

## APPENDIX 1

Mr Aidrian McCreesh  
Chief Executive Officer



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Mid Ulster Council  
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**Date:** 08 November 2023

Dear Mr McCreesh

### **Mid Ulster Council NI Business Start-up Programme Performance 2022/23**

As you are aware the Department has the responsibility of monitoring performance in relation to the NI Business Start-Up Programme against statutory targets set out in the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015. I am now writing to confirm your audited performance for 2022/23.

#### **2022/23 Performance**

The overall programme performance has exceeded its statutory target of 1,573 jobs created with 1,777 jobs created for 2022/23. This is a noteworthy achievement given residual effects of the pandemic remain, and reflects very well on the collective work of councils to promote support for business start-ups in their areas over the period.

In relation to your own performance, the figures for 2022/23, along with your statutory target are set out below.

<b>Statutory Jobs Target</b>	<b>Total Jobs Created 2022/23</b>	<b>Target Variance</b>
153	169	+16

**10X**

**DECADE OF  
INNOVATION**



## **Future Development of Performance Indicators and Standards**

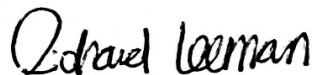
You will be aware the current statutory indicators will apply until September 2023 when the 'Go For It' Programme ends.

DfE will engage with councils on how the new Enterprise Support Service (ESS) programme, to be implemented with effect from 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023, will be monitored under the 2015 Order.

If you have any queries about any matters referred to here, please contact my team by email at [DfE-Entrepreneurship@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:DfE-Entrepreneurship@economy-ni.gov.uk).

We wish you the best with the start of the ESS.

Yours sincerely,



**Richard Leeman**  
**Head of Entrepreneurship Branch**

**Copied to:**  
Ms Fiona McKeown  
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## APPENDIX 2

### MID ULSTER TOURISM DEVELOPMENT GROUP MINUTES Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at 10am via Microsoft Teams

#### Present

Cllr Niamh Doris	Mid Ulster District Council
Cllr Martin Kearney	Mid Ulster District Council
Dermot Friel	Friel's Bar and Restaurant
Cathy O'Neill	Friel's Bar and Restaurant
Richard Mulholland	Ballyscullion Park
Kieran Bradley	Walsh's Hotel
Clare Murray	Deli on the Green
Norman Bell	Killymoon Castle
Shauna McElhone	J&K Coaches/Croga Tours
Roisin McKee	Hospitality and Tourism Skills Network
Carolyn Boyd	Tourism Northern Ireland
Mary McKeown	Mid Ulster District Council
Laura Shannon	Mid Ulster District Council
Grace Booth	Mid Ulster District Council
Genevieve Bell	Mid Ulster District Council
Charmain Bell	Mid Ulster District Council
Martha Beattie	Mid Ulster District Council

	DISCUSSION	ACTIONS
	<p><b>Welcome</b> In the absence of the Chair, M McKeown welcomed members to the meeting and introduced, C Boyd, Tourism NI (TNI) and R McKee, Hospitality and Tourism Skills Network (HATS) who were invited to make a presentation on the Make it Here! Careers in Tourism &amp; Hospitality.</p> <p><b>Apologies</b> Councillor Frances Burton                      Mid Ulster District Council Councillor Sean Clarke                              Mid Ulster District Council Fiona McKeown                                      Mid Ulster District Council Anne Reid    Mid Ulster District Council Brian McCormick                                      Mid Ulster District Council Allison O'Keefe                                      Mid Ulster District Council Simon Wiggins                                      South West College Tanya Purvis    South West College Martin Graham    Tourism NI</p>	

<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Minutes of Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2023</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2023, having been circulated in advance, were taken as read and correct.</p> <p><i>Proposed: N Bell                      Seconded: D Friel</i></p>	
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Matters Arising</b> None</p>	
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Make it Here! Careers in Tourism &amp; Hospitality – presentation by C Boyd Tourism NI and R McKee from HATS</b></p> <p>R McKee, HATS, outlined their current Careers in Tourism and Hospitality campaign. She explained that the campaign aims to assist businesses with attracting, retaining and engaging staff in order to grow and retain skills within the Tourism and Hospitality industry. The campaign also aims to change perceptions of the hospitality and tourism industry in order to attract employees and show the industry as an attractive career option.</p> <p>C Boyd, TNI, further discussed the ‘Make it Here Campaign’ outlining key areas the industry are addressing such as, increased flexibility with working hours.</p> <p>She added that a dedicated recruitment website is available to businesses within the Tourism and Hospitality sector to advertise positions.</p> <p>R McKee and C Boyd thanked members for the opportunity to present and exited the meeting at 10:37am</p>	
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>Industry Updates – Tourism Development Group Members</b></p> <p><b>4.1</b>     <u>Walshs Hotel</u> K Bradley highlighted that St Patrick’s Day and Mother’s Day weekends were busy for the hotel. Walsh’s Hotel informed that they had attended Meet the Buyer on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023 and returned with good leads to follow-up.</p>	

<p><b>4.2</b></p>	<p><u>Friel's Bar and Restaurant</u> D Friel informed that the restaurant was busy on St Patrick's Day and Mother's Day weekends.</p> <p>D Friel and C O'Neill attended the Meet the Buyer event and it proved successful. C O'Neill added that she attended the Banquet event on The Hill of The O'Neill and saw it as an excellent opportunity to chat with international tour operators.</p> <p>C O'Neill further added that the Faith Family and Heritage Cluster is now at stage one of collaborative growth.</p>	
<p><b>4.3</b></p>	<p><u>Deli on the Green/ The Loft</u> C Murray stated that she noticed an increase in spend in the hospitality sector. She highlighted the importance of getting profit margins correct and said the cost of overheads were steadily increasing, with electricity being main cost.</p>	
<p><b>4.4</b></p>	<p><u>Killymoon Castle</u> N Bell said he had attended Meet the Buyer for the first time and found it very beneficial. N Bell advised that he would follow up with contacts to progress them into potential customers for Killymoon Castle.</p> <p>Killymoon Castle was fully booked for afternoon tea on Mother's Day. The WW2 experience is attracting people from outside Mid Ulster namely the American market. N Bell noted how rising costs are affecting business.</p>	
<p><b>4.5</b></p>	<p><u>J&amp;K Coaches/Croga Tours</u> S McElhone stated that they had taken on a range of operators, namely German and American. July and August are forecast to be busy.</p> <p>She reported that Croga Tours is a newly established tour company affiliated with J&amp;K Coaches. Currently they are focusing on increasing awareness of the brand and are attending events to promote Croga Tours. Croga Tours attended both Meet the Buyer and The Banquet on The Hill of The O'Neill.</p>	
<p><b>4.6</b></p>	<p><u>Nordics Workshop</u> M McKeown reported that she attended Nordics Workshop, Copenhagen, with Tourism Ireland and Mid Ulster received a great deal of interest from buyers. M McKeown advised that although she was there under OM Park Sky Park and Observatory banner she was promoting all of Mid Ulster. Mary commented that the</p>	

<p>4.7</p>	<p>Nordic market was seen as an attractive market with high disposable income who were attracted to the outdoors and hillwalking in particular.</p> <p><u>Banquet on Hill of the O’Neill</u> M McKeown updated members on the Hill of the O’Neill Banquet stating that 11 international buyers and 12 tourism businesses attended the event to network with bookings being.</p> <p>Two tour operators have already enquired about dates for the Banquet in October 2023. Excursions Ireland are interested in running a castle tour that would end with the Banquet on The Hill of The O’Neill.</p>	
<p>5.</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p> <p>5.3</p>	<p><b>Business Engagement Programme</b></p> <p><u>Meet the Buyer</u> L Shannon reported that she had attended Meet the Buyer workshop to promote Mid Ulster and the Unwinding Time brand. Mid Ulster was also represented by twelve attending tourism businesses. She added that she had received positive feedback and would follow-up with leads.</p> <p><u>Business Engagement Workshops</u> L Shannon stated that questionnaires were circulated to attendees of the business engagement workshops in order to evaluate how the tourism department can best continue to support businesses going forward.</p> <p><u>MUDC Experience Development Programme</u> M McKeown advised that she will be appointing a mentor to develop three new experiences that can then apply to TNI for brand alignment. These new tourism experiences will launch summer of next year. A procurement exercise will be undertaken to appoint a facilitator following approval of the programme at the April Council Development Committee.</p>	<p><b>L Shannon to follow up with contacts.</b></p>
<p>6.</p>	<p><b>Cluster Reports</b></p> <p>The following cluster reports were circulated in advance of the meeting and no further comments were made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loughinsholin</li> <li>• Clogher Valley</li> <li>• Archaeology, History &amp; Heritage</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor Activities</li> <li>• Hospitality and Taste</li> </ul>	
<b>7.</b>	<p><b>Visitor Monitoring – M McKeown</b> M McKeown advised these are collected quarterly and will be presented at the next Tourism Development Group meeting.</p>	
<b>8.</b>	<p><b>Brown Signage</b> G Bell and M McKeown are meeting with G Darby week commencing 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023 to discuss progress of the Brown Signage Audit. G Darby will present findings of the audit to the Development Committee meeting.</p> <p>G Bell added that the Brown Signage policy needs reviewed and a letter had been sent to the Permanent Secretary for the Department for the Economy and CEO J McGrillen, Tourism Northern Ireland.</p>	<p><b>G Bell will provide feedback on the content of the letters at next the next Tourism Development Group meeting.</b></p>
<b>9.</b>	<p><b>Spring Marketing Campaign 2023 – Mary McKeown</b></p> <p>M McKeown informed the group that the Spring Marketing campaign, entitled ‘Valuing your time’, ran from 23 – 28 March. The campaign consisted of UTV advertising, radio advertising with Cool FM and Northern Sound and sponsored social media video posts showcasing a range of activities and attractions across Mid Ulster. Families, over 50’s and young couples were the target market. Over 16,000 views on the full 90 second social media video were recorded, and the campaign will continue to run until end of April.</p> <p>M McKeown stated that a new external information kiosk will be in place in Coalisland on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023. There will be a delay with the installation of the kiosk in Maghera until the Public Realm Scheme is completed.</p>	
<b>10.</b>	<p><b>Shared Island, Tullaghoge Fort, Sliabh Beagh – Mary McKeown</b></p> <p><b>10.1 Tullaghoge Fort</b> There has been a successful application made in partnership with Leitrim County Council to complete a feasibility study which will include the creation of new pathways with interpretation at Tullaghoge Fort. Total funding is 100% to the value of €20,000. Feasibility study for this project will be complete by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023.</p> <p><b>Shared Island/Sliabh Beagh</b></p>	

<p><b>10.2</b></p>	<p>M McKeown informed the group that a second Shared Island Local Authority Development Scheme in partnership with Fermanagh and Omagh DC and Monaghan County Council, who will take the lead on this project, has been awarded €145,475 to carry out feasibility studies on seven work packages to develop the Sliabh Beagh region as an Eco Tourism Destination.</p> <p>M McKeown stated that it will create links with the surrounding towns and villages around the Clogher Valley. The feasibility study is to be complete by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and is 100% funded.</p> <p>N Bell asked M McKeown about the budget for the next financial year. M McKeown stated that the tourism budget will be smaller next year.</p>	
<p><b>11.</b></p>	<p><b>Any other Business</b></p> <p>L Shannon advised that the Visitor Map was in the final stages of being updated. The map is going to print within the next couple of weeks and will be distributed to all businesses.</p> <p>M McKeown thanked the Councillors for attending the Tourism Development Group meeting and for their support throughout the year.</p> <p>N Doris enquired about Lough Neagh with M McKeown responding that she is meeting with CEO's from Councils around the Lough and that a feasibility study has been completed on the Blackwater River. M McKeown attended a meeting last week with Lough Neagh Partnership, discussing the dredging of The Blackwater River.</p> <p>M McKeown informed the group of a new experience, Jigsaw Farm, which will launch later this year and is located near Ballyronan Marina taking visitors onto Lough Neagh.</p> <p>C Bell further stated that both Lough Neagh Stories and River Bann Boat Tours currently have experiences on Lough Neagh.</p> <p><b>Date of Next Meeting: Date TBC</b></p>	