

## Policy on Consultation (draft)

Document Control			
Policy Owner	Head of Democratic Services		
Policy Author	Corporate Policy and Equality Officer (CPEO)		
Version	1.0 (draft)		
Consultation	Senior Management Team	Yes / No	
	Trade Unions	Yes / No	
Equality Screened by	CPEO	Date	
Equality Impact Assessment	No	Date	
Good Relations	N/A		
Approved By	Policy & Resources Committee	Date	
Adopted By	Council	Date	
Review Date	March 2021	By Whom	CPEO
Circulation	Staff		
Document Linkages	Equality Scheme Disability Action Plan Customer Service Policy Accessible Communications Policy Rural Needs Impact Assessment guidance		

## 1.0 POLICY SUMMARY

- 1.1 This policy describes Mid Ulster District Council's commitment to undertaking consultation as appropriate to assist it in the development of policy and how. The document is supported with practical guidance for staff who may be required to undertake consultations.

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Council, as a public service provider, strives to ensure that the services it provides are both responsive and indeed delivered in such a way that the needs of its customers fulfilled. To inform the delivery of its services and functions the Council will on occasion consult with local people and groups about its policies and services to improve the Council's services and ensure that they meet the varied needs of customers. The Council will consider when it is appropriate to consult with different audiences, including individual residents, partner organisations and other authorities. Some of the most common opportunities for consultation arise with the periodic review of an existing service, or the introduction of a new policy or service, and also during the normal day to day contact with customers. Guidance on the type and appropriateness of varying types of consultation will be developed to assist council officers in considering and undertaking same.

- 2.2 In the interests of developing how we do business and in continually improving how the Council does things consultation may be undertaken across a number of council functions to for example ascertain a view on how customers may be affected by their policies and services. The need to ascertain the views of customers through consultation is important to the council which will also go some way to assisting it in meeting its legislative duties. Some duties, amongst others, where consultative arrangements will assist include.

- **Equality and Good Relations:** A key pillar of the Section 75 statutory equality and good relations duties on public authorities is the requirement to consult with service users and others likely to be affected by policies and decisions, and to involve them in the policy development and decision making process. The councils' commitment to consultation is set out in its Equality Scheme.
- **Disability Duties** – Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) requires the council to have regard to the need to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life.
- **Rural Needs** - Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 places a duty on council to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and when designing and delivering public services.

A policy on consultation is not only necessary to fulfil its duties across various aspects of its activities but will contribute to business planning and improved service delivery.

### **3.0 POLICY AIM & OBJECTIVES**

#### **3.1 Policy Aim:**

The aim of this policy is to ensure that Mid Ulster District Council carries out effective and appropriate consultation that enables the public, or sections of the public, to have a say in how we design and deliver services that impact on them.

#### **3.2 Policy Objectives:**

- To communicate Council's strategic commitment to appropriate and effective consultation
- To provide guidance to staff to help them undertake appropriate and inclusive consultation that maximizes feedback and improves decision making
- To ensure consistency of approach across Council functions and adoption of best practice.

### **4.0 POLICY SCOPE**

- 4.1 This policy relates to all consultation, irrespective of scale, where the views of service users or potential service users should be sought to inform and influence the development of a policy/plan/project or decision-making.

Consultation may vary in scope and scale according to the significance of the policy/plan/project or decision consulted on, with the expectation that larger scale public consultation exercises will be required for projects of a strategic nature or which involve significant budgets. All new or revised/updated policies/plans, will be considered for the need for some level of consultation – internal, external or both.

### **5.0 LINKAGE TO CORPORATE PLAN**

- 5.1 This policy contributes to the delivery of all four Corporate Themes but has a particular focus on "Delivering for our People".

### **6.0 Key principles for effective consultation**

- We will ensure that a commitment to consult as appropriate and necessary is built into work plans for policy/project development and implementation.
- We will set out clearly what we are consulting on, why we are consulting and what we will do with the information or feedback that results.
- We will be clear on who we need to consult and plan effectively to ensure that our consultation is targeted appropriately, accessible, user-friendly and inclusive.
- We will allow an appropriate timescale for responses and take factors that may affect response rates into account. For equality-related public consultations, the suggested timescale is 12 weeks, though this may be shortened in exceptional circumstances when this timescale is not feasible. Smaller scale, targeted consultation will not need this length of time.
- We will also ensure that consultees are made aware of how their input has been considered and ensure that information gained from consultation is shared across departments and functions as appropriate to inform future work.
- We will ensure that staff who carry out consultations comply with data protection legislation.
- We will monitor who is responding to our consultations so that we can be sure we are getting feedback from a cross-section of the population or the targets of the exercise.
- We will always consider if we should try to consult with individuals as well as representative groups, recognising that not all individuals belong to groups or feel they reflect their specific experience.

In drawing up our principles, the council has sought to ensure consistency with practice and those of The Cabinet Office Consultation principles 2018

## **6.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 6.1 The role of managers in relation to this policy is to demonstrate leadership by ensuring that consultation considered as part of work/project plans and to ensure that staff comply with the policy and associated guidance, as developed.

Heads of Service and Directors should consider and satisfy themselves that adequate consultation has been undertaken with appropriate evidence is available before any policy or plan is finalised.

Managers should also ensure that information or evidence from consultation is made available and shared across teams and departments for others to use and learn from as appropriate.

- 6.2 All staff should familiarise themselves with the policy and any guidance developed. Advice on its application should be sought from the Corporate Policy and Equality Officer and others as appropriate.

## **7.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENTS**

### **7.1 Equality Screening & Impact Assessment**

- 7.1. The policy has been subjected to equality screening in accordance with the council's screening process. The outcome was that the policy has been screened out without mitigation as no adverse impacts have been identified. This means that it will not be subject to an equality impact assessment at this time.

However, consultation exercises will be monitored and account taken of any feedback from stakeholders about the extent or quality of Council consultation. If monitoring suggests potential adverse impacts that are not currently obvious, or that Council's approach to consultation is not effective, this will be looked at again.

### **7.2 Rural Needs Impact Assessment**

The policy has been subjected to a rural needs impact assessment. The outcome of this assessment is that people in rural areas should not be disadvantaged as a result of this policy. It aims to benefit all service users/potential service users through appropriate and effective consultation which considers how best to include the needs of all those being consulted.

However, it is recognised that a range of consultation methods will be required to ensure that people in rural areas are not disadvantaged and can participate in Council consultations. For example, people in rural areas will find it more difficult to attend consultation events that may require them to travel a distance. Certain categories of rural dwellers may be further disadvantaged because of a lack of access to transport, caring responsibilities, for example women, older people, disabled people or young people.

If consultation is limited to online methods, people in rural areas who do not have Broadband or mobile coverage may be disadvantaged.

#### **7.4 Staff & Financial Resources**

Departments or teams which carry out consultation will need to assess the level of resourcing required to meet their statutory duties as outlined in Section 2, and build this into work plans and budgets.

There is no direct cost to the Democratic Services in implementing this policy although there will be staff resourcing required in terms of advice on its implementation.

### **8.0 SUPPORT AND ADVICE**

- 8.1 Advice and guidance on the implementation of this policy should be sought from the Corporate Policy & Equality Officer. At departmental level, staff should seek advice from their relevant Head of Service or Director.

### **9.0 COMMUNICATION**

- 9.1 The Corporate Policy & Equality Officer/Democratic Services is responsible for the communication.

### **10.0 MONITORING & REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS**

- 10.1 Implementation of this policy will be monitored and a formal review undertaken 24 months from its effective date.

### **Introduction**

Mid Ulster District Council has a statutory duty to screen its policies, procedures, practices/decisions. This Policy Screening Form and Report assists Council Departments to consider the likely equality and good relations impacts of the aforementioned, if any, placed upon our ratepayers, citizens, service users, staff and visitors to the district.

### **Section 1 – Policy scoping**

This asks the Policy Author to provide details on the policy, procedure, practice and/or decision being screened and what available evidence you have gathered to help make an assessment of the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations. Reference to policy within this document refers to either of the aforementioned (policy, procedure, practice, and/ or decision).

### **Section 2 – Screening questions**

This asks about the extent of the likely impact of the policy on groups of people within each of the Section 75 categories. Details of the groups consulted and the level of assessment of the likely impact. This includes consideration of multiple identity and issues.

### **Section 3 – Screening decision**

This guides the Council to reach a screening decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment (EQIA), or introduce measures to mitigate the likely impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity.

### **Section 4 – Monitoring**

This provides guidance to the Council on monitoring for adverse impact and broader monitoring.

### **Section 5 – Approval and authorisation**

This verifies the Council's approval of a screening decision by a senior manager responsible for the policy.

### **Appendix A          Screening Process**

## Section 1 Policy Scoping & Information

The first stage of the screening process involves scoping the policy under consideration which sets the context and confirms the aims and objectives for the policy being screened. Scoping the policy helps to identify constraints as well as opportunities and will help the policy author to work through the screening process on a step by step basis.

<b>1. Policy Name</b>		
Draft Policy on Consultation		
<b>2. Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?</b>		
New policy		
<b>3. What is it trying to achieve? (aims/outcomes)</b>		
<p>The aim of this policy is to ensure that MUDC carries out effective and appropriate consultation that enables the public, or sections of the public, to have a say in how we design and deliver services that impact on them, and that will ultimately lead to improved services.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To communicate Council's strategic commitment to appropriate and effective consultation as required by Section 75 of the NI Act and our Equality Scheme</li> <li>• To provide guidance to staff to help them undertake appropriate and inclusive consultation that maximises feedback and improves decision making</li> <li>• To ensure consistency of approach across Council functions and adoption of best practice.</li> </ul>		
<b>4. Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?</b>	Yes	X
	No	
<p>All Section 75 categories are intended to benefit from appropriate consultation as this will give people an opportunity to influence policies and decisions about services that affect their daily lives.</p>		
<b>6. Who initiated or wrote the policy?</b>		
Corporate Policy & Equality Officer – Democratic Services		
<b>7. Who owns and who implements the policy?</b>		



Democratic Services owns the policy but all Directorates are responsible for implementation within their respective functions.

## Implementation factors

		Yes	No
Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from intended aim/outcome of the policy?		Yes	
• If yes, are they financial?		X	
• If yes, are they legislative?		X	
• If yes, Please specify	<p><b>Financial:</b> large scale public consultation exercises are time consuming and can be expensive so must be resourced in terms of staff and budget.</p> <p><b>Legislative:</b> Council must comply with the commitments in our approved Equality Scheme. A failure to comply with our Scheme could lead to a complaint by a member of the public or an investigation by the Equality Commission.</p> <p>In carrying out consultations, Council must comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).</p>		
• Other, Please specify	<p>Consultation, even on a small scale, can be time consuming and labour intensive. On occasion, an urgent deadline may mean that recommended good practice is compromised.</p> <p>It can be difficult to identify all relevant potential consultees for any given project and consultee lists must be checked and updated regularly.</p>		

## Stakeholders

The internal and external (actual or potential) that the policy will impact on

	Yes	No
Staff	X	
Service users/potential service users	X	
Other public sector organisations	X	
Voluntary/community/ trade unions	X	

Other, please specify	
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### Other policies with a bearing on this policy

Policies	Owners
Equality Scheme 2015-2020 Disability Action Plan Accessible Communications Policy Customer Service Policy	Democratic Services Democratic Services DS/Marketing & Comms Marketing & Comms

### Available evidence

Information and available evidence (qualitative and quantitative) gathered to inform the policy under each of the Section 75 groups as identified within the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

In developing this policy, we looked at a range of information sources and guidance material:

- Cabinet Office Consultation Principles 2018
- Guidance on consultation in relation to Section 75 produced by the Equality Commission, including guidance on consulting with children & young people
- Local Government Guidance on consultation
- Examples of previous MUDC consultations & feedback from participants
- Guidance on consultation produced by other public bodies (including local government organisations in N Ireland and beyond)
- Information on data protection legislation
- Current consultee list
- Effectiveness of S75 consultation report
- Mid Ulster District demographic information from 2011 Census – see below
- Equality Commission research reports, Key inequalities policy papers, advisory and good practice publications

We also spoke to some key stakeholders – Mid Ulster Disability Forum, Rural Community Network, NI Rural Women's Network

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information		
Religious belief	63.77% of the Mid Ulster district population were brought up in the Catholic religion and 33.46% belong or were brought up in a Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related) religion. Other religions comprised 690 (0.5%) and None 3,153 (2.28%) of the population (Source: 2011 Census).		
	Religion or Religion brought up in	No.	%

	<table><tr><td>Catholic</td><td>88,375</td><td>63.77</td></tr><tr><td>Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)</td><td>46,372</td><td>33.46</td></tr><tr><td>Other religions</td><td>690</td><td>0.5</td></tr><tr><td>None</td><td>3,153</td><td>2.28</td></tr><tr><td><b>Total</b></td><td><b>138,590</b></td><td><b>100</b></td></tr></table>	Catholic	88,375	63.77	Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)	46,372	33.46	Other religions	690	0.5	None	3,153	2.28	<b>Total</b>	<b>138,590</b>	<b>100</b>																									
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	<p>The Council's Good Relations team have ongoing contact with an area based Churches Forum which can be contacted for further guidance about consultation. See consultee list.</p>																																								
Political opinion	<p>Political party representation can be used as an approximate barometer of political opinion of people within Mid Ulster council area. The table below shows the results from the May 2019 local government/council elections - percentage 1<sup>st</sup> preference vote share for each political party and current representation (seats) on Council. (Source: Electoral Office):</p> <table><tr><th>Party</th><th>Votes</th><th>Percentage</th><th>Council Seats</th></tr><tr><td>SF</td><td>23,553</td><td>39.8%</td><td>17</td></tr><tr><td>DUP</td><td>13,700</td><td>23.2%</td><td>9</td></tr><tr><td>SDLP</td><td>8,512</td><td>14.4%</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>UUP</td><td>8,021</td><td>13.6%</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>Independent</td><td>3,422</td><td>5.8%</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Aontu*</td><td>846</td><td>1.4%</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Alliance</td><td>729</td><td>1.2%</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>TUV</td><td>230</td><td>0.4%</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Workers' Party</td><td>95</td><td>0.2%</td><td></td></tr></table> <p><b>*A councillor who was elected as a representative of the SDLP resigned from that party and aligned with Aontu shortly after the 2019 local government elections</b></p> <p>The Good Relations team has ongoing contact with single-identity and cross-community groups in the local area who can be contacted for further advice on consultation. The corporate policy and equality officer can also provide advice. See consultee list.</p>	Party	Votes	Percentage	Council Seats	SF	23,553	39.8%	17	DUP	13,700	23.2%	9	SDLP	8,512	14.4%	5	UUP	8,021	13.6%	6	Independent	3,422	5.8%	2	Aontu*	846	1.4%	1	Alliance	729	1.2%		TUV	230	0.4%		Workers' Party	95	0.2%	
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Racial group	<p>According to the 2011 Census the overwhelming majority of the population 136,485 (98.48%) were classified as 'white'. Within this total will be migrant communities, such as Polish, Lithuanian and so forth. Statistics indicate that the number of people in Mid Ulster Local Government District (LGD) born outside Northern Ireland is:</p> <table><tr><th>Place of Birth</th><th>No.</th></tr><tr><td>Great Britain</td><td>4,053</td></tr><tr><td>Republic of Ireland</td><td>2,250</td></tr><tr><td>EU Countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia)</td><td>6,795</td></tr><tr><td>Other</td><td>2,280</td></tr></table> <p>The minority ethnic language profile within the area can serve as a possible indicator of the Black &amp; Minority Ethnic (BME) community profile within the district. The composition of language groups in Mid Ulster LGD area is also noted from the 2011 census by NISRA as:</p>	Place of Birth	No.	Great Britain	4,053	Republic of Ireland	2,250	EU Countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia)	6,795	Other	2,280																														
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<p>MUDC council area has a small number of Syrian refugees who have come through the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme who speak Arabic.</p> <p>The District is home to small settlements of Irish Travellers and attracts various visiting Traveller families on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>There are several BME support groups in the MUDC area which can be contacted for further advice on consulting with local BME citizens – see consultee list.</p> <p>It is accepted that it is particularly difficult to ensure that BME citizens engage with public consultation exercises as they face additional barriers to information and participation if they have language barriers.</p>																													
Age	<p>The age profile of Mid Ulster Local Government District area as at 2015 (Source, NISRA)</p> <table><tr><th></th><th>Mid Ulster</th><th>Northern Ireland</th></tr><tr><td>Total Population</td><td>144,002</td><td>1,851,621</td></tr><tr><td>0-15 years</td><td>33,123</td><td>385,200</td></tr><tr><td>16-39 years</td><td>47,646</td><td>583,116</td></tr><tr><td>40-64 years</td><td>43,621</td><td>591,481</td></tr><tr><td>65+ years</td><td>19,612</td><td>291,824</td></tr><tr><td>Population Change % (2005-2015)</td><td>15.3%</td><td>7.2%</td></tr></table> <p>The Agewell Partnership is represented on the Mid Ulster Disability Forum which is supported by MUDC community development department. For other groups, see consultee list.</p>		Mid Ulster	Northern Ireland	Total Population	144,002	1,851,621	0-15 years	33,123	385,200	16-39 years	47,646	583,116	40-64 years	43,621	591,481	65+ years	19,612	291,824	Population Change % (2005-2015)	15.3%	7.2%							
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Marital status	The below table sets out the marital status profile for Mid Ulster District Council area as extracted from results of the 2011 Census																																																			
		Mid Ulster		Northern Ireland																																																
		No.	%	No	%																																															
	Single (never married or never registered a same sex civil partnership) (Aged 16+)	38,353	35.97	517,393	36.14																																															
	Married (Aged 16+)	54,192	50.82	680,831	47.56																																															
	In a registered same sex civil partnership (Aged 16+)	62	0.06	1,243	0.09																																															
	Separated (but is still legally married or still legally in a same sex civil partnership) (Aged 16+)	3,369	3.16	56,911	3.98																																															
	Divorced or formerly in a same sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved (Aged 16+)	4,139	3.88	78,074	5.45																																															
	Widowed or surviving partner from a same sex civil partnership (Aged 16+)	6,523	6.12	97,088	6.78																																															
Sexual orientation	No specific statistics are available from the 2011 government census for this category. However, Office for National Statistics (ONS) statistics, based on Integrated Household survey for 2017, estimate 4.2% as being Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual. Due to the nature of ‘disclosure’ in this area, and the fact that 6.8% in the ONS 2017 survey do not identify as heterosexual, umbrella organisations suggest that the figure may be closer to 10%.																																																			
	<table><tr><th>Region</th><th>Heterosexual / Straight</th><th>Gay/ Lesbian</th><th>Bisexual</th><th>Gay/ Lesbian/ Bisexual</th><th>Other</th><th>Don't know /refuse</th><th>No response</th></tr><tr><td>England</td><td>92.54%</td><td>1.10%</td><td>0.51%</td><td>1.61%</td><td>0.33%</td><td>4.07%</td><td>1.45%</td></tr><tr><td>Wales</td><td>93.93%</td><td>1.04%</td><td>0.48%</td><td>1.52%</td><td>0.45%</td><td>2.99%</td><td>1.11%</td></tr><tr><td>Scotland</td><td>94.65%</td><td>0.82%</td><td>0.33%</td><td>1.14%</td><td>0.26%</td><td>2.59%</td><td>1.37%</td></tr><tr><td>N Ireland</td><td>93.00%</td><td>0.64%</td><td>0.96%</td><td>1.60%</td><td>0.26%</td><td>3.98%</td><td>1.17%</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>92.80%</td><td>1.06%</td><td>0.51%</td><td>1.57%</td><td>0.32%</td><td>3.89%</td><td>1.42%</td></tr></table>					Region	Heterosexual / Straight	Gay/ Lesbian	Bisexual	Gay/ Lesbian/ Bisexual	Other	Don't know /refuse	No response	England	92.54%	1.10%	0.51%	1.61%	0.33%	4.07%	1.45%	Wales	93.93%	1.04%	0.48%	1.52%	0.45%	2.99%	1.11%	Scotland	94.65%	0.82%	0.33%	1.14%	0.26%	2.59%	1.37%	N Ireland	93.00%	0.64%	0.96%	1.60%	0.26%	3.98%	1.17%	Total	92.80%	1.06%	0.51%	1.57%	0.32%	3.89%
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Total	92.80%	1.06%	0.51%	1.57%	0.32%	3.89%	1.42%																																													
	Research conducted by the HM Treasury suggests that between 5%-7% of the UK population identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or ‘trans’ (transsexual, transgender and transvestite) (LGBT). Some surveys have found that almost 50% of young people identified as ‘other than heterosexual’. It is reasonable to assume that MUDC will have a % of citizens who are LGB, although research and feedback from support groups (eg, The Rainbow Project, Cara-Friend and HereNI) suggests that LGB and T people experience significant difficulties living in rural areas and some may move to densely populated towns and cities where they can be more anonymous.																																																			

	<p>There are three main regional LGB&amp;T support groups in Northern Ireland, two of which have a presence in MUDC area. These groups can be contacted for specific guidance in relation to consulting with LGB&amp;T people, including young people.</p> <p>The Rainbow Project has produced research reports on the experiences of LGB&amp;T people in Northern Ireland including the particular experiences of LGB&amp;T people in rural areas.</p>																				
Men & women generally	<p>The gender profile of Mid Ulster LGD is detailed as:</p> <table><tr><th></th><th colspan="2">Mid Ulster</th><th colspan="2">Northern Ireland</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>No.</th><th>%</th><th>No.</th><th>%</th></tr><tr><td>Male</td><td>69,362</td><td>50.05</td><td>887,323</td><td>49.00</td></tr><tr><td>Female</td><td>69,228</td><td>49.95</td><td>923,540</td><td>51.00</td></tr></table> <p>There are well established Women’s Groups in Mid Ulster district – First Steps Women’s Centre in Dungannon, Cookstown &amp; District Women’s Group and Magherafelt Women’s Group. There are also numerous smaller groups in villages and rural areas. The NI Rural Women’s Network is based in the district (Dungannon) and has a regional remit for rural issues that impact on women specifically. There are business and professional women’s organisations such as Women in Business and Business &amp; Professional Women. Some churches have women’s committees.</p> <p>There is no umbrella organisation in the area representing men’s interests but there is the Men’s Project which is regional and a number of areas, including Pomeroy, Cookstown &amp; Ballinascreen, have Men’s Shed initiatives. Organisations such as Rotary Clubs still attract mainly men and can be perceived to be men’s clubs.</p> <p>Northern Ireland has an increasingly visible minority population who identify as trans or non-binary. Numbers are difficult to assess but an increasing number of young people are referred to the Gender Identity Clinic each year and many employers and service providers are finding themselves dealing with trans people who have found it easier to ‘come out’ in recent years. It is reasonable to assume that MUDC area will have at least some citizens who identify as Trans. There is no local Trans support group but regional groups such as SAILNI, GenderJam and Focus: the Identity Trust operate across Northern Ireland and much information and support is provided online and via social media channels. The Government Equalities office and Cabinet Office has carried out surveys on the needs and experiences of LGB and Trans people and the Cabinet Office has produced good practice guidance on supporting Trans employees at work. The Department of Education has published surveys which explore the experiences of young LGB and T people in schools in Northern Ireland. The Education Authority has produced guidelines for dealing with transgender pupils in schools (Oct 2019).</p>		Mid Ulster		Northern Ireland			No.	%	No.	%	Male	69,362	50.05	887,323	49.00	Female	69,228	49.95	923,540	51.00
	Mid Ulster		Northern Ireland																		
	No.	%	No.	%																	
Male	69,362	50.05	887,323	49.00																	
Female	69,228	49.95	923,540	51.00																	
Disability	<p>According to the 2011 NISRA census statistics, 19.39% of people in the MUDC area declared a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities while 80.61% stated their general health was either good or very good</p>																				

		Mid Ulster		Northern Ireland	
		No.	%	No.	%
	Disability / long term health	26,870	19.39	374,646	20.69
	No disability / long term health problem	111,720	80.61	1,436,217	79.31
	In Northern Ireland the profile of persons with a disability has been reported by Disability Action as:				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More than 1 in 5 or 21% of the population have a disability</li><li>• 1 in 7 people have some form of hearing loss</li><li>• Approximately 5,000 persons use sign language - British Sign Language and/or Irish Sign Language</li><li>• There are 57,000 blind persons or persons with significant impairment</li><li>• 52,000 persons with learning difficulties.</li></ul>				
	MUDC supports the Mid Ulster Disability Forum, which includes individuals who are disabled and representatives of a range of disability support organisations. The Forum can be used as a first point of contact for consulting on disability-related issues and can signpost to others as necessary. There are many individual charities and support groups for different kinds of health conditions and disabilities. Some of these have a regional remit and have a local office in the district but others are locally based only.				
	The regional umbrella body Disability Action has produced research reports on a wide range of issues that affect disabled people.				
Dependants	Persons with dependants may have personal responsibility for the care of a child (or children), a person with a disability, and/ or a dependent older person. The table below provides a summary with respect to Mid Ulster LGD.				
		Mid Ulster		Northern Ireland	
		No.	%	No.	%
	Households with dependent children	18,626	38.99	238,094	33.86
	Lone parent households with dependents	3,485	7.30	63,921	9.09
People providing unpaid care	12,821	10.69	231,980	11.82	
	Of the households in Mid Ulster Local Government District with dependent children, they can be summarised as;				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 7,407 families in households have 1 dependent child</li><li>• 6,394 families in households with two dependent children</li><li>• 5,014 families in households with three dependent children</li></ul>				
	There are 37,306 dependent children within families.				
	For details of support groups for carers, see consultee list. The main carers' support organisation in N Ireland, Carers' NI, has a regional remit.				

	The MU Disability Forum includes members who can represent the interests of carers of disabled dependants. Age support organisations and women's groups are also useful consultees for carer-related issues.
--	--

### **Needs, experiences and priorities**

Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular policy/decision? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories

<b>Section 75 category</b>	<b>Details of needs/experiences/priorities</b>
Religious belief	<p>While all categories should be consulted about Council policies and projects, it may be necessary to make specific efforts to engage with people from a Protestant community background. Research shows that they tend to be less supportive of equality legislation generally. While it is relatively easy to obtain views from groups which represent different religions and the main churches, it is less easy to reach individuals and those who are not affiliated to a particular organised religion. Minority religions who may not have English as a first language may face double disadvantage and pose a particular challenge when it comes to inclusive consultation.</p> <p>If organising public consultation events, location is important to ensure that different religious communities will feel comfortable to attend.</p>
Political opinion	<p>Past experience suggests that some people from a Unionist community background feel that their views are not taken into account fully as MUDC is a nationalist controlled council. This means that additional efforts may be required to encourage feedback and participation in consultations. As above, location is an important consideration when organising consultation events.</p>
Racial group	<p>While it is relatively easy to make contact with BME support groups, many of these groups are voluntary or do not have adequate resources to enable them to engage with public bodies. Also, not every BME resident is part of, or represented by, a group. It is a challenge to reach BME people in the district as individuals, with language skills being a particular barrier. Those who are newly arrived in the district will face difficulties in learning about and accessing Council services that most residents take for granted. Information about consultations may need to be translated and interpreters made available for consultation events.</p>



	Some newcomer residents may be reticent about engaging with public authorities, even when those authorities exist to provide services or help them.
Age	<p>MUDC has an ageing population. Some older people can be hard to reach so effort may be needed to ensure that a range of consultation methods are used to meet their needs. For example, if social media is used to publicise a consultation, older people may be less likely to pick it up. Information needs to be understandable, particularly if the consultation is on something that affects older people specifically.</p> <p>Children and young people require specific targeting, especially on matters that directly impact them. This requires information to be user-friendly and understandable and response methods to reflect how children/young people like to communicate.</p>
Marital status	There is no information to suggest that this specific policy will have a significantly differential impact according to marital status. However, those who organise consultation events need to be aware that those who are single parents may have more limited opportunity to attend consultation events.
Sexual orientation	All consultations need to consider whether there is a potential hidden impact on people who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual. LGB people need to know that their views are encouraged and welcome but they may not always want to publicise their identity. Consideration should therefore be given to opportunities for providing feedback and views anonymously.
Men and women generally	<p>Women are still under-represented on Councils and on most decision-making bodies. This may lead to a lack of focus in policy making on the issues that affect women disproportionately. Research suggests that women and men may prioritise different things when it comes to public services/expenditure so it is important that both perspectives are considered when making decisions about how resources are allocated and services delivered.</p> <p>The different situations of male and female need to be taken into account when running consultation events. For example, men may be less likely to be able to attend during the day and women who are parents or carers may face difficulties attending events in the evenings. Males and females may be inclined to take an interest in different issues which can lead to unrepresentative responses from consultation. Care needs to be taken to ensure balance in any feedback obtained. Trans people may not wish to identify publicly as Trans although they</p>

	<p>may be keen to convey wishes or needs so mechanisms to protect their identity may be required.</p> <p>Any analysis of who responded to Council consultations?</p>
Disability	<p>People with disabilities can face barriers not experienced by non-disabled people including finding out about consultations and in accessing the methods used to consult. A range of consultation methods and response options is necessary to ensure that disabled people are genuinely able to participate and give their views. Council needs to be aware that disabled people are not one homogeneous group and their needs may be very different, depending on the particular disability. Many disabled people will not be able to access consultations independently so will depend on carers or professionals to represent their views and interests.</p>
Dependants	<p>As above, people with caring responsibilities, for children, disabled family members or older people, tend to have little time to respond to consultations, even when it is about things that matter to them. Providing a range of options for responses/feedback will help ensure they can participate. Keeping consultation questionnaires brief and user-friendly can increase response rates. People who are carers may not be able to attend consultation events due to their caring responsibilities and consideration needs to be given to how to reach them in other ways.</p>

## Section 2 – Screening Questions

In making a decision as to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA), the Council should consider its answers to the questions 1- 3 detailed below.

If the Council's conclusion is **none** in respect of all of the Section 75 equality of opportunity categories, then the Council may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is 'screened out' as having no relevance to equality of opportunity, the Council should give details of the reasons for the decision taken.

If the Council's conclusion is **major** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality of opportunity, then consideration should be given to subjecting the policy to the equality impact assessment procedure.

If the Council's conclusion is **minor** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality categories, then consideration should still be given to proceeding with an equality impact assessment, or to:

- measures to mitigate the adverse impact; or
- the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity.

### **In favour of a 'major' impact**

- a) The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
- b) Potential equality impacts are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;
- c) Potential equality impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;
- d) Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns amongst affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;
- e) The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
- f) The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

### **In favour of 'minor' impact**

- a) The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
- b) The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;
- c) Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
- d) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity.

### **In favour of none**

- a) The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity.
- b) The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity for people within the equality categories.

## **Screening questions**

<b>1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories (minor/ major/ none)</b>
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Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? minor/major/none
Religious belief	Provided consultation exercises are inclusive, all religious beliefs (and those with none) should be catered for. The policy will allow staff to undertake flexible, targeted consultation with specific groups if there is evidence that they have a particular need, are under-represented or likely to be more impacted in relation to the issue/project being consulted on. The policy will also encourage consultation where there is no or limited information/evidence.	Minor - positive
Political opinion	As above, all political opinions and none should be catered for in consultation exercises. The policy will allow for flexible and targeted consultation if it is necessary for an under-represented or unengaged group.	Minor - positive
Racial group	Consultation should ensure that the needs of different BME communities are taken into account.	Minor - positive
Age	Appropriate consultation should ensure that the needs of people of different ages are taken into account.	Minor - positive
Marital status	There is no evidence that this policy will impact differently according to marital status.	None anticipated
Sexual orientation	Appropriate consultation has the potential to impact if the issue being consulted on is particularly relevant. Over time, more information should become available about emerging issues for LGB people	Minor - positive
Men and women generally	Good consultation that recognises that policies can impact very differently on men and women have the potential to identify gaps and issues for both sexes. Considering the particular needs of people who identify as Trans or other	Minor - positive

	will help ensure that this small minority feel more included.	
Disability	The lives of people who are disabled can be transformed when their particular needs are identified and addressed in policy making. These needs can only be identified through appropriate consultation. Small changes to policies and practices can have far reaching benefits for disabled people and their families/carers.	Significant - positive
Dependants	Good consultation can help identify areas where policies or practices impact negatively on carers.	Minor - positive

**2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within Section 75 equality categories? (Yes/ No)**

Section 75 category	If <b>Yes</b> , provide details	If <b>No</b> , provide reasons
Religious belief	The language used in consultation documents can be explicit about the need/benefit for balanced feedback from people of different religions. Council can take specific steps to identify groups who may be unengaged or disengaged.	
Political opinion	As above. Consultation, even if it is about a potentially contentious issue, can provide a vehicle for constructive discussion and debate.	
Racial group	Consulting minority ethnic communities can help promote inclusion and a feeling of being valued. Consultation exercises can provide useful opportunities to explain and promote council facilities	

	or services and encourage take-up or participation.	
Age	Responding to feedback from people of different ages should ensure that services are delivered in a way that meets the needs of different age groups.	
Marital status	No obvious evidence of how a policy on consultation can better promote equality.	
Sexual orientation	Targeting people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual through consultation sends out a clear message that Council is interested in ensuring equality of opportunity.	
Men and women generally	Consulting throughout the policy development process will ensure that issues that may not be obvious to Council staff are brought to the fore. Many policies and practices impact differently on men and women and this will only be identified through feedback from consultation.	
Disability	Council supports the Mid Ulster Disability Forum and uses the Forum as a first point of contact for consulting with disabled people. There is evidence that involving the Forum at an early stage in projects and policy development pays dividends. While the Forum is an important consultee, however, it is important that Council takes steps to consult with individual disabled people as no one group can speak on behalf of all disabled people or represent all disabilities.	

Dependants	Consulting on the needs of people with dependants will ensure that their needs and issues are taken into account.	
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**3. Are there opportunities without prejudice, to the equality of opportunity duty, to better promote good relations between Section 75 equality categories, through tackling prejudice and/ or promoting understanding? (Yes/ No)**

	No	
	Yes	x

If yes, please detail the opportunities below:

Officers have determined 'yes' but have also determined that it is not considered necessary to refer this policy to the Good Relations Working Group as it applies to all Section 75 categories and is not specific to good relations. In summary opportunities for explanatory purposes extend to:

- Consultation exercises can include messages of inclusion and be explicit in addressing issues of under-representation or contention. [similar to welcoming statements used in recruitment for jobs, etc]
- Providing opportunities for constructive dialogue and debate can help promote good relations.
- Groups who are currently unengaged or disengaged may respond more positively if they know that their views are being valued and taken into account.
- Depending on the issue/project etc that is being consulted on, Council may be able to run a consultation event that itself will promote good relations by bringing people together on an issue that is of mutual interest. Likewise, by publicising the outcome of consultation, Council can highlight areas of agreement as opposed to disagreement.

If yes is concluded to Question 3, then the policy will be referred to the Council's Good Relations Working Group for consideration. The Group will consider the potential opportunities and assess if and how the overall impact of a decision/policy can better promote good relations.

### **Additional Considerations - Multiple identity**

Generally speaking, people can fall into more than one Section 75 category. Taking this into consideration, are there any potential impacts of the policy/decision on people with multiple identities? (*For example; disabled minority*)

*ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people).*

Good quality consultation should lead to the identification of multiple identity impacts and feedback which can be shared and taken account of and inform other work/policies.

Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

### Section 3 – Screening Decision

In light of answers provided to the questions within Section 3 select one of the following with regards the policy:

		Select One
1	Shall not be subject to an EQIA - <i>with no mitigating measures required</i>	X
2	Shall not be subject to an EQIA - <i>mitigating measures/ alternative policies introduced</i>	
3	Shall be subject to an EQIA	

If 1 or 2 above (i.e. not to be subject to an EQIA) please provide details of reasons why.

This screening analysis has identified some ways in which all Section 75 categories will benefit from quality consultation and no adverse impacts have been identified.

It is therefore not considered necessary to do an equality impact assessment on the policy at this time. However, it will be kept under review and if evidence arises that there are differential impacts or it is not working effectively, a further assessment can be made.



If 2 above (i.e. not to subject to an EQIA) in what ways can adverse impacts attaching to the policy be mitigated or an alternative policy be introduced.

If 3 above (i.e. shall be subject to an EQIA), please provide details of the reasons.

## Mitigation

When it is concluded that the likely impact is 'minor' and an equality impact assessment is not to be conducted, you may consider mitigation to lessen the severity of any equality impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity.

Can the policy/decision be amended or changed or an alternative policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity?

If so, give the **reasons** to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative policy:

N/A

## Timetabling and prioritising N/A

If the policy has been screened in for equality impact assessment, please answer the below to determine its priority for timetabling the equality impact assessment.

- **On a scale of 1-3 (1 being lowest priority and 3 being highest), assess the policy in terms of its priority for equality impact assessment.**

Priority criterion	Rating (1-3)
Effect on equality of opportunity	
Social need	
Effect on people's daily lives	
Relevance to a Council's functions	

Note: The Total Rating Score should be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for equality impact assessment. This list of priorities will assist the Council in timetabling. Details of the Council's Equality Impact Assessment Timetable should be included in the Screening Reports.

- **Is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities?**

Yes	
No	

## Section 5 – Monitoring

Effective monitoring will help identify any future adverse impact arising from the policy which may lead the Council to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and policy development. Please detail proposed monitoring arrangements below:

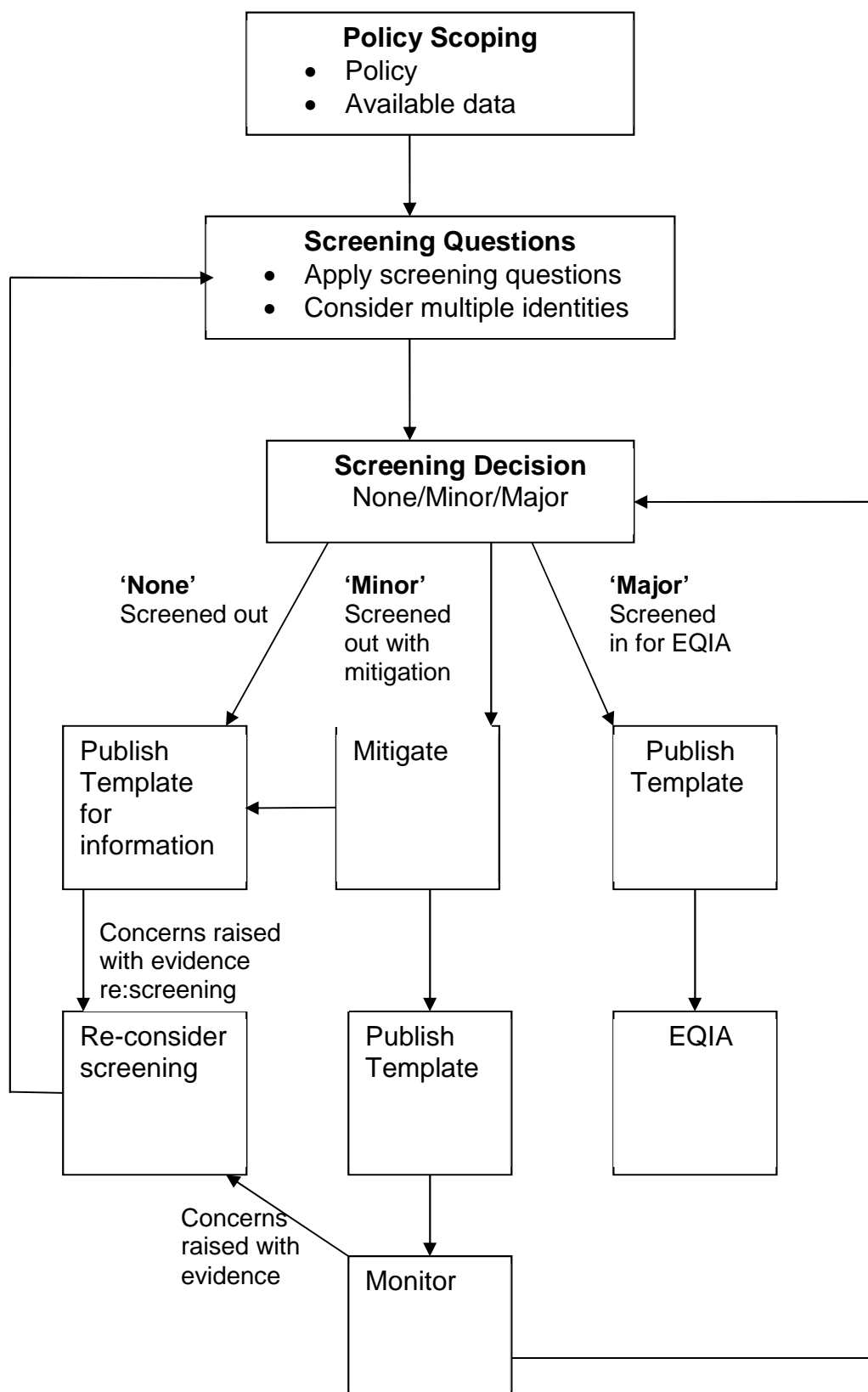
The council's corporate policy and equality officer will work towards monitoring, where practicable, of Council consultation exercises and provide guidance to ensure that appropriate, measured and quality consultation is undertaken. Council guidance will require that each consultation exercise is evaluated and lessons learned. Departments will be asked to share feedback from monitoring so that it can be used by others to inform their policy development and service delivery.

Consideration will be given to how best to communicate the outcome of consultation exercises with consultees and encourage feedback on the process.

## Section 6 – Approval and authorisation

Screened by:	Position/ Job Title	Date
Mary McSorley	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	20/9/2019
Approved by:	Position/ Job Title	Date
Philip Moffett	Head of Democratic Services	24/01/2019

**Note:** A copy of the Screening Template, for each policy screened should be 'signed off' and approved by a senior manager responsible for the policy; made easily accessible on the council website as soon as possible following completion and be available on request.



## Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA)

### SECTION 1 - Defining the activity subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

#### 1A. Name of Public Authority.

Mid Ulster District Council

#### 1B. Please provide a short title which describes the activity being undertaken by the Public Authority that is subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

Developing a new policy and guidance on consultation.

The policy is in response to an audit recommendation that guidance is provided to staff who are required to consult with service users and affected individuals when they are developing policies or making decisions.

#### 1C. Please indicate which category the activity specified in Section 1B above relates to.

Developing a	Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Adopting a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Implementing a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Revising a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Designing a Public Service	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Delivering a Public Service	<input type="checkbox"/>		

#### 1D. Please provide the official title (if any) of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service document or initiative relating to the category indicated in Section 1C above.

Policy and Guidance on Consultation

#### 1E. Please provide details of the aims and/or objectives of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that MUDC carries out effective and appropriate consultation that enables the public, or sections of the public, to have a say in how we design and deliver services that impact on them.

**1F. What definition of 'rural' is the Public Authority using in respect of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?**

Population Settlements of less than 5,000 (Default definition).

☒

Other Definition (Provide details and the rationale below).

☐

A definition of 'rural' is not applicable.

☐

*Details of alternative definition of 'rural' used.*

N/A

*Rationale for using alternative definition of 'rural'.*

N/A

*Reasons why a definition of 'rural' is not applicable.*

N/A

## SECTION 2 - Understanding the impact of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

**2A. Is the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service likely to impact on people in rural areas?**

Yes ☒ No ☐ If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **2E**.

**2B. Please explain how the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas.**

Council's policy on consultation applies to everyone in the MUDC District which is a predominantly rural community. Using the DAERA definition of "rural" as settlements with a population of less than 5,000 and open countryside, the majority of ratepayers (70%) live in rural areas. Only four settlements in the District are classed as small towns, with a population of more than 5,000 (Census 2011) – Dungannon, Cookstown, Magherafelt and Coalisland.

The policy is intended to better meet the needs of all those who will be targeted for consultation and should impact positively on people in rural areas as well as other hard to reach groups.

**2C. If the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently from people in urban areas, please explain how it is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently.**

Council recognises that people who live in rural areas may not find it as easy as town dwellers to access information about consultations or to attend consultation events. The policy requires staff to consider the needs of hard to reach groups when carrying out consultations and to employ a range of communication methods to ensure that all categories are reached. For example, if only online methods are used, some rural dwellers who do not have access to Broadband or good download speeds will be at a disadvantage. If consultation events are only held in central town locations, rural residents may find it more difficult to participate.

**2D. Please indicate which of the following rural policy areas the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to primarily impact on.**

Rural Businesses

☐

Rural Tourism

☐

Rural Housing

☐

Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas

☐

Education or Training in Rural Areas

☐

Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas

☐

Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas

☐

Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas

☐

Poverty in Rural Areas

☐

Deprivation in Rural Areas

☐

Rural Crime or Community Safety

☐

Rural Development

☐

Agri-Environment

☐

Other (Please state)

Access to Council services for rural dwellers

**If the response to Section 2A was YES GO TO Section 3A.**

**2E. Please explain why the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is NOT likely to impact on people in rural areas.**



## SECTION 3 - Identifying the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

**3A. Has the Public Authority taken steps to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas that are relevant to the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?**

Yes ☒ No ☐ If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **3E**.

**3B. Please indicate which of the following methods or information sources were used by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.**

Consultation with Rural Stakeholders	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Published Statistics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consultation with Other Organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Research Papers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Surveys or Questionnaires	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Publications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Methods or Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below).			<input type="checkbox"/>

**3C. Please provide details of the methods and information sources used to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas including relevant dates, names of organisations, titles of publications, website references, details of surveys or consultations undertaken etc.**

Meeting with Rural Community Network – July 2019

RCN website – [www.ruralcommunitynetwork.org](http://www.ruralcommunitynetwork.org) - research reports and policy papers

Meeting with NI Rural Women's Network (NIRWN) – August 2019

NIRWN website – [www.nirwn.org](http://www.nirwn.org) - policy papers and research, eg, Rural Voices report (March 2018)

Council publications and reports, for example, Rural Needs Impact Assessment of Local Development Plan 2030 – Draft Plan Strategy (Feb 2019)

Audit of Inequalities

NISRA population statistics and NINIS data

**3D. Please provide details of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas which have been identified by the Public Authority?**

Mid Ulster Council is a predominantly rural district with only 4 settlements having more than 5,000 residents. The main needs identified are:

Issues re proximity to key services (eg, Council offices, health, education, banking, retail, leisure)

Access to transport, especially for older people, disabled people, women and young people  
Journey times to key towns – the District covers a wide geographic area

Access to Broadband and mobile signal; and, where available, poorer download speeds

Access to jobs within a reasonable travelling distance

Access to childcare to support people who want to work or set up a business – particular issue for women. Inadequate provision in rural areas, high cost of childcare and services not flexible to meet the needs of people who have to work outside standard 9-5, Mon-Fri pattern.

Support for business and enterprise

Affordable housing in rural areas, eg, near relatives or where people have grown up

Particular issues for farm families, re income

Rural poverty – evidence that there is more poverty in rural areas, including fuel poverty

Social isolation is an issue for many people in rural areas – can be worse for older people, those who live on their own, women, carers, those with disabilities and people on low incomes.

**If the response to Section 3A was YES GO TO Section 4A.**

**3E. Please explain why no steps were taken by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas?**

N/A

## **SECTION 4 - Considering the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas**

### **4A. Please provide details of the issues considered in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.**

When considering consultation, MUDC staff must take into account how people in more rural areas will access information and respond. This requires consideration of communication methods and location and timing of consultation events.

For example, if a consultation requires attendance at an event, this will present more challenge to those who live in rural areas. The challenge will be compounded for certain groups such as women, older people, young people, disabled people, those who are socially and economically disadvantaged or isolated, and those who do not have access to independent means of transport. Alternative ways to encourage participation and feedback will include running events in rural areas, getting local community groups to engage in their area, etc.

Council's Consultation policy and guidance will recommend a varied range of consultation techniques to ensure that barriers are addressed.

Consultation guidance will suggest that staff should not rely solely on online communication which may pose problems for people in rural areas who do not have Broadband, good download speed, mobile signal, etc.

Even within areas that are defined as 'rural' because of location and population density, there will be very different needs and experiences which must be identified and taken into account. A policy may have a very different impact in two villages or small towns which, although of a similar size, have a different demographic.

## SECTION 5 - Influencing the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

**5A. Has the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, been influenced by the rural needs identified?**

Yes ☒ No ☐ If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **5C**.

**5B. Please explain how the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, has been influenced by the rural needs identified.**

The need to facilitate participation of people in rural communities has been taken into account in the Council's consultation policy and guidance which will be communicated to all staff.

The guidance prompts staff to consider how they run their consultations to ensure that they are accessible to, and inclusive of, people in rural areas.

The consultation guidance that is linked to the policy also requires staff to monitor and report on the outcome of consultation exercises so that they know whether responses are representative of the wider community, including those in more rural areas.

If the response to Section **5A** was **YES** GO TO Section **6A**.

**5C. Please explain why the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or the delivery of the Public Service, has NOT been influenced by the rural needs identified.**

N/A

## SECTION 6 - Documenting and Recording

**6A. Please tick below to confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained by the Public Authority and relevant information on the Section 1 activity compiled in accordance with paragraph 6.7 of the guidance.**

I confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained and relevant information compiled.

☒

<b>Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:</b>	Mary McSorley
<b>Position/Grade:</b>	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer
<b>Division/Branch</b>	Democratic Services
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	20 September 2019
<b>Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:</b>	Philip Moffett
<b>Position/Grade:</b>	Head of Service
<b>Division/Branch:</b>	Democratic Services, Chief Executive's Office
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	24 January 2019