

Report on	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Christmas Off Street, Car Parking Charges - Dungannon and Magherafelt. 2. TV Christmas Promotional Campaign for Retail and Hospitality. 3. Tourism Trade and Consumer Shows/Events 2023/2024 4. Project Gigabit – Public Review 5. ICBAN – Peace Plus - DS3 Smart Towns and Villages
Date of Meeting	14 September 2023
Reporting Officer	Assistant Director of Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes.

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 provide Members with an update on key activities as detailed below.
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>Christmas Off Street Car Parking Charges Dungannon & Magherafelt</p> <p>For the past eight years, a Christmas car parking scheme has been implemented in Dungannon and Magherafelt town centres to boost trading during the key Christmas period.</p> <p>Following positive feedback from businesses and the public, it is proposed to bring into effect a similar scheme this Christmas to support the local retail sector.</p>
2.2	<p>TV Christmas Promotional Campaign for Retail and Hospitality</p> <p>Council wishes to support our vibrant retail and hospitality businesses during the festive period and therefore, wish to develop an engaging and high profile TV Christmas Promotional Campaign to attract footfall to our town centres.</p>

<p>2.3</p>	<p>Tourism Trade and Consumer Shows/Events 2023/2024</p> <p>The tourism team continue to work in association with Tourism NI, Tourism Ireland and other strategic partners to maximise tourism promotion of our key attractions, experiences and businesses targeting core ROI, UK, European and US markets.</p> <p>In the aftermath of the covid pandemic, most promotions and events are now back to a fully in-person model, with little to no virtual events. Through research, experience, and stakeholder engagement, the MUDC tourism team have identified key promotions and shows that are important to attend.</p>
<p>2.4</p>	<p>Project Gigabit – Public Review</p> <p>The Department for the Economy (DfE) recently undertook a public review on the broadband intervention project known as Project Gigabit, which launched on 5 June and ended on 6 July 2023.</p>
<p>2.5</p>	<p>ICBAN – Peace Plus - DS3 Smart Towns and Villages</p> <p>The Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN) is currently working with partner Councils to develop and submit a major funding bid under the Peace Plus Investment Area 2.4: Smart Towns and Villages, which is anticipated to open in November 2023.</p>
<p>3.0</p>	<p>Main Report</p>
<p>3.1</p>	<p>Christmas Off Street Car Parking Charges Dungannon and Magherafelt</p> <p>As part of this year’s Christmas Promotional Campaign, officers have considered options for a car-parking scheme in Dungannon and Magherafelt town centres. The proposed pricing arrangements are aimed at encouraging footfall and spend, boosting town centre trade during the critical festive trading period – one of the busiest times of the year. Following positive feedback from trader groups, it is proposed to implement a similar scheme to last year as follows:</p> <p>The first three hours parking for 10 pence in <u>all</u> Pay & Display Car Parks for a six-week period from Saturday 25 November 2023 to Saturday 6 January 2024. Total cost to Council of implementation is approximately £24,000.</p> <p>The normal tariff is 40p for 1 hour (except for Central in Magherafelt, which has a tariff of 40p per three hours) and the proposed pricing arrangements are intended to boost town centre trade at one of the busiest times of the year. The very nominal fee of 10p for the first three hours is being charged to prevent “all day parkers” and ensure town centre car parks are available to visitors and shoppers.</p>

Car parks included in the scheme are:

- Dungannon - Ann Street East, Castle Hill, Perry Street West and Scotch Street North
- Magherafelt - Rainey Street, Union Road and Central.

3.2 TV Christmas Promotional Campaign for Retail and Hospitality

Council wishes to procure the services of a professional company to design and deliver a Christmas promotional video suitable for TV and other social media channels. This will involve investigating and securing TV advertising and YouTube pay per click for the Christmas Promotional Video. The promotional video will be used in marketing campaigns during this period. The TV campaign will enhance the profile of the retail and hospitality offering in Mid Ulster as a must visit experience destination this Christmas.

3.3 Tourism Trade and Consumer Shows/Events 2023/2024

The key shows and events the tourism team have/plan to attend are as follows:

- [Clogher Valley Show](#), 26 July 2023 - **£1,000** (completed).
- [Flavours of Ireland, London](#), 5 October 2023 - The full cost of participation at this event is €520/£452 plus VAT, however, Tourism Ireland will support 75% of the participation fee, therefore the cost to participate is £113 plus VAT per industry member. Flights approx.: £45pp. Hotel approx: £300 (1 night). **Total cost: £500 approx – recommended one member of tourism staff attends.**
- [Irish Tour Operators Association \(ITOA\) workshop, Armagh City Hotel](#) - 15 November 2023 - **£240 – recommend one member of tourism staff attends.**
- [World Travel Market, London](#), 6 – 8 November 2023 – cost of stand £2,500 approx. Flights approx. £60pp. Hotel approx., £1,200 for one room 4 nights. **Total costs: £3,760 approx – recommend one member of staff attends.**
- [Holiday World, Dublin](#), 26 – 28 January 2024 – **€2,154 approx – recommend two members of staff attend.**
- [Travel News Market, The Nordics, Sweden](#), February 2024 – cost of stand £344 +VAT, flights: £103pp approx., Hotel: £350 approx. **Total spend: approx. £797 – recommend one member of staff attends.**
- [Meet The Buyer, Belfast](#), March 2024 – **Price TBC (staff mileage/expenses) – recommend two members of staff attend.**

The tourism team will continue to host familiarisation trips for media, influencers, and tour operators to promote our current and new products and newly developed tourism experiences.

Outcomes from Tourism staff attendance at Events and Shows in the last financial year;

World Travel Market (London November 2022)

- Launched the new Loughinsholin Cluster in London (previously known as Seamus Heaney Cluster)
- El Travel (US Tour Operator) - hosted a joint familiarisation visit with Loughinsholin Cluster and Visit Mid Ulster – Friday 24 Feb 2023

Meet the Buyer (Belfast March 2023)

- Holiday Ireland Hotels - “New Year’s” tour scheduled for OM in December 2023
- Prime Tours (Dubai) - tour scheduled at OM, Beaghmore and Embrace Tours October 2023
- Pursuing new Photography Tour Group at OM - group series commencing 2024.
- Alainn Tours (Sligo) - Hosting familiarisation visit to OM 26 August 2023
- Prime Tours (Dubai) hoping to add Mid Ulster to future tour series.

Clogher Valley Show (July 2023)

- Launch of the new Visit Mid Ulster tourism map.
- Data capture for tourism ezine.

Nordics Workshop (Copenhagen February 2023)

- Mid Ulster Tourism featured on Tourism Ireland travel podcast.
- Familiarization Trip organised from this workshop in March 2023 – 12 Tour Operators from Nordics Region visited Mid Ulster.
- To date one confirmed Tour Operator – Claus Hebor - has added Mid Ulster to their Tour series as a result of Mid Ulster attendance at event.
- International influencer trips have taken place in Mid Ulster with social media coverage and a new audience reached as an outcome.
- Increased awareness of Mid Ulster Tourism offering in the Nordics market.

3.4

Project Gigabit – Public Review

The Department for the Economy (DfE) had previously asked all Councils for assistance to support awareness raising of their Public Review on the broadband intervention project known as Project Gigabit. The public review was open for one month only from 5 June 2023 until 6 July 2023. This new intervention is designed to pick up any premises that could not avail of Project Stratum.

Council's Economic Development Team did raise awareness of this Public Review across our district, via social media channels, business and community networks/databases/newsletters, etc.

Members and Officers were not satisfied that the review timeframe was long enough and also wished to have sight of the datasets to allow Council Officers to examine if there were still going to be gaps in provision.

Members recommended previously that the Council Chair write to DfE to seek a two-month extension to the consultation period, until 6 September 2023, to allow time for greater awareness raising to take place about the Project Gigabit consultation.

Members further recommended that Council request from DfE the recent information they had collected from broadband infrastructure providers to help identify and map the addresses/postcodes where remaining gaps in broadband provision still exist.

DfE responded to the Chair's letter to say they were unable to provide an extension period to the consultation, however, they would accept from MUDC any ongoing issues raised.

One such issue has been raised a Council Officer regarding the Clogher Valley area, post the closing date of 6 July 2023 and was forwarded to DfE. DfE have since advised they have added these premises to the Project Gigabit list.

Correspondence has been issued to all Council Members to make them aware that if there are any ongoing issues related to Project Gigabit they should contact Council's Economic Regeneration Services Manager.

DfE has supplied Council with a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) to sign prior to releasing the Project Gigabit datasets. The NDA (**Appendix 1**) is currently being reviewed by Council Legal Services team. Once this is completed, delegated authority is sought for the Chief Executive to sign and return the NDA to DfE, which will then enable DfE to release the Project Gigabit datasets to Council.

3.5 ICBAN – Peace Plus - DS3 Smart Towns and Villages

ICBAN staff is currently developing a funding bid in association with partner Councils, Southern Regional College, Western Development Commission and International Centre for Local & Regional Development, under Investment Area 2.4: Smart Towns and Villages, which is anticipated will open to applications in November 2023.

The application aims to strategically invest in digital services, digital supports and digital spaces (DS³) to modernise, grow and future-proof a cluster of challenged towns and villages in the Central Border Region. The six themes currently under consideration for inclusion at this development stage (and still

	<p>subject to change) are:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data Investment and Monitoring Platform 2. Investing in new digital hubs and enhancing the offering and experience of existing hub facilities 3. Enhancing the Urban / Village Centre Experience 4. Twin Transition towards Greener and Smarter Centres 5. Digital Mentoring Programme 6. Learning and Sharing <p>ICBAN holds regular meetings with all partners.</p> <p>ICBAN now wishes to procure the services of a contractor to assist in co-ordinating the final submission to Peace Plus under Investment Area 2.4, which is anticipated to open November 2023.</p> <p>Mid Ulster Council has been asked to provide a partner funding contribution of up to £1,500 (sterling) towards costs associated with employment of a contractor to coordinate a major funding bid (circ. €6 million) on behalf of the ICBAN region.</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Other Considerations</p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p>
	<p>Financial</p> <p>Christmas Off Street Car Parking Charges Dungannon and Magherafelt - £24,000 available within the Economic Development Budget this financial year.</p> <p>TV Christmas Promotional Campaign for Retail and Hospitality - The estimated cost for the TV Christmas promotion is approximately £35,000 which has been earmarked in the Economic Development budget.</p> <p>Tourism Trade and Consumer Shows/Events 2023/2024 – Approx tourism budget of £10,000 earmarked to cover all costs including stand hire, travel, overnight accommodation, and relevant expenses related to staff travelling.</p> <p>ICBAN – Peace Plus - DS3 Smart Towns and Villages - Funding contribution of up to £1,500 (sterling) towards costs associated with employment of a contractor to coordinate a major funding bid (circ. €6 million) on behalf of the ICBAN region.</p>
	<p>Human - Officer time</p>

	Risk Management – Officers will manage delivery of programmes in line with current Governance arrangements.
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications
	Rural Needs Implications
5.0	Recommendation(s)
	It is recommended that Members:
5.1	<p>Christmas Off Street, Car Parking Charges Dungannon and Magherafelt</p> <p>Approve the temporary reduced tariff for the First 3 Hours of 10 pence in all Off Street Pay and Display Car Parks in Dungannon and Magherafelt from Saturday 25 November 2023 to Saturday 6 January 2024 (6-week period) at a cost to Council of £24,000.</p>
5.2	<p>TV Christmas Promotional Campaign for Retail and Hospitality</p> <p>Approve the development of a high profile Christmas Promotional Campaign (involving TV and other social media channels) to support the Retail and Hospitality sectors during the festive period at an approximate cost of £35,000 with funding from Council’s Economic Development budget.</p>
5.3	<p>Tourism Trade and Consumer Shows/Events 2023/2024</p> <p>Approve officer attendance at the various Tourism Trade and Consumer Shows/Events in 2023/2024 as detailed in the report, at a cost of circa. £10,000 from Council’s Tourism budget.</p>
5.4	<p>Project Gigabit – Public Review</p> <p>5.4.1 Note update on Project Gigabit.</p> <p>5.4.2 Approve delegated authority be given to Council’s Chief Executive to sign and return the Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) to the Department for the Economy to enable release of Project Gigabit datasets, upon Council’s legal team having satisfactorily completed their review of the NDA.</p>
5.5	<p>ICBAN – Peace Plus - DS3 Smart Towns and Villages</p> <p>5.5.1 Note progress of funding bid.</p>

	<p>5.5.2 Approve a partner funding contribution to the Irish Central Border Area Network of up to £1,500 (sterling) towards costs associated with employment of a contractor to coordinate a major funding bid (circ. €6 million) on behalf of the ICBAN region, related to Smart Towns and Villages.</p>
<p>6.0</p>	<p>Documents Attached & References</p>
	<p>Appendix 1 - DfE Digital Infrastructure – Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA)</p>