

<b>Report on</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Minutes 14.9.23</li> <li>2. Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Update</li> <li>3. NIBSUP / Business Start Up Performance 2023/24</li> <li>4. Town Centre Spruce Up Scheme</li> </ol>
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	10 January 2024
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Assistant Director of Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
<b>1.1</b>	To provide Members with an update on key activities as detailed below.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
<b>2.1</b>	<p><b>Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Minutes – 14.9.23</b></p> <p>The Mid Ulster LMP was established by Council in October 2021 and aims to improve employability outcomes and labour market conditions locally by working through coordinated, collaborative, multiagency partnerships.</p>
<b>2.2</b>	<p><b>Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Update</b></p> <p>The Council previously agreed to participate in the development and delivery of a Local Labour Market Partnership (LMP) under the Employability NI Programme led by the Department for Communities (DfC). The Mid Ulster LMP aims to improve employability outcomes and labour market conditions locally by working through coordinated, collaborative, multiagency partnerships. The LMP provides a unique 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> <p>Following restoration of LMP funding, Council received a Letter of Offer (dated 27 July 2023) for £369,005.21 from the Department for Communities to support delivery of the Mid Ulster LMP Action Plan 2023-24.</p>

<p><b>2.3</b></p>	<p><b>NIBSUP / Business Start Up Performance 2023/24</b></p> <p>In 2015, following the Review of Public Administration, responsibility for the delivery of business start transferred to the 11 Local Councils. The Department for the Economy (DfE) has responsibility of monitoring performance in relation to the NI Business Start-Up Programme against statutory targets set out in the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.</p> <p>From 2015 to September 2023, start up support has been delivered through the 11-Council 'Go for It' / NI Business Start Up Programme which was funded 60% from the European Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme (2014-22), 20% from Invest NI with Councils funding the remaining 20% and also the other supporting structure costs (MIS System and programme management resources).</p> <p>Since November 2023, start-up provision across the 11 Councils is funded by monies secured by the 11 Councils from the Shared Prosperity Fund. The application was led by Belfast City Council in conjunction with the other 10 Councils. Enterprise NI have recently been appointed to deliver this new service across Northern Ireland.</p>
<p><b>2.4</b></p>	<p><b>Town Centre Spruce Up Scheme</b></p> <p>Members will be aware the former Spruce Up Scheme funded by Mid Ulster District Council, has now concluded after a period of four years.</p> <p>Council Officers contacted Department for Communities (DFC) and Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) to find out if they would co-finance the delivery of a further Spruce Up Scheme across Mid Ulster, in conjunction with Council.</p> <p>DAERA advised that they were unable to assist with funding at this time.</p> <p>DFC indicated they may consider providing funding towards a scheme limited to the town centre boundaries within Mid Ulster's four largest towns, namely Dungannon, Cookstown, Magherafelt and Coalisland, where the population of these towns are greater than 5,000. They added that any funding from DFC would be dependent on a successful funding application being made by Council.</p> <p>Council Officers submitted a formal funding application to DFC seeking financial support for a new Spruce Up Scheme to assist businesses in the 4 main towns in Mid Ulster (Dungannon, Cookstown, Magherafelt and Coalisland).</p>
<p><b>3.0</b></p>	<p><b>Main Report</b></p>
<p><b>3.1</b></p>	<p><b>Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Minutes – 14.9.23</b></p> <p>Minutes of meeting of Mid Ulster LMP held on the 14th September 2023 are attached at <b>Appendix 1</b>.</p>

### 3.2 Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Update

To keep Members apprised of the ongoing activity within Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership, the following summary has been provided;

#### Mid Ulster LMP online presence

Council's web pages for Mid Ulster LMP have been fully updated and are now live with additional information and advice for both residents and employers. The weblink remains the same: [www.midulstercouncil.org/midulsterImp](http://www.midulstercouncil.org/midulsterImp)

A social media presence is also now active on Facebook and LinkedIn. These channels will allow the LMP to share information both on projects within the Action Plan, as well as general employment initiatives across the area which partner organisations are delivering.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MidUlsterLMP>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/mid-ulster-labour-market-partnership>

#### Mid Ulster Employability and Skills Register

The Mid Ulster Employability and Skills Register was formally launched on Friday 8 December 2023. A key element of the 2022-23 Action Plan, the comprehensive register has been developed as an information and signposting resource to assist both employers and residents in the area to identify and access local skills support that can help with employment, reskilling/upskilling, career progression or workforce development.

The register is available at:

<https://www.midulstercouncil.org/Impforemployers>

<https://www.midulstercouncil.org/Impforresidents>

#### Mid Ulster LMP Employment Academies and Programmes 2023/24

Delivery agents have been appointed and are in the process of commencing registrations and employer engagement. Further information regarding all programmes is available at: <https://www.midulstercouncil.org/Impprogrammes>

<b>Academy/ Programme</b>	<b>Delivery Agent</b>	<b>Registration Details</b>
HGV Academy	People 1 <sup>st</sup>	Registration closed Friday 27 October 2023.
Construction Academy	People 1 <sup>st</sup>	Registration open via application form from Monday 4 December 2023: <a href="https://forms.gle/o3CjknpfK3Y3Xedy7">https://forms.gle/o3CjknpfK3Y3Xedy7</a>
Health and Social Care/Classroom Assistant Academy	Network Personnel	Registration open via email or telephone from Thursday 14 December 2023: Email: <a href="mailto:Imp@networkpersonnel.org.uk">Imp@networkpersonnel.org.uk</a> or telephone: 028 7963 1032
Tourism and Hospitality Academy	Network Personnel	Registration open via email or telephone from Thursday 14 December 2023:

		Email: <a href="mailto:imp@networkpersonnel.org.uk">imp@networkpersonnel.org.uk</a> or telephone: 028 7963 1032
Women Returners Programme	People 1 <sup>st</sup>	Registration open via application form from Monday 4 December 2023: <a href="https://forms.gle/m5GWXhzfWK3RCvqJA">https://forms.gle/m5GWXhzfWK3RCvqJA</a>
Employer-led Disability Inclusion Programme	Network Personnel	Registration open via email or telephone from Thursday 14 December 2023: Email: <a href="mailto:imp@networkpersonnel.org.uk">imp@networkpersonnel.org.uk</a> or telephone: 028 7963 1032

#### Mid Ulster Jobs and Apprenticeship Fair

A Jobs and Apprenticeship Fair will be held in the Burnavon, Cookstown on Thursday 8 February 2024 in partnership with the Department for Communities Employer Services Branch. The Fair will allow employers from across the district to publicise current job vacancies as well as promoting Apprenticeship opportunities.

The event, which will be held during Apprenticeship Week 2024, provides employers with a platform to encourage those who would like to upskill or re-skill to consider an apprenticeship following the removal of age limit restrictions announced by the Department for the Economy in September 2023.

#### Mid Ulster LMP Celebration Event

A Celebration Event was held at the Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown on Wednesday 15 November 2023 to recognise and celebrate the achievements of participants who completed LMP employment academies or programmes in 2022-2023, as well as local businesses and support agencies who have assisted individuals with their journey back into meaningful employment.

Through the various programmes, participants have gained accredited qualifications as well as receiving employability support and mentoring, with over 140 individuals securing employment as a result. Other participants have continued their journey by re-entering education to gain additional skills before seeking employment. During the event, a number of participants spoke about the positive benefits of taking part in the programmes and the change to their daily lives.

#### 3-year Mid Ulster LMP Strategy

Following guidance and advice from the Department for Communities, Mid Ulster LMP is now in the process of developing a 3-year Strategy with year-on-year Action Plans. This will enable the partnership to consider key issues and priorities over a longer term to achieve greatest impact. It is anticipated that a draft Mid Ulster LMP Action Plan for 2024-2025 will be submitted to Council for approval circ. March 2024.

### **3.3 NIBSUP / Business Start Up Performance 2023/24**

In December 2023, as part of their audit of the Business Start Up Programme, the Department for the Economy (DfE) issued communication to Councils (**see**

	<p><b>Appendix 2)</b> regarding the performance for the first 6 months of the financial year (April-Sept 2023) which are also the final 6 months of the GoForIt Programme. The letter confirms that the overall programme performance exceeded its 6-month statutory target of 785 jobs with 890 jobs created for 2022/23.</p> <p>In Mid Ulster during this period, the number of jobs created was 80, exceeding the statutory target of 77 by 3.</p> <p><b>3.4 Town Centre Spruce Up Scheme</b></p> <p>Following approval at November 2023 Committee, Council Officers have been in liaison with DFC and have submitted a funding bid seeking financial support from the Department to assist Council deliver a new Spruce Up Scheme in Mid Ulster's four largest towns.</p> <p>DFC's role is to support towns with a population size greater than 5,000 people. In Mid Ulster, this translates to the district's four largest towns; Dungannon, Cookstown, Magherafelt and Coalisland.</p> <p>Council is now in possession of a Contract for Funding from DfC (<b>Appendix 3</b>) and this will now allow Council Officers to work at pace to progress to procure the services of a professional Independent Chartered Architect, who will have overall management responsibilities to oversee the scheme delivery from start to completion. Council Officers will then liaise with the appointed Architect to agree the application pack and assessment criteria. The appointed Architect will independently assess all applications.</p> <p>The scheme will be advertised early in the new year with applications issued, returned and assessed and offers made to the successful property/business owners to commit funds by 31 March 2024.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<p><b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b></p> <p><b>Financial</b></p> <p><b>Town Centre Spruce Up Scheme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful funding bid to DFC securing funding of £200,000 to deliver a Spruce Up Scheme (for Mid Ulster's 4 largest towns).</li> <li>• Council to procure and provide funding for the services of an Independent Chartered Architect to be paid from Council's Economic Development budget.</li> </ul> <p><b>Human</b> Officers time.</p> <p><b>Risk Management</b></p> <p><b>Town Centre Spruce Up Scheme</b></p>

	The scheme has a tight turnaround and will have to be advertised, applications issued, returned and assessed and offers made to the successful property/business owners to commit funds by 31 March 2024.
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	<b>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
	It is recommended that Members;
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Minutes – 14.9.23</b>  <b>Note</b> minutes of the meeting of Mid Ulster LMP held on 14 September 2023.
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership Update</b>  <b>Note</b> update on Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership activity.
<b>5.3</b>	<b>NIBSUP / Business Start Up Performance 2023/24</b>  <b>Note</b> letter from the Department for the Economy re: NIBSUP/business start-up performance from April to September 2023.
<b>5.4</b>	<b>Town Centre Spruce Up Scheme</b>  <b>Note</b> correspondence from Department for Communities (DFC), dated 6 December 2023, providing a Contract for Funding for delivery of a Town Centre Spruce Up Scheme confined to the town centre boundaries within Mid Ulster’s four largest towns of Dungannon, Cookstown, Magherafelt and Coalisland. The funding contract was signed by Council’s Chief Executive and returned to DFC, as delegated authority was granted at the Development Committee in November 2023.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	<b>Appendix 1</b> - Minutes of Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership - 14.9.23  <b>Appendix 2</b> - Letter from DfE (7.12.23) re MUDC’s NI Business Start-up Programme Performance for 2023/2024  <b>Appendix 3</b> - Contract for Funding Mid Ulster Towns Business Spruce Up Scheme 2023-2024