

Report on	1) Ministerial Launch of Council's £1million Business Support Package 2) Cookstown Town Centre Forum Minutes 3) Coalisland Town Centre Forum Minutes 4) Magherafelt Town Centre Forum Minutes 5) Maghera Town Centre Forum Minutes
Date of Meeting	10 September 2020
Reporting Officer	Fiona McKeown, Head of Economic Development

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
	To receive updates on the matters detailed below.
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>Ministerial Launch of Council's £1million Business Support Package</p> <p>Minister for the Economy, Mrs Diane Dodds, joined the Council Chair, Councillor Cathal Mallaghan, to formally launch Mid Ulster Council's £1million business support package at a photocall held at PJD Safety Supplies Ltd in Ballygawley on 27 August 2020. The 4 new business programmes launched provide a comprehensive range of free mentoring support, equating to the value of £1million to support 690 micro and small businesses in Mid Ulster. Launch photos enclosed on Appendix 1.</p>
2.2	<p>Cookstown Town Centre Forum Minutes</p> <p>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>
2.3	<p>Coalisland Town Centre Forum Minutes</p> <p>Coalisland Town Centre Forum was established in March 2019. The Forum members meet on a regular basis and work collaboratively to take forward a number of key initiatives to develop Coalisland town centre.</p>
2.4	<p>Magherafelt Town Centre Forum Minutes</p> <p>Magherafelt Town Centre Forum was re-established in January 2017. The Forum meets on a quarterly basis to act in an advisory capacity, playing a fundamental role in the development and delivery of key town centre initiatives.</p>

2.5	<p>Maghera Town Centre Forum Minutes Maghera Town Centre Forum was established in August 2018. The forum works in partnership with businesses, statutory agencies, community and voluntary sector and Council officials to ensure Maghera can achieve its full potential.</p>
3.0	<p>Main Report</p>
3.1	<p>Ministerial Launch of Council’s £1million Business Support Package</p> <p>Minister for the Economy, Diane Dodds, and Councillor Cathal Mallaghan, Council Chair, performed the official launch of Mid Ulster Council’s comprehensive business support package, valued at £1million, on 27 August 2020 at PJD Safety Supplies Ltd, Ballygawley.</p> <p>The four programmes detailed below, all provide free bespoke mentoring support to micro and small businesses across Mid Ulster, employing less than 50 employees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gearing for Growth Programme – designed to build business capacity in key business areas including financial management, access to investment and finance, effective pricing, innovation, business planning, customer care, steps to exporting, achieving industry standards, human resources, social media and marketing. • Tender Ready Programme – working with businesses to improve their ability to source new work, identify supply chain opportunities and prepare high quality tender bids. • Digital First Programme – supports businesses to adopt digital technologies and strategies to enhance and grow their online presence and drive sales. • Transform Programme – will work with businesses to help them become an ‘employer of choice’, and implement tailored and sustainable measures to recruit and retain staff. <p>These programmes were originally designed to help businesses grow and expand but have been rebranded so that assistance can also be targeted at helping local companies recover, build resilience and sustainability after the Covid19 pandemic.</p> <p>Invest NI has advised Council that whilst the Programmes’ targets cannot change and jobs should be created where possible, they fully recognise that sustaining jobs would be equally important in the current environment and subsequently approved this new approach. If ‘reasonable endeavours’ to achieve targets can be demonstrated and programmes are delivered in line with Letters of Offer there will be no sanctions in relation to the non-achievement of job creation targets.</p> <p>Programmes are currently open to applications until April 2022 or until all places are filled. Full details on the programmes are available on Council’s website https://bit.ly/3ljgLVR</p>

	<p>The programmes are currently being promoted in the press and through social media. Any interested business can contact Council's Economic Development Team to discuss the support available by emailing business@midulstercouncil.org</p> <p>Photos of the Ministerial Launch are enclosed on Appendix 1.</p> <p>3.2 Cookstown Town Centre Forum Minutes of the meeting of Cookstown Town Centre Forum held on the 6 November 2019 and 15 June 2020 are attached at Appendix 2.</p> <p>3.3 Coalisland Town Centre Forum Minutes of the meeting of Coalisland Town Centre Forum held on the 2 March 2020, 15 June 2020 and the 6 July 2020 are attached at Appendix 3.</p> <p>3.4 Magherafelt Town Centre Forum Minutes of Magherafelt Town Centre Forum Meeting held on 4 November 2019 and 6 July 2020 are attached at Appendix 4.</p> <p>3.5 Maghera Town Centre Forum Minutes of Maghera Town Centre Forum held on 6 November 2019, and 8 July 2020 are attached Appendix 5.</p>
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p> <p>Financial: Ministerial Launch of Council's £1million Business Support Package 4 Programmes: budget secured for the 4 financial years 2019/2023 covering the Programmes' delivery at the time of receipt of Invest NI Letters of Offer. These Programmes are funded 60% from ERDF Investment for Jobs and Growth Fund, 20% from Invest NI and 20% from Mid Ulster District Council.</p> <p>Human: Officer Time</p> <p>Risk Management: Ministerial Launch of Council's £1million Business Support Package Invest NI's Letters of Offer for these 4 Programmes requires the delivery of support to 690 micro and small businesses until December 2022 and the use of 'reasonable endeavours' to create 900 new jobs and generate 80 quality referrals to Invest NI. As stated in point 3.1 (above) following Council's request to Invest NI for greater flexibility in approach, Invest NI advised that, <i>Where ever possible new jobs should be created but it is also recognised that sustaining jobs will be equally as important in the current environment. The European Commission has issued guidance around flexibility on the achievement of targets and indicators as a direct result of COVID-19, the final outputs will therefore be considered on that basis. DfE has also confirmed that they will not be seeking to penalise any project, which has failed to meet their targets as a direct</i></p>

	<p><i>result of the Covid-19 impact. On that, basis if reasonable endeavours have been demonstrated and programmes are delivered in line with the Letters of Offer there would be no sanctions in relation to the non-achievement of targets.</i></p> <p>The Contracts are managed by senior officers in the economic development team and programme delivery is subject to ongoing and regular monitoring of progress.</p>
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	<p>Equality & Good Relations Implications:</p> <p>Ministerial Launch of Council's £1million Business Support Package All Programme Contractors are required to maximise participation and report to Council who monitor their engagement and recruitment of businesses.</p>
	<p>Rural Needs Implications:</p> <p>Ministerial Launch of Council's £1million Business Support Package As noted above, the Programme Contractors are required to maximise participation and ensure the businesses recruited are reflective of Mid Ulster's sectors and geographical spread, and are required to report to Council who monitor their engagement and recruitment of businesses.</p>
5.0	Recommendation(s)
	<p>It is recommended that Members: -</p>
5.1	<p>Ministerial Launch of Council's £1million Business Support Package Note the official launch of Mid Ulster Council's £1million business mentoring support package to assist 690 micro and small businesses in Mid Ulster with their recovery, resilience and growth.</p>
5.2	<p>Cookstown Town Centre Forum Note minutes of Cookstown Town Centre Forum meetings held on 6 November 2019 and 15 June 2020.</p>
5.3	<p>Coalisland Town Centre Forum Note minutes of Coalisland Town Centre Forum meetings held on 2 March 2020, 15 June 2020 and the 6 July 2020.</p>
5.4	<p>Magherafelt Town Centre Forum Note minutes of Magherafelt Town Centre Forum meetings held on 4 November 2019 and 6 July 2020.</p>
5.5	<p>Maghera Town Centre Forum Note minutes of Maghera Town Centre Forum meetings held on 6 November 2019 and 8 July 2020.</p>

6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Appendix 1 - Photos of Ministerial Launch of Council's £1million Business Support Package
	Appendix 2 – Minutes of Cookstown Town Centre Forum – 6.11.19 and 15.6.20
	Appendix 3 - Minutes of Coalisland Town Centre Forum – 2.3.20, 15.6.20 and 6.7.20.
	Appendix 4 – Minutes of Magherafelt Town Centre Forum – 4.11.19 and 6.7.20.
	Appendix 5 – Minutes of Maghera Town Centre Forum – 6.11.19 and 8.7.20.