



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

DONEGAL TRADE MISSION 17-19 OCTOBER 2018

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to update Council Executive of the outcomes of the Trade Mission to Donegal on 17-19 October 2018.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council Executive:

1. Notes the contents of the report
2. Agrees to the ongoing links with Donegal through Economic Development.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Providing equality of opportunities; making best use of our resources; working in partnership.
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	The report does not raise any Strategic Environmental Assessment, equality, health or risk issues.
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	We are better educated and have access to increased and better quality learning and employment opportunities. - We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We live longer, healthier lives and have reduced health inequalities. - We make the most efficient and effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment.
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	The report does not raise any revenue or capital resourcing issues. Support for the initiatives set out in the report will be met from existing budgets.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	The outcome of the Trade Mission has not been reported to PDSP but Development & Transport PDSP will be updated on outcomes from the on-going links.
VIII	Other consultations	West Lothian Chamber of Commerce

D. TERMS OF REPORT

Following Council Executive approval on 21 August 2018 to join the Trade Mission to Donegal from 17-19 October organised by West Lothian Chamber of Commerce.

The Trade Mission included representatives from Scottish Government, Scottish Chambers, West Lothian Chamber, West Lothian Council and Businesses.

The Trade Mission In Donegal was organised through Udaras na Gaeltachta, the Local Enterprise Agency and included Irish Government, Allied Irish Bank and local agencies and businesses.

An extensive programme was put together for the two days which covered the following:-

1. Business meetings including Randox TEO a research & development company; Syncherchi manufacturer of Kombucha, Rapid Packaging largest food packaging company in UK. & Ireland.
2. Presentations from Gteic business incubator and enterprise and innovation hub. Cope a cooperative based on the Scottish Cooperative Society. Allied Irish Bank and various testimonials from local start-up companies.
3. Round table talks with Irish & Scottish Ministers to promote mutual business arrangements between Donegal and West Lothian.
4. Networking event with over 100 local businesses, this was a very diverse range of businesses all of whom had received support from Udaras. This was a good opportunity to share experiences and views on the local economy.

Brexit centred on a lot of the discussion with companies fearful of what this will actually mean for trade and business. The businesses we met with explained that over 80% of what they produce is for the UK market. Discussion also focused on opportunities which could be created between Donegal and West Lothian.

During the visit to the businesses it was interesting to see how they had kept reinventing themselves to ensure local employment and also how to attract graduates back to the area. In many ways like West Lothian but on smaller scale.

Their business incubator operates very much like many of our private sector business centres and it was announced through the Ministerial round table that Udaras would set aside space for any Scottish Company looking to set up a trading office from Ireland depending on the outcomes of Brexit. Likewise agreed for Scotland and would be easy to facilitate in West Lothian.

Work is continuing with the Chamber of Commerce on what the format of this arrangement will look like and how we promote the links and benefits to West Lothian business.

In addition representatives from Udaras and the Donegal business community are looking to visit in the near future. We will work jointly with West Lothian Chamber of Commerce in supporting this visit.

It was also a great opportunity to look at how rural areas work with the local agencies including their universities to promote enterprise and growth. Udaras also have a LEADER programme to support the development of rural organisations and business.

Udaras have recently refreshed their marketing materials promoting the benefits of basing your business out with the City but still having the same global competitiveness. Syncherchi the drinks manufacturer was a recent example of how they moved out of Dublin.

There are a lot of good opportunities and best practice which we can share, particularly around business support initiatives, enterprise and skills. Discussions with Udaras and their partners including the Allied Irish bank focused around start-ups and they were interested in our business start-ups how we promote the service and continue the support as they go through the growth stages.

E. CONCLUSION

This was a good start to building relationships in Donegal through the enterprise agency Udaras na Gaeltachta, one which we can build on and share best practice to support the growth of our local economies.

The Ministerial support from the Irish & Scottish Governments strengthens the relationship and through the commitment of shared office space will allow for on-going collaborative work.

We will continue to work with the West Lothian Chamber of Commerce to support the collaboration and ensure benefits for West Lothian businesses.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None

Appendices/Attachments: None

Contact Person: Alice Mitchell, Economic Development and Regeneration Manager, 01506 283079,
alice.mitchell@westlothian.gov.uk

Craig McCorriston
Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration

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