



20 October 2020

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Development Committee to be held in The Chamber, Dungannon and by virtual means Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon, BT71 6DT on Thursday, 15 October 2020 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

Anthony Tohill  
Chief Executive

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## AGENDA

### OPEN BUSINESS

1. Apologies
2. 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.
3. Chair's Business

### Matters for Decision

- |     |   |         |
|-----|---|---------|
| 4.  | UNESCO World Heritage Site – Davagh & Beaghmore Stone Circles | 3 - 20  |
| 5.  | Autumn Corporate Events Update                                | 21 - 24 |
| 6.  | Decade of Anniversaries - Commemorations 2021/22              | 25 - 30 |
| 7.  | Community Development   | 31 - 36 |
| 8.  | Railway Park Action Plan                                      | 37 - 44 |
| 9.  | Relocation of a Changing Cabin                                | 45 - 46 |
| 10. | Tamnamore Close Play Park Lease Agreement                     | 47 - 50 |
| 11. | Economic Development Report - OBFD                            | 51 - 78 |

### Matters for Information

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| 12 | Minutes of Development Committee held on 10 September 2020 | 79 - 98   |
| 13 | Mid Ulster District Tourism Development Group              | 99 - 104  |
| 14 | Mid Ulster Tourism Update                                  | 105 - 106 |

15	Economic Development Report - OBFi	107 - 118
16	Mid South West (MSW) Region Update	119 - 160

**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

- 17. Southern Health Trust Transfer of Assets
- 18. Brookmount to Spring Road Alleged PRow

Matters for Information

- 19. Confidential Minutes of Development Committee held on 10 September 2020
- 20. Economic Development Report - CBFi

<b>Report on</b>	UNESCO World Heritage Site – Davagh & Beaghmore Stone Circles
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Michael Browne
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Charmain Bell

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To inform council about the progress of the notion to motion at the development meeting on the 23 <sup>rd</sup> July 2020 - "That Mid Ulster District Council resolves to explore the necessary steps to have Davagh Dark Sky Park officially designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site"
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	After several years of recording sky brightness, Davagh Forest and the area around Beaghmore Stone Circles was awarded IDA recognition for its unique dark skies in February 2020. The first Dark Sky Park in Northern Ireland.
2.2	With the development of the OM Darky Sky Observatory and Visitor Centre at Davagh, along with the IDA status, this is the first Dark Sky Observatory on the island of Ireland, which combines the uniqueness of the sky with the uniqueness of the surrounding archaeology. The archaeological significance of the region has been recognised by the Historic Environment Division in its designation as an Area of Significant Archaeological Interest (ASAI).
2.3	OM Dark Sky Observatory is also part of Tourism NI's Embrace A Giant Spirit Campaign for their 'Stars and Stones' visitor experience launched at World Travel Market, London in November 2019.
2.4	As a new and unique attraction in Northern Ireland, OM is receiving a new level of interest locally, nationally and internationally.
2.5	As mentioned by Cllr Clarke at the Council meeting on the 23 <sup>rd</sup> July, "The Davagh Dark Skies Park is remarkable for much more than its Dark Skies. The park contains a number of elements of significance which meet the criteria for designation of a World Heritage Site. Astrology, Archaeology, Geology and Ecology are all key elements within the Davagh Dark Sky Park."

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p>The Purpose of World Heritage Sites</p> <p>The cultural heritage and the natural heritage are among the priceless and irreplaceable possessions, not only of each nation, but also for mankind as a whole. The loss, through deterioration or disappearance, of any of these most prized possessions constitutes and impoverishment of the heritage of all peoples in the world. Parts of that heritage, because of their exceptional qualities, can be considered to be of outstanding universal value and as such worthy of special protection against the dangers, which increasingly threaten them. The purpose is to identify the sites worth of the status of World Heritage Sites and then ensure their protection.</p>
3.2	<p>To be considered of universal interest a site must meet one of the selection criteria produced by UNESCO. The State Party of that country compiles a tentative list of sites to be considered for inscription. They are then evaluated by either ICOMOS (<i>International Council of Monuments and Sites</i>) and/or IUCN (<i>International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources</i>). The sites are then presented to the World Heritage Committee who make a final decision.</p>
3.3	<p>Council Officers, with the assistance of Dr William Burke and Dr Liam Campbell of Lough Neagh Partnership (<i>both of which have previous experience of the Derry City Walls UNESCO application</i>) have written the attached scoping paper exploring the necessary steps to have Davagh Dark Sky Park officially designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.</p>
3.4	<p>Dark Sky Parks are not recognised by the World Heritage Committee as a specific type or category of World Heritage. However, while dark sky places cannot, in themselves, be recognised as specific types or categories of World Heritage, “dark sky values can nonetheless enhance either the natural or cultural value of a place, or both, and in this sense contribute to potential Outstand Universal Value.</p>
3.5	<p>After reviewing a range of case studies, pertinent literature and assessing the wider landscape heritage assets of the Davagh region, it is viable to develop a framework that can incorporate the cultural narrative of astronomy, archaeology, biodiversity, settlement and place into a story of landscape evolution in line with sub-terrestrial, terrestrial and celestial connected ‘spacetime’.</p>
3.6	<p>Subsequently, it is feasible for us to consider the Dark Sky Park at a landscape scale, and include the archaeology of Davagh, Beaghmore and Broughderg as being creative acts, a response to a sense of place and balance between earth and sky. The creation of this prehistoric landscape has provided a focus and an index of human continuity and community since prehistoric times. There is a lived richness of place-names, ecology, archaeology, astronomy and cultural history and they cannot be separated here. Combining this with the geological and geomorphological importance of the region, and alongside the global importance of</p>



	the extensive peatland setting, it can be argued that the site meets the WHS selection criteria as outlined in the attached report.
3.7	As an alternative to the competitive and challenging WHS designation it may also be possible to consider the Davagh area as a Biosphere Reserve which focus on improving the relationship between people and their local environment, globally. They are sites created by UNESCO that find creative ways for people and nature to thrive together. They act as extraordinary testing grounds to put into practice a revolutionary approach to managing our ecosystems sustainably for future generations. The UNESCO Biosphere Reserve status would apply to the wider landscape concentrating on the peatlands and water systems with the establishment of core protected areas, buffer zones and a transition or co-operation area.
3.8	The Davagh Dark Sky Park as a wider “in combination” bid incorporating archaeology and peatland at a landscape scale would allow for progression to the Tentative List. In doing so, it is feasible to consider the Dark Sky Park as a palimpsest of attributes that include the archaeology of Davagh, Beaghmore and Broughderg as being creative acts and a response to a sense of place and balance between earth and sky.
3.9	The process is technically complex, time consuming and will require dedicated human resources. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) acts on behalf of the UK as a state party to the World Heritage Convention and is responsible for nominating new sites for inscription by the World Heritage Committee. Each state party may only nominate a maximum of one new site per year. Most recently, the Jodrell Bank Observatory was inscribed as the UK’s 32nd World Heritage Site in 2019.
3.10	The tentative list is periodically reviewed by the government, typically every 10 years. When the next review of the tentative list is initiated, guidelines will be published with further information for prospective sites. As yet, the scope of this review and timeframes for its completion have not been set. DCMS will keep us informed with any updates.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: A designated annual budget and salary costs of Heritage Officer/consultants
	Human: Employment of a Heritage Officer or appointment of consultants to complete the process.
	Risk Management:
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications:
	Rural Needs Implications:

<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	To proceed and work towards seeking UNESCO World Heritage accreditation.
5.2	To establish a working group including all stakeholders.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Appendix 1. Scoping Paper Attached Appendix 2. Response letter from Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport



# DAVAGH DARK SKY PARK

## SCOPING PAPER FOR UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE DESIGNATION

Dr Liam Campbell & Dr William Burke  
September 2020

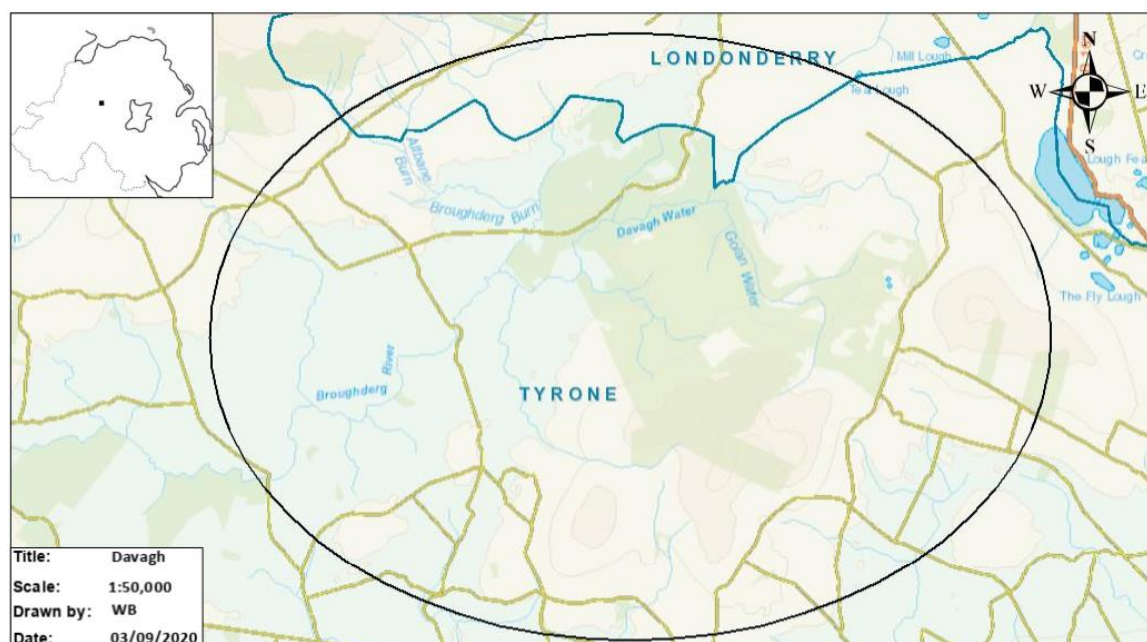
## Introduction

Mid Ulster District Council Officers working alongside Dr Liam Campbell and Dr William Burke have drafted a position paper in response to a motion brought forward by Cllr. Clarke and amended by Cllr. Mallaghan *“That Mid Ulster District Council resolves to explore the necessary steps to have Davagh Dark Sky Park officially designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site”* (C144/20).

The purpose and scope of the paper is to provide Council Officers and elected Members’ with an introduction on what a World Heritage Site (WHS) is, how sites are selected and the process of designation. In summarising these, the paper goes on to provide a synoptic overview of what makes the Davagh region unique in respect of the WHS qualifying criteria and outlines the broad time scale and resources required to reach the nomination stage.

## Location

The Davagh Dark Sky Park project is located in Davagh Forest which lies approximately 10 miles north of Cookstown (Figure 1) at the foot of the Sperrin Mountains and in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Park has been designated as an International Dark Sky Park, making Davagh the first-ever IDSP in Northern Ireland. Along with this designation a new OM Dark Sky Park and Observatory will open in October 2020. The archaeological significance of the region has been recognised by the Historic Environment Division in its designation as an Area of Significant Archaeological Interest (ASAI) and is known to contain multiple prehistoric sites. The surrounding region is rich in Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments, comprising chambered tombs and court cairns, standing stones, cairns, alignments, cist graves and stone circles, of which the best known are the Beaghmore and Copney stone circle complexes. Beaghmore is about 3.25 km SW of the site, the Ballynagilly Neolithic habitation site is about 4.25 km to the SE. The area of the site has been moorland since the growth of peat in the Late Bronze Age, the only probable economic activity being sheep grazing. It has remained undisturbed by agriculture, as far as can be determined.



**Figure 1: Map showing location of Davagh and approximate area being considered for WHS Status**

## What is a World Heritage Site?

Approved in 1972, the 'Convention concerning the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage' was adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and came into force in 1976, when it had been ratified by twenty countries. It has since been ratified by 187 States Parties across the globe. The purpose of the Convention is to '*ensure the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value*' (UNESCO, 2005a). The Convention states that the World Heritage Committee (WHC) should coordinate the process of designating these sites through a system known as inscription, which includes an evaluation of the resources by experts against a set of known criteria. The aim is to encourage conservation of the resources within the designated sites and surrounding buffer zones on a local level and also to foster a sense of collective global responsibility via international cooperation, exchange and support. Once designated, the States Party accepts responsibility for the effective management of the site and commits to adopting the 'Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention' and the systems of reactive and periodic reporting set in place by UNESCO. If it fails to do this effectively then the threat of removal from the WHL is present, though it has not, to date, been exercised.

Sites may be nominated as cultural, natural or mixed criteria, with designation reliant upon the type of criteria that they are deemed to present in an exceptional form. The diversity of WHS is vast, ranging from Neolithic and medieval ruins on St Kilda and the Orkney archipelago, Stonehenge, and the Skellig Islands to castles, cathedrals and iconic buildings and structures such as Blenheim Palace, the Forth Bridge and Tower of London. Areas of cities have also been designated UNESCO Heritage sites such as the Old and New towns of Edinburgh and the Spa City of Bath, the Maritime Mercantile City of Liverpool and Maritime Greenwich. Geological phenomena such as the Giant's Causeway, the English Lake District and the North Devon and Dorset Coastlines are also now protected by heritage status.

Nominations are evaluated against a set of ten cultural and natural criteria that "*represent a masterpiece of human genius or to contain superlative natural phenomena; or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance; or to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilisation which is living or which has disappeared*" (UNESCO, 2005b).

Cultural sites can be:

- monuments (architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science),
- groups of buildings (groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, homogeneity or their place in the landscape are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science)
- sites (works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view) (See World Heritage Convention Article 1.)

Cultural landscapes are included in this category. (See Operational Guidelines 47, and Annex 3, 5- 13.) These represent 'combined works of man and nature' and are illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and opportunities presented by the natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces. Cultural landscapes can reflect the interaction between humankind and its natural environment. They can include;

- clearly designed landscapes such as gardens and parklands
- organically evolved landscapes evolving from an initial social, economic, administrative and/or religious imperative which has developed in association with, and in response to, its natural environment
- associative cultural landscapes resulting from powerful religious, artistic or cultural associations.

Natural heritage is defined in the Convention as:

- natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which are of Outstanding Universal Value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view
- geological and physiographical formations and precisely delineated areas which constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation
- natural sites or precisely delineated natural areas of Outstanding Universal Value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty

Mixed sites are sites which have Outstanding Universal Value for both cultural and natural heritage. Some cultural landscapes may also be mixed sites.

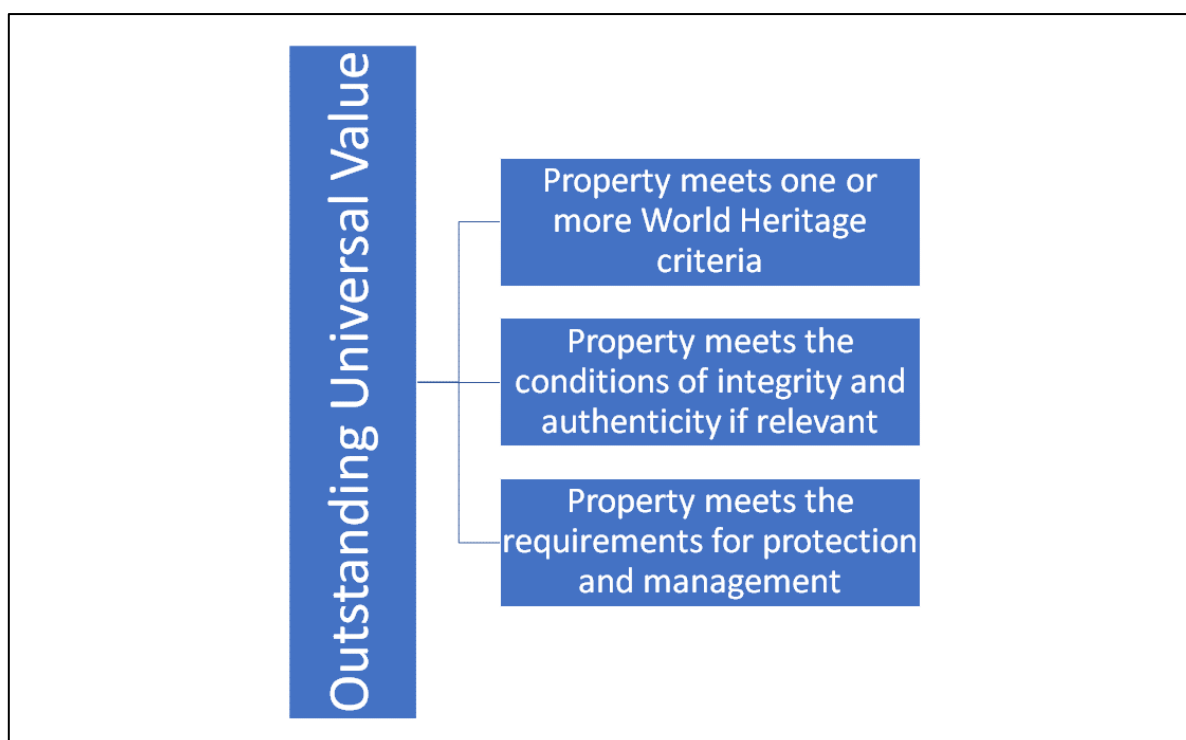
To be included on the World Heritage List, sites must qualify in three ways – they must meet one of the UNESCO’s selection criteria, show integrity and be adequately managed and protected (Figure 2). All three must be in place for a property to be judged to have Outstanding Universal Value, which is the final piece to the puzzle of becoming a World Heritage site. An ‘Outstanding Universal Value’ or OUV describes why the designated site is one of the most remarkable places on earth. Outstanding Universal Value means cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity. As such, the permanent protection of this heritage is of the highest importance to the international community as a whole.

The site also must meet at least one out of UNESCO’s ten selection (Table 1) criteria<sup>1</sup>. These criteria are explained in the 2019 Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention<sup>2</sup> which, besides the text of the Convention, is the main working tool on World Heritage. The criteria are regularly revised by the Committee to reflect the evolution of the World Heritage concept itself.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines/>



**Figure 2: Factors required to be included on the World Heritage list**

	<b>Table 1: Selection criteria for World Heritage Site status</b>
i	To represent a masterpiece of human creative genius
ii	To exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design
iii	To bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared
iv	To be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history
v	To be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change
vi	To be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria)
vii	To contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance
viii	To be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features
ix	To be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals
x	To contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation

## How are WHS designated?

The UK Government's Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is the body who establish a call for applications for new candidates to join the UK's World Heritage Tentative List by seeking applications from Local Authorities, State Bodies, community organisations and individuals, for sites or properties of natural and/or cultural heritage which are considered to be of outstanding universal value (OUV). They also oversee the process of Tentative List application and assessment. The Tentative List format includes:

- The name of the property/site
- The geographical location of the property/site
- A brief description of the property/site
- A justification of its outstanding universal value in accordance with the criteria and with the conditions of authenticity or integrity as set out in the Operational Guidelines.

The last Tentative List of The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was published in 2010 and this is likely to be reviewed in 2021/2022.

The DCMS **may only nominate a maximum of one site per year from this list**, and the UK government will only submit nominations which clearly demonstrate that a site meets the criteria, authenticity, integrity and management required.

Along with one of the ten criteria, a location needs to be deemed that it has outstanding universal value. Although important to the local region, the attraction needs to prove significant across the globe. UNESCO sets the standard high, with a location that can "transcend national boundaries." A place that is memorable in the modern day, but also years, decades, and centuries down the road.

Once a site has been selected from the Tentative List, the nomination document can be prepared. This outlines the criteria for inscription, boundaries of the site and buffer zone (area immediately surrounding the resource) and as much detail as possible relating to the uniqueness and importance of the site resource. In addition, a Management Plan must be presented to demonstrate how the integrity of the site and its universal value are to be presented, covering aspects such as transport, conservation and tourism activity. Advice is available from the World Heritage Centre and advisory bodies, such as ICOMOS-UK and IUCN-UK prior to this submission.

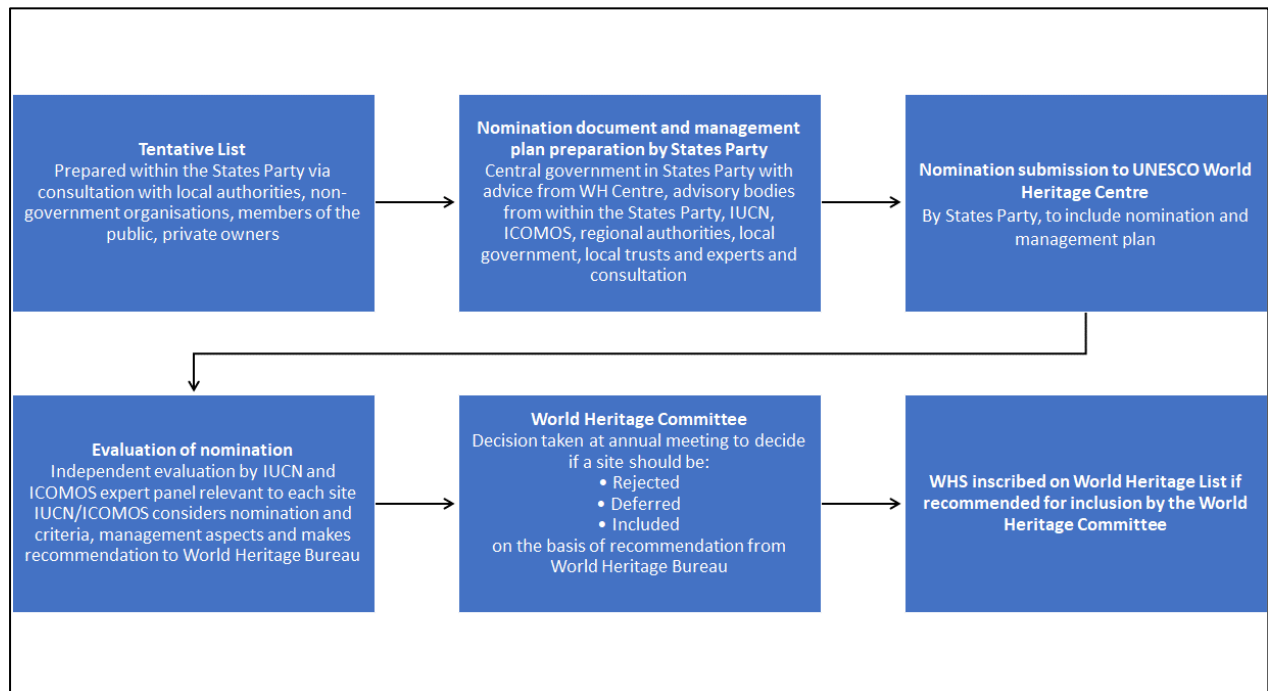
The World Heritage Centre then arranges for the nomination to be independently evaluated by an expert representative from either one or both of the two Advisory Bodies mandated by the WHC: the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), which respectively provide evaluations of the cultural and natural sites nominated. A third advisory body, that of the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), an intergovernmental organisation, provides the Committee with expert advice on the conservation of cultural sites and training activities.

Mission reports relating to conservation and management, reports on the cultural/scientific values, and consultations with specialists are used to produce detailed recommendations on a site. These are then studied by special panels of the respective Advisory Bodies and at these meetings recommendations are formulated which are later presented to the World Heritage Committee. The options are to recommend inscription, deferral (to seek further detail) or reject the nomination.



The final step is for the formal inscription of the site as a WHS and committing it to being managed in accordance with the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

Once moved from the tentative list to the World Heritage List and registered as a World Heritage Site, it is not the end for that location. The state who submitted the site needs to monitor the location. Every six years the sites are assessed to make sure they still qualify to be preserved and continue to earn the distinction. The process is illustrated in Figure 3.



**Figure 3: World Heritage Site inscription process**

### **Does the Davagh Dark Skies project meet the criteria?**

In an announcement concerning dark skies and celestial objects, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre made a statement in 2007 underlining **that the sky or the dark night sky or celestial objects or starlight as such cannot be nominated to the World Heritage List within the framework of the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage**. Further, the World Heritage Centre went on to underline that a parallel ‘Starlight’ Initiative developed by a group of international experts was not part of the UNESCO Thematic Initiative “Astronomy and World Heritage”. Subsequently, neither Starlight Reserves, nor Dark Sky Parks can be recognised by the World Heritage Committee as specific types or categories of World Heritage cultural and natural properties since no criteria exist for considering them under the World Heritage Convention. However, in their second Thematic Study (2017) they have considered dark sky qualities in detail, concluding that, while dark sky places cannot, in themselves, be recognised as specific types or categories of World Heritage property, either cultural or natural, *“dark sky values can nonetheless enhance either the natural or cultural value of a place (or both), and in this sense contribute to potential OUV”*<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www3.astronomicalheritage.net/thematic-study-2>

### What can we do to make Davagh eligible?

Davagh as a dark sky project is not enough to attain WHS accreditation so how can we apply the UNESCO World Heritage Criteria to the officially designated Davagh International Dark Sky Park? After reviewing a range of case studies, pertinent literature and assessing the wider landscape heritage assets of the Davagh region it is viable to develop a framework that can incorporate the cultural narrative of astronomy, archaeology, biodiversity, settlement and place into a story of landscape evolution in line with sub-terrestrial, terrestrial and celestial connected 'spacetime' as described by Tim Robinson in *"Setting Foot on the Shores of Connemara"* (1996). To elaborate, the basic features of the Dark Sky Park concept are:

- The sky itself (object of the observation),
- The site as a property in local permanent context (geography, atmosphere, architecture, landscape, nature etc)
- Humankind using the observation place eventually with artefacts/instruments.

Of course, these three basic aspects of the sky observation are intimately related, but they do not align with the World Heritage view. However, the Dark Sky Park does have a series of natural and cultural attributes supporting and expressing its value - Dark Sky quality is a natural attribute of the place among others with visible relationships with the landscape and the assets it hosts.

When considering the Dark Sky project among a cluster of natural attributes, the Dark Sky quality contributes to the global natural context of a giving place and it belongs to a larger group of natural attributes of the site, forming its natural environment components. Subsequently one of the best ways to use the Dark Sky value is among a set of other remarkable attributes, making a generally remarkable landscape at the turn of night and day. Further, when considering the Dark Sky among a cluster of cultural attributes or mixed attributes, the Dark sky quality could be considered as a cultural asset in context of the history of the observatory place; the remarkable atmosphere quality and the 6000 year plus settlement and celestial history of the region.

Subsequently, it is feasible for us to consider the Dark Sky Park at a landscape scale, and include the archaeology of Davagh, Beaghmore and Broughderg as being creative acts, a response to a sense of place and balance between earth and sky. The creation of this prehistoric landscape has provided a focus and an index of human continuity and community since prehistoric times. There is a lived richness of place-names, ecology, archaeology, astronomy and cultural history and they cannot be separated here. Combining this with the geological and geomorphological importance of the region and alongside the global importance of the extensive peatland setting, it can be argued that the site meets the following WHS selection criteria as outlined in Table 1:

- i. To represent a masterpiece of human creative genius
- ii. To exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design
- iv. To be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history
- v. To be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change

These are discussed below.

**Selection Criteria 1: To represent a masterpiece of human creative genius**

Davagh in combination with the wider landscape setting of Beaghmore and Broughderg represents a temporal continuum of societal and cultural interaction with the celestial sky that extends from the late Neolithic through to the modern day. The creativity of historic communities in linking the terrestrial setting of the Sperrin foothills with not only our celestial sun and moon neighbours but the wider astronomical heavens through stone alignments, circles and burial structures is evident throughout the landscape and has now transitioned into an internationally recognised Dark Sky Park. Representative of being possibly the first 'observatories', these structures reflect the societal creativity of ancient communities and their sense of place within an evolving landscape during a time of climatic fluctuation, the result of which being the formation of the expansive stretches of peatland in which they are set. These sites stand as a tribute to the complexity and diversity of ways in which people rationalised the cosmos and framed their actions in accordance with that understanding. This includes, but is by no means restricted to, the development of modern scientific astronomy which has culminated in the Davagh Dark Skies project. This close and perpetual interaction between Neolithic and early Bronze Age astronomical knowledge and its role within human culture is a vital element of the outstanding universal value of this proposal.

**Selection Criteria 2: To exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design**

The Davagh proposal exhibits an important interchange of human values during the development of monumental architecture of major ceremonial complexes related to astronomical landscapes in the British Isles, Ireland and northwest Europe. This complex shows a planned, designed landscape as opposed to a purely functionally evolved one as in a farming landscape. It is art of a monumental scale that we still do not know the size and limits of. The landscape is not 'finished' - there is so much more to find out at a sub peat level.

**Selection Criteria 4: To be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history**

This proposal sits within major technological achievements as to how people have understood the phenomena in the sky, how they used these phenomena and what role the sky played in their culture. The whole landscape is one huge technological ensemble of remarkable complexity that illustrates thanks to the peatland cover the significant stages in human history.

**Selection Criteria 5: To be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change**

This sub-terrestrial, terrestrial and celestial connected landscape is an example 'par excellence' of human interaction with the environment that is vulnerable under the impact of climate change and which has profound lessons for humanity, some yet to be discovered. This is "a common good that belongs to each of us regardless of nationality." The unique mix of ecology, archaeology and astronomy make this an outstanding example of traditional human settlement and culture. The creation of this prehistoric landscape has provided a focus and an index of human continuity and community since prehistoric times.

## **Consideration of Davagh Dark Skies under UNESCO Biosphere Reserve (BR) Status**

As an alternative to the competitive and challenging WHS designation it may also be possible to consider the Davagh site as a Biosphere Reserve. Biosphere Reserves are all about improving the relationship between people and their local environment, globally. They are sites created by UNESCO that find creative ways for people and nature to thrive together. They act as extraordinary testing grounds to put into practice a revolutionary approach to managing our ecosystems sustainably for future generations.” (UNESCO) Biosphere Reserves UNESCO launched Biosphere Reserves (BR) in 1976 as a contribution to the Man and Biosphere Programme (MAB) objective of achieving a balance between conserving biological diversity, promoting economic development, and maintaining associated cultural values. BRs are intended to provide a means of testing, refining, demonstrating, and implementing this objective (UNESCO, 1995). Biosphere reserves are ‘learning places for sustainable development’. They are sites for testing interdisciplinary approaches to understanding and managing changes and interactions between social and ecological systems, including conflict prevention and management of biodiversity. They are places that provide local solutions to global challenges. Biosphere reserves include terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems. Each site promotes solutions reconciling the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use.

As with WHS, states nominate their chosen sites which are then assessed against standard criteria and conditions before they are eligible to be listed as part of the BR network. Biosphere Reserves involve local communities and all interested stakeholders in planning and management. They integrate three main "functions":

- Conservation of biodiversity and cultural diversity
- Economic development that is socio-culturally and environmentally sustainable
- Logistic support, underpinning development through research, monitoring, education and training

To assist in achieving these complex objectives reserves should be structured into core protected areas, buffer zones, and a transition or co-operation area. Buffer zones include sustainable management activities compatible with the needs of the core area and including sustainable tourism and recreation. The transition area can include a wide range of economic activities and human settlements. The aim here is to develop these in a sustainable way that is linked to, and compatible with, the rest of the reserve. The Seville strategy (UNESCO, 1995) identified four objectives for BR: to conserve natural and cultural diversity, to provide models of land management and sustainable development, to provide for research, monitoring, education and training, and to strengthen the BR network itself. Under each main objective the strategy lists several more specific objectives and actions, and indicates whether the latter apply at international, national, or reserve level. Section 18.2 of the strategy lists reserve level activities or objectives that are most relevant for this study. The Seville+5 review of BRs (UNESCO, 2001) identified some additional initiatives that would improve the effectiveness of the network and its reserves. In particular, the concept of “quality economies” was introduced, which deals with the potential of branding and marketing, and the need for a stronger socio-economic perspective on BRs.

### **Does the Davagh Dark Skies project meet the BR criteria?**

As with Davagh as a dark sky project alone, not being enough to attain WHS accreditation, so too, is it with the Biosphere Reserve status designation. However, we could apply the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve status to the wider landscape concentrating on the peatlands and water systems with the establishment of core protected areas, buffer zones and a transition or co-operation area. This status

is very suitable to peatland areas and areas with little light pollution with 'leaky boundaries. The emphasis would be more on the peatlands and the associated cultural landscape. The world consists of many different ecosystems, and in every one of them, people have learned how to live in harmony with their environment for generations. The role of a Biosphere Reserve is to uncover this knowledge, to use it, and to adapt it for the future. The Davagh landscape is a classic example of an outdoor teaching laboratory of human settlement, ecology, archaeology and astronomy that can help teach and improve the relationship between people and their local environment at a global scale due to its unique landscape terrestrial and celestial mix.

Incorporation of the peatlands surrounding the Davagh area also contribute to the more a subtle theme referenced in modern Irish history, extending to political and cultural issues as well as permeating social and economic ones. There is a picture richer in detail and more complex in its development than traditional images of the "bog" would suggest. This is timely, given the current political and environmental debates, and it is original in that bog study is truly cross-disciplinary and totally interconnected. Further, Blanket bogs have appeared on the WHS tentative list for Scotland at The Flow Country in Caithness and Sutherland<sup>4</sup> and indeed a sub-peat archaeology of a farming landscape at the The Céide Fields and North West Mayo Boglands is on the Republic of Ireland's tentative list. What makes this proposal unique is the addition of astronomy and celestial landscapes to the mix.

Peatlands invite a whole academy of sciences to their study, but the cultural element is often neglected. You cannot have one without the other. If we add the threatened ecology of bogs to the resources of literature, archaeology, and other elements of culture the possibilities are limitless for their survival. The arts and sciences do not meet often enough. There are few other substances that can join the built, natural, and cultural elements of our heritage as much as our bogs. Joseph Beuys, one of the world's most influential post-war avant-garde artists described our bogs as, "the liveliest elements in the European landscape, not just from the point of view of flora, fauna, birds and animals, but as storing pieces of life, mystery and chemical change, preservers of ancient history." These contentious terrains can throw a light on the past and help us look to future.

### **The social, economic and environmental benefits of World Heritage Sites and Biosphere Reserve status**

As previously noted, UNESCO designations are granted to sites satisfying several criteria and are intended to contribute towards a series of economic, social and environmental objectives relating to sustainable development. Evaluation of the impact, efficiency and effectiveness of designations can contribute to their utility and is increasingly promoted by various bodies. For the purposes of this report, we have drawn on the literature and previous studies to generate a broad assessment framework that comprise eight high level categories of potential environmental and social benefit of designation:

- Environment - Biodiversity / Climate change mitigation; Landscape / greenspace / light pollution; Ecosystem services
- Economy – Employment and income; Business opportunity
- Social – Social inclusion; Health and well-being; Education and training

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nature.scot/green-light-peatlands-partnership-apply-unesco-world-heritage-site-status>

In summary, there is little hard evidence in the literature about the benefits of UNESCO sites. Some work has been done around the world, often focusing on tourism benefits. None of this indicates how much benefit the designation itself generates compared with the role of the underlying heritage resources. Previous research has shown that some benefits are relatively well-evidenced for some sites – including World Heritage Site status as a catalyst for more effective conservation, partnership working, civic pride, social capital, learning and education and additional funding and investment. But the existing body of research suggests the tourism and economic development impacts are limited or that the existing evidence base does not justify some of the claims made of WHS status.

However, previous research methodologies have failed to do justice to the complexities of World Heritage Sites; tending to ignore the differing motivations and actions of sites. This has resulted in a body of research that has shown some sites that have achieved a range of socio-economic impacts but offered no framework for understanding why or how these were achieved in some places and not others. More evidence is available about the influence of the designations on governance processes. UNESCO guidelines encourage participation by a wide range of stakeholders, and this seems to have been put into effect at sites in many countries. Nonetheless, many of the sites appear to deliver four key benefits<sup>5</sup>:

- Enhanced leverage to pull in funding for a wide range of purposes
- Stimulus to awareness raising and educational initiatives
- Enhanced tourism image and profile
- Enhanced opportunities for niche branding of local products and services.

However, weighing-up the relative costs and benefits associated with any UNESCO designation is a difficult task since identification and quantification are hindered by several factors. First, the objectives of a designation may be described in terms of processes and outputs rather than outcomes. It may be possible to translate them into outcome benefits, but for practical reasons it may be better for the evaluation to focus on the effectiveness and efficiency of achievement of the stated objectives.

Second, economic, social and environmental systems tend to be dynamic rather than static in nature and have complex spatial linkages, that is, cause and effect may be separated by distance in both time and space, and to evolve over time. Third, scientific data and understanding of systems and sites is rarely complete. We still do not know the extent of this sub peat archaeological and celestial landscape. In other words, the data available, and models derived from it, may fail to capture true relationships and situation adequately. Fourth, concerns about system complexity and an understandable desire to measure more easily observable results, may have led to monitoring that is directed towards aspects of the designation or compliance process rather than actual outcomes.

Fifth, evaluation entails careful consideration of “additionality” – what would have happened in the absence of the designation? To put it another way, as the flip-side of the opportunity cost coin, what additional benefits have been gained? As with chances forgone, benefits gained can be difficult to discern – especially if the possibility of “displacement” from other sites is considered. For example, income generated within a designated site may merely be at the expense of income lost from neighbouring areas. Finally, even if cost and benefit categories can be identified and measured it is still difficult to compare and aggregate across categories. It may be unacceptable to use the same yardstick to compare certain factors, or even to compare them at all.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://icomos.fa.utl.pt/documentos/2009/WHSTheEconomicGainFinalReport.pdf>

## Conclusions

Mid Ulster District Council's proposal to have Davagh Dark Sky Park officially designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site is ambitious and should be highly commended for both its vision and ambition. However, the challenges to be faced in achieving the designation are technically complex, time consuming and will certainly require a high degree of flexibility in establishing the underlying framework goals to meet the designating criteria set out by UNESCO.

One of the most critical decisions that Council will have to make relates to the designating feature. UNESCO have clearly stated that dark skies cannot be nominated to the World Heritage List within the existing framework of the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. This, however, does not mean that the site cannot progress. In this scoping report we have reviewed the criteria and believe that an amendment to the initial proposal made by Council that gives consideration to the Davagh Dark Sky Park as a wider "in combination" bid that incorporates archaeology and peatland at a landscape scale would allow for progression to the Tentative List. In doing so, it is feasible for us to consider the Dark Sky Park as a palimpsest of attributes that include the archaeology of Davagh, Beaghmore and Broughderg as being creative acts and a response to a sense of place and balance between earth and sky. The context of a prehistoric landscape provides a focus and an index of human continuity and community since prehistoric times resulting in a lived richness of place-names, ecology, archaeology, astronomy and cultural history that cannot be separated. Combining this with the geological and geomorphological importance of the region and alongside the global importance of the extensive peatland setting, it can therefore be argued that the site meets the following WHS selection criteria:

- To represent a masterpiece of human creative genius
- To exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design
- To be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history
- To be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change

A second factor to consider is the challenge of getting onto the Tentative List. Competition for a place on the list is significant and the assessment criteria are robust. Despite this, we believe that if the Dark Skies project is considered in combination with the wider landscape attributes cited above there is every possibility that the proposal could progress. It is also very important to remember that the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport can only nominate one site per year from the Tentative List to the World Heritage List so successful designation is likely to take a significant length of time.

The resources required to progress a successful bid are difficult to quantify but can be significant. Apart from the development of relevant reports, management plans and monitoring documentation there is also a need to put in place integrated communication methodologies to accommodate partnership development, governance arrangements, community engagement and sustainability plans.

Despite the challenges, we see this as a feasible venture for Council that should be investigated further



## Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

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29 September 2020

Ms Charmain Bell  
[Charmain.Bell@midulstercouncil.org](mailto:Charmain.Bell@midulstercouncil.org)

Our Ref:  
TO2020/17221/NB

Dear Ms Bell,

Thank you for your email of 17 August, regarding your interest in pursuing the nomination of a site for World Heritage inscription. I am replying as a member of the Ministerial Support Team. I apologise sincerely for the lengthy delay in your receiving a reply.

DCMS act on behalf of the UK as a state party to the World Heritage Convention, and is responsible for nominating new sites for inscription by the World Heritage Committee. Each state party may only nominate a maximum of one new site per year. Most recently, the Jodrell Bank Observatory was inscribed as the UK's 32nd World Heritage Site in 2019.

The development of nominations and the management of sites is largely undertaken at local level, and must include commitments to protect the site. Inscription, if properly planned for and leveraged, can bring benefits such as increased tourism and international awareness.

The first step to achieving World Heritage inscription is for a site to be included on the UK's tentative list of sites. This list is periodically reviewed by the government, typically every 10 years. To be considered for the tentative list, a site must have the potential to demonstrate outstanding universal value, authenticity and integrity, as set out in the convention. When the next review of the tentative list is initiated, guidelines will be published with further information for prospective sites. As yet, the scope of this review and timeframes for its completion have not been set. We will endeavour to keep you informed with any updates.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Neil Bedi  
**Ministerial Support Team**



<b>Report on</b>	Autumn Corporate Events Update
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Michael Browne
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Sharon Arbuthnot

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To provide the Council with an update on autumn corporate events and identify savings to be reallocated to the COVID-19 Response Fund.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	The planning for all autumn corporate events has been a challenging and a fluid environment, as a team we are re-evaluating our plans daily to ensure the safety of the rate payer and protect the reputational and financial interests of the Council.
2.2	The recovery of our town centre businesses and the safety of our residents and visitors to the district are paramount and is at the forefront of all our planning.
2.3	The increase of positive COVID-19 cases within the Mid Ulster District Council area and Northern Ireland has been fully considered and is continually being monitored.
2.4	The introduction of recent restrictions and possible further restrictions over what is known as the "Flu" season has also been carefully considered and has influenced the proposals and planning of the Halloween and Christmas events.
2.5	The corporate events teams have also been working very closely alongside other councils' events teams over the last number of months, sharing ideas and concerns which now reflects a collective approach in the delivery of safe events to mark Halloween and Christmas.
2.6	Prior to and during events, the teams are always advised by the Mid Ulster Council Corporate Health & Safety team and other agencies, to ensure the highest level of health and safety, when planning major events.

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	Christmas celebrations will be different in Mid Ulster this year. With the recommendation of no mass gatherings of people, but in a safe way enhancing the atmospheres within our town centres and instilling civic pride with our residents amidst these uncertain times.
3.2	The objective this autumn/winter will be to support the town centre recovery plans with ongoing consultations being held with our Town Centre Forums.
3.3	The switching on of town centre Christmas lights cannot be promoted with the concern of large numbers of people gathering in our town centre to watch the lights coming on. The marketing message will be to support our town centre businesses on the run up to Christmas. Enhanced lighting; pop up entertainment; Drive by Santa; window dressing competitions with businesses etc., will form the Christmas celebrations for 2020. All other safe options and suggestions from stakeholders will be considered within the timescales and reduced budgets.
3.4	In addition to the above we also recommend enhanced festive lighting on Council buildings, which we are currently investigating across Mid Ulster to encourage people to visit our town centres during the festive period.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial:  Savings from the Halloween & Christmas events of £110,000 (across Corporate Events and Town Centre Budgets) have been identified. This money will be reallocated to Council's COVID-19 Response Fund.
	Human: n/a
	Risk Management: Adhering to the Executive guidance and advice from our Health and Safety team is paramount.
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A

<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	The Council don't organise any formal or planned events that will bring people together in numbers and may potentially encourage none adherence to the current government guidance and measures across all towns for both Halloween and Christmas.
5.2	Reallocate savings of £110,000 from town centre and events budgets to the Council's COVID-19 Response Fund.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	N/A



<b>Report on</b>	Decade of Anniversaries - Commemorations 2021/22
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thurs 15 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Tony McCance Head of Culture & Arts
<b>Contact Officer(s)</b>	Tony McCance, Head of Culture & Arts Claire Linney, Head of Community Development Michael Browne, Head of Tourism and Events Nigel Hill, Head of Parks Fiona McKeown, Head of Economic Development

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To seek approval for the Decade of Anniversary Commemoration activities for 2021 – 2022 financial year, subject to budget approvals and subject to COVID 19 restrictions that may apply.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	As members will be aware the decade of anniversaries activities have been taking place from 2012 up to 2022.
2.2	A range of activities and events to commemorate the Decade of Anniversaries is presented by both Culture & Arts, Good Relations, Economic Development, Parks, Tourism and Events and are designed and to support both Council led and community group activity for commemorations during the 2021/22 financial year.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	The Decade of Anniversaries programme is delivered through Culture & Arts and Community Services (Good Relations) as part of the Culture & Arts programme and TBUC Together Building a United Community, with the support of other Council services, including Parks, Economic Development and Tourism/Events.
3.2	The Decade of Anniversaries continues to be delivered under the CRC/HLF principles of Remembering and support in line with the CRC/HLF Decade of Anniversaries Toolkit, 'Understanding our Past, and Shaping our Future'.  The Principles of Remembering: 1) Start from the historical facts; 2) Recognise the implications and consequences of what happened; 3) Understand that different perceptions and interpretations exist; and

	<p>4) Show how events and activities can deepen understanding of the period.  5) All to be seen in the context of an 'inclusive and accepting society'</p>
3.3	<p>It is envisaged that the activities proposed will be delivered during the 2021/22 financial year with a concentration within the Spring and Summer and early Autumn period.</p>
3.4	<p>It should also be noted that all activities proposed are subject to any COVID-19 Government restrictions that may apply at the time of planning and delivery of the events and activity proposed.</p>
3.5	<p><b><u>Culture and Arts activity proposals</u></b></p> <p><b>Community Grant Support</b>  The Community, Arts, Culture and Heritage Grant programme will open in February 2021 and groups will be able to apply to this for activities relating to cultural expression which will include the decade of anniversaries period. These could include community planting schemes, heritage at a local level e.g. town names and place name origins etc. exploring and discovering what it was like to live in 1921.</p> <p>As in the current financial year (2020/21), groups will be requested to develop their projects based on an ability to deliver their proposed activity in a deliverable format. Flexibility of delivery methods will be built in to the programme to permit groups to amend the delivery format based on any COVID-19 social distancing protocol which may apply at the time of proposed project delivery.</p> <p><b>Exhibitions</b>  Officers are currently working with colleagues in our neighbour Council area of Fermanagh and Omagh to display an exhibition to be commissioned and which will largely focus on events of 1921. Tentative dates have been secured to host the exhibition for July 2021 at the Burnavon Theatre.</p> <p>Further exhibitions will be planned/delivered, pending availability of other suitable exhibitions created and offered for touring. The Community Relations Council is currently looking at a number of regional delivery agents including The Public Records Office NI (PRONI), and The Junction regarding suitable exhibition material for this period.</p> <p>In addition Mid Ulster District Council has a catalogue of images/photographs of towns and villages in the former Dungannon Council area and these will be utilised to form an exhibition to be displayed at Hill of the O'Neill and Ranfurly House and Arts and Visitor Centre, Dungannon during the commemorative period.</p> <p>Budget £3,000</p>

3.6	<p><b>Drama Productions</b></p> <p>In the absence of regional touring drama productions, it is proposed that Drama productions based on the events of 1921 will be sought and commissioned through Council's strategic arts organisations. It is envisaged that potentially 2-3 groups may produce dramas to commemorate the 1921 period of events.</p> <p>These will be commissioned for stage delivery and will be delivered via the strategic arts groups own theatres and or Burnavon Theatre in Spring/Summer 2021.</p> <p>Budget £12,000</p> <p><b>Education Programme</b></p> <p>The Nerve Centre is currently engaged with the Community Relations Council (CRC) regarding the development of a range of educational materials that relate to the period of 1921. These will be made available online and virtually for schools to access support the delivery of 1921 history projects within our schools. It is envisaged that there will be post primary and primary level materials available. Council will partner with CRC and the Nerve centre in making these available and targeting these at our local Mid Ulster schools.</p> <p>Budget £6,000 (Good Relations £5,000) Total Budget required from Culture &amp; Arts Services - £16,000</p> <p><b>Good Relations Activity proposals</b></p> <p>Council led lecture Series</p> <p>Good Relations will deliver a further lecture series in 2021 along with CRC and historians focusing on the period 1921. This will be planned for September/October 2021 and will be arranged for both shared venue provision and/or online if required. The lecture series will build on the annual lecture series that has taken place since 2012.</p> <p>Budget £5,000</p> <p><b>Community led Decade of Commemoration</b></p> <p>A Decade of Anniversaries Fund is available to groups for decade of commemoration events. Events/activities must be in keeping with the CRC/HLF Decade of Commemoration guidelines. Officers will support all groups with applications and development of events/activities. Funding is up to £2,000 with 50% funding by each group. Expenditure to be supported will include: speakers, venues, bus travel, exhibition costs, accommodation costs in line with Council policy, and refreshments up to a maximum of 20% of the total project cost.</p> <p>Budget £20,000</p>
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3.7	<p><b>Economic Development</b></p> <p>Women have played a key role in the decade of anniversaries alongside key landmarks such as the right to vote; it is proposed to facilitate an event, similar to previous events delivered by Council celebrating the valuable contribution made by women, both currently and over the last 100 years as leaders, entrepreneurs, visionaries and innovators.</p> <p>Budget £6,000</p>
3.8	<p><b>Tourism/Events</b></p> <p>COVID 19 restrictions permitting, to explore the possibility of staging an outdoor concert in a suitable outdoor location within the region. The concert will recognise the range of musical talent within Mid Ulster interspersed with readings from our recognised Mid Ulster writers and poets.</p> <p>Budget £15,000</p> <p>Further activity that is identified that is festival in nature can be supported under the Community Festival Fund, which is a rolling fund, again subject to COVID-19 restrictions, advice and guidance.</p>
3.9	<p><b>Parks</b></p> <p>Working with local schools, it is proposed to create a garden or woodland (100 trees) project within the district (location to be determined) creating a lasting legacy of the commemorative period.</p> <p>Budget £5,000</p>
3.10	<p><b>Regional Delivery</b></p> <p>It is recognised that there will also be a regional delivery aspect of the 2021 anniversary period, led by Government. It is proposed that linkages with Community Relations Council/Heritage Lottery and Northern Ireland Office will continue to develop over the months ahead, with a view to securing additional support mechanisms that will be available to Councils and Community organisations to ensure further engagement taking place at a local level.</p> <p>Additional projects will include the delivery of a ceramic Art project where school children will be afforded the opportunity to work with local artists to create momento pieces of pottery/ceramics depicting what the 2021 commemorative period means to them. The pieces will form part of an exhibition which will be displayed through our venues and the participating children will have a momento of the 2021 anniversary period. Subject to support centrally, this project will be rolled out through primary schools across the District.</p>



<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<p><b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b></p> <p>Financial: Total Budget £72,000 alongside funding from small arts, community and heritage grants and local festivals grants (pending adherence to social distancing protocol)</p> <p>Arts and Culture £16,000 (subject to 2021/2022 budget approvals)</p> <p>Good Relations £30,000 (to be confirmed re 2021 – 2022 plan and subject to 2021/2022 budget approvals)</p> <p>Events £15,000 (subject to 2021/2022 budget approvals)</p> <p>Parks £5,000 (subject to 2021/2022 budget approvals)</p> <p>Economic Development £6,000 (subject to 2021/2022 budget approvals)</p> <p>Human: No additional staff support required</p> <p>Risk Management: The impact of COVID -19 may place restrictions on specific events taking place into 2021/22 financial year. This will be monitored and if required, alternative activities will be put in place to ensure that community engagement can take place via other means and were social distancing requirements will not be impacted.</p>
<b>4.2</b>	<p><b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b></p> <p>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications: The Decade of Anniversaries and the commemorations in 2021/22 financial year will continue to be delivered under the CRC/HLF principles of Ethnical Remembering and support in line with the CRC/HLF Decade of Anniversaries Toolkit, 'Understanding our Past, and Shaping our Future'.</p> <p>Rural Needs Implications: Rural Needs have been considered in the development of the programme proposed and with regard to participation and involvement of groups and schools in project delivery.</p>

<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	To approve the Decade of Anniversary Commemoration 2021-2022 programme as outlined under section 3 of this report and the funding commitment required, across the services detailed, totalling £72,000 from 2020/21 service budget allocations.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	N/a

<b>Report on</b>	Community Development
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Claire Linney, Head of Community Development
<b>Contact Officers</b>	Philip Clarke - Community Services Manager, Oliver Morgan – Good Relations Manager, Michael McCrory - PCSP 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	Grants – to agree the rolling good relations grants & small community, arts and heritage grant appeal
1.2	Emergency Support Funding; DFC funding
1.3	Peace IV – to note the Peace IV update
1.4	Community Development – to note the recommendation regarding Good Relations Leadership group and community development update
2.0	Background
2.1	Community Grants – Council annually delivers two rolling community grants programmes; Good Relations and Local Community Festivals. Local Community Festivals is on hold due to Covid 19. Good Relations grants are to continue, where possible, using innovative methods of delivery.
2.2	Emergency Support Funding; DFC has allocated a further £85,548 for emergency support to Mid Ulster. This is the second tranche following the first allocation of £63,300.  A further additional fund of £81,195 has been offered to Mid Ulster based on a proposal to be submitted; which is targeted at a Food Partnership Fund £42,774 & a Financial Inclusion Partnership Fund £38,421.
2.3	Peace IV – Council delivers on the Peace IV Action Plan through guidance and engagement with the Peace IV Partnership.
2.4	Community Development includes the following areas: Community Support, Good Relations, PCSP, Connecting Pomeroy and facilitation of Community Planning.

3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Grants - Rolling Good Relations – 1 application is recommended for award totalling £1,100- <b>Please refer to Appendix 1.</b></p> <p>Council received an appeal to the small community, arts and heritage grant fund from Cookstown Royal British Legion Branch. The grant was deemed ineligible due to perceived duplicate grant applications to the same strand of funding. In light of further information provided, by both the Cookstown Royal British Legion Social Club and Cookstown Royal British Legion Branch, in relation to the venue grant awarded and the grant deemed duplicate, this has been reviewed. Officers have now confirmed that there is a distinction between both groups and clarity has been provided regarding their cultural activities listed within the venues grant. As a result, the grant has been assessed and is proposed for award at £720.</p>
3.2.	Emergency Support
3.2.1	<p>As members will be aware, an allocation of £63,300 was received previously from DFC to support with the issues relating to Covid 19. This was allocated as follows: £50,000 to foodbanks and £13,300 to support community groups delivering for their communities during the lockdown period. This was matched by Council at just over 50% for areas of delivery along with support for PPE.</p> <p>DFC has allocated a further tranche of emergency response funding of £85,548. It is proposed to allocate the emergency response funding partly to support mental health provision and partly to support community led debt management support.</p> <p>Community led mental health support (via counselling) £50,000  Engagement with the sector has identified an increased demand for community led/provided counselling which can be attributed to Covid 19. It is proposed to allocate awards per town area to progress forward and allow for In-depth engagement with the sector regarding support needs and capacity to deliver. The social enterprise sector (Mid Ulster Counselling Service, STEPs, The Olive Branch, Vineyard &amp; Link Counselling) and other Mid Ulster community certified counselling providers may be identified. The allocations are indicative to areas and capacity for the social enterprise sector to deliver. Alongside support, the organisations will be facilitated to come together and link and network to share good practice and maximize resources and link with relevant agencies as required The proposed allocation is as follows:</p> <p>Magherafelt £10,000  Cookstown £10,000  Maghera £7500  Dungannon &amp; Clogher area £15,000  Coalisland £7500</p> <p>Targets to be set once further engagement has taken place with the sector; however a provisional minimum target would be supporting over 1000 sessions over the winter period, over 300 people.</p>

3.2.2	<p>Engagement continues to take place with EA youth and their FLARE programme – supporting post primary schools and young people with mental health issues and REACH working with schools to support young people at key stage 2-4 where attainment may be falling.</p> <p>CAP Debt Management Service £10,000 CAP is a national programme, delivered in Mid Ulster (led by CAP and hosted by Hope located in Magherafelt); it operates across Mid Ulster. It supports people in debt by taking on the management of the debt (this is through the national CAP service that has agreements with many credit service providers). It is proposed to fund increased provision for the CAP service to support people in serious debt. CAP also works closely with services to take referrals as often people in serious debt requiring debt management are struggling with stress and mental health issues.</p> <p>It is proposed to retain the remainder of the emergency support funding of £25,000 until further information is provide in relation to lockdown over the winter period.</p> <p>Additional funding, dependent upon a proposed submission to DFC, of £81,195 is also available but they have stipulated this award has to be split as follows: DFC Food Partnership Fund of £42,774 &amp; DFC Financial Inclusion Partnership Fund of £38,421</p> <p>Food Partnership Fund of £42,774 – It is proposed to allocate the funding towards emergency food support, through the registered food banks (linked to Fairshare and /or Trussell Trust) and SVP. This funding would allow them to continue to support people in a time of crisis. The foodbanks are currently supported to network to allow for partnership and a shared approach to addressing need. The average value of food parcel is £35 - £50 for a larger family, either in food items or vouchers.</p> <p>Financial Inclusion Partnership Fund of £38,421 – It is proposed to allocate the funding towards fuel poverty and the provision of emergency fuel support through the foodbanks and SVP. This will be in the form of a fuel voucher of £50 - £60. This will contribute to the Council oil stamp scheme, which allows people to save for oil through purchase of stamps.</p> <p>Expenditure £81,195 Dungannon Vineyard Foodbank £10,000 SVP £7,500 Magherafelt Hope Food bank £10,000 &amp; SVP £7,500 Cookstown Foodbank £7,500 -SVP (drop in food bank &amp; voucher) £10,000 Coalisland Foodbank £5000 &amp; SVP £5,000 Clogher Valley RBL Food Bank £5000 &amp; SVP £5000 Maghera Foodbank £5000 &amp; SVP £5000</p> <p>The above will be based on demand and phased payments linked to regular audits.</p> <p>Targets: To support over 1200 food parcels (average value £35 per parcel/voucher) To support over 500 people (to allow for a 3-5 week emergency intervention over approximate 4 weeks to allow income support or emergency to be addressed) To support over 1000 fuel vouchers (average value £50 - £60)</p>
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<p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p>	<p>To support over 750 people to allow for a small number that may require a second level of support. Time period – 5 - 6 months to cover Autumn, Winter</p> <p><b>Peace IV</b></p> <p>An extension has been granted by SEUPB for delivery of Peace IV to June 2021.</p> <p>Programmes are continuing to deliver as per the last update report, in alternative format, as agreed by SEUPB.</p> <p>It was proposed by the Peace IV Partnership that Council would formally write to SEUPB seeking a meeting to address the issue of claims and timeline to receive outstanding funding.</p> <p><b>Community Development</b></p> <p>Community Support – The Community Support team continues to work with groups regarding the delivery of grants to respond to their communities.</p> <p>Good Relations – As a follow up to the recommendation to host a Member meeting to discuss good relations issues such as the elimination of the display of offensive posters, effigies, a meeting was led by the Chair of Council to discuss this. From early conversation to date It is recommended for discussion that a working group be established to allow conversation around these issues and others that may arise under sectarianism and racism; and hate crime within the District. It is proposed the working group would have party leaders &amp; independent who wish to be involved, and operate under TBUC (Together Building a United Community) of Good Relations and report any recommendations through Development Committee.</p> <p>Good Relations continues to deliver the updated Plan through innovative and flexible models in line with social distancing requirements.</p> <p>The teams are continuing to support in the development and delivery of Mid Ulster poverty plan and initiatives.</p> <p>The PCSP team has commenced delivery of the action plan in alternative formats as agreed by DOJ and NIPB.</p> <p>All of the partnership meetings are continuing via Zoom to accommodate members and external partners.</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p><b>Other Considerations</b></p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p><b><u>Financial &amp; Human Resources Implications</u></b></p> <p>Good Relations awards £1,100 Small community, arts &amp; heritage grant £720</p>

	<p>Emergency Support Funding – Tranche II £85,548, Financial and Food Emergency Fund £81,195 based on proposal to be submitted.</p> <p><b><u>Professional Support</u></b> None</p>
<b>4.2</b>	<p><b><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></b> None</p>
<b>4.3</b>	<p><b><u>Risk Management Implications</u></b> None</p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	Grants - To agree the grant award recommendation for Good Relations & grant appeal award for the small community, arts & heritage grant
5.2	Emergency Support Funding – to agree the proposed delivery and allocation
5.3	Peace IV – To agree the Peace IV Partnership and note the Peace IV Update
5.4	Community Development – to discuss the recommendation for a Good Relations leadership group and to note the update report
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Appendix 1 Grant Award Recommendations

## Appendix 1

### Good Relations October 2020 (Maximum £1,200)

No	Organisation Name	Organisation Aim	Title Of Event/project	Band	Requested	Awarded
1	Ausome Kids	Community	Diversity Community for Kids	1	£1,100	£1,100
						<b>£1,100</b>

### Unsuccessful

Polish Anglers NI	Open International Course Match	Did not meet minimum threshold
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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%



<b>Report on</b>	Railway Park Action Plan
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Head of Parks
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Nigel Hill

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To update and seek approval from Members on planned actions associated to addressing issues in relation to anti-social behaviour in Railway Park, Dungannon.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	<p>Generally, community feedback on local parks and green spaces in Mid Ulster District Council emphasises the very positive benefits they and their families gain from their local green spaces – the way in which they help build a sense of community, the opportunities they provide for relaxation and escape, and the space they provide for exercise and recreation. However, they also tell us about how some parks have become neglected in their areas and how anti-social behaviour has become high on the list of things that they were worried about. People are concerned about the way that some parks seem to attract anti-social behaviour. They see that this in turn puts off other members of the community, like older people and mums with kids, creating areas that people are scared to visit. Evidence supports the public perception that poor maintenance of parks can attract anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Encouragingly, it also provides examples of places where a combination of good design, management and maintenance has transformed less attractive areas back into popular community spaces. Case studies also suggests that investing in creating good-quality parks and green spaces, which are well staffed and provide a range of attractive facilities for the local community, can be a far more effective use of resources than security interventions or blanket use of CCTV albeit balanced control measures and monitoring will always be part of an effective management model. We therefore acknowledge a broad-spectrum consensus that investing in park staff, in good design, and in the ongoing maintenance of spaces is vital if parks are to be the much-valued community assets that our communities have told us they want.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	Dungannon's third largest park at just under twenty acres, Railway Park is a vital green space in the south-west of the town providing much needed recreational space and play along with access routes to shopping, community event space, services and transport links for school children and commuters. However, unfortunately Railway Park has, like some parks, a history associated to anti-

	social behaviour. Regular incidents recorded refer to acts of significant vandalism and damage, disorderly behaviour associated to alcohol abuse and emergency responses to assault and organised fights. Local neighbourhood policing and PCSP recognise Railway Park as a 'hot spot' because of the number and nature of the incidents associated to the location.
3.2	Recently released statics from PSNI 12 months from 1st September 2019 to 31st August 2020 recorded 65,872 anti-social behaviour incidents in Northern Ireland, an increase of 9,776 (17.4%) on the previous 12 months. The trend generally followed the same direction as that seen in the previous twelve months, up to March 2020. The introduction of lockdown measures resulted in substantially higher levels of anti-social behaviour incidents, most notably in April and May 2020. When compared to the same months in 2019, figures for April to August 2020 were higher by 2,957, 3,272, 1,822, 1,412, and 1,378 respectively. This is reflected at a local level with Mid Ulster Policing District recording an increase of reported anti-social incidents of 19.4% over a 12 month period September 2019 to August 2020 in comparison to that of the previous year. These figures include 65 reports of ASB, 22 reports of criminal damage and 3 firework incidents in the Dungannon area.
3.3	Council Parks Service have recorded 12 reported incidents in Railway Park associated to anti-social activities and vandalism/damage over the period from 1st January 2019 to July 2020.
3.4	Mid Ulster District Council are progressing with significant redevelopment proposals for Railway Park in access of £1m on a twelve month works programme, scheduled for commencement in early 2021. The Council, at an early stage shared concept design proposals with the PSNI's Crime Prevention Design Service. This approach was to ensure that all feasible aspects of community safety were considered and where possible incorporated into hard and soft landscaping and infrastructure design features. (appendix)
3.5	Council took this approach as an initial and fundamental step of an action plan to combat the current held perceptions that Railway Park is not a safe environment. The creation of a safe environment not only relies on the physical aspects of design and creation of visitor friendly hard and soft landscapes, it invariably also relies on co-ordinated cross agency/organisational partnerships, sustainable management structures, continued investment, robust maintenance programmes and uncompromised community support to create the shared utopia that successful public parks possess. The formulation of a synchronized action plan to meet the challenges associated to Railway Park is a focus for the Council and in particular the Parks Service and should be for other partner organisations.
3.6	<p><b>Works previously carried out between November 2018 and March 2019 in Railway Park to reduce anti-social behaviour included the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tree and foliage removal along three specific sections of the Park to remove tightly packed vegetation which encroached the main pathway to improve visitor visibility and safety. It also improved soiling and making good the respective areas of approximately 200 linear metres – approximate cost £17,345.</li> </ul>

3.7

- Upgrade of 14 number pathway lights from 250 watt metal Halide to 11 watt LED fitting at a cost of £4,480. This measure enhanced lighting quality and supported safety improvements while also resulting in energy consumption improvement.

**The benefits of the works targeted the following objectives:**

- Improved Access and Movement - clear paths that provide for convenient movement without compromising security.
- Visibility - Walkways that are publicly accessible, overlooked and well lit.
- Activity - Safe walkways that generate increased users that the level of human activity is appropriate and creates a reduced risk of crime and sense of safety at all times.

RAILWAY PARK ACTION PLAN

Improvement Objective: Reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour and the perception that anti-social behaviour is a significant factor on public visits to Railway Park

Key Milestones:

1. A reduction in the actual number of anti-social behaviour incidents reported
2. A reduction in the actual number of recorded incidents of criminal damage
3. Increased number of community involvement projects, schemes and events in Railway Park

Actions	Service Responsible for Implementation	Time scale	Resource Implications	Outcome
Clearing of light restrictive vegetation and site lines - foliage removal and clearing of light restrictive vegetation/under growth and site lines along the 200m banked section. Some other minor tree/shrubbery works to improve light transfer and	Property Services / Grounds maintenance / Parks Service	1 mth	Estimated cost = £4,800 - not within current budget	Public reassurance, reduction in fear of crime and anti-social behaviour

	site lines at pedestrian access points and around the underpasses.					
	<b>Lighting Enhancement</b> - Installation of a new lighting under both underpasses, and a new light at the Ulsterbus access point which currently have no or very limited lighting.	Property Services	2mths	Estimated cost = £3,750 - not within current budget	Public reassurance, reduction in fear of crime and anti-social behaviour	
	<b>Lighting columns</b> - One option working with existing columns is to change the heads to double heads which are design to 'throw' the light further rather predominantly downwards. However a longer term solution is required to the overall lighting issue in the Park.	Property Services	2mths	Estimated cost = £5,775 - not within current budget. (Focusing on seven ASB hotspot locations indicated by the PSNI.)	Public reassurance, reduction in fear of crime and anti-social behaviour	
	More co-ordinated approach to interventions identify list of interventions provided by all agencies / organisations	Parks Service / PCSP / PSNI	3mths	Within budget	Co-ordinated approach to tackling anti-social behaviour	
	Visible presence in Railway Park	Parks Service / Property Services /	1mth	Within budget	Increased public reassurance	

		Grounds maintenance / PSNI			Reduction in anti-social behaviour	
	Targeted response to hot spot areas Need for innovative approach to evidence gathering for prolific offenders	Parks Service / PCSP / PSNI	3mths	Within budget	Significant impact on recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour	
	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Service Responsible for Implementation</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	
	Detached Youth Work Focussed youth work in identified areas of concern to work with young people and target groups	EA Youth Service/ PCSP / PSNI	4/6mths	Within Budget or additional funding for specific Activities and Resources £TBC	Young People engaged with the Youth Service. Reduced number of reports of ASB. Young People engaged in Diversionary and Alternative Activities	
	Develop target group social media / awareness campaign	Parks Service / Marketing – Communications / Community Dev / PCSP	1/2mths	Within budget	Improved community engagement and public reassurance, reduction in fear of crime and anti-social behaviour	

	<p>Review staff resources / recruitment / role of Park staff/utilisation of temporary security. Consider staffing parks after dark in conjunction with neighbourhood policing initiatives</p>	<p>Parks Service / PCSP /PSNI</p>	<p>3/6mths</p>	<p>Additional budget would be needed – requirements to be further considered.</p>	<p>Reduction in anti-social behaviour incidents in parks after dark.</p>																									
	<table><tr><th>Actions</th><th>Service Responsible for Implementation</th><th>Timescale</th><th>Resource Implications</th><th>Outcome</th></tr><tr><td><p>Develop activities for young people / target groups within the park Consider joint use of community premises</p></td><td><p>Parks Service / EA Youth Service / PCSP</p></td><td><p>3/6mths</p></td><td><p>Within budget</p></td><td><p>Joined-up approach to the provision of community play and diversionary activities</p></td></tr><tr><td><p>Enforcement e.g., Drinking dog fouling, rubbish</p></td><td><p>Environmental Health / Parks Service /PCSP / PSNI</p></td><td><p>1/3mths</p></td><td><p>Within budget</p></td><td><p>Reduction in reported incidents in parks associated to Drinking /dog foul / litter</p></td></tr><tr><td><p>Railway Park Capital works Programme</p></td><td><p>Technical Services / Parks Service</p></td><td><p>12/18 mths</p></td><td><p>Within budget</p></td><td><p>Re development of Public Park</p></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>	Actions	Service Responsible for Implementation	Timescale	Resource Implications	Outcome	<p>Develop activities for young people / target groups within the park Consider joint use of community premises</p>	<p>Parks Service / EA Youth Service / PCSP</p>	<p>3/6mths</p>	<p>Within budget</p>	<p>Joined-up approach to the provision of community play and diversionary activities</p>	<p>Enforcement e.g., Drinking dog fouling, rubbish</p>	<p>Environmental Health / Parks Service /PCSP / PSNI</p>	<p>1/3mths</p>	<p>Within budget</p>	<p>Reduction in reported incidents in parks associated to Drinking /dog foul / litter</p>	<p>Railway Park Capital works Programme</p>	<p>Technical Services / Parks Service</p>	<p>12/18 mths</p>	<p>Within budget</p>	<p>Re development of Public Park</p>									
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<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Estimated cost for vegetation and lighting improvements is £14,325. This is not included within current revenue budgets. Where additional possible resources have been proposed, this will need further assessment by SMT, appropriate committee's and council as part of the rate setting process for approval before implementation.
	<b>Human:</b> Where additional staffing structures or programmes are proposed, additional resources will require to be calculated and presented to SMT, appropriate committee's and council as part of the rate setting process for approval before implementation.
	<b>Risk Management:</b> In line with Council policies and procedures
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	<b>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications:</b> In conjunction with Council policies and procedures.
	<b>Rural Needs Implications:</b> In conjunction with Council policies and procedures.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	This report is for the purposes of updating and seeking approval from members on proposed actions associated to combating anti-social behaviour in Railway Park, Dungannon.
5.2	Members are asked to approve that the report be presented to Policy and Resources Committee to request the additional budget required.
5.3	Members approval is also sought to organise a DEA meeting to further discuss the additional actions that have yet to be fully determined.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>





<b>Report on</b>	Relocation of a Changing Cabin
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Kieran Gordon, Head of Leisure
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Kieran Gordon, Head of Leisure

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To seek approval for the relocation of a changing cabin at Knockloughrim Playing Fields to Pomeroy and establishment of a license agreement with Pomeroy District Sports and Cultural Association.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	Recently a request has been received to move an MUDC Council owned changing cabin currently located at Knockloughrim Playing Fields to an alternate venue, Pomeroy.
2.2	This is a portable changing room cabin with two changing rooms which include one toilet in each. There are no showers.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	In order to facilitate relocation, there would be minor cost to reinstate the base and terminate the water and electricity supply.
3.2	There has been little or no use of this changing cabin at the current venue in recent years.
3.3	It would be proposed that the changing cabin to be relocated and for Council to enter into an agreement where Council retain ownership. The proposed agreement would also ensure any ongoing maintenance, liability and insurance would be the responsibility of the group.
3.4	It would be proposed that the cost of relocation would be the responsibility of the group.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: Minor cost to reinstate the base and terminate the water and electricity supply.
	Human: Existing staff resource.
	Risk Management: In conjunction with Council policies and procedures.
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: In conjunction with Council policy

	Rural Needs Implications: In conjunction with council policy
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	That Members approve in principle the relocation of the changing cabin currently situated at Knockloughrim Playing Fields to Pomeroy in addition to the approval to proceed with entering into a licence agreement with Pomeroy District Sports and Cultural Association.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	N/A

<b>Report on</b>	Tamnamore Close Play Park Lease Agreement
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Head of Parks
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Nigel Hill

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	Council approval to progress lease proposals in relation to a parcel of land adjacent to 1 and 4 Tamnamore Close, Dungannon from Northern Ireland Housing Executive.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	<p>Tamnamore was identified as one of the villages selected for minor works programme to a value of Circa £17,000 for the provision of play/leisure equipment. A continual issue identified in each of the villages was the need to upgrade existing facilities and amenity areas in all the villages. These priorities have been strongly identified in the village planning process and subsequently can be referenced in the village plans.</p> <p>The communities living in this rural area have suffered in terms of low economic activity and general development the potential investment in the infrastructure has the potential to generate social and economic opportunities by addressing need and stimulating pride. The final approved concept designs have been agreed by each community within the Villages to further enhance the significant consultation exercise recently undertaken within each village.</p> <p>Community meetings were held on following dates –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9th March 2017– Public meeting to discuss priorities for Village Plan and Village Renewal Project</li> <li>• 27th March 2018 - Initial project meeting with representatives of all groups to identify priorities.</li> <li>• 23rd July 2019 - First Meeting with Community and Design Team to discuss potential projects outlined in Village Plan</li> <li>• 18th September 2019 – Concept Designs presented to Community</li> <li>• 25th September 2019– Final sign off on priority projects and concept designs by Community</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p>The project aims to achieve the following outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Greater community and recreational activity in rural villages/communities</li> <li>2. Greater quality of life provision in our local areas</li> </ol>

3.2	<p>3. Increased sustainability in relation to rural areas and accessibility of services</p> <p>4. Increased activities focused on children and young people</p> <p>5. Village renewal and regeneration of rural settlements.</p> <p>This report seeks the establishment of a lease with Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) for the parcel of land as out lined in red (Appendix) for a period of 25 years subject to Letter of Offer and LPS valuation.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
4.1	<p><b><u>Financial &amp; Human Resources Implications</u></b></p> <p>Financial: Subject to LPS valuation for the provision of 25-year rental agreement.</p> <p>Human: Existing staff resources sufficient to coordinate project support.</p>
4.2	<p><b><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></b></p> <p>In line with Council policy and procedures</p>
4.3	<p><b><u>Risk Management Implications</u></b></p> <p>In line with Council policy and procedures</p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1  5.2	<p>Members approval is sought to seek the establishment Lease Agreement from Northern Ireland Housing Executive in relation to the proposed 25 year lease for the designated land at Tamnamore Close, Dungannon for the provision of public play facilities.</p> <p>Members approval is sought to present, on receipt, all associated LPS valuations and Lease Agreement Documentation to P&amp;R Committee and Council Meeting for approval and Seal.</p>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	<p>NIHE Location map, Tamnamore Close (Appendix).</p>

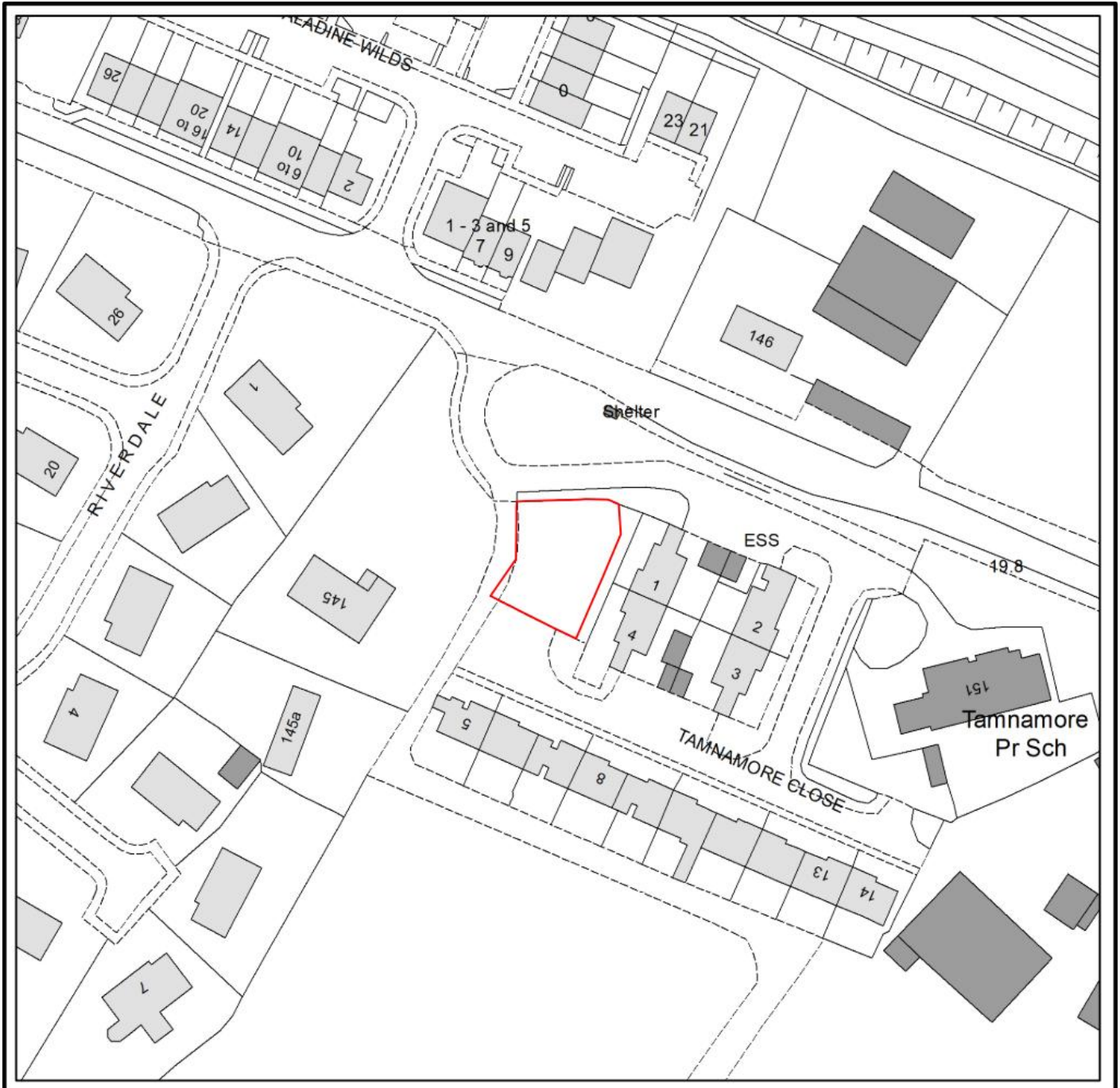
N.I.H.E.  
Place Shaping South  
Marlborough House  
Central Way  
CRAIGAVON  
BT64 1AD



NIHE TO: MUDC

ADDRESS: Land at Tamnamore Close  
Dungannon  
Co Tryone

REF. NO: \_\_\_\_\_



ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP NO: I.G. 16114SE

APPROXIMATE SCALE: 1:1,250

PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOUR CLIENT(S) IS/ARE SATISFIED THAT THE BOUNDARY AS  
OUTLINED IN RED ON THE MAPS ATTACHED IS CORRECT



<b>Report on</b>	1) Covid-19 Revitalisation Project (Tranche 2) 2) Magherafelt Chamber of Commerce Funding Request 3) Social Enterprise NI: Council Membership 4) Committee for the Executive Office - Brexit StakeholderEvent
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	15 October 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Fiona McKeown, Head of Economic Development

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

<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>Covid-19 Revitalisation Project (Tranche 2)</b></p> <p><b>Department for Communities (DfC) and Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Funding</b></p> <p><b>Covid-19 Business Grants Scheme (Tranche 2)</b></p> <p>Members will recall that under the Covid-19 Revitalisation Project funding in Tranche 1, Council delivered a Covid-19 Business Grant Scheme to assist urban and rural businesses make adaptations and implement social distancing measures to protect staff and customers in line with government guidance. . In Tranche 1, Council received £281,000 funding from DfC and £148,000 from DAERA and Council also redirected £133,000 from its Economic Development budget towards the scheme. This provided a maximum budget of £562,000 to be split equally between urban and rural areas with £281,000 for each.</p> <p>A new <b>Tranche 2</b> application to deliver a further Covid-19 Business Grants Scheme was submitted to DfC on 24 September 2020.</p> <p><b>Department for Infrastructure (DFI) / Department for Communities (DFC) Funding</b></p> <p><b>Covid-19 Town Centre Works Scheme (Tranche 2)</b></p>

	<p>Members were briefed at the September 2020 Committee Meeting, that DfC advised Council on 2 September 2020, that DfC will provide £464,659 capital funding to Mid Ulster Council in Tranche 2. The focus of their funding must be concentrated on pavement widening to allow for social distancing, active travel, promoting connectivity, access to services, enhancing green/blue spaces, etc. Furthermore, on 30 September 2020, DfC advised they will also provide a further £34,000 revenue funding to Mid Ulster Council.</p>
2.2	<p><b>Magherafelt Chamber of Commerce Funding Request</b></p> <p>Magherafelt Chamber of Commerce is a membership organisation, existing to represent and promote the interests of its member businesses in Magherafelt.</p>
2.3	<p><b>Social Enterprise NI: Council Membership</b></p> <p>Social Enterprise NI (SENI) is a membership body for social enterprises across NI with the team providing support to members. In recent years, membership, including organisations from outside the sector such as private and public sector bodies, including local Councils.</p>
2.4	<p><b>Committee for the Executive Office - Brexit Stakeholder Event</b></p> <p>Council has received correspondence on 25 September 2020 from the Committee for the Executive Office inviting representatives from Mid Ulster District Council to attend a Brexit Stakeholder Event in Parliament Buildings, Stormont on 4 November 2020.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b>Covid-19 Revitalisation Project (Tranche 2)</b></p> <p><b>Department for Communities (DfC) and Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Funding</b></p> <p><b>Covid-19 Business Grants Scheme (Tranche 2)</b></p> <p>In terms of <b>Tranche 2</b> funding, Members will recall at the September 2020 Development Committee meeting, approval was granted to officers to progress and make a new application to DfC/DAERA by 24 September 2020, seeking the same funding as per Tranche 1 to deliver another rolling Covid-19 Business Grants Scheme. Scheme funding breakdown is as follows;</p> <p>£281,000 from DfC      <i>(awaiting approval)</i>  £148,000 from DAERA   <i>(awaiting approval)</i>  <u>£133,000</u> from Council   <i>(approved at Sept 2020 Development Committee)</i>  <b>£562,000</b></p> <p>Subject to funding approval from DfC/DAERA, the discretionary grants scheme would be delivered as before, providing a discretionary grant to businesses up to</p>



100% of eligible costs, with a minimum grant of £500, up to a maximum grant of £3,000 (per property), to assist businesses make adaptations and implement social distancing measures in their businesses to comply with government guidance. As before, the scheme will be delivered as a “rolling grant scheme” with funding issued to businesses for eligible expenditure on a “first come first served basis” until funding runs out. This time there will be a reserve list created until all funding is maximised.

If the project is approved by DfC/DAERA, then the DfC element of the grant will focus on the 4 urban areas; Dungannon (including Moygashel), Cookstown, Magherafelt and Coalisland. All other areas outside of this will be deemed ‘rural’ and catered for with funding from DAERA and MUDC.

Approval is requested for delegated authority to be granted to the Director of Business and Communities to sign off on letters offer to successful participants in Tranche 2 with a full list of approved projects to be brought to Committee for noting. This will allow for the scheme to be rolled out quickly and efficiently.

It is anticipated that there will be a strong demand from businesses for another Covid-19 Business Grants Scheme, but in the unlikely event that there is a low uptake and not all funding is required, then approval is sought to redirect any underspends towards the DFI project detailed below, to ensure Mid Ulster Council maximises the budget made available to us.

## **Department for Infrastructure / Department for Communities Funding (Tranche 2)**

### **Covid-19 Town Centre Works Scheme (Tranche 2)**

With an extremely tight timeline to submit an application to DFI/DFC on 24 September 2020 outlining how Council proposed to spend the £464,659 capital funding, Members agreed at the September 2020 Committee Meeting, to progress the following projects (subject to budget availability), and appoint an ICT Team to help develop detailed designs/costings.

The Economic Development Team have worked closely with Council’s Capital Team to develop the agreed Council projects as detailed below in each of the 5 large towns (Dungannon, Cookstown, Magherafelt, Coalisland and Maghera). These projects were subsequently presented to the relevant Town Centre Forums/Partnerships in each of the 5 towns where buy-in was secured to progress same.

To ensure that each of 5 towns are afforded the opportunity to avail of the DFI funding, the following projects have been identified for “Priority 1” funding;

#### **Dungannon - Two “Priority 1” Projects –**

**Project 1 - Redevelopment of the civic space in front of Ranfurly House & Hill of the O’Neill Visitor Centre** to maximize the use of the area as a safe and user friendly rest area for cyclists and pedestrians alike, enhancing green space through public seating / rest areas. The project proposes the following:

- A mobile covering, which will house tables, seating, bicycle racks planters, outdoor heater etc.
- Creation of a raised platform on the terraced area to accommodate the above, which can also be used for arts activity.

**Project 2 - Develop a section of Irish Street, Dungannon into a ‘temporary’ covered pedestrian rest area** which can be used as and when required to allow social interaction in an open and safe environment. This temporary structure could be used on evenings/weekends etc, to create a safe pedestrianised area, subject to agreement and road closure permits being obtained.

The project proposes the following:

- Mobile coverings, which will house tables, seating, heaters, etc. These will not be a permanent fixture but can be used on Irish Street or at other locations/events, as required. The equipment will be used on certain occasions seeking the appropriate permits from DfI when doing so, for example Ulster Flaedh.

#### **Cookstown – One “Priority 1” Project –**

**Project 1 - Redevelopment of the civic space located in the vicinity of Burnavon Theatre** to create a safe outdoor environment that adheres to social distancing measures, providing a safe and user friendly rest area for cyclists and pedestrians alike. The strategic area identified is an area of underutilized civic space, adjacent to the central car park in Burn Road, Cookstown, which is in close proximity to pathways for accessing the town centre. By developing this project, this space can also be used to enhance outdoor arts activity and performances to encourage footfall to the town particularly in the evenings and weekends.

The project proposes the following:-

- Covered area, which will house tables, seating, bicycle rack and planters, outdoor heater, planters etc.

#### **Magherafelt – One “Priority 1” Project**

**Project 1 - Redevelopment of the civic space in the Diamond** which is currently underutilized and repurposing it into a multi-use covered space to facilitate town centre activity (including events and outdoor performances) and a pedestrian rest area to encourage the public to come back into the town and gather safely with friends and family in a safe environment whilst observing social distancing measures.

The project proposes the following:-

- Installation of safety barriers
- Covered area, which will house tables, seating, bicycle rack and planters, outdoor heater, planters etc. to encourage people to utilize the area and extend their stay in Magherafelt. This multi-functional space can also be used for outdoor entertainment / performances

**Maghera – One “Priority 1” Project****Project 1 - Installation of street lighting on the existing footpath along the road leading from the Park and Ride/Bus Stop at Craigadick to Maghera.**

The project proposes the following:

- Installation of street lighting on Tobermore Road from 30mph zone out to Craigadick Park & Ride facility (approx. 600meters).

**Coalisland – One “Priority 1” Project**

**Project 1 - Works at Coalisland Canal Towpath** from Coalisland to Gortgonis Road is the priority project for Coalisland. The area is a well-used walking and cycling track link into Coalisland Town, Gortgonis Recreation Centre and various housing developments on the periphery of Coalisland. With the provision of lighting, the project will provide a safe and accessible route for pedestrians and cyclists. The towpath conveniently links the periphery of Coalisland to facilities in the town centre and is very popular among residents of the town and indeed outlying rural areas.

The project proposes the following:-

- Up to 60 new lighting columns from Coalisland Town to Gortgonis Road, approx. one mile, Bimac path repairs, Street furniture along the route.

**Coalisland – One “Priority 2” Reserve Project**

**Priority 2 Project – Lineside, Coalisland Landscaping Project** can only be progressed depending if funding remains after all the Priority 1 projects are progressed. Council has indicated its intention to DfI that it would wish to progress this key project as it is strategically located at the start/finish of the Canal towpath and caters for much pedestrian footfall.

The project proposes the following:-

- Site preparation works, Paving, Creating pathway, Seating, Bike Racks, Landscaping - to include planters, tree/shrub planting incidental to creating/improving walking or cycling paths.

*Please note: the Lineside project can only be progressed if the budget is available to take it forward.*

All the above schemes have been selected to allow us to “reclaim our towns and high streets” both during and after the pandemic, enhancing green space through public seating/rest areas and serve to better utilize the existing civic space created through previous public realm schemes, funded by DfC. These spaces can be multi-functional and double up as covered areas to provide arts/entertainment activity to the public which will inject much needed life back into our high streets.

The creation of specific ‘cycle and pedestrian rest areas’ will “promote connectivity” and enhance green space areas, within the town centre. It will also revitalize and replenish these vacant areas through the creation of spaces where the public can meet in a safe outdoor environment whilst observing social distancing regulations.

	<p>The high level concept drawings and estimated costs for each scheme is contained in Appendix 1. Schemes may be subject to some variances as more detailed work progresses by Council's ICT Team.</p>
3.2	<p><b>Magherafelt Chamber of Commerce Funding Request</b></p> <p>A request has been received from Magherafelt Chamber of Commerce on 17 September 2020 (Appendix 2) requesting £5,000 support to assist them the following activities;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting the growth of Magherafelt Chamber of Commerce.</li> <li>• Networking events.</li> <li>• Promotional content for website and social media channels.</li> <li>• Training / Workshops for businesses.</li> <li>• Administration.</li> <li>• Celebrating achievements of businesses.</li> <li>• Campaign to promote shopping in Magherafelt.</li> </ul>
3.3	<p><b>Social Enterprise NI: Council Membership</b></p> <p>The responsibilities that were transferred to local Councils in 2015 under the Reform of Local Government included that of the social economy sector. Since 2015, almost all Councils have signed up as members of SENI; however, as yet this Mid Ulster District Council is not currently a member. The range of benefits in becoming a member include the following, as a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SENI will promote any Council events for social enterprises in their e-zine and social media</li> <li>• SENI offer free members to any new social enterprise in the area for the first year if they are not already members of SENI.</li> <li>• Host joint events with the Council including Pitching Events, Buy Social Events, Entrepreneurship week support etc</li> <li>• Free training on topics such as "What is Social Value" with any Council staff or members at any time should you feel that appropriate, or any other relevant training required, in order to better understand the business model.</li> <li>• Listing as a Corporate Member on SENI's new website (coming soon)</li> <li>• Access to discounted events for members including Awards and Conferences</li> <li>• Access to free bursaries that SENI offers to members</li> </ul> <p>Members are therefore requested to consider Council membership of SENI for a fee of £500 per annum.</p>
3.4	<p><b>Committee for the Executive Office - Brexit Stakeholder Event</b></p> <p>Council received an invitation (Appendix 3) from the Committee for the Executive Office to attend a Brexit Stakeholder Event on Wednesday 4 November 2020. Two attendees from each Council are invited to attend; one political representative and one senior official.</p> <p>Each Council will have a 30 minute time slot to meet and brief Committee Members and this will be followed by 20 minutes for questions and answers.</p>

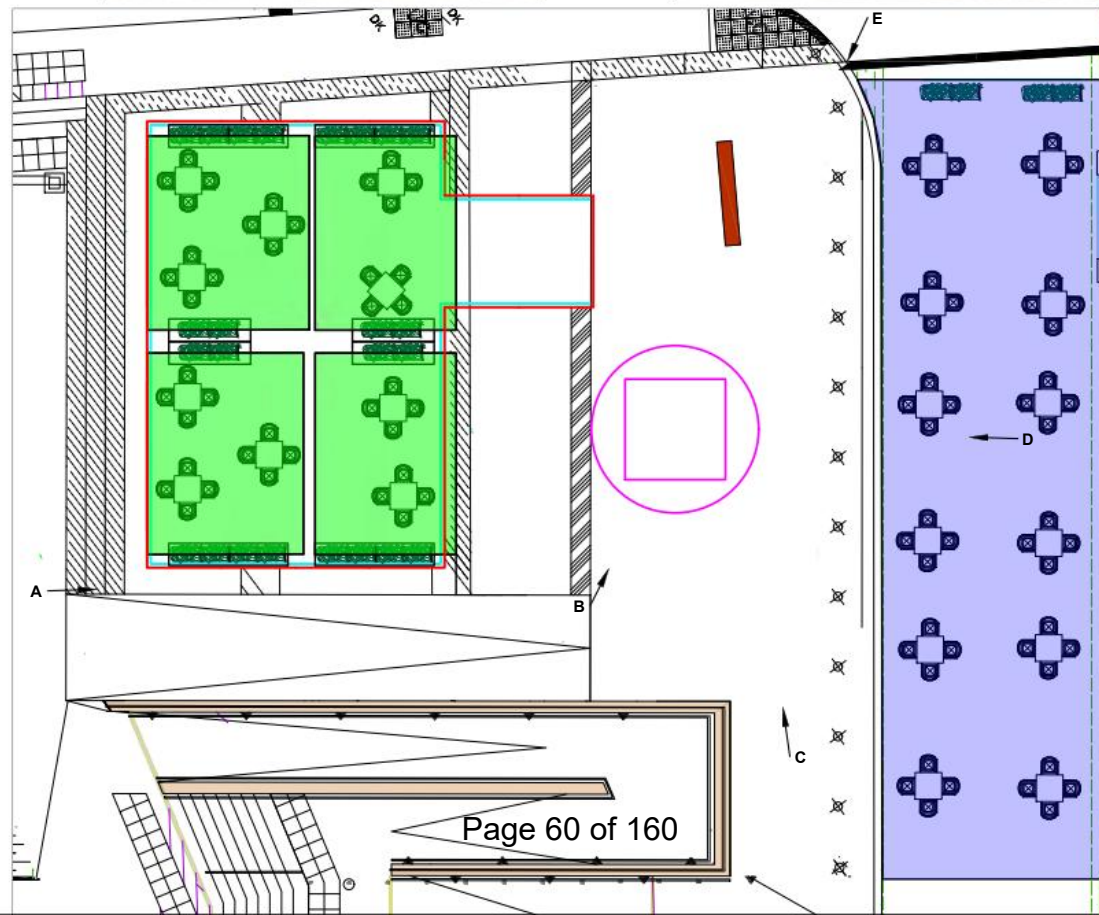
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	<p>Financial:</p> <p><b>Covid-19 Revitalisation Project (Tranche 2) –</b></p> <p><b>Covid-19 Business Grants Scheme (Tranche 2)</b>  Anticipated Total Funding Package of <b>£562,000</b>, comprising of;  DfC £281,000 (awaiting funding approval)  DAERA £148,000 (awaiting funding approval)  Council £133,000 (funding agreed at Sept 2020 Development Committee from existing economic development budget)</p> <p><b>Covid-19 Town Centre Works Scheme (Tranche 2)</b>  Anticipated Total Funding Package of <b>£498,659</b>, comprising of;  DFI £464,659 (Capital)  DfC £34,000 (Revenue)</p> <p><b>Social Enterprise NI: Council Membership</b>  Membership Subscription Fee : £500 available in the 2020/21 economic development budget.</p>
	<p>Human:</p> <p><b>Covid-19 Revitalisation Project</b>  Officers time</p> <p><b>Committee for the Executive Office - Brexit Stakeholder Event</b>  Two attendees from each Council are invited to event</p>
	<b>Risk Management:</b> Achieving completion of the Covid-19 Revitalisation Project within a very short deadline – 31 March 2021.
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications:
	<p>Rural Needs Implications:  Covid-19 Revitalisation Project Business Grant Scheme will assist all urban and rural businesses.</p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<p>It is recommended that Members;</p> <p><b>Covid-19 Revitalisation Project (Tranche 2)</b></p> <p><b>5.1.1 Approve</b> delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive and/or Director of Business and Communities to sign and accept any letters of offer/contracts received by Council offering funding for the Covid-19 Revitalisation Project.</p>

	<p><b>5.1.2 Approve</b> delegated authority be granted to the Director of Business &amp; Communities to develop and roll out a business grants scheme to urban and rural businesses, <u>as soon as funding is confirmed to Council</u> by the Department for Communities (for urban businesses) and Department for Agriculture and Rural Affairs (for rural businesses), along with Council funding of £133,000 (previously approved).</p> <p><b>5.1.3 Approve</b> authority be granted to the Director of Business &amp; Communities to sign off on letters of offer to successful participants on a business grants scheme, with the list of approved projects to be brought to Committee for noting.</p> <p><b>5.1.4 Approve</b> the additional revenue funding from DfC of £34,000 be used to cover key revenue expenditure costs within the Covid-19 Towns Centre Works Scheme, to match-fund the DFI capital budget assigned to Mid Ulster Council of £464,659.</p> <p><b>5.2 Magherafelt Chamber of Commerce Funding Request</b>  <b>Request</b> Council officers meet with Magherafelt Chamber of Commerce to deliver a presentation on the range of business programmes and marketing activities currently provided by Council and Magherafelt Town Centre Forum that businesses in Magherafelt can avail of to assist their growth and development.</p> <p><b>5.3 Social Enterprise NI: Council Membership</b>  <b>Approve</b> Mid Ulster District Council subscribe to become a member of Social Enterprise NI at an annual cost of £500.</p> <p><b>5.4 Committee for the Executive Office - Brexit Stakeholder Event</b>  <b>Approve</b> one political representative (either Council Chairperson or Brexit Working Group Chairperson) and a senior officer attend the Committee for the Executive Office - Brexit Stakeholder Event in Parliament Buildings, Stormont on 4 November 2020.</p>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Covid-19 Town Centre Works Scheme (Tranche 2) - Concept Drawings and Estimated Costs</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Magherafelt Chamber of Commerce Funding Request</p> <p>Appendix 3 - Committee for the Executive Office - Brexit Stakeholder Event Invitation</p>

## **1. Priority one schemes for DfI funding:**

- 1) Dungannon
  - i. Redevelopment of the civic space at Market Square, in front of Ranfurly House
  - ii. Irish Street, Dungannon- covered entertainment area over the licensed premises
  
- 2) Cookstown
  - i. Redevelopment of the civic space at Burnavon Arts & Cultural Centre
  
- 3) Magherafelt
  - i. Redevelopment of the civic space in 'the Diamond', Magherafelt
  
- 4) Maghera
  - i. Installation of street lighting on Tobermore Road from 30mph zone out to the Craigadick Park & Ride facility.
  
- 5) Coalisland
  - i. Lighting scheme for Coalisland Canal towpath

# Draft - Dungannon Streetscape (Ranfurly House)



## Legend

- Temporary Decking
- Awning Coverage
- Night use only
- Existing Sculpture
- Artificial Planter
- Glass Barrier
- Christmas Tree

## Notes



CLIENT: MID ULSTER COUNCIL 80 BURN ROAD COOKSTOWN BT80 8DT	DRAWING NAME Dungannon Streetscapes
PROJECT Street Scapes	SCALE
PROJECT ADDRESS Market Square Dungannon BT70 1AA	DATE September 2020
Drawn by: J.L. Checked by:	DWG NO MUD/CS/001
	REV A
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# Draft - Dungannon Streetscape (Ranfurly House)

Seating Option



Glazed Screens



Planters



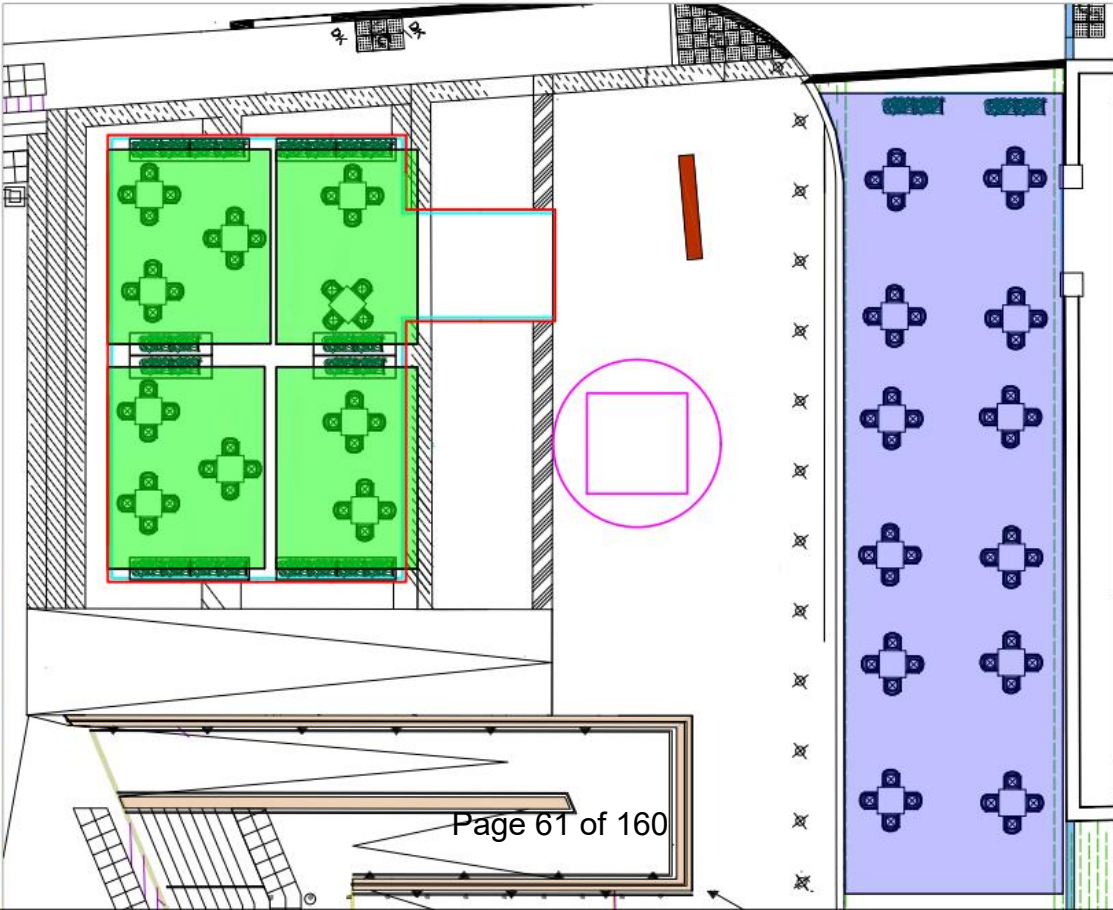
## Legend

- Temporary Decking
- Awning Coverage
- Night use Only
- Existing Sculpture
- Artificial Planter
- Glass Barrier
- Christmas Tree

Seating Option



Retractable Free Standing Canopy

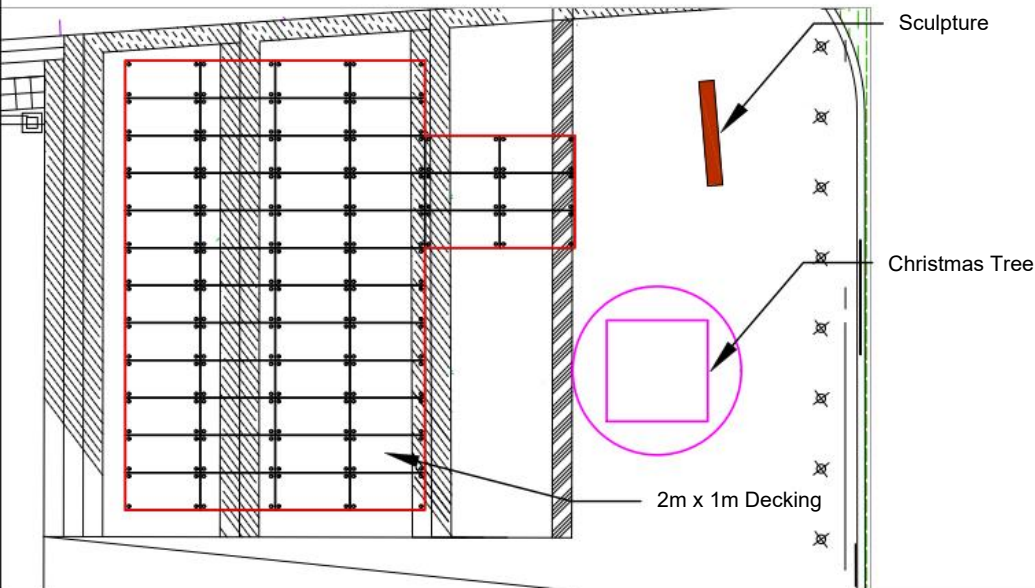


## Notes

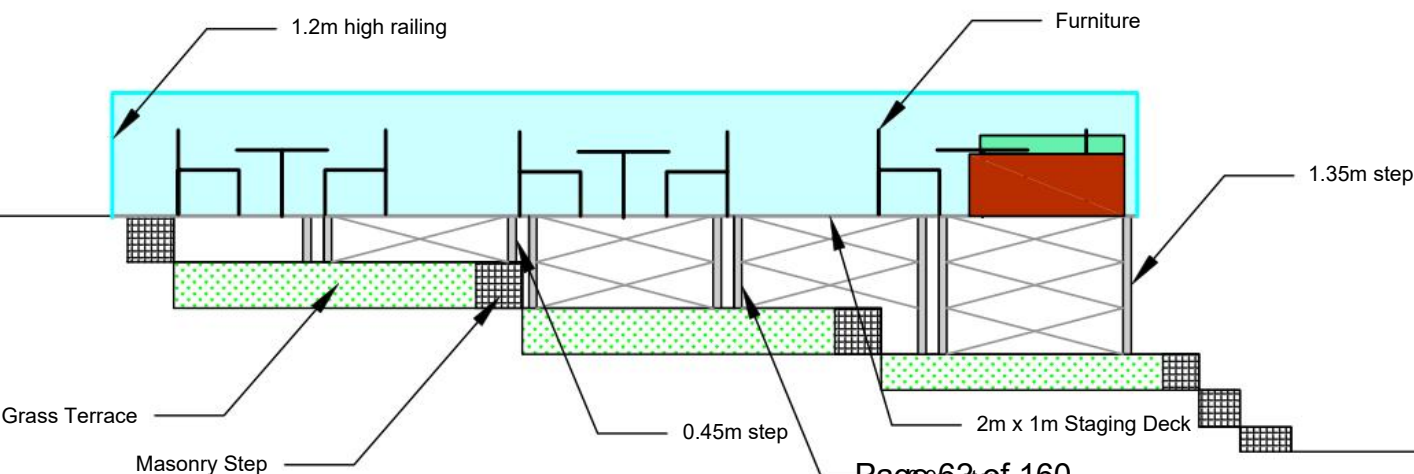
Comhairle Ceantair <b>Lár Uladh</b> <b>Mid Ulster</b> District Council	
CLIENT: MID ULSTER COUNCIL 80 BURN ROAD COOKSTOWN BT80 8DT	DRAWING NAME Dungannon Streetscapes
PROJECT: Street Scapes	SCALE
PROJECT ADDRESS: Market Square Dungannon BT70 1AA	DATE September 2020
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# Draft - Dungannon Streetscape (Ranfurly House)

Plan View



Section View



CLIENT: MID ULSTER COUNCIL 80 BURN ROAD COOKSTOWN BT80 8DT	DRAWING NAME Dungannon Decking Detail
PROJECT Street Scapes	SCALE
PROJECT ADDRESS Market Square Dungannon BT70 1AA	DATE September 2020
Drawn by: J.L. Checked by:	DATE REV MUDC/TS/001 A
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# Draft - Dungannon Streetscape (Irish Street)

Glazed Screens



Legend

-  Awning Coverage
-  Footpath
-  Artificial Planter
-  Glass Barrier

Planters



Notes

Retractable Free Standing Canopy



Comhairle Ceantair  
**Lár Uladh**  
**Mid Ulster**  
District Council

CLIENT: MID ULSTER COUNCIL 80 BURN ROAD DUNGANNON BT76 8BT	DRAWING NAME Dungannon Streetscapes Oran Street
PROJECT: Street Scapes	SCALE
PROJECT ADDRESS: Market Square Dungannon BT76 1AA	DATE September 2020
Drawn by: J. Checked by:	DWG No HUBC/TS/ 001 REV A

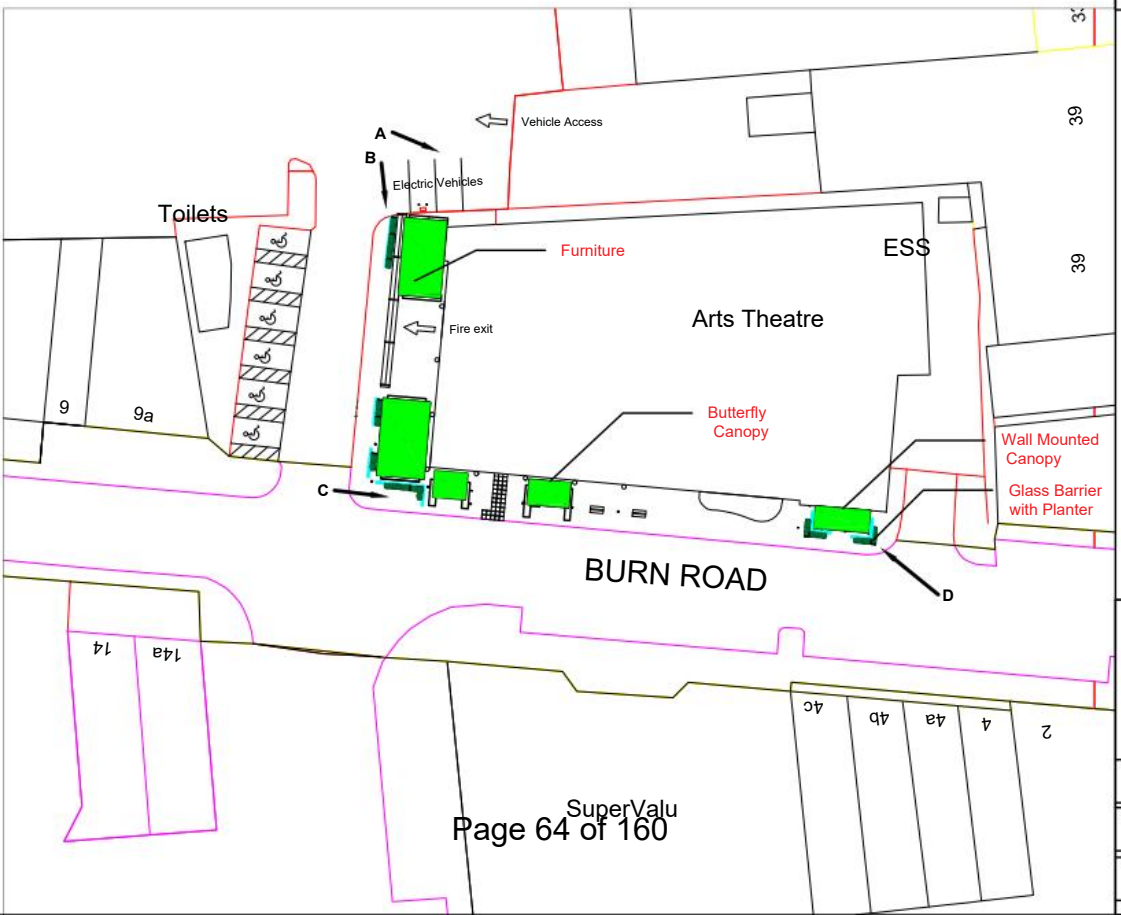
# Draft - Cookstown Streetscape (Burnavon)



Free Standing Canopy



Wall Mounted Canopy



### Legend

- Existing Planter
- DFI Posts
- Burnavon Posts

### Notes

Comhairle Ceantair <b>Lár Uladh</b> <b>Mid Ulster</b> District Council	
CLIENT: MID ULSTER COUNCIL 80 BURN ROAD COOKSTOWN BT80 8DT	DRAWING NAME Cookstown Streetscapes
PROJECT: Street Scapes	SCALE
DATE September 2020	REV A
PROJECT ADDRESS: Burnavon Centre Burn Rd, Cookstown BT80 8DN	DWG No MUD/TS/001
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# Draft - Magherafelt Streetscape 3 Spires Roundabout

Retractable Free Standing Canopy












Seating Option



Glazed Screens



## Legend

-  Awning Coverage
-  New Artificial Planter
-  Existing movable Planters
-  Blue Arrow Bollard
-  Tactile Paving
-  Bin
-  Spire
-  DFI Post
-  Glass Barrier

## Notes



Comhairle Ceantair  
**Lár Uladh**  
**Mid Ulster**  
District Council

CLIENT: MID ULSTER COUNCIL  
80 BURN ROAD  
COOKSTOWN  
BT45 8DT

PROJECT:  
Streetscapes

PROJECT ADDRESS:  
Raiway St  
Magherafelt  
BT45 8DA

Drawn by: J.L. Checked by:

DRAWING NAME  
Magherafelt Streetscape

SCALE  
DATE: September 2020

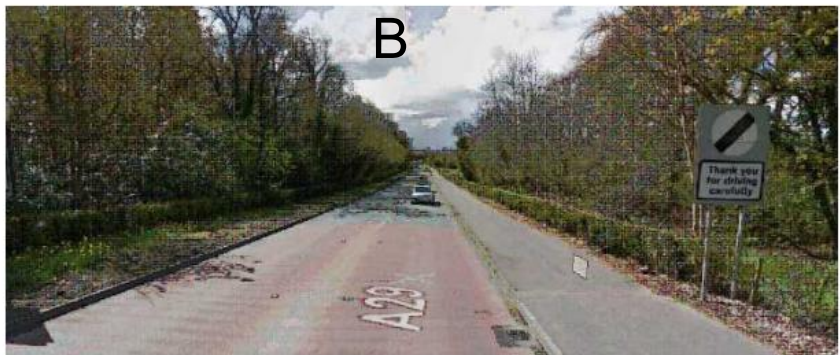
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# Draft - Maghera Streetscape (Tobermore Road)



Legend

— Currently unlit Footpath

Notes

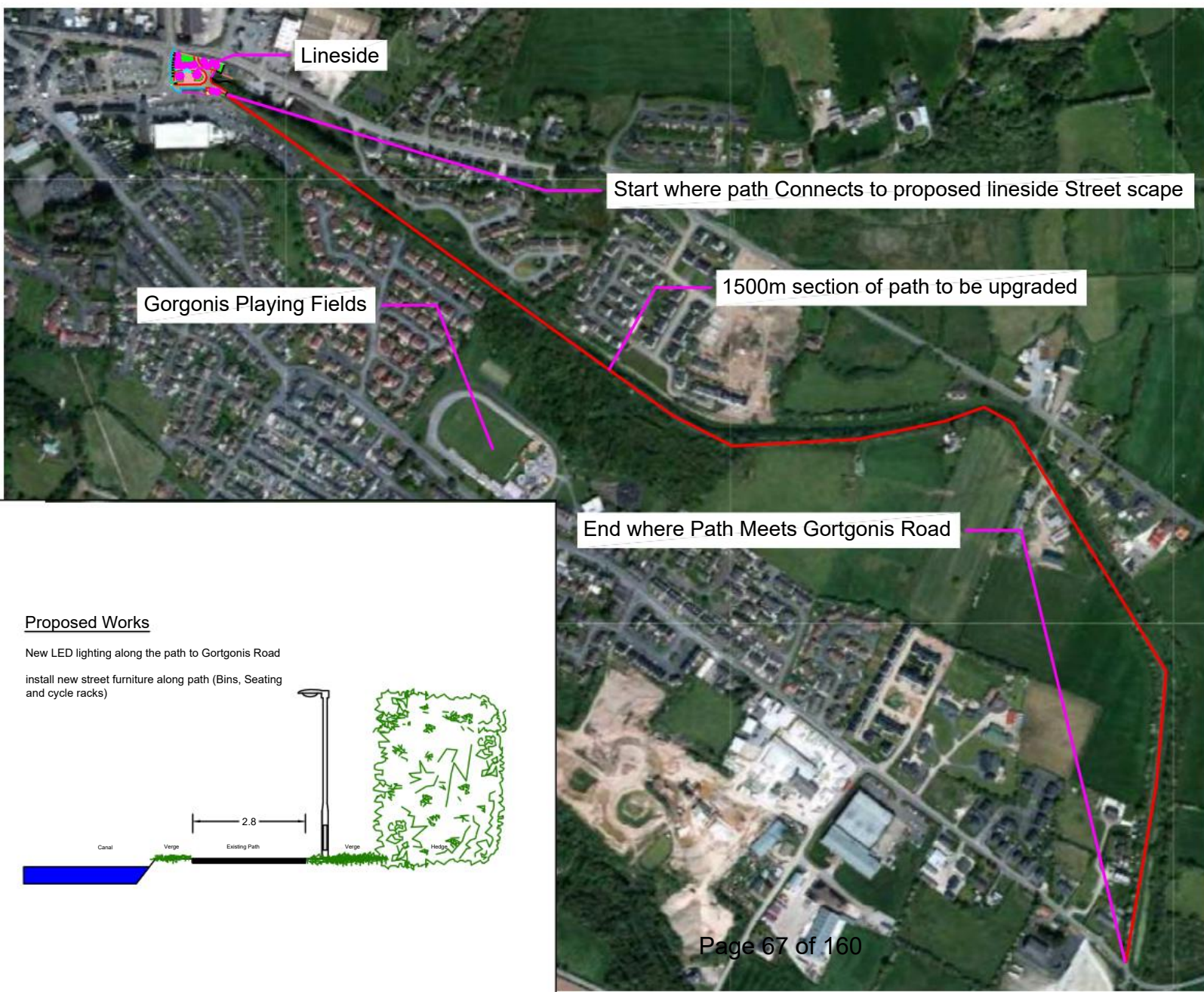
Installation of street lighting on Tobermore Road from 30mph zone out to Craigadick Park & Ride (approx 600m)



 Comhairle Ceantair <b>Lár Uladh</b> <b>Mid Ulster</b> District Council	
CLIENT: MID ULSTER COUNCIL 80 BURN ROAD COOKSTOWN BT90 8DT	DRAWING NAME Maghera Streetscape
PROJECT: Street Scapes	SCALE
PROJECT ADDRESS: Maghera	DATE: September 2020
Drawn by: J.L.	Checked by:
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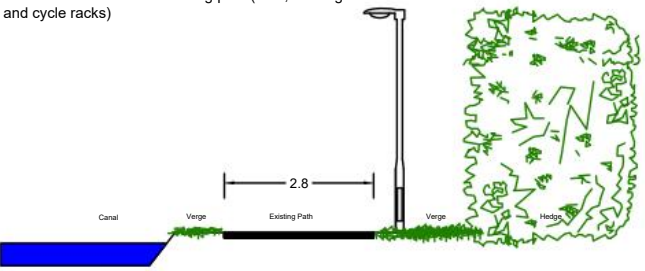


# Draft - Coalisland Streetscape (Tow Path to Gortgonis Road)



### Proposed Works

New LED lighting along the path to Gortgonis Road  
install new street furniture along path (Bins, Seating and cycle racks)



### Notes

#### Existing Path





**Comhairle Ceantair**  
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**Mid Ulster**  
District Council

<b>CLIENT</b> MID ULSTER COUNCIL 80 BURN ROAD COOKSTOWN BT90 8DT	<b>DRAWING NAME</b> Coalisland Section view
<b>PROJECT</b> Street Scapes	<b>SCALE</b>
<b>PROJECT ADDRESS</b> Coalisland Canal Walk	<b>DATE</b> September 2020
<b>Drawn by:</b> JL	<b>Checked by:</b>
<b>DATE</b> 10/09/20	<b>REV</b> 1A

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## **2. Priority two scheme for Dfl funding:**

### **1) Coalisland- Lineside**

- i. Landscape area at the start/end of Coalisland Towpath**



# Draft - Coalisland Streetscape (Lineside )

Trees used in Magherafelt Public Realm



Paving used in Coalisland public realm



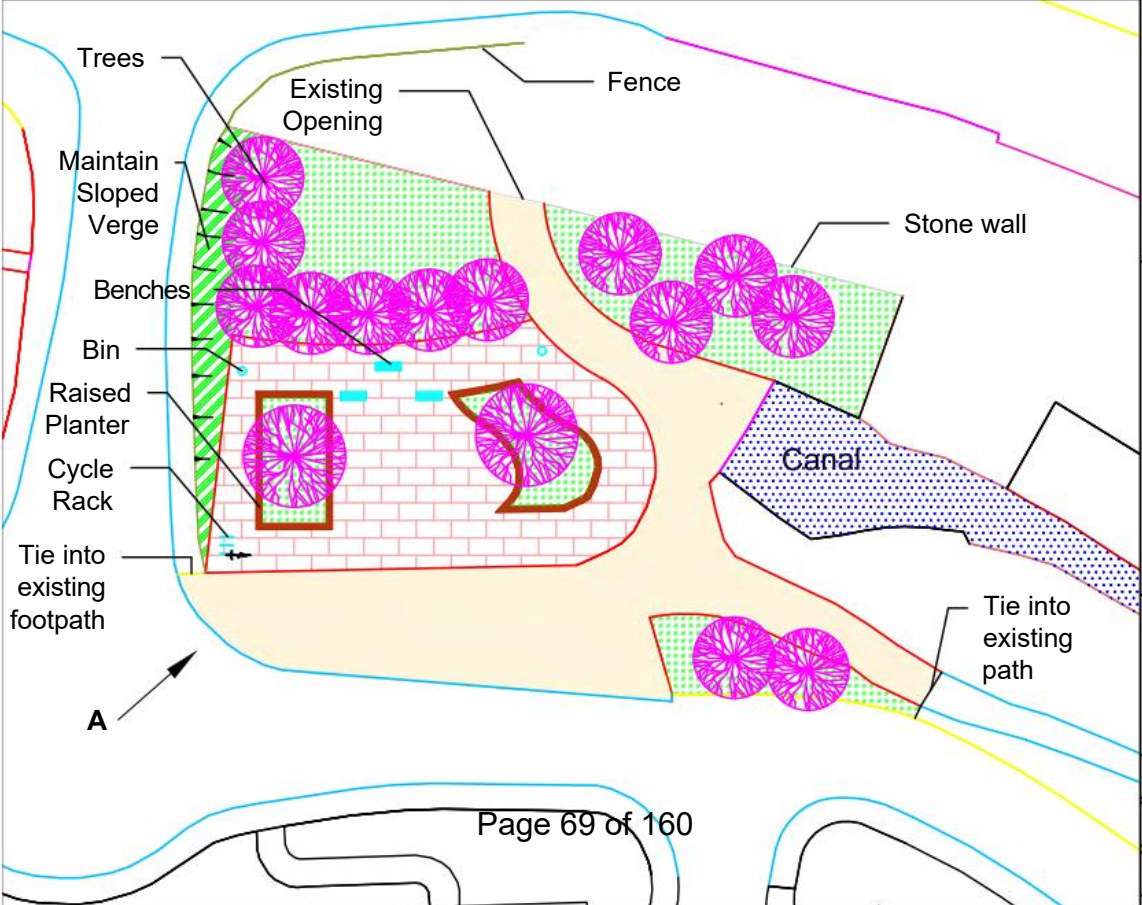
Anti Vandal Steel Bench



## Legend

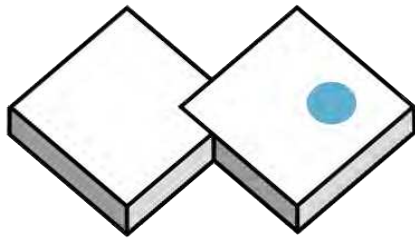
- New Bitmac
- New Paving
- Existing Canal
- New Grass
- Sloped verge
- New Kerb line
- Existing Kerb line

## Notes



CLERK, MID ULSTER COUNCIL 80 BURN ROAD COOKSTOWN BT80 8DT	DRAWING NAME Coalisland Street Scene open space
PROJECT Street Scenes	SCALE
DATE September 2020	REV A
PROJECT ADDRESS Lineside Coalisland Dungannon BT71 4ND	DATE MUDC/TS/001
Drawn by JL	Checked by

### **3. Proposed Costs for the Schemes**



# **ESTIMATE OF COST**

**PROPOSED STREETSCAPE SCHEMES**

**for**

**MID ULSTER COUNCIL**

**Sep-20**



**W T ORR & PARTNERS QS**  
**Chartered Quantity Surveyors**  
**2 Moygashel Mills Park**  
**Dungannon**  
**Tel: (028-8772-6099)**

## Proposed Streetscape Schemes for Mid Ulster Council

### DUNGANNON

#### 1. Ranfurly House

• 4nr- retractable, freestanding butterfly canopies	34,000.00	
• 28nr- Table/chair sets (112 seats), spaced to 2m Covid guidelines	12,600.00	
• 2nr- aluminium staging units with guardrail, and side cladding	13,000.00	
• 6nr- fibreglass planters (movable), with artificial plants	4,500.00	
• 5nr glazed screens to define area to be developed	2,000.00	
• 4nr- Heating/lighting sets, 2nr per canopy	1,600.00	
• 2nr cycle racks	1,000.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>		68,700.00

#### 2. Irish Street

• 4Nr- retractable, freestanding butterfly canopies	34,000.00	
• 16nr- Table/chair sets (64 seats), spaced to 2m Covid guidelines	7,200.00	
• 8nr- fibreglass planters (movable), with artificial plants	4,800.00	
• 6nr glazed screens to define area to be developed	2,400.00	
• 4nr- Heating/lighting sets, 2nr per canopy	1,600.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>		50,000.00

### COOKSTOWN

• 5nr- retractable, freestanding butterfly canopies	22,000.00	
• 10nr- Table/chair sets (36 seats), spaced to 2m Covid guidelines	4,000.00	
• 6nr- fibreglass planters (movable), with artificial plants	3,600.00	
• 7nr glazed screens to define area to be developed	3,000.00	
• 5nr – Heating/Lighting sets, 2nr per canopy	2,000.00	
• 1nr cycle rack	500.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>		35,100.00

### MAGHERAFELT

• 3nr- Permanent fixed Canopies	25,500.00	
• 9nr- Table/chair sets (36 seats), spaced to current Covid guidelines	4,250.00	
• 18nr- fibreglass planters (movable), with artificial plants	10,000.00	
• 32nr glazed screens to define area to be developed	12,800.00	
• 3Nr – Heating/Lighting sets, 2nr per canopy	1,200.00	
• 2nr cycle racks	1,000.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>		54,750.00

### MAGHERA

• 17nr Street road Lighting units on 8m columns/ Tobermore rd		42,500.00
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## **COALISLAND**

### **2. LANDSCAPE AREA- LINESIDE**

• 1224 sqm, Demolition and removal of existing landscape	5,000.00	
• 608 sqm, Provide topsoil grassed area with mounding	5,000.00	
• 501 sqm, New paved area, to reflect current Public Realm Scheme	26,700.00	
• 230sqm, Provide new 2nr raised planters with shrubs and trees	5,500.00	
• 3nr, 4m columns and lighting heads (LED) at 25m centres	4,500.00	
• 115sqm, Provide new aligned path complimentary material to adjacent paved area	5,000.00	
• Street furniture including 2nr bins, 3nr seats, 2nr cycle racks, signage	6,000.00	
• 12nr trees, 20-25cm girth Birch or similar	3,600.00	
• 200sqm, shrub planting	2,500.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>63,800.00</b>

### **3. TOWPATH TO GORTGONIS ROAD**

• Bitmac path repairs	20,000.00	
• 60nr, 4m columns and lighting heads (LED) at 25m centres	90,000.00	
• Street furniture including 7nr steel bins, 7nr seat with arm rests, 3nr cycle rests, signage/waymarkers	17,000.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>127,000.00</b>

**Sub Total** **441,850.00**

### **Preliminaries**

Contractors overheads etc, management, supervision, health & safety, insurances etc 44,000.00

### **Contingency/Design Development**

44,000.00

### **Professional Fees**

ICT Appointment 42,500.00

**TOTAL COSTS** **572,350.00**

Excl VAT

### **Notes:**

Assuming good ground conditions

Table spacing has been set to reflect current Covid 19 spacing guidelines, set at 2m. If guidelines are relaxed then additional numbers can be included in the proposals.

### **Excluding:**

On-going management costs

Statutory Connection Charges

Planning and Building Control Fees

VAT

17<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Ms Davina McCartney,  
Mid-Ulster District Council Office,  
50 Ballyronan Road,  
Magherafelt,  
BT45 6EN

Dear Davina,

I'm following up on our meeting pre COVID-19 regarding a funding request. With all the changes that have occurred the ideas we have had have altered slightly so I wanted to give you an updated report.

### **Choose Local / Magherafelt Campaign**

'Shopping local' has never been so important and we want to urge the public to support our retailers and businesses in Magherafelt with our member features / promotional videos and photography. Showcasing everything Magherafelt has to offer.

### **Networking Vision**

We would like to promote networking with businesses in the town however this would now have to be done with social distancing in place so I feel that smaller gatherings would be much more appropriate.

The vision is to provide beneficial and inspiring networking opportunities and to promote the town itself and the attendees with as much publicity as possible.

We want to keep everything focused on Magherafelt and inspire the business owners in the town with motivational talks and advice. We believe if the businesses in the town work together it's better for everyone and will make Magherafelt a more desirable location for both customers and businesses.

Networking together keeps business in the town > Suppliers promote each other > Aiding recommendations and referrals > Wider audience reached.



## Funding

- To promote the growth of the Magherafelt Chamber of Commerce
- Networking events
- Promotional content for website and social media building on the business profiles we already do. We want to take this up a level with photography and promotional videos. We have found that people love seeing the faces behind the businesses and our member profiles are very popular in gaining publicity so we want to build on this and offer it to all businesses who wish to get involved.
- Training / Workshops - We would like to help businesses lacking in certain skills and be able to offer training if required which could be done. Self Employed people in particular are trying to balance so much at once - book keeping / social media / HR / marketing / customer service. We want to promote businesses coming together in the chamber to see what we all have to offer each other making our separate businesses stronger and ultimately providing a better service to customers.
- Administration
- Celebration of achievement - Recognising and rewarding achievement in the business community
- A campaign to promote shopping in Magherafelt. Showcasing what all the town has to offer

We would like to request £5000 to go towards our work and vision for building the business community in the town.

Thanks so much for your time,

Alexandra





## Committee for the Executive Office

Anthony Tohill  
Chief Executive  
Mid Ulster District Council  
[chief.executive@midulstercouncil.org](mailto:chief.executive@midulstercouncil.org)

25 September 2020

Dear Anthony

### **COMMITTEE FOR THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE: BREXIT STAKEHOLDER EVENT**

At its meeting on 16 September 2020, the Committee for the Executive Office agreed to hold a Brexit stakeholder event to provide local councils with an opportunity to brief Committee Members on any issues and concerns they might have as a result of the UK's exit from the European Union.

The Committee agreed to invite **two attendees from each council; one senior official and one political representative**. This will allow for appropriate social distancing.

Each council will have an opportunity to meet with a small number of Committee Members for 30 minutes. Attendees will be given 10 minutes to brief Committee Members and this will be followed by 20 minutes for questions and answers.

The event will take place on **Wednesday 4 November 2020, in Parliament Buildings, Stormont, from 2.00pm to 5.00pm**. Your 30-minute time slot will be allocated when the number of councils attending has been confirmed. Further details on the event will also issue at this time.



If representatives from Mid Ulster District Council wish to attend the event, please confirm by **5.00pm on Friday 9 October 2020**. Your confirmation, which should include the names and positions of attendees, should be emailed to: [Committee.Executive@niassembly.gov.uk](mailto:Committee.Executive@niassembly.gov.uk)

As mentioned above, further details will issue in due course. However, you should note that, if you wish to attend, you will be asked to submit a short written briefing paper, by **5.00pm on Thursday 22 October 2020**, outlining the issues you wish to raise.

Yours sincerely



**Colin McGrath MLA**  
**Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office**



**Minutes of Meeting of the Development Committee of Mid Ulster District Council  
held on Thursday 10 September 2020 in the Council Offices, Ballyronan Road,  
Magherafelt and by Virtual Means**

**Members Present** Councillor McNamee

Councillors Ashton, Black, Burton, Clarke\*, Corry\*, Cuddy,  
Doris, Elattar, Kerr, Hughes, Kearney, Milne\*, Monteith,  
Wilson\*

**Officers in  
Attendance**

Mrs Campbell, Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation  
Mr McCreesh, Director of Business and Communities  
Mr M Browne, Head of Tourism\*\*  
Mr Gordon, Head of Leisure  
Mr Hill, Head of Parks  
Ms Linney, Head of Community Development\*\*  
Mr McCance, Head of Culture and Arts  
Ms McKeown, Head of Economic Development  
Mr Brown, ICT Support  
Ms Grogan, Democratic Services Officer

**Others in  
Attendance**

\* Denotes Members present in remote attendance

\*\* Denotes Officers present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm.

*The Chair, Councillor McNamee welcomed everyone to the meeting and those watching the meeting through the Live Broadcast. Cllr McNamee 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.*

**D111/20 Apologies**

Councillor Molloy

**D112/20 Declarations of Interest**

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

*Councillor Clarke declared an interest in LAG*

*Councillor Hughes declared an interest in LAG*

*Councillor Burton declared an interest in LAG*

*Councillor Kearney declared an interest in LAG and Lough Neagh Partnership*

*Councillor Milne declared an interest in Lough Neagh Partnership*

*Councillor Elattar declared an interest in Northern Ireland Housing Executive*

*Councillor Wilson declared an interest in LAG*

## **D113/20      Chair's Business**

The Chair advised members that a Special Development Committee meeting was scheduled to take place on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> October to deal with the backlog of presentations and said that an email would be issued in due course clarifying the date.

The Director of Business and Communities referred to Covid19 Business Support Grant and said that this was welcome. He updated Members on the current position relating to Tranche 1 as follows;

### **Tranche 1    (Covid19 Business Support Grant Scheme)**

DFC	£281,000	(urban areas)
DAERA	£148,000	(rural areas)
Council	£133,000	(rural areas)
	<u>£562,000</u>	Fully committed & letters of offer issued to projects within 3 weeks of receipt of funding

The Director of Business and Communities sought approval to progress to Tranche 2 of the Covid19 Business Grants Scheme. He advised that DfC would provide £281,000 as per previous programme, and indicated he is hopeful of receiving similar DAERA funding as in Tranche 1 of £148,000, but awaits confirmation of this. He added Council's Head of Economic Development had been reviewing the existing economic development budget and was able to contribute a further £133K to match DAERA funding for rural areas. He said that Officers are working extremely hard to try to progress the scheme as soon as possible.

Councillor Doris commended Officers on their commitment and said that she would be more than happy to propose that Tranche 2 is progressed but asked that it be reiterated back to both Departments the need to address the boundaries situation.

Councillor Monteith concurred with Councillor Doris and said that he welcomed the extra funding for businesses but also raised his concern around boundaries and about the different emphasis for tranches and enquired how this affects the other.

The Director of Business and Communities advised that the same criteria for urban and rural businesses would be followed the same as tranche one.

The Director of Business and Communities advised Members that since the committee papers were issued that Council had received notification from DfC that DfI would provide Mid Ulster Council with a further £464,659, the focus of which would be based on the following areas; pavement widening to allow for social distancing, active travel, promote connectivity, access to services, enhancement of green/blue spaces etc. He stated that this is a positive development, but the timing is challenging with Council's application due back to the Department next week,

He advised that DfI funding was to be allocated towards the urban areas like Cookstown, Dungannon, Magherafelt and Coalisland and sought agreement in principle from Members for the following proposed works, subject to greater detail being provided at Town Centre Forum meetings involving representation from DEA Members and businesses;

- **Cookstown** – The area to the front and side of the Burnavon Theatre and The Hub – outdoor covered civic spaces, seating etc, to provide pedestrian rest areas.
- **Coalisland** – The new civic area off Main Street – outdoor covered civic space, seating, etc, to provide pedestrian rest areas. A second project is proposed for Coalisland relating to the Canal Walk and is a perfect opportunity to consider upgrade works along the pathway.
- **Dungannon** – Civic Space at the front of Ranfurly House and Hill of The O'Neill and on Irish Street – outdoor covered civic space, seating, etc, to provide pedestrian rest areas.
- **Magherafelt – The civic space in the Diamond** – outdoor covered civic space, seating, etc, to provide pedestrian rest areas.

The Director of Business and Communities advised members that the application has to be submitted by the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2020. The Director requested permission to appoint an ICT Team with immediate effect, after which meetings would be held with Town Centre Forums's on the specific schemes.

Councillor Clarke commended Officers on their work regarding projects and said it was great to see such good work being carried out in such a short space of time and would be happy to second the proposal.

Councillor Wilson praised the work being carried out by Officers, but said that he would have some concerns regarding how as a committee this proposal can be pushed through without it being agreed by Council. He said that at the previous Environment Committee a number of consultations were presented with a short date and it was agreed that these would be agreed in "draft form" and asked for this project to be treated the same, subject to gaining full Council approval.

The Director of Business and Committee advised that any works commissioned would be treated in draft format, subject to attaining Full Council approval.

Councillor Kerr commended Officers on their quick reaction, but also raised concern around the boundary issue as there seemed to be a separate element for spruce up grant scheme which was available for businesses to use to renovate shops with some financial support from the Council. He said that he welcomed the fact that the scheme was at an advanced stage but felt this was unacceptable for businesses which operate outside the boundary lines and when we return to normality, rural areas needed to be included in terms of equality and asked if there was any update on this.

Councillor Ashton concurred with previous members comments regarding the work commitment by the Officer team when it was previously debated and decided to proceed with the funding issue. She said that she was glad that things were moving forward, but

enquired about the new scheme and the appointment of the ICT team costings and if these could be recouped.

The Director of Business and Committees advised that costs would be determined as part of the framework but could not determine yet if the fees could be included in the costs.

Councillor Kearney congratulated the Officer team on their work, but enquired why Maghera was being excluded from the scheme.

The Director of Business and Committees stated that specific projects were for urban areas and larger towns with populations greater than 5000. He added however, that subject to gaining confirmation from DAERA that rural funding will be made available, that Maghera would be included again in the next round of funding for Covid19 Business Support Grants.

Councillor Black referred to Covid19 Business Support Grant Scheme and enquired if this funding would go towards applicants on the reserve list and said that he was also disappointed that Maghera was being excluded from the DFI funding initiative.

The Director of Business and Communities in response to the query advised that there was no reserve list for Covid19 Business Support Grants as this was a rolling grant programme and all the monies were allocated in Tranche 1, however, any business who wished could reapply when the scheme opens again.

Councillor Cuddy queried about applicants who applied for Covid grant funding at the beginning and when list is complete, will they be eligible to apply for the small grant or will this be re-advertised again.

The Director of Business and Communities advised that Tranche 2 of the Covid19 Business Support Grant Scheme will be rolled out as in Tranche 1 until all the monies were allocated. He said that there was a high volume of businesses seeking grants between £500 - £3,000.

In response to a member query, the Head of Economic Development advised that a high number of businesses had applied for the funding in Tranche 1 and there was a surge of applications as the funding pot was almost fully allocated. She said that any business that submitted an application when all the funding was allocated had been written to advising them they were unsuccessful due to Tranche 1 funding being fully allocated but if an opportunity for Tranche 2 funding became available, they could reapply with a fresh application.

In response to Councillor Black's query, the Director of Business and Committees advised that Tranche 1 closes when money was all allocated and Council is currently working up a funding application for Tranche 2. He stated that forms for applying would be straight forward and basic.

Councillor Milne enquired about the closing date for completion of works.

The Head of Economic Development advised that the scheme must be completed by the end of March 2021.

Cllr Milne advised that an applicant had advised him that that returns had to be submitted by the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

The Head of Economic Development said that all works must be complete and claims submitted by March 2021 but agreed to investigate Cllr Milne's query and would respond directly to him.

The Director of Business and Communities advised that Covid19 Grant funding had been sourced from DfC and DAERA and this had to be spent by the end of this financial year.

The Chair said that it was great to see the funding coming through and for the people who previously missed out, there will be another opportunity for them to apply.

The Director of Businesses and Communities in reply to Councillor Kerr's query, regarding Council's Spruce Up Scheme, advised that there were;

- 38 schemes completed with a budget of £124,122 in 2019/20;
- 69 schemes were awarded funding of £249,147 through letters of offer in 2020/21; and
- 70 schemes are budgeted for to the value of £250,191 in 2021/22

He added that a further 74 schemes remain on the reserve list to the value of £272,387. He said that money has to be sourced to fund these but at present the Economic Development budget has been maximized to fund as many schemes as the budget currently allows.

The Chair stated that he had received enquiries about the reserve list by someone which was on it.

Councillor Kerr congratulated Officers on their great amount of work, but stated that his main concern would be the boundaries of the spruce up grant scheme and rural businesses falling outside the area of the town and asked if they would be opted out of the scheme or will they have the opportunity in the next Phase.

The Head of Economic Development advised that the Spruce Up Scheme had opened and closed with an enormous amount of applications and advised that Council had been upfront and made applicants aware that funding towards the scheme would take a phased approach to allow funding to be sourced. She said that Council Officers cannot go back and change the existing scheme at this stage, but moving forward with any new scheme in the future, consideration would be given towards how the scheme could be made more inclusive.

Proposed by Councillor Doris  
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to agree;

- (1) to move forward with the Covid19 Recovery Revitalisation Funding Programme in association with DfC, DAERA and DFI.

- (2) Funding of £133,000 be made available in Tranche 2 from Council's economic development budget for the Covid19 Business Grants Scheme to co-fund rural applications, alongside DAERA (*subject to confirmation of DAERA funding*).
- (3) Appointment of an ICT team with immediate effect to assist Council progress the proposed projects as outlined for each town for DFI streetscape funding, subject to all works being treated as 'drafts' until full Council approval is attained, and Town Centre Forum Meetings held to agree the schemes.

Councillor Wilson stated that it was brought to his attention of concerns relating to 2 National Trust Properties, Wellbrook Beetling Mill and Springhill which are struggling very badly due to the covid pandemic and looking at cost cutting measures. He said that Springhill House was closed indefinitely, with gardens being opened but with no carparking facilities. Staff are off or on furlough and not there to tend to the grounds and there needs to be something considered and put in place to keep it up to standard.

He advised that the National Trust had sought a DEA meeting with Councillors to progress this as tomorrow was the deadline for staff and volunteers.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson  
Seconded by Councillor Cuddy

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that a meeting be arranged for DEA's and representatives from the National Trust to investigate a favorable outcome relating to Springhill and Wellbrook Beetling Mill.

## **Matters for Decision**

### **D114/20 Outdoor Recreation Master Plan Programme**

The Head of Parks presented previously circulated report and sought approval to appoint a qualified consultancy to develop Master Plans for the potential development of Drumcairn, Altmore and Dunmoyle Forests as local multi-activity hubs, subject to available funding. As outlined in the Action Plan of Mid Ulster District Council Outdoor Recreation Strategic Plan, March 2020.

Councillor Doris said that she was happy to propose the report as it was a long time coming for the Drumcairne & Cappagh/Altmore areas and said that there would be more ability for mountain biking and walking trails, picnic areas, parks and possible glamping in the areas of outstanding natural beauty.

She sought a meeting with Stewartstown Community Group and Cappagh Village Regeneration Group to progress these projects forward.

She also asked that the carpark at Drumcairn be given attention as it was in a dire need of a good clean up.

Councillor Kerr concurred with member's comments and said that it would be important to work with the community groups in Stewartstown and Cappagh and would like an



Interagency meeting relating to Altmore Forest project. He sought an update on Cappagh Reservoir project and how it was progressing.

Councillor Clarke referred to Dunmoyle Forest and sought clarification on whether it was part of Mid Ulster District Council area.

The Head of Parks advised that it was part of the former Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council remit and that Ballygawley was part of the Council's jurisdiction.

Councillor Clarke stated that Drum Manor was identified as a regional hub and enquired if Forest Service had made this identification as space and opportunity was limited.

The Head of Parks advised that Drum Manor, Parkanaur and Ballyronan were identified as regional hubs as part of the Council approved strategic plan as they were recognised as visitor destinations. He said that access was important and structure on site and these were points to determine whether they were classed as a local facility or a regional facility.

Councillor Elattar said that she was happy the people of Tyrone and looked forward to the projects coming through but when the Strategy went out Iniscarn Forest and Derrynoid Forest were not recognised and felt that it was a pity as Iniscarn Forest was adjacent to Slieve Gallion. She stated that there were very poor carparking facilities and overflowing bins and asked if extra bins could be installed or addressed to protect the area.

The Head of Parks advised that there were a number of other activities within the Strategy which would cater for those. In referring to carparking he said that he would liaise with the Forestry Service to see if anything can be done to elevate carparking issues. He said that the Council wanted people to follow the Countryside Code and be pro-active and responsible with their litter and didn't want to follow down the route of installing more bins but would take on board and seek to address the issue.

Councillor Elattar said that it would be beneficial if some benches could be placed in some areas going towards the top of Iniscarn so people can stop and rest.

The Head of Parks advised that a current scheme would be looking at this for Iniscarn.

Councillor Burton said that this was the next 5-year plan and raised concern regarding Lumfords Glen being overlooked. She stated that she had raised Lumfords Glen on numerous occasions and felt that not enough was being done to address issues around the damage caused by adverse weather conditions dilapidating the beauty spot. She also referred to Brantry Lough and said that more bins were required as it was a very busy attraction and used a lot by the community especially during the pandemic.

The Head of Parks advised that Lumfords Glen was continuously being brought to the attention of Forestry Service and that he would continue to press on the issue and keep the committee updated.

In referring to request for additional bins at Brantry Lough, the Head of Parks advised that no additional bins would be installed due to the fact that everyone should be

adhering to the Countryside Code and taking their litter home with them, but would continue to get the area where the bins are located, picnic area and carpark serviced.

Councillor Burton raised concern as she felt that Lumfords Glen should be given more priority when others have come more recently and are listed on the agenda, it is disheartening to see and wants this matter moved forward as its being overlooked.

She stated that it was important that the bins at Brantry Lough were emptied on a regular basis as litter is being blown around the forest and into the water.

Councillor Cuddy referred to the incident at Dungannon Park where a handbrake failed to work and a car ran away. He said that it could have been a tragic incident as a lot of pedestrians were around that area and asked for an update on how this could be prevented in the future.

The Head of Parks advised that the handbrake wasn't secured resulting in the car rolling away and coming into contact with a bollard. He said that the car did progress down the pedestrian area where people were moving about and that a review on carpark safety would be investigated with Safety Officers looking at other methods for safety measures within the Park environment.

The Chair said that it was good to see the masterplans for Forests going forward.

Proposed by Councillor Doris  
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that approval be granted to procure and appoint qualified consultancy to develop Master Plans for the potential development of Drumcairn, Altmore and Dunmoyle Forests as local multi-agency recreational hubs, subject to available funding.

#### **D115/20 Lough Neagh Partnership Core Funding 2020/21**

The Head of Tourism presented previously circulated report and sought approval for annual contribution for year 2020/21 towards the core running costs associated with Lough Neagh Partnership (LNP) in the delivery of marketing tourism, recreational, environmental and heritage activities on Lough Neagh (LN) and the shoreline on behalf of Mid Ulster District Council.

*Councillor Corry left the meeting at 7.50 pm and returned at 7.54 pm.*

Councillor Doris stated that she would be happy to propose the recommendation but had an issue around the boglands at Derrylaughan and Derrytresk. She said that it was upsetting to see the burning of moss and the detrimental effects that this was having on wildlife and the environment. She referred to the June Development Committee meeting where she made a proposal that the burning of moss be carried out in a controlled way and thanked the locals for their assistance in working for years to preserve the lands.

Councillor Kerr concurred with member's comments and said that he would be happy to second the proposal.

He said that he had met with community groups regarding the issues around Derrytresk and Derrylaughan and felt that it was important that something was done to address this issue around the boglands.

In regard to the linkage to Washingbay, Lough Neagh and Coalisland Canal, there is a huge potential to interlink each specified area and to become a recognised pathway. He said that it would be hugely significant that Council does all it can to continue and maximise their efforts to support the fantastic work LNP was carrying out.

Councillor Kerr referred to The Low Country Native Irish Honeybee Association where members of LNP are interested in getting a conservation area and asked that Council Officers engage the group on the use of Council maintained lands.

The Head of Tourism said that he would pursue the issue raised regarding Derrylaughan and Derrytresk boglands and advised that as off today there still was no agreement from the Education Board.

The Head of Tourism stated that he would follow up Councillor Kerr's request.

Proposed by Councillor Doris  
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to approve that:

- (i) Mid Ulster District Council fund Lough Neagh Partnership £22,000 as requested subject to funding being secured from all five Councils on the shores of Lough Neagh.
- (ii) Lough Neagh Partnership submit a quarterly update to MUDC.

**D116/20      ITT Report for Augmented Reality and Trail Interpretation for Davagh Forest (Cookstown), Slievemore (Mayo) and Ballyronan Marina (Magherafelt) and Update on Grant Aid Letters of Offer for OM, Dark Sky Park Solar Walk**

The Head of Tourism presented previously circulated report to provide an update regarding:

- ITT Report for Augmented Reality and Trail Interpretation for Davagh Forest (Cookstown), Slievemore (Mayo) and Ballyronan Marina (Magherafelt)
- Letters of Offer for the DAERA match funding for OM Solar Walk, OM Archaeological Walks & The Ballyronan Tourism Project

Councillor Clarke stated it was a very comprehensive, strong report and a lot of progress in Mid Ulster but enquired about 40% quality for overall 88 and still 70%. He said that it seemed to be difficult for people to meet the criteria and maintain a good score.

Councillor Ashton said that it would be useful for officers to update members in the future on the scoring mechanisms used.

Councillor Corry said that it was an excellent initiative and a great selling point which captured peoples attention.

Proposed by Councillor Clarke  
Seconded by Councillor Corry and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council:

- (i) To approve for acceptance the tender received from Tandem Partners Ltd, being the most economically advantageous tender and their tender total price of £218,443.
- (ii) That Council grant approval for the match funding for the projects outlined within the report.

## **D117/20 Autumn Corporate Events Update**

The Head of Tourism presented previously circulated report to which updated members on no advice being given yet regarding mass gatherings and maximum numbers permitted to attend an outdoor event. However, from Monday 24 August 2020 the maximum number of people who can meet outdoors has been reduced from 30 people to 15 people. Any meetings of more than 15 people will be required to complete a risk assessment.

To ensure all options were investigated; site visits took place in particular looking at the logistics of hosting firework displays with Officers and Health and Safety.

Councillor Ashton referred to item 4.1 and said that proposals looked to be more cost effective than fireworks costings and asked if the money could be put towards the Economic Development budget.

The Head of Tourism advised that savings have been made and a report would be brought to the next meeting on allocated funding measures.

Councillor Wilson said that he had no problem with agreeing to the report but queried why the issue of Magherafelt Christmas was included in the Halloween festivities and brought to this meeting.

The Head of Tourism advised that it was an error on his part and would form part of his report next month.

Councillor Doris said that discussions with the Coalisland Town Centre Forum had included the possibility of having a Halloween Shop Window Decoration Initiative which would bring a happy atmosphere and deter anti-social behavior.

The Head of Tourism reassured the member that he would investigate the matter.

Proposed by Councillor Milne  
Seconded by Councillor Corry and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that approval be granted to celebrating Halloween and Christmas in Mid Ulster in a new way. With no mass gatherings of people, but in a safe way enhancing the atmospheres within

our town centres and instilling civic pride with our residents amidst these uncertain times.

**D118/20      Social Housing Working Group & Pilot Dungannon Place Shaping Plan**

The Head of Community Development presented previously circulated report to:

- Update members on Social Housing Working Group issues and plans to address these
- Seek agreement to proceed with the development of a pilot Place Shaping Plan for Dungannon

Councillor Monteith said that he was glad to see the issue of affordable housing on the agenda tonight.

He raised concern about affordable housing in Dungannon and the extortionate cost of renting in the town, with no families being allocated social housing and forced down the road of expensive renting. He stated that the minimum for a 3-bed former housing executive house was in the region of £620 per month and stressed the need for a rigorous rent control system between the private and public sector which must be adhered to. If anyone was paying more than 30% of their weekly wage then this was classed as rental poverty and there was a need to move away from Housing Associations as they are also expensive and don't help the people as there is an extra amount to be paid on top of the housing benefit. He said that in this day and age this was totally unacceptable and in relation to the strength of the report, there was a need for a buy in from Developers and others who buy up retail businesses and turn them into 2-bedroom apartments, which are unacceptable for families. He said that MUDC's Planning Department were also to blame for approving these type of buildings as they approved town houses outside the town and there was a need to grasp this and have more homes adapted for families. He suggested a simple solution called mixed tenure development where a development is not approved unless some goes towards social housing.

Councillor Kerr supported Councillor Monteith's comments and said that there was a similar problem in Coalisland regarding social housing, with people being the working poor and having to choose between feeding their families or paying rent. He said that unfortunately there will more poverty-stricken families after the furlough scheme ends and no employment opportunities and these 2 areas will be the hardest hit.

Councillor Wilson sought clarification on item 3.2 and enquired if all the phased land was used up in Dungannon.

The Head of Community Development advised that phased land still remained and that social housing development was important and NIHE are re-examining potential sites and any issues regarding these. This was agreed at an earlier meeting of members as the current social housing list was mainly retail units.

Councillor Monteith noted that it is important if Council invests this money in the pilot plan that there needs to be action from this.

The Head of Community Development stated that it was about getting the right people around the table at the beginning and having everyone involved in the development of a specification and ensuring commitment at this time. Due to the level of proposals currently it is important that this is taking forward as soon as possible and setting up a working group to progress this issue.

Councillor Wilson said that it was strange that Dungannon was considering phase II land for social housing as the phased land for Cookstown hasn't been considered; he is aware of one such site discussion. He asked that a report be brought to a future meeting on the difference between Dungannon and Cookstown.

The Chair concurred with members comments about extortionate rental prices, with rental prices over £600 in Cookstown. He referred to people living in social housing and in receipt of housing benefit expected to pay an extra £20 per week to cover their rent.

*Councillor Black left the meeting at 8.15 pm*

Councillor Corry said that it was important that this matter be sorted asap and agreed with Councillor Kerr's theory that things were going to get more difficult for people once furlough ends and people end up losing their jobs.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith  
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council:

- (i) To note update on social housing issues and plans to address them
- (ii) To commit up to £10,000 towards the development of a Place Shaping Plan for Dungannon with a further 50% match from NIHE (from within existing budgets).

## **D119/20      Community Development Report**

The Head of Community Development presented previously circulated report to update members on the following:

- Grants – approval sought for rolling Good Relations Grants
- Peace IV – approval sought for Peace IV proposals and to note the update
- Community Development – to note the Community Development update

In response to Councillor Ashton's query regarding Good Relations DOA Events, the Head of Community Development advised these had to be completed by March 2021.

*Councillor Burton declared an interest in Ulster in Bloom as a member of NILGA.*

Councillor Burton referred to appendix 1, Good Relations Report, Ulster in Bloom 2021 and sought clarification if this event was going ahead next year.

*Councillor Milne left the meeting at 8.17 pm.*

The Head of Community Development said that the project was anticipated to be delivered as the main element of the project being funded is bringing the diverse groups and people together from across the village through planting.

Councillor Burton said that there was no issue but it could be a bit misleading re the title.

*Councillor Black returned to the meeting at 8.19 pm.*

Proposed by Councillor Doris  
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to approve:

- (i) Grant award recommendations for Good Relations totaling £3,000
- (ii) Peace IV extension end date of June 2021 and Peace IV update
- (iii) Note the contents of Community Development report.

## **D120/20 Economic Development Report**

*Councillor Milne returned to the meeting at 8.20 pm.*

The Head of Economic Development presented previously circulated report to update members and sought approval for the following:

### **(1) Christmas Off Street Car Parking Charges - Dungannon & Magherafelt**

To boost trade over the Christmas period during the last 5 years, Council previously agreed to introduce a reduced tariff car parking scheme in Dungannon and Magherafelt. Approval sought to bring into effect a similar scheme this year to support the local retail sector.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith  
Seconded by Councillor Kearney and

**Resolved Christmas Off Street Car Parking Charges – Dungannon & Magherafelt**  
Implement a temporary reduced tariff for the first 3 hours of 10 pence in all Off Street Pay & Display Car Parks in Dungannon and Magherafelt during the Christmas period from Saturday 21 November 2020 to Saturday 2 January 2021 (6-week period) at a cost of £23,400.

Councillor Monteith said that for a few years he had been arguing the fact that carparking should be free and now post Covid, this should be the case more than ever as more shops are closing and people highlight the fact that carparking charges deters them from coming into town centres. He said that there was supposed to be a pilot scheme carried out and doesn't know what become of that but welcomed the reduction in carparking charges for Christmas.

The Chair advised that the pilot scheme had been brought to the Environment Committee for decision with the first 2 hours free across all carparks to see if it was viable.

**(2) DAERA Public Consultation – Further Education (FE) Support & Charging Policy at the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE)**

DAERA has launched a public consultation on a Review of Further Education Support and Charging Policy at CAFRE. They provide a range of full-time and part-time further and higher education courses as well as industry training course at CAFRE. The courses cover agriculture, equine, food, horticulture and business for agri-food and rural enterprise. Permission sought to approve the draft consultation response to enable it to be submitted to DAERA before closing date for submissions of 11th September 2020.

Proposed by Councillor Corry  
Seconded by Councillor Milne and

**Resolved DAERA Public Consultation – Further Education Support & Charging Policy at the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE)**

Delegate authority to the Development Committee to approve the draft consultation response to enable it to be submitted to DAERA before the closing date for submissions of 11<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

*Councillor Clarke left the meeting at 8.23 pm.*

**(3) Review of Council's Online Business Directory**

The function of this directory is to provide a facility for Mid Ulster businesses to include their details on Mid Ulster District Council's Online Business Directory

Councillor Ashton enquired if the Council community services database was just for the Council or for public use.

The Head of Economic Development advised that she believed the Council's community database was an internal database.

Councillor Ashton said that she would have an issue with removing community groups from the platform and would propose putting these groups back on a database for public use.

*Councillor Clarke returned to the meeting at 8.26 pm.*

She referred to appendix 2, item 3 where it seemed to review the complaints regarding religious beliefs and then on page 8 referred to "political beliefs" was raised again and felt that this needed checking or screening. She said that she would not be supporting this regardless of their background and if



people were willing to work with community then Council should work with them.

The Director of Business and Communities advised that it was appropriate that businesses are seen to be acting responsibly and that going forward they would be offered the option of completing an Equality Monitoring Form.

Proposed by Councillor Ashton  
Seconded by Councillor Burton and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that going forward that a community platform be publicly advertised on the Council's website.

Councillor Ashton said that the community groups section should not have been removed from the business directory in the first instance due to the great work being carried out i.e. Niamh Louise Foundation.

The Director of Business and Communities in response to member's query, advised that a policy approach would be brought forward on the issue to Council's P&R Committee.

Proposed by Councillor Milne  
Seconded by Councillor Corry and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that approval be granted to:

**Review of Council's Online Business Directory**

Approving the recommendations contained in the Review of Council's Online Business Directory.

**D121/20 A29 Cookstown and Dungannon By-Passes**

The Director of Business & Communities presented previously circulated report to:

- (1) Update member on the progress of the A29 Cookstown by-pass project
- (2) Seek agreement with Dungannon DEA elected members to form a working group with officials from the Department of Infrastructure (DfI) to progress a by-pass scheme for Dungannon

The Chair advised members that the bimonthly meetings with DfI representatives were very useful and this meeting should be extended to discuss Dungannon also but felt that there was a need to start identifying Moneymore too as an issue as it was becoming a problem due to traffic congestion.

Councillor Clarke agreed that Moneymore needed to be kept on the radar as it was the 3<sup>rd</sup> link from north to south.

Councillor Cuddy said that it was great to see Cookstown progressing as our Council extends from Swatragh to Fivemiletown and stated that primary things needed to be done and learn from the Cookstown Councillors.

Councillor Kearney felt it was a good day for Mid Ulster due to the launch of the Mid South West Growth Deal Economic Strategy.

Proposed by Councillor Cuddy  
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that approval be granted to:

- (i) Note update on the progress of the A29 Cookstown by-pass scheme
- (ii) Form a working group comprising Dungannon DEA elected members and officers from the Department of Infrastructure (DfI) to progress the development of a by-pass scheme in Dungannon

**D122/20      Department for Communities Access and Inclusion Programme  
2020/21**

The Head of Culture & Arts presented previously circulated report to:

- (1) Inform members of the 2020/21 Department for Communities Access and Inclusion funding programme
- (2) Seek Council approval to participate in the 2020/21 Department for Communities Access and Inclusion Scheme and to request project submissions from internal Arts & Culture, Leisure, Parks, Tourism Services and to assess submissions received in advance of submitting all project applications to the Department for Communities for further project funding assessment.

Councillor Corry said that this was a great opportunity for projects as it would create a positive impact for people who may be otherwise disadvantaged.

Proposed by Councillor Corry  
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that approval be granted to:

- (i) Participation in the 2020/21 DfC Access and Inclusion Programme
- (ii) Council requesting project submissions from internal Culture, Arts, Leisure Parks, Recreational and Tourism services to form applications for funding to the 2020/21 DfC Access and Inclusion Programme.

**Matters for Information**

**D123/20      Minutes of Development Committee held on 9 July 2020**

Members noted Minutes of Development Committee held on 9 July 2020.

**D124/20      OM Dark Sky Park & Observatory, Davagh**

Members noted update on the progress and scheduled official launch of the OM Dark Sky Park and Observatory, Davagh Forest.

Councillor Ashton referred to page 98 and stated that there was a typo error on the report and should read “BBC Northern Ireland”.

Councillor Doris enquired if there was any possibility of arranging a site visit to the OM Dark Skies Project for members.

The Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation advised that there would be an opportunity for a visit for members and the community before opening the venue to the public.

Councillor Black commended the work by Officers to get the project to this stage and said that from looking at the images, it looks spectacular. He said that it was unfortunate that the project won't get the launch it deserves at this current time.

He referred to the financial impact with the possibility of a 70% decrease in tourist footfall and increased costs regarding Covid restrictions and asked if it would be possible for a report to be brought back to committee on the impact Covid was having on tourism, arts, leisure and other venues used by the public.

The Director of Business and Communities advised that budget predictions were due to commence shortly, and similarly for other venues like theatres etc. which were unlikely to open this side of Christmas. There will be challenging times ahead as no performances can be booked but officers will do their best to try and keep things moving forward.

#### **D125/20      Macmillan Move More Service Update**

Members noted update which provided information on a research and evaluation report completed in partnership with Queen's University Belfast and Macmillan, demonstrating how proactive the Macmillan Move More Programme has been throughout the Covid pandemic.

#### **D126/20      Leisure – Covid 19 Recovery Update**

Members noted update on the response from the Leisure Team to the Covid 19 pandemic and the ongoing engagement and contact with customers and users of Council Leisure Services.

Councillor Cuddy said that these were worrying times for the public and private sectors and stated at the beginning of Covid, the Council stated that they would be eligible to get 10% back and enquired where we were presently and also asked about Furlough and leisure staff who received it.

The Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation advised that centre managers were all working at all levels through the pandemic. Staff up to Duty Managers were furloughed but were back at work by June. She said that family packages had been introduced this week and the service had been building reassurance and confidence within the community to use leisure facilities, with positive feedback being received. She stated that

income was below where it had been but anticipated that when the swimming lesson programme was launched things should improve.

Councillor Cuddy said that it was the Councillors responsibility to find out where we were financially.

### **D127/20      Mid Ulster Walking and Hillwalking Festival**

Members noted update on the upcoming walking festival.

Councillor Corry said that she welcomed the report and commended officers on their work in such a short period of time. She stated that Mid Ulster had some magnificent walking opportunities and felt that during the Covid pandemic walking had been reignited again and suggested that marketing be considered to enhance this.

She enquired about promotional adverts for Carntogher Way Walk and if this was taken on board.

The Head of Tourism advised that a date still had to be finalised for Carntogher Walk but would be worked upon.

Councillor Doris enquired if there was any update on DEA meetings for Councillors for their local areas.

The Head of Tourism said to date that this still hadn't been progressed but were looking at a complement across the District of long and short walking routes and advised that there would be consultations over the next couple of weeks to progress this.

Councillor Ashton referred to £10pp rate and enquired if there were any packages if any individual wished to take part in 3 walking opportunities.

The Head of Tourism advised that to date there has been no package for groups but going forward this can be investigated.

### **D128/20      EA Youth Engagement Mid Ulster**

Members noted update on the Education Authority (EA) funding support for Youth Services in Mid Ulster.

Councillor Monteith said that he welcomed the fact that there was communication between staff and Education Authority (EA) but felt that there needed to be a further development for co-ordination of working together moving forward. He stated that youth clubs were going to be hindered and our programmes needed to be adapted with more money being put into youth activity. He said that this could include staff being trained up to do more youth outreach. He stated that although the youth got bad press, they went through a horrific time over the last few months and that blame towards them was unwarranted as they were responsible in protecting their families. He suggested that the youth outreach be moved forward with possible areas identified like the Hill of The O'Neill and Burnavon arts, education outreach and street arts.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith  
Seconded by Councillor Corry and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to investigate opportunities for officers to work with Education Authority on working in co-ordination to enhance youth activity in the area and source possible areas for outreach and street arts.

Councillor Corry referred to youth services in Maghera and why were there two contracts in this area for the north and south and enquired why this might be.

The Head of Community Development said that the EA had noted this was due to previous youth delivery which had worked well in the area.

### **D129/20 Economic Development Report – OBF1**

Members noted correspondence relating to the following:

- Ministerial Launch of Council's £1million Business Support Package
- Cookstown Town Centre Forum Minutes
- Coalisland Town Centre Forum Minutes
- Magherafelt Town Centre Forum Minutes
- Maghera Town Centre Forum Minutes

*Councillor Burton declared an interest in item 2.1 as relative is employed by PJD Safety Supplies.*

*Live broadcast ended at 8.50 pm.*

### **Local Government (NI) Act 2014 – Confidential Business**

Proposed by Councillor Clarke  
Seconded by Councillor Corry and

**Resolved** In accordance with Section 42, Part 1 of 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 D130/20 to D137/20.

#### **Matters for Decision**

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| D130/20 | Reservoirs Safety Management Appointment of Integrated Consultancy Team |
| D131/20 | Moydamlaght Forest Permissive Path Agreement                            |
| D132/20 | Meadowbank Sports Arena Carpet  |
| D133/20 | Sports NI Multi Facility Fund Application                               |

#### **Matters for Information**

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| D134/20 | Confidential Minutes of Development Committee held on 9 July 2020 |
|---------|---|

D135/20      Greenvale Leisure Centre  
D136/20      Culture & Arts Update Report  
D137/20      Economic Development Report

**D138/20      Duration of Meeting**

The meeting was called for 7.00 pm and concluded at 9.10 pm.

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Report on</b>	Mid Ulster District Tourism Development Group
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Michael Browne
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Allison O'Keefe

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To present minutes of Tourism Development Group meeting held on 28 <sup>th</sup> April 2020 that were approved at Tourism Development meeting held on 22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2020.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	<p>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 in order to create economic growth, increase visitor numbers and create employment.</p> <p>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>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	The ratified minutes of the most recent meeting of the Tourism Development Group dated 22 September 2020 attached Appendix 1.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
4.1	<p><b><u>Financial &amp; Human Resources Implications</u></b></p> <p>N/A</p>
4.2	<p><b><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></b></p> <p>Mid Ulster Council is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity in all its activities with a focus on all citizens living within the Mid Ulster.</p>
4.3	<p><b><u>Risk Management Implications</u></b></p> <p>N/A</p>

<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	For information.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	Appendix A – Minutes of Tourism Development Group Meeting dated 22 September 2020.



**MID ULSTER TOURISM DEVELOPMENT GROUP**  
**Tuesday 28 April, 2020 at 11.00am via Zoom**

**Present**

Hugh McCloy

**Acting Chair**

Cllr Sean Clarke

Mid Ulster District Council

Cllr Niamh Doris

Mid Ulster District Council

Norman Bell

Visitor Attractions

Cathy O'Neill

Hotel Sector

Clare Doherty

Self Catering

Claire Murray

Local Food Producers/ Farmers Markets

Terry McCrory

Craft Sector

Colleen McGrath

Education &amp; Skills NRC

Simon Wiggins

Education &amp; Skills Sector

D Friel

Vintners

**In Attendance**

Michael Browne

Mid Ulster District Council

Tony McCance

Mid Ulster District Council

Mary McGee

Mid Ulster District Council

Mary McKeown

Mid Ulster District Council

Charmain Bell

Mid Ulster District Council

Genevieve Bell

Mid Ulster District Council

Graeme Major

Mid Ulster District Council

Sharon Arbuthnot

Mid Ulster District Council

Martha Beattie

Mid Ulster District Council

Joanne Robinson

Hill of The O'Neill &amp; Ranfurly House

**Apologies**

Cllr Frances Burton

Mid Ulster District Council

Brenda Murphy

Tourism NI

Mary Gervin

Events Sector

Mary McKeown

Mid Ulster District Council

Martha Beattie

Mid Ulster District Council

	<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>ACTIONS</b>
	<p><b>Introductions</b></p> <p>In the absence of Cllr Burton, Hugh McCloy, chaired the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies were raised for the Tourism Manager, who has been temporarily redeployed to work on the Community Hub.</p> <p>M Browne provided a brief overview on the plan to develop a Recovery Plan for Tourism, with the assistance of L Goodall, which will be brought to Council for approval.</p>	
<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Minutes of Meeting held on 4 March 2020</b></p> <p>Having been circulated in advance of the meeting the minutes were taken as read and correct.</p> <p><i>Proposed:</i> T McCrory      <i>Seconded:</i> C O'Neill</p>	

<b>2.</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>	
<b>2.1</b>	<p><b>Brown Signage</b>  M Browne informed that he has discussed signage with D Friel and K Bradley relating to their businesses following an update from Transport NI.</p> <p>G Bell informed that T Bratton confirmed that an inventory of signage within MUDC was not available and suggested Council carry out an audit within the district. G Bell advised that a suitable company would be appointed to deliver this exercise and provide quarterly updates. Cllr N Doris queried as to why Council staff could not carry out the audit. G Bell replied that staff would not be aware of the location of all signage in the area. M Browne added that this would be too big a task on officer's time and resources and informed that suitable companies who carry out maintenance and erecting of signage for Transport NI were more viable. Cllr Doris informed that she will raise it with the local MLA and MP to request that the department would deliver an audit. Cllr S Clark enquired as to how a company would have this information and Transport NI do not. C Doherty raised that Transport NI are quick to inform businesses who erect signs illegally and felt therefore that they should have a list of approved signs.</p>	<p>Cllr Doris to enquire with local MLA and MP to request Department of Infrastructure deliver an audit on all brown signage within MUDC.</p>
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>Overview of Tourism in Covid-19 Pandemic – TNI Review</b></p> <p>M Browne reported that he is a member of TNI Covid-19 Industry Working Group across all councils. He informed that they are currently working on gathering intelligence and statistics to look at where the markets will sit during recovery and financial rescue plans. M Browne advised that TNI are continuing with online surveys to measure the impact of the virus on tourism businesses and should be able to break this information down to district level.</p> <p>M Browne informed that TNI are developing a recovery plan to look at where the markets are likely to sit, including airlines, following the pandemic and future years. He briefly outlined the following plans for TNI:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on domestic market, including ROI and GB for next 2 years</li> <li>• Formal launch of Embrace the Giant Spirit brand in June 2020</li> <li>• Plan for The Gathering 2021</li> </ul> <p>M Browne added that he will update the group frequently and businesses could avail of regular updates from R McHugh, TNI, who feeds into the MUDC WhatsApp forum.</p> <p>Acting Chair thanked the Tourist Board for their support to the MUDC group. M Browne added that businesses will have to regenerate and target domestic markets and Council are looking to put mechanisms in place to assist. During discussion the Acting Chair felt it would take up to 2 years for global markets to reopen and as competition would be fierce businesses need to be prepared to react, therefore should continue to engage with these markets.</p>	
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>Mid Ulster Update</b></p> <p>M Browne spoke of how during the time from the last meeting, members now find themselves in an unusual and surreal environment which has been a shock in terms of what council and businesses are facing and the need now is to look at how each will function moving forward.</p>	

<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Business Engagement Programme Online</b></p> <p>M McGee delivered a presentation to members on the MUDC Tourism Covid 19 Response. She briefly updated members on the WhatsApp group, setup as an emergency response to provide a platform of communication for businesses to share concerns, information and ideas.</p> <p>M McGee reported that this forum has now evolved to deliver 3 webinars per week including speakers from the financial, legal, hospitality and tourism sectors offering advice to businesses. She informed that the group now has 105 members across Mid Ulster and is used as a constant flow of information and as the main communication channel. She added that group emails and social media platforms are also being used for those not on the WhatsApp forum. M McGee thanked TNI for their continued support and for making available experts in financial and legal matters available to businesses on a one-to-one. M McGee reported that training has also been provided for businesses to use LinkedIn, Instagram and Mobile Movie Making.</p> <p>M Browne recognised H McCloy by thanking him for the work that he has done and informed the group that R McHugh, TNI, and organisations outside of the District are looking at this group as best practice.</p> <p>M McGee went on to advise members of other associations online where support is available. She added that businesses will have to look at other ways to function in the current climate and gave examples of attractions offering online experiences and breweries making hand sanitisers.</p>	
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Mid Ulster Council Recovery Planning</b></p> <p>M Browne explained that Council are currently developing a Recovery Plan to work with businesses to rebuild, recover and reopen. He asked L Goodall to share and briefly deliver her document on Scenario Planning, showing 4 possible scenarios and discuss activities to help recovery among sectors, looking at different models.</p> <p>L Goodall went through her report and explained that the best scenario for the economy would be the V shape model that would allow business to bounce back following the pandemic. She discussed the shrinkage in the economy and job losses. Lara went on to explain that the rural setting of Mid Ulster and number of outdoors activities provided opportunities. She advised that communications should reflect this but in a sensitive manner to take into account the number of lives that have been lost. Lara went onto to look at possible scenarios, sector responses and reactions within other regions.</p> <p>When discussing moving forward, Lara suggested the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Branding the district as a safe area with plenty of outdoor space and activities</li> <li>• Ensure to continue offering support in a structured manner</li> <li>• Include businesses who are not within the WhatsApp</li> <li>• Build a bank of content to use digitally</li> <li>• Reengagement within sectors</li> <li>• Digital Meet the Buyer events</li> <li>• Businesses need to be innovative, engaging and reinvent themselves to reopen</li> <li>• Local marketing and promotions</li> </ul>	<p>M Browne requested officers' setup a Recovery Plan working group with a</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an Action Plan with timescales</li> </ul> <p>C O'Neill raised concern that during the recovery process there will be more risk to businesses than during supported lockdown due to limited capacity and costs. Acting chair also raised that guidelines need to be clear to prepare businesses for reopening.</p> <p>L Goodall warned businesses not to reduce their prices and to offer quality products as costs will rise due to capacity limits.</p> <p>Acting Chair thanked Head of Tourism and Business Engagement Officer for all their support to the private sector.</p>	<p>small number of members.</p> <p>M McGee to look at businesses developing new tour experiences and support implementation through TDG</p>
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<b>Report on</b>	Mid Ulster District Tourism Update
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Michael Browne
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Mary McGee

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To present an update on the Mid Ulster Tourism Group and ongoing webinars
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	The group was established online on Monday 16 <sup>th</sup> March in response to the onset and predicted impact of Corona Virus on businesses across Mid Ulster. Established by the Tourism development officer the group now has 128 members from every sector of the hospitality and tourism sector across Mid Ulster.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<p>The group has continued to develop and grow with 128 members now included. The webinar support continues online with the latest suite covering the Tourism NI Experience Development programme and giving support to the 17 applicants who submitted applications to this fund last week. The next webinar is planned for Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October. This will feature Michael Black from Cleaver Fulton Rankin Law who will cover the changes to the furlough scheme and the new employment regulations and provide an opportunity for questions and answers. This forum continues to be invaluable to the businesses given the rapidly changing circumstances the hospitality and tourism businesses find themselves in. This is a huge advantage as it means we can be very responsive to this rapidly evolving situation.</p> <p>Tourism NI continue to be present and support the webinars in terms of advice and supplying key speakers. Hospitality Ulster through Colin Neil is a regular contributor to the group in terms of supplying information and advice and posting the latest updates directly into the group.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
4.1	<p><b><u>Financial &amp; Human Resources Implications</u></b></p> <p>N/A</p>
4.2	<p><b><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></b></p> <p>Mid Ulster Council is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity in all its activities with a focus on all citizens living within the Mid Ulster.</p>

4.3	<b><u>Risk Management Implications</u></b>  N/A
5.0	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	For information.
6.0	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>

<b>Report on</b>	1) Cookstown Town Centre Forum Minutes – 7.7.20 2) Coalisland Town Centre Forum Minutes – 10.8.20 3) Town Centre Business Videos
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	15 October 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Fiona McKeown, Head of Economic Development

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
	To receive updates on the matters detailed below.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	<p><b>Cookstown Town Centre Forum Minutes – 7.7.20</b> Cookstown Town Centre Forum was established in 2002 to develop a partnership approach for the development and delivery of key town centre initiatives. The Forum meets at regular intervals throughout the year.</p>
2.2	<p><b>Coalisland Town Centre Forum Minutes – 10.8.20</b> Coalisland Town Centre Forum was established in March 2019 along similar lines to the Forums / Partnerships already operating in Dungannon, Cookstown, Magherafelt and Maghera. The Forum is a strategic body with representation from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors with the strategic aim of developing Coalisland Town.</p>
2.3	<p><b>Town Centre Business Videos</b> In June 2020 a report was taken to the Development Committee outlining the types of support the Economic Development service was providing to businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic. Included within the list of activities was the creation of business videos to represent each of the 5 large towns showcasing our retailers/social enterprises and encouraging the public to support them by shopping local. The businesses represented are independent high street traders and social enterprises that have survived the pandemic and have reconnected safely with their customers. The videos will be rolled out on Council's social media channels from 8 October 2020 onwards.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b>Cookstown Town Centre Forum Minutes – 7.7.20</b> Minutes of the meeting of Cookstown Town Centre Forum held on the 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020 are attached at <b>Appendix 1</b>.</p>

3.2	<p><b>Coalisland Town Centre Forum Minutes – 10.8.20</b> Minutes of the meeting of Coalisland Town Centre Forum held on the 10<sup>th</sup> August 2020 are attached at <b>Appendix 2</b>.</p>
3.3	<p><b>Town Centre Business Videos</b> A series of videos have been completed featuring local retailers and social enterprises. From 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020 onwards the Council's social media channels will be sharing stories of six well known town centre businesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sheehy's Newsagents in Cookstown;</li> <li>• O'Neill's Chemist in Coalisland;</li> <li>• Horace McMullan's in Dungannon;</li> <li>• Jude Law Boutique and Cuddy's in Magherafelt</li> <li>• Maghera Cross Community Link (social enterprise).</li> </ul> <p>Each short film focuses on their history and how they have been dealing with the challenges that trading during a pandemic has presented.</p> <p>From 8 October 2020 onwards, the videos can be viewed on the Council's social media channels.</p>
4.0	<b>Other Considerations</b>
4.1	<p><b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b></p> <p>Financial:</p> <p>Human: Officer Time</p> <p>Risk Management: N/A</p>
4.2	<p><b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b></p> <p>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications:</p> <p>Rural Needs Implications:</p>
5.0	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	<p>It is recommended that Members:</p> <p><b>Cookstown Town Centre Forum – 7.7.20</b> <b>Note</b> minutes of Cookstown Town Centre Forum held on 7.7.20.</p>
5.2	<p><b>Coalisland Town Centre Forum – 10.8.20</b> <b>Note</b> minutes of Coalisland Town Centre Forum held on 10.8.20.</p>
5.3	<p><b>Town Centre Business Videos</b> <b>Note</b> production of new business videos encouraging the public to shop local and support local traders.</p>



<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	<p>Appendix 1 - Minutes of Cookstown Town Centre Forum – 7.7.20</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Minutes of Coalisland Town Centre Forum – 10.8.20</p>



## **APPENDIX 1**

### **MINUTES OF COOKSTOWN TOWN CENTRE FORUM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD TUESDAY 7 JULY 2020 AT 12.30PM VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

**Present:**

Councillor McNamee	Mid Ulster District Council
Councillor Buchanan	Mid Ulster District Council
Councillor Hughes	Mid Ulster District Council
Councillor Mallaghan	Mid Ulster District Council
Councillor Wilson	Mid Ulster District Council
Chris Magee	PSNI
Glynn McGarry	PSNI
Patrick Anderson	Department for Communities
Ursula Marshall	Cookstown Disability Forum
Annette McGahan	Mid Ulster PCSP
Peter Beckett	Large Retailer
Paul Wilson	Large Independent Retailer
 Fiona McKeown	
Mary McCullagh	) Mid Ulster District Council
Colin McKenna	

**In attendance:** Deborah Ewing ) Mid Ulster District Council

#### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillor Gavin Bell and Councillor Mark Glasgow, Mid Ulster District Council; Tom Jebb, Vintners Association; TP Sheehy, Small Independent Retailer; Jim Eastwood, Cookstown Enterprise; Conall McKee, DRD Roads Service; Bernie Sonner, Tenants Association; Hazel McKenzie, Cookstown North Community Association; Adrian McCreesh, Mid Ulster District Council.

#### **2. MINUTES OF TOWN CENTRE FORUM MEETING 9/11/2019**

It was proposed by P Beckett and seconded by P Anderson to ADOPT the minutes of the Town Centre Forum Meeting held on 9 November 2019.

### **3. MINUTES OF TOWN CENTRE FORUM MEETING 15/06/2020**

It was proposed by U Marshall and seconded by Councillor Hughes to ADOPT the minutes of the Town Centre Forum Meeting held on 15 June 2020.

### **4. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

There were no matters arising from minutes.

### **5. UPDATE ON TOWN CENTRE RECOVERY PLAN**

M McCullagh advised that the Town Centre Recovery Plan is being presented at Development Committee on Thursday 9 July 2020. If approved this will then be ratified at full Council on 23 July 2020. A copy of the Plan can be circulated to members following ratification.

#### **a) DFC Funding Proposal**

Council continue to liaise with Department for Communities with regards to securing funding to enable a Covid 19 business grants programme for town centres. It is anticipated that the grant will include items that assist businesses to meet Covid 19 Government Guidelines. P Anderson advised that they are still awaiting on a central decision being made. He also advised members that they are negotiating with DAERA at present to try and ensure that rural areas are included in the potential Covid 19 business grants programme. This is an ongoing request from all Council's but he stated that it is significant for Mid Ulster due to the rurality of the district. Councillor Wilson agreed that it is essential that the rural community is not forgotten and advised that there is now an urgency on programme delivery, expressing concerns that there could be issues should the money not be forthcoming.

#### **b) Marketing Element**

M McCullagh advised that the Reconnect marketing campaign has commenced and is progressing. Adverts have been placed in the local press encouraging people to support their local businesses. An online business tool is now available which provides a range of downloadable resources for businesses and includes checklists, posters and floor sticker templates covering hygiene, social distancing measures, payment processes etc. A copy of the link was forwarded to members for their information and M McCullagh encouraged them to share with other businesses in the area. She advised that McGlaughlin's Bakery had shared an image on social media of their new sanitising station with one of the template posters.

The Open for Business campaign is ongoing. Several businesses have submitted videos to Council showing the social distancing measures they have in place which is then being promoted across Council's social media channels.

A video is currently being developed across the 5 towns of Mid Ulster which will promote the district as a place to visit and shop.

Reconnect with confidence stickers are being printed and will be delivered to town centre and village businesses for display in their shop windows. The idea is to encourage patrons to enter the business premises with the sticker on the window to show that there are safety measures in place and that it is safe to visit.

A marketing plan is being developed and members will be updated at future meetings. Councillor Wilson thanked the staff for their work during this difficult time and stated that it is essential to promote Cookstown in the best way possible and encourage footfall back into the town.

c) **Pavement Café Licensing**

Councillor Wilson advised that Pavement Café Licensing is being raised at the Environment Committee on Wednesday 7 July 2020. He stated that Council are conscious of the need to take into consideration the access issues in relation to pavement licensing. An update on this will be provided at next meeting.

**6. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON MID ULSTER TOWN CENTRE PROJECTS**

M McCullagh provided an update on Mid Ulster Town Centre Projects as follows:

**a) Physical Regeneration/Improving Infrastructure**

i) **Rural Regeneration Projects**

There are 37 villages who will access funding to develop and deliver projects identified through their respective village plans. Assistance will be provided to the following villages within the former Cookstown District: Pomeroy; Ardboe; Stewartstown; Sandholes; Coagh/Drummullan; Rock; Ballyronan; Moortown; Churchtown/Lissan; and Orritor/Broughderg.

Meetings have taken place to finalise projects and move them to the next stage involving an appointed professional led design team. The following projects have been completed: Pomeroy, Ardboe, Stewartstown, Rock, Ballyronan, Orritor, Lissan and Coagh. Works are ongoing at Sandholes and Moortown. M McCullagh thanked the community groups in each area for their assistance which has enabled the successful and smooth delivery of the projects.

ii) **Mid Ulster Town & Village Spruce Up Scheme**

Mid Ulster Town and Village Business Spruce Up Scheme offers discretionary grants of up to 75% eligible costs, capped at £5,000 per property for external and/or internal improvements. The scheme was open to both occupied commercial premises and vacant/derelict units within the town centre boundary of each of the towns and development limits of the eligible villages as per the proposed Mid Ulster Settlement Report as per the draft Local Development Plan (2030).

Knox & Clayton Architects were appointed as independent consultants to assist in the delivery of the Scheme.

Council are currently working through Phase 1 which has had a few delays due to Covid-19. In June 2020 Phase 2 commenced with a further 69 Letters of Offer issued to the next businesses on the ranked list. M McCullagh advised that this is still a large number of projects still on the ranked reserve list.

### iii) **Town Centre Enhancement**

A range of town centre enhancement proposals for Cookstown have been completed thanks to funding received from Department for Communities. The works included:

- Upgrade of sign and maintenance area at the A29 Roundabout
- Replacement hoarding and vinyl A29 Roundabout
- Powerwashing and cleaning street furniture and bins of main retail core (paved areas)

## **7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### a) Gas to the West

Councillor Wilson advised that they had met with Gas to the West representatives who have advised that there are works ongoing in Cookstown until approximately December 2020. There are 2 teams working in the town and the main roads to be affected are Coolreaghs Road and Lissan Road. However it was noted that the roads will not be closed but may operate on stop/go system. Other anticipated works will take place in housing estates but access will still be available.

The Gas to the West team have advised that if there are any concerns from businesses or residents that they are happy to meet with them on site to resolve any issues.

## **8. DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Councillor Wilson proposed that due to current circumstances and the need to discuss the Town Centre Recovery Plan that a meeting could be arranged in August. Councillor Buchanan and U Marshall agreed.

Councillor McNamee raised a request from Councillor Bell regarding the times that the Town Centre Forum meetings are held to be reviewed to accommodate other members. Councillor Wilson proposed that this issue is included as an agenda item at the next meeting which will provide all members with an opportunity to comment on.

A date for August will be finalised and members will be notified accordingly.

The meeting ended at 1.05pm

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Minutes of Coalisland Town Centre Forum Meeting** **Monday 10 August 2020 at 12.30pm** **Microsoft Teams**

#### **Present**

Raymond O'Neill	Coalisland Traders Association (Chair)
Cllr Niamh Doris	Mid Ulster District Council (Vice Chair)
Cllr Robert Colvin	Mid Ulster District Council
Ursula Marshall	Mid Ulster Disability Forum
Patrick Anderson	Dept. for Communities
Francie Molloy	Coalisland Residents & Community Forum

#### **In Attendance**

Adrian McCreesh	Mid Ulster District Council
Michael Browne	Mid Ulster District Council
Colin McKenna	Mid Ulster District Council
Catherine Fox	Mid Ulster District Council
Oliver Donnelly	Mid Ulster District Council
Mark Leavey	Mid Ulster District Council
Celene O'Neill	Mid Ulster District Council

	<b>DISCUSSION</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies</b> Cllr Joe O'Neill                      Mid Ulster District Council Cllr Dan Kerr                        Mid Ulster District Council Cllr Niall McAleer                   Mid Ulster District Council  Mark Kelso                            Mid Ulster District Council Fiona McKeown                    Mid Ulster District Council Raymond Lowry                    Mid Ulster District Council  Declan Dorrity                        The Venue/The Beer Shed JP McCartan                          PSNI
<b>2.</b>	<b>Introductions</b> Cllr Doris Vice Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and took the role of Chair as Raymond O'Neill was having problems linking in.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting - Monday 6 July 2020</b> Proposed by U Marshall Seconded by P Anderson and agreed: -  The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 6 July 2020 were a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4.	<p><b>Matters Arising from Previous Meeting – Monday 6 July 2020</b></p> <p>There were no matters arising from the minutes of Monday 6 July 2020</p>
5.	<p><b>Covid-19 Business Support Grant Scheme</b></p> <p>C McKenna updated those present on the recently opened Covid-19 Business Support Grant Scheme. The scheme is open for commercial businesses both in the urban and rural areas within Mid Ulster. Grant awards are between £500 - £3000. The programme is open for online application from the 10 August and is a rolling programme with no closing date. It will be first come first served and will close when funding has run out. The scheme is part funded through DFC, DEARA and Mid Ulster Council. So far, there has been 40-50 applications received. The funding is for capital projects only to allow businesses to put social distancing measures in place.</p>
6.	<p><b>Coalisland Projects Updates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p><b>Coalisland Public Realm Scheme</b></p> <p>M Leavey provided an update on the Public Realm Scheme stating that the contractor is currently working on Barrack Street and moving on to pave Main Street shortly. The car parking spaces on Main Street are also currently undergoing construction and the railings are due to be erected in the next few weeks.</p> <p>In relation to the existing BT phone kiosk at the bottom of Platers Hill the consultation exercise for permanent removal of the kiosk commenced on 27 July 2020 and is due to finish on 2 November 2020.</p> <p>Broadband providers BT and Fibrus are also planning to carry out works within the town to install fibre broadband infrastructure.</p> <p>C McKenna updated that Fibrus was planning to install fibre broadband in c1900 premises within Coalisland town. In the rural areas, the current Project Stratum scheme being delivered by the Department of the Economy will be identifying areas for upgrade to Fibre.</p> <p>F Molloy asked for an update on the current proposals to deal with flooding in the town. M Leavey updated that NI Water are currently carrying out investigations on infrastructure. A database of all properties affected was created and sent to them and it is hoped that a follow up meeting will be held within the next two weeks.</p> <p>Cllr Doris asked as to the make – up of the seating at the Cornmill asking if the current proposal include wooden seating. M Leavey updated that the Project Manager has asked the contractor to look at alternatives – metal etc. and will feed back once these have been sought.</p> <p>Cllr Doris also asked what the current design would be at Barrack Street car park. M Leavey stated that there is no further update on this as the technical team are currently looking at options.</p> <p>F Molloy asked that a meeting is set up with the owners of Heron’s shop to discuss parking proposals at front of their shop on Barrack Street</p> </li> </ul>



**Action: M Leavey to organize meeting between technical team and owners of Heron's shop Barrack Street to discuss parking arrangements.**

R O'Neill joined the meeting and asked as to the current situation with the proposed one-way system and whether it is going ahead as planned. He quoted that there is a 30 % reduction in business turnover on main Street and a recent Freedom of Information request to Department for Infrastructure highlights that Coalisland vacancy rate is currently 28% - one of the highest in Northern Ireland.

R O'Neill stated that the decision to push on with a one-way system was a Sinn Fein one and it will be to the detriment to the town.

A McCreesh interjected stating that, as Chair R O'Neill should be impartial when it comes to political opinion. R O'Neill rebutted that the survey carried out by AECOMM on behalf of MUDC stated that 62% were against the one-way system and that it is madness that it is still going ahead.

F Molloy stated that the one-way system will make the roundabout at 'Mamies corner' a lot safer and that a one-way system will make the traffic flow a lot safer around the town. He also stated that the new car park at Barrack Street would also alleviate many problems. Ultimately, though the carriageway on Main Street is not wide enough to accommodate two lanes of traffic.

R O'Neill stated that the current proposal to construct a 7-spoke roundabout is illegal.

(R O'Neill left the meeting at 13.06)

- **Gortgonis Recreation Centre Redevelopment**

M Leavey provided an update on the Gortgonis scheme stating that Mid Ulster Council are currently liaising with DfI Roads Service around access to the two sites – recreation centre and the school.

F Molloy suggested that a site visit is held to look at options.

**Action: M Leavey to arrange a site visit with F Molloy, DfI Roads Service and MUDC to look at options for road layout.**

- **Coalisland Events – Halloween & Christmas 2020**

O Donnelly provided an update following the meeting held with the Halloween Working Group. There are currently investigating options for the event such as a high-level fireworks show at Gortgonis with limited attendance and /or a Fireworks show with vehicular access only. Both have potential after O Donnelly and P Gallagher had a site visit and spoke with MUDC Health & Safety officer. The other potential is to hold a light show in the town centre (Cornmill area) in partnership with local businesses.

	<p>This is all predicated on the announcement due from the Executive on 24 August, which will decide whether there will be any events going forward. O Donnelly stated that officers are at least working up proposals for events so preparations are in place with the ultimate decision being made by Council.</p> <p>A McCreesh stated that the Safety Advisory Group will be making a decision on events and Officers will be guided by them in terms of that can and cannot take place. He said that officers are working up proposals but the announcement on the 24<sup>th</sup> August by The Executive will decide the way forward for all events.</p>
<b>7.</b>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>Cllr Doris asked for an update on the lands on the former Railway Line</p> <p>P Anderson updated that there were initially two interested parties but now there is only one who has confirmed they are willing to work with Mid Ulster Council on any future development.</p> <p>F Molloy suggested that a meeting is set up with the traveller's representatives to resolve the issue.</p> <p><b>Action: P Anderson to set up meeting with traveller's representatives with regard to the land on the former Railway Line.</b></p> <p>Cllr Doris asked if it was possible to get more businesses onto the forum. Firstly, we should revisit the Terms of Reference and contact the 4 existing traders to see if they want to remain.</p> <p><b>Action: O Donnelly to contact the 4 existing traders to see if they want to remain.</b></p>
<b>7.</b>	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p><b>Monday 7th September @ 12.30pm via Microsoft Teams</b></p>
<b>8.</b>	<p><b>Meeting Duration</b></p> <p>Meeting ended at 13.40pm</p>

<b>Report on</b>	Mid South West (MSW) Region Update
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Adrian McCreesh, Director of Business & Communities

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To note progress on the ongoing work in relation to the Mid South West (MSW) region.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	The most recent MSW Region Update was presented to the Council for information in July 2020.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b><u>Mid South West Regional Economic Strategy (RES) &amp; Launch</u></b></p> <p>As reported to Council in July 2020, the content of the RES was reviewed to take account of the impact of Covid-19. Attached at Appendix 1 is a copy of the RES which was launched on 9 September 2020 by First Minister Arlene Foster MLA and deputy First Minister Michelle O'Neill MLA. The launch was hosted in an industrial setting at the premises of Edge Innovate. Edge Innovate, which is represented on the Business Reference Group, is located in the Mid Ulster District Council area.</p> <p>Numbers at the launch were restricted in adherence to Public Health Agency Guidelines with representation from the Mid South West Region Governance Steering Group, the Business Reference Group and invited guests including the First Minister, deputy First Minister, Robin Walker MP - Minister of State for Northern Ireland, Diane Dodds MLA - Minister for the Economy and Kevin Holland - Chief Executive of Invest NI.</p> <p>Guests who had been invited to attend the original launch back in March 2020 but who were unable to attend the physical launch due to restrictions in numbers, received an invitation to watch the event via a live stream. The launch included a promotional video showcasing MSW and an infographic video which provides a high level overview of the RES.</p> <p>Feedback following the launch of the RES has been positive with good media coverage to date.</p>

The RES, videos and a recording of the launch event are available to view/download from [www.midsouthwestregion.org](http://www.midsouthwestregion.org).

### **Update on Prioritisation of Interventions**

An exercise to identify and prioritise interventions under the four intervention areas detailed in the RES has been completed following discussions with the Mid South West Region Governance Steering Group. A summary of the prioritised interventions is attached at Appendix 2.

It is important to note that the RES is an ambitious 10-15 year plan which will require a number of economic levers to support its delivery. The interventions identified are broadly referenced in the RES however as a high level strategic plan, scope exists to take advantage of opportunities that may present over the 10-15 year delivery timeframe. Stimulating growth and increasing productivity were central considerations in the identification of interventions for inclusion in the Growth Deal proposition.

Following consideration and as detailed in Appendix 2, the Governance Steering Group has agreed to the prioritisation of strategic interventions in respect of:

- Mid South West Growth Deal – Infrastructure, Innovation, Tourism, Skills
- Executive Complementary Fund
- Other Funding Interventions (SEUPB, Shared Prosperity Fund, Innovate UK etc.)
- Longer Term
- Policy Change

### **Forward Work Plan**

#### **Business Planning – Development of Five Case Model Business Cases**

Having completed the identification and prioritisation of interventions, the business justification process in respect of the Growth Deal proposition can commence. As previously agreed, technical support and expertise will be required to develop strategic business cases in adherence to HM Treasury's requirements. This technical support and expertise will now be put in place.

#### **Stakeholder Engagement**

Engagement with a range of stakeholders including the NIO, relevant Government Departments, Treasury as well as the Business Reference Group will continue in the period ahead.

#### **Governance Arrangements**

In parallel with the business planning process and stakeholder engagement referenced above, the Mid South West Region Governance Steering Group will

	<p>give consideration to the governance arrangements required to support the development phase of the Growth Deal proposition.</p> <p><u>Executive Complementary Fund</u></p> <p>No further information on the Executive Complementary Fund has been made available. Officers from across the three Councils are continuing to develop the interventions that will be pursued through this Fund.</p> <p><u>Promotion of the Mid South West Region</u></p> <p>Utilising the marketing assets developed in support of the RES, opportunities to promote the Mid South West Region will be pursued.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: Financial contributions from the three respective Councils have been allocated to develop the growth deal proposition.
	Human: Officer Time
	Risk Management:
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	<p>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications:</p> <p>The RES was equality screened and it has been screened out. The Equality Impact Assessment was presented to the Committee at their meeting on 11 February 2020.</p>
	<p>Rural Needs Implications:</p> <p>The Rural Needs Impact Assessment was also presented to the Council on the same date.</p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<p>It is recommended that Members <b>note</b>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing work in relation to the Mid South West Region.</li> <li>2. The prioritisation of strategic interventions.</li> <li>3. The commencement of the development of business cases in pursuance of the Growth Deal proposition.</li> </ol>

<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Mid South West Regional Economic Strategy (RES)</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Prioritisation of Interventions</p>



# REGIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY

2020







# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## We are proud to unveil the Regional Economic Strategy for the Mid South West (MSW).

The MSW region makes up almost half of Northern Ireland's (NI) land mass. A quarter of NI's population live there. It is home to a third of NI's businesses. It provides 214,000 workplace jobs, 90% of which are taken up by local people. It generates £7.7bn Gross Value Added (GVA), representing a fifth of the overall economy. Our purpose is to sustain and increase that impact.

MSW has a global vision to supercharge our region. The economy is driven by a thriving private sector that includes many world-leading companies which are major innovators and global exporters. Indeed, our deep engagement with business and industry to understand its strengths and needs, provided much of the evidence base which is at the core of this strategy.

There has also been extensive consultation involving government departments and agencies, Invest NI, business representative groups, further educational institutions and universities. All have made a valuable contribution. This strategy is the product of intensive collaboration.

The programme of work to develop this Regional Economic Strategy (RES) was completed in early 2020, with a planned launch scheduled for the end of March 2020. Although the launch was postponed in response to the continued escalation of the COVID-19 crisis at that time, the fundamentals of the evidence-base [gathered to March 2020] underpinning the need for intervention across the four main pillars for action within this RES remain. Indeed, as detailed within the main body of this RES, the emerging evidence about the economic shock created by the COVID-19 pandemic further augments this need in many respects.

The strategy is underpinned by the announcement of Growth Deal funding from the UK Government in October 2018, and is in line with the 'New

MSW map location



'Decade, New Approach' deal to restore devolved government in Northern Ireland.

Furthermore, in May 2020 the NI Executive announced an investment package which will be crucial in helping to rebuild the economy after the coronavirus emergency and which includes match funding for City and Growth Deals as well as the creation of an Executive Complementary Fund. These are very positive developments which will help us to expedite our ambitions for the MSW and work to achieve the balance between shorter term challenges and achieving long-term transformation.

MSW's geographical position is hugely significant. It stretches along the Border Corridor with the Republic of Ireland, enjoying a natural co-dependency in trade, tourism, movement of workers, shared services such as health and education, and inward investment and funding.

Our region has significant strengths in manufacturing, engineering, agri-food, health and life sciences, tourism and construction. Furthermore, there are emerging strengths in the fast-growing digital tech sector. All of this activity creates significant numbers of additional jobs within local supply chains, propelling our economy forward.

The strategy also identifies challenges to be addressed – amongst them, productivity levels which are lower than the rest of NI, providing more and better jobs and the ability to keep our economy open to all levels of international talent in the face of a weaker outlook for population growth and changing migration policy. There is also a substantial infrastructure deficit which is identified throughout the strategy document. This ranks highly as a key area in need of substantial investment which, if addressed, could catalyse significant GVA and productivity growth.

The strategy establishes four pillars for action in priority areas.

**1- 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. The aim is to develop this activity further.

**2 - Enabling infrastructure:** Improved access to a quality road network is a key imperative to unlocking our economic potential. The region accounts for half of the landmass in NI yet motorway and A-roads account for only 8% of the road network. Investment is also needed to improve digital connections and reliability. There

are issues around utilities - electricity supply and wastewater systems - and there is a lack of land for industrial expansion.

**3 - Boosting innovation and digital capacity:** Proposals include an Innovation and Skills Academy at South West College working in collaboration with the NI Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre project; an NI Agri-Food Robotics Centre at CAFRE's Loughry campus; the development of agri-food incubation spaces for smaller SMEs; a network of digi-hubs to help the tech sector to grow; and action on health innovation involving the region's two acute and teaching hospitals.

**4 - Building a high-performing visitor/tourist economy:** Key actions are identified to capitalise on the region's natural attractions. These include a project to further develop the appeal of the Sperrins as a tourist destination; a focus on the Ulster-American Folk Park as a centre for the genealogy tourism experience in Northern Ireland; a literary trail; stronger cross-border connections into the brand experience of the Wild Atlantic Way; and the promotion of longer term investment projects such as the reopening of the Ulster Canal. MSW will soon be home to the new WarnerMedia global visitor attraction for Game of Thrones which will be located at The Linen Mills Studios in Banbridge. This commitment by WarnerMedia to our region will propel MSW onto the international stage, creating an unrivalled opportunity to attract out-of-state visitors to MSW thus helping to rebalance the visitor economy in NI.

Built into the foundations of this Regional Economic Strategy is the ability to have a targeted response to challenges or opportunities emerging from the UK's departure from the EU. A specific focus is the Border Corridor which MSW believes should become a special enterprise zone with initiatives to deliver maximum impact and build on relationships which have been long established. Everything in this document is rooted in a deep knowledge and understanding of the region and its needs. It is about playing to strengths, identifying

gaps to expedite progress and making the most of our potential.

It reflects the resilience and determination of industry and business in MSW to succeed. The future ahead is a bright one as we work together, thrusting our economy forward through collaboration and investment.

Our strategy is about vision and engagement. It is about the impact of the three MSW councils working together, building collaboration across public, private and third sectors. It is about sharing problems and ideas, establishing priorities, and providing a demonstration of how much can be achieved through co-operation in a joint purpose for the benefit of all.

The implementation of this vision for the MSW has never been more important. We will strike a balance between shorter term challenges and the need for longer-term transformative action to deliver inclusive and sustainable economic growth for our region. Our work will be aligned to the economic recovery plans within central government which we strongly welcome with their focus on addressing Northern Ireland's structural weaknesses in terms of delivering 'better' jobs, addressing skills gaps and reducing regional imbalances. All of these issues were core to our RES ambition pre-pandemic and will have a revitalised imperative now.



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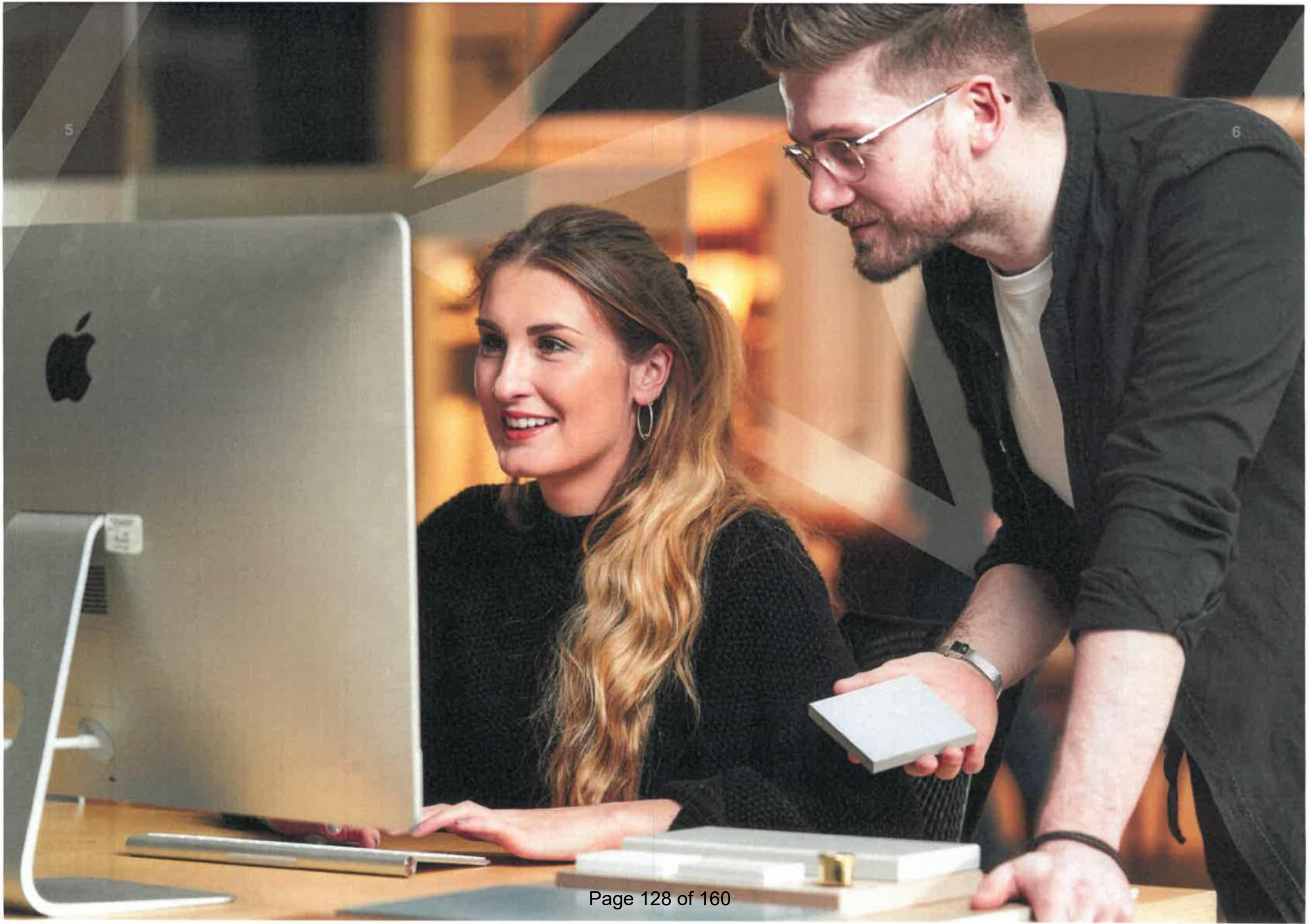
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# INTRO





## This is a Regional Economic Strategy (RES) for the Mid-South West (MSW) region.

This is a Regional Economic Strategy (RES) for the Mid-South West (MSW) region. It sets out our vision and ambition for the region; it identifies the opportunities and challenges we face; and sets out the priority pillars around which future investment and actions to realise our ambitions will be framed. Furthermore, it provides an early, high level indication of potential specific projects/interventions that may sit under each of these pillars - which will be subject to ongoing development.

The RES will underpin the case for the Growth Deal funding for the MSW announced by the UK Government in October 2018 and referenced in the 'New Decade, New Approach' deal published in January 2020 by identifying the projects/interventions most suited to maximising the potential of the Growth Deal funding. Importantly, our ambition to supercharge the growth of our collective economy and ensure inclusive prosperity in MSW extends beyond the Growth Deal funding. Accordingly, a core assumption is that other resources/funding sources and policy changes will come into effect to underpin the full realisation of the RES.

In developing the RES and in other work to date, we (i.e. the three councils that make up MSW – Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon; Fermanagh and Omagh; and Mid Ulster) have led an extensive engagement process across the region. In effect this RES has been extensively shaped and directed by the industry/business base within MSW, aligned to the fact that it is their commitment, drive and ambition that has contributed to the growth and success of our region to date and will be instrumental to realising our future potential. Recognising the distinctiveness of MSW as a private-sector led economy, we prioritised engagement with our

major employers and membership bodies to understand the opportunities and challenges facing them and the interventions needed to unlock further growth in GVA and productivity for our region. In addition, we have consulted with elected officials, government departments/agencies, Invest NI, Skills Bodies, Higher and Further Education institutions, and universities to ensure buy in and input from key stakeholders across MSW and Northern Ireland.

All of our engagements have been informed through articulation of the 'evidence-base' of the current economy of MSW, future projections for the same and an assessment of 'what works' elsewhere in other regional economies (including via other City/Growth deals) to tackle similar opportunities and challenges as those presenting in MSW. This evidence-base was compiled through an extensive analysis of socio-economic data and forecasts for MSW and a thorough review of existing strategies and interventions across NI and the UK. Finally, an important consideration in developing the RES is the position of the three constituent local authorities in the MSW region along the Ireland/Northern Ireland Border Corridor - which presents opportunities, risks and issues to consider, particularly in a post-Brexit era.

As noted previously the fundamentals of the evidence-base [gathered to March 2020] underpinning the need for intervention across the four pillars for action within this RES remain and indeed are augmented in a post COVID-19 recovery context. Where appropriate additional emphasis or nuancing to some of the planned interventions and actions have been more recently added to the RES document.

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## GION: THE IC ENGINE' I ECONOMY

### THE 'ECONOMIC ENGINE' OF THE NI ECONOMY

Contributes

**£7.7bn**

of GVA

Home to

**1/3**

of NI firms

Accounts for

**1/5**

of NI economy

Accounts for

**27%**

of NI's exports

**1/4**

of NI population

**90%**

of local jobs taken  
by residents

**70%**

more employment in  
advanced manufacturing  
compared to the UK  
average

**214,000**

workplace-based jobs



## 2.1 WE CONTRIBUTE AROUND ONE FIFTH (£7.7BN) OF NI'S ENTIRE GVA...

Our region consists of three district council areas that make up almost half of Northern Ireland's (NI) land mass and which all border the Republic of Ireland. One quarter of NI's population live in MSW (478,000 people), and in 2018 the 214,000 workplace-based jobs generated an estimated £7.7bn of GVA - corresponding to one fifth of NI's economy. The MSW region is also a functional economic geography with 90% of local jobs taken by residents.

Our region is a highly entrepreneurial, private sector led economy. Over one third of the 75,000 NI firms are based in MSW, meaning there are 54 businesses in MSW per 1,000 residents—significantly higher than the NI average (40 businesses). The three district council areas that make up our region rank 1, 2 and 3 amongst the 10 council areas in NI for early-stage entrepreneurial activity (TEA). This converts into a business birth rate for MSW above the NI average (4 versus 3.6 respectively). Furthermore, business survival rates in MSW also outperform the NI average.

MSW is home to many world-leading export businesses and as such is a globalised, outward and forward-looking region. This is evidenced by the fact that our businesses accounted for 22.6% of turnover in NI in 2018, 27% of NI exports and 31.1% of NI external sales. Further evidence of our outward and forward-looking ethos is the fact that our businesses have historically been very successful in attracting new labour and skills to our region.

This critical mass of economic activity has been achieved in spite of a deficit of investment in enabling infrastructure in MSW, demonstrating the resilience and determination of indigenous businesses in the region to succeed. Facilitating transport, promoting communication, providing

access to land, energy and water are the bedrock of prosperity and well-being in any competitive economy. There is evidence of serious gaps in our basic infrastructure in MSW which, if addressed, could catalyse significant GVA and productivity growth.

As previously noted the positioning of the MSW region along the Ireland/Northern Ireland Border Corridor is a key attribute. The Border Corridor is recognised as the sub-regional economic driver within the Regional Development Strategy. Our region (relative to the other City/Growth Deal regions in NI) has the longest proportion of the Border Corridor. As a result there are significant existing cross-border co-dependencies in our region (e.g. in areas such as trade, movement of people/labour, agri-food, tourism, shared services such as health and education, and inward investment and funding).

## 2.2 ..WITH STRENGTHS IN MANUFACTURING, ENGINEERING, AGRI-FOOD, HEALTH & LIFE SCIENCES, TOURISM AND CONSTRUCTION...

Our region has significant strengths in manufacturing, engineering, agri-food, health & life sciences, tourism and construction (See Fig 2 on page 17), and mature local supply chains in all of these sectors. A 2019 study by Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC) highlighted that our region accounts for two fifths (39%) of NI's manufacturing employment and a quarter (23%) of its manufacturing GVA. It also noted that MSW accounted for 37% of NI businesses manufacturing machinery & equipment and a third (31%) of all NI's agri-food firms.

Fig. 1. MSW Council areas

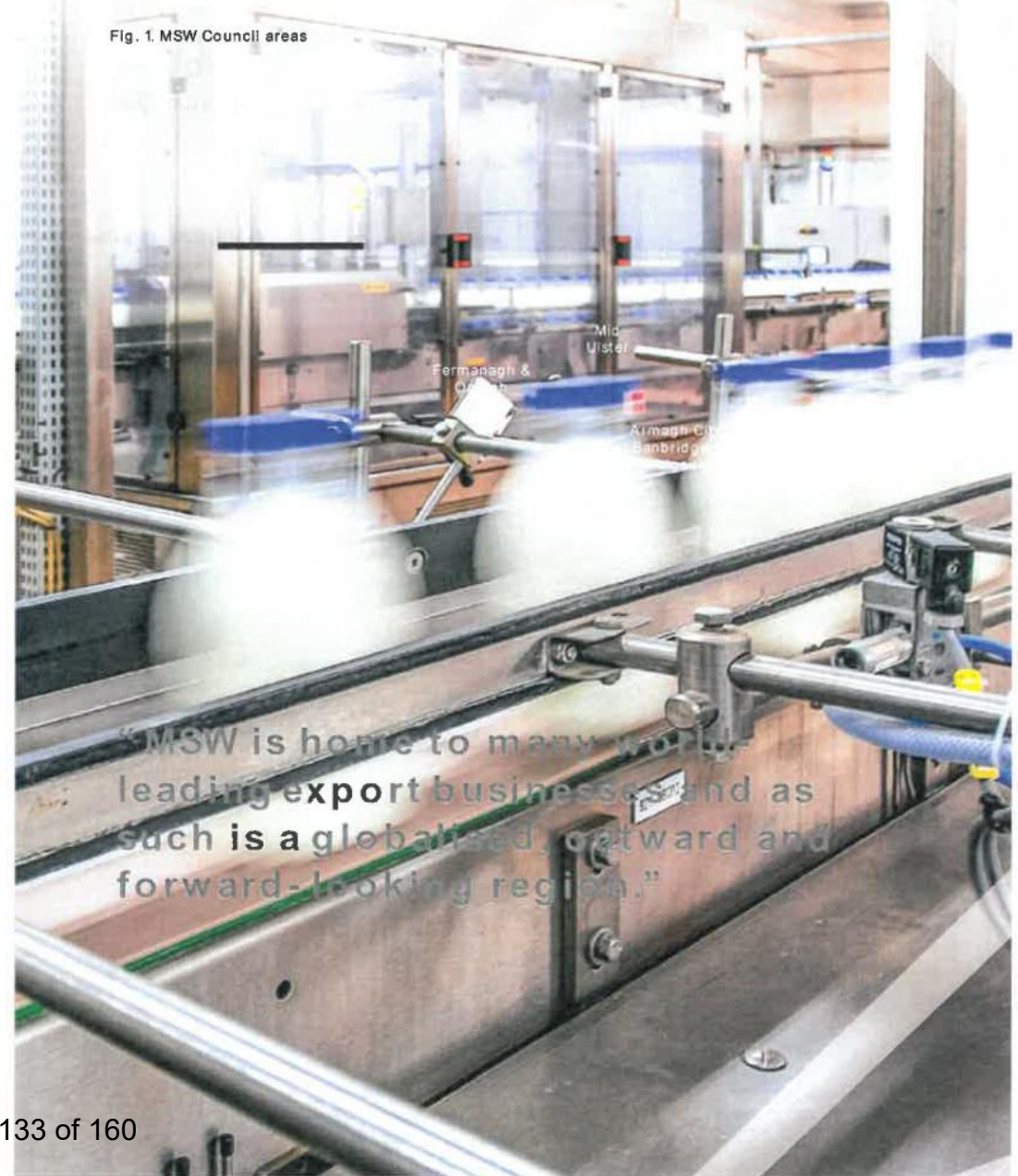
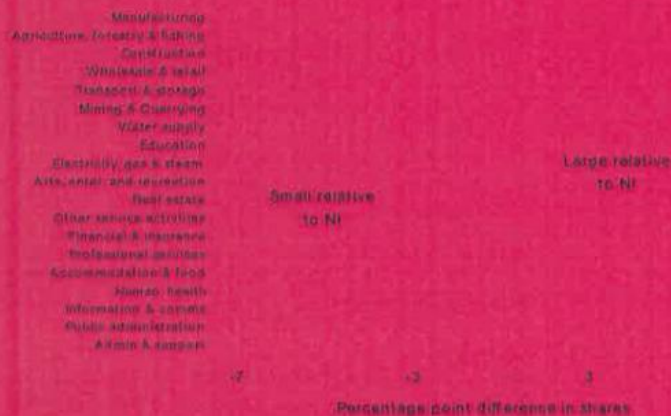




Fig. 2. Sectoral employment in MSW relative to NI, 2018



It is no surprise therefore that we have specialisms in the manufacturing of machinery and equipment and in the manufacturing of food products. For example, employment in the manufacture of machinery for mining, quarrying and construction sector is almost four times the size of the NI average and over 22 times the UK average. Indeed, three of six four-digit Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) sectors employing over 500 employees add with the highest Location Quotients (LQs) are in the manufacturing of machinery and equipment sector.

Our agri-food sector in MSW employs nearly 11,500 people. Within it the processing and preserving of poultry meat and meat sub-sectors employ nearly 5,700 people (3.3 larger than the NI average) and over 2,000 people (2.4 times the NI average) respectively. We have a strong presence and capacity for R&D and innovation in the agri-food sector - with the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) site in Loughgall in Co. Armagh and two of the three CAPRE Campuses in NI based in MSW (in Loughry and Enniskillen).

In addition, our region is a global leader in the niche market of the manufacture of tracked mobile stone crushing and gravel screening equipment. Around half of the equipment in this market niche globally is manufactured in NI - indeed NI companies hold the top five positions in this niche market - with the capacity predominantly located in MSW.

In more recent years our region has started to experience the growth of emerging sectors. For instance, a recent study within MSW indicated that in the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council area there is a particular strength in the digital tech sector - IT services, computing and advanced electronics, software and communications. This report highlighted that the Digital GVA/capita therein was 28% more than the NI average and digital ICT wages 44% above the NI average.

11,500

people in MSW are employed by the agri-food sector

tru corp

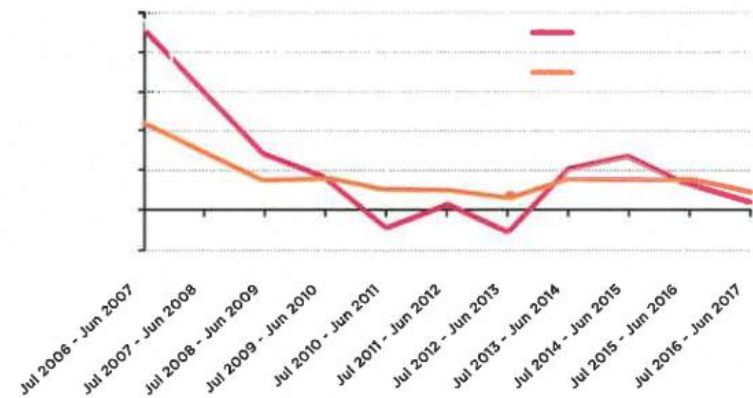
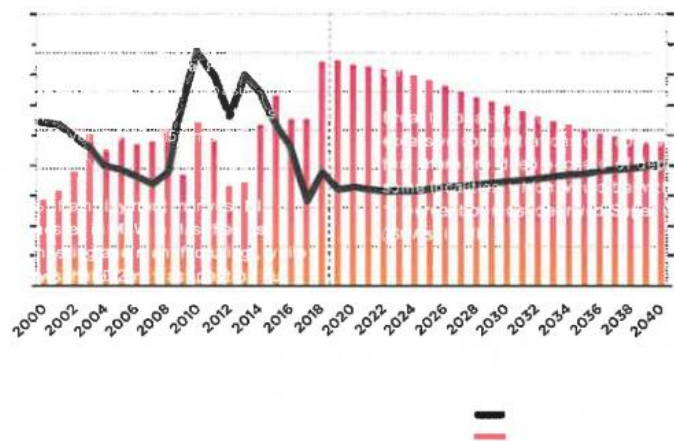




Fig. 3. Resilient and unemployment rates, MSW, 2000 to 2040



Source: Oxford Economics

We boast an above average share of residents aged under 16, which will support the future growth of our businesses and we have been successful in attracting new labour to our region. This has been supported by labour market opportunities, lower house prices and

higher levels of housing affordability, and relatively low levels of recorded crime. Indeed, the region has consistently enjoyed net inward migration, even when NI as a region had more people leaving than entering (per Figure 4 overleaf)

Fig. 4. Estimated Net International Migration 2007-2017 – NI v MSW



Looking ahead significant uncertainty remains about the longer-term legacy of the pandemic. The impact of the pandemic on our work will strike a balance between shorter term challenges and need for longer term transformative action. Recent policy studies into the economic impact of coronavirus at a UK wide and NI level highlight that not all places have been impacted equally in the crisis thus far. Indeed, these indicate that because of the sectoral mix of economic activity in MSW parts of our region are expected to be amongst those experiencing the worst immediate 'economic hit' from the pandemic across the local authority landscape in the UK.

Looking ahead significant uncertainty remains about the longer-term legacy of the pandemic

our region (as elsewhere) as the evidence base is evolving rapidly. The imperative for the portfolio of interventions/actions within the RTO was already (pre-pandemic) strongly founded on the need to deliver a regionally balanced economy in NI. The early evidence of the potential impact of the crisis suggests that this imperative is even more compelling. As such we welcome the acknowledgement in the recovery plan from central government that there have been gaps (mainly infrastructural) to achieving a more balanced economy in NI that require a focused focus looking ahead, as part of the response to the COVID-19 crisis.

"We boast an above average share of residents aged under 16 which will support the future growth of our businesses."



## ISSUES TO IN GROW 'ECONOM



# CONSIDERING OUR IC ENGINE'

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Whilst our region as the 'economic engine' of NI, is highly successful in many respects, and we have many evident strengths to build upon, it is vital to understand the nature and scale of some of the remaining issues and challenges that we face. Our ambition and forward proposition, as set out in Section 4, has been framed by research and extensive engagement on the key issues set out below.

## 3.2 PRODUCTIVITY LEVELS

As the 'economic engine' of NI, and with our evidenced strengths in advanced manufacturing we are in a prime position to drive wealth creation, exports and innovation. However, we currently suffer from low levels of productivity. In 2017 MSW's productivity was an estimated £8,500 below the NI average. This was an issue across the economy with most 'broad' sectors (except for retail and administrative & support activities) suffering from below average levels (see Appendix A). However, a number of manufacturing sub-sectors have consistently been strongly outperforming the NI average, including:

- The manufacture of basic metals;
- The manufacture of fabricated metal products (except machinery and equipment);
- The manufacture of computer, electronic and optical products;
- The manufacture of electrical equipment;
- The manufacture of machinery and equipment;
- The manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers; and
- The manufacture of other transport equipment.

Addressing the productivity shortfall represents a massive opportunity for our region. Doing so would generate substantially more GVA and wealth for our businesses and our residents. For illustrative purposes, if our businesses had closed the 2017 productivity gap (where applicable) with the NI average, productivity would have been

## ISSUES TO CONSIDER

approximately £7,900 (22%) higher. This would, in 2017, have increased MSW's GVA by £1.1bn.

To put this in context NI's GVA was estimated to be nearly £30bn in 2017. Therefore, the increase in MSW's potential GVA contributions (by closing the sectoral productivity gaps, where appropriate) would have been the equivalent of a 4.3% uplift to the NI economy. In practice, were this to happen, it could generate even more demand in the NI economy through increases in supply chain spending by MSW firms and additional consumer spending by those working in MSW.

Linked to the above, the prevailing productivity gap feeds through to lower wage levels. In 2018 workplace-based wages in MSW were 6.2% below the NI average. Increasing productivity would enable our businesses to offer higher wage rates and subsequently attract greater numbers and higher skilled individuals to the MSW. It would also help to make our businesses even more competitive, supporting future growth and making the MSW region an even more attractive place to live.

Forward looking and bold action is needed to address long-standing issues around productivity, which will have been exacerbated further by the COVID-19 crisis.

Our engagement with business, academia and business support organisations, including the Northern Ireland Manufacturing Institute, has provided a number of insights into the challenges facing the MSW region. These include:

A case in point is the slow progress of automation in the MSW region. Whilst there are opportunities to speed up our production, for example, through the replacement of lower skilled and lower paid tasks with leading manufacturing companies, the adoption of robotic solutions, these initiatives are slow to be implemented. This is due to a number of factors, including the high cost of automation, the need for significant upskilling of the workforce, and the complexity of automating mundane and repetitive processes, leading to no productivity.



There are also opportunities to use 3D printing to speed up supply chains or pilot new products. Furthermore, data analytics can support the movement of products, or how robots work simultaneously within factories. Some of our businesses are already aware of aspects of the above potential and the FEI/HE sector is increasingly working to skill up our local residents for this 'new world of work'. However, the expertise in this arena simply does not exist at the scale needed to drive material productivity improvements and our businesses can face barriers in terms of access to the mechanical resources to test and try different approaches to automation to meet their specific needs. Whilst in the short-term greater adoption of technology and automation in manufacturing can be at the expense of lower paid jobs, it will over time create additional demand for higher skilled, higher paid roles in MSW - a key aspiration of our businesses and people.

The COVID-19 pandemic is proving to be a major catalyst for change in this arena, arguably a 'once in a generation shift'. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, it was strongly recognised (e.g. in Economy 2030/the Industrial Strategy for NI) that companies who did not keep pace with the potential offered by digital technologies and automation risked losing ground. This has been amplified significantly by the COVID-19 pandemic reinforcing the urgency with which companies need to accelerate their digital transformation to recover and thrive. The crisis has differentiated those companies who were willing/able to implement new business models based on digital channels (which might otherwise have remained as ideas or pilot projects). The challenge looking ahead is building the expertise at scale and quickly within our region to move from experimentation with the transformative impact of these technologies to full roll out of the same.

Also, as set out previously and detailed further at Section 3.3, significant barriers exist to improving productivity in MSW because of gaps in several aspects of the basic economic infrastructure for

a competitive economy. Facilitating transport, promoting communication, providing access to land, energy and water are the bedrock of prosperity and well-being in any competitive economy. With improved physical connectivity (to entry and exit points in NI and onto overseas markets) and enhanced digital connectivity with customers and suppliers from across the globe, our indigenous businesses in MSW will be in a much better position to realise significant gains in productivity and competitiveness. The potential that exists in this regard is strongly underlined by the fact that despite these constraints our businesses have demonstrated considerable resilience and determination to succeed. We are a highly entrepreneurial, private sector-led economy – the 'economic engine' of NI.

As home to a third of NI's businesses and amongst them, many world-leading export businesses, the MSW needs the infrastructure to move products to market quickly and maintain efficient supply chains. A high-quality transport network is of paramount importance.

However, whilst MSW accounts for half of the land mass in NI the prevailing data shows that motorway and A roads account for only 8% of our road network.

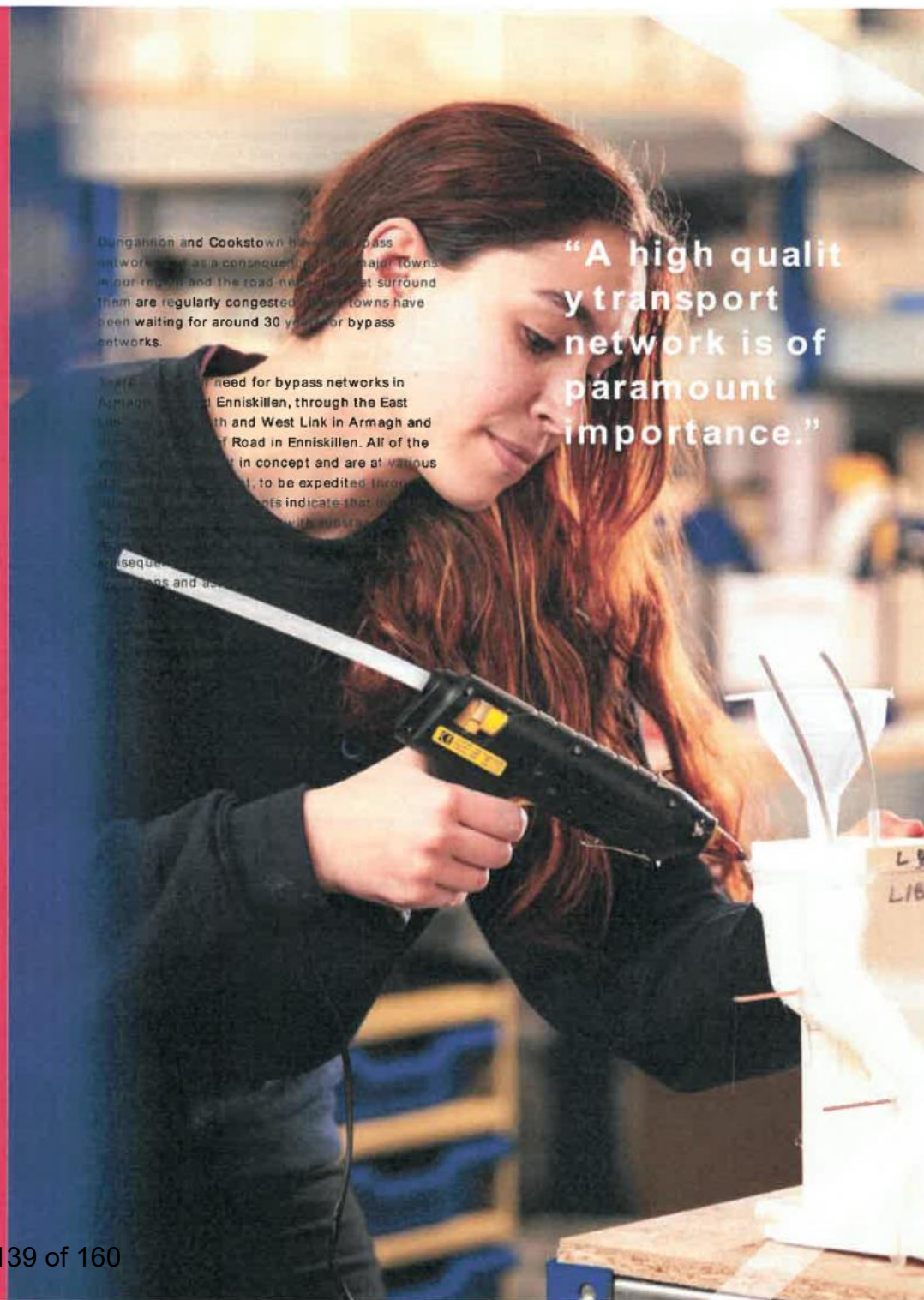
The map to the right provides a stark illustration of this. It shows the coverage of motorways, dual carriageways and primary roads on the island of Ireland, with an evident gap in coverage out to the West. There is almost no dual carriageway in the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area (660 metres only).

At a regional level completion of the A5 Western Transport Corridor (A5 WTC) is critical to connectivity within MSW and also to the flow of traffic around Omagh, given that the existing thoroughfare is saturated.

Dungannon and Cookstown have no bypass network and as a consequence the major towns in our region and the road network that surround them are regularly congested. These towns have been waiting for around 30 years for bypass networks.

There is a clear need for bypass networks in Armagh, Enniskillen, through the East Link, South and West Link in Armagh and the A5 Western Transport Corridor in Enniskillen. All of the projects are in concept and are at various stages of development, to be expedited through the planning process. Recent surveys indicate that there is a strong demand for such infrastructure, particularly in the north-west, with significant consequences for the local economy and for the environment and access to services.

**“A high quality transport network is of paramount importance.”**



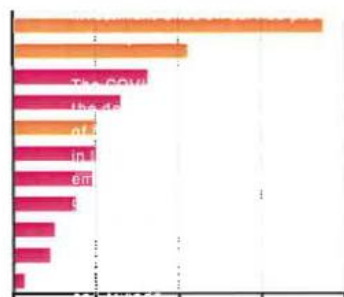
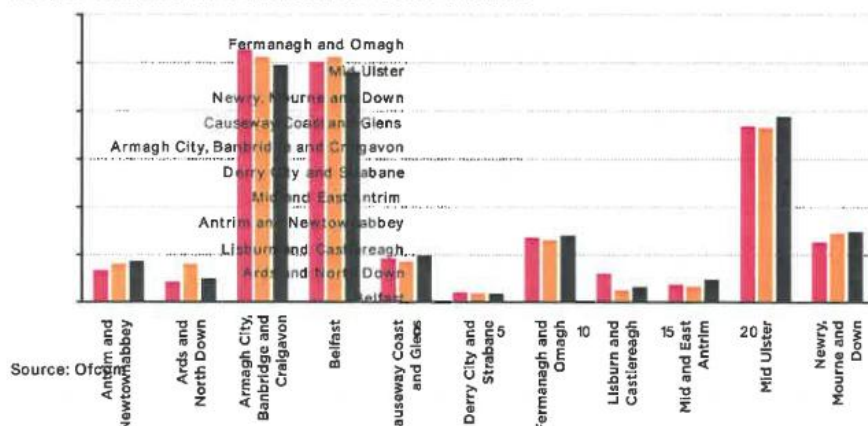




Fig. 5. Percentage of premises that do not have access to broadband services above 10 Mbit/s

% of premises that do not have access to services above 10 Mbit/s



Source: Ofcom

In addition to constraints in relation to physical and digital connectivity, our businesses tell us there is an urgent need for access to industrial land to facilitate their expansion in MSW. Mid Ulster presently has no industrial land available for development. Industrial estates in Banbridge, Granville, Dungannon and Cookstown are at full capacity with no room to expand. However, there is industrial land in public ownership in MSW that could be made available to our indigenous businesses to support their immediate growth plans. There is also a lack of high-quality innovation space for our people to test new ideas and work in emerging sectors (including digital tech) and collaborate in research and development. Yet collaboration and the sharing of ideas, is a key ingredient for a successful knowledge economy.

There are also major utility infrastructure deficits in relation to the prevailing wastewater network capacity and state electricity supply in MSW.

The deficit in relation to wastewater network capacity is most pronounced in Mid Ulster but arguably increasingly more prevalent in other parts of MSW. This is a major constraint on housing development (impacting on the ability to attract labour from elsewhere to MSW) and on the development of serviced industrial land, to enable our businesses to expand. In addition, there is a need for research on a policy agenda change in respect of the regeneration of our towns and rural areas.

Finally turning to state electricity supply, whilst the Tyrone to Cavan Interconnector (also known as the North South Interconnector) is planned it is unlikely to be in place in the short-term. It is urgently required to ensure that there is sufficient access to electricity to meet supply needs in NI. As things stand it is anticipated that the decommissioning of older electricity generating stations means that after 2021 demand will outstrip supply. As well as security of supply it

should reduce the cost of electricity by allowing the transmission network to operate much more efficiently, playing a vital role in supporting economic growth and facilitating investment. It will also help facilitate the connection of more renewable energy to the grid – which is essential to achieve government-led renewable energy targets and to increase energy independence. In the interim our business community has been challenged by supply constraints and the cost of energy in our region and as such it is important that SONI/NIE have a positive commitment to invest in infrastructure west of the Bann. Consequently, actions that we will take through the RES to improve our physical infrastructure and connectivity will have an immediate impact on the region's productivity and potential for growth, making the MSW a more attractive region to higher skilled individuals and for business investment.

### 3.4 LABOUR AND SKILLS

As set out in Section 1.90% of local jobs in MSW are taken by our residents. However, our poor road network and shortfalls in accessibility to public transport (particularly by rail) can mean it is difficult for our people to access all of the employment opportunities in the region. A consistent message from our engagements is that journey times from one part of our region to the other are prohibitively long for many workers to

consider changing their employment if career opportunities present themselves. In turn this has a negative impact on the ability to best match the skills of our population to the jobs available in MSW.

As set out previously (Fig 4) our region has consistently enjoyed net inward migration, even when NI as a region had more people leaving than entering. However, this has recently become more challenging as Brexit and global markets have strengthened. Sterling has weakened and uncertainty has increased. Our ability to be able to continue to attract people from elsewhere is becoming increasingly important, given track record of a tight labour market and our ageing population trends. Government policy espoused to date on migration post-Brexit, including that centred on a general salary threshold of £25,600 for all non-UK individuals working in the UK is likely to further exacerbate our labour and skills challenge in MSW. Our reliance in MSW on migrant labour as a core component of our 'economic engine' in recent years is well illustrated by Fig 6 overleaf, which charts the proportion of migrant workers by district council areas in NI in rented housing. Outside Belfast the three MSW district council areas stand out, particularly Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon and Mid Ulster.

**“There is a lack of high-quality innovation space for our people to test new ideas and work in emerging sectors”**



Fig. 6. Migrant Worker Tenant Households

Estimated number of Migrant Worker Current Tenant Households by Local Government District (August 2007 - July 2018)



Over the last decade (2008-18) the population in MSW increased by 0.87% each year on average -relative to 0.56% and 0.72% across NI and the UK respectively. However, Oxford Economics' forecasts indicate that this trend of MSW outperforming the NI and UK positions will not last. Indeed, the forecasts suggest that our region will experience only a modest increase in population to 2040 i.e. a population rise to 481,000, only 3,000 higher than today (a 0.6% increase). This is notably weaker than the NI (3.5%) and UK (7.3%) equivalents over the same period to 2040.

The weaker outlook for population growth articulated above is driven by changes to both net migration and natural change. While both factors have been positive contributors to overall population growth in MSW over recent years, they are expected to change over the forecast horizon.

Most importantly Oxford Economics expect a weaker outlook for net migration than previously experienced. This in part reflects the government's desire to reduce migration numbers substantially and the nature of what a post-Brexit migration policy may look like. The fall in migrant numbers is critical as this group tend to be of working age and a greater share find employment compared to average for NI.

Per Fig 7, natural change (births minus deaths) will maintain positive overall population growth in the short term in MSW before weakening and eventually being overpowered by net out migration, thereby leading to a contraction in the population level in the longer-term outlook.

Fig. 7. Components of population change, MSW, 2000 to 2040



Fig. 8. Working age population change, MSW and comparisons, 2000-2040

	Total population		Working age (16-64s)	
	Change (000s)	22 year % y/y	Change (000s)	22 year % y/y
MSW region	3,000	+0.6%	-28,000	-0.42%
NI	66,000	+3.5%	-22,000	-0.35%

Drawing on all of the above it is imperative that MSW is able to continue to attract workers from outside the region. This means creating higher paid jobs, improving the quality of our schools, investing in our entertainment and our hospitality offering. At present too many of our jobs in MSW offer minimum wage or below average salaries.

It also points to the need for lobbying in relation to a differentiated migration policy for MSW post Brexit that keeps our economy open to all levels of international talent otherwise businesses in many of our world leading sectors could be at risk. Whilst of course recognising that the right controls are in place to manage immigration effectively.

The rationale for some regional autonomy/ flexibility is based on the economic contribution of our region to NI GVA and the predominance of manufacturing employment within it (as set out previously in Fig 2). In 2017, 21.8% of NI's manufacturing employment was taken by non-UK workers, a statistic which increases in some sub-sectors of manufacturing in which MSW excels such as food manufacturing. Data from DAERA and the LFS in the same year shows that EU26 migrants accounted for 40% of employees in the food manufacturing sector.

If MSW is to close the productivity gap and grasp the opportunities of increased automation, our economy will become increasingly 'skills hungry'. Therefore, it is also imperative that we reshape our education policy to provide the skills that our businesses need, and continue to upskill many of our residents. At present, the proportion of our labour force that have no qualifications (16.7% compared to 8% in the UK) is too high while the share that have not progressed to NVQ 4+ or above (31.6% compared to 38.4% in the UK) is too low.

Importantly it is already recognised in our region that industry leadership is central to addressing prevailing labour and skills challenges. Initiatives such as Mid Ulster Skills Forum and ABC Local Works Forum have been established to bring a collaborative dynamic between local businesses, colleges/universities and industry sectoral bodies to address labour and skills challenges. Their 'blue-prints' for action recognise many of the prevailing challenges cited above and include a number of 'spade-ready' actions that can be scaled up/expedited through this RES. These span actions to improve careers education, advice and guidance; actions to promote inclusive and engaging workplaces to improve the image of priority MSW sectors; actions to develop leadership talent alongside technical and professional skills; and actions to increase the uptake and quality of modern apprenticeships (informed by actions in relation to apprenticeships implemented in other City/ Growth Deals across the UK).

These actions will need to be further developed and 'future-proofed' to enable a longer-term perspective on what the 'world of work' will look like in 10 years plus time, with associated skills implications – consistent with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development work recently completed with the Department for the Economy (DfE) in relation to the future skills needs of NI economy. Increasing application of Industry 4.0 innovation, use of data, and robotics/cobotics in the workplace will over time increase the demand for higher-skilled roles in our businesses and help to increase wage levels/ attractiveness of employment therein.

Addressing the skills gap is one of the three structural weaknesses prioritised within recovery plans from central government in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Within this it is recognised that in a post pandemic environment with significant competition for jobs that the sections of society furthest from the labour market could face even greater challenges in securing employment. As noted above, in MSW we have too high a proportion of our labour force that have no qualifications and also a smaller proportion (compared to the UK average) with qualifications at level NVQ 4+ or above. Our people are our key asset and we now have an increased imperative to focus on these particular areas of need within our overall skills development plans.

### 3.5 LEVELS OF INNOVATION AND R&D

Despite our concentration of manufacturing businesses and above average concentration of activity in advanced manufacturing, we have a need to foster higher levels of innovation and R&D.

In 2017, business expenditure on R&D equalled £543 million in NI (714% of all R&D spend in NI). MSW businesses accounted for £121 million or just over a fifth of the overall NI business total. As a result, MSW businesses spent on average just £4,900 on R&D in 2017 – significantly lower than both the NI and Belfast city region averages





(£7,600 and £10,100 respectively). Our challenge is to address this shortfall. There are many opportunities to do so. Manufacturing businesses spent nearly £12m on R&D in NI in 2017 (57.6% of all BERD), and 57.3% of manufacturing R&D expenditure was made by engineering & allied industries, sectors of the economy where MSW excels. However, there is some counter-evidence to the above. Example of this HMRC data for 2016-17 showed there were 2.6 successful claims for R&D tax relief by firms in Mid Ulster, the best performance of any NI Council area, and a 49% of all enterprises in Mid Ulster, it was the highest of all UK counties. Furthermore, our engagements provided much anecdotal evidence of product and process innovation in businesses despite this not being reflected in formal R&D statistics for our region.

There is a broad perception across the private sector that more could be done to encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing with respect to R&D/innovation in our region.

As such, innovation and R&D activity needs to be formalised more within our businesses and designated as a strategic priority. Although our large base of small businesses will add to the scale of this innovation challenge, given demographic trends and the need to expedite productivity growth, higher levels of innovation and R&D spend are critical to the future performance of our economy.

### 3.6 SMALL BUSINESS GROWTH

Finally, despite being the 'economic engine' of NI and a highly entrepreneurial economy with favourable survival rates, there is evidence that too many of our indigenous businesses fail to grow. Over 86% of local businesses have less than 10 employees compared to 83.9% in NI. In addition, over a third of MSW businesses have a turnover of less than £50,000 compared to a quarter across NI.

All of the aforementioned remaining challenges in MSW – underinvestment in transport infrastructure; shortfalls in digital connectivity; the lack of incubator, office and light industrial facilities; as well as shortage of labour/skills in more recent years – are contributing factors to the fact that too many of our indigenous businesses fail to grow. In addition, our engagements indicate that there is a requirement for different leadership skills in smaller businesses, and the large share of family owned businesses in MSW could be barriers to growth. There were also suggestions that insufficient technology adoption was hindering productivity, competitiveness and business growth more generally in the SME economy.

Therefore, a key ambition within the RES will be to enhance the leadership skills of our existing business owners and workforce, as well as provide support to our businesses with technology adoption for growth and development. Our region is a highly entrepreneurial, private sector-led economy. Given the scale of our business base – MSW is home to one third of NI firms – the potential for growth is enormous.

Small businesses are the heart of our communities in MSW and many have been hit especially hard by the COVID-19 crisis. Several of the barriers to growth cited above could also be barriers to adaptation, increased resilience and ultimately survival in a post-pandemic environment. Therefore, our immediate focus will be on supporting small businesses with the complex challenges they face in moving from managing the initial crisis response to preparing for recovery. This will be the first necessary step in realising the longer-term growth potential referenced above.

The need above extends to the small business and enterprise activity on our towns. High Street shopping was already under considerable pressure even before the COVID-19 pandemic. The shut-down of the majority of the physical retail stores

on our high streets during lockdown, combined with rapidly shifting consumer spending habits, has greatly augmented the challenges that our high streets may face. There is an urgent need to develop strategies to recover, reopen and re-imagine our town centres and high streets – all geared to long-term transformation and 'future-proofing'. These require a digital as well as physical emphasis.

### 3.7 TOURISM PERFORMANCE

Our region has particular competitive advantages in terms of the quality of our tourism product. The Loughs and Lakes of Lough Erne in Co Fermanagh and a superb recreational and tourism resource are strongly differentiators for region from other destinations in Ireland and Northern Ireland. The Sperrins are a defined Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (one of only eight in NI) and the cross-borderable Area of Cultural Geopark is a World Heritage Site, a Natural Park and UNESCO.

Together with the landscape and mountains the tourism product in the western part of MSW is well defined in terms of attractions, rural heritage (forests, loughs and lakes, countryside, the Sperrins, the Geopark); our rich archaeological heritage, events and history and natural beauty. There is further scope to develop our region as a tourism destination with the potential to compete through the potency of the Ulster American Folk Park, the glacial landscape and the unique geological formations, experience, history and natural resources indicated that development opportunities exist and have been identified through a number of projects and initiatives in the region.

Further to the MSW, the distinctive character and immediacy of Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty of the Sperrins, the Glenties and the surrounding area, which is a place with a significance that is not only across the island of Ireland for 600 years but at the heart of celebrating the life of Saint Patrick.

Visitor attractions include the historic Navan Fort, two Saint Patrick's Cathedrals, Georgian architecture and the Armagh Observatory and Planetarium. In addition to the latter, in autumn 2020 a new star gazing experience will be launched in Mid Ulster, with a Dark Sky Observatory and Visitor Centre at Davagh Forest, near Cookstown.

The opportunity to further grow tourism in MSW, sits in the context of the strong growth in overall tourism activity in NI from 2013-2018. Between 2013 and 2018, overnight trips made in NI and the spend associated with these visits increased by 22% and 35%, respectively. This growth however has largely been dominated by the NI tourism markets of Dublin, Belfast and the Gateway Coast. By contrast the performance of the tourism sector in MSW has lagged behind other parts of NI. Over the same period, the number of overnight trips to MSW is estimated to have increased by 2%. However, the spend associated with these trips reportedly fell by 7%. Furthermore, MSW's share of overall tourism activity in NI – measured by the region's share of overnight trips – fell during this period from 17% to 15%. This is a significant impact on MSW's share of tourism activity in NI. The number of overnight trips to MSW in 2018 was 1.2 million, a 2% increase on 2013, but the spend fell by 7% to £1.2 billion, a 1% increase on 2013.

Fig. 9. MSW share of tourism, 2013 to 2018



All of the above indicates that despite the evident strengths of the tourism product in MSW, structural barriers to growth exist. Indeed, Tourism NI research confirms that the main barriers to out-of-state tourism growth in MSW include the physical accessibility of the region, information and signposting and digital connectivity. Therefore, actions taken to address the deficits in our basic economic infrastructure in MSW will also help to expedite the growth of our tourism sector.

There is also evidence of under provision of hotel accommodation in MSW. In 2018, accommodation in MSW accounted for 11.3% of all rooms and 13.2% of all beds. However, our region only had 9.6% of all hotel rooms in NI and only 10.4% of hotel beds, compared to nearly one quarter of rooms and beds in guesthouses and guest accommodation. Furthermore, NISRA data from 2013 shows that our share of NI accommodation has been falling. Indeed, the number of hotel beds and hotel rooms was lower in 2018 in MSW than in 2013. Accordingly, we recognise the need to stimulate investment in tourist related

infrastructure including supporting more hotel and accommodation provision, in key locations in MSW where there are evident gaps – to underpin our future ambitions for the tourism sector.

The proximity of the west of our region to the Wild Atlantic Way, a tourism trail that straddles the west coast of Ireland from County Donegal's Inishowen Peninsula to Kinsale, County Cork, on the Celtic Sea coast presents a key opportunity. Connecting our tourism product in the West to the discovery points and attractions along the Wild Atlantic Way will position us to benefit from and contribute to the out-of-state visitor market active on the trail. We will also promote longer term investments in cross-border assets such as the reopening of the Ulster Canal as a strategic tourism opportunity. The original route of the Ulster Canal, links the lowlands around Lough Neagh with the Erne Basin and the River Shannon system. The route traverses all three council areas in MSW and is the 'backbone' of the historic inland waterway network in Ireland.





Our region will soon be home to the Game of Thrones legacy project in Banbridge at the site of the Iron Islands studios. This commitment by the Iron Islands and the world-renowned Game of Thrones brand to our region offers a fantastic opportunity to attract out-of-state visitors to MSW to help rebalance the visitor economy in NI. Which, as noted above, in recent years has been dominated by Historic Belfast and the Causeway Coast.

A major tourist attraction such as this has significant potential for job creation and the local economy of MSW. The total investment in the project is expected to be around £23.7m and it is expected to employ up to 200 people and provide a £400m in spend benefit for the region by 2030.

Tourism is among the sectors that will define recent policy and the most successful by the

### 3.8 ALIGNMENT WITH ECONOMIC POLICY IMPERATIVES

The areas of the RES (set out in Section 4) are closely aligned with the UK Industrial Strategy five foundations above. The UK Industrial Strategy recognises that while the UK economy has significant strengths, "the UK has greater disparities in regional productivity than other European Countries," and "many places are not fulfilling their full potential". The UK Strategy therefore places a strong emphasis on the development of local industrial strategies that will be, "long term, based on clear evidence and aligned to the national industrial strategy". This is entirely consistent with our ambition and approach to developing the RES for MSW.

COVID-19 crisis thus far and likely to experience the greatest impact from the ongoing need for social distancing. This along with a reduced tendency towards international travel in the short and medium term may require greater focus on family staycations, outdoor activity/recreational breaks and attracting visitors from cross-border/GB markets which are all opportunity areas for the tourism assets within MSW.

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### Five foundations of productivity

Our five foundations align to our vision for a transformed economy

#### Ideas

The world's most innovative economy

#### People

Good jobs and greater earning power for all

#### Infrastructure

A major upgrade to the UK's infrastructure

#### Business environment

The best place to start and grow a business

#### Places

Prosperous communities across the UK

A particular feature of the UK Industrial Strategy is the establishment of four 'grand challenges' to put the UK at the forefront of the industries of the future. These are:

- **AI & Data Economy** - putting the UK at the forefront of the artificial intelligence and data revolution;
- **Clean Growth** - maximising the advantages for UK industry from the global shift to clean growth;
- **Future of Mobility** - becoming a world leader in the way people, goods and services move; and

- **Ageing Society** - harnessing the power of innovation to help meet the needs of an ageing society.

Our region already has world class companies working in all of the above areas and as such there is an opportunity to build on these strengths, by supporting companies to innovate and grow by removing the prevailing barriers to growth.

The overall aim of the draft Programme for Government (PfG) Framework is, "improving wellbeing for all – by tackling disadvantage, and driving economic growth". Our RES will contribute to a wide range of PfG outcome areas including but not limited to:

- We are an innovative, creative society, where people can fulfil their potential;
- We connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure;
- We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally-balanced economy;
- We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest;
- We have more people working in better jobs;
- We have a more equal society.

**"We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally-balanced economy."**

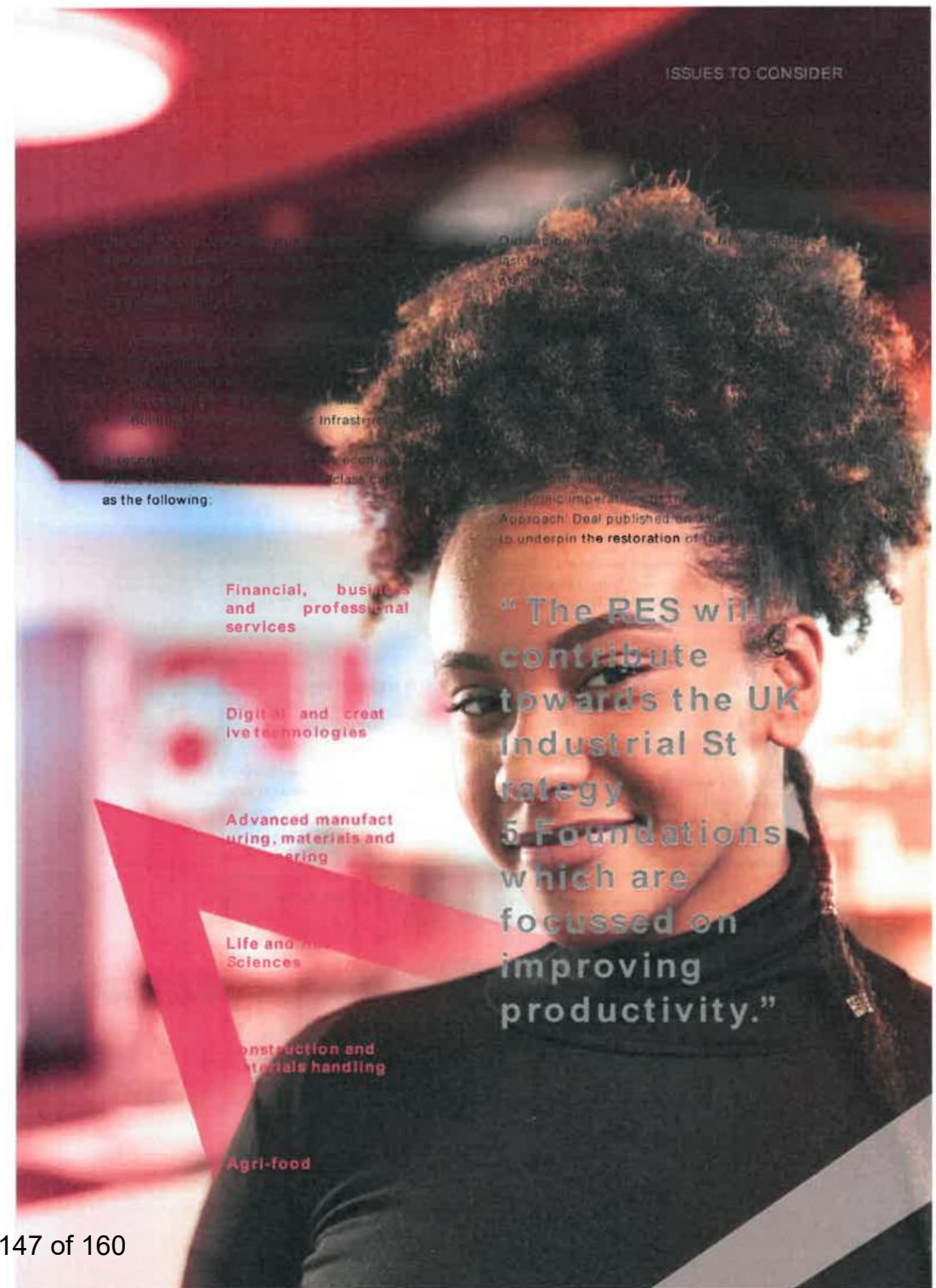
**DETAILED BELOW ARE SOME OF THE RELEVANT ECONOMIC PRIORITIES IN THE 'NEW DECADE, NEW APPROACH' AGREEMENT...**

**Our Purpose**

Improve wellbeing for all - by tackling disadvantage, and driving economic growth.

**Outcome**

- We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy;
- We live and work sustainably - protecting the environment;
- We have a more equal society;
- We enjoy long, healthy active lives;
- We are an innovative, creative society, where people can fulfil their potential;
- We have more people working in better jobs;
- We have a safe community where we respect the law, and each other;
- We care for others and we help those in need;
- We are a shared society that respects diversity;
- We are a confident, welcoming outward-looking society;
- We give our children and young people the best start in life;
- We have high quality public services;
- We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest;
- We connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure.







The narrative below sets out some of the relevant economic priorities in the Deal that are wholly aligned to our ambition and many of the areas for intervention/project concepts set out in the following sections.

### Examples of Economic Priorities - 'New Decade, New Approach' Deal (January 2020)

- Investing for the future to ensure Northern Ireland is equipped to harness opportunities and drive sustainable productivity, including opportunities for future trade as we leave the EU;
- A top priority of the Executive will be to develop a regionally-balanced economy with opportunities for all;
- Investing strategically in ensuring that NI has the right mix of skills for a thriving economy;
- Driving the delivery of essential infrastructure projects to boost the economy in order to build a Northern Ireland that is equipped for a prosperous shared future;
- Investing urgently in wastewater infrastructure which is at or nearing capacity in many places across Northern Ireland, which is limiting growth;
- In support of both economic and educational objectives, the Executive will develop an enhanced approach to careers advice, curriculum, training and apprenticeships to enhance employability and support economic growth.

The Deal also commits to make it a priority to realise the economic potential offered by the City/ Growth Deals in NI, which will be one component of the resources to deliver our RES ambitions. It states that "the Executive will work with the UK Government to develop and deliver the Growth Deals for Mid South West and Causeway Coast and Glens".

Furthermore, in May 2020 the NI Executive announced an investment package which will be crucial in helping to rebuild the economy after the coronavirus emergency that includes a renewed and additional commitment towards delivery of the City and Growth deals in NI. This is a positive development which will help us to expedite our ambitions for the MSW.

In turn this investment package will help to reinforce the central government economic recovery plans announced in June 2020. As previously noted we strongly welcome these with their focus on addressing Northern Ireland's structural weaknesses in terms of delivering 'better' jobs, addressing skills gaps and reducing regional imbalances. All of these issues were core to our RES ambition pre the pandemic and will have a revitalised imperative now.

**"Our ambition is consistent with the economic imperatives of the 'New Decade, New Approach' Deal."**







# OUR AMBITION: THE OUTLINE PROPOSITION

## 4.1 TO RAISE PRODUCTIVITY AND PROVIDE BETTER JOBS

Our headline ambition within the RES will be to raise productivity levels and in so doing create better paid jobs for our residents and close the productivity gap between MSW and the rest of NI. Closing sectoral productivity gaps in MSW has the potential to be equivalent to a 4.3% uplift of the NI economy. In reality, the actual benefits to the NI economy would be higher again, as additional levels of GVA in MSW would have additional supply chain and consumer spending impacts across the rest of the NI economy.

To achieve this headline ambition, we will prioritise a range of projects and actions across four inter-

connected intervention themes outlined in Figure 10 below to 'supercharge' the growth of our collective economy and ensure inclusive prosperity for MSW. The exponential growth of our dynamic private-sector led economy that results from these interventions will cement the reputation of MSW as the 'economic engine' for NI and a region that is world renowned for business excellence.

Our productivity challenges have been exacerbated further by the COVID-19 pandemic. This is reflected in the projected falls in GVA for 2020 across the local authority areas that make up the MSW region cited in various policy studies on the economic impact of the pandemic at UK and NI levels. This further underlines the need for the forward looking and bold actions encompassed in this RES.

## 4.2 FOUR INTERVENTION AREAS

The development of our RES is structured around four main intervention areas/ 'pillars' that will interplay and reinforce each other (Fig 10 below).

These 'pillars' are geared to delivering exponential /long-term benefits including:

- Increasing productivity levels (closing the productivity 'gap');
- Driving business growth;
- Protecting MSW's unique sectoral advantages (as a minimum) and thereafter fully realising sectoral opportunities;
- Creating more, better paid jobs; and
- Ongoing internationalisation of MSW (and better internal NI profiling).

Fig. 10. Four intervention areas

Future-proofing  
the  
skills base

Enabling  
infrastructure

Boosting  
innovation  
and  
digital capability

Building a  
high-performing  
digital economy



Through our engagements with the business community of MSW and senior stakeholders a range of project ideas/concepts were generated for consideration and further development. It is important to note that the feasibility and affordability of each is not yet tested, therefore what is included in Sections 4.3–4.6 as examples under each of the intervention areas may be subject to change. The next stage of development work on these project ideas/concepts will also help to refine the economic targets for each – which aggregated together will quantify the scale of our collective vision (e.g. GVA/productivity/job growth etc.) for the MSW region as a whole.

It is important to reiterate that our ambition must be framed in the commitment of a Programme for Government (2018-2025) outcome of seeking to 'prosper through a strong, competitive and regionally-balanced economy' referenced previously in Section 3. Furthermore, the 'New Decade, New Approach' Deal published on January 10th 2020 is underpinning the restoration of the NI Executive highlights that a 'top priority of the Executive will be to develop a regionally-balanced economy with opportunities for all'. Reducing regional imbalances is also a headline priority within the NI Executive's plans for economy recovery post-COVID-19.

Our region thus far has not sufficiently experienced the benefits of policy to 'regionally-balance' the NI economy. Annoted in Section 1 our success as the 'economic engine' of the NI economy has been achieved in spite of a deficit of investment in enabling infrastructure in MSW, demonstrating the resilience and determination of our indigenous businesses to succeed. Accordingly, as a region where FDI has not played a major role to date, we need to ensure, looking ahead, that our indigenous business champions receive sectoral support and focus through the actions of this RES to further grow nationally and internationally.

Furthermore, significant cross-border dependencies exist in our region (having the largest proportion of the Border Corridor relative to the other City/Growth Deal regions in NI). Evidence from successive reports and studies all highlight that

the impact of Brexit will fall disproportionately on the Border Region and within that on a number of sectors such as indigenous SMEs which are predominant along the Border Corridor.

We have aimed in this RES to ensure that our four main intervention areas ('pillars' (see Fig. 10 on page 50)) will drive forward growth and, as such, have the potential to provide a targeted, 'action-learning' response to the challenges of Brexit. This self-significant uncertainties and risks remain which could mean that our economic outcomes may fall behind. Therefore, our interventions in the RES must work in tandem with efforts by the British and Irish Governments to drive economic activity in the Border Corridor and ensure that businesses have additional support in mitigating the impact of Brexit. A key example of which is the economic stimulus package announced in January 2020 by the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation in Ireland for the Southern Border counties (i.e. Donegal, Sligo, Lethm, Mayo, Monaghan and Louth).

Our counterparts in the North-West in their City Deal proposition document recognised that the existence of an international border post-Brexit raised many issues about the delivery and impact of their Inclusive Strategic Growth Plan. Accordingly, they highlighted the need for a NW Enterprise Zone focused on the innovation sectors within their bid proposal and to mitigate the challenges and exploit the opportunities arising from Brexit.

Reflecting on all of the above we reiterate that our ambition must sit within a regional approach to economic growth – rebalancing across NI – and an approach that also recognises the particular considerations that our positioning on the Border Corridor brings.

Future proofing the skills base in MSW emerged as the top priority from our engagements and is aligned with the findings from the socio-economic

analysis that skills and access to labour are both a major current and future constraint to growth and competitiveness in MSW.

Given that before the COVID-19 pandemic our economy was near or at full employment, there is a need to intervene with actions to ensure that the requisite skills for the future are there in scale and profile (by sector and by levels) to underpin our region's ambitions. Interventions in this area must be strongly aligned to the 'innovation pillar' within the RES in that interventions to embed technology and automation in the workplace (e.g. robotics/cobots, application of AI, data analytics, Industry 4.0 innovation much of which is in its infancy currently) will fundamentally change the skills needed within the workplace of the future.

We are in a strong position to expedite projects/actions in this theme through the industry-led structures that are already established in our region – the Mid Ulster Skills Forum and the ABC Local Works Forum – which have been established to bring a collaborative dynamic between local businesses, colleges/universities and industry sectoral bodies to address prevailing labour and skills challenges. Structures such as these and the Manufacturing & Engineering Growth & Advancement (MEGA) will provide key governance structures for advancing skills focused interventions in the MSW.

The following sets out potential actions/project concepts for further development and prioritisation. The first four are largely centred on policy changes that would align better with MSW needs – in effect offering MSW a degree of regional autonomy.





### Access to labour/lobbying for a differentiated migration policy/regional autonomy for MSW post-Brexit

- Lobbying for a differentiated and more flexible migration policy – in effect regional autonomy for MSW post Brexit, that keeps our economy open to all levels of international talent. With the rationale for this based on the economic contribution of MSW to NI GVA and the predominance of manufacturing employment within our region, which has been highly reliant on attracting EU migrant labour in recent years.

### Policy changes to the 'off-the-shelf' apprenticeship offer (short-term) regional autonomy for MSW

- The work-based learning route is the priority for MSW and the ambitions / plans of the FE sector offer a good basis to build on. However, there are perceived constraints regarding the 'off-the-shelf' apprenticeship offer in terms of its ability to meet the prevailing needs of industry in MSW. It was clear from our

engagements that the Apprenticeship Levy has not served the needs of MSW's industry well to date, and a policy change is required to enable businesses to use the Levy in order to provide tailored training support to meet their needs. As it stands it is viewed as a 'tax' on the larger businesses that does not adequately convert to a sufficiently tailored skills development mechanism for our businesses. Businesses in the construction sector also pay a levy to the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) underlining the need for the main levy as above to be more effective. There is interest in exploring solutions that give our employers more control to 'purchase' their own solutions in this regard, which may entail aspects of the voucher system in place elsewhere in the UK. Another issue cited was prevailing age restrictions. Short-term therefore there is an

immediate need to work with DfE / the FE Colleges to assess what adaptations could be made to better fit with immediate skill needs.

### Extend the range of Higher-Level Apprenticeships (HLAs) and degree apprenticeships available in MSW - regional autonomy for MSW

- Extend the range of higher-level apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships as an alternative, and debt-free, route to higher-level qualifications, with greater opportunity to progress into employment. This extended range should be linked to the needs of priority sectors in MSW and aligned with the concept of the Innovation and Skills Academy set out under 4.5/the Innovation 'Pillar' – which will drive the need for cross-cutting skills in digital futures and automation. In relation to the construction industry there is also an interest/ a proposal to develop a fully employed four-year apprenticeship model;
- Promotion of the value of this option as a route to higher-level qualifications/ the 'world of work' with parents of young people.

### Greater focus on shared apprenticeship schemes in MSW - regional autonomy for MSW

- In order to increase the uptake of apprenticeships in MSW, there should be greater focus on Shared Apprenticeship models. These are typically targeted at SMEs who may not be in a position to offer apprenticeships to young people due to the economic uncertainty across their sector and the short-term nature of their order books. A Shared Apprenticeship model entails the sequential hosting of an apprentice across multiple companies (e.g. for a minimum of three months), thus removing the long-term risk for individual SMEs but still offering a

mechanism to develop requisite skills at a region-wide level. There are established models of good practice in this regard in the construction industry in GB that typically involve a partnership between a regional/ devolved public sector organisation and the CITB. This model rotates individual apprentices through hosted placements within construction companies, and individuals who complete the full three-year apprenticeship achieve an NVQ Level 3 in their chosen trade. This model has been successful in building skills for the construction industry, with around 90% of apprentices who complete the three years securing full time employment in their chosen trade.

### Supporting the renewed policy focus on apprenticeships as part of the post pandemic recovery plans

- Apprenticeships are already recognised as an instrumental part of the national post-COVID-19 recovery plan. For instance, the UK government recently highlighted the idea of an apprenticeship guarantee for young people, as part of an "interventionist approach" that is aiming to ensure that the country "bounces back sharply";
- Similarly, the recent announcement by the UK Government of the Kickstart scheme, as part of the economic recovery proposals, whereby the Government will either fund or contribute towards businesses creating new roles for 16-24-year olds who would otherwise find themselves entering the employment market at a precarious time;
- In MSW we already recognised (pre-pandemic) that the work-based learning route is our priority. As such we look forward to our actions/plans within this RES as above being framed within a renewed policy focus, that would include initiatives such as those referenced above and related developments, as part of the economic recovery.

### Extend scale and scope of available management and leadership training in MSW

- A range of actions are needed to develop leadership talent and management skills alongside technical and professional skills in MSW. This can be particularly relevant for the SME community and family owned businesses, where succession planning is relevant;
- Via the ABC Local Works Forum a range of pilot management and leadership programmes have been rolled out in the ABC Council area. The learning from this activity should inform considerations to extend the scale and scope of the leadership and management training offers more broadly in MSW. All future interventions in this area should be underpinned by a focus on innovation, efficiency and improved productivity, consistent with the headline ambition of this RES.

### Initiatives to promote career attractiveness

- A range of initiatives that promote career attractiveness in priority sectors in MSW are needed to retain and build key skills in the region. This will include work experience in industry for school age pupils from age 14 and the education of parents on the value of the work-based learning route, including HLAs and Foundation Degrees (as above);
- It is also evident that there is an onus on the employers and businesses themselves in MSW to actively promote the development of productive, inclusive and engaging workplaces. Promotion of good practice in this regard will help to improve the image of MSW priority sectors;
- Furthermore our businesses will be encouraged to increasingly offer different employment models, flexi-working, contract and portfolio working – all of which have the potential to significantly change the way they attract, invest in and develop skills in future.





**CONC  
REM**



## 4.5 BOOSTING INNOVATION AND DIGITAL CAPACITY

Given our ageing population and expected slowdown in population growth, increasing productivity will become our most important driver for success – as reflected in both the UK and NI Industrial Strategies.

Consistent with these strategies a key priority in our RES is supporting our businesses to be more productive and to enhance their capabilities in crucial enabling technologies such as data analytics, robotics, automation, Industry 4.0, machine learning, artificial intelligence, augmented reality, advanced materials and production techniques, and to exploit the growth opportunities these technologies hold for our region. There are evolving plans at an NI level for a Manufacturing Innovation Ecosystem embodying much of the above via the City/Growth Deals. These plans are being co-ordinated by QUB/the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre project and provide for an integrated skills pipeline, linking FE colleges and the HE sector to satisfy industry needs. Collaboration at the NI region level in this regard will help 'NI Pic' to build enhanced UK presence and overseas representation leading to increased revenue streams for NI from participation in major national innovation programmes and by attracting FDI. As set out previously, our region boasts significant levels of advanced manufacturing activity, with 70% more employment in high and medium tech manufacturing than the UK average. Consistent with this we will be a major player within the evolving plans at an NI-wide level for a Manufacturing Innovation Ecosystem, with a footprint/physical innovation facility on the ground in MSW within this ecosystem and reinforcing interventions specific to our RES/Growth Deal to ensure further success. We envisage that this should be mainly delivered via the auspices of the South West College (SWC) who were awarded the Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing Curriculum Hub for NI in recognition of their long-

standing track record of successful collaboration with manufacturing industry.

Our implementation approach to the above will be tailored to the leading sectors in the manufacturing/industrial economy in MSW (that offer further potential for growth) as set out in Section 2 of this Strategy – working in conjunction with sector partners/agencies as appropriate. A case in point is agri-food/food manufacturing, a sector which has a large presence in MSW. Robotic solutions are increasingly being used to automate repetitive tasks in this sector (e.g. for dispensing, food placement, cutting, packaging or casing of food, pick-and-place products into containers, and sorting) and their further application can bring productivity improvements and help offset labour shortages in a tight labour market such as that recently present (and forecast) for MSW. In this arena we would work with CAERE as a partner agency which has a leadership role for stimulating innovation, including the application of enabling technologies automation, within the agri-food sector across NI. CAERE has a major presence in MSW through two of their three campuses being located in MSW (Loughry and Enniskillen).

Our ambition for boosting innovation is not limited to the manufacturing/industrial economy. A recent study within MSW indicated that in ABC there is a particular strength in the digital tech sector – IT services, computing and advanced electronics, software and communications. This report highlighted that the Digital GVA/capita therein was 28% more than the NI average and Digital ICT wages 44% above the NI average. The new Southern Regional College (SRC) campus in Banbridge is also set to become a 'Specialist Centre for Digital Media and Design'. Building on all of this we recognise the opportunity for growth of the digital tech sector across MSW whilst acknowledging that the reach of the digital tech sector is much wider than the sector itself (e.g. within financial services, creative industries, medical devices and pharma/bio-technology).

It is also important to recognise health and social care as an 'economic driver', over and above being a core service providing sector in MSW. Our region is home to two leading acute and teaching hospitals, which along with the expertise therein and associated local supply chains are major sources of employment in MSW. Furthermore, in Dungannon, plans are being progressed for what will be the largest significant investment in health infrastructure the region has seen for many years, with the development of a multi-million pound purpose-built health and care centre. This new service model will deliver high quality integrated primary and community care services for the population of Dungannon and the surrounding area, with the potential to accommodate some regional services. In Cookstown also, agencies are exploring plans for a new build health and care centre, designed to achieve an integrated approach to the delivery of primary services as well as adopting an innovative approach in co-locating other health and public services within the one site.

With these health care assets, and the leading pharma companies based in MSW, our region has both world class expertise and demonstrable innovation practice that will be consolidated further via the RES to deliver exponential gains in GVA and productivity. We will explore with our two hospitals the specific opportunities that this presents to align to the evolving plans for the Health Innovation Research Alliance Northern Ireland (HIRANI) at an NI-wide level.

As espoused in Economy 2030 the Industrial Strategy for NI our ambition is for an economy in MSW where innovation is embedded in the DNA of every company and across the public sector.

The following narrative sets out potential actions/project concepts for further development and prioritisation.

## An innovation and skills academy delivered by South West College

- We will deliver an Innovation and Skills Academy through the South West College. This will be the 'physical footprint' of the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre (AMIC) for the MSW region. It will provide access for our companies to continue to learn, test and embed enabling technologies and automation to expedite productivity improvements. It will be 'world-beating' in concept and delivery. Aligned with this we will continue to ensure that the proposals will be shaped by our business leaders, active in the advanced manufacturing and engineering sectors in MSW.
- It will facilitate university collaboration in MSW in this arena, through the AMIC network building on/scaling up the expertise already in the FE sector within MSW, particularly with respect to product/process innovation in the SME industrial economy.
- As a core element of 'NI Pic's' Manufacturing Innovation Ecosystem, it will be networked into an Advanced R&D and Investment Network across the UK and Ireland including the relevant Catapult centres – providing access to revenue streams for our region via participation in major national innovation programmes and by attracting FDI.
- It will also act as the focal point for the development of higher value-added skills and related apprenticeships for advanced manufacturing/the industrial economy of MSW.
- We will seek to reinforce all of the above by putting in place an Industrial Investment Challenge Fund that will build a delivery pipeline of demonstration projects eligible for support – by virtue of their potential to radically address the productivity challenges facing our region and to showcase 'best in class' adoption of enabling technologies. Specifically, this will entail the provision of



## OUR AMBITION

capital funding to support businesses with in-house innovation and/or to enable them to introduce new equipment following the conclusion of R&D – including that stimulated via the AMIC network referenced above.

### The development of an NI Agri-Food Robotics Centre, at CAFRE Loughry campus

- We will work with CAFRE, other educational institutions and industry stakeholders to create an Agri-Food Robotics Centre. CAFRE, is an integral part of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, with two of its three campuses (Loughry and Enniskillen) located within the MSW region. The Loughry campus has lead responsibility for knowledge and technology transfer to the NI Agri-food industry;
- The proposal is to create a NI Agri-food Robotics Centre, at CAFRE Loughry campus, focused on education of HE students and technology transfer of robotic automation and enabling technologies to the agri-food sector.

### Centre for Agri-Tech Innovation (in collaboration with AFB I Loughgall)

- In MSW we want to play our part in building capabilities that can lead the world in delivering sustainable food and farming solutions. Accelerating efficiencies in the way food is produced is now arguably more important than ever, with rising global demand for high-quality food and nutrition, set against challenges such as food security, profitability and climate change;
- To this end we will explore the potential to develop MSW as a centre of agri-tech innovation building on the track record and expertise of the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) in Loughgall, Co Armagh.

There is a network of four Agri-Tech Centres of Innovation in the UK (supported via Innovate UK) as well nine regional clusters across the EU that are acting as centres of agritech innovation as part of a €20m project called SmartAgriHubs (where Ireland is a key partner with a centre in Waterford). We will explore models such as these to shape and advance our plans for MSW.

### The development of Agri-Food Incubation space in MSW

- Incubation space is required across the region to support food development for smaller SMEs. By way of example this is currently an area being explored by the Southern Regional College within MSW.

### The development of a network of Digi-Hubs in MSW

- As noted above we recognise opportunity for growth of the digital tech sector across MSW, whilst acknowledging that the reach of the Digital Tech sector is much wider than the sector itself;
- To this end we will put in place a network of state-of-the-art digi-hubs in MSW entailing inspiring, digitally advanced co-working spaces. These will be visible locally-based foci for the development of the digital tech sector in MSW and will provide a structure for sectoral focus, leadership and networking. The sectoral focus will include building on the increasing reputation of Banbridge as a centre of excellence for the screen industry (film, TV and digital media). The collaboration that these will enable between individuals/companies working in the digital tech arena and local communities will help to stimulate small scale innovation projects. They will also act as a 'gateway' into training and education

for the digital roles in the new economy and for digitally enabled design, leveraging from the expertise and plans of the Southern Regional College in this regard;

- Our ambition in this regard is aligned to the concept of the Regional Innovators Network (RIN) in the Belfast Region City Deal, and accordingly when up and running we would seek to exchange good practice on an ongoing basis with the same.

### Health Innovation

- Explore opportunities with the MSW Region's two acute and training hospitals to align with evolving plans for the Health Innovation Research Alliance Northern Ireland (HIRANI) at a NI-wide level;
- This could help build support for additional clustering of Life and Health Science (LHS) sector activity in MSW;
- Supporting the effective delivery of a health hub provision including, for example, a new build health and care centre in Cookstown (cited previously).

## For more information:

Contact [info@midsouthwestregion.org](mailto:info@midsouthwestregion.org) or visit [www.midsouthwestregion.org](http://www.midsouthwestregion.org)



## 4.6 BUILDING A HIGH-PERFORMING TOURISM ECONOMY

As set out previously our region has particular competitive advantages in terms of the quality of our tourism product. Accordingly, our focus within the RES will be on selective product development only within MSW alongside positioning our region much more within the 'all-island' visitor economy. This will be facilitated through connection of our tourism product in the West to the discovery points and attractions along the Wild Atlantic Way and promotion of longer-term investments in cross-border assets such as the reopening of the Ulster Canal as a strategic tourism opportunity. The latter also offers scope to align with the ambition to restore the Lagan Navigation from Belfast Harbour to Lough Neagh. The Lagan Navigation was one of the most successful commercial navigations in Ireland, and the final stretch of navigation route to Lough Neagh, runs through MSW – per adjacent schematic. Actions taken elsewhere in the RES to address

Fig. 11: Inland waterway network in Ireland

the deficits in our basic economic infrastructure in MSW are crucial to overcoming the structural barriers to the growth of out-of-state tourism in our region. We will leverage from projects/actions that will help to improve the physical accessibility of our tourism product in MSW and improved digital connectivity in our region. These are crucial to help route out-of-state visitors to our region from the existing NI tourism 'hotspots' and for improved information provision and sign-posting. Improved digital connectivity (and associated digital capacity developed via the Innovation Pillar of our RES) will also help us to innovate in the engagement of visitors with our tourism product (e.g. through the immersive experiences that application of AR/VR can offer).

**"Our region has particular competitive advantages in terms of the quality of our tourism product."**

Finally, we recognise the need to stimulate investment in tourist-related infrastructure including supporting more hotel and accommodation provision, in key locations in MSW where there are evident gaps – to underpin our future ambitions for the tourism sector.

In pursuit of all of the above we will seek to use Growth Deal funding to leverage other funding sources to invest in our tourism economy such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and PEACEPLUS in relation to cross-border ambitions.

Set out below are potential actions/project concepts for further development and prioritisation.

### Tourism Product Development within MSW

- Implementation of the Sperrins Signature Tourism/ Future Search project. This will address the fact that recent research indicates that, despite its appeal, Tyrone & Sperrins is not recognised nor is it functioning optimally as a tourism destination/area in the eyes of the visitor. The report arising from the Future Search Conference contains five action plans in relation to development of environment and heritage; infrastructure; branding and tourism; community and management, collectively geared to realising a co-ordinated vision for the future of the Sperrins AONB summed up in the report title 'reaching new heights, realising our potential';
- Further development of MSW as the locus of the 'genealogy/connections' tourism experience in NI, with the Ulster American Folk Park (UAFP) in Omagh as the hub of the same. The current master-planning exercise underway for UAFP will inform further development of this concept within the RES;
- Development of a literary trail spanning MSW that could embrace and build upon existing discovery points/attractions and events that celebrate literary giants from the region (e.g. Heaney, Wilde, Beckett).

### Cross-Border Tourism Product Development

- Promotion of investment in cross-border assets and tourism projects is key. One longer term example is the reopening of the Ulster Canal as a strategic tourism opportunity. The original route of the Ulster Canal, links the lowlands around Lough Neagh with the Erne Basin and the River Shannon system. The route traverses all three Council areas in MSW and is the 'backbone' of the historic inland waterway network in Ireland.

### Actions to stimulate/ de-risk and expedite quality hotel investment in MSW

- Relevant only in areas of MSW where there are evidenced 'gaps' in provision and associated market failures across the region. Banbridge is a case in point where there is an urgent need to support the impending out-of-state visitor traffic to the Game of Thrones Legacy Project. Similar capacity may be needed in the Sperrins to support the planned Sperrins Signature Tourism/ Future Search project.

### Improved infrastructure for routing/ signposting and visitor engagement with the tourism product in MSW

- Branding research to best connect/align the West of our region to the discovery points/ attractions on the Wild Atlantic Way – and implementation thereafter;
- Support for innovative investment in digital channels and enhancements of visitor experiences in MSW e.g. through use of VR AR. These could exist at visitor attractions themselves or be hosted at TICs to inspire visitors to then go and visit the region.

# LUDIN G ARKS

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

This RES sets out the headline vision and ambition for our region; it identifies the opportunities and challenges we face; and sets out the priority 'pillars' around which future investment and actions to realise our ambitions will be framed. It also provides an early, high level indication of potential specific projects/interventions that may sit under each of these pillars - which will be the subject of ongoing development in the months ahead.

The next stage of development work on these project ideas/concepts will enable us to refine the economic targets for each - which aggregated together will quantify the scale of our collective vision (e.g. GVA/productivity/job growth etc.) for the MSW region as a whole.

In a post COVID-19 recovery context, our work will strike a balance between the shorter-term challenges and the need for longer-term transformative action.

We are resolute in our ambition to 'supercharge' the growth of our collective economy and ensure inclusive prosperity in MSW through development and delivery of this RES.

We would like to acknowledge the input and guidance of our industry/business base in MSW in shaping our ambition thus far. As the 'economic engine' of NI, our region is in a prime position to deliver substantial additional economic growth for NI as a whole, on foot of the implementation of the targeted investments and actions proposed within this RES. To this end we look forward to ongoing engagement with our industry/business base and our partners in central government departments/agencies.



