

<b>Report on</b>	1) TEDx (Cookstown) Event 2020 2) Women in Business – Yes You Can Programme - Year 3 3) DAERA (TRPSI) Rural Business Development Grant – 2020 4) LEADER Contract Variations 5) ICBAN Framework of Regional Priorities 2021-2027
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	12 November 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>TEDx (Cookstown) Event 2020</b> At the Development Committee on 12 March 2020, Members recommended to Council to approve to Gold Level sponsorship of £2,000 towards the event which had been scheduled for June 2020. However, due to Covid, the event will now take place virtually (but filmed in the Tullylagan Hotel) on 27 November 2020. It is the first time that a TEDx event will take place in Mid Ulster.</p>
2.2	<p><b>Women in Business 'Yes You Can' Collaboration Programme – Year 3</b> In March 2018, Council approved a proposal from Women in Business to all 11 Councils for the delivery of a three-year collaborative regional programme entitled 'Yes You Can' between Women in Business, Invest NI and the 11 Councils to increase and support levels of female entrepreneurship. The initiative is a collaboration resulting from a unique situation: An American entrepreneur originally from NI, impressed with the efforts of Women in Business to encourage new female entrepreneurs, made a financial commitment (£200,000) towards the development of other support initiatives, the 11 Councils and Invest NI are each contributing £200,000 (Mid Ulster District Council's contribution is approximately £6,060 for each of the 3 years). Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council are acting as Lead Council on behalf of the 11 Councils.</p>
2.3	<p><b>DAERA (TRPSI) Rural Business Development Grant – 2020</b> The Rural Business Development Grant Scheme is funded by DAERA through the TRPSI (Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation) Programme. It focuses on existing rural micro businesses employing less than 10 employees, offering 50% in</p>

grant aid against eligible costs up to £4,999 to support actions aimed at improving business sustainability and growth.

The Scheme opened for applications on 3rd August 2020 and closed on 11th September 2020 at 12 noon. A total of 315 complete applications were received by the closing date. A further 15 were received after the closing deadline and deemed ineligible.

The value of applications received far exceeds the level of grant aid allocated to Mid Ulster District Council of £62,000. DAERA has indicated but not confirmed that additional funding may be provided following completion of assessments.

The Contract for delivery of this Scheme sets out specific progress milestones with 30th November 2020 identified as the date by which applications are to be assessed and letters of offer issued to successful applicants.

#### 2.4 **LEADER Contract Variations**

The governance framework for delivery of the current Rural Development Programme 2014 – 2020 by Mid Ulster Rural Development Partnership (the LAG) includes:

1. A Contract between Council and the LAG for administration support provided by Council; and
2. A Service Level Agreement between DAERA and Council outlining the administration services to be provided by Council to the LAG.

Both the contract and SLA are due to expire on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.

#### **ICBAN Framework of Regional Priorities 2021-2027**

2.5 The *Framework of Regional Priorities for the Central Border Region of Ireland / Northern Ireland, 2021/2027* (FRP) is a strategic initiative for the advancement of our regional economy. This is motivated by, and seeks to give effect to, ICBAN's Vision of a region *with a thriving, resilient, vibrant and diversified economy*, that will be strengthened and sustained through a focus on:

- Utilising our environmental assets respectfully and responsibly;
- Encouraging investment in value-added industries and promoting innovation;
- Enhancing quality of life;
- Embracing new technologies and enhancing remote working; and
- Promoting our strengths in tourism.

The new Framework document builds on the earlier 2013 'Regional Strategic Framework' and is complementary with all key local, regional and national strategies and plans.

<p><b>3.0</b></p>	<p><b>Main Report</b></p>
<p>3.1</p>	<p><b>TEDx Cookstown Event</b>          Claire O’Hanlon (TEDxCookstown licensee and curator) is the organiser. The event will be on 27 November 2020 and will be a live event that will run over 2 sessions. It will be held virtually and speakers will include people from a wide range of backgrounds with varied talk ideas as per TED guidelines (5 of whom are from Mid Ulster).</p> <p>The event will be hosted by Denise Murtagh, with a welcome from the Council Chair, and speakers include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gary Doherty - Curator of TEDx Derry/Londonderry &amp; founder of THINK Network</li> <li>• Leeann Monk-Ozgul - Co-founder of Elemental Software</li> <li>• Stephen Brown - Founder of Fire walking International &amp; Compassionate Enquiry Practitioner</li> <li>• Claire Hackett - Doula and maternal rights &amp; support advocate</li> <li>• Jill Robb - Owner of Origin Digital</li> <li>• Philip Bain - Owner of ShredBank</li> <li>• Dr. Shane McKee - Geneticist &amp; NI lead on the 100,000 genomes project</li> <li>• Michaela Hollywood - Disability advocate</li> <li>• David Gibson OBE - Entrepreneurship education</li> <li>• Claire Hughes - former bank manager and owner of Soiree Society</li> <li>• Deiric McCann - Head of International at Genos Emotional Intelligence</li> <li>• Johann Muldoon, MBE – Owner, Manor Architects.</li> </ul> <p>Four complimentary tickets have been allocated to Council as a Gold Level Sponsor. Since the event is running over 2 sessions ticket holders can attend 2 of the morning sessions and 2 in the afternoon or they can all attend the same session. The audience watching live is restricted (both physically or virtually) as per TEDx licensing rules. TEDx talks are all available after the event when the videos are posted on the TEDx YouTube channel.</p> <p>Due to the event occurring on 27 November 2020 (the day immediately after the Council meeting on 26 November), Members are requested to approve Delegated Authority to the Director of Business &amp; Communities/Chief Executive to manage the allocation of tickets in accordance with Council procedures.</p>
<p>3.2</p>	<p><b>Women in Business ‘Yes You Can’ Collaboration Programme – Year 3</b>          Year 2 of the programme will complete in December 2020 and Women in Business will provide Council with an update on the second year’s activity at that time. Due to Covid, Women in Business had to re-package the delivery of events to an online platform, and the programme did experience a decline in participant numbers from Year 1.</p>

## **DAERA (TRPSI) Rural Business Development Grant – 2020**

### **3.3 Delivery timescales**

Indicative timescales for the roll out of this Scheme have been agreed with DAERA, which necessitates the completion of individual projects by successful applicants by 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

To meet this timescale all of the participating Councils are working simultaneously to the key date of 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020 for completion of project assessment and the issue of letters of offer.

#### **Assessment arrangements**

Council staff will be responsible for the following:

- Opening the call for applications
- Initial eligibility checks
- Liaison with DAERA / Invest NI on applications received
- Assessment and scoring of eligible applications
- Preparation of letters of offer
- Collation of grant claims from successful project promoters for submission to DAERA for payment
- Post project evaluation on individual funded projects

Projects achieving a score of 65% and over will be awarded funding. In the event that the number of projects approved exceeds the budget available, funding will be awarded to the highest-ranking scores until the budget is exhausted.

An overall Post Project Evaluation at scheme level will be carried out to ascertain the achievement of scheme objectives and identify lessons learnt for future similar initiatives.

Mid Ulster District Council has received by far (along with Fermanagh and Omagh District Council) the highest intake of applications across all of the 11 Council areas participating in this scheme. Assessment of applications is well underway but due to the volume received, will not be complete in time to include in a list of approved projects for the November 2020 Development Committee papers.

### **3.4 LEADER Contract Variations**

DAERA has issued variations to both the Contract for administration support between Council and LAG and the SLA between Council and DAERA to extend the original term of both to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

These extensions are necessary to complete the delivery of the NI LEADER Programme. Signed variations are to be returned to DAERA by **30<sup>th</sup> November 2020**.

Copies of the correspondence from DAERA and Contract / SLA variations are included in Appendix 1.

### 3.5 ICBAN Framework of Regional Priorities 2021-2027

The key ambitions of ICBAN's Framework of Regional Priorities reflect the current and evolving challenges and opportunities at local, regional, national and international levels. They are:

- To develop as a sustainable region, characterised by increased employment, improved economic activity, social progress and ecological sustainability;
- To redress economic and social inequalities between the Central Border Region and other areas of Ireland and Northern Ireland and the inequalities which persist within the region itself;
- To influence and work with the Governments of Ireland and Northern Ireland on their investment priorities for the region, by providing an evidence base to justify investments; and
- To identify opportunities for local authorities and other stakeholders to work together to realise opportunities and to respond to the challenges facing the region.

The strategic priorities and deliverables detailed in the Framework are presented under five interlocking and complementary pillars namely:

- Economic development;
- Infrastructure and connectivity;
- Human capital – education and training;
- Liveable communities; and
- Greening the region.

ICBAN has expressed its thanks to Council Members who serve on ICBAN, and the Senior Officers Team, comprising Directors and Heads of Service from Member Councils, who helped drive the project in tandem with the Management Board of ICBAN.

In completing the final version of the Framework, the pandemic's developing impacts have been incorporated, as well as the challenges of Brexit and climate change on our border region.

As the Framework has now been finalised, ICBAN seeks support for the document from each Member Council by 18 November 2020, in advance of moving towards implementation stage.

Mr Shane Campbell, CEO of ICBAN indicated he is happy to meet with Council Members and/or Officers at any stage to discuss the Framework in more detail, if required.

The new '*Framework of Regional Priorities for the Central Border Region, 2021-2027*' strategic document is enclosed on Appendix 2A and a Synopsis of the main document is enclosed on Appendix 2B.

4.0	<b>Other Considerations</b>
4.1	<p data-bbox="228 259 975 293"><b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b></p> <p data-bbox="228 338 368 367">Financial:</p> <p data-bbox="228 371 692 405"><b>TEDx (Cookstown) Event 2020</b> Council sponsorship of £2,000 previously agreed in March 2020.</p> <p data-bbox="228 483 1294 517"><b>Women in Business ‘Yes You Can’ Collaboration Programme – Year 3</b> £6,060 for each of the 3 years</p> <p data-bbox="228 595 1286 663"><b>DAERA (TRPSI) Rural Business Development Grant – 2020</b> None – all grant aid approved to project promoters will be paid by DAERA.</p> <p data-bbox="228 703 667 736"><b>LEADER Contract Variations</b> None – all administration costs are recouped at full cost recovery through the LAG’s programme administration budget. Sufficient budget remains within this allocation to extend administration support to March 2022.</p> <p data-bbox="228 853 341 882">Human:</p> <p data-bbox="228 887 1126 920"><b>DAERA (TRPSI) Rural Business Development Grant – 2020</b> Staff time. An administrative budget of £9,300 will be paid to Council by DAERA for associated administrative duties on completion of the scheme.</p> <p data-bbox="228 1032 667 1066"><b>LEADER Contract Variations</b> The RDP administration unit will continue to provide admin support to the LAG.</p> <p data-bbox="228 1111 496 1140">Risk Management:</p> <p data-bbox="228 1144 592 1178"><b>TEDx Cookstown Event</b> Now a virtual event</p> <p data-bbox="228 1256 1294 1323"><b>Women in Business ‘Yes You Can’ Collaboration Programme – Year 3</b> Now a virtual event</p> <p data-bbox="228 1368 1126 1435"><b>DAERA (TRPSI) Rural Business Development Grant – 2020</b> None</p> <p data-bbox="228 1480 667 1547"><b>LEADER Contract Variations</b> None</p>
4.2	<p data-bbox="228 1592 746 1626"><b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b></p> <p data-bbox="228 1671 999 1771">Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications: <b>DAERA Rural Business Development Grant – 2020</b> None</p> <p data-bbox="228 1816 1382 1962">Rural Needs Implications: <b>DAERA (TRPSI) Rural Business Development Grant – 2020</b> This scheme is specifically targeted at rural areas (defined as all areas outside of settlements with over 5000 residents).</p>

	<p><b>LEADER Contract Variations</b> The LEADER programme is specifically targeted at rural areas (defined as all areas outside of settlements with over 5000 residents).</p>
5.0	<p><b>Recommendation(s)</b></p>
	<p>It is recommended that Members:</p> <p>5.1 <b>TEDx (Mid Ulster) 2020</b></p> <p><b>Approve</b> delegated authority to be granted to the Director of Business &amp; Communities/Chief Executive to manage the allocation of the 4 Tedx tickets in line with Council procedures, ahead of Council Meeting on 26 November 2020.</p> <p>5.2 <b>Women in Business ‘Yes You Can’ Collaboration Programme – Year 3</b></p> <p><b>Approve</b> provision of up to £6,060 towards the third and final year of delivery of the ‘Yes You Can’ Programme, subject to Women in Business providing Council with an Activity Plan for 2021 outlining how they propose to promote the Initiative to achieve a higher level of participant engagement.</p> <p>5.3 <b>DAERA (TRPSI) Rural Business Development Grant – 2020</b></p> <p>(i) <b>Note</b> update on the Rural Business Development Grants Scheme 2020 and pressure on delivery timescales.</p> <p>(ii) <b>Approve</b> delegated authority be granted to the Director of Business &amp; Communities/Chief Executive that once project applications are assessed, scored and ranked, the Director/Chief Executive can approve letters of offer in ranked order, up to the maximum grant funding available for issue by 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020. A report will be brought to the Development Committee immediately afterwards to update Members on the outcome of assessment and scoring to note approved projects.</p> <p><b>LEADER Contract Variations</b></p> <p>5.4</p> <p>(i) <b>Approve</b> Contract variation for signature between Council and the LAG for administration support provided by Council to 31 March 2022.</p> <p>(ii) <b>Approve</b> Service Level Agreement variation for signature between DAERA and Council outlining the administration services to be provided by Council to the LAG to 31 March 2022.</p>

5.5	<p><b>ICBAN Framework of Regional Priorities 2021-2027</b>  <b>Approve</b> Council write to ICBAN to offer support towards the Framework of Regional Priorities for the Central Border Region of Ireland / Northern Ireland 2021/2027.</p>
6.0	<p><b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b></p>
	<p><b>Appendix 1</b> – Correspondence from DAERA and Contract / SLA Variations relating to LEADER delivery.</p> <p><b>Appendix 2A</b> - ICBAN's Framework of Regional Priorities 2021-2027  <i>(Full Framework)</i></p> <p><b>Appendix 2B</b> - ICBAN's Framework of Regional Priorities 2021-2027  <i>(Synopsis of Framework)</i></p>