

Update Report - All-Island Strategic Rail Review (AISRR) **June 2024**

The AISRR was announced in April 2021 by Northern Ireland's Minister for Infrastructure, Nicola Mallon MLA and Ireland's Minister for Transport, Eamon Ryan TD. The Council submitted representations to the review in January 2022. It is noteworthy that almost 10% of all responses came from people and groups in the Mid Ulster District (647 in total) making it the 4th largest contributor to the public consultation, after Fermanagh & Omagh, Derry & Strabane and Donegal County. The four council areas together accounted for almost half (49%) of all the responses received across the entire island which highlights the strength of the desire within the four north-western counties to see rail returned.

The AISRR report and associated Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) were published for consultation in July 2023 and Council submitted a response in September 2023.

The AISRR considers how the rail network across the island could contribute to the decarbonisation of the island's transport systems, promote sustainable connectivity into and between major cities, enhance regional accessibility, and support balanced regional development. It also considered the interactions between proposed improvements and existing, or planned, commuter rail services. The time horizon for the Review covers the period to 2050 to align with both jurisdictions' stated goals of achieving net zero carbon emissions by this milestone.

The vision of the Review is to provide a "high quality, sustainable and integrated railway for passengers and goods across the Island of Ireland". The Review sets out six high-level goals which aim to use rail as effectively as possible to:

- contribute to decarbonisation;
- improve All Island connectivity between major cities;
- enhance regional accessibility;
- stimulate economic activity;
- encourage sustainable mobility; and
- achieve economic and financial feasibility.

It also considers the interactions between proposed improvements and existing, or planned, commuter rail services. It does not consider rail within major cities, which is subject to separate and established strategic planning processes.

The AISRR Report published in July 2023 presented findings and 30 recommendations for development of the railways in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland including expanding the total network from 2300 to 2950km, along with electrification, higher speeds, and more frequent services. The 30 recommendations are set across 6 themes as follows:-

Theme 1: Decarbonisation

1. Develop and implement an All-Island Rail Decarbonisation Strategy that includes an electrified intercity network.
2. Develop plans to invest in the skills, supply chains, and rolling stock to deliver decarbonisation.
3. Procure hybrid and electric rolling stock in the medium term.

Theme 2: Intercity

4. Upgrade the cross-country rail network to a dual-track railway (and four-track in places) and increase service frequencies.
5. Upgrade the core intercity railway network to top speeds of 200km/h (125mph).
6. Develop short sections of new railways on congested corridors.
7. Develop a cross-Dublin solution.

Theme 3: Regional and Rural

8. Provide more direct services between Ireland's west and south coasts.
9. Ensure regional and rural lines have at least one train per two hours.
10. Increase line speeds to at least 120km/h.
11. Upgrade Limerick Junction and the Limerick Junction – Waterford line.
12. Reinstate the Western Rail Corridor railway between Claremorris and Athenry.
13. Extend the railway into Tyrone, Derry~Londonderry, and Donegal.
14. Reinstate the South Wexford Railway.
15. Develop the railway to boost connectivity in the North Midlands.
16. Integrate bus service and rail service timetables to connect communities where direct rail access proves to be unviable.

Theme 4: Sustainable Cities Recommendations

17. Connect Dublin, Belfast International, and Shannon Airport to the railway and improve existing rail-airport connections.
18. Extend double tracking in the Belfast area.
19. Segregate long-distance/fast services from stopping services.
20. Explore the case for developing new stations in the Belfast, Cork, Derry~Londonderry (e.g., Limavady), and Limerick – Shannon City regions.

Theme 5: Freight

21. Develop a sustainable solution for first-mile-last-mile rail access for Dublin Port.
22. Reduce Track Access Charges for freight services.
23. Strengthen rail connectivity to the island's busiest ports.
24. Develop a network of inland terminals close to major cities on the rail network.

Theme 6: Customer Experience

25. Continue to invest in initiatives that deliver a seamless customer journey.
26. Continue to benchmark and monitor service quality and deliver continuous improvement.
27. Ensure future rolling stock specifications are aligned to the infrastructure-led interventions outlined in the Review.
28. Invest in improving integration within rail and between rail and other transport options.
29. Deliver 'clock-face' timetable calling patterns.
30. Develop cross-border structures to improve the effectiveness of cross-border infrastructure and rail service planning.

A Map showing how a potential railway could look in 2050 if the AISRR used recommendations. Several of the recommendations will indirectly benefit the Mid Ulster area. However, Recommendation No.13 - reinstatement of the railway between Portadown, Dungannon, Omagh, Strabane, Derry, and Letterkenny will impact directly on Mid Ulster and bring considerable benefits. The restoration of this key rail line would significantly strengthen connections within the North West and Mid South West (MSW) region. It would link the large towns of Strabane, Omagh, and Dungannon to the rail network and greatly improve intercity connectivity between Derry and both Dublin and Belfast (as an alternative to the indirect and constrained existing route).

This recommendation is fully endorsed by rail lobby group, Into The West (ITW), who submitted responses to the consultations that support this as well as further rail expansion in Mid Ulster.

ITW have been campaigning for improved rail transport in counties Derry, Donegal, Tyrone, and Fermanagh since 2003. The group presented to the Development Committee in June 2022 where they highlighted that two of the eleven councils within Northern Ireland do not have rail access, one of which is Mid Ulster District Council. ITW continue to lobby for 7 key rail re-openings across West and Mid Ulster as detailed in the table below:

ITW Priority	Reopening Project	Review Recommends?	Considerations/Issues
A	1. <u>Derry-Portadown</u> Strabane, Omagh, Dungannon.	Yes	Significant concerns re proposed line speed
	2. <u>Derry-Letterkenny</u>	Yes	Concern re location of spur, & if towns will have direct services.
B	3. <u>Connecting Limavady</u>	Yes	Concern re spur preventing direct services.
	4. <u>Connect NI's 3 Airports</u>	Partially	No station at Derry Airport.
C	5. <u>Omagh-Enniskillen-Sligo Line</u>	No	Fermanagh only county without rail.
	6. <u>Letterkenny-Sligo Line</u> (Ballybofey, Donegal Town, Bundoran)	No	- Most of Donegal left without rail. - The gap in the rail map still persists.
	7. <u>Reconnect Cookstown / Mid-Ulster</u>	No	Cookstown dismissed, on flawed grounds.

As indicated in the table, the reconnection of Cookstown/Mid Ulster has been dismissed. According to the Draft All-Island Strategic Rail Review “*physical constraints ruled out some options, such as the Sperrin Mountains ruling out Cookstown as a stop on a service from Derry~Londonderry to either Belfast or Dublin*”.

In their consultation response in September 2023, ITW submitted their recommendation to reconnect Cookstown to the rail network. They have proposed that a spur line to Cookstown is installed in once the Derry-Portadown route is reopened. In addition, they recommend that a spur line from Dungannon to Cookstown be continued a further 10 miles north to connect with Magherafelt and then continue east above Lough Neagh to connect with the Derry-Belfast line. This ‘Mid-Ulster Link’ or ‘Lough Neagh Loop’ would create a spine of rail connectivity through what is not only the fastest-growing part of NI – but also an area with significant industry that could benefit from (and positively contribute to) rail freight access.

Next steps

Following the conclusion of the AISRR SEA consultation, officials from both jurisdictions are working closely with Arup to analyse and consider the responses submitted in detail, with input from the AISRR Project Management Group. These comments will inform the finalising of the AISRR Report and its associated environmental reports. It is currently anticipated that the report will be finalised in Spring/Summer 2024.

Implementation

It is intended that the final recommendations of the AISRR will provide an evidence-based framework to inform the future direction of travel for investment in the railways across the island. However, more work will be needed to test the feasibility and environmental impact of the recommended interventions and to secure the necessary funding before any projects can be implemented.

KEY

Electrified railways

	Single track	Dual track	New station
New railway			
Dual or four-track upgrade			
Electrification upgrade			

Other decarbonised railways

	Single track	Dual track	New station
New railway			
Dual track upgrade			
Other improvements			
Other existing railways			



KEY

	Existing Unconnected	Existing Connected	New Connection
Airport			
Port			
Inland Terminal			



All Island Strategic Rail Review

Key Stages



Joint launch of Review by Infrastructure Minister Nicola Mallon MLA and Transport Minister Eamon Ryan TD
7 April 2021



Phase 1: Review of the current context and role of rail through policy review, data analysis, environmental considerations, development of rail case studies, and consultation to gauge stakeholder and public priorities.

- **Consultants (Arup) appointed to complete Review**
July 2021
- **Public and stakeholder consultation**
29 November 2021 - 21 January 2022



Phase 2: Identification of different service and connectivity concepts to address issues and opportunities for rail, applying insights from Phase 1 to inform selection of potential options.



Phase 3: Final appraisal of developed concepts.



Phase 4: Completion of draft Final Report



Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

- **Consultants (Arup) appointed to complete SEA**
May 2023
- **SEA Applicability Screening Report: Mandatory SEA required**
Completed May 2023
- **SEA Scoping**
Completed June 2023
- **SEA Environmental Report and Appropriate Assessments**
Drafts for consultation completed July 2023
- **Public Consultation of SEA including publication of Draft Report**
Consultation ran 25 July - 29 September 2023. Detailed analysis and consideration of the responses is currently underway.



Final Review incorporating responses from consultation
It is currently anticipated the review will be finalised in Spring 2024. Publication will be subject to the necessary approvals in both jurisdictions.



MID ULSTER DISTRICT COUNCIL

Meeting of:	A5-N2 Cross Border Committee
Date and Time:	Tuesday 19 th March 2024 at 16:30
Location:	via MS Teams
Chair:	Councillor Gael Gildernew
Councillors Present:	Derry City and Strabane District Council Brian Harte, Ruairi McHugh
	Donegal County Council Johnny McGuinness, Gary Doherty
	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Bernard McGrath, Paul Robinson, Glenn Campbell
	Mid Ulster District Council Mark Robinson, Gael Gildernew, Kevin McElvogue, Eugene McConnell
	Monaghan County Council Brian McKenna, Paudge Connolly
	Donegal County Council Bryan Cannon (A/Director of Service, Roads and Transportation)
	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council John News (Director of Environment and Place)
	Mid Ulster District Council Paul McCreedy (Strategic Programmes Service Manager)
	Monaghan County Council Shirley McIntyre (Business & Investment Officer) Emma Hughes (Meeting Secretariat)
	Monaghan County Council Roisin Moore (N2 Project Liaison Officer) Gareth McMahon (A/Director of Services, Roads and Transportation)
In Attendance:	Derry City and Strabane District Council Cllr Jason Barr, Cllr Paul Gallagher
	Donegal County Council Cllr Paul Canning
	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Cllr Allan Rainey MBE
	Monaghan County Council Cllr David Maxwell, Cllr Seamus Coyle, Robert Burns (Chief Executive)
Apologies:	

No	Item	Action By:
1.	Welcome and apologies	
	Cllr G Gildernew welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves as there are several new Councillors.	Note
2.	Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 30th November 2023	

	AGREED: Proposed by B Harte Seconded by Cllr G Gildernew and agreed: The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 30 th November 2023 were a true and accurate record of proceedings.	Note
3.	Matters Arising	
	There were no matters arising.	
4.	Terms of Reference	
4.1	Discussion took place about the proposal from Donegal County Council for a name change to the Committee. Cllr G Gildernew advised Members to defer any further dialogue and that an exceptional meeting of the Committee would be arranged to discuss the Term of Reference only. The original name will be used in the interim.	All
4.2	Section 2.0 Membership Point 2.2 was discussed with a view to revising the "Role of Chair" to reflect current and future arrangements. Cllr G Gildernew proposed a change to read: <i>The role of Chair will be rotated annually and undertaken by a Member nominated by the Host Council.</i> Change to be reviewed at the exceptional meeting.	All
5.	Correspondence	
5.1	<i>Letter from John News, Director Environment & Place Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (January 2024)</i> As discussed. FODC position and concerns noted.	Note
5.2	<i>Email from Matt Carthy TD (February 2024)</i> Members queried whether to issue another invitation to Minister Ryan. It was agreed that this may be counter-productive and should be reviewed at a later date.	Note
6.	Project overview and update	
	R. Moore, N2 Project Liaison Officer, Monaghan County Council, provided Members with brief synopsis of the Major Road Project Overview. Members have been provided with a comprehensive report on the Major Road Projects in their meeting pack.	Retain on agenda
7.	Proposal to issue invitation to John O'Dowd, MLA, Minister for Infrastructure to attend next meeting	
	Members agreed that an invitation be issued to John O'Dowd, MLA, Minister for Infrastructure, to attend the next meeting. A proposed in-person meeting of the Committee in May/June 2024 was agreed.	MUDC
8.	AOB	
	Cllr McConnell gave Members an update of a meeting held earlier in the day (19 th March 2024) between Minister O'Dowd and the campaign group, Enough is Enough.	Note
	Cllr G Gildernew advised Members that in advance of the next meeting,	MUDC

	she intends to meet with Enough is Enough.	
9.	Date of next meeting	
	The next meeting of the A5-N2 Cross Border Committee will be scheduled in May/June. This will be an in-person meeting. Date tbc.	MUDC
	An exceptional meeting of the Committee will be arranged prior to May/June meeting to discuss Terms of Reference. Date tbc.	MUDC
	The meeting concluded at 17.22	

Terms of Reference
A5/N2 Cross Border Committee
Adopted 30th April 2024

1.0 Committee: Councils, Scope and Purpose

Derry City and Strabane District Council, Donegal County Council, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, Mid Ulster District Council and Monaghan County Council recognise the need to co-ordinate and lobby for the delivery of improvements and upgrades to the N2/A5/TEN-T route from Dublin to the Northwest. These are important routes serving the defined border region in ROI and Northern Ireland and require infrastructural development.

The formation of the A5/N2 Cross Border Committee, comprising membership from all Councils listed above provides a platform from which lobbying and representation can be taken forward to ensure completion of this essential infrastructure project is realised within the given timeframe by central government. There will be a particular focus on projects on the N2/A5/TEN-T corridor in the border region and Northern Ireland including:-

- The A5 Western Transport Corridor (A5WTC), which comprises c.55 miles of road to be upgraded through Northern Ireland,
- The 28km N2 Clontibret to Border Road Scheme in County Monaghan,
- The 32km Ardee to Castleblayney Road Scheme in County Monaghan and County Louth, and,
- The Donegal TEN-T project, which provides onward connectivity to the north and west.

2.0 Membership

2.1 Membership of the A5/N2 Cross Border Committee will be agreed by the individual Councils concerned and shall be no more than 4 Members per Council (20 in total).

2.2 The role of Chair will be rotated annually (alternating between Northern and Southern Councils where practicable) and undertaken by a Member of the respective nominated Council and agreed by members of the nominated Council.

2.3 If there is a requirement for a Deputy Chair – The Deputy Chair shall be nominated from the same Council as the Chair.

2.4 Where a vote is required on any decision then all 20 members appointed to the committee and present at the meeting will be entitled to a vote, with the Chair holding the casting vote.

2.5 Where decisions are required within a limited timeframe and there is no opportunity to bring the matter to a scheduled meeting, the Chair will exercise authority on the matter where it is deemed to be of an uncontentious nature and reflects only the objectives already set out and agreed by the Committee. The Committee will then be provided with an update at the next meeting for information. Where it is deemed that the Committee is required to give consideration to the matter this will be brought before a Committee meeting at the earliest opportunity.

3.0 Meetings

3.1 The A5/N2 Cross Border Committee will meet quarterly or more frequently if required.

3.2 Meetings will rotate annually between the Councils of Derry City and Strabane District Council, Donegal County Council, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, Mid Ulster District Council and Monaghan County Council on an annual basis in line with the designated Chair and secretariat and be hosted as necessary by the Council acting as the secretariate for that period.

3.3 Meetings will be quorate when there is an attendance of 5 Members inclusive of at least one representative from each member Council.

3.4 Minutes of the meetings will take the form of key discussion points and agreed actions.

3.5 A schedule of meetings will be agreed and at least 5 working days formal notice will be given of meetings, together with an agenda and associated papers.

3.6 Each partner Council to give consideration to ensuring minutes of each meeting are reported to their own Council through the appropriate mechanism.

4.0 Administration

4.1 The secretariat will be provided from the host Council of each meeting

4.2 Additional administrative support will be agreed by the member councils.

4.3 Any necessary financial provisions will be agreed by the member councils and be subject to the governance arrangements of the council nominated for that purpose.

4.4 Any costs associated with convening and holding meetings to be incurred by the host Council.

5.0 Key Objectives

5.1 The remit of the A5/N2 Cross Border Committee will include: -

- Lobbying both the NI Assembly, UK and Irish Governments and relevant central government departments to ensure the A5WTC Scheme is effectively progressed
- Lobbying NI Assembly and UK and Irish Governments to secure the appropriate funding to complete the A5/N2 dualling scheme in its entirety; and
- Lobbying the Irish Government to secure the appropriate funding to complete the Donegal TEN-T project in its entirety; and
- Gaining commitment from all relevant stakeholders in terms of the timetable for completion.
- Ensuring that in accordance with their respective statutory obligations the planning and implementation bodies constructively engage with all relevant stakeholders that may be affected by the various projects.
- Advocating Cross Border coordination in terms of planning, funding, and implementation to secure maximum benefit in terms of cost efficiencies and project completion by the responsible bodies.

6.0 Review

6.1 The draft terms of reference will be reviewed by the A5/N2 Cross Border Committee periodically.

Appendix 4



Adelaide House
39-49 Adelaide Street
Belfast BT2 8FD
email: multiply@economy-ni.gov.uk

Adrian McCreesh
Mid Ulster Council
Circular Road
Dungannon
BT71 6DT

29 March 2024

Dear Adrian

Multiply Officer – LETTER OF OFFER

Please find attached your letter of offer for a Multiply Officer within the Multiply Project. As you are aware, we have been working with your staff at pace to identify a range of initiatives to support the UK Government's Multiply agenda and funding will be made available for a Multiply Officer to assist in getting your programmes up and running.

Full funding for the role will be paid out on receipt of an invoice from your organisation, which should be submitted before the end of April 2024.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raymond Kelly". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

RAYMOND KELLY



Multiply Officer

Mid Ulster Council

Letter of Offer

29th March 2024

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AGREEMENT

1. PARTIES

1.1 This Agreement is made between:

(a) the DEPARTMENT FOR THE ECONOMY, and hereinafter called the “Department”; and

(b) MID ULSTER COUNCIL and hereinafter known as the “Organisation”

2. DETAILS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

2.1 The total funding allocation for the Organisation for financial year 2024/25 is:

£50,000

2.2 The Department will fund the Organisation to hire a Multiply Officer to assist with the detail set out below in section 2.3.

2.3 This funding will be used to support the following proposal in Financial Year 2024/2025:

The key duties for the Multiply Officer will include:

- Management and coordination of Multiply projects.
- Project administration, including liaison with DfE.
- Promotion and marketing of Multiply projects.
- Procurement.

2.4 This funding may be used to support a single individual or be spread across a number of individuals as per the Organisations requirements.

3. DURATION OF AGREEMENT

3.1 This Agreement covers the period from date of signature to 31 March 2025, unless otherwise determined in accordance with this Agreement.

4. ORGANISATION'S STATUS

4.1 In carrying out its obligations under this Agreement:

- the Organisation is not acting as the agent of the Department;
- In other respects, the Organisation shall enter into Agreement with third parties as principal and not as agent of the Department; and
- Accordingly, shall not do or say anything that might lead any person to believe that the Organisation is acting as agent of the Department.

4.2 Nothing in this Agreement shall render the Department liable to indemnify the Organisation in respect of any liability of any kind incurred by them, but this disclaimer shall not be taken to exclude or limit any liability of the Department to the Organisation that may arise, by virtue of a breach of this Agreement by the Department, or any negligent act or omission on the part of the Department, its staff, or agents.

5. ORGANISATION'S OBLIGATIONS

5.1 The Organisation shall carry out the project in accordance with the provisions of **Annexes A and B**. The Annexes to this Agreement shall be deemed to be incorporated in and form part of this Agreement.

5.2 The Organisation shall agree to give publicity to the UK Government's primary role as overall funder of the project, as well as the Department's role in management and support of the project and to have early and prior consultations with the Department about any branding, publicity, publications or public announcements associated with the project.

6. INSURANCE

6.1 The Organisation shall affect and maintain policies of insurance against all risks and to the value such as a prudent Organisation carrying out similar

business would normally insure, and shall produce a policy of such insurance, duly written up to date to the Department, on demand.

7. OBSERVANCE OF LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

7.1 The Organisation shall not do or permit anything to be done which might cause a breach or infringement of the laws and regulations of Northern Ireland in the performance of this Agreement.

7.2 Without prejudice to Paragraph 7.1 in carrying out this Agreement, the Organisation shall comply with all applicable fair employment, equality of treatment and anti-discrimination legislation, including, in particular, the Employment (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 and 1988, the Equal Pay Act (Northern Ireland) 1970, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997, the Employment Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 2004, the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (NI) 2006 and the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 and shall use its best endeavours to ensure that in its employment policies and practices and in the delivery of the services required of the Organisation under this agreement, it has due regard to the need to promote equality of treatment and opportunity between:

- persons of different religious beliefs or political opinions;
- men and women or married and unmarried persons;
- persons with and without dependants (including women who are pregnant or on maternity leave and men on paternity leave);
- persons of different racial groups (within the meaning of the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997);
- persons with and without a disability (within the meaning of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995);
- persons of different ages; and

- persons of differing sexual orientation.

7.3 The Organisation shall take all reasonable steps to ensure the observance of the provisions of the above Paragraph 7.2 by all servants, agents, employees, consultants and sub-contractors of the Organisation.

7.4 Where any of the Organisation's obligations under this Agreement are carried out by sub-Contractors, the Organisation shall take reasonable steps to ensure that in carrying out those obligations the sub-Contractors comply with the provisions of Paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2.

7.5 This Agreement shall in all respects be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of Northern Ireland and the parties hereby agree that the Courts of Northern Ireland shall have exclusive jurisdiction to hear and determine any disputes arising out of or in connection with this Agreement.

7.6 The Organisation shall not, without the prior consent in writing of the Department, assign or transfer this Agreement or any part, share or interest in it.

7.7 The Organisation shall, with regard to personal data collected in arranging and managing the courses, be expected to adhere to the requirements of the Data Protection Act (DPA) and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

8. DfE CONTACT

8.1 Skills Initiatives Branch shall act, on behalf of the Department, to oversee the project. Therefore any queries should be addressed to the mailbox at Multiply@economy-ni.gov.uk

9. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND MONITORING

9.1 The Organisation shall maintain records to monitor expenditure covering aspects of the aims, objectives, activities and output of this programme (both the full-time and part-time cohorts).

9.2 The Organisation shall use its best endeavours to carry out each programme's activities within the duration of the agreement as set out in Paragraph 2.1.

10. REVIEW AND CONTRACT

10.1 The Organisation shall obtain the Department's written consent to any proposed changes to the Multiply Officer role.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

11.1 This Agreement and the terms and conditions contained therein shall be treated as confidential by the Organisation and should not be disclosed to any other person without the prior consent of the Department. The Department will not disclose any information relating to this Agreement, unless it is legally obliged to do so in order to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or any other legal obligation.

12. CORRUPT GIFTS OR PAYMENTS

12.1 The Organisation shall not offer or give, or agree to give, to any person any gift or consideration of any kind as any inducement or reward for doing or refraining from doing, or having done or refrained from doing, any act in relation to the obtaining or execution of this or any other Agreement for His Majesty's Service or for showing or refraining from showing any favour or disfavour to any person in relation to this or any such Agreement.

13. FUNDING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

13.1 It should be noted that the Eligible Expenditure under this agreement, as set out in **Annex A**, is based on the cost provided in Section 2.1.

13.2 For the purpose of securing payment the Organisation will invoice the Department by the end of April 2024.

13.3 Funding will be claimed from the Department via one invoice, including detail of where the payment claim has been reduced if the full amount of funding is not required.

13.4 To safeguard funding as part of the compliance process, the Department shall, at its discretion, review the timesheets of those staff involved in this project.

14. RECOVERY OF SUMS DUE

14.1 If the Department finds after inspection or checking of claims that an overpayment has occurred, this money will be recovered from the Organisation.

15. FUNDING REVIEW

15.1 In respect of funding, if, at any time, the Organisation considers that it will be unable to spend any or all of the funding allocated, or identifies a possible overspend, it should declare this to the Department at the earliest possible date.

15.2 If at any stage during the course it is deemed that the planned outcomes are unlikely to be achieved, the Department has the right to reconsider the level of funding in line with the revised outcomes, e.g. on an apportionment basis. In this event, the Department will consult the Organisation prior to finalising any amendments.

16. BREACH

16.1 Either party may terminate this Agreement with immediate effect in the event of a material breach of any of its terms by the other party. Such termination shall not affect any rights which the party terminating the Agreement may have against the other party in consequence of the breach.

16.2 In the event of a breach of any term of this Agreement the party not in any breach may, as an alternative to immediate termination, serve a notice on the party in breach requiring the breach to be remedied (if capable of remedy) within a period specified in the notice, not being later than three months. If the breach has not been remedied before the expiry of the specified period, the party not in breach may then terminate the Agreement under Paragraph 17.1.

16.3 Service of a remedy notice under Paragraph 17.2 in respect of this Agreement shall not prejudice the rights of the party serving it in respect of any further breach by the other party arising before or after the date of service of the notice.

17. DEFAULT

17.1 If at any time during this Agreement the Organisation is in breach of any of its obligations contained in this letter the Department shall be under no obligation to make any payment or further payment to funding and the Organisation shall, on demand, repay to the Department the full amount of the funding or such proportion thereof as the Department may at its discretion determine.

18. ACCOUNTS AND INSPECTION

18.1 The Organisation shall maintain separate accounts for all costs associated with this appointment. These accounts shall be retained for at least 7 years from the end of the financial year in which the last payment was made under this Agreement.

18.2 The Organisation shall permit duly authorised staff or agents of the Department or the Northern Ireland Audit Office to examine the accounts and other records at any reasonable time and shall furnish suitable oral or written explanation(s) if required. The Department reserves the right to have such staff or agents carry out the examinations into the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which the Organisation has used the Department resources in the performance of this Agreement. The Organisation shall have regard to the need for economy in all expenditure.

19. FORCE MAJEURE

19.1 Notwithstanding anything that is contained in this Agreement, neither party shall be liable for delay or failure to perform any obligation under the Agreement in so far as the performance of such obligation is prevented by an industrial dispute or by any other causes which are beyond the reasonable control of the affected party.

Signed: 

Name: RAYMOND KELLY

TITLE: Principal Officer, Skills Initiatives

(On behalf of the Department for the Economy)

Date: 29/03/2024

FORM OF ACCEPTANCE 2024:

Multiply Officer as detailed in ANNEX A

The foregoing offer of financial assistance as outlined in Letter of Offer dated 29 March 2024 is hereby accepted by Mid Ulster Council on the terms and conditions stated.

Signed:

Name: (CAPITALS)

Position:

Date:

Signed:

Name: (CAPITALS)

Position:

Date:

Note: This form should be signed by two representatives of the Organisation, one of whom would be the Accounting Officer.

ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE

- I refer to the Organisation's recent proposals to avail of a Multiply Officer.
- I am pleased to advise that the Department is prepared to offer the following financial support:

£50,000

- This indicates the maximum funding support available to the Organisation for a Multiply Officer.
- This funding may be used to support a single individual or be spread across a number of individuals as per the Organisations requirements.
- Specific conditions relating to this grant are detailed below.

SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

The offer of funding is subject to the following conditions:

- Funding can only be used for a Multiply Officer within your organisation.

ANNEX B

CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

The Organisation will ensure the appointed Multiply Officer(s) work in line with the Department's Declaration of Customer Service Policy.

1. This statement formally acknowledges that the quality we provide is of the highest priority to all Department staff. Through effective teamwork and maximum co-operation between all our staff we seek to maximise the benefits to the community from the services we offer.

2. The Department is committed to ensuring that all services are made as accessible as possible to all who seek to use them.

3. Department staff are committed to assisting customers and clients and to demonstrating that they care about their needs.

4. Department staff will provide a competent, helpful and friendly service to the highest professional standards.

5. At all times Department staff will seek to demonstrate a flexible responsive attitude to all customers and clients.

6. This policy will apply to customers inside and outside the Department.

7. The Department is committed to deliver and manage all its services and programmes in a way which is consistent with the policy of the Department for the Economy to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;

- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

The Department for the Economy is committed to delivering a quality service to its customers and to this end a customer complaints process has been put in place which is available at:

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/dfe-complaints-procedure>

MULTIPLY



Department for the

Economy

An Roinn

Geilleagair

www.economy-ni.gov.uk

Adrian McCreesh
Mid Ulster District Council
Circular Road
Dungannon
BT71 6DT

Adelaide House
39-49 Adelaide Street
Belfast BT2 8FD
Email: multiply@economy.gov.uk

20 May 2024

Dear Adrian

MULTIPLY PROJECT- LETTER OF OFFER

Thank you for your recent proposal(s) regarding Multiply. As you are aware, we have been working with your staff to identify a range of initiatives to support the UK Governments Multiply agenda. The programme requires these initiatives to be developed and delivered at pace, and I would like to thank your team for the time and effort they have put in to date.

This letter of offer contains an allocation for delivery of eleven proposals submitted to the Multiply Project during the period May 2024 to March 2025.

Funding will be paid out in two parts, with 50% up front on receipt of an invoice for costs. The remaining 50% will be paid upon completion, following any assurance and compliance checks, and will be paid out on receipt of an invoice for all related costs submitted upon completion of delivery and no later than end of March 2025.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raymond Kelly".

Raymond Kelly



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UP**

MULTIPLY



Department for the

Economy

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MULTIPLY PROJECT PROPOSALS

Mid Ulster District Council

Letter of Offer

20 May 2024



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AGREEMENT

1. PARTIES

1.1 This Agreement is made between:

(a) the DEPARTMENT FOR THE ECONOMY, and hereinafter called the “Department”; and

(b) Mid Ulster District Council and hereinafter known as the “Organisation”

2. DETAILS OF THE PROJECT

2.1 The total funding allocation for the Organisation for financial year 2024/25 is:

£208,115.00

2.2 The Department will fund the Organisation to a maximum funding limit, set out in 2.3 to deliver eleven initiatives for the Multiply Project.

2.3 This funding will be used to support the following proposal(s) in Financial Year 2024/25:

Intervention	Initiative	Maximum funding	Targeted number of participants
Bring Your Grown Up	Family Fun Days	£48,265.00	60-90
Counting on You – Industry Upskilling	Enhanced Learning for Industry	£20,500.00	15
Counting on You – Industry Upskilling	Gamified Learning - Numeracy	£31,000.00	20
Engaging Mature Learners - Making it Count	Financial Planning for Retirement Drop In days	£16,000.00	20

Intervention	Initiative	Maximum funding	Targeted number of participants
Engaging Mature Learners - Making it Count	Financial Planning for Retirement Workshops	£7,900.00	30
MSOL	Financial Wellbeing Workshops for Speakers of Other Languages	£18,625.00	18-30
Numeracy Boot Camps	Health and Nutrition 1-1 Bootcamps	£11,800.00	10
Numeracy Boot Camps	Health and Nutrition Small Group Workshops	£18,380.00	42-56
Numeracy Boot Camps	Financial Wellbeing 1-1 Bootcamps	£9,840.00	15
Numeracy Boot Camps	Financial Wellbeing 1-1 Workshops	£16,555.00	24-40
Numeracy Boot Camps	Money Matters Workshops	£9,250.00	18-30

2.4 The main objective of the programme is to empower adults with the skills and knowledge they need to achieve personal growth, financial wellbeing and social engagement. By providing accessible and engaging learning opportunities, the initiative aims to break down barriers to learning and empower individuals to take charge of their lives. By fostering a supportive learning environment and addressing numeracy, financial literacy and essential life skills the initiative aims to contribute to a more empowered and inclusive community in Northern Ireland where individuals can learn, grow and develop the skills they need to navigate everyday challenges.

2.5 If there is a requirement to change the maximum funding limit, or re-profile funding between initiatives, the Organisation must formally submit a request to

the Department, setting out why this change is required. An updated Letter of Offer will then be issued.

3. DURATION OF AGREEMENT

3.1 This Agreement covers the period from date of signature to 31 March 2025, unless otherwise determined in accordance with this Agreement.

4. ORGANISATION'S STATUS

4.1 In carrying out its obligations under this Agreement:

- the Organisation is not acting as the agent of the Department;
- In other respects, the Organisation shall enter into Agreement with third parties as principal and not as agent of the Department; and
- Accordingly, shall not do or say anything that might lead any person to believe that the Organisation is acting as agent of the Department.

4.2 Nothing in this Agreement shall render the Department liable to indemnify the Organisation in respect of any liability of any kind incurred by them, but this disclaimer shall not be taken to exclude or limit any liability of the Department to the Organisation that may arise, by virtue of a breach of this Agreement by the Department, or any negligent act or omission on the part of the Department, its staff, or agents.

5. ORGANISATION'S OBLIGATIONS

5.1 The Organisation shall carry out the project in accordance with the provisions of **Annexes A and B**. The Annexes to this Agreement shall be deemed to be incorporated in and form part of this Agreement.

5.2 The Organisation shall agree to give publicity to the Department's primary role in and support of the programme and to have early and prior consultations with the Department about any publicity, publications or public announcements associated with the programme.

6. INSURANCE

6.1 The Organisation shall affect and maintain policies of insurance against all risks and to the value such as a prudent Organisation carrying out similar business would normally insure, and shall produce a policy of such insurance, duly written up to date to the Department, on demand.

7. OBSERVANCE OF LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

7.1. The Organisation shall not do or permit anything to be done which might cause a breach or infringement of the laws and regulations of Northern Ireland in the performance of this Agreement.

7.2 Without prejudice to Paragraph 7.1 in carrying out this Agreement, the Organisation shall comply with all applicable fair employment, equality of treatment and anti-discrimination legislation, including, in particular, the Employment (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 and 1988, the Equal Pay Act (Northern Ireland) 1970, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997, the Employment Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 2004, the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (NI) 2006 and the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 and shall use its best endeavours to ensure that in its employment policies and practices and in the delivery of the services required of the Organisation under this agreement, it has due regard to the need to promote equality of treatment and opportunity between:

- persons of different religious beliefs or political opinions;
- men and women or married and unmarried persons;
- persons with and without dependants (including women who are pregnant or on maternity leave and men on paternity leave);
- persons of different racial groups (within the meaning of the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997);
- persons with and without a disability (within the meaning of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995);
- persons of different ages; and

- persons of differing sexual orientation.

7.3 The Organisation shall take all reasonable steps to ensure the observance of the provisions of the above Paragraph 7.2 by all servants, agents, employees, consultants and sub-contractors of the Organisation.

7.4 Where any of the Organisation's obligations under this Agreement are carried out by sub-Contractors, the Organisation shall take reasonable steps to ensure that in carrying out those obligations the sub-Contractors comply with the provisions of Paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2.

7.5 This Agreement shall in all respects be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of Northern Ireland and the parties hereby agree that the Courts of Northern Ireland shall have exclusive jurisdiction to hear and determine any disputes arising out of or in connection with this Agreement.

7.6 The Organisation shall not, without the prior consent in writing of the Department, assign or transfer this Agreement or any part, share or interest in it.

7.7 The Organisation shall, with regard to personal data collected in arranging and managing the initiatives, be expected to adhere to the requirements of the Data Protection Act (DPA) and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

8. DfE CONTACT

8.1 Skills Division shall act on behalf of the Department, to oversee the project. Therefore any queries should be addressed to the mailbox at multiply@economy-ni.gov.uk

9. PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND MONITORING

9.1 The Organisation shall maintain records to monitor expenditure covering aspects of the aims, objectives, activities and output of this programme (both the full-time and part-time cohorts).

- 9.2 The Organisation shall use its best endeavours to carry out each initiative's activities within the duration of the agreement as set out in Paragraph 2.1.
- 9.3 The Organisation shall complete and submit monitoring reports to the Department, in the format requested and within required time scales.
- 9.4 The Organisation shall seek permission from participants to share their post code, age bracket and their existing level of mathematics qualification with the Department. Where the initiative offers a qualification, the Organisation shall also seek permission from the participant to share their achievements with the Department. This information will be used to report back to funding providers, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

10. REVIEW AND CONTRACT

- 10.1 The Organisation shall obtain the Department's written consent to any proposed changes to each of the Initiatives (including but not limited to start/end dates of the Initiative, individual activities and associated costs).

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 11.1 This Agreement and the terms and conditions contained therein shall be treated as confidential by the Organisation and should not be disclosed to any other person without the prior consent of the Department. The Department will not disclose any information relating to this Agreement, unless it is legally obliged to do so in order to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or any other legal obligation.

12. CORRUPT GIFTS OR PAYMENTS

- 12.1 The Organisation shall not offer or give, or agree to give, to any person any gift or consideration of any kind as any inducement or reward for doing or refraining from doing, or having done or refrained from doing, any act in relation to the obtaining or execution of this or any other Agreement for His Majesty's Service or for showing or refraining from showing any favour or disfavour to any person in relation to this or any such Agreement.

13. FUNDING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

13.1 For the purpose of securing the Start Payment (the Start Payment will be to the value of 50% of the maximum value for each initiative as listed in 2.3). The Organisation will invoice the Department following receipt of this signed letter of offer. The invoice will be itemised to show monies claimed against each initiative.

13.2 Completion payments will be to the value of 50% of the maximum value for each initiative listed at 2.3. The final payment will only be submitted following any assurance and compliance checks required by the Department are completed in discussion with the organisation.

13.3 Funding will be claimed from the Department via invoices, including detail of where the payment claim has been reduced to take account any cohorts which are not delivered.

13.4 To safeguard funding as part of the compliance process, the Department shall, review the delivery documents, in order to confirm that the cohorts were delivered.

14. RECOVERY OF SUMS DUE

14.1 If the Department finds after inspection or checking of claims that an overpayment has occurred, this money will be recovered from the Organisation.

15. FUNDING REVIEW

15.1 In respect of funding, if, at any time, the Organisation considers that it will be unable to spend any or all of the funding allocated, or identifies a possible overspend, it should declare this to the Department at the earliest possible date.

15.2 If at any stage during the course it is deemed that the planned outcomes are unlikely to be achieved, the Department has the right to reconsider the level of funding in line with the revised outcomes, e.g. on an apportionment basis. In

this event, the Department will consult the Organisation prior to finalising any amendments.

16. BREACH

16.1 Either party may terminate this Agreement with immediate effect in the event of a material breach of any of its terms by the other party. Such termination shall not affect any rights which the party terminating the Agreement may have against the other party in consequence of the breach.

16.2 In the event of a breach of any term of this Agreement the party not in any breach may, as an alternative to immediate termination, serve a notice on the party in breach requiring the breach to be remedied (if capable of remedy) within a period specified in the notice, not being later than three months. If the breach has not been remedied before the expiry of the specified period, the party not in breach may then terminate the Agreement under Paragraph 17.1.

16.3 Service of a remedy notice under Paragraph 17.2 in respect of this Agreement shall not prejudice the rights of the party serving it in respect of any further breach by the other party arising before or after the date of service of the notice.

17. DEFAULT

17.1 If at any time during this Agreement the Organisation is in breach of any of its obligations contained in this letter the Department shall be under no obligation to make any payment or further payment to funding and the Organisation shall, on demand, repay to the Department the full amount of the funding or such proportion thereof as the Department may at its discretion determine.

18. ACCOUNTS AND INSPECTION

18.1 The Organisation shall maintain separate accounts for any and all initiatives, whether online or in-person, associated with this programme. These accounts shall be retained for at least 7 years from the end of the financial year in which the last payment was made under this Agreement.

18.2 The Organisation shall permit duly authorised staff or agents of the Department or the Northern Ireland Audit Office to examine the accounts and other records at any reasonable time and shall furnish suitable oral or written explanation(s) if required. The Department reserves the right to have such staff or agents carry out the examinations into the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which the Organisation has used the Department resources in the performance of this Agreement. The Organisation shall have regard to the need for economy in all expenditure.

19. FORCE MAJEURE

19.1 Notwithstanding anything that is contained in this Agreement, neither party shall be liable for delay or failure to perform any obligation under the Agreement in so far as the performance of such obligation is prevented by an industrial dispute or by any other causes which are beyond the reasonable control of the affected party.

Signed: 

Name: RAYMOND KELLY

TITLE: Principal Officer, Skills Initiatives

(On behalf of the Department for the Economy)

Date: 20/05/2024

FORM OF ACCEPTANCE 2024:

Various online courses listed in ANNEX A

The foregoing offer of financial assistance as outlined in Letter of Offer dated 20 May 2024 is hereby accepted by Mid Ulster District Council on the terms and conditions stated.

Signed:

Name: (CAPITALS)

Position:

Date:

Signed:

Name: (CAPITALS)

Position:

Date:

Note: This form should be signed by two representatives of the Organisation, normally the Accounting Officer and Head of Training.

ANNEX A

ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE

- I refer to the Organisation's recent proposals for the Multiply Project.
- I am pleased to advise that the Department is prepared to offer the following financial support:

£208,115.00

- This indicates the maximum funding support available to the Organisation for the delivery of the initiative(s) outlined.
- As the funding is based on many different costings throughout the duration of the programme e.g. material costs and facilitation costs, the actual funding may be less than the total funding available if all are not utilised.
- Specific conditions relating to this grant are detailed below.

SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

The offer of funding is subject to the following conditions:

- Funding is delivery based and payment will be made on the Organisation's delivery of the proposals, which have been approved by the Department. The Organisation must seek prior approval for any material change to the proposal.

ANNEX B

CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

The Organisation will organise and run each programme in line with the Department's Declaration of Customer Service Policy:

1. This statement formally acknowledges that the quality we provide is of the highest priority to all Department staff. Through effective teamwork and maximum co-operation between all our staff we seek to maximise the benefits to the community from the services we offer.

2. The Department is committed to ensuring that all services are made as accessible as possible to all who seek to use them.

3. Department staff are committed to assisting customers and clients and to demonstrating that they care about their needs.

4. Department staff will provide a competent, helpful and friendly service to the highest professional standards.

5. At all times Department staff will seek to demonstrate a flexible responsive attitude to all customers and clients.

6. This policy will apply to customers inside and outside the Department.

7. The Department is committed to deliver and manage all its services and programmes in a way which is consistent with the policy of the Department for the Economy to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group,
- age, marital status or sexual orientation;

- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

The Department for the Economy is committed to delivering a quality service to its customers and to this end a customer complaints process has been put in place which is available at:

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/dfe-complaints-procedure>

APPENDIX 6
Summary of Multiply Programme Initiatives

Intervention	Initiative	Max funding	Target number of participants
Bring Your Grown Up	<p>Family Fun Days 6 Family Fun Days across the district, during the summer in council parks and forests with a 'Numeracy' theme – crystal maze/escape rooms style central activity to complete along with general numeracy games such as connect 4, place value toss, snakes and ladders, mini golf – some games to be adult only to ensure interaction. Team will need to include at least 1 adult with key elements of tasks requiring an adult to complete.</p>	£48,265	60-90
Counting on You – Industry Upskilling	<p>Enhanced Learning for Industry Access to accredited and CPD/non accredited (via Open University) qualifications in subjects such Computerised Bookkeeping, Computerised Payroll, Digital Marketing, SEO, Data Analytics etc to upskill those within industry.</p>	£20,500	15
Counting on You – Industry Upskilling	<p>Gamified Learning – Numeracy Gamified Essential Skills Courses providing a new learning experience using novel digital technologies and/or Virtual Reality technology. Participants are assessed at the start of the course to determine current level of knowledge and are entered into the appropriate level - Entry Level 3, Level 1 (equivalent to a GCSE D), Level 2 (equivalent to a GCSE C).</p>	£31,000	20
Engaging Mature Learners - Making it Count	<p>Financial Planning for Retirement Drop In days Drop in Days in each of the 5 main towns providing access to relevant support agencies and providers of financial planning and budgeting for retirement. Support agencies/providers will take stands and be available throughout the event to speak to attendees face to face.</p>	£16,000	20

	<p>Speakers will present on following at preset times for allow residents to plan when and how long they would like to stay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budgeting for retirement including pensions, cost of living, shopping, nutrition and recipes, - Online banking and fraud awareness. - Financial planning for retirement including life insurance, funeral cover, power of attorney, and wills. <p>Community transport will be provided to bring people to and from the event and refreshments will be served throughout the day.</p>		
Engaging Mature Learners - Making it Count	<p>Financial Planning for Retirement Workshops</p> <p>Providing relevant speakers to 6 local Age Friendly groups across the district, delivering key speaker presentations relating to financial wellbeing for Over 50s (one per month on following 3 areas)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budgeting for retirement including pensions, cost of living, shopping, nutrition and recipes - Online banking and fraud awareness - Financial planning for retirement including life insurance, funeral cover, power of attorney, and wills. 	£7,900	30
MSOL	<p>Financial Wellbeing Workshops for Speakers of Other Languages</p> <p>Small Group Financial Wellbeing workshops to assist with budgeting, shopping and recipes, debt management and benefits and income, UK tax system for employees provided over 4 weekly sessions</p> <p>To be held in 3 locations across the district</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each location will target a different ethnic group - Appropriate translation services provided 	£18,625	18-30
Numeracy Boot Camps	<p>Health and Nutrition 1-1 Bootcamps</p> <p>1-1 training session from a personal trainer as well as tailored advice on nutrition, measuring and tracking, using calorie apps.</p> <p>15 participants over 10 weekly sessions.</p>	£11,800	10

<p>Numeracy Boot Camps</p>	<p>Health and Nutrition Small Group Workshops 4 week programme delivering Small Group 45 min coaching session followed by speakers on the following topics. - Nutrition and Calorie counting - Recipe planning including how to scale up and down - Planning your food shopping for healthy eating - Monitoring Weight, apps to help, planning ahead To be held in 4 MUDC Leisure Centres plus a venue within Clogher Valley (to be confirmed as no Leisure Centre available), as well as 2 walking tracks at MUSA and Gortgonis, and will work closely with the designated Leisure teams in each venue.</p>	<p>£18,380</p>	<p>42-56</p>
<p>Numeracy Boot Camps</p>	<p>Financial Wellbeing 1-1 Bootcamps 1-1 support for 15 individuals already struggling to manage finances - Detailed assessment of income and outgoings - Budgeting advice - Individual plan on how to manage finances better - Debt management, understanding loans and credit cards - Meal planning, nutrition, and shopping calculations Referrals primarily from Food Banks and community groups but open to everyone who is eligible - Initial assessment. - In-depth budget and income assessment with recommendations on how to manage money more effectively. - 3 x follow up sessions to continue to support implementing improvements.</p>	<p>£9,840</p>	<p>15</p>
<p>Numeracy Boot Camps</p>	<p>Financial Wellbeing 1-1 Workshops 4 weekly workshop sessions to be held in 3 locations across the district: Week 1 - budgeting: household bills, Week 2 - budgeting: shopping and nutrition Week 3 - benefits and income check Week 4 - Managing debt and understanding loans and credit cards</p>	<p>£16,555</p>	<p>24-40</p>

Numeracy Boot Camps	Money Matters Workshops Small Group Financial planning workshops to assist with understanding finance, pension planning, loans to be held as evening workshops across 3 weeks: Week 1 - Savings Pension Planning at the various stages of life Week 2 - Mortgage and Loans Week 3 - Understanding the implications of debt including credit rating To be held in 3 locations across the district Evening sessions to suit those in work	£9,250	18-30
	Total Operational funding	£208,115	

APPENDIX 7

Maghera Regeneration Programme

Maghera Public Realm
Concept design for illustration purposes only

Issue 1: May 2024

Welcome to the first community update for the Maghera Regeneration Programme.

We're excited to share details of this £10 million project, funded by the UK Government through its Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' Levelling Up Fund, along with support from Mid Ulster District Council.

The Maghera Regeneration Programme consists of three key projects that will revitalise Maghera:

1) A New Town Centre Look:

We're sprucing up the heart of Maghera with a fresh Public Realm Scheme, making it a more attractive and enjoyable place to shop, stroll, and spend time with family. This involves new paving, street lighting, tree planting, and street furniture.

The Public Realm Scheme is the first of the three projects to begin, with local contractors CivCo Ltd appointed in March 2024. The work will be carried out over the next 12 to 18 months, rejuvenating the town centre.

The scheme covers Main Street and extends to:

- Coleraine Road
- Station Road
- Meeting House Avenue
- Tirkane Road
- Church Street
- Glen Road
- Hall Street
- Bank Square
- St Lurach's Road

2) Business Park Development:

The former High School site will be redeveloped into a modern Business Park, creating new job opportunities, and providing local businesses with space to grow.

3) Wetland Park Creation:

This new park will offer a peaceful escape for residents and visitors, with nature walks and spaces for family outings.

The Maghera Regeneration Programme aims to enhance the social, cultural, environmental and economic wellbeing of Maghera, creating a vibrant and thriving community.



Funded by
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**LEVELLING
UP**



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



Maghera Business Park
 Concept design for illustration purposes only

Maghera Business Park:

This part of the Regeneration Programme will provide serviced sites for local businesses to grow and thrive. It's also designed to attract new businesses, creating high-quality jobs, and boosting employment in the area.

Right now, the plans for the Business Park are with the Department of Infrastructure, and we're waiting an outcome. Stay tuned for more updates!

Maghera Wetlands Park:

We're also planning a beautiful Wetlands Park, which will bring more green spaces and fun places to relax for both residents and visitors. This new park will give everyone more chances to socialise and enjoy the outdoors, leading to better health and well-being.

Right now, a design team is working on how the park will look. Once they have the concept ready, you'll be able to see



Maghera Wetlands Park
 Concept design for illustration purposes only

the designs at the Maghera Leisure Centre (date to be announced).

Stay Updated on Maghera Regeneration Programme

The Regeneration Programme has three big projects, and they'll continue to develop in the coming months. We'll keep you informed through regular social media posts and website updates, so be sure to stay tuned. We look forward to seeing the changes this investment will bring to Maghera and its surrounding area - together, we can create a vibrant community for future generations.

If you'd like to know more about the Programme or have any questions, you can contact us at:

- ☎ 03000 132 132
- ✉ info@midulstercouncil.org
- 🌐 www.midulstercouncil.org/magheraregenerationprogramme

SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM AND STRATEGIC PROGRAMMES DEPARTMENT 2023/24

This Report provides an overview of the comprehensive range of work delivered across the Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes section in 2023/2024 and details some of the year's highlights and initiatives delivered under each of the four key Themes of the Council's Economic Development Strategy, 'Our Plan for Growth' and Council's Tourism Strategy.

THEME 1: ENABLING ECONOMIC GROWTH

Go Succeed Programme



Go Succeed Start Up (Engage and Foundation) & Go for It

Go For It ended September 2023 with the new Go Succeed provision then commencing, **433** clients had accessed enterprise support.

Growth and Scaling Support for existing businesses and social enterprises from November 2023:

200 Mid Ulster businesses have been engaged to receive support to grow and scale

203 Mid Ulster businesses attended **22** growth focused events

Digital Transformation Flexible Fund



11-Council Regional Launch of Digital Transformation Flexible Fund Programme (Nov 2023)

The Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF) is the first cross-City/Growth deal bid to be awarded funding (£6M) under the first tranche, managed on an 11-Council basis. It offers up to 70% (or up to £20,000) of project costs towards capital equipment aligned to 6 advanced digital technologies:

Smart technologies (Internet of Things) | Process Automation | Big data and Analytics
 Immersive Technologies | Artificial Intelligence | Blockchain Technologies.

Council officers are promoting DTFF and engaging with businesses to progress applications to maximise uptake from the region.

Call 1

The DTFF was formally launched with Call 1 opened in November 2023. Mid Ulster Council area had the joint (with Belfast) highest number of applications (14) with 12 businesses being offered funding as below:

Total Project Value	DTFF Fund	12 Businesses Match Funding
£305,622.94	£204,736	£100,886.88

Call 2

Opened March. Of the Stage 1 (Expressions of Interest) 11 Councils’ total of 154 submitted, Mid Ulster businesses accounted for 29 of these (highest of all Council areas at 18%).

Business Support Programmes 2019-2023

(Funded by European Regional Development Fund, Invest NI and Mid Ulster District Council)

Launched in August 2020, the four Business Programmes, namely; (1) Gearing for Growth; (2) Digital First; (3) Tender Ready and (4) Transform, were designed to build the capacity, resilience and growth prospects of 690 Mid Ulster micro and small businesses (<49 employees) to December 2022.

An Independent Evaluation (completed Sept 2023) confirmed:

Total Investment £1.128M for 4 Business Programmes

Mid Ulster District Council	£225,760 (20%)
Invest NI	£225,760 (20%)
ERDF Investment for Growth & Jobs	£677,280 (60%)

Results

- 2992 days support delivered to 714 businesses
- 12 events delivered to 680 participants
- 344 new jobs created – valued at £7.33M
- 32 businesses won new work of £28.45M
- Businesses supported to access £1.274M
- 57 businesses accepted as Invest NI Quality Referrals
- 31 Mid Ulster businesses offered £1.015M from Invest NI’s Ambition to Grow Fund
- Total Investment (Council | EU ERDF | Invest NI) £1.128M
- Total Economic Impact £37.054M
- A Celebration event to promote the results of the Programmes, coupled with the Local Launch of the Go Succeed Programme was held in the Burnavon Theatre, Cookstown on 17 May 2024 with a wide range of invited stakeholders.



These Programmes were part funded by Invest Northern Ireland and the European Regional Development Fund under the Investment for Growth and Jobs Northern Ireland (2014-2020) Programme and Mid Ulster District Council.

Mid South West Net Zero Project

In July 2023, funding of **£300,000** from Innovate UK was secured by the Mid South West (MSW) region to assist local businesses in their transition towards achieving Net Zero emissions.

The 'Driving Net Zero Transformation of the Mid South West Region' project will offer up to 90 businesses from across the region the opportunity to baseline their current emissions and develop an action plan that will support them in working towards transitioning to, and ultimately achieving net zero. The project will also seek to raise awareness of Net Zero and enable knowledge transfer to a wider range of businesses across the region.



Mid Ulster Enterprise Week 2023 (Monday 13 – Friday 17 November 2023)



To mark Global Entrepreneurship Week 2023, Mid Ulster District Council's fifth Enterprise Week took place from Monday 13 November to Friday 17 November 2023. The week's theme was *Challenge, Adapt, Succeed* in today's ever evolving economic landscape. There were six in-person events and five online free events. The week was launched with 'AI Uncovered – The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Business'; a topical panel discussion hosted by UTV's Paul Clark with 3 expert speakers.

Followed by a wide range of topical events and speakers which brought a variety but also a clear relevance to the needs of the local business community and this was reflected in the attendance levels and types of businesses who engaged across the week, with a total of 700 people attending the programme of events.

Council's Business Ezine Service

Over the year, Council have issued 42 comprehensive ezines to businesses registered on Council's Business Directory. The ezine provides valuable up to date information to businesses across the district. These ezines include details on funding opportunities, changes in business legislation, as well as networking / capacity building events, and other sources of support from recognized business organisations..

THEME 2: ENABLING SKILLS & EMPLOYABILITY

Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP)

The Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) is focused on improving Mid Ulster's employability outcomes and labour market conditions by working with a wide range of partners, being flexible to meet local needs and helping to connect employers with employees.



Following delivery of the 2022-23 Action Plan which completed in December 2023, the Partnership received £386k funding from the Department for Communities to deliver the 2023/24 Mid Ulster LMP Action Plan. This funding support enables Mid Ulster LMP to develop and implement a range of targeted projects and initiatives aimed at directly impacting the local labour market by bringing unemployed or economically inactive constituents back into work or assisting in upskilling or reskilling those at risk of redundancy.

Such initiatives included a HGV/PCV Academy alongside four Sectoral Academies which offer a range of routes back to employment whilst providing one to one mentoring and support in



employability skills and guaranteed job interviews. In addition, the LMP engaged with a number of local employers to raise awareness and understanding of the special needs of people with disabilities and those out of the labour market for a period of time due to caring responsibilities, and how to bring them back into the workforce to fill skills and labour shortages within Mid Ulster industry.

A range of events including job fairs, career events and employer support and training have also been delivered to over 1,000 participants supporting residents across the skills and employability arena and the LMP are currently developing an Employer Toolkit to assist local businesses understand the issues within the labour market and help them react positively to challenges.



The 2022-23 Action Plan resulted in 155 residents gaining employment and a celebration event was held in November 2023 to recognise the achievements of participants and employers. To date **45 participants** are in employment due to initiatives within the 2023-24 Action Plan.



THEME 3: ENABLING URBAN & RURAL REGENERATION

Maghera Regeneration Project

The Council has successfully secured £9.1m from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' Levelling Up Fund to support the regeneration of Maghera to include a town centre Public Realm Scheme, the redevelopment of the former High School site as a Business Park and the creation of a Wetland Park.

The Council has also committed a substantial amount of additional funding to support regeneration, resulting in a total investment of over £10m in Maghera and its surrounding area.

The overall programme has three core project elements:

- **Town Centre Public Realm Scheme**
- **Maghera Business Park**
- **Maghera Wetland Park.**

Town Business Spruce Up Scheme

Funding to the value of £200,000 was secured from Department of Communities to deliver a Town Business Spruce Up Scheme to eligible commercial properties located within the town centre boundary of each of the towns (Coalisland, Cookstown and Dungannon as per Area Plan 2010; and Magherafelt as per Area Plan 2015).

Letters of Offer have been issued to 67 successful applicants. Further engagement is ongoing with the Department of Communities to seek additional funding for the remaining 50 schemes, which met the criteria, but had to be placed on a reserve list until Council ascertains if DFC will provide additional funding to allow these schemes to progress.

Mid Ulster Gift Card

There are currently 226 businesses across the District registered to participate and accept the Mid Ulster Gift Card.

This includes Council leisure facilities and cultural venues. Registrations continue to increase, with over £78,000 being uploaded onto the gift cards, to be spent in participating businesses across the district. Mid Ulster Gift Cards can be collected free of charge from Ranfurly House, Dungannon, The Burnavon, Cookstown and The Bridewell in Magherafelt. A consumer simply chooses the value this wish to spend and upload the value by visiting www.midulstergiftcard.com. Alternatively, consumers can also purchase online at the same website address.



International Women's Events 2024

To celebrate International Women's Day 2024, Mid Ulster District Council hosted two sold out events at the Royal Hotel, Cookstown and the Ryandale Inn, Moy with a total of 258 attending.

The first event took place on Wednesday 6 March 2024 at the Royal Hotel with speakers Lynda Bryans, Journalist and Course Director at Belfast Metropolitan College and Jade Bradley, Burnout Recovery Specialist, Nutritionist and Health Coach.



The second event was held in the Ryandale Inn, Moy, on Wednesday 13 March 2024 with speakers, Vivian McKinnon, Award-Winning Public Speaker and Post Traumatic Growth Specialist and Tara Grimes, Nutritionist, and accredited Personal Trainer.

Representatives from Causeway and Mid Ulster Women's Aid also presented during both events, shedding



light on the substantial challenges the charity is confronting due to the increasing numbers of women seeking help. **£892.69** was donated the Causeway and Mid Ulster Women's Aid.

Theme: Town Centre Events



Roar Roar Dinosaur- Maghera Walled Garden 2023

Maghera Walled Garden was buzzing with excitement as families gathered for the Council's highly anticipated summer 2023 event with the theme being Roar Roar Dinosaur held on Saturday 09 September.

Families from the local community flocked to the garden to partake in an afternoon filled with dino-themed entertainment and activities.



Coalisland Summer Bash 2023

This event was developed to complement the Newell 10K and 5K event held within Coalisland on Sunday 28th May 2023. Over 1,000 people attended the event which encompassed free family fun activities.



Dungannon Halloween Event 2023

This event marked its nineteenth year taking place on Friday 27th October 2023 in Market Square, Dungannon. It is estimated that an audience of 3,000 attended throughout the evening. The programme of entertainment included face painters, balloon modellers, walk about characters, fire/LED performers, a range of Halloween workshops/activities along with on stage entertainment. To conclude the evening a ten-minute firework display took place.



Coalisland Halloween Event 2023

This was held on Tuesday 31st October 2023 at the Parochial Centre and Fr Peter Campbell Park (Coalisland Fianna G.F.C Grounds). The event provided family friendly activities with amusements for all to enjoy and fireworks to end the event. It is estimated that up 2,000 people attended the event throughout the evening. In the week leading up to this event there were community activities held at various locations throughout the town and surrounding area.

Christmas Programme of Events & Marketing Campaign 2023

The traditional Christmas Switch-On events were delivered in each town centre – Dungannon, Cookstown, Magherafelt, Coalisland and Maghera.

Cookstown Christmas Lights Switch

Friday 24th November 2023

It is estimated 3,500 people attended the Christmas Lights Switch on in Cookstown. The event took place from 6.30pm - 8.00pm and focused on providing the opportunity for local groups to be involved in the entertainment. Activities for the children included a gaming bus, arts and crafts, face painting, character walkabouts and selfie boards.



Dungannon Christmas Lights Switch On 2023 **Saturday 25th November 2023**

Dungannon Lights Switch On took place on Saturday 25th November commencing at 6pm until 8pm. The programme of entertainment included a mix of on stage and street entertainment with performances from a local Theatre Company, the Manhattan Swing band, walkabout characters, face painters, family fun activities. In partnership with Dungannon Town Traders, Santa arrived on a De-icer lorry into Market Square to switch on the Christmas Tree and festive lights along with the Council Chair. It is estimated that 2,000 people attended this event.



Magherafelt Christmas Lights Switch On 2023 **Saturday 25th November 2023**

Huge crowds attended the 2023 Christmas festivities in Magherafelt on Saturday 25th November.

For the first time, Market Square hosted a Children's Christmas Village where children met the Grinch, enjoyed Christmas crafts, musical performances, puppet shows and storytelling with Mrs Claus.

Free face painting also took place in the Bank of Ireland on Market Square which proved as popular as always, and live entertainment was on offer from local choirs, musicians, and popular walkabout characters.

The main event was Santa's arrival to switch on the Christmas lights with help from the Deputy Chair, with a finale firework display and marked the start of the festive season in Magherafelt.



Saturday 2nd December 2023 **Maghera Light Switch on 2023**

Maghera hosted its annual Christmas lights switch-on event. Santa Claus made his customary appearance at Maghera Walled Garden, where he interacted with children of all ages.

Prior to the light switch on, festivities took place at the Lurach Centre, with featured activities such as Christmas decoration making, face painting, and letter writing to Santa. Subsequently, Santa relocated to the Potting Shed at Maghera Walled Garden to greet the children. Throughout the event, friendly elves provided entertainment for attendees, while the garden was adorned with an impressive LED display and festive characters, creating an inviting backdrop for festive photographs.

The highlight of the evening was the official switch-on of the Christmas lights, led by Santa and Council Chair marking the commencement of the holiday celebrations in Maghera.



Coalisland Lights Switch On 2023

Sunday 3rd December 2023

The fourteenth annual Christmas event in partnership with CRAIC theatre saw Santa take up residence in a Grotto in the Cornmill Car Park on Sunday 3rd December 2023 where children could come, meet Santa and receive a free selection box. Entertainment and festive fun took place in the carpark of the Cornmill Centre throughout the afternoon with music by a DJ and a live band, Christmas walkabout characters along with a special appearance from the Craic Theatre's Pantomime. It was estimated that over 1,000 people attended this event.



Shop Local Campaign – Christmas 2023

To coincide with Christmas lights switch on a two week “Shop Local” campaign ran with both television and outdoor advertising. A TV Advert formed part of Mid Ulster Council’s Christmas Marketing Campaign to promote the ‘shop local’ message and encourage additional footfall in our main towns in the run up to Christmas. Airtime advertising for a 30 second TV advert run on UTV from 11th December to 22nd December 2023. This campaign also promoted the Mid Ulster Gift Card.

In addition to the Christmas Lights Switch On Events, entertainment was provided in the five main towns on three Saturdays before Christmas, to encourage shoppers to the towns. This included pop up entertainment in each town centre, along with local musicians playing.



Reduced Christmas Car Parking 2023 in Dungannon and Magherafelt

From Saturday 25 November there will be a return of the Christmas parking promotion at all Council owned pay and display car parks in both Mid Ulster towns. This campaign provides reduced car parking fees with 10p for the first three hours in Dungannon and Magherafelt, running up to Saturday 6 January 2024

THEME 4: ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE & CONNECTIVITY

Project Stratum

Project Stratum is the largest Full Fibre broadband project across NI. In Mid Ulster, it is on target to deliver broadband improvements to almost 13,000 rural premises. This is year 3 of a year roll out plan.

Strategic Transport Infrastructure

The A29 Cookstown Bypass has been progressed to Draft Orders Stage and Public Information Event. The Bypass is a key project under the MSW Growth Deal.

Council continues to lobby to ensure a bypass for Dungannon is included in the RSTNTP.

Council has lobbied for the reintroduction of rail in Mid Ulster. One of the recommendations in the All-Island Strategic Rail Review (AISRR) Report published in July 2023, is the reinstatement of the railway between Portadown, Dungannon, Omagh, Strabane, Derry~Londonderry, and Letterkenny which would bring significant economic benefits to the District.

Desertcreat Green Innovation Business Park

A Strategic Outline Case (SOC) was developed for the Desertcreat Industrial Lands Project. However, this project has now evolved into the Desertcreat Green Innovation Business Park and a Programme Business Case has commenced under the Mid South West Growth Deal.

Furthermore, the Council is a partner in a cross-border project, which received €250k funding through the Shared Island Local Authority Development Fund. All partners identified an undersupply of appropriately serviced and digitally connected green industrial lands and enterprise space as a common threat to sustainable long-term economic growth and an obstacle to SME innovation cluster development. As part of this project a Feasibility Report was completed for cross-border investment in industrial/enterprise space with border Councils including Monaghan (lead Council), Cavan, and Leitrim, as well as northern partner Councils in Fermanagh and Omagh and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon. The Report was submitted to the Department of the Taoiseach in November 2023.

Cookstown Market Scoping Study

Following an extensive process involving research and consultation, a detailed scoping study has been completed for Cookstown Saturday Market. The findings will inform the best way forward to sustain and rejuvenate a Cookstown Market.

TOURISM SECTION

THEME 1: PROGRAMMES

Sperrins Walking Programme

Sperrins Walking Programme, developed and delivered by The Sperrins Partnership and outdoor experts Far and Wild, appeals to a broad range of walkers to enjoy the beautiful landscape of the Sperrin AONB as well as promoting health, physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.

Participants enjoyed discovering a great choice of walks ranging from moderate ability to more demanding longer walks, all in small groups, guided by experienced leaders who helped to uncover the stories, history, environment, and heritage of this unique landscape.



The Mid Ulster walks over the weekend of 23rd and 24th September 2023 involved a moderate looped walk looking at adaptive plant species in the area around Davagh Forest (8km) and two challenging looped walks, one on Slieve Gallion including a prize for the best landscape photo (12km) and exploring place names on Carntogher (12km).

A stringent marketing and PR campaign raised the profile of the Sperrins and was delivered by Harriott Communications. It included a successful launch with Celia Daly on Slieve Gallion, Davagh Forest and local tour guide Cathy O'Neill featured on UTV Life, BBC Radio Foyle, regional press and social platforms.

Sperrins Sculpture Trail

The Sperrins Sculpture Trail Project consists of 3 iconic pieces of artwork positioned in spectacular settings within the Sperrins. The sculpture trail is designed to promote the natural and built heritage of the region and encourage rural tourism and out of state visitors whilst preserving the natural assets of the rural community.

This project is a working partnership between Derry City and Strabane District, Mid Ulster District Council and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council. The Sperrins Giant Sculptures - The Storyteller, The Guardian and The Stargazer have been installed at their respective sites. Works are now complete, and the official launch took place in July 2023.



Sperrins Partnership Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

The Sperrins are a defined Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, one of only eight in Northern Ireland and had been declared an AONB in 1968. The Sperrins Partnership Project (previously Sperrins Future Search) is a joint collaboration between 4 councils: Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, Derry City and Strabane District Council, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and Mid Ulster District Council. External funding has been secured through the DAERA Environment Fund Strategic Strand 2023 – 2028 to develop a Management Plan for the AONB.

An new Sperrins AONB Project Officer has been recruited and commenced on 20th November 2023. The post is fully funded through the DAERA Environment Fund. The AONB Officer will assist with developing the Management Plan and Action Plan. An AONB consultant has been appointed to undertake a 6-month consultation process with all key stakeholders and the public. The deadline for plan development is November 2025.

Experiential Mentor Programme

Lough Neagh Partnership were appointed by Mid Ulster District Council to spearhead a new initiative aimed at fostering the development and growth of tourism experiences in the Mid Ulster area. This new project showcased everything that is unique about the area, especially its people and their stories, family history, cultural traditions, and invaluable skills. From the Programme 3 strong experiences are being developed with the potential of becoming a TourismNI Embrace a Giant Spirit experience.

Brown Signage

The current tourism brown signage policy in Northern Ireland is implemented by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) in partnership with Tourism Northern Ireland (TNI). Brown signs are used as a traffic management tool to guide visitors to tourist destinations in a safe and sustainable manner. Council conducted a review of brown signage across the district between December 2022 and March 2023, noting what needs to be updated, made visible and implemented. All existing signs were surveyed, photographed, geo-located and placed on a google map link, allowing all photos of the signs to be identified at their actual geographic location.

SHARED ISLAND FUNDING

Feasibility Study to Develop Sliabh Beagh as an Eco-Tourism Destination

ORNI and partners were appointed by Monaghan County Council on behalf of the Sliabh Beagh Partnership Committee (comprising Mid Ulster District Council, Monaghan County Council and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council), to develop 7 work packages of projects to collectively enhance rural tourism and outdoor recreation provision. A feasibility study was undertaken to investigate options to develop Sliabh Beagh as an eco-



tourism destination through delivery of an exciting range of outdoor experiences that supports both the understanding and conservation of this special landscape. A number of inter-connected work packages were considered to build on the existing services and facilities in Sliabh Beagh area.

Tullaghoge Fort Feasibility Study

A successful application was made to Shared Island, made in partnership with Leitrim County Council, to complete a feasibility study which includes the creation of new pathways with interpretation at Tullaghoge Fort. Total funding awarded is 100% to the value of €20,000. The purpose of this project is to preserve, protect and transform the heritage of the Forts, research and increase awareness and understanding of the history the sites and examine the viability of introducing a new pathway.



THEME 2: BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

Tourism Business Engagement Workshops

Tourism hosted 6 business engagement tailored workshops, with on average 20 businesses attending each workshop to gain transferrable knowledge and skills. These included:

- Branding Guidelines – Understanding the Unwinding Time Brand
- Social media
- Canva
- Pricing for Success
- Recruiting and Retaining Staff
- Content Creation

Tourism WhatsApp Group

Established in response to the pandemic, membership of Mid Ulster WhatsApp group currently stands at 198 business representatives. It continues to highlight news, updates, and information in a fast and convenient manner for businesses, with organisations, such as, Tourism NI, NI Hotels Federation and Hospitality Ulster feeding into the group.

FAM Trips

FAM Trip Monday 26th February 2024

JAC Travels an International tour operator visited OM Dark Sky and Observatory and Seamus Heaney HomePlace. This was organised with Mid Ulster Council with Tourism NI through a sponsorship agreement with ITAO to support members on NI fam trips.

FAM trip Thursday 14 March 2024.

Five members of staff from the publicity and digital departments at Tourism Ireland joined teams from DCSDC, FODC and MUDC to experience the giant adventure of the Sperrins Sculpture Trail Project. The trip visited all three recycled sculptures by Thomas Dambo inspired by geological wonders and ancient heritage.

Once in our district the Tourism Ireland staff were guided through OM Dark Sky Park facilities. FAM trip attendees availed of hospitality over discussions about the light show before visiting the actual Giant sculpture.

Media Visits

Through Tourism Northern Ireland tourism organised media visits to Mid Ulster. Tourism NI's media team visited the district in February 2024. They visited Glenshane Country Farm, OM Dark Sky Park and Observatory, The Clogher Valley namely, St Patrick's Chair and Well and U.S. Grants Homestead. They also visited Ranfurly House and Hill of the O'Neill.

The trip was very successful in that it provided Tourism NI with greater product awareness, experience of on the ground practicalities, deeper/new relationships with suppliers, a greater relationship with Mid Ulster Council. All of which can be fed into TNI's media planning visits and to the wider industry.



World Host Training 2023

Tourism Development Officers delivered 'World Host' Principles of Customer Service training and World Host Ambassador training to Staff within Seamus Heaney HomePlace, Ranfurly House, Parks and Leisure Centres in 2023.

World Host training focuses on customer service skills that are vital to improve standards & service provision, to upskill staff & to compete in today's ever-changing environment. The practical aspects of the training delivery help to reinforce the benefits of excellent customer service to the employee, team, Council & the customer.

THEME 3: TOURISM CLUSTERS

Tourism Development Group (TDG)

The Tourism Development group is comprised of Council, business, education and training representatives and statutory agencies including Tourism NI. This group works alongside officers to manage the delivery of the Council Tourism Strategy and act as an advisory body for the industry.

The following clusters are subgroups who feed into the TDG:

- **Loughlinsholin Cluster (formerly Seamus Heaney Cluster)**

This cluster of 15 Tourism and Hospitality businesses continues to evolve and is progressing through the Invest NI Phase 2 Collaborative Growth Programme.

- **Clogher Valley Cluster**

The Clogher Valley Tourism Cluster (CVTC) had been successful in being awarded Invest NI Phase 1 Collaborative Growth Programme funding. This group comprised of Todds Leap (Lead Business), Blessingbourne Estate, The Valley Hotel, Corick House Hotel and The Forth Chapel. Runda Hospitality & Tourism Solutions were appointed as facilitator to implement work on Phase 1 of the Scoping Study and recruitment of other businesses in the Clogher Valley.

The Cluster were successful in receiving a Letter of Offer from Invest NI for Phase 2 of the Project. Again, facilitated by Runda Hospitality & Tourism Solutions team, the cluster is now working with a further 11 local businesses who are interested in advancing forward and becoming part of the Clogher Valley Tourism Development Programme.

- **Archaeology, History and Heritage**

Hidden Heritage Tours 2023 proved successful with very positive feedback.

The first tour to take place was Stars and Stones on 23 June at OM Dark Sky Park and Observatory and Beaghmore Stone Circles. There was a full house for this with Craic Theatre providing Living History at Beaghmore Stone Circles.

The next tour was on Saturday 8 July in the Clogher Valley featuring William Carleton and his connections, visiting Clogher Cathedral, The Forth Chapel and Carleton Cottage. Again, this tour was fully booked.

The final Hidden Heritage Tour took place on Saturday 30 September in Maghera. This was a walking tour visiting Maghera Heritage Centre, St Lurach's Church and the Walled Garden and other points of interest within the town.



European Heritage Open Days, September 2023

Over 17 properties across Mid Ulster opened their doors as part of European Heritage Open Days. The theme was 'Living Heritage' referring to the practices, knowledge and skills passed on through the generations and which are still being used today.

- U.S. Grant Homestead – Sunday 10th Sept, 4 tours took place with Mrs Simpson meeting approximately 70 visitors.
- The Bridewell – Sat 9th Sept had five fully booked tours in the Bridewell. Visitors were met by Mrs McKinley and the tour finished with a visit to the old graveyard to explore some of the gravestones and hear stories of those buried there. Magherafelt guided walking tours were also available.



Great Days Out

Great Days Out event took place in the Glenavon Hotel on Wed 18 October 2023. The event showcased the vast array of tourism businesses and experiences across the Mid Ulster District which can offer a range of day trip experiences and overnight stays. 25 Mid Ulster tourism businesses participated with some reporting back that they secured bookings from Group Organisers who attended the event.

Outdoor & Events Cluster

Maria McAlister, Tourism NI Interim Manager Landscapes and Activities, visited Mid Ulster to familiarise herself with outdoor product on offer and visited a range of businesses.

- Glenavon House Hotel,
- Todds Leap
- Blessingbourne Mountain Trails
- OM Dark Sky Park and Davagh Forest
- Splash NI
- Ballyronan Marina
- Good 2 Go Paddle Boarding



Bike

Ireland's Association for Adventure Tourism (IAAT)

A number of outdoor businesses were invited to attend Ireland's Association for Adventure Tourism (IAAT) in Derry/Londonderry on 29th September. The IAAT is the representative body for over 250 adventure activity tourism operators on the island of Ireland and provided an opportunity for our businesses to network with similar outdoor adventure businesses and discuss challenges/opportunities facing the sector.

Heritage Strategy and Map

Mid Ulster Heritage Strategy

A five-year Mid Ulster Heritage Strategy & Action Plan is nearing completion. The strategy highlights the heritage environment within Mid Ulster, with provides a range of proposed actions to enhance the visibility of the heritage offering within the region and foster greater community participation and visitor engagement in Mid Ulster's range of rich and diverse heritage.

Christmas Grotto at the Bridewell

Santa's Grotto turned the Bridewell into a festive experience in the heart of Magherafelt town and opened to coincide with the Magherafelt Christmas switch on. Running over 3 weekends and for a nominal of £6 children were able to:

- Write and post their letter to Santa
- Make magical reindeer food to take home
- Visit Santa in his Grotto and receive a small gift
- Have the opportunity to take their own photos.



fee

ASD/sensory friendly sessions were available also

THEME 4: MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Summer Marketing Campaign 2023 – focusing on Loughs and Shores, including Ballyronan, Heaney Open Ground, Splash and Lough Neagh Stories.

Autumn/Winter Marketing Campaign 2023 – Showcasing attractions, places to visit and accommodation reinforcing the brand message of unwinding time and directing traffic to the Visit Mid Ulster website and the autumn offers. There was a focus on the Stargazer, Ceoldán - Giant of the Sperrins in Davagh Forest.

Spring Marketing Campaign 2024

This campaign focused on 'Taste Mid Ulster' and on the launch of the first ever Taste Mid Ulster Food and Heritage event in Moy Village.

Launch of Taste Mid Ulster Cluster – Taste Mid Ulster Food and Heritage Event Moy Village

The event on 9/10 March 2024 in Moy, showcased local businesses, accompanied by live music and children's entertainment. A total of 19 traders attended the event here were live cookery demonstrations, and 13 music acts entertained onlookers across the two days. The event attracted over 3,300 customers over the weekend.



Taste Mid Ulster Market, Pomeroy

A further Taste Mid Ulster Market is planned for Pomeroy in June 2024. It is anticipated that 'Taste Mid Ulster' will become an annual event, rotating around areas within the district.

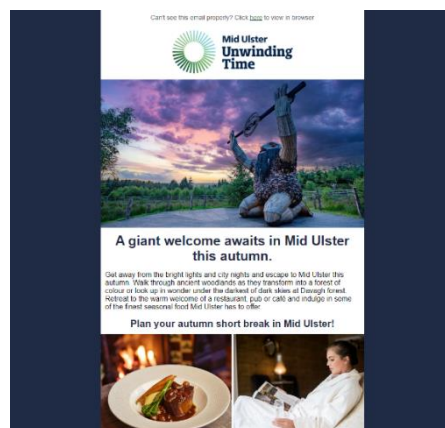
Building on the success of the first 'Taste Mid Ulster' it has been agreed it would be advantageous to re-instate a 'food' cluster which will become the 'Taste Mid Ulster' Cluster. MUDC officers are working to progress this and will provide updates in due course.

Tourism Newsletter

Trade Newsletter supplied to 380 tourism businesses and Visitor Newsletter issued to 300 visitors on a fortnightly basis. The newsletter incorporates the Unwinding Time brand which keeps brand consistency across all platforms. Visitors can sign up to the newsletter through our website. This has proved an excellent communication platform targeting both markets.



Trade Newsletter



Visitor Newsletter

HEADLINE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM AND STRATEGIC PROGRAMMES ACHIEVEMENTS 2023/24

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & STRATEGIC PROGRAMMES

The activities the Council's Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes sections have undertaken over the past 12 months have resulted in the achievement of some key outputs, which include:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & STRATEGIC PROGRAMMES

<p>v' £9.1M secured from Levelling Up Fund (LUF) to deliver a large capital regeneration project in Maghera.</p>
<p>v' 169 new jobs created through the Business Start Programme</p>
<p>v' ERDF Programme Evaluation (2019 – 2023)</p> <p>Total Investment £1.128M - Total Economic Impact £37.054M</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 344 new jobs created – valued at £7.33M o 32 businesses won new work of £28.45M o 57 businesses accepted as Invest NI Quality Referrals o 31 Mid Ulster businesses offered £1.015M from Invest NI's Ambition to Grow Fund
<p>v'NEW Go Succeed Enterprise Service (Start Up, Growth and Scaling)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Start Up (incl Go For It) - 433 clients accessed supported o Growth – 200 businesses recruited and receiving Growth support o 57 businesses accepted as Invest NI Quality Referrals o 31 Mid Ulster businesses offered £1.015M from Invest NI's Ambition to Grow
<p>Digital Transformation Flexible Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 12 businesses supported to access £204,736 funding for new digital technologies (+ business match funds £100,886 = total investment £305,622.94) o From Calls 1 & 2 Mid Ulster businesses accounted for the highest number of Applications (14 & 29 respectively)
<p>Mid South West (MSW) Net Zero Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Mid South West (MSW) Partnership secured £300,000 from Innovate UK's Fast Followers Programme to assist local businesses in their transition towards achieving Net Zero emissions
<p>Desertcreat Green Innovation Industrial Park</p> <p>A Strategic Outline Case (SOC) was developed for the Desertcreat Industrial Lands Project. However, this project has now evolved into the Desertcreat Green Innovation Industrial Park and a Programme Business Case has commenced under the Mid South West Growth Deal.</p>

Shared Island Funding

- A Feasibility Report was completed for cross-border investment in industrial/enterprise space with border Councils including Monaghan (lead Council), Cavan, and Leitrim, as well as northern partner Councils in Fermanagh and Omagh and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon. The report was submitted to the Department of the Taoiseach in November 2023.

v' Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP)

2022-23 Action Plan (delivered up to 31 December 2023)

Employment Outcomes:

- Sector Focused Employability Academies: **68**
- HGV/Coach Academy: **31**
- Employer Led Disability Inclusion Programme: **13**
- Registered Childminder Academy: **16**
- Careers Fairs: **25**
- Total employed as a result of 2022-23 initiatives: **153**

2023-24 Action Plan (on-going)

Employment Outcomes to date:

- HGV Academy: **7**
- Construction Academy: **7**
- Health and Social Care/Classroom Asst Academy: **6**
- Tourism and Hospitality Academy: **2**
- Female Returners: **5**
- Employer Led Disability Inclusion Programme: **8**
- Total employed to date as a result of 2023-24 initiatives: **28**

v' Mid Ulster Enterprise Week (13th – 17th November 2023)

- Over 700 people participated in Mid Ulster's fifth Enterprise Week.
- There were 11 free online and in-person events

v' Town Business Spruce Up Scheme

Phase 1 - 67 Letters of Offer issued to businesses.

Phase 2 – 50 further projects held on a Reserve List (pending funding bid to DFC)

TOURISM

<p>Sperrins Partnership AONB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>External funding has been secured through the DAERA Environmental Fund Strategic Strand 2023 – 2028 to develop a Management Plan for the AONB.</i>
<p>Shared Island Funding</p> <p>Feasibility study to develop Sliabh Beagh as an Eco-Tourism destination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sliabh Beagh Feasibility Study completed. <p>Tullaghoge Fort Feasibility Study completed</p>
<p>Visit Mid Ulster, Social Media and Marketing</p> <p>Social Media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>From 1st April 2023 – 27th March 2024, reach was up 18% on Facebook and 151.4% on Instagram. Visits were up 168% on Facebook and 106.4% on Instagram.</i>• <i>From 21st May 2023 – 16th March 2024 content interactions have gone up 186.7%.</i> <p>Visit Mid Ulster</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>From 1st April 2023 to 28th March 2024, 74k users, 73k new users, average engagement time 51 seconds, organic search was up to just over 40k.</i> <p>Spring Marketing Campaign 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The radio advertisement had impacts of 733,017 and reach of 317,611.</i> <p>Autumn/Winter Marketing Campaign 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The radio advertisement had impacts of 870,419 and reach of 330,929.</i> <p>Spring Marketing Campaign 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The radio advertisement had impacts of 1,788,569 and reach of 463,230.</i>
<p>Taste Mid Ulster, Moy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Over 3,300 people attended the event over the weekend 9th and 10th March 2024.</i>
<p>Business Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Fortnightly newsletter was distributed to 380 businesses and 300 visitors</i>• <i>Live WhatsApp engagement to 186 businesses.</i>• <i>Delivered six in-house business mentoring workshops in addition to Tourism NI's TED programme to 120 tourism businesses</i>• <i>Four active clusters with up to 50 businesses collaboratively working with Invest NI</i>• <i>Hosted six meetings with Tourism Development Group meetings.</i>