

Title of Report:	Rural Business Development Grant Scheme
Committee Report Submitted To:	The Leisure and Development Committee
Date of Meeting:	18th February 2020
For Decision or For Information	For Information

Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23)	
Strategic Theme	Accelerating our Economy and Contributing to Prosperity
Outcome	All people of Causeway Coast and Glens will contribute to and benefit from a thriving economy built on a culture of growth, entrepreneurship, innovation and learning
Lead Officer	Economic Development Officer - Enterprise

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	Provision of grant by DAERA- £71,871.70 with cost recovery of 10% by Council
Included in Current Year Estimates	Does not apply. Externally funded.
Capital/Revenue	Capital
Code	31291
Staffing Costs	Within budget

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	No	N/A
	EQIA Required and Completed:	No	N/A
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	No	N/A
	RNA Required and Completed:	No	N/A
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	No	N/A
	DPIA Required and Completed:	No	N/A

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to update members on the delivery of the Rural Business Development Grant Scheme funded by Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) for the financial year 2019-2020. This scheme is separate from the Rural Development Programme.

2.0 Context

This is a pilot scheme funded under DAERA's Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Programme (TRPSI) the primary aims of which are:

- To alleviate financial poverty by enhancing entrepreneurship and growth.
- To alleviate financial poverty by supporting micro businesses in rural areas.

This grant scheme is being delivered by 10 of the 11 councils (excluding Belfast) concurrently.

2.1 Objectives

- a. To provide at least 60 (min 10 per Council) micro (less than 10 employees) businesses in rural areas with a capital grant capped at £4,999, at a match funding rate of 50% from DAERA and a minimum 50% from participating businesses, up to a total project cost of £20,000, to enhance their sustainability and growth prospects.
- b. To provide rural, micro businesses with capital support with the wider aim of sustaining rural communities and economies.
- c. To seek to minimise poverty, social exclusion and inequality amongst those living in rural areas.
- d. To complement businesses within rural areas and to sustain their survival and in turn maintain rural communities.
- e. To increase innovative activity and efficiency of rural businesses.

2.2 Outputs (NI Level)

- a. Minimum of 60 rural micro businesses supported with capital grant to enhance sustainability and growth.
- b. At least 60 indigenous micro, rural enterprises supported in their efforts to grow their businesses in their own locality.
- c. Supporting rural businesses to apply for further programmes and funding.

3.0 Pre-Application Support

The grant was widely advertised in local press, DAERA website and on Council's social media channels.

Guidance notes were made available to all interested businesses and included full details in respect of level of award, exclusions and assessment and scoring processes. Named contact was also provided to potential applicants wishing to discuss their idea pre-application.

There was significant interest in the fund, via telephone and email enquiries, by businesses wishing to discuss criteria and requirements. Full support was given to all potential applicants during the funding call.

4.0 Scoring

Of the 48 applications received at closing, 1 was re-directed to Mid-Ulster Council for scoring, as the business was located in a ward within that Council area. A further 8 were deemed ineligible and the remaining 39 progressed to scoring panel held on Wednesday 16th to Friday 18th January 2020.

The panel consisted of:

- Business Development Manager.
- Economic Development Officer.
- Economic Development Officer.

Scoring outcomes as follows:

Name of Business	Location	Percentage Score	Award
Chestnutt Farms	Portrush	75%	£4,999
Irwin Agri-Build	Limavady	71%	£2,550
McAleese Agri Services	Macosquin	68%	£1,279.13
Jam at the Doorstep	Armoy	69%	£2,496
Shean's Horse Farm	Armoy	81%	£4,999
Mairi. Co	Kilrea	68%	£3,209
Fintastic Aquarium Services	Greysteel	67%	£3,225.59
Straid Concrete	Bushmills	78%	£4,350
Cromore Castles	Portstewart	68%	£4,999
DM Groundworks	Limavady	67%	£4,875
CDM Systems Ltd.	Garvagh	89%	£3,671
Canning Concrete	Dungiven	76%	£731.90
JL Contracts	Limavady	71%	£4,988
North Coast Steel	Ballymoney	73%	£4,757.18
MA McCloskey Ltd.	Dungiven	65%	£763.90
TMAC Construction	Limavady	68%	£4,982.50
PS Engineering Ltd.	Ballymoney	76%	£4,999
TJS Steel Supplies	Ballymoney	68%	£4,997.50
McLaughlins Sportsturf Maintenance	Cushendall	84%	£4,999
			£71,871.70

DAERA's original offer of funding to Council of £52,490 has now been increased to £71,871.70, to enable funding of all 19 applicants who scored above the 65% threshold.