

Report on	Mid Ulster Rural Development Partnership
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Is this report restricted for confidential business? If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	x

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To update members on progress with the LAG Rural Development Strategy for Mid Ulster.
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>Mid Ulster Rural Development Partnership has been allocated £10.16m for the roll out of a local rural development strategy for Mid Ulster funded under the 2014-2020 NI Rural Development Programme.</p> <p>The Schemes within the local rural strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Business Investment Scheme • Rural Services Scheme • Village Renewal • Rural Broadband; and • LAG Co-operation <p>Further detail on these Schemes is available on the LAG website www.midulsterrdp.org</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Members are asked to note progress on the roll out of the strategy schemes as follows:</p> <p>Rural Business Investment Scheme (RBIS) To date 57 businesses have been approved for funding under this Scheme to the value of £1.23m. The job creation target from these projects is 124 with 16.5 verified to date. 34 projects have completed to date.</p> <p>The next call for applications under this Scheme closes on 19th February 2018. 125 businesses have been invited to apply to this call. There is a remaining balance of £1.6m in funding yet to commit under this Scheme.</p> <p>The key targets within the LAG strategy under the Rural Business Investment Scheme are:</p>

- 100 businesses supported (with 57 supported to date)
- 100 jobs created (with 124 jobs targeted within Letters of Offer issued to date)

Rural Basic Services Scheme

12 applications were received from the first call for capital support under this scheme with 10 approved for funding of £1.5m as listed below:

Community Group	Total Grant awarded
Tobin Youth Centre (Moortown) Ltd	£ 58,846
Knocknagin Hall Committee	£ 111,587
Rock St Patrick GAC	£ 250,000
Carntogher Community Association	£ 150,000
Cavanakeeran Community Association	£ 250,000
Workspace (Draperstown) Ltd	£ 150,000
Moortown St Malachy's GAC	£ 250,000
Clonoe Rural Development Agency Ltd	£ 136,631
Lissan Hall Committee Ltd	£ 77,707
Moneyneena and District Development Initiative	£ 70,907
	£ 1,505,678

There is a remaining balance of approx £827,000 for a second call for applications under this Scheme. Expressions of interest from potential applicants have been received and the LAG would envisage an opening date for this call in early February closing at the end of June 2018.

Village Renewal

Letters of offer have been issued for projects in Ballygawley, and Augher, Caledon, Granville and Tobermore (as one project involving playpark improvements at each location). Contractors have been appointed to both projects. Works are underway in Ballygawley and the various pieces of play apparatus for the four play parks have been ordered up in preparation for installing. Completion timescales for both of these projects is end of March.

Subject to LAG approval on 29th January 2018 a third letter of offer will issue for phase 1 of Upperlands for the development of a 2G multi games area. Work on this project is expected to commence mid February.

Co-operation

DAERA has informed that applications for co-operation funding must now be submitted by Council on behalf of the LAG with the LAG as co-applicant. Similarly letters of offer from the LAG are to be issued to Council with the LAG as co-applicant. As the LAG does not hold a bank account, Council is the lead financial actor for the LAG on co-operation projects and is responsible for paying project invoices which are then claimed back through the LAG's RDP budget.

	<p>Update on projects:</p> <p><u>International Appalachian Trail</u> A second phase of technical support is being prepared led by Derry and Strabane Council. This phase will relate to preparation of final technical designs and specification which will be put to tender to obtain the quotes needed by the LAG to support a capital application.</p> <p><u>Lough Neagh</u> Pre-development stage has now completed and the three LAGs involved will meet on 5th February to discuss progressing to a second stage of technical support needed to finalise technical specifications for planned infrastructural works. Within Mid Ulster infrastructure works will focus on access improvements to the Lough around Washingbay and angling infrastructure at Portglenone.</p> <p>Rural Broadband The LAG has a budget of £350k for this Scheme however discussions are ongoing regarding the most effective roll out mechanism for delivery. Before any decisions are taken on this, the LAG would prefer to know the out-workings of where and how the £150m earmarked for broadband as part of the DUP/Conservative deal will be spent, to ensure there is no duplication of funding.</p> <p>17/18 Spend target The LAG’s spend target for 17/18 is £1.23m. Spend achieved to date in claims paid and pending is £480,000. The remaining balance of £750k is being targeted from spend profiled under the Rural Business Investment Scheme, Rural Services and the Village Renewal Scheme. Due to the timing of calls most of this spend is profiled for the last quarter of 17/18.</p>
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	<p><u>Financial & Human Resources Implications</u></p> <p>Financial: N/A</p> <p>Human: N/A</p>
4.2	<p><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>N/A</p>
4.3	<p><u>Risk Management Implications</u></p> <p>N/A</p>

5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Members are asked to approve the DAERA requirement for Council to act as the applicant on behalf of the LAG and accept letters of offer on behalf of the LAG for Co-operation projects. The LAG will act as co-signatory on Co-operation applications and letters of offer.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	N/A