

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Small Settlements Restore and Reactivate Grant Programme</b>
<b>Committee Report Submitted To:</b>	Leisure & Development Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	20 September 2022
<b>For Decision or For Information</b>	For Decision

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)</b>	
Strategic Theme	Local Economy
Outcome	Council facilitates towns and villages in the Borough to continue to provide quality environments which evolve to meet the needs of their citizens, businesses and visitors to them
Lead Officer	Town & Village Manager

<b>Budgetary Considerations</b>	
Cost of Proposal	100% Covid Recovery Small Settlement Programme, DfC
Included in Current Year Estimates	<b>Does not apply. Externally funded.</b>
Capital/Revenue	Capital
Code	N/A
Staffing Costs	Within budget

<b>Screening Requirements</b>	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 recommend grant decisions and awards in respect of the Small Settlements Restore and Reactivate Grant Programme funded by Department for Communities (DfC) for the financial year 2022-2023.

## 2.0 Context

In January 2022 council approved the three-strand approach (Project A, Project B and Project C) for the Covid Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme, which was submitted to DAERA, DfC and DfI and subsequently approved.

The Programme is made up of combined funding from the Department for Communities [DfC], the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs [DAERA] and the Department for Infrastructure [DfI] as follows:

	Initial funding offer	Revised funding allocation 20/1/22
DfC	£605,920	£740,000
DAERA	£698,840	£750,000
DfI	£605,920	£600,000
Total Capital	£1,911,000	<b>£2,090,000</b>
Revenue	£120,000	<b>£160,000</b>
Total	£2,031,000	<b>£2,250,000</b>

In April 2022 Council accepted the letter of Offer and put in place the necessary measures to implement the Covid Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme. This included the implementation of **Project B, the Restore & Reactivate Grant Programme**.

The grant scheme seeks to support capital development and repurposing works on derelict or vacant commercial properties within the following 12 Settlements with population thresholds of between 1000 and 4999:

Armoy, Ballykelly, Bushmills, Castlerock, Cloughmills, Cushendall, Dungiven, Dunloy, Garvagh, Greysteel, Kilrea & Rasharkin

The grant call opened on Tuesday 24th May 2022 and closed for applications on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 with an estimated budget of £475k.

## 3.0 Programme Criteria

- To encourage property owners to invest and deliver regeneration benefits in their area.
- To support property owners in bringing their derelict or vacant properties back into use.
- To provide increased provision and choice options in the settlements.
- To generate economic benefit through job creation and increased dwell time in the settlements

## 4.0 Funding Level

- Grants providing capital support up to a maximum of 75% of total costs with a maximum limit of £50,000.
- Match funding must be in the form of a 'cash' contribution.
- There is a minimum project cost of £6667 with no maximum limit to the cost of the project.

## **5.0 Pre-Application Support**

The grant was widely advertised in the local press, DAERA website and on Council's website and social media channels. There were 3 online workshops offered to potential applicants during the funding call.

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 contacts were also provided to potential applicants wishing to discuss their idea pre-application.

There was a good level of interest in the fund, totalling 58 telephone and email enquiries, by property owners/leaseholders wishing to discuss criteria, requirements and eligibility. Full support was given to all potential applicants during the funding call.

## **6.0 Scoring**

12 applications were received at closing, 3 were deemed ineligible, 1 being outside of the settlement development limits and the other 2 were owing to incomplete procurement as set out in the guidance notes.

The **9 eligible applications** progressed to a scoring panel in August 2022.

**6 Applications** scored above the minimum 65% scoring threshold and are deemed successful:

**Table 1**

<b>Applicant Name</b>	<b>Business Location</b>	<b>Percentage Score</b>	<b>Award</b>
Mind and Body Garvagh	Garvagh	84%	£16139
Kevin Bradley & Eamonn Morgan	Kilrea	84%	£50000
Mr & Mrs S McKillop	Bushmills	80%	£50000
Grow The Glens	Cushendall	78%	£50000
S G Construction	Greysteel	72%	£45525
Donaghy Bros	Kilrea	66%	£50,000
<b>Total Grant Funding Awarded</b>			<b>£261,664</b>

**3 Applications** did not score above the 65% scoring threshold and are deemed unsuccessful

## **7.0 Recommendation**

**It is recommended that the Leisure & Development Committee recommends to Council:**

- 1. To award funding to the 6 successful applicants detailed in Table 2 to the value of £261,664.**
- 2. That the underspend from Project B budget be re-allocated to Project A: Continuation of Village Renewal Scheme on agreement with the relevant funder.**