

Report on	1) Invest NI Letter of Offer: Digital First Programme 2) NI Women's Enterprise Challenge Proposal 2018- 21 3) Coalisland Town Centre Forum 4) Creative Shops Project Magherafelt 5) Launch of 'Mid Ulster Skills Report and Action Plan 2018-21' 6) Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) Challenge Fund 7) Business Improvement District Feasibility Study
Date of Meeting	November 2018
Reporting Officer	Adrian McCreesh, Director of Business & Communities
Contact 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 above.
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>Invest NI Letter of Offer: Digital First Programme</p> <p>In May 2018, Members approved the submission of 4 applications from the Council to the ERDF Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme for the delivery of 4 business support programmes (2018-22). This included a 'Digital First Programme', at a total cost of up to £269,700 (including expenses and excluding vat), with grant aid of 80%.</p> <p>The Digital First Programme seeks to develop the digital capacity of 150 businesses by December 2022 through the provision of support to micro and small businesses including a Digital Audit and up to 4 days' support. Nine Digital Seminars will also be included as part of the Programme and will be available to all micro and small businesses across Mid Ulster. The Programme's performance indicators outlined in the Letter of Offer include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council will use all reasonable endeavours to create at least 225 jobs by November 2023 ▪ Council will use all reasonable endeavours to generate at least 20 quality referrals to Invest NI
2.2	<p>NI Women's Enterprise Challenge Proposal 2018- 21</p> <p>In March 2018, Council approved a proposal from Women in Business to all 11 Councils for the delivery of a three-year collaborative regional programme between Women in Business, Invest NI and the 11 Councils to increase female entrepreneurship. NI Women's Enterprise Challenge (NIWEC) is a proposed collaboration resulting from a unique situation: an American entrepreneur originally from NI, impressed with the efforts of Women in Business to encourage new entrepreneurs, made a substantial financial commitment (£200,000) towards the development of other support initiatives. Invest NI then approached the councils to consider whether they, along with Invest NI, committing £200,000 could consider a partnership approach to supporting female entrepreneurship.</p>

	<p>The overall target participants is 600 women per year. Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council will act as Lead Council on behalf of the 11 Councils.</p>
2.3	<p>Coalisland Town Centre Forum Coalisland Town Centre Forum is being established along similar lines to the Forums / Partnerships already operating in Cookstown, Dungannon, Magherafelt and recently Maghera. The Forum will be a strategic body that will provide advice and guidance to Strategic Bodies and others regarding the growth of Coalisland Centre.</p> <p>The town centre forum will play a fundamental role working closely with key stakeholders such as Mid Ulster District Council, Neighbourhood Renewal, Coalisland Traders Association, Government Departments, Statutory agencies, local businesses and the community.</p>
2.4	<p>Creative Shops Project Magherafelt The Creative Shops Programme has launched its second three year programme. The programme is run by Big Telly Theatre Company and funded by Esme Fairburn Foundation and Arts Council of Northern Ireland. In June 2018 Members agreed to provide £4,000 towards the development of a Creative Shops Project in Magherafelt.</p>
2.5	<p>Launch of Mid Ulster Skills Report and Action Plan 2018-21 Council and Mid Ulster Skills Forum have completed a Skills Report and Action Plan 2018-21. The key priorities and actions identified have been summarised into an Executive Summary Report. An official launch of the Report and Action Plan was held at Emerson, Cookstown on Monday 15th October 2018.</p>
2.6	<p>Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) Challenge Fund This project will see a fibre link capable of delivering gigabit (1,000 <u>mps</u> per second) connections running between Council buildings which will act as anchor tenants in Dungannon, Cookstown and Maghera. The fibre links will have chambers every 400m approximately that allow commercial providers to access so they can provide FTTP to adjacent premises. Projects must demonstrate that Telecom providers can maximise what has been created which will benefit adjoining areas. Therefore urban and semi urban areas will be the main beneficiaries as opposed to rural areas. The LFFN must be completed by 2021.</p>
2.7	<p>Business Improvement District Feasibility Study One of the actions identified in the Regeneration Action Plan was the development of a Feasibility Study to provide a comprehensive assessment of the potential for developing a Business Improvement District (BID) in each of the five towns and ultimately recommend whether this is a viable proposition for each.</p>
3.0	
3.1	<p>Invest NI Letter of Offer: Digital First Programme Invest NI have approved the Council's Application (at a slightly reduced figure) and issued a Letter of Offer to Council for 80% of the total requested of £268,500 i.e. £214,800. Due to the Programme's value it will be advertised in the OJEU and, as required by Invest NI, the procurement process will be managed by the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD), who will provide advice and guidance to Council Officers during the process. Appendix 1.</p>

3.2 **NI Women's Enterprise Challenge Proposal 2018- 21**
Further to all 11 Councils approving their funding towards the initiative, a Collaborative Agreement has now been produced by Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (Lead Council) for 10 other Councils and Women in Business. Appendix 2.

3.3 **Coalisland Town Centre Forum**
The selection process to recruit members onto the Forum is ongoing. A further report will be taken to Council once all Members of the Forum have been identified and agreed.

3.4 **Creative Shops Project Magherafelt**
A suitable property has been identified on Broad Street to run a creative shops project. Big Telly Theatre Company have engaged an artistic director to take over the shop for 8 weeks from 22 October – 22 December.
During the 8 week period the creative director will meet local people, groups, passers-by, local traders, school children. They develop creative projects specifically for that community. The Craft Collective will be involved with delivery of some of the workshops / initiatives.

3.5 **Launch of Mid Ulster Skills Report and Action Plan 2018-21**
On Monday 15th October 2018 over 70 representatives of local businesses, industry bodies, central government, schools, colleges, MLAs and Council Members attended the official launch of the new Mid Ulster Skills Report and Action Plan 2018-21. The report and its key headlines attracted significant media coverage including features/interviews on BBC Radio Ulster and BBC Newsline.

Feedback from businesses who attended the event has been extremely positive. The Report and Action Plan is now available in either hard copy or can be viewed and downloaded from the Council website:

<https://www.midulstercouncil.org/Business/Mid-Ulster-Skills-Forum>



Michael Deeny -Cogent, Alan Mc Keown-Dunbia, Cllr Sean Mc Peake-Chairman MUDC, Michael Gould -Department for the Economy, Anthony Tohill -Chief Executive MUDC, & Liz Kearns -Emerson

Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) Challenge Fund

<p>3.6</p> <p>3.7</p>	<p>Full Fibre Northern Ireland is the working name for a Council led consortium making a regional application to the Local Full Fibre Network Challenge fund. Councils involved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Newry, Mourne & Down 2. Antrim & Newtownabbey 3. Causeway Coast & Glens 4. Derry City & Strabane 5. Fermanagh & Omagh 6. Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council 7. Mid Ulster 8. Mid & East Antrim <p>Steady progress has been made in developing a regional application. The timetable for presenting to the investment panel is 27th November. Documents will be submitted by w/e 16 November. The consortium is now drafting all estimate costs of projects which will also provide the benefits of the interventions. There will be more detailed discussions with each member shortly. At this stage only outline projects are required to support the bid. The Council group are meeting on 8 November for a run through of the presentation. A first draft will of the Strategic, Management and Commercial cases will forwarded to the DCMS Dialogue team late October for comment.</p> <p>The consortium have begun to engage with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The market players and an update on the same will follow shortly. - DCMS and other organisations to consider best ways that asset reuse could be managed which will help us develop our proposed approach further. - Commercial operators to develop a commercial model for calculation of return on premises passed. - Dfl in respect of road ducting. <p>The consortium will also continue developing the range of intervention types and identify which ones will apply in each council area.</p> <p>3.7 Business Improvement District Feasibility Study NI Bids have been appointed to develop the feasibility study for the five towns which will provide a comprehensive assessment of the existing positions of the 5 town centres, their structure, resources, how they work and the strategic context and consequently its ability to develop a BID. To date a location, partnership review, a financial and boundary review have been carried out for the 5 town centres. The next stage of the project is to carry out consultation and engagement through a number of means with key stakeholders including online surveys, one to one interviews and workshops. This will help to inform the final feasibility study.</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Other Considerations</p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p> <p>Financial: Invest NI Letter of Offer: Digital First Programme Total cost of £268,500 with 80% grant aid (£214,800) over the period to March 2023 approved by Council in June 2018</p> <p>NI Women’s Enterprise Challenge Proposal 2018- 21 Up to £6,162 is available from the economic development budget in 2018/19</p>

	Human: Officer time.
	Risk Management: Invest NI Letter of Offer: Digital First Programme The Digital First Programme is scheduled to deliver digital support to 150 businesses until December 2022. While Invest NI's Letter of Offer commits funding of up to 80% (£214,800), this offer has been issued in line with existing legislation at time of issue. The relevant legislation which will apply post-Brexit is currently not known. Given the potential risks surrounding future EU funding, the Council will include a Clause in the Specification and the Contract to enable the Contract delivery to be reviewed/ ended, should funding be withdrawn or reduced, in a way which will minimise impact on programme beneficiaries.
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Invest NI Letter of Offer: Digital First Programme a) Members to accept Letter of Offer from Invest NI (dated 8 October 2018) for the Digital First Programme offering up to £214,800 (80%) grant towards total programme costs of £268,500. b) Members to approve Officers to work with CPD to procure a suitably qualified organisation(s) to deliver the Digital First Programme at a cost of up to £268,500 (including expenses and excluding vat)
5.2	NI Women's Enterprise Challenge Proposal 2018- 21 Further to the commitment of funding for up to one year initially towards the initiative, members are requested to approve the signing of the Collaborative Agreement with Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Women in Business. Provision for future years to be reviewed on receipt of reports from Women in Business, detailing the performance, outputs and value for money of the initiative in the Mid Ulster District Council area.
5.3	Coalisland Town Centre Forum Members to note progress
5.4	Creative Shops Project Magherafelt Members to note progress
5.5	Launch of Mid Ulster Skills Report and Action Plan 2018-21' To note the official launch of Mid Ulster's new 'Skills Report and Action Plan 2018-21' on Monday 15 th October 2018 at Emerson, Cookstown
5.6	Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) Challenge Fund Members to note progress
5.7	Business Improvement District Feasibility Study Members to note progress

6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix 1 – Letter of Offer from Invest NI: Digital First Programme (8 October 2018)
6.2	Appendix 2 – Collaborative Agreement: Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, NI Women in Business & NI Councils (15 October 2018)