



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE CHAMBER, MOSSLEY MILL ON
TUESDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2024**

- In the Chair** : Councillor B Webb
- Members Present
(in person)** : Aldermen – M Magill and S Ross
Councillors – M Goodman, R Lynch and S Ward
- Members Present
(Remote)** : Councillor B Mallon
- Non Committee
Members Present
(in person)** : Councillor M Stewart
- Non Committee
Members Present
(Remote)** : Councillor R Foster
- Officers Present** : Director of Economic Development & Planning – M McAlister
Deputy Director of Investment and Business Development –
M McKenna
Deputy Director of Regeneration and Infrastructure – S Norris
ICT Helpdesk Officer – J Wilson
Member Services Officer – L Irwin

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the November Meeting of the Economic Development Committee Meeting and advised Members of the audio recording procedures.

1 APOLOGIES

Alderman M Cosgrove

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

3 ITEMS FOR DECISION

3.1 ED/REG/085 AWARDS UNDER TOWN CENTRE SHOPFRONTS IMPROVEMENTS PHASE ONE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update members on the Urban Shop Front Improvement Programme and to seek Members approval for the proposed grant awards to the first tranche of businesses.

2. Introduction

Members would recall that in September 2024 the Council was successful in securing £396,000 from DfC towards an Urban Shop Front Improvement Programme which was launched in two phases:

- Ballyclare and Randalstown in Phase 1 launched in July 2024; and
- Glengormley, Crumlin and Antrim in Phase 2 launched in October 2024.

The scheme, which was co-funded by the Council up to £39,600 provided a combined budget of £430,000. Grants were provided to businesses at an 80% intervention level with 20% contributed by the business or property owner.

This grant provided up to £5,000 towards eligible businesses and property owners to make physical improvements to the exterior of their business premises. To date, 81 applications had been received from business owners across Ballyclare and Randalstown.

The closing date for Phase 2 was the 13th December and a number of workshops had been taking place to support potential applicants. Up-coming dates are included below.

- Tuesday 19 November, 12noon to 3pm - Space Antrim (Floor1, 51-55 High st, Antrim, BT41 4AI)
- Wednesday 20 November, 12.45pm to 3.45pm - Crumlin Leisure Centre
- Thursday 21 November, 12noon to 3pm - Lillian Bland Pavilion (Ballyclare Road, Glengormley)

There is also a link to the relevant pages of the Council website.

<https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/business/support-for-businesses/proposed-town-centre-shopfront-improvement-scheme/>

3. Key Issues

81 applications had been received to Phase 1 of the Urban Shop Front Improvement Programme.

These had been reviewed by Council Officers and presented to the project assessment panel. The assessment panel was comprised of Council Officers and a member of the Department for Communities Urban Regeneration Team who are the principal funder of the programme. The assessment panel considers three main elements:

- Need for the project – is the current shop front in need of repair/upgrade?
- Impact on street scape – will the project impact on the overall appearance of the area?
- Value for Money – does the project represent value for money?

Once recommended by the assessment panel, the proposed grant awards would be presented to the Project Board which consists of Council Officers, DfC Officers, DEA Members for Ballyclare and Dunsilly and Members of the Ballyclare Chamber of Commerce and Randalstown Chamber of Commerce.

This report sought Members' approval to proceed to issue the following Letters of Offer following successful completion of the internal approval process outlined above.

No.	DEA	Business Name	LoO Amount
1	Ballyclare	JB's Fruit and Veg	£2,198.40
2	Ballyclare	JM Dance Academy	£1,718.40
3	Ballyclare	Safari Baby Studio	£1,382.40
4	Ballyclare	TDR Academy	£2,150.14
5	Ballyclare	McCandless Opticians	£2,792.00
6	Ballyclare	Clare Farm Supplies	£2,360.00
7	Ballyclare	Alchemy Hair	£3,211.20
8	Ballyclare	Wilson Chiropractic	£4,800.00
9	Ballyclare	Jill Jones Bridal	£3,828.00
10	Dunsilly	Kearney's	£4,999.00
11	Dunsilly	Impact NI	£3,470.40
12	Dunsilly	Calm Fertility Clinic	£960.00
13	Dunsilly	Corner House Bar	£4960.00
14	Dunsilly	Budding Designs	£4999.00
15	Dunsilly	The Kandy Shop	£3,268.00
Total Grant Assistance			£47,096.94

Members noted that other proposed awards would be brought before Members for consideration once the applicants had completed the required checks.

4. Financial Position/Implication

The Council secured £396,000 from the Department of Communities towards the implementation of the Urban Shop Front Improvement Programme. There were no new financial implications for the Council.

5. Summary

The first tranche of businesses were assessed through the Urban Shop Front Improvement programme and have been recommended for approval. 15 businesses are included in tranche 1 with a value of £47,096.94.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch
Seconded by Alderman Magill and agreed that

the first tranche of awards under the Urban Shop Front Improvement Programme with a value of £47,096.94, be approved.

ACTION BY: Steven Norris, Deputy Director of Regeneration and Infrastructure

3.2 **ED/ED/203 BELFAST CITY AND REGIONAL PLACE PARTNERSHIP PARTICIPATION**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the engagement with the Belfast City & Regional Place Partnership and to propose next steps for consideration.

2. Introduction/Background

The Belfast City and Region Place Partnership (BCRPP), formerly the Renewed Ambition Partnership, was a joint public-private initiative that is delivering a programme of work aimed at ensuring the City Region was positively positioned to continue to attract inclusive investment to unlock the development, regeneration and infrastructure required to deliver the City Region's ambitions.

The BCRPP comprised public, private and key anchor institution partners within the Belfast City Region. Partners include Belfast City Region Deal Partner Councils, Invest NI, Belfast Harbour, Translink, Housing Association representation, and representatives from the local development community bringing forward significant regeneration and development projects.

Objectives of the BCRPP programme included:

- continuing to build collaboration and partnership in the wider City region;
- continuing to promote and market the Belfast City region outside Northern Ireland;
- increased engagement and advocacy with key stakeholders, in particular investors and government;

- support delivery of the Belfast Region City Deal programme of investment by attracting collaborative partners;
- delivering the shared ambition to drive inclusive, sustainable growth.

Members were reminded that the Council had participated in the BCRPP / Renewed Ambition Partnership initiative as part of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) from 2022 onwards. The total financial contribution since 2022 had been £30,000.

The Council had been invited to renew its membership of the Belfast City & Region Place Partnership for 2024/25.

Membership of the partnership for 2024/25 included:

- 3 x delegate passes to UKREiIF 2025
- Access to reduced rate delegate passes for UKREiIF 2025
- 2 x delegate passes to MIPIM 2025
- Invitation to join dedicated investment showcase in Dublin / London
- Participation in dedicated BRCD showcase events

3. Key Issues

Over the last 2 years the Council participated in the BCRPP. Council Officers attended both MIPIM and UKREiIF to promote and showcase the investment opportunities within the Borough to discuss key investment priorities with sector leaders in industries such as Advanced Manufacturing and Logistics/Distribution. In addition it provided an opportunity for officers to hear the latest policy considerations in relation to key economic drivers e.g. investment zones, innovation districts, and strategy relating to long term investment attraction and delivery.

Participation in the Partnership provided the wider City Region with the opportunity to meaningfully compete with other similar sized or larger locations that were seeking to attract major investment, such as Manchester, Newcastle, Liverpool City Region and Cardiff City Region. As a result of this participation Council would be part of a collective approach that seeks to represent the wider City Region with a collaborative strategy considered by the BCRPP more effective than individual Council areas seeking to represent their investment proposition on a stand-alone basis.

Taking part in the Partnership afforded the opportunity for the Council to be part of a collective representation at major international investment events. These events included MIPIM, the world's leading built environment conference and exhibition attended by approximately 20,000 public and private sector representatives from across the globe, major European and UK cities including London, Manchester, Newcastle, Cardiff, Liverpool. It provided an opportunity for the wider city region to position itself to a global audience and attract the interest of institutional investors, developers, occupiers and funders in the context of bringing forward sustainable development to create a well-connected and culturally vibrant, sustainable city region. The UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum (UKREiIF) was also part of the BCRRP programme. Held in Leeds, the multi-day event sought to

connect developers, investors, local and national government and industry representatives to showcase investment opportunities and attract potential investment.

Whilst participation in the Partnership was of merit, the Council had raised concerns regarding the lack of exposure and profile Antrim & Newtownabbey received as part of the cluster particularly around adequately showcasing of key investment sites. As agreed at September's meeting, the Chairperson of the Economic Development Committee issued correspondence to the Chairperson of the BCRPP (circulated) to raise these concerns.

Subsequent to this, the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Economic Development Committee along with Council Officers met with the Chairperson of BCRRP, representatives from Belfast City Council and representatives from Lanyon Group. The correspondence subsequently received was circulated for Members information.

At the meeting feedback was provided to the Partnership representatives regarding the Council's involvement in key events and the work of the wider partnership. The Council Members and Officers highlighted the need to showcase the entire Belfast Region as an attractive investment proposition on both national and international stages and pivot as required, key messaging and research to better reflect the breadth of opportunities across the region, including the Borough's own sectoral strengths and investment opportunities. It was suggested that key to this was enhanced brand placement and better acknowledgement of the Council's branding on key literature and promotional material.

Following the meeting and receipt of follow up correspondence it was proposed that Council continued to invest in the Partnership at a cost of £15,000 for the 2024/25 year whilst also pressing for greater recognition of the strengths and opportunities of the Borough.

In making this commitment, Officers proposed that:

- The Council continued to play an active role in the partnership and undertakes to participate in UKREiIF 2025 and the potential Dublin/London Showcase Event. Further information on these events would be brought to Members in due course.
- The Council does not participate in MIPIM 2025 but the Council's involvement would be kept under review and if there were positive changes to place more emphasis on the region then the Council would be open to re-engage with the partnership regarding involvement in future years.
- The Council continues to participate in the local level engagement of the Partnership and to contribute to the research undertaken.

4. 2025 Investment Event

In parallel with the above activity it was proposed that the Council hold its own Trade and Investment event in London in 2025, utilising the enhanced profile that comes with winning Council of the Year and building on recent private and public sector investments in recent years. It was proposed that Council use this event to showcase the strength of the Borough as an investment proposition with the opportunity to partner with other key stakeholders, major businesses and representative organisations from the Borough as part of the event.

It was proposed that the Council appoint a suitably qualified external resource to support the preparation and delivery of this event, with further detail to be brought to Members in due course regarding partnership, timings and programming.

5. Financial Position/Implication

The cost of participation in the wider Belfast City & Region Place Partnership was £15,000 per annum which would be met through the economic development budget and would be included in the 2024/25 budget allocation. This fee included the delegate passes for both UKREiif and MIPIM, although travel expenses and accommodation etc. were an additional cost.

Approval was sought for the appointment of external support for the planning and delivery of the proposed London 2025 Trade and Investment event.

6. Summary

The Council participated in the Belfast City & Region Place Partnership for the last two years. Officers believed there was value in participating in the Partnership however further 'return' at a local level was sought from the membership and annual fee and this would be pursued over the course of the current financial year.

To capitalise on the increased profile of being awarded Council of the year and to showcase the Borough as an attractive and successful investment proposition it was proposed to host a Trade and Investment event in London in 2025, with external support to be appointed to support Council officers in the planning and delivery of this event.

In response to a Member's query, the Director of Economic Development and Planning confirmed that a further report would be brought back to Committee in due course in relation to potential funding/ sponsorship for the Trade and Investment event.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch

Seconded by Alderman Ross and agreed that

- a) **The Council's continued involvement in the Belfast City & Region Place Partnership for 2024/2025 at a cost of £15,000 to be met through the Economic Development budget;**
- b) **The Council's continued involvement and attendance at the UKReiif 2025 event and any future Dublin/London Showcase organised through the partnership be approved and;**
- c) **The Council does not participate in MIPIM 2025; and**
- d) **The Council hosts a Trade and Investment event in London in 2025, and appoints suitably experienced external support.**

ACTION BY: Michael McKenna, Deputy Director of Investment and Business Development and Steven Norris, Deputy Director of Regeneration and Infrastructure

3.3 ED/ED/301 INVEST NI SUB-REGIONAL PLANS - LOCAL ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIPS AND ACTION PLAN

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members in relation to Invest NI's sub regional plans and the establishment of Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs) at a local level.

2. Introduction/Background

Further to the Committee report in September, Members were advised that Minister Murphy issued a statement on 1 October regarding the launch of the Department's Sub-Regional Plan. In this statement, he set out the strands of delivery for his economic vision:

1. Creation of new Local Economic Partnerships with dedicated funding;
2. Enhancing the role of Invest NI at a regional level; and
3. Realignment of Departmental policies and programmes to help drive local growth

Subsequently, Invest NI and the Department for the Economy held a number of workshops with relevant stakeholders. A copy of the slides from the Dungannon workshop were circulated. During these sessions officials laid out the vision for sub-regional delivery in line with Minister Murphy's key objectives.

3. Key Issues

Local Economic Partnerships

One of the key proposals was the establishment of Local Economic Partnerships within each Council area. At this point it was indicated that membership would be for the Council to consider but DfE would approve the final list of suggested partners. It was also suggested that no group/organisation should have a majority on the LEP and Councils should consider equality of opportunity. The guidance issued by the Department

(circulated) outlined that membership should reflect local economic needs with no one sector dominating at the expense of others and with each organisation having an equal vote. The guidance also set out that the LEP must include representation from Further Education, Local Enterprise Agencies and local business representatives.

It had been suggested that some Councils may wish to use their LMP as a vehicle for this delivery or alternatively establish a new group, sub-committee or other model.

Members may wish to consider the inclusion of the following partners in the LEP:

- Northern Regional College
- Queen's University Belfast; AMIC
- Ulster University
- Mallusk Enterprise Park
- Antrim Enterprise Agency
- LEDCOM (Foundry House, Ballyclare)
- Belfast International Airport
- Invest NI and DfE propose to attend in an advisory/observer role

Action Plan

The LEP would be tasked with co-designing a plan which would identify actions and develop projects that align with the Sub-Regional Economic Plan, Council Economic Development Strategies and Invest NI Business Strategy. These would be developed with advice from DfE and Invest NI, and they should be appraised and scored/ ranked (where relevant) using a consistent and transparent methodology.

To support the delivery of these plans the Minister proposed a Regional Fund which would seek to address regional imbalance. It was not clear at this stage how the funding would be allocated to Councils.

Next Steps

The circulated Departmental timeline indicated that the schedule of activities:

November 2024 - Initial Setup

- Council appoint lead official/team.
- DfE would appoint a Strategic Advisor and they would work alongside the relevant Invest NI Regional Office to support development of the LEP.
- DfE Regional Balance Unit/ Invest NI Regional Manager to meet lead council official/team and agree proposed structure.

- Draft TOR for each LEP be agreed by Council and DfE/ INI based on chosen model. This would set out initial membership, initial decision-making process, and extent of DfE/INI role. DfE would provide template.
- Action Planning phase be started on agreement.

December 2024 - Action Planning

- LEP agree core focus until end 26-27, e.g. productivity, economic inactivity etc. based on SREP evidence. To be agreed with DfE/ Invest NI.
- LEP would decide how to choose actions to take forward – open call, private submissions, how to rank, appraise options etc. – DfE and Invest NI would advise.
- DfE would confirm funding level to each LEP. Fund management guidance will be provided to Council secretariat.
- Project and Funding phase to be started on agreement.

January-March 2025 - Project and Funding

- LEP would identify actions.
- DfE/ Invest NI would work with LEP to identify projects that meets their core focus.
- Projects and actions would be assessed based on LEP methodology agreed.

4. Financial Position/Implication

There was no clarity at this stage regarding the budget available to the Council to create and service the LEP or bring forward an action plan. Equally it was unclear what the funding formula was going to be and the indicative amount available to the Council from the Regional Fund.

5. Summary

Subject to the agreement of Members, Officers would proceed to make arrangements for the establishment of the LEP and the development of an action plan, in accordance with the attached guidance, by engaging with the relevant partners at a local level.

Following a request from Members, the Director of Economic Development and Planning agreed to engage with other third party stakeholders suggested by Members.

The Director of Economic Development and Planning agreed to confirm the nature of the funding to clarify if it would be capital or revenue spend.

Proposed by Alderman Magill

Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

the Local Economic Partnership be established as a Working Group of the Economic Development Committee which would enable non-elected

members to be involved but provide a direct reporting line to the parent Committee for decision-making purposes. Officers to liaise directly with the Department to establish the detail in relation to the proportion of funding to be provided for management and administration and any potential impact on the delivery of existing economic development related programmes.

ACTION BY: Michael McKenna, Deputy Director of Investment and Business Development and Steven Norris, Deputy Director of Regeneration and Infrastructure

3.4 CCS/GEN/014 INVEST NI BUSINESS PLAN CONSULTATION

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for Council to give a corporate response to the recent Business Strategy 2024-27 published by Invest NI.

2. Introduction/Background

Invest Northern Ireland had published the Business Strategy 2024-2027 which sought to build momentum to support building Northern Ireland's economic capabilities both at home and internationally. The strategy outlined was largely based around The Economy Minister, Conor Murphy's strategic priorities, and this forms the basis of this strategy which focuses on;

- Promoting Regional Balance
- Increasing Good Jobs
- Raising Productivity
- Reducing Carbon Emissions

This new strategy was a reflection of the transformation undergone within Invest NI following the independent review, with the aim to enable the agency to be more agile, efficient and better equipped to meet the needs of businesses.

The document outlined Invest NI's six strategic priorities which include;

- Boosting Business Investment
- Accelerating Innovation and Skills
- Driving Global Ambition
- Developing and Achieving Sustainability
- Maximising City & Growth Deals
- Promoting Places and Partnerships

3. Proposal

It was proposed that the Council provided a corporate response to the specified questions (circulated). The response was largely based around the objectives set out benchmarked against Council Corporate Plan 2024-2030. Council response was due before 14 November 2024.

Proposed by Councillor Goodman
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

Members approve the corporate response to Invest NI on the Business Strategy 2024-2027 consultation.

ACTION BY: Chris Doyle, Investment Officer

3.5 ED/ED/279 ENTERPRISE SUPPORT SERVICE – FUTURE FUNDING

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval to provide up to £48,000 towards the extension of the Northern Ireland wide Enterprise Support Service (Go Succeed Programme) in 2025/26.

2. Introduction/Background

Members were reminded that all 11 Councils had worked together to develop a new Entrepreneurship Support Service which would provide business start-up support comprising a set of connected enterprise support activities, where clients could utilise support elements at varying stages on their enterprise journey. Delivery of this service, now branded as Go Succeed, was funded via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which included provision for £17m of funding, including £5m for grants to enterprises. Each Council also made its own separate contribution towards the programme, with Council's contribution being £77,000 for 2024/25.

3. Key Issues

The ESS, which had been underway since November 2023, had funding in place from the Shared Prosperity Fund and local Councils until March 2025. Belfast City Council, the Council leading on this on behalf of all Councils, had established a Programme Management Office (PMO) to support the delivery of the programme, contract management, and administering of the funding.

BCC were currently engaging with the Shared Prosperity Fund on behalf of all Councils, seeking a 12 month extension of the programme. It was expected that these discussions would come to a conclusion by the end of this calendar year.

In the interim period, the BCC PMO was at risk of losing key personnel due to the absence of committed funds. To mitigate this risk at this stage and ensure that any future extension could be delivered, BCC had requested that each Council commit to contributing £48,000 towards staff costs to support programme delivery in 2025/26.

Whilst this funding may ultimately not be required for staff costs if further SPF funding was secured, the request had come due to the need to provide clarity regarding future staffing provision.

4. Financial Position/Implication

The Council's current financial commitment for this programme was £77,000 in 2024/25. Any future Council contribution would be dependent on the level of funding secured for the programme and subject to further Council consideration, however, the Economic Development budget estimate process for 2025/26 had made provision for this level of expenditure for an enterprise support service.

Summary

Members were asked to approve a commitment to provide £48,000 towards staff costs for the effective delivery of the Enterprise Support Service (Go Succeed) in 2025/26, pending any additional SPF funding secured.

Proposed by Councillor Goodman
Seconded by Alderman Magill and agreed that

Members approve to provide up to £48,000 towards the extension of the Northern Ireland wide Enterprise Support Service (Go Succeed Programme) in 2025/26.

ACTION BY: Michael McKenna, Deputy Director of Investment and Business Development

3.6 **ED/ED/284 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the delivery of the Economic Development Action Plan. A copy of the plan was circulated, with relevant updates since the last Committee meeting highlighted in red.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch
Seconded by Councillor Goodman and agreed that

that the Economic Development Action Plan be noted.

NO ACTION

3.7 **ED/ED/265 BALMORAL SHOW 2025**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' instructions regarding the Council's involvement in the 2025 Balmoral Show.

2. Introduction/Background

The 2024 Balmoral Show took place from Wednesday 15 – Saturday 18 May, and the Council booked a large stand to promote the Borough and ten local businesses benefited from free use of space on the stand.

This year's showcasing businesses were:

Tinholt's Tasties (Glengormley, gourmet marshmallows)	Riversdale Wagyu (Doagh, Wagyu beef farm)
The Lock Keeper's Cottage (Toome, local café)	Golden Popcorn (Antrim, healthy snacks)
Belfast Artisan Gin (Mallusk, gin/vodka distillery)	Brady's Bakes (Glengormley, baked goods)
Benchmark Bread (Jordanstown, breads)	The Boathouse, Antrim (Antrim, restaurant)
Tasty Grub Club (Ballyclare, healthy prepared meals)	Frost Freeze Candy (Glengormley, candies)

Each business received 2 days on the stand to showcase and sell their products, enabling them to promote themselves to the 120,000 attendees.

Officers provided pre-event support in the form of an online business briefing session for participants, facilitating engagement with Council's Environmental Health team to ensure that the Borough was represented by businesses achieving quality food hygiene ratings, as well as some pre-/post-event promotional opportunities. In addition to the showcasing businesses, the Council stand was made available to local hoteliers including The Maldron, The Rabbit and The Dunadry Hotel who availed of the opportunity to promote themselves in conjunction with the Council's Tourism offer.

A survey was conducted of the public's perception of the Council's Stand. Almost 350 survey responses were received and indicated a very high level of satisfaction with the stand, as detailed below.

- 99.1% of responses were totally satisfied with their experience at the stand;
- 97.5% of responses indicated that they had been attracted to the stand by the mix and variety of the showcasing businesses, with 83.3% of respondents stating that they had engaged directly with the businesses;
- More than 1 in 4 visitors to the stand purchased something from at least one of the showcasing businesses;
- 69.2% of responses indicated an awareness of the Council's tourism branding;
- 63.1% of responses indicated that, in the last 12 months, they had visited Antrim Castle Gardens and Clotworthy House. Over the same period, 41.0% had visited Antrim Lough Shore and The Gateway, and 17.7% had visited the Coronation Garden.
- 99.1% considered the stand to be attractive and informative;
- 99.4% felt that staff were helpful and engaging in promoting the Borough.

Business Feedback

The showcasing businesses were positive in terms of their experience, the support provided by the Council and the highly visible location of the stand, with the opportunity to showcase their businesses and products.

The benefits to the participating business were challenging to quantify, however over the last number of years businesses on the Council stand had reported:

- Increased sales and turnover
- New contract and supplier opportunities
- Increased brand awareness
- Uptake in social media following.

Local businesses also received the chance to take part in the Tesco Theatre Kitchen, giving them further brand exposure.

3. Previous Decision of Council

In December 2023, approval of £25,000 towards the delivery of the Council stand at the 2024 Balmoral Show was granted.

4. Key Issues

There were a number of issues to be considered before committing to the 2025 event.

Cost/Stand Capacity

The 2024 event cost £25,000, comprised of £20,000 to cover the cost of the pitch and the construction/deconstruction of the existing stand and £5,000 cover merchandising costs, additional passes and parking for the Mayor and other members visiting the show.

For the last three years the Council had utilised a 6mx6m stand, which provided 6 separate promotion booths, one was used for the promotion of the Council and local assets e.g. Antrim Castle Gardens and the other five were offered to local businesses.

Food NI oversee the cost of pitches in the NI Food Pavilion and the event organisers The Royal Ulster Agricultural Society (RUAS) stipulated all approved suppliers to the Council.

This scale of stand provided the opportunity to showcase more businesses but would cost more than a smaller stand.

Benefits

There were significant tangible benefits to both the Council and the businesses using the stand. Council could promote its key events and tourism offer, whilst the businesses benefit from a platform to promote their products.

Business Recruitment

The artisan food and drink sector was a small sub-sector of our local economy and each year it could be challenging to recruit the business to showcase on the stand despite the opportunity the event presents. The main reason behind this was the requirement to close business to display for two days was a large undertaking for any small business.

Other Council Involvement

It should be noted that not every Council in Northern Ireland participates, in fact the number of relatively small. At the 2024 show the Council areas represented included:

- **Armagh, Banbridge Craigavon** – large 6mx6m stand with businesses showcasing each day.
- **Lisburn City and Castlereagh Council** – used to have a separate pavilion outside the Food NI pavilion, however downsized their presence for the 2024 show.
- **Mid and East Antrim** – smaller 3mx3m stand each year.
- **Ards and North Down** – smaller 3m/3m stand each year.

5. Options for Future Participation

There were a number of options which could be considered in relation to the Council's participation in the 2025 event.

Option	Description	Est. Cost
1	Withdraw (do nothing) Under this option, Council does not attend the 2025 Balmoral Show.	£0
2	Reduce our Participation Move to a smaller stand to reduce the level of cost, however this option would require the purchase of a new stand utilising the panels from the current 6mx6m stand where possible. A 6mx3m pitch is the smaller size available. The implications of this would mean that only 6 businesses could show case on the Council's stand over the four days.	£16/£17k
3	Continue Current Participation Continue as per 2024 with the large stand and ten showcasing businesses.	£25,000

In response to a query from a Member, The Deputy Director of Regeneration and Infrastructure agreed to share evidence collected from traders in relation to any positive impact on their business following attendance at previous Balmoral Shows. It was also agreed to ensure that as many businesses within the Borough as possible would be contacted with regards to participation on the Council's stand at the Balmoral Show.

The Deputy Director of Regeneration and Infrastructure confirmed that the potential of working with a strategic partner could be explored and options would be brought back to Committee.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch
Seconded by Alderman Magill and agreed that

Members approve option two and this be kept under review for future years.

ACTION BY: Alistair Law, Regeneration Officer, Economic Development

3.8 ED/ED/198 LEDCOM WORKSPACE DEVELOPMENT FUND

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for a Letter of Variation (circulated) for a 12 month extension to LEDCOM's project to refurbish and repurpose Foundry House, Ballyclare; and to approve the signing of the associated legal agreement to protect the Council's investment (circulated).

2. Introduction/Background

Members would be aware that on 29 March 2021 the Council established a Workspace Development Fund to support the development and delivery of a complementary network of modern, accessible, fit for purpose accommodation to meet the needs of businesses, aligned with the Council and Levelling Up Funded workspace projects in Glengormley and Antrim.

In November 2021 the Council agreed to provide LEDCOM (Local Economic Development Company) one of the Borough's three Local Enterprise Agencies that provided services from their Ballyclare location, with up to £200,200 to deliver a 7,800sq/ft. refurbishment and create 200 business start-ups with c.300 jobs to be created at Foundry House in Ballyclare.

3. Previous Decision of Council

In November 2021 the Council approved an award of up to £200,200 for the refurbishment of Foundry House under the Workspace Development Fund.

4. Key Issues

Since receiving their Letter of Offer LEDCOM had completed their acquisition of Foundry House, finalised their detailed workspace design and secured the

necessary planning permission for the works. However, due to a range of factors including rising costs, LEDCOM had not yet commenced the delivery of the workspace project.

As a result of this delay LEDCOM required a 12 month extension to the original letter of offer in order to enable delivery of their capital works programme. The proposed letter of variation provided an extension until 30th September 2025.

In addition, to the Letter of Variance, a separate legal agreement had been drafted which aimed to protect the Council's investment by introducing a clawback mechanism should LEDCOM decide to sell the improved building following completion of the works. The legal agreement introduced a ten year, reducing clawback mechanism which would see the Council reimbursed if this situation arose.

5. Financial Position/Implication

There were no new financial implications at this time.

Proposed by Councillor Goodman
Seconded by Alderman Magill and agreed that

- a) **the letter of variation for a 12 month extension to LEDCOM for the refurbishment and repurpose Foundry House, Ballyclare be approved and;**
- b) **the signing of the associated legal agreement introducing the clawback mechanism be approved.**

ACTION BY: Chris Doyle, Investment Officer

3.9 **PBS/BC/003 VOL 2 STREET NAMING SUBMISSION – BELFAST ROAD, ANTRIM**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to recommend to Members a new street name for a development at Belfast Road, Antrim.

2. Introduction/Background

A development naming application was received from Chris McIlwaine on behalf of McCombe Brothers regarding the naming of a residential development at Belfast Road, Antrim. The development consisted of one block of 13 apartments. The development names and developer's rationale had been submitted as outlined below, with the developer's application, location map and site plan circulated.

- 1 – Belleville Hall – Name of the original dwelling. Hall is a term often used for a building with residential units.
- 2 – Blackthorn Hall – Blackthorn is the name of an Irish tree
- 3 – Hawthorn Mews – Hawthorn is the name of an Irish tree (fairy tree).

Should the Council not wish to select one of the above names; the matter would be referred back to the developer via the Building Control section for further consideration.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch
Seconded by Councillor Goodman and agreed that

the name Blackthorn Hall for the above development be approved.

ACTION BY: Liam McFadden, Principal Building Control Surveyor

3.10 PBS/BC/003 VOL 2 STREET NAMING SUBMISSION – JUBILEE ROAD BALLYCLARE (K&P CONSTRUCTION)

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to recommend to Members a new street name for a development at Jubilee Road, Ballyclare.

2. Introduction/Background

A development naming application was received from Charlene McGuinness on behalf of K&P Construction Ltd regarding the naming of a residential development at Jubilee Road, Ballyclare. The development consisted of 18 dwellings, these being a mixture of detached and semi – detached. The development names and developer's rationale had been submitted as outlined below, with the developer's application, location map and site plan circulated.

- 1 – Peel Lane – The development was built across the original access lane to the Peel farm.
- 2 – Whitehare Avenue – The white hare is the emblem of Ballyclare Rugby Club situated beside the development.
- 3 – Rugby Drive – The development was located adjacent to Ballyclare Rugby Club

Should the Council not wish to select one of the above names; the matter would be referred back to the developer via the Building Control section for further consideration.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch
Seconded by Alderman Magill and agreed that

the name Whitehare Avenue for the above development be approved.

ACTION BY: Liam McFadden, Principal Building Control Surveyor

3.11 PBS/BC/003 VOL 2 STREET NAMING SUBMISSION – JUBILEE ROAD BALLYCLARE (CYM PROPERTIES)

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to recommend to Members a new street name for a development at Jubilee Road, Ballyclare.

2. Introduction/Background

A development naming application was received from Jim Burke on behalf of CYM Properties regarding the naming of a residential development at Jubilee Road, Ballyclare. The development consists of 77 dwellings, these being a mixture of detached and semi – detached. The development names and developer's rationale had been submitted as outlined below, with the developer's application, location map and site plan circulated.

- 1 – Spring Meadow – Due to the amount of springs in the area.
- 2 – Springwater Meadow – Same rationale as above.
- 3 – The Springs – Same rationale as above

Should the Council not wish to select one of the above names; the matter would be referred back to the developer via the Building Control section for further consideration.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch
Seconded by Alderman Magill and agreed that

the name Springwater for the above development be approved.

ACTION BY: Liam McFadden, Principal Building Control Surveyor

3.12 PBS/BC/003 VOL 2 STREET NAMING SUBMISSION – MAIN STREET TOOME

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to recommend to Members a new street name for a development at Main Street, Toome.

2. Introduction/Background

A development naming application was received from Michael Small on behalf of Creeve Construction regarding the naming of a residential development at Main Street, Toome. The development consisted of 13 dwellings, these being a mixture of detached and semi – detached. The development names and developer's rationale had been submitted as outlined below, with the developer's application, location map and site plan circulated.

- 1 – Chapel View – The local chapel was located directly across the road from the proposed development.
- 2 – Chapel Lane – The development is small with only one road which could be classed as a lane.
- 3 – The Orchard – The site used to be an orchard in the 1950s.

Should the Council not wish to select one of the above names; the matter would be referred back to the developer via the Building Control section for further consideration.

Proposed by Councillor Ward
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

the name The Orchard for the above development be approved.

ACTION BY: Liam McFadden, Principal Building Control Surveyor

3.13 PBS/BC/003 VOL 2 STREET NAMING SUBMISSION – MILL ROAD CRUMLIN

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to recommend to Members a new street name for a development at Mill Road, Crumlin.

2. Introduction/Background

A development naming application was received from Paul Nicholas on behalf of Oceana Construction regarding the naming of a residential development at Mill Road, Crumlin. The development consisted of one block of 25 apartments. The development names and developer's rationale had been submitted as outlined below, with the developer's application, location map and site plan circulated.

- 1 – Lough Neagh Court – The development was adjacent to existing properties known as Lough Neagh Terrace
- 2 – River Oaks Court – The development was located on the banks of the River Oaks
- 3 – Heyland Court – The development was adjacent to the flour mills built by Rowley Heyland in 1765.

Should the Council not wish to select one of the above names; the matter would be referred back to the developer via the Building Control section for further consideration.

Proposed by Alderman Magill
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

the name Lough Neagh Court for the above development be approved.

ACTION BY: Liam McFadden, Principal Building Control Surveyor

Councillor Ward left and returned to the Chamber during item 4.1.

4 ITEMS FOR NOTING

4.1 ED/REG/083 OUT OF TOWN CENTRE COMMERCIAL AREAS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the work being undertaken by the Council to support out of Town Centre Commercial Areas and to outline future plans.

2. Introduction/Background

The Council area had five recognised town centres which provided amenities to large sections of the population of the Borough, however in a number of areas, particularly in Three Mile Water and Macedon DEAs, there were a number of commercial centres, that whilst not recognised as a town, provided similar services to their local communities, on a different scale.

3. Key Issues

In planning terms there were two main types of area outside of town centres, these are detailed below:

District Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Northcott• Whiteabbey Village
Local Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Abbot's Cross• Ballyduff• Beverley Road• Carnmoney• Cloughfern• The Diamond• Greystone• Jennings Park• Kingspark/ Kings Crescent• Mallusk• Mayfield• Merville Garden Village• Monkstown• Mossley West• Parkhall• Richmond

Across the last number of years various programmes had been provided to support these areas, particularly the local centres in metropolitan Newtownabbey.

This has included:

- **Grants for Shop Front Improvement** – to date £111,450 in grant funding had been provided to Abbots Cross, Monkstown and Carnmoney Village. Phase 2 of the shop front improvement programme was due to open later this year and would focus on the remaining areas with a budget of around £103,500 providing grant funding to approximately 30 additional businesses.

- **Repair works** - to date a number of properties had been supported through the regeneration reactive maintenance programme to support business owners and property owners whose buildings were in a state of disrepair or which leave the business exposed to risk. Businesses in New Mossley, The Diamond, Mossley West and Beverly had been supported through replacement shutters to replacement doors etc.
- **Aesthetic Improvements** – through the integrated masterplan framework a number of small projects were undertaken to improve the aesthetics of the local centres through minor works improvements and new planting schemes. This has included new planters for New Mossley, Abbots Cross, Greystone, Jennings, Kingspark and Mossley West. It had also included replacement of street furniture e.g. bins/benches where required.

The businesses located in all of these areas could also avail of the main business support programmes including:

- GoSucceed
- ASK Mentoring Programme
- LMP
- Digital Transformation Programme
- Green for Business Programme

Information regarding these schemes had been delivered to these areas as part of a targeted communications campaign earlier this year.

Looking ahead, there was more work to be completed to continue to support these areas. One of the biggest challenges faced by these areas was around visibility and the awareness of residents and visitors to the services and conveniences they provide.

- **Branding and Marketing** - Earlier this year the Council launched its new Town Centre marketing brand *#EmbraceYourTown*. Officers were now considering how a sub-brand could be developed to run separate marketing campaigns for Local Centres to promote them across the Borough and beyond.
- **Merchandising Visualisation Programme** – In June 2024 the Council approved a new merchandising visualisation programme aimed at supporting businesses in dressing their shop windows and promoting themselves in a more professional manner. Officers were in the midst of the procurement exercise for this programme and it was hoped that businesses, including those in local centres, could avail of this support in the early part of 2025.
- **Signage and wayfinding** – an audit of signage and wayfinding would be undertaken to understand the current level of coverage. The Council would then engage with relevant stakeholders e.g. DfL and land owners to consider options. A further report would be brought to Members in due course.

In response to a Member's query regarding previous approval for Hillview Monkstown and Carnmoney Village to be included in Phase 1, the Deputy Director of Regeneration and Infrastructure agreed to follow up on this query.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch
Seconded by Alderman Magill and agreed that

the update on the support being provided to local centres across the Borough be noted.

ACTION BY: Majella McAlister, Director of Economic Development and Planning

Councillor Mallon left the meeting during item 4.2.

4.2 ED/ED/302 SIB APPOINTMENT- LOCAL ENTERPRISE AGENCIES PARTNERSHIP MODEL

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the appointment of the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) to undertake an assignment which would consider the establishment of a new model between the council and local enterprise agencies to improve local performance in innovation and entrepreneurship and increase the quality and quantity of workspace across the Borough.

2. Background & Progress

Members would be aware that approval was previously granted to proceed with the appointment of a suitably qualified and experienced individual/team to advise on the creation of an ambitious support model to improve local performance in innovation and entrepreneurship and in particular to increase the quantum and quality of workspace available across the Borough to include business incubation facilities.

A methodology had been agreed with the SIB team which included Alan Mc Vicker, Hazel King and Gregor Hamilton. The assignment would be delivered over a 4 month period until February 2025.

SIB would now undertake the following actions;

1. Initial stakeholder engagement and desk-based research to establish key objectives and outcomes required from setting up a new partnership arrangement between the council and enterprise agency. Stakeholder meetings to be held with the Council, the 3 local Enterprise Agencies as well as other external bodies as agreed with the Council.
2. Undertake a review of the current legal framework that partners are operating in, including Council and Local Enterprise Agency current powers and structures.
3. Set out the required regulatory compliance including public procurement and any subsidy control implications as well as setting out the roles and responsibilities of each partner.

4. Research and present an option analysis detailing the spectrum of potential partnership models which the council and LEAs could participate in to achieve the desired outcomes, from low commitment collaboration (e.g. common branding) to more complex legal structures which require high levels of commitment (e.g formal service level agreements, establishing a new entity such as a Special Purpose Vehicle).

This piece of work would specifically consider whether the Council could legally establish a new body such as a SPV, setting out what the implications might be for both the Council and the local enterprise agency working as partners.

5. Each of the options identified would highlight, where relevant, increasing levels of legal and financial governance requirements, and would outline the potential delivery models, any examples of best practice which already exist, key risks and benefits, due diligence required, the treatment of assets etc. This appraisal may include an option of a staged approach, moving from a collaborative working arrangement to a more formal arrangement over time.
6. Options may include a model which comprises the Council and one enterprise agency, as well as options to include the Council and up to the three enterprise agencies.
7. Where appropriate scope out the initial core elements of what would need to be included in a financial model for each of the options (e.g cost structures, funding agreements and potential for revenue generation, explore options for financial sustainability).
8. A decision matrix would then be developed which evaluates each option based upon key factors which may for example include: ease of implementation, cost, risk, achievement of outcomes, legal requirements etc. Please note, these decision factors would be agreed in advance with the Council and LEAs.

This initial piece of work would be developed through consulting with relevant legal, accounting, procurement and governance experts in SIB.

Based upon this piece of work a recommendation would be made to the Council on the option which provided the 'best fit' and which reflects the Council and LEAs key objectives, with recommendations to Council regarding further work required to develop and implement the preferred option.

3. Previous Council Decision

Approval was previously granted to proceed with the appointment of a suitably qualified and experienced individual/team to undertake this assignment.

4. Summary

SIB had been appointed to undertake this assignment and would commence work from December 2024.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch
Seconded by Alderman Magill and agreed that

The update be noted.

NO ACTION

4.3 FI/FIN/4 BUDGET REPORT – QUARTER 2 APRIL 2024 TO SEPTEMBER 2024

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide financial performance information at period 6 (April 2024 – September 2024) for Economic Development.

2. Introduction/Background

As agreed, quarterly budget reports would be presented to the relevant Committee or Working Group. All financial reports would be available to all Members.

3. Summary

Budget reports for Economic Development for Quarter 2 April 2024 to September 2024 were circulated for Members' information.

The overall financial position of the Council would be presented to the Policy & Governance Committee.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch
Seconded by Councillor Goodman and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

4.4 ED/ED/167 COMMUNITIES AND PLACE 2024-2025 FUNDING UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the successful outcome of the Council's bid to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the offer of £754,069.

2. Background

Members were reminded that it was agreed at the September Committee that a bid incorporating five projects which were considered likely to meet the criteria and could be delivered within the financial year be submitted.

The projects included were:-

- (i) Monkstown 3G Pitch
- (ii) Randalstown Viaduct
- (iii) Mallusk Play Area
- (iv) Antrim Court House Cafe
- (v) Roundabout Refurbishment Programme

3. Key update

Correspondence had been received from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund team advising that the bid had been successful and offered the Council funding of £754,094. A Memorandum of Understanding had now been signed between the Department of Levelling Up Housing & Communities and the Council.

The projects would be progressed in line with the application with all expenditure to be incurred by 31 March 2025.

Proposed by Alderman Magill
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

the report be noted.

NO ACTION

The Chairperson advised that the Supplementary report would be taken at this point.

4.5 ED/ED/275 DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES LETTER OF OFFER – TOWN CENTRE MARKETING CAMPAIGN

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members approval to accept a contract for funding from the Department of Communities for financial assistance of £50,000 to support the Town Centre Marketing Campaign for Christmas 2024 and Spring 2025.

2. Introduction/Background

In March 2024, the Council launched a new town centre marketing brand, 'EmbraceYourTown' with the aim of showcasing the best our towns had to offer. The initial campaign led to the creation of a number of videos, posters and billboards.

The overall aims of the campaign were to:

- **Increase Footfall and Economic Activity** - Inspire residents and visitors to shop and dine within our five town centres, increasing footfall and supporting local businesses.

- **Raise Awareness of our Town Centre Offerings** - Enhance public awareness of the hospitality and retail offerings available within our town centres through digital, radio and print marketing.

3. Key Issues

The funding received would now enable the Council to build upon the 'EmbraceYourTown' brand launched earlier this year and undertake further activity to promote businesses in our town centres.

The project sought to deliver the following activity:

- **Campaign Strategy** – development of a comprehensive marketing strategy outlining key objectives, target audiences, and messaging for the Christmas and Spring campaigns.
- **Digital Marketing** – creation of engaging content to raise awareness of the hospitality and retail offerings in our local towns, which would be shared across the Council's various social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) and promoted through local radio advertising to support and promote local businesses.
- **Print Advertising** - production of bespoke printed assets, including billboards, Adshells, adwraps and banners to promote the campaign across each of the town centres.

4. Summary

Members were advised that correspondence (circulated) had been received from the Department for Communities (DfC) offering financial assistance totalling £50,000 to support the Town Centre Marketing Campaign for Christmas 2024 and Spring 2025.

Funder	Amount
DfC	£50,000
ANBC	£5,000
Total	£55,000

Proposed by Councillor Lynch

Seconded by Alderman Ross and agreed that

the acceptance of this contract for funding of £50,000 from the Department for Communities to support the Town Centre Marketing Campaign for Christmas 2024 and Spring 2025 be noted.

ACTION BY: Steven Norris, Deputy Director of Regeneration and Infrastructure

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED TO 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Goodman

Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

the remaining Committee business be taken In Confidence and the livestream and audio recording would cease at this point.

5 ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

5.1 IN CONFIDENCE ED/ED/303 WORKSPACE DEVELOPMENT FUND GRANT – TRANSPORT TRAINING SERVICES (NI) LTD

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for a Workspace Development Fund Grant to Transport Training Services (NI) Ltd for their proposed development plans at Nutts Corner Business Park.

2. Introduction/Background

Members were reminded that the policy to Support the Development and Refurbishment of Workspace, approved through Full Council in March 2021, allowed selective grant assistance to be provided to businesses and social enterprises within the Borough.

In August 2024 officers received an expression of interest from Transport Training Services NI Ltd (TTS) to commence an application process for support to their significant investment proposals outlined further below. (circulated)

The Transport Training Board for Northern Ireland (TTB) was a registered charity NI101451, as outlined in the Charities Act (NI) 2008. TTS was TTB's wholly owned subsidiary and was the training delivery arm of TTB, operating as a Social Enterprise and reinvesting profits from trading operations into the development of further training programmes for young people and adult learners involved in the Transport and Logistics Industry.

TTB had operated from Nutts Corner since 1991 when it replaced the Government Agency, The Road Transport Industry Training Board, which had been in effect since the late 1960s. As part of this hand over TTB became the owner of the land that was known today as the Nutts Corner Business Park. Over their stewardship nine other businesses had been welcomed into the business park.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

As a result, a significant proportion of fully qualified apprentices would work in the region and contribute to the economic performance of Borough.

3. Key Issues

About the Project

Owing to an increase in demand for their services as well as aging facilities, TTS had plans to expand its operations, enabling greater capacity and capability.

To help meet the increased demands for their services, the existing Light Vehicle Workshop building needs extended and a new Heavy Vehicle Workshop would be developed.

The improved and expanded facility would enable TTS to increase the capacity of apprentices trained through the facility from 280 apprentices to a maximum of 400 to reflect the market share TTS command and enable the organisation to add specialist courses to their delivery programme.

The project was a £[REDACTED] investment by the company and would have significant impact for the local area and would provide job creation for both permanent and seasonal staff, as well as safeguard existing employees.

The project was split into two phases:

Phase 1 - New build Heavy Vehicle Workshop:

- Value: £[REDACTED] + VAT
- Increased floor space: 5,166 sq ft

The existing TTS workshop was outdated, with issues such as a leaking roof, poor insulation and outdated wiring. An upgrade was essential to meet current apprentice training demands and reflect TTS's market presence.

Phase 2 - Extension of Light Vehicle Workshop:

- Value: Est £[REDACTED] + VAT
- Increased floor space: 1,776 sq ft

This phase included:

- Extension of the existing workshop
- Refurbishing the existing cladding
- Replacing the roof
- Installation of a mezzanine floor
- Development of two additional classrooms

Phase 2 was currently at the procurement stage and yet to commence.

All statutory approvals, including planning permission, were in place.

Project Outcomes

The commercial objectives of the project included:

1. Investment of £ [REDACTED] + VAT in a new Heavy Vehicle Workshop
2. Investment of £ [REDACTED] + VAT in extending the Light Vehicle Workshop
3. 9 FTE jobs created 24 months from completion
4. Increase intake of apprenticeships by 70 within 24 months

TTS were currently operating over capacity and having to rent space from the neighbouring TTS. Upon project completion, TTS would increase capacity from 280 to 400 apprentices at any given time.

The project would support a social enterprise that had very ambitious targets to increase their percentage of market share, enabling Transport Training Services (NI) Ltd to demonstrate efficiencies in their working procedures to keep up with demand. As an indigenous social enterprise, the Council aimed to support and aid that growth as it complements our strategic goals to be a place for businesses & social enterprises to feel supported and enabled.

TTS were located at Nutts Corner, one of the Borough's main Strategic Employment Locations. It was considered that the proposed growth in users of the enhanced TTS facility would in-turn raise the number of people accustomed to travelling to this high potential growth area, resulting in a greater number of skilled people willing and able to work in this area.

Benefits to the local economy

Through supporting this project, the local area would benefit from increased job opportunities for residents by the creation on 9 FTE jobs as well as any third party jobs that are created via apprentices qualifying.

TTS offers significant contributions to the local economy by providing skills-based training and workforce development tailored to meet the needs of both the community and local businesses.

Unlike other charities and social enterprises focused primarily on providing short-term assistance, TTS emphasises equipping individuals with practical skills, certifications and confidence to secure stable, long-term employment. This approach not only benefits the individuals who participate in TTS programs but also had a lasting impact on the local economy by building a skilled and employable workforce, reducing dependency on social support systems.

By completing this project, TTS would provide the following economic contributions:

- Local workforce development
- Reducing unemployment and economic inactivity

- Support local businesses
- Development of an underutilised space

As with other beneficiaries of the workspace fund, it was proposed that the Council entered into a legal agreement to secure this level of investment, including inhibition to sell the property within a defined period.

4. Financial Position/Implication

In order to complete the proposed works, the TTS Board agreed to make a significant contribution from their own reserves, [REDACTED]. It was proposed that under the workspace development fund, Council support TTS with financial assistance for **phase one** of the project.

The proposed grant assistance for Transport Training Services (NI) Ltd is 25% of the total cost of phase 1 up to a maximum of £[REDACTED].

Payments would be paid in three instalments, 25% on the signing and return of the Letter of Offer, 50% upon completion of the build and a final 25% on the achievement of the associated KPIs. The payments would be subject to a signed letter of offer.

This was based on an indicative funding split of 25% from Council and 75% from TTS.

As per the budget agreed through the Economic Development Business Plan in February 2024 there was currently a budget set aside for grant awards under the three strategic funds. There would be no further financial implications to the Council.

5. Summary

Transport Training Services (NI) Ltd had submitted an expression of Interest to the Workplace Development Fund for grant assistance of up to 25% of the total cost of phase 2 up to a maximum of £[REDACTED] to support its expansion plans. The social enterprise was investing £[REDACTED] in the Borough creating 7,000 ft² of workshop space. The project would create 9 FTE jobs and support the business with its growth plan by increasing the number of apprentices being trained by the social enterprise.

Whilst Council would not benefit from recouped rates as the overlaying status of the organisation was a charity, outputs from the project were comparable to other projects supported under the fund and due to the nature of the organisation, they would make a major contribution to the local economy through the creation of a skilled workforce.

In response to a Member's query, the Deputy Director of Investment and Business Development undertook to explore the range of apprenticeships on offer across all age ranges.

Proposed by Alderman Ross
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

grant assistance of up to £[REDACTED] from the Workspace Development Fund for Transport Training Services (NI) Ltd be approved to support their expansion plans in the Borough subject to satisfaction of a future letter of offer, associated KPIs and necessary legal agreement.

ACTION BY: Stewart McCormack, Investment Officer

5.2 IN CONFIDENCE ED/ED/195 VOL 3 SPACE ANTRIM UPDATE REPORT

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the progress of SPACE Antrim since the soft opening on the 30 August 2024.

2. Introduction/Background

Members would be aware of the Council's success in securing £5.1m from the UK Levelling Up Fund (LUF) which was supporting two major regeneration schemes in Antrim and Glengormley.

A formal Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Department in February 2022 and since then Officers have been working to progress the two schemes.

3. Previous Decision of Council

In May 2023 the tender report for the Antrim scheme was approved at full Council with a total budget of £[REDACTED].

In July 2023 the Pilot LUF Operational Agreement with Antrim Enterprise Agency was approved. This was signed in November 2023.

In January 2024, following a series of Member workshops, the new brand for the workspace was approved.

4. Key Issues

The construction of the Antrim workspace commenced in August 2023. The aim of the project was to transform 16,000sq/ft of derelict space in the heart of Antrim Town Centre into a thriving business environment to support entrepreneurs, business start-ups and SMEs.

The workspace, named SPACE Antrim, was now nearing completion with formal handover having taken place on Friday 30 August 2024. The works had seen the creation of:

- 16 dedicated offices
- 3 boardrooms and spaces for meetings

- 8 meeting pods and privacy pods
- Three large collaborative working and hot-desking areas
- One large event space

During the construction phase Officers had also been working on a number of parallel issues to support the operation of the building. In November 2023 a formal Pilot Operational Agreement was signed between Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council and Antrim Enterprise Agency Limited to operate SPACE Antrim on a day-to-day basis. Antrim Enterprise, and their CEO Jennifer McWilliams, have over 30 years of experience in supporting businesses and managing workspace to the project and were a valuable partner in moving the workspace into operational mode.

In addition to this, a new brand was agreed by Elected Members in January 2024.



A new website had been established for enquires at <https://space-ni.co.uk/>

The workspace was now in operational mode and Elected Members would have had a chance to visit SPACE themselves at the two open events hosted on Friday 6 September or Thursday 12 September.

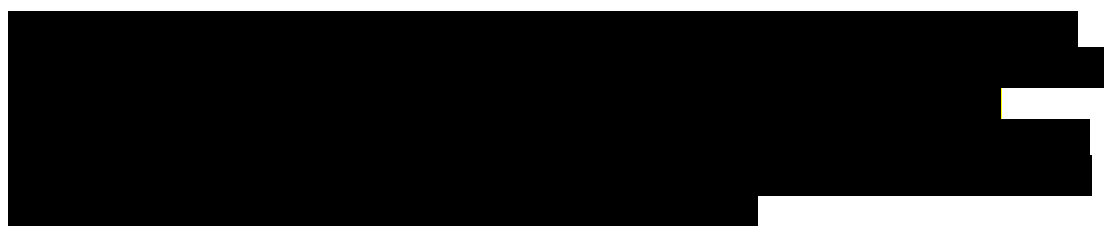
In addition to this, the Mayor hosted a visit by the Minister for Community Growth Alex Norris MP on the 18 September.

The official opening of SPACE Antrim took place on the 8 November 2024 where the Mayor official unveiled a plaque marking the official opening of the building.

Operating Model and Income Generation

The original business case for the Levelling Up projects was completed in 2021 and provided a modest financial model based on a number of key variables:

- Types of chargeable space available (e.g. offices/meeting rooms)
- Estimated annual price
- Level of occupation (starting at 35% in year one)



Since this model was completed a number of variables had changed. These changes included:

- The addition of new types of chargeable space as the floor plan of the space developed
- The price point charged had increased largely due to inflation. Private sector estate agent, CBRE, was involved in the price setting for SPACE Antrim and considered market rates and the quality of the workspace.

These changes had positively impacted the income generation capability of SPACE Antrim. Council Officers were now working with Antrim Enterprise Agency on the revised income and expenditure projection and this would be brought to Members in January 2025.

Tenants and Business Residents

The SPACE Antrim hub had gotten off to a great start with the operator, Antrim Enterprise Agency, continuing to deal with enquires and tours of the building.

14 businesses now call Space Antrim home:

- Office – Inspired Business Consultancy Limited
- Office – Arc Design Limited
- Office – First Forensics
- Office – Legal Island
- Office – BB7
- Dedicated Desk – Colourwired
- Dedicated Desk – Kinfow
- Dedicated Desk – Flight Line Golf
- Dedicated Desk – Safeguarding Solutions NI
- Dedicated Desk – JNA Brands
- Dedicated Desk – Digital Next
- Dedicated Desk – Stagforge
- Dedicated Desk ENGA Translation
- Hot Desk – Jason Johnson Ghost Writer

The above users meant that 35% of the offices, 33% of the dedicated desks and 6.5% of the hot desks were let to business users. Overall, this represented 25% of SPACE Antrim is currently occupied.

The Council's Economic Development team alongside Antrim Enterprise had continued to support the businesses and promote the other Council support available.

In addition to this, both meeting rooms and event space were also starting to get more frequent use. Event space was the venue for the Northern Ireland Artificial Intelligence conference on 24 October and there were a number of other high profile events already in the diary for the rest of 2024 and into 2025.

A further report would be brought to Members periodically to provide continued updates on the progress of the workspace and the income/expenditure position.

5. Summary

Space Antrim was officially opened by the Mayor on 8 November 2024 and this report provided an updated position in terms of the projected income and expenditure as well as an update on the business users.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch
Seconded by Alderman Magill and agreed that

the update be noted.

NO ACTION

5.3 **IN CONFIDENCE** ED/ED/259 BIRCHILL ROAD SPONSOR BODY REQUEST FROM ANTRIM ENTERPRISE AGENCY

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for Council to act as the sponsor body for Antrim Enterprise Agency regarding a piece of land at Birch Hill Road, Antrim.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Proposed by Councillor Lynch
Seconded by Councillor Goodman and agreed that

approval be granted in principle, subject to an approved business case and any legal requirements, for the Council to act as the sponsor body for Antrim Enterprise Agency to acquire the land (or part thereof) as outlined at Birch Hill Road, Antrim.

ACTION BY: Steven Norris, Deputy Director of Regeneration and Infrastructure

5.4 IN CONFIDENCE ED/ED/284 STRATEGIC PLANNING APPLICATIONS OVERVIEW

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to update Members regarding Major Strategic Planning Applications and Planning Application Notices (circulated).

Proposed by Alderman Magill
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

the Strategic Planning Applications Overview as outlined be noted.

NO ACTION

5.5 IN CONFIDENCE ED/ED/195 Vol.2 MINUTES – LEVELLING UP FUND PROJECT BOARD ANTRIM & GLENGORMLEY

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to recommend to Members for approval the circulated minutes of the Levelling Up Fund Project Board meetings held on 24 July and 4 September for the Antrim scheme and 28 August for the Glengormley scheme.

2. Governance

The Levelling Up Fund award required that a governance structure be put in place to oversee the management and implementation of the approved schemes:

LUF0037 Glengormley Integrated Economic and Physical Regeneration Scheme

LUF0080 Antrim Integrated Economic and Physical Regeneration Scheme

Proposed by Councillor Lynch

Seconded by Alderman Magill and agreed that

the minutes of the Levelling Up Fund Project Board meetings held on 24 July and 4 September for Antrim and Glengormley, and 28 August for Glengormley, be approved.

ACTION BY: Tara McCormick, Executive Officer

5.6 **IN CONFIDENCE** ED/ED/273 MINUTES OF THE ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY BOROUGH COUNCIL LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to recommend to Members for approval the (circulated) minutes of the meeting of the Labour Market Partnership held on 19th September 2024.

Proposed by Alderman Magill

Seconded by Councillor Lynch and agreed that

the minutes of the Labour Market Partnership held on 19th September 2024 be approved.

ACTION BY: Michael McKenna, Deputy Director Investment and Business Development

5.7 **IN CONFIDENCE** ED/ED/273 MINUTES OF THE GLENGORMLEY PUBLIC REALM PROJECT BOARD MEETING 17th SEPTEMBER 2024

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to recommend to Members for approval the (circulated) minutes of the meeting of the Glengormley Public Realm Project Board held on 17 September 2024.

2. Governance

As per the Project Board Terms of Reference which required that a governance structure be put in place to oversee the management and implementation of the approved schemes, the minutes of the Board would be presented to the Council's Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and then to the Council for approval.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch
Seconded by Alderman Magill and agreed that

the minutes of the Glengormley Public Realm Project Board meeting held on 17 September 2024 be approved.

ACTION BY: Chris Doyle, Investment Officer

PROPOSAL TO PROCEED OUT OF 'IN CONFIDENCE'

Proposed by Councillor Lynch
Seconded by Alderman Magill and agreed that

that the remainder of Committee business be taken in Open Session.

The Chairperson advised that the audio-recording would recommence at this point.

There being no further Committee business, the Chairperson thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 8.03pm.

MAYOR

Council Minutes have been redacted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation, and legal advice.