



16 March 2023

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Development Committee to be held in The Chamber, Magherafelt and by virtual means Council Offices, Ballyronan Road, Magherafelt, BT45 6EN on Thursday, 16 March 2023 at 19:00 to transact the business noted below.

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

Yours faithfully

Adrian McCreesh
Chief Executive

AGENDA

OPEN BUSINESS

1. Notice of Recording
This meeting will be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast on the Council's You Tube site [Live Broadcast Link](#)
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
Members should declare any financial and non-financial interests they have in the items of business for consideration, identifying the relevant agenda item and the nature of their interest.
4. Chair's Business
5. Deputation - ICBAN

Matters for Decision

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------|
| 6. | Facilities Room Hire Charges at Arts, Leisure and Tourism 2023/2024 | 3 - 8 |
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| 12. | Draft Mid Ulster LMP Action Plan 2023/24 | 83 - 130 |
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Matters for Information

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

Matters for Decision

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 16. | SHHP - Bellaghy Bawn Literary Residential Proposal |
| 17. | Environmental Health Management System |

Matters for Information

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 18. | Confidential Minutes of Development Committee held on 16 February 2023 |
| 19. | Feenys Lane |

Report on	Facilities Room Hire Charges at Arts, Leisure and Tourism 2023/2024		
Date of Meeting	16 th March 2023		
Reporting Officer	Claire Linney, Assistant Director of Development Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director of Health, Leisure, & Wellbeing Fiona McKeown, Assistant Director of Economic Development, Tourism & Strategic Programmes		
Contact Officer	Catherine Fox, Arts & Facilities Development Manager John Howard, Open Spaces & Recreation Development Manager Mary McKeown, Tourism Manager		
Is this report restricted for confidential business?		Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon		No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To provide information to Members on Room hire charges in Arts, Leisure and Tourism venues/facilities and to seek approval to implement from 1 st April 2023.
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>Room Hire Charges at Arts, Leisure and Tourism Venues/Facilities 2023/2024</p> <p>A proposal for hire rates for the Bridewell was submitted to Council on 7th December 2022, with Members requesting that a report be brought back to Council to include all facilities/venue:</p> <p><i>“That it be recommended to Council to review room hire charges across all facilities and postpone revised charges and mechanism for same at Bridewell, Magherafelt until the review is complete.”</i></p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>An internal review of the charges for room rental and facility hire charges that apply to Arts, Leisure and Tourism facilities was carried out in conjunction with departmental and facility management.</p> <p>The review compared and contrasted the various costs and charges that currently apply to room hire and facility usage costs across all facilities.</p> <p>The review also examined the current charges that are applied to recognised community groups, church groups and charities in addition to the charges that apply to corporate bodies and private promoters and performers that utilise and hire the facilities at each location (see Appendix 1). It is proposed to have a price freeze for</p>

	<p>arts and leisure facilities and not to apply any additional inflationary annual price increase to any charges for the period April 2023 – March 2024. In terms of the Bridewell, Magherafelt, it is proposed to make a minor adjustment to the prices and extend the times when the facility will be available for hire from 1 April 2023 as detailed in Appendix 1.</p> <p>A strategic review process is currently being completed in relation to Ranfurly House and Hill of The O'Neill which will identify the strategic direction and outline objectives, actions and outcomes for the next 2 years. It is envisaged this process, which will involve stakeholder engagement and provide an operating model for the site, will take 2 to 3 months. A pricing review will also form part of the process and a further report will come to Members for approval.</p>
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	<p>Financial:</p> <p>Human:</p> <p>Risk Management:</p>
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	<p>Equality & Good Relations Implications:</p> <p>Rural Needs Implications:</p>
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	<p>Members are recommended to note the contents of this report and approve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proposed Room Hire Charges at Arts, Leisure and Tourism venues/facilities 2023/2024
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	<p>Appendix A – Proposed Room Hire Charges at Arts, Leisure and Tourism venues/facilities 2023/2024</p>

MUDC Room Hire Charges 2023 -2024



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

Category A – Capacity 150+	
Category B - Capacity between 50 – 150	
Category C - Capacity between 30 – 50	
Category D – Capacity up to 30	

Category A

Venue	Room	Capacity	Cost Per Hour	
			Commercial	Non Commercial
Dungannon Leisure Centre	Main Hall (4 cts)	1,000	£ 45.00	£ 30.00
Maghera Leisure Centre	Main Hall (4 cts)	880	£ 45.00	£ 30.00
Hill of The O'Neill	Events Space (Outside)	700	Hourly Rate £86 Full Day (8 hrs) £460 Sunday hourly rate £149 Sunday Full Day £816	Hourly Rate £50 Full Day (8 hrs) £360 Sunday hourly rate £105 Sunday Full Day £262
MUSA Hall	Main Hall (4 cts)	300 - 500	£ 45.00	£ 30.00
Cookstown Leisure Centre	Main Hall (4 cts)	300-500	£ 45.00	£ 30.00
Greenvale Leisure Centre	Sports Hall (4 cts)	300 -500	£ 45.00	£ 30.00
Burnavon	Auditorium	341	Hourly Rate £97.75 Full Day (8 hrs) £517.50 Sunday hourly rate £138 Sunday Full Day £690	Hourly Rate £55 Full Day (8 hrs) £385 Sunday hourly rate £88 Sunday Full Day £440
Seamus Heaney HomePlace	The Helicon	190	Hourly Rate £60 Full day £420 Half Day £220 Sunday/Evening hourly rate £90	Hourly Rate £ 40 Full day £220 Half Day £130 Sunday/Evening hourly rate £55
Ranfurly House	Square Box	98	Hourly Rate £35 Full Day (8 hrs) £196 Sunday hourly rate £50 Full Day £280	Hourly Rate £25 Full Day (8 hours) £140 Sunday hourly rate £40 Full Day £224
Hill of The O'Neill	Events Space (Inside)	150	Hourly Rate £30 Evening Hourly Rate £40 Sunday hourly rate £65 Sunday Full Day £520	Hourly Rate £ 22.50 Evening Hourly Rate £30 Sunday hourly rate £36 Sunday Full Day £262

Category B

Venue	Room	Capacity	Cost Per Hour	
			Commercial	Non Commercial
Moneymore Recreation Centre	Main Hall (3 cts)	100	£ 33.75	£ 22.50

Bridewell	Courtyard Room	60	Hourly Rate £30 Full Day £160, 8 hrs (9am-5pm) Half Day Rate £80, 4 hrs (9am-1pm) & (1pm-5pm) Sunday/Evening Hourly Rate £35	Hourly Rate £15 Full Day £110, 8 hrs (9am-5pm) Half day £55, 4 hrs (9am-1pm) & (1pm-5pm) Sunday/Evening Hourly Rate £30
Seamus Heaney HomePlace	Moyola Hall- River Room	69	Hourly Rate £30 Full day £220 Half Day £115 Sunday/Evening hourly rate £35	Hourly Rate £ 22 Full day £140 Half Day £80 Sunday/Evening hourly rate £27.50
Ranfurly House	Tower Room	60	Hourly Rate £20 Full Day (8 hrs) £160 Sunday hourly rate £25 Evening Rate £25	Hourly Rate £15 Full Day (8 hrs) £120 Sunday hourly rate £20 Evening Rate £20
Cookstown Leisure Centre	Dance Hall	60	£ 15	£ 10
Seamus Heaney HomePlace	Broagh Room	60	Hourly Rate £ 25 Full day £150 Half Day £80 Sunday/Evening hourly rate £30	Hourly Rate £ 17 Full day £100 Half Day £60 Sunday/Evening hourly rate £22
Seamus Heaney HomePlace	Strand Room	60	Hourly Rate £ 25 Full day £150 Half Day £80 Sunday/Evening hourly rate £30	Hourly Rate £ 17 Full day £100 Half Day £60 Sunday/Evening hourly rate £22

Bridewell Existing Room Rates (2022/23)	Bridewell Existing Room Rates (2022/23)
Commercial Rate	Non-Commercial Rates
Hourly Rate £30	Hourly Rate £15
Full Day (7hrs) £150	Full Day (7hrs) £100
Half Day (3.5 hrs) £75	Half Day (3.5 hrs) £50
Outside Normal Opening Hours rate per hour £30 (minimum 2 hr booking required)	Outside Normal Opening Hours rate per hour £30 (minimum 2 hr booking required)

Category C

Venue	Room	Capacity	Cost Per Hour	
			Commercial	Non Commercial
Cookstown Leisure Centre	Main Hall (2 cts)	50	£ 22.50	£ 15
Meadowbank	Café	50	£ 15	£ 10
Burnavon	Studio	50	Hourly Rate £18 Half day session (4 hours) £72 Full day £144 (8 hours)	Hourly Rate £15 day session (4 hours) £54 Full day £108 (8 hours)
Burnavon	Exhibition Area	50	Hourly Rate £18 Half day session (4 hours) £72 Full day £144 (8 hours)	Hourly Rate £15 day session (4 hours) £54 Full day £108 (8 hours)
Seamus Heaney HomePlace	Glanmore Room	50	Hourly Rate £ 25 Full day £150 Half Day £80 Sunday/Evening hourly rate £30	Hourly Rate £ 17 Full day £100 Half Day £60 Sunday/Evening hourly rate £22
Maghera Leisure Centre	Meeting Room	50	£ 15	£ 10
Moneymore Recreation Centre	Upstairs Studio	50	£ 22.50	£ 15
Meadowbank	Pavilion	40	£ 15	£ 10

Greenvale Leisure Centre	Conference Room	30/40	£ 15	£ 10
MUSA	Committee room	20/30	£ 15	£ 10
Cookstown Leisure Centre	Meeting Rooms x 3	30	£ 15	£ 10
Dungannon Lesiure Centre	Minor Hall	30	£ 15	£ 10
Gardiners Hall	Upstairs	30	9am - 5pm - £20 5pm - 10pm - £25	9am - 5pm - £15, 5pm - 10pm - £20

Category D

Venue	Room	Capacity	Cost Per Hour	
			Commercial	Non Commercial
Seamus Heaney HomePlace	Moyola Hall- Meeting Room	22	Hourly Rate £ 20 Full day £ 130 Half Day £70 Sunday/Evening hourly rate £25	Hourly Rate £ 12.50 Full day £ 90 Half Day £47.50 Sunday/Evening hourly rate £ 27.50
Gardiners Hall	Ground Floor	20	9am - 5pm - £20 5pm - 10pm - £25	9am - 5pm - £15 5pm - 10pm - £20
Cookstown Leisure Centre	Party Room	20	£ 15	£ 10
Moneymore Recreation Centre	Meeting Room x 2	18	£ 15	£ 10
Dungannon Leisure Centre	Meeting Room	15	£ 15	£ 10
Gortgonis	Meeting Room	15	£ 15	£ 10
Meadowbank	Meeting Room	15	£ 15	£ 10

Report on	Community Wealth Building
Date of Meeting	16 th March 2023
Reporting Officer	Ryan Black, Director of Communities and Place
Contact Officers	Martina Totten, Social Inclusion Manager

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

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to update members and seek approval for the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Wealth Building
2	Key Issues
2.1	<p>Community Wealth Building</p> <p>Members will be aware of the progress to develop a Community Wealth Building (CWB) Framework for the Council, as agreed through a notice of motion during 2022 and the governance approach to this model, previously agreed by the Committee.</p> <p>A working group has recently been established, made up of elected members, social enterprises, Department For Communities officials and Council officers. An initial information session for working group members was held on Wednesday 22nd February. The session was facilitated by Development Trust NI (DTNI), who provided an overview of CWB, best practice from other jurisdictions, regional work on CWB, delivery at a local government and community level and initial discussions on a potential test and learn approach for Mid Ulster.</p> <p>To support the further development of this work, Officers have been working with DfC officials to ensure alignment with regional approaches and to create an environment to share information, test new ways of working and tap into any potential central government resources, which can support the Council to realise our objectives and outputs locally.</p> <p>Keen to build on the momentum gained within Mid Ulster on the development and delivery of a CWB Framework, Council have secured financial support from DfC (£29,000) to enable us to engage relevant external expertise to assist us to develop and implement an initial 'test and learn' plan for CWB in Mid Ulster. This support will include facilitation and advice of the CWB working group; mapping of current CWB provision; research and development and implementation of agreed test and learn actions; and a 'Next Steps' Action Plan for CWB in Mid Ulster.</p>

	<p>Council will use the development plan to inform the next phase of CWB delivery in the district, delivering test and learn actions; monitoring and evaluation of those actions; further research into CWB best practice; and training and capacity building for working group members and the wider public. Elements of our test and learn work and development can also be used to support and inform other Councils interested in commencing CWB work and feed into regional consideration of the recommendations from the CWB expert panel.</p>
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	<p>Financial:</p> <p>DfC funding allocation £29,000</p>
	<p>Human:</p> <p>NA</p>
	<p>Risk Management:</p> <p>NA</p>
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	<p>Equality & Good Relations Implications:</p> <p>NA</p>
	<p>Rural Needs Implications:</p> <p>NA</p>
5	Recommendations
5.1	<p>Members are recommended to;</p> <p>(i) Note the Community Wealth Building Update and accept the offer of funding from DfC (£29,000) to support the development of our CWB work and 'test and learn' plan.</p>
6	List of Documents Attached

Report on	Development Report
Date of Meeting	16 th March 2023
Reporting Officer	Claire Linney, Assistant Director of Development
Contact Officers	Philip Clarke - Community Services Manager, Oliver Morgan-Good Relations & Peace Manager, Michael McCrory - PCSP Manager, Catherine Fox Arts Development Manager, Brian McCormick Seamus Heaney Homeplace Manager

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

1	Purpose of Report									
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to update members and seek approval for the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rolling Community Grants• Grant Funding Allocation 2023-2024 Update• DfC Advice Salary & Cost of Living Uplift Payment• Good Relations – Additional Funding• Community Arts Plan 2023 – 2024• Community Arts – King’s Coronation 2023• Seachtain na Gaeilge Grant 2023• Cross Border Arts and Climate Change Project• Development Update									
2	Key Issues									
2.1	<p>Community Grants - Rolling Grants Programme 2022 – 2023 Members are advised that the grants assessment panel are making the following recommendations to award grants.</p> <table><tr><th>Grant</th><th>No. of groups awarded</th><th>Value of Grant Awards</th></tr><tr><td>Community Festival Fund</td><td>4</td><td>£2,520</td></tr><tr><td>Good Relations Grant</td><td>1</td><td>£960</td></tr></table> <p>Please see attached in Appendix 1 grant award recommendations</p>	Grant	No. of groups awarded	Value of Grant Awards	Community Festival Fund	4	£2,520	Good Relations Grant	1	£960
Grant	No. of groups awarded	Value of Grant Awards								
Community Festival Fund	4	£2,520								
Good Relations Grant	1	£960								
2.2	<p>Community Grants 2023-2024 Members are reminded of the financial pressures considered as part of the 2023/2024 rates setting process, which resulted in a reduction of £220,000 across a number of the Council Community Grant Programmes for 2023/2024. Detailed</p>									

below is the revised fund value for grants agreed as part of the grant review recently considered and agreed by Committee.

Grant Programme	Budget 23/24
Venues and Facilities	£135,000
Strategic Community Development	£35,000 (additional annual contribution Good Relations)
Small Grants (Community, Arts, Heritage, Env, Sports)	£132,000
Strategic Events	£55,000
Strategic Arts	£65,000
Strategic Sports	£39,000
Community Festivals	£74,000
Festive lights	£76,000
Schools Access	£10,000
Sports Representative	£15,000

Applications will be accessed against the grant criteria and presented to committee for approval until fund values have been exhausted.

2.3 **DfC Advice Salary & Cost of Living Uplift Payment**

The Department for Communities has offered additional funding support to front line advice providers to cover both salaries and overheads to mitigate the cost-of-living increases that impact the community and voluntary sector for the 2022-23 year only. The additional contribution is for £1500 towards overheads and £22,004.25 for salary uplifts. These are direct contributions from DFC to the advice service and are monitored accordingly. See correspondence in **Appendix 2**.

2.4 **Good Relations Additional Funding**

The NI Executive Office (TEO) has offered Council surplus funding to support its work with foodbanks/svp's. Council has agreed to accept this funding in principle, subject to liaising with the foodbanks regarding their outputs to end of March 2023. It is proposed to accept this additional funding of £30,000 and match within current budget of £10,000, and allocate the £40,000 as per previous agreement.

2.5 **Community Arts Plan 2023 – 2024**

As part of Council's annual programme of community arts delivery, an action plan has been developed for delivery in partnership with the strategic arts partners and Burnavon Arts Centre.

See attached a copy of the Plan in **Appendix 3** for consideration and approval.

2.6 **Community Arts – King's Coronation 2023**

To complement the community led activity being planned for the King's Coronation, the attached community arts activity is proposed. Refer to **Appendix 4**.

2.7 **Seachtain na Gaeilge Grant 2023**

The following grant awards as part of Seachtain na Gaeilge are presented for approval.

Grant	No. of groups awarded	Value of Grant Awards
Seachtain na Gaeilge	13	£7500
Please see attached in Appendix 5 grant award recommendations		
<p>2.8 Cross Border Arts and Climate Change Project The Eco Showboat is an art project aimed at raising awareness of climate change. It is a cross border project in conjunction with the Local Authority Waters Programme Ireland and Poetry Ireland. One of the strategic aims is to activate local communities in creating awareness of good water quality and climate change through exploring the rivers of Ireland on a national poetry and film adventure. The Eco showboat will tour on a cross border basis along stretches of rivers and engage communities along the way and produce short literary and musical films inspired by a river in each county. The support required is in kind and advisory only, introducing creative arts people from the area to the project and with general promotion.</p> <p>It is proposed to provide a letter of support to the project who is seeking to secure funding from the Climate Change fund. Please see attached correspondence at Appendix 6.</p>		
<p>2.9 Development Update</p> <p><u>Community Support</u></p> <p>Support is ongoing as part of the Council's community grants. The grants will close mid-March with assessment and recommendations to Council. Officers continue to provide support to groups on other funding investment areas and general project development.</p> <p><u>Good Relations</u></p> <p>The Good Relations Plan 2023 – 2024 is with the NI Executive Office for approval. Officers are working to finalise the current plan of expenditure, monitoring and claims.</p> <p>As per the previous report to Committee in February agreeing the funding from TEO to support refugees in Mid Ulster of £133,015 to be delivered through STEP. An update of a final contribution of £143,175 is being provided.</p> <p><u>PCSP</u></p> <p>No minutes.</p> <p><u>Burnavon Arts Centre</u></p> <p>The new Spring programme for Burnavon is being delivered at present, with positive numbers across performances and activities.</p> <p><u>Seamus Heaney Homeplace</u></p> <p>The new Spring programme for Seamus Heaney Homeplace is being delivered at present, with positive numbers across performances, programmes, exhibition and education programme.</p>		

	<p><u>Hill of The O'Neill and Ranfurly House</u></p> <p>Events are being planned and delivered at Hill of The O'Neill and Ranfurly House. An updated plan of events and activities is being developed.</p>
4.1	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p> <p>Financial: Community Festival Grant £2,520 Good Relations Grants £960</p> <p>DfC Advice Salary & Overheads Uplifts £22,004.25 - £1,500</p> <p>TEO Funding £30,000, match £10,000</p> <p>Seachtain na Gaeilge Grant £7500</p> <p>Community Arts Plan – Budget £85,000 within the Arts Development Budget.</p> <p>Human: NA</p> <p>Risk Management: NA</p>
4.2	<p>Screening & Impact Assessments</p> <p>Equality & Good Relations Implications: NA</p> <p>Rural Needs Implications: NA</p>
5	<p>Recommendations</p>
5.1	<p>Members are recommended to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Approve Local Community Festivals and Good Relations grants (ii) Note the updated Grant Funding Allocation 2023-2024 (iii) Approve DfC Advice Salary & Overhead Allocations (iv) Approve receipt of Good Relations Additional Funding (v) Agree the Community Arts Plan 2023 – 2024 (vi) Approve the Community Arts King's Coronation activity 2023 (vii) Approve the Seachtain na Gaeilge Grants (viii) Support the Cross Border Arts and Climate Change Project (ix) Note the update from the Development Department

6	List of Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 Community Rolling Grant Award</p> <p>Appendix 2 DFC Correspondence</p> <p>Appendix 3 Community Arts Plan 2023 – 2024</p> <p>Appendix 4 Community Arts – King’s Coronation 2023</p> <p>Appendix 5 Seachtain na Gaeilge Grant Award</p> <p>Appendix 6 LOS Eco Showboat</p>

Appendix 1

Local Community Festival Grants - (Maximum £1,200)

No	Organisation Name	Aim	Title Of Event/project	Band	Request	Award
1	Footlight Drama Group	Community	Another Bitta Broadway	6	£1400	£600
2	Sporting Hearts	Community	Truck Run	5	£3190	£720
3	Maghera Cricket Club	Sport	A Festival of Cricket	6	£836.44	£600
4	Galbally GAC	Sport	St Patricks Day Breakfast	6	£1550	£600
				Total		£2520

Good Relations Grants - (Maximum £1,200)

No	Organisation Name	Aim	Title Of Event/project	Band	Requested	Awarded
1.	SWS Wheehchair Basketball Team	Community	Basketball Game Day	3	£1000	£960
				Total		£960

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



DECLARATION OF INTENT

Following ongoing engagement with the Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) where the case for additional support was outlined, we have recognised the impact the cost-of-living crisis is having on the staff you have employed within your organisation.

In recognition and to acknowledge the vital role that the VCS plays in providing critical services within our communities we are now offering a one-off, non-consolidated payment to VCS organisations funded through the Voluntary and Community Division (VCD) or Community Empowerment Division (CED). This payment is being offered as a one off, in-year financial contribution, for 2022/23 only, with the amount for each organisation determined through calculation of a **maximum of £1,925 pro rata (gross) for each post*** for which salary support is provided.

***The payment is being provided ONLY for posts that attract a maximum annual salary of up to £47,665 (pro rata where postholder works reduced hours)**

Payments are scheduled to be issued on 13 March and should be available in your organisation's bank account within 5 working days of this date.

To confirm you wish to avail of or decline this additional support you are required to complete the declaration below and return by **24 February 2023**.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact your Development Officer/Programme Manager.

DECLARATION

Intent to avail of this Salary Support Payment.

Mid Ulster District Council

Project Ref: CO1-22-3141

We wish to avail of the opportunity to receive a one-off payment of **£22,004.25** (gross), distributed to the organisations you fund as per **Annex A**, to provide a payment of **up to a maximum of £1,925 pro rata (gross) per funded salary** currently supported through VCD/CED as a one off contribution to assist with cost-of-living/inflationary pressures on budget and incomes for VCD funded organisations. This payment is to be applied to any posts that VCD provide salary support to.

PLEASE NOTE: The payment is being provided ONLY for posts that attract a maximum annual salary of up to £47,665 (pro rata where applicable)

- ☐ **We intend to avail of the full salary support above.**

- ☐ **We intend to partially avail of the salary support up to an amount of £_____ for the following reason:**
_____.

- ☐ **We do not intend to avail of the salary support above for the following reason:**
_____.

Where availing of salary support, we undertake to: (Please tick the following as appropriate)

- ☐ **Ensure the funding provided will be paid through supported salaries**

- ☐ Provide detail of instances where our employees supported by VCD/CED funding have received any other lump sum payments to assist with the cost-of-living crisis.

In the event such payments have been made we undertake to discuss this with our Development Officer/ Programme Manager and understand that any support may be reduced commensurate with any other such support provided.

- ☐ Ensure any underspend will be returned to VCD/CED as soon as possible.

Note: This payment could be subject to normal vouching and verification arrangements as necessary.

Signed Position in Organisation:

Signed Position in Organisation:

Dated

ANNEX A

Organisation	Amount
Community Support General, Advice Grant, and Welfare Reform Tribunal Representation	£15,349.99
Welfare Reform Face to Face Mitigations:	
<i>STEP</i>	£6,654.26
Total	£22,004.25



Department for

Communities

www.communities-ni.gov.uk

An Roinn

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Department für

Commonities

DECLARATION

VCD funded organisations intent to avail of additional funding to assist with increased running costs.

The Department has listened to concerns from across the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) regards the cost-of-living increases and the pressures this places on organisations such as yours as you seek to maintain delivery of vital services across our communities.

The VCS plays a crucial role in assisting our most vulnerable citizens and appreciate the pressures and impact of the increasing demand for access to the range of services you as partner organisations provide.

The Department has been considering ways to help mitigate some of these pressures, whilst we cannot meet all your additional requirements, securing limited additional funding that will at least make a contribution to your increased running costs.

..... (Insert organisations name)

would like to avail of opportunity to receive a one-off payment of up to £1500 to assist with rising cost of living increases. Our organisation is currently experiencing financial hardship and are or are likely to experience difficulties with service delivery if this additional support is not made available.

We understand that this payment is to be made available to assist with increased running costs. The increases in energy costs must be to cover the period between 1 April to 30 September 2022.

We also understand that this payment could be subject to normal vouching and verification arrangements.

We acknowledge that it is made to assist with the ongoing cost of living crisis and undertake to ensure that the payment provided is used for this purpose.

We undertake to advise the Department of and additional support for increased running costs/energy costs that my organisation has received/receives by 31 March 2023 from any other funder.

To facilitate prompt processing return the Declaration as soon as possible but **no later than noon on 18 January 2023** to PDTApplications@communities-ni.gov.uk

We confirm that if any of the above circumstances change, I/we will commit to notifying the Department immediately.

Signed

Dated

Position in Organisation:

Mid Ulster District Council Arts Plan 2023/2024



Burnavon Arts Centre Mid Ulster

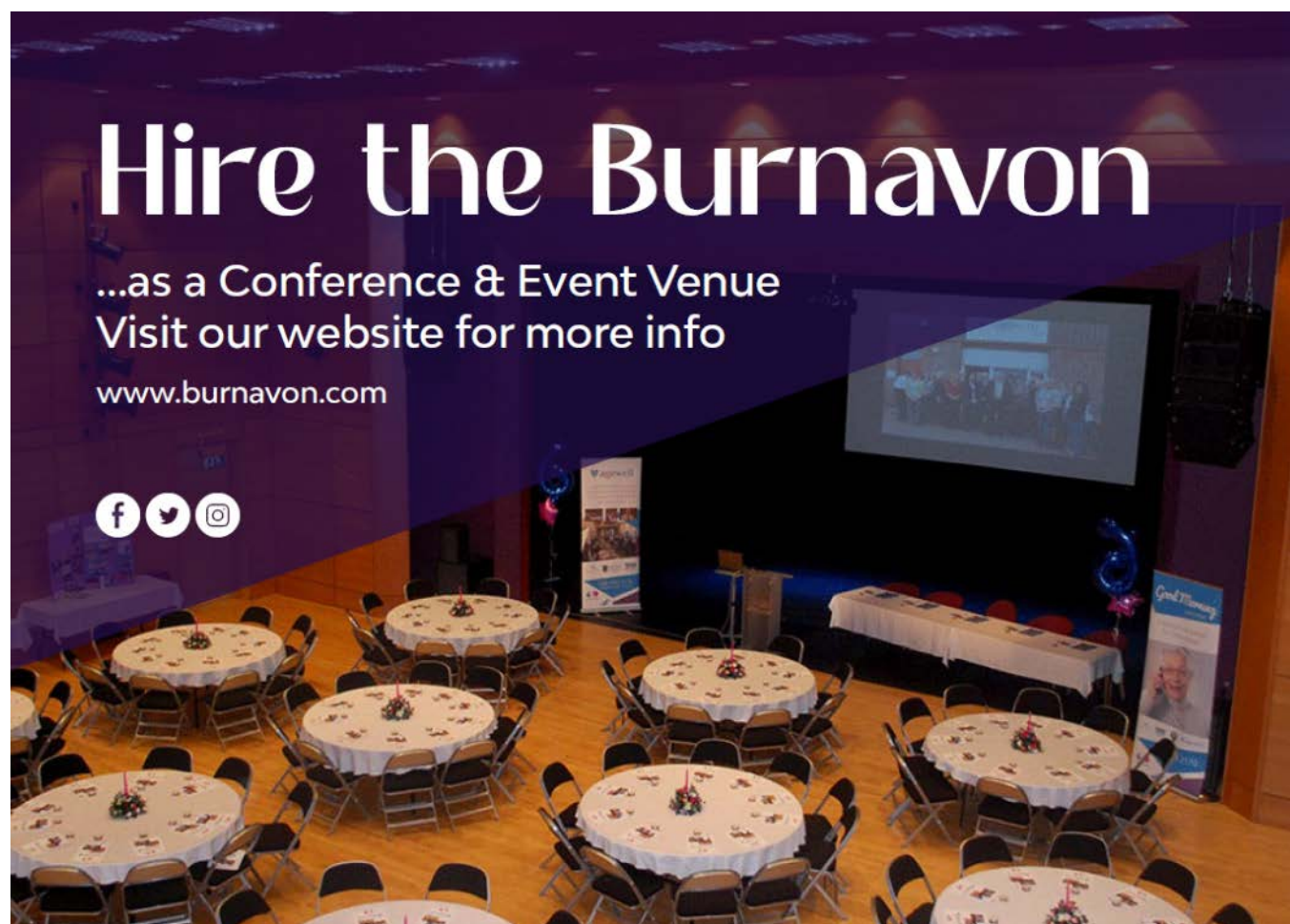
The Burnavon Arts Centre Mid Ulster opened in 1999 and since then has grown as a regional arts centre across the region providing a wide range of entertainment throughout the year including concerts, comedy, children's performances, dance, drama, educational performances, and community and visual arts.

In addition to delivering a diverse programme of performances live on stage, it also organises a number of community events each year such as Easter Family Fun Day, St Patrick's Celebration Concert, July Celebrations Concert and the Annual Craft & Food Fair.

Supporting the Creative Industries is an essential role of the facility be this through giving artists an opportunity and platform to perform, exhibiting in our Gallery space, employing them as facilitators for our workshops and events, displaying in our Craft Shop or providing advice and support from our staff.

The facility is further utilised by hiring groups for meetings and conferences to maximise usage. We continue to adapt our services to an ever-changing environment.

Moving into the 2023/24 Burnavon Arts Centre Mid Ulster will focus on providing a state of the arts facility and performances and range of art forms to meet the demands of our customers.



Community Arts



Our Community Arts will form an important part of the development of arts activities within Mid Ulster. Mid Ulster District Council, seek to develop and deliver a district wide Community Arts Plan (linked to Burnavon Arts Centre) which will focus on offering activity to groups and individuals, in particular targeting those with limited access to the arts, “Bringing Art to the Community” and building opportunity within the Creative Industries sector. Council will seek to deliver this in partnership with local groups, schools, arts agencies, and our strategic arts theatre partners located in the community including: Bardic Theatre, Craic Theatre, An Carn Theatre, Glasgowbury, The Hub, Brantry Bard.

The Community Arts Plan will contribute and partner the direction of a number of strategies and plans for the District:

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland's 5 Year Strategy (2019/2024) outlines the key priorities as Inspire, Connect and Lead. Mid Ulster District Council will strive to take our programmes in this direction.

Mid Ulster Community Plan is built around five key themes and the Community Arts Plan will contribute to the development of Theme 3: Education & Skills and to Theme 4: Health & Wellbeing. The Mid Ulster District Council Corporate Plan also outlines Five Key themes, the Community Arts Plan will seek to actively help achieve positive action under Themes 2: Service Delivery, 4: Environment and 5: Communities.

The Community Arts Plan will be delivered under the following themes:

Youth Engagement Programme
Older People & Disability Arts Programme

Education Programme
Art Engagement Programmes

Creative Industries Programme
Mid Ulster Arts Festival

Youth Engagement Programme

Project	Detail	Participants	Duration	Budget	Lead
Summer Schemes	Deliver a number of interactive workshops for young people to participate in to develop skills. The workshops will be held in the Burnavon. Ballet Ireland Summer School Music Summer School Burnavon Summer Scheme Summer Coding Workshops.	30 per summer scheme	July and August	Burnavon Budget	Burnavon Arts Centre Activity 3 Youth summer schemes - Arts workshops July 2 x Coding youth workshops in July Ballet Ireland Workshop
Outreach Street Art	Partner with PCSP and EA Youth re engagement of young people via outreach		Annual	£2500	Partner with PCSP / EA Youth in identifying art engagement programmes for young people in areas identified by PCSP

Education Programme

Project	Detail	Participants	Duration	Budget	Lead
Traditional Music in Schools (Primary) Project	Children P4 to P7 have an opportunity to learn to play the guitar, mandolin, tin whistle, flute, mandolin and banjo Delivered via cross community to support children to perform	400 children from various schools per week	Weekly (academic year)	£14000 (£6000 GR £8000 Arts)	Good Relations
Traditional Piping in Schools (primary) project	Support young people in schools engage in the traditional music of piping. Delivered via cross community to support children to perform	100 children per week	Weekly (academic year).	£5000 Good Relations	Good Relations
Pre School First Theatre Visit	Introduction of nursery schools to Burnavon to attend a show for their first theatre visit	600	2 individual shows per target audience of 300 per show	Burnavon Programme	Burnavon
Schools Project	Art delivery facilitators to deliver creative workshops engaging young people in primary schools to develop an	1500	98 primary schools – P6/P7 – every 2 nd year	£27,000	Arts Delivered via a hybrid approach Partners

	early interest in the arts (link with curriculum learning)		98 primary schools in the District – schools will be engaged bi annually		Amma Creative Hub Nerve Centre
Theatre Performances for schools	Burnavon Arts Centre & Community Arts Theatres will hold a number of events targeting primary schools to visit the theatre space and enjoy live performances	600	2 shows per annum	Burnavon Programme Community Arts Bardic Craic An Carn	Burnavon Programme Open to all schools, advertised in theatre programme. Small fee charged as performance based
Creative Writing and Illustration Arts	To promote creative writing and poetry to school children Poet Paul Cookson - "Bringing Poetry to Life" - engaging P6/P7 schoolchildren Illustrator Paul Howard – bringing illustration to life – engaging P4 school children	300 1000 (further engagement via hybrid model)	2 events per annum	Burnavon Programme	Burnavon Programme – open to all schools re performance attendance. Small fee charged for attendance To be delivered as a hybrid model via Burnavon Recording Studio
Special Education Project	Engage young people in special education to use their senses skills to identify and explore different art forms	All special learning units	One project per School per annum.	£6000	Arts 8 special schools – schools and learning units

Creative Industries Programme

Project	Detail	Participants	Duration	Budget	Lead
Creative Industries Development	Engage with key partners Nerve Centre, Amma Creative Hub to develop the opportunities for Creative industries for young people via skills development in digital media	20 post primary schools Link	Annually	£4000 towards Careers Digital media programme	Arts Partners Amma, Nerve Hybrid delivery model
Screen Works NI	Partner Screen Works Education Programme - Creative Industries Apprenticeship Programme Link to Screen Works NI/BBC NI to target areas young people	All Schools PP Community Planning Careers Forum	Annually		Screen NI Partner Community Planning Careers Forum, Neighbourhood Renewal Initial meeting with Screen NI held.

	into film (Young People in Film Apprenticeship Programme)				Revisit in July for Academic year 22/ 23.
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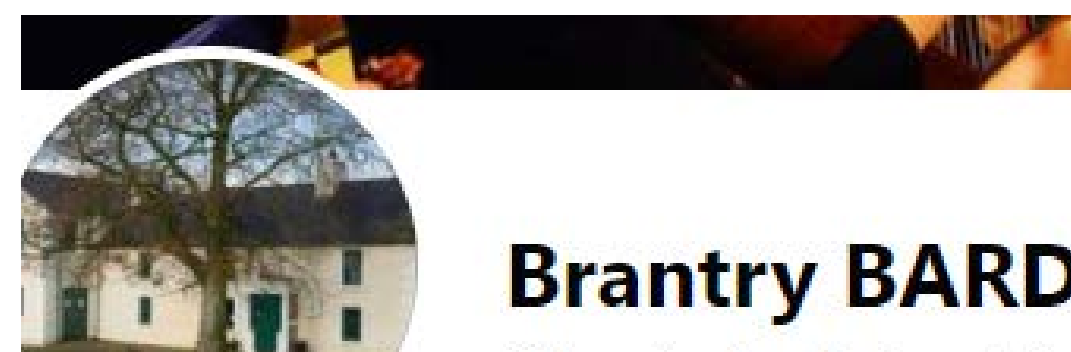
Older & Disability People's Programme

Project	Detail	Participants	Duration	Budget	Notes
Creative Arts Workshops	Host a series of workshops aimed at people aged 60y+ to learn new creative skills & meet new people	30 – 40 older people	Delivered over 4 weeks (1 session per week)	Burnavon Programme	Burnavon Subsidized - minimal fee to Burnavon Workshop programme
Disability & Inclusive Arts Programme	Support to disability groups across the area with arts outreach activity to ensure arts is inclusive for all	Groups – Day Centres, Day Opportunities (stat, voluntary)	Timeline developed to suit the groups	£22,000	Arts Groups -21

Art Engagement Programme

Project	Description	Participants	Duration	Budget	Notes
Support community art groups to engage with the Burnavon	Engage groups with the Arts Cookstown Youth Choir Mid Ulster Choral Group Dungannon Choral Group Cookstown Folk Group Mid Ulster Burnavon Writers	160	Regularly	£5500 £2000 GR	Arts Partner Good Relations
Easter Family Fun Day through Art	Engaging families in arts and crafts.	2000	One per annum	Burnavon Programme	ASD Friendly Free event
St Patrick's Community Concert	Engaging families in arts and crafts.	2000	One per annum	Burnavon Programme	ASD Friendly Free event
July Community Concert	Engaging families in arts and crafts.	2000	One per annum	Burnavon Programme	ASD Friendly Free event
Winter Craft & Food Fair	Craft event within the Burnavon to offer artisan crafters the	30 - 50 exhibitors	1 or 2 day event.	Burnavon Programme	Burnavon Partner local creative businesses

	opportunity to showcase and sell products.	event 2000			
Arts and Crafts Workshops Burnavon	Workshops across the year in arts and crafts	8000	Across the year	Burnavon	Burnavon
Strategic Community Arts Partners	Engage with the community arts partners re outreach programme delivery – Bardic, Craic, Glasgowbury, An Carn, The Hub, Brantry.	20,000	Annual	£90,000	Community Partners SLA agreement with partners Link to Art Festival
Community Arts Grant Aid Programme	Partner with Community Development regarding delivery of small grants programme to support local groups deliver on arts	20,000	Annual	£35,000	Community Development Team Total budget £130,000 – over 50% of activity is arts related



Mid Ulster Arts Festival



Project	Detail	Participants	Duration	Budget	Notes
Mid Ulster Arts Festival	<p>Deliver an Arts Festival celebrating various arts forms. The festival will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dance Drama Workshops Exhibitions Taster Sessions Music Film Creative Industries promotion (tours etc) <p>It will be mainly delivered via Burnavon Arts Centre and strategic community arts partners and other arts delivery partners</p> <p>It will seek to complement programmes being delivered by Seamus Heaney Homeplace, Hill of The O'Neill/Ranfurly House events, Good Relations, Seachtain na Gaeilge</p> <p>Links will be established with local Businesses to other pre-theatre meals etc.</p> <p>Potential music event / street concert linking partners funding.</p>		<p>March 2023</p> <p>4 week delivery</p>	£10,000	<p>Strategic partner engagement – as per partners above</p> <p>Other organisations which may also have some drama offerings during the period and can be advertised as part of the programme;</p> <p>Potential for engagement with local drama groups that tour with plays and acts -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pomeroy Players • Mid Ulster Drama Society • Bright Young Things • CastleHill Theatre Group

Additional Support

Project	Detail	Participants	Duration	Budget	Notes
Equality and Access Standards Initiative (EASI) Autism Friendly Initiative	<p>Burnavon Arts Centre aims to become a Centre of Excellence. This means Equality, Access & Inclusion Principals will be fully embedded in our culture. Staff at all levels within the centre will have ownership and will be committed to achieving the highest standards.</p> <p>Burnavon Arts Centre has been identified by the University of Atypical, as one of 10 organisations in NI, to take part in the EASI initiative.</p> <p>Will help the Burnavon to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that everyone has access to our services and activities. Remove any barriers that would exclude people from taking part in what we do. • To design systems and processes to optimise accessibility to our organisation, our services and to create opportunities for all. <p>University of ATypical sets an agreed standard for Burnavon and an Accreditation. EASI branding material will be displayed to show members of the public the standard.</p> <p>Burnavon Arts Centre has recently been accredited as an Autism Friendly facility. This means ensuring that all services and delivery takes account of people with autism.</p> <p>It also works with local groups and the Mid Ulster Disability Forum to ensure the facility and services/programmes are open and accessible to all.</p> <p>Disability concession support; provision of a companion scheme to be rolled out.</p>	Burnavon Staff	Ongoing	N / A	<p>Launch of programme has already taken place.</p> <p>This initiative will be ongoing throughout the 22 / 23 financial year.</p>

Appendix 1 Community Arts Programme – King’s Coronation

Community Led Activity

Community Festivals

The local community groups are planning a range of festivals and ‘get – togethers’ in local areas to celebrate the Kings Coronation. Groups are currently working with community development officers to get funding support for the events.

Groups are currently applying to Council small grants for their activities between the Festival Grant and the Small Community/Culture/Heritage/Arts Grant. These grants are a maximum of £1500

Groups will also be encouraged to work with community development staff to access other funding for festivals and activities.

Council Community Arts programmes

Council as part of its Arts outreach programme delivers a number of annual arts activities, performances and events; as part of this annual programme, it is proposed the following would be arranged /themed in recognition of the Kings Coronation.

Burnavon Arts Centre – Schools art engagement - art poetry competition on the Kings Coronation (open to all Mid Ulster primary schools) during April - May – with the winning school displaying their art in the Burnavon.

Arts Programme budget

Hill of The O’Neill- family fun day event May 2022- family craft/art activities similar to other fun day events - 1pm – 5pm where families can come along and take part in arts and crafts, fun engagement activities for children

Hill of the O’Neill Events budget (similar events £3000 - £4000)

Bridewell – Exhibition/Film – The Bridewell hosts a range of exhibitions throughout the year. It is proposed that a Kings Coronation exhibition/film would be hosted in May - June 2022

Bridewell budget

MUDC Seachtain na Gaeilge Awards 2023	Description	Award £
Glór na Speiríní Ballinascreen	Lá Spraoi – Irish Language Fun Day -schools series of bilingual talks on culture	500
Coiste Forbartha Charn Tóchair, Maghera	Irish Language cinema, lecture, family puppet show, theatre show, language course, creative writing workshop, conference on “Irish in 2050”	3050
Glór Mhachaire Fíolta Magherafelt	Oíche Áirneáin- Irish Language Social Evening with conversation circle etc	550
CLG Chill Dreas, Kildress	Irish language day of conversation, music and dance festival, 3 language classes	500
Gaelscoil Uí Néill Coalisland	All-school concert and céilí, festival parade and Irish language mass	575
Cairdeas Eoghain Cookstown	Céilí Mór and “Green Disco” events for 5-11 year olds	400
Cairde An Acadaimh Dungannon	Intra-school debate for parents and children	100
CLG Naomh Mhuire Cill na mBan, Killyman	Irish language social evening with musicians, singers, dancers and storytellers	300
Cairde Augher	Series of language activities culminating with Lá ‘le Pádraig celebration event.	200
Cairde Uí Néill Coalisland	Conversation circle with local musicians to celebrate Seachtain na Gaeilge	500
Seamrógaí Bhaile an Doire Ballinderry	Series of language activities culminating with Lá ‘le Pádraig celebration event.	280
Institute of Irish Leadership Pomeroy	Irish Language celebration event - musicians, singers story-tellers and dancers	380
CLG Achadh Lú Uí Néill Aghaloo	Irish language celebration event and conversation circle.	165
		Total £7,500

From: Anne Cleary <clearyconnolly@gmail.com>

Sent: 10 February 2023 16:10

To: Ryan Black <Ryan.Black@midulstercouncil.org>

Subject: [Mimecast - Suspicious Message] Fwd: Eco Showboat Creative Ireland Project - request for letter of support

PLEASE REVIEW THIS MESSAGE CAREFULLY BEFORE ACTING UPON IT - IF IN DOUBT CONTACT
ICT@MIDULSTERCOUNCIL.ORG

Dear Ryan,

I would like to tell you a little about our Eco Showboat project and the follow on project we are preparing for 2024/2025.

The Eco Showboat is an art project aimed at raising awareness of climate change. Myself and my partner Denis Connolly are navigating Ireland's inland waterways meeting local artists, scientists and communities to spark climate action. In 2022 we travelled up the Shannon and Erne systems from Limerick to Enniskillen using only solar power.

You can see some information about our journey on BBC Northern Ireland,
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-62603771>

And this clip from RER Nationwide
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bipKGSGCVFE>

We are now preparing a project to follow on from our current programme, which will involve working with a significant number of poets, musicians and writers across the whole Island of Ireland, to produce short literary and musical films inspired by a river in each county, and we would be extremely grateful if the Mid Ulster borough Council Arts service could support us in this new project - 32 Rivers. This support would be in kind and advisory only, introducing us to creative people around the area who would have an interest in being involved with an ecological art project such as ours, and perhaps providing in kind support such as communication.

These films will have a short 3 - 5 minute format suitable for wide distribution on the web, and also an appropriate length for a poem or song. Our proposal will include commissioning fees for the artists involved, as well as performing fees in the case of public performances, and travel expenses should they need to travel. We will also be including a workshop module, as our overarching aim remains to spark conversations in the community on climate change and water quality through the arts. So all of these aspects will be sources of revenue for local poets or musicians should we be successful in our application. For the current Eco Showboat project we raised funding to commission new work on climate change from 25 artists countrywide. All our artists are paid equitably.

We plan to use our solar boat Mayfly for travelling where possible, and will complete the journeys to rivers that are not navigable using a variety of other sustainable means of transport: Bicycle, walking, train, bus, rowing... The challenge will be to keep the carbon footprint of the project as low as possible.

Please let me know if you can help us with this, just a short letter of support will suffice and the deadline is early March. We have also been in touch with Poetry Ireland and the Local Authorities Water programme down south, who have expressed their enthusiastic support. I enclose these letters. If there is any similar organisations north of the border, I would appreciate it if you could put us in touch.

Looking forward to hearing from you soon,

Best wishes

Anne

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www.schooloflooking.org

School of Looking
The Junction
19h Clara Rd, Axis Business Park, Tullamore, Co. Offaly



Report on	Health, Leisure & Wellbeing Service Level Agreements 2023/24
Date of Meeting	16 th March 2023
Reporting Officer	Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing
Contact Officer	Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To agree proposals on Community Service Level Agreements (SLA's) for the financial year 2023/24 only.
2.0	Background
2.1	Previously in March 2016, the Development committee considered and resolved to adopt proposals for annual service levels agreements (minute reference: D075/16) and each year thereafter, a report has been brought forward for Members consideration on annual service level agreements.
2.2	<p>Previously in May 2022, Members resolved to approve the approach for the April 22 – March 23 year (minute reference: D080/22):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fivemiletown College Youth Annexe - £50,000 • Backrow Recreation Centre, Draperstown - £10,000 • Battery Harbour Management Company, Battery Harbour - £16,011 (<i>previously £9,925 per annum – in September 2022 Members resolved an uplift of £6,086, minute reference: D140/22</i>) • Muintor na Mointeach Ltd, Washingbay Wetlands Park - £3,126 • Pomeroy Community Projects, Pomeroy Forest - £6,500 • Traad, Ballyronan and Ballyinderry Development Association (TABBDA) Ballyronan Marina - £6,000. • Kildress Community projects, Killucan Picnic Area - £3,365. • Traad Wildlife & Conservation Club, Traad Point - £2,000 • Broughderg Area Development Association (BADA) for provision of a caretaking/maintenance service at Davagh Forest MBT Trailhead - £11,434
2.3	This report details proposals for the community SLA's for the financial year 2023/24 only.

3.0	Main Report
3.1	Council review all Service Level Agreements annually based on a mixture of performance indicators and service provision - this ensures that service level objectives meet with Council's satisfaction and are monitored continuously.
3.2	<p>The following groups have met the agreed requirements for the 22/23 year and it is proposed therefore to continue into the 23/24 year on the basis of the of the current arrangements with a renewed emphasis on the previously agreed key performance indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fivemiletown College Youth Annexe for provision of leisure services programmes including swimming activities - £50,000 • Workspace Backrow Recreation Centre, Draperstown for provision of leisure services programmes - £10,000 <i>(note that Workspace also pay Council £10,000 per annum for lease of land that the Backrow Recreation Centre is built on)</i> • Battery Harbour Management Company, Battery Harbour for inspection and maintenance requirements - £16,011 • Muintor na Mointeach Ltd, Washingbay Wetlands Park for inspection and maintenance requirements - £3,126 • Pomeroy Community Projects, Pomeroy Forest for inspection and maintenance requirements - £6,500 • Traad, Ballyronan and Ballyinderry Development Association (TABBDA) Ballyronan Marina for idelivery of required services - £6,000 • Kildress Community projects, Killucan Picnic Area for inspection and maintenance requirements - £3,365 • Traad Wildlife & Conservation Club, Traad Point for inspection and maintenance requirements - £2,000 • Broughderg Area Development Association (BADA) Davagh Forest MBT Trailhead for inspection and maintenance requirements - £11.434 • Protect Slieve Gallion (PSG) Community Group Iniscarn for caretaker and cleansing duties within Iniscarn Forest - £6,427.20 <i>(in January 2023 Members resolved to approve this new SLA, minute reference: D010/23)</i>
3.3	Some groups have identified financial pressures with cost to deliver these services rising – therefore they may not be able to continue with current arrangements and there is potential that service delivery standards may need to be reviewed and reduced in line with the available budgets. It is recommended to permit Officers to deal with this on a case by case basis as and when required

	<p>and going forward it is anticipated that all community partnership arrangements in respect of Council assets may be considered and reviewed as part of the recently agreed motion to develop a Community Wealth Building Framework.</p> <p>In advance of this, Officers will review SLA's later in 2023 in terms of affordability, effectiveness and value for money, with any future proposals/inflationary monetary increases to be considered as part of the 2024/2025 rates estimates process.</p>
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: All Service Level Agreement payments are contained within existing budgets and there is provision within the 2023/24 Health, Leisure and Wellbeing budgets allocations.
	Human: Officer time to administer and monitor delivery of agreed SLA's.
	Risk Management: Considered in line with relevant policies and procedures.
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: None anticipated at this juncture.
	Rural Needs Implications: None anticipated at this juncture.
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	To note the contents of this report and give approval for the Health, Leisure & Wellbeing Service Level Agreements for the period 2023/24 financial year only
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	N/A

Report on	Affordable Warmth Scheme SLA 2023-2024
Date of Meeting	16th March 2023
Reporting Officer	Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing
Contact Officer	Anne Caldwell, Principal Environmental Health Officer

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update Members on communications received from the Department for Communities (DfC) on the Affordable Warmth Scheme 2023-2024 and the consideration of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) for the April 2023 – March 2024 year.
2.0	Background
2.1	Members may be aware that officers within Council have been delivering the Affordable Warmth service within the Mid Ulster District Council area on behalf of the Department for Communities (DfC) since 2014.
2.2	The Council work in Partnership with NIHE and Department of Communities to deliver the scheme via a Service Level Agreement (SLA). The Councils role is to identify, assess eligibility and refer to the NIHE any households that would be eligible for the scheme.
2.3	The Affordable Warmth Scheme targets low income households who experience the effects of fuel poverty and energy inefficiency. It is a targeted scheme aimed at those areas where levels of fuel poverty are highest. The scheme is available to home owners, those who have their day / life interest in the house and those who privately rent their home. It is not available for tenants living in the social (Housing Executive or housing association) sector.
2.4	Once eligibility checks have been carried out by Council officers, an onwards referral to the NIHE is made and the NIHE subsequently considers and where eligible, provide grant aid to improve energy efficiency measures within the home. From 1 July 2021 the income threshold for the Affordable Warmth Scheme rose to £23,000 and at the same time Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Personal Independence Payment and Carer's Allowance was removed from the calculation of income.

2.5	<p>DfC have recently written to all Councils on the 27th February 2023 to outline their indicative position regarding spending in 2023/24 and with a request to consider, sign and return the Service Level Agreement for the period April 2023 – March 2024.</p> <p>Council's have been advised that a reasonable planning assumption for the Affordable Warmth Scheme is for a capital budget of £16m for 2023/24. On that basis Councils are asked to submit 20 referrals per month for April, May and June 2023 and then a maximum of 20 referrals per month from June 2022 onwards - the SLA allows a +/-5 flexibility in monthly referral numbers and Councils are advised to work with their local Grant Office to make up any shortfall by the end of each quarter.</p>
2.6	<p>DfC have also noted that further correspondence will be issued once the budget for the full 2023/24 year has been confirmed and they have further advised that the Department is drafting an addendum to the current Business Case to allow the Scheme to run from April 2024 – March 2026 and will seek to provide information at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>Previously in June 2023, Members may recall a previous update paper presented to Development committee noting DfC's decision to reduce the maximum referrals on a monthly basis from the previous 30 per month to 20 month and this took effect from June 2022. As Council is remunerated on a payment per referral, the reduction in maximum annual referrals from 360 in 2021-21 to 260 in 2022-23 resulted in an approximate reduction of approx. £20,000 in available annual funding. (minute reference: D097/22)</p> <p>This reduction in numbers of max referrals that can be made has meant monthly referrals at times have had to be prioritised accordingly which has the potential to result in delays for some applicants and the possibility that other applicants will not be referred to NIHE due to the capped limits.</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>The reduction of fuel poverty is an element of the Council's Poverty Plan and as such it is important that the Affordable Warmth service is continued to be provided in conjunction with other schemes such as Home Safety, Energy Efficiency Advisory Service (both supported with funding via the Public Health Agency) and also the Council's Fuel Stamp Scheme.</p>
3.2	<p>Where applicants or previous applicants do not meet the entry criteria for the Affordable Warmth scheme, officers will signpost them to other fuel poverty assistance schemes such as the Housing Executive Boiler Replacement Allowance, the Northern Ireland Energy Advice Line and the Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme.</p>
3.3	<p>Council currently allocate one full time officer to the Affordable Warmth scheme and expenditure costs are anticipated to be on a full cost recovery basis should Council achieve the capped referral targets per month.</p>

3.4	The current SLA for Members consideration and approval is attached within Appendix B.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: 2023-2024 Max Affordable Warmth funding £53,500.80 (240 annual referrals - assuming the referral number of 20 per month doesn't change). Grant income and corresponding expenditure has been considered within the existing 23/24 revenue budgets.
	Human: Staff recruitment already in place. May need reviewed in line with appropriate HR processes should funding position change.
	Risk Management: Considered in line with relevant policies and procedures.
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: None anticipated at this juncture.
	Rural Needs Implications: None anticipated at this juncture.
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	To note the content of this report and to approve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Service Level Agreement between the Department for Communities and Mid Ulster District Council for the Affordable Warmth Scheme for the April 2023 – March 2024 year.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix A: DFC Correspondence received re: Affordable Warmth Scheme Appendix B: Proposed SLA for period April 2023 – March 2024



From: Emma Sisk
Head of Affordable
Warmth and Energy
Branch

Level 3
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
BELFAST
BT2 7EG

Telephone: 028 90515269

27 February 2023

To: All Affordable Warmth
Scheme Council Senior
Officials

Dear all

AFFORDABLE WARMTH SCHEME – SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT, FUNDING AND A REFRESHED APPROACH TO TARGETING

At the Senior Officials meeting on 20 January, I said I would write to you about the interim Service Level Agreement (SLA), Council funding for delivery of the Scheme, and provide some guidance on the refreshed approach to targeting recently approved by the Department of Finance.

Service Level Agreement

I have attached the latest version of the SLA which we are proposing covers the period up to 31 March 2024, the end date of the existing approved business case. Councils indicated at January's meeting that this would need to be signed off at local committee before the election in May. I would be grateful if that process could be completed, and the signed SLA returned to the Department as soon as possible.

It is an audit requirement that Councils provide an assurance regarding financial accountability and operational delivery to assure the Department that funds provided for the

AWS are being spent on the Scheme. Therefore, can I ask that each Council provides this assurance statement and returns to the Department alongside the signed SLA. You should keep a record of the evidence you have used, and how you got the assurance you needed. We do not require Councils to send this evidence to us, but we may ask to see it, or elements of it.

Council Funding for Delivery of the Scheme

Unfortunately, I am not in a position to confirm the Scheme budget for 2023/24; however, our current planning assumption is for a capital budget of £16m. I had indicated at our last meeting that we may be asking Councils to make 30 referrals per month, however, due to the budget uncertainty we are now asking Councils to make 20 referrals per month from 01 April 2023 to 30 June 2023. As soon as I am given confirmation of the budget, I will write to you with details.

I understand there is some concern among Councils about meeting the referrals per month target without a change to funding arrangements. In addition, at the most recent Senior Officials meeting several Councils indicated that they may be unable to continue their participation in the Scheme under the current funding model. The SLA allows a +/-5 flexibility in monthly referral numbers and you should work with your local Grant Office to make up any shortfall by the end of each quarter.

The Department is drafting an addendum to the current Business Case to allow the Scheme to run from April 2024 – March 2026. Options on a revised funding model will be explored through the addendum. Any changes must demonstrate value for money and will be subject to relevant approvals and budget availability. We are progressing this work as a matter of urgency and hope that a revised model will provide additional certainty to Councils in regard to funding whilst allowing the Department to meet its financial and risk management obligations. I will provide further detail on the approved new approach at the earliest opportunity.

However, should any Council intend to formally withdraw from the Scheme, I would be grateful if you would notify the Department as a matter of urgency and by the 17th March 2023 at the latest so that alternative delivery models can be explored.

Refreshed Approach to Targeting

As you are aware an Internal Audit Review of the Affordable Warmth Scheme completed in March 2021 and recommended (4.1) in relation to targeting that the Department:

- a) Liaise with DoF regarding Scheme targeting to establish the implications for the 2018 interim Business Case and current Business Case approvals: and
- b) Undertake an evaluation of the targeted approach including the effectiveness of the model used and assess the impact on the current Business Case.

The Department commissioned Business Consultancy Services (BCS) in the Department of Finance to complete a study to examine if the Affordable Warmth Scheme continued to deliver value for money. This included an evaluation of both the effectiveness and value for money of the current targeted approach within the current delivery model. The BCS study concluded that:

- The principle of “worst first” is sound, and results in successful targeting of those most in need.
- The effectiveness of the current model has diminished in recent years, based on the marginal nature of targeting i.e. lists in a number of council areas are exhausted and the current 80/20 split is limiting councils’ ability to target support towards people who are in relative need but outside of the targeted area.
- Continuing but optimising the current targeted approach by implementing the recommendations in this report would provide the best value for money at this point.

The BCS study recommended that:

- the definition of ‘targeted’ should be more flexible;
- the targeted to self-referral ratio should be amended (it suggested a change to 60:40);
- consideration should be given to expanding the targeted list.

In February 2022 the Department commenced a pilot with a refreshed approach to targeting in 3 Council areas: Antrim and Newtownabbey, Derry City and Strabane and Belfast. The pilot introduced a modified version of the definition of “targeted” to reflect the development of the Scheme since it began in 2015 and to take account of Councils’ views on the

meaning of what a targeted case should include. For the purpose of the pilot the following referrals were considered targeted:

- On the targeted list;
- Same postcode as address on the targeted list;
- Close proximity (as determined by Council staff) to an address on the targeted list; or
- Signposted by another Agency or person.

The BCS study is attached at Annex A and a report of the pilot is attached at Annex B.

It is clear from the results of this pilot that a refreshed approach using the modified definition is more effective in finding and assisting those most in need and make the best use of Council resources and provides value for money.

We would therefore ask all Councils to commence using this refreshed targeted definition from 01 April 2023. To assist the Department to evaluate the effectiveness of this revised approach, Councils will also be asked complete the template attached at Annex C and return to the Department on a monthly basis. A member of the Affordable Warmth and Energy team will contact you soon to arrange a suitable date and time for a visit to your office to discuss the new approach with you.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Councils for all their efforts in delivering the Scheme to date.

Yours sincerely,

Emma Sisk

CC: Oliver McHugh
Josephine Gardner
Nicola Kelly
Eva Dougan



Microsoft Word -
BCS Review of DfC Af

PILOT OF A REFRESHED APPROACH TO TARGETING IN THE AFFORDABLE WARMTH SCHEME

Background

Rationale for Targeting

1. The Affordable Warmth Scheme was introduced in April 2015 and targeted homes most at risk of fuel poverty and likely to be in need of improvements to their energy efficiency. Initially the Department adhered rigidly to a referral ratio from Councils of 80% targeted and 20% self-referral. This was to ensure that Councils focused on the targeted lists of addresses provided to them by the Department. These addresses were identified using a targeting tool developed by Ulster University and were most likely to be in severe fuel poverty.
2. The Scheme was built on a partnership with Councils and as it developed it was always expected Councils would be more involved using local knowledge to identify and target households most at risk of fuel poverty in their local area. As the Scheme progressed year on year an increased number of referrals came from areas outside those identified on the targeted lists. All of these referrals meet the Scheme qualification criteria and were just as likely to be in severe fuel poverty as those on the targeted lists.

Developing the Targeted Approach

3. The 80/20 split was becoming almost impossible to meet and Councils argued that that there should be more flexibility around it. The targeted lists in some council areas had been exhausted and they could not be re-worked or looked at until after the census results which could be post 2024. Refreshing the targeted approach does not represent a move away from targeting the “worst first” ethos of the Scheme, rather it acknowledges that Councils are well placed to assist with the identification and targeting of those most in need by using local knowledge and maintains the targeted approach approved in the Business Case.

Business Consultancy Services Study

4. The Department commissioned Business Consultancy Services (BCS) in the Department of Finance to complete a study to examine if the Affordable Warmth Scheme continued to deliver value for money. This included an evaluation of both the effectiveness and value for money of the current targeted approach within the current delivery model.
5. The BCS study concluded that:
 - The principle of “worst first” is sound, and results in successful targeting of those most in need.
 - The effectiveness of the current model has diminished in recent years, based on the marginal nature of targeting i.e., lists in a number of council areas are exhausted and the current 80/20 split is limiting councils’ ability to target support towards people who are in relative need but outside of the targeted area.
 - Continuing but optimising the current targeted approach by implementing the recommendations in this report would provide the best value for money at this point.
6. The BCS study recommended that:
 - the definition of ‘targeted’ should be more flexible;
 - the targeted to self-referral ratio should be amended (it suggests a change to 60:40);
 - consideration should be given to expanding the targeted list.
7. This presented an opportunity for a pilot of the refreshed approach to be run across three of the councils.

The Refreshed Approach to Targeting pilot

8. It was agreed that the pilot would run in 3 Council areas - Antrim and Newtownabbey, Derry City and Strabane and Belfast. The status of targeting in each of the council areas at the start of the pilot was:

- Antrim & Newtownabbey – Been through list 5 times, door knocking and letters sent out. Of the last 400 letters sent out, there were 3 responses and of those only 1 of those were eligible for AWS.
 - Derry City & Strabane – Been through list twice and it is now exhausted. They had also sent out letters but the response has been minimal and the cost involved has not been recouped.
 - Belfast – List has not been exhausted, when self-referrals come in they look at the targeted lists to see if they can bring them in under targeted.
9. The pilot introduced a modified version of the definition of “targeted” to reflect the development of the Scheme since it began in 2015 and to take account of Councils’ views on the meaning of what a targeted case should include. For the purpose of the pilot the following referrals were considered targeted:
- On the targeted list;
 - Same postcode as address on the targeted list;
 - Close proximity (as determined by Council staff) to an address on the targeted list; or
 - Signposted by another Agency or person.

Results from the Pilot

10. Adhering to the targeted lists and the 80% targeted 20% self-referral arrangement had been restricting Councils’ ability to use their local knowledge to assist the “worst first”. Refreshing the approach to targeting has allowed Councils to use their resources to find homes most in need of assistance. A summary of the referrals from the pilot is attached at Appendix 1 and shows a significant shift in the levels of cases considered targeted when using the refreshed approach.
11. It is important to note the low levels of household incomes in many of the cases which were targeted by the pilot using the refreshed approach, many of these would not have been identified otherwise. In Belfast the average household income for

referrals during the period of the pilot was £13,200, in Antrim and Newtownabbey it was £13,758 and in Derry and Strabane the average household income was £13,152.

12. It is also important to note that 76% of approved referrals received multiple energy efficiency measures and 63% received priority 1 measures (**Insulation / Ventilation / Draught-proofing**).
13. The Councils have recorded many examples of homes in real need of assistance which they would not have been able to refer into the Scheme outside the pilot arrangements. Some of these are shown in Appendix 2.

Conclusion

14. The use of targeted lists and adherence to a strict 80% targeted and 20% self-referral was necessary to ensure that resources were directed to those most in need of assistance in the early years of the Scheme. The findings from the pilot show a rate of 80% targeted and 20% self-referral.
15. It is clear from the results of this pilot that a refreshed approach using the modified definition is more effective in finding and assisting those most in need and make the best use of Council resources and provides value for money.

Recommendation

16. The Department recommends that the refreshed approach to targeting is rolled out to all eleven Councils from 1 February 2023. The Department will review the refreshed approach after one full year of operation. In line with the BCS Study the targeted to self-referral ratio should be amended to 60:40.

Appendix 1

AFFORDABLE WARMTH SCHEME TARGETING PILOT FEBRUARY - OCTOBER 2022

SUMMARY

Council	Total Feb - Oct	Targeted List	Same Postcode	Close Geographical Proximity	Referred by another Agency	Self-Referral	Average Income level
Antrim N'Abbey *	172	27	15	92	1	37	£13,758
	78%					22%	
Belfast	221	5	54	7	118	37	£13,200
	83%					17%	
Derry Strabane	230	92	0	77	8	53	£13,152
	77%					23%	
Overall	623	124	69	176	127	127	£13,370
	80%					20%	

- Information for Antrim and Newtownabbey is for 6 months only

Case 1 – 65 Joanmount Park

Address is outside the targeted area, referred by a family member who thought she might be eligible for the scheme. 82 years old, solid fuel glass fronted fire and unable to use the fire easily or safely now due to age and mobility issues.

Case 2 – 37 Whitecliff Parade

Address is not on the targeted list but within the targeted area and has the same postcode (dropping the last letter). Lady who is 64 years old receives DLA, has mental health problems and has a daughter with learning difficulties living in the house. The old oil boiler was completely broken and she had no insulation in the house at all. She was referred to the Warm and Well scheme to provide her with oil-filled electric radiators and electricity top ups in the interim period.

Case 3 – 21 Glencairn Crescent

Outside targeted area, referred by a community worker. Elderly gentleman, 85 years old recently lost his wife. No insulation at all in the property and finds it very difficult to heat and spending a large amount of money on gas. Despite having a new boiler he has also been having trouble with the heating so he was referred to the Warm and well Scheme who arranged for the heating system to be inspected and subsequently flushed. He was also referred to Bryson for a home safety check and handyperson service as he had a few odd jobs and clutter to clear from his home.

COUNCIL RPEORTING TEMPLATE



Council Reporting
Template.xlsx

AFFORDABLE WARMTH SCHEME

INTERIM

SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

between

DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES

and

MID ULSTER COUNCIL

For the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2024

Date: 27 February 2023

1. Overview

- 1.1. The Department for Communities (DfC/the Department) is responsible for developing policy and implementing programmes to mitigate the effects of fuel poverty and improve the thermal comfort of low income households across Northern Ireland. The Affordable Warmth Scheme is DfC's primary scheme for tackling fuel poverty. DfC works in partnership with all local councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE/the Housing Executive) to deliver the Affordable Warmth Scheme.
- 1.2. The Affordable Warmth Scheme aims to mitigate the effects of fuel poverty in households living in severe or extreme fuel poverty. It targets low income households in eligible private housing and delivers home energy efficiency improvement measures to qualifying households.
- 1.3. All parties will use opportunities during the life of this agreement to display a commitment to work together in support of Government aims to improve household energy efficiency.

2. Aims and Objectives of the Affordable Warmth Scheme

- 2.1. The Affordable Warmth Scheme is delivered under the statutory framework contained within the Domestic Energy Efficiency Grants Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 as amended by the Domestic Energy Efficiency (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 (2016 SR NO 333 Para 7) and Amendment Regulations 2021 (2021 SR NO 147).
- 2.2. The aims of the Affordable Warmth Scheme include to:
 - mitigate the effects of fuel poverty in low income households.
 - deliver a whole house approach providing energy efficiency improvement measures.
 - target and assist those most likely to be living in the most severe fuel poverty first using a triage system which utilises an agreed scoring matrix to prioritise cases and maintain consistency across all Council areas. The weighting for the triage system takes account of the vulnerability of the householder in terms of age and disability and the condition of the household.
 - deliver a range of measures within a short period of time with minimal disruption to residents.

- raise the SAP rating of homes to a level which would protect the occupants from the impacts of fuel poverty.
- deliver tailored solutions in a synchronised way.

2.3. The Affordable Warmth Business Case (2019 – 2024) contains the following objectives and performance indicators:

- between 1 June 2019 and 31 March 2024 to deliver energy efficiency improvement measures to a minimum of 14,000 homes considered to be likely to be at risk of severe fuel poverty
- between 1 June 2019 and 31 March 2024 to deliver 21,000 energy efficiency measures.

2.4. For the period of this SLA and based on an annual budget of £16m this translates overall as:

- 3,137 homes assisted
- 4,705 energy efficiency measures provided

2.5. The measures available under this scheme are listed at **Annex A**

3. Scope and Duration of the Interim Agreement

3.1. The Department has agreed to work with Councils to review a number of issues raised by Councils. To inform the process going forward DfC commissioned Business Consultancy Services (BCS) to undertake an evaluation of the current targeted approach of the Affordable Warmth Scheme and to examine and consider the appropriateness of the current funding model. Councils participated in that study and made recommendations for a refreshed approach to targeting. This approach was piloted in 3 Council areas and the Department made recommendations to DoF to make changes to the targeted approach based on the results of the pilot. DoF agreed to the changes and Councils will be asked to introduce the refreshed approach from 1 April 2023.

3.2. The purpose of this Service Level Agreement (SLA) is to set out the interim arrangement between the Department and Councils pending further consideration of the way forward in the development of a future SLA. It sets out the relationship between Councils and DfC, the duties and responsibilities on each and the outworkings of delivering the Affordable Warmth Scheme.

3.3. This interim agreement takes effect from 1 April 2022 and remains in force unless terminated by:

- The end date of the agreement: 31 March 2024
- Either party, on the expiry of 3 months' notice in writing.
- The agreement of both parties.

3.4. Any party may also terminate the Agreement without notice, for any of the following reasons:

- any breach by the other of its obligations under this Agreement; and
- in the case of a breach capable of rectification, where such breach has not been rectified by the other party within 14 days of it being given notice of same.

3.5. The agreement may be amended at any time with the consent of both parties. Agreed amendments will be incorporated into the agreement and recorded at **Annex B**

3.6. This interim agreement will be reviewed as part of a wider review of the SLA as required under DfC Internal Audit Recommendation 4.2(c):

Review the SLA to ensure clarity is provided on self-referrals, the Scheme's objectives and key performance indicators are included and ownership is clearly attributed between the parties.

4. Role and Responsibilities

4.1. Department for Communities

4.1.1. The Department for Communities has a responsibility to ensure that the Affordable Warmth Scheme meets its aims and objectives and is delivered in partnership with local Councils and NIHE.

4.1.2. The Department undertakes to:

- bid for funding to enable Councils and NIHE to administer the Scheme. Funding to Councils will be provided through NIHE which will transfer agreed funds to each local council on a quarterly basis **(the funding model is under review and any revised model will be approved by DoF)**;

- set a target for referrals which Local Councils will deliver to the NIHE annually and monthly;
- where targets are required to be changed due to budgetary or scheme performance reasons give 2 months' notice of an increase or decrease of targets;
- provide each Local Council with data detailing the households to be targeted where appropriate;
- provide reporting templates for Local Councils monthly progress reports.
- continually monitor and evaluate the scheme through reporting arrangements with the NIHE and Local Councils;
- provide advice to the NIHE regarding the policy of the scheme as required;
- consider changes that will improve process or impact as the scheme develops;
- carry out a final evaluation of the Scheme post 31 March 2024.

4.2. Local Councils

4.2.1. Local Councils are responsible for targeting households who are most in need, determining eligibility for the Scheme and submitting regular referrals to the NIHE. Each local council has been provided with details of households considered to potentially meet the conditions of the scheme.

4.2.2. Each Local Council undertakes to:

- with the consent of the targeted householder, conduct an eligibility assessment with the householder to collate and verify eligibility for the Scheme in relation to occupancy, tenure and financial income;
- contribute to the objectives and performance indicators (paras 2.3 and 2.4 refer) by maintaining a steady rate of 20 +/- 5 completed first time surveys to the Housing Executive monthly (equates to approximately 240 per Council annually). Additional referrals will not be accepted without prior agreement with the Department and NIHE. The monthly tolerance difference should be made up by the end of the quarter.

- apply appropriate discretion regarding accepting self-referrals (*currently referrals which are not from the 'targeted list'*). Local councils must bear in mind that Affordable Warmth is primarily a targeted scheme. Targeting those households in most need of intervention and requiring scheme measures in priority one to four order **(Annex A). This clause will be amended to reflect the refreshed targeting approach from 1 April 2023.**
- advise the Department within one month if referral targets cannot be met along with a plan for resolution.
- where the number of referrals may need to be adjusted in year due to budget change or scheme performance, endeavour to meet the new targets in order to maximise the number of households being supported. Where this is not possible the Council must inform the Department;
- highlight urgent cases to the NIHE central team at the time the referral is being electronically transferred. An urgent case is defined as a household with no heating system, or where a 15 year old central heating boiler is broken down beyond repair
- ensure that when an application is received by Building Control that officials arrange for measures to be inspected. NIHE will provide Councils with details where certificates are outstanding, and both parties will actively progress these cases and report position at the quarterly partnership meetings.
- Building Control officials will confirm to the NIHE whether the installation is in compliance with the building regulations;
- provide householders participating in the scheme with information regarding energy advice;
- manage and respond to complaints concerning local council staff regarding the Affordable Warmth Scheme;
- where local council officials have completed the survey and referred that survey to the NIHE, direct any query regarding the application to the NIHE to resolve.
- meet with the NIHE and DfC at least quarterly to discuss the progress of the scheme and discuss any areas of concern;
- participate in both the established Senior Officer group (3 meetings per year) and other ad hoc meetings as and when required;

- where the householder agrees, refer their details (name, address, contact number) to the Social Welfare Group (***Make the Call¹***) for the purposes of conducting a Benefit Entitlement Check with them.
- carry out additional duties such as handholding of householders and qualitative case studies of homes which have received assistance through the Scheme.

4.3. Northern Ireland Housing Executive

4.3.1. The NIHE is a non-departmental public body. Therefore it will not be a signatory to this SLA as the DfC and the NIHE has an established accountability process. This accountability process sets out the controls to be exercised over the different areas of the NIHE's activities by the DfC directly or by the NIHE itself. The prime purpose is to assist the Permanent Secretary of DfC in discharging his responsibilities in relation to NIHE systems and as such represents a formal statement by DfC of the standards it requires the NIHE to achieve in relation to the probity of activities.

4.3.2. The NIHE undertakes to:

- act as Scheme Manager to deliver the schemes strategic objectives;
- manage and control all financial procedures and in line with approved budgetary capacity and scheme business case;
- develop, implement and monitor scheme policies, procedures and guidance underpinned by the objectives outlined in the scheme business case;
- provide performance and financial information and complete all monthly and quarterly reports to NIHE Executive Team and DfC;
- complete evaluations of the scheme interventions in relation to customer satisfaction levels, energy efficiency and fuel poverty;
- work closely with DfC, Councils and Grants Offices to ensure effective delivery of the scheme business case;
- manage, investigate and respond to all complaints in line with Housing Executive policies;

¹ Link for contact information and general information to Make the Call [Make the Call Service | nidirect](#)

- administer scheme information requests where available such as Freedom of Information Requests, Subject Access Requests and Assembly Questions;
- positively engage with other scheme stakeholders and actively address matters pertaining to the scheme;
- carry out the daily tasks as defined in the Scheme Information & Policy Guide;
- attend quarterly partnership meetings and provide scheme performance update and address matters relating to the scheme with senior officials;
- maintain local monthly meeting between Grants Office representative and Council representative to address local queries;
- complete sample verification checks (minimum 10% - maximum 100%) of applications referred and liaise with Councils on the findings so corrective action can be taken;
- encourage scheme participation, give technical and energy guidance to householders and help reduce cancellations.

5. Financial Arrangements

5.1. Local councils will be responsible and accountable for the management of the Affordable Warmth budget allocated to them and paid to them quarterly by NIHE. Each local council must ensure that they have appropriate financial management policies in place and that the Affordable Warmth Scheme budget is ring fenced for Affordable Warmth activities.

6. Monitoring & Reporting

6.1. Each local council will provide the Department, with monthly progress reports (template attached at **Annex C**) regarding the number of:

- referrals completed;
- the number of self-referral referrals completed; and
- numbers and details of referrals to other schemes or services.

6.2. Local councils will advise the Department of any Internal Audit of the Affordable Warmth Scheme in their Council area, share any Audit recommendations concerning Affordable Warmth and consider those which relate to improving the management of the scheme. This will be done in consultation with DfC.

7. Accountability

7.1. Overall accountability for the delivery of the scheme rests with the Accounting Officer of DfC as the funding department. However, each receiving organisation is accountable for its own finances and ensuring that appropriate controls are in place in order to provide them with the necessary assurances regarding expenditure.

8. Limited Liability

8.1. The local council shall have no liability to the Department for any loss or damage sustained by the Department as a result of the Department relying on any information supplied to it by the local council under this agreement.

9. Confidentiality and Data

9.1. All Parties are to take cognisance of the Data Protection, GDPR and Freedom of Information legislation. **Annex D** sets out an agreement for the processing of personal data for the DfC and the NIHE.

Department for Communities
22 February 2023

FORMAL COMMITMENT

Signed

Dated

On behalf of the Department for Communities

Signed

Dated

On behalf of Mid Ulster Council

AFFORDABLE WARMTH MEASURES

Prioritised list of measures available under the Affordable Warmth Scheme:

Priority rating	Conditions in existing property	Improvement measures available
Priority 1 – Insulation	No cavity wall insulation	Install cavity wall insulation
	Ineffective cavity wall insulation	Remove and replace cavity wall insulation
	No loft insulation or below minimum	Installation or top up of roof space insulation to 270mm
	No hot water jacket	Install hot water jacket
	Ineffective or no draught proofing	Draught proof windows/doors
Priority 2 – Heating	No heating system exists	Installation of natural gas or oil heating
	Conversion of existing LPG or solid fuel system	Installation of natural gas or oil heating
	Conversion of Economy 7	Conversion to natural gas (or oil where natural gas isn't available) or conversion to high efficiency storage system
	Householder 65 or over, or with child under 16, or receiving a disability benefit and with a boiler over 15 years old	Boiler replacement and new radiators where required
	Heating system exists without controls	Add heating controls
	Heating system exists but radiators defective	Replace radiators as needed
Priority 3 – Windows	Windows in disrepair	Repair/replace windows with double glazing if draught proofing is not possible
Priority 4 - Solid wall	Solid wall with no insulation	Internal/external insulation

RECORD OF AGREED CHANGES TO THE INTERIM SLA

Summary of Change made	Reference Paragraph	Date change agreed	Version updated by

COPY OF MONTHLY RETURNS TEMPLATE



Council Reporting
Template.xlsx

DATA PROCESSING AGREEMENT – MID ULSTER COUNCIL

for the processing of personal data for the Department of Communities and Northern Ireland Housing Executive

1) Purpose

1. This agreement sets out the terms and conditions by which personal data will be processed by the Council's on behalf of the Department for Communities (DfC) and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE).
2. This agreement is signed and agreed to ensure full compliance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) and is consistent with the original purpose for which the data is / was gathered and further processed.
3. The purpose of the disclosure is to facilitate the processing of personal data on behalf of the DfC and NIHE who are the Data Controllers and to fulfil the obligations with regard to: Improving domestic energy efficiency in the private sector across Northern Ireland via the Affordable Warmth Scheme. This scheme aims to target identified low income households and deliver energy efficiency improvement measures to qualifying households. The Affordable Warmth Scheme is DfC's primary scheme for tackling fuel poverty. DfC and NIHE work in partnership with all local councils and the NIHE to deliver the Affordable Warmth Scheme.
4. The terms Data, Data Controller, Data Processor, Personal Data, Sensitive Personal Data, Processing and Information Commissioner have the same meaning as defined within the Data Protection Act 2018.
5. "Agreement" – means this Data Processor agreement along with any associated documents attached or referred to as forming part of the agreement.

6. “Services” – means the services that will be provided by the Data Processor during the period of the agreement.
7. “Council Liaison officer” – means the person nominated by each Data Processor who will assume day to day management responsibility and liaison with the Data Controllers.

2) Use and Disclosure of Personal Data

1. Councils will receive specific targeted lists of referral addresses within their Council area of responsibility and also receive independent enquiries from individuals who are not on the target list.
2. Council officers will visit targeted and non-targeted addresses, where appropriate to assess eligibility for the scheme and collect the necessary documentation. When visiting an address, the Council officers will complete an electronic NIHE application form named ‘**Affordable Warmth Scheme**’ application.
3. As part of the process, the applicant is required to provide documentation to verify eligibility including proof of ownership, occupancy and income. These eligibility documents will be photographed by Council staff on a Council issued electronic tablet at the time of the visit and in the home of the applicant. Eligibility documents will be shared with NIHE electronically and the eligibility document data is then deleted beyond recovery from the tablets. Where documents cannot be submitted electronically, hardcopies can be accepted if necessary.
4. The tablets have a security feature that secures all data being stored on and transmitted to a device and provides functionality to lock down and wipe data from a device if it is lost or stolen.

5. In certain cases the original hard copy eligibility documents are removed by the Council officers instead of photographing onto the electronic tablet in the home of the applicant. These documents will be photographed or scanned and checked that the copy is legible before sharing with NIHE. The originals will be returned to the applicant in such a way to protect the data in accordance with Council policy.
6. If the property is privately rented, the Council officers will send a consent form to the landlord.
7. Data gathered for this purpose will not be disclosed to any other person or organisation. The data is used to confirm the eligibility of the applicant to receive a grant.

3) Proportionality / Subject Access

1. The processing will be proportional for its purpose and a high level of security and confidentiality will be applied. The Council will additionally agree to notify the ICO if any changes are required to their Data Protection notification.
2. If a subject access request is made directly to the Council and it involves personal data controlled by DfC and NIHE, it is the responsibility of the relevant Council to immediately liaise with DfC and NIHE to process the request.
3. DfC and NIHE will give appropriate assistance as is necessary to the Council to enable it to:
 - Comply with a subject access request
 - Respond to any information notice served upon the Council by the ICO
 - Respond to any complaint from a data subject
 - Investigate any breach or alleged breach of the Data Protection Act

4) Security

1. The Council will apply appropriate security measures equal with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018.
2. The Council must ensure that appropriate technical and organisational measures shall be taken against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data. In particular, the Council shall ensure that measures are in place to:
 - Prevent accidental compromise or damage during storage, handling, use, processing, transmission or transport;
 - Deter deliberate compromise or opportunist attack;
 - Promote discretion in order to avoid unauthorised access; and
 - Provide suitable training to their staff on how to handle DfC and NIHE data.
3. To ensure Information Security Standards Councils will work to the principles of ISO27001.
4. The personal data, including application forms and supporting documents, is transferred to NIHE (on behalf of DfC) via -
Electronic forms are transferred to NIHE using XML files and FTPS site or using password protected xml files via e-mail.
5. When necessary paper application forms and supporting documentation are hand delivered to NIHE grants office and signed in by case officers.
6. The services of any sub-contractor will not be used by the Council in connection with the processing of DfC and NIHE data without prior approval.

5) Confidentiality

1. The Council will not disclose or communicate to any other individual or organisation the personal data gathered for DfC and NIHE. They shall treat any personal data provided strictly private and confidential.
2. The Council shall ensure that any of their staff listed within the agreement are aware of their responsibilities in connection with the use of that data.
3. The obligations of confidentiality in relation to this agreement by the Council will remain in force after the expiry of this agreement.
4. This obligation of confidentiality shall not apply where disclosure of DfC and NIHE data is ordered by a Court of law. There may also be occasions when disclosure is required by the Police or other law enforcement agencies for the investigation of a crime or is required for legal proceedings.
5. If this happens, and a request is received by the Council, it must inform DfC and NIHE as soon as possible in writing, stating the identity of the requesting body and nature of the data sought. This will allow DfC and NIHE to deliberate and decide on what can be released.

6) Retention and Review

1. The data should be retained for five years in line with DfC retention policies.

7) Data Processor Breach of Security

1. In the event of a data breach by the Council, which involves DfC and NIHE data, the Council Liaison Officer must immediately inform DfC and NIHE of the circumstances.
2. A data breach can take the form of the following:-

- The loss or theft of data;
 - Equipment failure;
 - Professional hacking attempt;
 - Professional “blagging” whereby data is obtained by deceit; and
 - Human error by accidental disclosure. (An organisation mistakenly providing personal information to the wrong person, for example by sending details out to the wrong address).
3. Once it has been confirmed that DfC and NIHE personal data has been involved, the main DfC Data Breach procedure must be invoked. It must also be assumed that the Council will have a data breach procedure in place; however, DfC will lead on this matter.

8) Time Period of agreement and Termination

1. This agreement will remain in force until the SLA is reviewed. However if potential issues do emerge, this may require further consideration.
2. DfC may at any time by notice in writing, terminate this agreement if the Council is in breach of any obligation under this agreement.
3. DfC retains the final decision in any variation to the agreement. No variation will occur unless written directions are signed by both parties and included within this document.

This constitutes an agreement between the Council (acting as Data Processors) and DfC / NIHE who will abide by the content of this document.

Report on	Catering Provision at Arts and Leisure Venues
Date of Meeting	16th March 2023
Reporting Officer	Claire Linney, Assistant Director Development Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing
Contact Officers	Catherine Fox, Arts & Facilities Development Manager John Howard, Open Spaces & Recreation Development Manager Paul Bailie, Open Spaces & Recreation Development Manager Sean Cavlin, Leisure Services Development Manager

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

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to update members on current catering provision at arts and leisure venues and to seek approval for the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cafe and refreshment contract for arts, leisure and recreation venues
2	Background
2.1	<p>Cafe and refreshment contract at arts and leisure venues</p> <p>Currently there are a range of different cafe and refreshment contracts and delivery models across Council arts, leisure and recreation facilities.</p> <p>The current provision and need are detailed below. The list does not include for Seamus Heaney Homeplace, where the contract is currently in place and is not open to renewal at present.</p> <p>The proposed provision below for each venue has been considered in line with existing asset base, the target audiences and market complementarity.</p> <p>It is proposed that should the recommendations below proceed, all will be publicly tendered as lots, to allow the maximum number of local businesses to access the opportunities.</p>
2.2	<p>It is envisaged that a monthly rental fee to cover cafe hire and the access to the vending on these sites will make it more attractive and viable for an operator in the current economic climate. The rental fee for each venue will differ based on market</p>

	<p>and service conditions, asset provision, and complementarity of Council services/delivery.</p> <p>Where there is a proposal for a cafe opportunity at a venue, this will also include event refreshments and food and it is hoped that this should maximise the potential for an operator to sustain and maintain cafe viability for longer periods.</p>
2.3	<p>It is envisaged that the vending is key to provide some provision of service at quieter times.</p> <p>It is hoped that adopting this approach for the designated venues provides for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater service provision at sites; responding to customer demand and changing customer expectations. • Quality delivery: delivering through local businesses specialised in cafe and conference/event refreshment provision. • Maximisation of resources; allowing Council to deliver through a partnership model with local industry due to limited financial resource. • Economic development: supporting community wealth building by tendering key services to local businesses through a small lot based approach.
3	Main Report
3.1	<p>Burnavon, Hill of The O'Neill & Ranfurly House</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no current formalised contractual provision of refreshments at either the Burnavon or Ranfurly House & Hill of The O'Neill. • Whilst there is a bar facility in the Burnavon that operates during arranged performances (which is operated and managed directly by the facility), there is no refreshment provision for general users. • The cafe function in Ranfurly House historically has not been a successful venture with limitations in the service and there is a need to provide visitors to the site with hospitality options.
3.2	<p>Two separate provisions will be required to cater for visitors and users of the facilities -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is a need for conference provision of food, for a range of events and receptions at both locations. Conferences and events are a key income generator for the facilities, which complement and supplement the range of arts performances and shows that can be accommodated. 2. It is proposed that high quality vending machines (snacks, pastries, sandwiches, cold and hot drinks) which will be self-service, would be provided for use in both facilities which will bring convenience to all users as they will be able to buy refreshments quickly, on demand and beyond the standard hours offered previously. Whilst providing the traditional confectionery snacks, it is envisaged that the provision will be of a higher quality with more high price items such as pastries, scones, and sandwiches and tabletop full suite of tea and coffee choices. Suitable locations for the vending machines will be identified in the public areas of both facilities.

3.3	<p>Cookstown Leisure Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a designated spaces along with associated equipment on site at this facility however there is no cafe currently at Cookstown Leisure Centre. This was previously delivered by a 3rd party contractor but has now expired. • There is a need for cafe provision to provide for users of the facility, and income generating services such as birthday parties and other private functions. • There is a need for vending provision (snacks, cold and hot drinks) at times when the cafe is closed or at busy times catering for parties etc.
3.4	<p>Dungannon Leisure Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no designated spaces or associated equipment to facilitate cafe provision at Dungannon Leisure Centre. • There are vending machines which provide for some level of service for public users. • There is also a need for continued high level vending provision (snacks, cold and hot drinks) at this location.
3.5	<p>Greenvale Leisure Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a designated spaces along with associated equipment on site at this facility however there is no cafe currently operational at Greenvale Leisure Centre. • This was previously delivered by Council but has been closed since covid restrictions first were introduced and there is no longer the financial resource available to return this to previous operational model. • There is a need for cafe provision to provide for users of the facility, and income generating and requested services such as birthday parties and other private functions. • There is a need for vending provision (snacks, cold and hot drinks) at times when the cafe is closed or at busy times catering for parties etc.
3.6	<p>Dungannon Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a designated space along with associated equipment on site at this facility however there is no cafe currently at Dungannon Park. This was previously delivered by a 3rd party contractor but has now expired. • There is a need for Coffee Shop provision to provide for users of the facility, in particular visitors using the caravanning facilities at the site. It would also support income generating of users to the park and outdoor events. • There is a need for vending provision (snacks, cold and hot drinks) at times when the cafe is closed as the site is accessible, during visitor months, for longer days.
3.7	<p>Other Recreational Locations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the following sites, there is no designated spaces or associated equipment to facilitate cafe provision however there are some level of vending across the following staffed sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mid Ulster Sports Arena, Meadowbank Sports Arena, Maghera Leisure Centre, Moneymore Recreation Centre, Tobermore Golf Centre

<p>3.8</p> <p>3.9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for continued vending (snacks, cold and hot drinks) provision at those locations where vending provision satisfies user requirements. <p>Proposed Procurement Route for Suppliers</p> <p>The provision of catering within venues is proposed to be completed through a publicly advertised tender process with the tender being split into lots to cater for all arrangements in each of the facilities and Centres (this means that prospective bidders can choose to bid for a lot which is most suitable to them and/or bid for all lots):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lot 1 – Vendor for Cookstown Leisure Centre Café, including provisions for vending. • Lot 2 - Vendor for Greenvale Leisure Centre Cafe, including provisions for vending. • Lot 3 – Vender for Dungannon Park Coffee Shop, including provisions for vending. • Lot 4 – Vendors for event and conference catering for Hill of The O'Neill and Ranfurly House and Burnavon. • Lot 5 – Supplier for high quality self serve vending machines for Burnavon, Hill of The O'Neill & Ranfurly House and Dungannon Leisure Centre. • Lot 6 - Vending provisions for staffed sites at Mid Ulster Sports Arena, Meadowbank Sports Arena, Maghera Leisure Centre, Moneymore Recreation Centre, Tobermore Golf Centre <p>A further report will be brought to Development Committee for Members consideration once the proposed procurement process has concluded and this will seek to provide further recommendations for Members consideration before any contract is awarded.</p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p> <p>Financial: It is anticipated there will be a modest income derived from adopting this approach. This will not be known until tender process has concluded.</p> <p>Human: Officer time to coordinate the procurement process and thereafter to manage the contract(s).</p> <p>Risk Management: Considered in line with relevant council policies and procedures.</p>
<p>4.2</p>	<p>Screening & Impact Assessments</p> <p>Equality & Good Relations Implications: None anticipated at this juncture.</p> <p>Rural Needs Implications: None anticipated at this juncture.</p>

5	Recommendations
5.1	<p>To note the contents of this report and give approval for Council to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceed to seek to procure cafe and refreshment contract(s) for arts, leisure and recreation venues as outlined in section 3.8 of this report.
6	List of Documents Attached
6.1	N/A

Report on	Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership - Draft Action Plan 2023-2024
Reporting Officer	Assistant Director of Economy, Tourism & Strategic Programmes
Contact Officer	Strategic Programmes Service Manager

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To update Members on the development of Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership - Draft Action Plan 2023-2024.
2.0	Background
2.1	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. It is the Council's intention that the Mid Ulster LMP will be industry-led; developing and delivering activities relating to skills development, training and employability programmes in the local area.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>In December 2022, Council appointed Locus Management to assist the Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) to develop an Action Plan for 2023-24. It is important to note that the Action Plan must be developed in accordance with the planning methodology and strategic priorities set out by the Department for Communities (DfC).</p> <p>A robust strategic assessment, employer skills/labour survey and stakeholder consultation process were completed to ensure that the Action Plan developed by the LMP is locally focussed and reflects the specific needs and challenges particular to Mid Ulster.</p> <p>The Action Plan identifies a number of Themes, Aims and Key Activities, which are evidence based and focussed on outcomes which improve employability and labour market conditions across the Mid Ulster region.</p>

	<p>An indicative budget has been provided by DfC based on a maximum budget allocation of £7m across all 11 Councils. However, it is likely that the final budget will remain the same as 2022-23 at £5.5m (across 11 Councils) and LMPs have been asked to plan accordingly by identifying priority projects that can achieve maximum impact on the labour market.</p> <p>Mid Ulster's budget allocation to deliver its Action Plan for 2023-24 is therefore likely to be £369,005.21. There is a potential additional contribution of £100,638 depending on DFC's final budget allocation.</p> <p>Please note that projects contained in Section 5 of the Action Plan 2023-24 on Appendix 1, in 'black font' are the priority projects proposed for delivery during the year, however, in the event DFC provide further funding (as mentioned above), then an additional 4 projects, highlighted in blue font, will also be included.</p> <p>At the most recent meeting of the Mid Ulster LMP on 10th March 2023, LMP members agreed the draft Mid Ulster LMP Action Plan for 2023-24 and budget based on what is considered deliverable within the timeframe.</p> <p>A full copy of the Draft Mid Ulster LMP Action Plan 2023-24 is included at Appendix 1.</p> <p>It is recommended that Council approve the Draft Mid Ulster LMP Action Plan 2023-24 for submission to the Department for Communities. It should be noted the Action Plan will be evaluated under staged assessment process by DFC and the Regional LMP for Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Subject to the Plan's approval, a letter of offer should be forthcoming to enable the Mid Ulster LMP to commence delivery of the Action Plan.</p> <p>Members of the Development Committee will be kept updated on the rollout of Mid Ulster LMP's Action Plan for 2023-2024.</p>
4.0	Other Considerations
	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
4.1	<p>Financial:</p> <p>LMP activity is 100% funded by the Department for Communities (DfC). Council is likely to receive a minimum offer of £369,005.21, which encompasses £275,076.61 of operational costs and £93,928.60 of administration costs for the year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.</p> <p>In the event the higher level of funding becomes available, Council would receive a maximum offer of £469,643.00, encompassing £375,714 of operational costs and £93,929 of administration costs.</p> <p>No financial support is available from Department for the Economy to support the work of the LMP in 2023/24.</p>

	<p>Human:</p> <p>Officers' time.</p>
	<p>Risk Management:</p> <p>The risk level is mitigated as LMP activity is 100% externally funded. LMP staff will manage delivery of the Action Plan in line with current governance arrangements.</p>
4.2	<p>Screening & Impact Assessments</p> <p>One of the key advantages of the LMP approach to improving employability is that it targets resources on specific groups, including those with particular access issues and barriers, which currently prevent them from accessing training and employment opportunities.</p>
	<p>Equality & Good Relations Implications:</p> <p>It is not anticipated the Action Plan will have an adverse impact upon equality or good relations.</p>
4.3	<p>Rural Needs Implications:</p> <p>To be considered.</p>
5.0	<p>Recommendation(s)</p>
5.1	<p>It is recommended that Members:</p> <p>Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership - Draft Action Plan 2023-2024</p> <p>5.1.1 Approve the Draft Mid Ulster LMP Action Plan 2023-2024 subject to any final adjustments required by the Department for Communities (DfC) following assessment. A copy of the final Mid Ulster LMP Action Plan 2023-2024 will be brought back to the Development Committee for Members information once DFC has approved the Plan.</p> <p>5.1.2 Subject to DFC approving the Mid Ulster LMP Action Plan 2023-2024, approval is sought for delegated authority to be granted to the Chief Executive to;</p> <p>(a) Sign and return the letter of offer from the Department for Communities;</p> <p>(b) Make appointments to the successful organisations following the completion of all relevant procurement exercises. This will allow work on the Mid Ulster LMP Action Plan 2023-24 to commence as soon as possible.</p>
6.0	<p>Documents Attached & References</p>

	Appendix 1 - Draft Mid Ulster LMP Action Plan 2023-2024
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APPENDIX 1



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

Draft Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership **Action Plan 2023-2024**

March 2023



Funded by
Department for
Communities
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An Roinn
Pobal

Department for
Commonities

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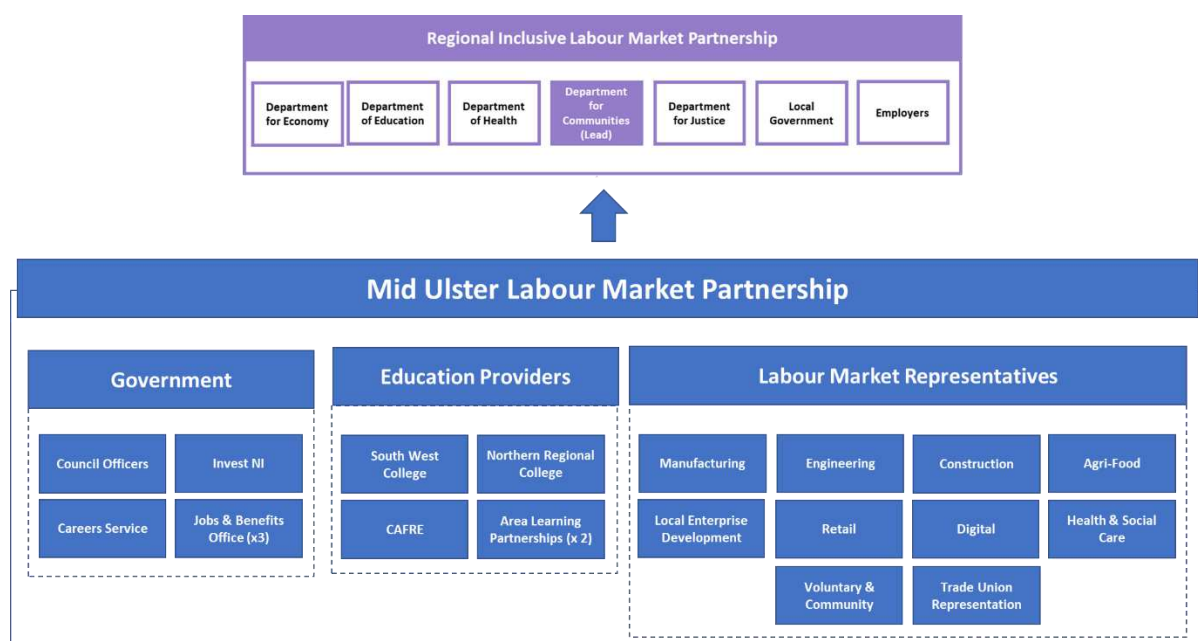
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1. Introduction

Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) has built on the success of its original Skills Forum, and Mid Ulster District Council (MUDC) has designed its LMP so that it is inclusive of all relevant government, education, and labour market stakeholders as well as key industry representatives.

Mid Ulster's LMP consists of representatives from all the major employment sectors in the region as well as including schoolteacher representation (through the two Area Learning Partnerships), and representation from the Further Education sector, including South West College (SWC), Northern Regional College (NRC), and the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE). Government representation includes Council officers from MUDC's economic development and community planning teams, along with representatives from Invest NI, Careers Service, Health & Social Care (H&SC) Trust, Mid Ulster Enterprise Partnership, and DfC's three Jobs and Benefits Offices (JBOs) located in the region.

Chart 1: Mid Ulster LMP Membership Structure



Mid Ulster LMP undertook a review of its initial one-year action plan, Strategic Assessment and employability outcomes and local labour market conditions in the Mid Ulster Council area in January and February 2023.

This exercise was undertaken to ensure that the priorities identified continue to reflect priority employability and labour market issues in the area and was informed by analysis of information provided by statutory partners, as well as the results of ongoing district wide engagement and consultation across the council area.

Cognisance was also taken of the:

- **Draft Programme for Government:** A focus on skills and employability is included in 'The Programme for Government Draft Outcomes Framework 2021'¹, which proposes nine outcomes including 'everyone can reach their potential' and 'our economy is globally competitive, regionally balanced and carbon neutral'.
- **Draft Northern Ireland Industrial Strategy:** Northern Ireland's industrial strategy 'Economy 2030: A Consultation on an Industrial Strategy for Northern Ireland'² includes a vision for the region "to be a globally competitive economy that works for everyone". The strategy includes enhancing education, skills, and employability as one of the five core pillars for growth, with proposals consisting of reforms to careers advice, strengthening collaboration across industry and government, and delivering new models of youth training.
- **10x Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland:** 'Addressing Skills Imbalances, Driving Economic Growth' can be seen as an overarching objective and includes commitments to Supporting Economic Inclusion - Individuals with Low or No Qualifications, Supporting Social and Economic Development – Focus on Mid-Level Qualifications and Driving Growth and Innovation - Higher Level Qualifications.'
- **Mid Ulster Corporate Plan 2020-2024:** Theme 3, Economy includes a commitment to 'continue to support the work of our partners, including the Mid Ulster Skills Forum, to address employability and skills to ensure the existing and future needs of our region's business base are met'.
- **Mid Ulster Community Plan** sets out the ambition for the Council area under Education & Skills as, 'Our people are better qualified and more skilled. We give children and young people the best chance in life and we are more entrepreneurial, innovative and creative.'
- **Mid Ulster Economic Development Plan 2015-2020:** Priority 2 Enabling employability and skills includes aims to address emerging sectoral labour market shortages, address training and employment needs of long-term unemployed and economically inactive, address productivity constraints through in-job training and promoting the development of a strong educated skills base.
- **Mid-South West Regional Economic Strategy** is built upon 4 priorities, the first of which is 'Future-proofing the skills base: New industries, new technology, increased automation – the world of work is changing. Initiatives have begun in the region involving local businesses, FE colleges, universities and industry bodies to equip the workforce of the future.'
- **Community Wealth Building:** Key messages include 'Skills are undoubtedly the most important driver to increase employability and to create pathways out of worklessness. Educational and training provisions, including lifelong learning programmes, work-readiness initiatives, and technical apprenticeships in the social enterprise sector, are needed to address local skills mismatches, but also to strengthen the knowledge economy workforce.'

¹ <https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/newnigov/pfg-draft-outcomes-framework-consultation.pdf>

² Department for the Economy (2017), 'Northern Ireland's industrial strategy, Economy 2030: A Consultation on an Industrial Strategy for Northern Ireland', <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/economy/industrial-strategy-ni-consultation-document.pdf>

As a result of the Planning Exercise the following Themes have been identified as local priority:

1. Economic Inactivity
2. Disability
3. Skilled Labour Supply

A Turning the Curve Exercise was undertaken in relation to the current Local LMP Action Plan Themes. A range of projects have subsequently been identified taking account of the above programmes, particularly in relation to the outcomes they deliver to ensure duplication of effort has not occurred.

A desk-based analysis of the Mid Ulster labour market was completed, and the findings used to inform primary research including roundtable discussions, consultations, employer survey and LMP members' workshop. A recurring issue raised was the impact of the removal of the European Social Fund (ESF) and the uncertainty around the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). This uncertainty has provided obvious challenges for Mid Ulster LMP as it looks to plan for 2023-2024. To this end, Mid Ulster LMP has decided to take a cautious approach to the 2023/24 Action Plan and not be over-ambitious with the development and delivery of new project ideas.

We will review the Action Plan in the Autumn of 2023 when we have a better understanding of the employability and skills eco-system post ESF funding withdrawal and the advent of the UKSPF. The LMP Action Plan will therefore continue to be a living document.

With the above in mind, Mid Ulster LMP has decided to develop its Action Plan to take account of the maximum amount of potential funding available from the Department for Communities. Thus, the Mid Ulster LMP Action Plan includes a number of programmes which will be delivered if this funding is made available during 2023/24.

2. Strategic Assessment

2.1. Introduction

This section highlights the key statistics about the labour market in Mid Ulster. Most of the statistics are from NISRA³ who supply the data for Northern Ireland Local Labour Market Insight. The latest published statistics have been used but these often date back to 2021, so we have applied some caution when assessing if they remain valid at the start of 2023. At the Council level some of the sample sizes are small and NISRA caution on their use. We have not used any of these instances for Mid Ulster LMP but some data tables highlight where there are small samples for other Councils.

Using the available statistics this section highlights the key labour market facts and trends in Mid Ulster. This is supplemented by the consultations we have undertaken with employers, Jobs and Benefit Offices (JBOs) and stakeholders.

Following the termination of the 'European Social Fund' there is a high degree of uncertainty at the start of 2023 about the capacity in Mid Ulster to deliver support for those furthest from the labour market. This is primarily because the results of bids for the new 'Shared Prosperity Fund' are not yet public. Until results are known it will make some decisions about priorities and interventions more difficult.

2.2. Demand for labour in Mid Ulster

Mid Ulster is one the most entrepreneurial regions in Northern Ireland - home to over 9,430⁴ businesses in 2022 and representing the highest concentration of enterprise outside of Belfast. Over the last ten years registered businesses in Mid-Ulster have increased by 18%, above the Northern Ireland average of 16%⁵.

Employment in Mid-Ulster is significantly different to Northern Ireland as a whole. As shown in Table 2.2. employment in manufacturing at 28% is almost three times that of the Northern Ireland rate. Construction at 10% is double the Northern Ireland rate. Consequently, this means the service sector is considerably lower⁶. **This means the skills required by employers, the patterns of recruitment, and pathways to opportunity for residents will also be significantly different.**

³ Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)

⁴ A 2% increase on 2021. Source: [NISRA, IDBR, June 2022](#)

⁵ [NISRA, NI Business Register and Employment Survey, 2021](#)

⁶ NISRA, BRES 2021

Table 2.2: Number of employees in Mid Ulster and percent by main industry in Mid Ulster and NI, 2021 (main industries = over 1,700 employees in Mid Ulster)⁷

	Number of Employees	% of Mid Ulster	% Northern Ireland	Difference (percent points)
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1,730	3%	2%	1
Manufacturing	17,066	28%	11%	17
Construction	5,921	10%	5%	5
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles	11,207	18%	17%	2
Transport and storage	1,801	3%	4%	-1
Education	5,356	9%	9%	-1
Human health and social work activities	6,272	10%	17%	-7
Other sectors	11,344	19%	37%	-18
Total	60,697			

Mid Ulster is the manufacturing centre of Northern Ireland, with key sub-sectors including advanced manufacturing, engineering, agri-food and construction. However, at 32% it also has the second highest proportion of small businesses (below £50,000 turnover) and well above the Northern Ireland rate of 25.5%⁸.

Overall, Mid Ulster had the fastest pace of employee job creation of any council area in Northern Ireland between 2016-21, growing at 13% (6,680 new jobs) compared to a total Northern Ireland growth rate of 7%⁹ and this growth has continued into 2022.

2.2.1. Public/private jobs

At 83% Mid Ulster has the highest proportion of employees in the private sector and is significantly different to the Northern Ireland average of 74%¹⁰. This high proportion is likely to have an impact on other aspects of the Mid Ulster labour market, such as skillsets of employees, willingness to work in the public sector, recruitment channels, and female employment. For example, the public sector recruits larger numbers of women so this may explain part of the large gender employment gap in Mid Ulster.

2.2.2. Self-employment

In common with Northern Ireland (and UK) the numbers of people in Mid Ulster who are self-employed has dropped since Covid. At 16.8%¹¹ of all employment Mid Ulster has the second highest rate and compares with just 11.6% for Northern Ireland. Given the industrial profile of Mid Ulster it is likely that the self-employed are mostly made up of people in skilled trade occupations and this group is likely to have been attracted back into PAYE jobs. Self-employment in Mid Ulster accounts for almost 1 in 5 jobs and approximately 11,000 people. **It is both a recruiting ground for employers and a route into economic activity for those out of work.**

⁷ NISRA, BRES 2021

⁸ *ibid*

⁹ [NISRA, NI Business Register and Employment Survey, 2021](#)

¹⁰ NISRA

¹¹ *ibid*

2.2.3. Vacancies

In 2021-22 there were 5,081¹² vacancies notified to Department for Communities in Mid Ulster. This was an increase over the previous year by 54%, however this was the lowest percentage increase of all Councils. The largest increase across Northern Ireland was for vacancies in the service sector, and Mid Ulster is less likely to benefit from these.

Since late 2022¹³ there appears to be a reduction in the number of vacancies advertised in Northern Ireland. Using the index for online adverts for jobs based in Northern Ireland there has been a dip in vacancies since late Autumn 2022. **If Mid Ulster has been following the same trend, then it is possible the level of vacancies will fall in 2023**, with much depending on the impact of low or negative growth.

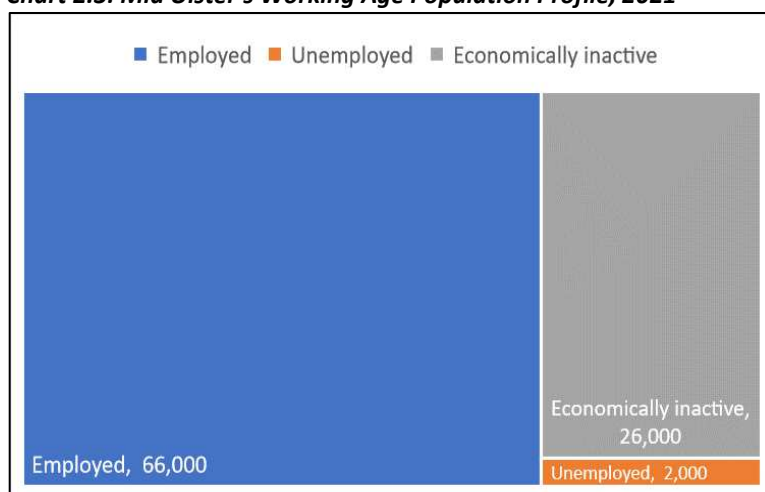
Pay in Mid Ulster

Mid Ulster is seventh in the Council rankings on pay but not much different to the Northern Ireland average. In June 2022 the HMRC PAYE (Real Time Information) average monthly pay in Mid Ulster was £2,235 compared to £2,307 for Northern Ireland. However, Mid Ulster is 25% below the UK average monthly pay. This low level of remuneration reflects the pay in manufacturing and construction and in some low paying service sector jobs. Whilst difficult to determine, it is likely that levels of pay in Mid Ulster will have an impact on: (a) the ability to attract the economic inactive back into the labour market; and (b) encourage inward migration from other parts of Northern Ireland and the UK.

2.3. Supply of labour in Mid Ulster

Since the 2011 Census Mid Ulster's population has grown by 8% and the proportion of older people has increased. There has been a significant 54% growth in people who were born outside of UK/Ireland – up from 9,100 to 13,900. Chart 2.3 below illustrates the composition of the 2021 Mid Ulster working age population (16-64)

Chart 2.3: Mid Ulster's Working Age Population Profile, 2021¹⁴



¹² Statistics on vacancies are temporarily on hold following the launch of JobApplyNI.com on 31 March 2022

¹³ Statistics on vacancies are temporarily on hold following the launch of JobApplyNI.com on 31 March 2022

¹⁴ NISRA LFS [Local LMI](#)

2.4. Economically active: those employed and unemployed

Mid Ulster has a very similar employment rate (70.3%) to Northern Ireland (70.2%)¹⁵. As such it is mid-table in the Council rankings, which range from Derry & Strabane on 65.4% to Lisburn & Castlereagh on 75.2%. However, Mid Ulster has dropped from 75.3% in 2019 prior to Covid – a full 5 percentage point drop. **If the employment rate returned to the 2019 level, then there would be a further 4,500 in employment in Mid Ulster.**

Unemployment (using the Labour Force Survey) remained stable in 2021 at around 2,000 people. The unemployment rate was 3.3% compared to 3.2% in 2020 and 2.7% prior to Covid in 2019. However, recent (December 2022) changes in the Claimant Count (see below) would suggest that the unemployment rate could have returned to pre-Covid levels.

Overall, unemployment can only drop by **around 700 people and contribute to a growth in employment**. At low levels of unemployment much of it is either frictional (temporary unemployment whilst changing jobs) or people who are long-term unemployed with significant barriers to employment.

2.5. Universal Credit Claimants in Mid-Ulster

In August 2022 there were 9,180 claimants¹⁶ on Universal Credit in Mid-Ulster, one of the lowest Councils in NI. Universal Credit includes three broad groups:

- In work but on low incomes (who previously would have been eligible for Tax Credits)
- Out of work and actively seeking work (previous Jobseeker Allowance claimants); and
- Out of work but are not required to seek work (claimants with health problems).

Using Northern Ireland proportions for the reason of a Universal Credit claim shows there are around 1,800 Universal Credit claimants in Mid-Ulster who are 'Searching for work'.

Table 2.5: UC claimant work requirements in NI and Mid Ulster, 2022¹⁷

	No work requirements	Planning for work	Preparing for work	Searching for work	Working - with requirements	Working - no requirements	Total
Aug-22							
% of NI UC claimants	45%	1%	7%	20%	11%	16%	100%
Mid-Ulster UC claimants	4,131	92	643	1,836	1,010	1,469	9,180

2.5.1.Claimant Count (searching for work)

The (experimental) Claimant Count used by government consists of all those claiming UC who have a requirement to be 'searching for work' and a further 302 Jobseeker Allowance (JSA) claimants in Mid Ulster who are yet to transition to Universal Credit. Taken together these two groups make up the experimental Claimant Count. Chart 2.5.1 below shows the Claimant Count since 2018. During 2018 and 2019 the numbers were averaging around 1,500 and then with Covid peaked at just over 4,000 people. **Since the 2022/23 Action Plan the Claimant**

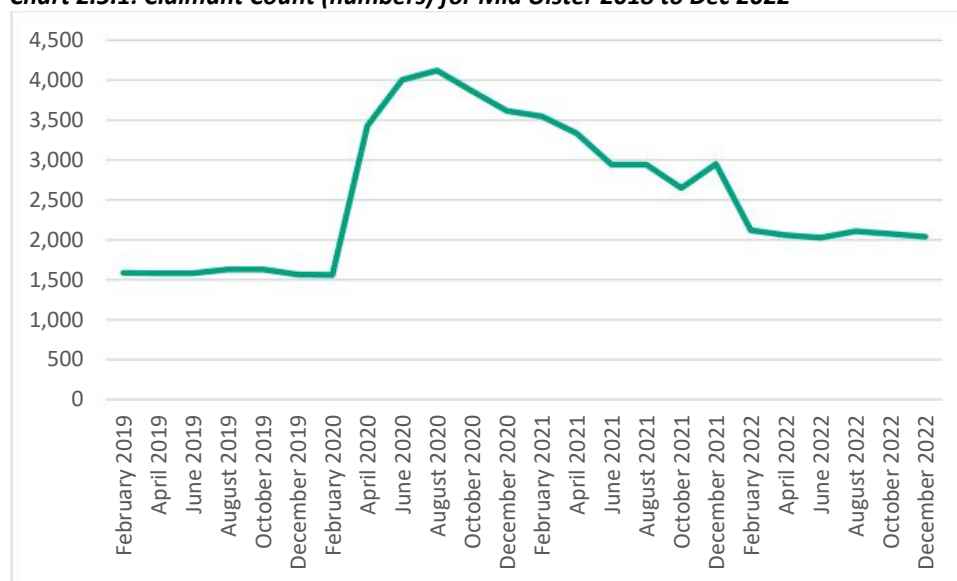
¹⁵ ibid

¹⁶ [Department for Communities UC statistics](#)

¹⁷ Department for Communities

Count has dropped and as of December 2022 is 2,075 or 2.3% of the working age population. This is 520 people (33%) above the pre-Covid 2020 low of 1,555.

Chart 2.5.1: Claimant Count (numbers) for Mid Ulster 2018 to Dec 2022¹⁸



Of these claimants as many as 900 could be long-term unemployed¹⁹ (out of work for over 12 months). However, the long-term unemployment rate in Mid-Ulster has been significantly below the Northern Ireland average at between 20-27%²⁰, therefore the **numbers of long-term unemployed are likely to be in the range of 450 to 900 people**. (It should be noted that as LTU data has been unavailable since 2017, these are a best-case estimate.)

In December 2022 the claimant rate was 2.3% of the working age population which is the second lowest in Northern Ireland and significantly below the Northern Ireland rate of 3.1%. Over the year to December 2022 there was a decline of 8.4%. This was not as rapid as the 11.8% for Northern Ireland. This is to be expected given the already low claimant rate.

The age profile of claimants searching for work shows that the 25-49 age group is the largest group²¹. The 25-49 age group has more than doubled (112%) since 2019 whilst the over-50s have increased by 54%. Young people in the Claimant Count also increased significantly from 330 in 2019 to 570 in 2021. It is likely that these numbers have since reduced again given the Claimant Count decline in 2022.

In terms of maximising the number of people returning to work it will be important to focus on the 25-49 age group. However, there are strong social and economic reasons to provide support to the younger and older age groups, especially in the pursuit of an inclusive labour market in Mid Ulster.

Mid-Ulster has the highest proportion of claimants in Northern Ireland who are women – 45% (around 930 women) compared to 40% for Northern Ireland²². The Claimant Count levels remain 520 people above pre-Covid levels and 730 people above the historically low level of

¹⁸ Claimant Count Monthly data

¹⁹ Based on using the NI rate for long-term unemployment of 43.2% of claimants. See [NISRA LFS tables](#).

²⁰ NISRA [Long-term unemployed rates 2005-17](#)

²¹ Claimant Count Monthly Data

²² *ibid*

1,345 in November 2017 (1.5%)²³. This suggests it may be **feasible to reduce claimants by around 700 people in Mid-Ulster, given continuing high levels of demand from employers.**

This would reduce the claimant rate back down to around 1.5%, below which it is unlikely to fall. This level represents ‘frictional unemployment’ where most people are temporarily unemployed as they change jobs. In these circumstances it is possible for long-term unemployment to drop significantly as people are more rapidly recruited by employers. However, **those that remain long-term unemployed are highly likely to have very low levels of employability** (for various reasons) and need active support to improve their employability. If not, there is a likelihood they will become economically inactive and stop seeking work.

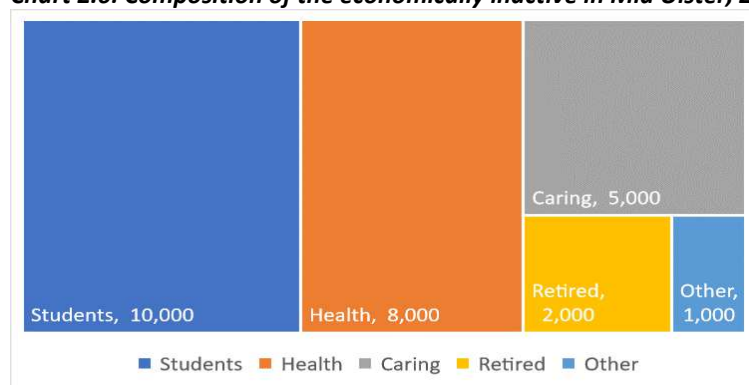
2.6. Economic inactivity in Mid Ulster

In 2021 27.7% of the adult working age population of Mid Ulster were economically inactive, of which over one third were students (10,000 people)²⁴. Excluding students, the economically inactive rate was 17%. This made Mid Ulster relatively low compared to Northern Ireland at 19.2%. However, a rate of 17% is an increase from an historic low of 14.7% in 2019 and marks a return to levels last seen in 2016.

Chart 2.6 shows the reasons why people are saying they are not looking for work and are economically inactive:

- Long-term sick – estimated 8,000 people (8.2% of working age population)
- Looking after family and home – estimated 4,000 people (4.1%); and
- Retired – estimated 2,000 (2%)
- Students – 10,000 up from 8,000 in 2020
- Other reasons – estimate 1,000 people (1%).²⁵

Chart 2.6: Composition of the economically inactive in Mid Ulster, 2021²⁶



There are significantly more women who are economically inactive. Excluding students there were 11,000 women (a rate of 24%) compared to 5,000 men (10.2%)²⁷. Almost two-thirds (10,000 or 62.5%) of the economically inactive (excluding students) report they have some work-limiting disability. 8,000 report ‘health’ as their main reason for not seeking work which

²³ Claimant Count Monthly Data.

²⁴ NISRA

²⁵ ‘Other reasons’ are predominantly ‘discouraged workers’ where people believe there are no available jobs that match their skills and requirements

²⁶ NISRA LFS Local LMI

²⁷ *ibid*

means a further 2,000 from the other groups also report some form of disability. This reinforces the strong influence that health conditions (including mental health) have on Mid Ulster's ability to increase the employment rate.

The economically inactive can be split by those 'who want work' (but not immediately available) and those 'who do not want work'. Official breakdowns for Council areas are not given but using the NI figures as approximations for Mid-Ulster gives:

- 14% of all economically inactive do 'want a job'
- 6% of all economically inactive 'want a job' and are long-term sick
- 3% of all economically inactive 'want a job' and are looking after family and home
- 5% of all economically inactive 'want a job' and are inactive for 'other reasons'

Table 2.6: Economically inactive wanting work in Mid Ulster in 2021²⁸

			Of which are:		
	All inactive (excl students)	Total want a job	Long-term sick	Looking after family	Other
Mid-Ulster	16,000	2,240	960	480	800
Want work rate of all inactive		14%	6%	3%	5%

If Mid-Ulster returned to its lowest rate of 22.4% then this would represent around 4,500 people (including students) in Mid-Ulster becoming economically active. However, around half of this drop is likely to be represented by students²⁹ and the other half are likely to be (but not necessarily) from the 2,240 'want work' group in Table 2.6. The key target group for achieving this will be to support and encourage those 'who want work' (2,240) to take more active steps to find employment. Approximately 1,000 of the target group are 'long-term sick' and of this group a significant percent will have mental health problems. Policy interventions should focus on helping those who want to return to suitable work, and overcoming the barriers to work this group may experience.³⁰

2.7. Qualifications profile of Mid Ulster population

Compared to other areas, Mid Ulster has high numbers of low and medium qualifications, but less high-level qualifications. The constant challenge for Mid Ulster will be meeting the increasing skills and qualifications demands for the new jobs being created which are increasingly likely to require high-level qualifications. This trajectory towards higher level skills needs is highlighted within the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre Northern Ireland Skills Barometer 2021 report³¹ which states:

'The labour market is demanding individuals with qualifications and for the most part, the education system is producing them. However, for a region to prosper in productivity, improve living standards and compete at a global level, the labour market needs more. Employers demand individuals qualified to the appropriate level but also qualified within the relevant subject matter. They require these individuals not only to have accurate levels of qualifications

²⁸ Source: NISRA inactivity by reason and LGD in User Requested Look-up Table

²⁹ The main reason for the rise in inactivity between 2019-21 was an increase of 3,000 students

³⁰ 'Is poor health driving a rise in economic inactivity?' The Health Foundation, October 2022

³¹ https://www.ulster.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1112986/Skills-Barometer-Summary-Report-2021_FINAL_SENT.pdf

within the correct field, but also with strong soft skills and recent relevant working experience. Collaboratively the education system, employers and policy makers must work to develop a system that sufficiently prepares talented young people to prosper within the world of work’.
Page 6

In the last decade significant progress has been made on reducing the numbers of people with **no qualifications**³². Almost one-third (30%) of 16–64-year-olds had no qualifications in 2012 and Mid Ulster was bottom of the league table. By 2021 there had been a large improvement to 12% and fourth in the Council rankings.

This improvement can be due to a number of factors:

- Retirement of older workers who had lower levels of formal qualifications
- A strong upward trend in educational attainment by young people
- Support to enable adults to have the opportunity to acquire new skills and qualifications.

This improvement has led to a current (2021) bulge in people with medium level qualifications and a significantly poor performance for high-level qualifications (Degrees and above). In Northern Ireland, Mid Ulster has the lowest proportion of its population with a Degree and the highest proportion below a Degree or with no qualifications.

Between 2012 to 2021 Mid Ulster moved from the lowest proportion with **medium level qualifications** to the highest proportion in 2021. In 2012, 43.5% of working age had medium qualifications whilst the Northern Ireland average was 53%. By 2021 this had flipped with Mid Ulster having 56.7% and a Northern Ireland rate of 45.9% - a significant difference. For those with **high qualifications Mid-Ulster’s position has worsened** relative to other areas between 2012-22. In 2012, 26% had a degree which was eighth in the Council rankings, by 2021 the rate was 32% and was bottom of the rankings by a considerable amount. In both years these Mid Ulster’s proportions were worse than the Northern Ireland average but the gap had significantly widened – from minus 2% to minus 10%.

Given the low skilled profile of Mid Ulster a decade ago there has been impressive progress. The challenge for the future is to meet the danger of the vulnerability of medium skilled jobs by upskilling the population to take advantage of the anticipated new jobs requiring high qualifications. **For example, for Mid Ulster to reach the Northern Ireland average for high qualifications (42%) a further 10,000 people would need to attain a degree level qualification.**

To boost high qualifications by this extent will take time and concerted action to provide opportunities for people to progress. Given the immediacy of some employers for high qualifications, the gap will likely need to be closed by inward migration of qualified people. The attractiveness of Mid Ulster as a place to live and work will therefore be important.

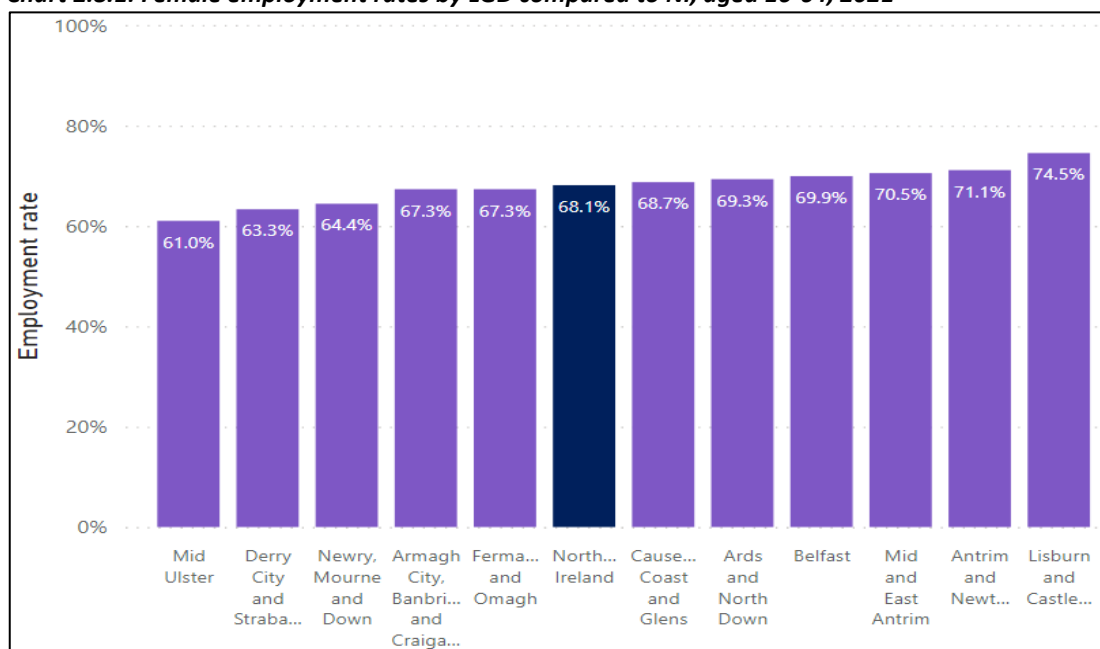
³² All figures for qualification levels in this section are from NISRA [LFS tables for Local Government Districts](#)

2.8. Encouraging an inclusive labour market in Mid Ulster

2.8.1. Gender Employment Gap

In 2021 Mid-Ulster had the lowest employment rate for women in Northern Ireland. At 61% it is considerably below the Northern Ireland average of 68%.

Chart 2.8.1: Female employment rates by LGD compared to NI, aged 16-64, 2021³³

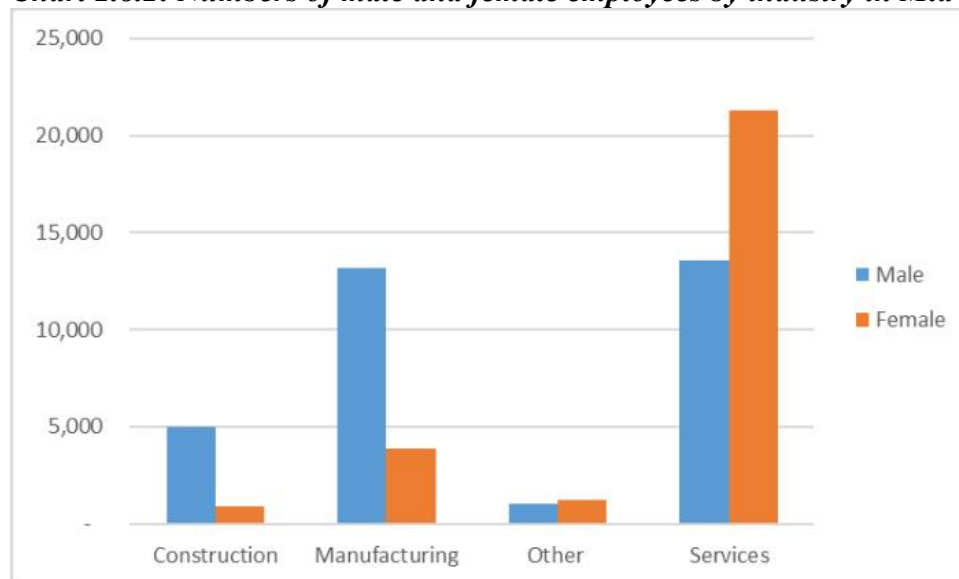


The Gender Employment Gap in 2021 was 18.6 percentage points and has widened further since 2020³⁴. This is possibly as a result of unequal shouldering of responsibility for increased childcare requirements arising from Covid-19 lock-downs and home schooling and shielding of vulnerable at-risk citizens with underlying health issues. **If the women's employment rate returned to the level in 2019 then there would be around 3,000 more women in employment.**

Women's employment is influenced by the nature of industries in Mid Ulster and the balance between public and private sector employment. Chart 2.8.2 show how women are significantly under-represented in Manufacturing and Construction and are over-represented in the Service sector. Between 2020 and 2021 there was a small reduction in Service sector jobs but increases in Manufacturing and Construction. Women are also over-represented in public sector jobs but Mid Ulster has the smallest percentage of public sector employment in Northern Ireland. These factors are likely to be major causes of the increasing gender gap.

³³ Labour Market Insight

³⁴ *ibid*

Chart 2.8.2: Numbers of male and female employees by industry in Mid Ulster, 2021³⁵

2.9. Disability Employment Gap

As shown in Table 2.9, at just 24%³⁶ Mid-Ulster has the lowest employment rate for disabled people in Northern Ireland. There is a large and significant difference between Mid-Ulster and other Council areas – the highest ranked Council (Lisburn & Castlereagh) has double (48%) the disability employment rate of Mid Ulster. There should be some caution when interpreting statistics for disability at the local level in Northern Ireland because of small sample sizes, but the low levels of disabled employment in Mid Ulster suggests there are some structural reasons in the labour market.

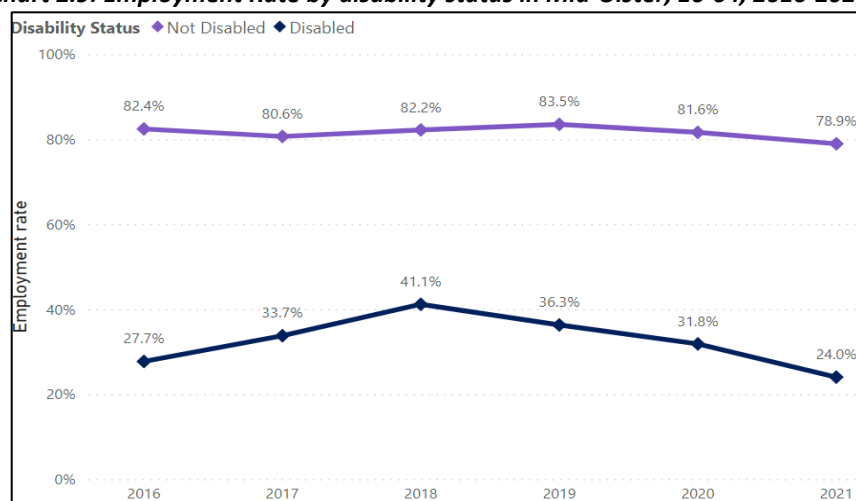
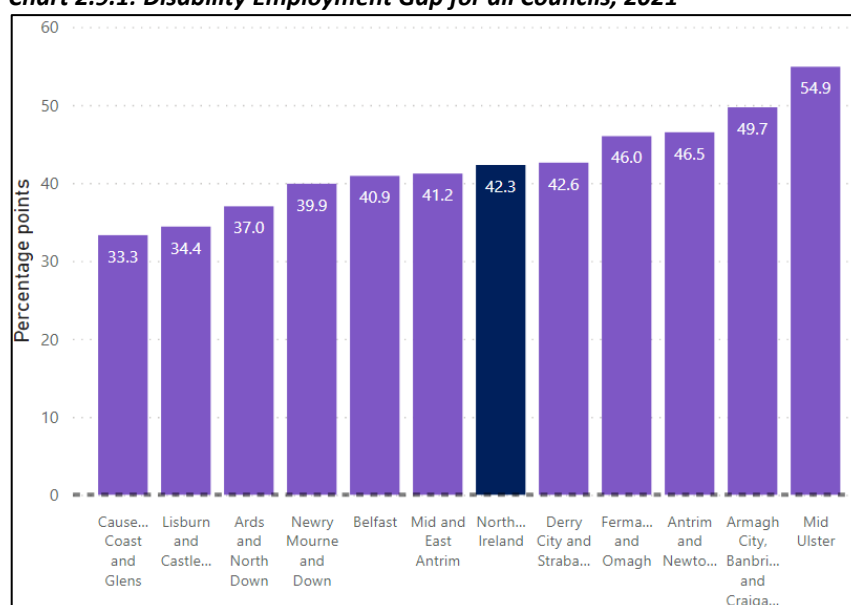
Chart 2.9 shows the employment rate for those who are disabled³⁷ and those who are not. The gap between the two rates is the 'Disability Employment Gap' – Chart 2.9.1 compares the gap with other Councils.

At a gap of 54.9 percentage points Mid Ulster is significantly higher than other Councils and the gap has grown by almost 5 percentage points since 2020.

³⁵ NISRA

³⁶ Labour Market Insight

³⁷ The definition of 'disability' is those who have a long-term physical or mental health condition (lasting or expecting to last 12 months or more) that affects their ability to carry out day to day activities.

Chart 2.9: Employment Rate by disability status in Mid-Ulster, 16-64, 2016-2021³⁸**Chart 2.9.1: Disability Employment Gap for all Councils, 2021³⁹**

However, in 2018 Mid Ulster had a disability employment rate of 41.1% (see Chart 2.9) and was ranked fourth highest. This large variation (in a relatively short time) may suggest that the statistics are not wholly reliable because of small samples (as warned by NISRA). If the statistics are a sufficient reflection of the current position, then if the disabled employment rate returned to 41% there would be **approximately 2,500 people with disabilities in Mid Ulster who would move in to work.**

2.10. Deprived communities

An inclusive labour market in Mid Ulster will need to address the geographical distribution of where unemployed and economically inactive people are more likely to live. The implications for service delivery of employment and skills interventions are that resources need to be

³⁸ Labour Market Insight

³⁹ ibid

focused on those communities which are more deprived and where significant numbers of eligible people will live.

The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures⁴⁰ provide a standardised method for ranking all communities (Super Output Areas) across Northern Ireland. Whilst this is based on 2017 data there will be minimal changes in the communities or the rankings. Across most measures Mid Ulster has a high number of communities in the bottom 25% of deprived communities in Northern Ireland. However, Mid Ulster performs better in the 'Employment Measure', consistent with its overall employment rate. There are five areas in Mid Ulster in the bottom 25% of the Northern Ireland employment measure: Coalisland South; Glebe 2; Killymoon; Ballysaggart; Town Park East 2.

Table 2.10: Ten most deprived communities in Mid Ulster by Measure and by Multiple Deprivation, 2017⁴¹

INCOME

Rank

68

Pomeroy

76

Coalisland South

113

Ballygawley

163

Maghera

183

Aughnacloy

198

Donaghmore

205

Oaklands

207

Upperlands

214

Draperstown

222

Dunnamore

EMPLOYMENT

Rank

96

Coalisland South

190

Glebe 2

217

Killymoon

219

Ballysaggart

223

Town Parks East 2

233

Coalisland North

238

Ardboe

262

Drumglass

267

Pomeroy

292

Gortallowry

HEALTH AND DISABILITY

Rank

82

Coalisland South

122

Glebe 2

137

Town Parks East 2

178

Ardboe

189

Oldtown

191

Coalisland North

192

Killymoon

203

Drumglass

210

Ballysaggart

236

Newbuildings

EDUCATION, SKILLS AND TRAINING

Rank

131

Glebe 2

155

Ballysaggart

191

Killymoon

199

Coalisland South

206

Drumglass

221

Town Parks East 2

235

Coalisland West and Newmills

250

Newbuildings

258

Ardboe

275

Maghera

ACCESS TO SERVICES

Rank

6

Dunnamore

10

Lissan

24

Swatragh 2

30

Lower Glenshane 1

36

Augher

40

Clogher

44

The Loop

53

Altmore

57

Caledon

59

Oaklands

LIVING ENVIRONMENT

Rank

65

Coolhill

122

Altmore

137

Mullaghmore

150

Caledon

195

Upperlands

197

Augher

203

Clogher

226

Killymeal

229

Stewartstown

250

Ballysaggart

CRIME AND DISORDER

Rank

90

Town Parks East 2

96

Tullagh

98

Mullaghmore

156

Ballysaggart

159

Newbuildings

197

Coalisland South

203

Gortallowry

204

Oldtown

215

Town Parks West

253

Glebe 1

MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION

Rank

92

Coalisland South

167

Pomeroy

206

Ardboe

218

Town Parks East 2

227

Glebe 2

232

Ballygawley

239

Ballysaggart

254

Killymoon

255

Maghera

271

Dunnamore

For each domain, as well as the overall multiple measure the 890 SOAs in NI are ranked from 1 (most deprived) to 890 (least deprived)

⁴⁰ Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure, NISRA, 2017

⁴¹ ibid

3. Consultation Findings

Consultation to inform the Action Plan has included:

1. Employer online survey – circulated via LMP members and Council networks as well as promotion through Council's social media channels. A total of 45 responses were received for the survey.
2. Stakeholder meetings – face to face and virtual meetings were facilitated with Mid Ulster LMP and the following;
 - Employers represented on Mid Ulster LMP
 - Area Learning Partnership (Dungannon & Cookstown, Magherafelt)
 - Northern Regional College (NRC)
 - South West College (SWC)
 - College of Agriculture Food & Rural Enterprise (CAFRE)
 - Skills & Education Thematic Group (CP)
 - Network Personnel
 - Trade Union
 - MUDC – elected members & staff
 - Department for Communities
 - Jobs and Benefit Offices
 - Department for Economy Careers
 - Invest NI (Regional / Local)
 - Local Enterprise Agencies (Workspace, Cookstown & Dungannon)
 - MEGA
 - STEP

3.1. Employer Survey Findings

Respondents to the survey included a mix of businesses from different business sectors and micro, small, medium and large businesses, as shown below in figures 3.1.1/3.1.2

Fig. 3.1.1 Survey Respondents by Business Sector

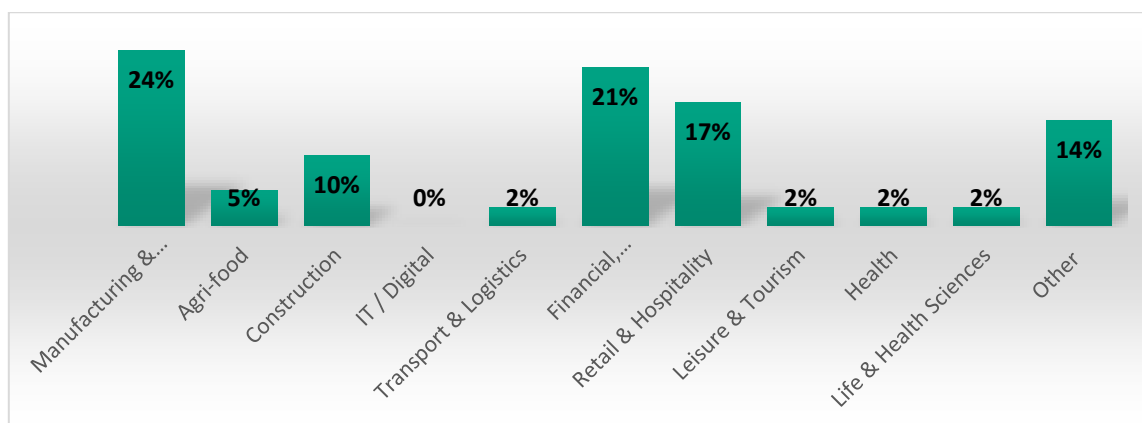
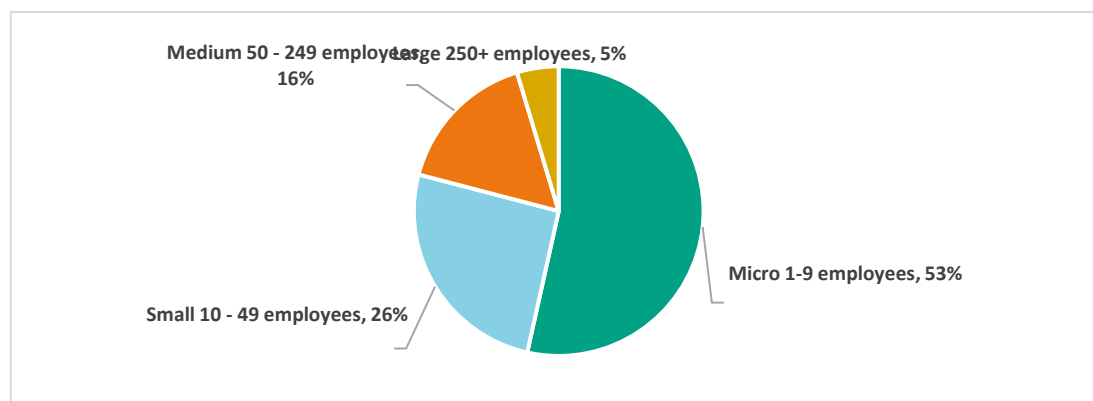
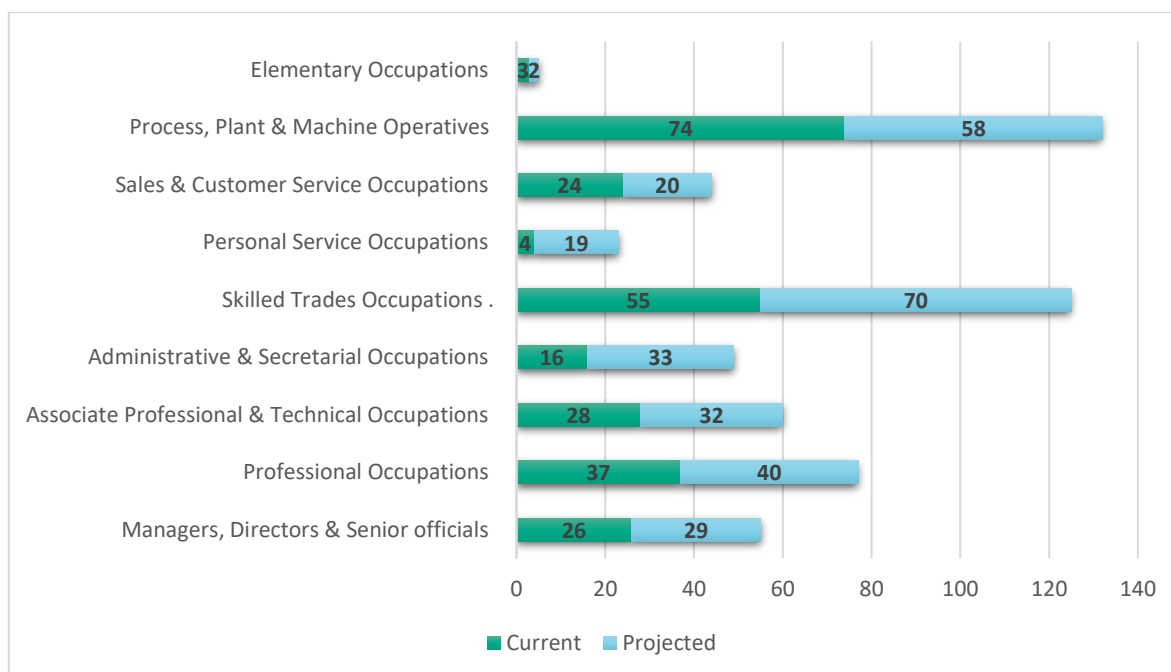


Fig. 3.1.2 Survey Respondents by Business Size



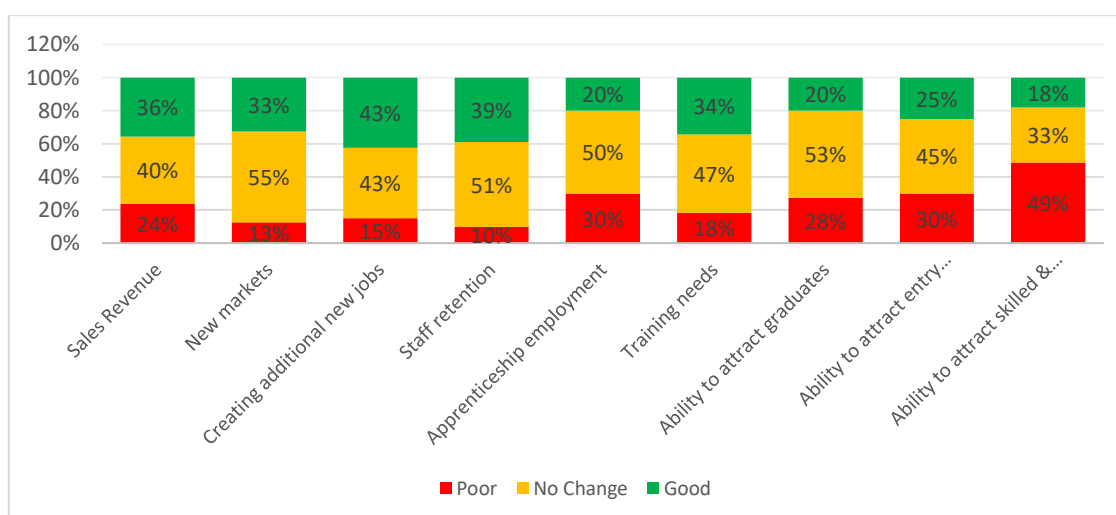
Respondent businesses currently employ 2,195 employees and report to have 267 current job vacancies and a further 303 projected within the next 12 months across all professional occupations. The job categories with the most vacancies reported (current and projected) are for process, plant and machine operatives (23%) and skilled trades occupations (22%).

Fig. 3.1.3: Current and Projected Job Vacancies



The business outlook over the next 12 months is considered to be 'no change' or 'good' for many employers in respect to a range of business development indicators as shown in figure 3.1.4. 43% of respondents report the outlook for their business is 'good' with respect to creating additional new jobs but 49% report that the outlook is 'poor' in terms of the ability to attract skilled and experienced staff.

Fig.3.1.4 Business Outlook Over the Next 12 Months



78% of respondents report they experience challenges in the recruitment of staff and the most reported issues are:

- Lack of applications (66%)
- Applicants don't have the necessary skills / qualifications (49%)

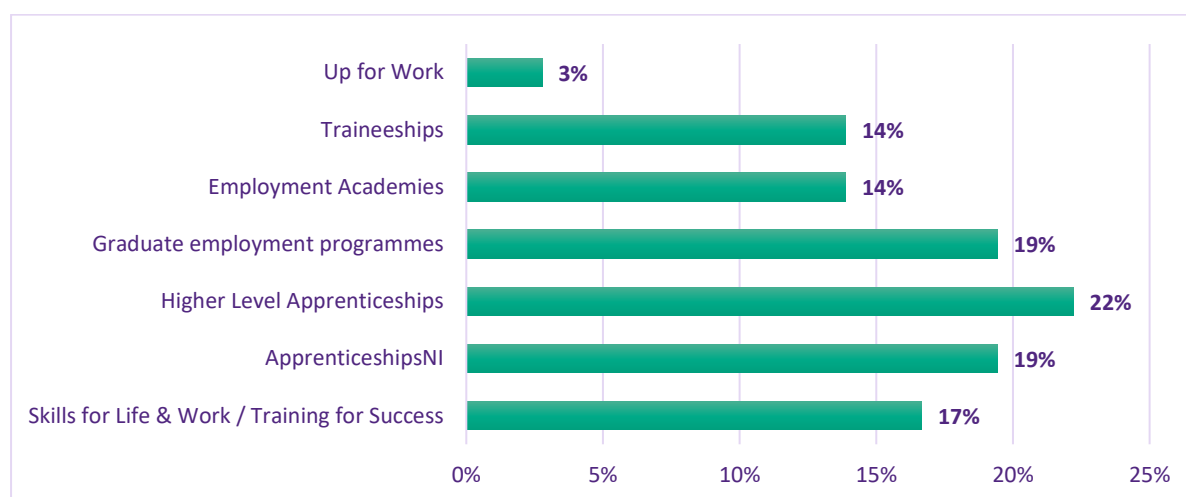
- Applicants don't have the necessary experience (49%)

Difficult to fill job roles reported included:

Fabricators & Welders	Accountancy & Finance
Sand blasters	Graduate & Locum Pharmacists
Painters	Administration
Assemblers	Engineers
Timber machining	HR
General operatives	Marketing & sales
Senior Architectural Technologies / Architect / interior design	Graphic design
Construction - QS, Foremen, Trades	Chefs
Product development – cosmetics industry	Taxi drivers

Findings would illustrate a disconnect between employers and mainstream support programmes. There is a low uptake of recruitment from employment programmes as shown in figure 3.1.5, with Higher Level Apprenticeships the most frequently reported by 22% of employers.

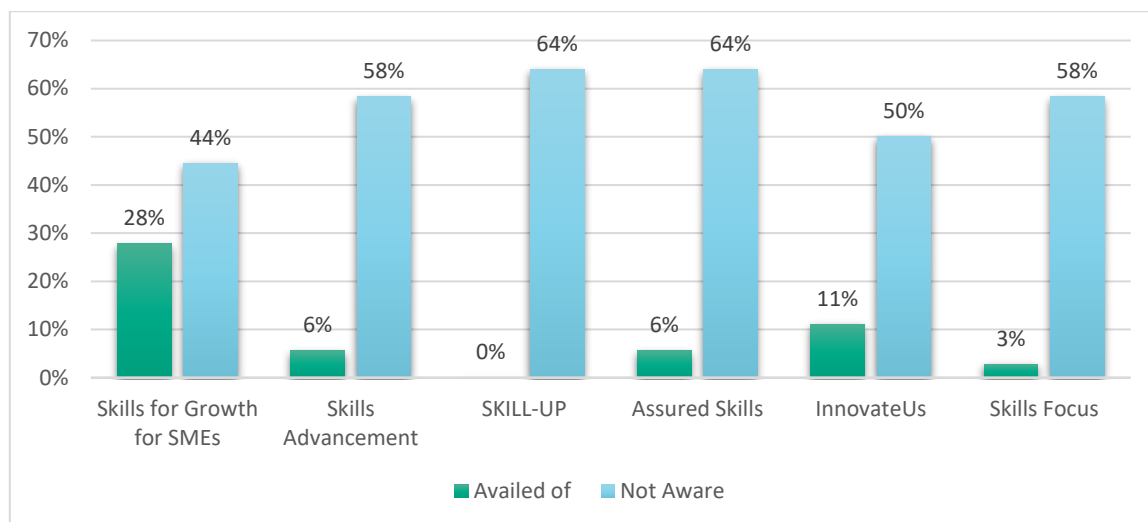
Fig.3.1.5: Employer Uptake of Recruitment Support Programmes



When asked why employers did not access current support, 52% reported they were not aware how to avail of these programmes and 20% reported they did not have time to engage. One employer commented *“Business owners and Directors simply don't have time to fill in 10/20 page forms and multiples of them for various programmes”*.

This trend is also reflected in responses to employer access to skills training interventions. There is a low uptake across all skills training programmes, with Skills for Growth the most frequently reported by 28% of respondents. No businesses have accessed SKILL UP, DfE's free training delivered by Northern Regional College and South West College locally. Generally, employers are not aware of the training schemes available.

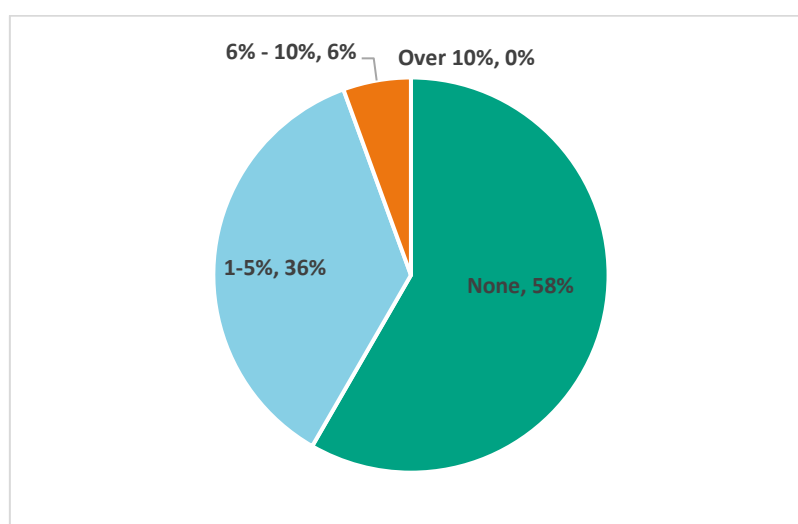
Fig. 3.1.6: Uptake of Skills Training Programmes



56% reported to have current employment and training support needs they would welcome help with, including specific training and help with recruitment.

As highlighted in the Strategic Assessment, Mid-Ulster has the lowest employment rate for disabled people in Northern Ireland. Low levels of disability employment were evidenced in the survey, with 58% of employers advising that none of their workforce has a disability.

Fig.3.1.7: % of Workforce with a Disability



Again, within those surveyed, knowledge and uptake of employer disability support programmes available which support the integration and inclusion of people with a disability into the workforce was reported as low.

- 53% were familiar with Access to Work (NI) – a DfC support programme providing advice and guidance for employers on employee's disability needs in the workplace and, if

appropriate, a financial grant towards the cost of necessary support. Examples of support available includes:

- adaptations to premises and equipment
 - communicator support at interviews
 - special aids and equipment
 - travel to work costs
 - a support worker
 - travel within work e.g., to attend a meeting or training course
- 33% were familiar with Workable (NI) – a DfC support programme providing support for people with a disability, for example, assigning a job coach to assist the worker with a disability and their colleagues adapt to the needs of the particular job, extra training and disability awareness training.
 - 29% were aware of Disability Action’s Job Match scheme which supports people with a disability with their job search and job preparation activity, including work tasters and placement and in work support.

When asked what support interventions would encourage them as an employer to increase employment of people with a disability, funding for adaptations was the most frequently reported response (55%), followed by job specific training (48%) and information on existing support for employers (42%). This reinforces the fact that employers are not aware that support already exists for adaptations and training.

Employers were asked to rank where they would welcome LMP intervention to meet the needs of business. The top five recommendations were:

1. Job specific skills training academies
2. Pre employment support for potential job applicants
3. Awareness raising of job opportunities in Mid Ulster
4. Support for upskilling staff
5. Promotion of apprenticeships

3.2. Stakeholder Findings

Stakeholder consultation highlighted many labour market supply and demand issues and challenges.

3.3. Employer Challenges

Recruitment was highlighted as a major issue and concern for local businesses and the lack of applications for vacancies, as well as an appropriately skilled, experienced labour supply was being experienced across all industry sectors, skill levels and job roles. There is a high level of competition between local businesses for existing labour and as a result of Covid and hybrid / remote working conditions, there is global competition, as people can now work anywhere in the world from their own home.

It was acknowledged that there is a need to move away from traditional recruitment methods which are not working and a need for employers to rethink job roles and working conditions that will attract the economically inactive e.g. flexible and agile working, part time / job share roles, terms and conditions that will attract people into work. There is a need for a cultural change and a mind shift amongst employers which will need supported, to consider opportunities within sectors such as manufacturing, engineering and construction that will attract people from the economically inactive cohort, especially women and people with a disability.

There are excellent examples of good practice in Mid Ulster in terms of modern employer recruitment / talent acquisition, engagement in Higher Level Apprenticeships and schools and industry links. The MEGA model which is industry led is an excellent working model that was consistently referenced as a best practice example that is supporting industry needs. MEGA is an industry led collaborative network focused specifically on promoting the manufacturing and engineering sector as a source of high value, long term employment and creating transformational career opportunities that deliver skills for life.

Stakeholders highlighted a need for better working across Mid Ulster in terms of showcasing good practice and supporting employers to modernise recruitment practice and avail of exiting support programmes which are not currently being well utilised by local businesses. There is a need to develop HLAs across other industry sectors and construction was reported as a difficult sector that would welcome HLA support and development.

3.4. Labour Market Challenges

Barriers to employment need addressed to facilitate access to opportunities in Mid Ulster. Barriers identified include:

- Affordable childcare is a huge issue and the number one barrier for women returners.
- Lack of confidence and awareness of individual capabilities discourages job search amongst the economically inactive.
- Mental health is a big issue, a legacy of the conflict and more recently Covid.
- There is a lack of recognition of transferable skills which excludes potentially suitable out of work individuals from applying for jobs.
- Terms and conditions are not attractive to encourage the economically inactive into work e.g. flexible working, part time roles, disability adaptations, wages. Specifically targeting needs to focus on women, people with a disability and older retirees.
- English language is a challenge for migrant communities and there is large demand in Mid Ulster for English language classes.
- Unemployment is particularly high within the traveller community which necessitates tailored support.

Stakeholders report a need for personalised and 1:1 support at a community level to support the unemployed and economically inactive back to work. Mentoring was highlighted as a very

valuable and effective approach that can add value to current support and programme interventions, facilitating and encouraging access to programmes as well as in work support.

The need for employer support was also highlighted with respect to changing recruitment practice and enabling employers to consider how they can attract the economically inactive into the labour market. Specifically it was recommended a sectoral recruitment approach should be considered, supporting employers in the manufacturing, engineering and construction sectors to encourage for example women and people with a disability to consider job opportunities.

Traditionally post primary schools have promoted a Higher Education career path and the Apprenticeship route would not have been as well promoted as an alternative option for school leavers. MEGA has helped to increase the awareness and profile of Higher Level Apprenticeships as a high quality career path and schools welcome HLA developments locally. However, there is a need to do more with respect to awareness raising, role models / local Ambassadors, parental education and access to local apprenticeship opportunities. There has been a growth in available HLAs in Mid Ulster and MEGA report to having 260 apprenticeship opportunities currently.

School engagement with employers is reported to be poor and post primary schools would welcome an opportunity for improved employer input to experiential learning opportunities that enhance and complement curriculum delivery. Schools are also challenged with sourcing work experience opportunities and report that work experience is essential to enhancing the employability skills of young people and raising their awareness of local industry and job opportunities.

3.5. Current Provision

Consultation with stakeholders has highlighted much current and planned activity that Mid Ulster LMP will need to ensure Action Plan activities complement and add value to. Provision includes:

- DfC suite of support programmes
- Further Education (FE) provision including the new Step-Up programme targeting women returners and the Ignite Your Skills programme targeting businesses and the economically inactive, which will adopt a sectoral focus based on local industry needs
- Enterprise activities through the Local Enterprise Agency (LEA) network including Go For It and Exploring Enterprise
- Potential PEACEPLUS applications
- DfC plans for a Labour Market Observatory
- Current European Social Fund (ESF) activity which will cease on 31st March 2023 and potential UK Shared Prosperity projects which Mid Ulster LMP is aware of have been submitted by local organisations. At the time of drafting the Action Plan, UK Shared Prosperity Fund decisions had not been made. Funded activity will need to be factored into Action Plan delivery once announcements have been made on successful projects to avoid duplication.

3.6. Summary Feedback

Consultation findings reinforce the evidence presented through the statistical analysis and have highlighted the following key challenges for consideration by Mid Ulster LMP:

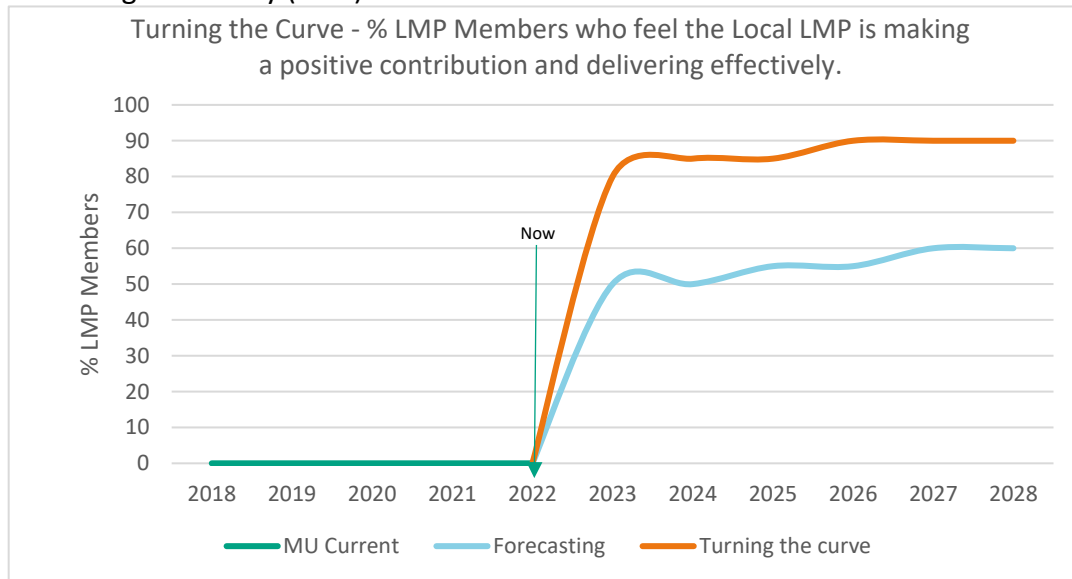
- There is a need address the demand for labour across sectors, and especially within skilled trades and process operatives job roles. There is support for the academy model.
- Employers are not actively engaging in mainstream support programmes and there is a need to promote and raise awareness of support interventions as well as a need to better engage with employers to support their access to all relevant support.
- There is a need to proactively support the inclusion of women and people with disabilities into the labour market. This will necessitate employer focused activity to raise awareness of barriers to employment and consider cultural changes needed in respect to terms and conditions and necessary supports / adaptations.
- Supporting the long term unemployed and economically inactive back into the labour market will also necessitate focused, personalised support and 1:1 mentoring delivered in local communities where people feel safe and barriers such as personal development and mental health can be addressed has been recommended as an effective approach that would add value to mainstream delivery.
- HLAs are becoming increasingly more popular as a career path for school leavers and there is a need to build on the good work that has been delivered and further enhance resources to promote HLAs and improve awareness raising of HLA job opportunities locally.
- There is evidence of good practice (recruitment, HLAs, schools and industry working) that needs to be rolled out across different sectors, sharing the learning between employers and all stakeholders.
- The industry led MEGA model is an effective model that should be replicated across other sectors.

3.7. Defining the interventions - turning the curve

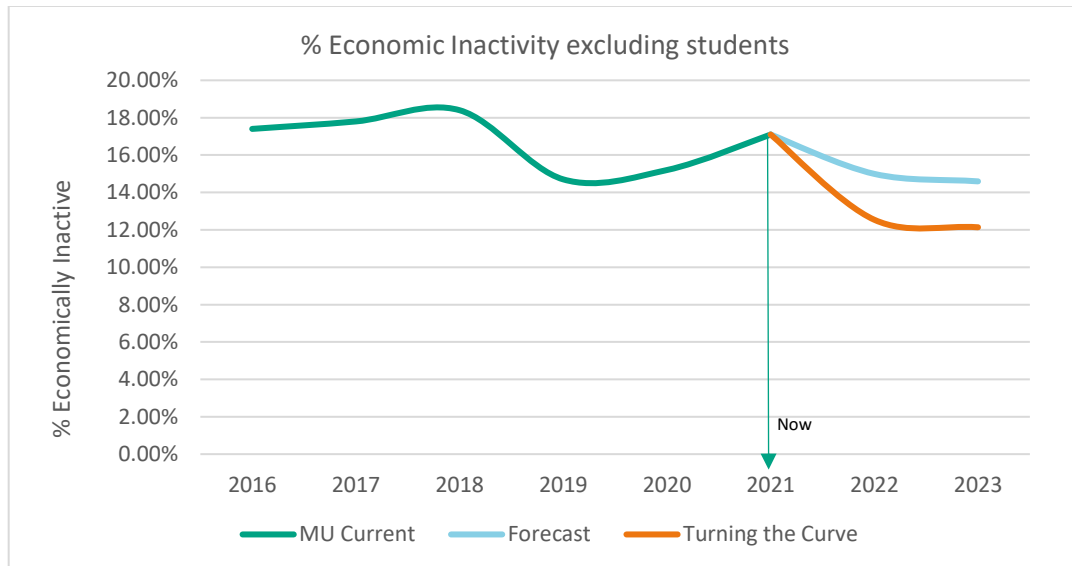
An outcome-based approach has been used to address the following local priorities in 2023/24. **To Note:** with reference to the Turning the Curve exercises, the term “Now” refers to the assessment of the most recently available data made at the time of the review.

Strategic Priority (SP) 1: LMP Delivery and Development

% LMP members who feel the local LMP is making a positive contribution and delivering effectively (LMP)

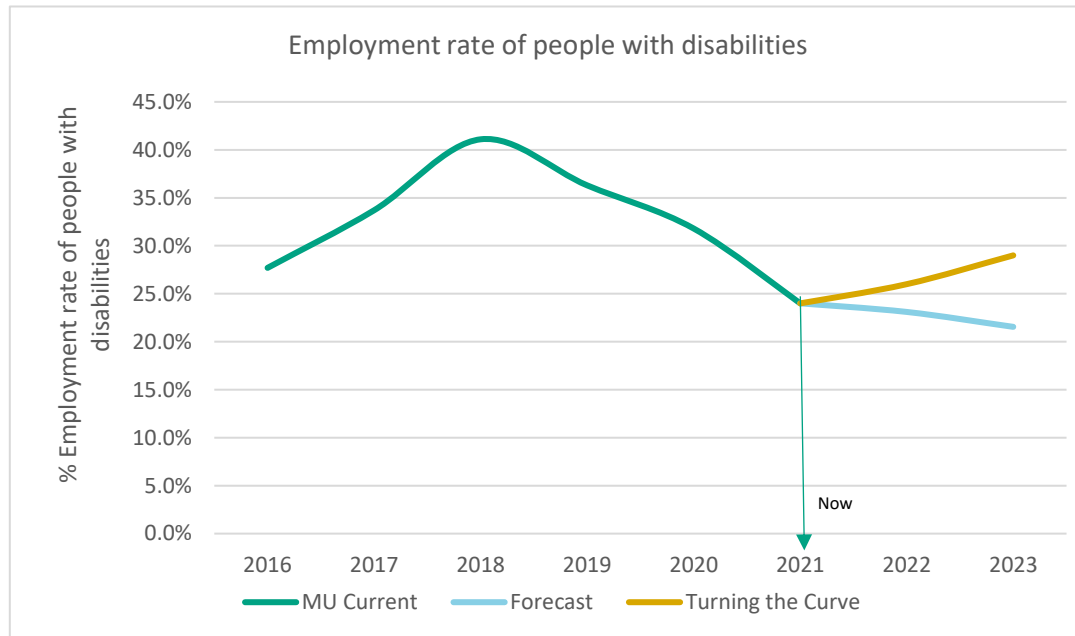
**Strategic Priority (SP) 2: Economic Inactivity**

% Economic Inactivity excluding students (NISRA LMI Portal)

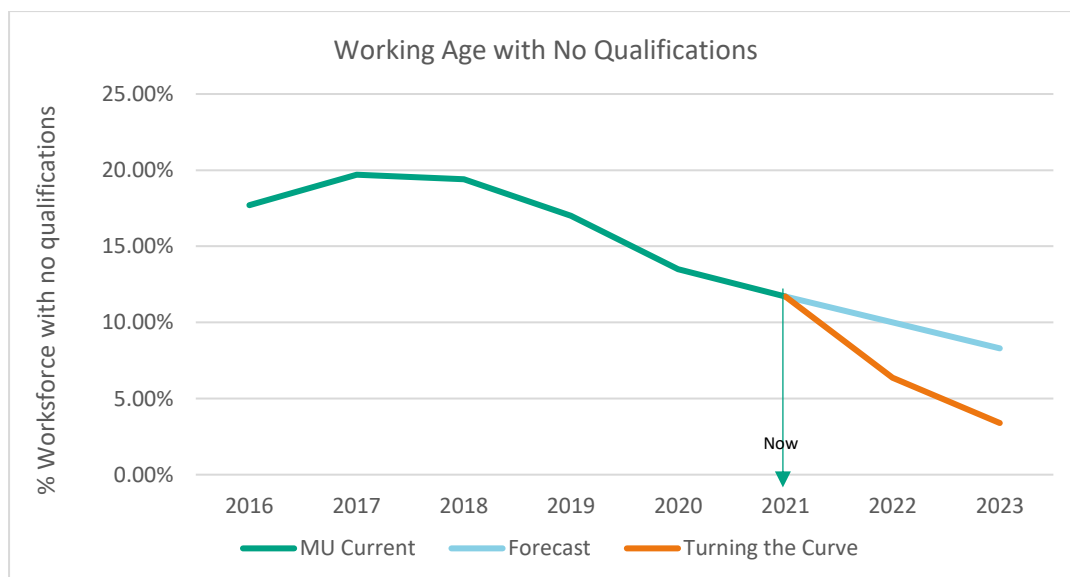


Strategic Priority (SP) 2: Disability

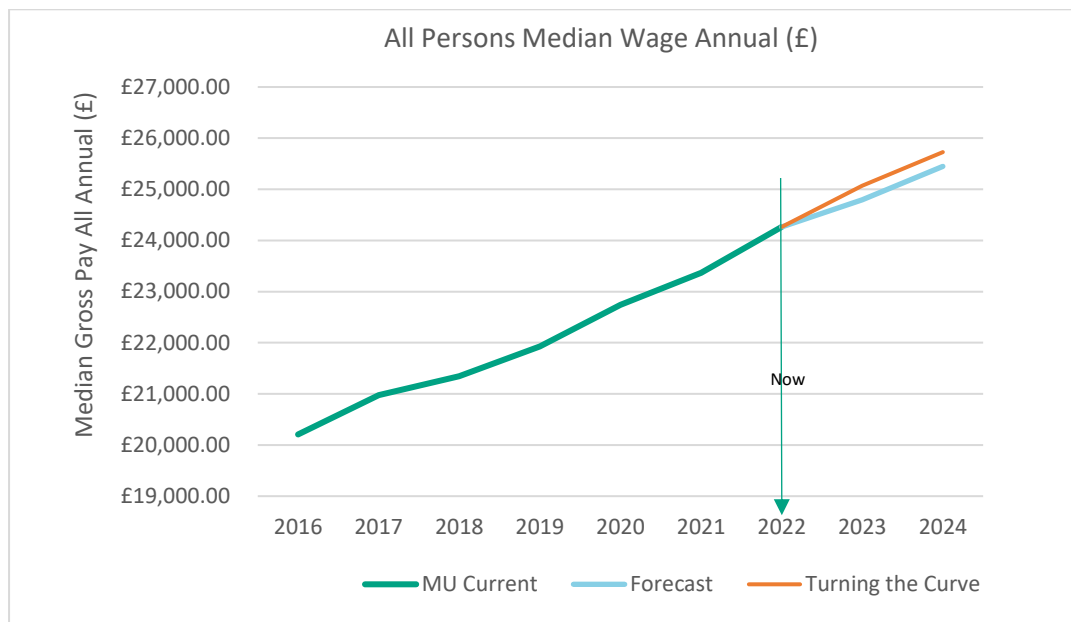
% Employment rate of people with disabilities (NISRA LMI Portal)

**Strategic Priority (SP) 2: Skilled Labour Supply**

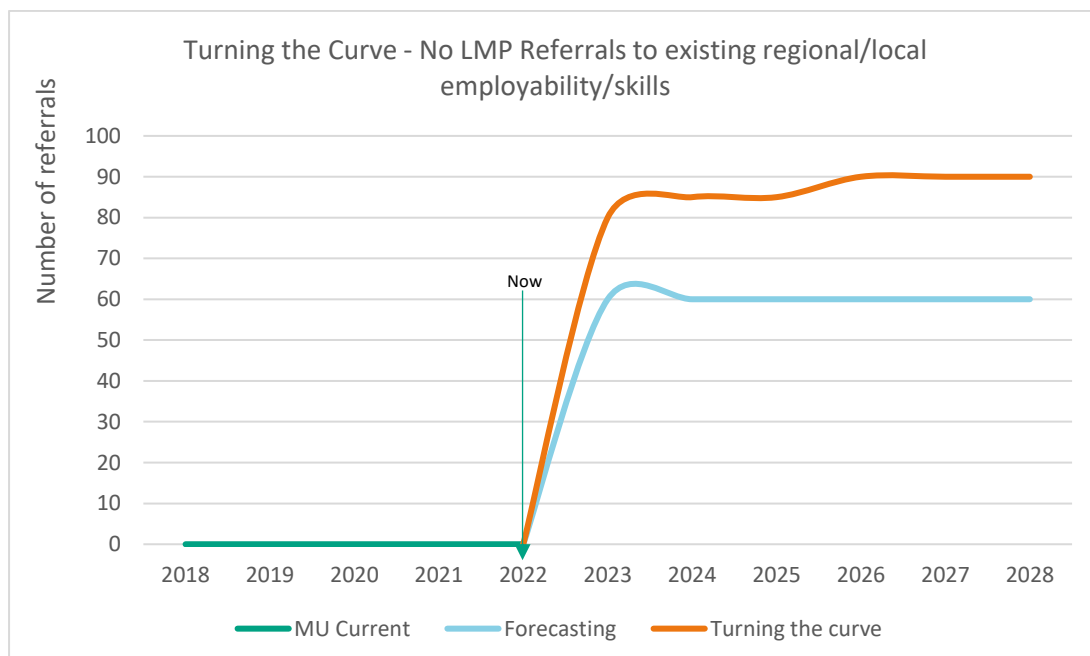
% Working Age: No Qualifications (NISRA – Labour Force Survey)



All Persons Median Wage Annual (NISRA LMI Portal)

**Strategic Priority (SP) 3: Increased Awareness**

Increased awareness of existing regional/local employability or skills provision (LMP)



4. Mid Ulster LMP 2023/24 Action Plan

4.1 Introduction

In January/February 2023 the Mid Ulster LMP undertook a Strategic Assessment of employability outcomes and local labour market conditions in the Mid Ulster Council Area. This exercise was undertaken to ensure that the priorities identified continue to reflect priority employability and labour market issues in the area and was informed by analysis of information provided by statutory partners, as well as the results of ongoing district wide engagement and consultation across the council area.

Cognisance was also taken of the:

- Mid Ulster Community Plan
- The 10X Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland
- Mid-South West Region Growth Deal
- Mid Ulster Economic Development Strategy
- Community Wealth Building Model

As a result of the Planning Exercise the following Themes have been identified as local priority:

1. Economic Inactivity
2. Disability
3. Skilled Labour Supply

Mid Ulster LMP focused on the above themes as they are the most relevant to the Council area which has a strong local economy, low unemployment, low NEETs (young people who were not in education, employment or training), lower than NI average economic inactivity but considerable problems with respect to disabled and female participation within the local economy.

A Turning the Curve Exercise was undertaken in relation to the current Local LMP Action Plan Themes and projects and considered the programmes of work in relation to the outcomes they delivered.

4.2 Alignment to strategic priorities

The Mid Ulster LMP Action Plan has been designed to align with the Strategic Priorities (SPs) defined by DfC in the development of Mid Ulster LMP programme, namely:

Strategic Priority 1 – To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership for Mid Ulster

Strategic Priority 2 – To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally.

Strategic Priority 3 – To promote and support delivery of existing employability or skills provision available either regionally or locally.

A range of indicators have been selected to assess delivery under each of these strategic priorities.

4.3 Baseline information

The Mid Ulster LMP will impact on the following set of indicators from the baseline position stated below.

Strategic Priorities	Indicators to which Local LMP makes a contribution (Source)	2022/23 Baseline	
Strategic Priority 1: To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership for the area	LMP Delivery and Development % LMP members who feel the local LMP is making a positive contribution and delivering effectively (LMP) (see turning the curve graph on pg. 26)	2018	0
		2019	0
		2020	0
		2021	0
		2022	0
		no baseline data to be collected until end Q4 22	
Strategic Priority 2: To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally	Economic Inactivity % Economic Inactivity excluding students (NISRA LMI Portal) (See turning the curve graph on pg. 26)	2017	17.80%
		2018	18.40%
		2019	14.70%
		2020	15.20%
		2021	17.10%
	Disability % Employment rate of people with disabilities (NISRA LMI Portal) (See turning the curve graph on pg. 27)	2017	33.7%
		2018	41.1%
		2019	36.3%
		2020	31.8%
		2021	24.0%
	Skilled Labour Supply % Working Age: No Qualifications (NISRA – Labour Force Survey) (See turning the curve graph on pg. 27)	2017	19.70%
		2018	19.40%
		2019	17.00%
		2020	13.50%
		2021	11.70%
# All Persons Median Wage Annual (NISRA LMI Portal) (See turning the curve graph on pg. 28)		2018	£21,345
		2019	£21,924
		2020	£22,743
		2021	£23,366
		2022	£24,264

Strategic Priority 3: To promote and support delivery of existing employability or skills provision available either regionally or locally	Increased Awareness	
	Increased awareness of existing regional/local employability or skills provision (LMP)	
	(See turning the curve graph on pg. 28)	

5 Action Plan

Strategic Priority 1: To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership for the area							
Indicators: % LMP members who feel the local LMP is making a positive contribution and delivering effectively (LMP)							
Theme	Title of Programme/Project, Aims & Description	Key Activities	Start Date	End Date	Resource or cost	Performance Measures	Delivery Quarter
LMP Delivery	SP1.1 LMP Delivery and Development To support the effective partnership delivery of the LMP Action Plan and development of future Action Plans.	Bi-monthly meetings of the LMP. Annual survey of LMP members.	1 April 2023	31 Mar 2024	Staff Resource + SP1.1 £1714.40 Hospitality and Catering	How much did we do? • 6 x LMP meetings. How well did we do it? • (130/216) 60% attendance at LMP meetings. Is anyone better off? • (27/36) 75% of LMP members who think that the LMP is making a positive difference.	1,2,3,4
Strategic Planning	SP1.2: Development of a 3-Year Strategic Assessment and 1-Year Action Plan To complete a 3-year strategic assessment and develop a 1 year action plan for 2024-25	Complete a 3-year LMP Strategic Assessment for 2024-2027 and develop a 1-Year Action Plan for 2024-25.	1 Sept 2023	31 Jan 2024	Staff Resource + SP1.2: £20,000 Ext. consulting.	How much did we do? • 1 x Action Plan drafted to address identified local needs and approved by Regional LMP • 1 x Strategic Assessment developed on time to inform LMP Action Plan 2024/25 How well did we do it? • (27/36) 75% of LMP Members who feel that their views have been taken into	3,4

						<p>account with regard to the Action Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (27/36) 75% of LMP Members who feel that their views have been taken into account with regard to the Strategic Assessment. <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (27/36) 75 % of LMP members reporting increased awareness of local employability and labour market issues. 	
Working Groups/Sub Committees	<p>SP1.3: Construction Sector Working Group</p> <p>Continue to support the Construction Sector Working Group to enable submission of a Collaborative Growth Project application and support delivery of a 2-3 year Action Plan to increase attractiveness of the Construction Sector within Mid Ulster.</p>	<p>Bi-monthly meetings of Working Group.</p> <p>Submission of Collaborative Growth Application to Invest NI.</p> <p>Commence delivery of Construction Sector Action Plan.</p>	1 July 2023	31 Mar 2024	<p>Staff Resource +</p> <p>SP1.2: £0</p>	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 x Working Group meetings. <p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (25/40) 62.5% attendance of working group members at working groups meetings. <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (6/8) 75% of Working Group members who feel clear on their role. • (6/8) 75% of Working Group/ members who feel that their views have been listened to 	

Strategic Priority 2: To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally							
Indicators: % Economic Inactivity excluding students, % Employment rate of people with disabilities, % Working Age: No Qualifications, # All Persons Median Wage Annual							
Theme	Title of Programme/Project, Aims & Description	Key Activities	Start Date	End Date	Resource or cost	Performance Measures	Delivery Quarter
Economic Inactivity	SP2.1: Sector Based Academies Target a swift reduction in the number of job claimants and improve economic activity rates through sector focused employability academies to reduce unemployment and encourage the unemployed and economically inactive into the workplace.	Sector-focused Employability Academies co-designed supported by the Project Officer and local employers. 4 academies - 20 participants per cohort (80 total): Tourism and Hospitality (£750 per participant); Construction (£1500 per participant); H&SC (£750 per participant); HGV/Coach Driver (£2000 per participant). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employability facilitator/mentor to engage the participants. • Mentoring, personal employability development plans, CV writing & mock interviews. (4-12 weeks depending on need) • Industry ambassador led master classes. (4-12 weeks depending on sector requirement) • Guaranteed interview on completion of academy. • Continued Mentorship for 6 months after employment. Project Delivery Officer and LMP Manager to provide Project	1 Jul 2023	31 Mar 2024	Staff Resource + SP2.2: £116,000 Delivery partner(s) costs for 80 participants: Tourism: £15,000 (20 x £750) Construction: £30,000 (20 x £1,500) Health and Social Care: £15,000 (20 x £750) HGV: £40,000 (20 x £2,000) Internal Costs: Project Delivery Officer (20%) £10,100 LMP Manager (10%) £5,740	How much did we do? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80 participants enrolled • 4 Academies provided. How well did we do it? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (60/80) 75% academy participants completed the programme • (60/80) 75% of participants reported satisfaction with the project. Is anyone better off? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (45/60) 75% participants gaining new employment. • (45/60) 75% of participants who gained a qualification as a result of participation on the project • (30/45) 75% still in employment 6 months after completing the programme 	2,3,4

		Management, Course Co-Design with Industry and assisting delivery agent with participant and employer recruitment and PR/Marketing of the project					
	SP2.2 Agri-Food Academy The agri-food sector is one of the largest sectors within Mid Ulster Council area, providing considerable employment to its residents. The agri-food sector is facing similar recruitment challenges to other sectors across Mid Ulster and this stand-alone academy will attempt to reduce unemployment and encourage the unemployed and economically inactive into agri-food jobs.	Agri-Food Employability Academies co-designed by local employers and supported by the Project Officer. 1 Academy - 20 participants. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employability facilitator/mentor to engage the participants. • Personal employability development plans, CV writing & mock interviews. • Industry ambassador led master classes. • Digital literacy improvement. • Guaranteed interview on completion of academy 	1 Jul 2023	31 Mar 2024	Staff Resource + SP2.2: £21,500 delivery partner(s) costs for 20 participants at an average of £1,075/head.	How much did we do? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 participants enrolled • 1 Academy provided. How well did we do it? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (15/20) 75% academy participants completed the programme. • (15/20) 75% of participants reported satisfaction with the project. Is anyone better off? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (11/15) 73% participants gained employment. • (11/15) 73% of participants who gained a qualification as a result of participation on the project • (8/11) 73% still in employment 6 months after completing the programme 	2,3,4
	SP2.3: Women Returners Programme Improve on Mid Ulster's position as the Council region with one of the	Women Returners Programme to increase the number of women in paid employment across the council area.	April 2023	March 2024	Staff Resource + SP2.7: £40,790 Delivery Partner Costs:	How much did we do? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 female participants enrolled • 20 employers engaged. 	1,2, 3,4

	<p>largest gender employment gaps in NI by investing in an employer-led employability programme that aims to support women into employment across the MUDC area.</p>	<p>Engage 20 prominent local employers on a 1-1 basis in a targeted Employer led and focused programme to increase awareness of benefits of flexible working policies most beneficial to Women Returners</p> <p>Deliver an awareness programme to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide 2-day support specific to their available job roles - raise awareness of need for and assist in development of flexible working policies, promote benefits of Women Returners to workforce and assist in recruitment process • Inform them of other available supports via FE Colleges, Women's Centres, Local Training organisations, Universities etc. • Develop case studies. <p>Engage 20 Female Participants who are currently Economically Inactive</p> <p>Applicants will receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 hours 1:1 coaching. • 2 small group mentoring to include employability support. • Mentoring support for a further 6 month period for those successfully placed in employment • Signposted to job roles identified by employers and 			<p>Employer Training: £5,000</p> <p>Participant 1-1 Coaching £13,000 Small Group mentoring: £2,000</p> <p>Project Admin and PR: £10,000</p> <p>Internal Costs: Project Delivery Officer (10%) £5,050 LMP Manager (10%) £5,740</p>	<p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (15/20) 75% participants complete the programme • (15/20) 75% of participants reported satisfaction with the project. • (14/20) 70% of employers reported satisfaction with the project. <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (10/14) 50% of participants gained new employment. • 40% of participants (8) sustain employment 6 months after programme completion. 	
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		<p>encouraged to apply for these and other suitable roles within the labour market.</p> <p>Project Delivery Officer and LMP Manager to provide Project Management, assisting delivery agent with participant and employer recruitment and PR/Marketing of the project.</p>					
	<p>SP2.4: Mentorship Programme</p> <p>There are labour market shortages throughout Mid Ulster whilst at the same time there are job seekers, unemployed, NEETs, long-term unemployed and economically inactive residents. During the development of the Action Plan, we were told that those furthest from the labour market require support, 1:1 mentoring to develop the necessary confidence, motivation and skills to enter/re-enter the labour market.</p>	<p>Community-led mentoring programme which will provide an intensive 1:1, group work, support programme for 90 'hardest to reach' individuals with the goal to support them into employment, further education or training. Programme to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engagement & outreach ▪ Assessment & Personal Planning ▪ Employability & Skills Planning ▪ Support into employment, training or further education ▪ Aftercare (12 weeks 1:1 support plus 6 month aftercare mentoring support) <p>Targets take into account high dropout rates for those who are 'hard to reach' and therefore far from the labour market.</p>	1 Jun 2023	31 Mar 2024	<p>Staff Resource + SP2.3: delivery partner costs for 90 participants £64,000 at an average cost of £711/head</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much did we do? 90 participants enrolled • How well did we do it? (54/90) 60% participants completed the programme • (54/90) 60% of participants reported satisfaction with the project. • Is anyone better off? (16/54) 30% participants gained employment. • (8/16) 50% still in employment 6 months after completing the programme • (16/54) 30% participants undertake further education or training following completion of the project 	1,2,3,4

Skilled Labour Supply	<p>SP.2.5: Graduate/ Internship/ Work Experience/ Mentor Toolkit</p> <p>To develop a toolkit which provides a step-by-step guide to local employers to assist with employing graduates, offer internships and work experience, and develop mentorship roles for those close to or in early retirement; develop appropriate HR policies to assist with recruitment and retention including flexible working, terms and conditions; provide best practice to employee health and wellbeing. The Toolkit will make it simpler for local employers to offer work experience or placement opportunities.</p>	<p>To commission external, professional support to produce a Toolkit which sets out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Frameworks/templates and best practice on benefits of recruiting work and graduate placements, internships, work experience, engaging mentors from early retirees etc. ▪ Employer role – how does the employer benefit ▪ Terms, duration, costs, government support etc. ▪ How and when is best to offer opportunities ▪ Legal and insurance obligations <p>(6 weeks)</p> <p>Development of draft/sample HR policies relating to recruitment and retention, employee wellbeing and flexible working policies.</p> <p>Delivery of the toolkit to at least 50 local employers through enhanced employer engagement via a mixture of small group events or one to one support. (On-going throughout year. Half day engagement per employer)</p> <p>Project Delivery Officer and LMP Manager to provide 1:1 support to local employers as well as project management, organisation of group info sessions and PR/Marketing of the project.</p>	<p>1 Jul 2023</p>	<p>31 Mar 2024</p>	<p>Staff Resource +</p> <p>SP2.4: £37,575</p> <p>£7,000 external consultant</p> <p>Internal costs: Project Delivery Officer (55%) £27,775 LMP Manager (7%) £4,020</p>	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Toolkit provided • 50 employers engaged <p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (40/50) 80% of employers reported satisfaction with the project. <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (20/50) 40% of employers creating work placements. • (30/50) 60% of employers who reported feeling more confident that their business would be more successful. 	<p>2,3,4</p>
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Disability	<p>SP2.6: Employer-led Disability Inclusion Programme</p> <p>Improve on Mid Ulster's position as the Council region with the largest disability employment gap in NI by investing in an employer-led employability programme that aims to improve employer understanding of special needs and the support services available. This programme has been developed as a precursor to the new DfC Trust Inclusion service.</p>	<p>Employer-led Disability Inclusion programme to increase the number of disabled people in paid employment. Engage charitable subject-matter expertise to deliver the initiative. Engage 20 prominent local employers in a targeted Employer-led and focused programme to match employers to participants. Deliver an employer education & awareness programme to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • address knowledge gaps & misperceptions about disability • inform on available support (Access to Work, Workable NI) • provide 2 week training and support specific to their available job roles • Develop case studies. <p>Applicants will receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • targeted recruitment programme specific to available job roles & access available support packages to place 20 participants. (4 weeks) • Mentoring and employability support provided to applicants over the life of the programme and for a further 6 month period for those successfully placed in employment • Guaranteed Job Interview 	1 Jul 2023	31 March 2024	<p>Staff Resource + SP2.5: £37,575 (£1,878 per participant)</p> <p>Delivery partner costs: Employer Training: £10,000</p> <p>Participant Training: £10,000</p> <p>Project Admin and PR: £10,000</p> <p>Internal Costs: Project Delivery Officer (15%) £7,575</p>	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 participants enrolled • 20 employers engaged. <p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (16/20) 80% participants complete the programme • (16/20) 80% employers complete the programme • (15/20) 75% of participants reported satisfaction with the project. • (15/20) 75% of employers reported satisfaction with the project <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (10/16) 62.5% of participants successfully secure employment • (6/10) 60% of participants sustain employment 6 months after programme completion. 	2,3,4
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		Project Delivery Officer to provide Project Management, assisting delivery agent with participant and employer recruitment and PR/Marketing of the project.					
	SP2.7: Disability Charter Working with DfC Disability Services to introduce a local MUDC Disability Charter which recognises local employers who support disabled workers within the workforce.	Appoint charitable subject-matter expertise to develop charter standard, working closely with DfC Disability Services. Undertake a basic disability audit of businesses who have engaged as part of the Disability Inclusion Programme and award Charter mark where appropriate. Audit (half day) to be carried out within 4 weeks of completing training and support.	1 Oct 2023	31 March 2024	Staff Resource + SP2.6: £7,500 external consultant	How much did we do? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 employers engaged How well did we do it? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (12/16) 75% of employers reported satisfaction with the project. Is anyone better off? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (8/16) 50% of employers awarded the MUDC Disability Charter. • (12/16) 75% of employers more knowledgeable to recruit employees with a disability 	3,4

Strategic Priority 3: To promote and support delivery of existing employability or skills provision available either regionally or locally							
Indicators: % Increased awareness of relevant existing projects / initiatives and building confidence through locality based engagement (LMP); # LMP referrals to regional/local employability/skills provision (LMP)							
Theme	Title of Programme/Project, Aims & Description	Key Activities	Start Date	End Date	Resource or cost	Performance Measures	Delivery Quarter
Increased Awareness	<p>SP3.1: Job Fairs / Employability Events</p> <p>Promote the programmes and support / encourage employers and participants to access and implement the schemes through a range of events to include employer engagement/education, apprenticeship and job fair, partner events, local job fairs.</p> <p>Marketing of the LMP.</p>	<p>Improve employer & participant knowledge and access to existing employability and skills services by hosting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum of 2 localised Job Fairs per JBO (Cookstown, Dungannon, Magherafelt) 1 Apprenticeship and Jobs Fair A minimum of 2 employer events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective Recruitment and Retention in today's world and the need for flexible working policies Disability Inclusion – how to remove barriers and myths and tap into a readily available labour pool. Up to 3 localised employer events – recruitment and retention/terms and conditions/ flexible working/ employee wellbeing. A minimum of 2 Partner Events – Bring IT On 	1 April 2023	31 March 2024	<p>SP3.1: £20,500</p> <p>Apprenticeship and Job Fair £9,000</p> <p>Large Employer Events £4,000</p> <p>Localised Job Fairs £3,000</p> <p>Localised Employer Events £1,000</p> <p>Partner Events £1,000</p> <p>PR and Marketing of the LMP £2,500</p>	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 Events Attendees at Events (1280) <p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (400/500) 80% of attendees report satisfaction with event. <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (65/130) 50% of attendees at employer events reported increased awareness of LMP programme (225/450) 50% of attendees intend to apply for a job as a result of the job fairs 	1,2, 3,4

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 x large school event, ○ 1 x Enterprise Week event <p>Event Attendee Numbers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeship and Jobs Fair: 300 • Large Employer Events: 100 • Localised Jobs Fairs: 450 • Localised Employer Events: 30 • Partner Events: 400 <p>Marketing of the LMP</p>					
	<p>SP3.2: Female Job Fair / Employability Events</p> <p>To hold a job fair which provides opportunities for women from MUDC area who are unemployed, underemployed or looking at career change opportunities to meet with local employers offering employment opportunities. The Women's Job Fair will be organized in conjunction with local JBOs (Magherafelt, Dungannon & Cookstown).</p>	<p>Improve employer & female jobseekers from MUDC with the knowledge and access to existing employability and skills services by hosting a Women's only Job Fair.</p> <p>Influential speaker – one per event to give presentation on real life experience and achievements.</p> <p>15 employers per event 1 Speaker per Event Support agencies to include FE colleges and universities</p>	1 July 2023	30 Nov 2023	SP3.1: £7,500 Job & careers fair	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Jobs Fair • 150 female participants. • 45 employers • 3 Speakers <p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (90/150) 60% of jobs fair attendees rated the event as helpful for finding work, training, further education opportunities <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (75/150) 50% of attendees intend to apply for at least one job because of the job fair. • (30/45) 67% of employers participating who 	3,4

						<p>reported the event was a good platform to showcase their sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (30/45) 67% of employers participating reported the event would assist in filling vacancies	
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6 Budget

The proposed budget for Mid Ulster LMP's 2023/24 Action Plan is set out in the table below.

Budget Category	Budget Sub Category	Budget 2023-2024
Administration	LMP Staff Costs	
	LMP Manager (73%)	£41,246.66
	LMP Finance and Admin Officer (100%)	£35,736.56
	LMP Project Delivery Officer (50%)	£10,731.36
	Running costs	
	Staff mileage	£2,250.00
	Printing & stationary	£404.02
	LMP Internal Audit	£2,000.00
	LMP Chairperson Stipend @ £80 per mth	£960.00
	LMP Vice-Chair Stipend @ £50 per mth	£600.00
	Total Administration	£93,928.60
Operational	Strategic Priority 1	
	SP1.1 LMP Delivery and Development	£1,714.40
	SP1.2: Development of a 3-Year Strategic Assessment and 1-Year Action Plan	£20,000.00
	SP1.2: Development of a 3-Year Strategic Assessment and 1-Year Action Plan	£0
	Strategic Priority 2	
	SP2.1: Sector Based Academies	£115,840.00
	SP2.2 Agri-food Academy	£21,500.00
	SP2.3: Women Returners Programme	£40,790.00
	SP2.4: Mentorship Programme	£64,000.00
	SP.2.5: Graduate/ Internship/ Work Experience/ Mentor Toolkit	£38,795.00
	SP2.6: Employer-led Disability Inclusion programme	£37,575.00
	SP2.7: Disability Charter	£7,500.00
	Strategic Priority 3	
	SP3.1: Job Fair / Employability Events	£20,500.00
	SP3.2: Female Job Fair / Employability Events	£7,500.00
	Total Operational	£375,714.40
	Overall Total (Administration & Operational)	£469,643.00

Minutes of Meeting of the Development Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 16 February 2023 in the Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon and by Virtual Means

Members Present

Councillor Clarke, Chair

Councillors Ashton, Black, Corry*, Cuddy, Doris*, Elattar*, Kerr, McNamee*, Martin*, Milne*, Molloy*(7.02 pm), Monteith, Quinn*, Wilson

Officers in Attendance

Mr Black, Strategic Director of Communities and Place (SD: C&P)

Mr Gordon, Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing (AD: HL&W)**

Ms Linney, Assistant Director of Development (AD: Dev)**

Ms McKeown, Assistant Director of Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes (AD: EDT&SP)**

Miss Thompson, Committee and Member Services Officer

Others in Attendance

Councillor McKinney (7.17 pm)***

Agenda Item 4 – Deputation Mid Ulster Red Squirrel Association

Mr McAleese – Chairperson***

Ms Donnelly – Vice Chairperson***

* Denotes Members present in remote attendance

** Denotes Officers present by remote means

*** Denotes Others present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm.

The Chair, Councillor Clarke welcomed everyone to the meeting and those watching the meeting through the Live Broadcast. Councillor Clarke in introducing the meeting detailed the operational arrangements for transacting the business of the committee in the chamber and by virtual means, by referring to Annex A to this minute.

D020/23 Notice of Recording

This meeting will be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast on the Council's You Tube site.

D021/23 Apologies

Councillor Burton.

D022/23 Declarations of Interest

The Chair, Councillor Clarke reminded Members of their responsibility with regard to declaration of interest.

D023/23 Chair's Business

None.

D024/23 Deputation – Mid Ulster Red Squirrel Association

The Chair, Councillor Clarke welcomed Mr McAleese and Ms Donnelly from Mid Ulster Red Squirrel Association to the meeting and invited them to make their presentation.

Mr McAleese outlined the mission statement of the group which is to work together, with Council, to support the under-threat native red squirrel population and their ever-shrinking habitat; for the benefit of contributing to the wider Irish and UK red squirrel conservation efforts, and helping empower the entire community to make lasting, positive change.

Mr McAleese also outlined the aims and objectives of the group which is to –

- Monitor and study red squirrels in their natural habitat. Encouraging the red squirrel population to grow by ensuring their environmental needs are met. The removal of the invasive grey squirrel via regulated, safe, and humane trapping / dispatch methods.
- Educate the general public, landowners and statutory and voluntary bodies on how to create and maintain an environment that is sympathetic to red squirrel survival.
- Raise funds in order to facilitate the groups purposes.
- Ensure close collaboration with our allies in the red squirrel community, along with all associated groups and organisations, situated right across the island of Ireland.

Ms Donnelly highlighted how the red squirrel population from 1945 to 2010 has changed and diminished and that the population is dying out. Ms Donnelly stated it is important to work together to help protect the red squirrel now and for future generations. Ms Donnelly stated it is imperative that current red squirrel populations are supported through subsistence feeding and habitat protection and expansion along with an increase in grey squirrel removal efforts. Ms Donnelly stated that things need to change and that whilst the Mid Ulster Red Squirrel Group is here to help bring about that change, it is only with full support and backing of Council, Forestry Service, and other associated public bodies that it can save the red squirrel.

The Chair, Councillor Clarke thanked Ms Donnelly and Mr McAleese for their informative presentation and stated that Davagh was one of the first places he had seen a red squirrel and for the group to keep up the good work.

Councillor Corry stated it was frightening to see how the red squirrel population has dwindled over the years and thanked the group for their hard work and dedication in saving the red squirrel. The Councillor stated that habitat and tree planting go hand in hand with this and that Council and Councillors should be supportive of the hard work being done. Councillor Corry referred to the groups difficulties with opening a bank account and advised that sometimes credit unions can help with this. The Councillor stated that Mid Ulster is a beautiful area and that having the possibility of a red squirrel trail is an exciting opportunity as well.

Councillor Molloy thanked the representatives for their presentation and stated he was impressed with the groups dedication to restoring the red squirrel. The Councillor stated that the opening of bank accounts is an ongoing issue for a number of community groups but that some literature or sharing the video shown tonight would be helpful to get the message out to the community and community groups so they can encourage people to support the red squirrel and discourage the grey.

Councillor Quinn stated that he had probably seen more mink around where he lived outside Coalisland than red squirrels and stated that the group did not have an easy task but should be encouraged in their efforts. The Councillor referred to the introduction of the pine marten and that this seemed to help the red squirrel population in areas where they had been brought in and asked if this is something which has been considered in the Mid Ulster area. Councillor Quinn stated he would be happy to support the group any way he could and felt that Council as an organisation should also be supportive of the group and increasing the red squirrel population in the Mid Ulster area.

Ms Donnelly advised that there have been a couple of red squirrel sightings in Drumcairne Forest.

Councillor McNamee stated the group were carrying out great work and asked if the pine marten is a threat to the red squirrel as well as the grey and what other eradication methods are being used to remove the grey squirrel. The Councillor also asked if there are any red squirrels in Drum Manor Forest.

Ms Donnelly stated that whilst there have not been any sightings of the red squirrel in Drum Manor there is potential for the future and that the group were awaiting the outcome of an Ulster Wildlife study.

Mr McAleese stated that the feedback and interaction from the public has been phenomenal to date and sightings of red squirrel are beginning to be submitted from across the District and from areas which were previously prolific with the grey squirrel. Mr McAleese stated that the pine marten populations have been increasing and that with further studies it is hoped to get a clearer picture of where the pine marten are residing. Mr McAleese stated that the group are of the opinion that there are a lot more red squirrel and pine marten in the District than what is known about now and that further investigations should be able to prove this.

The Chair, Councillor Clarke stated he had a great interest in what the group are doing and that in Creggan Forest close to where he lives there have been sightings of red squirrels. Councillor Clarke stated he would do whatever he could to support the group.

Ms Donnelly and Mr McAleese withdrew from the meeting at 7.25 pm.

Matters for Decision

D025/23 Development Report

The Assistant Director of Development (AD: Dev) presented previously circulated and sought approval for the following:

- Rolling Community Grants
- Good Relations Plan 2023-24
- TEO Refugee Support Programme
- Development Update

In addition to the report the AD: Dev advised that Council have been approached with regard to the Northern Ireland Refugee Scheme and looking at a project with key partners. The AD: Dev advised that a proposal regarding refugee support was prepared and submitted in liaison with STEP. The AD: Dev advised that an allocation of £133,015 has been recommended in relation to support for refugees up until March 2024 on the basis that Council allocate the monies to the partner who will deliver the programme and that monitoring will be through to the TEO Office.

The AD: Dev advised that a letter of support has been sought by Early Years regarding a Peace Plus application to develop the proposed community hub project at the old workhouse in Clogher. The AD: Dev also referred to request received from Poetry Ireland who are undertaking a climate change project on a cross border basis and are seeking a letter of support from Council in relation to the project including some help with linkages to key artists.

Councillor Monteith referred to the the Tbuc scheme and 25% match funding which comes from Council and asked how much this works out at.

The AD: Dev advised that Council match fund £103,000.

Councillor Monteith asked if officers were of the opinion that the money was well spent the last time.

The AD: Dev advised that in relation to the programme Council would have had good outcomes and feedback from the TEO Office and that they would have been supportive in relation to all the activity undertaken. The AD: Dev advised that in the past couple of years activity has also been tied into the community plan. The AD: Dev stated that the poverty initiative started out of the Good Relations Plan and was successful during Covid as partnerships had been established and therefore officers were able to act quickly at that time.

Councillor Monteith stated there was other funding within Tbuc which was outside of Council remit and he did not see a lot of evidence of the outcomes. The Councillor felt it would be worth officers discussing this with Tbuc and referred to housing associations and that residents cannot get their heating or windows fixed but that there are grants for face painters. Councillor Monteith stated he was not against community activity however tenants are entitled to a decent home. Councillor Monteith proposed the report but in addition proposed that the advisory groups be brought in to discuss other Tbuc funding streams. In relation to the Clogher Community Hub proposal, Councillor Monteith stated that there needs to be adequate memorial to those who lost their lives within the confines of the workhouse there similar to that at South Tyrone Hospital. Councillor Monteith stated that it was good to see the old workhouse building in Clogher being kept in life to work for the community in 2023 but that no one should forget the suffering and horrors that went on within the walls of that building.

Councillor Molloy seconded the proposal to adopt the report and also seconded the proposal for Council to engage with Tbuc groups as there is good work done in relation to inclusivity but that he felt there is also some daft money spent. The Councillor stated he did not know how much control Council would have in relation to this but that he felt if Council is involved then it should have a say.

In response to Councillor Ashton, the AD: Dev advised that the requests for letters of support had come in since the report was written. The AD: Dev stated that the letter of support in relation to Peace Plus application for Clogher Hub was urgent but that the other request could be brought back next month if Members preferred.

Councillor Ashton asked that the requests be emailed to Members.

Councillor Monteith stated he was happy to amend his proposal that the request for letter of support for Poetry Ireland be considered next month. The Councillor stated he was content for the letter of support in relation to Clogher Hub would go ahead as the project has been presented to Members previously and that this letter would be a continuation of Council's support.

The Chair, Councillor Clarke proposed that there was also a job of work to be done in relation to Magherafelt Workhouse.

Councillor Monteith seconded Councillor Clarke's proposal.

Councillor Wilson stated he supported the comments in relation to bringing in the Tbuc groups, especially the housing associations.

The SD: C&P stated that Tbuc is a central government strategy and the policy lead is the Executive office who oversee the whole strategy including the Council Good Relations Programme. The SD: C&P asked if Members were asking that the Executive Office come to Council to discuss how other elements of Tbuc funding work.

The AD: Dev clarified it was the housing associations who prepare housing plans Members wanted to invite to come in for discussion.

The SD: C&P stated that officers can look at this and invite the relevant parties to a future meeting.

Councillor Corry referred to proposal in relation to Magherafelt Workhouse and advised of request received regarding commemorative piece at this location and asked that Council look at this.

- Resolved** That it be recommended to Council –
- To approve the assessment panel recommendations under the Good Relations Grant as outlined at appendix 1 of report.
 - To approve the Good Relations Plan 2023-2024 as outlined at appendix 2 of report.
 - To invite relevant parties to a future meeting to discuss other elements of Tbus funding.
 - To approve the allocation of £133,015 for the TEO Refugee Support Programme up until March 2024.
 - To issue letter of support to Early Years in relation to Peace Plus application for Clogher Valley Community Hub. Letter of support for Poetry Ireland to be considered at next month's meeting.
 - To recognise the suffering of those who lost their lives within Clogher and Magherafelt Workhouses and assist with memorials at these sites.
 - To note Development Department Update.

D026/023 Sports Representative Grants

The Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing (AD: HL&W) presented previously circulated report which sought approval for Sports Representative Grant – Individuals (January 2023).

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconed by Councillor McNamee and

- Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to approve the sports grant allocations as outlined in appendix 1 of report.

D027/23 Health, Leisure and Wellbeing Scale of Charges 2023/24

The Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing (AD: HL&W) presented previously circulated report which outlined the proposed scale of charges for April 2023-March 2024 for the Health, Leisure and Wellbeing service and sought approval to implement same from 1 April 2023.

Councillor Kerr proposed the scale of charges as set out.

Councillor Kerr stated that a constituent had approached him in relation to cervical smear testing and that she had a test last October but has received no result. The Councillor stated this was concerning as residents need access to testing quickly so that any abnormalities can be dealt with. Councillor Kerr proposed that Council

make contact with Southern Trust in relation to cervical smear testing, the importance of these tests and having them dealt with quickly.

Councillor Cuddy seconded Councillor Kerr's proposal and asked if income into leisure centres has stayed the same or dropped from the year before to last year.

The AD: HL&W advised that the 2020/21 was a challenging year for everyone and income did drop during that year due to closures and Covid restrictions. The AD: HL&W advised that the 2021/22 and 2022/23 years are on a par and whilst not quite at the peak of pre covid level income he stated that the revised income projections will be met and that this will be kept under review. The AD: HL&W stated it is hoped that the freezing of charges will go some way to maintaining confidence and that facilities will be affordable to users.

Councillor Cuddy stated that the issue of income in leisure centres was one of the issues raised during the rates process. The Councillor stated that the officer seemed to be hopeful that income will come back to somewhere near where it was pre covid. Councillor Cuddy stated that leisure centres are an important part of Council's business and if the income is not there it puts more pressure on other things.

Councillor Molloy stated it was important to strike a balance in having pricing at a rate that Council is competitive and facilities being used rather than over pricing.

- Resolved** That it be recommended to Council –
- To approve the Health, Leisure and Wellbeing Scale of Charges 2023/24 as set out at appendix 1 of report.
 - To write to Southern Trust in relation to cervical smear testing and the importance of having these tests carried out and results coming back in a timely manner.

D028/23 Commencement of Sections 1-12 of the Private Tenancies Act (Northern Ireland) 2022

The Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing (AD: HL&W) presented previously circulated report which provided update on the new provisions of the Private Tenancies Act (NI) 2022 commencing on 1 April 2023 and sought approval to set fixed penalty levels for certain offences under said Act.

Proposed by Councillor Clarke
Seconded by Councillor Corry and

- Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to note the new legislative powers for Council in relation to the private rented sector and to give approval for Officers to enforce by way of fixed penalty levels at £500 for offences detailed as per sections 3.5 through to section 3.10 of report.

Councillor Monteith stated that this is statutory legislation which Council did not have a lot of say over. The Councillor referred to the fixed penalties for non registered landlords and asked how many these fines have been issued since the legislation was brought in.

The SD: C&P advised that the number of fixed penalties issued would not be available tonight but that the Member could be advised of the figure in the coming days.

Councillor Monteith stated that tenants are struggling and felt that if Council does have powers to enact and enforce tenant rights it should be pro active in letting people know that they can contact Council in relation to these issues. The Councillor stated that the promotion of these rights needs to be done in a number of languages and should be carried out every couple of months. Councillor Monteith stated that the vast majority of private tenancies are dealt with through agents and suggested that all those tenants should be provided with the legislative powers of Council. Councillor Monteith proposed writing to all agents asking for information on anyone they know who is facilitating a private rental property and is not registered. The Councillor stated that Council needs to find landlords who are not registered and should be encouraging tenants that they do have recourse to Environmental Health in relation to fitness and the standard of housing. Councillor Monteith proposed that detail on the number of fines for non registered landlords be provided, that new tenant rights are promoted and that this is done regularly and in different languages. Councillor Monteith further proposed that letting agents are asked to include the new rights within new private lets that they are involved in and that letting agents are asked to work with Council to ensure all landlords are registered. The Councillor stated that Council should support tenants because when tenants complain about housing this can often lead to eviction. The Councillor stated that this is a chance for Council to take the lead in relation to housing standards and make a difference in peoples lives.

Councillor Corry seconded Councillor Monteith's proposal.

Resolved That it be recommended to Council –

- To provide detail in relation to number of fines issued for non registered landlords since legislation was brought in.
- To promote new tenant rights and that this be done regularly and in different languages.
- To ask letting agents to include the new rights in new private lets that they are involved in and ask them to work with Council to ensure all landlords are registered.

D029/23 Pitch and Recreational Spaces Strategy

The Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing (AD: HL&W) presented previously circulated report which sought approval to adopt the proposed Pitch and Recreational Spaces Five Year Strategic Plan.

The Chair, Councillor Clarke stated this is a good piece of work which needed to be done and provides a framework for the future.

Councillor Molloy thanked the officer for the comprehensive report and stated that the report identifies what a lot of Members already know but that it helps to see where the gaps are and that the report will be a useful tool going forward. The Councillor stated that community provision tends to be largely in the GAA and rugby

sector where these clubs are providing their own facilities and that Council has to find a way of supporting those clubs and those communities by helping them maintain and grow their facilities for the betterment of the community. In terms of the schools sector Councillor Molloy stated that there is a realisation for schools in that it makes sense to open up their facilities out of hours and that this can be a revenue stream for them. The Councillor stated it is important to engage with school principals and Boards of Governors on this matter to make them aware that Council is interested in working with them to open up their facilities and the benefits that this can bring. Councillor Molloy stated that the facilities tend to be at secondary level schools but that there is also scope to engage with primary level as well. Councillor Molloy stated that there is ongoing work to be done but that the report forms a good start and proposed the report recommendations.

Councillor Ashton referred to the partnership working of Council and stated that she found this is the best way of delivering in rural communities. The Councillor spoke in relation to Council partnership with DfC and Aughnacloy College to deliver a state of the art sports facility in Aughnacloy. Councillor Ashton referred to page 233 of the report which states that the use of the facility is three hours by two organisations and advised that the site opened in 2018 and that since Covid restrictions have lifted the site is thriving every night of the week and is used from 7am every Saturday with usage including soccer, gaelic and rugby. The Councillor stated that this is testament to the effort put in by the community, Council and the Department to show that the facility is needed in the area and that the community have taken ownership of it. Councillor Ashton highlighted through the report the usage of the grass pitch in Aughnacloy and that this facility has had no bookings and that alternative use can be considered at that location. The Councillor referred to the growth of the facility at Aughnacloy and stated that Ulster Rugby have come on board with the school and would also seek the support of Council to make Aughnacloy College a hub for the west. Councillor Ashton stated this is a huge coo for the Council that an organisation such as Ulster Rugby want to invest in this area and see the benefit of the Aughnacloy site. The Councillor stated that the investment in Aughnacloy and the benefit this has given young boys in particular resulted in Aughnacloy College boys winning the School Cup for the first time and that this is a direct result of being able to access the facilities in Aughnacloy. Councillor Ashton seconded Councillor Molloy's proposal and further proposed that in order to progress the Ulster Rugby project that Council move to engage with the EA ahead of March P&R Committee in order to progress the Ulster Rugby hub project in Aughnacloy.

Councillor Wilson stated that MUSA is centre of excellence within Mid Ulster and referred to the pitches only achieving a 'good' assessment and that this needed to improve. The Councillor stated that the part of the report he was disappointed in was that of hockey. Councillor Wilson stated that Cookstown Hockey Club play in the highest league and that this Council offers nothing to the sport. The Councillor referred to the indoor arena which some of the hockey clubs use during the year but that this is only for practice and stated that there was an overall lack of facilities provided by Council for hockey. Councillor Wilson asked that officers meet with representatives of the hockey clubs to discuss a way forward.

Councillor Black seconded Councillor Ashton's proposal.

Councillor Monteith stated he had no difficulty with what was within the report but agreed with the comments in relation to inaccuracies in relation to usage. Councillor Monteith referred to page 113 of the report and the assertion that GAA is a Spring and Summer sport, the Councillor stated that nothing could be further from the truth. Councillor Monteith stated that there is a severe lack of GAA pitches across Mid Ulster and highlighted provision for soccer is 57 pitches to facilitate 491 participants, rugby has 17 pitches to facilitate 1084 participants and GAA has 122 pitches to facilitate 14348 participants. The Councillor stated he was not suggesting that Council have the resources or capital ability to meet that demand but that he was frustrated that the report does not outline projected demand for any sport. Councillor Monteith stated that Council is in the process of producing a Development Plan and that a projection of pitches is needed, particularly in urban areas and that land needs to be zoned for this. *Councillor Monteith declared an interest that he is involved in the GAA in an urban context.* The Councillor stated he accepted that Council cannot finance everything but that clubs needed to be given the chance to expand in any sport. Councillor Monteith stated that if Council is serious at promoting health and fitness from a young age then the facilities need to be in the areas that people live in. The Councillor expressed disappointment that there didn't seem to be any recognition of the Development Plan and how the growth of a club can be facilitated. Councillor Monteith proposed some work in relation to this and that officers engage with planning. Councillor Monteith also stated Council should not be approving planning permission for any school which does not have recreational space and highlighted that some of the biggest primary schools in the area have no green space within their curtilage. The Councillor stated he was disappointed the report did not go further as it has taken a long time to get to this stage and that going forward officers needed to consider the Development Plan and engage with planners on this.

Councillor Kerr supported the comments raised by Councillors Monteith and Molloy and that he knew from being involved with his local club the clashes there can be between teams regarding usage of facilities. Councillor Kerr seconded Councillor Monteith's proposal.

The SD: C&P thanked Members for their input and stated that with any strategy the evidence and consultation is a snapshot in time and that this is used as the baseline to understand what needs to be done to meet current demand. The SD: C&P assured Members that on moving through the delivery of the strategy the baseline figures will be reviewed to ensure future proofing and that the work that is delivered as part of the strategy helps longer term need. The SD: C&P stated that the work in relation to schools is important and that there is work ongoing with schools across the District to look at projects to open up school sites for community use and that hopefully there will be more of this activity ongoing throughout the strategy. The SD: C&P stated that the strategy cuts across five sporting codes and that hockey is one of these codes. The SD: C&P stated that there is some recognition in terms of the work that is needed in relation to local hockey clubs but that there are also opportunities across all of the sporting clubs to work together to help them move forward with their own aspirations. The SD: C&P advised that once financing is released updates on the strategy will be provided to Committee.

Councillor Wilson referred to the officer's comments in relation to consultations with groups and that this will be a rolling process. The Councillor stated hockey is mentioned but that there is nothing within the strategy for that sport. Councillor Wilson stated he felt it would be useful to have a meeting with Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt hockey clubs to give them some reassurance.

The SD: C&P took on board the Councillors comments and stated that within the action plan there are SLA partnership arrangements identified around the hockey clubs and that the clubs will be brought on board and that there will be further conversations with them regarding how Council can support them and their aspirations. The SD: C&P reassured Councillor Wilson that hockey will not be forgotten about under the strategy.

Councillor Wilson stated that what the officer had outlined needs to be beefed up so that the hockey clubs see something for them within the strategy.

The AD: HL&W stated that over the last number of years hockey have been able to avail of the schools facilities access fund and confirmed that the strategy seeks to formalise arrangements with Cookstown and Dungannon Hockey clubs. The AD: HL&W advised that the survey taken in 2021 was a snapshot in time and that this is a first time inventory and that the figures obtained then need to be used as a platform to build on for the future.

Councillor Monteith left the meeting at 8.23 pm

- Resolved** That it be recommended to Council –
- To approve the Pitch and Recreational Spaces Five Year Strategic Plan;
 - To recommend to the Policy & Resources Committee that the Pitch & Recreational Strategy 2023 -2028 is included as part of the Council capital programme and the required capital financing allocated (£4,273,792).
 - Consideration of the additional re-current revenue costs (approx. £76k per annum) as part of the 24/25 rates estimates and beyond.
 - To engage with the EA, in advance of the March P&R Committee, to progress the Ulster Rugby hub project in Aughnacloy.
 - To recognise the Development Plan and engage with planners in relation to future growth provision of clubs, particularly in urban areas.
 - To engage with planners in relation to ensuring new schools have recreation space within their curtilage.

D030/23 Funding offer from Department of Business Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) 2022-2023

The Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing (AD: HL&W) presented previously circulated report outlined a potential funding opportunity for the Environmental Health service from the OPSS for 'The Capacity & Capability Building Programme in Northern Ireland: Non-Food Products 2022'. Funding is for the period 1st July 2022 – 31st March 2023.

Councillor Wilson asked if this was a follow up to funding headed by Causeway Coast and Glens Council last year.

The AD: HL&W advised this funding was completely separate, that the funding is for consumer product safety work, items which may exist in each of the Council's work plans through Environmental Health and the opportunity to do some extra work between now and year end to support businesses in their obligations regarding product safety.

Councillor Wilson clarified if this had anything to do with the Protocol.

The AD: HL&W stated there was nothing mentioned within the documentation to suggest this and that a clear direction has been given by the funder that this is for non food consumer product safety work.

Councillor Kerr proposed the recommendation. Councillor Kerr advised that someone from the National Association of Drainage Contractors had contacted him in relation to shortage of staff within the industry and difficulties in accessing local labour and suggested that the local college and labour partnership tie in with them to offer access to training courses. The Councillor asked that officers make contact with this person in relation to same. Councillor Kerr also referred to European Social Fund which is coming to an end in the coming months and that there are residents who may be facing redundancy because of this. The Councillor asked that Council reach out to local colleges and trade unions to see if there is anything it can do to prevent job losses when the funding comes to an end.

Councillor McNamee seconded Councillor Kerr's proposal.

- Resolved** That it be recommended to Council
- (i) to accept the offer of funding from OPPS (up to a maximum of £55,000) in relation to activities undertaken in 2022/2023, and if accepted, that it be recommended to the Chief Executive that he operate his Delegated Authority Resolve under the Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officers to sign and return the funding agreement between Mid Ulster District Council and the Department of Business Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS); and
 - (ii) to engage with local colleges and Trade Unions regarding the cut to funding provided by the European Social Fund and for council to contact the National Association of Drainage Contractors to help alleviate labour's shortage and engaging with local education providers to see if courses can be provided.

D031/23 Economic Development Report - OBFD

The Assistant Director of Economic Development, Tourism & Strategic Programmes (AD: EDT&SP) presented previously circulated report to update on key activities as detailed below:

- Association of Town Centre Management – Membership Renewal

- Independent Evaluation of Council's Business Support Programme
- Lough Neagh Rescue (2022-2023) – Draft Service Level Agreement
- Sperrins Partnership Agreement
- Tourism Spring Campaign 2023

Councillors Cuddy, Molloy and Wilson declared an interest in this item.

Councillor Quinn proposed all the report recommendations and in particular the one for Lough Neagh Rescue as he stated they do great work. Councillor Quinn referred to the three Councils who contribute and asked if this used to be five.

The AD: EDT&SP stated that there are three main funders, these being the three Councils with the largest borders around the Lough.

Councillor Kerr seconded Councillor Quinn's proposal.

- Resolved** That it be recommended to Council –
- Association of Town Centre Management - Membership Renewal -**
To renew its ATCM membership (January 2023 – January 2024) at a cost of £595 (excluding Vat).
- Independent Evaluation of Council's Business Support Programmes –**
- That officers proceed to seek competitive quotations to appoint a suitably qualified organisation/consultant to undertake an Independent Evaluation of Council's suite of Business Support Programmes, with costs to be funded from the 2023/24 economic development budget in the region of £15,000 (excl Vat).
 - That the Chief Executive be awarded delegated authority to appoint the successful organisation/consultant following the quotation exercise to allow work to commence as soon as possible.
- Lough Neagh Rescue (2022-2023) – Service Level Agreement -**
- To approve annual contribution of £12,000 to Lough Neagh Rescue from Council's 2022/2023 tourism budget;
 - To approve Mid Ulster District Council's Service Level Agreement with Lough Neagh Rescue (LNR) on Appendix 3, for the 2022-2023 financial year (subject to final review of SLA by Legal Services) and release the full payment to LNR once the Agreement has been signed and returned and Council provided with all the requisite documentation.
- Sperrins Partnership Agreement Approval -**
To retract Mid Ulster Council's 2022/2023 Service Level Agreement for £22,000, issued earlier this year to Derry & Strabane Council (the Lead Council for Sperrins Partnership) and revert to make payments against the original Partnership Agreement dated 2020, until it expires in 2023, after which a new Agreement can be developed. This change has no material impact upon the delivery of the Sperrins Partnership Action Plan, but rather sought to align the governance arrangements with partners/organisations, funded from Council's economic development, tourism and strategic programmes service plan.
- Tourism Spring Campaign 2023 –**

To retrospectively approve the Tourism Spring Marketing Campaign and for the Chief Executive to sign and return Tourism NI's offer of funding totalling £20,000 for the Co-operative Partnership Marketing Fund, in order to meet the timeframe to return the Service Level Agreement by 31 January 2023. To also retrospectively approve provision of up to £7,000 match funding from Council's Tourism budget.

D032/23 SOLACE Report on Strategic Funding Alignment

The Assistant Director of Economic Development, Tourism & Strategic Programmes (AD: EDT&SP) presented previously circulated report which provided an update on a SOLACE NI Report (prepared by Ekosgen), focusing on Strategic Funding Alignment to Map Investment Fund Opportunities in Northern Ireland.

Proposed by Councillor Cuddy
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

- Resolved** That it be recommended to Council -
- To endorse the Report and Investment Mapping Tool appended to this report, produced by Ekosgen.
 - To agree that officers use this report and the Investment Mapping Tool as a 'live' tool which should be updated as may be required to guide and inform the approach to funding opportunities.
 - To agree that officers consider the establishment of a process to continuously review and update the investment mapping tool, investment/funding opportunities and approved/committed projects internally and also across local government. Consideration should be given to the resource implications of introducing and maintaining this process.
 - To agree to share the final report as appropriate, with relevant partner organisations eg, Community Planning Partnerships, City and Growth Deal Board's etc.
 - To agree that Council pay an equal share of costs to SOLACE NI to fund development of the report, ie, £1,310.

Matters for Information

D033/23 Minutes of Development Committee held on 12 January 2023

Members noted Minutes of Development Committee held on 12 January 2023.

Councillor Kerr asked if there was an update on the Altmore/Cappagh project and asked if officers can contact Forest Service as some people have been in contact with him regarding the trails and improving accessibility. Councillor Kerr referred to the Maghera Regeneration Project being successful in obtaining Levelling Up Funding and that Gortgonis Health and Community Hub wasn't and asked for update on the Gortgonis project.

The SD: C&P stated that in respect of the Altmore/Cappagh project there was funding through NIEA for masterplanning work but unfortunately a suitable contractor could not be secured for this work which means that it cannot be delivered before the end of the financial year. The SD: C&P advised that officers are looking at alternative plans of what can be done going into the new financial year. In relation to Gortgonis, the SD: C&P advised there was no further update from that which went to the Policy and Resources Committee but that officers are seeking to progress the enabling works agreed at the last Committee meeting and that further updates will be brought through the Policy and Resources Committee.

D034/23 Economic Development Report - OBF1

Members noted update on key activities as listed below:

- Dungannon Traders Association Proposal
- Levelling Up Fund Capital Funding (Round 2)
- Mid Ulster International Women's Day Events

Live broadcast ended at 8.40 pm.

Local Government (NI) Act 2014 – Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

Resolved In accordance with Section 42, Part 1 Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 that Members of the public be asked to withdraw from the meeting whilst members consider items D035/23 to D039/23.

Matters for Decision

D035/23	Development Report – Arts (SHHP)
D036/23	Tender for the maintenance of play equipment and associated landscape works
D037/23	Clean Neighbourhood Action Plan
D038/23	Council Led Entrepreneurship Support Service – Shared Prosperity Fund Bid

Matters for Information

D039/23	Confidential Minutes of Development Committee held on 12 January 2023
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D040/23 Duration of Meeting

The meeting commenced at 7pm and concluded at 9.00 pm

Chair _____

Date _____

Annex A – Introductory Remarks from the Chairperson

Good evening and welcome to the Council's [Policy & Resources/Environment/Development] Committee in the Chamber, [Dungannon/Magherafelt] and virtually.

I specifically welcome the public watching us through the Live Broadcast. The Live Broadcast will run for the period of our Open Business but will end just before we move into Confidential Business. I let you know before this happens.

Just some housekeeping before we commence. Can I remind you:-

- If you have joined the meeting remotely please keep your audio on mute unless invited to speak and then turn it off when finished speaking
- Keep your video on at all times, unless you have bandwidth or internet connection issues, where you are advised to try turning your video off
- If you wish to speak please raise your hand in the meeting or on screen and keep raised until observed by an Officer or myself
- Should we need to take a vote this evening I will ask each member to confirm whether they are for or against the proposal or abstaining
- When invited to speak please introduce yourself by name to the meeting
- For any member attending remotely, if you declare an interest in an item, please turn off your video and keep your audio on mute for the duration of the item
- If referring to a specific report please reference the report, page or slide being referred to
- Lastly, I remind the public and press that taking photographs of proceedings or using any means to enable anyone not present to see or hear proceedings, or making a simultaneous oral report of the proceedings are not permitted

Thank you and we will now move to the first item on the agenda

Report on	Lands at Altmore/ Cappagh Update
Date of Meeting	16 th March 2023
Reporting Officer	Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing
Contact Officer	Anne Reid, Recreation & Countryside Officer

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To update Council on the current position regarding the proposed development of publically owned lands at Altmore/Cappagh.
2.0	Background
2.1	Previously in February 2021 (minute ref: D034/21) Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI) were appointed to carry out Scoping Studies on Dunmoyle, Altmore and Drumcairne Forest.
2.2	In September 2021 (minute ref: D154/21) the Scoping Studies were adopted by Council and permission granted to procure and appoint suitably qualified Integrated Consultancy and Supply Teams (ICT and IST) to develop all necessary designs, specifications, procurement documentation and project manage agreed schemes associated to Drumcairne, Altmore and Dunmoyle Forests, subject to available funding.
2.3	In September 2022 (minute ref: D135/22) permission was granted to accept the letter of offer from NIEA and appoint a suitably qualified personnel/company to carry out a detailed Master Plan of the site.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Following the approval as outlined in section 2.23 above, Council officers commenced work on devising a specification for required services and thereafter a procurement quotation exercise was carried out to seek a suitably qualified company to carry out the Master Planning exercise, unfortunately Council were unable to secure a company to undertake this work.

3.2	Due to the time constraints associated with the NIEA Challenge Fund, all funding to be spent by 31 March 2023, and the unsuccessful procurement exercise, Council have been unable to draw down this funding.
3.3	In February 2023 Council were successful in attracting UK Shared Prosperity Funding (minute ref: D039/23) £104,000.00. It was indicated that this money can help release other funding within the Outdoor Recreation Capital Budget.
3.4	Therefore, Council will reissue the procurement exercise and procure a suitable qualified company to carry out the Master Planning of Altmere/Cappagh. This company will be procured with funds now available within the Outdoor Recreation Capital Budget.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: It is anticipated that the financial cost to be in the region of £40,000 - £50,000. Using budget within the Outdoor Recreation Capital Budget.
	Human: There are no additional Council human resources implications associated with this project.
	Risk Management: Considered in line with relevant policies and procedures as part of the tendering exercise and in the appointment of personnel.
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: Considered in line with Council's policies and procedures.
	Rural Needs Implications: Considered in line with Council's policies and procedures.
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	To note the contents of this report.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	N/A

Report on	1. Coalisland Town Centre Forum Minutes – 16.11.22 2. Tourism Development Group Minutes – 11.11.22
Date of Meeting	16 March 2023
Reporting Officer	Assistant Director of Economy, Tourism and Strategic Programmes

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To provide Members with an update on key activities as detailed below.
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>Coalisland Town Centre Forum Minutes – 16.11.22</p> <p>Coalisland Town Centre Forum was established in March 2019. It is a partnership of public, private, community and voluntary sector organisations working together to deliver a range of strategic economic actions to develop Coalisland town.</p>
2.2	<p>Tourism Development Group Minutes 11.11.22</p> <p>The Tourism Development Group (TDG) was established to create a working forum between Council and private sector businesses. The TDG will assist with policy development and support the implementation of Council's Tourism Strategy and associated work to create economic growth, increase visitor numbers and create employment. The group meet on a bi-monthly basis and as per the agreed Terms of Reference all business will be reported to Council through the Development Committee.</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Coalisland Town Centre Forum Minutes – 16.11.22</p> <p>To present the minutes of Coalisland Town Centre Forum held on 16 November 2022 (Appendix 1).</p>
3.2	<p>Tourism Development Group Minutes – 11.11.22</p> <p>To present the minutes of the Tourism Development Group meeting held on 11 November 2022 (Appendix 2). These were subsequently approved at the Tourism Development meeting held on 25 January 2023.</p>

4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial N/A
	Human Officer time
	Risk Management N/A
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments N/A
	Equality & Good Relations Implications N/A
5.0	Recommendation(s)
	It is recommended that Members;
5.1	Coalisland Town Centre Forum Minutes – 16.11.22 Note minutes of Coalisland Town Centre Forum held on 16 November 2022.
5.2	Tourism Development Group Minutes – 11.11.22 Note minutes of Tourism Development Group held on 11 November 2022.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Appendix 1 – Minutes of Coalisland Town Centre Forum – 16.11.22 Appendix 2 – Minutes of Tourism Development Group – 11.11.22



Minutes of Coalisland Town Centre Forum Meeting

Wednesday 16th November 2022 at 5.30pm

Microsoft Teams

Present

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. Cllr Niamh Doris | Mid Ulster District Council (Chair) |
| 2. Cllr Joe O'Neill | Mid Ulster District Council |
| 3. Cllr Malachy Quinn | Mid Ulster District Council |
| 4. Cllr Niall McAleer | Mid Ulster District Council |
| 5. Francie Molloy MP | Coalisland Residents & Community Forum |
| 6. Sharon McGowan | Department for Communities |
| 7. Patricia Toner | Sole Sister |

In Attendance

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| 8. Colin McKenna | Mid Ulster District Council |
| 9. Catherine Fox | Mid Ulster District Council |
| 10. Annette McGahan | Mid Ulster District Council |
| 11. Emma Hughes | Mid Ulster District Council |
| 12. Johnny McNeill | Mid Ulster District Council |

	DISCUSSION	
1.	Apologies	
	Cllr Dan Kerr	Mid Ulster District Council
	Cllr Robert Colvin	Mid Ulster District Council
	Adrian McCreesh	Mid Ulster District Council
	Fiona McKeown	Mid Ulster District Council
	Michael McGibbon	Mid Ulster District Council
	Raymond Lowry	Mid Ulster District Council
	Seamus Warnock	Mid Ulster District Council
	Ursula Marshall	Mid Ulster Disability Forum

	Aedamar McCrossan John Paul McCartan Avril Sharkey Lesley Maxwell Brian O'Neill Raymond O'Neill Dermot McGirr Declan Dorrity	PSNI PSNI Department for Communities Department for Infrastructure Coalisland Credit Union Eden Blooms Translink The Venue/The Beer Shed
2.	Cllr Doris, the Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
3.	Minutes of Previous Meeting – Monday 7th February 2022 Proposed by F Molloy Seconded by Cllr N Doris and agreed: The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 7 th February 2022 were a true and accurate record of proceedings.	
4.	Matters Arising from Previous Meeting – Monday 7th February 2022 There were no matters arising.	
5.	Coalisland Project Updates - C Fox updated Members and shared photos <i>Coalisland Public Realm</i> is nearing final completion with minor snagging to be undertaken. C Fox shared photos of the completed works. A follow up walkabout is planned for the next few weeks before it will be formally handed over to DfI. <i>PEACE IV Shared Spaces Project</i> has been completed with the amphitheatre seating, benches and lighting at the start of the Canal all installed. The awnings in the seating area have been taken down by MUDC Properties to be stored away for the winter. Area has seen wide usage. There will be a tree planting ceremony taking place on Thursday 17 th November 2022 with 4 local schools planting trees at the start of the path. <i>El Scheme</i> – all capital works have been completed bar some snagging.	

F Molloy and Cllr M Quinn offered congratulations for all the works that have been completed.

Gortgonis

Cllr N Doris wanted it noted that the information in relation to the withdrawal of funding for Gortgonis works are incorrect. There are no further updates in relation to the proposed works, Neighbourhood Renewal funding is for a hub only. She also suggested a meeting between Council and relevant bodies to discuss further.

Action: C Fox to liaise with C Linney in relation to organising a meeting with local representatives to discuss update on Gortgonis.

Brand Development

There has been a positive reception to the Coalisland brand so far with merchandise being distributed at the Coalisland Summer Bash. Merchandise was also distributed to local schools in June and were received well.

There is a bag drop planned for the week commencing 5th December 2022 to local retailers. C Fox suggested having a few retailers on board that could act as collection points for Coalisland merchandise.

Action: Bags to be delivered to the Sinn Fein office and to Cllr M Quinn.

P Toner asked if it is possible to sell the Coalisland bags if the current supply runs out. C Fox said there are 5,000 bags and would address how supply is at next meeting. Any further purchasing of bags would depend on budget availability.

F Molloy proposed that the Coalisland brand could be used for Christmas cards next year.

Festive Lighting

The new Christmas lights and Christmas tree will be switched on Sunday 4th December 2022. F Molloy asked about the current metal tree – C Fox informed that it is to be erected this week however due to its condition and advice from MUDC Building Maintenance, this will be the last year it will be used.

	<p>Mid Ulster Gift Card</p> <p>C Fox updated Members with the Programme Summary Report for period 8th November 2021 until 31st October 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total No. of businesses registered to date – 206 • Value of Gift Cards funded - £25,655 • Cards activated – 799 <p>Events</p> <p>A successful Coalisland Summer Event was held on the Friday 24th June 2022 with merchandise distributed at the event. Next year the event will be held in its original location of opposite Newell Stores in the civic area.</p> <p>The Halloween Event took place on the Monday 31st October 2022 and was, as always, a successful night despite the weather conditions.</p> <p>Coalisland Christmas Lights switch on, in conjunction with Craic Theatre, will take place Sunday 4th December 2022 in Cornmill Car Park from 5.00pm with switch on of lights at approximately 6.50pm. The new Christmas Tree and Christmas street lighting decorations will be in place in advance of the switch on.</p> <p>Cllr M Quinn put forward a suggestion for Coalisland to host an International Food Festival next year, similar to Cookstown's Continental Market but offer a different approach such as bringing in Lough Neagh Artisans. C Fox advised that she would liaise with the Tourism department to determine possible market providers. At present, there was not a budget through Council for a food festival but there were opportunities for private providers to use Coalisland as a location in the future.</p> <p>Action: C Fox to liaise with the Tourism department to determine possible market providers.</p>
6.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Cllr M Quinn raised a question in relation to the resurfacing of the DfI roads.</p> <p>Cllr M Quinn also raised the issue regarding the bridge crossing from the Canal towpath over to Upper-cut coffee shop. C Fox said that Council could not be seen to promote one business but suggested that an alternative could be that local companies could design and install and she would check with R Lowry and K Gordon.</p>

	<p>Action: C Fox to liaise with R Lowry and K Gordon re bridge on Canal towpath</p> <p>S McGowan asked if it is possible to organise an in-person meeting between Council (T Scullion) and Councillors in the new year in relation to land issues.</p> <p>Action: Request to Terry Scullion for an in-person meeting with DfC and Councillors.</p> <p>P Toner asked if it would be possible to have more social media promotion in the Town. C Fox informed that whilst Council cannot be seen to favour particular businesses, all marketing is completed at key periods throughout the year e.g. Christmas shopping, with key shop local messaging.</p> <p>Cllr M Quinn raised the point in relation to the Coalisland town boundary and the exclusion of key businesses e.g. the Enterprise Centre. Cllr M Quinn highlighted that there needs to be a strategic response in relation to this area and should be reviewed through the local development plans for the Town.</p> <p>Action: Strategic response required from all Members in relation to Town Centre Boundaries</p> <p>Cllr N Doris proposed that future meetings should be held bimonthly to which all agreed Cllr M Quinn asked if a meeting could be held in early January 2023.</p> <p>Action: Invitations to the next meeting to be issued this week (once a date has been confirmed).</p> <p>C McKenna informed members that C Fox will be leaving her Regeneration Manager's post in December 2022 and commended her for her commitment and hard work during her 5 years in the job. Members offered their best wishes to her in her new role.</p> <p>Meeting ended at 6.25pm</p>
7.	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>Monday 16th January 2023 at 5.30pm on MS Teams</p>

MID ULSTER TOURISM DEVELOPMENT GROUP MINUTES
Friday 11th November 2022 at 10am via Zoom

Present

Cllr Frances Burton	Mid Ulster District Council (Chair of TDG)
Mary McKeown	Mid Ulster District Council
Charmain Bell	Mid Ulster District Council
Allison O'Keefe	Mid Ulster District Council
Grace Booth	Mid Ulster District Council
Norman Bell	Visitor Attraction
Richard Mulholland	Hospitality
Cathy O'Neill	Hospitality
Dermot Friel	Hospitality
Cllr Walter Cuddy	Mid Ulster District Council
Cllr Martin Kearney	Mid Ulster District Council
Cllr Sean Clarke	Mid Ulster District Council

	DISCUSSION	ACTIONS
	<p>Welcome Councillor F Burton chaired the meeting and welcomed all present.</p> <p>Cllr F Burton spoke about the Mid Ulster Business Excellence Awards that took place in The Corick House Hotel on 10th November. She congratulated all the businesses who were nominated.</p> <p>Cllr F Burton congratulated D Friel who won business person of the year and mentioned how the Royal Hotel, Cookstown & The Hungry Goat Restaurant in Dyan had won awards. Cllr F Burton made a suggestion of writing to the businesses and acknowledging them for their awards.</p> <p>Apologies Fiona McKeown Mid Ulster District Council Genevieve Bell Mid Ulster District Council Brian McCormick Mid Ulster District Council Anne Reid Mid Ulster District Council Martha Beattie Mid Ulster District Council Tanya Purvis South West College Martin Graham Tourism NI Claire Doherty An Carn</p>	

1.	Minutes of Meeting held on 7th September 2022 Minutes approved. <i>Proposed: N Bell Seconded: D Friel</i>	
2.	Matters Arising N/A	
3.	Industry Update Ballyscullion Park R Mulholland said that weddings have picked up with 76 last year and approx. 60 wedding expected this year. The focus is on promoting the cottages and a few Air bnb's. R Mulholland said they would be expected 25 tours next year. R Mulholland also mentioned the difficulties facing the industry due to rising interest rates and the economy. Friel's Bar & Restaurant D Friel said the motorhome park has now been passed for 6 motor homes & they are liaising with the Council Planning Department to increase this to 12 motorhomes. D Friel said they had added on a shower block with full disabled access. Friel's are working with The Causeway Coast and Glens. The Famine and Folklore Project has reached the architectural stage and this is going out to tender next week with the work planned to commence in January or February 2023. D Friel discussed how Friel's had a successful summer with Tours, commenting that the last 5 tour groups each had different tour operators. They had received 12 requests from ITOA. The Christmas markets in Swatragh are commencing next week & D Friel thanked Council for support with the stalls. 10 stalls have already sold. D Friel commented on how this has helped launch Christmas in the village. They received great feedback from the Great Days Out Event with 6/7 leads from this event. D Friel attended World Travel Market on Monday 7 th November and said this was a fantastic opportunity to network with other businesses. Killymoon Castle N Bell mentioned bookings for the Christmas candle light suppers and how the WW2 Museum was doing well. They have	

4.	<p>decided to leave tours until after Christmas. They are experiencing smaller tour groups of approx. 25 -30 people. This includes Women's groups and Local History groups.</p> <p>N Bell praised the success of the Great Days Out Event. N Bell suggested an improvement for the future would be to encourage a wider district to attend the next event.</p> <p>Cllr F burton acknowledged M McGee's Giant Spirit Award and congratulated Seamus Heaney HomePlace on winning the innovation award.</p> <p>Business Engagement Programme – M McKeown</p> <p>M McKeown said there is a new Business Engagement Officer starting on Monday 14th November. They have a great background in tourism, having previously attended trade shows and having worked closely with the tourism department in Council.</p> <p>M McKeown thanked businesses for their kind words.</p> <p>M McKeown mentioned she attends Tourism NI marketing meetings every month.</p> <p>M McKeown acknowledged the success of the Great Days Out event which had 30 exhibitors and over 50 group organisers who attended. M McKeown said going forward these events should be open to free independent travellers.</p> <p>M McKeown provided an update on the Social Media Workshops. Each workshop has received a great number of bookings and keen interest from the industry. Participants provided great feedback on the facilitator. M McKeown mentioned the upcoming workshops next week and encouraged the businesses to attend.</p> <p>M McKeown also mentioned the last Social Media Workshop which is happening on 17th January in The Glenavon House Hotel. This will focus on LinkedIn and Social Video Content. This has been promoted through the tourism email database, e-zine and Whatsapp group.</p> <p>Two Officers from The Tourism Department will be attending ITOA on Thursday 17th November 2022.</p> <p>World Travel Market</p> <p>C Bell provided an update, stating that this was the first in person event since 2019. World Travel Market took place on Monday 7th November & Tuesday 8th November. Tour operates are keen on visiting Seamus Heaney open ground, The</p>	
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	<p>Banquet and the OM night time experiences. There is an interest in accommodation in Mid Ulster.</p> <p>C Bell is networking with tour operators. Friel's Famine story has been well received, Lough Neagh Stories attended with Lough Neagh tours.</p> <p>EF Tours have contacted Friels and Walsh's hotel. There is interest in The Glenavon Hotel and River Bann tours.</p> <p>C Bell mentioned their work with Rory's Travel Club. She advised that there may be opportunity for him to work with accommodation in Mid Ulster. They are In the process of building an APP to offer discounted rates directly to customer. This will help increase bed stays in Mid Ulster.</p> <p>M McKeown stated that staff from the tourism department would be attending Meet the buyer again in March 2023. There will be a focus on developing further FAM trips.</p> <p>The tourism department will be attending the Holiday World Show in Dublin and trade will be invited down to book a stand.</p> <p>C Bell has started to engage with the accommodation sector through an accommodation webinar hosted by Tourism NI.</p> <p>N Bell asked 'How did Mid Ulster Council do at the event compared to other Councils?'</p> <p>M McKeown said she was confident with our work. We have developed contacts with Game of Thrones and other districts are coming to Mid Ulster for advice. Tour operators have greater interest in coming up North for tours. There will be a focus on pushing accommodation in Mid Ulster.</p> <p>M McKeown also commented on the growing relationship Mid Ulster has with Visit Derry.</p> <p>D Friel said Visit Derry is a great link for Mid Ulster Tourism. He advised the department should be a member of Visit Derry.</p> <p>Cllr F Burton stated how she is looking forward to the new Business Support Officer starting to build strong relationships across the district.</p>	
5.	<p>Cluster Reports</p>	
5.1	<p>Seamus Heaney Cluster – C Bell</p> <p>C Bell mentioned that the cluster brand had now become established and was launched at The World Travel Market. The</p>	

	<p>cluster has been rebranded as “Loughinsholin”. Glenn from McCadden is to present the new branding to members at the next Tourism Development Group Meeting.</p>	
5.2	<p>Clogher Valley – M McKeown As read. Work is underway with the consultant to complete phase one of the project.</p>	
5.3	<p>Archaeology, History & Heritage – M McKeown As read. M McKeown mentioned the success of Great Days Out and our Hidden Heritage Tours. The Heritage Strategy Engagement workshop on 10th November helped to showcase Mid Ulster heritage.</p> <p>M McKeown thanked Killymoon castle for their hospitality during the workshop. H McLaughlin from The Rural Centre is leading the Heritage strategy in collaboration with Council. The aim is to have the strategy developed by next year 2023.</p>	
5.4	<p>Outdoor Activities – A O’Keefe A O’Keefe said the first walking event was very successful. A O’Keefe advised that they hope to run the event again next year and entice ROI market to attend, budget permitting.</p>	
6.	<p>Visitor Monitoring Results – M McKeown As read. M McKeown briefly outlined the visitor figures,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beaghmore up 2000 visitors between June and September • Tullyhogue Fort - 500 visitors, • Davagh – 1000 visitors • Ballyronan Marina (monitor reinstalled) • Springhill house – 5000 visitors • Walled garden visitor figures were slightly down • Lough Fea there were more cars than walkers (they use carpark for hillwalking to Slieve Gallion) • Fivemiletown - monitor installed last year • Moyola river figures were the same as last year • US. Grants Homestead had the same figures • Pomeroy Forest figures were down by 40, • Washingbay, An Carn, Knockmanny and Blessingbourne visitor figures remain the same • Coalisland canal visitor numbers are up by 5000 • Solar walk visitor numbers are approx. 10,000. 	

7.	<p>Brown Signage – M McKeown</p> <p>M McKeown provided an update on the progress of the Brown Signage audit. M McKeown said there has been good progress made from the last meeting, the audit is moving forward and MUDC will be appointing an external auditor to carry out the signage audit.</p> <p>There will be an expression of interest sent to businesses that wish to apply, January / February. A letter signed by the Council Chair will be sent letter to review the current signage policy.</p> <p>Council received a letter from Transport NI which stated they have no audit or data on current signage. Councillor S Clarke echoed the need for this brown signage audit with Councillor M Kearney in agreement.</p>	
8.	<p>Autumn Marketing Campaign Update</p> <p>M McKeown stated that Tourism have a smaller budget this year. The autumn marketing campaign has been very successful.</p> <p>C Bell had pulled together competitions for Cool FM running from 1st – 7th November. For this campaign they used existing content. M McKeown advised they were waiting on Cool FM to announce the competition winners.</p> <p>The new spring marketing campaign will be launched in March 2023, with a key focus on advertising on the Cool FM Breakfast show targeting the family market. There will be longevity with the advert and competition.</p> <p>The campaign ran over Halloween on 31st October with an increase in people looking for accommodation, places to eat and autumn offers.</p> <p>The competitions ran from 31st October to 3rd November using organic social media.</p> <p>M McKeown stated she would like to shoot and use new video content for the Spring Marketing Campaign. M McKeown proposed the idea of the tagline 'Open for business.'</p> <p>Any other Business</p> <p>M McKeown mentioned the Slaibh Beagh project – report under cluster groups. Monaghan County Council, Fermanagh Omagh</p>	

1. Seamus Heaney Cluster – C Bell

The cluster met on Thursday 27th October in Ardtara house, and is progressing well with their Phase 2 Invest NI Collaborative Growth Programme with Lara Goodhall. Subgroups meetings have taken place for each of the four work streams:

Governance:

The group are in the final stages of establishing governance documents such as Memorandum of Understanding covering membership criteria, geographic remit of the cluster, fees, etc. A final draft will be presented to the full cluster group at the next meeting on the 24th November.

Marketing and Communications:

The group are developing the strategic marketing plan and have met to discuss key actions, a final draft will be presented at the next full cluster meeting.

An area of priority is the new brand. Final four brand options were presented to the full cluster group. A vote took place with all members, and a final decision has been made on the name. This will allow the designers to create the final artwork for the new brand. Glenn from McCadden can present the new brand at the next Tourism Development Group meeting.

The new brand will be launched at World Travel Market (WTM) with a PR campaign working along with Tourism NI and Tourism Ireland. Lara assisted several of the cluster members with applications to the Mid Ulster Business Awards. Friel's, Glenshane Country Farm, Ballyscullion House and River Bann Tours have all been shortlisted.

Business Development:

Engagement has taken place with cluster members to develop collaborative itineraries which can be presented as sales meetings. Lara's team have secured several appointments with key tour operators at WTM to promote the cluster. Lara will be attending ITOA on the 17th November.

A key focus is securing FAM Trips with key tour operators. Crafted Ireland FAM took place on Saturday 1st October, with positive feedback.

Skills Development:

Initial training sessions are planned to include Digital Marketing Training, Industry Insights and Tourism NI –Leaner Greener Tourism.

2. Clogher Valley Cluster – G Bell

A new Clogher Valley Cluster collaborative group has been developed with a strong focus on tourism and economic growth in the Clogher Valley area with a minimum of 4 SMEs.

The Cluster has appointed Runda Hospitality and Tourism Solutions Consultants to facilitate and scope out collective opportunities for the SME businesses over the next 6 months, with completion due by 31st March 2023. This programme focusses on the development of a strategic approach to maximising tourism and business

opportunities and associated economic growth within the Clogher Valley area of Co. Tyrone.

The CVTC has received Phase 1 support via the Invest NI Collaborative Growth Programme and Mid Ulster Council.

Key cornerstones of this tourism-development focused programme will include: Training and mentoring supports across the following core topics/pillars:

- Communications and branding
- Product development
- Sustainability
- Commercial strategies and skills

The Clogher Valley Cluster membership includes:

1. Todds Leap
2. Blessingbourne Estate
3. Corick House Hotel & Spa
4. The Valley Hotel, Fivemiletown
5. St. Macartan's Forth Chapel, Augher

The SMEs have embraced a cluster approach, which will allow them to increase productivity, be more innovative and help maximise key strengths to collectively grow. The businesses will work in partnership with Runda to undertake a scoping study, which will culminate in the development of a strategic tourism product and plan, with the end goal of maximising economic growth and job creation in the Clogher Valley area.

Through collective ideas generation, prioritisation of common goals, understanding how each business can contribute to a shared vision and working to develop saleable experiences for the area, this cluster will act as strong economic driver. Further, they will identify strengths and skills gaps in their respective organisations and work to ensure capacity in key areas e.g. marketing/finance to deliver and grow individual and collective tourism products.

Through this cluster the groups ambition is to identify and market this unique region, that is so accessible, replete with outdoor, heritage and tourism assets and upsell other hospitality and leisure opportunities as part of the wider product. Each cluster business will focus on marketing their own unique product whilst collectively working with other businesses within the cluster to develop new packages and programmes, market their product as an add-on, scope out new markets and market segments while encouraging visitors to spend more time and money in the area.

3. Archaeology, History & Heritage Cluster – G Bell

Hidden Heritage Tours 2022

The 2022 Hidden Heritage tours proved to be extremely successful, allowing visitors the opportunity to sample unique visitor experiences whereby they could step back in time and discover what's on their doorstep. An additional tour, Poetry

and Prayer was included within the series. Feedback has been excellent for all Hidden Heritage tours. Officers are now planning next year's series of tours;

1. **Killymoon Castle All-American WW2 Tour, Saturday 18th June 2022, 9.30am -2.30pm** This tour was fully booked and this new experience helped raise awareness and resulted in Killymoon being able to deliver additional WW2 tours during the rest of the summer.
2. **A Village of Ages** – A historical walking tour of Donaghmore Village was scheduled for Saturday 2nd July 2022, however the date was changed to Saturday 17th September to secure living history actors. Unfortunately this was cancelled at short notice as it coincided with the official mourning period of Queen Elizabeth II. This tour will now take place in the 2023 series.
3. **Poetry and Prayers – a Spiritual Tour around Lough Neagh, Thursday 7th July, 1.30pm to 6.00pm**
Another fully booked tour and it's success has resulted in securing further bookings for the tour guides who devised this unique experience.
4. **The Emigrant's Walk, Maghera, Saturday 8th October, 9.30am – 3.15pm**
The last of the hidden heritage took place with Cathy O'Neill who led the group up Carntogher Mountain, following in the footsteps of our ancestors, where the views stretched across the hills.

Great Days Out Fair, 2022

Great Days Out event took place in the Glenavon Hotel on 19th October. The event showcased the vast array of tourism businesses and experiences across the Mid Ulster District which can offer a range of great day trip experiences and overnight stays.

30 Mid Ulster tourism businesses highlighted their experiences at the Fair and approximately 50 group organisers attended. The feedback has been very positive with some exhibitors securing group bookings for 2023.

Heritage Strategy Engagement Workshop – Thursday 10th November

The Rural Centre, in partnership with Mid Ulster District Council has conducted research in the form of a survey on how we can promote our built, natural and cultural heritage to encourage more people to engage with these heritage assets and foster greater community/visitor engagement. The findings of this survey and the way forward will be discussed at an engagement workshop in Killymoon Castle on Thursday 10th November.

4. Outdoor Cluster – A O'Keefe

The Sperrins Walking programme was attended by 85 participants over the weekend of 24th and 25th September. Weather was perfect over the weekend and provided a perfect opportunity for drone footage and photography.

Both challenging walks, Slieve Gallion on Saturday and Moydamlaght to Glenshane on the Sunday proved most popular, with the Slieve Gallion walk selling out quite quickly. The Davagh walk was also well attended and included the new Solar Walk from OM to Beaghmore. Going forward there may be an opportunity to provide two Slieve Gallion walks on both days when planning next year's programme.

Participants were asked to complete a short Survey Monkey and a short synopsis of the results from those who completed the survey were:

- Majority of participants travelled within 20 mile radius
- Some participants travelled within 20 mile to 50 mile radius
- Small number of participants travelled between 50 mile and 100 mile radius
- All were pleased with tour guiding services provided
- From the small number surveyed caravan and camping was the main accommodation booked
- Average spend between £20 - £100
- All surveyed wish to be informed of future events

Each of the Councils met with Sperrins Partnership to review this year's programme and manage expectations for next year. Subject to budgets, we will meet with the other 3 Councils and Sperrins Partnership in January to begin planning another walking programme for September 23.

5. Visitor Monitoring Results – M McKeown

DISTRICT WIDE MONITORING RESULTS 2022					
Pedestrian Counters unless otherwise stated	Jan-March	April-June	July-Sep	Oct - Dec	TOTAL
Beaghmore Stone Circles	6063	9809	13639		
Tullaghoge Fort	3861	3744	4342		
Davagh Car Park (car)	3562	3875	4909		
Davagh Pump Track	1493	1656	1899		
Davagh Forest	2503	2706	3727		
Davagh Red Trail	1948	1207	1156		
Ballyronan Marina (car)	46848	84089	88752		
Springhill House	15435	16509	17372		
Wellbrook Beetling Mill (car)	damaged	damaged	damaged		
Maghera Walled Garden	closed	5899	5428		

Lough Fea Pedestrian	20027	10693	11364		
Main Car Park	13453	17292	25009		
Dungannon Park Car Park (car)	94559	124631	133707		
Roundlake Fivemiletown	11650	14043	13722		
Seamus Heaney HomePlace	10226	14131	7329**		
Seamus Heaney Moyola River	4261	7966	7336		
Seamus Heaney Long Point Wood	12574	23664	23501		
Lissan House	3973	5565	5965		
US Grant Ancestral Homestead	824	1263	1228		
Pomeroy Forest	3534	4100	4321		
Washingbay	39158	27090	24863		
An Carn	1476	1748	1543		
Knockmany Forest	19499	24341	13550		
Blessingbourne FMBT	502	666	796		
Portglenone Riverside Walk	4775	17667	8952		
Iniscarn Forest	2477	4143	3020		
Coalisland Canal	4329	6904	11867		
Beaghmore Solar Walk	Installed 12.01.22 6195	6121	10573		

** Upstairs counter not working for 25 July to 31 August

