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## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Business growth and new jobs for the Longtown area**

Longtown Market Town Initiative (MTI) has continued to exceed its targets for investment and business support in the past year with more than 30 jobs created and 19 new start-up businesses assisted in the past year.

To date, 52 different businesses in the Longtown area have benefited from Business Expansion Grants of up to 50% of project cost to a maximum of £5k. So far, almost £200 000 has been invested into the area through this scheme in addition to numerous training grants that amount to over £5k and marketing support worth almost £8k.

Helen Sykes leads the team of three staff at the MTI and she is delighted with the interest and enthusiasm from local businesses: "Enquiries about grants for expansion and training opportunities have far exceeded our expectations and it is reassuring to know that we are offering the mix of funding, advice and practical support that local businesses want and need. It has also been great to see the fruits of some of our earlier investments with businesses such as Border Vets, Expo Life and the Esk Laundry recruiting new people, investing in growth and moving into new markets."

Job creation since the project began now stands at 47.5, more than double the original target set and with 12 months still to run. At over 3000 sq.m., more than double the original target amount of new or improved work space has been created too.

Melvyn Redgers is the chair of the Longtown & District Enterprise Trust, which secured the funding for the MTI from the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA). "The Longtown MTI is a real success story already," he says. "We have another year to run and I am sure that we can make a big difference to business success and sustainable job creation. As well as the fantastic response from businesses to the various grant schemes, we have seen individuals making investments of their own time to take part in training and development with 43 people undertaking work-based training, and about 30 others receiving assistance or training to get into the job market. This kind of

investment in skills, business confidence and growth bodes well for the area's future."

David Hunter, NWDA Head of Rural Affairs, said: "The Longtown Market Town Initiative is working hard to create a dynamic rural community that is financially, socially and environmentally sustainable. As a major funder of this initiative the NWDA is delighted by the progress made so far and looks forward to continued success in the future."

In total, more than £440k has now been spent or allocated in and around Longtown but funding is still available for business expansion, start up, marketing and training grants. Advice and assistance with the application process is readily available from Helen Sykes and her team with further information available online at [www.longtown.org/mti](http://www.longtown.org/mti) or from the MTI office on 01228 792778.

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### **Editor's notes**

Longtown Market Town Initiative is a locally managed partnership initiative programme that is expected to run until March 2008. In 2005, it was awarded £1 million by Northwest Regional Development Agency to implement a regeneration programme, focused on helping existing businesses to develop and grow and on enabling individuals in the area to improve their earning potential. The project has now been successful in securing additional ERDF European funding (more than £26k) to assist start up businesses and to enable local micro businesses to expand.

Longtown Market Town Initiative is funded by:



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