



5 September 2024

Committee Chair: Councillor B Webb

Committee Vice-Chair: Councillor M Goodman

Committee Members: Aldermen – M Cosgrove, M Magill and S Ross
Councillors – R Lynch, B Mallon and S Ward

Dear Member

MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Economic Development Committee will be held in the **Chamber, Mossley Mill** on **Tuesday 10 September 2024** at **6.30 pm**.

You are requested to attend.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Baker".

Richard Baker GM MSc
Chief Executive, Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council

PLEASE NOTE: Refreshments will be available in the Café from 5.20pm

For any queries please contact Member Services:

Tel: 028 9448 1301

memberservices@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

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**REPORT ON BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING ON
TUESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2024**

3 ITEMS FOR DECISION

3.1 ED/ED/282 PHASE 2 BUSINESS CCTV PROGRAMME

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval for the launch of the Business CCTV Scheme Phase 2 at a cost of £49,000 which will be met through the existing Economic Development budget.

2. Introduction/Background

Members are reminded that, in August 2021, the Council approved a 'CCTV Grant Programme', providing town centre businesses with financial assistance to install external, public facing CCTV systems and associated equipment.

The programme focused on supporting local businesses, reducing anti-social behaviour and crime hot-spots, and improving the safety and well-being of the public within our town centres.

The initial call was opened in early 2022, with 245 Expressions of Interest received Borough-wide; 124 in town centres. Of these, 30 were converted into full applications and the Council provided more than £49,000 in grant funding to these businesses to help install their required CCTV equipment.

Town Centre	Number of EOIs	Completed Projects	Spend
Ballyclare	20	4	£4,222.65
Crumlin	15	8	£16,335.25
Randalstown	29	4	£6,735.00
Antrim	33	6	£9,509.27
Glengormley	27	8	£12,833.26
TOTAL	124	30	£49,635.43

Officers conducted post-project on-site inspections with the PSNI, to check that businesses were utilising their CCTV system correctly, offer assistance and guidance to businesses and to confirm the accuracy of the CCTV system's date and time configurations. Feedback from the businesses and the PSNI was very positive.

Several businesses have reported that the PSNI have checked their CCTV systems on numerous occasions in respect of criminal activity such as shoplifting, car accidents and anti-social behaviour. One business reiterated the importance and value of the Council's CCTV scheme and advised that footage obtained from his premises contributed to securing a prosecution in a shoplifting case.

3. Previous Decision of Council

In February 2022, a budget of £327,500 was approved for the whole CCTV scheme of which £49,635.43 was awarded in Phase 1.

Officers tabled a report to the Our Prosperity Outcome Delivery Group (OPODG) in December 2023 seeking approval to proceed with a second phase of the programme, encompassing town centres, villages, and other commercial areas (e.g. industrial estates and areas with high concentrations of commercial establishments) across the Borough.

The proposal was for an “Open Call” approach, removing the need for an ‘Expression of Interest’ phase, or a fixed closing date. Instead, applications would be processed on a first-come, first-served basis, allowing businesses to apply at their convenience. This approach was proposed to ensure that new businesses would be eligible, and more businesses would be able to participate in the scheme.

It was proposed that the maximum grant award remain at £2,500 per business, at a grant rate of up to 75%, as was the case under Phase 1.

Following discussion, Members asked Officers to consider a more targeted approach, linking in with PSNI and the Council's PCSP team, to highlight specific areas of need and to ensure maximum impact. Members asked for the presentation of a further CCTV Phase 2 report at a future meeting.

4. Key Issues for Consideration by Members

Officers subsequently met with the PSNI's Antrim and Newtownabbey Policing Teams in April 2024 and outlined the potential for external/ street-facing CCTV in areas which have higher levels of theft, vandalism or anti-social behaviour. PSNI Officers consulted their data analysts and provided a number of suggestions for key areas, as listed below.

Town	Areas	Potential Number of Businesses
Antrim	Lough Road Car Park, Halls Bridge and Alleyway	5
	Massareene Bridge and Bridge Street	8
	Antrim High Street	30
	Antrim Train Station	2
Ballyclare	The Square	30
	Harrier Way	21
	Centenary Way	3
Crumlin	ANBC Leisure Centre	1
	Main Street	25
Glengormley	Antrim Road Corridor	86
	Carnmoney Road	23
	Ballyclare Road	24
Total		258

In order to progress Phase 2, Officers are seeking Members' approval to proceed with an open call approach which prioritises the PSNI's suggested areas at the application- scoring stage.

Under this approach, the call will open and be advertised as it was in Phase 1 and relies on the business owners in the towns being willing to participate the scheme.

All applications to the scheme will be subject to the eligibility criteria and the necessary due diligence however, during the scoring of applications, applicants from within the PSNI's suggested areas will receive additional points. Officers are also considering direct engagement or direct advertising with businesses in the PSNI-suggested areas, to raise awareness of the scheme and its benefits.

Following completion of Phase 2 of the Business CCTV scheme, Officers intend to undertake a robust post-project evaluation of both Phase 1 and Phase 2. The evaluation will consider the scheme's outputs and outcomes against value for money and effectiveness.

A report on the evaluation will be provided for Members' information and direction in due course.

5. Financial Position/Implication

In February 2022, a budget of £327,500 was approved for the overall CCTV scheme of which £49,635.43 was utilised in Phase 1, leaving an available budget of £281,133.07.

Finance Officers are reviewing the expenditure, which will be capitalised if possible. The maximum grant award is £2,500 per business, at a grant rate of up to 75%, unchanged from Phase 1.

It is proposed that a budget of £49,000 be ring-fenced for Phase 2 from the remaining budget.

6. Governance

The project will be delivered by the Economic Development section.

7. Recommendation

It is recommended that progress with Phase 2 of the Business CCTV scheme as an open call approach which prioritises the specific areas identified by the PSNI through a budget of £49,000 from Economic Development be approved.

Prepared by: Tara McCormick, Executive Officer, Economic Development

Agreed by: Steven Norris, Deputy Director of Regeneration and Infrastructure

Approved by: Majella McAllister – Deputy Chief Executive & Director of
Economic Development and Planning

3.2 ED/ED 296 & 297 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES WHITEABBEY VILLAGE AND CRUMLIN TOWN CENTRE

1. Purpose

The rationale for an Environmental Improvement Scheme in Whiteabbey Village and Crumlin Town Centre has been established. Therefore, the purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval to place the project on the Council's Capital Programme and to commence the first stage of the four-stage Capital Project Management Process by appointing the Integrated Consultancy Team (ICT).

2. Introduction/Background

The Council, working with the Department for Communities Regional Development Team, has identified the need for Environmental Improvement Projects in Whiteabbey Village and Crumlin Town Centre, which could be progressed in the coming years.

These projects seek to address the strategic, economic and environmental need to improve the public realm in Whiteabbey Village and Crumlin town centre and meet the challenges facing High Streets across the UK and beyond. This project aims to visually transform the areas, reduce the current vehicular dominance and sustain footfall in the area, thereby improving the perception of the areas (and their businesses), add to their vibrancy and appeal to businesses, visitors and residents.

The projects are outlined in the Integrated Development Framework, published and ratified by the Council in January 2023.

For Crumlin, the Framework states;

"There's an opportunity to modernise the public realm treatment along the Main Street, making the town centre a more pleasant and comfortable place to spend time in. These public realm improvements should focus on keeping the simplicity of the streetscape and raising the quality of materials. At present, there is a significant fall in the quality of public realm along the western section of Main Street towards Lurgan Road, resulting in a poor first impression for people approaching Crumlin from this direction. It is proposed that the Main Street public realm improvements extend out of the town centre boundary to improve the sense of arrival along the Lurgan Road. Likewise, secondary public realm improvements are proposed along Orchard Road, Mill Road, Cider Court Road where these streets join the town centre. These improvements should be in keeping with the principal public realm works proposed on Main Street."

For Whiteabbey Village, the Framework states;

"Whiteabbey Village is located off the A2 Shore Road in Newtownabbey, consisting of a linear street with fronting retail/ commercial premises. Many retail/ commercial units within this centre were once residential properties and over time have been converted into retail/ commercial uses occupying the

ground and first floor levels. Whiteabbey Village is ideally situated in that it is close to a number of community facilities, such as Jordanstown Loughshore Park and thus benefits from high footfall and is generally a very active centre. The Village Centre would be significantly improved with a public realm scheme to unify the style of paving and street furniture throughout the village. Maximising, where possible, wide pavements to accommodate outdoor seating for the many businesses."

Both schemes are also identified in previous reports and plans including;

- Crumlin Town Centre Action Plan 2020
- Crumlin Business Network Plan 2024
- Whiteabbey Village Strategy 2020-2025

3. Previous Decision of Council

The Integrated Development Framework and the associated actions included were approved by Members at Full Council in January 2023.

In addition, in July 2023, Members approved the development of a separate business case for public realm in Whiteabbey Village with an associated Shop Front programme.

4. Project Overview

The project will undertake environmental improvements of stretches of the village and town centres, which will include provision of new paving and kerbs, street lighting, street furniture and soft landscaping.

The projects are part of the Integrated Development Framework 2023, which underwent public consultation in 2022 and were ratified by the Council in January 2023.

A Strategic Outline Case is being developed to support the project and will be shared with Members in due course.

It is envisaged that the future capital project would include the following broad elements (to be agreed) e.g. new paving, landscaping, street furniture etc.

To progress these projects to the next stage of development, Members' approval is sought to add these projects to the Council's Capital Programme and to commence the first stage of the new Capital Project Management process.

This will involve the appointment of an Integrated Consultancy Team (ICT) to undertake design work through a landscape architect, civil engineering works and project management works. This expert input will be used to inform the subsequent versions of the Business Case including the options appraisal, benefits realisation case and costing.

5. Financial Position/Implication

The estimated cost of the ICT tender is circa £250k and a further report will be presented to the Economic Development Committee in due course. This cost will be met through the Economic Development budget across the 2024/2025 and the 2025/2026 financial years as per the breakdown below.

Year	Budget Allocation
24/25	£50,000
25/26	£200,000
Total	£250,000

The Council's contribution will be used to support the revenue costs in Years 1 and 2 i.e. the appointment of the Integrated Consultancy Team and the completion of the Outline Business Case.

The Department for Communities have placed both the Whiteabbey and Crumlin schemes on the capital programme list and further negotiation will be undertaken in relation to the funding available for the capital schemes.

At this stage, it is hoped that 90% of the capital funding could be secured from the Department following a formal application, informed by the business case. It would be anticipated that the Council would be required to make a 10% match funding contribution towards the capital programme costs, however the Department have agreed to offset our contribution against the funding committed to this development stage of the project.

This detail will be further developed through the Outline Business Case which will be presented to Members in due course.

6. Governance

The project will be taken forward by the Economic Development and Capital Development Team, working collaboratively on the detailed specification of works and the procurement of an Integrated Consultancy Team.

Economic Development will lead the project on a day-to-day basis.

As the capital scheme will be funded by a central government department, there will be strict governance processes in place to monitor delivery and implementation of the programme and the success in achieving its objectives and targets. Procurement will be conducted in line with the NIPPP.

The team has significant experience of managing and delivering schemes collaboratively with the Department for Communities.

7. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Whiteabbey Village and Crumlin Town Centre Environmental Improvement Schemes are placed on the Council's Capital

Programme and that stage one of the four stage process be commenced with the appointment of an Integrated Consultancy Team at a cost of up to £250,000 to be met from the Economic Development budget.

Prepared by: Steven Norris, Deputy Director of Regeneration and Infrastructure and Michael McKenna, Deputy Director of Investment and Business Development

Approved by: Majella McAllister, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Economic Development and Planning

3.3 ED/ED/276 DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES LETTER OF OFFER - SMALL AREAS REVITALISATION PROGRAMME

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval to accept a contract for funding from the Department for Communities for financial assistance of £358,000 to support the Small Areas Revitalisation Programme.

2. Introduction/Background

The Small Areas Revitalisation Scheme aims to deliver small-scale, revitalisation interventions and enhancements concentrating on discreet geographical areas that will strengthen and enhance the town centres in terms of their physical, environmental, social and economic capacities. The proposed scheme includes seven key sites:

- a. Halls Entry and Lough Road Car Park (Antrim)
- b. Pogue's Entry (Antrim)
- c. Harrier Way Entry (Ballyclare)
- d. North End (Ballyclare)
- e. Cashell's Lane (Randalstown)
- f. Community Garden and Lane (Crumlin)

3. Previous Decision of Council

In April 2024, Members approved the submission of the funding application to the Department for Communities for the Small Areas Revitalisation Programme and the Council's £40,000 match funding contribution towards the overall scheme.

At the same meeting, Members also approved that the project be added to the Council's Capital Programme.

4. Summary

Members are advised that correspondence (**enclosed**) has been received from the Department for Communities (DfC) offering financial assistance totalling £358,000 for the delivery of the Council's Small Areas Revitalisation Programme over the next two financial years until 31 March 2026.

Funder	Amount
DfC	£358,000
ANBC	£40,000
Total	£398,000

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members' approve the acceptance of this contract for funding of £358,000 from the Department for Communities for delivery of the Small Areas Revitalisation Programme, which will be match funded by £40,000 from the Economic Development budget.

Prepared by: Steven Norris, Deputy Director of Regeneration and Infrastructure

Approved by: Majella McAllister, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Economic Development and Planning

3.4 ED/REG/085 DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES LETTER OF OFFER - URBAN SHOP FRONT REVITALISATION PROGRAMME

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval to accept a contract for funding from the Department for Communities for financial assistance of £390,600 to support the Urban Shop Front Revitalisation Programme.

2. Introduction/Background

The aim of the Shop Front Improvement Programme is to visually enhance commercial areas in town centres, improving the overall appearance of the street and changing the way residents and visitors view local retail areas. It is envisaged that this will ultimately attract more shoppers and boost local trade.

The programme will cover minor works to include painting, signage, window dressing and other visual improvements. Major structural works will not be covered under this scheme.

3. Previous Decision of Council

In April 2024, Members approved the submission of the funding application to the Department of Communities for the Urban Shop Front Revitalisation Programme and the Council's £43,400 match funding contribution towards the overall scheme.

4. Summary

Members are advised that correspondence (**enclosed**) has been received from the Department for Communities (DfC) offering financial assistance totalling £390,600 for the delivery of the Council's Urban Shop Front Revitalisation Programme until 31 March 2025.

Funder	Amount
DfC	£390,600
ANBC	£43,400
Total	£434,000

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the acceptance of this contract for funding of £390,600 from the Department for Communities for delivery of the Urban Shop Front Revitalisation Programme, which will be match funded by £43,000 from the Economic Development budget be approved.

Prepared by: Steven Norris, Deputy Director of Regeneration and Infrastructure

Approved by: Majella McAlister, Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Economic Development and Planning.

3.5 ED/REG/065 DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES LETTER OF OFFER - GLENGORMLEY PUBLIC REALM SCHEME

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Members on the Glengormley Public Realm scheme and seek approval for the Letter of Offer of funding from Department for Communities (DfC) for the sum of £2.335 million.

2. Introduction/Background

The public realm scheme proposed for the centre of Glengormley, with an estimated total cost of £6.3million will make a significant contribution to the physical and economic regeneration of Glengormley. The scheme involves major enhancements to the streetscape along the centre of the Town, primarily along the Antrim and Ballyclare Roads.

The Project includes the installation of new granite paving, new street lighting and feature lighting, undergrounding of overhead utility lines, new street furniture and soft landscaping. The carriageway will be also resurfaced following completion of the pavement works.

Funding of £2 million had originally been sought from DfC, with £696,075 committed by DfI and the remaining £3,873,149 to be contributed by the Council (see section 5 below).

Following feedback to DfC from Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) regarding the potential for project costs to increase the Department has subsequently committed an additional £335,000 to the project. It is proposed that this additional funding goes towards any increased capital costs on the condition that the Council matches any uplift on a 50/50 basis. Following completion of the tender exercise, Council Officers will have a complete understanding of project costs and will update Members accordingly.

3. Previous Decision of Council

Initial approval was granted at Council in March 2017 for the progression of a Glengormley Public Realm Scheme.

Subsequently a major planning application for the project was approved by the Council in September 2023. The public realm project forms part of a package of wider physical and economic regeneration activities proposed for the area including the development of a workspace hub and various transport and connectivity improvements in the area which are funded by the Levelling Up Fund.

In April 2024, Members approved the commencement of the procurement exercise to appoint a contractor for the scheme, pending receipt of funding confirmation.

4. Key Issues

On 21st August 2024, DfC formally announced £2.335 million funding contribution for the Glengormley Public Realm scheme. The Letter of Offer has been received outlining conditional funding of up to £2.335 million (**enclosed**).

The Glengormley Public Realm Project Board have continued to progress matters whilst funding confirmation was awaited, and receipt of a Letter of Offer now allows the procurement exercise to progress.

The project procurement documentation is in the final stages of preparation and will be issued in September 2024. It is proposed that the procurement documents incorporate potential adjustments to the materials used in the scheme and flexibility regarding the scope, to ensure deliverability of the project within the proposed budget.

The proposed programme is currently as follows:

- Procurement documents for Contractor issued September 2024
- Appointment of Contractor November 2024
- Commencement of Works January 2025
- Completion of Works March 2027

5. Financial Position/Implication

The current funding position for the scheme is outlined below.

<i>Glengormley Town Centre Environmental Improvement Scheme</i>		
DfC	Works	£2,000,000* (*an additional £335,000 has been budgeted by DfC to accommodate any potential cost increases, subject to match funding by the Council, if required)
	Fees	£0
DfI	Works	£636,075 *with potential to explore further funding for street lighting
	Fees	£60,000
ANBC	Works	£3,354,158
	Fees	£518,991
	Total	£6,569,224

The Letter of Offer received from DfC includes a conditional uplift of £335,000 to allow for some potential cost increases as per advice from CPD. Following completion of the tender exercise, Council Officers will have a complete understanding of project costs and will update Members accordingly as to whether there is a requirement for the Council to match fund any cost uplift.

6. Governance

The improvement works will be overseen by the Project Board which consists of senior Officers from Council alongside representatives from DfC and DfI. The Project Board met for the first time on 13th February 2024 and meet on a monthly basis.

7. Recommendation

It is recommended that the update on the Glengormley Public Realm scheme be noted and the Letter of Offer from Department for Communities (DfC) for the sum of £2.335 million be approved.

Prepared by: Jill Murray, Executive Officer, Economic Development

Agreed by: Michael McKenna, Deputy Director of Investment & Business Development

Approved by: Majella McAlister, Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Economic Development and Planning.

3.6 ED/REG/086 REGENERATION FUNDING APPLICATION – PROTECTING OUR TOWN CENTRE INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members the submission of a funding application to the Department for Communities (DfC) for the “Protecting Our Town Centre Investment” Programme at a value of £240,000.

2. Introduction

Each year the Council undertakes a range of projects across the Borough to support the development of towns and villages, built heritage and other assets. Officers liaise with DfC officials to identify funding opportunities for such schemes and, when agreed, submit funding bids for consideration.

This report seeks to secure approval for the submission of a bid as outlined, at a value of £240,000, to be delivered in 2024/25.

3. Outline of the Application

Council Officers are working with the Department for Communities on an application for funding towards a new 'Protecting our Town Centre Investment' Programme.

The aim of the programme is to continue to invest in those town centres which have already seen significant investment through dedicated public realm schemes, namely: Antrim, Ballyclare and Randalstown.

Each town's public realm activity commencement is detailed below

- Ballyclare in 2013/2014
- Randalstown in 2014/2015
- Antrim in 2016/2017

In each town the Council undertakes audits of assets to ensure that they are still viable and useful. During these audits it is become clearer that the street furniture has become tired, outdated and could do with modernisation.

The Council's Corporate Plan sets out the Vision for our Borough and the framework for our work until 2030. A number of objectives are identified within the plan in relation to Place, Prosperity and People. All three areas are interlinked, but for the proposed project, the dimension of place is particularly important. Our commitments under the theme of Place are as follows:

- A place where people take pride in their surroundings
- A place where people feel safe
- A place where we protect and enhance, where possible, our natural habitats, and built heritage.
- A place with vibrant and welcoming towns, villages, neighbourhoods and rural areas and an efficient planning process that promotes positive development.

- A place where people choose to reuse or recycle their water.

In addition to this, given the anticipated lead time for a stand-alone public realm scheme in Crumlin, special dispensation has been granted to include Crumlin in any future bid, providing that the items procured have been designed in such a way that they could be used for the public realm scheme without the need to for them to be replaced again.

Members will recall that the Council has approved a £6.3m public realm scheme in Glengormley town centre. As set out in agenda item 3.5, a Letter of Offer for a £2.3m contribution from DfC has now been received. The Project includes the installation of new granite paving, new street lighting and feature lighting, undergrounding of overhead utility lines, new street furniture and soft landscaping. The carriageway will be also resurfaced following completion of the pavement works. As a result, Glengormley is not proposed to be part of the Protecting our Town Centre Investment Programme.

In Crumlin, a new public realm scheme is at the beginning of the development stage and further information will be brought to Members in due course.

The proposed scheme will therefore build upon the town centre audits completed by the team and seek funding to:

- Replace and modernise street furniture in our town centres e.g. new seating and planting areas, new bins with enhanced recycling provision, improved safety with bollards, railings and tree grills.
- Conduct remedial work to vacant and derelict properties in the town centres through painting works, weeding and as required, new window covers to remove any unsightly areas.

Officers aim to be in a position to submit the application in late September and the application form is supported by a detailed business case that is collated independently by the Department. Both of these documents will clearly demonstrate the need for the project, how they align with both Council and Departmental policy and the anticipated outputs and outcomes. Since these will be funded schemes a stringent monitoring and claim process will be implemented and mandatory Post Project Evaluations will be completed.

4. Financial Position/Implication

If successful, the application will attract £240,000 of grant funding to deliver the proposed programmes. The current proposal is 90% funding from the Department with £24,000 match funding being provided by the Council. The Council's revenue contribution can be capitalised upon completion.

5. Governance

The proposed scheme is funded by a central government department there will be strict governance processes in place to monitor the delivery of the programme and the impact on the project areas.

Economic Development will be the lead section for the scheme and the Senior Responsible Officer will be Steven Norris, Deputy Director of Regeneration and Infrastructure.

The projects will be governed by project boards with representation from internal Council departments and external agencies, if and when relevant. Procurement and financial management will be progressed in line with the Council's own policies and with the agreement of CPD.

The team has significant experience of managing and delivering schemes collaboratively with the Department for Communities.

6. Summary

The Economic Development team is preparing a funding application to the Department for Communities with a value of £264,000 (DFC: £240,000, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council: £24,000).

7. Recommendation

It is recommended that the submission of the funding application to the Department for Communities for £240,000 towards the Protecting Our Town Centre Investment Programme, which will be match funded by £24,000 from the Economic Development budget be approved.

Prepared by: Steven Norris, Deputy Director of Regeneration and Infrastructure

Approved by: Majella McAlister, Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Economic Development and Planning.

3.7 ED/ED/299 GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK 2024: YOUNG ENTERPRISE SCHOOLS MASTERCLASSES

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the delivery of Global Entrepreneurship Week activities, at a cost of up to £13,000, as per below.

2. Introduction/Background

Members are reminded that Young Enterprise NI (YENI) is a charity that delivers a range of enterprise and financial education programmes to children and young people from all backgrounds from one day masterclasses to year-long activities.

A proposal has been received from YENI to deliver a primary and secondary schools programme in November 2024 during Global Entrepreneurship Week in partnership with the Council (**enclosed**).

Global Entrepreneurship Week is a worldwide initiative which takes place each year and is used as a medium to enable organisations to raise the profile of entrepreneurship. As part of the week, YENI and Council's Economic Development Team will work in collaboration to deliver a series of workshops to primary, post primary and special needs schools across the Borough. The workshops will introduce the concept of entrepreneurship and using enterprise skills to realise entrepreneurial potential.

In 2023 the programme took place from 13-17 November and delivered 8 masterclasses to 981 school pupils from 27 local primary and post primary schools in the Borough.

Anticipated Outputs

A minimum of 16 schools taking part in the Programme to include: A minimum of 5 post primary schools

A minimum of 11 primary schools

Primary Schools

- Delivery of a minimum of 3 supply chain workshops
- A minimum of 350 pupils participating
- Each student will design new branding for their juice carton through the supply chain workshops

Post Primary Schools

- Delivery of 1 digital industry masterclass
- A minimum of 60 pupils participating
- A minimum of 8 new app designs generated through the workshop

Reporting

- A final report detailing the programme results against anticipated outputs and if appropriate recommendations for future programmes

3. Previous Decision of Council

The Council approved the delivery of Global Entrepreneurship Week activity and associated budget for the programme last year.

4. Financial Position/Implication

Financial provision for Global Entrepreneurship Week Events have been made within the Economic Development Budget and is based on previous year costs.

Cost Breakdown:

- **Young Enterprise Delivery Costs**- £3,000 to include:
 - Management of recruitment of the schools
 - Management of the schools' attendance at the event
 - Designing of workshop content and materials
 - Provide staff resources to provide and deliver the workshops
 - Provide a final report detailing the programme results against anticipated outputs and if appropriate recommendations for future programmes

Remaining costs to be met from existing Economic Development Budget:

- **Catering** – £4,000
- **Bus Hire**- £5,800
- **Prizes**- £200

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the delivery of Global Entrepreneurship Week activities as detailed within this report at a cost of up to £13,000 be approved.

Prepared by: Matthew Mulligan, Business Development Project Officer

Agreed by: Michael McKenna, Deputy Director of Investment and Business Development

Approved by: Majella McAllister, Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Economic Development and Planning

3.8 ED/ED/205 GLOBAL POINT PEDESTRIAN LINK FOOTPATH AND LIGHTING

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide further information to Members on the development of a new path and lighting at Global Point which the Council previously agreed to support 'in principle' at a 50% contribution with Invest NI.

2. Introduction/Background

Members will be aware of the substantial investment of circa £155.5m attracted to Global Point through RLC, Steelmac, Sensata and AMIC to date and the ongoing efforts to achieve full take up of the site. Providing the necessary infrastructure and in particular sustainable transport options was essential to securing the commitment of these businesses to Global Point all of whom were conscious of the desire of their workforces to travel to work via train, bicycle and on foot where possible. The location of the train halt at Mossley West coupled with the adjacent section of the Newtownabbey Way made the site a very attractive option in this regard and presented the opportunity for workers to walk or cycle from the halt to their premises. A key drawback however was that the path was not continuous from the train halt to the actual business premises nor was it lit for the full length.

To address this, Invest NI has progressed the construction of the main road between Ardagh and Sensata which will be fully lit, with a footpath which will provide part of the link required to Mossley West park and ride facility, which is due to be extended subject to funding. This will however leave a gap between the new road and footpath and the existing Newtownabbey Way path, hence the requirement for a small section of new path to be created and lights installed on a short section of the existing Newtownabbey way path on the Eastern boundary which runs parallel to the properties at Weavers Wood and Uppertown Drive.

3. Key Issues

The Council agreed in principle in June 2023 to support this path and lighting development in partnership with Invest NI subject to further information being received regarding the parameters of the development and a cost breakdown.

Subsequently, Invest NI submitted a planning application LA03/2023/0705/F for the erection of a pedestrian link footpath with associated street lighting and the culverting of the existing stream. As shown on the **enclosed** plan, this will involve the erection of a new stretch of path to link the existing path to the new road and footpath. It also involves installing 6 lighting columns which will be 6 metres in height erected along the existing stretch of the Newtownabbey Way on the Eastern boundary which runs parallel to the properties at Weavers Wood and Uppertown Drive. Planning permission was secured on 2nd July 2024.

An up to date cost breakdown has been provided which indicates the estimated total cost to be £85,000. Final costs will be confirmed after

development works have completed. It is anticipated that these works will commence during October with an expected duration of 3-4 weeks.

4. Governance

The project will be managed by Invest NI.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that Council's contribution of 50% of the final costs (currently estimated at £42,500) towards the scheme, provision for which exists within the Economic Development budget, be approved.

Prepared and Approved by: Majella McAlister, Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Economic Development and Planning

3.9 ED/ED/293 GREEN FOR BUSINESS PROGRAMME

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval of the delivery of a pilot "Green for Business" Programme to support local businesses in the Borough.

2. Introduction/Background

Businesses are facing growing pressures in relation to maintaining competitive and commercially successful in the face of growing energy, sustainability and Net Zero challenges.

Members will be aware that the UK Government signed up to the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Targeted Amendment) Order 2019 which aims to ensure the UK reduces its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 100% from 1990 levels by 2050; and that the Northern Ireland Assembly declared a climate change emergency in February 2020.

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 (Act) sets a target of at least 100% reduction in Net Zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050. This act includes an interim target of at least a 48% reduction in net emissions by 2030.

In June 2024 DfE published 'Low Carbon/Net Zero Sectoral Action Plan' which recognises the positive components to be realised for the Northern Ireland industry as businesses seek to decarbonise across the commercial landscape. The report recognises the opportunities for business to grow as they work toward Net Zero targets.

Increasingly, businesses across all sectors are expected to be able to demonstrate their 'green credentials' to continue to win work and maintain their commercial competitiveness.

As a result of the above Officers believe there is a clear need to support local business on their journey towards Net Zero.

By establishing this programme for businesses, with input from the Council's Sustainability team, this proposal seeks to align with the wider sustainability principles outlined in the *Planet* pillar of the Council's new Corporate Plan.

3. Proposal

It is proposed that the Council works with CarbonFit, a local company that comprises of Qualified Chartered Low Carbon Consultants to deliver a programme of work to support up to 150 businesses with a range of interventions, to include:

- Access to their online intelligence carbon reporting software

- Development of a Carbon reduction Plan
- Attainment of a Carbon Reduction Certificate
- Development of a Carbon Assessment
- Support with managing Utility costs vs Kwh Tracking
- Development of a Decarbonisation roadmap

Set out in their proposal (**enclosed**) and presentation (**enclosed**), CarbonFit will deliver up to 5 events / meets across the Borough to engage with local businesses on Net Zero and Decarbonisation and to recruit businesses onto the Programme.

CarbonFit understand the specific challenges and solutions required to attain Net Zero bringing a wealth of knowledge and over 20 years carbon reduction calculation. With an extensive track record in delivering successful decarbonisation roadmaps, CarbonFit have worked with both public and private sector clients including:

- Belfast Trust
- Intertrade Ireland
- Invest NI
- NI Hospice
- Mid South West Economic Engine
- CDE Global
- Concentrix

CarbonFit specialise in carbon calculations using data analysis calculations which are DESNZ approved in line with ISO14064 methodologies, carbon legislation and risk management as well as energy modelling.

4. Aims and Delivery of the Programme

The aim of the programme is to support businesses to:

Win Business

Strong environmental credentials will better position businesses to win public and private tenders by evidencing a carbon reduction plan and a commitment pledge to net Zero.

Measure Sustainability

The UK Government is increasingly mandating sustainability reporting and adherence to environment, social and governance (ESG) standards, measuring sustainability ensures compliance to regulations. By embarking on a carbon reduction plans businesses will be data ready, and equipped to meet their current sustainability commitments and any future statutory requirements.

Customer Needs

Addressing changing customer preferences and being proactive with regard to businesses carbon footprint mitigates risks of losing key customers in the supply chain.

Cost Savings

A focus on decarbonisation will reduce costs for a business by improving energy efficiency and reducing reliance on fossil fuels. Implementing energy efficient technologies, optimising process and shifting to renewable energy sources all minimise costs and lead to a sustainable, financially resilient business model.

Moreover, businesses that can demonstrate a carbon reduction plan are able to benefit from more favourable business loans, as well as tap into a raft of Net Zero solutions within the commercial marketplace.

Access to other funding

It is intended that businesses that avail of this programme will be better placed to successfully apply for other funding opportunities as a result of a greatly enhanced state of 'data readiness' in relation to their current and future carbon challenges, including the Invest NI Energy Efficiency Capital Grant (EECG) and the Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme (NISEP).

As well as the above, the UK Government have almost £5 billion of funding available to help UK Businesses become greener as part of its Net Zero commitments.

It is proposed that the programme will be delivered via two core components.

Component 1 - Technical assistance

In order to address the challenges set out above, it is proposed to offer businesses support in the form of technical assistance that will provide businesses with access to CarbonFit's industry specialists who will conduct carbon compliance energy audits and produce a bespoke carbon reduction action plan for each business.

Component 2 - Green Transition Fund

Subject to the level of uptake in Component 1 follow on support may include financial assistance in the form of grant funding to help businesses deliver the recommendations outlined in the Carbon Reduction Action Plan. Members will receive an update in Q1 2025 with an overview of delivery to date and a decision may be sought regarding the provision financial assistance.

Target beneficiaries

The project will target micro businesses and SME's seeking to initiate their carbon reporting and assess where they should begin as they look to decarbonise and deliver on their reporting commitments.

This pilot project will enable the company specific carbon reports to be captured, culminating in Council having the ability demonstrate both need and desire to roll out bigger programmes with the financial support from UK Government and other associated agencies, based on concrete and real time data.

5. Financial Position/Implication

CarbonFit's proposal is to deliver the programme at a cost of £29,925.00. This expense will be allocated from the existing Economic Development budget.

6. Summary of Timeline

It is anticipated that Programme will open In Q3 of 2025 and will be an open call for expressions of interest with delivery Component 1 expected to be completed by 31 March 2025.

7. Finance

CarbonFit's proposal is to deliver the programme at a cost of £29,925.00. This expense will be allocated from projected underspend from the existing Economic Development budget.

8. Recommendation

It is recommended that the delivery of a pilot Green for Business Programme be approved, at a cost of £29,925.

Prepared by: Chris Doyle, Investment Officer

Agreed by: Michael McKenna, Deputy Director of Investment & Business Development

Approved by: Majella McAlister, Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Economic Development and Planning

3.10 ED/ED/295 INVESTMENT READINESS PROGRAMME

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval for the delivery of a new "Investment Readiness Programme" to support micro, small and medium enterprises on their future growth journey.

2. Introduction/Background

As part of the Council's ongoing business engagement survey, local enterprises have highlighted a need for a range of different support including those relating to future business planning, expansion and growth strategies.

The Investment Readiness Programme seeks help address this need by providing local micro, small and medium businesses with the necessary knowledge and support to better understand the world of business finance, procurement, and contract opportunities as part of their continued growth in the Borough.

It is intended that the programme will have an impact on local businesses by supporting them with:

- Specialist advice on issues related to business finance (access to loans and finance, innovative fund raising, work winning) and business growth strategies.
- Specialist advice on applying for and securing funding and grants.
- Access to market opportunities including major public sector contracts / sources of work.
- Signposting to other existing support both Council-led and external to the Council.

3. Aims and Delivery of Programme

The primary aim of the programme is to support local businesses as they seek to become ready for future growth and investment opportunities.

The programme will primarily comprise a range of activities aimed at equipping local businesses with the knowledge and skills necessary for business development and growth on a one-to-one and one-to-many basis, including:

- Themed workshops and events featuring industry experts on key topics including:
 - Procurement and accessing work
 - Public sector procurement opportunities
 - Business Finance (accessing loans and overdrafts, Crowdfunding, pitch deck preparation)
 - Finding and applying for grants
 - Export
 - Work winning strategies
 - Growth opportunities in the Borough

- Access to specialist mentoring advice through Council's ASK programme (or other most relevant support programme)
- Direct connection to existing Council-led supports:
 - Digital Transformation Flexible Fund
 - Go Succeed
 - ASK
 - TRPSI
 - Living over the Shops
 - Supporting Direct Investment and Supporting Town Centre Investment funds
 - Site search and pre-application engagement with other Council services
 - Direct connection to existing external supports including Invest NI, Intertrade, and Innovate UK

Members are reminded that the Economic Development team is currently delivering the ASK Programme that has procured mentors in over 20 specialisms. The Investment Readiness Programme will utilise existing business support programmes including Go Succeed and the ASK framework.

It is anticipated that workshops will take place on a bi-monthly basis however, flexibility will be applied depending on business needs and operational requirements.

The Council's Economic Development team is currently engaging with other public sector agencies with major contract opportunities with a view to better connecting local businesses to significant areas of work, including NI Housing Executive, the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, and the Education Authority.

4. Financial Position/Implication

The programme will be facilitated through the existing Economic Development Budget.

5. Summary of Timeline

It is expected that the Programme will be an ongoing piece of work with initial Investment Readiness activities to take place in October 2024.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that the delivery of a new “Investment Readiness Programme” to support micro, small and medium enterprises, at no additional cost to Council, be approved.

Prepared by: Stewart McCormack, Investment Officer

Agreed by: Michael McKenna, Deputy Director of Investment & Business Development

Approved by: Majella McAlister, Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Economic Development and Planning

3.11 ED/ED/280 SISTER CITIES YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAMME 2024/2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the 2024/25 Sister Cities Exchange Programme at a cost of up to £10,000 for up to 4 young people from the Borough aged 16/17 (year 13 or equivalent); to seek Members' approval for a change in title from Sister Cities Student Exchange Programme to Sister Cities Youth Exchange Programme; to agree financial assistance for participants families and to seek approval that the Mayor and Chair of Economic Development Committee or their nominees sit on the interview panel to recruit the programme participants, alongside a member of the Economic Development staff team.

2. Introduction/Background

Members will be aware that the Sister Cities Student Exchange Programme provides young people aged 16/17 from Antrim and Newtownabbey and Gilbert, Arizona with an opportunity to develop an understanding of a different country, its culture, and its people through a family living experience. The programme lasts approximately six weeks during the summer with half the time spent in Gilbert and half in Antrim and Newtownabbey. The programme has been running successfully for 21 years.

This year's exchange was delivered with excellent feedback from all participants who thoroughly enjoyed the exchange and gained many valuable insights and skills. A number of the participants expressed a desire to remain involved in the programme in a support/mentor capacity.

As with previous years, a BBQ was held in July at Theatre at the Mill with the Mayor presenting completion certificates to both the ANBC and Gilbert students. A number of Elected Members were in attendance and enjoyed the opportunity to participate in a Q & A with all the students, discussing their experiences in the exchange.

3. Previous Decision of Council

At the Council meeting on 30th October 2023, Members approved delivery of the 2024 Sister Cities Student Exchange Programme with Gilbert at a cost of £10,000 involving four young people from the Borough aged 16-17 (Year 13).

4. Key Issues

The Exchange typically takes place from around mid-June until mid-July, based around the dates of the young people's exams and school terms. In recent years, Antrim and Newtownabbey students have travelled to Gilbert first and are home hosted by their matched student for approximately 3 weeks. They have then returned from Arizona with their matched Gilbert student and reciprocated the home hosting in Antrim and Newtownabbey for approximately 3 weeks. Direction of travel and length of visits may be altered to fit around exam timetables and availability of both the Gilbert and Antrim and Newtownabbey students.

Over the past year, officers have liaised extensively with colleagues in Gilbert in terms of the exchange and the proposal for the year 2024/25. Members will recall that four students from both Antrim and Newtownabbey and Gilbert have participated in the exchange for the past 2 years, a doubling in numbers when compared to previous years. Following on from the success of this, it is proposed that the 2024/25 exchange involves up to four students from Antrim and Newtownabbey and up to four students from Gilbert.

The process to recruit students from Antrim and Newtownabbey will largely follow that of previous years, including promotion and advertisement of the opportunity through schools, local FE colleges, youth groups and via social media, an application and selection process, and an informal interview with the Mayor, an elected representative and a staff member from the Economic Development section. The highest scoring candidates would be offered the opportunity, with a reserve list being created if appropriate. It is anticipated that interviews will take place in December 2024.

Officers intend to launch the marketing campaign (target 30th September) and have the application window open and close at an earlier stage than previous years. This will afford the overall selection process additional time to allow for any delays that may arise. It is also intended to increase use of social media content (Instagram stories/Tiktok) to appeal to the target audience, and officers are currently working with the Council marketing team to develop an enhanced promotional video for the campaign.

The application form has been reviewed alongside an update to the terms and conditions of the exchange. These are currently being finalised by officers.

There will also be the addition of two in-person information sessions which will be held as follows:

- Wednesday 16th October 5-7pm Ferrard Room, Antrim Castle Gardens
- Wednesday 23rd October 5-7pm Foyer, Theatre at the Mill

These sessions will be operated on a drop-in basis and will feature officers, previous participants and previous parents of participants to offer information and advice to those who may be considering applying.

Programme Title

Members are reminded that this programme is open to young people aged 16 or 17, the equivalent of Year 13, or Lower Sixth, who reside in the Borough. There is no requirement that applicants are still at school and therefore the process is also open to school leavers. On this basis, it is proposed that the programme title be changed to the Sister Cities Youth Exchange Programme. As part of the programme, there is a volunteering element and an informal BBQ hosted by the Mayor during which Members can meet with the students and their families to hear more about their experience of the programme.

5. Financial Position/Implication

Financial provision of £10,000 for the 2024/25 Sister Cities Youth Exchange Programme exists within the Economic Development budget.

Officers are also requesting agreement from Members to provide a small amount of financial assistance to participant families for the 2024/25 programme. This is in order to make the exchange programme as accessible as possible to all families. It would be intended that this would be largely in the form of vouchers for local restaurants and attractions, and would ease some of the financial burden on the families of participants. Officers anticipate that this would not exceed £500 per family (£2000 total) and provision would be made in the Economic Development budget. This would be additional to the normal delivery cost outlined above.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- a) The programme title change from Sister Cities Student Exchange Programme to Sister Cities Youth Exchange Programme be approved;**
- b) Delivery of the Sister Cities Youth Exchange Programme 2024/25 at a cost of up to £10,000 for up to 4 young people from the Borough aged 16/17 (year 13 or equivalent) be approved;**
- c) Financial assistance of up to £500 per participant family be agreed (total £2000); and**
- d) The Mayor and Chairperson of the Economic Development Committee or their nominees sit on the interview panel to recruit the young people, alongside a member of the Economic Development team, be approved.**

Prepared by: Jill Murray, Executive Officer, Economic Development

Agreed by: Michael McKenna, Deputy Director, Investment & Business Development

Approved by: Majella McAlister, Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Economic Development and Planning

3.12 ED/LMP/064 TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS WORKSHOPS 2024/2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to deliver and fund Transport and Logistics Workshops for local primary and secondary schools in partnership with Young Enterprise and the Labour Market Partnership.

2. Introduction/Background

Members are reminded that Young Enterprise NI (YENI) is a charity that delivers a range of enterprise and financial education programmes to children and young people from all backgrounds, from one day masterclasses to year-long activities.

The Council and the Labour Market Partnership (LMP) worked in partnership with YENI to deliver Transport and Logistics Masterclasses for school age residents in January 2024 to raise awareness of the wide variety of career opportunities and routes into the sector.

The highly successful and interactive workshops involved local industry speakers, demonstrations, a driving simulator and various vehicles used in the sector and was supported by 5 local businesses Woodside Haulage, Diamond Trucks, Montgomery Transport Group, Henderson Group and Transport Training Services.

In total 3 Transport and Logistics industry workshops took place with 263 primary 7 pupils from 12 primary schools and 68 secondary pupils from 4 secondary schools attending over the three days.

All teachers and students were surveyed following the event and feedback from both was very positive regarding the format and content of the event. Teachers agreed that the following workshop objectives were met:

- To have a better awareness of local career options and pathways
- To learn about the variety of careers and apprenticeships available in the industry
- To experience some of the skills required to work in the industry
- To develop team working skills
- To identify the importance of the industry to the community

A copy of the final report, prepared by YENI, is **enclosed**.

3. Previous Decision of Council

The Council approved delivery of the 2024 programme on 22 June 2023, it approved £11,000 for this program, with £4,000 for YENI. The overall cost including: Young Enterprise fee, schools transport, hospitality and prizes was £11,000.

4. Proposal

A proposal has been received from YENI to deliver the workshops again in March 2025 and a copy is **enclosed**.

The 2025 programme will include two workshops targeted at primary school students and one for post primary pupils. The workshops will be open to all primary, post primary and special educational needs schools across the Borough.

5. Financial Position/Implication

The overall cost including Young enterprise fee (£4,000), schools transport, hospitality and prizes is estimated to be a maximum of £12,000.

The Labour Market Partnership will fund the post primary school day with the Council asked to fund the two primary school days at an approximate cost of £7,000.

6. Governance

The workshops will be managed by the Labour Market Partnership which meets bi-monthly (six times per year) and is chaired by the Mayor. Minutes from LMP meetings are reported to the Economic Development Committee.

7. Recommendation

It is recommended that

- (a) the 2024 final report be noted; and**
- (b) the proposal as outlined and contribution of £7,000 towards the total programme cost of up to £12,000 be approved.**

Prepared by: Michelle Pearson, Project Officer

Agreed by: Michael McKenna, Deputy Director, Investment and Business Development

Approved by: Majella McAlister, Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Economic Development and Planning

3.13 ED/LMP/003 LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP (LMP) LETTER OF OFFER 2024/25

1. Purpose

The purpose of the report is to seek approval for Council acceptance of a letter of offer from the Department for Communities (DfC) (enclosed) to deliver the 2024/25 Labour Market Partnership Action Plan.

2. Introduction/Background

Members will be aware of the Labour Market Partnership (LMP), the aim of which is to improve labour market conditions by working through coordinated, collaborative, multi-agency partnerships, achieving regional objectives whilst being flexible to meet the needs presented by localised conditions and helping to connect employers with employees.

The 2024/25 Action Plan was approved by full Council on 29 April 2024 and includes activities such as employment academies and support programmes, upskilling academies, employment events such as job fairs, as well as continuing to maintain and form partnerships with external support organisations, training providers and businesses.

The Action Plan focuses on the following themes:

- **Economic Inactivity** - People not in employment who have not been seeking employment within the last four weeks and/ or are unable to start work in the next two weeks;
- **Unemployment** - People who are without a job, currently available to work, and have been actively looking for work within the previous four weeks;
- **Disability** – People who report a physical or mental health condition(s) or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more where this reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities; and
- **Skilled Labour Supply** – DfE's 2021 Skills Barometer utilises the National Qualification Framework (NQF) Skills Classification.

The review of the 2023/24 Action Plan is underway and will be reported in due course.

3. Previous Decision of Council

At full Council on 29 April 2024, the LMP Action Plan 2024/25 and the associated budget was approved along with agreement for Officers to proceed at risk with project delivery preparation, without entering into any contract until a formal letter of offer is issued by DfC, and accepted by the Council.

The approved budget included a contribution from Council of £24,306 towards the administration costs for the Partnership.

4. Letter of Offer

Members are advised that a letter of offer for £395,966.53 has been received from DfC for the delivery of the 2024/25LMP Action Plan.

The budget for the Partnership for this financial year has been confirmed as £420,272.53, this is below the value of the action plan projects but is as expected by officers and is comparable to funding provided to the Council in the previous two years.

5. Financial Position/Implication

The total budget for the programme has been confirmed as:

Overall Total (Administration & Operational) £420,272.53.

This is made up of:

Department for Communities Contribution:

- Administration Spend	£100,791.48
- Operational Spend	£295,175.05

Council Contribution:

- Administration Spend	£24,306.00
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6. Governance

The Partnership meets bi-monthly (6 times per year) and is chaired by the Mayor. Minutes from LMP meetings are reported to the Economic Development Committee.

7. Recommendation

It is recommended that the acceptance of the Letter of Offer for £395,966.53 from the Department for Communities be approved.

Prepared by: Michelle Pearson, Business Development Officer (Economic Development) and Terry McNeill (Team Manager, Economic Development)

Agreed by: Michael McKenna, Deputy Director of Investment and Business Development

Approved by: Majella McAlister, Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Economic Development and Planning

3.14 ED/ED/240 CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE UPDATE

1. Purpose

This purpose of this report is to update Members on the development and work of the Town Centre Chambers of Commerce and to seek approval to transfer ownership of social media pages from the Council to the Chambers where required.

2. Introduction/Background

Members will recall that, in November 2022, approval was granted to appoint Lara Goodall Consulting to support the development of Chambers of Commerce across our five towns. The December 2023 meeting of the Our Prosperity Outcome Delivery Group (OPODG) approved a three month extension of the consultant's contract to March 2024, to further support the Chamber's development and ongoing needs.

The same OPODG meeting also approved a small funding allocation of £25,000 in the Economic Development budget 2024/2025 to provide ad-hoc financial assistance to the Town Chambers in the development and delivery of their Action Plans.

Overall, the programme of support has been successful. The consultant has now stepped back from the majority of operational support and a dedicated Council Officer has been assigned as a link between the Chambers and Council.

A summary of the Chambers current positions is outlined as follows;

- **Antrim** – Antrim Chamber of Commerce launched in 2023 and has since elected a committee, established social media accounts, signed and agreed articles of constitution and opened a bank account. The group is chaired by Joanna Maxwell, a business owner in Antrim, and the Vice Chair is Pamela Minford from Antrim Castle Mall. The group has developed four sub-groups – Finance, Events, Marketing and Skills and has in excess of 160 associated members and 40 subscribed members to date.

Antrim Chamber's main challenge is regarding recruitment. Firstly, making Antrim businesses aware that the Chamber exists and the benefits it has to offer and secondly, diversifying its current membership to include smaller, independent retailers. They are also looking into options for part-time administrative support.

The Chamber's Action Plan is mainly focused on self-promotion/ membership recruitment and business events. A promotional flier has been produced and distributed, and is used at all Chamber events. Upcoming events include;

- "Chamber Chats" – a series of drop-in clinics for businesses to find out more about the Chamber's work and the business community in Antrim town
- Redundancy clinics for staff of the former Mo's Grill

- Pop-up stands at Speed Networking events
 - A "Lessons In Leadership" event with Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive of NI Chamber (15 October 2024)
 - Business Skills workshops to coincide with Skills month in February 2025
 - Fire aid and safety training workshops with NIFRS and the PSNI
- **Crumlin** – The business network in Crumlin has been largely inactive since the outbreak of COVID-19. The Chair of the previous Town Team has been supportive of the initiative to develop a new Chamber of Commerce, which has proven challenging.

Crumlin has undergone a period of sustained business engagement and Lara Goodall Consulting has continued to support the formation of the Chamber, their Constitution and action plan. Despite a successful information event in November 2023, attended by 20 business representatives, Chamber representatives have struggled to engage the 78 associate businesses in the town to agree a Constitution and maintain involvement in the Chamber's operations. Council Officers and Lara Goodall met with Chamber representatives on 20 August to discuss a way forward.

It was agreed to host a further business engagement session in Crumlin in October, again inviting businesses to get involved with a Chamber or business network model and avail of Council assistance.

- **Randalstown** – The Randalstown Traders Association was largely inactive from the outbreak of the pandemic until their introduction to Lara Goodall. Initial engagement with the group focused on contacting businesses again and identifying potentially interested parties. The Chamber has elected Liam Hurrell as the new Chairperson and is constituted, with a bank account established and regular Chamber meetings ongoing. The group has an action plan which focuses on local marketing initiatives and events and is the first Chamber to draw down from their allocated funding from Council for the printing and distribution of a local-shopper style leaflet, featuring adverts for local businesses, business news and promoting the Chamber itself.

Randalstown Chamber has over 60 associate businesses. The Committee Members are currently considering introducing a membership fee for both established and new Members, and are looking into options for part time administrative support.

- **Ballyclare** – Ballyclare already had an established Chamber of Commerce in place, Chaired by local business owner Jamie Hamill and with good representation from businesses throughout the town.

Initially, the consultant was called upon for support on an ad hoc basis however, the Chamber then asked to bypass the consultant and engage directly with senior Council staff. Since this request, engagement has been limited.

Officers therefore propose facilitating a meeting between Council Officers, the Chair of Ballyclare Chamber of Commerce and Ballyclare DEA Members in the coming weeks, to explore future engagement and how the Chamber can access financial support from the Council.

- **Glengormley** – Glengormley had an active chamber with a strong Chairperson in local business owner Iain Patterson, however they had also been impacted by COVID. Working with the consultant, Glengormley Chamber of Commerce has been reinvigorated, has over 60 associated Members and regular meetings to discuss issues facing the business community.

Glengormley Chamber's main challenges are around administrative support and meeting venues, and they are currently considering using Council's financial support to retain Lara Goodall's services on a part-time basis.

Glengormley Chamber's upcoming action plan features PR support to promote the town centre, influencer marketing, three business to business social events and printing and distribution of a Home Buyers pack.

3. Previous Decision of Council

During the 22 June 2023 meeting of the Our Prosperity Outcome Delivery Group (OPODG), ratified at Council in June 2023, Members received an update on the Chamber engagement project and the Groups' social media pages.

Members agreed a handover of existing Facebook pages on the principle that:

- (a) draft wording was considered for a consistent post across all town Facebook pages, clarifying handover of responsibility of pages from Council to the groups
- (b) clarification would be provided to Members on how distinction will be made clear in respect of branding, content etc

At the OPODG meeting of 19 December 2023, ratified at Council in January 2024, Members also approved both:

- (a) The extension of the Lara Goodall Consulting Contract for an additional three months at a cost of £6,250, and;
- (b) Provision of £25,000 within the Economic Development Regeneration Budget for 2024/2025 to support the new Chambers.

4. Social Media

Members will be aware that for a period each town in the Borough had its own Facebook Page, which was originally established and managed by Council for the previous Town Teams.

These pages were used extensively during the COVID-19 pandemic, before becoming largely inactive for a period of time. With the reinvigoration exercise

however, some of the Chambers and Business Networks have started to use these once again for promotion of their activity.

In June 2023, ownership of the Glengormley page "Get Into Glengormley" was passed over to the Glengormley Chamber of Commerce with certain conditions agreed, namely;

- (a) That the Group signed an agreement with the Council to only post relevant business material and that there would be no political endorsement or statements made on the page.
- (b) That once ownership had transferred, a post would be put out stating that the Chamber had taken over the page and that the Council no longer controlled or was responsible for content.

Given the development of the other Groups a similar approach will be adopted, where required, for the others. This is summarised below;

Chamber	Old Page	New page(s)	Proposed Action
Antrim	Antrim Town Team	Website– www.antrimchamber.com Linkedin: (3) Antrim Chamber of Commerce LinkedIn Facebook: Antrim Chamber of Commerce	The Chamber have established new pages- delete existing
Ballyclare	Your Ballyclare	Facebook: Your Ballyclare page remains	Transfer ownership
Crumlin	Crumlin Town Team	Facebook: Crumlin Town team page remains	Name change and transfer across
Glengormley	Resolved		
Randalstown	Randalstown Town Team	Facebook: Randalstown Chamber of Trade private	Deletion of Town Team page

Officers will continue to work closely with the Groups during this transition phase and it is hoped the pages would still be available to share and promote relevant Council information on grant programmes, capital works and other updates.

5. Financial Position

There are no further financial implications.

6. Governance

The Economic Development section continues to manage links with the five town Chambers of Commerce.

7. Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- (a) the update on the Town Centre Chambers of Commerce, be noted; and**
(b) the handover of relevant social media pages be approved on the basis that;
- i. The group signs an agreement with the Council in relation to suitable content; and**
 - ii. Appropriate posts are issued making it clear that a handover of responsibility has taken place.**

Prepared by: Tara McCormick, Executive Officer, Economic Development

Agreed by: Steven Norris, Deputy Director, Economic Development

Approved by: Majella McAlister, Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Economic Development and Planning

3.15 ED/ED/298 NI ECONOMIC CONFERENCE 2024

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval for attendance at the Northern Ireland Economic Conference 2024 for Members of the Economic Development Committee and relevant Council Officers.

2. Introduction/Background

Members will recall that Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council was the principle sponsor for the 2022 and 2023 Agenda NI Northern Ireland Economic Conferences that took place at the Kingfisher Hotel.

The Northern Ireland Economic Conference is Northern Ireland's premier economic analysis event and is unique in being the only forum which takes a high-level look at the performance of and prospects for the local economy.

3. Overview

The 2024 Northern Ireland Economic Conference is being hosted in the Titanic Hotel in Belfast on Wednesday 20th November. The theme of this year's conference is:

“Creating good jobs, promoting regional balance, raising productivity and achieving net zero by 2050”

Keynote speakers will focus on the Economy Minister's seven key growth sectors including:

- Agri-tech;
- Life and health sciences;
- Advanced manufacturing, materials and engineering;
- Fintech/Financial services;
- Software (including cybersecurity);
- Screen industries; and
- Low carbon technologies (including green hydrogen).

The programme is still being finalised but will include keynote addresses from:

- a. Minister for the Economy – Conor Murphy MLA
- b. Financial Times Commentator – Chris Giles
- c. ESRI Professor – Seamus McGuinness
- d. Northern Ireland Skills Council Chair – Kathleen O'Hare
- e. CEO of AMIC – Sam Turner

4. Financial Implications

Tickets for the event are £165 each, which is a special discounted rate for local government. It is proposed that Members of the Committee and relevant Officers attend the event.

The total anticipated cost can be met from existing Economic Development budgets.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members of the Committee and relevant Council Officers attend the Northern Ireland Economic Conference, the cost of which will be met through the existing Economic Development Budget.

Prepared and Agreed by: Steven Norris, Deputy Director of Regeneration and Infrastructure

Approved by: Majella McAlister, Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Economic Development and Planning

4 ITEMS FOR NOTING

4.1 ED/ED/228 BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the Council's business engagement activity.

2. Introduction/Background

Members will be aware that in August 2022 the Council granted approval for a large-scale engagement exercise with the businesses in the town centres to establish the challenges faced and to inform Council's suite of programmes and policies.

In practice, this work involved a number of interconnected activities:

- An online survey tool which was issued to all businesses in the Council's Town Centre databases.
- A dedicated officer going around businesses in the town completing hard copy surveys and encouraging participation.
- Workshops, roadshows and events aimed at bringing the business community together to feedback to officers.

3. Previous Decision of Council

In August 2022 the Council granted approval for a large-scale business engagement exercise with the businesses in the town centres to establish the challenges faced and to inform Council's suite of programmes and policies.

4. Key Issues

Business Engagement Survey

A survey tool was developed and has been used to gather information from businesses across the towns located in the Borough to help inform future economic development programmes and policies.

Officers have used multiple methods of data collection to maximise participation:

- Online survey – using online survey link to allow businesses to access and complete the survey in their own time.
- Hard copy version – posted or delivered to businesses with a pre-paid envelope.
- Telephone – businesses could call economic development officers and complete the survey over the telephone.

Phase 1 of the survey exercise has now been completed and each town centre has been surveyed. The table below provides a breakdown of the responses received and the estimated response rate.

Town	Businesses Surveyed	Responses	Response Rate
Antrim	186	80	43%
Ballyclare	156	81	52%
Crumlin	58	39	67%
Glengormley	204	92	45%
Randalstown	92	33	36%
Total			

Officers are continuing to analyse the findings from the survey to help inform future programmes, policies and also to feed into the update of the Economic Development Strategy.

The initial analysis indicates that the top issues being faced by businesses include:

- Increased cost of raw materials
- Increased cost of supplies and services
- Increased transport costs

As part of the survey exercise the team have also collected the most up to date contact details for each business to update the Council's database.

Officers are now preparing to launch Phase 2 of this survey exercise. This will focus on smaller settlements e.g. Toome etc., on industrial areas e.g. Mallusk, Greystone Road, and business parks. The survey has been updated to reflect changes and new funding opportunities.

5. Financial Position/Implication

Officer time and resources have been accounted for within the Economic Development 2024/25 budget.

6. Governance

The initiative is being managed by the Economic Development Section.

7. **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the updated be noted.

Prepared by: Paul Seymour, Business Analyst

Agreed by: Steven Norris, Deputy Director of Regeneration and Infrastructure and Michael McKenna, Deputy Director of Investment and Business Development

Approved by: Majella McAlister, Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Economic Development and Planning

4.2 ED/ED/284 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN UPDATE

1. Purpose

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

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Economic Development Action Plan be noted.

Prepared by: Jill Murray, Executive Officer, Economic Development

Approved by: Majella McAlister, Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Economic Development and Planning

4.3 ED/ED/195 VOL 3 ANTRIM AND GLENGORMLEY LEVELLING UP UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the progress of the two Levelling Up Funded Projects in Antrim and Glengormley.

2. Introduction/Background

Members will be aware of the Council's success in securing £5.1m from the UK Levelling Up Fund (LUF) which is 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 £3,479,650.

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

Antrim

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, is now nearing completion with formal handover having taken place on Friday 30th August 2024. The works have 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 have also been working 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, bring over 30 years of experience in supporting businesses and managing workspace to the project and are 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 has been established for enquires at <https://space-ni.co.uk/>

The workspace is now moving to operational mode and Elected Members will have hopefully had a chance to look around SPACE themselves at the two open events hosted on Friday 6th September or the upcoming one on Thursday 12th September.

In addition to this, the Mayor is hosting a visit by Minister for Community Growth Alex Norris MP on the 18th September and all members of the Committee should have received an invitation to this.

Antrim Enterprise Agency continues to deal with enquiries and tours of the building for perspective occupiers. At the time of writing the report, there has been a healthy pipeline of enquiries.

A formal opening of SPACE Antrim is still being finalised and more information will be shared with Members in due course.

The formal close out report of the Capital Project will be tabled at an upcoming meeting of the Policy and Governance Committee, however these details will also be included in the November agenda for Economic Development Committee as will regular updates on the operation of the workspace.

A series of up to date images have been included as an **enclosure**.

Glengormley

Glengormley Workspace

The construction of Glengormley workspace is now underway with the contractor Connolly & Fee on-site since April 2024. Officers are currently working closely with the architects (Collins Rolston) and contractors (Connolly & Fee) as the works progress at pace. It is anticipated that the build will be completed in early 2026.

Farmley/Glenwell Road Accessibility & Connectivity works

Members will be aware of the agreement on the final design of the town centre accessibility/connectivity project for Glengormley which is developing an enhanced two-way traffic system to improve accessibility/connectivity through Farmley Road car park and along the front of the Glenwell shop units. This programme is progressing, and Officers are currently liaising with utilities to investigate the opportunity to improve the turning radius at the Farmley Road entrance which is currently quite restricted. Significant engagement is also ongoing with key stakeholders including owners of the private land surrounding/included in the works ahead of works commencing.

A planning application has been submitted for the proposed works to the privately owned area and it is anticipated that this application will be presented at the September Planning Committee. Assuming planning approval is granted, the works programme is anticipated to commence in November 2024.

Glengormley Public Realm

DfC has now confirmed funding approval of their £2.335m contribution to the public realm works. Agenda item 3.5 refers.

5. Summary

The Antrim Levelling Up project is substantially complete and good progress is being made in the delivery of the Glengormley scheme.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that the update be noted.

Prepared by: Steven Norris, Deputy Director of Regeneration and Infrastructure and Michael McKenna, Deputy Director of Investment and Business Development

Approved by: Majella McAlister, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Economic Development and Planning

4.4 ED/DI/002 ASK MENTOR PROGRAMME UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Members on the status of the ASK Mentoring programme and to share details of the appointed mentors and specialisms available to local businesses.

2. Introduction/Background

The ASK Mentor programme was originally launched by the Council in 2013 with the aim of offering start-ups and SME businesses the opportunity to receive free one-to-one mentoring from an industry expert. It focused on addressing specific needs for businesses in the borough and was designed to deliver quick and flexible support. The programme has been refreshed and updated since its inception. Under the current programme, eligible business applicants are allocated a maximum of 10 hours mentoring.

3. Previous Decision of Council

The Council approved the continuation of the ASK Programme in January 2024 for the remainder of 2023/24, with further provision made in the 2024/2025 estimates of £30,000.

4. Key Issues

Assigning Mentors

A procurement exercise was promoted widely and 53 submissions were received. Following scoring and assessment 88 mentors were added to the mentoring list under 23 specialisms. The complete mentor list is **enclosed** for Members' information.

Marketing and Publicity

- Marketing and publicity for the programme is wide spread across different mediums. Promotional material about the programme can be found on social media channels (Facebook, X, LinkedIn, Instagram, etc.)
- The webpage for the ASK Mentoring programme includes a short form for businesses to complete. As this is the main mechanism for applying to the initiative this should be the priority for directing new businesses to the programme. The full link for this website is:
<https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/business/support-for-businesses/ask-programme/>
- An e-Zine has been sent regarding ASK to all businesses within the Economic Development database.
- The focus of the promotional strategy will be on the programme being free at the point of use, the number of hours of dedicated mentoring (up to 10) and the variety of specialisms offered.
- Successful businesses on the programme will be requested to share the programme details with other relevant businesses in the borough, with the

aim of the programme benefiting through word of mouth and the development of case studies.

Programme to Date

Since the launch of the new programme in July 2024 13 businesses have requested ASK Mentoring support. These are detailed below:

Business Name	Business Sector	Specialism
Spring & Airbrake Irl Ltd	Retail	Big Data and Analytics
Valor N.I.	Health & Life Sciences	Legal (and Market Research)
AI Services (NI) Ltd	Agriculture	Smart Technologies and IoT (and Blockchain)
Patterson's Butcher	Food & Drink	Smart Technologies and IoT
Afco Electrical Wholesale Ltd	Wholesale	Digital Transformation Strategy
Randalstown Pharmacies Ltd	Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering	Digital Transformation Strategy
Diamond Discounts	Food & Drink	Referred to Go Succeed
Antrim School of Music CIC	Arts & Creative Industries	Marketing for Merchandising
ADVANCED NI Scaffolding Ltd	Construction	Digital Transformation Strategy
Ross Companies	Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering	Digital Transformation Strategy
Goudy Engineering	Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering	To be confirmed
Janine Dempster Artist	Arts & Creative Industries	To be confirmed
A Digital Next	Information & Communication Technology	To be confirmed

5 businesses elected to use ASK support for assistance with the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF) application process. One applicant was an early stage entrepreneur who has been referred to Go Succeed for additional

support. If successful, this would unlock up to £20,000 of additional financial support.

5. Financial Position/Implication

The funding for the initiative is £30,000 and is accounted for within the Economic Development 2024/25 budget.

6. Governance

The initiative is being managed by the Economic Development Section.

7. **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Philip Doherty, Digital Project Implementation Officer

Agreed by: Steven Norris, Deputy Director of Regeneration and Infrastructure

Approved by: Majella McAllister, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Economic Development & Planning

4.5 PT/CI/049 PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2024/25 PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORT (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT) QUARTER 1

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members that the Performance and Improvement Plan 2024/25 Performance Progress Report (Economic Development) Quarter 1 be noted.

2. Background

Members are reminded that Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 puts in place a framework to support the continuous improvement of Council services.

The Council's Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2024/25 was approved at Council in June 2024. This set out a range of robust performance targets, along with six identified improvement objectives and a number of Statutory Performance Targets

3. Previous Decision of Council

As agreed at the August 2023 Council meeting, quarterly performance reports will be presented to the relevant Committee or Working Group.

4. Key Points

The first Quarter performance progress report for Economic Development is **enclosed** for Members' information.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Performance and Improvement Plan 2024/25 Performance Progress Report (Economic Development) Quarter 1 be noted.

Prepared by: Allen Templeton, Performance Improvement Officer

Agreed by: Katherine Young, Organisation Development & Employee Engagement Manager.

Approved by: Helen Hall, Director of Corporate Strategy

4.6 FI/FIN/4 BUDGET REPORT – PERIOD 4: APRIL 2024 TO JULY 2024

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide financial performance information at period 4 (April 2024 – July 2024) for Economic Development.

2. Introduction/Background

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

3. Summary

Budget reports for Economic Development for Period 4 April 2024 to July 2024 are **enclosed** for Members' information.

Whilst the budget report presents an underspend at this point in the year from the Economic Development budget, Members are advised of significant commitments, summarised as follows;

- Conclusion of the Environmental Improvement Scheme
- Conclusion of the Small Settlements Artwork scheme
- ASK Programme
- The Work Experience Programme
- Digital Transformation Flexible Fund Call 3
- CCTV Phase 2
- Small Areas Revitalisation Programme
- Urban Shopfronts Revitalisation Programme
- Digital Factory Accelerator Initiative
- Transport and Logistics Workshops
- Living Over the Shops Programme
- Visual Merchandising Programme

The overall financial position of the Council will be presented to the Policy and Governance Committee.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Steven Norris, Deputy Director of Regeneration and Infrastructure and Michael McKenna, Deputy Director of Investment and Business Development

Approved by: Majella McAlister, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Economic Development and Planning and Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

4.7 ED/ED/171 MINUTES BELFAST REGION CITY DEAL COUNCIL PANEL

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to share with Members the minutes of recent BRCD Council Panel meeting held on 29 May 2024; a copy is enclosed for Members' information.

2. Introduction/Background

The BRCD Council Panel has been established to fulfil an oversight role, ensuring that the BRCD continues to be aligned with the vision for inclusive economic growth with the Panel meeting regularly during the development of the BRCD.

3. Recommendation

It is recommended that the minutes of the 29 May 2024 meeting be noted.

Prepared by: Jill Murray, Executive Officer, Economic Development

Agreed by: Michael McKenna, Deputy Director of Investment and Business Development

Approved by: Majella McAlister, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Economic Development and Planning