

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Rural Business Development Grant Scheme</b>
<b>Committee Report Submitted To:</b>	<b>The Leisure and Development Committee</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>15th December 2020</b>
<b>For Decision or For Information</b>	<b>For Information</b>

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23)</b>	
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

<b>Budgetary Considerations</b>	
Cost of Proposal	Provision of grant by DAERA-£62,000 originally. Volume of applications received resulted in increased grant amount by DAERA to £158,021.27. Admin fee paid to Council by DAERA £9,300
Included in Current Year Estimates	<b>Does not apply. Externally funded.</b>
Capital/Revenue	Capital
Code	31291
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 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 2020-2021. This scheme is separate from the Rural Development Programme.**

## **2.0 Context**

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

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

This grant scheme is being delivered by the 11 councils concurrently.

The 2019 pilot placed sustainability and growth as its core aims. In the intervening period, the COVID 19 pandemic has changed the landscape for all businesses, therefore councils have identified business recovery as the key theme within the current grant programme. This recognises that, for some, new business opportunities will emerge and for others, previous work practices will have to change to deliver enhanced safety for staff and customers. It is proposed that grant offered through this scheme will assist participating businesses in their recovery efforts by providing capital assistance for equipment and machinery for new business practices or growth plans, as well as internal and external adaptations in line with new government guidelines.

This scheme is not focused on job creation but on helping micro businesses emerge from lockdown and re-engage with staff who have been furloughed or temporarily laid off and helping the businesses survive and sustain.

## **3.0 Objectives (Causeway Coast and Glens)**

- a) To provide at least 12 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 supporting recovery and sustainability following the COVID 19 pandemic.
- c) To seek to minimise poverty, social exclusion and inequality amongst those living in rural areas by supporting businesses to grow and develop.
- d) To complement businesses within rural areas and to sustain their survival and in turn maintain rural communities.
- e) To support rural businesses to maintain or increase pre-application staffing levels.

## **4.0 Outputs (NI Level)**

- a) Minimum of 168 rural micro businesses supported with capital grant to enhance sustainability and growth.
- b) At least 168 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.

## 5.0 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 a high level of interest in the fund, totalling 289 telephone and email enquiries, by businesses wishing to discuss criteria and requirements. Full support was given to all potential applicants during the funding call.

## 6.0 Scoring

Of the 159 applications received at closing, 1 was re-directed to Mid and East Antrim Council and 1 to Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council for scoring, as the applicant businesses were located in wards within those Council areas. A further 28 were deemed ineligible and the remaining 129 progressed to scoring panel held over the period of a week in late September 2020. Panel consisted of:

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

Successful scoring outcomes as follows:

<b>Business I.D</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Percentage Score</b>	<b>Award</b>
RBDS-CCG-076	Ballycastle	98%	£1,996.50
RBDS-CCG-012	Limavady	92%	£3,249.99
RBDS-CCG-027	Ballymoney	92%	£2,017.56
RBDS-CCG-154	Dungiven	90%	£3,636.84
RBDS-CCG-036	Castlerock	86%	£1,440
RBDS-CCG-059	Kilrea	84%	£4,999
RBDS-CCG-157	Garvagh	84%	£4,999
RBDS-CCG-115	Coleraine	82%	£4,999
RBDS-CCG-116	Ballycastle	80%	£2,324.50
RBDS-CCG-086	Limavady	80%	£3,618.54
RBDS-CCG-041	Dunloy	78%	£4,999
RBDS-CCG-002	Limavady	78%	£3,167.79
RBDS-CCG-097	Limavady	76%	£4,660
RBDS-CCG-009	Ballycastle	74%	£4,374.07
RBDS-CCG-029	Castlerock	74%	£516.45
RBDS-CCG-112	Limavady	74%	£4,999
RBDS-CCG-006	Garvagh	74%	£1,302
RBDS-CCG-026	Greysteel	74%	£4,734
RBDS-CCG-042	Ballymoney	72%	£4,999
RBDS-CCG-104	Limavady	72%	£4,797
RBDS-CCG-089	Coleraine	70%	£3,511.66

RBDS-CCG-084	Kilrea	70%	£3,063.92
RBDS-CCG-021	Bushmills	70%	£1,700
RBDS-CCG-087	Dungiven	70%	£4,982.40
RBDS-CCG-030	Dungiven	68%	£4,129.18
RBDS-CCG-044	Coleraine	68%	£2,241.85
RBDS-CCG-093	Bushmills	68%	£4,680
RBDS-CCG-085	Dungiven	68%	£1,142.47
RBDS-CCG-119	Coleraine	68%	£4,999
RBDS-CCG-055	Garvagh	68%	£2,693.37
RBDS-CCG-090	Garvagh	68%	£4,999
RBDS-CCG-138	Limavady	68%	£2,935
RBDS-CCG-047	Cloughmills	68%	£4,847.50
RBDS-CCG-123	Garvagh	68%	£1,995.64
RBDS-CCG-143	Coleraine	68%	£1,677.28
RBDS-CCG-131	Limavady	68%	£4,999
RBDS-CCG-137	Garvagh	66%	£570.41
RBDS-CCG-071	Dungiven	66%	£4,999
RBDS-CCG-057	Foreglen	66%	£1,898.25
RBDS-CCG-125	Dungiven	66%	£1,196.90
RBDS-CCG-101	Limavady	66%	£4,999
RBDS-CCG-118	Feeny	66%	£4,723.76
RBDS-CCG-045	Aghadowey	66%	£2,571.46
RBDS-CCG-063	Ballymoney	66%	£4,999
RBDS-CCG-054	Limavady	66%	£4,999
RBDS-CCG-003	Ballycastle	66%	£637.98
			<b>£158,021.27</b>

Due to the volume of applications to the scheme, DAERA's original offer of funding to Council of £62,000 was increased to £158,021.27, to enable funding of all 46 applicants who scored above the 65% threshold.