1. Purpose of Report/Recommendations

1.1 To provide Members with an overview of the MourneDerg and Glenelly Action Plan activity for the 2016/2017 year.

2. Background

2.1 The MourneDerg and Glenelly Action Plans were designed to assist with the promotion of businesses operating across rural towns and villages including Castlederg, Newtownstewart and the Glenelly areas including Plumbridge and Donemana.

2.2 The Mournederg and Glenelly Action Plan Committees have been meeting on bi-monthly basis since 2013 and have delivered on a number of key priorities including improving the internal and external image of the areas, supporting community and developing community pride via promotional events. These Council Committees have enabled Council to lobby for investment in rural areas, for example, improvements to rural broadband and mobile phone coverage.

3. Key Issues

3.1 The Mournederg and Glenelly Action Plan Committees work in partnership with the Castlederg and Newtownstewart Business Forums and are in the process of developing new Action Plans for the 2016/2017 year which will include a range of events and projects including promotional campaigns highlighting businesses operating across rural towns and villages including Castlederg, Newtownstewart and the Glenelly areas including Plumbridge and Donemana.
3.2 The Business team staff will service these meetings and work closely with each of the Forums to ensure that each of these rural towns and villages is enhanced economically and socially.

3.3 Key dates for initiatives planned to promote and encourage additional footfall into the Castlederg and Newtownstewart town centres are as follows:

<table>
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<th>Event</th>
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| Newtownstewart - Thursday 27th October Halloween | Late Night Opening  
Scarecrow trail – school entries to be displayed in shop windows  
Music & street entertainment  
NI Year of Food & Drink - Celebrity Chef          |
| Castlederg Apple Fair Friday 28th October & Saturday 29th | Market Day Theme  
Scarecrow trail – school entries to be displayed in shop windows  
Celebrity Chef  
Music & street entertainment – Pipe band on the green |
| Castlederg Christmas Lights Thursday 24th November | Christmas Markets theme – non-alcoholic mulled wine/ mince pies, nibbles etc  
NI Year of Food & Drink - Celebrity Chef  
Music & street entertainment  
Launch of the model of the town & exhibition |
| Saturday 3rd December 2016 Small Business Saturday | Federation of small businesses – Bus - John Friel is trying to get the bus to visit Strabane – to promote and support SMEs |
| Newtownstewart Christmas Lights Thursday 1st December | Christmas Markets theme – non-alcoholic mulled wine/ mince pies, nibbles etc  
NI Year of Food & Drink  
Celebrity Chef  
Music & street entertainment |
| January/February - Spring Campaign              | Heritage event in conjunction with local businesses.                    |
3.4 Support will also be given to local villages through the Rural Development Programme and Local Community Plans. Extensive consultation is ongoing at present.

3.5 All of these initiatives will include publicity campaigns using social media, and local newspaper advertising and have support activity such as music, street entertainment including animated characters and celebrities to attract local residents and visitors into the rural towns and villages to raise the profile of the area. The Business staff will work closely with Health & Safety and Marketing staff in relation to the promotion and delivery of these initiatives.

4. Financial, Equality, Legal, HR and Other Implications

4.1 The budget for the MourneDerg and Glenelly Action Plans is £20,000 and has been included within the existing Business and Culture Budget.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Members note the content of the report.

Background Papers

None.