

Report on	1. Mid Ulster Economic Development Action Plan 2021/22 2. Mid Ulster Traders Recovery Action Plan 3. Rural Micro Business Development Scheme 21/22
Date of Meeting	13 May 2021
Reporting Officer	Fiona McKeown, Head of Economic Development

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>Mid Ulster Economic Development Action Plan 2021/22 Regeneration, revitalisation and business support are key priorities identified in the Economic Development Plan 2015/2020. To reflect such priorities, the Mid Ulster Economic Development Action Plan 2021/22 highlights a variety of key activities for our businesses, towns and villages.</p>
2.2	<p>Mid Ulster Traders Recovery Action Plan Following the series of Trader engagements, which took place across the five towns within Mid Ulster, the three Regeneration Managers have developed an action plan based on further support and initiatives Traders would welcome from the Council over a 4-month period as they re-open after the lockdown.</p>
2.3	<p>Rural Micro Business Development Scheme 21/22 The Rural Micro Business Development Scheme funded through DAERA's Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation programme (TRPSI) will run again in 21/22 subject to approval of a business case and budget within the Department. July 21 has been targeted as a potential opening date for this year's scheme.</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Mid Ulster Economic Development Action Plan 2021/22 The Action Plan aims to prioritise the development of a comprehensive range of activities, programmes and support across Mid Ulster during the 2021/22 financial year. The Mid Ulster Economic Development Action Plan 2021/22 lists initiatives under the following thematic headings as set out below (Appendix 1):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Marketing & Promotion 2. Business Support & Investment (Including Rural) 3. Events 4. Physical Regeneration & Improving Infrastructure.

	<p>5. Business Start and Entrepreneurship</p> <p>6. Business Sustainability and Growth</p> <p>7. Business Information Service</p> <p>8. Supporting Employability and Skills</p> <p>9. Business Events</p> <p>10. Supporting cross border initiatives</p> <p>11. Renewable Energies / Strategic Collaborations</p> <p>12. Strategic Projects</p> <p>13. Supporting skills and apprenticeships</p> <p>14. Mid Ulster LEADER RDP Programme 2016-2020.</p>
3.2	<p>Mid Ulster Traders Recovery Action Plan</p> <p>Following a series of meetings with Mid Ulster Traders during the week commencing the 7th March 2021, an Action Plan has been developed based on the discussions at these meetings. The following key initiatives summarise the action plan (Appendix 2):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing Initiatives • Mid Ulster Gift Card/Voucher Scheme • Mid Ulster Traders Recovery Programme • Mid Ulster Town & Village Spruce Up Scheme
3.3	<p>Rural Micro Business Development Scheme 21/22</p> <p>21/22 will be the third year of the Rural Micro Business Development Scheme. The 20/21 Scheme was heavily oversubscribed with 333 applications received seeking grant in excess of £1m for an initial allocation of £66,000. Additional funding was allocated by DAERA which increased the allocation significantly to over £500,000.</p> <p>Based on early indications from DAERA, the overall allocation across all Council areas in NI will be £1m in project funding for 21/22. The exact allocation for MUDC is to be confirmed but may sit within the region of £140-£170k with an administration budget of 10% of the allocation awarded.</p> <p>The administration percentage has reduced from 15% in last year's scheme to 10% for 21/22. In last year's scheme, administration was fixed against the initial allocation of £66k however for this year's scheme administration is linked to project spend therefore should the initial allocation increase, so too will the administration budget available.</p> <p>There will be further robust discussions with DAERA regarding delivery of future funding initiatives to ensure that resource funding is commensurate with the level of staff time needed for delivery without placing further pressure on Council resources.</p> <p>It is likely that 21/22 will again see a high level of interest in this scheme therefore grant requested will outstrip grant available to award. In the event that initial funding allocations are not increased to accommodate demand it may be necessary to adopt a different approach to assessment of applications such as assessment by date and time order received until funding is fully committed to manage the process more efficiently. This will be kept under review but will be reflected within scheme guidance notes for applicants.</p>

	Preparation of a joint business plan by the Council areas participating in this year's scheme will commence shortly for submission to DAERA.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	<p>Financial:</p> <p>Mid Ulster Economic Development Action Plan 2021/22– Provision has been made within the 2021/22 Economic Development Budget.</p> <p>Mid Ulster Traders Recovery Action Plan To be delivered within existing Economic Development Budget.</p> <p>Rural Micro Business Development Scheme 21/22 Grant aid to be provided by DAERA subject to approval of business case. An administration budget of 10% of the funding allocation will be available to Council.</p>
	<p>Human: Officer Time</p> <p>Mid Ulster Economic Development Action Plan 2021/22 Officers time</p> <p>Mid Ulster Traders Recovery Action Plan Officers time</p> <p>Rural Micro Business Development Scheme 21/22 Officers time</p>
	<p>Risk Management:</p> <p>Mid Ulster Economic Development Action Plan 2021/22 Council policies and procedures will be adhered to in the roll out of this plan</p> <p>Mid Ulster Traders Recovery Action Plan Council policies and procedures will be adhered to in the roll out of this plan</p>
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	<p>Equality & Good Relations Implications:</p> <p>Mid Ulster Economic Development Action Plan 2021/22 Equality and Good Relations screening will be carried out prior of commencement of the Scheme.</p> <p>Mid Ulster Traders Recovery Action Plan Equality and Good Relations screening will be carried out prior of commencement of the Scheme.</p> <p>Rural Micro Business Development Scheme Equality and Good Relations screening will be carried out prior of commencement of the Scheme.</p>

	<p>Rural Needs Implications:</p> <p>Rural Micro Business Development Scheme Screening will be carried out prior of commencement of the Scheme.</p>
5.0	Recommendation(s)
	<p>It is recommended that Members:-</p> <p>5.1 Mid Ulster Economic Development Action Plan 2021/22 To approve those projects and costs within the Economic Development Action Plan for 2021/22.</p> <p>5.2 Mid Ulster Traders Recovery Action Plan Approve Mid Ulster Traders Recovery Action Plan</p> <p>5.3 Rural Micro Business Development Scheme Approve participation of MUDC in the 2021/22 Rural Micro Business Development Scheme (subject to approval of funding from DAERA)</p>
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	<p>Appendix 1 - Mid Ulster Economic Development Action Plan 2021/22</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Mid Ulster Traders Recovery Action Plan</p>