

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM ACHIEVEMENTS 2021/2022

This Report provides a thematic overview of the comprehensive range of work delivered across the Economic Development and Tourism section in 2021/2022, highlighting some of the year's achievements.

THEME 1: ENABLING ECONOMIC GROWTH

- Business Programmes

NI Business Start Up Programme 'Go For It'



In the challenging twelve month period to March 2022, there were 272 local entrepreneurs supported to develop Business Plans, promoting 163 jobs in the Mid Ulster area.

Suite of Four Business Programmes 'Advance your business in Mid Ulster'

Launched in August 2020, these are designed to build the capacity, resilience and growth prospects of 690 Mid Ulster micro and small businesses (<49 employees) to Dec 2022.



Gearing for Growth Programme ... offers up to 5 days' support in key business areas (business planning, effective pricing, financial management, steps to exporting, marketing, social media, customer care and industry standards)

Tender Ready Programme ... provides up to 5 days' assistance for businesses to win new work, develop compliant tendering documentation to industry standards, respond to live tendering opportunities, and mobilise contracts



Digital First Programme ... provides up to 4 days' support to build businesses' digital capacity, grow their online presence and sales through adopting new digital strategies and technologies

Transform Programme ... delivers support of up to 5 days' to help businesses enhance their attractiveness to the labour market and implement tailored and sustainable measures to recruit and retain staff and also flex in response to the impact of Covid.

By March 2022:

- 556 businesses are participating
- 131 jobs created (equating to a value of £2,709,816)
- 16 businesses have won 19 tenders (total value of £7,777,400)
- 22 businesses have been accepted by Invest NI as Quality Referrals



Mid Ulster Social Enterprise Programme (2021/23)

In May 2021, Council appointed Workspace Enterprises to deliver the new Social Enterprise Programme, which is currently providing support to 16 new and existing social enterprises in Mid Ulster (to support 40 by September 2023).

Mid Ulster Rural Business Development Scheme 2020 (RBDS)

The Rural Business Development Scheme is funded under the DAERA Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation (TRPSI) initiative and aims to support the sustainability, survival and development of rurally based micro businesses across Northern Ireland by offering a small capital grant at 50% up to £4,999.



In 2021/22:

- 93 rural micro businesses received a letter of offer from Mid Ulster District Council to the value of £306,959
- Match funding by project promoters resulted in a minimum of £600,000 investment by rural micro businesses in business development and recovery activities

Mid Ulster Trailers – one of the businesses supported under Mid Ulster's Rural Business Development Grants Scheme

Business Events

Digital First Webinars

April/May 2021 & Feb/March 2022, the Digital First Programme delivered four Digital Webinars to **160 participants**. The Webinars focussed on the topics of Website Development, Social Media, Ecommerce and SEO.



Tender Ready Webinars

Three webinars were delivered on 16, 18 and 23 November 2021, as part of the Tender Ready Programme to offer practical guidance on procurement issues for businesses, and were attended by **143 participants**.

Mid Ulster Enterprise Week 2021 (8 – 12 November 2021)



Ten free webinars and one in-person event were delivered to just over 600 people; a further 380 have viewed recordings of the webinars via the Council's YouTube channel. The week kicked off with David Meade's 'Lead with Your Head'; other webinars included 'Inspiring Innovators' (a Mid South West event), 'Enhancing Your Personal Brand using Social Media' and 'How to succeed in a Virtual World'.

Council's E-zine Service to Businesses

Over the year, Council issued **42 detailed e-zines** to registered businesses on Mid Ulster's Business Directory. This service is provided free to businesses and details information, as it emerged, on key issues such as latest government advice and guidance on Covid regulations and recovery grants, EU Exit changes, as well as any other events, opportunities and sources of support for Mid Ulster businesses.

THEME 2: ENABLING SKILLS & EMPLOYABILITY

MEGA (Manufacturing and Engineering Growth & Advancement) Collaborative Network



MEGA has grown from its original 8-member collaboration into a network that is actively engaged with over 60 manufacturing and engineering companies across the Mid Ulster area. During 2021-22, MEGA undertook a Strategic Review, which set out a new three year Strategic Action Plan (2022-25) for MEGA as a response to the evidenced needs of Mid Ulster's manufacturing and engineering sector.

Key achievements of particular note include:

- The establishment of the Industrial Training Centre (ITC) in partnership with South West College (SWC);
- The establishment of the MEGA degree apprenticeship in partnership with University of Ulster (UU) Magee campus - 14 Degree Apprenticeship positions.
- The raising of additional investment in MEGA-related activities to support the Manufacturing and Engineering sector;
- The establishment of 218 new apprenticeship positions available with MEGA companies in 2022;
- The co-ordination of sectoral communications, industry collaboration, and community response during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic; and
- Winning the 2021 Mid Ulster Business Excellence Award for Excellence in People Development;

Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP)

Council has agreed to participate in the development and delivery of a Local Labour Market Partnership (LMP) under the Employability NI Programme. The aim of LMPs is to improve employability outcomes and labour market conditions locally by working through coordinated, collaborative, multiagency partnerships. In October 2021, the Council formed a **Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP)**, which is industry-led comprising senior business leaders representing all of our key industry sectors across Mid Ulster as well as representatives from the Education Sector, Invest NI, DfC, Trade Union, Mid Ulster Strategic Community Forum and elected members.



The Mid Ulster LMP completed a strategic assessment of the local labour market and following a period of robust stakeholder engagement developed an Interim Employability Action Plan 2022-23, which was approved by the Regional LMP Board in March 2022.

ESF Employability & Skills Programmes

Following the success of the three-year ESF1 Programmes (2015/18), Council committed to a providing match funding for a further four years (2018/22) towards:

- Step Up to Sustainable Employment Programme (SUSE+)
- Exploring Enterprise 4 Programme
- Up for Work Programme
- Job Match Programme

At the end of the **7 years** of match funding towards ESF Projects, Council funding of £329,713 has leveraged £9,824,090 and resulted in a total investment of £10,153,803:



- Supporting 3,300 participants
- Helping 1,127 people into employment
- 6,548 qualifications being achieved by participants
- 598 participants progressing to Further Education / training

THEME 3: ENABLING URBAN & RURAL REGENERATION

Mid Ulster Village Renewal Scheme

Council continued with the roll out of the Village Renewal Scheme throughout 2021/22 funded by DAERA with match funding from Mid Ulster Council. The programme was managed and administered via Mid Ulster Rural Development Partnership and the Local Action Group (LAG). £3.75m in grant aid from DAERA was received, with additional match funding from Council, which resulted in a total investment of £5.9m across the 50 village renewal projects in Mid Ulster. Some notable flagship projects completed in 2021/22 including Ballyronan Marina refurbishment, Maghera 4G pitch and Fivemiletown Round Lake redevelopment, as well as other schemes in Galbally, Broughderg, Tamnamore, Eglish, Clonoe, Brocagh, Stewartstown, etc.



**Stewartstown
Galbally**





Eglish



Maghera 4G Pitch



Ballyronan Marina Refurbishment



Round Lake Redevelopment, Fivemiletown

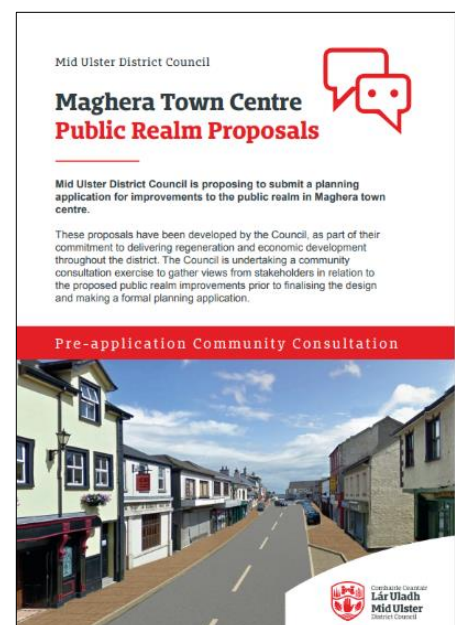
Public Realm Schemes

Coalisland Public Realm Scheme was completed and launched in March 2022 by the Minister for Communities, Deirdre Hargey.



Council's Public Health and Infrastructure Dept has worked alongside Council's Economic Development team to progress a public realm scheme in Maghera.

The outline design for Maghera Public Realm Scheme has been agreed. The Pre Application Notification for Planning has been carried out and the designs are ready to be submitted to Planning.



Coalisland Revitalisation Project

Following the Public Realm Scheme in Coalisland, a further funding was received from DFC to carry out a Revitalisation Scheme in the town. The project involved the development of a new town centre brand for the town, the purchase of branded promotional materials, festive lighting and Christmas tree as well as improvement works to the Canal Walkway.

Redevelopment Maghera High School Site

The former High School site is owned by Council has been identified as a strategic site for economic development purposes within the Maghera Development Framework Plan 2017-30. Planning applications are currently being considered by DfI with regard to the construction of a number of industrial units on fully serviced sites and the creation of a new access road and installing associated utility services.

Gas to the West

Council representatives engage with Gas to the West representatives to be kept informed of the significant works being carried out in the towns of Coalisland, Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt. Works to connect homes and businesses to the network in the towns is ongoing.

Mid Ulster Town & Village Business Spruce Up Scheme (2019-2022)

62 schemes were completed through Phase 3 with a total investment of £214,485.57. Council Grant Aid of £214,485.57 has leveraged a total of £117,875.35 private sector investment.

A further 9 schemes are expected to be completed by June 2022 as part of Phase 3. The total project cost of the remaining schemes is expected to be £52,595.20 with Council Grant aid of £35,872.15 leveraging private sector investment of £16,723.05.



Through the delivery of Phases 1, 2 & 3 of Mid Ulster Town & Village Business Spruce Up Scheme (2019-2022) 175 properties were enhanced, resulting in a total of £995,984.07 spent on improving properties in towns and villages. This included a total of £626,450.27 of Council grant aid and £369,533.81 of private sector investment.

Mid Ulster Covid 19 Marketing Scheme

The Mid Ulster Business Marketing Grant Scheme was launched in August 2021 to support and aid the economic recovery of local businesses in the district. During this time, businesses could apply for a marketing grant, up to a maximum of £300, to help assist their recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. In total 670 businesses were awarded a total of £141,776.27 in funding from the Council.

Marketing & Promotion

Marketing Campaigns were delivered for the town centres at key periods as part of the town centre recovery plan using print media, outdoor advertising and social media as the key channels.

Mid Ulster Gift Card

The new Mid Ulster Gift Card was launched on Monday 8 November 2021. To date 191 businesses are registered across the District, with £25k worth of cards purchased, including Council leisure facilities and cultural venues, with more expected to register over the next few months. Mid Ulster Gift Cards can be collected free of charge from Ranfurly House, Dungannon, The Burnavon, Cookstown and The Bridewell in Magherafelt. Members of the public can then choose their card amount (£) and upload the value by visiting www.midulstergiftcard.com. Alternatively, cards can be purchased online at the website address shown above.



Music in Town Centres

Music was provided in Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt Town Centres every weekend in September 2021.

Shop Local Campaign – Christmas 2021

To coincide with the virtual Christmas lights switch on a two week “Shop Local” campaign ran with outdoor advertising. This campaign also promoted the Mid Ulster Gift Card.



Christmas Activities 2021

Due to government guidelines the traditional Christmas Switch-On events could not be held. A virtual Christmas Lights switch on video was posted on social media on Friday 26 November. To encourage people visit the towns entertainment was provided in the three main towns on three Saturdays before Christmas. This included pop up entertainment in Cookstown and Dungannon in vacant shops. Local musicians played in the three towns and interactive festive trails were developed in all five towns.



Reduced Christmas Car Parking Charges

As in previous years Dungannon & Magherafelt benefitted from reduced Christmas Car Parking charges from 20 November 2021 – 1 January 2022.



Town Centre Wi-Fi

Town centre Wi-Fi is installed and maintained in each of the five town centres.

Mid Ulster Women's Events

Two events to celebrate the achievements of women highlighting accomplishments throughout the past 100 years right through to the present day. The events took place on Tuesday 29 March 2022 at Corick House Hotel and Spa, Clogher and Thursday 31 March 2022 at the Terrace Hotel, Magherafelt. The events raised £1,820 for the NI Air Ambulance.



THEME 4: ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE & CONNECTIVITY

Project Stratum

Project Stratum is the largest Full Fibre broadband project across NI. In Mid Ulster it is expected to deliver improvements to over 13,000 rural premises. It is a four year project with on average 20,000 premises being connected across NI each year. This is year 2 of the project. Mid Ulster District Councils Broadband Working Group has met several times this year (and continues to do so) with DfE and Fibrus mainly to discuss addressing the gaps and raise residents' concerns with the provision within Mid Ulster.

Full Fibre Northern Ireland (FFNI)

Mid Ulster District Council was successful in drawing down £3.2m of funding to as part of a consortium that included 10 Councils and Business Services Organisation (BSO) to provide full fibre broadband to public buildings. In all 80 Mid Ulster District Council buildings have been full fibre connected. The FFNI project has been funded through the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS). This project is now expected to provide improved broadband connectivity to those properties along the routes where the fibre will travel between the exchange and the end destination.

TOURISM SECTION

THEME 1: PROGRAMMES

DEARA PROGRAMMES

OM Dark Sky Park & Observatory

OM Dark Sky Park and Observatory, Mid Ulster's newest £1.2M visitor attraction, was formally opened by Minister Poots MLA and MUDC Chair in June 2021.



The Embrace A Giant Spirit Experience – Stars and Stones was developed to provide bespoke tours and is proving very successful with international markets, receiving significant exposure through Tourism NI, Tourism Ireland Industry Opportunities, TV and media.

Davagh Solar Walk

A 3.4km Solar Walk links the OM Dark Sky Observatory to Beaghmore Stones Circle, with augmented reality bringing the experience alive. The AR app can provide a digitally immersive scale model of the solar system to connect the sky directly with the surrounding land. DAERA funded 75% of the total project cost of £527,250.



Davagh Archaeology Walk

Augmented Reality also brings Davagh Archaeological Walk alive by telling the story behind the sites and planets and its cultural importance and allows the visitor to understand the significance of the sites in human history at local, national and international levels. Mid Ulster LAG provided 75% funding of the total project cost £138,720.

Ballyronan Marina

DAERA funded 75% of total project cost £651,293 to provide four on-water floating luxury glamping pods complimented by state-of-the-art interpretive displays to promote the rich heritage and mythology of Lough Neagh.



Appalachian Way

An initiative between six partners - LAG's in Derry City and Strabane, Donegal, Fermanagh & Omagh, Causeway Coast and Glens and Mid and East Antrim.

- A long distance walking/hiking route started in US and Canada and extended to Europe.
- The IAT Ulster Ireland section formally launched in 2013. There is 9 miles now proposed to pass through Mid Ulster for 2022/23.
- Activities proposed include installation of IAT branded trail head markers, directional way markers and fingerposts as well as a joint marketing
- Total cost £14,397.





Sperrins Sculpture Trail

A joint tourism initiative being developed by MUDC, FODC and DCSDC to embed three iconic public art installations by international artist Thomas Dambo, based on the theme 'The Giants of the Sperrins'.

The project, aimed at promoting rural tourism, reflects the rich cultural and natural heritage of the region and will form the Sperrin Sculpture Trail with artwork at Davagh Forest, Cranagh and Mullaghcarn.

Total project cost of £568,337.33 received 75% funding under DAERA's Rural Tourism Scheme.

DAERA Experience Development Programme

Secured 100% funding from DAERA to deliver on the Rural Tourism Collaborative Experience Programme. This project comprises 2 elements namely, Mid Ulster Heritage and Lough Neagh Shoreline in conjunction with Antrim & Newtownabbey Council.

This £66,000 programme helped develop 2 clusters and a series of experiences based around the Embrace a Giant Spirit brand. The programme facilitated by Taylor Training ran to the end of March 2022 and helped identify skills and training gaps amongst the businesses, delivered both a marketing and action plan and finally identified key stakeholders and partners who can support the clusters and bring the experiences to market.

Mid Ulster Heritage Cluster resulted in 5 very strong, collaborative tourism experiences:-

- 1) **The Emigrant's Walk** – Fully developed, branded, trialled, bookable
- 2) **An Apple a Day** – Fully scoped, awaiting infrastructural completion, promises to be a highly sought after experience once bookable.
- 3) **The Milky Bar Commando** – Fully planned, scoped and branded with new Interpretation at Killymoon Castle.
- 4) **"If the Cross Could Talk"** – In final stages of development, semi trialled, due to be market ready by Summer
- 5) **Poems & Paintings** – Fully developed, branded, trialled, bookable



Poems & Painting



The Emigrants Walk

The Lough Neagh Shore line Programme resulted in 4 very strong, brand new, collaborative tourism experiences:-

- 1) Poetry & Prayer** – Fully developed and trialled (Final stages of EAGS brand alignment)
- 2) Authentic Eel Fishing Experience** – Fully developed and trialled (approved in theory for EAGS)
- 3) High Cow Tales** – In final development phase - for launch summer 2022
- 4) Sail Away on Lough Neagh** – Delayed due to funding approval – for launch summer 2023



Poetry & Prayer at
Antrim Round Tower



Authentic Eel Fishing at Lough Neagh

Tourism NI Market Led Programme

Tourism NI's Market Led Product Development Programme launched on 2nd July 2021 and MUDC were successful in securing £265k.

The Market Led Programme enhanced and animated the visitor experience for NI/ROI visitors which has encouraged opportunities to spend and thus supporting economic growth. Support was given to Tourism and Hospitality businesses across Mid Ulster under the following themes:

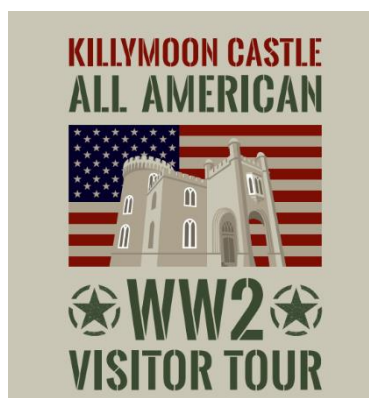
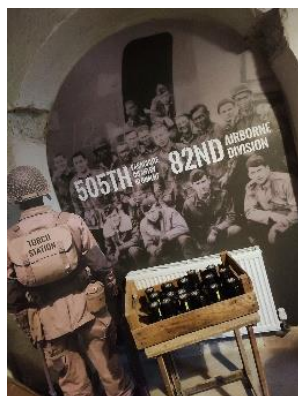
- 1) Fed & Watered – 3 Cookery demonstrations, development of Taste Mid Ulster with 17 participating restaurants all provided mentoring, mystery shopper reports, professional photography and video, promoted on visitmidulster.com, showcase large banquet re-enacting Hugh O'Neill and Mabel Bagnell wedding and promoted to tour operator groups commercially
- 2) Living history costumes, scripts and voice amplifying equipment. £50k of Tourism NI's Market Led Product Development Programme was allocated to the Archaeology, History and Heritage Cluster.

The sites which received support were:

- Springhill House
- Cookstown Town Centre
- Magherafelt Town Centre
- Killymoon Castle
- Hill of the O'Neill
- Tullaghoge Fort
- Emigrant's Trail Famine Study
- U.S. Grant Homestead
- Ardboe Cross
- Donaghmore Cross
- Beaghmore Stone Circles



- 3) Experience Development - Interpretation, exhibition props, signage, equipment, tour guide training and events to enhance experiences enhance both existing and emerging visitor experiences.



- 4) OM Experience Show – 2 new visual experience shows, also boosting night time economy

Taste Mid Ulster

The rollout of Taste Mid Ulster continues successfully as part of the Tourism NI Funded Market Led Programme. To date we have delivered the following:

- 1) 3 Christmas Market Cookery Demos across Mid Ulster in Dungannon, Cookstown and Magherafelt
- 2) Recruitment of 17 restaurants as part of Taste Mid Ulster
- 3) Development of at least 17 signature Mid Ulster dishes across the businesses
- 4) Chefs training programme (2 workshops initially) delivered by Sean Owens
- 5) Mystery shopped all restaurants included in the Taste programme
- 6) Photography to include interior, exterior and dining experience in each business
- 7) Filming of a selection of producers and restaurateurs to give a real Mid Ulster flavour
- 8) All businesses and signature dishes included on a new Taste Mid Ulster Section of Visit Mid Ulster website
- 9) New Taste Mid Ulster Food Trail map in development online



Dorman's Signature Dish



Friel's Signature Dish



The Food Doc's Signature Dish

The Wedding Banquet

Mid Ulster District Council hosted 100 guests on Wednesday 27th April from the regional travel and tourism trade for an evening designed to bring the past to life and recreate the marriage of Hugh O'Neill and Mabel Bagenal. This event showcased the event space and Hill of The O'Neill as a very flexible space and targeted in particular the MICE (Meetings, Incentive, Conference and Exhibitions) market as well as leisure tourism and of course weddings.



This is very much Phase 1 of our work with these businesses, we plan to further develop and promote Taste Mid Ulster in this current year and into the future.



DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES (DFC)

U.S. Grant Ancestral Homestead

Relaunched following an investment of £58,000 refurbishment works. USG was officially reopened on Saturday 3 July 2021.

The latest refurbishment was to the value of £33,000 and 100% funded by The Ulster Scots Agency and the Department for Communities, has enhanced the site further with the introduction of welcome signage at the entrances and exits, directional signage to help visitors navigate around the site and brand new interpretive displays within and around the buildings.



U.S Grant Homestead Exhibition

ACCESS AND INCLUSION PROGRAMMES (DFC)

U.S. Grant Ancestral Homestead

A further £24,000 was allocated from DfC to refurbish the new play park on the site, making it more accessible and inclusive through the installation of a pod swing, a wheelchair accessible ground level roundabout and a wheelchair accessible in ground trampoline and 4 sensory panels.



Playground at US Grants

Ballyronan Marina & Newferry

£26,300 was awarded to improve access to water based recreation activities at Newferry and Ballyronan Marina by installing a bespoke lowered pontoon with ramp and non-slip surface, along with a portable hoist, making activity fully accessible to all. Provision of the hoist will also support private enterprises such as the River Bann boat tours, and Portglenone Paddlers.



At Ballyronan Marina an accessible hoist was installed that allows Ballyronan Boat Club to offer Sailability - the RYA's national programme for disabled people who want to go boating regularly. It will also improve accessibility for the new Lough Neagh Boat Tours on Lough Neagh, and the Mid Ulster Canoe & Kayak Club.

Changing Places Facilities at the Bridewell, Magherafelt

In April 2020, £28,172.84 was awarded to refurbish the toilets on the ground floor of the Bridewell, which included male and female toilets.

In June 2021, a further £38,000 (£30k from DfC) was spent to install a Changing Places facility with the refurbishment of two unisex toilets. This will be the first Council owned Changing Places Facility located within one of Mid Ulster Councils Town Centres. A corner accessible toilet is already in situ. £9,450 was awarded for works on the installation of automated doors to the main hall and a hearing loop system – is expected to be completed by May 2022.



Changing Place facilities at the Bridewell

Carleton Cottage



Carleton Cottage

Mid Ulster Council facilitated the roof repair at Carleton Cottage through successful discussions with Historic Environment Division of Department for Communities. £10k was awarded to put a temporary roofing structure on the cottage.

THEME 2: BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

Winner Best Digital Initiative at Mid Ulster Business awards November 2021

The Council Tourism Business Engagement programme continues with a high level of engagement from the Tourism and Hospitality sector.

Webinars

To date we have hosted 47 webinars targeting issues relating to our Tourism and Hospitality sector, with an average of 25 businesses dial in to each session.

Also profiled over a series of webinars relating to:

- Covid grants
- Economic Development Programmes
- Marketing grants

What's App group

This group was established in response to the pandemic. Membership of our group currently stands at 145 business representatives, it has proved successful in highlighting news, updates, and what is new in a fast and convenient manner for businesses.

Mentoring

Tourism have also rolled out two mentoring programmes in the past year:

- **Road to Recovery**

14 small businesses are involved with a focus on the development of experiences, some of which have opened for the summer or are developing programmes and itineraries.

- **Instagram Programme**

This programme aims to upskill businesses on Instagram and help promote their businesses. 19 businesses have completed this programme.

THEME 3: TOURISM CLUSTERS

Tourism Development Group

The Tourism Development group is comprised of Council, business representatives and representatives from education and training plus statutory agencies including TNI. This group work with officers to manage the delivery of Council tourism strategy and act as an advisory body for the industry.

This group also comprises representatives from the following cluster groups:

Archaeology, History and Heritage Cluster

Under the DAERA Experience Development Programme within the Rural Tourism Theme

The Archaeology, History and Heritage Cluster resulted in 5 very strong, collaborative tourism experiences as mentioned above under the **DAERA Experience Development Programme**.

Heaney Cluster

This cluster of 15 Tourism and Hospitality businesses completed their Invest NI Phase 1 Collaborative Growth scoping study to the value of £25,000. Phase 1 provided the foundation for the group to apply for the Invest NI Phase 2 Collaborative Growth Programme in April 2021 and were successful in securing £165,000 for the recruitment of a facilitator to deliver the following five work streams over two and a half years.

1. Governance & Initial Project Planning
2. Branding and Marketing
3. Commercialisation & Business Development
4. Internationalisation
5. Upskilling

Lara Goodhall Consulting - appointed as the facilitator and has commenced working on the work streams.

McCadden Design - appointed to deliver the branding exercise on behalf of the cluster members.

Hotel Cluster

This platform allows for all nine designated hotels within the district to meet and work collaboratively together, facilitated by Councillor Officers.

Hotels were affected significantly by COVID closers - April 2020-March 2021 hotels were closed for 245 days (67%), 82 days (22%) operated under tight restrictions, and 38 days (10%) operating under restrictions with a curfew.

The tourism department supported the hotels within the district who are registered with Tourism Northern Ireland, to produce virtual tours, creating a 'virtual' walk through of the hotel to help sell to customers with a budget of £4,500 approved by council.

A three minute video was produced for each participating hotel which contributes to the necessary collateral for content on the new Mid Ulster Tourism Website, which will be essential to help promote the wedding and conference business in Mid Ulster post COVID.



Cohannon Inn

Outdoor & Events Cluster

A suite of videos, drone footage and photography stills was produced for 15 outdoor activity businesses, of which will be used on Visit Mid Ulster website, social media platforms and marketing opportunities. Each business will also receive copies to promote. The following businesses were included:



Ballyronan Marina



Go Karting at Moneymore

Hill Walking Events

Summer 21 saw a series of guided walks across the district to promote walking routes, complemented by a promotional campaign across social platforms. Two local qualified hillwalking guides delivered the walks across the district at the following sites:

1. Slieve Gallion from Iniscarn Forest
2. Moydamlaght Forest and Eagles Rock + (Moneyneany)
3. Carntogher
4. Crockmore / Crockbrack (Moneyneany)
5. Knockmany Forest Ascent (Augher)

Due to COVID restrictions participation numbers were capped to 13 per walk with social distancing guidelines in place. Bookings were taken through the Bridewell at a cost of £10pp.



Carntogher



Knockmany

Bridewell, Magherafelt

The following essential upgrades were made to the Bridewell in line with Health and Safety:

- New fire alarm
- New intruder alarm
- New boiler system
- Understairs cupboard built to store bins etc. safely

Bridewell Events

Traditional music masterclasses in the bodhran, fiddle and flute were delivered by well-known artists Gino Lupari, Clare McCrystal and Donna Campbell. The lessons ran over a 4 week period and was attended by both adults and children from across the district.

Christmas at the Bridewell

There was a Meet and Greet with Santa in his grotto on Saturday 4 and 11 December 2021 to complement workshops, baths bombs and festive clay decorations.

THEME 4: MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Touch Screens

Tourism NI Tech Refresh Scheme awarded £10,000 funding to place the following IT equipment for visitors use: touchscreen at the Bridewell and 4 iPads across VIC sites, Hill of the O'Neill, Seamus Heaney HomePlace, Burnavon and OM Observatory.



Touchscreen at Hill of The O'Neill

Summer Marketing Campaign 2021

Aimed at the ROI and staycation market. The campaign was £33k with £25,000 funding from TNI Co-Operative Partnership Fund.

Autumn Marketing Campaign 2021

This highlighted the wide offering across Mid Ulster focusing on the flagship winter attraction, the OM Odyssey Light Show and OM Solar Walk. It ran over a 2 week period from 1st November to 14th November 2021, targeting markets in NI and ROI.

Both campaigns used a mix of outdoor media (outdoor advertising on billboards and bus shelters etc), cinema and digital platforms for promotion.

Spring 2022 Marketing Campaign and Launch of New Brand Unwinding Time

Tourism's Spring Campaign highlighted the launch of our new brand "Unwinding Time", website and social platforms.



Campaign included:

- TV advertising and radio promotion in Northern Sound and Q Radio
- A competition with Q-Radio which included a 2 night staycation at the new Ballyronan Glamping Pods, Lough Neagh Stories boat tour and hamper from The Scullery which included entries from NI and ROI.

Accommodation providers indicated a busy Easter period with high occupancy across the district.

OM Dark Sky Park and Observatory featured in BBC Home Ground Television show in May 2022, and will feature in the new Tourism Irelands green button campaign.



Development of new suite of Outdoor videos and photography, including a new Hill Walking video promoting Sperrins and surrounding tourism attractions.



Carntogher Sperrins Hillwalk



The Sperrins

New Mid Ulster Tourism Website

MUDC availed of 100% financial funding from Tourism NI for the development of a new destination tourism website **visitmidulster.com** at a cost of £41,886. This will deliver a collaborative and synchronized online presence for NI tourism across the regions.



HEADLINE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM ACHIEVEMENTS 2021/22

The activities the Council's economic development and tourism sections have undertaken over the past 12 months have resulted in the achievement of some key outputs, which include:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

✓ 163 new jobs created through the business start programme
✓ ESF Programmes supported 391 participants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Helped 133 people gain employment - Assisted participants to achieve 1,288 new qualifications - Helped 82 participants progress to Further Education/Training
✓ 18 business events delivered to 903 attendees, including 11 events run as part of Mid Ulster's 3 rd Enterprise Week in 2021
✓ 4 business programmes have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - supported 556 businesses - created 131 jobs (equating to a value of £2,709,816) - helped 16 businesses win 19 tenders (total value of £7,777,400) - referred 22 businesses to Invest NI
✓ £1,339,067.81 of Covid 19 Business Grants delivered to 587 businesses across the district
✓ 10 villages being supported to develop projects with a total cost of £1,711,000
✓ £4.7m Public Realm Scheme delivered in Coalisland with £3.5m Public Realm Scheme being developed for Maghera

TOURISM

<p>✓ Spring Marketing Campaign from 7th March – Mid April 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online campaign had a reach of over 250,000 - 100,000 engagements of click through, comments and shares
<p>✓ Tourism NI Market Led Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TNI's Market Led Product Development Programme launched on 2nd July 2021, made a call for programme submissions. The devised programme submitted to TNI was successful to the value of £265k - Assisted in the enhancement of 14 emerging tourism experiences
<p>✓ Taste Mid Ulster</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Banquet event delivered to 100 people, including tour operators and trade. - Recruitment of 17 restaurants as part of Taste Mid Ulster
<p>✓ Business Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mid Ulster Whatsapp group contains up to 150 Hospitality and Tourism businesses who are receiving current updates from the industry, and from TNI and Hospitality Ulster. - To date 47 webinars have been hosted targeting issues relating to our Tourism and Hospitality sector, with an average of 25 businesses dial in to each session.
<p>✓ Banquet on The Hill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In total, 78 individual pieces of content were shared over the 7 day period on the day of and after the event - A total of 64 Instagram stories were shared from the Mid Ulster Council Instagram account - . Reach and impressions (number of times the story appeared on a screen) for each story varied from a low of 217 unique impressions to a high of 859 impressions. - Account Growth During 27 – 30 April, the account had 33,311 impressions in total (+26,548%), 216 profile visits (+839%). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council account gained an additional 32 followers • The account reached 7,341% more accounts during 27-30 April than in previous 4 days. Of these 2,307 accounts, 1143 were non-followers, and 1,164 were followers) • The content led to an increased reach across a total of 4,869% more accounts that weren't following us.