A

Minutes of Meeting of Policy and Resources Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 3 September 2015 in the Council Offices, Burn Road, Cookstown

Members Present	Councillor McGuigan, Chair
	Councillors Ashton, Bateson, Buchanan, Cuddy, Elattar, Forde, Gildernew, Mallaghan, McKinney, McLean, Molloy, M Quinn, T Quinn and Totten
Officers in Attendance	Mr A Tohill, Chief Executive
	Mrs Canavan, Lead Human Resources Officer
	Ms Mezza, Head of Marketing Communications
	Mr Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
	Mr O'Hagan, Head of ICT
	Mr J Tohill, Lead Officer for Finance
	Mrs Forde, Member Support Officer

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm.

PR121/15   Apologies

Apology received for Councillor McPeake

PR122/15   Declaration of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of their responsibility with regard to declarations of interest.

PR123/15   Receive and confirm minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee held on Thursday 9 July 2015

Proposed by Councillor Forde
Seconded by Councillor T Quinn and

 Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on Thursday 9 July 2015 (PR105/15 – PR111/15 and PR120/15) were considered and signed as accurate and correct

Matters for Decision

PR124/15   Performance Improvement

The Chief Executive presented the previously circulated report in relation to Continuous Improvement & Performance Arrangements drawing Members attention to the background of the requirement and highlighting the identified improvement objective as undernoted:

"To enhance Council services by adopting a standardised approach to delivery across Mid Ulster"

Continuing the Chief Executive advised that the Directors and Heads of Service had listed objectives as to how this could be achieved, that progress was being monitored and a progress report would be presented at a future Committee meeting. He stated that as Council was still in a transition period the aforementioned objective was deemed to be the most appropriate and sought Members views.

In response to Councillor Cuddy's query the Chief Executive assured Members that the Senior Management team ethos was to determine how objectives were best achieved, as Heads of Service had been recruited from across the three legacy councils there were a range of ideas and that moving forward reports would be comprehensive to highlight improvements but emphasised they would be understandable.

> Proposed by Councillor McLean
> Seconded by Councillor Bateson and

Resolved   That it be recommended to Council to approve the 2015-2016 Corporate Improvement Plan and Improvement Objective to 'enhance Council services by adopting a standardised approach to delivery across Mid Ulster'"

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PR125/15   **Mid Ulster District Council Policy Statement on Employer Discretions under the Local Government Pension Scheme (NI) 2014 Regulations and other related Regulations**

The Lead HR Officer presented the previously circulated report on Mid Ulster District Council Policy Statement on Employer Discretions under the Local Government Pension Scheme (NI) 2014 Regulations and other related Regulations highlighting that whilst compiling the policy she had worked with NILGOSC and other councils. Stating that the updated policy was required to permit for example flexible retirements as NILGOSC would not accept the policies of the legacy Councils the Lead HR Officer sought approval to adopt the policy.

Councillor Ashton asked if staff were coming forward for flexible retirement. Responding the Lead HR Officer confirmed that one staff member had requested consideration under the scheme and as NILGOSC required a Mid Ulster District Council policy this was why the policy was expedited but it would be kept under review noting that pension regulations had changed in recent times.

Councillor Cuddy referring to the 'black hole in pensions' that had been referred to in former times queried if there was a cost to Council. Responding the Lead HR Officer advised that a business case would come to Council for any request, that Council pensions had run at a deficit for the past 5-7 years and moving forward pension schemes would not be as generous and terms and conditions of entitlement were different for those embarking on the scheme now as opposed to a decade ago.

The Lead Officer for Finance assured Members that as the pension scheme was NILGOSC run the 'black hole' was a result of stock and share investment and thus out of Council's control. Speaking on the legislation the Lead Officer for Finance stated

that it was relevant to the pension scheme, that there would be costs but these would only be in exceptional circumstances and be presented to Council as a business case for consideration.

In response to Councillor Bateson's enquiry regarding consultation with Trade Unions on the policy the Lead HR Officer advised that the Trade Unions had received the draft and had raised no issues.

Proposed by Councillor McLean
Seconded by Councillor Buchanan and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council the Mid Ulster District Council Policy Statement on Employer Discretions under the Local Government Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) 2014 Regulations and other related Regulations be approved to take effect from 1 April 2015

PR126/15 Photographic Policy

The Head of Marketing Communications presented the previously circulated report on the introduction of a photographic policy and sought Members approval for adoption of same advising that upon adoption appropriate documentation would be implemented.

In response to Councillor Gildernew in relation to photographs being taken at functions the Head of Marketing Communications confirmed that either press are invited to a function or a photographer is commissioned and stated the policy being considered was for all images being taken of people in Council facilities, during Council run activities/events and for use by the Council in printed material, filmed material and on-line. In response to Councillor Molloy's query regarding open spaces the Head of Marketing Communications advised that people may take their own photographs but staff at all times should be vigilant.

Proposed by Councillor Bateson
Seconded by Councillor M Quinn

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council that the photographic policy be adopted
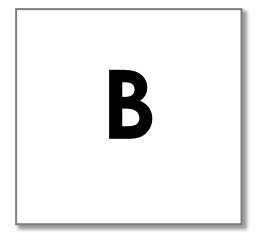
Confidential Business

Resolved That items (PR127– PR131/15) be taken as confidential business.

PR132 /15 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7.00 pm and ended at 8.05pm

Chair _____

Date _____

B

Subject	UN Association for Northern Ireland – Correspondence
Reporting Officer	Philip Moffett, Head of Democratic Services

1	**Purpose of Report**
1.1	To determine if the Council wishes to take part in an event within the Council area to mark the 70th Anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

2	**Background**
2.1	The United Nations Association (UNA) of Northern Ireland has corresponded with the Council to ask it to participate in an event to mark the foundation of the United Nations which took place on 24 October 1945.
2.2.	They have proposed that this event take the form of a meeting, photo-call or a reception within one of Council offices and involve representatives from a local school and UNA-NI members at which the Council would be presented with a commemorative copy of the UN Charter.

3	**Key Issues**
3.1	Consideration should be given on whether or not Council should participate and the direction provided on what form the occasion should be to mark the anniversary within either of our Council's offices.
3.2	The UNA-NI has indicated that they are in the process of contacting a local school.

4	**Resources**
4.1	**Financial** – To be established, subject to committee consideration of the request
4.2	**Human** - N/A
4.3	**Basis for Professional/ Consultancy Support -** N/A
4.4	**Other** - N/A

5	**Other Considerations**
5.1	Not applicable

6	**Recommendations**
6.1	That consideration is given to the request made to facilitate marking the anniversary of the United Nations being established.

7	**List of Documents Attached**
7.1	Appendix A Letter from UNA Northern Ireland

Mr Anthony Tohill
Chief Executive
Mid Ulster Council

22 July 2015

Dear Mr Tohill

We would like to invite you to join us in marking the 70th anniversary year of the founding of the United Nations (UN) organisation, starting from 24 October 2015.

The United Nations Association of Northern Ireland (UNA-NI), a branch and region of UNA-UK, is a non-governmental, voluntary organisation. We exist to encourage public and governmental support for the goals of the UN, to seek a safer, fairer and more sustainable world.

We are in the process of contacting a local school in your area and would request that representatives from that school, along with local UNA-NI members, could be present at a reception or meeting or photo call in the Council Office, at which you would be presented with a commemorative copy of the UN Charter for your Council.

The UN Charter declared that 'We the Peoples of the United Nations determined:
- to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind and
- to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and
- to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and
- to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.'

We hope that you will consider participating in this historic year and we will give you more information, if required. You may be interested to know that we also hope to document local reaction to the implementation of the UN Charter on 24 October 1945, through seeking accounts, memories and photographs. We have asked local newspaper editors to carry our request for help in creating such an archive by inviting their readers to contact UNA-NI through our email address: unassocni@gmail.com.
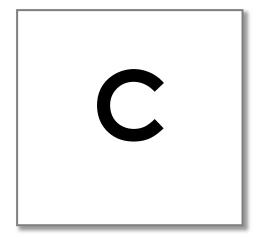
Yours sincerely

Carol Conlin   Judith Fawcett
Hon. Secretary UNA-NI   Chairperson UNA-NI

Tel. 028 37522070   Tel: 028 90665063

C

Subject	Member Networks Representation - NILGA
Reporting Officer	Philip Moffett, Head of Democratic Services

1	**Purpose of Report**
1.1	To consider and agree nominations/ representation from Council to two Member Networks being established by the NI Local Government Association (NILGA).

2	**Background**
2.1	The NI Local Government Association (NILGA) has corresponded with the Chief Executive confirming that a series of Working Groups have been established to discuss sectoral issues at a regional level. The working Groups include: • Community Planning & Wellbeing • Economic Development & Investment • Planning & Regeneration • Workforce, Employment & member Development • Rural development • Regional Improvement & Partnerships • Audit & Organisational Sustainability • Strategic Migration Partnership
2.2.	Details on and membership of each of the Working Groups can be reviewed in Appendix A to this report.
2.3	The Member Networks for which nominations are being sought are intended to closely support the Community Planning & Wellbeing and Planning & Regeneration Working Groups as listed above and contained within Appendix A.

3	**Key Issues**
3.1	Those representing Mid Ulster District Council on each of the Members Networks will be requested to attend 2 to 4 meetings per year and become a point of contact between NILGA and the council on such matters. One representative per Member Network is being sought from the Council.
3.2	In general, the Member Networks are being tasked to: • Identify regional member development requirements • Act as a mechanism for sharing good practice • Identify issues of concern requiring regional lobbying
3.3	The committee may wish to give consideration as to whether nominations be drawn from the membership of the Policy & Resources Committee or another committee of Council. Others considered relevant include Development Committee and Planning Committee.

3.4	Representatives on the member networks do not have to be drawn from the NILGA membership already provided by the Council.

4	**Resources**
4.1	**Financial** – N/A
4.2	**Human** - N/A
4.3	**Basis for Professional/ Consultancy Support** - N/A
4.4	**Other** - N/A

5	**Other Considerations**
5.1	Not applicable

6	**Recommendations**
6.1	That consideration is given to the appointment of a representative to the Community Planning & Well Being Member Network and a representative to the Planning & Regeneration Member Network.

7	**List of Documents Attached**
7.1	Appendix A NILGA Working Groups - Key Objectives

NILGA Working Groups – Key Objectives

Name	COMMUNITY PLANNING & WELLBEING	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT
Chair	Cllr Philip Brett (Antrim &Newtownabbey)	Ald Freda Donnelly (Armagh Banbridge & Craigavon)
Vice Chair	Cllr Martin Kearney (Mid Ulster)	Cllr Dermot Nicholl (Causeway Coast & Glens) Sub – Cllr Charlie Casey (Newry, Mourne & Down)
Members	Cllr Patrice Hardy (Mid & East Antrim) Sub – Cllr Michael Goodman (Antrim &Newtownabbey) Cllr Michael Henderson (Lisburn & Castlereagh) Sub – Cllr Joan Baird (Causeway Coast & Glens) Cllr John Blair (Antrim & Newtownabbey) Sub – Ald Deborah Girvan (Ards & North Down)	Cllr Robert Burgess (Newry, Mourne & Down) Sub – Ald Mark Cosgrove (Antrim & Newtownabbey) Cllr Ritchie McPhilips (Fermanagh & Omagh) Cllr Mervyn Jones (Belfast) Sub – Ald Alan McDowell (Ards & North Down)
Support Officer	Karen Smyth	Ken Bishop
Key objectives	**Lobbying** for the necessary (and still outstanding) legislation, guidance and support for councils in relation to community planning and well-being **Democratic Scrutiny** of: Departmental and partner organisation input into the design delivery and resourcing of new community planning and well-being systems and policies **Monitoring** the progress of the Partnership Panel in relation to its regional role in community planning	To stimulate local-level **skills, growth and jobs** delivered through new financial instruments, plus national, EU and transnational investment platforms such as Growth & Jobs Fund. **Democratic Scrutiny of:** NI Economic Strategy and Councils input into same Local Government representation in and benefit from Europe Strategic Presentations: Colleges NI, EER, DETI/INVESTNI KEY MINISTERS: DETI & DFP
Wider objectives	Monitoring ongoing member capacity building requirements in relation to community planning and well-being Design and provision of necessary regional member development events on relevant issues Developing regional guidance on the new elected member role, including 'commissioning' and other 'outward facing' activity Continued lobbying to develop a partnership role for local government within an integrated government approach	Building member capacity on EU issues Disseminating knowledge and a menu of investment throughout the Councils Supporting elected members and officers to influence policy, plan and deliver investment in specific sectors and in respective Councils Communicating role of elected members on key European bodies e.g. CoR, Congress, CEMR, Monitoring Committees and the Managing Authorities in NI Partnership working with key linked bodies (e.g. LED Forum and the Cross Border Bodies) to innovate, and offer best practice solutions
Key linked bodies	DOENI, DSDNI, Community Places, Sustainable NI, Carnegie UK, SOLACE	DFP/OFMDFM, SOLACE, LED Forum, CoR, Congress, CEMR, Invest NI, DETI, SEUPB, Whitehall / Westminster,, UK Forum (LGA, COSLA and WLGA), AILG, US Consul, NI council EU offices
First Meeting	TBC	22nd September 2015

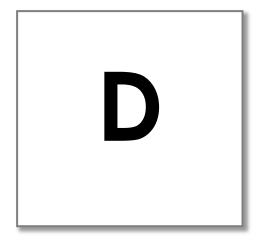| Group Name	Planning & Regeneration	Workforce, Employment & Member Development
Chair	Ald Jim Dillon (Lisburn & Castlereagh) Sub- Ald Marion Smith (Ards & North Down)	Ald Stephen Martin (Lisburn & Castlereagh) Sub – Ald Alan McDowell (Ards & North Down)
Vice Chair	Cllr Kieran McGuire (Derry & Strabane) Sub – Cllr Dermot Nicholl (Causeway Coast & Glens)	Cllr Alan Givan (Lisburn & Castlereagh)
Members	Cllr Robert Gibson (Ards & North Down) Cllr Jim McKeever (Derry & Strabane) Ald Alan McDowell (Ards & North Down) Sub – Ald Stephen Martin (Lisburn & Castlereagh)	Cllr Debbie Coyle (Fermanagh & Omagh) Sub - Cllr Michael Goodman (Antrim &Newtownabbey) Cllr Carol Black (Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon) Cllr Brian Tierney (Derry & Strabane)
Support Officer	Karen Smyth	Derek McCallan
Key objectives	**Lobbying** for the necessary (and still outstanding) legislation, guidance and support for councils in relation to planning and regeneration e.g. Regeneration Bill, SPPS, continued concern re transfer of functions funding. **Democratic Scrutiny** of: Departmental and partner organisation input into the design delivery and resourcing of new planning and regeneration functions. **Monitoring** the progress of the relationship between DOE and councils on planning, e.g. on the Planning Portal, and performance improvement	**Democratic Scrutiny** of: Member Development and Capacity Building at Regional Level (in partnership) Workforce Strategy - supporting HR and related member development structures (including Charter) Partnership Work including Training and Awareness Events with LGTG, NAC, Politics Plus, NI Ombudsman, LGA, European EU Regulatory, Awareness and Funding bodies –Democratic Scrutiny and communication around Pay / Performance linked to National Negotiating Machinery; Production and investment in Toolkits of Information such as Councillors Guide 2015 - 2019
Wider objectives	Monitoring ongoing member capacity building requirements Design and provision of necessary regional member development events Assisting in the wider work on the new elected member role and code of conduct Continued lobbying on planning issues and a partnership role for local government within an integrated govt approach	Best Practice in terms of Workforce Development and Versatility Different Service Delivery Models – Commissioning, Outsourcing (Councils as Municipal Entrepreneurs) Political Skills Framework for Councillors Apprenticeships in local government – benchmarks and models to consider
Key linked bodies	DOE, DSDNI, SOLACE, PlaceNI, RTPI, Council Planners	LGA, NARE, CEEP, LGSC, LGTG, PPE Skills+, SOLACE, NAC, SEE (for charter), Councils in NI and UK / IRL
First Meeting	6th October 2015	17th September 2015

Group Name	Rural Development	Regional Improvement & Partnerships
Chair	**Cllr Cathal Mallaghan (Mid Ulster)** Sub – Cllr Sean Clarke (Mid Ulster)	**Cllr Seamus Doyle (Armagh Banbridge & Craigavon)**
Vice Chair	**Cllr Frances Burton (Mid Ulster)**	**Cllr William McCaughey (Mid & East Antrim)**
Members	**Cllr Bert Wilson (Fermanagh & Omagh)** Sub – Cllr Robert Burgess (Newry, Mourne & Down) **Cllr Brian Quinn (Newry, Mourne & Down)** **Cllr Aaron McIntyre (Lisburn Castlereagh)**	**Cllr Charlie Casey (Newry Mourne & Down)** Sub - Cllr Debbie Coyle (Fermanagh & Omagh) **Ald Arnold Hatch (Armagh Banbridge & Craigavon)** **Cllr Patrick Brown (Newry Mourne & Down)** Sub – Cllr John Blair
Support Officer	**Ken Bishop**	**Derek McCallan / Claire Bradley**
Key objectives	To stimulate smart, sustainable and inclusive rural growth. **To develop the rural economies in NI in terms of sustainable communities and industries, both traditional and emerging** **Objectives:** Knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas Agri – food business and fishery competitiveness and sustainability Food chain organisation – promoting NI produce Restoring and enhancing ecosystems & promoting resource efficiency Social inclusion, poverty reduction and rural economic development	To develop best practice at regional political level regarding shared services, collaborative working and creative service delivery. To receive investment opportunities for Councils and evaluate their benefit for members. Support for the further development of necessary culture change within the sector

Wider objectives	Energy efficiency in rural dwellings Rural planning issues (with PWG) Future of rural settlements, rural community cohesion and Rural Infrastructure	• Scrutiny of new investment for Councils and communities e.g. Municipal Bonds, UK Infrastructure Loans Guarantee Scheme, European Investment Bank • The number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity (by reference to a standard which differs for each council) • The number of major planning applications processed (by reference to a standard of within an average 30 weeks timescale) • The number of local planning applications processed (by reference to a standard of within an average 15 weeks timescale) • The progress of enforcement cases (by reference to a standard target of 70% concluded within 39 weeks) • The percentage of household waste that is sent for recycling • The amount (tonnage) of biodegradable waste that is land filled • The amount (tonnage) of local authority collected municipal waste • Regional and local procurement development – weighted towards local, indigenous businesses
Key linked bodies	RDC, RCN, EST, SOLACE, USPCA, Fisheries, DARD, UFU, CoR, Congress, CEMR, Invest NI, Whitehall / Westminster, Leinster House, UK Forum (LGA, COSLA and WLGA), and AILG	**SOLACE, Professional Officers Groups , Public Services Improvement Board**
First Meeting	**August 2015**	**Circa Nov 2016.**
Current work	Dairy Farm Crisis Meet Minister 3/8/15 Notice of Motion to Councils	Evaluation of I C E Programme and Shared Services Agenda, for reporting to WG

Group Name	Audit & Organisational Sustainability	Strategic Migration Partnership
Chair	**Cllr Jim Rogers (Belfast)**	**Cllr Alex Baird (Fermanagh & Omagh)** Sub – Ald Arnold Hatch (Armagh Banbridge & Craigavon)
Vice Chair	**Cllr Trevor Beattie (Antrim & Newtownabbey)**	**Cllr Rosemarie Shields (Fermanagh & Omagh)**
Members	**Cllr Charlie Casey (Newry Mourne & Down)** **Cllr Roisin Lynch (Antrim & Newtownabbey)** **Cllr Mervyn Jones (Belfast)**	**Ald Geraldine Rice (Lisburn & Castlereagh)** **Cllr Cara McShane (Causeway Coast & Glens)** Sub – Cllr Patrice Hardy (Mid & East Antrim)
Support Officer	**Derek McCallan**	**Ken Bishop**
Key objectives	**Democratic scrutiny:** • That NILGA's activities are sustainable, compliant and accountable • That an effective system of internal control is maintained.	The NISMP was established in 2011 to provide strategic leadership, advisory and coordination functions for migration in Northern Ireland to enable its public, private and third sector partners to develop an appropriate national Northern Ireland migration policy structure. Funded by the Home Office and hosted by NILGA. **Objectives 2015/16:** Engagement Programme with Northern Ireland's 11 new councils. NISMP partner optimisation. Northern Ireland infrastructure health check for immigration and migration. Providing a focal point and conduit for migration matters in Northern Ireland.
Wider objectives	- Evaluate and scrutinise the framework of internal control and corporate governance - Review and approve plans in relation to external audit - Review NILGA's performance as set out in the Corporate Plan and Annual Report - Review key areas of risk in NILGA's activities.	Bring together and use their diverse knowledge and experiences in immigration and migration to debate and identify the issues most relevant to Northern Ireland; Ensure that asylum seekers, refugees and migrants who are in Northern Ireland lawfully successfully integrate into host communities and those who should not be here are encouraged to return to their home; Focus efforts and initiatives in ways that support local and regional governmental objectives
Key linked bodies	Councils, NILGOSC, ALGFO	NI councils, Home Office, OFMdFM, DSD, DEL,DHSSPS, DoJ, PSNI, Law Centre, NIHE, NICICTU, QUB, Bryson, NI Humans Rights Commission.
First Meeting	**6th July 2015**	**18th September 2015 (tbc)**
Current work	Risk register Annual Accounts Auditing	Racial Equality Strategy – scoping study / validation Data preparation at regional and local council level Guidance on Community Planning from a Migration perspective Responses to key consultations e.g. New minimum Salary Threshold for migrant workers

Spokesperson Roles

Role	Waste	Health	Housing
Spokesperson	**Cllr Mervyn Rea**	**Cllr Debbie Coyle**	**Cllr Steven Corr**
Key Objectives	1 To act as spokesperson for local government on waste issues 2 To act as Vice Chair of the Waste Programme Board, leading the local government members of the Board., and to represent the sector at events and conferences as necessary	1. To act as spokesperson for local government on health issues - in the face of the Donaldson Report, Transforming Your Care etc. 2. To promote, on behalf of the sector, a better partnership approach between the health sector and local government, including pooling of resources	1 To act as spokesperson for local government on housing issues, in the face of welfare reform and the social housing reform programme .2 To promote, on behalf of the sector, a better partnership approach between DSD, the housing sector and local government on relevant issues
Wider Objectives	1.To promote, on behalf of the sector, a more effective working relationship, between the DOE the waste industry and local government further to the recent Mills Report 2.To work with the NILGA CEO and Head of Policy to issue relevant consultation responses and press statements	1.To represent the sector at events and conferences as necessary 2. To work with the NILGA CEO and Head of Policy to issue relevant consultation responses and press statements	1 To represent the sector at events and conferences as necessary 2. To work with the NILGA CEO and Head of Policy to issue relevant consultation responses and press statements
Support Officer	**Karen Smyth**	**Karen Smyth**	**Karen Smyth**

D

Subject	Gifts and Hospitality Policy
Reporting Officer	Philip Moffett, Head of Democratic Services

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	To consider the adoption of a Gifts and Hospitality Policy for Mid Ulster District Council.

2	Background
2.1	A Gifts and Hospitality Policy has been developed to form part of the Council's governance framework to manage the offering and acceptance of gifts and hospitality offered to members and officers of the Council. The policy sets the framework within which the offer of gifts and hospitality should be managed from individuals and organisations offering them.
2.2	The policy applies to all elected members and employees of the Council, and should extend to all aspects of business undertaken. It is applicable to all employees irrespective of their contractual basis.

3	Key Issues
3.1	The policy will form part of the Council's governance framework within which it undertakes its business and when implemented shall; • Maintain reputation of Council through its employees and member • Manage the risk of exposure to criticism • Maintain integrity within Council decision and governance processes • Avoid cases which could give rise to the honesty and integrity of council
3.2	The policy links with paragraph 4.20 on *Acceptance and registration of gifts and hospitality* contained within the Northern Ireland Code of Conduct for Councillors and the maximum value for which Gifts and Hospitality may be accepted has been set at £20 within the policy.
3.3	A Gifts and Hospitality Register will be kept within which notifications on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality will be maintained and entered.

4	Resources
4.1	**Financial** – N/A
4.2	**Human** - N/A

4.3	**Basis for Professional/ Consultancy Support -** N/A
4.4	**Other** - N/A

5	**Other Considerations**
5.1	Not applicable

6	**Recommendations**
6.1	That the committee adopts the Gifts and Hospitality Policy.

7	**List of Documents Attached**
7.1	Appendix A Managing Acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality Policy

Managing Acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality Policy

Document Control	
Policy Owner	Head of Democratic Services
Policy Author	Head of Democratic Services
Version	v1.0 (draft)
Consultation	Senior Management Team Yes / No Trade Unions Yes / No

Equality Screened by		**Date**	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes / No	**Date**	
Approved By	Policy & Resources Committee	**Date**	
Adopted By	Council	**Date**	

Review Date		**By Whom**	

Circulation	Members, Council Staff
Document Linkages	Managing Conflicts of Interest Policy Whistleblowing Policy Fraud Policy Anti-Bribery Policy

	Local Government Code of Conducts for Employees NI Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors

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1.0   INTRODUCTION

1.1   This policy confirms Mid Ulster District Council's approach to dealing with and handling matters relating to gifts and hospitality offered to councillors (members) and officers of council.

1.2   All employees and members of council are expected to observe the highest standards of conduct and should at all times adhere to Codes set for both parties, namely the Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees and the Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors.

1.3   It is important to have clear policies and procedures in place to govern council's approach on same as council recognises that the acceptance of gifts and hospitality could be seen to compromise personal judgement or integrity, particularly in those persons involved in procurement, awarding of grants or enforcement of regulations. The handling of gifts and hospitality is a sensitive matter which could lead to public disapproval and become a risk to the council's reputation if dealt with inappropriately.

1.3   As a general rule members and officers should consider whether a particular course of action could be satisfactorily defended if scrutinised by a member of the public or organisation responsible for auditing the council. Where there is any doubt about the application of this policy consultation and advice should be taken from the Head of Democratic Services as detailed in Section 8.

2.0   POLICY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1   This policy has been set by Council to manage the acceptance and provision of gifts and hospitality offered to members and officers. It is intended to provide guidance concerning the offer of gifts and hospitality from individuals and organisations in the course of business. The policy also sets responsibilities and procedures for authorising and recording the acceptance or rejection of same.

2.2   Policy is intended to:

- Maintain reputation of Council through its employees and member
- Manage the risk of exposure to criticism
- Maintain integrity within Council decision and governance processes
- Avoid cases which could give rise to the honesty and integrity of council

3.0 POLICY SCOPE

3.1 The policy applies to all members and employees, and should extend to all aspects of business undertaken on behalf Mid Ulster District Council.

4.0 LINKAGE TO CORPORATE PLAN

4.1 This policy forms part of council's corporate governance framework and as such is embedded within how it does business therefore having an impact across all services and all elected representatives.

4.2 This policy actively contributes towards Council's corporate theme 4.0 *Building Unity* ensuring Councillors and employees are fully engaged on council business throughout the district.

5.0 PROCEDURE AND IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 **Acceptance of Gifts**

5.1.1 Offers of cash, cheques and lottery tickets to members and officers should be declined. Seasonal, promotional gifts, such as calendars, diaries or pens, which bear company names and branding of the provider and have an estimated value of less than £20 may be accepted without the need for reporting acceptance.

5.1.2 Acceptance or decline of a gift greater than a value of £20 must be declared within the Gifts and Hospitality Register. Appendix 1 should be completed and submitted in all cases within 28days of receipt of the offer. This will form part of the council's Gifts and Hospitality Register.

5.2 Acceptance of Hospitality

5.2.1 Offers of hospitality require careful judgement to determine whether or not it is proper to accept hospitality offered. Each case should be considered on its individual merits.

5.2.2 As a general rule, significant hospitality determined as a value greater than £20 should not be accepted. When deciding whether to accept hospitality consideration should be given to:

- the reason for accepting it
- if acceptance could be satisfactorily defended if queried by a ratepayer
- the value and scale of the hospitality
- the obligation that acceptance might appear to place on an officer or the Council in terms of reciprocal hospitality and business dealings
- whether it provides benefits to the Council, which outweighs the risk of possible misrepresentation of the hospitality
- The timing of the offer, bearing in mind decisions which the Council may be in the process of taking, affecting the provider of the hospitality, procurement, grant award, enforcement of regulations

5.2.3   Acceptance or decline of an offer of hospitality greater than a value of £20 must be declared within the Gifts and Hospitality Register. Appendix 1 should be completed and submitted in all cases within 28days of receipt of the offer. This will form part of the council's Gifts and Hospitality Register.

5.3   Gifts and Hospitality Register

5.3.1 The Chief Executive's Office shall maintain and update the Gifts and Hospitality Register for council. The register will contain;

(i) Declined offers of gifts and hospitality valued over £20; and
(iii) Accepted gifts and hospitality valued over £20.

6.0   ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1   The following details the role and responsibilities for all those involved in the application of the policy across the council

6.1.2 **Members** should observe the NI Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors with particular reference to 4.20 of the Code on Acceptance and registration of gifts and hospitality and apply the requirements of this policy.

6.1.3 **Employees** should observe the Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees and apply the requirements of this policy.

6.1.4 **Line managers** have a managerial responsibility to ensure all employees within their service are made aware of the contents and conditions of this policy. Arrangements should be made for the policy to be communicated to all employees at set and relevant intervals.

6.1.5 **Chief Executive** to have overall executive responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

6.1.6 **Chief Executive's Office** shall maintain the Gifts and Hospitality Register for Council.

7.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 Equality Screening and Impact

7.1.1 The policy is currently in draft form and subject to committee consideration.

7.2 Staff & Financial Resources

7.2.1 It is not considered that there will be a significant impact on staff and resources on the implementation of this policy.

8.0 SUPPORT AND ADVICE

8.1 Employees should contact their line manager or Head of Service in the first instance should they have any queries on the policy. Elected Members should contact the Head of Democratic Services.

9.0 COMMUNICATION

9.1 This policy will be integrated into the council's corporate training programme and be included within employee training induction programmes.

10.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

10.1 Application and compliance with this policy will be monitored by the Internal Audit function. A formal review of this policy will be undertaken two years from its adoption by council

Notification of Gift and Hospitality Offers

This form should be completed for:

- Declined Offers of Gifts or Hospitality; and
- Acceptance of Gifts or Hospitality greater than £20

Mid Ulster District Council	
1. Name - *person who received the offer*	
2. Department and Service	
3. Description of gift or hospitality offered	
4. Estimated Value	
5. Details of organisation making the offer	
6. Accept or Decline	
7. Reason to accept or decline	
Signed	
Date	/ /
Line management acknowledgement	
Signed	
Date	/ /

Completed forms to be returned to Chief Executive's Office

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Subject:	Irish Language Policy EQIA
Reporting Officer:	Anne-Marie Campbell, Director of Culture and Leisure

1	**Purpose of Report**
1.1	To advise Members of the progress in respect of the Irish Language Policy assessment of equality impacts and public consultation and to consider the recommendations of the EQIA Decision Report.

2	**Background**
2.1	Council's obligations in respect of Irish arise from commitments the UK Government made when the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (The Charter) was signed and ratified. The Charter is an international convention designed to protect and promote regional and minority languages. It is designed to protect and promote regional and minority language as a threatened aspect of Europe's cultural heritage. The Charter does not cover sign language or the languages of minority ethnic communities.

3	**Key Issues**
3.1	The Mid Ulster Council agreed that the draft Irish Language Policy be issued for public consultation and that the equality impacts of the draft policy be assessed. Policy ARC Ltd were appointed to undertake the EQIA and consultation which was held over a 14 week period ending 7th September 2015.
3.2	In undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) the Council was guided by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland which has defined a seven stage process: Stage 1 : Definition of the aims of the policy Stage 2 : Consideration of available data and research Stage 3 : Assessment of impacts Stage 4 : Consideration of:

		▪ measures which might mitigate any adverse impact; and
		▪ alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity
		Stage 5 :Consultation
		Stage 6 :Decision by public authority and publication of report on results of the EQIA
		Stage 7 :Monitoring for adverse impact in the future and publication of the results of such monitoring
3.3		**Consultation** - A EQIA consultation report was in English and Irish and made available to:
		• **Equality Scheme consultees** - the consultees normally consulted on SECTION 75 issues were informed of its availability.
		• **General Public** – A standard response form for publication was available on the Council's website. This consultation was advertised in the regional press.
		• **Staff and Trade Unions** – A short paper was circulated to staff providing a description of the process and the issues under consideration. Staff and trade unions had the opportunity to contact the consultants via email or telephone. The consultants also were available to meet staff and trade unions at Council premises in Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt.
3.4		The report considers the equality impacts and presents the conclusions of the EQIA process. It makes recommendations with regard to further action in the following areas:
		• Implementing the policy without any deterioration in the timeliness and quality of service.
		• Underpinning the outworking of the policy with best value principles.
		• Clarifying the detail of the Courtesy Code and Human Resource Planning at an early stage of implementation.
		• Promoting a good and harmonious environment.
		Good Relations
3.5		Whilst the EQIA considers the equality impacts, the Section 75 duties also requires Council to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.
		Mid Ulster District Council has already established a Good Relations Working Group to assist with policy development in a variety of areas

	including language. A number of responses to the EQIA process suggested that the development of an Irish Language policy may impact on Councils desirability to promote Good Relations. It is therefore recommended that the draft policy be referred to the Good Relations Working Group for consideration and mitigation as per the groups Term of Reference.

4	Resource Implications
4.1	**Financial**
4.2	Professional support of £9,000 previously agreed by Council for an EQIA.
	Human resources
4.3	None.
	Assets and other implications
4.4	N/A

5	Other Considerations
5.1	None

6	Recommendations
6.	Members are asked to consider the recommendations of the EQIA Decision Report.

7	Documents Attached
7.1	Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) of the Draft Irish Language Policy – EQIA Final Decision Report

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)
of the Draft Irish Language Policy

EQIA Final Decision Report

Draft   **24th September 2015**

Contents

1.   Introduction

Mid Ulster District Council (the Council) is in the process of developing an Irish Language Policy. A draft EQIA Consultation Report was prepared in April 2015 and published for consultation over a 14 week period ending 7th September 2015. This Final EQIA Decision Report has been prepared to assist the Council to make a final decision on the adoption of the policy and includes:

- **a summary of the evidence presented in the Consultation Report on the potential equality of opportunity impacts of the proposed policy;**
- **the findings of the consultation process;**
- **recommendations resulting from the EQIA.**

After the Council has made a decision, details of this will be included in this report which will then be published on the Council's website.

1.1   The EQIA process

The Council is committed to implementing the statutory duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Section 75(1) requires any public authority, in carrying out its functions in Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different -
    - religious belief;
    - political opinion;
    - racial group;
    - age;
    - marital status;
    - sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

Without prejudice to this obligation, Section 75(2) requires any public authority, in carrying out its functions, to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

Schedule 9 of the Act sets out the detailed procedure for implementing these duties including the carrying out of screening exercises and EQIAs. When undertaking an EQIA, the

Council closely follows the guidance published by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) which recommends that there should be seven stages in the process:

Stage 1 :   Definition of the aims of the policy

Stage 2 :   Consideration of available data and research

Stage 3 :   Assessment of impacts

Stage 4 :   Consideration of:
- measures which might mitigate any adverse impact; and
- alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity

Stage 5 :   Consultation

Stage 6 :   Decision by public authority and publication of report on results of the EQIA

Stage 7 :   Monitoring for adverse impact in the future and publication of the results of such monitoring.

1.2   Mid Ulster District Council

The Council was established on 1st April 2015 as part of the review of local government in Northern Ireland and has responsibility for the areas previously administered by:

Cookstown District Council;

Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council; and

Magherafelt District Council.

The new district council covers an area of 1714 km² and is responsible for a wide range of services to a population of more than 140,000, living in a mix of urban and rural communities.

The Council is currently developing new policies. In the absence of an agreed new Council policy, the Council is implementing policies previously established and adopted by the three former legacy Councils. A draft Equality Scheme has been developed for the new Council setting out how it will implement the statutory duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, but – at the time of writing – this has not yet been approved by the ECNI[1]. The three previous councils all had similar approved Equality Schemes in place.

1.3   The Draft Irish Language Policy

The draft Irish Language Policy, which is attached at Appendix 1, sets out the background to the adoption of the policy (including the relevant legislation and guidance) and some of the key data regarding knowledge of Irish in the District. The draft policy makes clear that the Council recognises that the Irish language is an integral part of the linguistic, cultural and

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[1] At this time, and mindful of ongoing discussions with the Equality Commission, the Council proposes to focus its Scheme on the first Section 75 duty (equality of opportunity) and to address the second duty (good relations) elsewhere. The EQIA has been written with this orientation in mind.

historical heritage of the area and believes that the proactive promotion of Irish, as well as catering to the needs of the growing Irish speaking population, can enhance the rich linguistic culture of the area.

The stated aim of the draft policy is as follows:

Operating within the spirit of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, and having due regard to the status afforded to Irish within that Charter, Mid Ulster District Council aims to take resolute and positive actions that will aspire to promote, enhance and protect the Irish language within the Council and District.

The associated policy objectives are:

- To encourage the use of Irish in both speech and writing within the District and Council.
- To promote a range of initiatives that will reduce intolerance and promote understanding of the Irish language across the District and within the Council.
- To preserve townland names through the use of appropriate signage.
- To recognise and celebrate the Irish language within the broader context of linguistic and cultural diversity across the District and Council.
- To maintain and develop links between groups using Irish with other groups using Irish and/or Ulster Scots[2].

2.   Assessment of Available Data and Research

The second step of the equality impact assessment process considers whether available data and research can provide an insight into the potential impacts on people in the various Section 75 categories. The available information which was presented in the Draft EQIA Consultation Report (published in May 2015) is summarised below.

- According to the 2011 Census, approximately 64% of the population of Mid Ulster is from a Catholic community background and 33% from a Protestant community background.
- Internal monitoring data shows that approximately 52% of Council staff are from a Catholic community background and 45% from a Protestant community background.
- Census data shows that 17.41% of the population of Mid Ulster (aged 3+) have some ability in Irish, compared with 10.65% of the Northern Ireland population as a whole. This is broken down into the following categories:

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[2] It should be noted that the Council has agreed a draft policy on Ulster Scots which will be subject to a separate EQIA.

- 6.11% speak, read, write and understand Irish;
- 0.73% speak and read but do not write Irish;
- 2.43% speak but do not read or write Irish;
- 6.60% understand but cannot read, write or speak Irish;
- 1.54% have some other combination of skills.

- The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) recently published more information on people who have some knowledge of Irish within the Northern Ireland population as a whole which shows that in 2011:
  - people aged 12-15 were most likely to have some ability in Irish (20%), while those least likely to have such ability were aged 75 and over (6.2%);
  - 90% of people with some ability in Irish were or had been brought up as Catholics and 7.4% as Protestants;
  - drawing together both religion and age, and probably linked to the inclusion of the subject on the education curriculum and its particular popularity in non-Controlled over two-thirds (68%) of people with some ability in Irish had an Irish only national identity, 17% felt Northern Irish only and 7.0% British only.

- The School Census 2014/15 showed that 1344 pupils were in schools and youth clubs in Mid Ulster where teaching was provided through the medium of Irish. There are also 22 Primary Schools in the District with peripatetic Irish provision and 13 Secondary Schools teaching Irish.

- DCAL published a report in 2012 setting out the results of a module included in the NI Omnibus Survey concerning public attitudes towards the Irish language. This showed that a considerably higher proportion of Catholic respondents than Protestant respondents were in favour of the use of the Irish language (66% and 14% respectively).

- Consultation carried out by Magherafelt District Council during the development of the Irish Language Policy adopted in 2014 showed that consultees tended to be characterised by one of two dominant opinions:
  - Those who wished to see the Council actively promote the use of Irish through its publications, communications, correspondence, presentations/events, staff and administrative processes and signage;
  - Those who felt that the policy was not a good use of Council staff or money, that it had the potential to be divisive and discriminatory, and that it focused on a single aspect of a single culture in a culturally rich and politically divided area at the expense of all other cultures.

3.   Consultation

A vital stage of the EQIA process is formal consultation with interested parties to obtain their views on the various options and scenarios described in the EQIA report. The Council is committed to consultation which is timely, open and inclusive, and conducted in accordance with the Equality Commission's Guiding Principles. The consultation period in respect of this EQIA lasted for 13 weeks (from May to September 2015) and attracted a substantial response. The consultation process is outlined below together with a summary of the responses.

3.1   Consultation methodology

The Council appointed independent external consultants to facilitate the EQIA process and manage the consultation to ensure objectivity and confidentiality.

All consultation documents were made available on the Council's website in both English and Irish language versions and consultees normally consulted on Section 75 issues were informed of their availability. Copies could also be made available in hard copy and alternative formats on request on a timely basis.

A standard response form was developed and published on the Council's website to assist consultees and to facilitate focused responses.   This invited consultees to comment on individual sections of the EQIA Consultation Report and allowed for the collection of some personal data about respondents (community background, gender and age). However, responses were welcomed in any format and a dedicated email address and post box were made available.

Staff and Trade Unions are key stakeholders in relation to the proposed policy.   Advance notice of the EQIA consultation was given to all staff through the staff newsletter. At the start of the consultation process, a short paper was circulated (via email and in hard copy format for those staff who do not have regular access to email) providing a brief description of the EQIA process and the issues under consideration. A separate staff response form was developed, to maximise the opportunity for staff to comment on how they considered the proposed policy might affect service delivery and how it might affect them personally.

Staff were also offered an opportunity to meet with the consultant informally, either individually or in small groups, on a strictly confidential basis on specific dates at Council offices in Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt. A copy of the staff response form was completed at each interview and these are included in the analysis below.

3.2   Responses received

There was a substantial response to the consultation process. Responses included:

- 67 completed standard response forms (including two in Irish), submitted by individual members of the public and some community groups by post or email;
- 421 copies of a letter supporting the proposed policy submitted by individual members of the public and some community groups by post (see Appendix 2 for the text of the letter); it should be noted that each letter was signed by a different individual;
- 360 copies of a letter opposing the proposed policy submitted by individual members of the public by post (see Appendix 3 for the text of the letter); it should be noted that each letter was signed by a different individual;
- 53 signatures attaching to a letter from Tamnamore LOL 513 opposing the proposed policy (see Appendix 4 for the text of the letter)
- 17 individual written responses (not using the response form) submitted by post or email;
- 20 completed staff response forms, submitted anonymously by post or email or completed at face-to-face meetings;
- 7 formal written submissions from the Ulster Unionist Party Group, the Equality Commission, Conradh na Gaeilge, the Ulster-Scots Community Network, Mid Ulster Victims Empowerment, Ballynakelly Concerned Protestant Community Group and the Committee on the Administration of Justice.

This represents a total of 945 responses.

Many (but not all) of the respondents who completed the standard response form, the staff response form or signed the letter opposing the proposed policy provided personal information on their gender, community background and age. Analysis of this information shows that there were a substantial number of responses from both men and women and from all age groups. All those who signed the letter opposing the proposed policy who indicated a community background were from the Protestant community.

3.3   Comments made

Respondents were invited to comment on each section of the EQIA Consultation Report and indicate whether they agreed with the findings. On the whole those who agreed with the findings did not offer detailed comments while those who disagreed commented extensively. The summary below therefore mostly reflects the views of those who disagreed with the findings; it should be noted that the comments are presented in no particular order.

(1)   Scoping of the policy

Respondents were asked whether they agreed with the way the policy was scoped and set out in the EQIA Consultation Report and whether they had any further comments. Comments included:

- The need for the policy has not been sufficiently established.

- The Belfast Agreement commitment is to "facilitate and encourage the use of the language in speech and writing in public and private life, *'where there is appropriate demand'.* Given that a relatively small number of people in Mid Ulster can actually speak the Irish language, it is not clear that appropriate demand exists.

- The proposed policy goes further than the requirements of the European Charter.

- The proposed policy goes further than those of the three previous legacy councils.

- There is no evidence as to how the proposed policy will improve tourism.

- It is clear that the Council has already decided to adopt the policy and that the EQIA is simply 'ticking the boxes'.

- The EQIA was unnecessary given that the European Charter already states that the promotion of a minority language cannot be regarded as an infringement of the rights of the majority language speakers.

- The report gives no explanation of the policy screening process and does not explain why the Council did not screen out the policy from the EQIA process.

- The proposed policy addresses areas which will be of diminishing importance in the future; resources should be concentrated on increasing the number of people learning the Irish language.

- The EQIA should ensure that it considers the proposed Irish language policy in the context of the international obligations which exist in relation to the promotion of the Irish language in local councils[3].

- It would have been helpful to include a timescale for addressing Ulster-Scots and British cultural issues to give the appearance of balance.

(2)   Assessment of available data and research

Respondents were asked whether they agreed with the way in which relevant information had been analysed and set out in the EQIA Consultation Report and whether they had any further comments. Comments included:

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[3] No specific information on international obligations was provided.

- The Census does not provide a true measure of the use of Irish; knowledge of a language is not the same as use.

- Census data is voluntary and there is no way of checking if those who claim fluency in Irish to a certain level can actually speak, read or write the language.

- Census statistics show that only 6.11% of the population say they can speak, read, write and understand Irish; in an area which is 33.46% Protestant and other Christian, and 63.77% Catholic, it is clear that the vast majority of people have no ability in Irish.

- The Census statistics on people who can understand or speak but not read or write Irish should be discounted as, in practice, they would require a letter in English to confirm what has been said to them in Irish; this would be a ludicrous situation.

- The Census statistics show that 17.41% of the population of Mid Ulster have some knowledge of Irish; this is considerably higher than the 11% of the north as a whole and illustrates how popular the language is in the area. As the Irish speaking community is growing and developing, the demand for access to services from the Council in the Irish language is also growing.

- It should be made clear that not all staff expressed concern about the Irish Language Policy introduced by Magherafelt District Council and the impacts of the policies adopted by the three constituent councils should form part of the EQIA analysis.

- More research is required on the users of the language – for example, actual demand for use of services in Irish in the three constituent councils, actual demand for use of services within government departments who are already offering services in Irish, trends in the number of pupils taking Irish at GCSE level.

- More research is required on the use of other minority languages in the District.

Respondents suggested additional sources of information as follows:

- A report in the Republic of Ireland published in May 2015 and commissioned by Udaras na Gaeltachta suggesting that Irish will no longer be the primary language in any Gaeltacht community in ten years.

- Numerous reports which show that students who have studied a second language perform better than their monolingual peers on many standardised tests.[4]

- Monitoring reports from other councils on the impacts of Irish Language policies – Down District Council was specifically mentioned as an example.

- A survey carried out by Millward Brown in partnership with Conradh na Gaeilge in January 2015 regarding support for the Irish language and Irish medium education.

- Material regarding the experiences of Irish speakers, with reference to particular Section 75 groups. (The respondent assumed that the Council has consulted with Irish speakers in relation to the development of the policy).

In relation to this last point, it should be noted that Quarter Consultancy had previously undertaken research involving representatives from across the Irish Language Community in the three legacy Council areas now making up Mid Ulster, on the legal, social and moral obligations relating to the promotion of the Irish Language in the area. The report (published 16/4/2015) highlighted the extensive social and economic impact of the Irish Language Community in the Mid Ulster area, concluding that, 'the new Mid Ulster Council will inherit a strong and vibrant Irish Language Community currently delivering a range of community services in the existing Councils of Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt'.

(3)   Assessment of impacts

Respondents were asked whether they agreed with the way the impacts had been analysed and set out in the EQIA Consultation Report and whether they had any further comments. Comments included:

- The proposed policy simply safeguards the rights of Irish speakers and will have no adverse impact; the European Charter makes it clear that the promotion of a minority language cannot be regarded as an infringement of the rights of the majority language speakers.

- The policy embraces bilingualism and it will be possible to access all Council services in English; therefore there will be no negative effect.

- The report indicates that the potential adverse impact scenarios are unlikely to occur and so there will be no adverse impacts from the introduction of the policy.

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[4] The respondent did not provide details of specific reports.

- The idea that the non-Irish speaking community will benefit specifically from exposure to the Irish language fails to recognise that Northern Ireland's ever more diverse population has already experienced and embraced many languages. It may be more useful to expose people to a language spoken by visitors to Mid Ulster.

- The EQIA report concludes that it is likely that the adverse impacts identified will relate to the two Section 75 grounds of religious belief or political opinion; it is not clear on the basis of which differentials this position was reached.

- The financial implications attaching to the policy should be addressed in the report.

A number of respondents commented on the lack of attention in the EQIA report to the potential impacts on the promotion of good relations and some indicated how they considered the proposed policy could impact on good relations:

- The EQIA report indicates that it does not address potential good relations impacts; the process is therefore flawed and has no credibility.

- The report downplays serious issues about good relations.

- The Council should present its assessment of the impacts in relation to service users in a way that enables it to provide transparency in the balance it will strike between the need to promote equality of opportunity and the desirability of promoting good relations. It is recommended that the Council inform consultees of the arrangement for addressing the good relation duty.

- Whilst the Irish language is obviously important to those of the Irish culture, its use in supposedly 'shared spaces' is blatant intimidation to those of Ulster culture, Ulster-Scots or British.

- The proposed policy will highlight the Irish culture in an adverse way for good relations and create further divisions. To promote a single language in isolation is perceived as divisive, discriminatory and offensive.

- The report states that those who are most likely to experience an adverse effect are from the Protestant and/or Unionist communities; this sends a very clear signal to those communities as to how they are perceived and how they will be treated by the Nationalist and Republican majority on the Council and will have a very detrimental effect on community relations in the future.

- The policy is designed to implement a cultural dominance and ownership of the council buildings and on the Unionist people.

- The Irish language is divisive; the policy will drive a wedge between the two communities and do nothing to bring them together.

- The use of the Irish language, for example among Council workers, will accentuate the differences between political and religious groupings.

- Use of the Irish language will make some workers uncomfortable and could lead to lower numbers of Unionists applying for jobs.

- It is inevitable that in a very short time a two tier class of Council staff will emerge and the Council will become a very cold house for non-Irish speakers.

- One respondent organisation indicated that a high percentage of ex-services and victims and survivors of both religious communities who have suffered in violent incidents during 'The Troubles' suffer physical and mental disablement and associated problems of social isolation and exclusion. It was indicated that their disabled members feel intimidated by the overwhelming use of the Irish language because they have previously heard it used in abusive and violent situations and that the mental anguish and sense of isolation that the whole issue stirs up for these members cannot be overstated.

(4)   Consideration of alternative policies and measure to mitigate adverse impacts

Respondents were asked whether they agreed with the way in which the measures to mitigate and preliminary recommendations had been drawn up and set out in the EQIA Consultation Report and whether they had any further comments. Comments included:

- Alternative policies have not been considered; it appears that the decision to adopt the policy has already been made.

- A number of measures to mitigate adverse impacts are outlined but these do not clearly explain how the impacts will be addressed.

- There is reference to the possibility of developing a human resources strategy but limited information is provided on specifically what issues it might address.

- The proposals regarding a human resources strategy imply that future recruitment will have language requirements, even though the policy is not intended to have a harmful effect on the progression of non-Irish speaking staff.

- The mitigating measures provide no protection for non-Irish speakers.

- The inclusion of caveats such as "as resources allow" may provide an excuse for not implementing the policy.

- The increased visibility of the Irish language would likely prove to be a very effective way of demonstrating how little impact the inclusion of Irish language services will have upon those who do not wish to avail of them.

- The reports says that earlier consultation identified significant levels of concern but that these concerns will be managed through a planned and staged process of implementation. It appears that concerns will simply be worked through a process and noted as opposed to being respected and reflected in the initial policy shaping process.

Several respondents commented on the proposed Courtesy Code:

- The Code should clarify when staff should engage with the public in Irish and whether this is only on request.

- The Code should not prevent staff from speaking Irish to each other in the workplace; the Council should encourage the use of Irish on an increased level by staff.

- It would have been helpful to include detail of the Courtesy Code in the consultation documentation.

Several respondents suggested additional mitigating measures and revisions to the policy:

- The Council should consider a multi-language policy instead of focusing on the Irish language alone.

- The Council should provide more learning opportunities for staff and greater flexibility to encourage attendance.

- Those staff who use Irish should be afforded due recognition when it is an integral part of their work.

- Literature should be in one language with separate versions available on request in other languages including Irish.

- Favour using English, Irish and Ulster-Scots for certain matters, such as in the Council logo, but with English as the most visible to avoid confusion.

- Concerns regarding the creation of a 'chill factor' can be dealt with through working with groups and providing information on why these services are being delivered through the medium of Irish.

(5)   Consultation

Respondents were asked whether they agreed with the way in which consultation was planned and set out in the EQIA Consultation Report and whether they had any further comments. There were very few comments on this section of the report, although a number of respondents indicated that they agreed with the process. Some respondents said that they had little confidence that the Council would take account of the consultation process when making a decision.

(6)   Decision and publication of the results of the EQIA

Respondents were asked whether they agreed with the way in which the decision and publication procedures had been set out in the EQIA Consultation Report and whether they had any further comments. There were no specific comments on this section of the report although a number of respondents indicated that they agreed with the process.

(7)   Monitoring

Respondents were asked whether they agreed with the way in which monitoring of the policy was planned and set out in the EQIA Consultation Report and whether they had any further comments. Comments included:

- The final EQIA report should set out the mechanisms put in place to monitor the impact of any policy decision.

- The emphasis on future monitoring of the policy appears to be negative in its outlook. The policy should be monitored to determine how successfully it is being implemented and whether sufficient time, energy and resources are being put in place to ensure its success.

- The report has not identified any actual adverse impacts on equality of opportunity; any monitoring taken forward should be based on matters which would objectively constitute either an adverse or positive impact on equality of opportunity.

4.   Findings

The main purpose of the EQIA process is to assess whether the proposed policy may have a differential impact on people in one or more of the Section 75 groups in relation to the promotion of equality of opportunity, and to determine the extent of differential impact and whether that impact is adverse. This section of the report sets out conclusions based on the data and research considered and the findings of the consultation process.

With regard to the proposed policy, it is likely that the adverse impacts identified will relate primarily to two Section 75 grounds, religious belief and/or political opinion. A small number of consultees did suggest that the policy may also impact differentially on other groups, in particular young people, older people and those with a disability (primarily with regard to access issues), and these concerns should continue to be borne in mind during successive stages of implementation. At the same time, the consultation has generally confirmed that the primary impacts are likely to attach to community background, with those from the Protestant / Unionist community far more likely to identify the potential for adverse impact.

To examine the precise nature of potential adverse effects, it may be useful to draw a distinction between those who access the goods, facilities and services that the Council provides (Service Users) and those Council staff who must implement the policy (Council Staff). Furthermore, and despite concerns raised by some consultees, at this time the Council is minded to divorce the second Section 75 statutory duty (i.e. the promotion of good relations) from its Equality Scheme, and in turn policy screenings and EQIAs. Hence the focus of this EQIA, and the determination of adverse effects, will fall primarily on a consideration of the promotion of equality of opportunity.

4.1   Service Users

The policy is specifically designed to meet the needs of the considerable and growing Irish speaking population of the District and to allow them to access Council services in Irish, in keeping with the provisions contained within the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. The positive action measures proposed within the policy to protect and enhance Irish will undoubtedly meet this aspiration and afford greater access to the Irish language in both its written and spoken forms. These measures were duly welcomed by a considerable number of consultees.

At the same time, for those who will choose to engage with the Council exclusively through the medium of Irish, it should be noted that the service will not be directly equivalent to that provided in English. For example, an individual telephoning the Council and wishing to speak in Irish may need to be transferred to an Irish speaker who in turn may not be able to answer queries on the specific service concerned and may only be able to pass on a message. Hence there is no guarantee that the Council will be able to deliver a full service of comparable quality to Irish speakers when the policy is implemented.

From a Section 75 perspective, in the short term it is clear that the majority of those who will benefit most significantly from the policy (i.e. those with an existing knowledge of Irish) are from a Catholic community background, and these people tend to be young. However, it can also be argued that those with little knowledge of Irish will potentially benefit in the longer term from exposure to a new language.

Those who may feel most disadvantaged by the introduction of the policy (i.e. those with no working knowledge of Irish) tend to be members of the Protestant and Unionist communities. While the policy aspires to promote the Irish language, it also embraces bilingualism. Hence it will still be possible to access all documents in English and <u>all directional signs to and within Council buildings</u> will continue to be in English. It will therefore be possible to access all Council services in English.

At the same time, there may be the potential for an adverse impact on the quality and timeliness of service delivery which would have a negative impact on all customers. For example:

- translations into Irish may take time to process and hence may slow down the delivery of services, e.g. responses to Freedom of Information requests, publication of documents, access to the website, length of meetings – this would impact negatively on all service users;

- the policy will be expensive to implement and this may impact on expenditure on other services and may impact negatively on all service users through rate setting;

- signs in two languages may not be welcomed by all communities and could be vandalised as a consequence; there is evidence that this has already happened to street signs in certain communities.

It should be noted that these adverse effects would impact on all users of Council services, irrespective of Section 75 status.

More specific adverse effects relating to Section 75 grounds could attach to any 'chill factor' associated with the increased profile of Irish within the Council, a profile which may discourage engagement with the Council and its facilities and services. A number of respondents maintained that the policy could serve to distance members of their community from the Council and its functions. Any potential adverse effect attaching to this perception cannot be tested at this time but should not be ignored during stages of implementation.

While many supporters of use of the Irish language would argue that its use is, and should be, apolitical and neutral, a counterargument was advanced by a significant number of respondents that language could be used as a marker of 'cultural dominance and ownership of the council buildings'. Whatever the merits of each argument, if this perception or sentiment is genuinely held then it cannot be ignored as it may impact adversely on willingness to engage

with the facilities and services which the Council provides. Those who were most likely to identify this potential for adverse effect came from the Protestant and/or Unionist communities, and a number of respondents did identify this as a concern.

Overall, the division of opinion among those who responded to the consultation was stark and reflected on diametrically opposed perceptions of the policy between the two main communities. On the one hand the policy was welcomed and embraced as a positive measure to promote, protect and enhance the Irish language within the district. On the other hand, the policy was seen as an imposition that represented a threat to identity and a mark of cultural dominance by the Council.

4.2   Council Staff

While the EQIA deliberately targets only the first Section 75 duty (to promote equality of opportunity), it must be borne in mind that the second duty (to promote good relations) cannot be disregarded insofar as it links with the anti-discrimination legislation generally. For example, under the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 (FETO), the Council as an employer has a duty to maintain a good and harmonious working environment, that is, one in which no worker feels under threat or intimidated because of his or her religious belief or political opinion.

A substantial majority of those staff who responded during the consultation were in support of the draft policy and the positive opportunities which were presented to protect and enhance the Irish language, including personal development through training. At the same time, a small number of staff did raise concerns as to how the policy may impact on career prospects and good relations among staff. The small number of concerns specific to the working environment raised by staff during this consultation included the potential impact on good relations within the Council, the cost of implementation, impact on career opportunities for non-Irish speakers and the imposition of the language on those who were resistant or unwilling to learn.

4.3   Summary

At this time, despite concerns raised by a significant number of consultees regarding the introduction of the policy, there is little concrete evidence to suggest that its introduction will necessarily cause either a deterioration in service delivery or will harm the good and harmonious nature of the working environment within the Council. However, it would be naïve to ignore the possibility that this may happen. The Council should therefore ensure that safeguards are put in place to allay concerns and to ensure the smooth implementation of the policy through the establishment of a structured programme of awareness, communication and information, and through Human Resource planning.

With these caveats in mind, while the proposed policy may have potential adverse differential impacts, it is argued that these are not inevitable but instead can be managed through a planned and staged process of implementation.

5.   Conclusions and recommendations

This EQIA process is designed to provide decision makers with detailed information on the potential impacts, in terms of the promotion of equality of opportunity of the proposed policy. This section therefore presents the conclusions of the EQIA process and makes recommendations with regard to further action.

Initial recommendations

5.1   Implementing the policy

There are a number of practical issues that need to be addressed to ensure that the policy can be implemented without any deterioration in the timeliness and quality of service delivery, such as availability of Irish speaking staff and translation services. For example, there are some aspects of the draft policy which are subject to qualifying phrases such as 'according to need and as resources allow', and it will be necessary to determine the extent to which these elements will be implemented.

A significant number of consultees made explicit reference to the costs associated with implementing the policy in its entirety, and best value principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness should continue to underpin the outworking of the policy.

Consultees also suggested that the Council should make clear the precise detail of the proposed Courtesy Code and Human Resource Planning at an early stage of implementation, and subject these to further Section 75 screening if necessary.

There is also a need to ensure that the policy does not have an adverse impact on the promotion of a good and harmonious environment, either among Council staff or within the District as a whole.

With reference to the potential adverse effects identified in the previous section, it should be noted that the draft policy already contains a number of provisions to alleviate potential concerns and thereby mitigate adverse effects:

- the Courtesy Code for Irish will make provision for courtesy to employees who do not speak Irish but come in contact with a member of the public who wishes to speak Irish;
- simultaneous translation services will be made available to employees who have no knowledge of Irish when bi-lingual presentations need to be made;
- translation services will be made available to employees who have no knowledge of Irish who are required to process internal documentation that is in Irish;
- fluency in the Irish language will not be a requirement for any position that would not ordinarily justify the appointment of an Irish speaker.

In addition the Council has decided that the new corporate identity will include the name of the Council in both Irish and English but that the new uniforms will feature only the Council logo with no wording.

More generally, the Council commits to implementing the policy in a way which is respectful of the identity of all those that it engages with, including residents, visitors and staff, and in a manner that celebrates linguistic diversity within the District. The concerns raised by a significant number of consultees highlight the need to proceed in a sensitive manner to allay these concerns.

One of the key concerns expressed by staff during the consultation on the Magherafelt DC policy was that they may suffer a detriment if speaking Irish becomes an essential (or desirable) criterion for their post. The Council's Human Resource Planning (see above), with the full involvement of staff and trade unions, will determine how the delivery of services in Irish will be accomplished. The Welsh Language Commissioner has published a comprehensive guide to recruitment, training and development to ensure that public authorities in Wales can meet their commitments in relation to the conduct of business in Welsh; this points out that comprehensive workforce planning is necessary to ensure that staff with the requisite language skills are available whilst also ensuring that current staff are not disadvantaged.

In line with concerns raised by consultees, the Council also commits to the phased introduction of policies that have a bearing on other linguistic forms including Ulster-Scots, other minority ethnic languages (e.g. Polish and Lithuanian) and languages for those with sensory or cognitive disabilities (e.g. braille, sign language, easyread).

5.2   Communicating the policy

As the previous section indicates, the proposed introduction of the policy may cause concerns among residents and staff, including significant costs attaching to the translation of all Council policies, reports etc. in to Irish. In order to allay these concerns, the Council may consider clarifying aspects of the policy and communicating it to all residents and staff in a way that ensures that the intentions are better understood and the need for the policy is fully established. The policy could be publicised through internal communication channels, press releases, workshops and public meetings.

Further recommendations

Over and above those initial recommendations that have been either confirmed or modified as a result of the consultation process, a number of other specific recommendations were also suggested by consultees and these are outlined below:

5.3   Screening report

The original screening form which identified the need for an EQIA will be made available on the Council website.

5.4   Good relations

While the Council has adopted a corporate policy of focusing attention on the first Section 75 duty (i.e. the promotion of equality of opportunity), when the EQIA decision is made by the Council then it will also make clear how any good relations considerations attaching to this decision will be considered.

5.5   Linguistic Diversity and Ulster-Scots policies

The Council commits to scheduling an EQIA on a new Ulster Scots policy, and to develop policies dealing with linguistic diversity generally, following the EQIA decision on the Irish language policy.

5.6   Courtesy Code and HR Planning

The Council commits to consulting with staff and their representatives on the contents of the Irish language Courtesy Code and associated HR Planning.

5.7   Monitoring

Consultees made a number of suggestions regarding monitoring arrangements for the new policy and these have been incorporated into the monitoring strategy (see below).

6.   Monitoring

The final step in the EQIA process is the establishment of a system to monitor the impact of the policy. The results of the monitoring must be reviewed on an annual basis and must be published in the Council's annual Section 75 report to the Equality Commission[5].

In the short term, the Council will note any feedback received after the decision has been made and the final EQIA report has been published.

In the longer term, and further to the consultation responses, the Council commits to taking the following monitoring actions on an annual basis:

* to assess demand for Irish language services elsewhere, eg DCAL, and to modify the policy as appropriate;
* to consider the impact of the policy on the profile of job applicants by community background;
* to monitor uptake of Irish language services and to obtain qualitative feedback on benefits that people perceive and/or complaints registered;
* to monitor any decrease in the usage of Council facilities by the Protestant / Unionist community in response to the introduction of the policy;
* to gather and analyse feedback from staff on the policy on an annual basis.

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[5] Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment, Equality Commission for NI (2004) p50

Appendix 1: Draft Mid Ulster District Council Irish Language Policy

Contents

Introduction
Relevant Legislation and Guidance
The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Part 2 – applies to Irish Language and Ulster Scots), within the territories in which such languages are used and according to the situation of each language, requires Parties to base their policies on:

- The need for resolute action to promote regional or minority languages in order to safeguard them; and
- Facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of regional or minority languages in speech and writing in private and public life.

In particular, Part 3 Article 10 details the Council's obligations as follows:

- Within the Administrative district of the State in which the number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages justifies the measures specified below and according to the situation of each language, the Parties undertake, as far as this is reasonably possible to:
  - o Ensure that users of regional or minority languages may submit oral or written applications in these languages;
  - o Allow the administrative authorities to draft documents in a regional or minority language;
- In respect of the local and regional authorities on whose territory the number of users of regional or minority languages is such as to justify the measures specified below, the Parties undertake to allow and/or encourage:
  - o The possibility for users of regional or minority languages to submit oral or written applications in these languages;
  - o The use by local authorities of regional or minority languages in debates in their assemblies, without excluding, however the use of the official language of the state;
  - o The use or adoption, if necessary in conjunction with the name in the official language(s) of traditional and correct forms of place-names in regional or minority languages.
- With regard to public services provided by the administrative authority or other persons acting on their behalf, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which regional or minority languages are used, in accordance with the situation of each language and as far as this is reasonably possible, to:
  - o Allow users of regional or minority languages to submit a request in these languages.
- With a view to putting into effect the above provisions accepted by them, the Parties undertake to take one or more of the following measures:

- o Translation or interpretation as may be required.
- The Parties undertake to allow the use or adoption of family names in the regional or minority languages, at the request of those concerned.

With regard to cultural activities and facilities, Article 12 of the European Charter also details the Council's obligations to ensure that when organising or supporting cultural activities, they make appropriate allowance for incorporating the knowledge and use of regional or minority languages and cultures in the undertakings which they initiate or for which they provide backing.

Article 12 details the following obligations:-
- With regard to cultural activities and facilities, especially libraries, video libraries, cultural centres, museums, archives, academies, theatres and cinemas as well as literary work and film productions, vernacular forms of cultural expression, festivals and the cultural industries, including inter alia the use of new technologies – the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used and to the extent that the public authorities are competent, have power or play a role in this field:
  - o to encourage types of expression and initiative specific to regional or minority languages and foster the different means of access to works produced in these languages;
  - o to ensure that the bodies responsible for organising or supporting cultural activities of various kinds make appropriate allowance for incorporating the knowledge and use of regional or minority languages and cultures in the undertakings which they initiate or for which they provide backing;
  - o to promote measures to ensure that the bodies responsible for organising or supporting cultural activities have at their disposal staff who have a full command of the regional or minority language concerned as well as of the language(s) of the rest of the population;
  - o to encourage direct participation by representatives of the users of a given regional or minority language in providing facilities and planning cultural activities.

Article 14, Transfrontier Exchanges encourages the Council to foster contacts between users of Irish on a cross border basis "for the benefit of regional or minority languages, to facilitate and/or promote co-operation across borders, in particular between regional or local authorities in whose territory the same language is used in identical or similar form".

The European Charter is based on a concept of non-discrimination, that is, the majority language group is not discriminated against by the implementation of actions designed to promote and protect the minority indigenous languages.

"The Parties undertake to eliminate, if they have not yet done so, any unjustified distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference relating to the use of a regional or minority language and intended to discourage or endanger the maintenance or development of it. The adoption of special measures in favour of regional or minority languages aimed at promoting equality between the users of these languages and the rest of the population or which take due account of their specific conditions is not considered to be an act of discrimination against the users of more widely-used languages".

The Belfast Agreement (1998)

The Belfast Agreement (1998) under section 'Rights, Safeguards and Equality of Opportunity: Economic, Social and Cultural Issues (Point 4)' gives recognition to the Irish language, in particular where appropriate and where people so desire it to:

- Take resolute action to promote the language;
- Facilitate and encourage the use of Irish in speech and writing, in private and public life where there is appropriate demand;
- Seek to remove, where possible, restrictions which would discourage or work against the maintenance or development of the language;
- Make provision for liaising with the Irish language community, representing their views to public authorities and investigating complaints;
- Place a statutory duty on the Department of Education to encourage and facilitate Irish medium education in line with current provision for integrated education;
- Explore urgently with the relevant British authorities, and in cooperation with the Irish Broadcasting authorities, the scope for achieving more wide spread availability of Teilifis na Gaelige in Northern Ireland;
- Seek more efficient ways to encourage and provide financial support for Irish language film and television production in Northern Ireland; and
- Encourage the parties to secure agreement that this commitment will be sustained by the new Assembly in a way which takes account of the desires and sensitivities of the community.

Northern Ireland (St Andrew's Agreement) Act 2006

This Act places a duty on the Northern Ireland Executive to adopt a strategy for the enhancement and protection of the Irish language.

European Charter on Human Rights

The NI Human Rights Commission has advised that, from a human rights perspective, it is difficult to see any legitimate grounds for objecting to a minority language being promoted by an employer or, more generally, a public body.

On broader issues, the Commission has drawn attention to the fact that there is no "right to be offended" by another party exercising a right. This is a general principle of freedom of expression (ECHR Article 10) which can be read in conjunction with ECHR Article 14 on non-discrimination on grounds that include language.

The Commission has advised that the right to use a regional or minority language in private and public life is an inalienable right conforming to the principles embodied in the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and according to the spirit of the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

The Commission has concluded that official acknowledgement of a minority language cannot constitute a violation of the rights of those who do not use that language.

DCAL Consultative Document 2012 - Draft Strategy for Protecting and Enhancing the Development of the Irish Language

In July 2012 DCAL published a consultative document containing proposals for a strategy for protecting and enhancing the development of the Irish language, with a consultation period lasting for 20 weeks, from Wednesday 11 July until Tuesday 27 November 2012. The results of the consultation are not yet available.

The consultative document sets out a number of key aims of the draft Irish language strategy:
- To create a framework where Irish can flourish and be shared by all who wish to use it;
- To protect and support the development and learning of Irish; and
- To promote wider understanding of the background to the Irish language.

The draft strategy has the following objectives:
- To increase the number of those who can access Irish medium education;

- To increase the number of those that use public services through the Irish language; and
- To increase access to Irish language media.

Key areas for action include:

1. Education
2. Family Transmission of the Language – Early Intervention
3. Administration, Services and Community
4. Media and Technology
5. Legislation and the Status of the Language
6. Economic Life

Under the administration heading, the draft strategy specifically states that local authorities should:

- Adopt Irish language policies and plans and appoint Irish language officers where needed;
- Maximise the provision of services through Irish;
- Expand/initiate facilities for the use of Irish in their council/committee meetings;
- Guard against any diminution of services provided through the Irish language as a result of those authorities with Irish language policies and services being merged under the Review of Public Administration (RPA) with those authorities that do not;
- Provide an Irish or bilingual version of all publications, official documents and forms in line with the approach of this Strategy and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages;
- Facilitate the proper preservation and signposting of Irish place-names and the naming of new housing developments to reflect local or national heritage; and
- Encourage tourism and cultural initiatives through Irish.

The draft strategy envisages Foras na Gaeilge providing support to local authorities to develop language planning initiatives. It also envisages that an Irish Language Bill will be prepared and presented to the Assembly at the earliest possible time.

Policy Aim and Objectives

Mid Ulster District Council recognises that we live in a multi-cultural and multi lingual society and that the Irish language is an integral part of the linguistic, cultural and historical heritage of this area.

Irish is the first official language of the Republic of Ireland and was accorded minority language status in Northern Ireland by the UK Government in March 2000. Irish was made an official working language of the European Union on 1st January 2007.

The 2011 Census indicates that 22,984 people (17.4%) out of a district population of 132,025 have some knowledge of Irish. In particular 8,063 (6.1%) people could speak, read, write and understand Irish. As such the Council recognises that the proactive promotion of Irish, as well as catering for the needs of its growing Irish speaking population, can enhance the rich linguistic culture of the area and add to the appeal of the area as a tourist destination. This policy will facilitate and encourage the use of Irish in speech and writing, in private and public life.

Policy Aim
Operating within the spirit of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, and having due regard to the status afforded to Irish within that Charter, Mid Ulster District Council aims to take resolute and positive actions that will aspire to promote, enhance and protect the Irish language within the Council and District.
Policy Objectives
- To encourage the use of Irish in both speech and writing within the District and Council.
- To promote a range of initiatives that will reduce intolerance and promote understanding of the Irish language across the District and within the Council.
- To preserve townland names through the use of appropriate signage.
- To recognise and celebrate the Irish language within the broader context of linguistic and cultural diversity across the District and Council.
- To maintain and develop links between groups using Irish with other groups using Irish and/or Ulster Scots.

Policy Guiding Principles

The Mid Ulster District Council Irish Language Policy is based on the requirements of Parts II and III of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The policy presents a number of guiding principles from which the Council will implement a range of positive actions to promote, enhance and protect the Irish language whilst encouraging its use in speech and writing in private and public life. Specific measures for implementation relating to each guiding principle are included in Appendix 1.

Guiding Principle 1: Support for the Irish Language
Mid Ulster District Council is committed to the protection and encouragement of the Irish Language. The Council recognises that the Irish language is an expression of cultural wealth and there is a need for the Council to promote Irish in order to help safeguard and strengthen it.

To this end:
- The Council will prepare a plan for the Mid Ulster Council area on how it will promote the development and promotion of the Irish language. The development plan will identify opportunities to promote and learn the language; and
- The Council, through implementation of the plan, will encourage better understanding of the shared linguistic heritage of Irish. It will also recognise the contribution that the Irish Language can make to the vibrant society within Mid Ulster.

Guiding Principle 2: Publications
The Council's corporate identity will be English and Irish although English will remain the language of communication internally. Employees wishing to communicate with each other in Irish will be facilitated. With regard to Council publications, our policy will facilitate Irish speakers to communicate with the Council orally and in written format through the medium of Irish. All written / printed materials produced by Mid Ulster District Council for public consumption will include Irish where appropriate.

To this end:
- Key corporate documents, e.g. Corporate Plan, Annual Report, will be made available in English and Irish format;
- Design / publishing of material in the Irish language will be of an equal standard with the same material in English; and
- Council literature and forms should be available to the public in English and Irish format where appropriate, according to need and as resources allow.

Guiding Principle 3: Publicity

Mid Ulster District Council will encourage and support radio, TV and video work that broadcast in English and Irish format.

To this end:
- The Council will build relationships with the Irish language media; and
- Where possible and appropriate, media work carried out by Mid Ulster District Council will contain English and Irish elements.

Guiding Principle 4: Correspondence

Mid Ulster District Council will ensure that users of Irish may submit oral or written communications in Irish. Mid Ulster District Council will correspond in the chosen language of the recipient, where this choice is known.

To this end:
- Users of Irish may submit oral or written correspondence in Irish to Mid Ulster District Council;
- Any correspondence received in Irish will be responded to in Irish; and
- Translation or interpretation will be available to all staff as may be required.

Guiding Principle 5: Presentations / Public Speaking / Events

Mid Ulster District Council will ensure that in planning its presentations, events and festivals that appropriate allowance is made for incorporating the knowledge and use of the Irish language and culture.

To this end Mid Ulster District Council will:
- Use increasing amounts of Irish in presentations;
- Provide simultaneous translation services on request; and
- Where appropriate, incorporate the Irish language and culture within events, festivals and civic celebrations.

Guiding Principle 6: Staff and Administrative Practices

Mid Ulster District Council will train Council officers in the detail of this policy so that they will be able to respond appropriately to enquiries in Irish. Staff will be encouraged to use what Irish they have. Fluency in Irish will not be a requirement for any position that would not ordinarily justify the appointment of an Irish speaker.

To this end Mid Ulster District Council will:
- Offer appropriate training and guidance to staff;
- Provide translation services to staff; and
- Provide Irish versions of internal documentation for use by staff on request.

Guiding Principle 7: Visibility of Irish
Mid Ulster District Council will enhance the visibility of Irish and foster different means of accessing the language as part of everyday life.

To this end Mid Ulster District Council will:

- Devise a corporate identity to include Irish reproduced in the same quality and presentational standards and status as English;
- Devise a phased implementation plan for the erection of English and Irish internal and external signage on all Mid Ulster District Council owned properties;
- Initiate a settlement signage programme on request; and
- Maintain an English and Irish street signage programme.

Appendix 1 – Guiding Principles Specific Measures for Implementation

Timeframe relates to Year 1 – Year 4 of the first term of the Mid Ulster District Council.

Guiding Principle	Measures for Implementation	Timeline
Support for the Irish language	Prepare and implement plan on the development and promotion of the Irish language.	Year 1 – Year 4
Publications	Annual Reports and Corporate Plans will be made available in English and Irish format.	Year 1 and annually
	Mid Ulster District Council's website will include an English and Irish format with the Irish language text updated in line with the English text where possible. Those pages on Mid Ulster District Council's website receiving most user traffic, for example main front pages, will be available initially in English and Irish format. Headings of dynamic sections will also be of English and Irish format, while eventually the entire web site will be English and Irish.	Year 1 – Year 4
	According to needs and as resources allow forms will be produced in English and Irish format.	Year 1
	The format for English and Irish materials will be Irish and English, side-by-side, with both languages of equal size.	Year 1 – Year 4
	According to need and as resources allow, information leaflets, flyers and other Council literature should be available to the public in English and Irish format where appropriate. It is recommended that all such literature should be English and Irish as opposed to being separately produced, in Irish and in English.	Year 1 – Year 4
	Material aimed exclusively at users of Irish may be produced in Irish only.	Year 1 – Year 4

Guiding Principle	Measures for Implementation	Timeline
	Newsletters / bulletins will contain articles in Irish, where appropriate.	Year 1 – Year 4
	Design/ publishing of material in the Irish language will be of an equal standard with the same material in English.	Year 1 – Year 4
Publicity	Relationships with the Irish language media will be established and maintained with press releases being issued in Irish and in English where appropriate.	Year 1 – Year 4
	Where possible and appropriate, radio, T.V. and video work carried out by members of Mid Ulster District Council will contain significant English and Irish elements. Employees will not be excluded from radio, T.V. and video work because of a lack of knowledge of the Irish language.	Year 1 – Year 4
Correspondence	In written communications of English and Irish format, both languages will be placed side-by-side, with the Irish version on the left and the English on the right, or if this is not practicable, by placing the Irish version above the English.	Year 1 – Year 4
	The letterhead and logo of the organisation will be English and Irish.	Year 1 – Year 4
	Any correspondence received in Irish will be responded to in Irish.	Year 1 – Year 4
	When initiating correspondence, Mid Ulster District Council will correspond in the chosen language of the recipient, where this choice is known.	Year 1 – Year 4
	All staff within each department will be trained in the Courtesy Code for Irish which will also make provision for courtesy to employees of the Council who do not speak Irish but come in contact with a member of the public who wishes to communicate in Irish. Contact details for Irish speaking staff will be made known so that a pool of fluent	Year 1

Guiding Principle	Measures for Implementation	Timeline
	speakers is available to handle enquiries from the public.	
	Translation or interpretation will be available to all staff as may be required.	Year 1 – Year 4
Presentations / Public Speaking / Events	Representatives of Mid Ulster District Council, who are comfortable to do so, will aim to use increasing amounts of Irish in their presentations. Standard practice of using Irish at formal occasions and public meetings will be actively promoted.	Year 1 – Year 4
	Visual presentation on PowerPoint or other systems will be English and Irish where appropriate. When English and Irish presentations need to be made, simultaneous translation services will be made available to employees who have no knowledge of the Irish language.	Year 1 – Year 4
	Where large-scale public events are planned, simultaneous translation systems will be made available on request	Year 1 – Year 4
	Mid Ulster District Council will ensure that festivals/ civic celebrations which the Council organises or supports make appropriate allowance for incorporating the knowledge and use of the Irish language and culture.	Year 1 – Year 4
Staff and Administrative Practices	Guidance will be offered to receptionists and telephonists so that they will be able to respond appropriately to enquiries in Irish.	Year 1
	Irish versions of all internal documentation will be made available for use by staff on request e.g. order forms, pay slips, time sheets etc. Translation services will be made available to employees who have no knowledge of the Irish language but who are required to process internal documentation that is in Irish. Administrative staff will ensure	Year 1 – Year 4

Guiding Principle	Measures for Implementation	Timeline
	that all staff can access the Irish language accent command (Alt Gr+vowel) on all computers.	
	Translation, correction and proof-reading services will be made available to all staff and external providers of these services will be quality-assured.	Year 1 – Year 4
	Irish classes at different levels will be available as part of an in-service training programme for staff who wish to avail of it.	Year 1 – Year 4
	All staff will be encouraged to use what Irish they have. Encouragement will be given to the establishment of informal Irish speaking lunches, conversation classes etc. in employees' own time to be convened by Mid Ulster District Council, with the assistance of external groups/individuals when required.	Year 1 – Year 4
	Mid Ulster District Council recognises the importance of identifying situations or posts in which the use of Irish is an essential duty of the job. Fluency in the Irish language will not be a requirement for any position that would not ordinarily justify the appointment of an Irish speaker.	Year 1 – Year 4
Visibility of Irish	An implementation plan will be devised for branding, logos and the erection of English and Irish internal and external signage on all Mid Ulster Council owned properties including buildings and offices.	Phased
	An approach using English and Irish will be taken to advertising where appropriate.	Year 1 – Year 4
	Council's street signage programme of English and Irish, resident-liaison and street-name translation index service will be maintained.	Year 1 – Year 4

Guiding Principle	Measures for Implementation	Timeline
	An English and Irish settlement signage programme will be initiated on request.	Year 1 – Year 4

Appendix 2: Consultee Response Letter 1

I am pleased to see that Mid Ulster Council is moving ahead with its commitments to the Irish language and its continued development and use across the Council area.

I believe that if the policy is fully implemented it will help safeguard the rights of Irish language speakers in the District. The policy does not restrict or limit the rights of others in society nor does it have any adverse impact on any s.75 grouping, In fact I believe that it enhances everyone's rights.

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages already sets out that the promotion of a language cannot be regarded as an infringement of the rights of the majority language speakers. I do not therefore believe that an equality impact assessment was required especially given the cost of carrying this out. There is no detriment to anyone by having the policy, only by not having it would there be a detriment.

In relation to the use of the Irish language in Council or by Council staff, service users or the public I look forward to the successful promotion of the Irish language policy and its implementation. I would suggest that a Courtesy Code should reflect the fact that English is the dominant language and that there is a need for others to respect the rights of minority language speakers such as Irish. I would go further and encourage the use of Irish on an increased level by staff and would not like to think that any Courtesy Code would be used as a means to prevent Irish being spoken.

I take exception to the emphasis on future monitoring of the policy. It comes at it from the wrong angle and is negative in its outlook. The European Charter referred to above already highlights that promotion cannot be regarded as an infringement of rights, rather it is an enhancement of rights. Instead I believe the policy should be monitored to determine how successfully the policy is being implemented and whether sufficient time, energy and resources are being put into ensuring its success.

Finally, I commend the Council for working to improve and develop the Irish language across Mid Ulster and look forward to its continued growth.

Appendix 3: Consultee Response Letter 2

I wish to have it recorded that I do NOT approve the way Mid Ulster Council is planning and has imposed to further the Irish Language, this is designed to implement a cultural dominance and ownership of the council buildings and on the Unionist people. The Mid Ulster Council because it has a Nationalist majority thinks it can impose its wishes on the Protestant/Unionist people, firstly by the ban on the sales of Poppies, the flying of the Union Flag, taking the Oath, etc. and now by the imposing of an Irish Language over English, which will be spoken at council offices, thus seeking to employ from one side of the divide, and safeguarding jobs which will only be available to Nationalists.

Referring and comparing to the Welsh Language, for Irish language, the Government does not give Article 10 commitment to employ staff, the Mid Ulster Council applies this inappropriately to the position of Northern Ireland.

I feel the purpose and policy of this document is not linguistic but of dominance and ownership. I feel that this sham report which will be documented to serve its own ends, will be imposed on the minority Protestant and Unionist people, causing a greater divide and destroying any "faith" they may have in Nationalism.

This is an increased continuance of destroying any British presence and replacing with Irish nationalism, completely ignoring the Unionist viewpoint, which I feel is not only illegal but is designed to spark a backlash from Unionism.

In my opinion it goes to show what it would be like if/when Nationalists get a majority in local government with overall power and how they would treat the Unionist minority, taking away our cultural ethos and eventually our liberty as has happened in the past. No mention has been given to the overall costs of implementing this policy and in these times of austerity it is an unnecessary burden on the ratepayers in Mid Ulster Council area.

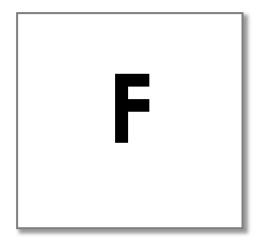# Appendix 4: Consultee Response Petition

We the undersigned members and associated family members would like to take this opportunity to communicate our opposition to the proposed Irish Language Policy of the Mid Ulster Council.

While we wholly accept the validity and history of the Irish Language and the right of those practising its use in the area to have support, we do not feel the reported numbers and data mitigate the implementation of all aspects of the proposed policy, especially in relation to street signage and council literature.

As some of the findings in the EQIA have highlighted, even among staff of the council there have been concerns raised that the implementation of the policy may cause a disruption of harmony. We believe at this point in time the policy is being used more as a political tool that a cultural promotion. English is the language of Northern Ireland, yet already on our new council literature Irish is the first language displayed with the new logo, what was the consultation here and rationale behind the this decision?

In an age of government austerity cuts, the council themselves openly admit to the challenges facing them in agreeing a budget and merging the budgets of three district councils. Policies such as the Irish Language Policy at this point in time can only lead to an increase in rates to enable the council to cover the additional costs required to fund the implementation of the policy as well as adhering to government enforced spending cuts. So far communication on the proposed policy has not mentioned the costs for implementation or where this funding will come from.

On the whole as a group we have signed this letter to outline our opposition to the implementation of this policy as it currently stands for both cultural and economic reasons. Given our religious and educational backgrounds, this policy in no way brings any benefits to our day to day living and we believe it is currently being forced upon us.

F

Subject: **Email Disclaimer**

Reporting Officer   **Barry O'Hagan**

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	To inform members of the new organisation email disclaimer.

2	Background
2.1	As part of good practice and guidance the Council has established a universal email disclaimer for all emails leaving the organisation.

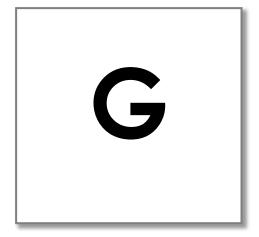| 3	Key Issues
3.1	All email leaving the organisation to the outside world will automatically add the new disclaimer approved by the Council solicitor.
	All officers and members using the council email should note same and ensure there is no duplication and update any individual setups. This setting can only be universally set.

4	Resources
4.1	**Financial : None there is no additional cost to this setup in O365 setups** None
4.2	**Human** None
4.3	**Basis for Professional/ Consultancy Support**
4.4	**Other**

5	Other Considerations
5.1	

6	Recommendations
6.1	Members note the disclaimer text for information.

7	**List of Documents Attached**
7.1	Disclaimer text "This email is solely intended for the recipient identified above ('intended recipient'). The contents of this email are confidential and may be subject to legal professional privilege. Only the intended recipient may rely on the contents of this email. The contents of this email do not express the views of Mid Ulster District Council ("the Council") unless otherwise clearly stated. The sender (including the Council) cannot guarantee that this message or any attachment is virus free. If you receive this email in error please immediately report the error to the sender and permanently delete this email from all storage devices. Any person who opens or otherwise accesses an email from the sender in the future does so at their own risk and acknowledges and agrees that the sender (and the Council) is not responsible for any loss or damage suffered by any person. As a public body, the Council may be required to disclose this email (or any response to it) under Data Protection and/or Freedom of Information legislation, unless the information contained is covered by an exemption"

G

Subject:	Draft Organisational Policies for Mobile telephony, Print Management and Email and Instant Messaging
Reporting Officer	Head of ICT

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	To consider and comment on the draft Information policies for

Mobile Phone Policy
Email and Instant Messaging Policy
Print management Policy |

2	Background
2.1	The council as part of good practice and governance require polices that govern and set the standards for the protection of the information and the appropriate use of resources and systems it uses to deliver service.

The three policies are presented for information and comment before adoption by council in line the |

3	Key Issues
3.1	**Mobile telephone Policy**
The council will seek to converge the existing mobile contracts (3), (currently approx. 220 connections) into a single contract to all the contracts are now out of date. This is now the most opportune window to review the current practices and policies and align the existing policies into a single policy.

The mobile policy defines how the Council will manage and govern the use of all mobile enabled devices covering various aspects of their appropriate use, roles responsibilities and conditions of use and health and safety considerations. The policy can extends to member use.

Print Management Policy
This policy gives detailed guidance to all staff on how the Council will allocate printers and multi-functional devices or MFDs (which typically provide photocopying, printing and scanning) to departments, teams and individual users. In addition this policy sets the guidelines on printing volumes and the best use of printing devices, in order to enhance print quality, minimize costs to the Council, and reduce the environmental impacts of Councils printing (power, paper, ink/toner and other consumables).
The policy sets the ground work for an ICT service improvement objective and will be complimented by staff training and a Print usage policy across the organisation. |

	Email and Instant Messaging policy
	The objective of this Policy is to direct all users of Council email and instant messaging facilities by: Providing guidance on how to get the most from email and IM while keeping information safe. Informing users about the acceptable use of ICT facilities in relation to emails. Stating the actions that may be taken to monitor the effectiveness of this policy. The Policy establishes a framework within which users of Council email and instant messaging facilities can apply self-regulation to their use of email and instant messaging as a productive communication tool.

4	**Resources**
4.1	**Financial** None
4.2	**Human** All the above policies will require staff briefing and update training.
4.3	**Basis for Professional/ Consultancy Support :None**
4.4	**Other**

5	**Other Considerations**
5.1	None

6	**Recommendations**
6.1	To consider draft policies for: Mobile Phone Policy Email and Instant Messaging Policy Print management Policy

7	**List of Documents Attached**
7.1 7.2 7.3	Draft Mobile Phone Policy Draft Email and Instant Messaging Policy Draft Print management Policy

Mobile Phone Policy

Document Control			
Policy Owner	Barry O'Hagan, Head of ICT		
Policy Author	Barry O'Hagan, Head of ICT		
Version	v1.0 (DRAFT)		
Consultation	Senior Management Team Yes / No		
	Trade Unions Yes / No		
Equality Screened by	Yes/ No	**Date**	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes / No	**Date**	
Approved By	Policy & Resources Committee	**Date**	
Adopted By	Council	**Date**	
Review Date	September 2017	**By Whom**	
Circulation	Councillors, Staff		
Document Linkages	Health & Safety Policy Customer Service Policy		

CONTENTS PAGE

1.0   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Mobile devices have been issued by Council to the following persons

Elected Members

Council Employees

Under the terms of the current contact, handsets are provided by Council, with all employees covering the costs of any personal calls made.

Members will receive a phone only and access to council mobile contracts but will automatically be deducted all charges in relation to the full contract cost.

1.2   The Council need to ensure effective management of the Council's mobile device usage, in order to protect Council assets, and to ensure compliance with appropriate legislation and security standards such as ISO 27001.

2.0   POLICY AIM & OBJECTIVES

2.1   **Policy Aim**: This policy seeks to establish a standard set of conditions, and a framework for the use of mobile phones within the Council.

2.2   **Policy Objectives:**

- To ensure that there is a clear internal arrangement for the effective management of mobile devices and devices.

- To establish the responsibilities of employees of the Council in regard to the issue and use of Council mobile devices in respect of data security.

- To ensure that Health & Safety issues are identified in relation to the use of mobile devices, and ensures compliance with legislation on mobile devices and driving.

- To support any operational procedures connected with the Council's framework for lone worker safety.

3.0   POLICY SCOPE

3.1   This Policy will apply to all Council employees who are provided with a mobile device to assist them in the performance of their duties. For the purpose of this policy 'Mobile devices' includes all mobile devices and portable smart devices that may or not contain a data sim card .

3.2   This policy does not deal with the specific negotiations regarding terms and conditions, rates or other mobile usage with the mobile companies in the management of the Councils Corporate contract.

4.0 LINKAGE TO CORPORATE PLAN

4.1 Referring to Mid Ulster District Council's Corporate Plan 2015-2019, this policy contributes toward the delivery of Corporate Theme 4 *Delivering for our People* to design and deliver its services around those accessing them by working for and with local people.

5.0 PROCEDURE & IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 This section confirms the framework for the criteria for use of a Council mobile device and the conditions of use.

5.2 **Criteria for use of a Council Mobile Device**

5.2.1 In the application of this policy, mobile devices will only be available to staff who have the approval of their Director or Head of Service. An employee will be eligible to have a mobile device if it is deemed necessary to their position and they meet one of the following criteria:

- If the employee's duties require them to spend a substantial amount of time out of the office on work related duties (substantial is defined as an average of more than 50% of their working day)

- Staff for whom it is necessary to make essential work related calls off site as part of their normal course of work

- Staff who are required to be contactable in an emergency situation, when working off-site

- Staff who are on call after normal business hours

- Staff identified through the risk assessment procedure or business case

5.2.2 Mobile devices may be issued on an individual or on a shared basis. It is the responsibility of the Director/Head of Service of the department to determine which staff will be part of a shared resource pool and the operational procedures.

5.3 **Procedures and General Principles on conditions of use**

5.3.1 In the application of this policy, Council shall make reference to and apply the following principles:

Purchase of Equipment

5.3.2 The purchase of mobile devices and service must be in compliance with the Council's purchasing policy through the ICT service. The contract will be reviewed and market tested on a contractual renewal basis.

5.3.3 All costs for the purchase and use of mobile devices will be charged to the appropriate departmental budget. It is the responsibility of each Departmental Head to ensure that adequate provision is made in the annual estimates to cover the cost of all mobile devices issued within their department and the cost of running same.

5.4   Replacement Devices

5.4.1 Council expects all recipients of a mobile device to take the utmost care and responsibility for them. If a device is lost or stolen, it should be reported immediately to the employees line Manager and the ICT helpdesk of the Council.

5.4.2 If a device is broken or faulty, then the handset should be returned. A temporary device may be issued until repair can be effected. If the device cannot be repaired, a replacement device will be provided.

5.4.3 Depending on the circumstances in which the device was lost or broken, the Council will be responsible for replacing the device.

5.5   Termination of employment

5.5.1 On termination of employment, the employee must return the device with to ICT unless the Manager has authorised a transfer to a new user using the appropriate form (appendix 1). Any accessories supplied by the organisation for use with the mobile device must also be returned.

5.5.2 Mobile devices issued to an individual must not be passed to any other employee without the authorisation of the Manager, and completion of mobile change form (Appendix 1).

5.5.3 Employees who transfer to other departments within the Council and are authorised to have continued use of a Council mobile device must inform the ICT helpdesk using the Mobile Device Change Form (Appendix 1).

5.5.4 At Council's discretion a mobile device number may be transferred to the employee on leaving the Council.

5.6   Conditions of use

5.6.1 Mobiles devices must be kept switched on at all reasonable times. Missed calls, text messages and voice mails must be responded to within a reasonable period as per customer service policy. This is particularly relevant to Directors, Crisis Management team, Emergency Planning Team, Heads of

Service and facility managers. Mobile devices can only be switched off for extended periods with the express permission of the user's manager. An extended period' would include that period between finishing normal working hours until commencing the next scheduled working hours. During annual leave it is not envisaged that staff will be routinely contacted but staff with mobile devices and particularly those listed within the emergency plan must respond to a call when contacted if possible.

5.6.2 Mobile devices should be switched off during meetings, lectures, seminars, training courses etc. other than in very exceptional circumstances where it is necessary to take an urgent call. In these circumstances it is courteous to alert colleagues to the fact that an urgent call is expected and where possible, the device should be kept on 'silent'.

5.6.3 Confidential information must not be discussed in open areas or inappropriate locations. Many departments / buildings e.g. Hospitals have local rules regarding the use of mobile devices and these must always be respected. Discretion should be used at all times.

5.6.4 Council mobile devices should be used in accordance with the council's Information Technology Policy and must not "be used inappropriately".

5.7   Health & Safety

5.7.1 The Health & Safety at work Order (NI) 1978, require that the Council provides and maintains a working environment for Council staff that is, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe, without risks to health.

5.7.2 As part of the Council's overall health & safety policy, Mid Ulster District Council is committed to reducing risks which employees face when driving or using machinery at work. All staff should play their part by never making or receiving a mobile call on a hand held mobile device when driving or operating machinery. The Council advises that a hands free mobile device should only be used when **absolutely essential** as research clearly shows that their use is a significant distraction and substantially increases the risk of accidents.

- **The Law:** It is an offence for drivers to use hand-held mobile device while driving. It is also an offence for employers to require or permit their staff who drive for work, to use a hand held device while driving. It is however, legal to use 2-way 'press to talk' radios such as those fitted in some Council vehicles.

- **Policy:** Mid Ulster District Council Policy is that **all** mobile devices should not be used in vehicles except when the vehicle is parked and switched off. If a mobile device in the vehicle rings, ignore it and do not pick up the handset (you will be in breach of the legislation). The call should be returned when the vehicle is parked in a safe place.

5.7.3 Guidance may be issued to mobile device users from time to time regarding health & safety in relation to their use, (ie. Legislation on mobile devices and driving guidance notes, and must be observed at all times).

5.7.4 Staff must ensure that, when they carry a Council mobile device, they have included in the contacts the number of their Line Manager, Departmental Manager, PSNI and Emergency Services.

5.8 Security

5.8.1 Where smart mobile device devices are enabled to access corporate ICT systems such as email the device must be protected from in others access information in the event it is lost or stolen via a security pin or password.

5.8.2 Web browsing through any smart mobile device is subject to the Acceptable Internet Usages policy. When technology allows the policy will be enforced remotely by systems and ICT services.

5.9 Use

5.9.1 The mobile device is provided primarily to allow contact with the staff member by other staff or customers.

5.9.2 Mobile devices within Council's group have been typically set up to allow free calls/texts on a standard tariff between Council mobiles.

5.9.3 The council will not provide any personal 'Hands-free Car Kit'. Most new Council passenger vehicles are factory equipped with blue tooth hands-free kits and can be used for critical business use.

5.10 Diverting fixed telephone when out of office

5.10.1 If an employee is out of the office and has his or her mobile switched on, then it may be appropriate for the employee to divert calls coming in via their fixed telephone to their mobile device (this will incur a cost and this functionality must be authorised by your line manager before it enabled through council telephone system by ICT).

5.11 Roaming And Data Access Use

5.11.1 The cost of roaming call charges can be expensive and where possible should be avoided when travelling outside of the UK.

5.11.2 Data roaming charges are normally charged on a daily basis and should be turned off whenever possible when travelling outside the UK to prevent unnecessary expense.

5.11.3 Users are reminded that the mobile device may roam to a non UK network when in border areas of Northern Ireland, Aughnacloy, Portrush, Portstewart

and Castlerock areas. Users should therefore be alert to ensure that expensive data roaming charges are not incurred.

5.12 Private Use

5.12.1 Council issued devices are intended primarily for Council business use.

5.12.2 Employees can use the Council mobile device for private calls and texts. This option will enable staff who are issued with a Council mobile device, to make private calls and texts, and to reimburse the Council if there is any additional cost.

5.12.3 It is the user's responsibility to identify any additional personal usage and reimburse the Council accordingly. Mobile devices with itemised usage will be circulated each month and must be settle promptly.

5.12.2 Reimbursement is not required where the total monthly personal usage is less than £1.00 in the month. This is due to administrative costs outweighing the financial benefit to the Council. However, all mobile bills must be signed off and returned whether reimbursement is made or not.

5.12.2 Managers and supervisors will monitor usage of Council mobile devices for both private and business use.

6.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 **Council and Chief Executive:** will assume executive authority with regard to the implementation of the Mobile Device Policy and delegation through the Lead Finance Officer and the management team.

6.2 **The Finance Department:** is responsible for the following:
   o Receipting of money received from mobile device users
   o Distribution of billing information
   o Monitoring of personal use/including spot checks
   o Reporting non-compliance to the management.

6.3 **ICT Department:** is responsible for the following:

   o Distribution and servicing of mobile devices.
   o Review the number of mobile devices in use within each department, and whether their issue complies with the criteria set out in section 5.2 when undertaking procurement of mobile device contracts.
   o Management & Maintenance of the Council's Mobile Contract.
   o

6.4 **Heads of Service:** must ensure:

   o The implementation of this policy and procedures.

- Ensure that all staff receive information about this Policy, and be part of any local induction where appropriate.

6.5 **Elected Members and staff:** All elected members and staff who use a Council mobile device are obliged to adhere to this policy and procedures.

7.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

7.1 Equality Screening & Impact

7.1.1 The policy is currently in draft form and yet to be Equality Screened.

7.2 Staff & Financial Resources

7.2.1 No issues have been identified which will impact on the delivery of Council business as a result of this policy being implemented.

8.0 SUPPORT AND ADVICE

8.1 Advice and guidance on the implementation of this policy should be sought from the ICT service.

9.0 COMMUNICATION

9.1 This policy will be communicated internally using a range of appropriate internal communication methods including intranet , inductions and team meetings.

9.2 All Elected Members and Directors shall be provided with a copy of this policy. Directors to make arrangements to ensure it is communicated with their relevant staff.

9.3 This policy will also form part of the induction process for all new staff.

10.0 MONITORING & REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

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

MOBILE REQUEST FOR Service or CHANGE OF BUSINESS

Details of staff member to receive a mobile device:		
Name of Officer		
Title of Officer		
Department		
Please identify the need for the mobile device/service request		
Tariff Type:		
Cost Centre to procure the mobile device		
Cost Centre for bills to be charged		

I authorize the above service request /Change the above member of staff to be allocated a Council mobile device and I have discussed the mobile device policy with this person	
Director (Name in block capitals)	
Director (Signature)	

I understand that I have read and understood the conditions of the Mobile Device Policy	
Staff Member (Name in block capitals)	
Staff Member (Signature)	

This form must be signed and returned to the ICT Service at Dungannon Office.

Email and Instant Messaging Policy

Document Control	
Policy / Procedure Owner (name, role & section)	Barry O Hagan
Policy/ Procedure Author (name, role & section)	Barry O Hagan
Version	v1.0
Consultation	SM Team Yes Trade Unions

Equality Screened by		**Date**	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes / No	**Date**	
Approved By	Policy & Resources Committee	**Date**	
Adopted By	Council	**Date**	

Review Date		**By Whom**	

Circulation	Mid Ulster District Council staff

Document Linkages	Code of Conduct for Councillors Data Protection Policy Information retention & disposal Policy Code of Conduct for Council Employees Communication Strategy Communication Policy Freedom of Information Policy Language Policy Uniform Policy

Contents

1.0 Introduction

Email and instant messaging (IM) are fast becoming an essential part of the way we do business. Email is one of the safest ways of transferring and sharing information if both sender and recipient are aware of the classification of the information and the safest way to send it. Our instant messaging service is also useful for quick queries but is potentially unsafe if not used appropriately.

The council's email and IM systems are coordinated and managed by Information and Communications Technology (ICT). No other email or IM system (server or client) is recognised by or supported the Council.

2.0 Policy Aims & Objectives

The objective of this Policy is to direct all users of Council email and instant messaging facilities by:
- Providing guidance on how to get the most from email and IM while keeping information safe.
- Informing users about the acceptable use of ICT facilities in relation to emails.
- Stating the actions that may be taken to monitor the effectiveness of this policy.

The Policy establishes a framework within which users of Council email and instant messaging facilities can apply self-regulation to their use of email and instant messaging as a productive communication tool.

3.0 Policy Scope

This policy covers all email and instant messaging systems and facilities (including electronic fax facilities) that are provided by Mid Ulster District Council for the purpose of conducting and supporting official business activity through the Councils network infrastructure and all stand alone and portable computer devices.

This policy is intended for all Mid Ulster District Councillors, Employees of the Council, contractual third parties and agents of the Council who have been designated as authorised users of messaging facilities.
The use of email and instant messaging facilities by staff that have not been authorised for that purpose will be regarded as a disciplinary offence

4.0 Linkage to Corporate Plan

The policy is aligned with the corporate themes

Delivering for our people :High performing services focused on customer need and value for money .

Focusing on performance: Embed a culture of continuous improvement which ensures the effective, efficient and sustained delivery of council services to the people of the Mid Ulster district.

Building Unity: Generate a culture and the conditions where innovation is encouraged and excellence is expected.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

All Staff have a responsibility to adhere to the guidelines contained within this policy and the accptable use policy in appendix 2.

Managers at all levels are responsible for ensuring that their relevent staff have read and understand their obligations in relation to this Policy

It is the responsibility of each individual user to ensure that they use Council's IT services in an acceptable manner in accordance with all policies and current legislation.

The ICT service will be responsible for the implementation of this policy.

6.0 Procedure and Implementation

General Policy statement

Email and Instant Messaging as a Form of Communication

Email and instant messaging is designed to be an open and transparent method of communicating. However, it cannot be guaranteed that the message will be received or read, nor that the content will be understood in the way that the sender of the email or instant messaging intended. It is therefore the responsibility of the person sending an email to decide whether it is the most appropriate method for conveying information.

Instant Messaging is a handy tool for quickly checking information or arranging a short notice meeting and collaborating but should not be used for communicating financial information, authorisations, decisions, historic or other information that must be retained for statutory or Council purposes e.g. it may be needed in a response to an FOI request or be part of an audit trail.

Instant messaging should only be used for informal communications with colleagues - any discussions pertinent to the Council's business should be conducted via email so that a formal record exists.

ICT facilities provided by the Council for email and instant messaging should not be used:

• for any unlawful endeavours including hacking.
• to request or provide any copyrighted material in a way which would infringe the rights of the copyright holder.
• for advocacy of any religious or political cause.
• in any way which breaches the council's policies & procedure including use of:
    • Harassment
    • Pornographic material
    • Remarks against any race, religion or sex
    • Remarks which could be constrained as sexual harassment
    • Remarks which are derogatory or defamatory towards any person

Whilst it can sometimes be helpful to maintain a chain of e-mails on a particular subject, long chains of e-mails are best avoided. Information from e-mails may be required to

answer Data Protection/FOI requests and difficulties can arise if a chain of e-mails refers to data which should not be disclosed. Users should consider this when responding to or creating an e-mail chain and, where appropriate, create a fresh message.

The Council's Social Media Policy provides further guidance relating to unacceptable use of email & Internet with respect to the use of Social Networking (for more information please see the Social Media Policy on the intranet).

In relation to email and IM, the following uses are specifically excluded:

- The sending of bulk email/IM, including excessive use of mailing lists, which is unrelated to the legitimate activities of the Council and is likely to cause offence or inconvenience to those receiving it;
- The sending of sensitive messages using email/IM, for example employment decisions. If in doubt, alternative methods of communication should be employed, or advice sought;
- Subscribing to external web sites and mailing lists using your Council email address for personal use not related to your Council work. For example: Amazon, EBay, etc.

Security and Risk

Mid Ulster District Council recognises that there are risks associated with users accessing and handling information in order to conduct official Council business.

These include;

Loss of Council Information
Financial penalties for failing to meet legal obligations
Risk to the safety and privacy of service users
Impact on the ability to share information with other bodies
Damage to the Council's reputation
Non-compliance with this policy could have a significant effect on the efficient operation of the Council and may result in financial loss and an inability to provide necessary services to our customers.

All emails arriving at the Council are scanned for computer virus and spam (unsolicited bulk email) content before delivery and any matching emails are rejected. However, email scanning can never be 100% accurate. Additionally, attachments sent via IM are not virus scanned during transfer so users are expected to take suitable measures to ensure that they prevent the introduction and transmission of computer viruses.

Some guidelines are listed below to minimise risk but the full code of practice is detailed in appendix 2. Contact the ICT Service Desk if you require advice:

i Do not open attachments received from unsolicited or untrusted sources;

ii Be wary of unsolicited attachments. If in doubt, contact the sender to check before opening the attachment;

iii Do not email/IM attachments known to be infected with a virus;

iv Check that suitable anti-virus software is installed on the computer you're using and that it's up-to-date;

Although the Council uses (where available) secure methods for email transmission and user access, email confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Unless special measures are undertaken by the user, all emails should be regarded as insecure. Personal, confidential or sensitive information should not be sent in the body of an email. Where there is a business need to send personal, confidential or sensitive information via email then the information must be encrypted before it is attached to the email.

For guidance on how to encrypt and protect documents please contact the ICT Service Desk or consult the intranet learning section.

Credit card information

Credit Card Information must never be sent via email/IM or asked to be sent via email/IM. Any credit card information received via email/IM must be immediately deleted by the recipient and must not be printed, copied, replied to, forwarded on or processed for payment. The sender must be informed that no payment was taken, their credit card details were deleted and that they must use an approved method of payment. The incident must also be reported to the ICT Service Desk as there are further processes needed to remove the data from our systems.

Email as Records

Emails and Messages are a form of record keeping as well as a means to communicate. Accordingly, they should be treated and managed as an informational asset.
Information held on Council equipment is considered to be part of the corporate record and provides a record of staff activities.

Non-work email accounts **must not** be used to conduct or support official MUDC business. Councillors and users must ensure that any messages containing sensitive information must be sent from an official council email.

Ownership & Monitoring

The associated accounts and their stored data within the Councils Email and IM systems are the property of the Council which allows the Council the right, where necessary, to monitor/access emails and IMs

Data Protection and Freedom of Information

As well as the guidelines outlined in the ICT Security Policy and the Data Protection Policy, the following guidelines are specific to email and logged IM chats:

i Under the Data Protection Act, all email transmissions and logged IM chats which contain personal data may be disclosed in response to a request for disclosure, brought forward (through normal procedure), via the Councils Data Protection Officer.

ii 'Personal data' can include a sender's opinion of another person;

iii The Councils internal and external use of email systems, for bona fide purposes connecting with its operations, is registered with the Data Protection Registrar;

vi The use of email, as a means of internal as well as external communication, falls within the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998;

vii Under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, email users who have access to email addresses have a responsibility not to disclose email addresses or email distribution lists to an unauthorised third party without permission of the owner of the email address.

Emails and logged IM chats are also potentially subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.

Confidentiality

All staff are under a general requirement to maintain the confidentiality of information. There are also particular responsibilities under Data Protection legislation to maintain the confidentiality of personal data. If any member of staff is unsure of whether they should pass on information, they should consult their line manager or the Head of IT for further advice..

Staff must make every effort to ensure that the confidentiality of email is appropriately maintained.
Care should be taken when addressing all emails, but particularly where they include SENSITIVE or RESTRICTED information, to prevent accidental transmission to unintended recipients.

Sensitive Information and Email

When creating an email, the information contained within it must be assessed and classified by the owner according to the content, when appropriate. The classification will determine how the email, and the information contained within it, should be protected and who should be allowed access to it.

There are several ways to mark emails – it is down to the discretion of staff to decide which the best way for them to do this is. It is possible to use Outlook to mark emails as 'Private' or 'Confidential' – guidance on how to do this can be found on the intranet. Alternatively, staff can include the classification of the information in the subject line of the email, this would be seen before the recipient sees the body of the email. It is imperative the recipient of any SENSITIVE or RESTRICTED information is aware that this is the classification of the information.

Instant messaging should never be used to communicate PROTECTED or RESTRICTED information.

Retention

The council will retain a copy of emails within an email archive and individuals can access their archive through the intranet.

Note: IM conversations are not routinely retained or archived, but may be forensically recovered if required for criminal or disciplinary investigation purposes in accordance with the above authorisations.

Mail on Mobile devices

MUDC Mail allows for the synchronisation of emails, calendar, tasks, contacts and other mailbox features to a mobile device such as a smart phone.

It must be recognised that these devices are more susceptible to theft and/or loss and therefore staff must adhere to the following:

Only approved mobile phones devices must be used to synchronise MUDC Mail Accounts to. Approved devices have been selected to ensure that safeguards are in place to protect any data downloaded to the device e.g. the use encryption and PIN numbers.

Staff wishing to synchronise their MUDC Mail accounts to their personal mobile phone must comply with the criteria set out in this policy and acceptable use policy.

Staff must only request the functionality required to undertake their job role e.g. if only calendar access is required then staff should not request all mailbox functionality to be synchronised to the device.

Due to their relatively small size staff must take extra care when responding to emails or sending an email message from a mobile device, especially with regard to ensuring that the correct email recipient has been selected. These devices usually have very small key pads or on screen keyboards which make it easy to input an incorrect character which may result in the misdirection of an email.

Any loss of a mobile device being used to synchronise a MUDC Mail account must be reported to the ICT Service Desk at the earliest opportunity so as to minimise the risk of loss of data.

Monitoring of Email and IM Usage

All users should be aware that messaging and email usage is monitored and recorded centrally. The monitoring of (outgoing and incoming) traffic will be undertaken so that Council:

- Can plan and manage its resources effectively.
- Ensures that users act only in accordance with policies and procedures.
- Ensures that standards are maintained.
- Can prevent and detect any crime.
- Can investigate any unauthorised use.
- Complies with informational security and legislation requirements.

Whilst respecting the privacy of authorised users, under the Data Protection Code of Practice, Council maintains its legal right to monitor and audit the use of email by authorised users under the Lawful Business Practice Regulations 2000. Users should be aware that deletion of e-mail from individual accounts does not necessarily result in permanent deletion from the Council's ICT systems.

Note: IM conversations are not routinely retained or archived, but may be forensically recovered if required for criminal or disciplinary investigation purposes in accordance with the above authorisations.

Access to another employee's email is **strictly forbidden** unless:- (a) the employee has given their consent, (b) their email needs to be accessed by their line manager for specific

work purposes whilst they are absent or (c) an appropriately authorised investigation is being undertaken .

In the case of (b) and (c) authorisations must be obtained from the corresponding Director or Chief Executive.

Access granted to email and network accounts must be for a specific purpose and **proportionate to the need** having regard to the rights and freedoms of the employee and the expectations of a reasonable level of privacy with regard to personal communications. Managers must only open emails which are relevant to the business need and/or purpose stated.

Shared Mailboxes

Where several users are responsible for the same area of work and require access to the same emails then a member of the Hed of service may request for the creation of a shared mailbox with an associated, generic, email address that represents the shared area of work to the ICT Service Desk. The request must include the names of at least 2 staff who will be in overall management of the shared mailbox and any other names of users who require access before it is considered and approved.

An email address allocated to a shared mailbox must be generic enough so that it encompasses the area of work shared by the users accessing that mailbox but it must not be so generic that there would be an overlap with users performing a similar role in another part of the Council who would not have access to that shared mailbox.

A shared mailbox does not have an associated username and password as users must log on with their personally-allocated username and password. This will give them access to their own mailbox and to the shared mailbox.

Out-of-Office Message, Disclaimer and Signatures

Staff users must set the Out-of-Office option when they are away stating an alternative email contact for work-related matters.

Each email leaving the organisation should include a compliant signature as prescribed in Appendix 3.

Emails sent by staff to recipients outside the Council will automatically include an approved disclaimer (as per appendix 1)':

Note: All official fax cover sheets must also carry this or a similar disclaimer. It is important no information is faxed without this disclaimer being present.

Account Activation and Termination

Account changes for staff to receive email services must first be approved by a head of service. Any changes to an existing email account must be requested through the ICT Help Desk.

Staff mailboxes and messaging accounts will be deleted at the termination of the staff member's employment.
Where explicitly requested in writing by a head of service, a mailbox of a staff member who has left may be kept open for a period of not more than two months, with an Out of Office reply directing enquiries to a different email address.

Any email addressed to a named staff member who has left may NOT be redirected to another email address. Such emails may contain personal, confidential or inappropriate content that may place the Council or Staff at risk if it is opened.

Staff mobile devices which are used to connect to MUDC provided mailboxes or which contain data owned by or held by the Council will be wiped at the termination of a staff member's employment.

Web based Email

Mid Ulster District council's email can be accessed from any computer or device with internet capabilities and the required security measures. The web based version of MUDC email can be accessed by navigating to https://login.microsoftonline.com/

Policy Compliance

If any user is found to have breached this policy, they may be subject to Mid Ulster District Council's disciplinary procedure.

If a criminal offence is considered to have been committed further action may be taken to assist in the prosecution of the offender(s).
If you do not understand the implications of this policy or how it may apply to you, seek advice from ICT services.

In the event of an accidental breach of this policy staff members must advise their line manager immediately so that appropriate steps can be taken to mitigate or remove any possible risk(s) e.g. the exposure and/ or loss of sensitive or person/ patient identifiable data.

7.0 Impact Assessment

- Equality screening and impact assessment

The policy will be equality screened using Mid Ulster District Council's Equality Scheme when agreed.

Staff and financial resources
The systems to implement and provide email, messaging and monitoring are provided and resources through the IT services budget and resources.

The primary systems are Office 365 and Cisco Jabber requiring internet access and network connectivity to back office telephony.

8.0 Support and Advice

For further information and advice about the policy, please ICT Service Desk Int 22222
Or alternatively Head of IT: Barry O'Hagan: Ext 23312

User Training and Support
Initial training for all front line staff will be provided
New start will receive training as part of on-going inductions for new staff affected.

Implementation of the policy may require the release of staff across the organisation to be briefed via team meeting.

Users will be provided with the following support, guidance and training materials on the intranet:.

9.0 Communication

The policy will be communicated internally using a range of appropriate internal communication methods, team meetings and on the council intranet.
The policy will also from part of the induction process for all new staff.

10.0 Monitoring and Review Arrangements

The effectiveness of the policy will be monitored using feedback from those staff involved in its implementation and data collated on performance against standards.

Formal review, with any appropriate recommendations for change, will take place 1 year after implementation.

Appendix 1

Email Disclaimer on all email leaving the organisation;

"This email is solely intended for the recipient identified above ('intended recipient'). The contents of this email are confidential and may be subject to legal professional privilege. Only the intended recipient may rely on the contents of this email. The contents of this email do not express the views of Mid Ulster District Council ("the Council") unless otherwise clearly stated. The sender (including the Council) cannot guarantee that this message or any attachment is virus free. If you receive this email in error please immediately report the error to the sender and permanently delete this email from all storage devices. Any person who opens or otherwise accesses an email from the sender in the future does so at their own risk and acknowledges and agrees that the sender (and the Council) is not responsible for any loss or damage suffered by any person. As a public body, the Council may be required to disclose this email (or any response to it) under Data Protection and/or Freedom of Information legislation, unless the information contained is covered by an exemption."

Appendix 2

Code of Practice for Email and Instant messaging ("Acceptable Use")

All users should adhere to the following guidelines for appropriate use:

Check your email regularly - once a day is an absolute minimum. For staff users, depending on the nature of the post, email may need checking on a more regular basis. Staff must recognise that certain communications may be time critical.

Do not expect a recipient to be constantly checking their email/IM or be available to respond immediately. If you require an immediate response then email/IM is not the correct method of communication and you should use a phone call instead, ideally to a relevant role-based telephone number provided for such purposes e.g. the ICT Service Desk on 22222.

If you use the 'Urgent' feature in email then it lets the recipient know that you consider the matter to be urgent. However, the recipient has their own workload to manage and, as such, the email may not be deemed urgent by them.

The use of 'Delivery Receipt' or 'Read Receipt' on an email can be deemed to imply a lack of trust in the recipient and so should not be used unless absolutely necessary. It should be noted that a 'Delivery Receipt' or 'Read Receipt' response is not guaranteed and may be blocked by the recipient's email system or the recipient's email client.

Be polite. Messages sent by email/IM can often seem abrupt, even when this is not the intention. Use professional courtesy and discretion. The use of all upper-case text in either the subject or the body of an email/IM should also be avoided as this is deemed to be the equivalent of shouting;

Before you send an email/IM, read it through to make sure it really does say what you want it to say;

Do not say anything in an email/IM that you would not be prepared to say to someone face to face;

The 'Subject' line must be clear and concise.
The body of the email should be as brief as possible and clear and unambiguous.

All emails that are used to conduct or support official Mid Ulster council business must be sent using a "@midulstercouncil.org" address.

Do not reply "With History" if it is not necessary especially if it incorporates a large attachment. Use 'reply all' and distribution lists with caution in order to keep the number of messages to a minimum and reduce the risk of sending messages to the wrong people;

Messages should be addressed to those from whom an action or response is expected, 'Cc' or 'Bcc' should be used for other recipients for whom the message is for information only;

Respect peoples' privacy and consider this aspect before forwarding messages;

Do not try to carry out confidential or sensitive tasks or express controversial views via email/IM;

Enter a meaningful title in the 'Subject' field at the top of an email to help the reader anticipate the content correctly. Try to keep to one subject per message to help avoiding unnecessary confusion;

Don't use all or part of someone else's message without acknowledgement.

Don't edit someone else's message without making it clear what the changes are that you have made. Don't distribute other people's messages without permission;

Avoid subscribing to unnecessary mailing lists. Unsubscribe from mailing lists when they are no longer required;

Do not forward email/IM "chain letters". These are emails/IMs which either ask you to forward them on to all your friends (or to everyone you know) or which state that something bad will happen if you do not forward them. Emails/IMs of this type, which are warning about something (e.g. computer viruses), are almost certainly hoaxes. If you are unsure about any email/IM that you've received then contact the ICT Service Desk for information and help.

Staff are required to use the approved Council email signature for all email communications as set out in appendix 3.

No other information should be added to email signatures.

Staff users should ensure that their calendar in the Councils email system is kept up-to-date so that colleagues can easily confirm their availability when booking appointments and arranging meetings.

Mail Box Housekeeping

Delete unwanted or unnecessary email. It is the user's responsibility to manage their email folders and keep within the set quota limits.

It is good practice to manage email accounts like any other filing system. - On receiving an email users should try to either respond and delete, save or delete it.

In order to ensure that the systems enabling email are available and perform to their optimum, users should endeavour to avoid sending unnecessary messages. In particular, the use of the "global list" of e-mail addresses is discouraged and should only be sent following direction from the Head of Communications and Marketing .

Email messages can be used to carry other files or messages either embedded in the message or attached to the message. If it is necessary to provide a file to another person and network access permissions allow, then a reference to where the file exists should be sent rather than a copy of the file.

Junk Mail

There may be instances where a user will receive unsolicited mass junk email or spam. It is advised that users delete such messages *without reading them*. Do not reply to the email. Even to attempt to remove the email address from the distribution list can confirm the existence of an address following a speculative e-mail.

Be wary of how you use your midulstercouncil.org email address – it should only be used for recognised professional bodies and official communications.

Chain letter e-mails (those that request you forward the message to one or more additional recipients who are unknown to the original sender) **must not** be forwarded using council facilities or messaging systems.

If the event with issues of repetitive Junk email or spam please contact the ICT service desk for assistance.

The use of COUNCIL-provided email is subject to all relevant laws, policies, and codes Of practice and guidelines. All users must comply with the COUNCIL's *Information Security Policy*, the *Data Security Policy* and the '*code of practice here.*

Personal use
COUNCIL email services are provided to staff, and approved third parties to conduct official Council-related business. Personal emails may be sent using the COUNCIL system so long as they do not breach any policy, Code of Practice and or other terms and conditions of employment.

Employees must regard this facility as a privilege that should normally be exercised in their own time without detriment to the job and not abused. Inappropriate or excessive personal use may result in disciplinary action and/or removal of email facilities. Staff should be aware that email will be subject to monitoring. There is no absolute right for staff to use the email facilities for personal use

Council Business

Official COUNCIL business should not normally be conducted from email accounts other than those provided by the COUNCIL. Although it is recognised that this might be necessary in some exceptional circumstances, users should be also be aware that the use of third-party email providers for COUNCIL work may breach contractual, legislative, ethical and policy requirements.

Simple "DO NOTS"

Users must not send messages or message content that may harass or offend (including racist, sexist, defamatory or obscene material).

Users must not send messages from someone else's account except under proper "delegate" and "send on behalf of" arrangements which retain individual accountability.

Users should not normally "auto forward" mail to a non-COUNCIL email system (this includes internet email systems such as Hotmail or Gmail)

Users should not normally enter into contractual agreements by email.
Users must not use COUNCIL email for personal gain or profit.
Users must not use COUNCIL email to represent themselves as someone else.
Users are encouraged not to use COUNCIL email as a means of storing information. All important information should be stored within the network drive
Attachments should be detached from messages and saved appropriately.

COUNCIL email should not be accessed by any end user device that has been deliberately or knowingly cracked or jailbroken, or that may otherwise prove a threat to the Confidentiality, Integrity and Accessibility of COUNCIL user accounts, networks and data.

Under the terms of this policy no person shall monitor another user's email account unless written authorisation has been granted to do so. The monitoring and or inspection of email accounts may only occur in accordance the *Information Security Policy* and the *Monitoring and Logging Policy*.

The COUNCIL, in accordance with its legal and audit obligations, and for legitimate operational purposes, reserves the right to access and disclose the contents users' email messages.

Email Distribution Lists and Mass Emails
Email distribution (group) lists provided by the Council must only be used for matters of Council business. To send to such a distribution list the sender must be either an administrator/moderator

of the distribution list. Any multiple use of email distribution lists provided should be avoided unless absolutely necessary;

A valid 'Reply-To' address must be used on any mass email with additional contact details given in the body of the email.

Do not put the name of the distribution list or a large list of names in the 'To' or 'Cc' fields but use the 'Bcc' field instead. This ensures the list of recipients will not be displayed when the email is sent out and prevents recipients from accidentally sending their reply to the whole list.

Do not send mass emails with attachments but try to contain the information within the body of the email or, as a last resort, in a web link. Where a web link is used then it must also provide information as to how the linked content can be accessed manually without clicking on the link. This is to help the recipient distinguish the email from a malicious 'phishing' email.

The email distribution lists are maintained by ICT and are automatically populated using information from the Human Resources or Affiliate Systems.

Web based Email

Mid Ulster District council's email can be accessed from any computer or device with internet capabilities and the required security measures. The web based version of MUDC email can be accessed by navigating to https://login.microsoftonline.com/

Appendix 3

MUDC Email Signature

Email signatures should contain the following information.

Name
Job Title
Telephone Number
Mobile Telephone Number
Provide | Location Address |
Email Address

The font must be Arial 12.

Directorate/department specific additions/amendments to this format must be approved by the Head of Communications and marketing.
The Council Logo with Full text is optional as this requires email to go out as HTML format and should be no wider than pixels and maintain in the correct aspect ratio as per the Council Branding Guidelines available on the intranet.

Maximum Actual Size

Print Management Policy

Document Control	
Policy / Procedure Owner (name, role & section)	Barry O Hagan
Policy/ Procedure Author (name, role & section)	Barry O Hagan
Version	v1.0
Consultation	SM Team Yes Trade Unions
Equality Screened by		**Date**	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes / No	**Date**	
Approved By	Policy & Resources Committee	**Date**	
Adopted By	Council	**Date**	
Review Date		**By Whom**	
Circulation	Mid Ulster District Council staff
Document Linkages	Code of Conduct for Councillors Code of Conduct for Council Employees Communication Strategy Communication Policy Freedom of Information Policy Language Policy Uniform Policy

Contents

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Policy Aims & Objectives

This policy gives detailed guidance to all staff on :

How the Council will allocate printers and multi-functional devices or MFDs (which typically provide photocopying, printing and scanning) to departments, teams and individual users.

In addition this policy sets the guidelines on printing volumes and the best use of printing devices, in order to enhance print quality, minimize costs to the Council, and reduce the environmental impacts of Councils printing (power, paper, ink/toner and other consumables).

3.0 Policy Scope

This policy applies to all staff within Mid Ulster District council.
The purpose of this policy is to support the implementation of a cost effective and efficient print management service in Mid Ulster District Council.

4.0 Linkage to Corporate Plan

The policy is aligned with the corporate themes

Delivering for our people :High performing services focused on customer need and value for money .

Focusing on performance: Embed a culture of continuous improvement which ensures the effective, efficient and sustained delivery of council services to the people of the Mid Ulster district.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

All Staff have a responsibility to

- To adhere to the guidelines contained within the Print Management Policy
- To notify IT services of any changes within the department e.g address, staff, charge codes
- To ensure that funds are available to pay for services and materials ordered.
- To familiarise themselves with devices and use hardware in a suitable and respectful manner.
- To attend training provided.

The IT Departments will be responsible for the implementation of this policy. Representatives of the IT service will meet with SMT and senior mangers to agree their requirements (within the context of this policy), and provide all relevant equipment (either MFDs or printers).
Departmental printing arrangements will be reviewed on an annual basis to reflect any changes in requirements and to ensure that they remain cost effective.

6.0 Procedure and Implementation

General Policy statement

In order to operate efficiently the Council must ensure that its assets are procured, deployed and managed effectively. The following key elements will govern this print policy:

- All printing devices, MFDs, laser printers etc., will be networked.

- All printers and MFDs must be approved prior to use by the IT Department

- Individual printers will be allocated on an essential use basis (please see details below)

- Printer/MFD settings will be defaulted to A4, mono and double sided, where possible. Specific overrides will be required for A3, one sided and colour prints.

- Recommended levels of print volumes for different items of print equipment will be set as part of this policy (Please see details below)

- Only paper supplied by the council will be used in all printers/MFDs.

- Pull printing not retrieved after 24 hours will be automatically deleted from MFD print queues

- Printing costs, based on actual usage, will be recharged to each cost centre and Central Service Departments on a regular basis

- Ratios of printing devices to staff will be agreed as part of this policy (please see details below)

- Printers and MFDs will be set to maximum power saving configurations

- Faults with printing devices, or requests for consumable items should be made via the IT Department help desk.

Print Volumes

The cost of printing varies depending on the print device used, with in-use costs per page typically being higher on smaller printing devices. We would therefore recommend the following print hierarchy:
Central MFDs should be the first point of printing, and should certainly be used for any multiple copy print jobs that have 20 pages or more
MFDs should be used for mid – small range printing requirements
Local network Printers and MFDs , if available, should only be used for small range printing

Colour should only be used when strictly required (it should be noted that the cost of a colour copy on a leased MFD is the same, regardless of whether a full colour page or just a small colour logo or strapline is printed).

Please also note that each MFDs has an assumed life cycle based on typical print volumes (i.e for small, medium and high range machines). If problems arise with an MFD these may be caused by over-usage beyonfd its expected print cycle.

Provision of MFDs

MFDs throughout the Council are to be provided centrally from ict department with a typical minimum rental period of 3 years. Essential supplies – such as toner cartridges – are covered as part of the cost of the lease on a per copy basis.

Provision of Printers

Printers are typically purchased outright and are maintained by the in-house IT support team. Essential supplies such as toner cartridges are purchased as and when required through a central procuremnt framework.

All departments will be provided with a Multi-Functional Device with a minimum capacity to print, photocopy and scan A4 and A3 black and white (mono) documents. All MFDs will also have the facility to provide secure printing (i.e the ability to hold printing until a pin number has been entered). The speed and size of the machine will depend on local requirements (as will the availability of a colour printing option).

Depending on staff numbers and specific requirements:

- A second MFD may be justified to provide a backup/volume service
- Alternatively a smaller printing device may be required to provide backup
- Where medium to high volume colour printing requirements exist, a colour MFD or dedicated colour printer may be provided
- Where high quality colour print requirements exist, eg to produce certificates, this may be provided by IT Services as below, or, exceptionally, through provision of a dedicated high quality printer.

Typically staffing numbers of 1-15 would require one mid range MFD to support their printing requirements. These units would be typically leased.

Individual/Personal Printers

It may be appropriate for the allocation of a small, local, individual/'personal', low throughput printer in the following circumstances :
Remote/isolated office with 3 or less staff (this would be as an alternative to a nearby MFD)
Staff with a mobility disability that would make it hard for them to walk to a shared printer
Point printing solutions that may be required – enrolment payments, ticketing and other sales outlets, receipting requirements, external functions

Where small volume colour printing requirements exist, in addition to larger volume monochrome requirements (these would only be provided in circumstance where no local colour-enabled MFD was available).
Local printers will only be available in exceptional circumstances and with the explicit agreement of the Head of IT.

Toners, Supplies & Maintenance

Where toners and other supplies/maintenance are part of an MFD lease deal, you should contact the supplier in the first instance who will supply key items .
For other printing devices toner and other supplies should be requested through the IT Service Desk. Toners will be recharged to departmental budget codes in order to manage consumption and ensure print costs are appropriately allocated.
All toner cartridges will be appropriately recycled.
The IT Department shall be responsible for the maintenance and repair of all directly purchased printers.

Paper Supplies

Paper is provided on request from the procurement Unit and strategically stock in admin centre stores. Please email paper requests to procurement @midulstercouncil.org

Print Management Software

In order to fully manage all print output across the Council, we will utilise specialist print management software packages that enable the control and release of print jobs to requestors and will allow for the collection and reporting of management information, such as how many pages are being printed, where and by whom/which department; and visibility of resource utilisation etc .
Technical Support

First line support for MFDs will be provided by IT Unit who will be able to resolve commonly occurring problems. Further technical support will also be provided by the MFD contract supplier (xxxxx).

7.0 Impact Assessment

o   Equality screening and impact assessment

The policy will be equality screened using Mid Ulster District Council's Equality Scheme when agreed.

o   Staff and financial resources

Initial training for all front line staff will be provided and financed via the Capacity Building Programme (January 2015 – March 2015) and thereafter via an on-going customer service training programme.

Implementation of the policy requires the release of staff across the organisation to be briefed via team meeting.

8.0 Support and Advice

For further information about the policy, please contact Barry O'Hagan:

User Training and Support

Users will be provided with the following support and training from the intranet:

- How to change default print settings
- How to use Secure Print
- How to use any print management software in operation
- How to access alternative printers
-

In all cases users will be set up to use alternative printers in adjacent areas so that they will still be able to print should their primary printer be unavailable.

9.0 Communication

The policy will be communicated internally using a range of appropriate internal communication methods, team meeting and on the council intranet.
The policy will also from part of the induction process for all new staff.

10.0 Monitoring and Review Arrangements

The effectiveness of the policy will be monitored using feedback from those staff involved in its implementation and data collated on performance against standards.

Formal review, with any appropriate recommendations for change, will take place 1 year after implementation.