

Appendix 1 – Traders Engagement Report and Consultees – March 2021

Main Issues Raised at Traders Meetings held week commencing 7 March 2021

Issues	Dungannon	Cookstown	Magherafelt	Coalisland	Maghera
Rates	<p>Support with Rates payments</p> <p>Rate relief/ holiday/ utility relief, support package/ rent relief.</p>	<p>Rates holidays extension for 12 months, followed by a phased return of rates</p> <p>Reduction in rates in Town Centres</p> <p>Five year rate break for smaller businesses to use vacant buildings for office space.</p> <p>Sectoral rates relief- sectors which are dying</p>	<p>Rates Relief supported</p> <p>Bounce Back grants to support businesses to reopen supported</p>	<p>Reduced rates, rents etc.</p>	<p>Rates Relief supported</p> <p>Bounce Back grants to support businesses to reopen supported</p>
Utility Costs	<p>A Utility Support Package for Traders is needed</p>	<p>Need for a financial package to assist with ongoing running costs which have occurred in the last 12 months and the forthcoming 12 months on reopening</p> <p>One business £1000 electric bill for a quarter has been closed</p>	<p>A Utility Support Package for Traders would be welcomed</p>	<p>A Utility Support Package for Traders would be welcomed</p>	<p>A Utility Support Package for Traders would be welcomed</p>
Recovery Start Up Grant	<p>Any support that will help less money going out.</p> <p>Support of more Covid support money.</p> <p>Some Traders felt they had enough PPE Support.</p> <p>£300 grant to all town centre businesses for PPE</p>	<p>Need to lobby Executive to roll out a similar recovery start up grant as per England (£6,000)</p>	<p>Support for more Covid support money.</p>	<p>Any support would be welcomed</p>	<p>Any support would be welcomed</p>

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Dereliction/ Vacancy	<p>Help to repurpose the vacant units.</p> <p>Lack of Accommodation provision within the Town Centre area.</p> <p>Use the vacant building to be used for display purposes for either commercial uses.</p> <p>Town Centre Development- central atmosphere, café culture, seating in the pedestrian section of the square.</p> <p>Adaption of court yards</p> <p>No more social house in the town centre.</p> <p>Fort Bar premises is lying closed and building lying empty in Perry Street, can there be an incentive to attract new shops or repurpose the building</p>	<p>Consideration of schemes similar to England run by local Councils- loan scheme- financial support towards redecorating/refurbishing/repurposing of vacant space/rent/rates relief</p> <p>Wrap around scheme- grants scheme to encourage businesses to locate/relocate into the Town Centre, for example, financial support for utility set up, unit fit out, reduced rent & rates, support towards marketing, mentoring support</p> <p>Scheme rollout as per ABC empty to occupied scheme 60% of the total eligible capital costs submitted and approved through a successful application, capped at a maximum of £80,000 grant award – whilst ensuring it is new businesses rather than current businesses relocating</p> <p>Need to encourage people back to live in our towns- large number of first floor/second floor premises vacant- Scheme like Living Over the Shops is required</p>		<p>Anything to be done as an initiative to help to fill vacant units</p>	

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Marketing	<p>Micro influencers brought in, smaller ones from the town and round the town such as “Everything Emma”, Aileen Mallon, Patricia McVeigh, and daughter etc. to Promote Dungannon Town centre.</p> <p>Schedule of promotion developed.</p> <p>Support of outdoor catering facilities and support needed for evening economy.</p> <p>Radio coverage placed in the town for a few days for a few weeks.</p> <p>Business to speak about their own selling points and why they are unique.</p> <p>TV advertisement to heighten business brand presences.</p> <p>Can MUDC Social Media promote Town Centre businesses, bus services etc</p> <p>Marketing of Town Centre all year round</p>	<p>TV/Adverts dated and a waste of financial resources</p> <p>Influencer videos are welcomed as social channels are the top form of marketing & communication at present</p> <p>Marketing to build consumer confidence along the Roadmap and thereafter; build confidence within the Town Centre again</p> <p>Sectoral campaigns for the town to showcase what Cookstown has to offer i.e. retail then hospitality etc.</p> <p>Link our Tourism assets and Town Centre offering to market as a destination</p> <p>Social Media page to promote & showcase the businesses of Cookstown & what they have on offer & a place to ‘staycation’</p> <p>Encourage businesses to locate/relocate from business parks to Town centre- questioned legitimacy of retail operating in business parks based on their planning approval</p>	<p>Traders focused on Magherafelt being a destination town and people travel a distance to visit the businesses.</p> <p>The town needs to be advertised across Ireland not just locally</p> <p>Independent shops are a real draw for people</p> <p>Marketing should focus on local people and local stories “people buy from people”. Use businesses to tell the story of the town.</p> <p>Local people should be ambassadors for the town. Support local is a key message</p> <p>Best influencers are the business people of the town.</p> <p>People are missing one to one personal service and this needs highlighted as we open up.</p> <p>Need to focus on getting people back into Magherafelt and supporting local.</p>	<p>Revisit the structure of Coalisland Connects, funding for a salary for someone to do the social media.</p> <p>Communication support e.g. Coalisland Connect</p> <p>Assistance with social media</p> <p>Make Coalisland unique/ Mission statement</p>	<p>Creation of a brand for Maghera</p> <p>Town centre marketing initiative (digital screens)</p>

	<p>To encourage the public to support business via social media just as online “eat out to help out” but to engage and encourage public to leave positive reviews for local business as well as like and share marketing promotion.</p> <p>Social Media grant – Traders do not have the money to hire Influencers etc.</p> <p>Enhancement with the evening economy incentive Town Flowers – an overload this year to add colour to the Town, even if a grant was given to all shops to do window boxes. Use local suppliers to supply and fit to brighten everywhere up.</p>	<p>Booklet/Brochure – promoting town centre businesses/hotels to be located in tourism hotspots and accommodation venues</p> <p>Council to promote and advertise local businesses on their platforms</p> <p>Continue with competitions such as Small Business Saturday – small schemes do have an impact</p> <p>Rolling grants scheme</p> <p>Available Grants - Apply to access financial support to assist with each individual businesses marketing</p>	<p>Voucher Scheme proposed by NI Executive – needs to be spent locally.</p> <p>Need a sustained approach to marketing – not all at the start when businesses reopen.</p> <p>Marketing needs to build confidence of people so they feel safe returning to town</p>		
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Gift Card/Voucher Scheme	Town Centre Gift Card to be used in any participating business.	<p>Mid Ulster Gift Card- some supportive; some not. If progressing, there is a feeling it should be solely Cookstown</p> <p>If a gift card/voucher scheme up and running, have a draw/lottery alongside it with a chance of winning a prize on a monthly basis</p> <p>NI Voucher Scheme – if this happens ensuring that large retailers are excluded from participating</p>	<p>Gift Card seen as a good initiative to support local businesses.</p> <p>Gift Card should be limited to independent businesses.</p>	Supported	Introduction of Gift Card seen as good for the town

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NI Taskforce		<p>Membership make up questioned- rural independents lack a voice</p> <p>Need for financial backing needs to be more than a 'talk shop'.</p> <p>Need for funds such as Future High Street Funds to make impact and deliver strategic and tangible projects over a period of time.</p>			
Stock		<p>Compensation for stock needed that hasn't been sold</p> <p>Financial assistance towards the forward buying of seasonal stock/loss of stock</p>			
Click n Collect		Click n Collect must be extended to all businesses with immediate effect			
Loans		Banks refusing loans to businesses due to retail being seen a 'vulnerable sector'			
Christmas Lights		<p>Enhance the asset we have in Cookstown</p> <p>Lights need to be on all the time day & night</p> <p>Additional/improved Christmas lights along the side streets- LED as like Town Centre</p> <p>Need music playing in town when lights on to create an atmosphere</p>			

		Possible collaboration with schools to encourage choirs to perform in the town (reducing costs and encouraging families into the town)			
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Tourism	<p>Play park/ fun attraction on the Hill green space.</p> <p>“Train” from Beechvalley/Tesco’s to Hill of The O’Neill would be a great novelty idea and a sure winner.</p> <p>Playpark on Hill of The O’Neill at the top for kids after their train ride.</p> <p>Support of the train/ tram Support of a train/ tram up round the town.</p> <p>Town park and utilising the event space at the castle hill Castle hill not bringing people into the town even pre-covid.</p> <p>Hill of the O’Neill- shame that know no knows about it, feels closed off and inaccessible.</p> <p>Information Board so people know where key places are of interest or shop location maps visitor.</p>		<p>Link in to encourage people to stay overnight – opportunity when things open up to encourage people to visit.</p> <p>Link with Seamus Heaney HomePlace needs explored and exploited. Experience is key – developing experiences for people.</p> <p>Telling the history of the area.</p> <p>Developing walking tours of the town. Market Yard is a key opportunity to develop a hub in the town centre.</p> <p>Opportunity to run courses /activities in The Bridewell.</p> <p>Developing walking tours throughout the district.</p> <p>Hospitality Sector needs dates for reopening.</p> <p>Support for live musicians</p>	<p>Better Signage</p> <p>Information boards to highlight the key dates and landmarks. And promote the industrial heritage.</p> <p>No Council initiative re Tourism, rich heritage in the area re Coal and Canal.</p> <p>Potential of Canal and lineside walk – very popular with locals.</p> <p>Walking Tours, Heritage Tours</p>	<p>Lighting up St Lurach’s Old Church (Maghera Development Association).</p> <p>Street Art Murals.</p> <p>Creation of walking routes around town.</p> <p>Development of walking tours based on the history of Maghera.</p> <p>Build on existing heritage projects in Maghera</p>

	<p>Nobody is aware of what is on the Hill and it there are opportunities to link to Town Centre.</p> <p>Extra chairs and sign posts.</p> <p>Sunday opening hours.</p> <p>Idea of a train/ tram/ free transport up to the town and a tour of the town.</p> <p>Put a “roof” over some of the Streets.</p>				
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Communication		<p>Communications needs to start in Council.</p> <p>Communications needs to be improved with traders</p>	<p>Support for digital marketing.</p> <p>Grants to support businesses to reopen – hygiene equipment / air purifiers</p> <p>Influencers – less is more needs to be very focused and specific</p>		
Public Buildings	<p>Ranfurlly House and Hill Of The O’Neill – focal point of town</p> <p>Better signage in town centre for Ranfurlly House and Hill Of The O’Neill</p> <p>Do something around entrance/barrier/gate and make it more inviting to go into the Hill Of The O’Neill</p>	<p>Burnavon is an underutilised resource within the town as a centre of information</p> <p>Directional information to the Burnavon</p> <p>Large screens located to showcase events or promotions in the town</p>			

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Gateways	Signage in town centre	<p>Development of the strategic entries to Cookstown from Omagh and Moneymore – with features</p> <p>Improved directional signage into the town centre</p> <p>Street lighting from A29 Roundabout out the Dungannon Road- all other roads off the roundabout have street lighting</p>			Develop Public Art Entrance Features / signage
Business/ Community Initiatives	<p>Better use of public space</p> <p>Entrepreneurship, for the local area.</p> <p>Need work space/ industrial space for potential.</p>	<p>Business/community initiatives work in Cookstown- perhaps a floral scheme where each premise along the main thoroughfare is encouraged to have hanging baskets to brighten the town i.e. Mid Ulster in Bloom and village participation in past (Stewartstown particular example)</p> <p>Shop Window displays</p>			
Town Centre Events	<p>Market days- Thursday flowers, Tuesday flowers and the food market in Tesco's.</p> <p>Pedestrianise the core of the Town Centre to create a café culture by day</p> <p>More social and coffee spaces</p>	<p>Continental Market & Christmas Lights switch ons are welcomed and bring footfall and atmosphere to the town.</p> <p>Caution was voiced on events, if additional ones, as some can be detrimental to Town Centre</p> <p>Ensure inclusion of local businesses to assist/be a part of the events</p>			

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Covid Requirements		<p>Assistance with the ongoing cost of Sanitisation equipment/liquid</p> <p>Council may be able to buy cheaper & in bulk.</p> <p>Further grant aid programme to assist businesses now that reopening is insight</p>		<p>Coalisland Credit Union was ruled out of the Covid grant was a challenge</p> <p>No support for charity or funding.</p> <p>Social Media Grant</p>	
Street Cleansing	<p>Regular in depth cleanse of streets as was carried out last year.</p> <p>Cleaning of links between streets such as Wilsons Lane</p>		More bins in the town		
Property Improvement Scheme		<p>Similar to spruce up only on a rolling basis</p> <p>Beneficial scheme to businesses</p> <p>Need internal fit out/refurbishment grant</p>			Painting buildings
Cookstown Market		<p>Query raised if Council has bought the Market Rights;</p> <p>Modernisation of the Market</p> <p>A business has recently closed in town and Saturday Market contributed to decision- stall holders blocking front of shop, being obstructive- busiest day went to quietest day.</p> <p>Underutilised asset unique to Cookstown; Potential to</p>			

		<p>rebrand showcasing local produce- Artisan; shape & structure needs assessed. Local talent playing at the Market- may not be every week</p> <p>Christmas Eve market to continue with stalls located outside vacant premises</p>			
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Masterplan		Major investment required in Town Centres- renewed Masterplans with a large financial investment			
Evening/Night Time Economy	<p>Evening economy- enhance the hospitality sector.</p> <p>Laser lights creation Cruise (youth).</p> <p>Organise an East Timor evening.</p>	Need to try and bring the town to life after 5 even for a few hours			
Town Centre		<p>Modernise the market</p> <p>Too many coffee shops/charity shops</p> <p>Entice new businesses to Cookstown 'retail focused' especially ladies boutique – incentives to take up a vacant property</p> <p>Need to have attractive Town Centre- it needs to be desirable for people to come to shop & Visit</p>			Additional planting.

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Mid Ulster District Council	<p>A bit more flexibility with Environmental Health and the tobacco officer to acknowledge the companies are trying to working within the Law but there customers under the influence might not be prepared to listen.</p> <p>Council should rent out stalls to local artisans selling homemade crafts.</p> <p>Roadworks to be scheduled for evenings in the Town Centre Support of the outdoor catering facilities and outside evening economy.</p> <p>Extra help with bin collections and collecting of cardboard to help with the reduction of over flow litter on streets.</p>	<p>Shop Fronts/Paving/Street Lighting/Floral Displays</p> <p>Like to see some examples of council trying to cutback expenses as well. From the private sector looking in there is a lot of waste - applies to the entire public sector.</p> <p>Consult and agree a Mid Ulster Town Centre Action Plan – with a collaborative approach for 2-3 years</p> <p>Council Grants- complicated and issues when enter discussions with planning etc...failed on awnings side of things</p>		<p>The Enterprise centre is outside of the Coalisland Town Boundary, bring in.</p> <p>Support of the public realm.</p> <p>Expansion of the public realm.</p>	<p>Public Realm Scheme is a key project for Maghera's redevelopment and Traders looking forward to it.</p> <p>Review licencing costs for outdoor entertainment</p> <p>Restrictions need to be enforced sensibly not a heavy handed approach.</p>
Car Parking	<p>Off street to be reduced to 10p per hour to avoid staffing taking up.</p> <p>Car parking 2 hr free on street.</p> <p>The car park opposite the bank hotel to find out who owns the site to reopen the car park.</p>	<p>Maintain free car parking</p> <p>On Street Parking need extension of stay time- 1hr is too short – but aware there needs to be a limit to deter staff from parking in the bays Clarification on future parking plans for town i.e. will pay and display be introduced in the future</p>	<p>Reduced fees like the 10p for 3 hours. Used as part of marketing campaign for town.</p> <p>Do not support free parking as this encourages all day parking.</p> <p>Needs control to ensure turnover of spaces.</p>	<p>Don't want to see charges being introduced.</p> <p>Car parking concerns regarding car wardens.</p> <p>Question whether the car park at the library will be pay and display- not in support of this.</p>	

	<p>Reopening of private Car Park at top of William Street.</p> <p>Free Car Parking from 10am – 5pm (up to 4 hours) so staff can't park in them.</p> <p>Car Parking – staff parking in free spaces and none left for Shoppers.</p> <p>Free off street parking everywhere, even if workers take the spaces Trader not annoyed.</p> <p>Staff are using free car parking leaves nowhere for customers and key spaces.</p> <p>Not what Dungannon need right now. Possibly need to reduce on street Parking, only restrictions for only hour. The hour isn't long enough to spend time in the town with covid restriction and extra cleaning between clients.</p> <p>Parking in the town needs to be free to help incentivise shoppers to come in.</p>				
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Trader Consultees

Dungannon	Cookstown	Magherafelt	Coalisland	Maghera
Dolphin Takeaway	Thompson Footwear	Alexandra Barfoot Photography & Magherafelt Chamber of Commerce.	Coalisland Credit Union	Crawford's
Maura's Beauty	Time Bar & Venue		Lilac	Burns & Co
Sloan's Newsagents	Cartwheel Bar	Shady Dolphin	Sole Sister	Walsh's Hotel
Solo/Snooty Fox	Adrian & Co Jewellers	Blue Box Media	Freshly Baked	The Dug Out
James Taggart Hairdressers	Helens Flowers	Blu Rinse Electric Hairdressing	Michael Dormans Pharmacy	Eurospar
Hagans Bar	Little Fashion Boutique	The Fashion House & KK Schoolwear	Michael Heron Architects	Glenview Gift Centre
Those that could not attend but wanted to contribute –	Sheehy's		Those that could not attend but wanted to contribute –	Noones
Café Latte	Black Shoes	The Coachman		
Cuba	Penny Farthing	Slims / Secrets	Brian McKernan & Co - sent comments	
Hagans Bar (attended meeting but had more points after).	Solo Retailing	Mary's Bar		
Hegarty's Bakery	Serephina	Jude Law Boutique	Plunkett Teague & Sons – forwarded comments	
	McConnell Shoes	Sportique		
James Taggart Hairdressers (attended meeting but had more points after).	The Royal Hotel	Off The Diamond		
	Gordons Chemist	Cuddy's.		
Beauty Within	Precious			
The Gas Works	Glenavon Hotel			
Professional Travel	Wallaces/Kees Clothing			
K9 Pet Shop				