

<b>Report on</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gearing for Growth Seminar - 20 October 2022</li> <li>2. TRPSI Rural Business Development Grant Scheme 2022</li> <li>3. Tourism Development Group Minutes on 29 June 2022</li> <li>4. European Heritage Open Days</li> <li>5. The Shared Island Fund</li> <li>6. Blackwater River Update Report</li> </ol>
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	13 October 2022
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Assistant Director – Economic Development, Tourism & Strategic Programmes

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

<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>Gearing for Growth Seminar – 20 October 2022</b> As part of their contract for delivery of the 'Gearing for Growth' business mentoring programme, Workspace Enterprises Ltd are required to deliver an enterprise-themed seminar before November 2022.</p>
2.2	<p><b>TRPSI Rural Business Development Grant Scheme 2022</b>  The Rural Micro Business Development Grant Scheme is funded through DAERA's Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation programme (TRPSI). This year's Scheme opened for applications on 4 May and closed on 31 May 2022.</p>
2.3	<p><b>Tourism Development Group Minutes on 29 June 2022</b>  The 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. The group meet on a bi-monthly basis and as per the</p>

	<p>agreed Terms of Reference all business will be reported to Council through the Development Committee.</p>
2.4	<p><b>European Heritage Open Days</b></p> <p>The Bridewell, Magherafelt and US Grant Ancestral Homestead, Ballygawley provided Living History tours for European Heritage Open Days on 9, 10 and 11 September 2022. This annual event celebrating local architecture, history and culture, takes place across Europe. Northern Ireland European Heritage Open Days are run by the Department for Communities with support of the Council of Europe and the European Commission.</p>
2.5	<p><b>The Shared Island Fund</b></p> <p>The Irish Government has committed to making €500 million in capital funding available to 2025 for investment in collaborative north/south projects, including infrastructure aimed at building a more connected Ireland.</p> <p>Mid Ulster District Council partnered in 4 collaborative cross border bids to the Shared Island Fund. The submission of applications to the Shared Island Fund was a competitive process and the closing date for applications was 5pm on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2022.</p>
2.6	<p><b>Blackwater River Update Report</b></p> <p>Members will be aware of the recently completed Blackwater River Feasibility Study Report completed by Lough Neagh Partnership, which was commissioned by Mid Ulster Council to explore potential opportunities to develop the Blackwater River and its environs.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b>Gearing for Growth Seminar - 20 October 2022</b></p> <p>Workspace Enterprises Ltd plan to deliver a seminar to be held at CDE premises (Cookstown) on the morning of Thursday 20 October 2022. This is for Mid Ulster's micro and small enterprises (eligible target group as stipulated by Council's funding partners Invest NI and EU/ERDF). The topic will be showing businesses what is required to prepare for and embrace change and how to integrate the management of change into a business. Keynote speakers will include Tony Convery (host) and a change management expert guest speaker, as well as providing an opportunity for other Mid Ulster businesses to showcase their 'change' journey and learnings. These will include Cormac Diamond (BlocBlinds), Lorna Robinson (Cloughbane) and Sharron McHugh (Molly and Me). Further details will be circulated to Members once finalised.</p>
3.2	<p><b>TRPSI Rural Business Development Grant Scheme 2022</b></p> <p>This Scheme is targeted at the rural micro business sector and provides capital grant aid of up to £4,999 funded at 50% of eligible costs. Mid Ulster Council had an original funding allocation of £140,000 for this year's scheme.</p>

204 applications were received before the closing date. Eligibility checks were carried out on applications received before they were assessed and scored. 136 applications were successful after the assessment process was completed. A request was made to DAERA to uplift their funding to fund the 136 schemes to the value of £429,902.22 and they have agreed to this and instructed Council to proceed. Council has issued 136 Letters of Offer to the successful candidates totalling £429,902.22 by 9 September 2022.

Delegated authority was previously granted to the Chief Executive to sign and issue the letters of offer approved under the Scheme. A full list of grant recipients is attached for Member's information in **Appendix 1**.

### 3.3 **Tourism Development Group Minutes on 29 June 2022**

Mid Ulster Tourism Development Group (TDG) minutes of 29 June 2022 is enclosed on **Appendix 2A** and Officer TDG Cluster Report of 29 June 2022 is attached on **Appendix 2B**

### 3.4 **European Heritage Open Days**

The Bridewell, Magherafelt and US Grant Ancestral Homestead, Ballygawley provided Living History tours for European Heritage Open Days from 9 – 11 September 2022.

- Friday 9 September – 113 Local primary schools children visited the Bridewell where Living History characters provided an interactive tour of what life would have been like in the 1804 Courthouse and Gaol Cells, a visit to the old Graveyard before going to the library to discover photographs and talk on the history of Magherafelt town.





- Saturday 10 September – The Bridewell was brought back to life with living history tours, allowing visitors the opportunity to experience life in the original cells and participate in activities in the exercise yard before a walk around the adjoining graveyard. Tours took place every hour throughout the day and for the first year were fully booked.
- Sunday 11 September – Living history tours took place every 30 minutes giving visitors an experience into the lives of the Simpsons, the ancestors of Ulysses Grant, General and 18<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America.

Over 22 sites in Mid Ulster as listed on **Appendix 3** were open for visits during the weekend with many of them booked out. All sites were promoted via Visit Mid Ulster and Mid Ulster District Council social media channels. All the above events were free of charge.

### 3.5 The Shared Island Fund

The €5 million scheme is being funded through the ROI Government's Shared Island Fund and supports the development of new joint investment projects by cross-border Local Authority partnerships to deliver on agreed regional development goals and the Shared Island dimension of the National Development Plan. The scheme enables Local Authorities to partner on a cross-border basis to bring new projects through feasibility or pre-planning stages, with a maximum amount of €250,000 per project awarded.

On Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2022 Taoiseach Micheál Martin announced that more than €4.3m (£3.8m) in funding has been awarded to 25 projects. Members will recall that Mid Ulster District Council agreed to partner in four cross-border applications to the Shared Island Fund Local Authority Development Fund.

Details of the submissions are below:-

#### 1) Industrial Land / Enterprise Space

Collaboration to develop SME innovation clusters in Agri-food, Agri-Tech, and Advanced Manufacturing to support North/South collaborative networks

through strategic investment in well planned industrial land and enterprise space.

Five Local Authorities partnered in the bid; Monaghan County Council, Cavan County Council, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, and Mid Ulster District Council.

**Lead Council: Monaghan County Council**  
**Total Amount Awarded: €250,000**

**2) Sliabh Beagh Tourism & Outdoor Recreation Based Initiatives**

Collaboration to create a number of inter-connected tourism and outdoor recreation initiatives to build upon the existing services and facilities in the region.

Three Councils partnered in the bid; Monaghan County Council, Mid Ulster District Council and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council.

**Lead Council: Monaghan County Council**  
**Total Amount Awarded: €145,475**

**3) Tullaghoge Fort and Killahurk Ringfort**

The project will involve Feasibility Studies focusing on two associated Ringfort developments on each side of the border to transform a derelict Ringfort at Killahurk, near Carrigallen, Co. Leitrim, and for the development of a new pathway linking Tullaghoge Fort to Tullyhogue village, near Cookstown, Co Tyrone, along with the investigation of new innovative approaches to the interpretation of a recently discovered settlement there.

Partners are Leitrim County Council and Mid Ulster District Council.

**Lead Partner: Leitrim County Council**  
**Total Amount Awarded: €110,000**

**4) Ulster Canal**

The application to the Shared Island Development Funding for a Feasibility Study for the Northwards development of the Ulster Canal was not successful.

The response from the Shared Island Fund will be considered at the next meeting of the ICBAN Management Board for discussion.

**3.6 Blackwater River Update Report**

At the Development Committee in September 2022, Members requested an update report be brought before Council in October 2022 to inform Members of progress especially in relation to dredging the mouth of the river. Such technical issues will

	<p>be considered through Council’s Environment Committee. Attached on <b>Appendices 4A &amp; 4B</b>, is a copy of the Blackwater River Update Report &amp; enclosures which Council’s Head of Technical Services will present to the Environment Committee on 11 October 2022.</p>
<p><b>4.0</b></p>	<p><b>Other Considerations</b></p>
<p><b>4.1</b></p>	<p><b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b></p> <p>Financial:</p> <p><b>Gearing for Growth Seminar - 20 October 2022:</b> Provision has been made from within the overall Programme budget, which receives 80% funding from EU/ERDF and Invest NI and Council 20%.</p> <p><b>TRPSI Rural Business Development Grant Scheme 2022:</b> Grant aid of £429,902.22 will be provided by DAERA. An administration budget of 10% of the funding allocation available will be provided to Council.</p> <p><b>Tourism Development Group Minutes on 29 June 2022:</b> Within Council Budget</p> <p><b>European Heritage Open Days:</b> Provision was made in the 2022/23 Tourism Development budget of £1,000.</p> <p><b>The Shared Island Fund</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <b>Industrial Lands / Enterprise Space</b> Council’s Contribution of £10,000 has already been approved by Council.</li> <li>b) <b>Sliabh Beagh Partnership</b> Council’s Contribution of £5,000 has already been approved by Council.</li> <li>c) <b>Tullaghoge Fort and Killahurk Ringfort</b> The project is 100% funded by the Shared Island Fund.</li> </ul> <p>Human:</p> <p><b>Gearing for Growth Seminar - 20 October 2022:</b> Officers time in working with Workspace Enterprises Ltd to ensure a successful event.</p> <p><b>TRPSI Rural Business Development Grant Scheme 2022:</b> Officers time</p> <p><b>Tourism Development Group Minutes on 29 June 2022:</b> Officers time</p> <p><b>The Shared Island Fund:</b> Officers time</p> <p>Risk Management:</p> <p><b>TRPSI Rural Business Development Grant Scheme 2022:</b> Council policies and procedures were adhered to in the roll out of this plan.</p>

4.2	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	<p>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications:</p> <p><b>TRPSI Rural Business Development Grant Scheme 2022:</b> Equality and Good Relations screening has been carried out prior to commencement of the Scheme.</p> <p><b>European Heritage Open Days:</b> Council policies and procedures were adhered to in the roll out of this plan</p> <p><b>The Shared Island Fund:</b> N/A at present. Equality and Good Relations screening will be carried out prior to commencement of projects, if funding is received.</p> <p>Rural Needs Implications:</p> <p><b>TRPSI Rural Business Development Grant Scheme 2022:</b> Screening has been carried out prior to commencement of the Scheme.</p> <p><b>The Shared Island Fund:</b> N/A at present. Rural Needs screening will be carried out prior to commencement of projects.</p>
5.0	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	<p>It is recommended that Members;</p> <p><b>Gearing for Growth Seminar - 20 October 2022</b>  <b>Note</b> update on Gearing for Growth Seminar (20 October 2022)</p> <p><b>5.2 TRPSI Rural Business Development Grant Scheme 2022</b>  <b>Note</b> progress on the TRPSI Rural Business Development Grant Scheme 2022.</p> <p><b>5.3 Tourism Development Group Minutes on 29 June 2022.</b>  <b>Note</b> Tourism Development minutes dated 29 June 2022.</p> <p><b>5.4 European Heritage Open Days</b>  <b>Note</b> that 22 sites were open across Mid Ulster for visits during the weekend with many of them booked out.</p> <p><b>5.5 The Shared Island Fund</b>  <b>Note</b> that three successful partner submissions were made to the Shared Island Fund for the following initiatives:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Investment in well planned Industrial Land and Enterprise Space</li> <li>• Sliabh Beagh Tourism &amp; Outdoor Recreation Based Initiative</li> <li>• Tullaghoge Fort and Killahurk Ringfort</li> </ul> <p><b>Note</b> the Ulster Canal application was not successful at this juncture.</p>

5.6	<p><b>Blackwater River Update Report</b>  <b>Note</b> the Blackwater River Update Report will be considered by the Environment Committee at its meeting on 11 October 2022. Copy of report enclosed for Members information on Appendices 4A &amp; 4B.</p>
<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>	
	<p>Appendix 1 - List of Successful Applicants under TRPSI Rural Business Development Grants Scheme 2022</p> <p>Appendix 2A – Minutes of Tourism Development Group Meeting - 29 June 2022</p> <p>Appendix 2B - Mid Ulster Council Tourism Development Group Officers Cluster Report – 29 June 2022</p> <p>Appendix 3 – European Heritage Open Days NI – Mid Ulster</p> <p>Appendix 4A - Blackwater River Update Report to Environment Committee on 11 Oct 2022</p> <p>Appendix 4B - Blackwater River Update – Appendices Document – 11 Oct 2022</p>