

Report on	1. COVID Small Settlements Regeneration Programme 2. Request from Dungannon Enterprise Centre
Date of Meeting	11 November 2021
Reporting Officer	Assistant Director of Economy, Tourism & Strategic Programmes

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To provide Members with an update on key activities as detailed below.
2.0	Background
2.1	COVID Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme The three government departments of DfC, DfI and DAERA are proposing to jointly fund a COVID Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme across 10 local authority areas targeting rural settlements with 1000 - 4999 inhabitants. This is predicated on each Council developing a <u>Small Settlement Regeneration Plan</u> in consultation with a local stakeholder engagement forum.
2.2	Request from Dungannon Enterprise Centre Correspondence was received on 7 October 2021 from Mr Brian MacAuley, CEO, Dungannon Enterprise Centre, on behalf of their Board, requesting Council to lease its site on Feeney's Lane, Dungannon to the Centre for a 10 year period.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	COVID Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme Background A draft discussion paper (Appendix 1) has been received from the Department for Communities setting out arrangements for a proposed Small Settlements Regeneration Programme which will target investment in small settlements with population from 1000 - 4999 to aid recovery from the COVID pandemic. Settlements with populations below 1000 are not precluded provided supported projects align with programme outcomes and demonstrate value for money.

Under the proposed delivery arrangements Local Authorities will be responsible for developing a COVID Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Plan in conjunction with key stakeholders from across the Council area.

Funding allocations

The indicative budget for the overall Programme is £19.5m across 10 local authorities (£6.5 from each Department). Within this Mid Ulster would receive **£2.3m**. Councils are expected to provide match funding of **10%** of their investment plan costs. Funding to be channelled to Councils via Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011.

Delivery timescales

It is envisaged that DfC will issue a letter of offer to Council before Christmas 2021 with the expectation that Council will submit its Regeneration Plan for approval ahead of **March 2022**

DfC has made it clear that Councils must endeavour to deliver their Regeneration Plan by **March 2023** with all funding to be spent within this timescale.

Constraints on project selection

The selection of projects for inclusion within the Regeneration Plan are framed by the following constraints:

- **Timescale** – projects selected must be deliverable by March 2023. Deliverability includes issues such as planning permissions, statutory approvals and land ownership.
- **Value for Money** - VFM will be a key consideration in the approval of the Regeneration Plan by DfC. The Programme targets settlements of between
- 1000 – 4999. Settlements below 1000 will not be precluded provided a robust VFM case is put forward.
- **Fit with Departmental policy objectives** – all projects included in the Regeneration Plan must show alignment with DfC, DAERA and DfI policy interest – which focus on differing targets and KPI's.
- **Resources for management and delivery** – this programme will add to existing significant work pressures across the delivery team structure within Council. Resource funding of £102,018 would be available for staff time involved in delivery.

The constraints identified would favour the selection of strategic scale projects which are capable of delivering positive, visible impacts in the short term.

DfC has indicated a possible follow up phase depending on the success of this initial programme.

3.2	<p>Request from Dungannon Enterprise Centre</p> <p>The correspondence from Mr Brian MacAuley (on Appendix 2) outlines that Dungannon Enterprise Centre’s charitable mission supports the economic development of the area through the fostering of profitable enterprises. It highlights the Board’s concern that the town centre is facing very difficult economic times ahead and needs support from wherever it can get. It notes the retail sector is particularly suffering and indicates a key part of the solution is increasing footfall and visitors to the town.</p> <p>The correspondence requests Mid Ulster District Council to lease its land at Feeney’s Lane, Dungannon to Dungannon Enterprise Centre, for a 10-year period, to develop the site as a semi-permanent outdoor space to hold initiatives and events that would attract local residents, visitors and shoppers back into the town. Mr MacAuley states that it would be their intention to create a working group of the Enterprise Centre Board and co-opted traders to plan and manage the initiative and to source funding for the project.</p> <p>In conclusion, Mr MacAuley highlights the site is located adjacent to the Market Square and the entrance to the Hill of the O’Neill, and Dungannon Enterprise Centre believe that a comprehensive programme of events held on the Feeney’s Lane site will enrich and compliment the Council managed events run throughout the year.</p>
4.0	<p>Other Considerations</p>
4.1	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p> <p>Financial:</p> <p>COVID Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme 10% match funding contribution from Council of £230,022 (based on a funding allocation of £2.3m)</p> <p>Human:</p> <p>COVID Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme Resource funding of £102,018 would be made available to Council from DfC for staff / delivery costs.</p> <p>Risk Management:</p>
4.2	<p>Screening & Impact Assessments</p> <p>Equality & Good Relations Implications</p> <p>COVID Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme To be developed.</p>

	<p>Rural Needs Implications:</p> <p>COVID Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme To be developed.</p>
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	<p>It is recommended that Members:-</p> <p>COVID Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme</p> <p>(i) To note details on the new COVID Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme.</p> <p>(ii) To approve that officers work up proposed options and bring back a report to Members for discussion.</p>
5.2	<p>Request from Dungannon Enterprise Centre</p> <p>To consider correspondence from Mr Brian MacAuley on behalf of Dungannon Enterprise Centre Board, requesting Mid Ulster District Council to lease its site at Feeney's Lane, Dungannon to the Centre for a 10 year period, for the purposes of developing the site as a semi-permanent outdoor space to hold initiatives and events.</p>
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	<p>Appendix 1 - COVID Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Request from Dungannon Enterprise Centre – 7 Oct 2021</p>