

<b>Report on</b>	1) Covid-19 Revitalisation Project (Tranche 2) 2) Magherafelt Chamber of Commerce Funding Request 3) Social Enterprise NI: Council Membership 4) Committee for the Executive Office - Brexit StakeholderEvent
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	15 October 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Fiona McKeown, Head of Economic Development

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To provide Members with an update on key activities as detailed below.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	<p><b>Covid-19 Revitalisation Project (Tranche 2)</b></p> <p><b>Department for Communities (DfC) and Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Funding</b></p> <p><b>Covid-19 Business Grants Scheme (Tranche 2)</b></p> <p>Members will recall that under the Covid-19 Revitalisation Project funding in Tranche 1, Council delivered a Covid-19 Business Grant Scheme to assist urban and rural businesses make adaptations and implement social distancing measures to protect staff and customers in line with government guidance. . In Tranche 1, Council received £281,000 funding from DfC and £148,000 from DAERA and Council also redirected £133,000 from its Economic Development budget towards the scheme. This provided a maximum budget of £562,000 to be split equally between urban and rural areas with £281,000 for each.</p> <p>A new <b>Tranche 2</b> application to deliver a further Covid-19 Business Grants Scheme was submitted to DfC on 24 September 2020.</p> <p><b>Department for Infrastructure (DFI) / Department for Communities (DFC) Funding</b></p> <p><b>Covid-19 Town Centre Works Scheme (Tranche 2)</b></p>

	<p>Members were briefed at the September 2020 Committee Meeting, that DfC advised Council on 2 September 2020, that DFI will provide £464,659 capital funding to Mid Ulster Council in Tranche 2. The focus of their funding must be concentrated on pavement widening to allow for social distancing, active travel, promoting connectivity, access to services, enhancing green/blue spaces, etc. Furthermore, on 30 September 2020, DfC advised they will also provide a further £34,000 revenue funding to Mid Ulster Council.</p> <p><b>2.2 Magherafelt Chamber of Commerce Funding Request</b> Magherafelt Chamber of Commerce is a membership organisation, existing to represent and promote the interests of its member businesses in Magherafelt.</p> <p><b>2.3 Social Enterprise NI: Council Membership</b> Social Enterprise NI (SENI) is a membership body for social enterprises across NI with the team providing support to members. In recent years, membership, including organisations from outside the sector such as private and public sector bodies, including local Councils.</p> <p><b>2.4 Committee for the Executive Office - Brexit Stakeholder Event</b> Council has received correspondence on 25 September 2020 from the Committee for the Executive Office inviting representatives from Mid Ulster District Council to attend a Brexit Stakeholder Event in Parliament Buildings, Stormont on 4 November 2020.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<p><b>Covid-19 Revitalisation Project (Tranche 2)</b></p> <p><b>Department for Communities (DfC) and Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Funding</b></p> <p><b>Covid-19 Business Grants Scheme (Tranche 2)</b></p> <p>In terms of <b>Tranche 2</b> funding, Members will recall at the September 2020 Development Committee meeting, approval was granted to officers to progress and make a new application to DfC/DAERA by 24 September 2020, seeking the same funding as per Tranche 1 to deliver another rolling Covid-19 Business Grants Scheme. Scheme funding breakdown is as follows;</p> <p>£281,000 from DfC      <i>(awaiting approval)</i>  £148,000 from DAERA   <i>(awaiting approval)</i>  <u>£133,000</u> from Council   <i>(approved at Sept 2020 Development Committee)</i>  <b>£562,000</b></p> <p>Subject to funding approval from DfC/DAERA, the discretionary grants scheme would be delivered as before, providing a discretionary grant to businesses up to</p>

100% of eligible costs, with a minimum grant of £500, up to a maximum grant of £3,000 (per property), to assist businesses make adaptations and implement social distancing measures in their businesses to comply with government guidance. As before, the scheme will be delivered as a “rolling grant scheme” with funding issued to businesses for eligible expenditure on a “first come first served basis” until funding runs out. This time there will be a reserve list created until all funding is maximised.

If the project is approved by DfC/DAERA, then the DfC element of the grant will focus on the 4 urban areas; Dungannon (including Moygashel), Cookstown, Magherafelt and Coalisland. All other areas outside of this will be deemed ‘rural’ and catered for with funding from DAERA and MUDC.

Approval is requested for delegated authority to be granted to the Director of Business and Communities to sign off on letters offer to successful participants in Tranche 2 with a full list of approved projects to be brought to Committee for noting. This will allow for the scheme to be rolled out quickly and efficiently.

It is anticipated that there will be a strong demand from businesses for another Covid-19 Business Grants Scheme, but in the unlikely event that there is a low uptake and not all funding is required, then approval is sought to redirect any underspends towards the DFI project detailed below, to ensure Mid Ulster Council maximises the budget made available to us.

## **Department for Infrastructure / Department for Communities Funding (Tranche 2)**

### **Covid-19 Town Centre Works Scheme (Tranche 2)**

With an extremely tight timeline to submit an application to DFI/DFC on 24 September 2020 outlining how Council proposed to spend the £464,659 capital funding, Members agreed at the September 2020 Committee Meeting, to progress the following projects (subject to budget availability), and appoint an ICT Team to help develop detailed designs/costings.

The Economic Development Team have worked closely with Council’s Capital Team to develop the agreed Council projects as detailed below in each of the 5 large towns (Dungannon, Cookstown, Magherafelt, Coalisland and Maghera). These projects were subsequently presented to the relevant Town Centre Forums/Partnerships in each of the 5 towns where buy-in was secured to progress same.

To ensure that each of 5 towns are afforded the opportunity to avail of the DFI funding, the following projects have been identified for “Priority 1” funding;

#### **Dungannon - Two “Priority 1” Projects –**

**Project 1 - Redevelopment of the civic space in front of Ranfurly House & Hill of the O’Neill Visitor Centre** to maximize the use of the area as a safe and user friendly rest area for cyclists and pedestrians alike, enhancing green space through public seating / rest areas. The project proposes the following:

- A mobile covering, which will house tables, seating, bicycle racks planters, outdoor heater etc.
- Creation of a raised platform on the terraced area to accommodate the above, which can also be used for arts activity.

**Project 2 - Develop a section of Irish Street, Dungannon into a ‘temporary’ covered pedestrian rest area** which can be used as and when required to allow social interaction in an open and safe environment. This temporary structure could be used on evenings/weekends etc, to create a safe pedestrianised area, subject to agreement and road closure permits being obtained.

The project proposes the following:

- Mobile coverings, which will house tables, seating, heaters, etc. These will not be a permanent fixture but can be used on Irish Street or at other locations/events, as required. The equipment will be used on certain occasions seeking the appropriate permits from DfI when doing so, for example Ulster Flaedh.

**Cookstown – One “Priority 1” Project –**

**Project 1 - Redevelopment of the civic space located in the vicinity of Burnavon Theatre** to create a safe outdoor environment that adheres to social distancing measures, providing a safe and user friendly rest area for cyclists and pedestrians alike. The strategic area identified is an area of underutilized civic space, adjacent to the central car park in Burn Road, Cookstown, which is in close proximity to pathways for accessing the town centre. By developing this project, this space can also be used to enhance outdoor arts activity and performances to encourage footfall to the town particularly in the evenings and weekends.

The project proposes the following:-

- Covered area, which will house tables, seating, bicycle rack and planters, outdoor heater, planters etc.

**Magherafelt – One “Priority 1” Project**

**Project 1 - Redevelopment of the civic space in the Diamond** which is currently underutilized and repurposing it into a multi-use covered space to facilitate town centre activity (including events and outdoor performances) and a pedestrian rest area to encourage the public to come back into the town and gather safely with friends and family in a safe environment whilst observing social distancing measures.

The project proposes the following:-

- Installation of safety barriers
- Covered area, which will house tables, seating, bicycle rack and planters, outdoor heater, planters etc. to encourage people to utilize the area and extend their stay in Magherafelt. This multi-functional space can also be used for outdoor entertainment / performances

### **Maghera – One “Priority 1” Project**

#### **Project 1 - Installation of street lighting on the existing footpath along the road leading from the Park and Ride/Bus Stop at Craigadick to Maghera.**

The project proposes the following:

- Installation of street lighting on Tobermore Road from 30mph zone out to Craigadick Park & Ride facility (approx. 600meters).

### **Coalisland – One “Priority 1” Project**

**Project 1 - Works at Coalisland Canal Towpath** from Coalisland to Gortgonis Road is the priority project for Coalisland. The area is a well-used walking and cycling track link into Coalisland Town, Gortgonis Recreation Centre and various housing developments on the periphery of Coalisland. With the provision of lighting, the project will provide a safe and accessible route for pedestrians and cyclists. The towpath conveniently links the periphery of Coalisland to facilities in the town centre and is very popular among residents of the town and indeed outlying rural areas.

The project proposes the following:-

- Up to 60 new lighting columns from Coalisland Town to Gortgonis Road, approx. one mile, Bimac path repairs, Street furniture along the route.

### **Coalisland – One “Priority 2” Reserve Project**

**Priority 2 Project – Lineside, Coalisland Landscaping Project** can only be progressed depending if funding remains after all the Priority 1 projects are progressed. Council has indicated its intention to DFI that it would wish to progress this key project as it is strategically located at the start/finish of the Canal towpath and caters for much pedestrian footfall.

The project proposes the following:-

- Site preparation works, Paving, Creating pathway, Seating, Bike Racks, Landscaping - to include planters, tree/shrub planting incidental to creating/improving walking or cycling paths.

*Please note: the Lineside project can only be progressed if the budget is available to take it forward.*

All the above schemes have been selected to allow us to “reclaim our towns and high streets” both during and after the pandemic, enhancing green space through public seating/rest areas and serve to better utilize the existing civic space created through previous public realm schemes, funded by DfC. These spaces can be multi-functional and double up as covered areas to provide arts/entertainment activity to the public which will inject much needed life back into our high streets.

The creation of specific ‘cycle and pedestrian rest areas’ will “promote connectivity” and enhance green space areas, within the town centre. It will also revitalize and replenish these vacant areas through the creation of spaces where the public can meet in a safe outdoor environment whilst observing social distancing regulations.

The high level concept drawings and estimated costs for each scheme is contained in Appendix 1. Schemes may be subject to some variances as more detailed work progresses by Council's ICT Team.

### 3.2 **Magherafelt Chamber of Commerce Funding Request**

A request has been received from Magherafelt Chamber of Commerce on 17 September 2020 (Appendix 2) requesting £5,000 support to assist them the following activities;

- Promoting the growth of Magherafelt Chamber of Commerce.
- Networking events.
- Promotional content for website and social media channels.
- Training / Workshops for businesses.
- Administration.
- Celebrating achievements of businesses.
- Campaign to promote shopping in Magherafelt.

### 3.3 **Social Enterprise NI: Council Membership**

The responsibilities that were transferred to local Councils in 2015 under the Reform of Local Government included that of the social economy sector. Since 2015, almost all Councils have signed up as members of SENI; however, as yet this Mid Ulster District Council is not currently a member. The range of benefits in becoming a member include the following, as a minimum:

- SENI will promote any Council events for social enterprises in their e-zine and social media
- SENI offer free members to any new social enterprise in the area for the first year if they are not already members of SENI.
- Host joint events with the Council including Pitching Events, Buy Social Events, Entrepreneurship week support etc
- Free training on topics such as "What is Social Value" with any Council staff or members at any time should you feel that appropriate, or any other relevant training required, in order to better understand the business model.
- Listing as a Corporate Member on SENI's new website (coming soon)
- Access to discounted events for members including Awards and Conferences
- Access to free bursaries that SENI offers to members

Members are therefore requested to consider Council membership of SENI for a fee of £500 per annum.

### 3.4 **Committee for the Executive Office - Brexit Stakeholder Event**

Council received an invitation (Appendix 3) from the Committee for the Executive Office to attend a Brexit Stakeholder Event on Wednesday 4 November 2020. Two attendees from each Council are invited to attend; one political representative and one senior official.

Each Council will have a 30 minute time slot to meet and brief Committee Members and this will be followed by 20 minutes for questions and answers.

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	<p>Financial:</p> <p><b>Covid-19 Revitalisation Project (Tranche 2) –</b></p> <p><b>Covid-19 Business Grants Scheme (Tranche 2)</b>  Anticipated Total Funding Package of <b>£562,000</b>, comprising of;  DfC £281,000 (awaiting funding approval)  DAERA £148,000 (awaiting funding approval)  Council £133,000 (funding agreed at Sept 2020 Development Committee from existing economic development budget)</p> <p><b>Covid-19 Town Centre Works Scheme (Tranche 2)</b>  Anticipated Total Funding Package of <b>£498,659</b>, comprising of;  DFI £464,659 (Capital)  DfC £34,000 (Revenue)</p> <p><b>Social Enterprise NI: Council Membership</b>  Membership Subscription Fee : £500 available in the 2020/21 economic development budget.</p>
	<p>Human:</p> <p><b>Covid-19 Revitalisation Project</b>  Officers time</p> <p><b>Committee for the Executive Office - Brexit Stakeholder Event</b>  Two attendees from each Council are invited to event</p>
	<b>Risk Management:</b> Achieving completion of the Covid-19 Revitalisation Project within a very short deadline – 31 March 2021.
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	<p>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications:</p> <p>Rural Needs Implications:  Covid-19 Revitalisation Project Business Grant Scheme will assist all urban and rural businesses.</p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
	It is recommended that Members;
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Covid-19 Revitalisation Project (Tranche 2)</b>
	<b>5.1.1 Approve</b> delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive and/or Director of Business and Communities to sign and accept any letters of offer/contracts received by Council offering funding for the Covid-19 Revitalisation Project.

	<p><b>5.1.2 Approve</b> delegated authority be granted to the Director of Business &amp; Communities to develop and roll out a business grants scheme to urban and rural businesses, <u>as soon as funding is confirmed to Council</u> by the Department for Communities (for urban businesses) and Department for Agriculture and Rural Affairs (for rural businesses), along with Council funding of £133,000 (previously approved).</p> <p><b>5.1.3 Approve</b> authority be granted to the Director of Business &amp; Communities to sign off on letters of offer to successful participants on a business grants scheme, with the list of approved projects to be brought to Committee for noting.</p> <p><b>5.1.4 Approve</b> the additional revenue funding from DfC of £34,000 be used to cover key revenue expenditure costs within the Covid-19 Towns Centre Works Scheme, to match-fund the DFI capital budget assigned to Mid Ulster Council of £464,659.</p> <p><b>5.2 Magherafelt Chamber of Commerce Funding Request</b>  <b>Request</b> Council officers meet with Magherafelt Chamber of Commerce to deliver a presentation on the range of business programmes and marketing activities currently provided by Council and Magherafelt Town Centre Forum that businesses in Magherafelt can avail of to assist their growth and development.</p> <p><b>5.3 Social Enterprise NI: Council Membership</b>  <b>Approve</b> Mid Ulster District Council subscribe to become a member of Social Enterprise NI at an annual cost of £500.</p> <p><b>5.4 Committee for the Executive Office - Brexit Stakeholder Event</b>  <b>Approve</b> one political representative (either Council Chairperson or Brexit Working Group Chairperson) and a senior officer attend the Committee for the Executive Office - Brexit Stakeholder Event in Parliament Buildings, Stormont on 4 November 2020.</p>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Covid-19 Town Centre Works Scheme (Tranche 2) -  Concept Drawings and Estimated Costs</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Magherafelt Chamber of Commerce Funding Request</p> <p>Appendix 3 - Committee for the Executive Office - Brexit Stakeholder Event  Invitation</p>