



## Minutes of Meeting Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP)

**Date:** Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2024

**Time:** 10.00am

**Venue:** Online via Microsoft Teams

**Present:**

<b>Industry</b>	Damian Power (Chair) Sinead McErlain (Bloc Blinds) Anthony Quinn (Ionic IT)
<b>Education Sector</b>	Pamela Steele (Northern Regional College) Fintan McCann (CAFRE)
<b>JBOs</b>	Michael McCormick (Cookstown Jobs & Benefits Office) Lorna Currie (Cookstown Jobs & Benefits Office) Declan McErlean (Magherafelt Jobs & Benefits Office) Frances Herron (Dungannon Jobs & Benefits Office) Amanda McFarland (Omagh Jobs & Benefits Office)
<b>Public Sector</b>	Anne Richardson (DfE, Careers Service) Darran Long (Invest NI) Philip McCann (Invest NI) Nuala McVey (Northern Health & Social Care Trust) Edel Quinn (Southern Health & Social Care Trust)
<b>MEGA</b>	Maria Curran (MEGA)

**In Attendance:**

<b>MUDC Officers</b>	Marissa Canavan (Strategic Director of Organisational Development, Strategy & Performance) Paul McCreedy (Strategic Programmes Service Manager) Celene O'Neill (Community & Strategic Planning Officer) Shelly Grimes (LMP Manager) Colleen Bell (LMP Project Delivery Officer) Geraldine Daly (Multiply Officer)
<b>Elected Members</b>	Cllr Deirdre Varsani (MUDC)

<b>Apologies:</b>	Benny O'Hanlon (Todds Leap) Julie McKeown (Henry Bros) Fintan McAliskey (STEP) Martina Totten (MUDC) Paula Kelly (MUDC)
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## **1. Welcome, apologies and introductions**

D Power (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## **2. Conflict of Interest Declaration**

None declared.

## **3. Minutes of the last meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2024 were proposed by M Curran and seconded by A McFarland.

## **4. Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

## **5. Manager's Report – LMP and Multiply**

S Grimes reported that the 2022/23 and 2023/24 LMP Action Plans are complete and Evaluation reports for 2022/23 HGV Academy and Employer-led Disability Inclusion Programme have been finalised and presented to Council. These reports will be circulated to the LMP Board after the meeting.

She advised that an Evaluation report for Sectoral Academies will be updated and resubmitted by South West College (SWC). An Evaluation report on the Childminder Academy is not yet due as the final two childminders were registered in October 2024.

S Grimes continued to discuss the progress of 2024/25 Action Plan:

- Funding approved by minister June 2024
- Letter of Offer received 30 August 2024: Mid Ulster allocation was £369,028
- Delivery period for projects to 30 June 2025
- Addendum to Letter of Offer received 17 September 2024 for DE Childminding Academy Provision – Mid Ulster Allocation was £23,895
- The delivery period for the Childminding Academy, to include all relevant training and the application process, is 31 March 2025.

With regards to the Childminding Academy S Grimes highlighted the tight delivery timeframe and reasoning for a higher number of Approved Home Childcare participants.

S Grimes gave an overview of the 2024/25 LMP Action Plan:

### **SP1.1 LMP Delivery and Development**

Target: 6 x LMP Meetings – Meetings are on schedule and will meet or exceed target.

### **SP1.2 Review of 3-Year Strategic Assessment (2024-27) and Development of a 1-Year Action Plan**

1 x Action Plan drafted to address identified local needs.

S Grimes reported that the process has been changed by DfC and Action Plans now have to be submitted by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 for 2025/26 and 2026/27. S Grimes and the Chair presented to the Regional LMP on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024 to discuss the current Mid Ulster 3-year LMP strategy and it was agreed in principle to continue to deliver similar projects to that in the current Action Plan based on the strategic priorities identified.

She stated that a Planning workshop will be scheduled for late November 2024 to discuss and agree programmes for the next two years.

### **SP1.3 Construction Sector Working Group**

Invest NI have launched a new Cluster Acceleration Programme (CAP) which may benefit this group – work is ongoing.

### **SP1.4 Disability and Health Awareness Group**

Target: 4 x working group meetings. LMP staff are in the process of arranging the first meeting of the group involving stakeholders.

### **SP2.1 Employability Programme**

Targets:

- 60 x participants enrolled
- 36 x completers gaining new employment
- 36 x completers gaining new qualification

This programme was launched in late September 2024 with progress to date: 4 registrations, 1 into employment, 1 referral pending and 1 individual actively applying for vacancies.

### **SP 2.2 Childcare Training Academy**

Targets:

- 15 participants enrolled
- 9 completers to gain new employment or move into self-employment.

S Grimes currently awaiting confirmation of appointed provider by Belfast City Council who have procured same for all council areas.

A Childcare event will be held in the Royal Hotel, Cookstown on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024 for advice on how to become a registered childminder.

### **SP 2.3 HGV/Coach Driver Training Academy**

Target:

- 20 participants;
- 12 completers to gain new employment.

This Academy is to be launched next week.

### **SP 2.4 Employer Support Programme**

Target:

- 30 employers engaged.

Work ongoing on this programme and C Bell reported that feedback from 8 employers already engaged has been very positive.

### **SP 2.5 Advanced Manufacturing/Engineering Upskilling Academy**

Target:

- 10 participants enrolled
- 1 Academy developed,
- 7 participants moved into higher paid employment,
- 7 gained a qualification as a result of participation on the project.

Academy currently being developed and will run from January to June 2025.

### **SP 2.6 Clean Tech/Green Energy Academy**

Procurement underway by Mid and East Antrim Council.

### **SP 2.9 Employer Led Disability Inclusion Programme**

Target:

- 16 participants enrolled;
- 16 employers engaged;
- 9 completers secure employment.

This programme was launched in September with good progress to date.

### **SP 2.10 NEETs Workwell Programme**

Target:

- 20 participants enrolled
- 5 completers gain new employment
- 5 completers undertake further education/training.

Procurement closed on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> October and a delivery agent will be appointed following council approval.

### **SP 3.1 Job Fair/Employability Events**

S Grimes reported that there are a number of events scheduled throughout the year. A successful 'Tech for the Future' Event was held at South West College (SWC) on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024 and feedback was very positive.

A Mid Ulster Jobs & Apprenticeships Fair is scheduled for 20<sup>th</sup> November as well as a LMP Celebration event on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

S Grimes provided an update report on the Multiply Programme:-

### **Family Fun Days**

These events were held throughout July and August and proved to be very successful with 243 adults participating in a 'challenge zone'.

Over 1000 participants across 243 teams. Targets achieved.

### **Enhanced Learning for Industry**

S Grimes reported on meeting to take place today with South West College (SWC) to identify a suitable course to gain L2/L3 equivalent in Maths. This initiative has proved difficult due to participants having to pay up front for courses. The aim will be to support businesses who have staff currently on reduced hours or have redundancies.

### **Gamified Learning**

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council is procuring a supplier and it is planned to launch this initiative before Christmas.

### **Financial Planning for Retirement Workshops**

S Grimes reported that 4 out of 5 drop in days have been completed with females representing a significant attendance in comparison to their male counterparts.

### **Financial Wellbeing Workshops for Speakers of other languages**

Quotation exercise to close on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

### **Financial Wellbeing 1 to 1 Bootcamps**

Quotation exercise to close on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

### **Financial Wellbeing Small Group workshops**

Quotation exercise to close on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

### **Health & Nutrition 1 to 1 Bootcamps**

To be launched in January 2025.

### **Health & Nutrition Small Group workshops**

Healthy Kidz/Lifestyle have been appointed to deliver this initiative. First group will commence in Cookstown Leisure Centre on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

### **Money Matters Workshops**

Launched in Pomeroy Forest Building on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024: Nutritional meals on a budget. During November, three workshops will be held on Wills and Power of Attorney Service.

S Grimes stated the Multiply initiatives are progressing well and all providers have been approached by DfE to explore additional funding options. Therefore, the LMP team is currently costing a project highlighted by Magherafelt Jobs & Benefits Office to work in partnership with Magherafelt school students to provide basic IT support to job claimants - this has already been successfully piloted in Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council.

She reported that staff are also looking at providing 3-5 webinars on topics within the Money Matters workshops which will be beneficial in terms of their longevity and accessibility.

D Power enquired if there was an easier method of engaging employers through the Employer Toolkit, for example, would a small group webinar be of benefit with employers on the MEGA network. C Bell stated she would be happy to contribute to a sectoral webinar which could be of benefit to smaller employers.

A Quinn stated that the Employer Toolkit is a great resource but a lot of employers don't know it is available and therefore a webinar would be a great idea.

S Grimes and C Bell to consider ways of engaging with businesses and promoting the Employer toolkit.

## **6. Jobs and Benefits Office Employer Services Branch – Presentation**

S Grimes advised that unfortunately there was no officer available from the Jobs & Benefits Offices to present today but there is a short video which would be circulated to all members after the meeting. This video aims to show how DfC Employer Services Branch can be of benefit to everyone.

## 7. Sub Regional Economic Plan

P McCreedy reported on the 'Sub Regional Economic Plan' which was published earlier this month by the Economy Minister. This document sets out a new strategic approach to economic policy in Northern Ireland building a more regionally balanced, sustainable, productive, and prosperous Northern Ireland economy.

He advised that among the proposals include the formation of 'Local Economic Partnerships' (LEPs) to be led and established by local councils. The focus of the LEPS will be productivity improvements and any identified local economic projects or interventions will need to align to DfE and PfG priorities. The funding to the local economic partnerships will be determined by need, however the funding allocation model has not been agreed by the Department. It is anticipated that similar to DfC funding, that the Council will be responsible for providing the administrative and financial management function and governance to the LEP. It is expected DfE and Invest NI will provide support in research/analysis and support LEPS to identify suitable projects.

P McCreedy stated that DfE are currently working out the details on how LEP will function and operate and there has been some recent engagement with local councils. The Department will in due course produce guidance for Councils on the establishment, composition and governance of LEPs. He reported that the Council's Chief Executive and himself had met with officials from DfE and Invest NI to discuss setting up a LEP. There is an agreed direction of travel that rather than set up a new standalone partnership, that we utilise an existing structure, such as the LMP, where many key stakeholders including industry and colleges are already in situ. P McCreedy reported that other relevant key agencies e.g. DfE would be invited to join the LEP as required but at this juncture council officials believe there is merit in basing the LEP within the LMP structure and DfE and Invest NI are supportive. He requested the Board's approval to participate in the SREP using the structure of the LMP, which would be subject to approval by Council.

In response to query, P McCreedy stated that industry would be included within the LEP.

D Power said his recommendation would be to engage and asked members to raise their hand if they were in favour of Mid Ulster LMP engaging with the LEP.

20 hands raised in favour.

D Power asked if there were any objections. None raised.

S Grimes confirmed that a copy of the Sub Regional Economic Plan would be circulated to board members following the meeting.

P McCreedy agreed to keep the board updated on progress.

#### **8. Any other business**

There was no other business.

#### **9. Date of next meeting**

S Grimes advised that a LMP Planning workshop will take place late November 2024 and details and venue would be confirmed shortly.

D Power stated that the next board meeting is scheduled for Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2024 at 10am via Microsoft Teams to approve Action Plans developed at the workshop.

He thanked everyone for their time.

The meeting ended at 10.48am.



**MID ULSTER  
LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP  
Annual Report 2023-24**



Contents Page	
Chairperson Foreword	Page 3
Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership	Page 4
Membership	Page 5
Action Plan Report and Overview of projects/successes	Page 6
Financial Statement	Page 19

## LMP Chairperson Foreword



The Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) was formed in October 2021. This 'local' partnership is charged with improving Mid Ulster's employability outcomes and labour market conditions by working with a wide range of partners, being flexible to meet local needs and helping to connect employers with employees.

In the 2023-24 year we saw the successful implementation of several key initiatives identified in our Action plan. These include a dedicated programme for Women Returners, Sector Based Academies in Construction, Tourism and Hospitality and

Classroom Assistant/Health and Social Care. We also saw the continuation of the highly popular HGV Academy and Employer Led Disability Programme. In total we have seen 81 participants gaining employment to date as a result of these employability programmes. Through the assistance of the various jobs fairs and other employability events organised by Mid Ulster LMP throughout the year, we envisage that over 100 local residents will have gained employment while further individuals will be inspired and supported to continue their journey back into the labour market; either through a return to education, undertaking voluntary work or through referrals to other support programmes such as UK Shared Prosperity Fund projects.

This year, we also launched the Employer Support Toolkit and have engaged with over 50 local businesses to assist with employability issues, aiding and educating employers on how to go about offering internships and work experience; develop mentorship roles for those close to or in early retirement; develop appropriate HR policies to assist with recruitment and retention including flexible working and terms and conditions; and provide best practice to employee wellbeing.

We continue to work to meet the needs of our stakeholders in Mid Ulster and while this year has been challenging with increased budget constraints on many public services, we are delighted to have secured continued funding from the Department for Communities (DfC), who have supported this initiative from the beginning.

We look forward to building upon our success in 2024-2025.

**Damian Power**  
LMP Chairperson

## MID ULSTER LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP (LMP)

Mid Ulster District Council (MUDC) established the Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) in October 2021, as part of the Department for Communities' (DfC) Employability NI programme.

Mid Ulster LMP developed an Action Plan for its inaugural year in 2022-23, with administration and operational costs supported by DfC and complementary funding provided by the Department for the Economy (DfE). Following a very successful first year, an Action Plan for 2023-24, fully funded by DfC, was rolled out and successfully delivered. This year, as a result of extensive research and stakeholder consultation, an ambitious 3-Year Strategy with a 1 Year Action Plan for 2024-25 was developed and approved. This Action Plan will enable Mid Ulster LMP to move forward into 2024-25 with a continued commitment towards reducing the number of job claimants through targeted interventions, supporting employers to improve local labour market conditions and upskilling/reskilling Mid Ulster residents so that they can enjoy more meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities.

To measure its impact and improve accountability, the Mid Ulster LMP Action Plan for 2023/24 has been defined using an Outcomes Based Approach (OBA) to deliver against its strategic goals:

**Strategic Priority 1** – To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership for the area.

**Strategic Priority 2** – To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally.

**Strategic Priority 3** – To promote and support delivery of existing employability or skills provision available either regionally or locally.

OBA is a valuable way of structuring planning to improve outcomes for whole populations and for improving services.

Mid Ulster LMP aims to better understand local market needs; improve employability outcomes; reduce economic inactivity; improve local labour market conditions; and design and deliver targeted interventions. The LMP's 2023-24 Action Plan targeted Mid Ulster District Council residents who are:

- of working age;
- unemployed/long term unemployed, under-employed or at risk of redundancy and reside in Mid Ulster; or
- economically inactive for any reason (including due to long term ill-health or disability, caring commitments, early retired, or any other reason).

Each quarter the LMP submit Report Cards to DfC to record performance and accountability for the expenditure to ensure impact is measured and that the right projects are being delivered to meet identified needs.

#### Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership Membership

Stakeholder Group	Organisation
Local Council	Mid Ulster District Council
Department for Communities	Jobs & Benefits Office Magherafelt Jobs & Benefits Office Cookstown Jobs & Benefits Office Dungannon
Public Sector	Invest NI Department for the Economy Southern Health & Social Care Trust Northern Health & Social Care Trust Mid Ulster Enterprise Partnership
Education sector	South West College Northern Regional College College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise Magherafelt Area Learning Community Dungannon & Cookstown Area Learning Community
Community/Voluntary sector	Mid Ulster Strategic Community Forum
Industry	Bloc Blinds ABP Linden Henry Brothers Mid Ulster Tourism Development Group Ionic IT Newell Stores Todds Leap Emerson MEGA
Elected Members	Mid Ulster District Council
Trade Union	NIPSA

#### Action Plan Report

This Annual Report covers the funding period 1st April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, although delivery of some projects continued into 2024/25 due to a delay in receiving a Letter of Offer from the Department for Communities. All programmes have now been completed with six month light touch mentoring underway to ensure sustainable employment outcomes are maximised.

During the reporting period, Mid Ulster LMP implemented its 2023-24 Action Plan which includes the following three strategic priorities.

#### Strategic Priority 1: To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership

Mid Ulster District Council (MUDC) established the Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) in October 2021, as part of the Department for Communities' (DfC) Employability NI programme. Building on the success of the Mid Ulster Skills Forum, MUDC has designed the local LMP as an industry-led initiative which is inclusive of all relevant government, education, and labour market stakeholders. Mid Ulster LMP aims to help improve employability outcomes and labour market conditions locally by working through coordinated, collaborative, multi-agency partnerships, achieving regional objectives whilst being flexible to meet the needs presented by localised conditions and helping to connect employers with employees.

The LMP Secretariat manage LMP activity on a day-to-day basis working directly with delivery agents, creating partnerships where possible to assist delivery and ensuring the LMP Board are actively involved in decision making. A fully functioning LMP secretariat ensures that all service areas meet the standards required in a progressive and effective manner, contributing to the inclusive growth and economic recovery of Mid Ulster. In the absence of funding, Board members were kept updated via email and the first Board meetings then took place in September 2023, with regular meetings held thereafter as well as workshops to develop a 3 Year Strategy and Action Plan for 2024-25.

#### Key Outcomes – SP 1

##### SP1.1: LMP Delivery

What did we do?	How well did we do it?
Due to delays in funding, board meetings were placed on hold until receipt of Letter of Offer in Quarter 2 2023. Four meetings were held between September 2023 and April 2024.	LMP Board meetings had a 55% attendance rate at meetings (122/216)  During the hold period, the Board was regularly updated via email and one to one calls took place with the Chair and Vice Chair every few weeks.
Is anyone better off?	
An annual review of the LMP was carried out via a survey of board members to determine whether they thought that the LMP is making a positive difference.	

19 responses were received and of those who responded, 18 (95%) felt that the impact of LMP Programmes was either positive or very positive. Mid Ulster LMP continue to deliver a sustained PR campaign to inform residents and employers across the district of supports available within the labour market. A web presence has now been established with newly updated and refreshed webpages on MUDC's website, Facebook social media account to better reach residents and a LinkedIn account to target employers as well as a YouTube playlist to house all videos, webinars and good news stories. This will allow Mid Ulster LMP to be the first port of call for anyone requiring information on local and regional programmes in relation to skills and employability. Knowledge and awareness of Mid Ulster LMP is growing as a result of such promotional activities.

#### SP1.2: Development of a 3-Year Strategic Assessment and 1-Year Action Plan

What did we do?	How well did we do it?
<p>An extensive scoping study and consultation exercise took place in Q3 resulting in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 x Action Plan drafted to address identified local needs and approved by Regional LMP</li> <li>1 x Three Year Strategic Assessment developed on time to inform LMP Action Plan 2024/25</li> </ul>	<p>An annual review of the LMP was carried out via a survey of board members to determine whether they felt that their views were taken into account.</p> <p>19 responses were received and of those who responded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>95% of LMP Members felt that their views have been taken into account with regard to the Action Plan</li> <li>95% of LMP Members felt that their views have been taken into account with regard to the Strategic Assessment</li> </ul>
<p><b>Is anyone better off?</b></p> <p>79% of LMP members reported increased awareness of local employability and labour market issues.</p> <p>A Strategic Assessment was carried out using a three-fold approach – desktop research of all relevant labour and skills data available for the district, a consultation process with all board members and other key stakeholders, and an employer survey. This provided an extensive range of data which was presented to the board at a Planning workshop. As a result of increased knowledge on the relevant local issues, a robust three year Strategy has been developed by the LMP Board to steer LMP Programmes from 2024 to 2027. Subsequently, a 2024-25 Action Plan for Mid Ulster LMP was agreed which addresses the key issues identified and maximises impact on the local labour market issues. A copy of the Action Plan is available on the LMP web pages or on request through the LMP mailbox.</p>	

#### Strategic Priority 2: To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally

Strategic Priority 2 forms the basis of programmes with direct interventions to improve the local labour market focusing on three key areas:

- Economically Inactive
- Skilled Labour Supply
- Disability

##### SP2.1: Sector Based Academies

Four academies were developed to meet shortages in labour supply across key sectors – Tourism and Hospitality, Construction, HGV and Coach, and Health and Social Care/Classroom Assistants. Following a procurement exercise People 1<sup>st</sup> and Network Personnel were appointed to deliver these programmes on behalf of Mid Ulster LMP.

Sector focused employability academies target a swift reduction in the number of job claimants and improve economic activity rates through to reduce unemployment and encourage the unemployed and economically inactive into the workplace. Academies aim to ensure all participants achieve training and an accredited qualification in the relevant sector as well as providing a dedicated mentor who will support the participant back to work through employability skills support and barrier removal. Light touch mentoring goes on for a period of six months post employment so that participants can feel supported as they transition back into work.

What did we do?	How well did we do it?
<p>101 Participants have been enrolled across all academies against a target of 92.</p> <p>Four academies have been delivered as planned.</p>	<p>82% (83 Participants) completed the academies and achieved either an accredited qualification or employment as a result against a target of 75%.</p>
<p><b>Is anyone better off?</b></p> <p>79 participants (95% of completers) gained qualifications as a result of the academies against a target of 75%.</p> <p>62 participants (75% of completers) have gained employment in line with targets. Evaluations will take place in Q4 2024/25 to determine levels of sustained employment.</p>	



#### SP2.2: Women Returners Programme

This pilot initiative aimed to improve Mid Ulster's position as a region with one of the largest gender employment gaps in NI by investing in an employer-led employability programme to support women into employment across the MUDC area. As well as assisting residents back into employment, the programme engaged local employers on a 1-1 basis in a targeted Employer led and focused programme to increase awareness of benefits of flexible working policies most beneficial to Women Returners, providing training and advice where appropriate.

What did we do?	How well did we do it?
21 Participants were enrolled within the Women Returners Programme. 30 employers engaged in the programme.	16 participants completed the academy and all 30 employers received support and advice on how to implement flexible work policies.
Is anyone better off?	
Barriers for this cohort are high due to caring responsibilities, mental health issues and other concerns. Despite this, targets were achieved with 9 achieving employment, 1 returning to full time education and 1 undertaking a placement to start their pathway back towards the labour market.	



### SP2.3: Employer Support Programme

Research and consultation with local employers highlighted that many businesses struggle with simple HR policies, as well as access to information to help consolidate and grow their businesses. As a result, Mid Ulster LMP undertook the development of a toolkit which provides step by step guides across a range of key topics and subject areas. These include offering internships and work experience and developing mentorship roles for those close to or in early retirement; developing appropriate HR policies to assist with recruitment and retention including flexible working and terms and conditions; provide best practice to employee wellbeing, offering Apprenticeships and HLAs and general best practice guidance.

The toolkit was developed with the input of industry as well as our key stakeholders and departments in the public sector and provides a wide-ranging support to micro, SME and large businesses.

An 'Employer of Choice' event was held in June 2024 to launch the toolkit and further support local industry with best practice examples, introductions to free initiatives delivered by the public sector and a short training session on Leadership or Change Management.

Employers who sign up to receive the toolkit will be given one to one signposting sessions with the Project Delivery Officer highlighting the most beneficial parts to them and how they can maximise its use to help sustain and grow their business.

An explainer video to highlight the key functions of the toolkit can be viewed [here](#).

What did we do?	How well did we do it?
The Employer Toolkit was developed during Q4 2024 and formally launched in June 2024.	10 local employers from across industry sectors and of various sizes were consulted in regards to the design and functionality of the Toolkit.

pg. 11

### Is anyone better off?

The Toolkit aims to help employers feel more confident that their business will be more successful and to assist those who would like to implement a work experience programme, mentorship programme or graduate programme, or hire an apprentice both at Level 2/Level 3 or at HLA level. By introducing initiatives such as these, Mid Ulster businesses can retain the youth talent particularly at Level 6 and above within their local area strengthening the skills base which provides opportunities to sustain and grow business across the district.

Here are some testimonies from employers who engaged within the programme:

- "Toolkit is perfect for employers - bitesize info, easy to digest and all in one place. In process of attaining Responsible Business accreditation and also very interested in workplace culture and wellbeing."
- "will be a useful resource for their business as they are going through a transition phase. Need help with flexible working, HR policies and placements."
- "Great resource - valuable particularly as it will be updated to stay current."

### SP2.4: Employer-led Disability Inclusion programme

Research in 2022-23 highlighted that the Mid Ulster Council region, at just 24%, continued to have the lowest employment rate for disabled people in Northern Ireland.

Following the success of the pilot Employer Led Disability Inclusion Programme in 2022-23, Mid Ulster LMP has once again prioritised disability inclusion, recognising that need for this to be included as a core programme going forward. The Employer Led Disability Inclusion Programme aims to improve employers understanding of disability employment needs, to raise awareness of the benefits of tapping into an under-utilised and capable labour pool, and to support local companies through an employability programme that will result in a number of job opportunities being created that are suited to employees with a long term disability or health condition. Network Personnel were appointed to deliver the Disability Inclusion Programme for 2023-24. A target of achieving 10 participants into employment and engaging over 20 employers has been exceeded and a testimonial from one of the participants is included below.

What did we do?	How well did we do it?
22 Participants and 32 Employers have completed the Employer Led Disability Inclusion Programme	32 employers were actively supported by Network Personnel to maximise employment outcomes. Training was provided as well as support for the recruitment process. Some employers were in a position to progress with employment opportunities whilst others took part to gain knowledge, advice and support for future recruitment.

pg. 12

	22 participants actively engaged with Network Personnel who provided support to assist in their journey back to the labour market with 21 completing the programme.
Is anyone better off?	
By the close of the programme in June 2024, 11 participants had gained employment as a result of the programme and one further participant was undertaking work experience. Since then, this individual has also secured long term employment with the support received through the project invaluable in helping him secure his new role. Participants and employers continue to receive support to ensure employability outcomes are sustained.	



*"I would recommend this programme to anyone who needs help in finding a job. The support and advice I received was invaluable and was key to helping me have the confidence to get myself back out and into employment. I knew I was good at cleaning so that's where I focussed my job search efforts. I do believe that being OCD in my approach to cleaning helps manage my anxiety as I'm constantly on the move and getting things done. I'm so pleased that things are working out for me and am excited to have starting my additional role in St. Mary's in September."*

Sarah McErlean



Employer Disability Training, February 2024

**Strategic Priority 3: To promote and support delivery of existing employability or skills provision available either regionally or locally**

It is important that Mid Ulster LMP supports delivery of Employability NI by promotion and referral to existing regional initiatives as well as upcoming Mid Ulster LMP programmes to maximise labour outcomes for the district. To this end, work has been on-going to build partnerships with all stakeholders to maximise employment outcomes to all residents and businesses.

To achieve this, Mid Ulster LMP rolled out a series of targeted events supporting residents and businesses throughout the district.

Tech for the Future	4 Oct 2023	Partnership with South West College, MEGA, the Construction Industry and Bring It On to increase awareness of the IT roles required in Mid Ulster and to provide an event for post primary students and their parents to understand the various pathways available to study this key subject.
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Mini Jobs Fairs	28 April 2023 31 May 2023 6 Sept 2023 29 Sept 2023 13 Oct 2023	A range of localised jobs fairs were delivered in partnership with the Jobs and Benefits Offices in Magherafelt, Cookstown and Dungannon.
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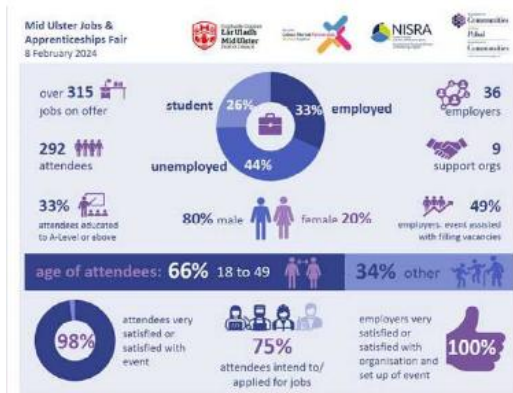


Employment Matters Workshop	14 Nov 2023	Employer Training on Recruitment and Retention practices.
LMP Celebration Event	15 Nov 2023	Recognising the achievements of participants and employers who benefitted from the 2022-23 Action Plan projects.



Disability Inclusion Event	1 Dec 2023	Providing employer training for Disability Awareness alongside access to support organisations for those with a disability who wanted to return to the labour market.
Jobs and Apprenticeships Fair	8 Feb 2024	Large Jobs and Apprenticeships Fair, held in the Burnavon Cookstown, promoting employment opportunities across the whole district.





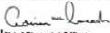
Webinar – Flexible Working	15 Feb 2024	Providing best practice ideas and expert advice on how to implement flexible work policies.
Webinar – Menopause in the Workplace	26 Mar 2024	Providing best practice ideas and expert advice on how to address issues encountered by women in the workplace as a result of Menopause.
Employer of Choice	13 Jun 2024	Panel discussions providing best practice on becoming an employer of choice, and introducing key free supports to employers followed by a short training session on Leadership or Managing Change Support organisations provided one to one advice after the event.



Key Outcomes across all events	
Number of residents at events	1185
Satisfaction levels across all events (positive or very positive)	97%
Number of employers receiving training and support	139
Number of employers and support organisations engaged for jobs fairs	108

## Financial Statement

An Audit of Mid Ulster LMP was completed in May 2024. The report concluded that there is a satisfactory system of governance, risk management and control.

Statement of Income & Expenditure				
Mid Ulster District Council Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership Statement of Income & Expenditure Year to 31 March 2024				
	Total Funding	Expenditure Charged	Expenditure Accrued	Total Expenditure
	£	£	£	£
<b>Funding</b>				
Funding from DfC (Administration)	111,434.10	111,434.10	0.00	111,434.10
Funding from DfC (Operational)	275,076.61	112,449.08	162,627.53	275,076.61
Funding from DfE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Contribution from Council	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Contributions from (Other Please state)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Contributions from (Other Please state)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	<b>386,510.71</b>	<b>223,883.18</b>	<b>162,627.53</b>	<b>386,510.71</b>
<b>Payments</b>				
Salaries	107,734.52	107,734.52	0.00	107,734.52
Self Costs	289.42	289.42	0.00	289.42
Telephones	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Printing and Stationery	1,410.16	1,410.16	0.00	1,410.16
Audit Fees	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00
Photocopying	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total DfC Administration</b>	<b>111,434.10</b>	<b>111,434.10</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>111,434.10</b>
Strategic Priority 1 (Operational)	23,143.80	22,544.80	599.00	23,143.80
Strategic Priority 2 (Operational)	235,054.11	77,760.58	157,293.53	235,054.11
Strategic Priority 3 (Operational)	16,878.70	12,143.70	4,735.00	16,878.70
<b>Total DfC Operational</b>	<b>275,076.61</b>	<b>112,449.08</b>	<b>162,627.53</b>	<b>275,076.61</b>
Payments - DfE (Admin)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Payments - Council Contribution (Admin)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Payments - xx	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Payments - (Other Please state) (Admin)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total Other (Admin)</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Payments - DfE (Operational)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Payments - Council Contribution (Operational)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Payments - xx (Operational)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Payments - (Other Please state) (Operational)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total Other (Operational)</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
	<b>386,510.71</b>	<b>223,883.18</b>	<b>162,627.53</b>	<b>386,510.71</b>
Certificate of Chief Financial Officer				
Subject to the central charges shown above properly reflecting actual costs incurred by the Council on behalf of the Labour Market Partnership. I am satisfied that the expenditure shown has been wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred by the Council on the Labour Market Partnership and that the grant receivable is in accordance with the regulations and conditions applicable.				
				
Chief Financial Officer			18.4.2024	Date

**APPENDIX 3****MID ULSTER DISTRICT COUNCIL**

<b>Meeting of:</b>	A5 N2 Cross Border Committee
<b>Date and Time:</b>	Tuesday 30 <sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 16:30
<b>Location:</b>	via MS Teams
<b>Chair:</b>	Councillor Gael Gildernew
<b>Councillors Present:</b>	<b>Derry City and Strabane District Council</b> Brian Harte, Ruairi McHugh, Paul Gallagher
	<b>Donegal County Council</b> Johnny McGuinness, Paul Canning
	<b>Fermanagh and Omagh District Council</b> Bernard McGrath, Paul Robinson, Glenn Campbell, Cllr Allan Rainey MBE
	<b>Mid Ulster District Council</b> Mark Robinson, Gael Gildernew, Kevin McElvogue, Eugene McConnell
<b>In Attendance:</b>	<b>Monaghan County Council</b> Brian McKenna, Paudge Connolly
	<b>Donegal County Council</b> Bryan Cannon (A/Director of Service, Roads and Transportation)
	<b>Mid Ulster District Council</b> Paul McCreedy (Strategic Programmes Service Manager)
	Shirley McIntyre (Business & Investment Officer) Emma Hughes (Meeting Secretariat)
<b>Apologies:</b>	<b>Monaghan County Council</b> Roisin Moore (N2 Project Liaison Officer)
	<b>Derry City and Strabane District Council</b> Cllr Jason Barr
	<b>Donegal County Council</b> Cllr Gary Doherty
	<b>Fermanagh and Omagh District Council</b> John News (Director of Environment and Place)
	<b>Monaghan County Council</b> Cllr David Maxwell, Cllr Seamus Coyle, Robert Burns (Chief Executive) Gareth McMahon (A/Director of Services, Roads and Transportation)

No	Item	Action By:
1.	<b>Welcome and apologies</b>	
	Cllr G Gildernew welcomed everyone to the meeting.	Note
2.	<b>Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024</b>	
	<b>AGREED:</b> Proposed by Cllr B McKenna Seconded by Cllr B Harte The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup> March 2024 were a	Note

	true and accurate record of proceedings.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>	
	There were no matters arising.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Terms of Reference Discussion</b>	
4.1	Cllr G Gildernew sought approval from Members with regards to reverting the Committee name to the original name. Following a discussion, Members agreed to revert the Committee name back to A5 N2 Cross Border Committee.	Note
4.2	<p>Cllr G Gildernew advised Members that following the last meeting, the Terms of Reference had been reviewed and some minor changes made. The revised Terms of Reference were presented to Members highlighting changes.</p> <p>Cllr G Gildernew asked Members for comments. Cllr M Robinson asked about keeping landowners updated. Cllr G Gildernew advised that she ask DfI for updates periodically that can then be shared with landowners.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Proposed by Cllr B Harte Seconded by Cllr P Canning</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That the name change, and revised Terms of Reference are adopted by this Committee.</p>	MUDC
<b>5.</b>	<b>Meeting with Minister Ryan, Minister for Transport</b>	
5.1	<p>Cllr G Gildernew informed Members that since the last meeting, a meeting with Minister Eamon Ryan had been secured for Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024 in Leinster House. She recommended that each Council put forward a delegate to attend the meeting. Cllr G Gildernew suggested that Roisin Moore, N2 Project Liaison Officer, Monaghan County Council also attend the meeting.</p> <p>Cllr E McConnell asked if the Chair is included as part of the proposed number of delegates allowed to attend the meeting with Minister Ryan. Cllr G Gildernew stated that she will seek confirmation for the number of delegates permitted to meet Minister Ryan.</p> <p>Cllr G Gildernew proposed that a meeting is arranged for the week commencing 6<sup>th</sup> May 2024 to confirm the nominated delegates.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>MUDC</p>
5.2	Cllr P Canning asked Cllr G Gildernew if there would be a briefing paper to present to Minister Ryan. Cllr G Gildernew advised that a briefing paper would be prepared for the meeting and asked Members to consider what to include in the paper and report back at the next meeting.	All
<b>6.</b>	<b>AOB</b>	
	Cllr G Gildernew has spoken to and received an update from the	Note

	campaign group Enough is Enough	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Date of next meeting</b>	
	The next meeting of the A5 N2 Cross Border Committee will be arranged for the week commencing 6 <sup>th</sup> May 2024. Each Council to nominate delegate for the Ministerial meeting.	All
	The meeting concluded at 17.08	

## APPENDIX 4



## **Introduction**

To mark Global Entrepreneurship Week 2024, Mid Ulster District Council's sixth Enterprise Week took place from Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November to Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2024.

Based on feedback from last year Mid Ulster District Council made the decision to retain a blend of in person and online webinar formats for the 14 events of the week: an increase from the 11 events of 2023. 7 webinars and 7 in person events took place with almost 1300 attendees in total. The week was launched on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November with 'The Road Ahead: Economic Insights and Trends for 2025'; a topical panel discussion hosted by The Positive Economist, Susan Hayes Culleton with a panel of 4 experts representing Mid Ulster business sectors. This year's theme and strapline was 'Create, Connect, Inspire'.

## **Synopsis and Programme of Events**

14 events in total were offered as part of Mid Ulster Enterprise Week 2024 under the theme of 'Create, Connect, Inspire'.

Topics were carefully considered based on research and feedback from the local business community in advance of selection of topics and speakers. The high numbers of attendees and the overall feedback clearly indicates the value of the events that Mid Ulster District offered to the business community this year.

Topics included local economic insights and trends, scaling businesses, paid social media advertising, use of TikTok and neurodiversity in the workplace to name a few.

The topics were selected strategically to ensure that subjects were relevant to all business sectors.

A specific event for hospitality and tourism (Tourism Business Engagement) was included to support this local industry, in addition to Flourish: Wealth and Wellness for Women Entrepreneurs, an event to support development of women in local business.

This year a new webinar was include specifically for all post primary schools across Mid Ulster; From Passion to Proft: Business Tips and Ideas for Young Entrepreneurs attracted an audience of 605

## Marketing and Promotion

Marketing and promotion were carried out across a range of platforms using various mediums as detailed below. A primary objective of all the PR and marketing efforts was to use all marketing channels to direct people back to council website for event information and booking. The statistics below of where attendees heard about events indicates that this was again a successful strategy. Taking on board the learnings and evidence from the evaluation of 2023 it was decided not to use paid newspaper or radio adverts as part of the marketing efforts.

2024 Marketing actions included:

- News release and launch photo with MUDC Chair.
- Social media – channels (LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook) were continuously used in the run up to MUEW24 both on MUDC, DEC platforms and also those of speakers, networks and other stakeholders such as Local Enterprise Agencies, local businesses and other support organisations.
- Digital programme – featured engaging content including speaker videos, explainer video etc.
- MUDC website – marketing and promotion including social media was targeted to encourage as many people as possible back to MUDC website to click on booking links
- Explainer and Highlights videos produced and promoted.
- Speaker videos and bios – shared across social media and web platforms including the digital brochure.
- Testimonial videos – attendees from MUEW24 produced testimonial videos to support promotion of this year's events including Carma Coffee, The Glenavon House Hotel, Mid Ulster Speech Therapy and Property People.
- Newsletters/online – information was disseminated to organisations to support awareness raising and promotion. This included 32 LEAs, Invest NI, nibusinessinfo, COSTA, CWSAN, NI Chamber of Commerce, Dungannon and South Tyrone Chamber, NI Councils, Go Succeed (Belfast City Council), NIRWN, Evolve Women, Women in Business, InterTradelreland, Shareit-Biz, FE Colleges, Armaghi and Queens University.
- Eventbrite – event descriptions and visuals were created and booking links set up for each event to facilitate promotion and online booking.
- Direct marketing – face to face and email marketing campaigns were successfully used to engage with businesses across the Mid Ulster district to ensure a broad range of business sectors attended events.
- Mid Ulster District Council E-Zine

**Statistics gathered from social media activities are as follows:**

**Council's Mailchimp:**

- No. of emails send out- 1010
- Emailed opened- 473
- Links clicked- 82

Webinar recordings were uploaded to MUDC YouTube channel.

By 30<sup>th</sup> November 5 videos had a total of \_49\_\_views.

**Social Media Engagement (From 18 October – 22 November)**

- X is no longer primary channel for the Council as engagement on it is minimal. This year we primarily focused on Facebook and LinkedIn for Enterprise Week promotion while also profiling to a lesser extent on X and Instagram.
- **X** – 4 posts, 978 impressions and 47 engagements.
- **MUDC Facebook** – 15 posts (excluding those shared from DEC) 59,414, people reached, 348 interactions, 19,932 video views including 3 boosted posts totalling £150.
- **MUDC Instagram** – 2 posts, 2,252 views, and 11 interactions.
- **MUDC LinkedIn** – 15 posts, 21,127 people reached, 1,682 people engaged and 1,750 video views and 1,733 link clicks.
- **MUDC website analytics** – 1,082 page views and 670 users (the new term for unique page views).

When considering link clicks, it needs to be taken into that account that due to privacy settings on Google Analytics some tracking information isn't shown. Therefore, the link clicks from social media channels may be more reliable and authentic than those taken from Google Analytics.

## Business Feedback

Google Forms was effectively used to capture attendee feedback post webinars. Hard copy evaluation forms were collected at the two mains in person events that week and responses transferred digitally to allow for easier collation and analysis. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive from respondents. A full breakdown on feedback has been included separately to this report but a headline breakdown is provided here:

**98%** of respondents stated they were either **very satisfied or satisfied** with both the speakers and the content of the events.

How they heard about Mid Ulster Enterprise Week 2024:

- Social Media – 36.8%
- Email – 24.6%
- Mid Ulster District Council website – 8.8%
- Newsletter – 5.3%
- Word of Mouth – 14.9%
- Other – 9.6%

Some of the positive comments included:

**Beyond The Boost** – “Fantastic Webinar with a very informative host, Meghan really knew her stuff and it’s great to see a more advanced webinar for digital marketing. I would love to see more advanced marketing webinars or in person events like this. I really got a lot from it as a photographer, and it will help my small business a lot!”

**Scaling Up**- “The information about mind set and attitude was very helpful and thought provoking. I enjoyed the candid straightforward approach from the speakers.”

**TikTok Tactics** – “Great webinar about TikTok and the TikTok shop, would love another in depth session with Rhea to get more out of it! It is a much bigger subject than I thought it would be! Lots to learn and excited for that journey. Thanks to Mid Ulster Council and all involved in putting on this fantastic webinar.”

**The Road Ahead** – “Great event. Very informative. Plenty of relevant information.”

**Flourish** – “Lynette was amazing as a host. So natural and welcoming. Panel was brilliant, so varied with lots of tips and key takeaways. So glad I came!”

**From Passion to Profit (post primary schools webinar)** – “Thank you for the incredibly insightful webinar on 'From Passion to Profit.' Julie and Leon were knowledgeable and engaging, providing practical tips and real-world examples that were relatable. Leon is a wonderful role model and excellent entrepreneur, making the session even more inspiring. Overall, it was a well-organised and highly informative session for inspiring Year 8’s looking

to deepen their understanding of what skills and qualities it takes to be a successful entrepreneur in today's world.”

**Tourism Business Engagement workshop** - team included comments:

The team noted the following feedback from participants:

- All participants preferred the workshop to be in-person as opposed to hybrid or online
- Would like greater use of case studies to be able to apply these to their business
- Now recognise the importance of having a business plan and how this feeds into your businesses overall PR and marketing plan
- Enjoyed that the workshop was informal, relaxed and interactive. Lots of opportunity for Q&A's.
- Lots of great information that can be practically applied
- Facilitator was excellent, presenting great content, ideas and solutions

Additional external events were included as part of the MUEW line up including Dungannon and South Tyrone Chamber of Commerce and Industry's **Meet the Experts** and MEGA's **Annual Director's Breakfast**.

**Meet the Experts** - The Chamber noted that this was once again a valuable event for local businesses with all sectors represented. Attendees noted that they found it extremely useful to have such a wealth of business information and support readily available in the one location and referred to the impact it had on extending business networks and in many cases making actual sales on the day itself.

**Annual Director's Breakfast** – MEGA noted that 90% of attendees were senior leaders within their companies. The event featured insightful presentations and discussions from esteemed speakers and a dynamic fireside chat that underscored the benefits of the MEGA network from an industry perspective.

# MID ULSTER ENTERPRISE WEEK

# 2024

Event	Speakers	Format	Attendance
The Road Ahead – Economic Insights and Trends for 2025	Hosted by The Positive Economist, Susan Hayes Culleton. Panellists: Catherin Martin (CavanaghKelly), Dr Justin Quinn (University of Ulster) Shannon McCaul (FRC Recruitment), Stepehn McCammon (Menarys)	In Person	41
LMP Neurodiversity in the Workplace	Hosted by NOW Group	Webinar	46
Beyond the Boost – Mastering Paid Social Media Advertising	Hosted by Meghan Semple, Digital 24	Webinar	87
From Passion to Profit: Business Tips and Ideas for Young Entrepreneurs	Faciliated and hosted by Julie Hanna, BEAM Creative NEtowrk with guest speaker Leon Hughes, Artfunkle	Webinar	605
Meet the Experts	A Dungannon Chamber event. Over 30 experts included Invest NI, Ulster Bank and many local business experts.	In Person	78
Tourism Business Engagement Workshop	Rachael Harriott	In Person	11
MEGA Annual Directors' Breakfast	Invite Only	In Person	118
IntertradeIreland Trade Export Clinic	IntertradeIreland	In Person	14
Scaling Up: Building a Mindset for Business Growth	Hosted by Canice Nicholas and Scott Millar, ActionCOACH NI with guest speaker Benny O'Hanlon, Todd's Leap	Webinar	43
TikTok Tactics	Hosted by Rhea Daly with guest Patricia McMahon , Saltmarine	Webinar	97
LMP Job and Apprentice Fair	LMP	In Person	169
Mid South West:Technology and Renewable Energy	MSW	Webinar	23
Go Succeed Grow: Effective Use of AI in Digital Marketing	Hosted by Nuala Advies, Profile Tree	Webinar	32
Flourish: Wealth and Wellness for Women Entrepreneurs	Hosted by broadcater Lynette Fay Panellists: Lisa McCloskey (The Lady Accountant), Denise Leacock (Denise Leacock Photography), Lisa McAllister (LMA Coaching), Siobhan Kearney (Menopause NI)	In Person	54

## Events Manager Feedback

The outcome of Mid Ulster Enterprise Week 2024 was highly successful, marked by record attendance once again this year. This success can be attributed to several factors, including the event management team's extensive local business knowledge and connections, enhanced direct marketing efforts, MUDC's consistent and visible social media campaigns, and event team's local business networks.

A critical element of this achievement was the effective collaboration between the MUDC team and the event managers, facilitated by regular and clear communication. The initial PR and marketing plan, along with the agreed Gantt chart developed collaboratively by MUDC and DEC, provided a clear framework for activities and requirements, ensuring the week proceeded smoothly and as planned.

The topics and speakers were of a high standard, offering both variety and clear relevance to the needs of the local business community. This alignment was reflected in the strong attendance levels and the diverse range of businesses that participated throughout the week, with many attending multiple events. The mix and scheduling of in-person and online events proved to be highly effective. Anecdotal feedback suggested that extending the duration of in-person events could further enhance opportunities for networking among businesses. This feedback was also noted for MUEW 23.

Although attendance was high; adverse weather conditions with the onset of Storm Bert on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> November, hampered attendance at Flourish in Pomeroy Forest and the InterTradelreland Export Clinic in Cookstown. InterTradelreland noted a number of planned attendees sending apologies due to the snow and ice. However, despite icy conditions and a drop off in attendance for Flourish there was still a great attendance rate, and it was noted that there were 14 'drop ins' that came to the event that had not planned to attend.

Some further observations are noted below to help inform future planning:

Earlier marketing and promotion once again are noted as being key to attracting sign ups.

Unlike last year, there are now a number of businesses supports available to the business community including many webinars and it was noted that a greater direct marketing effort was required this year to maintain levels of registration and attendance.

MUDC implemented feedback from the previous year regarding the limited effectiveness of newspaper advertisements, redirecting efforts towards direct marketing strategies such as email campaigns. This approach proved highly successful, as reflected in the strong attendance figures. With increased competition for the attention of the business community this year, direct marketing emerged as a critical component of the event management plan and is likely to remain equally important in future years.

MUDC implemented feedback from the previous year and the event management team supported the provision of material for Comms as and when needed such as notes for the Chair of MUDC etc. This works well this year as often the event managers will have a working knowledge of the specifics of the events and can be a useful resource for the MUDC

Communications team. It also alleviates any delays or miscommunication and ensures a consistent and timely marketing message.

Anecdotal feedback from the events highlighted the value of practical in-person sessions, such as *Meet the Experts*, which was praised as an excellent opportunity for networking and learning. It is recommended that similar sessions be included in future programs. Feedback also suggested that marketing-focused topics should prioritize practical, hands-on learning sessions over guest speaker formats. For example, attendees expressed a preference for the style of *Beyond the Boost*, delivered by a single digital marketing expert, over *TikTok Tactics*, which featured a guest speaker. While feedback for both sessions was generally positive, attendees indicated that the former offered more substantial learning opportunities.

Like 2023, feedback from the female focused event both during and after the event indicates a further need in Mid Ulster for specific tailored business support to female business owners.

Earlier, pre summer planning of MUEW is key as putting together the programme is the most important piece of ensuring a well-attended, relevant and impactful series of events. It is increasingly difficult to secure high profile, relevant speakers from the end of August onwards and this was a challenge for the team this year also. It is recommended that MUDC consider earlier recruitment of event managers and get a plan in place well in advance of summer 2025. This will also ensure that other organisations who plan their activities well in advance can be included to ensure a wider reach of audience e.g. MEGA, FE Colleges, Invest NI etc.

Zoom Webinar was used to facilitate the online events and this proved successful and highly effective in providing an effective media for audiences and also timely reports on attendance. It also allowed for a greater number of attendees without any disruption to service. The technical team worked diligently to ensure an effective digital set up for attendees, hosts and speakers and ensure the webinars ran according to plan and they provided timely reporting on all required elements such as chat, Q&A, managing attendees etc.

It is recommended that the event management team be provided with clear guidelines on the use of social media by MUDC, including specified tags from the outset. During MUEW, the event managers incorporated MUDC branding in additional social media posts (recommendation adopted from 2023 feedback), which successfully created an appealing and cohesive aesthetic for Council. However, many of these posts were flagged as “spam” by Facebook and, in some cases, removed from the platform. Feedback from partner organisations revealed similar issues when attempting to share posts to boost attendance. Although social media is not the responsibility of the appointed event managers it has proven that additional social media reach has boosted numbers of attendance. Some planning around a varied approach to social media marketing should be considered in advance of MUEW 25 to avoid repetitive content being flagged. Ensuring diverse and shareable posts will be essential to maximise engagement and encourage broader sharing by businesses.

## SWOT Analysis: Mid Ulster Enterprise Week (MUEW) 2024

### Strengths

1. **Record Attendance:** Achieved high participation despite challenging weather conditions affecting some in person events.
2. **Strong Collaboration:** Effective partnership between MUDC and event management teams ensured smooth execution.
3. **High-Quality Content:** Topics and speakers were well-aligned with the local business community's needs.
4. **Marketing Success:** Enhanced direct marketing strategies, including email campaigns, effectively drove registrations and attendance.
5. **Diverse Event Formats:** A mix of in-person and online events catered to various preferences and logistical needs.
6. **Responsive Adaptation:** Feedback from prior years implemented successfully, such as reducing reliance on newspaper ads and streamlining communication.
7. **Digital Tools:** Zoom Webinars and Eventbrite enabled seamless online sessions, enabling greater reach without technical disruptions.
8. **Practical and Relevant Sessions:** Hands-on sessions like "Meet the Experts" and "Beyond the Boost" received high praise.

### Weaknesses

1. **Weather Impact:** Storm Bert adversely affected attendance at certain in-person events.
2. **Late Planning Challenges:** Later summer planning and recruitment made it difficult to secure high-profile speakers and optimise the program.
3. **Social Media Issues:** Repetitive and flagged posts reduced the efficacy of social media campaigns, with partner organisations encountering similar difficulties.
4. **Event Duration:** Limited networking time during in-person events constrained opportunities for deeper engagement.
5. **Competition for Attention:** Increased availability of business support webinars and supports required heightened marketing efforts to maintain audience levels.

### Opportunities

1. **Earlier Planning:** Pre-summer preparation for 2025 could enhance speaker recruitment and program relevance.
2. **Expanded Female-Focused Support:** Tailored events for female entrepreneurs remain in demand and present an opportunity to address a niche need.

3. **Enhanced Social Media Strategies:** A more varied and less repetitive social media approach can boost engagement and mitigate flagged content issues.
4. **Networking Expansion:** Extending the duration of in-person events could foster stronger networking opportunities among participants.
5. **Continued collaboration with organisations:** Involving groups like MEGA, FE Colleges, and Invest NI in early planning could widen the event's reach.

### Threats

1. **Weather-Related Risks:** Future adverse weather could again disrupt in-person events.
2. **Increased Competition:** The rise of alternative business support programmes challenges MUEW to maintain its distinct value proposition.
3. **Digital Marketing Saturation:** Over-reliance on social media marketing and email campaigns could face diminishing returns due to audience fatigue.
4. **Platform Limitations:** Dependence on social media platforms with unpredictable content moderation policies risks reduced visibility.

This SWOT analysis highlights the successes and areas for improvement from MUEW 2024, offering a framework to inform and enhance planning for future events.

### Conclusion

MUEW 2024 was a significant success and serves as a model for similar initiatives to support local businesses across Northern Ireland. The enhanced local marketing efforts again this year played a crucial role in increasing engagement within the local business community, particularly with increased competition for the attention of local businesses. This enabled MUDC to deliver a relevant and impactful series of events for Mid Ulster in a time where other Council areas have perhaps scaled back on similar initiatives. The combination of in-person and online events proved both effective and well-attended.

The strong levels of engagement and positive feedback from participants demonstrate the success of this initiative and provide MUDC with a solid foundation to build upon. With continued effective planning and investment and a strong collaborative team, MUEW has the potential to achieve even greater impact in future years.

# Mid Ulster Enterprise Week

18th - 22nd Nov 2024

Create, Connect, Inspire



Canice Nicholas



Lynette Fay



Rhea Daly



Dr Justin Quinn

Register Online

## MON 18th November

### The Road Ahead - Economic Insights and Trends for 2025

9.30am arrival  
(Breakfast served)  
9.50am start - 11.00am  
The Burnavon, Cookstown

Join Susan Hayes Culleton, and a panel of experts, for an exclusive event where they will share insights on 2025 trends like sustainability, AI, and automation to help your business stay ahead.

### LMP Neurodiversity in the workplace

12.30pm - 1.30pm  
Hosted on: Zoom  
Speaker: NOW Group

Join the Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership webinar to learn more, address misconceptions, and gain tips for supporting neurodiverse employees.

### Beyond the Boost: Mastering Paid Social Media Advertising

1.30pm - 2.30pm  
Hosted on: Zoom  
Speaker: Meghan Semple

In this webinar, we'll unpack the latest trends, tools, and tactics to help you navigate the world of paid social media advertising with confidence.

## TUE 19th November

### MEGA Annual Directors' Breakfast\*

Venue: Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown  
An exclusive event bringing together industry leaders to discuss the future of manufacturing & engineering.

### From Passion to Profit: Business Tips and Ideas for Young Entrepreneurs\*

9.15am - 10.00am  
Hosted on: Zoom  
Speaker: Julie Hanna  
This webinar is for post-primary schools. It introduces students to the world of enterprise, inspiring them to develop entrepreneurial skills.

### Meet the Experts

1.00pm - 3.00pm  
Venue: CONNECT, Market Square, Dungannon  
Join us for an opportunity to connect with over 40 experts across business sectors, all under one roof.

### Tourism Business Engagement Workshop

1.00pm - 4.00pm  
Venue: Magherafelt Council Offices  
Speaker: Rachael Harriott  
This workshop will help you tell your story & show you how communications and PR can help build your business.

## WED 20th November

### Scaling Up: Building a Mindset for Business Growth

9.30am - 10.30am  
Hosted on: Zoom  
Speakers: Canice Nicholas & Scott Millar

Join coach Canice Nicholas and his associate Scott Millar, for this webinar on mindset & scaling your business with guest Benny O'Hanlon.

### IntertradeIreland Trade Export Clinic

Drop in 10.00am - 12.00pm  
Venue: Cookstown Enterprise Centre

Get ready to start your cross border export journey and grow your business with IntertradeIreland.

### LMP Job and Apprenticeship Fair

Drop in 12.00pm - 3.00pm  
Venue: The Burnavon, Cookstown

Looking for work, a career change, or upskilling? Visit the Mid Ulster Jobs & Apprenticeship Fair!

### TikTok Tactics

1.30pm - 2.30pm  
Hosted on: Zoom  
Speaker: Rhea Daly

For content that clicks join TikTok expert Rhea Daly and discover innovative ways to leverage TikTok's features to grow your business.

## THUR 21st November

### Flourish: Wealth and Wellness for Women Entrepreneurs

9.30am arrival (Breakfast served) 9.50am start - 11.00am  
Venue: Pomeroy Forest Park Building

Join well known broadcaster Lynette Fay as she explores the synergy between health, wealth, and business growth with a panel of local women entrepreneurs. Dress code: casual and comfortable!

### Mid South West: Technology & Renewable Energy

1.00pm - 2.00pm  
Hosted on: Zoom

Join us online as we delve into the world of sustainable practices and technologies in the field of renewable energy.

### Go Succeed Grow: Effective use of AI in Digital Marketing

1.30pm - 2.30pm  
Hosted on: Zoom  
Speaker: Nuala Davies

This workshop will explore the practical knowledge you need to embrace AI and stay ahead of the curve.

**FRI 22nd November**  
Attend our events for a chance to win great prizes! Winners announced on Friday, November 22, 2024.



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

All events are free to attend.

**Register at:** [midulstercouncil.org/enterpriseweek](https://midulstercouncil.org/enterpriseweek)

\*Invite Only. All information is correct at time of publication. Please confirm details online when registering.

## **News Release**

11 October 2024

### **Businesses learn to 'Create, Connect, Inspire' this Enterprise Week**

Mid Ulster District Council's Enterprise Week returns this year from Monday 18 – Friday 22 November.

During the week, 14 events for local businesses, both online and in person, will take place. This year's theme, 'Create, Connect, Inspire', will explore the incredible journey local businesses will take to get ahead in today's ever-evolving economic landscape.

To set the stage, we dive into the future of the local economy with 'The Road Ahead: Economic Insights and Trends for 2025.' Join us as we explore key developments and trends shaping the business landscape for the year ahead. Hosted at The Burnavon in Cookstown, this event is not to be missed.

Join The Positive Economist, Susan Hayes Culleton and panellists, including Catherine Martin, Shannon McCaul, Stephen McCammon and Justin Quinn as they discuss key trends such as AI, automation, sustainability, changing consumer behaviours and the labour market.

Enterprise Week's online events will help boost your business's brand awareness and increase sales; with webinars like 'TikTok Tactics' with Rhea Daly, TikTok Content Creator and Brand Manager, and 'Beyond the Boost' with Meagan Semple from Digital 24.

Learn about the importance of mindset when it comes to scaling your business with renowned coach and entrepreneur Canice Nicholas at the 'Scaling Up: Building a Mindset for Business Growth' webinar.

Join us for **Flourish: Wealth and Wellness for Women Entrepreneurs**, an inspiring event dedicated to empowering women in business to prioritize both their financial success and personal well-being. Hosted by well-known broadcaster **Lynette Fay**, you'll hear firsthand from a panel of local businesswomen who will share their personal journeys of building wealth and nurturing their wellness along

the way. Taking place at the newly opened **Pomeroy Forest Building**, this event is the perfect space to focus on you and your business's growth.

**Meet the Expert** is back by popular demand! Join us for an exclusive opportunity to connect with over 40 industry experts, all under one roof. Whether you're looking for advice on **marketing, banking, exporting, staffing**, or other key areas of your business, this event has you covered.

From neurodiversity and renewable technology to marketing and the economy, Mid Ulster Enterprise Week has you covered.

Launching this year's Enterprise Week, Councillor Eugene McConnell, Chair of the Council, said:

"I am thrilled to endorse this year's Enterprise Week, and its very timely theme, 'Create, Connect, Inspire'. This programme, now in its sixth year, highlights the creativity, collaboration, and innovation that drive our local businesses and entrepreneurs. In these challenging yet exciting times, Enterprise Week serves as a powerful reminder of the limitless potential we have when we come together as a community to foster growth and opportunity.

"By creating new ideas, connecting with key stakeholders, and inspiring the next generation of business leaders, we can continue to build a thriving, resilient economy for all. I encourage everyone to take part in the events and activities throughout the week, as this is a fantastic opportunity to learn, share, and inspire one another. Let's work together to build a brighter future!"

Dr Justin Quinn, Director for the Centre of Engineering and Renewable Energy, University of Ulster, commented:

"I am thrilled to join The Road Ahead panel session, where I will share my experience of the influences of changing technology and how the art of the impossible is very much within reach for Mid Ulster businesses."

Lisa McCloskey, The Lady Accountant, added:

“Mid Ulster Enterprise Week is packed with fantastic events and webinars – whether you’re looking for practical advice on enhancing your businesses marketing or scaling your business, Mid Ulster Enterprise week has something for all sectors.

“I can’t wait to share my story with my fellow panelists Siobhan Kearney, Denise Leacock and Lisa McAllister at the ‘Flourish’ event in Pomeroy Forest. I’d encourage all businesses across Mid Ulster to check out the week’s events and get registered!”

To view the full programme of events for the week, and to register your place, go to:  
[www.midulstercouncil.org/EnterpriseWeek](http://www.midulstercouncil.org/EnterpriseWeek).

**ENDS**

**Cap:**

Chair of Mid Ulster District Council, Councillor Eugene McConnell, launches the 2024 Mid Ulster Enterprise Week with.

For more information contact Mairead McNally, Mid Ulster District Council, E: [mairead.mcnally@midulstercouncil.org](mailto:mairead.mcnally@midulstercouncil.org) or tel: 03000 132 132 Mob: 07816 339825.

## ***News Release***

22 November 2024

### **Businesses learn to 'Create, Connect, Inspire' at Successful Enterprise Week**

**Almost 1300 people participated in Mid Ulster District Council's sixth Enterprise Week (18 - 22 November), attending 14 free online and in-person events focusing on how to help businesses 'Create, Connect, Inspire' to get ahead in today's ever-evolving economic landscape.**

The week kicked off with the popular 'The Road Ahead: Economic Insights and Trends for 2025' event which was hosted by The Positive Economist, Susan Hayes Culleton, alongside panellists, including Catherine Martin, Shannon McCaul, Stephen McCammon and Justin Quinn. During the in-person event at the Burnavon, Cookstown, attendees discussed key trends such as AI, automation, sustainability, changing consumer behaviours and the labour market.

Online events over the week helped boost businesses brand awareness and increase sales; with webinars like 'TikTok Tactics' with Rhea Daly, TikTok Content Creator and Brand Manager, and 'Beyond the Boost' with Meagan Semple from Digital 24.

Attendees learned about the importance of mindset when it comes to scaling your business with renowned coach and entrepreneur Canice Nicholas at the 'Scaling Up: Building a Mindset for Business Growth' webinar.

Women entrepreneurs were empowered at the Flourish: **Wealth and Wellness for Women Entrepreneurs event**, an inspiring event dedicated to empowering women in business to prioritize both their financial success and personal well-being. Hosted by well-known broadcaster **Lynette Fay**, attendees heard firsthand from a panel of local businesswomen who shared their personal journeys of building wealth and nurturing their wellness along the way.

The popular event took place at the newly opened **Pomeroy Forest Building**, the perfect space for focusing on you and your business's growth.

**The Meet the Experts** event was back by popular demand! The event provided an exclusive opportunity to connect with over 40 industry experts, all under one roof. Whether you were looking for advice on **marketing, banking, exporting, staffing**, or other key areas of your business, this event had you covered.

From neurodiversity and renewable technology to marketing and the economy, Mid Ulster Enterprise Week had something for everyone.

Chair of the Council, Councillor Eugene McConnell was delighted with the turnout and engagement of businesses throughout the week, "The turnout from local businesses at this year's Mid Ulster Enterprise Week was fantastic. The level of interaction is testament to this year's theme – 'Create, Connect, Inspire' – and how this struck a chord and resonated with businesses.

"Businesses used phrases including 'motivational', 'inspirational' and 'informative' in their feedback, showing the week really did make a positive difference - emphasising the Council's continued support of the business sector and that Mid Ulster's enterprising spirit is very much alive and well!"

**If you missed any of the events, you can watch them on the Council's YouTube channel.**

ENDS

Caps:

1. Pictured at the launch event of Enterprise Week 2024, 'The Road Ahead: Economic Insights and Trends for 2025, are, l-r, Susan Hayes Culleton, Host; Catherine Martin, Cavanagh Kelly;

Stephen McCammon, Menarys; Chair of Mid Ulster District Council, Councillor Eugene McConnell; Shannon McCaul, FRC Recruitment; and Dr Justin Quinn, University of Ulster.

2. Pictured are the Host and panellists of The Road Ahead event, Susan Hayes Culleton, Catherine Martin, Cavanagh Kelly; Stephen McCammon, Menarys; Chair of Mid Ulster District Council, Councillor Eugene McConnell; Shannon McCaul, FRC Recruitment; and Dr Justin Quinn, University of Ulster.
3. Pictured are panellists at the Flourish: **Wealth and Wellness for Women Entrepreneurs event, I-r**, Lisa McCloskey, The Lady Accountant; Siobhan Kearney, Menopause NI; Denise Leacock Photography and Lisa McAlister, LMA Coaching.
4. Pictured with the panellists at the Flourish event, Lisa McCloskey, The Lady Accountant; Siobhan Kearney, Menopause NI; Denise Leacock Photography and Lisa McAlister, LMA Coaching are Host Lynette Fay and Cahir of Mid Ulster District Council, Councillor Eugene McConnell.
5. Attendees at the Flourish event gathered for a guided wellness walk in Pomeroy Forest.
6. Some of those who attended the Flourish: **Wealth and Wellness for Women Entrepreneurs event at the new Pomeroy Forest Building during the Council's sixth Mid Ulster Enterprise Week.**

#### **Note to Editor**

For more information contact Mairead McNally, Mid Ulster District Council, E: [Mairead.Mcnally@midulstercouncil.org](mailto:Mairead.Mcnally@midulstercouncil.org) or tel: 03000 132 132 Mob: 07816 339825.