

Report on	Development Report
Date of Meeting	16 th January 2025
Reporting Officer	Claire Linney, Assistant Director of Development
Contact Officers	Philip Clarke – Neighbourhood Development Manager, Catherine Fox – Arts Development Manager, Cathy Brown – Seamus Heaney HomePlace Manager, Martina Totten – Social Inclusion Manager, Denise Smith – Diversity & Integration Development Manager

Is this report restricted for confidential business? If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	X

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to update members and seek approval for the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugee and Asylum Support Programme • Good Relations Plan – TEO Additional Funding • Development Department -Update
2	Key Issues
2.1	<p>Refugee and Asylum Support Programme</p> <p>Council is asked to consider joining the Refugee and Asylum Sanctuary movement for Mid Ulster. The City and Areas of Sanctuary movement is operating across the UK. At present a number of areas and cities have adopted this to be known as a City or Area of Sanctuary. The aim of the Area of Sanctuary is to adopt the following -</p> <p>Council of Sanctuary is a place that provides a welcome and safe place for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants and supports the conditions that will allow people from these backgrounds to feel safe, valued and included.</p> <p>Under our Council of Sanctuary designation, we resolve to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Join the City of Sanctuary's local authority network of cities and towns which promote the inclusion and welfare of people who are fleeing violence and persecution in their own countries. • Continue to work with key groups and organisations in Mid Ulster who provide sustainable support to refugees, asylum seekers and migrants • Ensure equality and diversity in the provision of our services, facilities, and open spaces. • Embody the City of Sanctuary values of Inclusivity, Openness, Participation, Inspiration, and Integrity in our work.

- Learn with and from others in the City of Sanctuary local authority network to ensure the dissemination of best practice.

The above text above reflects a similar position by Belfast City Council in April 2022 - Council of Sanctuary

Please see information on the belfast.cityofsanctuary.org/about-us

It is proposed that Council would agree to participate in a Mid Ulster Area of Sanctuary and promote this across our communities and with statutory partners. It would also support in the facilitation of a forum on a Mid Ulster Area of Sanctuary.

Refugee and Asylum Support

Council is also partnering with STEP at present regarding support to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to Mid Ulster.

As part of this support the NI Executive Office is providing £50K to deliver a refugee and asylum support programme focusing on the following areas:

- Awareness and engagement on the promotion of an Area of Sanctuary
- Support for the establishment of a forum for an Area of Sanctuary
- Two Engagement and integration support events
- Support provision for rights and services (through language interpretation)
- Links to general support and community provision support
- Training and awareness to statutory partners, community partners

Additional funding (£15k pending TEO underspend) to uplift activities to continue into June 2025 may be received, pending TEO confirmation.

2.2

Good Relations Plan – TEO additional funding

The NI Executive Office sought expressions of interest (2 December 2024) from Councils across Northern Ireland to submit proposals (4 December 2024) for underspend in the Department. Mid Ulster Council's Good Relations Team submitted a proposal to allow for the uplift to several programmes to be delivered before 31 March 2025.

It is proposed that support be given to: -

- Anti-Poverty Project £15,000
- Employability development £7000
- Youth Voice £1,350

All the above projects were profiled in Mid Ulster Good Relations plan 23/24, however due to a cut in budget, projects were either not funded or did not receive full funding. The additional spend will therefore allow these projects/programmes to be supported. Officers have recently received notification that Ministers confirmed extra funding of **£23,350 to Mid Ulster District Council**. Officers are awaiting a letter of variance.

2.3

Development Update

Neighbourhood/Community Development

The new Community Development strategy consultation and engagement first phase has now completed, and the draft strategy is in development. Further engagement will take place with members when complete.

Covid Small Settlements –

Coalisland Canal continues in planning for works to commence Spring 2025. Moy Recreation provision – Decision on planning is pending, and then the final business case approval by DFC.

Pomeroy Forest Centre and Magical Trails – the community led Christmas event is fully booked for the Forest with a large number of people also using the trails, play area and Centre. Preparation for the school holiday season is taking place when the trail activity increases. The refreshments cart is now in situ at the Forest.

Social Inclusion – the new draft Community Asset Transfer policy is being finalized; continued engagement is taking place with NIHE and other agencies on social housing – a Dungannon DEA meeting has been scheduled for January to finalise the Dungannon Social Housing Place Plan.

Good Relations & Peace

The Good Relations 2024 – 25 projects have all commenced, with engagement and monitoring ongoing.

A post funding letter of offer has been received; All post funding conditions are in place to allow receipt of the full letter of offer. One outstanding area is Council seeking confirmation of funding in sterling to ensure expenditure to final claim amount.

Burnavon Arts Centre

The Burnavon continues to be extremely busy with conferences and meetings for Auditorium and the Studio. The annual Winter Craft & Food Fair was a great success, and the Christmas Panto is ready to commence, again with a large number of bookings.

Seamus Heaney HomePlace

Seamus Heaney HomePlace has had a very successful Autumn/ Winter programme with positive feedback across a range of events. The Education programme is continuing to be busy with many schools participating. Exhibition visitors and footfall have been high over the Autumn period and development of the new Spring programme is ongoing.

Hill of The O'Neill & Ranfurly House

The Hill of The O'Neill & Ranfurly House – the new marketing materials are continuing to be distributed, with increasing meetings and conference activity. The Santa Christmas event was a great success and was fully booked. The development of the new programme for 2025 – 26 is in development focusing on the areas that are attracting most people.

Works are complete for access to the Hill of The O'Neill from Circular Road; this is going to be promoted along with the Earls trail around the town.

Regional and Minority Language

The signage plan continues to be delivered across facilities in partnership with Council Technical Team. The programme delivery is taking place across the district. Planning for Seachtain Na Gaeilge is ongoing.

	<u>PCSP</u> Minutes for information – attached
3.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: Refugee and Asylum Support Fund £50k and potential £15k uplift Good Relations Plan 24 – 25 – Additional Funding £23,350
	Human: NA
	Risk Management: NA
3.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: NA
	Rural Needs Implications: NA
4	Recommendations
4.1	Members are recommended to; I. Approve the Refugee and Asylum Support Programme II. Approve the Good Relations Plan – TEO Additional Funding III. Note the Development Department -Update
5	List of Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 PCSP Minutes