

Mid Ulster Economic Development Action Plan 2021 / 2022

INTRODUCTION

This Economic Development Action Plan 2021-2022 sets out how this Council will invest in the recovery to help address the damage done to our local economy.

We are witnessing the economic impact of Covid-19 across Mid Ulster, with increased vacant properties on our high streets, significant impacts on sectors like retail and hospitality, manufacturing, engineering and construction as well as an anticipated rise in unemployment levels.

Against a complex and challenging backdrop, the purpose of this Action Plan is to focus on activity and actions, which will support our businesses, high streets and economic recovery. Partnership working and collaboration will be crucial in ensuring the Action Plan is delivered effectively.

This Action Plan has been influenced by the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-24, Community Plan 2017-27, Economic Development Plan and Mid Ulster Business Recovery Action Plan (2020) and reflects actions which local businesses have asked us to assist them with during 2021.

We are only too aware the pandemic is not over. Therefore, this Action Plan presents a range of flexible and agile support measures to assist businesses and communities across Mid Ulster as they emerge from the impact of Covid-19.

Mid Ulster Economic Development Action Plan 2021 /2022

Theme	Projects	Outputs	Methodology	Outcomes	Total Budget
Marketing &	1.1 "Welcome Back	Phase 1			
Promotion	Campaign" after lockdown	Initial marketing videos will focus on a 'Welcome Back Campaign' through Council's Social Media Channels: - 23/4/21 - Close Contact Services (reopening videos) - 30/4/21 - Non Essential Retail & Outdoor Hospitality (reopening videos) - 24/5/21* - Hospitality (reopening videos, press ads) *Subject to Govt. guidance	"Welcome Back" Videos recorded in association with local traders – rolled out via Council's social media channels to promote the key sectors as they reopen after lockdown.	 Encourage local residents to reconnect with their towns and village centres to support local traders as they return after lockdown Contribute to increased footfall in towns and villages. 	£50,000
	1.2 "Love Local Campaign"	Phase 2 Next phase of marketing videos will change to focus on a 'Love Local Campaign' - Links to Public Health messaging - A range of marketing activities linked to key retail periods - Promoting Government High Street Voucher Scheme (when available). - Seasonal marketing / shop local campaigns, including Small Business Saturday.	"Love Local" Videos recorded in association with local traders and pushed out via Council's social media channels. Outdoor Advertising Radio Press Advertising, etc.	 Demonstrate Council's commitment to town centre recovery by engaging with and recruiting local businesses to actively participate in local marketing campaigns. Support the development of the brand identity of the three main towns. 	
	1.3 Town Centre Music	Introduction of music in the 3 main towns at peak weekend shopping intervals for an initial period (to commence when permitted safe to do so – linked to Govt Guidance).	Small music groups and buskers.	Using music to create a welcoming ambiance in our town centres after lockdown.	

Business Support	2.1 Provision of Wi-Fi in 5 main towns, plus Bellaghy	2.1 Maintain free Wi-Fi in the five town centres of Coalisland, Cookstown, Dungannon, Maghera and Magherafelt, and Bellaghy.	2.1 Ongoing contributions to businesses hosting access points.	To improve and grow the retail offer in the five towns across the Mid Ulster district.	£15,361 ongoing Wi-Fi costs
	2.2 Provision of Reduced Christmas Car Parking Charges	2.2 Provision of reduced Christmas car parking charges in charged car parks.	2.2 Council approval to reduce parking charges for a 6-week period.	To encourage footfall to the five main towns in Mid Ulster District at Christmas.	£25,000
	2.3 Reducing Dereliction and Vacancy Levels in Dungannon Town Centre	2.3 An external town centre development management contactor to be employed for a 3-year period with the aim of reducing dereliction/vacancy levels in the town centre.	2.3 Council allocation of £120,000 towards a Dereliction Project in Dungannon over a 3 year period (2021/22 to 2023/24), subject to match funding from DFC.	Anticipated outputs are: Reduction in Town Centre Vacant Premises - 2% per annum £500,000 investment by Developers in Town Centre annually	£120,000 over 3 years.
	2.4 Mid Ulster Gift Card	2.4 An external organisation will be employed to assist with the set up and ongoing support of the development and delivery of Mid Ulster Gift Card (Minimum Term Contract 3 years with break clauses annually)	2.4 Integral element of Town Centre Recovery Plan	 Support independent retailers by promoting Mid Ulster's unique retail offering Lock in spend within Mid Ulster District Council area 	Circ. £57,000 (over 3 years) (2021/22 to 2023/24)
	2.5 Small Grants Business Marketing Scheme	2.5 Rollout of a Small Grants Business Marketing Scheme to a minimum of 500 Mid Ulster businesses	2.5 Support provided to local businesses to assist them embrace new marketing and digital capabilities as they return after lockdown.	Provision of revenue grants up to £300 to a minimum of 500 businesses for marketing and digital activities.	Minimum of £150,000 (Scheme budget may increase if additional monies are awarded from Govt. Depts).

Strategic Events	3.1 Calendar of Events in 5 town centres	3.1 Town Centres Events - (October-December 2021) subject to compliance with Government guidance. - Halloween in Dungannon - Halloween in Coalisland - Christmas Lights Switch On in Cookstown - Christmas Kingdom and Switch On in Dungannon - Christmas Market and Switch On in Magherafelt - Christmas Lights Switch On in Coalisland - Christmas Lights Switch On in Maghera	3.1 Officers Delivery, in conjunction with Events Team.	 Increased footfall / visitor numbers across the five towns. Increased profile & engagement with town centre businesses. 	£70,500 (excluding wages) Due to the pandemic no events will be held from April – Sept 2021. October – December 2021 events are subject to review based on Government Restrictions.
Physical Regeneration /Improving Infrastructure	4.1 Urban Regeneration Projects	4.1. Work associated with public realm schemes in Coalisland 4.1.2 Potential Coalisland Revitalisation Project	4.1 Partnership working with Technical & ICT Teams 4.2 Potential Revitalisation Scheme in Coalisland following Public Realm works in the town. Funding details to be confirmed with DfC.	 Enhanced townscape quality. Improve quality of life for people in the rural areas of the district 	Projects/Funding as per Council's Capital Budget previously agreed Potential scheme value (£) yet to be confirmed in writing by DfC

4.2 Rural Regeneration	4.2 Work in partnership with	4.2 Delivery of Rural	•	Creating new or	RDP Projects &
Projects	RDP to deliver Village Regeneration projects in Mid Ulster District over 4 years	Village Projects		improved infrastructure in rural areas to enhance the lives of rural dwellers.	Funding already agreed by Council
4.3 Town & Village Spruce Up Scheme (Year 3 of 4) 2021/22	4.3 Deliver the Town & Village Spruce Up Scheme for Mid Ulster towns & Villages	4.3 Officers work in partnership with Technical Services & ICT Team to deliver Projects. 4.3 Deliver Grant Scheme based on approved ranked list.	•	Enhanced properties for business owners in the towns and villages across the district.	£250,000 (grant aid) & £8,200 (architect fees) previously agreed by Council

Theme	Projects	Outputs	Methodology	Outcomes	Budget
Business Start and Entrepreneurship	1.1 Delivery of NI Business Start Up Programme ('GoForlt') (1 April 2021 – 31 March 2023) 1.2 Women in Business 'Yes You Can' (11 Council Collaboration Initiative)	1.1.1 264 client-led Business Plans provided to Mid Ulster entrepreneurs 1.1.2 158 jobs promoted as a result of support provided 1.1.3 55 females from Mid Ulster participating in 5 initiatives to drive female entrepreneurship	 Raise awareness and secure client participation through regional and local marketing activities Regularly monitor activity / performance and work with Lead Council (Lisburn &CCC) to address any issues Highlight if remedial action required if performance falls below target 	 Entrepreneurship stimulated and supported in Mid Ulster Statutory Jobs Target achieved Where relevant, on completion, clients to be signposted to Council's business support programmes to access follow-on support 	£55,772

Business	2.1 Gearing for	2.1 Supporting the	2.1 Promotion of	■ To promote the	£82,875
Sustainability	Growth	sustainability and growth of	Council support via	sustainability and growth	·
and Growth	Programme	730 Mid Ulster's businesses	range of channels to	of 285 businesses/social	(Council's net
		and social enterprises	encourage business	enterprises, supporting	cost is 20%)
	2.2 Tender Ready		participation	their recovery and	
	Programme	(730 covers entire period for		building their resilience,	4 Programmes
		Progs 1-4 duration April 2020 –	2.2 Management of	post-Covid	total cost
	2.3 Digital First	March 2023) and	delivery agent		£334,375
	Programme	Social Enterprise Programme April 2021 – Sept 2023	Contracts to ensure targets are achieved	■ 135 new jobs created	
	2.4 Transform			■ £900,000 economic	
	Programme	Output budget figures refers to 2021/22 only	2.3 Regular monitoring of	impact achieved (New work won, turnover	
	(Above programmes	,	delivery agents'	increased, online sales	
	funded by ERDF 60%;		performance and	increased)	
	Invest NI 20% &		spend against	·	
	Council 20%)		targets		
	2.5 Social Enterprise		2.4 Actions taken to		
	Programme (2021-		address any		
	23) Council funded		identified areas of		
			underperformance		
			2.5 Compliance with		
			funders'		
			requirements (ERDF		
			and Invest NI) to		
			ensure drawdown of		
			funding		

Business Information Service	3.1 Mid Ulster District Council's Business E-shot Service 3.2 Economic Development Officers' signposting and support service for business	3.1 1,500 Mid Ulster businesses signing up to receive regular eshots outlining key support and funding opportunities and information re Covid-19 supports and EU Exit legislation 3.2 Businesses contacting economic development unit are triaged by officers and receive assistance to identify support provision	 Officers' ongoing research & information gathering on business supports. Targeted promotion of the service to Mid Ulster businesses to encourage more to sign up. Funding and support opportunities also promoted on Council's website and social media channels (where appropriate) 	Registered businesses kept informed of new funding and support opportunities on a regular basis	Staff time
Supporting Employability and Skills	ESF Funded Projects 4.1 Step Up to Sustainable Employment Programme (SUSE+) (South West College) 4.2 Job Match Programme (Network Personnel) 4.3 Up for Work Programme (Network Programme)	4.1 Supporting Employability and Skills in Mid Ulster by contributing match funding to 4 Mid Ulster employability and skills programmes 4.2 Programmes: (April 2018 – March 2022)	4.1 Promotion of programmes via range of channels to encourage recruitment of participants 4.2 Regular monitoring of lead project promoter's outcomes and spend against targets	■ Employability prospects of 300 individuals improved; participants supported to re-engage with the labour market by: accessing employment/ self- employment; training and/or Further Education	£49,250

	4.4 Exploring Enterprise 4 Programme (3 Mid Ulster Enterprise Agencies)				
Business Events	5.1 'Programme Related Events': - 3 No. Digital Webinars - 1 No. Tender Ready Seminar - 1 No. Social Enterprise Workshop	5.1 Five events delivered to a minimum of 120 participants	5.1 Work with Programme delivery agents to deliver and promote 5 business events to a minimum of 90 participants	 Building the profile and capacity of Mid Ulster's businesses and social enterprises through the provision of a range of practical support events covering key business areas 	£17,000
	5.2 Mid Ulster Enterprise Week Events (Nov 2021)	5.2 Minimum of eight events providing information on a range of key business areas delivered to 240 participants	5.2 Council delivery and promotion of a programme of at least 8 events	Provide up to 10 key events for businesses during Mid Ulster Enterprise Week to assist businesses as they recover from the pandemic	£25,000-£30,000
	5.3 Decade of Anniversaries Event (March 2022)	5.3 "The Impact of Women Over the Last 100 Years" – Event to celebrate the key role of women over last 100 years and acknowledging key landmarks in our history such as the right to vote.	5.3 Delivery of two key events to celebrate the valuable contribution made by women, both currently and historically as leaders, entrepreneurs, activists, visionaries and innovators.	Two key events to take place (in North of District and South of District of Mid Ulster – locations to be determined)	£6,000

	5.4 Mid Ulster Business Awards 2021 supported, (subject to Council conditions) 5.5 NI Chamber of Commerce Regional Networking Event (Mid Ulster)	5.4 Eight Mid Ulster business finalists nominated 5.5 100 business leaders attending event	5.4 Council Sponsorship of 'Best SME 2021' Award Category (to be agreed by Committee once details are received) 5.5 Work with the NI Chamber to promote and deliver a regional event		Mid Ulster Business Awards £1,750
Supporting cross border initiatives	6.1 Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN)	6.1 Strategic development of central border region supported, including projects: - Digital Connectivity - EU Exit - Creative Industries & Tourism - Roads Infrastructure - Urban & Rural Development Cross-Border Linkages 6.2 Collective Advocacy on behalf of the Region 6.3 Cross border linkages enhanced	6.1 Council's contribution is paid in two equal instalments, subject to Council being provided with the requisite documentation and Progress Updates, which will be furnished to Development Committee twice annually.	 Eight Councils from north and south involved in cross border development (Mid Ulster District Council, Fermanagh and Omagh Council, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council and Monaghan, Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim and Cavan County Councils). Strategic initiatives progressed on a cross border basis 	£15,000
Renewable Engine / Strategic Collaborations	7.1 Renewable Engine Project (funded by Interreg V)	 7.1 Facilitate knowledge transfer, technology development and innovation in 8 companies 7.2 8 enterprises co-operating with research institutes and participating in cross border 	 Develop an internationally recognised cross- border research supercluster in Renewable Energy and Advanced Manufacturing technologies 	7.1 Work with project lead (South West College) and project partners: IT Sligo, Queen's University, Catapult centre, University of Strathclyde, Manufacturing NI, Action Renewables.	Overall budget €6.1m (2017-21)

transnational research into renewable energies	involving four research institutes.	
7.3 Research Report completed into future of renewables in Mid Ulster's engineering sector		

Theme	Projects	Outputs	Methodology	Outcomes	Budget
Strategic Projects	1.1 Delivery of Mid South West (MSW) Regional Economic Strategy	1.1 Develop a range of strategic collaborative economic development projects as part of the Growth Deal. The following proposition papers, relevant to Mid Ulster, have been prepared and are currently with Government Depts for comment. • Lands at Desertcreat • A29 Cookstown Bypass • Engineering & Skills Innovation Centre • NI Agri-Food Robotics Centre • Cookstown Health & Care Hub • Development of the O'Neill Tourism Proposition • Sperrins Future Search • Industrial Investment Challenge Fund (MSW wide) • High Streets Challenge Fund (MSW wide)	Continue to work in partnership with Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon and Fermanagh & Omagh local authorities. Governance arrangements via the MSW Steering Group	Improved productivity and regional competitiveness	Growth Deal, Complementary Fund and other funding streams as appropriate.

Strategic Projects	1.1 To address barriers to economic recovery and growth to include Industrial land supply investment in strategic	1.1 Preparation of robust Business Case to support key investment to resolve the industrial land crisis in Mid Ulster.	1.1 To continue to engage with central government and present a strong case for the need for	•	Improved opportunities to support the growth of local businesses.	£7,000
	road infrastructure and funding.		intervention.	•	Increased investment and creation of new business and job opportunities.	
		1.2 Completion of disposal of lands at Drumcoo, Dungannon to enable additional workspace provision.	1.2 Continue to work with DEC to expand their managed workspace portfolio.	•	Ensure an appropriate supply of employment land and premises	
		1.3 Identify potential industrial sites in Mid Ulster and ensure appropriate allocations in LDP.	1.3 Continue to work with project partners Invest NI, DfI, etc)	•	Improved road infrastructure will support economic growth across the council area	
		1.4 Progress the A29 Bypass to Draft Orders Stage. Build the case for a funding package to progress a bypass for Dungannon.	1.4 High level lobbying to ensure a bypass for Dungannon is included in the emerging RSTNTP.	•	Improved awareness of funding opportunities to support and sustain the local business base	
		1.5.1 Continue to identify and highlight to government the business sectors most in need of financial supports.	1.5.1 Work closely with central government and engage with business community			
		1.5.2 Continue to identify and share funding opportunities to support businesses and input to development of the Peace Plus and Shared Prosperity Fund.				

Supporting skills and apprenticeships	1.1 To provide appropriate support to the industry-led MEGA Network	1.1 Delivery of MEGA Collaborative Growth Work plan and marketing activities. Development of a new 2-year MEGA Development Plan. Delivery of a Mid Ulster Apprenticeship Event during NI	1.1 Work in partnership with MEGA and Invest NI.	 Contribute to the sustainable recovery of the manufacturing and engineering sector. Additional funding support secured to sustain MEGA 	£27,500
	1.2 To address skills and employability challenges facing the economic recovery	Apprenticeship Week (April 2021). 1.2 Establishment of new Labour Market Partnership (LMP) involving key partners and Work Plan developed. Strategic Assessment of labour market needs and identification of issues and priorities.	1.2 Work with partners in the Skills Forum / statutory, private and community sectors	 Contribute to increased skills levels and access to labour Skills and employability issues improved by stronger partnership working and coordination. 	Awaiting funding award from DfC.
Supporting skills and apprenticeships	1.3 Coalisland Great Places Project	1.3 The project is exploring the rich manufacturing legacy of the people of Coalisland and East Tyrone through a series of initiatives delivered in the local community by Lough Neagh Partnership.	1.3 Council is a member of the Steering group	 Community Archaeology Programme Field & Placename interpretation Poetry, Songs & Stories The story of manufacturing in East Tyrone Introduction to fine craft skills Community Heritage Education Community Plays The way forward - sustaining our Great Place Exhibitions 	Project jointly supported by the Heritage Lottery £312,100 and Council £30,000

Theme	Projects	Outputs	Methodology	Outcomes	Budget
Business support	1.1 Full Fibre NI (FFNI)	1.1 £.3.4m of full fibre	1.1 Council part of	Delivery of fibre	Council Capital
/ attracting		broadband infrastructure	10 Council	connectivity to 92 of the	Funding
investment			consortium	Council's own sites.	
Business support	1.1 Project Stratum	1.1 No. 12,289 premises	1.1 Broadband	354 premises officially	No Council
/ attracting		eligible for FTTP in MIDC	Working Group	remain outside the scope	Funding
investment				of Project Stratum.	involved.
			1.2 Broadband		
			Survey	Need to address the	
				significant gaps in the	
			1.3 Meetings with	rollout of Project Stratum.	
			DfE & Fibrus		
				Work in progress.	
Rural Business	1.1 Micro business	1.1 Small capital grants for	1.1 Open call and	Build production capacities	Funding will be
support /	development scheme	business development activities	assessment	and improve turnover	provided from
attracting	(TRPSI)			within the rural micro	DAERA in
investment				business sector in Mid	2021/22.
				Ulster	
Mid Ulster	2.1 Rural Business	2.1 Delivery of the LAGs Local	Partnership delivery	 95 rural businesses 	LAG allocation of
LEADER RDP	Investment	Rural Development Strategy	between the LAG	supported with grant	£11.16m for the
Programme	Scheme		and Council	aid of £2.83m	period 2016/22
2016-2020					(£1.83m for admin
	2.2 Rural Services			 18 community hub 	delivery and
(2021/22	Scheme			projects supported to	£9.33m for project
activities relate				the value of £2.68m	funding)
to programme	2.3 Village Renewal				Council to Inla
closure)	Scheme			45 Village Renewal	Council to lobby
				projects supported to	for Rural
				the value of £3.5m	Development
					activities under
					the new Rural
					Affairs Policy

CONCLUSION

This Economic Development Plan contains a wide range of actions and commitments that will drive recovery during the pandemic and build the foundations for sustained recovery within Mid Ulster.

To help us deliver the Action Plan we recognise the importance of support from all our key partners across the public, private, community and education sectors.

We acknowledge there are many challenges ahead in the future and over the coming weeks and months we will continue to lobby government to ensure the necessary interventions are brought forward to support those sectors most affected by the pandemic. This will be vital to protect local businesses and sustain jobs within the district.

Approval is sought from Members to adopt the Mid Ulster Economic Development Action Plan 2021-2022 and the projects and budgets contained herein.

Fiona McKeown Head of Economic Development Mid Ulster District Council

28 April 2021

Appendix 2 Mid Ulster Business Recovery Short Term Action Plan

Initiatives	Actions	ED Budget (£)
Marketing &	Support initial re-opening of businesses following Covid-19 lockdown	£50,000
Promotional	To demonstrate Council's commitment to town centre recovery	
Activities	by engaging with and recruiting local town centre businesses to	
	actively participate in the campaign.	
	To encourage local residents to reconnect with their towns and	
	village centres thus supporting local businesses.	
	Phase 1	
	Initial marketing videos will focus on a 'Welcome Back Campaign'	
	through Council's Social Media Channels:	
	- 23/4/21 - Close Contact Services (reopening videos)	
	- 30/4/21 - Non Essential Retail & Outdoor Hospitality	
	(reopening videos)	
	- 24/5/21* - Hospitality (reopening videos, press ads)	
	*Subject to government guidance	
	Phase 2	
	Messaging will change to a 'Love Local Campaign'	
	- Linkages to Public Health messaging	
	- A range of marketing activities linked to key retail periods	
	- Outdoor Advertising, Social Media Videos and Press Ads	
	- Promoting Government's High Street Voucher Scheme	
Mid Ulster Gift	- Procurement Specification prepared in readiness to tender the	£57,000 (over 3
Card	Mid Ulster Gift Card Scheme. Appoint suitable delivery partner.	years)
	- Business liaison to encourage sign up and free participation in	,
	the scheme.	
	- Gift Card Scheme Launch and associated marketing.	
	- Liaison with larger companies to encourage corporate	
	purchases of the Gift Card to distribute as gifts to employees	
	(eg, at Christmas).	
Small Grants	- Small grants "business marketing scheme" proposes to award	Circ. £150,000
Business	revenue grants of up to £300 to a minimum of 500 business, on	(scheme funding
Marketing	a first come, first served basis until funding is allocated.	may increase if
Scheme	- The scheme aims to assist businesses with their marketing	additional
	efforts as they recover from the pandemic, eg, developing	monies are
	improved online presence, click&collect, promotional activity,	made available
	merchandising and window displays, use of	by Govt Depts)
Live Music	influencers/vloggers/bloggers, etc.	Circ. CO OOO
Live wusic	 Live music (small groups/buskers) in our 3 main towns at peak shopping times on Fridays/Saturdays for an initial period (will 	Circ. £8,000
	commence when permitted to do so based on Govt Guidance).	
Mid Ulster Town	- Phase 3 (2021/22) - 72 letters of offer issued to businesses to	£250,000
& Village Spruce	the value of £250,000.	2200,000
Up Scheme	tile value of £250,000.	
Town Centre	- Delivery of Town Centre Events in 5 towns from Oct – Dec 2021	£76,000
Events	(delivery subject to compliance with Govt. Guidance).	210,000
	(don'tory dabject to dompharide with dovt. daladiloc).	
	GRAND TOTAL	£591,000