

<b>Report on</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Mid Ulster Economic Recovery and Growth Plan</b></li> <li><b>2. Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN) Report 2021/22</b></li> <li><b>3. NI Apprenticeship Week 2022 (NIAW 2022)</b></li> <li><b>4. International Women's Events</b></li> </ol>
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	10 February 2022
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Assistant Director of Economy, Tourism & Strategic Programmes

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To provide Members with an update on key activities as detailed below.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	<p><b>Mid Ulster Economic Recovery and Growth Plan</b></p> <p>At a meeting of the Development Committee in December 2021, Members were advised of the Sub-Regional Development Funding made available to Councils by Invest NI. This to resource research to identify possible future interventions, either collaboratively across Councils or at an individual Council level, which could be implemented from 2022-26 (subject to budgets) to ensure economic recovery is inclusive and regionally balanced.</p> <p>The window of opportunity to avail of the funding was extremely short with the call opening on 3 November 2021 and closing on 19 November 2021. This required Councils to procure a delivery organisation to complete all work by 28 February 2022. Mid Ulster Council, submitted a bid to develop a 'Mid Ulster Economic Recovery and Growth Plan' and received a Letter of Offer from Invest NI for £20,000. Council agreed to contribute an additional £5,000 towards this work to result in a total value of £25,000.</p>

2.2	<p><b>ICBAN Report (2021/22)</b>  ICBAN receives funding from 8 Councils from north and south (as listed below) who have provided a financial contribution towards ICBAN to support their work; these are Mid Ulster District Council, Fermanagh and Omagh Council, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council and Monaghan, Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim and Cavan County Councils.</p>
2.3	<p><b>NI Apprenticeship Week (NIAW 2022)</b>  The Department for the Economy is facilitating the third annual Northern Ireland Apprenticeship Week, which will take place from Monday 7<sup>th</sup> to Friday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2022. This week will offer an opportunity through a dedicated week of virtual events and online promotional activity to demonstrate how apprenticeships work for individuals, businesses, communities and the wider economy.</p>
2.4	<p><b>International Women's Events</b>  Previously Council agreed that two International Women's Events be held within the 2021/22 financial year at a cost of up to £6,000, to be funded from Council's Economic Development Budget.</p>
3.0	<p><b>Main Report</b></p>
3.1	<p><b>Mid Ulster Economic Recovery and Growth Plan</b>  The Quotation specification was issued to eleven organisations on Friday 3 December 2021. The closing date and time for submission of Quotations was 12 Noon Friday 17 December 2021. Three organisations responded advising they would not be submitting a quotation, identifying an inability to complete all work outlined by the deadline (28 Feb 2022). No quotations were received by the quotation deadline.</p> <p>The Quotation specification was reviewed by Officers and reduced in scope and value (from £25,000 to £20,000) and reissued to the same eleven organisations on Wednesday 22 December 2021. The closing date and time for submission of Quotations was 12 Noon on Tuesday 11 January 2022. One quotation was received by the deadline. Following a query in relation to the date noted in the Quotation for the completion of the work, this organisation subsequently responded to advise they could not provide a sufficiently robust evidenced Report by 28 February 2022.</p> <p>The Quotation was re-issued a third time outlining an extended timeframe for completion of the work from 28 February to 16 March 2022, however, no responses were received.</p> <p>As a result of the very short funding timeframe provided by Invest NI to Council, it has not been possible to procure an organisation to complete the project by 16 March 2022. Officers liaised with Invest NI to request an extension to the</p>

	<p>timeframe but were advised this was not permissible, so unfortunately this project cannot proceed.</p>
3.2	<p><b>ICBAN Report (2021/22)</b> As required by Council, ICBAN have submitted a report detailing initiatives undertaken in 2021/22. The delivery focus continues to be on areas to benefit member Councils.</p>
3.3	<p><b>NI Apprenticeship Week (NIAW 2022)</b> There will be a programme of events taking place right across NI as part of the third annual Apprenticeship Week NI from Monday 7 to Friday 11 February 2022. The theme of NIAW2022 is <i>“Apprenticeship is your future”</i>.</p> <p>One of the main priorities of the industry-led MEGA Network is to increase the number of apprenticeships within the manufacturing and engineering sector in Mid Ulster. A survey completed in October 2021 identified that within 39 MEGA companies there are 643 current vacancies and the majority of these are within level 2 &amp; 3 roles. South West College’s intake for September 2021 for level 2 apprenticeships dropped from 250 to 180. MEGA’s key target for 2022 is to promote apprenticeships at level 2 &amp; 3 to ensure higher uptake for September 2022.</p> <p>As part of this year’s NIAW 2022 programme, Council agreed previously to make a financial contribution towards MEGA to assist them develop two 10-minute promotional videos to launch during Apprenticeship Week. The target audience includes students, teachers, parents and employers. The videos showcase a variety of footage from several manufacturing facilities throughout Mid Ulster and contain interviews and case studies. The videos will be available to watch online from 7 February 2022 at: <a href="http://midulstermega.com">midulstermega.com</a>. The full events programme for NIAW 2022 can be viewed at: <a href="http://nidirect.gov.uk/articles/apprenticeship-week-events">nidirect.gov.uk/articles/apprenticeship-week-events</a>.</p>
3.4	<p><b>International Women’s Events</b> The two International Women’s Events have been arranged and will take place as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Date: Tuesday 29 March 2022, 7pm</b> <b>Venue: Corrick House Hotel &amp; Spa, Clogher</b></li> <li>• <b>Date: Thursday 31 March 2022, 7pm</b> <b>Venue: Terrace Hotel, Magherafelt</b></li> </ul> <p>This will be a high quality event, with a drinks reception on arrival, it will incorporate a range of inspiring speakers, and food will be provided at the end. Each guest will also receive a free small gift bag containing a number of artisan products from local suppliers.</p>

	<p>The event will be ticketed at £10 per head with proceeds being donated to the NI Air Ambulance. Each venue can accommodate approx. 100 guests. Tickets will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.</p> <p>The Council Chairman will officially open each event.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<p><b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b></p> <p><b>Financial:</b></p> <p><b>Mid Ulster Economic Recovery and Growth Plan</b> Invest NI had issued Council with a Letter of Offer for £20,000 towards this work</p> <p><b>Human:</b></p> <p><b>Risk Management:</b> <b>Mid Ulster Economic Recovery and Growth Plan</b> Work had to be completed by end of March 2022. Due to the level of work required alongside the short timeframe to complete it in, Council were unsuccessful in procuring an organisation to undertake the assignment, despite undertaking 3 procurement exercises.</p>
<b>4.2</b>	<p><b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b> n/a</p> <p><b>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications:</b> n/a</p> <p><b>Rural Needs Implications:</b> n/a</p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	<p>It is recommended that Members:</p> <p><b>Mid Ulster Economic Recovery and Growth Plan</b> <b>Note</b> update.</p>
5.2	<p><b>ICBAN Report (2021/22)</b> <b>Note</b> ICBAN Report 2021/22</p>
5.3	<p><b>NI Apprenticeship Week (NIAW2022)</b> <b>Note</b> update on NI Apprenticeship Week.</p>
5.4	<p><b>International Women's Events</b> <b>Note</b> update.</p>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	<b>Appendix 1 – ICBAN Report 2021/22</b>

