NI Government such as transport, skills, and economic development.

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<sup>12</sup> Strategic Investment Board Landscape Presentation Paper for Strategic Insight Lab, Feb 2021

<sup>13</sup> [All-Party Parliamentary Group \(APPG\) on Post-Brexit Funding for Nations, Regions and Local Areas](#)

<sup>14</sup> [The UK Shared Prosperity Fund \(parliament.uk\)](#)

In addition, the timeframe within which UKSPF funds might realistically become available ‘on the ground’ remains a concern, given the pace at which its predecessor the [UK Community Renewal Fund](#) is being delivered and the significant delays regarding decision making and allocation of funding etc.

Suggestions that providers might come together to make a collective match funding bid to the proposed UKSPF, for a period of one year, to address immediate funding gaps regarding ESF Call 3, therefore appear wholly unrealistic, given the pace at which the UKSPF is being developed. Even if feasible, this would require significant intervention and leadership by NI government departments given the timescales and complexities involved.

In addition, the absence of detailed information about the UKSPF and the policy vacuum in which the programme and its future priorities are being developed mean that the practicalities of providers securing longer term or multiyear funding via the UKSPF after ESF monies come to an end are likely to remain complex, fraught with uncertainty and significant practical challenges.

Without the appropriate involvement and direction of NI Government in its planning and implementation, there is a very real concern that UKSPF resources may be misdirected and opportunities to help secure appropriate longer-term resourcing for ESF provision via this fund missed or underutilised.

This concern is reinforced by the October 2021 budget announcement that total UKSPF allocations will be £400m in 2022-23, £700m in 2023-24 and £1.5bn in 2024-25 – i.e. only building up to the £1.5 billion shortfall from lost EU receipts in 3 years’ time. There is also deep concern as to whether Northern Ireland’s allocation from this fund will be based on need, i.e. will **at least** the existing levels of ESF funding for Northern Ireland projects be maintained under UKSPF, upholding the UK Governments commitment that Northern Ireland will ‘*not be a penny worse off*’ as a result of Brexit.

Questions also remain as to how the UKSPF will operate in the specific context of Northern Ireland in order to comply with the statutory duty to promote good community relations and equal opportunities.

### *Domestic Policy Development*

At present there is no clarity on how future NI government programmes will meet the social and labour market inclusion needs met for decades by ESF when EU funding runs out.

We believe that the provision of supports to those who are socially excluded and are most marginalised from the labour market is a major area of public policy responsibility for Northern Ireland government that deserves to be led by strategy rather than a funding stream.

It is an issue which transcends Departmental boundaries and is interlinked with other issues at the heart of creating a better society in NI such as, among others, underachievement in education and tackling poverty.

As the recent SIB<sup>15</sup> report notes the interventions provided via ESF align directly with the Northern Ireland social and economic policy agenda, as evidenced by references in documents such as the draft Programme for Government (PfG), New Decade, New Approach<sup>16</sup> and a range of policy documents produced by the DfC, DfE, DoH, TEO and other government Departments and agencies. These include but are not limited to the development and delivery of : the *DfE Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland: Skills for a 10x Economy*; *DfE Industrial Strategy 2030*; the Executive Offices 'Building Forward: Consolidated Covid-19 Recovery Plan', *DfC Building Inclusive Communities, Strategy 2020-25*, the Department of Health's *Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together Strategy*, *DfC's Social Inclusive Labour Market Partnerships* programme and the delivery of local *Councils Community Planning Partnerships and Plans*. There is a clear policy link between the needs met via ESF provision and the principles and objectives of the PfG Outcomes 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 & 12 either directly or indirectly<sup>17</sup>.

Despite ESF provision delivering across a range of key government priorities, we remain uncertain whether domestic policy and strategy, is moving at a pace or in a direction that will ensure that this strategically relevant and much needed provision is adequately profiled and resourced for within same.

With increasingly limited resources likely to be available across all Government departments and agencies we are concerned that without adequate profiling and recognition, ESF type provision may receive less priority and risk not being funded or funded adequately to address need once EU funds have ended, resulting in a further cliff edge of support and unmet need.

Current ESF funds also provide much wider health benefits to the most vulnerable, such as those with mental health issues, intellectual disabilities, and autism spectrum disorders (ASD

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<sup>15</sup> Strategic Investment Board Landscape Presentation Paper for Strategic Insight Lab, Feb 2021

<sup>16</sup> [A New Decade A New Approach](#)

<sup>17</sup> [TEO Draft PfG and Outcome Delivery Plan](#)

and who it is well evidenced have suffered the most throughout the Covid pandemic <sup>18</sup>. For many years over 20 ESF providers have been part of well-established referral routes for these thousands of vulnerable people and when ESF funding ends there is currently no plan to make provision for this support.

## 5. What Needs to Happen

**Action is clearly needed to ensure both the immediate and longer-term future of ESF type provision.**

*There are clear steps that must be taken by both UK and Northern Ireland Governments to:*

- 1) Meet the match funding gap necessary to secure EU funds available under ESF Call 3
- 2) Ensure that continued and adequate resourcing for ESF-type activities is made available through both domestic NI Government Departments and/or delivery of the UKSPF.

*These are:*

### **1. Match Funding Position/ESF Call 3**

**Urgent clarity is needed regarding the match funding arrangements for those projects to be delivered through ESF Call 3**, with assurances that there will be no funding gap between the current ESF funding round and the distribution of any new funding.

- **The Department for Economy (DfE)**, as the managing authority for EU Funds, alongside **the Department for Communities (DfC) and other key government departments and agencies must urgently work with providers to ensure adequate financial arrangements are in place** and to avoid any immediate loss or disruption of provision.
- **The NI Executive, led by the Department of Finance** must have oversight of the key issues regarding and take timely and appropriate action to ensure that available EU monies are not lost as a result of adequate Match funding not being secured.

### **2. NI domestic policy and strategy**

- Whilst we remain disappointed with the decision not to proceed with the DfE's ESF Succession project, in the absence of this, **NI domestic policy and strategy must**

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<sup>18</sup> European Human Rights Report, Issue 5, Impact of COVID-19 on persons with disabilities (2021) [Human Right Centre - Università di Padova | Events and Updates :: European Disability Forum: Human Rights 2020 Report EDF. The impact of Covid-19 on people with disabilities \(unipd-centrodirittiumani.it\)](#)

**adequately mainstream, prioritise and address the needs of those previously provided for under the ESF programme.** This is vital to secure longer term funding and to ensure there is no significant loss or reduction in ESF type provision resulting in unmet need. NI government departments, with responsibility for those whose needs were previously met under ESF funded programmes, must ensure that current strategies and those under development maintain and deliver interventions that reflect the link between inclusion, health, wellbeing, and employability, as well as other interlinking barriers.

- **The NI Executive and local Government Departments must ensure the full involvement and participation of the voluntary and community sector and those they support, in the design of future domestic programmes and in decision making regarding priorities for funding** to ensure need is adequately prioritised and reflected in programming.

### ***3. Implementation and Delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)***

**Urgent clarity is needed as to whether the UKSPF will be a viable ‘successor’ programme to ESF**, including the level of funding and timeframe in which this is realistically to be made available. In addition, **increased involvement of the NI Government is required in the Fund’s practical design, management, and delivery, including decision making**, to ensure spend is most appropriately targeted and help avoid duplication etc

- **Clear criteria must be established for how spending under the UKSPF will be allocated in NI**, based on a transparent methodology that adequately assesses and reflects local need.
- **Reassurances must be provided to the NI Government regarding the level of funding to be made available in NI and the timescale over which funding will be guaranteed**, ensuring this reflects the commitment to ‘not a penny less’.
- There is a need for **clarity on how the UKSPF will operate in the specific context of Northern Ireland in order to comply with the statutory duty to promote good community relations and equal opportunities.**
- We maintain our position that **powers to manage and allocate funding through the UKSPF in Northern Ireland should be fully devolved to the Northern Ireland administration**, in line with its responsibilities for social inclusion and economic development. The Northern Ireland Executive has extensive experience of administering EU structural funds in a way that supports community relations.

- In the absence of this, **all efforts must be made by both UK and NI Government to ensure that there is significant practical involvement of the NI administration in the preparation, implementation, and management of the UKSPF funds**, including determining funding priorities.
- **NI Government should exert all influence in making the case to the UK government as to how they can contribute significant capacity and experience to a more partnership model/approach to local delivery of the UKSPF** (for eg, via a match funding approach).<sup>19</sup>
- **The UK Government must urgently engage with all relevant NI stakeholders, including the full involvement of relevant community and voluntary sector partners, to ensure the UKSPF is fit for purpose in terms of its priorities and its plans for implementation and delivery.**

**In closing we are most keen to meet with both UK and NI Government representatives and officials to discuss our concerns and key asks in more detail. *To request a meeting or more information please get in touch via the contact details below.***

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION:**

We are happy to provide further supporting information, including Case Study examples upon request.

For more background and supporting information please also read our earlier Briefing document produced in 2020:

[ESF Users Briefing on Future Replacement of ESF Funding Post-Brexit | NICVA](#)

***To request more information or to arrange a meeting please contact NICVA via:***

*Geoff Nuttall, Head of Policy and Public Affairs, NICVA*

**Tel** 07785 278928 **Email:** [geoff.nuttall@nicva.org](mailto:geoff.nuttall@nicva.org)

<sup>19</sup> [shared-prosperity-fund.pdf \(instituteofgovernment.org.uk\)](#)

## ANNEX 1

### **The following organisations are current members of the ESF Users Group:**

1. Network Personnel
2. Training for Women Network (TWN)
3. Include Youth
4. RNIB
5. Springboard Opportunities Ltd
6. The Workspace Group
7. Access Counselling NI
8. Women's Resource & Development Agency
9. Disability Action
10. Start 360
11. Upper Springfield Development Trust
12. Action Mental Health
13. Shankill Women's Centre
14. Extern
15. Triaxtaskforce
16. Triangle Housing Association
17. RNID
18. Youth Action NI
19. USEL
20. Clanrye Group
21. Derry Youth & Community Workshop
22. NIUSE
23. Cedar Foundation
24. The Appleby Trust
25. The Ashton Centre
26. Tyrone Donegal Partnership
27. Compass Advocacy Network Ltd
28. Customized Training
29. The Orchardville Society
30. The Princes Trust
31. Access Employment Ltd
32. Mencap
33. Womens TEC
34. The Now Group
35. The Women's Centre Derry
36. Action Deaf Youth
37. First Steps Womens' Centre
38. NIACRO
39. Skills North West
40. Stepping Stones NI
41. The Conservation Volunteers
42. Women in Business
43. Cedar Foundation
44. Bryson Charitable Group
45. Specialisterne Northern Ireland
46. The Bytes Project
47. GEMS NI
48. Access Centre NI





22 December 2022

Strategic Rail Review  
c/o Arup, Bedford House  
16-22 Bedford St  
Belfast  
BT2 7FD

**Ref: Consultation on the All Island Strategic Rail Review**

To whom it may concern:

Mid Ulster District Council would like to take this opportunity to put forward its views and opinion in relation to the proposals set out in the Consultation on the All Island Strategic Rail Review.

**Introduction**

Mid Ulster Council welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the consultation on the All Island Strategic Rail Review. The Council area covers a geographical area that would benefit significantly from a redeveloped and upgraded rail network on the island of Ireland.

Feedback on each of the 6 Goals and Ambitions detailed in the consultation review document are set out in turn:

**Goal 1: Contribute to Decarbonisation**

- **To reduce the carbon emissions associated with rail's construction, operation, and maintenance**
- **To reduce the carbon emissions from motor vehicle travel**

As a result of the lack of accessible public transport approximately 85% of households in Mid Ulster own a private vehicle, with this dependency expected to continue in the future. Accordingly, Travel Survey NI 2014-16 notes that 91% of rural workers travel to work by car/van. Unfortunately, residents cannot rely on a poor public transport network which exists and has been reduced further in recent years. For Mid Ulster residents the private vehicle is the only viable option.

Therefore, while the Council recognises that investment in an improved rail infrastructure could contribute to decarbonisation and reduce carbon emissions from motor vehicle travel, this will only be achieved across the Mid Ulster Council area with the restoration of connections that the former rail network afforded. This would improve connectivity to the two major cities in Northern Ireland and create an alternative to private vehicle usage to Derry City Airport, Belfast International Airport and Belfast City Airports located in Northern Ireland.

## **Goal 2: Improve All Island Connectivity between Major Cities**

- **To provide an attractive public transport choice for travel between the seven major cities of Belfast, Cork, Derry/ Londonderry, Dublin, Galway, Limerick and Waterford**

The Council does support the proposal to provide an attractive public transport choice for travel between the seven major cities of Belfast, Cork, Derry/Londonderry, Dublin, Galway, Limerick and Waterford. However outside of these cities, regional imbalances also have to be addressed and this can be achieved through levelling up. To achieve this it is essential in the first instance to install the basic infrastructure systems that boost and underpin the structure of our economy and take advantage of our distinctive positioning along the north/south and east/west border corridors. In the absence of redressing the fundamental economic problem (infrastructure gap), increasing productivity and achieving virtuous economic effects will only remain a distant possibility.

## **Goal 3: Enhance Regional and Rural Accessibility**

- **To give people in rural and regional areas better access to economic opportunities, health, education, and civic services.**
- **To improve inter-regional accessibility**

The Council is supportive of the overall strategic goal of giving people in rural and regional areas better access to economic opportunities, health, education, and civic services.

Mid Ulster District Council is a predominately rural district and is also the fastest growing Council area in Northern Ireland (its population is expected to grow to 165,000 by 2030). The area is within a 30 minute reach of Belfast (Dublin in 2 hours), and shares a land border with the Republic of Ireland providing access to 450,000 people within a 50km radius.

Mid Ulster is however a geographically dispersed population with a quarter of citizens living in the main towns, a third living in local towns and 40% of our homes located in the countryside. The area currently suffers from a lack of rural accessibility and would greatly benefit from investment in its overall infrastructure make up. Therefore, specific consideration needs to be given as to how rural districts are not left behind due to not having access to a rail network.

As such, consideration needs to be given as to how systems such as light rail can be introduced to the West of Northern Ireland, where there is a massive gap in the rail network and this presents a clear disadvantage in the context of economic growth.

Unless significant investment is provided for rural areas then the gap between access to services such as economic opportunities, health, education, and civic services will widen further between rural and urban Districts.

#### **Goal 4: Encourage Sustainable Mobility**

- **To help manage demand through compact growth and better integration of public transport with land use.**
- **To enhance the integration of rail with other transport modes.**
- **To reduce reliance on private passenger vehicles**

Mid Ulster District Council supports these goals with the overall aim of encouraging sustainable mobility. However, in relation to a reliance on private passenger vehicles and the enhancement and the integration of rail, the population of Mid Ulster District Council area is heavily reliant on private passenger vehicles both for work and leisure purposes. For anyone wanting to travel to the District by any other method than by bus, private passenger vehicles are the only option. The scale of this private car usage can be demonstrated by highlighting that the District is most accessible to the main East/West and North/South motorway routes and there are approximately 700,000 people who reside within a 1 hour drive of the District. Therefore, unless there is a reintroduction of a form of rail infrastructure to the 'west', it is likely that the heavy reliance on private passenger vehicles for all business and recreational purposes will remain and possibly increase in comparison to other area who have access to a rail network service.

#### **Goal 5: Foster Economic Activity**

- **To contribute to balanced economic growth between urban and regional areas.**
- **To support the efficient movement of goods to and from economic centres and international gateways.**
- **To support the efficient movement of people between economic centres, and to and from economic centres and international gateways.**

Mid Ulster District Council is of the opinion that expansion of the rail network to include the district as a gateway to the 'west' and as a cross border link could help to fulfil all the 3 actions associated with this goal and its associated aims.

In order to address regional imbalances and achieve levelling up of Northern Ireland there needs to be a focus on rail investment west of the Bann. A commitment to delivering modern and sustainable economic infrastructure and "levelling-up" is

essential particularly due to the historical underinvestment in Mid Ulster's basic enabling infrastructure. To achieve the aspiration of inclusive, balanced regional growth, rural communities must have greater access to services and an equal opportunity to participate in the economy. Moreover, investment in rail infrastructure West of the region would create opportunities to increase the use of the network for freight which is essential to supporting economic recovery and long term sustainable growth. Rail freight also delivers environmental benefits by reducing congestion and carbon emissions.

Furthermore, research clearly displays that tourists favour using railways and the Council feels that the lack of rail infrastructure discourages tourists from visiting Mid Ulster.

It is important to point out that Mid Ulster district is recognised as one of the most entrepreneurial and enterprising rural regions in Northern Ireland. Its economy is private sector driven, boasting the largest business base outside Belfast with over 9,000 VAT registered businesses. The region has higher productivity per head of population compared to the Northern Ireland average and a GVA (Gross Value Added) of £3.24bn (producing 7.7% of the Northern Irish economic output).

The Council area has strengths in key sectors, including Manufacturing & Engineering; Food and Agri Food; Construction; Retail, IT and Hospitality. Our businesses are the most export-intensive, accounting for 12% of Northern Ireland's exports. Mid Ulster businesses embrace innovation, and the region has the largest uptake of Invest NI's Innovation Accreditation Awards outside of the Belfast region.

Mid Ulster is rightly recognised as the centre of manufacturing and engineering in Northern Ireland, where it accounts for 21% of the local economy (providing nearly 11,000 jobs), compared to 9% in Northern Ireland. The sector is estimated to deliver in the region of £1.67bn GVA contribution to the local economy and over £710m in local wages, directly and indirectly. This world class cluster is of profound importance to the area's economy, especially in key specialisms such as the manufacture of mining and quarrying machinery, production of general and special purpose machinery etc., which have linkages and supply chain associations with the construction and food and agri-food sectors. For instance, 40% of world's mobile crushing and screening equipment is made in the Mid Ulster area.

However, in order to fully capitalise on this entrepreneurial spirit and to achieve efficient movement of people between economic centres and international gateways, investment in physical infrastructure such as new road networks and rail to the 'west' with the aim of creating improved connectivity of cross border connections and greater access to sea and airports via a railway network must be priority. Without this investment it will be impossible to realise inclusive economic growth ambitions and achieve a regionally balanced economy.

## **Goal 6: Achieve Economic and Financial Feasibility**

- **Investment in rail that is financially feasible**

- **To access potential funding**
- **To ensure the benefit cost ratio of investment in the railway network is considered alongside meeting objectives**

While it is recognised that any rail strategy must be realistic and financially feasible the associated cost should not be solely classed as prohibitive if a cost benefit analysis also reflects the significant benefits to the environment as well as increased potential for investment and increased employment opportunities. However, Council do recommend that financial feasibility is based on being realistic on how much consumers are able and willing to pay for the proposed services. It is further recommended that areas such as Mid Ulster, who currently do not have access to rail services, are not disadvantaged in this process because without baseline figures the potential level of usage and demand is harder to quantify. In this instance the wider all island financial benefits should be taken into account such as the economic benefit of getting goods to market and encouraging the creation of new suppliers and supply changes as a result of improved and faster infrastructure for delivery.

The goals set out in this section also underpins details contained in the Regional Economic Strategy for the Mid-South West (MSW) region. This strategy contains a long-term ambition of considering a range of effective sustainable transport solutions to restore some of the connectivity that the former rail network provided. Effective transport solutions considered include light rail that could have the potential to restore some of the connectivity that previously existed in MSW region.

## **Conclusion**

While Mid Ulster District Council is broadly supportive of the goals and policy opportunities set out in this Strategic Rail Review it cannot be ignored that the closure of various rail routes in the 1950s from the western counties of Northern Ireland has left the District economically disadvantaged. The continued lack of rail infrastructure to facilitate travel for social, domestic and employment uses has negatively impacted upon those residing and travelling to the district.

To further compound this situation there has been a the lack of investment of the road infrastructure within the District meaning that Mid Ulster, on a variety of economic and social indicators, is more disadvantaged when compared to other areas of Northern Ireland. One stark outcome of this lack of investment is that Mid Ulster residents are furthest from Accident & Emergency provision and have some of the longest emergency ambulance response times. Good infrastructure networks are crucial to addressing this as well as the other social and economic inequalities that are caused by a lack of adequate infrastructure within the District.

The reintroduction of a rail network to the District has the potential to enhance further economic prosperity for the District Council area. Mid Ulster District Council area already performs very well in terms of the economic and manufacturing outputs. However this is against the backdrop of a largely rural district that is currently experiencing under-investment in its road network. To reintroduce a rail network to the area has the potential to unlock the potential of the District's entrepreneurial

prospects and secure sustained growth for the future and investment in the manufacturing and engineering industries prevalent in the area. Without this infrastructure investment it will continue to be a challenge for businesses in the region to get goods to market in a timely and financially viable fashion.

Report on	Paws for Thought Initiative
Date of Meeting	13 <sup>th</sup> January 2022
Reporting Officer	Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing
Contact Officer	Conor Breslin, Principal Environmental Health officer

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


<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report provide Members with information on the “Paws for Thought Initiative”.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	There has recently been a lot of publicity around the illegal smuggling of puppies from Northern Ireland to Scotland in particular and also England. In some cases, the puppies may have originated from the Republic of Ireland.
2.2	Much of the publicity has arisen from people purchasing dogs from unregistered breeders or dealers and the dogs subsequently becoming unwell requiring expensive veterinary treatment. There have been reports where a number of dogs have even died due to conditions like parvovirus as a result of not having received the required vaccinations. When this happens, the owners have been unable to contact those that sold them the pup.
2.3	The aim of the initiative “Paws for Thought Initiative” is to raise awareness and seek to prevent people purchasing expensive and sickly pups from unauthorised breeders and dealers who cannot be traced when the pup subsequently dies or takes unwell. Local Councils in association with the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) have produced a series of eight information posters that will be periodically released to the public over the next year highlighting the problem. These contain practical advice that should be considered before people purchase a pup. There is also a DAERA Guide providing advice for people buying and caring for pups and dogs.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	This initiative seeks to ensure that the potential buyers of dogs should be fully aware of what they need to consider when they purchase a pup. The aim is to ensure that all pups purchased have come from reputable breeders, and have received all the necessary veterinary treatment prior to being sold. .

3.2	There are a number of legitimate breeders based in the Mid Ulster District Council area. Their premises will continue to be inspected on a regular basis ensuring compliance with welfare standards. The Mid Ulster District Council Enforcement Officers will also continue to visit premises in the district identified as regularly transporting dogs through the Belfast Ports to help identify false information hauliers may be presenting to port authorities.
3.3	<p>The message which will be highlighted to the public through the “Paws for Thought Initiative” can be summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Do you really know where your dog is coming from? Can you be sure that the dog isn’t from an illegal breeder or been stolen?</li> <li>➤ If you decide to get a dog, consider rehoming an unwanted dog first.</li> <li>➤ If you decide to buy a puppy, make sure to buy it from a reputable /licensed breeder who has made sure the puppy has had a good start in life.</li> <li>➤ Once you have made the decision to buy a puppy, only buy one aged 8 weeks or more and make sure to see the puppy with its mother at its home.</li> <li>➤ Never buy a dog or a pup that is delivered to you.</li> <li>➤ Never purchase the pup at a car park or other public place.</li> <li>➤ Dogs must be microchipped at 8 weeks old, and dog owners are responsible for contacting the local council and licensing their dog.</li> <li>➤ Dog owners are responsible for keeping the dog under proper control, and for meeting the welfare needs of their dog.</li> </ul>
3.4	Members are asked to note the “Paws for Thought Initiative” and the relevant information provided to the public to make sure they make informed decisions and ensure that they purchase healthy, happy pups from reputable sources. In addition, Members should be re-assured that there is ongoing work routinely undertaken by Council Enforcement Officers in helping regulate reputable breeders in the Mid Ulster District, and to follow up on reports of unauthorised breeders in conjunction with DAERA and the PSNI.
3.5	The Mid Ulster District Council website has been updated to provide links to the relevant information and information will be released via the Council's social media platforms on an intermittent basis to continue to raise awareness of this issue.
3.6	Additionally, Members are also reminded of Mid Ulster District Council’s position within a province wide four-centre sub-regional model with DAERA.
3.7	Council’s have a statutory responsibility for the enforcement of the Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 2011 in relation to non-farmed animals that transferred to Councils on 2 <sup>nd</sup> April 2012. Since an agreement in November 2011 (an updated in 2015 following the merging of Councils), a regional collaborative ‘cluster’ approach to the delivery of the new Animal Welfare Council function was implemented.
3.8	It was agreed that Fermanagh and Omagh District Council would act as the Northern Ireland lead Council for the purposes of the Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 2011. As Regional lead Council, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council have a coordinating role with all Councils and is the agreed single point of contact with DEARA and the PSNI. Mid Ulster District Council are part of the Western region that is led by Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and also includes Derry and



	<p>Strabane District Council. This includes a budget allocation as set by DEARA and as regional lead they also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Manage the various requirements that are included in separate Memorandum of Understanding's with DAERA, PSNI and Councils and service level agreement with the appointed regional legal services</li> <li>➤ Managing the activities of the regional Strategic Project Board</li> <li>➤ Manage the Care &amp; Collection Service contract for the provision of care and transportation of animals as set out in a regional tender</li> <li>➤ Manage the Veterinary contract for veterinary support for Animal Welfare cases within the Western Region Councils</li> <li>➤ Manage enforcement action taken in Western Region Councils as per Council's enforcement policy and files are prepared to constituent Council leads with recommendations.</li> <li>➤ Manage regional Media enquiries as per Strategic Project Board Media Policy</li> <li>➤ Manage and organise various training programmes on a regional basis for all staff</li> <li>➤ Manage and implement the recommendations of several reviews of the service since its implementation in 2012 including the Ministerial cross Departmental review that concluded in February 2016, and Council reviews in 2013, 2015 and 2018</li> </ul>
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: N/A
	Human: Increased Enforcement Officer resource targeted at dog breeding establishments and those individuals regularly shipping dogs to the mainland. Can be derived within existing resources.
	Risk Management: Considered in line with relevant Council policies and procedures. There is no additional risks anticipated to Enforcement Officer Staff via this initiative.
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	To note the contents of this report.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix A: Paws for Thought Initiative Posters

6.2	Appendix B: Guidance for buying and caring for a puppy.
-----	---



## Getting a puppy? ..Paws for Thought!

- Adopt, don't shop.  
Consider rehoming  
first.



Help put a stop to illegal puppy farming!  
Search: #pawsforthought DAERA





## Getting a puppy? ..Paws for Thought!

- Do your homework,  
is the breeder legit?



Help put a stop to illegal puppy farming!  
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## Getting a puppy? ..Paws for Thought!

- Proper pups are microchipped and vaccinated. Is yours?



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## Getting a puppy? ..Paws for Thought!

- It's probably a scam if your pup is sold from the back of a van!



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## Getting a puppy? ..Paws for Thought!

- Proper pups look healthy and happy. Is yours?



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## Getting a puppy? ..Paws for Thought!

- Ask to see Mum!



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# Getting a puppy? ..Paws for Thought!

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Getting a puppy?  
..Paws for Thought!

Adopt, don't shop.  
Consider rehoming  
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Help put a stop to illegal puppy farming!  
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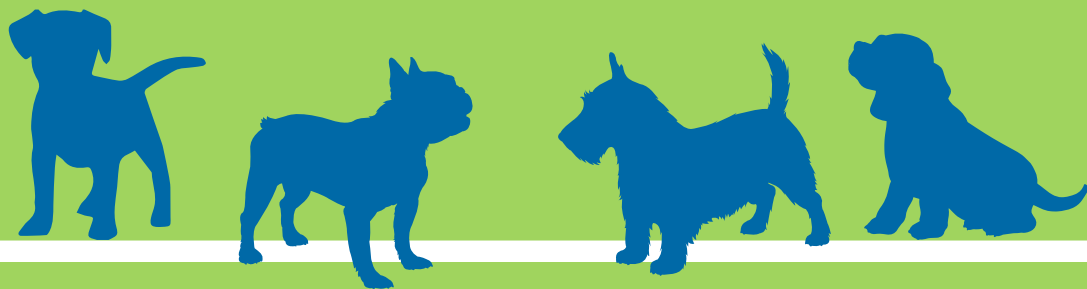
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# Buying and Caring for a Puppy



*A living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.*



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The purpose of this document is to act as a reference document on the subject matter of 'buying and caring for a puppy'.

The contents are laid out as follows:

- Introduction (including animal welfare in Northern Ireland);
- Part 1: decisions to make  
(from deciding whether to buy a puppy, to helping your new dog settle-in)  
(e.g. research tips, finding the right breed for you, understanding dog behaviour);
- Part 2: responsibilities of dog owners (e.g. licensing, control, and welfare); and
- Further information.



# Introduction

Deciding whether to get a puppy or dog is a big decision. It is advisable, before purchasing a puppy, to give it proper thought and to carry out some research.

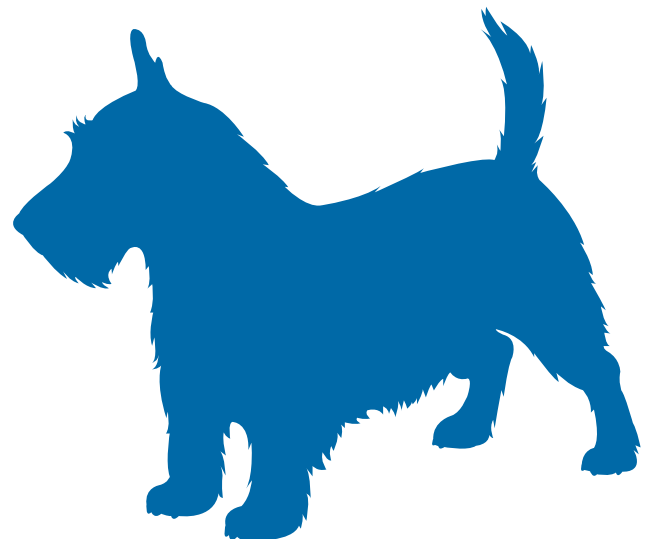
Anyone who decides to get a dog becomes responsible for that animal and will need to know about the legal requirements of owning a dog.

**Part 1** (Decisions to make) of this reference document (pages 4 to 8) sets out information on:

- the importance of research, before deciding to buy a puppy/dog;
- finding the right dog breed;
- deciding where to get your new puppy/dog;
- finding a healthy, happy dog;
- collecting your new dog and bringing it home;
- helping your new dog settle-in to its new home; and
- understanding dog behaviour.

**Part 2** (Responsibilities of dog owners) of this reference document (pages 9 to 11) sets out responsibilities that dog owners have, regarding:

- licensing the dog;
- keeping the dog under proper control; and
- meeting the welfare needs of the dog.



# Part 1 - Decisions to make

*(from deciding whether to buy a puppy, to helping your new dog settle-in)*

## The importance of research, before deciding to buy a puppy/dog

A responsible owner will first think long and hard about buying a puppy/dog. A rash decision may cause distress and suffering to the animal, and could cost the owner a lot more than anticipated. A puppy will soon become an adult dog that could live for about 13 years or longer.

It is advisable to do some research before buying a dog. Some things to consider are listed below.

### *Lifestyle*

- does your lifestyle, such as how you spend your days and evenings, mean that you can offer a dog the things it needs?
- can you make time to spend with your dog?

### *Environment*

- is your environment safe for a dog?
- do you have a safe and secure place for your dog to stay?
- will a dog enjoy staying in your environment?

### *Exercise, training, play*

- do you know how much exercise, training and play a growing puppy, or dog, needs?
- can you make sure a puppy/dog gets enough exercise, training, and play?

### *Doggy behaviour*

- do you know how different breeds behave?
- do you know how a puppy might behave when it grows into an adult?
- do you know if any breeds are really friendly?
- do you know if any breeds are very shy?
- do you know if any breeds are aggressive?
- do you know if any breeds won't like to be near other breeds, or other animals?
- do you know what a particular behaviour means? i.e. when a dog behaves in a certain way, are you confident that you know what it needs?



## Finding the right dog breed for you

There are hundreds of different breeds of dogs. Each breed has its own characteristics, and knowing about these will help choose the dog that is right for you. It is important to remember however, that all dogs are individuals and there is no guarantee that a particular dog will demonstrate characteristics specific to its breed.

### *Examples of dog breed characteristics to consider:*

- Adapts to living in a flat or apartment  
some breeds are quiet and calm, while others are high-energy.
- Affectionate with family  
some breeds are independent and aloof, while others bond closely with the family.
- Child-friendly  
some breeds are gentle with children, and cope well with lots of hugs. Other breeds are quite snappy and aren't child (or family) friendly.
- Dog-friendly  
some breeds may try to attack or dominate other breeds, while others prefer to play.
- Energy levels  
some breeds have lots of energy and need lots of exercise and mental stimulation. Other breeds will prefer to doze for most of the day.
- Exercise needs  
some breeds will be happy with a slow stroll, while others prefer vigorous exercise.
- Prey drive  
some breeds have an inborn desire to chase and sometimes kill other animals. Anything speeding by, for example cats, squirrels and even cars, can trigger that instinct.

### *Other characteristics to explore and consider:*

- amount of shedding/casting of its hair;
- drooling potential;
- easy to groom;
- easy to train;
- friendly towards strangers;
- general health;
- good for novice owners;
- intelligence;
- intensity;
- potential for mouthiness;
- potential for playfulness;
- potential for weight gain;
- sensitivity level;
- size;
- tendency to bark or howl;
- tolerates being alone;
- tolerates cold weather;
- tolerates hot weather; and
- wanderlust potential.

## Deciding where to get your new puppy/dog

Once you have decided that you are able to offer a dog the time, money and commitment that it needs, consideration should be given to where to get the dog.

### *Re-homing an unwanted puppy*

There are hundreds of stray and unwanted dogs, available for rehoming, kept in District Council dog pounds, and rehoming charities/organisations.

### *Buying a new puppy*

Puppies are available for sale from breeders or private sales. Some breeders/sellers advertise on the internet.

It is advisable to buy your puppy/dog from a responsible breeder, or seller. These people will have made sure that the puppy has had the best start in life. This is important, because how puppies have been bred and raised can have a lifelong effect.

Irresponsible breeders, or sellers, also offer puppies for sale. These people may not have looked after the puppies properly, and may only be interested in making as much money as possible. This could mean that you end up buying a puppy that is very sick, or a puppy that has been traumatised.

### *Finding a responsible breeder, or seller.*

The following advice will help make sure you are buying a puppy from a responsible breeder:

- Only buy a puppy aged at least 8 weeks old, and make sure you see it with its mother.
- Make sure the breeder/seller can give you an official pedigree detailing the ancestry of the puppy's father and mother.
- Make sure the breeder/seller can give you important details about the specific health requirements of your puppy, such as which vaccinations it has been given and which ones it is yet to have.
- Make sure the breeder/seller can give you as much information as possible about the puppy.
- If the puppy does not originate from the place of purchase, ask where it came from and try to obtain its previous history. Purchasing from an illegal breeder may mean that your new puppy was illegally imported into Northern Ireland.
- Make sure the breeder has prepared the puppy for the world around it. This is called 'socialisation' and could include activities like gently handling the puppy; introducing it to noise and varieties of human contact; and mixing it with other puppies.





## *Buying a puppy that was born outside of Northern Ireland, or Great Britain.*

If you are buying a puppy that was born outside of Northern Ireland, or Great Britain, it must:

- be at least 15 weeks old;
- have been microchipped;
- have been vaccinated against rabies;
- have been treated for tapeworm (unless the dog came directly from Finland, Republic of Ireland, Malta or Norway); and
- have a pet passport or a veterinary certificate confirming that the dog was vaccinated against rabies at the right age and according to the manufacturers data sheet, and that it has been treated for tapeworm.

## **Finding a healthy, happy dog**

When you have decided which breed is right for you, and decided where to get your dog, you will be ready to choose your particular dog.

To make sure that you choose a dog that is healthy and happy:

- eyes should be clear and bright, with no sign of dirt or redness;
- ears should be clean, with no smell;
- nose should be cold and slightly wet;
- mouth should be clean, with white teeth and pink gums;
- breathing should be quiet, not laboured;
- ribs should not be visible;
- fur should be shiny and soft, with no fleas;
- skin should be clean and dry, with no signs of soreness;
- bottom should be clean and dry; and
- legs should be strong and sturdy, with no limping or difficulty walking.

## **Collecting your new puppy/dog and bringing it home**

When you have chosen your new dog, you will need to take it home. For its journey to its new home, it will need a comfortable dog carrier and a cosy blanket. For a longer journey, it will also need water and food, and rest stops.

## Helping your new puppy/dog settle-in to its new home

When you have taken your new dog to its new home, make it as relaxed as possible:

- settle your new dog into its new environment;
- try to minimise exposure to loud noises;
- don't let children or adults handle the dog too much if it's nervous;
- if the dog shows signs of distress sit quietly and comfort it;
- ensure you follow advice the breeder/seller gives you regarding 'socialisation' – preparing the puppy for the world around them.

## Understanding dog behaviour

Your dog's body language can help you to understand how it is feeling.

### *Three dogs that could be happy*

- Dog has a relaxed body posture, smooth hair, mouth open and relaxed, ears in natural position, wagging tail, eyes normal shape.
- Dog is inviting play with bottom raised, smooth hair, high wagging tail, eyes normal shape, ears in natural position, may be barking excitedly.
- Dog's weight is distributed across all four paws, smooth hair, tail wagging, face is interested and alert, relaxed and mouth open.

### *Three dogs that could be worried*

- Dog is standing but body posture and head position is low. Tail is tucked under, ears are back and dog is yawning.
- Dog is lying down and avoiding eye contact or turning head away from you and lip licking, and ears are back.
- Dog is sitting with head lowered, ears are back, tail tucked away, not making eye contact, yawning, raising a front paw.

### *Three dogs that could be angry or very unhappy*

- Dog is standing with a stiffened body posture, weight forward, ears are up, hair raised, eyes looking at you, pupils dark & enlarged, tail is up and stiff, wrinkled nose.
- Dog is lying down cowering, ears flat, teeth showing, tail down between legs.
- Dog is standing with body down and weight towards the back, head is tilted upwards, mouth tight, lips drawn back, teeth exposed, eyes staring, ears back and down, snarling.



## Part 2 - Responsibilities of dog owners

In Northern Ireland, there are various pieces of legislation that make provision for animals in general, and dogs in particular. A responsible dog owner will need to know about these, in order to be aware of his rights and responsibilities, and in order to protect himself and the dog.

A person who owns a dog has certain responsibilities regarding:

- licensing the dog;
- keeping the dog under proper control; and
- meeting the welfare needs of the dog.

### *Licensing and microchipping*

The Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1983 makes provision for licensing of dogs. A person must have a licence to keep a dog. Licences are issued by District Councils. Before an owner applies for a licence, the dog must be microchipped. All dogs must be microchipped at eight weeks old.

### *Control*

This 1983 Order also makes provision for controlling a dog in public. For example, a responsible dog owner will not allow his dog to stray, and will also keep it under control where livestock is present.

### *Welfare*

The Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 requires a person who owns, or is responsible for a dog, even on a temporary basis, to care for it properly and take reasonable steps to ensure its welfare needs are met.

## What does the law say?

### *Licensing and microchipping*

It is against the law to own an unlicensed dog. There are some exceptions to this: two examples of dogs that do not need a licence are an assistance dog used by a disabled person; or a police dog.

A dog licence is valid for one year. A District Council will not issue a dog licence for a dog that is not microchipped.

A dog licence costs £12.50, and there are reduced fees for some dog owners. An example of a person who pays a reduced fee is a person aged over 65 years.

## *Control*

It is against the law to allow your dog to be unaccompanied and on land that you do not own, without permission of the person who owns that land.

It is against the law to allow your dog to be on any land where livestock are present and have a right to be there, unless your dog is under control.

It is against the law to allow your dog to attack or cause serious injury to a person, or to livestock. It is also against the law to allow your dog to behave in a way that makes a person worried that it might attack them.

## *Welfare*

It is against the law to:

- carry out an act that causes a dog to suffer unnecessarily; and
- fail to act and therefore cause a dog to suffer unnecessarily.

It is against the law to fail to ensure that the needs of an animal are met. These needs are:

- its need for a suitable environment;
- its need for a suitable diet;
- its need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns;
- any need it has to be housed with, or apart from, other animals; and
- its need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

## *Help with knowing how to care for animals*

DAERA has produced Codes of Practice to provide practical guidance on caring for particular animals. One of these is the “Dogs Code of Practice” and it provides information on how to meet the needs that are specific to dogs. The Code sets out minimum standards of care, and people are encouraged to exceed these minimum standards.

The Code can be accessed at the link listed below:

[www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/codes-practice-non-farmed-animals](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/codes-practice-non-farmed-animals)



## What happens if a person breaks the law?

### *Licensing*

Anyone who keeps a dog without a licence could have to pay a fine of up to £1,000.

### *Control*

Anyone who fails to keep proper control of his dog could have to pay a fine of up to £1,000. Failing to keep proper control of a dog includes things like allowing the dog to stray, or allowing the dog to worry livestock.

A District Council Dog Warden may seize a stray dog and take it to a Dog Pound. The dog will have to stay there until it has been re-claimed by its owner, or sold.

### *Welfare*

A District Council Animal Welfare Officer will investigate any complaint and then decide on action to take. Actions can include: giving advice on how to look after a dog; issuing warnings; and issuing legally binding Improvement Notices, for example, on how to take better care of your dog. In very serious cases, they can also take the dog into their possession.

The District Council can also decide to prosecute a person who has broken the law. This can lead to that person who broke the law being sentenced to:

- up to 12 months imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £20,000 (summary conviction for causing unnecessary suffering);
- up to 5 years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine (indictable conviction for causing unnecessary suffering); and
- up to 6 months imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £5,000 (summary conviction for failing to meet the needs of animals).



# Further information

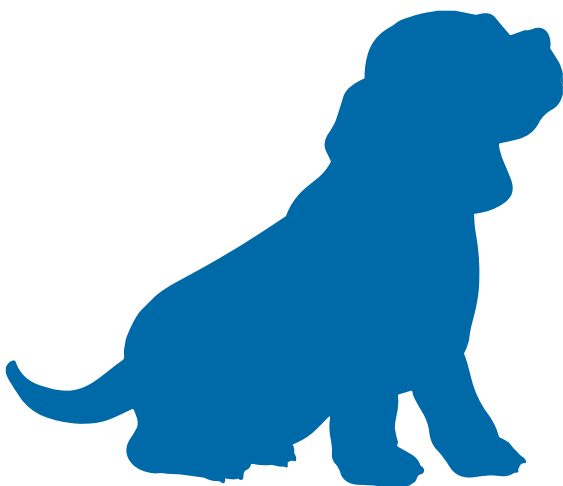
Other useful information is available at the following locations.

## The DAERA website

- Animal Welfare:  
[www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/animal-health-and-welfare/animal-welfare](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/animal-health-and-welfare/animal-welfare)
- Animal Welfare Quick Guide:  
[www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/daera/animal-welfare-enforcement-stat-quick-guide-final.PDF](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/daera/animal-welfare-enforcement-stat-quick-guide-final.PDF)
- Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs (minimum standards of care):  
[www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dard/dogs-code-of-practice.pdf](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dard/dogs-code-of-practice.pdf)

## NI Direct website

- Information on buying a dog, and responsible dog ownership:  
[www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/buying-dog-and-responsible-dog-ownership](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/buying-dog-and-responsible-dog-ownership)
- Animal Welfare:  
<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/animal-welfare>
- List of local Councils in Northern Ireland:  
(each Council will have further information on dogs)  
[www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/local-councils-in-northern-ireland](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/local-councils-in-northern-ireland)



ISBN: 978-1-84807-926-7



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<b>Report on</b>	1. Coalisland Town Centre Forum Minutes 25.10.21 2. Mid Ulster Enterprise Week 2021: Evaluation 3. Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) 4. Mid Ulster District Tourism Development Group
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	13 January 2022
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Assistant Director of Economy, Tourism & Strategic Programmes

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To provide Members with an update on key activities as detailed below.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	<p><b>Coalisland Town Centre Forum Minutes 25.10.21</b>  Coalisland Town Centre Forum was established in March 2019. It is a partnership of public, private, community and voluntary sector organisations working together to deliver a range of strategic economic actions to develop Coalisland town.</p>
2.2	<p><b>Mid Ulster Enterprise Week 2021: Evaluation</b>  To coincide with Global Entrepreneurship Week 2021, Mid Ulster's third Enterprise Week comprised 12 events: 1 in-person event (hosted by the Council and delivered by the NI Chamber of Commerce and Industry) and 11 virtual, due to on-going Covid uncertainties, which took place between Monday 8 – Thursday 11 November 2021. This year Council was supported by its delivery partner "plannd" in the promotion, set up and management of the webinars.</p>
2.3	<p><b>Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP)</b>  The inaugural meeting of Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) took place on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 2021, and was well attended by senior business leaders representing all of our key industry sectors across Mid Ulster, along with strong attendance from the Education Sector, Invest NI, DfC and supported by Elected Members. Council has agreed to participate in the development and delivery of a Local Labour Market Partnership (LMP) under the Employability NI Programme.</p>

	<p>The aim of LMPs is to improve employability outcomes and labour market conditions locally by working through coordinated, collaborative, multiagency partnerships.</p>
2.4	<p><b>Mid Ulster District Tourism Development Group</b></p> <p>The Tourism Development Group (TDG) was established to create a working forum between Council and private sector businesses. The TDG assists with policy development and supports the implementation of Council's Tourism Strategy and associated work in order to create economic growth, increase visitor numbers and create employment. The group meet on a bi-monthly basis and as per the agreed Terms of Reference all business will be reported to Council through the Development Committee.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b>Coalisland Town Centre Forum Minutes 25.10.21</b></p> <p>Minutes of the meeting of Coalisland Town Centre Forum held on the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2021 are attached at <b>Appendix 1</b>.</p>
3.2	<p><b>Mid Ulster Enterprise Week 2021: Evaluation</b></p> <p>Over 600 people participated in Mid Ulster's third Enterprise Week (8 -12 November 2021), attending 12 free and diverse events focusing on strategies for adapting to and maximising opportunities from new ways of working. It featured a broad and varied range of local and regional speakers and also well known representatives of local industry (Darragh Cullen, EDGE Innovate, James McCloy, Glenshane County Farm and Paula Wilson, Glenavon House Hotel and others) who took time out from their busy schedules to share insights of their business success.</p> <p>This year's theme was <i>'Innovation, Creation, Inspiration'</i>; some of the most popular webinars included, 'Lead With Your Head' with David Meade, 'It's All About You: Enhancing Your Personal Brand using Social Media' with Caroline O'Neill and Naomh McElhatton and 'Shine Online with Instagram and TikTok' with Niamh McAuley and Tierna Byrne.</p> <p>The Council was supported by partners including the MEGA Network, the NI Chamber of Commerce and Industry, GoForIt and local business leaders.</p> <p>In their feedback, participants used words like 'enjoyable', 'diverse', 'informative' and 'thought-provoking', demonstrating the week's impact.</p> <p>The Mid Ulster Enterprise Week 2021 Evaluation Report (<b>on Appendix 2</b>) details the week of events, all marketing activity and the range of feedback received.</p>
3.3	<p><b>Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP)</b></p> <p>Minutes of inaugural meeting of Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) held on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 2021 are attached on <b>Appendix 3</b>.</p>

3.4	<b>Mid Ulster District Tourism Development Group</b> The minutes of the Tourism Development Group meeting held on 23 September 2021 are enclosed on <b>Appendix 4</b> , and these were subsequently approved at the Tourism Development meeting held 25 November 2021.
	<b>Other Considerations</b>
4.1	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b> Financial: Human: Risk Management:
4.2	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b> Equality & Good Relations Implications: Rural Needs Implications:
5.0	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	It is recommended that Members; <b>Coalisland Town Centre Forum Minutes 25.10.21</b> <b>Note</b> minutes of Coalisland Town Centre Forum held on 25 October 2021.
5.2	<b>Mid Ulster Enterprise Week 2021: Evaluation</b> <b>Note</b> Mid Ulster Enterprise Week 2021 Evaluation Report
5.3	<b>Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP)</b> <b>Note</b> minutes of Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) held on 26 October 2021.
5.4	<b>Mid Ulster District Tourism Development Group</b> <b>Note</b> minutes of the Tourism Development Group Meeting held on 23 September 2021.
6.0	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	Appendix 1 – Minutes of Coalisland Town Centre Forum - 25.10.21 Appendix 2 – Mid Ulster Enterprise Week 2021 Evaluation Report Appendix 3 – Minutes of Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership - 26.10.21 Appendix 4 – Minutes of Tourism Development Group Meeting - 23.9.21



## **Appendix 1**

### **Minutes of Coalisland Town Centre Forum Meeting** **Monday 25 October 2021 at 12.30pm** **Microsoft Teams**

#### **Present**

Cllr Niamh Doris	Mid Ulster District Council (Chair)
Cllr J O'Neill	Mid Ulster District Council
Cllr Malachy Quinn	Mid Ulster District Council
Dermot McGirr	Translink
Francie Molloy MP	Coalisland Residents & Community Forum
Ursula Marshall	Mid Ulster Disability Forum
Sharon McGowan	Department for Communities

#### **In Attendance**

Johnny McNeill	Mid Ulster District Council
Colin McKenna	Mid Ulster District Council
Catherine Fox	Mid Ulster District Council
Oliver Donnelly	Mid Ulster District Council

	<b>DISCUSSION</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies</b> Cllr Dan Kerr                      Mid Ulster District Council Cllr Niall McAleer                Mid Ulster District Council Cllr Robert Colvin                Mid Ulster District Council  Adrian McCreesh                Mid Ulster District Council Mark Kelso                        Mid Ulster District Council Fiona McKeown                 Mid Ulster District Council Michael McGibbon               Mid Ulster District Council Raymond Lowry                  Mid Ulster District Council  Raymond O'Neill                Eden Blooms Brian O'Neill                      Coalisland Credit Union Aedamar McCrossan            PSNI Peter Waugh                      PSNI
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting - Monday 27 September 2021</b>  Proposed by U Marshall Seconded by F Molloy and agreed: -  The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 27 September 2021 were a true and accurate record of proceedings.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Matters Arising from Previous Meeting – Monday 27 September 2021</b>  F Molloy updated members around issue of tyres being left at Innishmore play park on Friday 15 September 2021 and he found it difficult to get a contact within

	<p>Council to get them lifted. O Donnelly who passed the information on to Councils Environmental Health staff who in turn was able to deal with the issue.</p> <p>Cllr O'Neill stated he also spoke with a youth coach within Clonoe O'Rahillys to try to steer young people away from Anti-Social Behaviour.</p> <p>Cllr Doris thanked O Donnelly for all the work carried out in Coalisland for the Halloween events.</p> <p><b>Action: O Donnelly to schedule meeting to review the Halloween events.</b></p>
4.	<p><b>Coalisland Project Updates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Coalisland Public Realm</b></li> </ul> <p>M Leavey updated that the contractor is currently going through the snagging list. The Road Safety Audit Stage 3 audit highlighted an issue on Main Street where it suggested the need for a new build out. This would result in a car parking space being lost outside O'Neill's Pharmacy. DfI have suggested that the build out is constructed. O Donnelly had been out with traders and residents who have said that they were not in favour of the crossing.</p> <p>F Molloy asked if there was a need for this crossing point, as there were already two crossing points on Main Street. M Leavey stated this had already been raised and that DfI are suggesting it goes in the location outside O'Neill's Pharmacy.</p> <p>Cllr Doris suggested that an onsite meeting is held with traders and residents to discuss it.</p> <p>M Leavey updated everyone that the parking legislation schedule needs updated and displayed the proposed parking enforcement map highlighting single and double yellow line layout. F Molloy raised issue of some people parking on Station Road and blocking residents who have parked outside the flats at Gortnaskea Place.</p> <p>Cllr Quinn mentioned a few issues that he has noticed, for example, at times it is hard to see traffic that is coming from behind Toals Bookmakers. There are also people parking on Platers Hill especially during Mass time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>PEACE IV Project</b></li> </ul> <p>J McNeill updated on the proposed PEACE IV project located in the area in front of Newell Stores and presented 2 options for projects in this area. Gold and Bronze Option. After discussion, it was agreed that the Gold scheme is the preferred option.</p> <p>F Molloy asked if there was a potential to gain access to Washingbay Road. He also stated that a check should be carried out on whether or not works can be carried out on the canal basin as when Newell Stores were building they has issues with the area being an heritage site.</p>

	<p>Cllr O'Neill stated that the Gold scheme looks good and that there should be an attempt to gain access to the Washingbay Road. Cllr Quinn also agreed that the Gold option is the preferred one and that any works in the area should not prevent any future plans to re-open the canal.</p> <p><b>Action: C Fox to issue details of project to U Marshall to circulate to Disability Forum for comment.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Town Centre Progress Report</b></li> </ul> <p>C Fox updated that an expression of interest has been sent to CRAIC Theatre to organize Christmas activities in the town in the absence of a formal Christmas event. The Mid Ulster Gift Card Scheme has been released with 44 businesses signing up to roll out the scheme so far. A launch was planned for the 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021 and all were asked to spread the message and encourage any businesses to sign up.</p> <p>An overview as also given of Mid Ulster Enterprise Week which runs from 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> November 2021 and advised all to book early for the Webinars.</p> <p>F Molloy asked for an update on Sandy Row as the Public Realm Scheme is now nearing an end. N Doris asked if this forum could write a letter to the Minister on Sandy Row project and to raise the issue on un-adopted roads in Newtownkelly.</p> <p>C Fox advised that this scheme could possibly fall under a phase 2 of the Public Realm Scheme in the next few years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Events</b></li> </ul> <p>The Halloween event will be delivered in the next few days through the local community groups and it is hoped they will be a huge success. C McKenna is to ask M Browne about the Halloween working group taking on other events in the town – Summer/ Easter events.</p> <p><b>Action: C McKenna to liaise with Head of Tourism in relation to working groups for other events in Coalisland.</b></p>
5.	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>C Fox requested that nominations be sought from local traders, as there is little representation from these groups on the forum.</p> <p><b>Meeting ended at 1.50pm</b></p>
6.	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>29<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at 5:30pm</p>

# Mid Ulster Enterprise Week

8 - 12 November 2021

**Mid Ulster Enterprise Week**  
8 - 12 November 2021

**Group Photo:** Five people (three men and two women) standing behind a banner that reads "Mid Ulster Enterprise Week" and "November 2021".

**Business Concepts Diagram:** A central image of a man thinking, surrounded by seven green circles containing the following concepts: Decision Making, Motivation & Engagement, Persuasion & Sales, Change Mindset & Resilience, Body Language Interpretation, Goals & Planning, and a central circle with a lightbulb icon.

**Cognitive Process Timeline:** A diagram showing the sequence of cognitive processes: Perception (180ms - 220ms) → Emotional appraisal (300ms - 420ms) → Cognitive appraisal (300ms - 420ms) → Choice (480ms - 640ms).

**Top Tips for Growing Your Brand:**

- Be genuine always remembering your brand values.
- Tell a story.
- Be consistent.
- It's not always about you.
- Educate your audience bringing value with your content.
- Collaborate with other businesses and influencers.
- Be ready to make mistakes.

**Other Images:** Several smaller photos of individuals, including a man in a suit, a woman in a blue top, and a man in a blue shirt.

**Logos and Text:** The logo for "DAVID MEADE" is visible. At the bottom right, the logo for "Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh Mid Ulster District Council" is displayed.



## 1.0 Background

To mark Global Entrepreneurship Week 2021, Mid Ulster District Council's third Enterprise Week took place from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> to Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

As a result of the success of the online Enterprise Week in 2020, Mid Ulster DC made the decision to keep Mid Ulster Enterprise Week virtual for 2021, incorporating only one in-person event. The week was launched by the in-person networking event and continued with ten online and interactive webinars.

Organised by Mid Ulster District Council, with support from partners including MEGA, Invest NI, Intertrade Ireland and local business leaders, the week's focus was on Innovation, Creation and Inspiration and bringing positivity back into the business world of Mid Ulster after the hardship of the previous years' Covid-19 restrictions.

The week's events focused on a wide range of subjects, including Leadership, Personal Branding, Emotional Intelligence, Negotiation, Digital Marketing, and more. The week concluded with the distribution of an invaluable digital booklet of business support and funding options available within Mid Ulster. The Council supported a further virtual event, aimed at inspiring potential entrepreneurs, as part of Global Entrepreneurship Week, organised by the Go For It Programme.

## 2.0 Marketing & Promotion (including Social Media)

Marketing and promotion were carried out across a range of formats. Enterprise Week 2021 was promoted in the press with a news release and launch picture, on billboards, adshells and newspaper adverts. There was also a radio advert commissioned and a dedicated page created on the Council's website: [www.midulstercouncil.org/enterpriseweek](http://www.midulstercouncil.org/enterpriseweek)

The week was launched on social media with an explainer video, followed by an A4 advertorial placed in 6 local newspapers, displaying the programme itself. As well as this, there was a week-long advert placed on Q Radio, with 32 slots commencing Monday 1<sup>st</sup> November.

Social media channels were continuously used in the run up to Enterprise Week 2021, featuring videos from speakers to promote their individual webinars. These were then shared on social media by some of the speakers themselves.

A digital e-booklet was created on PageTiger, featuring the speaker videos, webinar descriptions and links to the registration pages of each webinar, to enable a one stop shop for the week's programme and registration links.

The PageTiger document can be viewed here: <https://view.pagetiger.com/dpansjm/1>

Email marketing via Mail Chimp was sent to a database of contacts from the business directory mailing list and the week was promoted extensively on the Council's three social media channels: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram from 18 October to 19 November.

The results of the Mail Chimp were:

- 1100 emails sent out
- 431 opened
- 96 link clicks

Stats from Google analytics for the week show that there were 1,812 page views and 1057 unique page views. Referrals were as below:

- LinkedIn: 143
- Facebook: 117
- Twitter: 50

- Instagram: 47

- Total of **606** people attended the programme of events

- **High Social Media Engagement** (from 18 October - 19 November 2021):

o **Twitter** - 23 posts, 18,041 impressions (number of times a tweet has been delivered to twitter stream of users), 768 engagements (Number of users that interacted with post), and 2,714 video views

o **Mid Ulster Facebook** - 22 posts, 42,470 people reached, 1,389 people engaged, 14,430 video views. All posts were organic and non were promoted

o **Instagram** – 21 posts, 43,516 people reached, 179 people engaged, and 7,303 video views

- **Council Website Analytics** – 1,812 page views and 1,057 unique page views

- **Promotional PageTiger views:** 286

- **Support & Funding E-Brochure PageTiger views:** 88

The webinar recordings were uploaded to the Council's YouTube channel on Thursday 18 November, by 30 November, the 9 videos have a total of 211 views.

The events were also promoted via e-invitations to the Council's key business networks. A promotional video has been created to capture the highlights of Mid Ulster Enterprise Week 2021 in a visual format and is available to view here:

<https://www.facebook.com/MidUlsterDC/videos/>

If anyone wishes to view any of the webinars held during Mid Ulster Enterprise Week, these can be accessed at:

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzfkoqzAiZjV9wYNZbjAyY\\_TVKI4ziOf](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzfkoqzAiZjV9wYNZbjAyY_TVKI4ziOf)

## 4.0 Programme of Events

The target set at the beginning of the project was an average attendance of **40**.

This target was achieved successfully, with an average attendance across the webinars of **53**.

Event	Speaker(s)	Digital /In-person	Attendance	Views of Recording (up until 29/11/21)
Connect & Collaborate NI Chamber of Commerce & Industry: Regional Networking Series	Panel: <b>Enda Quinn</b> (SDC Trailers), <b>Darragh Cullen</b> (Edge Innovate) <b>Denis Finnegan</b> (Grofuse Digital)	In-person		N/A
Lead With Your Head	<b>David Meade</b> , International Speaker & TV Personality	Digital	78	N/A
#Goals – Shine Online with Instagram and TikTok	<b>Niamh McAuley</b> , PurpleDot <b>Tierna Byrne</b> , Marketing Consultant	Digital	59	23
Make Your Emotions Your Superpower	<b>Alan Lyons</b> , KinchLyons Business Psychologists	Digital	43	19
Light at the End of the Tunnel: Tourism & Hospitality	Host: <b>Jamie Delargy</b> , Journalist <b>Joanne Stuart</b> , NI Tourism Alliance <b>James McCloy</b> , Glenshane Country Farm <b>Paula Wilson</b> , Glenavon House Hotel	Digital	18	12
It's All About You: Enhancing Your Personal Brand using Social Media	<b>Caroline O'Neill</b> , Digg for Success <b>Naomh McElhatton</b> , Stimulai	Digital	78	14
MEGA: Improve Manufacturing Culture & Keep the Best Talent	Panel: <b>Brendan McGurgan</b> , MD Simple Scaling, <b>Patrick Hurst</b> MBE, Former MD Whale & <b>Tim Monroe</b> , Marketing Director at Smiley Monroe	Digital	91	22
Rebel Ideas: How to Succeed in a Virtual World	<b>Andrew Toogood</b> , Proclaim Consulting	Digital	28	18
Inspiring Innovators	Host: <b>John Campbell</b> , Journalist Q&A with <b>Darragh Cullen</b> , EDGE Innovate Ltd, <b>Sinead Welsh</b> , Informed Minds Training and Consultancy Ltd & <b>Brigid Derry</b> , Derry Bros Customs Clearance Ltd and Derry Bros Shipping Ltd	Digital	33	25
Win/Win: How to Negotiate in a Hybrid World	Camilla Long, Bespoke Communications	Digital	85	11
Re-creating the Magic of Retail in Mid Ulster	Mags McAlpin, Creating Retail Magic	Digital	15	17

## **5.0 Synopsis of Events**

A total of 11 events were offered by Council as part of Mid Ulster Enterprise Week 2021 under the theme of 'Innovation, Creation, Inspiration'. A wide range of relevant business topics were offered to ensure all sectors of industry received support to assist in operating within the current difficult economic environment. Specific webinars were held for the Retail, Tourism and Hospitality and the Manufacturing and Engineering sectors, alongside advice for leaders, digital marketing content for small businesses, personal branding and harnessing emotional intelligence.

Feedback from attendees was very positive, with comments praising the week's programme of webinar topics and speakers, as well as the consensus still being happy with the digital format rather than in-person.

## **6.0 Comments**

This year's Mid Ulster Enterprise Week programme was packed full of insightful and diverse presentations and launching the week with keynote speaker, David Meade, was a huge success. Featuring David in the programme created a lot of buzz in the run up to the week and he delivered an engaging and impactful session.

The programme featured a variety of speakers both local and regional, from a broad range of industries, with the majority being new speakers that had never featured in the programme, or similar programmes before. All speakers are very well-respected speakers and of a high standard, which has paved the way for future programmes to maintain this standard and variety.

The four-day programme, instead of five, worked well and this could be a suggestion going forward for future Enterprise Week programmes, given that numbers tend to tail off towards the end of the week – as is the way for most series of virtual events. Future programmes could also feature a larger mix of in-person and virtual events, and include a mid-week in-person conference.

Having the PageTiger document as a one stop shop for all programme details and registration links was a great digital feature for people to access, which could definitely be explored in future years as a more widespread part of Enterprise Week promotion.

The technical aspect of the week worked well and Zoom was a good choice of platform for the sessions, given its easy accessibility for the majority of people and the rarity of it being restricted by company firewalls.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

While Covid still impacted on moving the delivery of Enterprise Week to mainly virtual for a second year, Council decided to move the main focus of the week from the pandemic to other issues which businesses now have to consider in adapting to the new normal e.g. virtual working, communicating effectively in a new way, through new channels and motivating. The week aimed to deliver an upbeat message with a theme of positivity throughout, for entrepreneurs, start-ups and established businesses across the district. Having the networking event at the start of the week in-person was a great opportunity for attendees to feel a sense of normality again before the week's virtual events started. Starting

off the virtual events with a keynote as engaging and well-known as David Meade definitely raised the impact of Mid Ulster Enterprise Week 2021.

Feedback on the programme and the delivery of Enterprise Week 2021 has been positive across all events.

2022 has the potential for Enterprise Week to grow into a hybrid format, mixing more in person events alongside the virtual webinars. However, there is no question that the webinars have opened up Enterprise Week to a huge new audience and have benefited the programme greatly.

The highlights video of Enterprise Week 2021, which demonstrates the range of webinars that featured in the programme, can be viewed here -

<https://www.facebook.com/MidUlsterDC/videos/>

### Feedback Highlights from the Week

Event	Feedback
Lead With Your Head	<p>"Excellent event schedule."</p> <p>"It was perfect."</p> <p>"Timing of introducing topics was prefect and everyone got involved in the breakout room. I would definitely join for Enterprise Week 2022!"</p>
#Goals – Shine Online with Instagram and TikTok	<p>"Both speakers were very knowledgeable and gave lots of tips and information that would be very useful but proves how much more there is out there I need to learn"</p>
Make Your Emotions Your Superpower	<p>"Very easy to understand and listen to and take-aways for everyone regardless of the sector"</p> <p>"Alan is inspirational."</p> <p>"Absolutely loved the webinar and there are so many take always, for me as a manager I have a list of books to read and articles to look up, I had not considered the impact of emotional intelligence on our team and the importance of focusing on successes, the main take away for me was "Notice Progress" and I am going to focus our next team meeting on that"</p>
Light at the End of the Tunnel: Tourism & Hospitality	<p>"The positivity off the speakers was very heartening. The topics were also very relevant and interesting"</p> <p>"I really liked the format with the four screens...very sharp and well lit. very professional good questions and answers..."</p> <p>"This is great might take the week off next year to attend everything..."</p>
It's All About You: Enhancing Your Personal Brand using Social Media	<p>"I thought it was perfect"</p> <p>"It emphasised the importance for business of communicating consistently and on-brand"</p>
MEGA: Improve Manufacturing Culture & Keep the Best Talent	<p>"You've some great webinars this year. enjoying it, thanks"</p> <p>"Very impressed, started on time and was one hour, the panellists were knowledgeable and informative but succinct and direct which was appreciated."</p>
Re-creating the Magic of Retail in Mid Ulster	<p>"Creativity &amp; enthusiasm - lots of tips on how to take ideas and make them your own/relevant to your own business. I though Mags was absolutely fantastic - loved this webinar - thank you so very much!"</p>

## Newspaper Programme Ad

# Mid Ulster Enterprise Week

8-12 Nov 2021

Innovation, Creation, Inspiration





David Meade



Naomh McElhatton



Caroline O'Neill



James McCloy

### MON 8th November

#### Connect & Collaborate NI Chamber of Commerce & Industry: Regional Networking Series

10.30am (Refreshments 10am) - 12noon

Venue: The Hill of the O'Neill, Dungannon

Panel: Enda Quinn (SDC Trailers),  
Darragh Cullen (Edge Innovate),  
Denis Finnegan (Grafuse Digital)

Come along to the NI Chamber's in-person event for facilitated networking and hear a panel of local industry figures discuss their entrepreneurial journey. A great opportunity to expand your network and grow your business!

#### Lead with your Head

2.00pm - 2.40pm

David Meade, International Speaker & TV Personality

Let David Meade introduce you to the psychology of leadership! David will provide you with a practical toolkit to help make you a more effective leader. Empower and engage managers and leaders, improve your communication skills and increase team productivity.

#### #Goals - Shine Online with Instagram and TikTok

7.00pm - 8.00pm

Niamh McAuley, Purple Dot  
Tiarna Byrne, Marketing Consultant

This digital duo is not one to miss! Learn all things content creation for Instagram and TikTok, including demonstrations on creating videos that really stand out, the best apps to use and how to produce easy transitions to grab your audience's attention. Want to enhance your non-video posts too? Hear how to create the most engaging online content using simple design tool, Canva.

Apart from the Networking Event, all events will take place online. All events are free to attend. Register at:

[midulstercouncil.org/enterpriseweek](http://midulstercouncil.org/enterpriseweek)

\*All information is correct at time of publication. Please confirm details online when registering.

### TUES 9th November

#### Make Your Emotions Your Superpower

10.00am - 11.00am

Alan Lyons, KinchLyons Business Psychologists

It is more important than ever to foster resilience and emotional intelligence in the workplace. Hear how to harness the superpower that is Emotional Intelligence to manage your stress, the stress of employees, sustain energy and focus, as well as build positive relationships within your team. Learn the top tips on becoming more resilient, both in yourself and your business.

#### Light at the End of the Tunnel: Tourism & Hospitality

3.00pm - 4.00pm

Host: Jamie Delargy, Journalist  
Joanne Stuart, NI Tourism Alliance  
James McCloy, Glenshane Country Farm  
Paula Wilson, Glenavon House Hotel

Learn from local hospitality entrepreneurs on how they have survived, adapted and innovated once again to the 'new normal' now that they are able to reopen their doors to the public. We look at the changes that are here to stay and get a picture of what the future looks like post Covid.

### WED 10th November

#### It's All About You: Enhancing Your Personal Brand using Social Media

10.00am - 11.00am

Caroline O'Neill, Dig for Success  
Naomh McElhatton, Stimulai

You are an expert in your field, but do your customers know it? Building a personal brand on social media has amazing benefits for your business. It will showcase what you do, your values and your passions. Building core brand values and never stepping away from them boosts your brand visibility and reputation. The results? New customers, loyal customers and a more profitable business.

### WED 10th November

#### MEGA: Improve Manufacturing Culture & Keep the Best Talent

12.00pm - 1.00pm

Panel: Brendan McGurgan, MD Simple Scaling, Patrick Hurst MBE, Former MD Whale & Tim Monroe, Marketing Director at Smiley Monroe

Panel Discussion with Manufacturing/Engineering Leaders from Mid Ulster

Learn why company culture is your secret weapon for attracting and retaining top talent. We're joined by Tim Monroe, Brendan McGurgan & Patrick Hurst who will be discussing how you can build and leverage a winning culture. Learn how to grow culture to encourage continuous improvement and hear about how one of the companies was listed in the Sunday Times 'Best Company To Work For' Survey for 3 consecutive years.

#### An Inspirational Entrepreneurial Story!

1.00pm - 1.30pm

Host: Holly Hamilton, TV Presenter

Holly Hamilton interviews Aoife Doherty, founder of new business 'Sass & Halo' to find out what motivated her to start up, and how support from 'Go For It' helped turn her passion for fashion into a successful business. Attendees will have the chance to ask Aoife questions and seek advice on how they can turn their business ideas into reality.

#### Rebel Ideas: How to Succeed in a Virtual World

3.00pm - 4.00pm

Andrew Toogood, Proclaim Consulting

The world we operate in is volatile, complex and uncertain. Andrew will examine the power of diverse thinking. Understanding these differences in thinking, and how to harness them for better communication, enables teams to tackle problems in new ways and increase productivity. Learn innovative thinking, psychological strategy and really practical takeaways to become much more impactful as a business owner, manager or team member.

### THURS 11th November

#### Inspiring Innovators

10.00am - 11.00am

Host: John Campbell, BBC Journalist  
Q&A with Darragh Cullen, EDGE Innovate Ltd, Sinead Welsh, Informed Minds Training and Consultancy Ltd & Brigid Derry, Derry Bros Customs Clearance Ltd and Derry Bros Shipping Ltd

Hear from three inspiring leaders from different industries across the MSW region of Northern Ireland. This session will provide an insight into how their drive for innovation ensures their businesses remain agile, enabling them to stay ahead of the competition, even during the most recent challenging economic conditions.

#### Win/Win: How to Negotiate in a Hybrid World

2.00pm - 3.00pm

Camilla Long, Bespoke Communications

In this webinar, allow Camilla to help you to get what you need from every negotiation and difficult conversation. You'll learn how shifting your mindset can shift your results, how to influence outcomes with the power of listening as well as valuable strategies to get to a win-win, even when it looks impossible!

#### Re-creating the Magic of Retail in Mid Ulster

7.00pm - 8.00pm

Mags McAlpin, Creating Retail Magic

This webinar is especially suited to the Retail sector. Bring a little bit of Retail Magic to your business this Christmas! Our retail sector has been irrevocably changed so let's re-ignite our passion for creating the most magical customer experience possible. Register your place on this fast-paced webinar bursting with tips, inspiration and motivation to help you re-create the Magic of Retail in your business.

#### Friday 12th November

If you attend any of our webinars your name will automatically go forward into a prize draw with the opportunity to win some great prizes. The more events you attend, the more opportunity you have of winning a prize! Winners will be announced on Friday 12th November



Comhairle Ceantair  
**Lár Uladh**  
**Mid Ulster**  
District Council

## Appendix 3

### Minutes of Inaugural Meeting of Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership held on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2021 via Zoom

**Present:**

<b>Industry</b>	Damian Power, Chair Sinead McErlain, Bloc Blinds Elaine Willis, Linden Foods Julie McKeown, Henry Brothers Dermot Friel, Mid Ulster Tourism Development Group Jill Robb, Cicli Sport Colin Conway, Newell Stores
<b>MEGA</b>	Maria Curran, Project Director
<b>Education Sector</b>	Ciaran McManus, South West College Emma McKee, Northern Regional College Peter Simpson, CAFRE Brigid Heron, Area Learning Partnership (Magherafelt) Catherine McHugh, Area Learning Partnership (Dungannon & Cookstown)
<b>Public Sector</b>	Lorna Currie, Cookstown Jobs & Benefits Office Margaret Gallagher, Magherafelt Jobs & Benefits Office Frances Herron, Dungannon Jobs & Benefits Office Andrew Irwin, Department for Communities Niall Casey, Invest NI Colleen McCaughey, Department for the Economy Dawn Connolly, Southern Health & Social Care Trust Brian MacAuley, Mid Ulster Enterprise Partnership
<b>Elected Members</b>	Cllr Dominic Molloy, Mid Ulster District Council Cllr Catherine Elattar, Mid Ulster District Council Cllr Kim Ashton, Mid Ulster District Council Cllr Trevor Wilson, Mid Ulster District Council
<b>Trade Union</b>	Aaron Hoey, Mid Ulster District Council

**In Attendance:**

<b>Council Officers</b>	Adrian McCreesh, Chief Executive Marissa Canavan, Director of Organisational Development Fiona McKeown, Assistant Director of Economy, Tourism & Strategic Programmes Paul McCreedy, Funding & Investment Manager Celene O'Neill, Community Planning Officer Colleen Bell, Economic Development
<b>Consultancy</b>	Alan McKeown, Food for Thought Emma Nelson, Food for Thought

<b>Apologies:</b>	Ethna McNamee, Invest NI Regional Office Jill Cush, South West College Shane McKinney, CAFRE Martina Totten, Community Planning Co-ordinator
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	<b>DISCUSSION</b>
<b>1.</b>	<p><b>WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION</b>  <b>Adrian McCreesh, Chief Executive, Mid Ulster District Council</b></p> <p>A McCreesh welcomed everyone to the inaugural meeting of the Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) and went on to provide an overview of the programme, highlighting an opportunity to build upon the strong foundations laid by the industry driven Skills Forum to work collaboratively to develop and deliver a new locally focussed Mid Ulster Employability Action Plan (Action Plan).</p> <p>A McCreesh went on to update on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DFC have advised that Mid Ulster's Indicative Budget Allocation is £468,375 per annum;</li> <li>• Following a procurement process Council has appointed Alan McKeown (Food for Thought) to assist the LMP to develop the Action Plan;</li> <li>• The Action Plan will detail implementation structures and delivery mechanisms that will contribute towards improved employability outcomes and labour market conditions locally in Mid Ulster.</li> <li>• The Action Plan will clearly state the priorities, specific actions, targets, budgets, roles and responsibilities for partners and delivery bodies.</li> <li>• The LMP's input will shape and inform the construction the Action Plan and will identify and address the key challenges locally.</li> <li>• Once completed the Employability Action Plan will be submitted to the Department for Communities (DfC) for approval and funding.</li> </ul> <p>A McCreesh concluded by stating that the LMP will provide an opportunity to greatly impact Council's priorities for skills and employability, ensuring that an appropriate skills pipeline is available to local industry both now and in the future.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>EMPLOYABILITY NI AND LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIPS</b>  <b>Andrew Irwin, Department for Communities</b></p> <p>A Irwin shared a PowerPoint presentation, provided context around the establishment of the regional and local LMPs and talked through milestones, timeframes and budget. A Irwin described the working relationship between partners and members as an ecosystem of stakeholders, with DfC as a key partner and Council providing a secretarial function.</p> <p>With regards to timeframes, A Irwin indicated that an interim Action Plan should be established and approved by January 2022 with full LMP structures in place for 2022/23 onwards.</p> <p>B MacAuley asked if the figure of £468,375 was for the interim Action Plan or entire programme. A Irwin confirmed that the sum of £468,375 would be paid per annum.</p>

3.	<p><b>ESTABLISHING THE PARTNERSHIP</b></p> <p><b>3.1 Discuss and agree Terms of Reference</b></p> <p>The members reviewed and discussed the Terms of Reference (TOR).</p> <p>B MacAuley queried if “helping unemployed individuals to get back into work” was the sole purpose of the LMP noting that unemployment levels in Mid Ulster were not overly high. P McCreedy confirmed that it wasn’t exclusively aimed at unemployed and was much broader in terms of gaps and upskilling/reskilling the workforce. A Irwin added that it could be seen as a journey towards employment, using local knowledge to agree what’s best for the local area. It was agreed to amend the wording within the TOR to reflect this.</p> <p>Cllr K Ashton suggested that the meeting schedule be amended to a bi-monthly frequency to allow for substantive work to be completed between meetings, adding that if there were an urgent decision or report required, an emergency meeting could be convened with a one-item agenda. Cllr K Ashton also noted work commitments of members as another reason to consider.</p> <p>Cllr K Ashton agreed that the Chair/Vice Chair should be appointed from the private sector as they would have a better awareness of issues on the ground.</p> <p>All were in agreement that meetings should be every two months.</p> <p><b>3.2 Appointment of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson positions</b></p> <p>Cllr K Ashton proposed Damien Power as Chair and M Curran seconded the nomination.</p> <p>D Power accepted the post and gave a brief background of himself, highlighting that he had a long history of employment in the manufacturing and engineering industry with a long successful career at Terex.</p> <p>It was agreed to postpone nominating a Vice Chair, allowing the group time to reflect.</p> <p><b>3.3. Discuss and agree meeting dates and times</b></p> <p>As previously agreed, it was noted that meetings should be bi-monthly and aligned to Council reporting requirements.</p>
4.	<p><b>UPDATE ON MID ULSTER EMPLOYABILITY ACTION PLAN</b></p> <p><b>Alan McKeown, Director, Food for Thought</b></p> <p>A McKeown and E Nelson shared a PowerPoint presentation with the group.</p> <p>As an overview, relative to other Council areas, Mid Ulster was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2nd highest number of registered businesses: 9,220 – second only to Belfast.</li> <li>• 5th highest share of medium/large businesses.</li> <li>• 3rd highest employment rate - 75.3% of the working age population are employed.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3rd Lowest level of economically inactive residents – 22.4%.</li> <li>• Unemployment rate estimated at 2.3%.</li> <li>• Total employed people: 71,000</li> <li>• Total employment jobs: 59,681</li> <li>• At least 16% of residents work outside the council area.</li> </ul> <p>A McKeown said that the statistical evidence that exists around the economic performance of Mid Ulster shows that each region has its own unique characteristics and needs, adding that Mid Ulster levels of economic inactivity are better than many other NI Council regions, but there is room for improvement.</p> <p>A McKeown then went on to outline what Food for Thought's role would be in assisting the LMP develop and establish a functional strategy to get skills into the region and to get Mid Ulster ahead of other council areas.</p> <p>The first piece of work Food for Thought would undertake would be to interview the group to establish a baseline to create an initial report that would also help inform the 2 year interim Action Plan.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed the idea of the report and noted that it would shape content of the next meeting's agenda.</p>
<b>5.</b>	<p><b>UPDATE ON FUNDING AND STAFF RESOURCES</b></p> <p>P McCreedy advised that 20% of the budget would be utilised on staff resourcing. He indicated there would be a dedicated team of staff and that Council would commence recruitment in the coming weeks.</p>
<b>6.</b>	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <p>M Curran asked it if there was any project money available now for new training opportunities. A McCreesh replied that once there is a broad plan in place the LMP can draw down funding.</p> <p>Cllr T Wilson commended the Food for Thought report. He noted as Chair of Cookstown Enterprise Centre, small enterprise agencies play a key role but feel they are often left behind.</p> <p>Cllr Wilson suggested the group get an idea of what industries struggled to get people into jobs. J McKeown agreed there were gaps and massive skills shortages from apprentice level to managerial.</p> <p>The Chair noted that Mid Ulster is not short of jobs as such, there are recruitment signs everywhere. However, the bigger challenge would be addressing the skills shortage.</p> <p>M Curran advised of a recent survey undertaken by MEGA which showed in only 39 Mid Ulster companies there were 643 jobs available at all levels – welding to degree level.</p>

	<p>C McHugh discussed the importance of progressive pathways for students, supporting schools to create the workforce of the future. C McHugh also drew the group's attention to how low salaries were in Mid Ulster for students due to age and location. The Chair agreed supporting students and schools created an important pipeline.</p> <p>S McErlain suggested a piece of research to establish what the economically inactive were receiving in benefits earnings versus what the current minimum wage provided. This would help identify what would need to be done to attract those who were able to work but economically inactive, back to the workplace.</p> <p>J Robb spoke of the benefits of businesses promoting remote working opportunities to attract candidates from outside Mid Ulster. J Robb also suggested working with Maeve Monaghan, CEO of the NOW group to look at getting capable adults with learning difficulties into the workplace. When placed appropriately, these adults can thrive and businesses can benefit too. The Chair agreed that this should be looked at more closely as part of the wider inclusivity agenda.</p>
<b>7.</b>	<p><b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b></p> <p>Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021, 11.00am</p>
	<p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. P McCreedy to circulate presentations.</li> <li>2. P McCreedy to provide group's contact details (agreed no GDPR issues).</li> <li>3. MUDC to amend Terms of Reference to reflect broader focus of LMP.</li> </ol>

## APPENDIX 4

### MID ULSTER TOURISM DEVELOPMENT GROUP Thursday 23 September 2021 at 9.30am via Teams

Present

Cllr Frances Burton  
Cllr Walter Cuddy  
Cllr Niamh Doris  
Cllr Sean Clarke  
Cllr Martin Kearney  
Simon Wiggins  
Martin Graham  
Norman Bell  
Claire Murray  
Hugh McCloy  
Claire Doherty  
Kieran Bradley  
Dermot Friel/Cathy O'Neill

Mid Ulster District Council (Chair)  
Mid Ulster District Council  
Mid Ulster District Council  
Mid Ulster District Council  
Mid Ulster District Council  
Education & Skills SWC  
TNI Destination Manager  
Visitor Attractions  
Hospitality  
Tourism Services  
Visitor Attractions  
Hospitality  
Hospitality

Michael Browne  
Mary McKeown  
Mary McGee  
Charmain Bell  
Genevieve Bell  
Martha Beattie  
Allison O'Keefe  
Sharon Arbuthnot

Mid Ulster District Council  
Mid Ulster District Council  
Mid Ulster District Council  
Mid Ulster District Council  
Mid Ulster District Council  
Mid Ulster District Council  
Mid Ulster District Council  
Mid Ulster District Council

	DISCUSSION	ACTIONS
	<b>Apologies</b> Terry McCrory Heraldic Craft Sarah Cox SWC Anne Birt-McCartney NRC	
1.	<b>Minutes of Meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021</b>  <i>Proposed:</i> M Kearney <i>Seconded:</i> N Bell	
2.	<b>Matters Arising</b> Cllr Martin Kearney to be added to list of attendees	
3.	<b>Cluster Reports</b> In addition to Officers report circulated in advance of the meeting.	
3.1	<u>Seamus Heaney Cluster</u> M McGee outlined the report as circulated	
3.2	<u>Archaeology, History and Heritage Cluster</u>	

	<p>G Bell and M McKeown presented the report as circulated. Cllr Clarke informed the group that he had tried unsuccessfully to join the last meeting of this Cluster Group. He informed that Teams did not work for him. M Browne replied that meetings would be held via zoom in the future.</p> <p>Cllr Clarke spoke of the devastation of Davagh Forest by the action of Forestry Service felling trees. He likened the area to a 'moonscape' with valuable irreplaceable history being lost. M Browne said MUDC have already started the process of looking into this by requesting a meeting with Forestry. It was agreed that a letter be sent from Tourism Department. Proposed by Cllr Doris and seconded by Cllr Kearney.</p> <p>Cllr Burton asked about Lumford's Glen, which has been closed to the public for quite some time due to safety issues. M Browne to follow up with Parks Dept.</p> <p>Cllr Burton enquired if a link could be established between the Forth Chapel and Clogher Cathedral. M McGee to follow up.</p>	<p><b>M Browne to follow this up with other Council officers.</b></p>
<b>3.3</b>	<p><u>Lough Neagh Shoreline</u></p> <p>Cllr Doris asked if a cluster group could be formed for Lough Neagh and its surrounds. M Browne spoke of Lough Neagh Partnership and the work being done by Eimear Kearney and Gerry Darby. M Browne to speak to G Darby</p>	<p><b>M Browne</b></p>
<b>3.4</b>	<p><u>Outdoor and Events Cluster</u></p> <p>S Arbuthnot presented the report as circulated.</p> <p>A O'Keefe informed the group that a series of videos and stills had been taken for use in the various marketing campaigns. M Graham said TNI would be happy to include these in their online media and still library. A O'Keefe spoke of the potential for another Wild Adventure weekend with the possibility of a passport system.</p> <p>D Friel enquired about events, in particular Halloween and Christmas Events. M Browne replied that due to the continuing uncertainty surrounding covid-19 a decision had been made not to run any large events but focus to be on smaller animated events in the towns.</p> <p>N Bell informed the group that next year was the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 'Cookstown 100' the oldest motorcycle race in Ireland, possibly being held in April. M McKeown and M Browne agreed that plans would be made to mark the occasion.</p>	<p><b>M McGee</b></p>
<b>3.5</b>	<p><u>Hotelier Cluster</u></p> <p>C Bell presented the report as circulated.</p>	
<b>4.0</b>	<p><b>Business Engagement Programme</b></p> <p>M McGee spoke of the success of the WhatsApp Group, which now had upwards of 140 members. In the next week or so, it is hoped that the group will move onto WhatsApp for Business. M</p>	

	McGee updated the group on Press the Green Button campaign, the innovation vouchers, the High Street Voucher Scheme and spoke of the e-zines routinely forwarded.	
<b>5.0</b>	<b>District Wide Monitoring Results</b> M McKeown presented the report. Report to be emailed to members. H McCloy requested that Iniscarn Forest be added to this report Cllr Kearney requested that Portglenone Riverside Walk be added to this report.	<b>M McKeown</b>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>TNI Market Led Product Development Programme</b> M McKeown gave an update on the DAERA Experiential Programme. Kate Taylor is continuing to work with the businesses. The feedback is very positive with Kate providing lots of ideas and giving a brilliant insight. Mary spoke about the Experience Development Programme, a market lead programme comprising 4 programmes through experience – Living History and script writing support, new costumes and a new food and drink programme: work title 'Fed and Watered'. Mary also gave an update on the success of the summer marketing campaign where there was evidence of an increase of enquiries and an increase in bookings. A winter marketing campaign will follow. Mary informed that the Solar and Archaeology walks are now in place from Beaghmore Stone Circles to OM with interpretation panels due to go up shortly. Work at Ballyronan Marina is nearing completion with marketing of the accommodation hopefully commencing mid-October.	
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Brown Signage</b> M Browne said that as yet no reply had been received to the letter sent to Minister on review of the brown signage strategy. Cllr Doris noted that L Dillion MLA had put a question to the Minister proposing that signage move from Department of Economy to Department of Infrastructure. There was no reply to this and a further letter had been sent to Nicola Mallon with no reply received to date. Cllr Burton suggested that she send a letter to Minister Gordon Lyons.	
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Website Development &amp; Digital Collateral</b> M Browne spoke of the new tourism brand 'Unwinding Time'. He informed that the new website would be launched before Christmas. This site will carry the new tourism brand. The website will be shown to the group when it becomes available.	
<b>9.0</b>	<b>Update on Capital projects</b>	
<b>9.1</b>	M Browne gave a presentation as an update on the Capital Projects of OM Dark Sky Park & Observatory, Ballyronan Marina, Seamus Heaney Openground and U S Grant Ancestral Homestead.	

	<p>Cllr Burton suggested that it would be a good idea to bring the group to visit OM Dark Sky Park and Observatory. M Browne said it was intended that the group visit all of the Capital projects. M McKeown said it was hoped to have the group up to see the light show before it is launched to the public. Provisional date 27<sup>th</sup> October 2021. All of this depended on the restrictions with regard to covid-19</p>	
<b>9.2</b>	<p><b>Sculpture Project</b></p> <p>M Browne reported that this project is underway. It is a joint sculpture project with Derry &amp; Strabane and Omagh &amp; Fermanagh Councils and will feature the work of Thomas Dambo. The theme is giants and the Mid Ulster giant will be located in Davagh Forest, finishing touches are being put on the design of the figure. Giant to be in place by March 2022.</p>	
<b>9.3</b>	<p><b>Ballyronan</b></p> <p>Four 'on water' glamping pods located at Ballyronan Marina are now kitted out and will be available for holiday lets later in the year. One unit is fully accessible. These will target the young family market and will be complemented by a myths and legends experience on the breakwater.</p>	
<b>9.4</b>	<p><b>Seamus Heaney Openground</b></p> <p>Project was launched on 7th June and is a series of 5 locations all of which held a significance for the poet. The Strand at Lough Beg, the Moyola River at Castledawson, the Turfman at Bellaghy Bawn, the Eelworks in Toome and an alleyway in Magherafelt featuring sculpted silhouettes of people walking towards the town's bus station. Openground is a new outdoor visitor experience bringing Seamus Heaney's literature into the landscape of South Derry.</p>	
<b>10.0</b>	<p><b>Industry Updates</b></p> <p><u>M Graham, TNI</u></p> <p>M Graham spoke about The Recovery Plan which includes the following programmes launched by TNI:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experience Development Programme</li> <li>Website Development Programme</li> <li>Kickstart Programme</li> <li>Tourism Enterprise Development (TED) Programme</li> </ul> <p>M Graham said it was important to develop a critical mass of visitors coming into Mid Ulster. The start of the journey is to get people into the area and then filter into the various town centres.</p> <p><u>Simon Wiggins, SW College</u></p> <p>Simon outlined programmes available in SW College including: Professional Cookery, General Patisserie and Confectionary, Barista skills and Tour Guiding. M McGee to send out information on the Tour Guiding course again</p> <p><u>Norman Bell, Killymoon Castle</u></p>	



11.0	<p>N Bell informed that the GI Museum is now open. The museum houses an exhibition of memorabilia of the American World War II GIs in Cookstown. Online bookings only.</p> <p><u>Dermot Friel, Friels Bar and Restaurant</u> D Friel introduced Cathy O'Neill who recently joined his team. He spoke of his plans to incorporate a Famine Visitor Centre including a soup kitchen. Queens University have been contacted regarding an archaeological dig. Motor Home park proved successful, toilet block with showers to follow. Dermot hopes to hold an artisan food market in the run up to Christmas</p> <p><u>Claire Doherty, An Carn</u> C Doherty reported that An Carn had been busy over the summer. Summer festival held on 12 July 2021 proved successful and Festival of Light planned for 23/24 October 2021. Events are being planned for Christmas. New trail opening in the coming months. Kids trail is open all year round. Website has been updated.</p> <p><b>Any Other Business</b> Mary McGee relayed a request from Paul McCreedy, Funding and Investment Manager MUDC, for a nominee from the Tourism Development Group to sit on the Skills and Employability Group. Dermot Friel/Cathy O'Neill volunteered. Dermot asked if a deputy could be proposed. M McGee to speak to P McCreedy and report back to the group.</p> <p>Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at 9.30am.</p>	M McGee
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**Mid Ulster Council Tourism Development Group  
Officers Cluster Report – Thursday 23 September 2021**

**1. SEAMUS HEANEY CLUSTER – M MCGEE/C BELL**

Collaborative Growth Programme

The group met on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> September to finalise arrangements for the appointment of a facilitator for the Phase 2 Collaborative Growth Programme funded by Invest NI.

Richard Mulholland (Chair), Dermot Friel (Collaborative Growth Lead Business and Cathy Chauhan (River Bann Boat Tours) will represent the group in recruitment phase.

The businesses have put the role out and have shortlisted candidates. Interviews, which includes a presentation, are scheduled for Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> September in Seamus Heaney HomePlace.

MIKI Travel

Two of the businesses (Glenshane Country Farm, Bakehouse NI) have delivered presentations throughout September as part of Tourism Ireland - MIKI Travel London showcase to over 500 MIKI travel agents across China and Asia. Mid Ulster now features on two of the MIKI travel itineraries.

IMAP Tourism Ireland

A number of businesses in the cluster have applied for support through Tourism Ireland International Marketing Programme for support in delivering sales calls in key international markets from 2022 onwards.

Roxstar Consulting Ultra Lux Brand

Roxy Robinson, London based DMC completed a fam trip to the region with Mark Rodgers Dalriada. Ardtara Country House, Glenshane Country Farm and Bakehouse were showcased on this programme.

Businesses overall report that they have had a really busy summer with the staycation market particularly strong.

**2. OUTDOOR & EVENTS CLUSTER – S ARBUTHNOT / A O'KEEFE**

MUDC procured the services of Jim Kerr to produce a suite of videos, drone footage and photography stills for the outdoor activity businesses. These will be used throughout the new website, social media platforms and will eventually be shared with the businesses. The following businesses were included:

1. Railway Karting
2. Jungle NI
3. Ballyronan – play park, viewing point, marina, paddle boarding, Sailing
4. New pontoon at Newferry to include Canoeing, hoist, waterskiing, paddleboards
5. Portglenone Fishing Stands – Angling
6. Meadowvale Equestrian
7. Roundlake, Fivemiletown

8. Mountain Bike Trails, Blessingbourne (Bike trails, walking trails and boating on the lake).
9. Knockmany, Augher (the meandering walks and views from the top)
10. Todds Leap
11. Dungannon Park
12. Davagh Mountain Bike Trail and Walk Trails
13. Torrent Airsoft Activity Centre
14. Splash NI
15. Dungannon Golf Club

Due to poor attendance at the last few meetings it was agreed that meetings will only be held as and when required. Officers are always able to assist with any query on a daily basis. Additionally, cluster members have access to the What's App group to receive regular updates and receive the weekly e-zine with updates from the Business Engagement Officer.

### **3. ARCHAEOLOGY, HISTORY & HERITAGE CLUSTER – G BELL/M MCKEOWN**

The cluster group met virtually on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

#### **DEARA Collaborative Experiential Programme – Rural Tourism**

Kate Taylor from Taylored Training is continuing to work with the heritage businesses, the outcome of the experiential programme delivering 2 brand aligned experiences of Embrace a Giant Spirit ready to market in March 2022. A Marketing campaign is also being built around this and photography will be required before roll-out in March 2022. From the 17 Historic Houses in Northern Ireland 2 have been selected in Mid Ulster, namely Killymoon Castle and Springhill.

#### **European Heritage Days**

European Heritage Open Days took place over the weekend of 10-12 September. Approx. 18 properties in the Mid Ulster District Council area opened their doors to visitors. Within our Council properties tours were booked in advance at U S Grant Ancestral Homestead, Hill of the O'Neill and the Bridewell.

#### **Tourism NI, Delivery of Market Led Product Development Programme 2021-22TNI**

Cluster members were informed that the Tourism Manager had submitted an application for an Experience Development Programme, a market lead programme comprising of 4 programmes through experiences – Living history and script writing support, new costumes and a food trail and food circle. £265K has now been successfully secured to deliver on this Programme.

#### **Council Branding & Website**

The group were informed that the new brand name has been decided as 'Mid Ulster Unwinding Time'. The word 'unwind' is the title of a Seamus Heaney poem. Work is ongoing on the website.

#### **Tourism NI - Mid Ulster TV Schedule**

Mid Ulster District Council ran a very successful television marketing campaign from 18th to 30th August, together with 48 sheet ad shells in various locations as well as on the back of buses. Filming for the winter campaign will begin soon.

#### **Davagh Archaeological and Solar Walk**

Visitors will soon be able to enjoy the new 3.4km solar walk from Beaghmore Stone Circles to the observatory at OM. An AR app will provide a digital guide linking the

uniqueness of the sky to the uniqueness of the archaeological landscape. Interpretation panels are due to go up within the next few weeks.

### **Ballyronan Marina**

Works at Ballyronan are very near completion with a new play park, walks, interpretation panels, AR experience, a disabled hoist and 4 new pods/boat houses on the lake.

## **4. HOTELIERS CLUSTER – CBELL/M MCGEE**

Cluster members have had a very busy summer with the staycation market, and busy filming.

The virtual tours quotation process was completed at the start of July. Corish TV & Film was the appointed company.

An expression of interest was issued to all 9 hotels within Mid Ulster, and the following 7 hotels responded:

1. The Valley
2. Corick
3. Glenavon
4. Cohannon
5. The Royal
6. The Terrace
7. Walsh's

Storyboard writing commenced at the start of July for each hotel, with filming scheduled for the beginning of August. However due to COVID, filming dates changed on several occasions! Filming is now complete, and the final edit on five videos signed off. All videos will be signed off and going live at the end of the month. Space has been left at the end of each video to add in the new Mid Ulster tourism logo, alongside the Embrace a Giant Spirit logo.

Communication continues with the cluster members with regards to industry updates and other tourism programmes.