



9 January 2025

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 14 January 2025** 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

A G E N D A

1 APOLOGIES

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3 PRESENTATION

3.1 Estimates Update Presentation

4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 Ulster Bar Corner Licencing Agreement

4.2 Corporate Memberships 2025

4.3 London Investment Event 2025

4.4 Town Centre Shopfronts (Phase One) Grants Awards

4.5 Town Centre Data Collection

4.6 Multiply Programme Letter of Offer

4.7 Local Economic Partnership Update

5 ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 James Kane Foundation

5.2 Out of Town Centre Shopfront Improvement Programme Phase One Update

5.3 ASK Mentoring Programme Budget Update

5.4 Go Succeed update

5.5 Labour Market Partnership Update

5.6 Town Centre Marketing Campaign Update

5.7 Economic Development Business Plan 2024/25

5.8 Quarter 3 Key Performance Indicators

5.9 Economic Development Action Plan Update

6 ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

6.1 Supporting Direct Investment Summary and Update

6.2 Strategic Planning Applications Overview

6.3 Minutes - Levelling Up Fund Project Board Antrim & Glengormley

6.4 Minutes- Labour Market Partnership Project Board

6.5 Minutes - Glengormley Public Realm Project Board

6.6 Invest NI Global Point Update

7 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

3 PRESENTATION

3.1 FI/FIN/11 ESTIMATES UPDATE PRESENTATION

1. Purpose

An update on the 2025/26 Estimates for the Economic Development Directorate will be presented at the meeting.

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that the presentation be noted.

Prepared by: Richard Murray, Head of Finance

Agreed by: John Balmer, Deputy Director of Finance

Approved by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

4 ITEMS FOR DECISION

4.1 ED/REG/013 ULSTER BAR CORNER LICENCING AGREEMENT

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members the approval of a two-year extension to the licence agreement between the Council and the Department for Communities (DfC) for Ulster Bar Corner in Antrim.

2. Introduction/Background

In July 2022, a design was approved for the regeneration of the vacant Ulster Bar Corner site in Antrim Town.

The Council, working with the DfC secured £365,000 towards the redevelopment work (£170,000 from DfC and £195,000 from the Council).

In addition to this, a two-year licence agreement was signed between the Council and DfC to take ownership of the site for this period, until a final decision regarding any future development could take place.

3. Previous Decision of Council

In July 2022, the Council approved the proposed redevelopment scheme for Ulster Bar Corner at a cost of £365,000.

4. Key Issues (or the relevant titles for the main body of the report)

The period of the initial licence agreement has now ended and the Department now wishes to extend this agreement for another two years until 31st October 2026 in order to allow adequate time to properly consult and plan the future of the site. The extension agreement is **enclosed** and contains the same terms and conditions as the original agreement.

5. Financial Position/Implication

There are no new financial implications to the Council in relation to this.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that the extension of the Licence Agreement for Ulster Bar Corner in Antrim until 31st October 2026 and authorisation for the Chief Executive to sign the agreement on behalf of the Council be approved.

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

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

4.2 ED/ED/284 CORPORATE MEMBERSHIPS 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to request Members' approval for two Corporate Memberships in 2025; a renewal of the Council's annual membership of the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and a new request regarding membership of the Women in Business NI.

2. Introduction/Background

The Council has been a Corporate Member of the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce since 2017. The Council's alliance with the NI Chamber complimented the commission of the new economic development strategy for the Borough and alignment with the needs and expectations of Borough businesses. Other benefits of membership include;

- Connection through the Chamber network, including Chambers Ireland and British Chambers of Commerce
- Priority access to NI Chamber's signature events
- Personal invitations to high level networking, in Camera events and policy roundtables
- Potential to speak and/or host NI Chamber events
- Access to 110 + events per year with circa 7.8k delegates to connect with; these include general and regional networking; business support and international themed events
- Profile raising
- A copy of Ambition magazine and access to, and inclusion in, the Annual Member Directory

Corporate membership of Women in Business NI is a new proposal, which would allow the Council to prevail of the following benefits;

- Can be utilised as an employee perk and included within the employee benefits package
- Employee access to an individual dashboard, enabling them to view and register for upcoming events and Member news
- Connection through the Member Directory
- Promotion of the Council and its programmes across the WIB network
- Discounted rates on Centre of Learning development programmes, available both online and in person
- Monthly free online industry events, topical webinars and in person networking opportunities
- Discounts to all conferences and Awards including the Voices of Leadership Conference, Women in Tech Conference, All-Island Female Entrepreneurs' Conference and the Chair's Lunch

3. Previous Decision of Council

2024 Membership of the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce, at a cost of £3000 +VAT, was agreed by the Our Prosperity Outcome Delivery Group in their December 2023 meeting.

No previous decisions have been taken with regards to Corporate

Membership of Women in Business.

4. Financial Implication

In a slight increase on previous years, the cost of this year's Corporate Membership of the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce is £3,150 + VAT (£3,780 inc).

Annual Corporate Membership of Women in Business is £2,000 + VAT as the Council is a large employer with more than 500 employees – all employees are welcome to enjoy the benefits, membership is not exclusive to women.

These costs will be met from within existing Economic Development budgets.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that

- (a) the renewed annual membership of the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce at a cost of £3,150 (excluding VAT) be approved.**
- (b) the Annual membership of Women In Business Northern Ireland at a cost of £2,000 (excluding VAT) be approved.**

Prepared by: Tara McCormick, Executive Officer Economic Development

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

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

4.3 ED/ED/306 LONDON INVESTMENT EVENT 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval for Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council to hold a showcase investment event in London. The event aims to highlight the borough's achievements, promote its key industries (including transport and logistics, healthcare, advanced manufacturing), and attract investment following Council's prestigious recognition as *Overall Council of the Year 2024 for Service Delivery* by the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE).

2. Introduction/Background

Council's success in securing the *Overall Council of the Year 2024 for Service Delivery* by the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) has reinforced its position as a leading local authority in delivering excellence for residents and businesses. This achievement highlights the borough's ongoing commitment to innovation, economic growth, and public service.

The Council recognises the importance of leveraging this recognition to further enhance its reputation and attract investment. Hosting an event in London, a global economic and political hub, presents a strategic opportunity to:

- Showcase Council's success and forward-thinking approach.
- Highlight key industries and investment opportunities within the borough.
- Engage directly with potential investors and stakeholders, including representatives from UK Government, leading businesses, and policymakers.

3. Key Issues

The proposed event will focus on positioning Antrim and Newtownabbey as an attractive destination for investment, with key themes including:

- **Key Industries:** Promoting sectors such as advanced manufacturing, healthcare, transport & logistics and tourism.
- **Investment Opportunities:** Highlighting strategic development sites, business incentives, and the Council's commitment to economic development.
- **Borough Highlights:** Celebrating the borough's achievements, cultural heritage, and excellent infrastructure.

Proposed Format

- **Venue:** A prestigious London location to ensure high-profile attendance.
- **Guests:** Key representatives from the UK Government, leading business executives, and international investors.
- **Programme:** Presentations, panel discussions, networking opportunities, and exhibitions featuring local businesses.

Objectives

- Enhance Council's reputation as a leading Council and investment destination.
- Attract new business opportunities and strengthen existing partnerships.
- Foster relationships with political stakeholders and policymakers.

The proposed event represents a unique opportunity for Council to capitalise on its success and showcase the borough as an attractive destination for investment. With strategic planning and Members' input, the event can deliver significant economic and reputational benefits for the borough.

4. Financial Position/Implication

The event will require appropriate budget provision in 2025/26 to cover the cost of event planning, venue hire, hospitality, promotional materials, travel, and accommodation for key participants.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the appointment of an event planner to produce a costed proposal for the Investment Showcase Event in London be approved.

Prepared by: Chris Doyle, Investment Officer

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

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

4.4 ED/REG/085 TOWN CENTRE SHOPFRONTS (PHASE ONE) GRANTS AWARDS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report to update Members on the Urban Shop Frontage Scheme and to seek Members' approval to issue Letters of Offer to the latest tranche of businesses following successful completion of the internal approval process.

2. Introduction/Background

Members will recall that in September 2024, the Council was successful in securing £390,600 from the Department for Communities (DfC) towards an Urban Shop Frontage Scheme which was launched in two phases:

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

The scheme, which is co-funded by the Council up to £390,600 provides a combined budget of £434,000. Grants are provided to businesses at an 80% intervention level with 20% contributed by the business or property owner.

This grant provides up to £4,999 towards eligible businesses and property owners to make physical improvements to the exterior of their business premises.

Supported by regular social media alerts, a series of workshops to support potential applicants noted below and a link on the Council website, Phase 2 closed on the 13th December 2024.

- Tuesday 22 October & 19 November – Space, Antrim
- Wednesday 23 October & 20 November - Crumlin Leisure Centre
- Thursday 24 October & 21 November - Lillian Bland Pavilion, Glengormley

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

3. Key Issues

Under Phase 1 of the Urban Shop Frontage Scheme, 81 applications were received. A further 59 applications have been received under Phase 2.

Applications are reviewed and verified by Council Officers and presented to the project assessment panel, comprised of Council Officers and representatives from DfC Urban Regeneration Team, the principal funder of the programme. The assessment panel considers three main elements:

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

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

The most recent Project Board took place on 9 December 2024, and this report seeks Members' approval to issue Letters of Offer to the applicants noted in Table 1 (below), following the completion of the internal approval process outlined above.

In addition, 11 applications from phase 1 were deemed unsuccessful due to ineligibility reasons, as detailed in Table 2 (below). A further batch of applications from phase 1 as well as new applications from phase 2 will be brought before Members in due course for consideration.

TABLE 1: TOWN CENTRE SHOPFRONT IMPROVEMENT AWARDS (Tranche 2)

No.	DEA	Business Name	LoO Amount
1	Ballyclare	The Office	£ 4,999.00
2	Ballyclare	Hope 365	£ 2,480.00
3	Ballyclare	The Secret Place	£ 2,636.00
4	Ballyclare	The Sportsman's Inn	£ 3,920.00
5	Ballyclare	Miskimmin Wealth	£ 4,999.00
6	Ballyclare	Mundell's Footwear	£ 1,812.00
7	Ballyclare	The Harmony Hub	£ 4,588.58
8	Ballyclare	Homestyle	£ 1,324.00
9	Ballyclare	Jenkins Butchers	£ 4,999.00
10	Ballyclare	Namaste	£ 4,999.00
11	Ballyclare	Strands Barbers	£ 4,200.00
12	Ballyclare	Henderson & Taylor FM Ltd	£ 2,396.00
13	Ballyclare	The Beautician Salon	£ 1,324.80
14	Ballyclare	Ashers	£ 1,192.00
15	Ballyclare	Joli	£ 2,963.50
16	Ballyclare	Brown's Coffee Co	£ 3,065.36
17	Ballyclare	Fig Design Co	£ 4,999.00
18	Ballyclare	Beauty by Clarissa	£ 4,896.00
19	Ballyclare	Links Counselling	£ 4,080.00
20	Ballyclare	B Craig & Co	£ 4,999.00
21	Ballyclare	S&J Irvine Funeral Directors	£ 4,560.00
22	Ballyclare	Autopoint	£4,999.00
23	Ballyclare	Woks Asian Kitchen	£1,728.00
		(Ballyclare) Total:	£ 82,159.24
24	Dunsilly	Elle Body and Beauty	£ 828.00
25	Dunsilly	Coffee Co & Robinson's Funeral Directors	£ 2,320.00
26	Dunsilly	Centurion	£ 4,710.36
27	Dunsilly	Robinson's Funeral Directors	£ 1,426.56
28	Dunsilly	Rover Coffee House	£ 4,999.00
29	Dunsilly	McManus Hardware	£ 2,560.00

		(Randalstown) Total:	£ 16,843.92
Total Grant Assistance (Phase 1, rolling):			£ 99,003.16

TABLE 2: UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS

No.	DEA	Business Name	Reason for Refusal
1	Ballyclare	Window Films NI Ltd	Business not based at premises
2	Ballyclare	Cathay Square	Failed to respond
3	Ballyclare	Apollo Dry Cleaners	Failed to respond
4	Ballyclare	3 The Square	Ineligible
5	Ballyclare	3a The Square	Ineligible
6	Ballyclare	After Schools Club, McConnell's Yard	Failed on grounds of visual impact on Main Street
7	Ballyclare	47 Main Street	Ineligible (vacant unit)
8	Dunsilly	Beechgrove Interiors	Applicant declined to pursue.
9	Dunsilly	The Vintage Wine Merchants	Failed to respond
10	Dunsilly	29-31 Main Street/1-5 Moore's Lane	Failed to respond
11	Dunsilly	29-31 Main Street/1-5 Moore's Lane	Failed to respond

4. Financial Position/Implication

The Council has secured £390,600 from DfC towards the implementation of the Urban Shop Frontage Scheme. The Council must demonstrate a 10% match funding contribution, for which provision exists with the Economic Development 2024/25 budget.

5. Summary

To date, £47,096.94 has been awarded. This report seeks to commit a further £99,003.16 taking the total committed to £146,100.10. This leaves a remaining budget of £244,499.90 for the remainder of phase 1 and phase 2.

The second tranche of businesses have been assessed through the Urban Shop Frontage scheme and have been recommended for approval. 29 businesses are included in tranche 2 with a value of £99,003.16. In addition, 11 applications have been unsuccessful.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that the second tranche of awards under Phase 1 of the Urban Shop Frontage Scheme with a value of £99,003.16 across 29 local businesses be approved.

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

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

4.5 ED/REG/081 TOWN CENTRE DATA COLLECTION

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Members the extension of the contract with Huq Industries for Town Centre Data Collection for 2025.

2. Introduction/Background

The Council's Economic Development Section currently have two contracts that provide town centre health check data e.g. footfall, traffic counters, vacancy etc.

- Ballyclare & Antrim – current provider Springboard
- Crumlin, Randalstown and Glengormley – current provider Huq Industries.

3. Key Issues

The Council's Economic Development Team record, monitor and use the data collected by our town centre health check devices on a daily basis. They are also used by other sections of the Council e.g. Tourism and Events.

Through the data we can monitor changes in footfall following events in the town centres, we can record the impact of scheme including public realm works etc. It also helps with calculating anticipated disruption if we have to close a car park, or a street/footpath as part of any regeneration works.

The data is also used to monitor the impact of programmes and projects completed in the Towns and used to support Post Project Evaluations.

The data is proactively shared with the Chambers of Commerce.

An example of the reports received are **enclosed**.

There are currently two contracts in place. The utilisation different technologies to acquire the data and this is detailed in the table below.

Company	Towns Covered	Information Provided	Source of Information	Cost to Council
Springboard Ltd	Antrim Ballyclare	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Footfall (two locations in each town) by hour & day of the week. Average footfall and comparisons to other time periods and other similar regions.• Traffic (one location in	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two infra-red footfall sensors.• Two infra-red traffic sensors.	£ 35,250

Company	Towns Covered	Information Provided	Source of Information	Cost to Council
		each town) by hour and day of the week.		
Huq	Crumlin Glengormley Randalstown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footfall • Dwell Time • Visit Density • Daily visits • Visitor location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cookie Data 	£24,000

The equipment provided through the Springboard contract remains in place and is continuing to transmit data to the Council on a weekly basis. This will remain the case for the working life of the equipment and therefore no change is currently planned.

The initial agreement with Huq Industries was for two years. This is coming to an end and Officers are seeking Members' approval to extend the current contract with Huq for a period of 12 months at a cost of £12,000 to be met through the existing Economic Development budget.

During the year an evaluation exercise will be undertaken to ensure the current arrangement continues to meet the needs of the Council and whether there are alternative technologies that could provide this data in a more cost effective way.

4. Financial Position/Implication

£12,000 has been allocated within the current economic development budget to support this project.

5. Governance

The project will be managed by the Economic Development Department.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that a one year extension to the contract with Huq Industries at a cost of £12,000 to be met through the Economic Development budget be approved.

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

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

4.6 ED/ED/308 MULTIPLY PROGRAMME LETTER OF OFFER

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval to accept the updated Letter of Offer (enclosed) from Department for the Economy (DfE) for the Multiply Programme following a recently updated spend profile.

2. Introduction/Background

Members will recall that the Multiply programme aims to support the economic vision for a regionally balanced economy with good jobs and increased productivity by helping eligible adults improve their numeracy skills.

Spanning across a number of geographical areas in the Borough of Antrim and Newtownabbey, we will deliver a number of initiatives, reaching out to over 500 adults, these flexible and dynamic training initiatives on numeracy will endeavour to address skills and knowledge gaps within our community.

A programme update is outlined below:

- The Multiply Officer has successfully completed the procurement process for the nine planned Multiply Programme Initiatives.
- Two delivery partners, Sentinus and Workforce, have been appointed
- Initial monitoring meetings with both delivery partners and DfE were held in early December 2024.
- Delivery is now commenced with the first two initiatives, "Industry Upskilling in Retail and Hospitality" held on 11th and 12th December 2024.
- Remaining initiatives to be delivered starting Jan 2025 by both delivery partners.

3. Previous Decision of Council

The original Letter of Offer was approved by Members in April 2024.

4. Key Issues

Due to the response to the Council's approaches to market for 9 x Multiply Initiatives a revised spend was indicated to DfE. The updated Letter of Offer reflects this in a reduced amount of budget for ANBC Multiply Programme.

5. Financial Position/Implication

Updated Letter of Offer amounts to £224,668.00. The original amount was for £251,000.20.

6. Governance

Multiply Programme at ANBC will be delivered by two delivery partners, Sentinus and Workforce Training Services under management of the Multiply Officer (Economic Development Team) and associated reporting to the Council's Labour Market Partnership.

7. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Letter of Offer from Department for the Economy (DfE) for the Multiply Programme be approved.

Prepared by: James Martin, Multiply Officer

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

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

4.7 ED/ED/302 LOCAL ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the initial engagement sessions of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Local Economic Partnership (LEP) and to seek Members' approval of the Membership of the LEP and the recruitment of appropriate staff.

2. Introduction/Background

Members will be aware that the Department for the Economy (DfE) Minister, Conor Murphy MLA launched a Sub-Regional Economic Plan on the 1st October 2024. The Plan outlined how the Department will work with Invest NI, Councils and other key stakeholders to establish Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs) between Oct-Dec 2024 in each Council area.

Local Economic Partnerships are designed to:

- Bring together local economic stakeholders to reflect local needs and strengths, promoting collaborative working, and drive greater integration between local and central government economic initiatives.
- Identify actions and develop projects that align with the Sub-Regional Economic Plan, Council Economic Development Strategies and Invest NI Business Strategy. These will be developed with advice from DfE and Invest NI, and they should be appraised and scored/ ranked (where relevant) using a consistent and transparent methodology.
- Put in place effective monitoring and evaluation – this will be agreed dependent on the nature of the projects.

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

To support the delivery of these plans the Minister has proposed a £15m Regional Fund which will seek to address regional imbalance.

The Departmental timeline indicates the following schedule of activities:

November 2024 - Initial Setup

- Council to appoint lead official/team.
- DfE will appoint a Strategic Advisor, and they will work alongside the relevant Invest NI Regional Office to support development of the LEP.
- DfE Regional Balance Unit/ Invest NI Regional Manager to meet lead Council official/team and agree proposed structure.
- Draft TOR for each LEP to be agreed by council and DfE/ INI based on chosen model. This will set out initial membership, initial decision-making process, and extent of DfE/INI role. DfE will provide template.
- Action planning phase to be started on agreement.

December 2024 - Action Planning

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

January-March 2025 - Project and Funding

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

3. Previous Decision of Council

In November 2024 Members agreed to establish the Antrim and Newtownabbey Local Economic Partnership as a Working Group of the Economic Development Committee which will enable non-elected members to be involved but provide a direct reporting line to the parent Committee for decision-making purposes.

4. Key Issues

In December 2024 an initial meeting of the LEP was convened to discuss a number of key areas detailed below.

- Membership:

The membership of the group to date has included all Elected Members from the Economic Development Committee, Senior Council Officers and external partners:

- Northern Regional College
- Antrim Enterprise Agency
- Mallusk Enterprise Park
- LEDCOM
- Invest NI
- DfE
- DfC
- Queen's University
- AMIC
- Ulster University
- Belfast International Airport

Following the Committee meeting in November and the initial meeting of the LEP in December a number of other members were proposed including:

- Transport Training Services Limited (TTS)
- Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)

- CAFRE
- DfI
- A representative from the Chambers of Commerce

The Membership of the group now needs to be confirmed to enable the action planning work to commence throughout Q1 2025, therefore approval is sought to extend the membership to formally include those additional organisations outlined above.

In addition, the Working Group is currently open to all members of the Economic Development Committee and consideration should be given to whether the Chair and Vice Chair of the Economic Development Committee is sufficient representation and that the wider membership is not required at each LEP meeting.

- Funding and Recruitment:

In the announcement on the 1st October the Minister outlined a £15m fund spread across three financial years commencing on 1st April 2025. Each Council area in Northern Ireland would be granted an allocation to support their individual action plan.

Whilst the allocation for Antrim and Newtownabbey has not been confirmed officially, DfE has indicated that the Council's allotted funding would be in the region of £865,000 per year, meaning a total fund £2,595,000 across the three years. This is the lowest allocation across Northern Ireland.

The majority of the funding will be for operational expenditure on programmes and projects identified in the action plan, however the DfE has indicated that around £135,000 per year should be allocated to the administration of the programme and this would include the recruitment of additional staff. It is anticipated that all of the administration will be covered from this source and there is no anticipated additional cost to Council.

This report is seeking approval from Members to proceed on this basis and prepare documents for the recruitment of additional temporary staff resources to support the operation and delivery of the LEP.

- Initial Focus Areas:

The guidance from DfE has been clear the new interventions to be supported by the LEP cannot duplicate existing provision e.g. GoSucceed, LMP, DTFF or the work done by Invest NI, however, it can be used to support the Council's existing programmes or projects that are 'at a state of readiness' if that is deemed relevant.

At the initial meeting in December the Working Group discussed a number of key thematic areas including:

- Workspace/Infrastructure development
- Advanced Manufacturing Cluster
- Investment attraction and Strategic Employment Locations and Planning

- Commercial vacancy and dereliction
- Community Wealth Building
- Sustainability / Carbon Reduction
- Productivity and Entrepreneurial activity

Subsequent meetings of the LEP will now work to prioritise these areas and develop a pipeline of achievable, realistic programmes and projects that can be delivered using the funding available.

5. Financial Position/Implication

No official confirmation has been received however DfE has indicated that the Council's allotted funding would be in the region of £865,000 per year, meaning a total fund £2,595,000 across the three years. This is the lowest allocation across Northern Ireland.

The Department has indicated that around £135,000 per year should be allocated to the administration of the programme and this would include the recruitment of additional staff. It is anticipated that all of the administration will be covered from this source and there is no anticipated additional cost to Council.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- a) The final Membership of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Local Economic Partnership as outlined and that the Chair and Vice Chair of the Economic Development Committee be the representative Members be approved.**
- b) The recruitment of temporary staff as appropriate to support the operation of the LEP be approved.**

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

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

5. ITEMS FOR NOTING

5.1 ED/ED/309 JAMES KANE FOUNDATION

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update Members regarding a request for Council participation in an application for grant funding to the James Kane Foundation.

2. Introduction/Background

The James Kane Foundation is an independent charity, focusing on two themes:

- Enabling STEM related education and career opportunities
- Enabling students to make the correct choices between employment/career and higher-level education pathways.

The Foundation supports applications for funding that align with the above pathways and are for projects which will progress and facilitate education and career opportunities.

Workplus are an organisation who help employers grow their own future talent, supporting employers as they work together to better connect with schools, collaborate on work experience and apprenticeship recruitment and deliver social value. Workplus are currently delivering the Council's Work Experience programme.

3. Key Issues

Workplus are in the process of submitting an application to the James Kane Foundation for grant funding for an Apprenticeship project which will improve collaboration and information sharing between employers and schools with a key emphasis on supporting improved access to apprenticeships in the Borough.

This will be achieved by providing a single access platform for improved information sharing and communication supporting an enhanced pipeline of apprentices and apprentice-ready businesses. Full details of the proposal are **enclosed**. It is anticipated that the project will be undertaken between February 2025 and September 2025.

Workplus have approached the Council to request its participation as partner in their application. Their intention is to develop a prototype platform with a cluster of schools and employers in Antrim and Newtownabbey under the existing school-employer partnership which is facilitated by the Council and its Labour Market Partnership.

There is no financial commitment requested from the Council and the only requirement, should the application be successful, would be a small element of facilitation with the school-employer partnership which is already in place

through the Labour Market Partnership.

It is envisaged that a successful outcome to this project would be beneficial to the Borough by improving access to apprenticeships of all types within the Borough and by further enhancing the school/employer partnership which will have long term benefits in terms of employability, career pipeline and apprenticeships.

4. Financial Position/Implication

There will be no financial implication for the Council. Should the Workplus application be successful the project will be fully funded.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report regarding Council's inclusion as a partner in the grant funding application to the James Kane Foundation by Workplus be noted.

Prepared by: Jill Murray, Executive Officer

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

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

5.2 ED/REG/083 OUT OF TOWN CENTRE SHOPFRONT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME PHASE ONE UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a progress update on Phase One of the Out of Town Centre Shopfront Improvement Programme.

2. Introduction/Background

The aim of the Shopfront Improvement Programme is to visually enhance commercial areas outside of town centres, improving the overall appearance of the street and change 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 covers minor works to include painting, signage, window dressing and other visual improvements. Major structural works are not covered under this scheme.

3. Previous Decision of Council

In January 2023, the Council agreed to open an Expression of Interest process for a Shopfront Improvement Programme in the Macedon and Threemilewater DEAs. Following this process, in July 2023 the Council approved a programme budget of £250,000 for the Shopfront Improvement Programme. It was agreed that the programme would be implemented in stages, and businesses in Abbots Cross, Hillview, Monkstown and Carnmoney Village, be invited to submit an application under Phase One.

Under this Phase, each eligible property could apply for a grant of up to £5,000, at a grant rate of 80%.

4. Programme Update

The Programme opened for applications in October 2023 and closed 31 January 2024. Under Phase One of the programme, 29 applications were received, with 28 deemed eligible. A total of £75,256.45 has been awarded. The table below provides a breakdown of applications and grants awarded.

Business Name	Grant Award
Abbots Cross	
Kingsbridge Optician and Hearing Care	£1,108.00
Used Clothing	£3,695.54
Well Pharmacy	£5,000.00
Eva's Café	£3,695.54
Tropical Tan	£5,000.00
Jolos Hairdressing	£3,695.54
Nanny Plum's Bakery and Deli	£3,695.54

<u>Carnmoney Village</u>	
Manna	£5,000.00
Jego Hairdressing / Jackie's Barbershop	£3,509.76
Hill Tavern Bar	£4,066.66
Ashers Carnmoney	£5,000.00
Dean Samuel	£3,462.72
You Health and Wellness	£5,000.00
<u>Hillview Avenue</u>	
Classic Carpets and Beds	£3,600.00
Elite Nails + Beauty	£5,000.00
<u>Monkstown</u>	
The Butchers	£0.00
Active Feet	£907.16
Andrews Opticians	£728.82
Comfort First	£1,112.08
Turkish Barbers	£651.65
Ashers Monkstown	£608.00
Ten Coffee	£651.65
Sunbed Studio	£805.98
Mauds Moments	£634.50
Toto	£1,243.27
Eclipz	£1,268.99
Maloneys Chips	£592.00
Monkstown Community Forum	£5,000.00
Monkstown Village Initiative	£523.03
Total	£75,256.45

To date, four businesses have completed their works - 1 in Hillview Avenue, and 3 in Carnmoney Village. The remaining 24 businesses are due to complete all proposed works by 28 February 2025.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Natasha Donald, Regeneration Officer

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

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

5.3 ED/DI/002 ASK MENTORING PROGRAMME BUDGET 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 on the ongoing development of the programme for 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 immediate support. The programme has been revived and updated numerous times since its inception. In the current incarnation, eligible business applicants are allocated a maximum of 10 hours mentoring.

3. Previous Decision of Council

In December 2023 Members approved the continuation of the ASK Programme for the remainder of 2023/24, with provision made in the 2024/2025 estimates at a cost of £30,000.

4. Programme to Date

Since the launch of the new programme in July 2024 33 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 WHOLESAL 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 + Sustainability
ADVANCED NI Scaffolding Ltd	Construction	Digital Transformation Strategy
Ross Companies	Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering	Digital Transformation Strategy

Goudy Engineering	Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering	Marketing & Sales
Janine Dempster Artist	Arts & Creative Industries	Marketing & Sales
A Digital Next	Information & Communication Technology	Marketing & Sales + Digital Transformation Strategy
Glassies	Domestic & Personal Services	Application Withdrawn
The Bed Shop NI Ltd	Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering	Marketing & Sales
Inspired Business Consultancy	Financial, Professional & Business Services	Application Withdrawn
Opticare Opticians and Audiocare Hearing	Retail	Legal
Richard Atkinson & Co Ltd	Manufacturing / Production	Digital Transformation Strategy
Kaleidoscope	Health & Life Sciences	Marketing & Sales
SafeGuarding Solutions	Financial, Professional & Business	Marketing & Sales + Finance
BluRobin	Retail	Marketing & Sales
Stagforge	Design and Manufacture of Luxury BBQs	Marketing & Sales
Training Solutions NI	Education	Artificial Intelligence
Colourwired Elements	Health & Life Sciences	Social Enterprise
Label space.co.uk	Retail	Marketing & Sales
Savvy & Shine	Wholesale	Marketing & Sales
SFBlueprint	Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering	Marketing & Sales
Elliots Silks Ltd	Arts & Creative Industries	Digital Transformation Strategy
DIY4U	Retail	Import/Exporting
Antrim Tree Services	Arboriculture/ Tree services	Application Withdrawn
SAMUEL JOHNSTON LIMITED	Retail	Project Management
CMASS Ltd	Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering	Marketing & Sales
Secret Stash Yarn Shop	Arts & Creative Industries	Marketing & Sales

Previously 5 businesses elected to use ASK Mentoring support for assistance with the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF) application process – each of these businesses were successful in their applications and received DTFF funding. With Call 4 of DTFF launching in March 2025 we anticipate businesses to avail of the ASK Mentoring support again to assist with their applications.

39% of businesses have requested Marketing & Sales mentoring, while 21% have elected to utilise Digital Transformation Strategy under their 10 hours mentoring.

5. Financial Position/Implication

The funding for the initiative is £30,000 and is accounted for within the

Economic Development 2024/25 budget.

Currently (as of December 2024) £21,000 of the budget is forecasted as being spent– which leaves £9,000 remaining for further mentoring.

6. Governance

The initiative is being managed by the Digital Innovation section of Economic Development.

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, Director of Economic Development and Planning

5.4 ED/ED/279 GO SUCCEED UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update Members on Go Succeed activities at the approach of the end of the financial year.

2. Introduction/Background

As Members will be aware, Go Succeed launched in November 2023 and is a new go-to source for expert business advice led by all 11 local councils across Northern Ireland. The programme offers a flexible service to both entrepreneurs and already established businesses within the Borough through its 4 primary pillars; Engage, Foundation, Growth and Scaling via one-to-one mentoring, specialist masterclasses, peer support networks and access to grant aid.

Members will recall that Engage and Foundation (“Get Started”) elements of the programme are delivered by Enterprise Northern Ireland. The Council is partnered with Mid and East Antrim Borough Council for the Growth and Scaling components, which is being delivered by Mallusk Enterprise Park and Deirdre Fitzpatrick & Associates.

3. Mentoring

As mentioned above, mentoring support through the service is delivered via 4 primary pillars. When an applicant applies to the programme, Economic Development Officers will select the most appropriate support pillar based on their application.

- Engage – Volume Starts/Entrepreneurs (up to 5.5 hours mentoring)
- Foundation – Higher Value Starts/Newly Established (up to 11 hours mentoring)
- Growth – Existing Businesses (up to 21 hours mentoring)
- Scaling – Those who can go on and generate at least £1m in revenue after 3 years (up to 30 hours mentoring)

From the programme launch up to 30th November 2024, 861 entrepreneurs and established businesses across the Borough made applications to the service.

See below overview of enquiry numbers, diagnostics completed and diagnostic completion targets for each pillar up to 30th November 2024. Delivery towards these targets will continue up to 31st March 2025

Pillar	Enquiries	Diagnostics Completed	Diagnostic Completion Target
Engage	486	345	87% (on track)
Foundation	109	74	66% (on track)
Growth	263	196	82% (on track)
Scaling	3	2	100% (complete)

Please note these targets are for diagnostics completed over an 18-month delivery period (23/24 and 24/25).

4. Grants

The Go Succeed Grant is open to those who are currently receiving/have received support through the Foundation, Growth or Scaling pillars of the service. Applicants must be actively trading and have completed at least 50% of their allocated mentoring hours to be eligible for an application pack.

The grant can fund up to 70% of costs for capital and/or revenue items up to a maximum grant of £4,000. The organisation must provide their own funding for the remaining balance. Applicants receive their initial 80% instalment on return of signed Letter of Offer, with the final 20% released upon satisfactory claim check (receipts/invoices, bank statements and completed monitoring form).

Grants are awarded on a competitive, first come first serve basis until the budget allocation for the year (£296,461) has been depleted. In December, the Council put a pause on issuing additional Grant Application packs, as we approach the allocated budget for the 24/25 Financial Year.

To date, the Council have issued 53 Letters of Offer for the Go Succeed Grant, valued at £171,609 (a complete list of businesses in receipt of Letters of Offer is **enclosed**). There is a large pipeline of Grants, which will be assessed and issued with Letter of Offer, if successful, before the end of March 2025, utilising the remainder of the grant budget.

5. Peer Support Networks

Go Succeed Peer Support Networks are spaces for like-minded entrepreneurs and established businesses to provide mutual support, encouragement and assistance. These networks are designed to be vital platforms for businesses to connect and gain insights from similar sector and role models within their industry.

a) ANBC Social Enterprise Peer Support Network

Launched in September 2024, the network was created to support Social Enterprises within the Borough. An initial launch event took place in The Old Courthouse, Antrim, where members of the group engaged with valuable support organisations and connected with one another. The network currently has 11 members.

A key feature of this network is that it is shaped by the needs and requirements of its members. At the end of each session, feedback is taken from attendees which is used to determine the theme of the next session.

Sessions to date;

- 1- Launch Event – Social Enterprise Support Organisations and Networking
- 2- Social Enterprise Governance – Unlocking the Secrets to Sustainable Success within your SE

3- Unlock the Power of AI for your SE

b) ANBC & MEA DTF Peer Support Network

Due to launch in January, this Peer Support Network will work to build awareness and provide a pathway for Go Succeed clients to access support through the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund.

The initial session will serve as an introduction to the fund, with an overview of the benefits it can bring to your organisation. This will be followed by a further 3 sessions, which will include best practice/case study visits and an exploration of Digital Transformation Plans.

6. Masterclasses

Delivered by industry experts, the Go Succeed Masterclasses act as a supplementary support to the mentoring.

Although each Council area delivers their own masterclasses, any individual can attend any workshop across Northern Ireland.

To date, Antrim and Newtownabbey have delivered workshops in various areas-

Google Lunchtime Learning Series

- 1) Being Found Online by Google Searchers (30th April)
- 2) Growing Your Online Reputation (14th May)
- 3) Identifying Trends on Google and Using Them to Your Advantage (28th May)

Canva Lunchtime Learning Series

- 1) The Marketing Magic of Canva (30th July)
- 2) Canva Video Marketing (12th August)
- 3) Canva AI for Bulk Design (27th August)

Business Essentials Series

- 1) HR Recruitment & Selection (22nd October)
- 2) An Introduction to AI and How It Can Help Your Business (28th October)
- 3) Finance: How to Access It (25th November)

Upcoming masterclasses

- 1) Cyber Security (13th January)
- 2) An Introduction to Artificial Intelligence (28th January)
- 3) How to Market Your Business to Get Impact (17th February)
- 4) Unlock the Power of Google for Your Business (25th February)

7. Community Outreach

The Community Outreach component is a mechanism within the service which works to build awareness of support available through the programme. As part of Community Outreach works, Officers will typically attend events and promote the spectrum of support the service offers.

To date, the Council has delivered Community Outreach works using a combination of delivering specific Go Succeed events, as well as attending and supporting events hosted by others.

The Council's target for Community Outreach during 24/25 is to engage with 907 individuals – this target has been exceeded, with 1,232 individuals reached to date.

Some of the Community Outreach events are listed below -

- Business Health & Wellbeing Event, MEP
- Supporting SE Networking Event, NRC
- Invest NI Analysis Workshop
- Monkstown Boxing Club Community Job Fair
- NRC Innovation Camp
- NRC Freshers Fair
- ANBC Social Enterprise PSN
- Valley Leisure Centre Jobs Fair
- Women Connect, Ballyclare
- Catalyst Role Models Event
- Go Succeed Ultimate Pitch
- Laying the Foundations
- School Global Entrepreneurship Week
- The Ultimate Pitch

8. Previous Decision of Council

Approval for the delivery of Go Succeed and associated activities in October 2023.

9. Financial Position/Implication

The Council has previously agreed to match-fund the Programme estimated at £77,347 in 2023-24 and £77,347 in 2024-25, provision for which has been made in the Economic Development budget.

10. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Matthew Mulligan, Economic Development Officer

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

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

5.5 ED/LMP/055 LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the 'Turning the Curve' exercise, reconfirming and setting out objectives and outcomes of local labour market indicators for the Labour Market Partnership Action Plans 2025-26 and 2026-27.

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 Department for Communities (DfC) have advised LMPs to submit two-year Action Plans for the years 2025-26 and 2026-27 and a refreshed Strategic Assessment. To inform strategic priorities for the next Action Plans, a 'Turning the Curve' exercise was undertaken by Morrow Gilchrist Associates to examine the targets of indicators and themes within the Borough's local labour market with the Partnership on Wednesday 27 November 2024.

The following was agreed and incorporated into Council's draft Action Plan (**enclosed**):

- % of Working Age Economic Inactivity Rate Excluding Students: The original target of 15.7% by 2027 has been achieved, and is currently sitting at 15.3%. It was proposed to keep the Economic Inactivity Rate under 15%.
- Claimant Count Annual Averages: In October 2024, the claimant count rose to 2555 from 2200 in 2023. It was agreed to keep the Claimant Count under 3000.
- % of Working Age with No Qualifications: The original target as outlined in the LMP Strategic Assessment 2024-27 was 6%. The Partnership agreed to raise this to 7%, due to how this data can fluctuate.
- # of All Persons Median Wage (£): The Strategic Assessment set a target to reach £29,412, and in 2024, the current Median Wage of residents in Antrim and Newtownabbey sits at £29,359, due to rise of minimum living wage. The Partnership proposed to keep this target the same.
- Employment Rate by disability status, ages 16-64, 2022: In 2022 Antrim and Newtownabbey had an employment rate of 50.8% for people with disabilities. The Partnership opted to keep the 2027 target rate of 54% the same given the good progress being made toward it.

3. Previous Decision of Council

At a meeting of Full Council on 29 April 2024, the LMP Action Plan 2024/25 was

approved along with agreement for Officers to proceed with project delivery.

4. 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.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the agreement of targets as set by the Partnership an incorporated into the draft 2025/26 Action Plan be noted.

Prepared by: Jessica Smyth, Business Development Project Officer

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

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

5.6 ED/REG/087 TOWN CENTRE MARKETING CAMPAIGN UPDATE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the Embrace Your Town marketing campaign.

2. Introduction/Background

In February 2024, the Council secured £20,236.50 of funding from the Department for Communities (DfC) to deliver a town centre marketing campaign. The 'Embrace Your Town' campaign was developed, which aimed to promote the Borough's five town centres, and highlight the diverse range of businesses in our town centres and encourage both residents and visitors to embrace what they had to offer.

A sample of the materials generated to support the campaign is **enclosed**.

The initial campaign featured:

- Six promotional videos showcasing each town's business offering (links below)
 - Overall video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Xyfo3oNTcA>
 - Ballyclare: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pydtgz_u1SY
 - Randalstown: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nPzM8CXhKV8>
 - Glengormley: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZ6nrx3b-UE>
 - Crumlin: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9HG7nvnycqs>
 - Antrim: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_xg5o8_ApC
- The videos were complemented with print advertising, media/press releases and promotional shopping bags.
- A total of 55 local businesses were highlighted in the videos, which garnered over 80,000 views and achieved an average engagement rate of 9%, far exceeding the typical government rate of 1.6%-2.4%.

3. Programme Update

In October 2024, Officers submitted a further funding bid of £50,000 to DfC for a targeted Christmas 2024 and Spring 2025 digital marketing campaign. The campaign aims to enhance public awareness of the hospitality and retail offerings within our town centres through digital, radio, and print marketing. It also seeks to build on the momentum of the 'Embrace Your Town' initiative by increasing brand recognition, reinforcing the campaign message, and encouraging residents to rediscover and support their local towns.

The Christmas campaign featured:

- Six promotional videos
 - <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1FQzRdfRZk/>
 - Ballyclare - <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/15WVCPTXVN/>
 - Glengormley - <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/151xELWHxe/>
 - Randalstown -

- <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/19m6j9S6SU/>
 - Antrim - <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/18KMrWNVKi/>
 - Crumlin - <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/154TNVQsGd/>
- Print advertising
- Radio advertising
- Local influencers showcasing how each of our towns is the perfect destination for festive shopping.

Over 50 local businesses were highlighted in the Christmas campaign. At the time of writing this report, the campaign has received over 25.5k impressions (the number of times content has entered a user screen), achieving an organic post engagement rate of 3.19%, which exceeds the typical government benchmark.

A procurement exercise will be undertaken in January 2025, to appoint a marketing agency to manage and execute the spring campaign. Businesses will be invited to express their interest to participate in the campaign.

4. Financial Position/Implications

The Council has secured grant funding of £50,000 from DfC. The Council must demonstrate a 10% match funding contribution, for which provision exists with the Economic Development 24/25 budget.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Natasha Donald, Regeneration Officer

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

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

5.7 ED/ED/284 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN 2024/25

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an overview of performance progress against the Economic Development Business Plan 2024/25.

2. Introduction/Background

In June 2024, Members of the Economic Development Committee noted a presentation on the Economic Development Business Plan for 2024/ 2025. The report (**enclosed**) provides an update on performance against the Business Plan Performance Indicators for noting.

3. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Business Plan Progress Performance report be noted.

Prepared by: Tara McCormick, Executive Officer, Economic Development

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

5.8 ED/ED/284 QUARTER 3 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on Economic Development's performance against the agreed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) at the end of quarter 3 of the current financial year.

2. Update

The Economic Development department provides quarterly progress reports against departmental KPIs.

Economic Development is in a very strong position going into quarter 4 of the current financial year, with five out of six active KPIs achieved by the end of quarter 3. Achieving these KPIs at quarter 3 has involved a wide range of dedicated activity, including: securing over £750k in regeneration grant funding, assisting 260 unemployed people into work via Labour Market Partnership activity and engaging with over 500 businesses.

A detailed update on KPI performance has been **enclosed**.

3. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Economic Development's positive performance and robust current standing going into the final financial quarter of the year be noted.

Prepared by: Rebecca Courtney, Business Analyst

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

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

5.9 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: Tara McCormick, Executive Officer, Economic Development

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