

Report on	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All-Island Strategic Rail Review 2. A5/N2 Cross Border Committee Minutes 19.3.24 and Updated Terms of Reference 3. Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) – Multiply Programme 4. Taste Mid Ulster Food Heritage Events 5. Maghera Regeneration Programme – Town Centre Public Realm 6. Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Achievements 2023/2024
Date of Meeting	13 June 2024
Reporting Officer	Assistant Director of Economic Development, 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>All-Island Strategic Rail Review</p> <p>At a previous meeting of the Development Committee, Members requested an update on the reintroduction of a rail network to Mid Ulster and specifically the All-Island Strategic Rail Review (AISRR) which was announced in 2021. The reintroduction of a rail network to the District has the potential to enhance further economic growth and prosperity for the area.</p>
2.2	<p>A5/N2 Cross Border Committee Minutes (19.3.24) and Updated Terms of Reference</p> <p>The A5/N2 Cross Border Committee was established in 2019 to lobby for the delivery of infrastructure improvements and upgrades to the A5/N2 route from Dublin to the Northwest and serving the border region and Northern Ireland, with a</p>

particular emphasis on projects on the A5/N2 corridor in the border region and Northern Ireland.

There are 5 Councils represented - Derry City and Strabane District Council, Donegal County Council, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, Mid Ulster District Council and Monaghan County Council – each Council nominates up to 4 Members to the Committee.

2.3 **Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) - Multiply Programme**

In October 2021, the UK Government announced “Multiply”, a new scheme to boost numeracy skills, as part of the broader Shared Prosperity Programme. Following this, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), undertook a brief scoping exercise locally, but no allocation was made to Northern Ireland based providers.

During the summer of 2023, DLUHC approached the Department for the Economy (DfE) with a request to lead on developing and managing a portfolio of interventions, as part of the “Multiply” programme, with the following conditions:

- all provision to be completed by March 2025;
- must be numeracy, or numeracy related training;
- only open to adults, over 19 years old; and
- up to level 2 or equivalent, with no qualification outcome required.
- funding for the numeracy element of larger co-funded schemes; and
- funding utilised for existing provision, with an element of re-badging.

To progress the Multiply programme, DfE engaged with the Department of Education and Department for Communities in Northern Ireland, along with exploring what could be put in place with our FE colleges and universities. Following a pause in late autumn of 2023, discussions restarted in early spring 2024 when DLUHC confirmed funding for the programme. Given the tight timescales to design and deliver any interventions, DfE welcomed any opportunities to work in partnership with local government and, as such, have identified LMPs as an ideal vehicle through which we may be able to deliver Multiply in Northern Ireland.

Subsequently, each LMP was asked to indicate which interventions may be deliverable.

Mid Ulster LMP has since received two Letters of Offer from DfE for the Multiply Programme - £50,000 on 29 March 2024 in relation to Staff Costs (**Appendix 4**) and £208,115 on 20 May 2024 for operational costs (**Appendix 5**) and by the powers delegated to the Chief Executive in March 2024, these letters have now been signed and returned.

2.4 **Taste Mid Ulster Food Heritage Events – 2024**

Following the success of the inaugural Taste Mid Ulster event that took place in the village of Moy during March 2024, a second ‘Taste Mid Ulster’ Food Heritage event

<p>2.5</p> <p>2.6</p>	<p>will take place on Saturday 29 June 2024. These events celebrate and showcase Mid Ulster’s food heritage from across the district and are linked to the development of Council’s new Heritage Strategy.</p> <p>Maghera Regeneration Programme – Town Centre Public Realm</p> <p>The Council has successfully secured £9.1m from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' Levelling Up Fund to support the regeneration of Maghera to include a town centre Public Realm Scheme, the redevelopment of the former High School site as a Business Park and the creation of a Wetland Park.</p> <p>The Council has also committed a substantial amount of additional funding to support regeneration, resulting in a total investment of over £10m in Maghera and its surrounding area.</p> <p>Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes Achievements 2023/24</p> <p>A significant volume of Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes have been delivered during the 2023/24 financial year, much of which includes a range of new interventions, as well as continued delivery of existing programmes, to support Mid Ulster businesses and promote the District’s tourism offering. It is an opportune time to summarise these and reflect on our achievements.</p>
<p>3.0</p>	<p>Main Report</p>
<p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p>	<p>All-Island Strategic Rail Review</p> <p>The reintroduction of a rail network to Mid Ulster has the potential to unlock the area’s entrepreneurial prospects and secure sustained growth for the future. The continued lack of rail infrastructure to facilitate travel for social, domestic and employment uses has negatively impacted upon those residing and travelling to the area. A full update on the All-Island Strategic Rail Review (AISRR) is attached on (Appendix 1) for Members information.</p> <p>A5/N2 Cross Border Committee Minutes (19.3.24) and Updated Terms of Reference</p> <p>The above Committee meets quarterly, and the role of Chair is rotated annually, with the Chair of the Committee’s Council providing the secretariat. Councillor Gael Gildernew from Mid Ulster District Council undertook the role of Chair for 2024.</p> <p>Minutes of the A5/N2 Cross Border Committee meeting held on 19 March 2024 are attached (Appendix 2), along with an updated Terms of Reference (Appendix 3) which was discussed and agreed by the Committee on 30 April 2024.</p>

3.3 Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) - Multiply Programme

As reported in March 2024, the, Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership received correspondence on 3 March 2024 from DfE confirming that the Multiply funding bid for Northern Ireland, which was paused by UK Government in November 2023, has now been approved.

The revised bid is now £5.9m, for delivery between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025, through local colleges, universities and labour market partnerships, focusing on 6 key delivery areas, with the aim to provide a mixture of qualifications and interventions

- Maths for speakers of other languages,
- Numeracy for Mature learners,
- Industry led numeracy interventions,
- Numeracy bootcamps,
- Adult/child numeracy collaboration,
- Previous offenders/those in prison system.

Criteria

To be eligible under the Multiply Project criteria is currently as follows:

- Over 19, and
- Do not hold GCSE Maths at grade C and above.

DfE has acknowledged that some initiatives such as the Family Fun Days will reach a wider audience than just those who require numeracy support but recognise the benefits of peer learning in these instances.

DfE requested that all Councils and FE colleges submitted bids for delivery in their area against some or all of the 6 key delivery areas for consideration.

Following extensive consultation with both internal and external stakeholders, Mid Ulster LMP developed 11 projects across 5 areas. These aim to take a 'soft' approach to building numeracy skills and confidence using a 'Maths by Disguise' method to engage residents. One additional project is currently being costed which will enable a pilot to develop a partnership between the Jobs and Benefits Office and Year 11 students.

A summary of approved Multiply Programme Initiatives is shown in **(Appendix 6)**.

3.4 Taste Mid Ulster Food Heritage Events – 2024

At the Development Committee in October 2023, Members approved support towards Taste Mid Ulster events, one in Moy and the other in Pomeroy.

During the second weekend in March 2024, Council hosted its first 'Taste Mid Ulster' event celebrating Mid Ulster's food heritage in Moy Village. Feedback received from both traders and the public was extremely positive. Food related

	<p>events in Mid Ulster have proven to be popular with the public and when such events are coupled with music and entertainment, they draw in significant visitors to the district.</p> <p>The second event will be held in Pomeroy Forest on Saturday 29 June 2024, from 11am to 6pm.</p> <p>Widespread consultation has taken place with numerous individuals and stakeholders' groups to secure community ownership and commitment towards the event.</p> <p>In addition to the Taste Mid Ulster Food Market, there will be a wide range of activities such as live music and entertainment, children's activities, cookery demonstrations showcasing delicacies from across the District with the involvement of Local Cookery Schools.</p>
<p>3.5</p>	<p>Maghera Regeneration Programme – Town Centre Public Realm</p> <p>Local Civil Engineering company, CivCo Ltd, who are based in Maghera, have been awarded the contract to complete the Maghera Town Centre Public Realm Scheme. A 'Meet the Contractor' event was held in Walsh's Hotel, Maghera on Wednesday 29 May 2024 from 8am to 8pm. Invites were issued to the local businesses and residents located within the scheme boundary. At this meeting attendees received a presentation on the works with an opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification. A further online meeting also took place with the contractor and disability groups and Maghera Forum Members, to advise of works, with a question and answer session. Pre-Construction works have been ongoing with anticipated onsite works to start mid July 2024. Council officers will be communicating with key stakeholders throughout this programme, with regular update meetings scheduled.</p> <p>The Town Centre Public Realm Scheme in Maghera will create a vibrant high street environment; where a mix of commercial and residential uses complement each other; and where businesses, large and small, feel welcome and the community feels safer.</p>
<p>3.6</p>	<p>Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes Achievements 2023/24</p> <p>The key Achievements attained by Council's Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programme Department for 2023/24 is contained on Appendix 8.</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Other Considerations</p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p> <p>Financial:</p>

4.1.3 Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) - Multiply Programme
Mid Ulster LMP is in receipt of a Letter of Offer for £50,000, received on 29 March 2024 in relation to Staff Costs (**Appendix 4**) and £208,115 received on 20 May 2024 for operational costs (**Appendix 5**)

4.1.4 Taste Mid Ulster Food Heritage Events – 2024
Taste Mid Ulster Food Heritage Event will be funded from the Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes budget in 2024/2025 and will cost up to £50,000.

4.1.6 Maghera Regeneration Programme – Town Centre Public Realm
Funding has been secured under Levelling Up Fund and Mid Ulster Council

4.1.7 Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes Achievements 2023/24 – Delivered within EDTSP Budgets for 2023/24

Human:

Officer Time

Risk Management:

4.1.3 Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) - Multiply Programme
The risk level is mitigated as LMP activity is 100% externally funded.

4.1.4 Taste Mid Ulster Food Heritage Events – 2024
Adverse weather conditions could have an impact on outdoor events.

4.1.6 Maghera Regeneration Programme – Town Centre Public Realm
Risk register monitored by Maghera Public Realm Board

4.2 Screening & Impact Assessments

Equality & Good Relations Implications:

4.2.3 Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) - Multiply Programme
Equality and Good Relations Screening has been completed for LMP projects for the period 2024-27.

4.2.4 These will be considered as part of the event plan for **Taste Mid Ulster Food Heritage Event**.

4.2.6 Maghera Regeneration Programme – Town Centre Public Realm
Complete

Rural Needs Implications:

	<p>4.2.3 Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) - Multiply Programme Rural Needs Screening has been completed for LMP projects for the period 2024-27.</p> <p>4.2.4 These will be considered as part of the event plan for Taste Mid Ulster Food Heritage Event.</p> <p>4.2.6 Maghera Regeneration Programme – Town Centre Public Realm Complete</p>
5.0	Recommendation(s)
	<p>It is recommended that Members;</p> <p>5.1 All-Island Strategic Rail Review Note update report.</p> <p>5.2 A5/N2 Cross Border Committee Minutes 19.3.24 and Updated Terms of Reference</p> <p>(a) Note A5/N2 Cross Border Committee Minutes – 19.3.24</p> <p>(b) Note A5/N2 Cross Border Committee updated Terms of Reference</p> <p>5.3 Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) – Multiply Programme Note update on the Multiply Programme and that by the powers delegated to the Chief Executive at an earlier meeting, he had signed and returned both letters of offer providing funding to £50,000 for admin costs and £208,115 for operational costs,</p> <p>5.4 Taste Mid Ulster Food Heritage Events – 2024 Note update on the Pomeroy Taste Mid Ulster Food Heritage Event in Pomeroy Forest on 29 June 2024.</p> <p>5.5 Maghera Regeneration Programme – Town Centre Public Realm Note update.</p> <p>5.6 Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes Achievements 2023/24 Note key achievements attained by Council’s Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programme Department for 2023/24.</p>

6.0	Documents Attached & References
	<p data-bbox="229 259 1114 293">Appendix 1 - Update Report - All-Island Strategic Rail Review</p> <p data-bbox="229 333 1147 367">Appendix 2 - A5/N2 Cross Border Committee Minutes – 19.3.24</p> <p data-bbox="229 407 1326 441">Appendix 3 - A5/N2 Cross Border Committee - Updated Terms of Reference</p> <p data-bbox="229 481 1257 515">Appendix 4 - Multiply Letter of Offer from DfE 2024-2025 – Admin costs</p> <p data-bbox="229 555 1331 589">Appendix 5 - Multiply Letter of Offer from DfE 2024-2025 – Operational costs</p> <p data-bbox="229 629 1042 663">Appendix 6 - Summary of Multiply Programme Initiatives</p> <p data-bbox="229 703 1289 770">Appendix 7 - Maghera Regeneration Programme - Community Newsletter (Issue 1)</p> <p data-bbox="229 810 1326 878">Appendix 8 – Summary Achievements 2023-2024 - Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes Department</p>