



08 October 2020

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee to be held in  
The Chamber, Dungannon and by virtual means Council Offices, Circular Road,  
Dungannon, BT71 6DT on Thursday, 08 October 2020 at 19:00 to transact the  
business noted below.

A link to join the meeting through the Council's remote meeting platform will follow.

Yours faithfully

Anthony Tohill  
Chief Executive

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## AGENDA

### OPEN BUSINESS

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest  
Members should declare any financial and non-financial interests they have in  
the items of business for consideration, identifying the relevant agenda item  
and the nature of their interest.
3. Chair's Business

### Matters for Decision

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## 12. Member Services

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**Items restricted in accordance with Section 42, Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014. The public will be asked to withdraw from the meeting at this point.**

### Matters for Decision

- 15. The Process for Appointment to Chief Executive
- 16. Acting Chief Executive Arrangements
- 17. Staffing Matters for Decision
- 18. Staffing Matters for Decision – Planning Department
- 19. Staffing Matters – Allocation Staff Resources – Community Development
- 20. Greenvale Leisure Centre; Pool Under-croft Emergency Pipework Repairs
- 21. Lease Agreement for Davagh Solar Walkway
- 22. NILGOSC Superannuation Scheme – Additional Voluntary Contributions update

### Matters for Information

- 23. Confidential Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 3 September 2020
- 24. Staffing Matters for Information
- 25. Staffing Matters for Information – Deferral of Director of Environment & Property's Departure and Redundancy Settlement
- 26. Contracts and DAC
- 27. Financial report for 5 months ended 31 August 2020

<b>Report on</b>	Request(s) to Illuminate Council Property – October 2020
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	P Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
<b>Contact Officer</b>	P Moffett, Head of Democratic Services

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	<p>To consider requests received to illuminate/light up the Council's three designated properties to raise awareness and mark;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the United Nations 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary</li> <li>• International Day of Disabled People</li> <li>• World Mental Health Day</li> <li>• World Pancreatic Cancer Day</li> <li>• World Stroke Day</li> </ul>
1.2	Details on request received are set out below.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	The Council has a policy and procedural arrangements in place to facilitate the illuminating/lighting-up of its designated properties from requests made by charitable organisations for charitable causes. The designated properties are the Bridewell, the Burnavon and Ranfurly.
2.2	The policy requires that, requests be considered by the Council's Policy & Resources Committee. The policy is currently under review by a Working Group of Councillors and the Group met on 16 <sup>th</sup> September.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p>Requests:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To illuminate the designated properties on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October for World Mental Health Day 2020 – the colour Green. Request made by a member of the public</li> <li>2. To illuminate the designated properties on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United Nations – the colour Blue. Request made by the United Nations Association (UNA) Northern Ireland</li> <li>3. To illuminate the designated properties on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> October for World Stroke Day- colour Purple. Request was made by the Northern Ireland Stoke Association</li> </ol>

3.2	4. To illuminate the designated properties on Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup> November for World Pancreatic Cancer Day – the colour purple. Request was made by Pancreatic Cancer UK (NI Communities Engagement Lead)
	5. To illuminate the designated properties on Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup> December for the International Day of Disabled People – colour purple. Request was made by Disability Action
	On a review of the requests, it has been determined that Requests 3 - 5 are within the scope of the existing policy and procedural arrangements. Requests 1 and 2 above are partially within policy scope.
3.3.	As referenced at 2.2 the policy is currently under review by a Working Group of Councillors.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: Not applicable
	Human: Not applicable
	Risk Management: Not applicable
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications:  Not applicable
	Rural Needs Implications:  Not applicable
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	That the Committee consider the requests to light-up the Council designated properties for; World Mental Health Day on 10 <sup>th</sup> October; the UN 75 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary on 24 <sup>th</sup> October; World Stroke Day on 29 <sup>th</sup> October; World Pancreatic Cancer Day on 19 <sup>th</sup> November and International Day of the Disabled Person on 3 <sup>rd</sup> December 2020.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	Not applicable



<b>Report on</b>	Mid Ulster District Council Draft Equality Scheme (2021-2026)
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Philip Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Ann McAleer, Corporate Policy & Equality Officer

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	x

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	This report is to seek committee comment and approval for the draft Equality Scheme of Mid Ulster Council, reviewed in line with guidance from the Equality Commission. Subject to member consideration and comment, the Scheme will be made available for a 12 week public consultation in line with Equality Commission guidance.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	This Scheme has been reviewed in line with Equality Commission Five Year Equality Scheme review guidance. The guidance states that, <i>'the purpose of a 5-year review is to examine how those arrangements have been applied and to assess how effective they have been in assisting public authorities to comply with the Section 75 duties'</i> .
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p>Following a review by Officers, together with experience of its being implemented from November 2016, the following is a summary of the proposed amendments to the Scheme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusive communications statement be added (Page 1)</li> <li>• Council Chair updated (Page 2)</li> <li>• The Good Relations reporting committee has been amended to Policy &amp; Resources except in the case of quasi-judicial matters. In such instances matters referred go back to the committee from which they originated (Page 20)</li> <li>• Policy review process extended from 2 to 4 years (to reflect the Council term) (Page 25)</li> <li>• Equality Consultee list has been updated (Appendix 3)</li> <li>• Delivery timeframe updated (Appendix 4)</li> <li>• Good Relations Working Group meeting schedule updated (Appendix 6)</li> </ul>

3.2	The changes are not considered as being substantive, which is the trigger for require Equality Commission approval. The Commission have however requested that they are made aware of when the Scheme is being consulted upon, so as to provide any comment/feedback where necessary.
3.3.	The Equality Screening Form has been revised as part of the review process. The Equality Commission have been provided with an opportunity to comment on the changes. Their response indicated that the changes were not significant and that the revised form remains compliant with the Equality Scheme.
3.4	The reviewed Scheme together with the revised equality screening form and action plans are required to be in place from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: Costs associated with undertaking a consultation
	Human: Officer time
	Risk Management: N/A
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: None
	Rural Needs Implications: Completed and available on request
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	That committee comment and consider as appropriate the reviewed Equality Scheme for approval to move towards public consultation.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	Appendix A: Draft Equality Scheme 2021-2026 Appendix B: Revised Equality Screening Form

**DRAFT Equality Scheme**  
**for**  
**Mid Ulster District Council**  
**2021 - 2026**

**Contact Details**

Philip Moffett  
Head of Democratic Services  
Mid Ulster District Council

Telephone: 03000 132 132

Email: [philip.moffett@midulstercouncil.org](mailto:philip.moffett@midulstercouncil.org)

**Drawn up in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.**

This information can be made available in alternative formats, such as audio, braille, easy read or large print and may be provided in alternative languages, upon request. Please contact Mid Ulster District Council's Corporate Policy & Equality Officer on 03000 132 132 Ex 24612 or via [ann.mcaleer@midulstercouncil.org](mailto:ann.mcaleer@midulstercouncil.org)

## **Foreword**

*To be completed on approval*

**Councillor Cathal Mallaghan**  
Chair  
Mid Ulster District Council

**Anthony Tohill**  
Chief Executive  
Mid Ulster District Council

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## **Chapter 1      Introduction**

### **Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998**

1.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires the Council to comply with two statutory duties:

#### **Section 75 (1)**

In carrying out our functions relating to Northern Ireland we are required 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 or sexual orientation
- men and women generally
- persons with a disability and persons without
- persons with dependants and persons without.

#### **Section 75 (2)**

In addition, without prejudice to the obligations above, in carrying out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland we are required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

“Functions” include the “powers and duties” of a public authority<sup>1</sup>. This includes our employment and procurement functions.

Please see below under “Who we are and what we do” for a detailed explanation of our current functions.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 98 (1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.



## How we propose to fulfil the Section 75 duties in relation to the relevant functions of Mid Ulster Council

1.2 Schedule 9 4. (1) of the Act requires the Council as a designated public authority to set out in an equality scheme how it proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by Section 75 in relation to its relevant functions. This equality scheme is intended to fulfil that statutory requirement. It is both a statement of our arrangements for fulfilling the Section 75 statutory duties and our plan for their implementation.

1.3 We are committed to the discharge of our Section 75 obligations in all parts of our organisation and we will commit the necessary available resources in terms of people, time and money to ensure that the Section 75 statutory duties are complied with and that our equality scheme can be implemented effectively.

1.4 Through the production of our community plan, we will promote equality of opportunity and, without prejudice to this, we will have regard to the desirability to promote good relations and social well-being<sup>2</sup>.

## Who we are and what we do

The roles and functions of councils, established in the Local Government Act 1972 and in other legislation, fall into three types:

- **Direct** - councils are responsible for the provision and management of services
- **Representative** - council nominees sit on statutory bodies
- **Consultative** - councils reflect community views in the operation of range of statutory bodies, community concerns or give views on proposed admin decisions

Mid Ulster District Council is responsible for:

Refuse Collection and Disposal  
Civic Amenity Provision  
Street Cleansing  
Public Conveniences

Recycling and Waste Management  
Grounds Maintenance  
Cemeteries  
Food Safety

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<sup>2</sup> Section 66(2)(a)(i) and (3)(a) of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014

Health & Safety  
Environmental Improvement  
Building Control  
Dog Control  
Sundry Licensing  
Leisure Centres  
Parks, Open Space, Play  
Arts, Heritage, Cultural Activities  
Community Development  
Planning Regulation

Environmental Protection  
Estates Management & Maintenance  
Inspection/Regulation of Buildings  
Enforcement Byelaws, Litter etc.  
Sports and Leisure Services  
Sports and Recreational facilities  
Community facilities  
Registration Births/Deaths/Marriages  
Good Relations  
Area Plan Development

The Council also has a role in:

- Community Planning
- Economic Development
- Community Safety & police monitoring
- Sports Development
- Local Tourism
- Rural Development and Regeneration
- Urban Regeneration
- Local Parking

## **Chapter 2      Our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the section 75 duties** (Schedule 9 4. (2) (a))

2.1 Some of our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties are outlined in other relevant parts of this equality scheme (see paragraphs 4.1, 4.3, 5.3, 5.6, 6.8, 6.9, 10.1 and 10.2 below).

In addition we have the following arrangements in place for assessing our compliance:

### **Responsibilities and reporting**

The management structure put in place to enable the Council to carry out its statutory responsibilities and to conduct its business are illustrated at Appendix 1.

### **Management Structure**

(a) Elected Members form the statutory body responsible for all the activities of the Council. The Chief Executive discharges the implementation of the Equality Scheme on behalf of the Council and has overall management responsibility in doing so.

(b) Chief Executive is responsible for the overall performance of the executive functions of the Council. He is the designated Accounting Officer with responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of Council policies, aims and objectives, whilst safeguarding public funds and assets. The Chief Executive is also the accountable Equal Opportunities Officer which includes accountability for delivery of the Section 75 statutory duties.

The day-to-day implementation of the Equality Scheme will be undertaken by a senior officer in the Council.

### **(c) Senior Management Team**

A Senior Management Team will assist the Chief Executive in the implementation of Council strategies and policies for key operational matters. It also plans and develops service delivery for and makes recommendations within national and local policy frameworks and

guidelines. The Senior Management Team ensures that equality considerations are included in Corporate Plans and Annual Business Plans. Performance of each Departmental area in relation to corporate business plans is reported to the Council. Implementation of equality and fairness is considered a corporate function for all members of the Senior Management Team.

(d) Individual Directorates

The organisational structure of the Council is based on outcomes and maximization of performance and service delivery and compliance. The quality of our service delivery and compliance is monitored regularly within the organisation. We are also accountable through both external audit (N I Audit Office) and internal auditor arrangements to ensure that standards are met in relation to 'Value for Money' and financial statements.

### **External Relationships**

We will continue to develop links with other Government agencies, independent sector providers, and voluntary and community groups representing all categories of persons specified in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, including Trade Unions and professional organisations' and individuals.

2.2 We are committed to the fulfilment of our Section 75 obligations in all parts of our work.

2.3 Responsibility for the effective implementation of our equality scheme lies with the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive is accountable to the Council for the development, implementation, maintenance and review of the equality scheme in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, including any good practice or guidance that has been or may be issued by the Equality Commission.

2.4 If you have any questions or comments regarding our equality scheme, please contact in the first instance the Equality Contact(s) outlined at the beginning of the document and we will respond to you as soon as possible.

2.5 Objectives and targets relating to the statutory duties will be integrated into our strategic and operational business plans<sup>3</sup>.

2.6 Employees' job descriptions and performance plans reflect their contributions to the discharge of the Section 75 statutory duties and implementation of the equality scheme, where relevant. The personal performance plans are subject to appraisal in the annual performance review.

2.7 The Council prepares an annual report on the progress we have made on implementing the arrangements set out in this equality scheme to discharge our Section 75 statutory duties (Section 75 annual progress report).

The Section 75 annual progress report will be sent to the Equality Commission by 31 August each year and will follow any guidance on annual reporting issued by the Equality Commission.

Progress on the delivery of Section 75 statutory duties will also be included in our (organisational) annual report.

2.8 Annual Section 75 progress reports for Mid Ulster Council will be made available on the Mid Ulster website, in due course, or by contacting the current nominated equality contacts on Page 5:

2.9 The Council will liaise closely with the Equality Commission to ensure that progress on the implementation of our equality scheme is maintained.

2.10 Progress on implementing this Equality Scheme will be reported annually to the Council. Progress will also be reported to the Senior Management Team as part of routine updates on implementation of Corporate and Annual Business Plans.

We will continue with our established meetings with members of the Statutory Duty Unit of the Local Government Staff Commission and will liaise with them on common issues with the Equality Commission on Section 75 matters as they arise.

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 4 'Timetable for measures proposed' and section 2.11 of this equality scheme.

## **Action plan/action measures**

2.11 The Council will develop an action plan to promote equality of opportunity. This action plan will be developed commencing following completion of the Audit of Inequalities. The Action Plan will include measures spanning both duties, equality of opportunity and good relations (Section 75(1) and (2)), where appropriate.

2.12 The action measures that will make up our action plan will be relevant to our functions. They will be developed and prioritised on the basis of an audit of inequalities. The audit of inequalities will gather and analyse information across the Section 75 categories<sup>4</sup> to identify the inequalities that exist for our service users and those affected by our policies<sup>5</sup>.

2.13 Action measures will be specific, measurable, linked to achievable outcomes, realistic and time bound. Action measures will include performance indicators and timescales for their achievement.

2.14 We will develop any action plans for a period of between one and five years in order to align them with our corporate and business planning cycles. Implementation of the action measures will be incorporated into our business planning process.

2.15 We will seek input from our stakeholders and consult on our action plan before we send it to the Equality Commission and thereafter when reviewing the plan as per 2.16 below.

2.16 We will monitor our progress on the delivery of our action measures annually and update the action plan as necessary to ensure that it remains effective and relevant to our functions and work.

2.17 The Council will inform the Commission of any changes or amendments to our action plan and will also include this information in our Section 75 annual progress report to the Commission. Our Section 75 annual progress report will incorporate information on progress we have made in implementing our action plans/action measures.

2.18 Once finalised, our action plan will be available on the Council's

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<sup>4</sup> See section 1.1 of this equality scheme for a list of these categories.

<sup>5</sup> See section 4.1 of this equality scheme for a definition of policies.

website or by contacting, the nominated Equality Officer. Alternative formats will be made available, by contacting the nominated Equality Officer.

It will also be made available for staff on the Council's Intranet Site.

## Chapter 3      **Our arrangements for consulting**

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (a)) - on matters to which a duty (S75 (1) or (2)) is likely to be relevant (including details of the persons to be consulted).

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (b)) on the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by us on the promotion of equality of opportunity.

3.1 We recognise the importance of consultation in all aspects of the implementation of our statutory equality duties. We will consult on our equality scheme, action measures, equality impact assessments and other matters relevant to the Section 75 statutory duties.

3.2 We are committed to carrying out consultation in accordance with the following principles (as contained in the Equality Commission's guidance '*Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)*')

3.2.1 All consultations will seek the views of those directly affected by the matter/policy, the Equality Commission, representative groups of Section 75 categories, other public authorities, voluntary and community groups, our staff and their trades unions and such other groups who have a legitimate interest in the matter, whether or not they have a direct economic or personal interest.

Initially all consultees (see Appendix 3), as a matter of course, will be notified (by email or post) of the matter/policy being consulted upon to ensure they are aware of all consultations. Thereafter, to ensure the most effective use of our consultees' resources, we will take a targeted approach to consultation for those consultees that may have a particular interest in the matter/policy being consulted upon and to whom the matter/policy is of particular relevance. This may include for example regional or local consultations, sectoral or thematic consultation etc.

3.2.2 Consultation with all stakeholders will begin as early as possible. We will engage with affected individuals and representative groups to identify how best to consult or engage with them. We will ask our consultees what their preferred consultation methods are and will give consideration to these. Methods of consultation could include:

- Face-to-face meetings
- Focus groups



- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/opt out of the consultation
- Internet discussions or
- Telephone consultations.

This list is not exhaustive and we may develop other additional methods of consultation more appropriate to key stakeholders and the matter being consulted upon.

3.2.3 We will consider the accessibility and format of every method of consultation we use in order to remove barriers to the consultation process. Specific consideration will be given as to how best to communicate with children and young people, people with disabilities (in particular people with learning disabilities) and minority ethnic communities. We take account of existing and developing good practice, including the Equality Commission's guidance *Let's Talk Let's Listen – Guidance for public authorities on consulting and involving children and young people (2008)*.

We will liaise across the Mid Ulster Region with as wide a representation as possible, including the consultation list as attached. Consultation will include all Section 75 groupings.

Information will be made available, on request, in alternative formats<sup>6</sup>, in a timely manner, usually within 15 working days. We will ensure that such consultees have equal time to respond.

3.2.4 Specific training is provided to those facilitating consultations to ensure that they have the necessary skills to communicate effectively with consultees.

3.2.5 To ensure effective consultation with consultees<sup>7</sup> on Section 75 matters, we will develop a programme of awareness raising on the Section 75 statutory duties and the commitments in our equality scheme by displaying information in this regard on the Mid Ulster website and providing this to any service user or other User groups / engagement / consultative panels established.

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<sup>6</sup> See Chapter 6 of our equality scheme for further information on alternative formats of information we provide.

<sup>7</sup> Please see Appendix 3 for a list of our consultees.

3.2.6 The consultation period lasts for a minimum of twelve weeks to allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves as part of the process of forming a view. However, in exceptional circumstances when this timescale is not feasible (for example implementing EU Directives or UK wide legislation, meeting Health and Safety requirements, addressing urgent public health matters or complying with Court judgements), we may shorten timescales to eight weeks or less before the policy is implemented. We may continue consultation thereafter and will review the policy as part of our monitoring commitments<sup>8</sup>.

Where, under these exceptional circumstances, we must implement a policy immediately, as it is beyond our authority's control, we may consult after implementation of the policy, in order to ensure that any impacts of the policy are considered.

3.2.7 If a consultation exercise is to take place over a period when consultees are less able to respond, for example, over the summer or Christmas break, or if the policy under consideration is particularly complex, we will give consideration to the feasibility of allowing a longer period for the consultation.

3.2.8 We are conscious of the fact that affected individuals and representative groups may have different needs. We will take appropriate measures to ensure full participation in any meetings that are held. We will consider for example the time of day, the appropriateness of the venue, in particular whether it can be accessed by those with disabilities, how the meeting is to be conducted, the use of appropriate language, whether a signer and/or interpreter is necessary, and whether the provision of childcare and support for other carers is required.

3.2.9 We make all relevant information available to consultees in appropriate formats to ensure meaningful consultation. This includes detailed information on the policy proposal being consulted upon and any relevant quantitative and qualitative data.

3.2.10 In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, we take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy.

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<sup>8</sup> Please see below at 4.27 to 4.31 for details on monitoring.

3.2.11 We provide feedback to consultees in a timely manner. A feedback report is prepared which includes summary information on the policy consulted upon, a summary of consultees' comments and a summary of our consideration of and response to consultees' input. The feedback is provided in formats suitable to consultees. (Please see also 6.3)

3.3 A list of our consultees is included in this equality scheme at Appendix 3 or by contacting the **nominated contacts** at Page 1 of this document.

3.4 Our consultation list is not exhaustive and will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains relevant to our functions and policies.

We welcome enquiries from any person/s or organisations wishing to be added to the list of consultees. Please contact any of the **nominated contacts** on Page 5 to provide your contact details and have your areas of interest noted; or have your name/details removed or amended. Please also inform us at this stage if you would like information sent to you in a particular format or language.

## **Chapter 4      Our arrangements for assessing, monitoring and publishing the impact of policies**

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (b); Schedule 9 4. (2) (c); Schedule 9 4. (2) (d); Schedule 9 9. (1); Schedule 9 9.(2))

### **Our arrangements for assessing the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted on the promotion of equality of opportunity (Schedule 9 4. (2) (b))**

4.1 In the context of Section 75, 'policy' is very broadly defined and it covers all the ways in which we carry out or propose to carry out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland. In respect of this equality scheme, the term policy is used for any (proposed/amended/existing) strategy, policy initiative or practice and/or decision, whether written or unwritten and irrespective of the label given to it, e.g., 'draft', 'pilot', 'high level' or 'sectoral'.

4.2 In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, we take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy, as required by Schedule 9 9. (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

4.3 The Council uses the tools of screening and EQIA to assess the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity.

In carrying out these assessments we will relate them to the intended outcomes of the policy in question and will also follow:-

- the Equality Commission guidance on screening as detailed in the Commission's guidance '*Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)*' and
- on undertaking an equality impact assessment as detailed in the Commission's guidance '*Practical guidance on equality impact assessment (February 2005)*'.
- The Council's screening template is available for download from the Council's website at [www.midulstercouncil.org/Council/Equality](http://www.midulstercouncil.org/Council/Equality) or by contacting the Equality Scheme Contact detailed on the front page of this Scheme.

## Screening

4.4 The purpose of screening is to identify those policies that are likely to have an impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity.

4.5 Screening is completed at the earliest opportunity in the policy development/review process. Policies which we propose to adopt will be subject to screening prior to implementation. For more detailed strategies or policies that are to be put in place through a series of stages, we will screen at various stages during implementation.

4.6 The lead role in the screening of a policy is taken by the policy decision maker in partnership with the Equality Officer who has the authority to make changes to that policy. Screening will also involve other relevant team members, those who implement the policy and staff members from other relevant work areas. Where possible we will include key stakeholders in the screening process.

4.7 The following questions are applied to all our policies as part of the screening process:

4.7.1 What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? (minor/ major/ none)

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

4.7.3 Are there opportunities, without prejudice, to the equality of opportunity duty, to better promote good relations between Section 75 equality categories, through tackling prejudice and/ or promoting understanding? (Yes/No)

4.8 In order to answer the screening questions, we gather all relevant information and data, both qualitative and quantitative. In taking this evidence into account we consider the different needs, experiences and priorities for each of the Section 75 equality categories. Any screening decision will be informed by this evidence to record how the decision was reached.

### Good Relations (4.7.3 above)

4.9 In relation to the answer to the screening question set out in 4.7.3 above, if it is concluded that Yes, there are opportunities, then the policy will be referred to the Council's Good Relations Working Group ("the Group") for consideration. The Group will consider the potential opportunities and assess if and how the overall impact of a decision/policy is likely to promote good relations to include the level of impact.

The Group is not the ultimate decision maker, but will make recommendations to the Policy and Resource Committee which will in turn report to and make recommendations to the full Council for approval, which may include a recommendation to consult with the consultees in Appendix 3 in situations where opportunities have been identified or where the particular circumstances require consultation. However, where matters referred are deemed to be of a quasi-judicial nature they will be reported directly back to the committee from which they were referred/emanated. In such instances, Policy and Resources Committee will be notified by way of information of the matter discussed together with recommendation/outcome of discussion on same.

Consultation, if required, will be on the policy and the Working Group's assessment of whether the decision/ policy is likely to promote good relations, with an emphasis on the latter. Consultation will be recommended to be undertaken where the decision/ policy is likely to have a major impact on the promotion of good relations.

Any decision reached will be recorded together with relevant evidence. This information will be accessible through Working Groups which will be accessible from [www.midulstercouncil.org/Council/Equality](http://www.midulstercouncil.org/Council/Equality). Reports will be published online after they have been considered by the Development Committee and Council.

The Terms of Reference of the Group are attached at Appendix 6 and are part of the Council's approved Equality Scheme arrangements.

Whilst the interdependency of sections 75(1) and (2) is recognised, the Council may nonetheless adopt a policy upon assessment where doing so promotes equality of opportunity as defined in section 75(1) in

relation to the identified categories in order to address disadvantage and as appropriate to address said inequalities. However any impact identified will be considered in the decision making process including any measures that might mitigate any such impact.

#### Equality of Opportunity (4.7.1 & 4.7.2 above)

Completion of screening, taking into account our consideration of the answers to those screening questions set out in 4.7.1 and 4.7.2 above, will lead to one of the following three outcomes in respect of the equality of opportunity duty:

1. the policy has been 'screened in' for equality impact assessment
2. the policy has been 'screened out' with mitigation<sup>9</sup> or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted
3. the policy has been 'screened out' without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted

4.10 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'minor' in respect of one, or more, of the specified categories, we may on occasion decide to proceed with an equality impact assessment, depending on the policy. If an EQIA is not to be conducted we will nonetheless consider measures that might mitigate the policy impact as well as alternative policies that might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity.

Where we mitigate we will outline in our screening template the reasons to support this decision together with the proposed changes, amendments or alternative policy.

4.11 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'major' in respect of one, or more, of the specified categories, we will normally subject the policy to an equality impact assessment. This screening decision will be recommended by the Policy Owner and Equality Officer to an appropriate Head of Service/Director within the Council, who will formally sign this off.

4.12 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'none', in respect of all of the specified categories, we may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is 'screened out' as having no

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<sup>9</sup> Mitigation – Where an assessment (screening in this case) reveals that a particular policy has an adverse impact on equality of opportunity, a public authority must consider ways of delivering the policy outcomes which have a less adverse effect on the relevant Section 75 categories.

relevance, the Policy Owner and Equality Officer will give details of the reasons for the decision taken. This screening decision will be 'signed off' by the appropriate Head of Service/Director within the Council.

4.13 As soon as possible following the completion of the screening process, the screening template, signed off and approved by the senior manager responsible for the policy, will be made available on the Mid Ulster website. Screening reports will also be made available from any of the nominated contacts as identified on page 5.

4.14 If a consultee, including the Equality Commission, raises a concern about a screening decision based on supporting evidence, we will review the screening decision.

4.15 Our screening reports are published three times per year [see below at 4.20 - 4.22 and 4.23 for details].

## **Equality impact assessment**

4.16 An equality impact assessment (EQIA) is a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy, whether that policy is formal or informal, and irrespective of the scope of that policy. The primary function of an EQIA is to determine the extent of any impact of a policy upon the Section 75 categories and to determine if the impact is an adverse one. It is also an opportunity to demonstrate the likely positive outcomes of a policy and to seek ways to more effectively promote equality of opportunity and with regard to the desirability to promote good relations.

4.17 Once a policy is screened and screening has identified that an equality impact assessment is necessary, we will carry out the EQIA in accordance with Equality Commission guidance. The equality impact assessment will be carried out as part of the policy development process, before the policy is implemented.

4.18 Any equality impact assessment will be subject to consultation at the appropriate stage(s). (For details see above Chapter 3 "Our Arrangements for Consulting").



## **Our arrangements for publishing the results of the assessments of the likely impact of policies we have adopted or propose to adopt on the promotion of equality of opportunity**

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (d); Schedule 9 9. (1))

4.19 We make publicly available the results of our assessments (screening and EQIA) of the likely impact of our policies on the promotion of equality of opportunity.

### **What we publish**

#### **4.20 Screening reports**

These are published three times per year. Screening reports detail:

- All policies screened by the Council over each four month period
- A statement of the aim(s) of the policy/policies to which the assessment relates
- Consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact
- Consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity;
- Screening decisions, i.e.:
  - whether the policy has been 'screened in' for equality impact assessment.
  - whether the policy has been 'screened out' with mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.
  - Whether the policy has been 'screened out' without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.
- Where applicable, a timetable for conducting equality impact assessments
- A link to the completed screening template(s) on the Mid Ulster website

#### **4.21 Screening templates**

For details on the availability of our screening templates please refer to 4.13.

#### **4.22 Equality impact assessments**

EQIA reports are published once the impact assessment has been completed. These reports include:

- A statement of the aim of the policy assessed
- Information and data collected
- Details of the assessment of impact(s)
- Consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact
- Consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity
- Consultation responses
- The decision taken
- Future monitoring plans.

### **How we publish the information**

4.23 All information we publish is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request. Please see 6.3 below.

### **Where we publish the information**

4.24 The results of our assessments (screening reports and completed templates, the results of equality impact assessments) are available on the Mid Ulster website or by contacting any of the nominated individuals on Page 1.

4.25 In addition to the above, screening reports (electronic link or hard copy on request if more suitable for recipients) which include all policies screened over a 4 month period are also sent directly to all consultees every 4 months.

4.26 We will inform the general public about the availability of this material through communications such as press releases where appropriate.

### **Our arrangements for monitoring any adverse impact of policies** (Schedule 9 4. (2) (c))

4.27 Monitoring can assist us to deliver better public services and continuous improvements. Monitoring Section 75 information involves the processing of sensitive personal data (data relating to the racial or ethnic origin of individuals, sexual orientation, political opinion, religious belief, etc.). In order to carry out monitoring in a confidential and

effective manner, the Council follows guidance from the Office of the Information Commissioner and the Equality Commission.

4.28 We monitor any adverse impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity of policies we have adopted. We are also committed to monitoring more broadly to identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity in line with Equality Commission guidance.

4.29 The systems we have established to monitor the impact of policies and identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity are:

- The collection, collation and analysis of existing relevant primary quantitative and qualitative data across all nine equality categories on an ongoing basis
- The collection, collation and analysis of existing relevant secondary sources of quantitative and qualitative data across all nine equality categories on an ongoing basis
- An audit of existing information systems within one year of approval of this equality scheme, to identify the extent of current monitoring and take action to address any gaps in order to have the necessary information on which to base decisions
- Undertaking or commissioning new data if necessary.

4.30 If over a four year period monitoring and evaluation show that a policy results in greater adverse impact than predicted, or if opportunities arise which would allow for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted, we will ensure that the policy is revised to achieve better outcomes for relevant equality groups.

4.31 We review our EQIA monitoring information and other information on an annual basis. Other monitoring information is reviewed on an ongoing basis.

### **Our arrangements for publishing the results of our monitoring** (Schedule 9 4. (2) (d))

4.32 Schedule 9 4. (2) (d) requires us to publish the results of the monitoring of adverse impacts of policies we have adopted. However, we are committed to monitoring more broadly and the results of our policy monitoring are published as follows:

4.33 EQIA monitoring information is published as part of our Section 75 annual progress report [see 2.7]

4.34 Monitoring information will also be published and made available on the Mid Ulster District Council website.

4.35 All information published is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request. Please see below at 6.3 for details.

## **Chapter 5      Staff training**

(Schedule 9 4.(2) (e))

### **Commitment to staff training**

5.1 We recognise that awareness raising and training play a crucial role in the effective implementation of our Section 75 duties.

5.2 The Chief Executive will positively communicate the commitment of the Mid Ulster Council to the Section 75 statutory duties, both internally and externally.

To this end we have introduced an effective communication and training programme for all staff and an awareness raising programme for all elected members. We will ensure that our commitment to the Section 75 statutory duties is made clear in all relevant publications.

### **Training objectives**

5.3 The Council has drawn up a detailed training plan for its staff and elected members which will aim to achieve the following objectives:

- to raise awareness of the provisions of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, our equality scheme commitments and the particular issues likely to affect people across the range of Section 75 categories, to ensure that our staff and elected members fully understand their role in implementing the scheme
- to provide those staff involved in the assessment of policies (screening and EQIA) with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- to provide those staff who deal with complaints in relation to compliance with our equality scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to investigate and monitor complaints effectively
- to provide those staff involved in consultation processes with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- to provide those staff involved in the implementation and monitoring of the effective implementation of the Council's equality scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively.

### **Awareness raising and training arrangements**

5.4 The following arrangements are in place to ensure all our staff and elected members are aware of and understand our equality obligations.

- We will develop a summary of this equality scheme and make it available to all staff.
- We will provide access to copies of the full equality scheme for all staff; ensure that any queries or questions of clarification from staff are addressed effectively.
- Council staff will receive a briefing on this equality scheme following approval from the Equality Commission and within 6 months of this time.
- The Section 75 statutory duties form part of induction training for new staff.
- Focused training is provided for key staff within the Council who are directly engaged in taking forward the implementation of our equality scheme commitments (for example those involved in research and data collection, policy development, service design, conducting equality impact assessments, consultation, monitoring and evaluation).
- Where appropriate, training will be provided to ensure staff are aware of the issues experienced by the range of Section 75 groups.
- When appropriate and on an ongoing basis, arrangements will be made to ensure staff are kept up to date with Section 75 developments.

5.5 Training and awareness raising programmes will, where relevant, be developed in association with the appropriate Section 75 groups and staff.

In order to share resources and expertise, the Council will, where possible, work closely with other bodies and agencies in the development and delivery of training.

## **Monitoring and evaluation**

5.6 Our training programme is subject to the following monitoring and evaluation arrangements:

- We evaluate the extent to which all participants in this training programme have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve each of the above objectives.
- The extent to which training objectives have been met will be reported on as part of the Section 75 annual progress report, which will be sent to the Equality Commission.

- Directors and Heads of Service report further training needs requirements to the to the Equality Officer.

## **Chapter 6      Our arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and services we provide**

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (f))

6.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that the information we disseminate and the services we provide are fully accessible to all parts of the community in Northern Ireland. We keep our arrangements under review to ensure that this remains the case.

6.2 We are aware that some groups will not have the same access to information as others.

In particular:

- People with sensory, learning, communication and mobility disabilities may require printed information in other formats.
- Members of ethnic minority groups, whose first language is not English, may have difficulties with information provided only in English.
- Children and young people may not be able to fully access or understand information.

### **Access to information**

6.3 To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, we provide information in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. Where the exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided.

Alternative formats may include Easy Read, Braille, audio formats (CD, mp3 or DAISY), large print or minority languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language.

The Council will liaise with local representatives and groups across the Section 75 groups including representatives of young people, disability and minority ethnic organisations and will take account of existing and developing good practice.

In respect of the categories identified above, the Council is committed to developing in consultation with representatives of the relevant Section 75 categories, systems to ensure that there are effective means of communicating information to young people and those with learning disabilities and will consider using approaches such as “Plain English” and large print in written documentation providing papers /



documentation in advance of meetings, consulting within schools / youth clubs / youth councils (subject to permission) encouraging the participation of individuals and representative organisations in the Council's consultation processes.

We will respond to requests for information in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually 15 working days.

6.4 In disseminating information through the media we will seek to advertise in the press where appropriate.

6.5 Published information including Corporate Plans, Equality, Disability and Section 75 information is displayed on the Mid Ulster District Council website and will be made available in alternative formats as appropriate.

### **Access to services**

6.6 The Council is committed to ensuring that all of our services are fully accessible to everyone in the community across the Section 75 categories. The Council also adheres to the relevant provisions of current anti-discrimination legislation.

6.7 Council is committed to ensuring that all of our services are fully accessible to everyone in the community across the Section 75 categories. The Council will produce information in alternative formats on request. The Council's website will operate to W3C WAI-AAA standard. Council will also detail arrangements for accessing information in its Publication Scheme.

### **Assessing public access to information and services**

6.8 We monitor on an annual basis across all our functions, in relation to access to information and services, to ensure equality of opportunity is promoted.

6.9 This activity includes:

- Monitoring of complaints
- Consideration and implementation of reasonable adjustments under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Satisfaction Surveys
- Access to interpreting/translation services
- Article 55 Review

## **Chapter 7      Timetable for measures we propose in this equality scheme**

(Schedule 9 4. (3) (b))

- 7.1 Appendix 4 outlines our timetable for all measures proposed within this equality scheme. The measures outlined in this timetable will be incorporated into our business planning processes.
- 7.2 This timetable is different from and in addition to our commitment to developing action plans/action measures to specifically address inequalities and further promote equality of opportunity. We have included in our equality scheme a commitment to develop an action plan. Accordingly, this commitment is listed in the timetable of measures at Appendix 4. For information on these action measures please see above at 2.11 – 2.18.

## **Chapter 8      Our complaints procedure**

(Schedule 9 10.)

8.1 The Council is responsive to the views of members of the public. We will endeavour to resolve all complaints made to us.

8.2 Schedule 9 paragraph 10 of the Act refers to complaints. A person can make a complaint to a public authority if the complainant believes he or she may have been directly affected by an alleged failure of the authority to comply with its approved equality scheme.

If the complaint has not been resolved within a reasonable timescale, the complaint can be brought to the Equality Commission.

8.3 A person wishing to make a complaint that the Council has failed to comply with its approved equality scheme should contact:

- Chief Executive, Mid Ulster District Council

8.4 We will in the first instance acknowledge receipt of each complaint within 5 – 10 working days.

8.5 The Equality Officer will carry out an internal investigation of the complaint and will respond substantively to the complainant within one (1) month of the date of receiving the letter of complaint. Under certain circumstances, if the complexity of the matter requires a longer period, the period for response to the complainant may be extended to two (2) months. In those circumstances, the complainant will be advised of the extended period within one month of making the complaint.

8.6 During this process the complainant will be kept fully informed of the progress of the investigation into the complaint and of any outcomes.

8.7 In any subsequent investigation by the Equality Commission, the Council will co-operate fully, providing access in a timely manner to any relevant documentation that the Equality Commission may require.

Similarly, Mid Ulster District Council will co-operate fully with any investigation by the Equality Commission under sub-paragraph 11 (1) (b) of Schedule 9 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

8.8 The Council will make all efforts to implement promptly and in full any recommendations arising out of any Commission investigation.

## **Chapter 9      Publication of our equality scheme** (Schedule 9 4. (3) (c))

9.1 Our equality scheme is available free of charge in print form and alternative formats from contact(s) as per Page 5:

9.2 Our equality scheme is also available on the Mid Ulster District Council website at: [www.midulstercouncil.org](http://www.midulstercouncil.org)

9.3 The following arrangements are in place for the publication in a timely manner of our equality scheme to ensure equality of access:

- We will make every effort to communicate widely the existence and content of our equality scheme. This may include press releases, prominent advertisements in the press, internet and direct mail shots to groups representing the various categories in Section 75.
- We will email a link to our approved equality scheme to our consultees on our consultation lists. Other consultees without e-mail will be notified by letter that the scheme is available on request. We will respond to requests for the equality scheme in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually within 15 working days.
- Our equality scheme is available on request in alternative formats such as Easy Read, Braille, large print, audio formats ( CD, mp3, DAISY) and in minority languages to meet the needs of those not fluent in English.
- The Council will liaise with representatives of all Section 75 groups and takes account of existing and developing good practice.

9.4 For a list of our stakeholders and consultees please see Appendix 3 of the equality scheme, for all other equality related information visit the Mid Ulster District Council website at

[www.midulstercouncil.org/Council/Equality](http://www.midulstercouncil.org/Council/Equality)

## **Chapter 10      Review of our equality scheme**

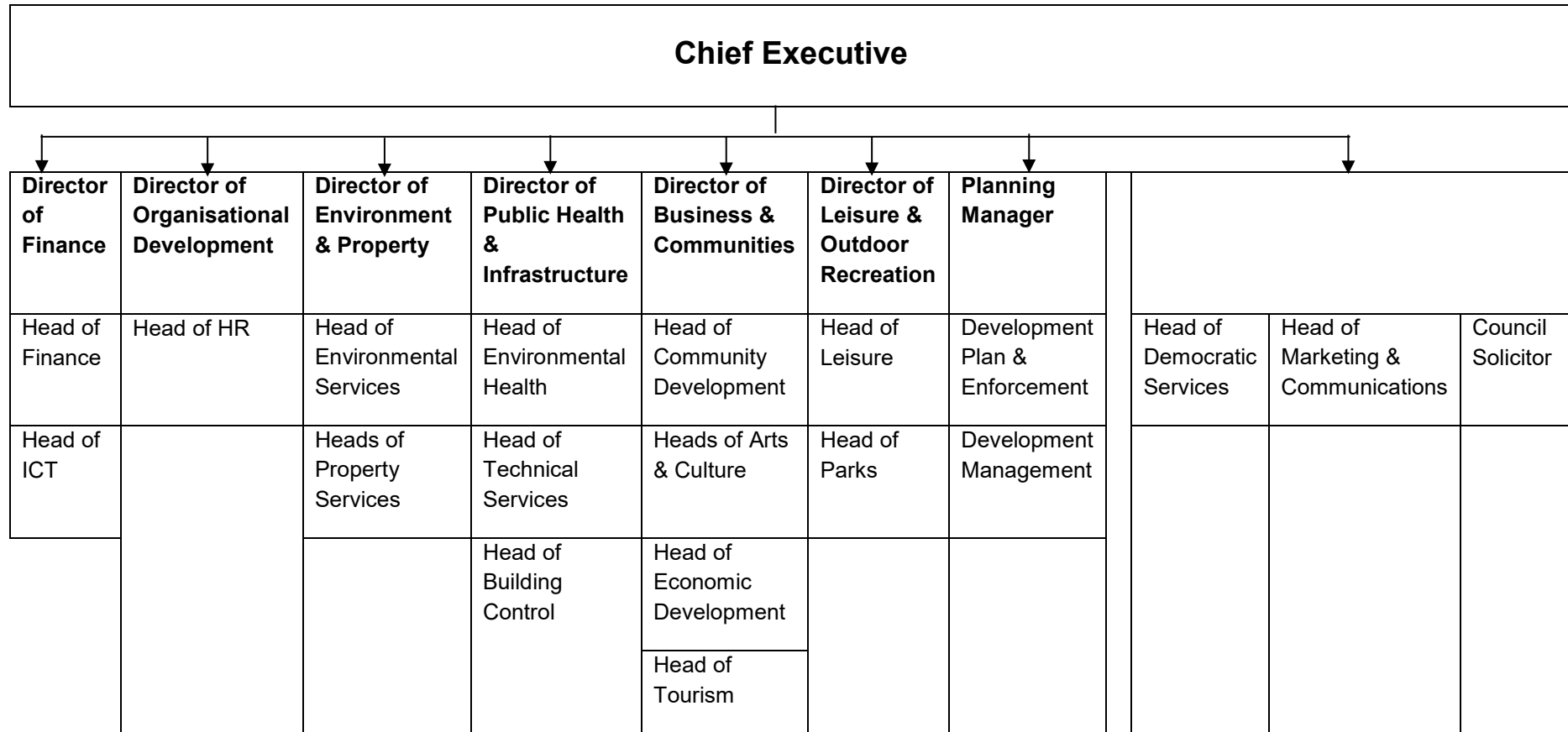
(Schedule 9 8. (3))

10.1 As required by Schedule 9 paragraph 8 (3) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 we will conduct a thorough review of this equality scheme. This review will take place either within five years of submission of this equality scheme to the Equality Commission or within a shorter timescale to allow alignment with the review of other planning cycles.

The review will evaluate the effectiveness of our scheme in relation to the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties relevant to our functions in Northern Ireland.

10.2 In undertaking this review we will follow any guidance issued by the Equality Commission. A report of this review will be made public on the Mid Ulster Council's website and sent to the Equality Commission. Consultees will be notified of the availability of the review.

## Appendix 1 Organisational chart



## Appendix 2 Example groups relevant to the Section 75 categories for Northern Ireland purposes

***Please note, this list is for illustration purposes only, it is not exhaustive.***

Category	Example groups
Religious belief	<p>Buddhist; Catholic; Hindu; Jewish; Muslims, people of no religious belief; Protestants; Sikh; other faiths.</p> <p>For the purposes of Section 75, the term “religious belief” is the same definition as that used in the <i>Fair Employment &amp; Treatment (NI) Order</i><sup>10</sup>. Therefore, “religious belief” also includes any <i>perceived</i> religious belief (or perceived lack of belief) and, in employment situations only, it also covers any “<i>similar philosophical belief</i>”.</p>
Political opinion <sup>11</sup>	Nationalist generally; Unionists generally; members/supporters of other political parties.
Racial group	Black people; Chinese; Indians; Pakistanis; people of mixed ethnic background; Polish; Roma; Travellers; White people.
Men and women generally	Men (including boys); Trans-gendered people; Transsexual people; women (including girls).
Marital status	Civil partners or people in civil partnerships; divorced people; married people; separated people; single people; widowed people.
Age	Children and young people; older people.
Persons with a disability	Persons with disabilities as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
Persons with dependants	Persons with personal responsibility for the care of a child; for the care of a person with a disability; or the care of a dependant older person.

<sup>10</sup> See Section 98 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which states: “*In this Act...“political opinion” and “religious belief” shall be construed in accordance with Article 2(3) and (4) of the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998.*”

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*

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Sexual orientation	Bisexual people; heterosexual people; gay or lesbian people.
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## **Appendix 3    List of consultees**

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (a))

The Council's consultation list is reviewed on a biennial basis to ensure it remains relevant to our functions and policies. At any time individuals and organisations can request to be added or removed from our list of consultees.

1. Action on Hearing Loss
2. Age NI
3. Aware NI
4. Barnardo's
5. British Dental Association
6. Carers NI
7. Cedar Foundation
8. Children in NI
9. Children's Law Centre
10. Chinese Welfare Association
11. Citizen's Advice Bureau
12. Committee on Administration of Justice
13. Community Foundation NI
14. Consumer Council
15. Contact NI
16. Cookstown Enterprise Centre
17. Cookstown Western Shores Association (CWSAN)
18. Cooperation Ireland
19. COPNI
20. COSTA
21. Council for the Homeless Northern Ireland
22. Cruse
23. Disability Action
24. Down's Syndrome Association
25. Dungannon National Autistic Society
26. DUP
27. Early Years
28. Education Authority
29. EFDNI



30. Employers for Childcare
31. Employers for Disability NI
32. Equality Commission for NI
33. Executive Office
34. Foras na Gaeilge
35. Gingerbread NI
36. Guide Dogs
37. Here NI
38. Information Commissioners Office
39. Irish Congress of Trade Unions
40. Loup Women's Group
41. Magherafelt Women's Group Ltd
42. Magherafelt Park Action Group
43. Mencap NI
44. Men's Action Network
45. Mid Ulster Women's Aid
46. MindWise
47. National Children's Bureau
48. NI Association of Mental Health
49. NI Youth Forum
50. NIACRO
51. NICCY
52. NICRC
53. NICVA
54. NIPSA
55. Northern Ireland Women's European Platform
56. Parenting NI
57. Parkinson's UK
58. PCSP
59. Playboard
60. Praxis Care
61. Probation Board for Northern Ireland
62. Queer Space LGBT NI
63. Rainbow Project
64. RNIB
65. RNID
66. Rural Community Network
67. Save the Children
68. SDLP
69. Sense

- 70. Simon Community
- 71. Sinn Fein
- 72. STEP NI
- 73. The Vineyard
- 74. Ulster Scots Agency
- 75. USEL
- 76. Ulster Unionist Party
- 77. Victim Support NI
- 78. Volunteer Now
- 79. Women's Resource and Development Agency
- 80. Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland
- 81. Women's Support Network
- 82. Youthlink NI
- 83. Youthnet

## Appendix 4 Timetable for measures proposed (Schedule 9 4.(3) (b))

Measure	Lead responsibility (Proposed)	Timetable
Section 75 Annual Progress Report [2.7]	Chief Executive / Corporate Policy& Equality Officer	31 August (annually)
Action plan [2.11]	Corporate Policy& Equality Office	Audit of inequalities completed by 30June 2020 & draft Action Plans prepared
Consultation on draft action plan [2.15]	Corporate Policy& Equality Office	Consultation for 3 months
Finalised action plan published [2.18]	Corporate Policy& Equality Office / Chief Executive	Within 5 months of equality scheme approval
Arrangements for monitoring progress in place [2.16]	Corporate Policy& Equality Office	Within 3 months of equality scheme approval
Consultation list reviewed and updated [3.4]	Corporate Policy& Equality Office	October (Annually)
Develop screening report template and publish in accessible formats [4.15]	Corporate Policy& Equality Office	Within one month of equality scheme approval
Screening reports will be published 3 times per year on Council's website [4.15]	Corporate Policy& Equality Office	3 times per year
EQIA timetable [4.16]	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer will finalise and publish EQIA reports in conjunction with Head of Service. Outcomes of consultation will be published	Ongoing

	on the internet and issued to consultees.	
Monitoring [4.28]	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer and Head of Service will revise policies as a result of analysing data to determine adverse impact or to promote equality of opportunity.	Ongoing
Review of monitoring information [4.31]	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer and Head of Service will ensure monitoring of policies is up-to-date and relevant to the policy	Annually from inception of the policy implementation
Publication of monitoring information [4.33;4.34]	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer will publish monitoring information in the Annual Equality Progress Report for the Equality Commission.	Annually in August.
Training [5.3]	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer to draw up plan covering all aspects of staff training (awareness; data collection; policy development; consultations; EQIA preparation; screening; monitoring; evaluation and complaints handling.	April 2021
Development of summary scheme [5.4]	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer will issue summary scheme once approved by Equality Commission	Within two months of approval
Development of overall training programme [5.5]	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer with Heads of Service will ensure that all staff will receive briefing on Equality Scheme once approved via email; departmental team meetings and on intranet	Within six months of approval
Focussed training, i.e. Policy Screening; EQIA preparation;	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer will arrange training for lead officers as necessary	Commencing three months after approval of

Consultation; Data collection; Monitoring and Evaluation [5.4]		Equality Scheme and on-going
Update training [5.4]	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer will keep training up to date in accordance with ECNI guidelines	Ongoing
Evaluation of training [5.6]	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer to assess learning of participants and provide refresher training if necessary	Ongoing
Assessing access to information and services [6.8]	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer to update preferred methods of communication of consultees; Ensure website information is current and up to date. Work with Local Government Staff Commission on accessibility issues.	Ongoing
Communication of equality scheme [9.3]	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer will detail availability of Equality Scheme on Council website; advertised in local newspapers; and Council communications	Within one month of approval by Equality Commission.
Notification of consultees [9.3]	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer will issue all consultees a copy of the Equality Scheme via their preferred method.	Within two months of approval by Equality Commission
Review of equality scheme [10.1]	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer will conduct a review of the Scheme as per Equality Commission's guidelines	Reviewed within 5 years or within a shorter timeline so as to align with other corporate planning cycles.
Any other measures proposed in equality scheme	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer to work closely with other Councils through the LGSC Statutory Duty Group so as to develop best practice.	Ongoing

	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer to work with ECNI to learn from and contribute to strategic direction of the Equality Agenda.	Ongoing
	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer to liaise with key stakeholders including Staff Unions; Voluntary and Community Groups; and other key stakeholders so as to build relationships and cooperative working	Ongoing

## Appendix 5 Glossary of terms

### Action plan

A plan which sets out actions a public authority will take to implement its Section 75 statutory duties. It is a mechanism for the realisation of measures to achieve equality outcomes for the Section 75 equality categories.

### Action measures and outcomes

Specific measures to promote equality for the relevant Section 75 categories, linked to achievable outcomes, which should be realistic and timely.

### Adverse impact

Where a Section 75 category has been affected differently by a policy and the effect is less favourable, it is known as adverse impact. If a policy has an adverse impact on a Section 75 category, a public authority must consider whether or not the adverse impact is unlawfully discriminatory. In either case a public authority must take measures to redress the adverse impact, by considering mitigating measures and/or alternative ways of delivering the policy.

### Affirmative action

In general terms, affirmative action can be defined as being anything consistent with the legislation which is necessary to bring about positive change. It is a phrase used in the Fair Employment and Treatment Order (NI) 1998 to describe lawful action that is aimed at promoting

equality of opportunity and fair participation in employment between members of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities in Northern Ireland.

### **Article 55 Review**

Under the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998, all registered employers must conduct periodic reviews of the composition of their workforces and of their employment practices for the purposes of determining whether members of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities are enjoying, and are likely to continue to enjoy, fair participation in employment in each employer's concern.

These reviews, which are commonly known as Article 55 Reviews, must be conducted at least once every three years.

### **Audit of inequalities**

An audit of inequalities is a systematic review and analysis of inequalities which exist for service users and those affected by a public authority's policies. An audit can be used by a public authority to inform its work in relation to the Section 75 equality duties. It can also enable public authorities to assess progress on the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties, as it provides baseline information on existing inequalities relevant to a public authority's functions.

### **Consultation**

In the context of Section 75, consultation is the process of asking those affected by a policy (ie, service users, staff, the general public) for their views on how the policy could be implemented more effectively to promote equality of opportunity across the 9 categories. Different circumstances will call for different types of consultation. Consultations could, for example, include meetings, focus groups, surveys and questionnaires.

### **Council of Europe**

The Council of Europe, based in Strasbourg, covers virtually the entire European continent, with its 47 member countries. Founded on 5 May 1949 by 10 countries, the Council of Europe seeks to develop throughout Europe common and democratic principles based on the European Convention on Human Rights and other reference texts on the protection of individuals.

### **Desk audit**

An audit of a draft equality scheme to ensure that the scheme conforms with the requirements on form and content as detailed in the Commission's Guidelines (the Guide).

### **Differential impact**

Differential impact occurs where a Section 75 group has been affected differently by a policy. This effect could either be positive, neutral or negative. A public authority must make a judgement as to whether a policy has a differential impact and then it must determine whether the impact is adverse, based on a systematic appraisal of the accumulated information.

### **Discrimination**

The anti-discrimination laws prohibit the following forms of discrimination:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect Discrimination
- Disability Discrimination
- Victimisation
- Harassment

Brief descriptions of these above terms follow:

#### **Direct discrimination**

This generally occurs where a public authority treats a person less favourably than it treats (or, would treat) another person, in the same or similar circumstances, on one or more of the statutory non-discrimination grounds. A decision or action that is directly discriminatory will normally be unlawful unless: (a) in an age discrimination case, the decision can be objectively justified, or (b) in any other case, the public authority can rely on a statutory exception that permits it – such as a *genuine occupational requirement exception*; or, a *positive action exception* which permits an employer to use “welcoming statements” or to take other lawful positive action to encourage participation by under-represented or otherwise disadvantaged groups.

#### **Indirect discrimination**

The definition of this term varies across some of the anti-discrimination laws, but indirect discrimination generally occurs where a public authority applies to all persons a particular provision, criterion or practice, but which is one that has the effect of placing people who share a particular equality characteristic (e.g. the same sex, or religious belief, or race) at a particular disadvantage compared to other people. A provision, criterion or practice that is indirectly discriminatory will



normally be unlawful unless (a) it can be objectively justified, or (b) the public authority can rely on a statutory exception that permits it.

### **Disability discrimination**

In addition to direct discrimination and victimisation and harassment, discrimination against disabled people may also occur in two other ways: namely, (a) *disability-related discrimination*, and (b) *failure to comply with a duty to make reasonable adjustments*.

- (a) *Disability-related discrimination* generally occurs where a public authority, without lawful justification, and for a reason which relates to a disabled person's disability, treats that person less favourably than it treats (or, would treat) other people to whom that reason does not (or, would not) apply.
- (b) *Failure to comply with a duty to make reasonable adjustments*: One of the most notable features of the disability discrimination legislation is that in prescribed circumstances it imposes a duty on employers, service providers and public authorities to take such steps as are reasonable to remove or reduce particular disadvantages experienced by disabled people in those circumstances.

### **Victimisation**

This form of discrimination generally occurs where a public authority treats a person less favourably than it treats (or, would treat) another person, in the same or similar circumstances, because the person has previously exercised his/her rights under the anti-discrimination laws, or has assisted another person to do so. Victimisation cannot be justified and is always unlawful.

### **Harassment**

Harassment generally occurs where a person is subjected to unwanted conduct that is related to a non-discrimination ground with the purpose, or which has the effect, of violating their dignity or of creating for them an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment cannot be justified and is always unlawful.

### **Economic appraisal**

An economic appraisal is a systematic process for examining alternative uses of resources, focusing on assessment of needs, objectives, options, costs benefits, risks, funding and affordability and other factors relevant to decisions.

### **Equality impact assessment**

The mechanism underpinning Section 75, where existing and proposed policies are assessed in order to determine whether they have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity for the relevant Section 75 categories. Equality impact assessments require the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data.

### **Equality of opportunity**

The prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between people on grounds of characteristics including sex, marital status, age, disability, religious belief, political opinion, dependants, race and sexual orientation.

The promotion of equality of opportunity entails more than the elimination of discrimination. It requires proactive measures to be taken to secure equality of opportunity between the categories identified under Section 75.

### **Equality scheme**

A document which outlines a public authority's arrangements for complying with its Section 75 obligations. An equality scheme must include an outline of the public authority's arrangements for carrying out consultations, screening, equality impact assessments, monitoring, training and arrangements for ensuring access to information and services.

### **Mainstreaming equality**

The integration of equal opportunities principles, strategies and practices into the everyday work of public authorities from the outset. In other words, mainstreaming is the process of ensuring that equality considerations are built into the policy development process from the beginning, rather than being bolted on at the end. Mainstreaming can help improve methods of working by increasing a public authority's accountability, responsiveness to need and relations with the public. It can bring added value at many levels.

### **Mitigation of adverse impact**

Where an equality impact assessment reveals that a particular policy has an adverse impact on equality of opportunity, a public authority must consider ways of delivering the policy outcomes which have a less adverse effect on the relevant Section 75 categories; this is known as mitigating adverse impact.

## **Monitoring**

Monitoring consists of continuously scrutinising and evaluating a policy to assess its impact on the Section 75 categories. Monitoring must be sensitive to the issues associated with human rights and privacy. Public authorities should seek advice from consultees and Section 75 representative groups when setting up monitoring systems.

Monitoring consists of the collection of relevant information and evaluation of policies. It is not solely about the collection of data, it can also take the form of regular meetings and reporting of research undertaken. Monitoring is not an end in itself but provides the data for the next cycle of policy screening.

## **Northern Ireland Act**

The Northern Ireland Act, implementing the Good Friday Agreement, received Royal Assent on 19 November 1998. Section 75 of the Act created the statutory equality duties.

## **Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission**

A statutory body established under Section 68 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which works to ensure that the human rights of everyone in Northern Ireland are fully protected in law, policy and practice.

## **Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA)**

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) is an Executive Agency within the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP).

They provide statistical and research information regarding Northern Ireland issues and provide registration services to the public in the most effective and efficient way.

## **The Executive Office**

The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister is responsible for providing advice, guidance, challenge and support to other NI Civil Service Departments on Section 75 issues.

## **PAFT**

The Policy Appraisal and Fair Treatment (PAFT) Guidelines constituted the first non-statutory attempt at mainstreaming equality in Northern Ireland in January 1994. The aim of the PAFT Guidelines was to ensure that issues of equality and equity informed policy making and activity in

all spheres and at all levels of government. PAFT has now been superseded by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

### **Policy**

The formal and informal decisions a public authority makes in relation to carrying out its duties. Defined in the New Oxford English Dictionary as ‘a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government party, business or individual’. In the context of Section 75, the term **policies** covers all the ways in which a public authority carries out or proposes to carry out its functions relating to Northern Ireland. Policies include unwritten as well as written policies.

### **Positive action**

This phrase is not defined in any statute, but the Equality Commission understands it to mean any lawful action that a public authority might take for the purpose of promoting equality of opportunity for all persons in relation to employment or in accessing goods, facilities or services (such as health services, housing, education, justice, policing). It may involve adopting new policies, practices, or procedures; or changing or abandoning old ones. *Positive action* is not the same as *positive discrimination*.

Positive discrimination differs from positive action in that *positive action* involves the taking of lawful actions whereas *positive discrimination* involves the taking of unlawful actions. Consequently, *positive action* is by definition lawful whereas *positive discrimination* is unlawful.

### **Qualitative data**

Qualitative data refers to the experiences of individuals from their perspective, most often with less emphasis on numbers or statistical analysis. Consultations are more likely to yield qualitative than quantitative data.

### **Quantitative data**

Quantitative data refers to numbers, typically derived from either a population in general or samples of that population. This information is often analysed by either using descriptive statistics, which consider general profiles, distributions and trends in the data, or inferential statistics, which are used to determine ‘significance’ either in relationships or differences in the data.

## **SACHR**

The Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights (SACHR) has now been replaced by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission. SACHR, as part of its review of mechanisms in place to promote employment equality and reduce the unemployment differential, recommended that the PAFT Guidelines should be made a statutory requirement.

## **Screening**

The procedure for identifying which policies will be subject to equality impact assessment, and how these equality impact assessments will be prioritised. The purpose of screening is to identify the policies which are likely to have a minor/major impact on equality of opportunity so that greatest resources can be devoted to improving these policies. Screening requires a systematic review of existing and proposed policies.

## **Schedule 9**

Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 sets out detailed provisions for the enforcement of the Section 75 statutory duties, including an outline of what should be included in an equality scheme.

## **Section 75**

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act provides that each public authority is required, in carrying out its functions relating to 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 and sexual orientation;
- men and women generally;
- persons with a disability and persons without; and
- persons with dependants and persons without.

Without prejudice to these obligations, each public authority in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland must also have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

## **Section 75 investigation**

An investigation carried out by the Equality Commission, under Schedule 9 of the NI Act 1998, arising from the failure of a public

authority to comply with the commitments set out in its approved equality scheme.

There are two types of Commission investigation, these are as follows:

1. An investigation of a complaint by an individual who claims to have been directly affected by the failure of a public authority to comply with its approved equality scheme;
2. An investigation initiated by the Commission, where it believes that a public authority may have failed to comply with its approved equality scheme

## **Appendix 6**

### **Good Relations Working Group – Terms of Reference**

The Council is conscious of the fact that there is an interdependency between having ‘due regard’ to the need to promote Equality of Opportunity among specified categories (Section 75(1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998) and ‘regard’ to the desirability for promoting Good Relations (Section 75(2)).

The Good Relations Working Group (“the Group”) will assist the Council in addressing its Section 75(2) duty. The Group will meet to develop a way forward by facilitating discussions amongst Elected Members.

#### **Group Aims**

The aims of the Group will be to agree a definition for Good Relations; to assist policy development, monitor the implementation of the Council’s arrangements and promote good relations in the following areas, but not limited to:

- Flags
- Emblems
- Language
- Bonfires
- Street Naming
- Internal and External Corporate aspects of Good Relations

This list is not exhaustive but does provide those areas of prominence. Screening will identify those areas to be referred to the Group.

The Group will also assess the Council’s compliance with the good relations duty and provide advice on and support the implementation of Council’s Good Relations Strategy and associated work.

#### **Procedure**

Throughout any screening exercise, where policy development suggests that, without prejudice to the Equality of Opportunity duty, there are opportunities for the Council to better promote Good Relations, the policy will be referred to the Group for consideration. The Group will consider the potential opportunities and assess if and how the overall impact of a decision/policy is likely to promote good relations to include

the level of impact. The Group will report its findings and make recommendations to the Council through the Development Committee.

Where the circumstances require it, a consultation exercise may be required on matters to which the Good Relations duty is likely to be relevant. Depending on the nature of the policy, this consultation process will take place with some or all of those consultees listed in Appendix 3 of the Council's Equality Scheme. Consultation will be recommended to be undertaken where the decision/ policy is likely to have a major impact on the promotion of good relations.

Any reports on monitoring undertaken by the Working Group will be published on the Council's website detailed below, as and when available.

### **Membership**

10 Elected Members will form the membership of the Group on a cross party basis. The Group will elect its own Chair and the meetings will be facilitated by senior Council officers.

### **Period of Operation**

The Group will be established for the term of the Council and will meet a minimum of twice annually. These arrangements will be reviewed annually.

### **Reporting Arrangements**

The business and the recommendations of the Group will be reported to the Policy and Resource Committee which will in turn report to and make recommendations to the full Council for approval, which may include a recommendation to consult with the consultees in Appendix 3 in situations where opportunities have been identified or where the particular circumstances require consultation. However, where matters referred are deemed to be of a quasi-judicial nature they will be reported directly back to the committee from which they were referred/emanated. In such instances, Policy and Resources Committee will be notified by way of information of the matter discussed together with recommendation/outcome of discussion on same.

All Reports and Minutes are publically available on the website [www.midulstercouncil.org/Council/Equality](http://www.midulstercouncil.org/Council/Equality) after they have been considered and approved at the Committee and Council.





## Equality & Good Relations Screening Report

## **Mid Ulster District Council - Equality Screening Template**

Council has a statutory duty to screen all policies. Please note a policy can be written or unwritten, formal or informal. This includes our strategies, plans, policies, legislative developments; and new ways of working such as – the introduction, change or end of an existing service, grant funding arrangement or facility. Please note a policy can be written or unwritten, formal or informal. This screening template is designed to help all departments consider the likely equality and good relations impacts of their proposed decisions on different groups of customers, service users, staff and visitors.

Before carrying out an equality screening exercise it is important that you have received the necessary training. To find out about the training contact [ann.mcaleer@midulstercouncil.org](mailto:ann.mcaleer@midulstercouncil.org)

The screening template has 4 sections to complete. These are:

### **Section 1 – Policy scoping**

Asks you to provide details about the policy/decision that is being screened.

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

These are key questions that require you to outline the likely impacts on equality groups, and all supporting evidence. Please provide details of groups consulted with.

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

This is a formal record of the screening decision. i.e. is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment (EQIA), or introduce measures to mitigate the likely impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity.

### **Section 4 – Monitoring**

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

## **Section 1- Scoping**

### **Details about the policy / decision to be screened**

**Title of policy / decision / programme to be screened: -**

**Is this an existing, revised or new policy/ decision / programme? :-**

**What is it trying to achieve? (aims/outcomes)**

**What others policies with a bearing on this policy/ decision/ programme?**

<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Policy Owners</b>

## Section 2- Screening Questions

**1. Outline any consultation process achieved or planned in relation to the implementation of this policy/ decision/ programme:**

### **2. Available evidence**

**What evidence / information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy/decision/programme? Set out all evidence below to help inform your screening assessment.**

Please note: It is important to record information gathered from a variety of sources such as:

- Monitoring information
- Complaints
- Research /surveys
- Consultation exercise
- other public authorities

Section 75 category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
Religious belief	
Political opinion	
Racial group	

Age	
Marital status	
Sexual orientation	
Men and women generally	
Disability	
Dependants	

**What is the likely impact (indicate if the policy impact is positive or negative) on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? What is the level of impact? major/minor/none (See Appendix B for definitions)**

<b>1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories (minor/ major/ none)</b>		
Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? minor/major/none
Religious belief		
Political opinion		
Racial group		
Age		

Marital status		
Sexual orientation		
Men and women generally		
Disability		
Dependants		

<b>2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within Section 75 equality categories? (Yes/ No)</b>		
Section 75 category	If <b>Yes</b> , provide details	If <b>No</b> , provide reasons
Religious belief		
Political opinion		
Racial group		
Age		
Marital status		
Sexual orientation		

Men and women generally		
Disability		
Dependants		

### Good Relations

**3.Are there opportunities without prejudice, to the equality of opportunity duty, to better promote good relations between Section 75 equality categories, through tackling prejudice and/or promoting understanding? (Yes/No)**

If yes please provide details of the opportunities below:

--

Please note that when it is identified that opportunities to better promote good relations between Section 75 equality categories, the policy/ decision/ programme will be referred to the Good Relations Working Group. The Working Group will then assess if and how the overall impact of a decision/policy can better promote good relations.

### 4. Multiple Identities

**Provide details of data on the impact of the policy with multiple identities**

**Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.**

--



### Section 3- Screening Decision

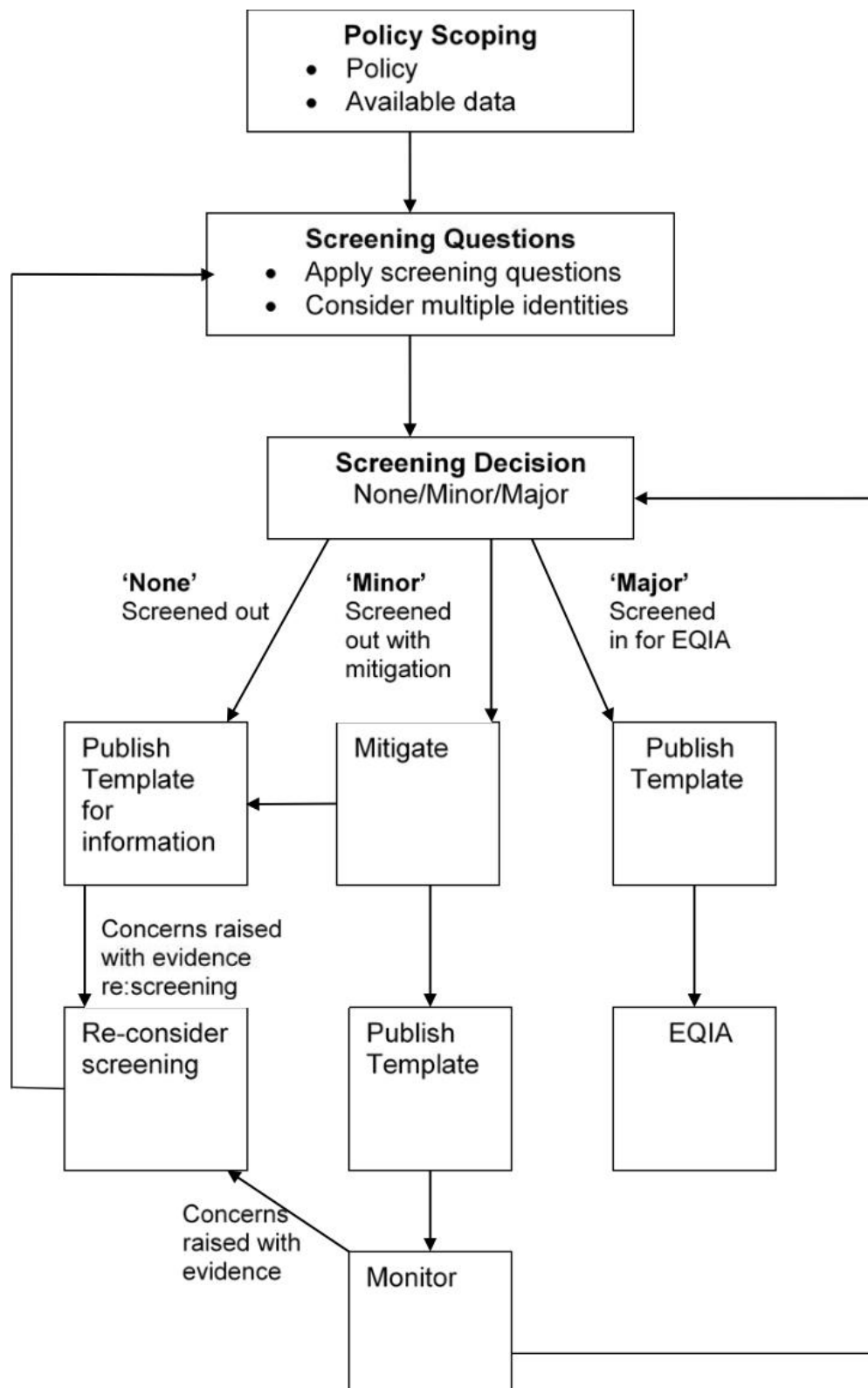
On the basis of the answers to the screening questions, I recommend that this policy/ decision/ programme is – (\*place an X in the appropriate box below)

☐ \*Screened In – Necessary to conduct a full EQIA

☐ \*Screened Out – No EQIA necessary (no impacts)  
Provide a brief note here to explain how this decision was reached:

☐ \* Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)  
Provide a brief note here to explain how this decision was reached:  
  
Explain what mitigating actions and / or policy changes will now be introduced:

## Appendix A



## Appendix B

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

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

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

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

### In favour of a 'major' impact

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

### In favour of 'minor' impact

- a) The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
- b) The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;

- c) Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
- d) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity.

**In favour of none**

- a) The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity.

## Appendix C

### Timetabling and prioritising

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

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

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

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

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

Yes	
No	



<b>Report on</b>	Council Draft Disability and Equality Action Plans (2021-2026)
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Philip Moffett, Head of Democratic Service
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Ann McAleer, Corporate Policy & Equality Officer

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	x

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide members with an opportunity to consider and comment on the Council's draft Equality and Disability Action Plans (2021-2026). Subject to comment, the plans will be subject to formal consultation for a period of 12 weeks in line with Equality Scheme commitments.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	Council is required to comply with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Compliance with the Act requires Council to have both an Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan in place.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p>Council's Equality Scheme commits it to the development and implementation of an associated Equality Action Plan to run from its approval until 2026, setting out how the priorities identified in the Scheme are to be delivered. The draft Equality Action Plan (refer to appendix A) has been informed by an Audit of Inequalities which was carried out between May-August 2020 with input from across Heads of Service. The Equality Commission requires that a public consultation be undertaken to inform the draft Equality Action Plan. Themes identified for inclusion in the Plan, from the Audit of Inequalities, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility of Council Services, Facilities and Events</li> <li>• Corporate Practices</li> <li>• Participation Levels</li> <li>• Partnership Working</li> </ul>
3.2	A Disability Action Plan was initially approved by Mid Ulster Council (Shadow) in December 2014. This Plan has been reviewed (refer to appendix B), and subsequently revised and updated to meet the changing needs of those who access our services. Disability Action Plans do not require direct approval from the Equality Commission though they are informed in their development by Equality

	Commission guidance, dictating that a number of actions measures on for example training measures are included.
3.3	The Mid Ulster Disability Forum is a named consultee within the current Disability Action Plan and as such have been provided with an opportunity to comment on the updated draft actions, as contained within appendix A and B to this report.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: None identified
	Human: Officer time
	Risk Management: None identified
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: Contributing towards Equality Scheme development
	Rural Needs Implications: Assessment undertaken and available on request
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	That the Committee considers and comments as appropriate the draft Equality and Disability Action Plans and approval to move to public consultation on same, in line with Equality Commission commitments.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	Appendix A: Equality Action Plan (draft) 2021-2026
	Appendix B: Disability Action Plan (draft) 2021-2026



**Mid Ulster District Council**  
**Draft Equality Action Plan (Pre Consultation)**  
**(2021-2026)**

This information can be made available in alternative formats, such as audio, braille, easy read or large print and may be provided in alternative languages, upon request. Please contact Mid Ulster District Council's Corporate Policy & Equality Officer on 03000 132 132 Ex 24612 or via [ann.mcaleer@midulstercouncil.org](mailto:ann.mcaleer@midulstercouncil.org)

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. The Community Plan- A 10 Year Action Plan for Mid Ulster**
- 3. Corporate Vision and Values**
- 4. Purpose**
- 5. Action Plan**
- 6. Review and Evaluation**
- 7. Conclusion**

## **1. Introduction**

Mid Ulster District Council is required to comply with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act). The act relates specifically to two statutory duties set out below:

In carrying out our functions relating to Northern Ireland we are required 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 or sexual orientation
- men and women generally
- persons with a disability and persons without
- persons with dependants and persons without.

In addition, without prejudice to the obligations above, in carrying out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland we are required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

## 2. The Community Plan- A 10 Year Action Plan for Mid Ulster

The Community Plan has identified the following themes and associated outcomes:

- **Economic Growth**
  - We prosper in a stronger and competitive economy
  - We have more people working in a diverse economy
  - Our towns and villages are vibrant and competitive
- **Infrastructure**
  - We are better connected through appropriate infrastructure
  - We increasingly value our environment and enhance it for our children
  - We enjoy increased access to affordable quality housing
- **Education and Skills**
  - Our people are better qualified and more skilled
  - We give our children and young people the best chance in life
  - We are more entrepreneurial, innovative and creative
- **Health & Wellbeing**
  - We are better enabled to live longer healthier and more active lives
  - We have availability to the right service, in the right place at the right time
  - We care more for those most vulnerable and in need
- **Vibrant & Safe Communities**
  - We are a safer community
  - We have a greater value and respect for diversity
  - We have fewer people living in poverty and fewer areas of disadvantage

The **vision** set out in the Community Plan is:

*‘Mid Ulster...a welcoming place where our people are content, healthy and safe; educated and skilled; where our economy is thriving; our environment and heritage are sustained; and where our public service excel’.*

## 3. Corporate Vision and Values

Mid Ulster District Council have also agreed a Corporate Plan 2020-2024. The plan sets out Council's priorities for the four year period it covers. When Mid Ulster District Council was formed in April 2015, the Council agreed that its vision was to aspire to be 'at the heart of our community'. This vision continues to strongly represent the ethos and ambition of Mid Ulster District Council.

This vision is underpinned by the following **values**:

- Citizen and customer-focussed *Designing and delivering our services in response to and around the needs of our customers and within our resources.*
- Innovative *New and better ways of doing what we do.*
- Excellence *Striving to excel in every aspect of our work, being accountable for and delivering the best, value for money services.*
- Trustworthy *Working for our communities in a spirit of friendliness and openness by delivering fair, transparent, equitable and ethical services to all customers.*
- Respect ***Treating** each other, our customers and our stakeholders in the same considerate way that we wish to be treated ourselves.*
- Inclusive *Creating a culture which values, supports and celebrates diversity to the benefit of the organisation and the people we serve.*

The Corporate Plan has identified five themes:

Our 5 Corporate Plan themes:

Theme 1: Leadership

Theme 2: Service Delivery

Theme 3: Economy

Theme 4: Environment

Theme 5: Communities

These guiding principles are the cornerstones of our action plans, policies and strategies.

The Corporate Plan also commits to:

- addressing rurality
- promoting equality of opportunity and good relations
- continuously improving our services
- designing and delivering our services sustainably
- working collaboratively across the public, private, community and voluntary sector to achieve shared objectives.

## **4. Purpose**

This Equality Action Plan (2021-2026) contributes to Mid Ulster District Council's compliance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The Equality Action plan ('The Plan') outlines how Council will address the key inequalities identified within our District. The Plan has been informed by an Audit of Inequalities carried out in 2020. Themes identified for inclusion in The Plan from the Audit of Inequalities included the following:

- Accessibility of Council Services, Facilities and Events
- Corporate practices
- Participation levels
- Partnership working

These themes remain consistent with the themes identified in the previous Equality Action Plan which was updated in 2017. Council is working to implement its Equality Scheme and to ensure that there are equitable opportunities provided as a direct result of its implementation. This draft Equality Action Plan is designed to support Council to meet its equality requirements and the full implementation of Council's Equality Scheme.

## 5. Action Plan

The table below sets out how the four themes identified by the Audit of Inequalities and how Council will deliver to address each area. Each theme can be addressed in an item by item basis by what the desired of each action will be, how performance will be monitored and who has responsibility for its implementation. A timeframe for its implementation is also included:

Action No.	Theme 1: Accessibility of Council Services, Facilities and Events	Key Inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of alternative formats</li> <li>• Accessibility of Buildings for People with Dependents</li> <li>• Accessibility of Events for People with Dependents</li> </ul>		
		Desired Outcome	Performance Indicator	Responsibility	Timeframe
1a	Improved accessibility of Council information in alternative formats	Ease of accessibility of information	Increase in the number of alternative formats requested and provided	Chief Executive and Directors	2021-2022
1b	Increased accessibility at Council facilities for parents and carers	Accessible and user friendly spaces created for parents and carers within Council facilities	Provision of quiet areas within buildings, baby changing to be installed where it is currently unavailable, family friendly parking spaces	Chief Executive and Directors	2022
1c	Staff Training	Improved awareness. Reduced number of complaints	No. of staff provided with awareness training	Chief Executive and Directors	2021 and thereafter
1d	Elected Members training	Improved awareness and informed decision making	No. of sessions held and No. of participants	Chief Executive and Directors	2021 and thereafter

Action No.	Theme 2: Corporate Practices	Key Inequality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are opportunities within corporate practices to mainstream improvement of inequalities and track improvement of inequalities</li> </ul>		
		Desired Outcome	Performance Indicator	Responsibility	Timeframe
2a	Any gaps in monitoring information identified	More robust monitoring arrangements	Monitoring reports examined/reviewed on an annual basis	Chief Executive and Directors	2021-2022
2b	Inclusive delivery of the Corporate Plan	Adherence to the commitment to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.	Policy developed and approved by Council for implementation	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer/ Head of Marketing and Communication	2021-2025
2c	Develop procedural arrangements for translation and interpretation	Clear guidance in relation to translation & interpretive requirements	Procedures developed and approved by Council for implementation	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	2021
2d	Mainstreaming equality of opportunity and Good Relations through service planning and documentation	Improved systems and procedures	No. of Screening Documents completed and examples of mainstreaming developed	Heads of Service and Directors	2021 and thereafter

Action No.	Theme 3: Participation Levels	Key Inequality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The timing and local of events can create participation barriers for carers</li> <li>Older people who are less comfortable and experienced with using online platforms can feel excluded from services that are provided online only</li> </ul>		
		Desired Outcome	Performance Indicator	Responsibility	Timeframe
3a	Explore the timing of events/courses	Create Equality of Opportunity for carers	Samples taken of the timing of various events/guidance developed	Heads of Service	2021 and thereafter
3b	Location of activities	Creates Equality of Opportunity for all locations across the District	Samples taken of the timing of various events/ guidance developed	Heads of Service	2021 and thereafter
3c	Provide a digital first but not digital only approach to service delivery	Older people feel excluded from services that are moved to online	Number of alternatives provided	Directors	2021 and thereafter
3d	Increased skills development opportunities	Opportunity to develop skills set and address any gap in skills	No of carers employed by Council	Director of Organisational Development	2022

Action No.	Theme 4: Partnership Working	Key Inequalities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership working between Council and Community &amp; Voluntary support organisations how place a focus on Health and Wellbeing and Good Relations</li> </ul>		
		Desired Outcome	Performance Indicator	Responsibility	Timeframe
4a	Explore partnership working opportunities that place a focus on Health and Wellbeing of S75 group	Increased opportunities for partnership working between Council and relevant C&V organisations	No. of joint partnership projects being delivered	Heads of Service	2021-2026
4b	Explore partnership working opportunities that place a focus on Good Relations	Increased opportunities for partnership working between Council and relevant C&V organisations	No. of joint partnership projects being delivered	Heads of Service	2021-2026



## **6. Review and Evaluation**

This action plan will be reviewed on an annual basis and progress will be monitored and reported upon within Council's annual submission to the Equality Commission.

## **7. Conclusion**

The implementation of this action plan will support the overall implementation of the Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan and the mainstreaming of equality throughout the organisation. This plan will be re-examined as priorities emerge following the commencement of the implementation of our community plan.

**Disability Action Plan**  
**for**  
**Mid Ulster District Council**  
**2021-2026**

**Final Draft (PRE Consultation)**

This information can be made available in alternative formats, such as audio, braille, easy read or large print and may be provided in alternative languages, upon request. Please contact Mid Ulster District Council's Corporate Policy & Equality Officer on 03000 132 132 Ex 24612 or via [ann.mcaleer@midulstercouncil.org](mailto:ann.mcaleer@midulstercouncil.org)

**Approved by SMT for Public Consultation:**

**MUDF consulted: 15/9/2020**

**Approved by P&R:**

**Approved by Council:**

**Submitted to Equality Commission:**

## Foreword

To be completed upon approval.

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Councillor Cathal Mallaghan  
Chair

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Anthony Tohill  
Chief Executive

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the) Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006 requires the Council, in carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need:

- to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- to encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

These are collectively referred to as ‘the disability duties’.

- 1.2 Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, Mid Ulster District Council is also required to submit to the Equality Commission a Disability Action Plan showing how it proposes to fulfil these duties in relation to its functions.
- 1.3 The Council is committed to the fulfilment of its disability duties in all parts of its organisation and has set out how it intends to do so in this Plan.

## **2. The Purpose of the Disability Action Plan**

- 2.1 The purpose of this Plan is to set out how Mid Ulster District Council in relation to the delivery of its functions.

## **3. The Council – its role and functions**

- 3.1 The roles and functions of Local Government in Northern Ireland are provided by the Local Government Act (NI) 1972, the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 and other Miscellaneous Acts and Regulations.
- 3.2 As a result of Local Government Reform, the Council has been given a wide range of transferring functions including functions relating to planning, roads, regeneration and community development, economic development and local tourism. Council now also has a leading role the Community Planning implementation process. The Council will facilitate and coordinate a joined up approach to the delivery of key projects and services which will address and improve local issues and challenges identified via the Community Planning development process.

3.3 The Council performs four principal roles within its local area and district:

- Direct service provision in response to community needs and legislative requirements – setting priorities for the area and for the Council and being accountable for the choices made.
- A development role as enabler/facilitator on economic and community development initiatives enabling and empowering local people; setting out the vision for local strategies in partnership with other agencies.
- A representative role on boards such as health and education – championing the district.
- A consultative role on issues such as water, roads and housing, by providing a challenge to the performance of all of the delivery agencies in the district.

3.4 In the performance of the above roles the Council will carry out functions in the following areas:

- Refuse Collection and Disposal
- Recycling and Waste Management
- Civic Amenity Provision
- Grounds Maintenance
- Street Cleansing
- Cemeteries
- Public Conveniences
- Food Safety
- Health & Safety
- Environmental Protection
- Environmental Improvement
- Estates Management Building Design and Maintenance
- Building Control
- Inspection/Regulation of New Construction
- Dog Control
- Enforcement Byelaws Litter etc.
- Licensing
- Sports and Leisure Services
- Sports and Recreational facilities
- Parks, Open Spaces, Playgrounds
- Community facilities

- Arts, Heritage and Cultural Facilities
- Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages
- Spatial Planning & Regeneration
- Community Planning
- Off Street Car Parking

The Council also has a role in:

- Economic Development
- Community Development
- Community Safety
- Sports Development
- Tourism

3.5 To enable the Council to provide the above services and perform its other functions, the Council must levy an annual rate and has the power to:

- acquire and dispose of land
- borrow money
- employ staff
- procure goods and services

3.6 To support and implement the above statutory functions and provision of services and facilities, the Council will adopt a wide range of policies.

#### **4. Public life positions over which the Council has responsibility**

4.1 A key aspect of the disability duties is to encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

4.2 The Review Report on the Effectiveness of the Disability Duties (Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, December 2009) identified a misunderstanding among public authorities regarding the definition of the public life with some authorities defining public life positions as public appointments. The Commission's guide makes it clear that the definition of public life is wider than this and includes:

- participation in focus groups or working groups
- participation in community group or fora

- local partnerships
- 4.3 Mid Ulster District Council does not have a responsibility for the membership of many such groups. However, Council is committed to ensuring that disabled people have the choice to be fully participative in groups/organisations that it has a responsibility for.
- 4.4 Council will also encourage other bodies such as community associations and user groups to take more positive steps towards including people with a disability and take accounts of their views.

## **5. The Council's commitment to the effective implementation of the disability action plan**

- 5.1 Mid Ulster District Council is committed to implementing effectively the disability duties and this Disability Action Plan. In order to do so Council will put appropriate internal arrangements in place in order to ensure that the disability duties are complied with and this Disability Action Plan is effectively implemented.
- 5.2 We will ensure the effective communication of the Plan to employees and provide all necessary training and guidance for employees and elected members on the disability duties and the implementation of the Plan.
- 5.3 Overall responsibility for determining policy on how this will be achieved lies with the Elected Members, and day to day responsibility for carrying out the policy with the Chief Executive. As part of its corporate planning process, the Council will set objectives and targets relating to the disability duties. These will be reflected at all levels of planning within the Council including individual staff objectives.
- 5.4 A formal report of progress on meeting the objectives relating to the disability duties will be included in the Council's annual report to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.



## **6. Internal Arrangements**

- 6.1 The Council consists of 40 Elected Representatives, elected for four years periods meeting monthly at full Council. The Council has selected a traditional committee structure as its form of decision making.
- 6.2 The Council organises its business through 5 statutory committees that meet on a monthly basis and each of the Committees consists of 16 members. This is with the exception of the Audit Committee which has 8 members.
- 6.3 The Council also has the power to establish working groups.
- 6.4 The list below sets out current committees:
- Planning
  - Development
  - Environment
  - Policy and Resources
  - Audit
- 6.5 The Full Council meeting meets in full session on the last Thursday of every month when it receives and decides on reports and recommendations from the various committees.
- 6.6 The work of the Council operates under the leadership of the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive is responsible for giving the strategic direction and advice to the Council and oversees the preparatory work to ensure it is ready to deliver its services.
- 6.7 The Chief Executive will have the overall responsibility for the implementation of the Disability Duties and the Action Plan.
- 6.8 The point of contact for those seeking further information on the Action Plan is the Corporate Policy and Equality Officer (see page 1 for contact details) who will take specific responsibility for co-ordinating the day to day requirements for the delivery of the Action plan.

## **7. Effective Engagement and Consultation**

- 7.1 Mid Ulster District Council is committed to engaging effectively with disabled people in the drafting, implementation, monitoring and review of this Plan.
- 7.2 The Council is committed to carrying out consultation in a meaningful manner in the development of its disability duties. In doing so the Council is keen to bring about change with and for people with disabilities and will therefore be focussing on the issue of involvement and participation in preparing and reviewing its Plan.
- 7.3 The Council's consultation process will be designed to ensure that people with disabilities are consulted at as early a stage as possible so that they can assist and inform the development of the Plan.
- 7.4 The Council will make every effort to remove any potential barriers to proper consultation by ensuring accessibility of documents in appropriate formats and in a timely fashion. Information will be made available on request in alternative formats. It will also be important to establish with people with a disability, the basis for dialogue and engagement during the life of the Plan. A variety of methods of discussion will be used such as meetings, one to one discussions, telephone and text phone discussions. Consideration will also be given to how best to communicate information to young people with a disability, as well as considering additional dimensions such as ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation and religious belief.
- 7.5 The Council believes it is important that people with disabilities are involved in the implementation, monitoring and review of the Plan. The Council will seek views and comments on the specific actions when they are developed and will consider amending them or including additional ones following the comments received.

## **8. Annual Report and Review**

- 8.1 The Council will prepare report annually on the implementation of its Plan. The report will be included as part of the Council's annual report to the Equality Commission on the implementation of our equality scheme.
- 8.2 A copy of the full annual report and further reviews will be made available on the Council's website.

## **9. Action Measures**

- 9.1 The Council continues to complete a number of actions which help promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage their participation in public life. These action measures include committing to:

Action Measure 1: Equality proof' our Community Plan

Action Measure 2: Integrate our Disability duties into policies, programmes, plans and strategies

Action Measure 3: Include 'Changing Places' facilities in capital build projects venues (where a need is established)

Action Measure 4: Maintain Council's partnership working with Mid Ulster Disability Forum and other with disability support services/ groups within the District in order to gauge their views and opinions

Action measure 5: Any new/substantially renovated play areas meet the highest possible standards of accessibility

Action measure 6: Appoint a Disability Champion at officer and elected member level to progress the disability duties

Action measure 7: Provide flexible work placements/taster placements for individuals with disabilities with a view to preparing them for paid employment

Action measure 8: Training on Accessibility Auditing provided to relevant Mid Ulster District Council Staff

Action measure 9: Develop, deliver and implement a programme of awareness training for Council Officers including members of the Senior Management Team

Action measure 10: Develop, deliver and implement a programme of awareness training for Elected Member

Action measure 11: Develop and implement effective means of communication for people who have hearing loss

Action measure 12: Ensure accessibility details for buildings and events are available on Council's website

9.2 The table below sets out the measures that Council intends to undertake to take in order to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation:

<b>Action measure 1: 'Equality proof' our Community Plan</b>		
<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Senior Management Team/Head of Community Development	Better promotion of equality and services for people with a disability	Equality Screening will be carried out intermittently over the duration of the Community Plan
<b>Action measure 2: Integrate our Disability duties into policies, programmes, plans and strategies</b>		
<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
All Policy Authors	All new and revised policies screened for impact on disability duties ensuring that issues which may affect people with a disability will be sorted out at the earliest possible juncture	Dip sample carried out every six months
<b>Action measure 3: 'Changing Places' facilities included in capital build projects (where a need is established)</b>		
<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Senior Management Team Head of Technical Services	The number of changing places established in Council owned facilities	6 Changing Places to registered by Mid Ulster DC by 2026
<b>Action measure 4: Maintain Council's partnership working with Mid Ulster Disability Forum and other with disability support services/ groups within the District in order to gauge their views and opinions</b>		
<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Focussed consultation and engagement with people with disabilities will be carried out in order to understand their needs and	Monthly meets attended by Mid Ulster District Council staff.

	requirements. Consultation is also inclusive of the statutory agencies representing people who have a disability	
<b>Action measure 5: Any new/substantially renovated play areas meet the highest possible standards of accessibility</b>		
<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Head of Leisure Head of Parks Head of Technical Services	Inclusive and accessible services for people with a disability	Inclusivity rate to be increased by 20% (from 17.5%) by 2026
<b>Action measure 6: Appoint a Disability Champion at officer and elected member level to progress the disability duties</b>		
<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Head of Democratic Services Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Disability champions appointed to promote disability issues both internal and external to Council	Annually
<b>Action measure 7: Provide flexible work placements/taster placements for individuals with disabilities with a view to preparing them for paid employment</b>		
<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Director of Organisational Development Corporate Learning & Development Manager	Flexible Opportunities provided for people with a disability	Annually
<b>Action measure 8: Training on Accessibility Auditing provided to relevant Mid Ulster District Council Staff</b>		
<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Director of Organisational Development Corporate Learning & Development Manager	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer will be skilled to advise	9 members of staff to be trained. Staff to be sought from various departments.
<b>Action measure 9: Develop, deliver and implement a programme of awareness training for Council Officers including members of the Senior Management Team</b>		
<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Corporate Policy & Equality Officer/Heads of Service	Increased awareness of disability legislation and understanding of the issues relating to the service users	2 Sessions Annually from 2021
<b>Action measure 10: Develop, deliver and implement a programme of awareness training for Elected Members</b>		
<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Head of Democratic Services Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Increased awareness of disability legislation and understanding of the issues relating to the service users	2 Sessions Annually from 2021
<b>Action measure 11: Develop and implement effective means of communication for people who have hearing loss</b>		
<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>

Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Appropriate and effective means of communication are in place	2021
<b>Action measure 12: Ensure accessibility details for buildings and events are available on Council's website</b>		
<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Heads of Service	Required information provided on Council's website	2021

## **10. How the disability action plan will be published**

10.1 Following submission to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, this Plan will be available by contacting:

Ann McAleer  
Corporate Policy & Equality Officer  
Mid Ulster District Council  
Dungannon Office  
Circular Road  
Dungannon BT71 6DT

Tel: 03000 132 132

E: [ann.mcaleer@midulstercouncil.org](mailto:ann.mcaleer@midulstercouncil.org)

10.2 The availability of the Disability Action Plan will be advertised in the press and can be accessed on Council's website:

[www.midulstercouncil.org/equality](http://www.midulstercouncil.org/equality)

10.3 The Council will, through our on-going work with people with disabilities and people with learning disabilities, find appropriate ways of communicating the Plan. The Plan will be produced in clear print and plain language, and will be available in alternative formats on request.

10.4 The contents of the Disability Action Plan will be highlighted through press releases, advertisements, Council literature and by meeting directly with disability organisations, representative groups and individuals.

10.5 In addition, a summary Plan as well as a full version of the Plan will be available on the intranet or in alternative formats upon request.

<b>Report on</b>	Response to Consultation on Department for Communities Disability Action Plan 2020-24
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Philip Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Ann McAleer, Corporate Policy and Equality Officer

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	x

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to inform members of a draft response developed on behalf Council to the Department for Communities Disability Action Plan 2020-24.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	Members received notification of this consultation at the August Council meeting. On discussion of the issues contained it was agreed that a response be developed on behalf of Council. Issues raised by Members related to feedback from residents in the District regarding their experience of accessing services from a disability perspective.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	The draft response as attached as Appendix A indicates a general support to the Department's Draft Disability Action Plan. The response has focused on encouraging cross-departmental working of government departments, particularly in relation to accessibility.
3.2	Please note, an extension was sought and granted to the Council to facilitate the development and approval of a response.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: None
	Human: None
	Risk Management:

<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: External response. Screening not required.
	Rural Needs Implications: External response. Impact Assessment not required.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	That members consider the draft response and recommend its approval to Council for submission to the Department for Communities.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	Appendix A: Draft Consultation Response to Consultation on Dept. for Communities Disability Action Plan 2020-24



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## Disability Action Plan - Response template

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July 2020

### **Confidentiality of Information**

The Department for Communities processes personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and in most circumstances this means that personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Name:

Position:

Organisation:

Address:

Tell us your opinion on whether the actions listed will meet the Disability Duties:

Any other general comments you wish to make?

**Thank you for completing this proforma.**

Please return your completed proforma to:

on or before **12 October 2020**

## **Contact Details**

**Equality Unit  
Department for Communities  
Level 8,  
Causeway Exchange  
1-7 Bedford Street  
Belfast  
BT2 7EG**

**Damian Brady  
damian.brady@communities-ni.gov.uk  
028 9082 3440**

**Stephen Fitchie  
stephen.fitchie@communities-ni.gov.uk  
028 9082 3443**

Available in alternative formats.

<b>Report on</b>	Working Group Meeting Reports – Illumination of Buildings, Civic Recognition and Member Development
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> October, 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	P Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
<b>Contact Officer</b>	P Moffett, Head of Democratic Services E Forde, Member Support Officer A McAleer, Corporate Policy & Equality Officer

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	<p>To receive and consider reports of member led Working Group meetings held in August and September 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting Report of Group on Illumination of Council Properties - 16<sup>th</sup> September</li> <li>• Meeting Reports o Group on Civic Recognition - 25<sup>th</sup> August and 17<sup>th</sup> September</li> <li>• Meeting Report of Elected Member Development Steering Group - 29<sup>th</sup> September</li> </ul>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	Policy and Resources Committee previously recommended and Council subsequently resolved that working groups of councillors be established to review (i) the policy on The Illumination of Council Properties and (ii) the arrangements for the provision of Civic Recognition.
2.2	<p>The remit of the Working Groups, as detailed within their Terms of Reference, extends to:</p> <p><b>Working Group on Illumination of Council Properties</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the existing policy and arrangements for lighting up Council buildings</li> <li>• Consider the continuing appropriateness of the existing policy</li> <li>• Reflect on our arrangements for considering/agreeing lighting-up requests</li> <li>• Recommend amendments to existing arrangements to form the basis for a revised policy</li> </ul> <p><b>Working Group on Provision of Civic Recognition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider continuing appropriateness of the types and forms of recognition provided</li> <li>• Reflect on civic recognition to date since establishment of Mid Ulster Council</li> <li>• Reflect on our arrangements for bringing forward and agreeing recognition</li> <li>• Recommend a model for provision of civic recognition to form basis of revised policy</li> </ul>
2.3	The Working Group Terms of Reference confirms that it shall report to Policy & Resources Committee. The Council also has an Elected Member Development Steering Group which reports to the Policy and Resources Committee.

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	Meetings of the Working Groups and Elected Member Development Steering Group took place as referenced at 1.1 above took place from 25 August to 29 <sup>th</sup> September. Meeting reports are attached as appendices A to C for consideration.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: not applicable
	Human: not applicable
	Risk Management: not applicable
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: not applicable
	Rural Needs Implications: not applicable
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	That the committee considers and approves the meeting reports of the Working Group on Illumination of Council Properties held on 16 <sup>th</sup> September; the Working Group on Provision of Civic Recognition held on 25 <sup>th</sup> August and 17 <sup>th</sup> September and the Elected Member Development Steering Group held on 29 <sup>th</sup> September.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	Appendix A - Working Group Meeting Reports: Illumination of Council Properties Appendix B - Working Group Meeting Reports: Provision of Civic Recognition Appendix C - Elected Member Development Steering Group



## Working Group Report

### Illumination of Council Properties

Report of Illumination of Council Properties Working Group meeting of Mid Ulster Council held on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020 in Chamber, Dungannon at 6pm

**Attendees** **Members:** Councillors Brown\*, McLean\*, Cuthbertson, Quinn, McKinney, Molloy, Oneill, McNamee (\*denotes virtual attendance)  
**Officers:** Head Democratic Services (P Moffett), Head Culture & Arts (T McCance), Corporate Policy & Equality Officer (A McAleer)

**Apologies** Councillor Mallaghan

AGENDA	MATTERS AGREED	RESPONSIBILITY
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Apologies &amp; Appointment of Working Group of Chair</b>	
	It was <b>AGREED</b> that Councillor Molloy assume the role of Working Group Chair	
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Draft Working Group Terms of Reference &amp; Scope of Activity</b>	
	Members considered and <b>AGREED</b> previously circulated Working Group Terms of Reference	
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Review and Consideration of Issues</b>	
	<p>Members considered the previously circulated <i>Issues &amp; Consideration Paper</i>. The following issues were <b>NOTED</b> for further consideration and the way forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the existing policy should broadly remain but where a request does not meet the existing requirements (i.e. be from a charitable organisation and for a charitable cause) then it be referred to Party Leaders for consideration/approval. Where there is not unanimous agreement then it be deferred to Council for determination</li> <li>• Clarity sought on definition of Party Leaders</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration be given to properties in Maghera and Coalisland (Cornmill, Coalisland was referenced) lighting up outside the 'main' towns. The town centre public art in Magherafelt was referred to as having the ability to be illuminated with varying colours.</li> <li>• Calendar of agreed specific dates similar to approach taken by Parliament Buildings was referenced with dates pre-approved on an annual basis</li> <li>• That illumination of buildings too frequently would de-value the efforts and opportunity offered by the Council. It was considered that that local causes/charities/organisations which impact on Mid Ulster and its residents directly should be supported and prioritised to illuminate properties</li> <li>• Approval process can take 4-6 weeks to get a request approved through Committee and Council</li> <li>• That Burnavon Arts &amp; Cultural Centre and Ranfurly House does not have the infrastructure in place that allows the facilities to illuminate/light up the buildings instantaneously without the use of gels and filters being placed on the lights of the exterior of buildings</li> </ul> <p>The following was <b>AGREED</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should requests meet the scope of the policy, arrangements should then be made to illuminate/light up the properties. Reports be brought to committee for information the following month(s) on the light ups which have taken place</li> <li>• That a scoping exercise be undertaken to identify estimated costs of lighting up each building. This should include the estimated installation costs for each building which do not have the infrastructure to instantaneously light up buildings without the use of gels and filters being placed over the lights on the exterior buildings</li> <li>• Buildings in Council ownership outside the three 'main' towns be explored as options for being illuminated</li> <li>• That a mechanism be explored on prioritising requests made from charities/organisations which impact locally in the district and which have an affinity/connection with the district</li> <li>• That the best methods for communicating illumination dates via social media or other be identified and reviewed</li> </ul>	Council Officers
	Meeting ended at 6.50pm	



## Meeting Report of Civic Recognition Working Group Tuesday 25 August 2020 at 6pm

Report of Civic Recognition Working Group of meeting held on 25 August 2020 at 6pm in the Council Offices, Dungannon and by virtual means

**Attendees** **Members:** Councillors Ashton\*, Brown, Buchanan, Doris, Mallaghan, D McPeake\*, Molloy, Quinn, Wilson (\*Denotes virtual attendance)

**Officers:** P Moffett (Head of Democratic Services), E Forde (Member Support Officer)

**Apologies** Cllr Bell, J Hobson (Executive Officer)

AGENDA	MATTERS AGREED	ACTIONS & RESPONSIBILITY
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Appointment of Working Group (WG) Chair</b>	
	<p>Councillor Wilson proposed that Councillor Mallaghan assume the role of Chair</p> <p>It was AGREED that the Working Group Chair: Councillor Mallaghan</p> <p>Two Members attending virtually had trouble in hearing activity/business in the meeting. It was NOTED that both Members had Party representation 'in the room' and left the meeting at 6.05pm</p>	Head of DS
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Consideration of the draft Working Group Terms of Reference and Scope of Activity</b>	
	<p>The Head of Democratic Services referred Members to the previously scheduled Terms of Reference and proposed scope of activity for the WG, with specific reference to its 5 no. areas of scope</p> <p>Members AGREED the Terms of Reference as presented</p> <p>The Head of DS referred Members also to the content of the Issues and Consideration as previously circulated, to inform discussion and context.</p>	Head of DS
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Issues for Discussion and Next Steps</b>	

	<p>Members discussed the following with respect the provision of current and future 'civic recognition':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members discussed and expressed the view that the current methodology for civic recognition and acknowledged it had become repetitive and frequency of events had diminished value</li> <li>• Noted that the criteria for receiving a reception/recognition was while previously reviewed and 'tightened' to help maintain value in it, recipients still plentiful</li> <li>• Members expressed view that this was an opportunity to review how receptions and recognition etc. is provided going forward and this should be done now that there is time to do it even with national, all Ireland or international win being required</li> <li>• In context of COVID-19 Members and Officers noted that some Councils had/were hosting online ceremonies but this was not considered a favourable option on a longer-term basis</li> <li>• On discussion, members referred to various options for further consideration and AGREED that these be captured in a single document. These have been captured below (appendix A), though summarised as - up to 3 awards (themed) ceremonies per year to capture the bulk of the current recognition type requests coming through; letters issued from the Chair for general recognition/well done congratulations on achievement and approved by the Chair; Chairs and Deputy Chair Receptions encompassing general requests for receptions, if requested and; something/an annual civic event to capture the achievements of young people i.e. 25yrs and under</li> </ul> <p><b>Reporting and Approval Process for Recognition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was AGREED that any approvals for civic recognition/receptions should be taken through as confidential business if the process is to continue with bringing requests to council as at present</li> </ul> <p><b>Data to Date</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was AGREED an analysis on current data be carried out to ascertain how recipients to date would slot into the different aspects above and give an understanding of the broad types of recipients</li> </ul>	<p>Council Officers</p> <p>Council Officers</p> <p>Council Officers</p>
4	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>	
	Was AGREED that the next meeting take place on Thursday 17 September 2020 at 6pm in Dungannon	
<b>Meeting concluded at 7.00pm</b>		

Report of Civic Recognition Working Group of meeting held on 17 September 2020 at 6pm in the Council Offices, Dungannon and by virtual means

**Attendees**    **Members:** Councillors Brown\*, Buchanan, Doris, Mallaghan, Molloy, Quinn, Wilson (\*Denotes virtual attendance)  
**Officers:**    P Moffett (Head of Democratic Services), E Forde (Member Support Officer), J Hobson (Executive Officer)

**Apologies**    None

AGENDA	MATTERS AGREED	ACTIONS & RESPONSIBILITY
1.0	<b>Report of Civic Recognition Working Group 25 August 2020</b>	
	<p>The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan drew attention to the Report of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> August</p> <p>The Report was <b>AGREED</b></p>	
2.0	<b>Overview of Existing Arrangements compared to Proposals</b>	
	<p>The Chair drew attention to the synopsis of the discussion of the last working group meeting</p> <p>Head of Democratic Services referred Members to section 3 <i>Issues for Discussion and Next Steps and the Options for Consideration</i> and sought direction as to how Members wished to progress bringing the focus to criteria. Members discussed suggestions for criteria highlighting that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criteria should include that a nominee must have qualified for the competition</li> <li>• If public nominations are to be sought, criteria be advertised</li> <li>• Awards should be granted for the 'best of the best' not at every level of competition</li> <li>• Noted that some competitions end at Northern Ireland/Provincial level for example NI League sports</li> <li>• Whilst robust criteria is required the overall process should not be so prescriptive as to eliminate exceptional achievements eg sports club winning a competition for the first time in a significant number of years. The process could require that these be considered by Council</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>AGREED</b> that a panel should assess criteria and be made up of Members, guided by officers with expertise sought as and when required i.e. from Sports representatives</li> <li>• <b>AGREED</b> that qualifying nominees would receive a letter commending achievement</li> </ul> <p>Head of Democratic Services drew Member attention to the synopsis of civic recognition to date. The members reviewed the number by theme noting, those which could be classified as exceptional</p> <p><b>Logistics:</b></p> <p>Members discussed logistics for awards ceremonies and it was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events should be smart dress (not 'black tie'), though should look at it on a case by case</li> <li>• Budgetary arrangements for civic recognition had been reduce within the current year (2020-21) in light of COVID-19</li> <li>• <b>AGREED</b> that when revised arrangements are approved, the required budget would be set by Members and reviewed following first year.</li> <li>• Members discussed and expressed view that nominees would receive certificate/small award and overall winner an award which could be for example a perpetual gift thUs eliminating need for sponsorship</li> <li>• Consideration given to invitee list given capacity at Council properties (i.e. Ranfurly, HomePlace, Burnavon and the inclusion of 40 members</li> <li>• <b>AGREED</b> that all awards evenings be held in council property</li> </ul>	
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>	
	<p><b>AGREED:</b> For next meeting giving cognisance to the foregoing draft criteria be drawn up for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each of the listed categories Arts, Industry, Sport and Community; and</li> <li>• Civic Honour (Civic Receptions)</li> </ul>	Council Officers
<b>4</b>	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>	
	AGREED that officers take time to consider the direction from Members and convene with substantive proposals (to include criteria) on way forward with 4–6 weeks	
<b>Meeting concluded at 6.45 pm</b>		

Report of Elected Member Development Steering Group of Mid Ulster District Council held on *29 September 2020* at 6pm in Council Offices, Dungannon

**Attendees**    **Members:** Councillors Buchanan, Burton (in place of Ashton), Doris, Elattar, Kearney (in place of Quinn)  
                  **Officers:**    E Forde, Member Support Officer, S McAleer, Corporate L&D Manager

**Apologies**    Cllrs Ashton, Bell, Forde, Gildernew, Mallaghan, McKinney and Quinn

AGENDA	MATTERS AGREED	ACTIONS & RESPONSIBILITY
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Appointment of Chair</b>	
	In absence of the Chair it was AGREED that Cllr Doris assume the role. Cllr Doris took the Chair	
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Progress Report</b>	
	<b>Members Noted:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members noted training opportunity updates</li> <li>Emphasis was placed on Members availing of all training opportunities especially NILGA regional training opportunities as attendance impacts the level of future funding to be drawn down.</li> <li>Members expressed interest in enrolling for the NILGA Leadership Training – Member Support Officer to follow up.</li> <li>Update to be forwarded re Members ICT and training allowances;</li> <li>Training Analysis: Concern expressed that though 60% required to retain Charter Status had been attained more Members had not participated.</li> <li>Due to impact of COVID 19 pandemic that the Charter Review be postponed until early 2021</li> </ul>	Member Support Officer
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Elected Member Development Training Plan &amp; Personal Development Plans</b>	
	<b>Members Agreed:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EMDWG Members to actively encourage fellow Members to attend training</li> <li>Training Programme until 2023 noting that it was fluid and could be amended to suit changing needs as and when required; (Appendix A)</li> </ul>	EMDWG Members Member Support Officer

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal Development Plans to be issued to those Members who had completed analysis with a copy of the proposed programme.</li> <li>• That it be noted training participation may increase if two sessions were run back to back.</li> <li>• Training programme to include Code of Conduct and Social Media training and Onboard training to be brought forward if possible.</li> <li>• Links to be provided to Members for MyCMIS resource site re In-house training Road Closures and Training Byelaws.</li> <li>• Members to be afforded the opportunity to view the NILGA Condensed Planning Programme 2020 training delivered virtually on 18 August 2020.</li> <li>• Training opportunities outlined through reports to be forwarded to all Members.</li> <li>• That it be explored if annual conference, training and seminar budget could be accumulated for the term of the Council thus allowing more efficient utilisation of the budget.</li> </ul>	<p>Corporate L&amp;D Manager</p> <p>Head of Democratic Services</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>E Learning</b>	
	<p><b>Members Participated:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members present participated in E Learning demonstration and complimented the training programmes this would allow them to access.</li> </ul> <p><b>Members Agreed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EMDWG Members to actively encourage fellow Members to avail of E Learning</li> <li>• Details of Log on to be forwarded to Members</li> </ul>	<p>Corporate L&amp;D Manager</p>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
	<p><b>Members Agreed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To explore issue of PPE high visibility vests for Members attending site meetings; explore purchase of umbrellas (small red/white)</li> <li>• To explore Team Building Day for Members to commence perhaps with inter DEA visits.</li> </ul>	<p>Member Support Officer</p> <p>Head of Democratic Services</p>
<b>Meeting concluded at 7.35 pm</b>		



<b>Report on</b>	Transfer of Council's interest in Castle Buildings, Market Square, Dungannon to STEP Training and Learning Limited
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Claire McNally, Council Solicitor

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	x

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To revert to the original Council resolution to transfer the Council's freehold and leasehold interests in the property at 12,14 & 15 Market Square, Dungannon (also known as Castle Buildings) to STEP Training and Learning Limited.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	In November 2016, Council approved a request from STEP Training & Learning Ltd (STEPTL) to transfer the freehold and leasehold interests of the entire property to them along with the external stairwell fronting Castle Lane in order to allow a proposed redevelopment scheme to proceed.
2.2	Following the approval of a report in 2017 " <i>Innovative Approaches to Reducing Vacancy and Dereliction in Dungannon Town Centre</i> ", Council officers explored a number of options to purchase long term vacant/derelict property in Dungannon town centre.
2.3	This exercise led to the Council agreeing to progress the purchase of the Castle Buildings property at Market Square in July 2018.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	Council own freehold and leasehold interests in the Castle Buildings property and external stairwell on Castle Lane.
3.2	In November 2016, Council approved a request from STEP Training and Learning Limited (STEPTL) to transfer the freehold of the entire property to them along with the external stairwell fronting Castle Lane in order to allow a proposed redevelopment scheme to proceed.
3.3	A report " <i>Innovative Approaches to Reducing Vacancy and Dereliction in Dungannon Town Centre</i> " was approved by Council in June 2017 and identified key vacant or derelict properties within the town centre boundary and potential interventions aimed at bringing such units back into productive use.

3.4	In July 2018, Council resolved to progress the purchase of property at 12,14 and 15 Market Square, Dungannon.
3.5	In the intervening period, Council agreed the acquisition of the brownfield site fronting onto Market Square and Feeney's Lane, which is a zoned Development Opportunity Site (DOS) within the Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan 2010. The purchase of this prime opportunity site increases the Council's strategic landholdings in the area, which includes the neighbouring Castle Hill car park. With negotiations ongoing for the purchase of the Thomas Street gardens, there is a wider opportunity to masterplan the combined site (1.5 acres).
3.6	In light of the aforementioned land acquisition and change in priorities it is recommended to withdraw Council's interest in acquiring Castle Buildings and to revert back to the original resolution taken in November 2016. This would be subject to an updated LPS valuation being sought.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: The transferee(s) pay Council's reasonable legal costs.
	Human: Officer time in completing the matter.
	Risk Management: To comply with the Council's "best price" obligations under Section 96(5) of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972, the Council is required to obtain an updated LPS valuation in relation to the disposal of the Council's Freehold and Leasehold interests.
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	It is recommended that Members progress the transfer of the Council's freehold and leasehold interests in the entire property at Castle Buildings and the external stairwell on Castle Lane to STEP Training and Learning Limited.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Appendix 1 – Photo of Castle Buildings from Market Square





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LOWE BROS  
QUALITY MEATS



pharmacy



beauty

P Mon-Sat  
9.15 am - 6.15 pm  
1 hour  
No return  
within 1 hour

4775







<b>Report on</b>	Cemetery Management Policy
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> October 2010
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Andrew Cassells, Director of Environment and Property Services
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Terry Scullion, Head of Property Services

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	This report is to seek members approval on the updated Council's administration of burials in relation to Cemetery Management Policy including Rules, Regulations and Memorial Safety following trade union consultation and recent amendments made.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	Members will recall at the January 2020 Environment Committee meeting a draft paper on the Cemetery Management Policy including Rules, Regulations and Memorial Safety was approved, and permission was agreed to circulate it to the trade unions for a consultation period.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p>An extended period of Trade Union consultation was provided earlier this year, however no feedback was received. Therefore, the version of the policy approved by the Environment Committee remains unchanged, with two exceptions as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) As a result of Covid 19 the process of managing funerals and the practice for burials has altered as a temporary measure in accordance with government guidance. Numbers attending and the duration for burials are restricted and the provision to purchase double plots has also temporarily ceased. A copy of the Covid 19 burial procedure is details in Addendum 1 of the attached policy.</li> <li>b) A new app released by Plotbox that provides the Cemetery Administration IT system recently replaces the process whereby Funeral Directors are required to telephone the staff member out of hours to make arrangements for a burial. Electronically the Funeral Directors can now view the live burial calendar at any time for each cemetery to see what slots are available and make a request without having to call the Officer. This allows for greater</li> </ul>

	<p>responsiveness and a more efficient service for all stakeholders. All burial requests outside of office hours are now being booked using this process since August following an earlier trial period. It is expected this process will follow for all burials by the end of 20/21.</p>
3.2	<p>The attached policy attached in appendix 1 is the proposed final version to replace the current regulations in place at Mid Ulster Cemeteries.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	<p><b>Financial:</b> Development of the management policy is within existing resources and the Plotbox app is included in council's current tendered package at no additional costs. The annual scale of burial fees are as approved by Council.</p>
	<p><b>Human:</b> Staff time in the administration of burials, cemetery inspections including training of operatives, and managing third party contractors working in the cemeteries. Other client service support through Council's Marketing and Communications, Legal Services and Health and Safety teams as required.</p>
	<p><b>Risk Management:</b> This is a risk of injury to staff, contractors or visitors should an unstable headstone or memorial fall, or injury from access to a site, including liability issues associated with maintaining a work area not under the responsibility of Council, or were a maintenance agreement does not exist. There is an ongoing risk in compliance with current burial regulations in relation to burial administration associated with historic burial grounds.</p>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	<p><b>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications:</b>  No adverse impact on any equality group has been identified and positive impacts will be minor. See appendix 2 for equality screening document.</p>
	<p><b>Rural Needs Implications:</b>  No adverse impact as it is not specific to both rural or urban burials grounds and cemeteries within the District. See appendix 3 for rural needs assessment.</p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	<p>Members are requested to note the content of the report and approve the final version of the Mid Ulster Cemetery Policy as attached.</p>

<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Appendix 1 - Mid Ulster District Council Cemetery Management Policy incorporating Rules, Regulations and Memorial Safety
6.2	Appendix 2 – Cemetery Equality Screening
6.3	Appendix 3 – Cemetery Rural Needs Assessment





## CEMETERY MANAGEMENT POLICY INCORPORATING RULES, REGULATIONS & MEMORIAL SAFETY

Document Control			
<b>Policy / Procedure Owner (name, role &amp; section)</b>	Terry Scullion Head of Property Services		
<b>Policy/ Procedure Author (name, role &amp; section)</b>	Eunan Murray Grounds & Cemeteries Manager		
<b>Version</b>	V2.1		
<b>Consultation</b>	Senior Management Team	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade Unions	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Equality Screened by</b>	Eunan Murray	<b>Date</b>	28/10/2019
<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Date</b>	
<b>Approved By</b>	Policy & Resources Committee	<b>Date</b>	
<b>Adopted By</b>	Council	<b>Date</b>	
<b>Review Date</b>	October 2022	<b>By Whom</b>	Eunan Murray
<b>Circulation</b>	Mid Ulster DC staff, Funeral Directors, Memorial sculptors, and Churches (all denominations)		
<b>Document Linkages</b>	Customer service policy Health & Safety Policy Accessible communications policy		

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## SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Active Burial Grounds

This policy and rules made by Mid Ulster District Council concern the general management, regulations and control of the Burial Grounds owned and managed; and prescribes the conditions upon which the exclusive Right of Burial may be purchased as follows:

- Forthill Cemetery, Cemetery Road, Cookstown
- Polepatrick Cemetery, Castledawson Road, Magherafelt
- Coolhill Cemetery, Killyman Road, Dungannon
- Cottagequinn Cemetery, Old Eglis Road, Dungannon
- Drumcoo Cemetery, Coalisland Road, Dungannon

As the burial authority in control of cemeteries, we are bound by the conditions of the Public Health (Ireland) Act 1878 Part III; Burial Grounds Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992 Part II No. 5; and we have a legal duty under the Health and Safety at Work Order (NI) 1978; and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 2000 to ensure that our burial grounds are safe places to work and visit.

### 1.2 Historic Burial Grounds

This also includes general management, regulation and control of the following old burial grounds:

- Kilcronaghan Old Burial Ground, Kilcronagh Road, Tobermore
- St. Lurach's Old Burial Ground, Bank Square, Maghera
- Churchwell Lane (Bridewell) Old Burial Grounds, Churchwell Lane, Magherafelt
- Desertmartin Old Burial Grounds, Main Street, Desertmartin
- Ballynascreen Old Burial Grounds, Cavanreagh Road, Sixtowns, Draperstown
- Desertlyn Old Burial Grounds, Desertlyn Rd, Desertmartin
- Mullagh Old Burial Grounds, Mullagh Road, Maghera
- Eglis Old Burial Grounds, Opp 54 Ballynagrave Road, Magherafelt
- Ballymaguigan Old Graveyard, Ballymaguigan Road, Magherafelt
- Desertlyn Old Graveyard, 42 Lawford Street, Money more
- Donaghareisk Old Burial Grounds, 60 Tullywiggan Road, Tullyhogue, Cookstown
- Ballinderry Old Graveyard, 117 Ballinderry Bridge Road, Coagh
- Ballyclog Old Graveyard, 124 Coagh Road, Stewartstown
- Grange Old Graveyard, 68 Grange Road, Cookstown
- Derryloran Old Graveyard, 2 Sandholes Road, Cookstown
- Donaghendry Old Graveyard, 5 Donaghendry Road, Stewartstown
- Eglis (Coagh) Old Graveyard, 16 Gort Road, Coagh
- Kildress Old Graveyard, 1 Upper Kildress Road, Cookstown
- Ballyeglis Old Graveyard, 75 Ballyeglis Road, Loup, Money more
- Old Cross Ardboe, 150 Ardboe Road, Ardboe
- Paupers Graveyard, 57 Fairhill Road, Cookstown
- Gorestown Old Graveyard, Gorestown Road, Moy
- Clonfeacle Old Graveyard, 69 Clonfeacle Road, Tullydowney
- Aghaloo Old Graveyard, Adj 7 Aghaloo Road, Aughnacloy
- Carnteel Old Graveyard, Adj 42 Main Street, Carnteel
- Drumglass Old Graveyard, Rossmore Road, Dungannon

- Donaghmore Old Cross Graveyard, Castlecaulfield Road, Donaghmore
- Errigal Keerogue Cross and Graveyard, 55 Errigal Road, Ballygawley
- Clogher Paupers Graveyard, Tullybroom Road, Clogher

### **1.3 Aim of this Document**

This policy aims to communicate Rules and Regulations concerning the general management, regulation and control of all Council Cemetery facilities operated and managed by Mid Ulster District Council upon which the exclusive Right of Burial may be purchased.

It provides guidance on arranging a burial within Council cemeteries. It provides information on restrictions and conditions that apply when purchasing exclusive rights of burial, and will detail rights and responsibilities in relation to our cemeteries.

This policy sets out Councils approach to the safe erection and management of memorials in our Cemeteries, including historical burial grounds.

### **1.3 Policy Implementation**

This policy will be implemented on behalf of Council and the Chief Executive by the Property Services section.

## SECTION 2 – CEMETERY MANAGEMENT

### 2.1 Contact Details:

Mid Ulster District Council  
Burn Road  
Cookstown  
Co Tyrone  
BT80 8DT  
Tel No. 03000 132 132  
E-mail: [cemeteries@midulstercouncil.org](mailto:cemeteries@midulstercouncil.org)

### 2.2 Office and Cemetery Opening Hours

Monday to Friday 9.00am – 5.00 pm.

An out of hours' service is available to Funeral Directors via the funeral director portal on the Council Plotbox app. Funeral Directors registered with the council can log on and provisionally request an available time slot on the system.

The officer on duty will send confirmation that the burial may proceed or request additional information if necessary.

Funeral Directors should not make final arrangement with bereaved family or clergy until council confirmation has been received.

Burial requests for Sunday funerals must be made before 8:00pm on Friday evening.

Access to active cemeteries is available around the clock. However work hours for memorial mason or sculptor work is restricted to times granted on approved permits. Some historical cemeteries may be locked, but access is available on request from the Cemeteries Officer.

### 2.3 Interment Arrival Times

Monday to Sunday: 10.30 to 15:00\*.

\*During winter hours the latest permitted entry time is 14:30 due to the reduction in daylight to safely complete the burial. However the latest permitted entry time on Sundays is 15:00 throughout the year to accommodate Church services on this day.

Council will not be responsible for any delay in burials if the funeral arrives early or late.

Interments are available on public holidays with the exception of Christmas Day.

### 2.4 Fees and Payment

Council will review the scale of charges when it considers it necessary to do so. Current fees can be acquired by contacting the Cemeteries Officer or view them on Council's website: [www.midulstercouncil.org](http://www.midulstercouncil.org)

Residents of Mid Ulster District will receive a concession on the full price. Council will accept payment of fees by cash, cheque, BACS or debit/credit cards by the representatives of the deceased or by the appointed funeral director.

## **2.5 Public Graves**

Public graves are only available to the Council's Environmental Health Service, Health and Social Care Trusts and other statutory agencies as required. No monument, headstone, plinth, railings or other structures can be erected on or around these graves.

## **2.6 Graves in Proprietary Ground (privately owned graves)**

To purchase a grave, you purchase what is known as '**Exclusive Rights of Burial**' for a grave space. The general rule is that you can only purchase a grave at the time of bereavement however, special circumstance can be considered if the purchase is linked with a funeral plan. It should be noted that when you purchase the exclusive rights of burial you only purchase the right to bury in the grave and not the ground. *(A maximum of three plots only shall be made available to a family or individual at this time.)*

A person who wishes to purchase the '**Exclusive Rights of Burial**' in a grave shall agree to conform to all rules and regulations in force or thereafter made by the Council. Upon their death, those rights formally transfer to their beneficiaries unless indicated differently in last will and testament. The grave cannot be opened or burial take place without permission of the owner.

The '**Exclusive Rights of Burial**' owner has the right to erect headstones or other memorials subject to all conditions being met as per cemetery rules and regulations. If the person who owns the exclusive rights of burial dies, it is assumed that they have given permission that they can be buried in that grave.

Only one person will be registered as the owner of '**Exclusive Rights of Burial**'. It is permissible to inherit exclusive rights of burial, for example if someone is named as a will beneficiary.

The number of burials that can be accommodated in a grave is dependent on a number of factors including ground conditions. Up to three burials may be possible in a standard plot. **Council will only guarantee one interment in any one plot.** No refund will be made to any purchaser whose plot has limited capacity owing to the existence of rock, or other obstructions found.

## **2.7 Grant of Exclusive Rights of Burial (Grave Paper or Deed)**

A grant of '**Exclusive Rights of Burial**' will be sent to the applicant when all required fees have been paid. This process can take between six to eight weeks from burial date. Council should be notified of any change of circumstances.

## **2.8 Replacement Grave Papers**

Replacement grave papers can be obtained by applying in writing to the cemeteries officer. Applications must be accompanied by proof of identification, such as a Passport or Driving Licence. If the application is on behalf of the grave owner, a letter of indemnity must also be provided.

All replacement papers are subject to payment of the appropriate administration fee.

## **2.9 Transfer of Burial Rights**

There are three situations where it would be possible to transfer the '**Exclusive Rights of Burial**'

- If the present registered rights of burial holder is alive and wishes to transfer the rights of burial to a specific person they must provide Council with a letter of conferment. The current scale of fees will apply.
- If the registered owner is deceased and has left a will bequeathing the rights of burial to a specific person, the rights of burial will be transferred to that person upon application to the Council and upon production of the said will and grave papers.

- If the registered owner is deceased and has left a will but the will does not state who the exclusive rights of burial should transfer to; or if the deceased registered owner has left no will (dies intestate) the exclusive rights of burial in both cases automatically transfers to the owner's beneficiaries.

In both cases where the owner is deceased, the following is required:

- A letter of indemnity;
- Grave papers and a copy of the will;
- If there is more than one relative (next of kin) to whom rights of burial could transfer to, the Council will require a letter of consent to the transfer signed by all parties stating they do not object to the transfer of right of burial to that particular family member.

The Council will not become involved in any disputes regarding allocation of burial rights. This must be resolved between the parties.

All transfers are subject to payment of the appropriate administration fee.

## **2.10 Registering the Death**

By law, all deaths occurring in Northern Ireland must be registered with the General Register Office (Northern Ireland). A death which occurs in Northern Ireland can be registered in any of the Registrar's Offices in Northern Ireland. To allow funeral arrangements to be made the death should be registered no later than five days after the date of death unless the death has been referred to the Coroner.

Once the death is registered, the Registrar's office will provide along with other documentation, a GRO 21. This allows a burial or cremation to take place. Information on local Registrar's Offices can be found at [www.midulstercouncil.org](http://www.midulstercouncil.org)

## **2.11 Applying for the Exclusive Right of Burial or to Open a Plot for Interments**

A person wishing to purchase the exclusive right of burial or have an interment in any grave is required to make an application and provide the following particulars:

- Forename and Surname of the deceased;
- Last place of residence;
- Date and place of death;
- Sex
- Date of Birth/Age;
- Religious denomination (including no religion);
- Marital Status or 'the child of';
- Occupation

- Next of kin having charge of the burial;
- Details of any existing family plot and cemetery name;
- Number of new plots if required and the name of exclusive rights of burial holder;
- Date and time you would like the burial to take place.

The information should also include the name and address of the person having the management of the interment (usually a Funeral Director). In the case of proprietary ground, the application shall give the plot number of the plot required to be opened. For new plots, Council will allocate a plot number.

## **2.12 All religions and none**

MUDC will aim to accommodate all non-Christian burials to the best of their ability. It is the responsibility of the family or funeral director to notify the Council of religion and any special requests or religious traditions that the deceased party may have.

The request for a particular orientation of burial will be considered where possible.

## **2.13 Responsibilities of the Funeral Director**

The Funeral Director shall provide copies of their relevant health and safety risk assessments and evidence of the following insurances, Employer Liability and Public Liability at Indemnity Level £10,000,000 and motor fleet insurance policy covering vehicles associated with the service.

It is the Councils intention to seek confirmation in respect of same annually in April.

The Funeral Director shall contact the Cemeteries Officer a minimum of a full working day prior to the proposed burial taking place to ascertain whether other burials have been arranged in the cemetery. When the Cemeteries Officer has confirmed the burial request the Funeral Director will make final arrangements with the family, Clergy etc. and insert a death notice where necessary.

The Funeral Director shall advise Council of any specific customs or traditions which families may wish to carry out during the burial service.

The Funeral Director will be responsible for carrying and lowering the coffin, assisted by the family. In exceptional circumstances, council grave staff present will assist if notified and agreed in advance to ensure compliance with manual handling requirements.

The Funeral Directors shall have communicated appropriate safety measures and associated risks with the burial process to the family/mourners, including supervision of children.

The Funeral Directors shall advise the Cemeteries Officer of the accurate weight, size and width of the Coffin/Casket before the opening of the plot. Only persons authorised by the Council shall be permitted to open or prepare any plot for interment.

The Funeral Directors shall liaise with the cemetery operatives upon arrival at the cemetery:

- to check burial details
- to determine the best route to the grave side
- to identify any areas of uneven or soft ground
- to assist in the identification of potential hazards
- to determine the correct positioning of the coffin



The Funeral Directors shall observe the time stated on the application for the funeral to arrive at the cemetery to prevent any inconvenience in the event of other funerals, or safety issues associated with reduced daylight levels.

## **2.14 Testing Graves for Opening**

When Council receives an application to open a grave, they will check the Cemetery records to ensure the burial can take place. If cemetery records indicate there may be a problem, Council will invoke the following process:-

- Check all regulations are being met
- Check ground conditions
- Check depth of remaining top cover

If there is any doubt as to whether the burial can take place due to ground conditions, the family can request the grave be opened to establish the available depth by paying the burial fee in advance. If there is sufficient depth for the burial to proceed the fee will be deducted from the overall balance. If not the burial fee will be retained.

**If Council is certain that the burial cannot take place, the Cemeteries Officer decision is final.**

If an existing plot cannot be used, a new plot must be purchased.

## **2.15 Depth & Direction of Plots**

The depth of a new grave will be 2.74 metres (108") as long as ground conditions will permit. By law no coffin shall be laid in any grave nearer to the surface of the ground than 1.00 metre (39") measured from the upper surface of the last interment. All burials shall be separated from other coffins by a layer of earth not less than 0.30 metres (12"). Each grave space will be 1.20 metres (48") by 2.74 metres (108") the number of burials that can be accommodated in a grave space is dependent on a number of factors including ground conditions. Up to three burials may be possible in a standard plot. **Council will only guarantee one interment in any one plot.** No refund will be made to any purchaser whose plot has limited capacity owing to the existence of rock, or other obstructions found.

## **2.16 Receiving the Burial Order**

Once Council has received the application for a burial, instruction will be issued for the opening of the plot.

## **2.17 The Burial of Ashes**

The burial of ashes can be arranged directly with Council by a family member, appointed Funeral Director or another appropriate person. For details on cost and fees you can contact the Cemeteries Officer or they can be found on the website [www.midulstercouncil.org](http://www.midulstercouncil.org)

## **2.18 Signing the Register of Burials**

Once the burial has taken place, the person managing the burial is legally required to sign the Register of Burials.

## **2.19 Burials resulting from Epidemic**

In the event of the District being affected by a pandemic or epidemic of disease, the Council may make special orders regulating the order of interments, and the period of notice required. Council may also make special arrangements for burials to take place outside normal operating hours. (See addendum 1 for further details on the Covid 19 Pandemic)

## **2.20 Exhumation**

The current law relating to exhumations is contained in Regulation 12 of the Burial Grounds Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992 which states that:

*“A person shall not cause or permit a body to be removed from one place of burial to another or to be exhumed unless that person first obtains the written consent of the Department”*  
The ‘Department’ means the Department for Communities.

Application forms must be requested in writing from Mid Ulster District Council. The applicant is required to complete Part A of the form and then return the completed form with all accompanying documentation to the Council.

Council having reviewed the completed Part A of the form and all accompanying documentation will then complete Part B of the form. When the review is complete Council will then make application on behalf of the applicant to the Department.

In line with the Burial Grounds Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992, Schedule III Part III, the application will be copied to the Council Environmental Health Officer prior to consultation with the Director of Public Health (Public Health Agency).

Current regulations provide that: “The removal or exhumation of a body or the remains of a body, shall be conducted with due care and attention to decency under the supervision of an environmental health officer appointed by the Council and in accordance with such conditions as he or she may, after consultation with the Public Health Agency, impose with respect to matters affecting or likely to affect public health”.

Council will charge a fee for the exhumation. This fee does not include the cost of a new coffin, the removal by a Funeral Director or the cost of the re-burial.

## **2.21 Lawn Sections**

Sections of cemeteries across Mid Ulster District Council are laid in a lawn type system that provides a concrete plinth at the head of each grave for the placing of a memorial stone and for the placing of flowers. The remaining portion of each plot shall be sown with grass, which must be left clear at all times for maintenance purposes.

Following a burial in lawn sections of the grave will be allowed a period of settlement. Then top soil and grass seed will be sown. If further sinkage occurs then additional topsoil and seed will be applied.

Council will not allow the erection of pillars, railings, fences, plinths, hoops, artificial grass matting, surrounds ropes, flagstones, concrete edging, kerbing, ornaments, flower pots or any other structures that are used to enclose a lawn plot. Council staff will be instructed to remove any of these items as they obstruct our staff from maintaining the grounds.

## **2.22 Responsibilities of the Grave Owner**

Each purchaser of '**Exclusive Rights of Burial**' in any plot must ensure that the plot and any memorial erected thereon is kept in good order and repair, to the satisfaction of the Council.

Should the registered owner of the plot fail to do so, Council may carry out maintenance and repairs at the expense of the registered owner and may refuse to permit the plot to be opened until costs of such repairs or removal have been paid.

When tending the plot, please keep waste to a minimum. Do not allow waste to fall onto any surrounding plots and do not disturb any floral arrangements or monuments belonging to surrounding plot owners.

Waste bins are placed in all cemeteries; these bins are not to be used for the disposal of household waste or heavy waste such as soil or turf.

All types of fresh wreaths, sprays, bouquets and posies must be cleared within 30 days of being laid, if such items have not been cleared or are found to be in a state of decay prior to the expiry of 30 days, Council staff will be instructed to remove all such items from the grave plots. This includes Christmas wreaths, sprays, bouquets and posies.

You must not place a symbol, flag or emblem on any grave at any time that is likely to disrupt a good and harmonious environment.

Grave owners are required to keep us informed if their contact details have changed as it is important that we are able to contact you if something happens to your grave or memorial.

## **2.23 Acceptable Behaviour in Cemeteries**

Visitors can access the cemeteries from dawn to dusk on any day. All visitors to cemeteries must conduct themselves in a quiet and orderly manner at all times and must adhere to the rules and regulations, failure to do so may result in Council requesting the person(s) to leave the cemetery and prohibit their return.

The speed limit for any vehicle within Council cemeteries is 5mph. Where access is permitted to a grave drivers should take care when passing surrounds and memorials, members of the public and avoid areas where an interment is taking place.

No inebriated or riotous person shall be permitted to enter the grounds of the cemetery.

All children must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

No person shall be permitted to use a metal detector in any of our cemeteries.

No notices or advertisements are to be posted on any cemetery buildings, walls, fences, memorials or monuments without Council permission.

Council will not permit the discharge of any firearms except at a military or police funeral.

The selling of flowers, shrubs or plants is prohibited unless authorised by Council.

Dogs are permitted in the grounds, but not on or near grave plots as detailed on maps within each cemetery, other than guide dogs. They must be on a lead and under control at all times. It is the owner's responsibility to clean up after their dogs.

## SECTION 3 – MEMORIALS AND STRUCTURES

### 3.1 Requesting Permission

If you wish to erect a headstone in one of Council's cemeteries you must firstly apply to the Cemeteries Officer for a permit to do so.

You can only erect a memorial on a grave if you have the exclusive right of burial there. The completed memorial application form must be signed by the Deed Holder or their Successor and the memorial mason and must be accompanied by the appropriate fee. Forms and Fees can be found online at [www.midulstercouncil.org/cemeteries](http://www.midulstercouncil.org/cemeteries).

You must satisfy Council that either:

- You own the grave
- You are a relative of the deceased
- You are acting on behalf of the deed owner.

The sculptor that you choose to carry out the work must be signed up to the Mid Ulster District Council Code of Memorial Safe Working Practice Procedures. This ensures the monumental sculptor has the necessary skills to safely erect a headstone to the standards that Council require.

### 3.2 Dealing with unauthorised memorials

Where Council find a memorial to be unauthorised, that has been erected without permission, or where no fees have been paid.

- Council will send a letter to the Deed holder at their last known address of the unauthorised memorial being discovered. Council will ask for an application for retrospective permission, and will charge an administration fee for this process.
- If after a further three months has passed, if it still hasn't received and approved valid application, cemetery staff will remove the memorial.

If council haven't been able to contact the owner of a grave with an unauthorised memorial on it, and subsequently someone wants to open the grave for a burial, or to bury cremated remains, any outstanding fees owed to council must be paid before a burial can take place in line with the application process to erect a memorial. It will then

be up to the grave owner or applicant to arrange to have the memorial put on the grave in accordance with the safe working procedures documented in this policy.

### 3.3 Memorial Permit Application Form

The memorial permit application form must contain:

A detailed plan and particulars of the memorial. Each drawing submitted must specify:

- The type of materials and how the materials is fixed to BS8415
- The exact dimensions
- The full inscription details – images etc.
- The applicant's name and address
- Cemetery and grave number

- The applicant's relationship to the grave owner or deceased person.

All memorials and headstones must be made of stone or other non-perishable material such as granite. Temporary hardwood memorials can be erected but only for twelve months from the date of the burial, after this period Council staff will be instructed to remove it'.

Once Council have agreed an application that is signed by the family and memorial mason, a numbered memorial permit for the memorial mason to carry out the work will be issued. All work must be completed within one year from the date of approval.

### **3.4 Restrictions on memorial size and placement**

Council do not permit any memorials that restricts access to the plot on which it is placed or obstructs another grave.

All stone memorials must be placed on a solid foundation and fixed to BS 8415.

In designated lawn cemeteries within the district, grave surrounds are not permitted. Council only allow grave owners or next of kin to use the concrete plinth at the head of the grave for placing memorials and flower tributes. Memorial Dimensions are as follows;

- Maximum Height of Memorial (Inc. base/sub base) 1.2 Metres (48")
- Maximum Width of Memorial on a Single Plot (Inc. base/sub base) 1.1 Metres (42")
- Maximum Width of Memorial on a Double Plot (Inc. base/sub base) 1.2 Metres (48")

The wording of inscription and the use of emblems on memorials is subject to strict conditions, in line with Council's legal duties of equality and promoting good relations. Council will not permit any inscriptions that contain sectarian, racist, homophobic wording or imagery or any inscriptions or imagery that promote discrimination, ethnic division, offensive materials or any form of hate crime.

If an inscription or an emblem is made on a memorial and the grave owner or applicant has not asked for permission to do this, or has been refused permission to do this, Council may remove the memorial and charge the grave owner or applicant a fee.

### **3.5 Fees**

Mid Ulster District Council charge a fee to erect a memorial in our cemeteries which must be paid before the memorial is erected. Fees can be found online at [www.midulstercouncil.org/cemeteries](http://www.midulstercouncil.org/cemeteries).

### **3.6 Changes to Memorials**

If a family wishes to add any inscriptions to a memorial at a later stage, they must seek approval for this in advance from the Cemeteries Officer. The same regulations around wording that are mentioned in 3.4 apply to any additional inscriptions and all work must comply with BS 8415.

### **3.7 Maintaining your memorial or surround**

It is the responsibility of the proprietor of the grave to maintain their grave, headstone and surround if applicable in the non lawned sections of the relevant cemeteries.

## SECTION 4 – MONUMENTAL MASONS AND SCULPTORS GUIDANCE

### 4.1 Standards

The standards referred to in this document are:

- The British Standard 8415 being the primary standard.
- The British register of Accredited Memorial Masons (BRAMM) Blue Book and National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) Code of Working Practice being the appropriate industry codes of practice that inform the monumental Sculptor how to achieve the required Standard.

Monumental masons and sculptors wishing to work within Council's cemeteries must carry out all works to these standards.

### 4.2 Cemetery Memorial Safe Working Procedure

Council is bound by legislation to ensure that its burial grounds are safe places to work and visit. Managing Memorial Safety is therefore an essential part of controlling the risks to health and safety. Whilst council has overall responsibility of the active cemeteries, including risk from unstable memorials, however they do not own the memorials. The owner of the memorial is the Deed Holder (grave owner with exclusive right of burial) or their successor in title. The purpose is to clarify the Council's position in all areas of memorial management, including the treatment of memorials that have been found to be unstable, unsafe or unauthorised.

### 4.3 Getting Permission

All monumental masons and sculptors who wish to work within Council cemeteries must, on a yearly basis sign up to the Council's Management Policy, incorporating Rules, Regulation and Memorial Safety. Any monumental mason or sculptor who does not sign up to this policy will not be permitted to work in any of the Council's cemeteries. All monumental masons or sculptors must provide and include a valid copy of their Public and Employee liability insurance when registering.

All registrations must be completed annually in April. Any mason or sculptor signing up throughout the year can do so but will have to re-register on 1 April the following year.

Anyone who is not registered with the Council will not be allowed to carry out such work in any of its cemeteries.

### 4.4 Carrying out preparation work

Council charge a fee to erect memorials and headstones within our cemeteries, which must accompany the memorial application and be paid prior to any work being undertaken.

A copy of Council's fees can be obtained from the Cemetery Officer or can be found on our website: [www.midulstercouncil.org](http://www.midulstercouncil.org).

### 4.5 Working Hours

Monumental masons and sculptors may carry out their works in Council cemetery grounds during the following times:

Monday – Friday 8.00am – 3.45pm

Evening and week-end working may be permitted in exceptional circumstances on application to cemeteries officer. No monumental work will be allowed when burials are taking place in the cemetery.

Any memorial mason or sculptor working outside the working hours stated will be asked to leave the cemetery. We may also consider refusing permission to undertake any other work within all Council's cemeteries for those who have breached the Conditions of the Council's Management Policy, incorporating Rules, Regulation and Memorial Safety.

#### **4.6 Signing in process**

Before starting any work in Council cemeteries, all monumental masons and sculptors must contact the Cemetery Officer, or call into the on-site cemetery office (where applicable) and show the headstone permit relating to the work they are going to carry out on that day.

If the monumental mason or sculptor is working on more than one memorial in the cemetery at any one time they must show the headstone permit of each memorial they will be working on.

PPE and hi-viz clothing should be worn on site at all times in compliance with site rules.

#### **4.7 Memorial Remedial Work**

Basic cleaning and washing down of a memorial is the responsibility of the family or their representative.

#### **4.8 Works Debris**

All sculptors and masons working in Council cemeteries i.e., erecting a memorial or doing necessary remedial works must remove all debris from site immediately following the work. They must also make good any damage that they may cause to other graves, pathways, shrubbery or grass etc. at their own expense and to the satisfaction of the Council.

#### **4.9 Memorial or Headstone Grave Marking**

The section, grave number and the name of the monumental sculptor must be engraved or marked in clear characters on the side of the base of the memorial monument or headstone being erected or re-erected on each grave.

#### **4.10 Re-erection and Repair or Inscription Work**

If you are re-erecting a previously authorised memorial, repairing an existing memorial or adding an additional inscription you must report to the Cemetery Officer.  
All works must comply with BS 8415.

## SECTION 5 – MEMORIAL SAFETY PROGRAMME

### 5.1 Introduction

Council regularly inspect and test its memorials to make sure they are safe. These inspections are done as part of a rolling 5-year programme, as recommended by the Health and Safety Executive.

Where a memorial has been deemed to be unstable or unsafe, a notification will be placed on the memorial giving cemetery contact details. It may also be staked and supported, cordoned off, or laid flat.

### 5.2 Communication

Given the sensitive nature of the programme, a specific communications plan has been developed which aims to:

- Create awareness and build understanding of the safety check programme among those who own or visit the graves of loved ones in Council-maintained cemeteries,
- Ensure key stakeholders (e.g. funeral directors, memorial masons, churches) are aware of the safety check programme and able to manage and/or signpost enquiries.
- Ensure a proactive, open, empathetic process which minimises any distress for those who may be affected

All initial inspections and recording of memorials will be carried out by trained staff in accordance with current industry best practice. All memorials will be recorded and inspected.

### 5.3 Memorials up to 1.5m (60”) high

For memorials up to 1.5m (60”) high, these inspections will include both a visual and a hand test. The hand test will be used to check the stability of the memorial.

The hand test will be carried out by standing to one side of the memorial and applying a firm but steady pressure in different direction. This test will determine to what degree the memorial is unstable.

### 5.4 Memorials between 1.5m (60”) and 3m (118”) high

For memorials over this height Council will use a complex visual check and a hand test if it thinks the memorial is unsafe. Council may ask a memorial sculptor or structural engineer to carry out a more detailed check.

Memorials above 3m (118”) high may require inspection by a structural engineer.

### 5.5 Unstable memorials

Whilst Council has overall responsibility for the safety of its cemeteries, including risks from unstable memorials, it doesn't own the memorials. The owner of the memorial is the Deed Holder (grave owner of exclusive right of burial) or their successor in title. This is the person responsible for maintaining the memorial so that it does not become a hazard. However, Council may not be able to identify a current grave owner, as some records are extremely old and in many cases have not been updated by relatives or family members.

If Council find a memorial to be unstable:



- It will send a letter to the grave owner at their last known address following the inspection. This letter will inform the owner that their memorial has been found to be unstable, and details of the action needed to be taken by the memorial owners to make the memorial safe. A notice will also be attached to the unsafe memorial.

This will continue for a three month period to address the problem. If after three months have passed and a response hasn't been received from the grave owner, or an acceptable timebound plan of action to remedy the unstable memorial, Cemetery staff will the necessary steps to make safe the memorial, subject to resource availability.

Wherever possible the memorial or its components will be left in the grave space in a way where by full repair of the memorial to BS 8415 is possible by a competent memorial mason. This action will involve any of the following:

- Removing the memorial from its foundation and partially sinking it into the ground at the head of the grave at least 25% of the memorial will be below ground, or
- Laying the memorial flat in the grave space.

If Council receive a request to reopen the grave for a burial, were a permanent repair is pending, this must carried out by the Deed holder first.

## **5.6 Dealing with Un-safe memorials that pose a significant risk**

When a memorial poses a significant or immediate risk, such as likely collapse in a way that could lead to serious injury, Council will take one or more of the following actions:

- It may temporarily make safe the memorial using a staking and banding structural support method or fence it off. It will put up a safety notice to tell people that the memorial is unsafe and the action to be taken by the grave owner or their heir(s) will be displayed on or near to the memorial.
- The memorial will be partially buried into the ground at the head of the grave.
- Memorials will be laid flat if there is no other practical way of making them safe.
- It will try to contact the owner of the grave as soon as possible to agree a repair time frame.

If council find a large number of memorials aren't safe within a section of burial ground, it may fence off the whole area. Signs will be displayed to inform visitors of the danger and provide contact details for further information.

Where a memorial is thought to have historical or social significance, Council will do its best to consult with the relevant conservation or heritage association before any remedial works are carried out.

## SECTION 6 – GENERAL

In these Rules “The Council” means the Mid Ulster District Council.

Ministers and Clergymen of the various religious denominations are at liberty to officiate at the graves of persons of their own communion and to perform ceremonies of their respective churches or bodies.

In the normal course of events, only funeral hearses, official funeral cars, wheelchairs, powered chairs and mobility scooters may enter the Cemetery beyond the car parking area (except for Council vehicles and monumental masons and sculptors with prior permission to be in the cemetery). However, in the case of elderly, disabled or infirm visitors, arrangements can be made with the Cemeteries Officer to have access with a vehicle beyond the car parking area. In such cases those afforded this facility must only drive vehicles on roads and pathways agreed in advance. Vehicles must not be driven on grass areas.

Council’s Management Policy, incorporating Rules, Regulation and Memorial Safety shall replace all previous Rules and Regulations adopted by the legacy Councils of Coosktown, Dungannon and South Tyrone, and Magherafelt.

These rules are subject to amendment or alteration from time to time, as the Council shall see fit.

The foregoing Rules shall remain in force, and be binding on all owners of the exclusive rights of burial in the Council Cemeteries, and all other persons, until same be altered by the Council

## **Addendum 1: COVID-19 Pandemic Burial Procedure**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a fundamental impact on our daily lives and, sadly, will also impact on how we traditionally arrange burials in our cemeteries.

Funeral directors, faith-based organisations and local councils will all face challenges conducting funeral services and burials in the current circumstances. To assist, we have produced guidance which we hope will be helpful to you and to bereaved families in the coming weeks and months.

### **Graves**

- Where a family plot exists and it is operationally possible, burials may continue in these graves.
- Where a new grave is needed, families may purchase single plots in our cemeteries. As a temporary measure, the purchase of double plots has been suspended.

### **Attendance at burials**

- Given the current advice on social distancing and restrictions on gatherings, we are advising that only immediate family should attend a burial and attendance will be limited to 30 people.
- Those attending should adhere to social distancing advice and remain 2 metres or 6 feet apart, and remain behind the 5 metre cordon which will be placed around the grave.
- Physical interactions including shaking hands and hugging should be avoided.
- All mourner displaying symptoms of COVID19 disease should not attend a funeral as they pose a risk to others.
- Mourners who are self-isolating for 14 days (due to someone in their household being unwell with symptoms of COVID19, or on the advice of the Contact Tracing system) should be facilitated to attend the funeral in person, should they wish to do so. They should not attend if they have any symptoms of COVID19, even if very mild; only attend outdoor elements of a funeral; advise the funeral directors and other mourners that they are self-isolating; at all times maintain strict 2m distancing; and use their own transport to the funeral.
- If the family wish to live stream the burial, they may do so provided the funeral director and pastoral/faith representative is in agreement with this. Council staff should not be filmed without seeking their permission.
- We ask that burial services are limited to 15 minutes and respectfully request that those attending leave the cemetery immediately after the committal.

### **Cemetery staff and cemetery operations**

- Local arrangements may be in place to control access to the cemetery for committals and monumental sculptors/stone masons. Following the committal, funeral directors/families may be asked to leave the cemetery if it is not open to the public at that time.
- Staff will place notices in the cemetery to direct those attending the burial to the grave plot.

- Our cemetery staff will prepare the grave as normal and remain at a distance during the burial service.
- It is recommended that coffin 'lifts' should not take place unless pallbearers all reside in the same house. Funeral directors should bring the coffin to the grave on a trolley or where this is not possible it should be carried at waist height using slings or another secure mechanism where necessary (if the funeral director is unable to do this, this should be communicated to the burial authority in advance so that assistance can be provided)
- Lowering of the coffin will continue based on existing local practice in each cemetery. However, this should be agreed in advance with us.
- Staff will wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as appropriate, including facemasks and gloves. We ask funeral directors to wear PPE also as appropriate, but always when lowering the coffin.
- Slings used to lower the coffin will be disinfected after each burial.

### **Further Changes**

Burial arrangements and this guidance may change in response to the evolving situation.

### **Introduction**

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

### **Section 1 – Policy scoping**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Section 4 – Monitoring**

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

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

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

### **Appendix A          Screening Process**

## Section 1 Policy Scoping & Information

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

<b>1. Policy Name</b>		
Cemetery Management Rules & Regulations, including memorial safety		
<b>2. Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?</b>		
New guidance for Mid Ulster District Council area which formalises current cemetery management protocols and practices (some of which were inherited from legacy councils) in one coherent document and includes a new Memorial Safety policy		
<b>3. What is it trying to achieve? (aims/outcomes)</b>		
<p>This new guidance aims to formalise existing MUDC cemetery management protocols and practices in one document and reflects new legislative requirements regarding memorial safety.</p> <p>MUDC has responsibility for the operational management of 5 active cemeteries and the maintenance of 36 old burial grounds.</p> <p>The aim of this guidance is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide the public with the necessary information on the restrictions and conditions that apply to purchasing exclusive rights of burial.</li> <li>• provide guidance and regulations that ensure that our cemeteries are safe places to work and visit.</li> <li>• promote high levels of service with clear guidance on how we deliver our services.</li> <li>• ensure council meets its obligations under the law</li> <li>• provide guidance on the safe erection and management of headstone memorials.</li> </ul>		
<b>4. Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?</b>	Yes	X
	No	
<p>As all categories of citizen are likely to access Council cemetery services at some point, all categories will potentially benefit from clearer guidance and communication regarding the cemetery and burial services offered by Council. No one category is likely to benefit differentially.</p>		
<b>6. Who initiated or wrote the policy?</b>		

The guidance and new policy has been written by the Grounds & Cemeteries Service Manager.

#### 7. Who owns and who implements the policy?

The Policy owner is the Head of Property Services and it will be implemented through the Grounds & Cemeteries Service Manager and the Cemeteries Officer.

### Implementation factors

		Yes	No
Are there any factors which could contribute to/ detract from intended aim/ outcome of the policy?			
• If yes, are they financial?		X	
• If yes, are they legislative?		X	
• If yes, Please specify	<p><b>Financial:</b>  <i>The cost of training operatives in memorial safety inspections and the resources required to do this every 5 years.</i></p> <p><b>Legislative:</b>  <i>Council are bound by the conditions of the following legislation;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Public Health (Ireland) Act 1878 Section 178</i></li> <li>• <i>Burial Grounds Regulations (NI) 1992 Part II No. 5</i></li> <li>• <i>Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977</i></li> <li>• <i>Health &amp; Safety at Work Order (NI) 1978</i></li> <li>• <i>Management of Health &amp; Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 2000</i></li> <li>• <i>Occupiers Liability Act (NI) 1957</i></li> <li>• <i>Occupiers Liability (NI) Order 1987.</i></li> </ul>		
• Other, Please specify			

### Stakeholders

The internal and external (actual or potential) that the policy will be impacted upon

	Yes	No
Staff	X	
Service Users	X	

Other public sector organisations	X	
Voluntary/community/ trade unions		
Other, please specify	Funeral Directors; Memorial sculptors; Churches (all denominations)	

### Others policies with a bearing on this policy

Policies	Owners
Customer service policy	Head of Marketing & Communication
Health & Safety Policy	Health & Safety Officer
Accessible communications policy	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer

### Available evidence

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

Council have consulted with a cross section of Funeral Directors, Church groups and Stone Masons that represent the majority of its users in Mid Ulster. Wider feedback has also been sought from minority groups representing non-Christian burials and the Mid Ulster Disability Forum.

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information		
Religious belief	63.77% of the Mid Ulster District population were brought up in the Catholic religion and 33.46% belong or were brought up in a Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related) religion. Other religions comprised 690 (0.5%) and None 3,153 (2.28%) of the population (Source: 2011 Census).		
	Religion or Religion brought up in	No.	%
	Catholic	88,375	63.77
	Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)	46,372	33.46
	Other religions	690	0.5
	None	3,153	2.28
	Total	138,590	100



	<p>From 01/01/2017 the breakdown of burials by religion is as follows:</p> <p>Protestant- 63.70% Catholic- 28.15% Non-Christian- 1.28% Non Stated- 5.68% Congregational- 1.28%</p> <p>Feedback has been sought from a wide range of stakeholders that include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 14 x Funeral Directors</li><li>• 13 x Memorial Masons</li><li>• Council staff</li><li>• Religious Groups and Organisations from the Catholic Church, Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church, Church of Ireland, Refugee Asylum Forum, Belfast Migrant Forum &amp; Belfast Islamic Centre.</li></ul>																																				
Political opinion	<p>Political party representation can be used as an approximate barometer of political opinion of people within Mid Ulster council area. The most recent local government/ council election in 2014 the percentage 1<sup>st</sup> preference vote share for each of the political party/ independents is detailed bellowed along with representation (seats) on Council (Source: NISRA):</p> <table><tr><th>Party</th><th>Votes</th><th>Percentage</th><th>Council Seats</th></tr><tr><td>SF</td><td>22,587</td><td>41.0%</td><td>18</td></tr><tr><td>DUP</td><td>9,723</td><td>17.6%</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>UUP</td><td>9,573</td><td>17.4%</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td>SDLP</td><td>7,600</td><td>13.8%</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>Independent</td><td>2,689</td><td>4.9%</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>TUV</td><td>2,380</td><td>4.3%</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>Alliance</td><td>250</td><td>0.6%</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>UKIP</td><td>195</td><td>0.4%</td><td>0</td></tr></table> <p>No info available on political opinion of those who purchase burial plots, are interred in Council cemeteries or who visit.</p>	Party	Votes	Percentage	Council Seats	SF	22,587	41.0%	18	DUP	9,723	17.6%	8	UUP	9,573	17.4%	7	SDLP	7,600	13.8%	6	Independent	2,689	4.9%	1	TUV	2,380	4.3%	0	Alliance	250	0.6%	0	UKIP	195	0.4%	0
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Racial group	<p>According to the 2011 Census the overwhelming majority of the population 136,485 (98.48%) were classified as 'white'. Within this total will be migrant communities, such as Polish, Lithuanian and so forth. Statistics indicate that the number of people in Mid Ulster Local Government District (LGD) born outside Northern Ireland is:</p> <table><tr><th>Place of Birth</th><th>No.</th></tr><tr><td>Great Britain</td><td>4,053</td></tr><tr><td>Republic of Ireland</td><td>2,250</td></tr><tr><td>EU Countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia)</td><td>6,795</td></tr><tr><td>Other</td><td>2,280</td></tr></table>	Place of Birth	No.	Great Britain	4,053	Republic of Ireland	2,250	EU Countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia)	6,795	Other	2,280																										
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	<p>The minority ethnic language profile within the area can serve as a possible indicator of the Black &amp; Minority Ethnic (BME) community profile within the district. The composition of language groups in Mid Ulster LGD area is also noted from the 2011 census by NISRA as:</p> <table><tr><th>Main Languages of residents in Mid Ulster Council area</th><th>No.</th></tr><tr><td>English</td><td>125,715</td></tr><tr><td>Polish</td><td>2,008</td></tr><tr><td>Lithuanian</td><td>2,039</td></tr><tr><td>Portuguese</td><td>903</td></tr><tr><td>Irish (Gaelic)</td><td>404</td></tr><tr><td>Slovak</td><td>477</td></tr><tr><td>Russian</td><td>297</td></tr><tr><td>Latvia</td><td>261</td></tr><tr><td>Hungarian</td><td>117</td></tr><tr><td>Chinese</td><td>64</td></tr><tr><td>Tagalog/Filipino</td><td>38</td></tr><tr><td>Malaysian</td><td>33</td></tr><tr><td>Other</td><td>922</td></tr></table> <p>Currently no information on the racial background of those who apply for opening of burial plots, those who are interred or who visit. However, it is likely that the number of BME (Black and minority ethnic) citizens who may come in contact with cemetery services in future will increase.</p>	Main Languages of residents in Mid Ulster Council area	No.	English	125,715	Polish	2,008	Lithuanian	2,039	Portuguese	903	Irish (Gaelic)	404	Slovak	477	Russian	297	Latvia	261	Hungarian	117	Chinese	64	Tagalog/Filipino	38	Malaysian	33	Other	922		
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Age	<p>The age profile of Mid Ulster Local Government District area as at 2015 (Source, NISRA)</p> <table><tr><th></th><th>Mid Ulster</th><th>Northern Ireland</th></tr><tr><td>Total Population</td><td>144,002</td><td>1,851,621</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>0-15 years</td><td>33,123</td><td>385,200</td></tr><tr><td>16-39 years</td><td>47,646</td><td>583,116</td></tr><tr><td>40-64 years</td><td>43,621</td><td>591,481</td></tr><tr><td>65+ years</td><td>19,612</td><td>291,824</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Population Change % (2005-2015)</td><td>15.3%</td><td>7.2%</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>		Mid Ulster	Northern Ireland	Total Population	144,002	1,851,621				0-15 years	33,123	385,200	16-39 years	47,646	583,116	40-64 years	43,621	591,481	65+ years	19,612	291,824				Population Change % (2005-2015)	15.3%	7.2%			
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Marital status	The below table sets out the marital status profile for Mid Ulster District Council area as extracted from results of the 2011 Census																																																			
		Mid Ulster		Northern Ireland																																																
		No.	%	No	%																																															
	Single (never married or never registered a same sex civil partnership) (Aged 16+)	38,353	35.97	517,393	36.14																																															
	Married (Aged 16+)	54,192	50.82	680,831	47.56																																															
	In a registered same sex civil partnership (Aged 16+)	62	0.06	1,243	0.09																																															
	Separated (but is still legally married or still legally in a same sex civil partnership) (Aged 16+)	3,369	3.16	56,911	3.98																																															
	Divorced or formerly in a same sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved (Aged 16+)	4,139	3.88	78,074	5.45																																															
	Widowed or surviving partner from a same sex civil partnership (Aged 16+)	6,523	6.12	97,088	6.78																																															
Sexual orientation	No specific statistics are available from the 2011 government census for this Category and there are therefore no official statistics available in relation to persons of different sexual orientation. However, the Integrated Household Survey would include between 3% and 4% would be either gay, lesbian and/or bisexual. However, due to the nature of 'disclosure' in this area, umbrella organisations often state that the figure may be closer to 10%.																																																			
	<table><tr><th>Region</th><th>Heterosexual / Straight</th><th>Gay/ Lesbian</th><th>Bisexual</th><th>Gay/ Lesbian/ Bisexual</th><th>Other</th><th>Don't know /refuse</th><th>No response</th></tr><tr><td>England</td><td>92.54%</td><td>1.10%</td><td>0.51%</td><td>1.61%</td><td>0.33%</td><td>4.07%</td><td>1.45%</td></tr><tr><td>Wales</td><td>93.93%</td><td>1.04%</td><td>0.48%</td><td>1.52%</td><td>0.45%</td><td>2.99%</td><td>1.11%</td></tr><tr><td>Scotland</td><td>94.65%</td><td>0.82%</td><td>0.33%</td><td>1.14%</td><td>0.26%</td><td>2.59%</td><td>1.37%</td></tr><tr><td>N Ireland</td><td>93.00%</td><td>0.64%</td><td>0.96%</td><td>1.60%</td><td>0.26%</td><td>3.98%</td><td>1.17%</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>92.80%</td><td>1.06%</td><td>0.51%</td><td>1.57%</td><td>0.32%</td><td>3.89%</td><td>1.42%</td></tr></table>	Region	Heterosexual / Straight	Gay/ Lesbian	Bisexual	Gay/ Lesbian/ Bisexual	Other	Don't know /refuse	No response	England	92.54%	1.10%	0.51%	1.61%	0.33%	4.07%	1.45%	Wales	93.93%	1.04%	0.48%	1.52%	0.45%	2.99%	1.11%	Scotland	94.65%	0.82%	0.33%	1.14%	0.26%	2.59%	1.37%	N Ireland	93.00%	0.64%	0.96%	1.60%	0.26%	3.98%	1.17%	Total	92.80%	1.06%	0.51%	1.57%	0.32%	3.89%	1.42%	<p>Research also conducted by the HM Treasury shows that between 5%-7% of the UK population identify themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual or 'trans' (transsexual, transgendered and transvestite) (LGBT).</p>		
Region	Heterosexual / Straight	Gay/ Lesbian	Bisexual	Gay/ Lesbian/ Bisexual	Other	Don't know /refuse	No response																																													
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Men & women generally	<p>The gender profile of Mid Ulster LGD is detailed as;</p> <table><tr><th></th><th colspan="2">Mid Ulster</th><th colspan="2">Northern Ireland</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>No.</th><th>%</th><th>No.</th><th>%</th></tr><tr><td>Male</td><td>69,362</td><td>50.05</td><td>887,323</td><td>49.00</td></tr><tr><td>Female</td><td>69,228</td><td>49.95</td><td>923,540</td><td>51.00</td></tr></table>		Mid Ulster		Northern Ireland			No.	%	No.	%	Male	69,362	50.05	887,323	49.00	Female	69,228	49.95	923,540	51.00					
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Male	69,362	50.05	887,323	49.00																						
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Disability	<p>According to the 2011 NISRA census statistics 19.39% of people had a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities whilst 80.43% of people within the district stated their general health was either good or very good</p> <table><tr><th></th><th colspan="2">Mid Ulster</th><th colspan="2">Northern Ireland</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>No.</th><th>%</th><th>No.</th><th>%</th></tr><tr><td>Disability / long term health</td><td>26,870</td><td>19.39</td><td>374,646</td><td>20.69</td></tr><tr><td>No disability / long term health problem</td><td>111,720</td><td>80.61</td><td>1,436,217</td><td>79.31</td></tr></table> <p>In Northern Ireland the profile of persons with a disability has been reported by Disability Action as;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More than 1 in 5 or 21% of the population have a disability</li><li>• 1 in 7 people have some form of hearing loss</li><li>• 5,000 persons use sign language - British Sign Language and/or Irish Sign Language</li><li>• There are 57,000 blind persons or persons with significant impairment</li><li>• 52,000 persons with learning difficulties</li></ul>		Mid Ulster		Northern Ireland			No.	%	No.	%	Disability / long term health	26,870	19.39	374,646	20.69	No disability / long term health problem	111,720	80.61	1,436,217	79.31					
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Dependants	<p>Persons with dependents may be people who have personal responsibility for the care of a child (or children), a person with a disability, and/ or a dependent older person. The below table provides a summary with respect Mid Ulster LGD.</p> <table><tr><th></th><th colspan="2">Mid Ulster</th><th colspan="2">Northern Ireland</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>No.</th><th>%</th><th>No.</th><th>%</th></tr><tr><td>Households with dependent children</td><td>18,626</td><td>38.99</td><td>238,094</td><td>33.86</td></tr><tr><td>Lone parent households with dependents</td><td>3,485</td><td>7.30</td><td>63,921</td><td>9.09</td></tr><tr><td>People providing unpaid care</td><td>12,821</td><td>10.69</td><td>231,980</td><td>11.82</td></tr></table> <p>Of the households in Mid Ulster Local Government District with dependent children, they can be summarised as;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 7,407 families in households have 1 dependent child</li><li>• 6,394 families in households with two dependent children</li><li>• 5,014 families in households with three dependent children</li></ul> <p>There are 37,306 dependent children within families.</p>		Mid Ulster		Northern Ireland			No.	%	No.	%	Households with dependent children	18,626	38.99	238,094	33.86	Lone parent households with dependents	3,485	7.30	63,921	9.09	People providing unpaid care	12,821	10.69	231,980	11.82
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## Needs, experiences and priorities

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

Section 75 category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
Religious belief	No specific issues have been highlighted to date.
Political opinion	No specific issues have been highlighted to date.
Racial group	Some minorities, for example, people who do not have English as a first language or who are not familiar with local customs and practice may need to have information explained or for someone to take more time to help them understand a policy or procedure.
Age	Some older people may need information explained to them or for someone to take more time to help them understand a policy or procedure.
Marital status	No specific issues have been highlighted to date.
Sexual orientation	No specific issues have been highlighted to date.
Men and women generally	No specific issues have been highlighted to date.
Disability	Some disabled people may need reasonable adjustments to accommodate them, eg, information in alternative formats, help to understand something, more time and patience from staff, etc. No specific issues were raised by members of the Mid Ulster Disability Forum in terms of physical access to cemeteries.
Dependants	No specific issues have been highlighted to date.

## Section 2 – Screening Questions

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

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

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

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

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

### In favour of a 'major' impact

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

### In favour of 'minor' impact

- a) The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
- b) The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;

- c) Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
- d) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity.

### **In favour of none**

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

## **Screening questions**

All categories of service user and potential service user will benefit to some extent from amalgamation/formalisation of policies and procedures in this guidance. Appropriate training and communication should ensure a consistent approach and enhanced customer service.

<b>1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories (minor/ major/none)</b>		
<b>Section 75 category</b>	<b>Details of policy impact</b>	<b>Level of impact? minor/major/none</b>
Religious belief	There will be a minor impact on all service users, whatever their religion or if they have no religious belief.  People of particular religions who do not currently access or use Council run cemeteries may be more encouraged to do so if they can access comprehensive information that suggests their needs will be met.	Minor - positive
Political opinion	There is likely to be a minor impact on all service users including people of different political opinions and none.	Minor - positive
Racial group	There is likely to be a minor impact on people from minority racial groups if it is clearly communicated that their needs will be met.	Minor - positive

Age	There is likely to be a minor impact on older people where staff are trained to be aware of potential issues and to respond appropriately.	Minor - positive
Marital status	No particular impact identified	None
Sexual orientation	No significant impact identified	None
Men and women generally	No significant impact identified	None
Disability	No significant impact identified.	None
Dependants	No significant impact identified.	None

<b>2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within Section 75 equality categories? (Yes/ No)</b>		
Section 75 category	If <b>Yes</b> , provide details	If <b>No</b> , provide reasons
Religious belief	The new guidance and policy will set our clear terms and conditions and mean that we now have an aligned and consistent approach to all our users. Council can take the opportunity in publicising this new guidance to make people aware that Council cemetery provision is for people of all religions and none.	
Political opinion	As above but for people of all political opinions and none	



Racial group	Council can take the opportunity to publicise their cemetery services to racial minorities and those who may not be familiar with local customs and practice, etc.	
Age		This improvement project provides equality of opportunity regardless of age
Marital status		This improvement project provides equality of opportunity regardless of age
Sexual orientation		This improvement project provides equality of opportunity regardless of age
Men and women generally		This improvement project provides equality of opportunity regardless of age
Disability		This improvement project provides equality of opportunity regardless of age
Dependants		This improvement project provides equality of opportunity regardless of age

**3. Are there opportunities without prejudice, to the equality of opportunity duty, to better promote good relations between Section 75 equality categories, through tackling prejudice and/or promoting understanding? (Yes/ No)**

	No	X
	Yes	
If yes, please detail the opportunities below:		

If yes is concluded to Question 3, then the policy will be referred to the Council's Good Relations Working Group for consideration. The Group will consider the

potential opportunities and assess if and how the overall impact of a decision/policy can better promote good relations.

## Additional Considerations - Multiple identity

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

N/A

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

## Section 3 – Screening Decision

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

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

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

It is not considered necessary to carry out an EQIA at this point as no adverse impact on any equality group has been identified and positive impacts will be minor.

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

--

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

## Mitigation

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

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

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

## Timetabling and prioritising

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

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

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

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

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

Yes	
No	

## Section 5 – Monitoring

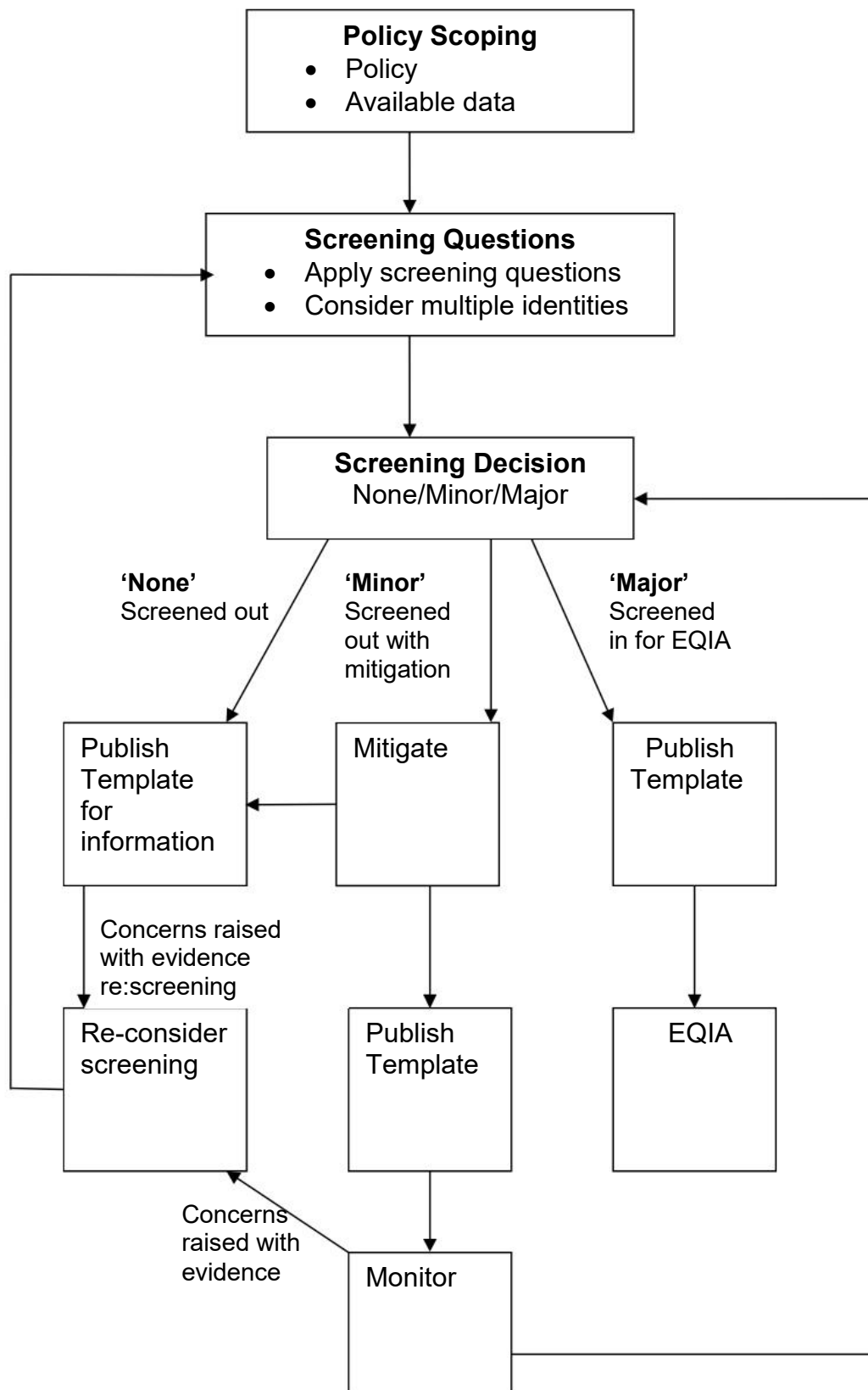
Effective monitoring will help identify any future adverse impact arising from the policy which may lead the Council to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and policy development. Please detail proposed monitoring arrangements below:

Regular reports will be brought to the Environment Committee updating Members on the progress of implementation of the various elements of this policy and where applicable making recommendations for further amendments to them. This effective monitoring will help identify any future adverse impact arising from the policy.

## Section 6 – Approval and authorisation

Screened by:	Position/ Job Title	Date
Eunan Murray	Grounds & Cemeteries Manager	28/10/19
Approved by:	Position/ Job Title	Date

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



## Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA)

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

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

Mid Ulster District Council

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

1.1 This policy is being introduced in order to make cemeteries and old burials grounds under the responsibility of Mid Ulster District Council safe places to work in and for the public to visit.

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

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

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

Cemetery Management Policy incorporating Rules & Regulations and Memorial Safety

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

Mid Ulster District Council has responsibility for 5 active cemeteries, 28 Old Burial Grounds, and grass cutting only in upto 8 old burial grounds.

The council aims to;

- provide guidance and regulations that ensure that our cemeteries are safe places to work and visit.
- promote high levels of service with clear guidance on how we deliver our services.
- ensure council meet its obligations under the law.
- provide the public with the necessary information on the restrictions and conditions that apply to purchasing exclusive rights of burial.
- provide guidance on the safe erection and management of headstone memorials.

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

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

☒

Other Definition (Provide details and the rationale below).

☐

A definition of 'rural' is not applicable.

☐

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A



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

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

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

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

Mid Ulster District Council have identified that of the 41 cemeteries and old burial grounds, more than 60% of them are located in rural areas.

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

This policy will be implemented as standard across all council cemeteries regardless of location.

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

Rural Businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Tourism	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education or Training in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poverty in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deprivation in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agri-Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please state)	<input type="text"/>

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

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

N/A

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

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

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

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

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

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

This Policy has been the subject of a focused consultation with the key stakeholders from April 2019. Council have consulted with a cross section of Funeral Directors, Church groups and Stone Masons that represent the majority of its users in Mid Ulster. Wider feedback has also been sought from minority groups representing non-Christian burials and the Mid Ulster Disability Forum.

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

Mid Ulster District Council has considered the needs of the District including our rural areas in relation to providing and sustaining local burial grounds and cemeteries within the rural areas of the District that are safe places to work in and visit. The needs of the District as a whole are met by the policy aims and objectives as set out in 1E of this document.

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

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

N/A

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

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

Any issues identified through public consultation will be considered however as alluded to in 2C the policy will be implemented at all active cemeteries and old burial grounds regardless of location.

Travel distances have been considered. People in very rural areas will have further to travel but as there are Council cemeteries in the three largest centres of population no-one should have an unreasonable distance to travel. There is flexibility in terms of timing of burials to accommodate funerals that have a distance to travel.

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

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

Yes

☐

No

☒

If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **5C**.

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

N/A

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

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

The need for an aligned document that provides guidance and regulations to Cemetery Management across the district has been identified. It is not specific to both rural or urban burials grounds and cemeteries within the District. There have been no complaints about the current cemetery rules and regulations but this will be monitored.

## SECTION 6 - Documenting and Recording

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

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

☒

<b>Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:</b>	Eunan Murray
<b>Position/Grade:</b>	Grounds & Cemeteries Service Manager
<b>Division/Branch</b>	Property Services
<b>Signature:</b>	E Murray
<b>Date:</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> October 2019
<b>Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:</b>	
<b>Position/Grade:</b>	
<b>Division/Branch:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	





<b>Report on</b>	Digital Strategy for Mid Ulster District Council
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	8 October 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Ursula Mezza & Barry O'Hagan
<b>Contact Officer</b>	same

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To consider the procurement of specialist support to develop a Digital Strategy for the Council.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	The Council continues to have substantial corporate and service improvement objectives relating to the provision of services digitally, together with several technological projects which will impact positively on the quality of digital services, specifically in new systems for finance, payroll, human resource management, planning and full fibre connectivity. Hardware and storage refresh will also take place in the current year.
2.2	The pandemic has also had an impact on the adoption of technologies internally (e.g. Teams, Zoom) to support remote working and remote access to networks, while the Council's marketing and communications approach to external communications continues to be 'digital first', helping to extend the Council's digital footprint via digital media, including responsive, accessible web sites and its social media channels.
2.3	While the Council has, therefore, made significant progress in terms of its digital infrastructure, digital processes and digital service provision, it does not currently have a formal Digital or ICT Strategy (the latter also forming an existing Internal Audit recommendation which is to be actioned).
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	A digital strategy will provide a road map towards becoming a 'digital council', that is, one which considers all of its services and how they are modelled and delivered, designing and re-designing them as required on the evidence-based needs of its citizens, supported by the appropriate technology.
3.2	A formal strategy will allow the Council to move beyond the traditional concept where 'digital' is viewed as the purview of specific services (most commonly ICT and Marketing & Communications) and interpreted narrowly as making services available online.
3.3	It will ensure that the digital direction of the Council is viewed holistically from an organisational perspective. This means digital work will be allied to other corporate

	strategies, applied consistently in the support of the delivery of corporate priorities and have measurable outcomes which contribute to the achievement of corporate objectives.
3.4	Given the pace of technological change and digital developments, together with ever-increasing pressures on finite resources and changing customer expectations in terms of contact, connection and service delivery, a strategy will also provide a framework through which to 'future proof' the Council's digital planning.
3.5	Ultimately any strategy should be visionary enough to carry Council through changes in the digital economy in a way that continues to bring a digital edge to the business.
3.6	The proposed strategy would align with the government's 'Making Lives Better: A Strategy for Digital Transformation of Public Services 2017-2021' (see Appendix 1) and cover a period of no more than 4 years.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications:</b>
	<b>Financial:</b> The cost of strategy development work is not anticipated to exceed £25,000. The work is not currently within existing budgets.
	<b>Human Resources:</b> Progress to date has been achieved in-house using existing resources. However, the Council does not have the capacity to deliver a timely strategy within a reasonable window without other projects and services being adversely impact. The strategy project will be led by ICT and Marketing & Communications and will be owned corporately and by each service impacted.
	<b>Risk Management:</b> The Council will formulate and manage a risk register for the project as part of the wider controls with implementing same in conjunction with the supplier. The recommendation in its own right will address the risks identified by Internal audit previously not addressed.
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments : Not applicable</b>
	<b>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications:</b> Not applicable
	<b>Rural Needs Implications:</b> Not applicable currently
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	That the Committee agrees to recommend the procurement of specialist services to develop a Digital Strategy for Mid Ulster District Council and approves the allocation of reserves from the current year.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	Appendix 1 : Dof : Digital Transformation Strategy 2017-2021

NORTHERN IRELAND GOVERNMENT

# Making Lives Better

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A Strategy for Digital  
Transformation of  
Public Services

2017-2021



Department of  
**Finance**  
An Róil

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# Foreword



We all rely on technology in everyday life for banking, entertainment, employment, education, health, social media as well as accessing Government services. Digital services offer significant benefits for those who choose to use them in terms of convenience and simplicity; however technology continues to evolve at a rapid pace and to remain relevant we need to embrace new and emerging technologies to deliver trusted, efficient and cost effective public services that users want to use.

This Strategy sets out our roadmap to continue our work with citizens and partners to digitally transform Government. This provides real opportunities for us to radically rethink, redesign and rejuvenate how we do business and achieve Programme for Government outcomes. It brings new opportunities to improve how we engage with our citizens and stakeholders to develop better policies, deliver better services and to overhaul business processes. This is particularly important as we are facing a sustained period of major budgetary constraints and policy challenges.

However technology is only an enabler. Transformation involves changing how we work, how we organise ourselves and how we serve our citizens. The key to the success of this Strategy though will be people, not technology. Driving forward our ambitious vision requires strong leadership and a willingness of all those involved to move out of their comfort zones and work across traditional boundaries.

Although the Digital Transformation Service has led the development of this Strategy, and will continue to oversee its implementation, everyone in Government needs to work collaboratively to deliver the outcomes to deliver the benefits and make lives better for everyone. The Strategy also needs to be flexible and adaptable enough to allow us to evolve our plans as new opportunities arise.

Whilst we want everyone to become digital citizens, I realise that there are people who are not online and Government will not leave anyone behind. However we must continue to maximise use of digital technology to drive better services and lower delivery costs. Our measure of success will be that our online services will be used because they are so easy and convenient.

I look forward to seeing this Strategy develop and move forward as we continue on our digital journey to better connect our citizens and businesses as well as contribute towards building a digital society.

**Hugh Widdis**, Department of Finance Permanent Secretary

# Executive Summary

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There are a number of key challenges facing Government over the next three years, including increasing citizens' expectations and continuing financial pressures. Digital technology provides us with a huge opportunity to re-think how our public services are better delivered and to work collaboratively to transform and revolutionise how we do business. The Programme for Government (PfG) includes a commitment to increasing use of online channels, with 70% of all citizen transactions with Government online by 2019. But this is not simply about creating websites or online forms. Technology is merely an enabler, the key to true transformation of Public Services lies with our people.

This Strategy sets out a Vision for transforming how Government works, which means that:

- People and businesses will be **enabled** to digitally engage with Government at a time and place that suits them.
- Government operations are digitally **transformed** to deliver effective and efficient public services; and
- Government aspires to **embrace** digital in everyday public services to deliver better outcomes.

Nine Strategic Enablers have been identified to support delivery of the Strategy.

- 1. Leadership** - Creating a digital change environment throughout organisations.
- 2. Digital Principles** - Establishing a common understanding for digital transformation delivery.
- 3. Digital Platform** - Providing a digital infrastructure to support and accelerate service improvement.
- 4. Delivery Capability** - Developing the optimum blend of digital skills to support delivery.
- 5. Digital Inclusion** - Giving citizens access, skills, motivation and trust to use digital services.
- 6. Innovation** - Creating the environment to enable services to be designed differently.
- 7. Procurement and Supply Chain** - Evolving procurement and sourcing practices to optimise delivery of digital initiatives.
- 8. Government Data** - Using, sharing and analysing data to design and deliver better public services.
- 9. Cyber Security/ Data Management** - Building citizen trust in digital public services.

Digital Transformation is a major change programme and needs to be owned by, and driven across all parts of Government. The Digital Transformation Strategy will align with a number of other key Government Strategies including the eHealth and Care Strategy for Northern Ireland and the forthcoming Industrial Strategy for Northern Ireland. A Digital Transformation Programme Board will be established to drive implementation of the Strategy. The local government and Health and Social Care sectors will be represented within the governance structure of the Digital Transformation Programme to ensure links with relevant Government Strategies. The Digital Leaders Forum and the niDirect User forum will be refined and reinvigorated to improve support for, and shaping of, the identified programme of work and ensure that all departmental strategies and action plans are aligned with the digital service Strategy. By 2021 the Strategy aims to deliver a number of outcomes, to improve access to, and quality of, public services including:

- A culture of innovation across the Public Sector;
- A skilled workforce and Digital Leaders who work across boundaries to deliver citizen focused solutions;
- Services are available everywhere to everyone who needs to use them;
- Public services are personalised putting our citizens in control with a range of integrated services available across the Public Sector;
- Public services are easier to use for businesses within the region, reducing red-tape and administration requirements;
- Digital Zones provide access to digital services for those without internet at home;
- Increased use of social media to communicate with service users and to encourage participation in society;
- Maximised use of common technologies and shared services; and
- Interaction both within and with the public sector will largely be made paperless.

# 1 Introduction

---

- 1.1** The purpose of the Digital Transformation Programme is to provide better public services in Northern Ireland. This Strategy will enable collaborative planning and design of public sector digital services to deliver Programme for Government outcomes through ‘increased usage of online channels to access public services’.
- 1.2** This Strategy has been informed by a Deloitte research paper, ‘Making lives better’<sup>1</sup>, commissioned by the Digital Transformation Service (DTS), which provided recommendations based on a review of digital trends and government digital transformation programmes in other countries. In developing the Strategy we engaged across Government on both Deloitte’s findings and relevant recommendations of a Strategic Review of the public sector in Northern Ireland 2016, which was conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD)<sup>2</sup>. We also reviewed progress in a number of jurisdictions including Estonia<sup>3</sup> and Denmark<sup>4</sup>.

This Strategy has also been informed by, and will align with, a number of other key Government Strategies including the [eHealth and Care Strategy for Northern Ireland](#)<sup>5</sup>; which aims to deliver transformation and modernisation of health and social services through the increased use of digital technologies to support the delivery of health and care services between now and 2020. As well as helping the public to use online services, such as booking GP appointments and ordering repeat prescriptions, the Strategy sets out Government’s longer-term vision for improving the flow of information across the health and social care system by implementing a fully integrated Electronic Health and Care Record and creating a fully mobile workforce through remote working.

- 1.3** The Strategy will be underpinned by a Digital Transformation Programme Strategic Delivery Plan for digital service delivery 2017-2021 and ‘Delivering better Public Services through Technology’, the Northern Ireland Government ICT Strategy 2017-2021.

---

1 Deloitte - Making Lives Better - a future direction digital transformation of public services, July 2016.

2 OECD Strategic Review of the public sector in Northern Ireland

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dfp/ni-uk-implementing-joined-up-governance-for-a-common-purpose.pdf>

3 [https://e-estonia.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Digital-Agenda-2020\\_Estonia\\_ENG.pdf](https://e-estonia.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Digital-Agenda-2020_Estonia_ENG.pdf)

4 <https://www.digst.dk/ServiceMenu/English/Policy-and-Strategy/Digital-Strategy-2016to2020>

5 <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/interactive-ehealth-strategy.pdf>

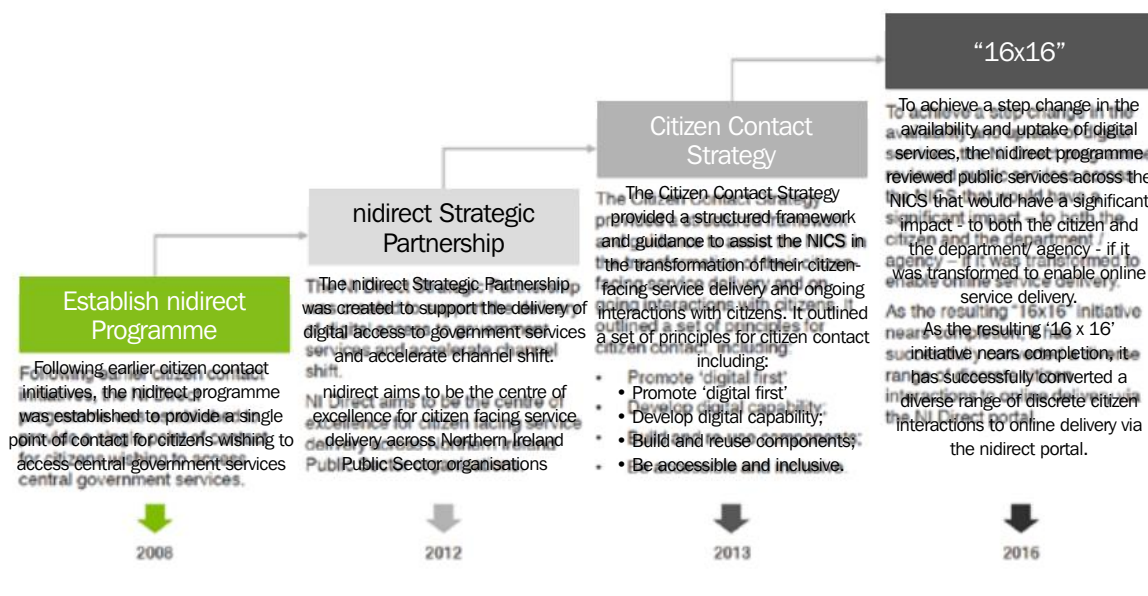
6 <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dfp/ICT-Strategy-2017-2021.pdf>



## 2 Progress to Date

- 2.1** The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) has already made considerable progress in transforming its services in a relatively short period of time by implementing a 'digital first' policy for Government services. This means that new or redesigned services must consider the online channel as the primary way for citizens to interact with that service. The key phases of the Digital Transformation Programme to date are set out in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Digital Transformation Programme Roadmap**



- 2.2** To accelerate the reform programme a small dedicated team, Digital Transformation Service (DTS), was established in Enterprise Shared Services (ESS), in the Department of Finance (DoF) to work with departments to support their transformation programmes and help drive more services online. DTS supported departments in the development of an NICS Citizen Contact Strategy (CCS) and all Departments have strategic digital action plans in place which set out how they will drive forward the 'digital first' agenda across Government. The nidirect portal ([www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk)) is the primary delivery vehicle to implement the Citizen Contact Strategy's recommendations supported by a multi-channel contact capability.

- 2.3** The service transformation strand has been largely implemented within the "16 by16" initiative (identification and delivery of 16 prioritised high volume or high impact services for transformation by 2016), with BT as a strategic delivery partners, which has successfully converted a diverse range of discrete citizen interactions to online delivery via the nidirect portal. [www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk)<sup>7</sup>

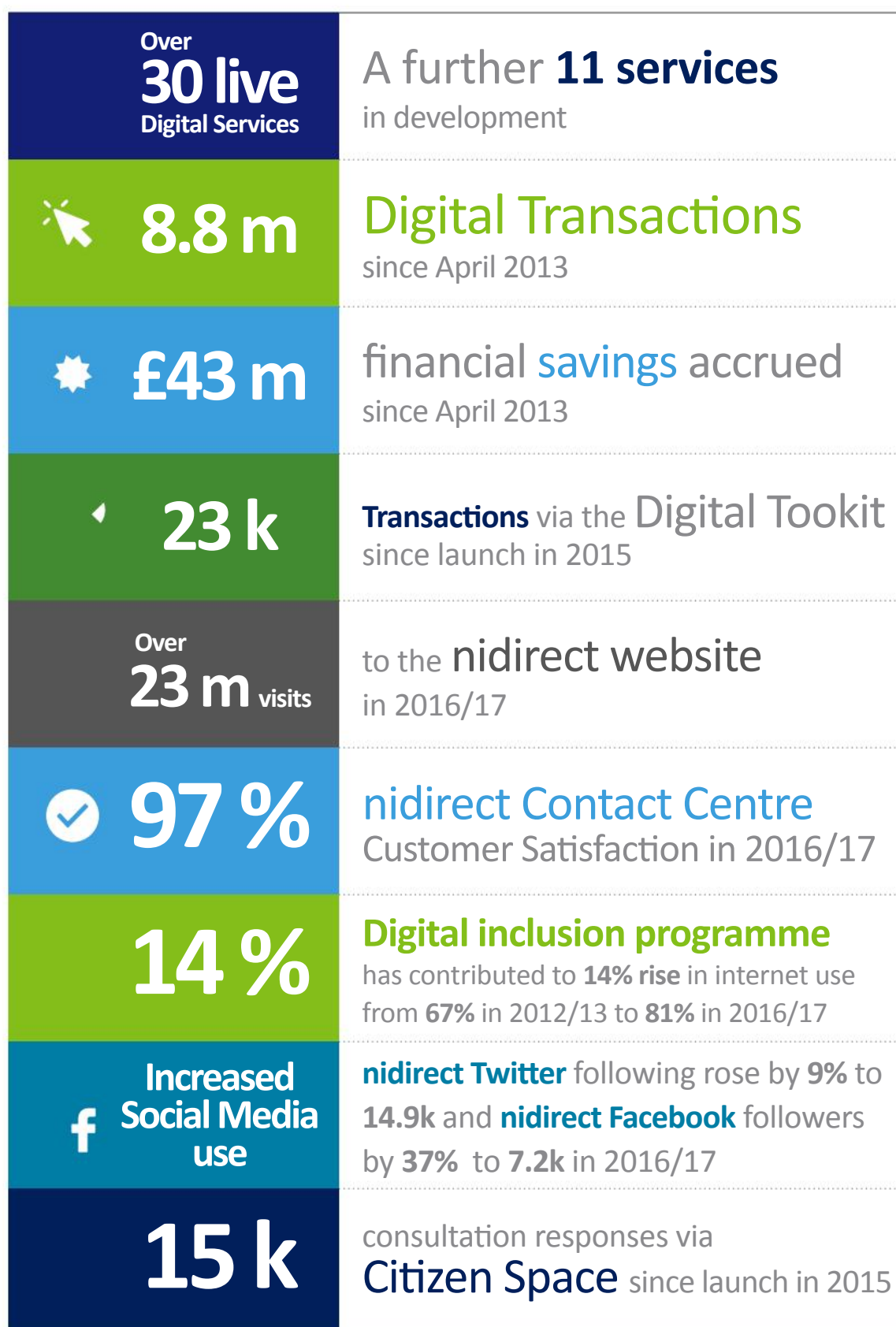
7 <http://www.agendani.com/ni-direct-a-digital-transformation-journey/>

- 2.4** Popular online services now available include: Applying for Motor Tax, Paying your Rates Bill, Applying for an Access NI certificate, Reporting a Road Fault, Purchasing an Ordnance Survey Map, Registering as a Landlord, Careers Service webchat and Ordering copies of birth, death, marriage and civil partnership certificates.
- 2.5** Services have been redesigned end to end to increase on-line take up and make access easy and intuitive by focusing on the citizen, and by placing them at the very heart of how Government services are designed.
- 2.6** Specific examples include:
- **Rates Collection** - the launch of an online system led to a 180% increase in online Rates payments in the first week of April 2016, compared to 2015.
  - **Single Farm Payment** - 99.5% of farmers chose to submit their Single Application Form online in 2017, an increase of 37.5% from 2016.
  - **Access NI Service** - Time taken to process an application reduced from 7-10 days to 1-2 days. 95% of all applications made using the online channel within the first 6 months.
  - **Applying for Motor Tax** - 767k digital transactions, 96% using digital channels.
- 2.7** DTS also developed a suite of reusable tools which allows business areas to quickly introduce and manage a range of online services. The **Digital Toolkit** includes:
- 'Find IT'** A tool that can use Land and Property Service (LPS) mapping and selected government data sets to allow people to find out where to find relevant government services such as their nearest MOT centre.
  - 'Book IT'** Allows people to book appointments online.
  - 'Report IT'** Allows people to report faults or problems online.
  - 'Tell US'** Provides an online channel for enquiry, feedback or complaining about specific government services.
  - 'Pay IT'** Provides an online payment channel for Government services.
  - 'Rate IT'** Allows real time feedback on a user's experience of the online service.
  - 'Invoice IT'** Provides online means of issuing invoices.
  - Appeal IT'** Allows people to appeal a decision online.

We have also:

- Commenced, or continued development of, a number of additional transformation projects including: Personal Learning Record, 'MyDirect' Citizen Self Service Portal, 'Social Web', DVA Compliance, LSA Legal Aid, 'Tell Us Once', Secure Messaging and 'Reporting As A Service';
- Expanded the use and functionality of the Short Messaging (SMS) service including Notifications and Reminders;
- Gained a number of National and International innovation and IT Awards.

Figure 2: Summary of Progress at 31st March 2017



# 3 Why are we doing this?

- 3.1** The '16 by 16' programme has demonstrated that high quality citizen focused and responsive online services drives significant channel shift. This means service users move away from the traditional face to face, telephone and mail channels. Whilst we have undoubtedly made progress, it is very clear that there is much more to be done. Deloitte<sup>8</sup> have identified three dimensions of public service delivery where digital can provide a positive influence as shown in Figure 3:

**Figure 3: Dimensions of Service Delivery**



## **Citizen Experience**

Digital can enhance usability, facilitate user-friendly interactions, enable self-service, and drive citizen engagement / behaviour. It should be easy to transact with the Government, so easy in fact that people will choose to do so, i.e. people prefer digital by choice. Digital services are enabled by user-centric design, effective user experience, and engagement across platforms and devices.

## **Digital Enterprise**

Digital can change the way organisations operate, share information, and make decisions. For Government this means ensuring that digital services are designed in the right way (seamless, smart and secure). Government services are digital by design.

8 [Deloitte-Making Lives Better - a future direction digital transformation of public services, July 2016](#)

### New Business Models

Digital can transform and disrupt business models, which changes the way government interacts and partners with other stakeholders. As new ecosystems are created, new business models emerge.

## Drivers for change in Northern Ireland

There are a number of factors that are driving the need for a continued step-change in the delivery of digital transformation in the Northern Ireland public sector, namely:

### Rising citizen expectations

- 3.2** Our society is changing at a rapid pace, and public expectations continue to rise. Research indicates that around 82% of adults use the internet every day<sup>9</sup>. Ofcom (2016) reported that more than 8 in 10 households in Northern Ireland now have internet access, and 72% of adults own a smartphone<sup>10</sup>.
- 3.3** People are increasingly using digital technology in their daily lives for activities such as banking, booking holidays and ordering weekly shopping. People are often motivated to use public services because of a change or new event in their personal lives, such as a marriage, birth, job search, or retirement. They may need to renew a licence, book an appointment, purchase a certificate or find information. Research by Steria<sup>11</sup> found that 83% of people want to access public services via digital channels and they increasingly expect a user experience that is intuitive and similar to what they get from their bank, supermarket or utility company. 74% say the development of online services should remain a Government priority. The [eHealth and Care Strategy for Northern Ireland](#)<sup>12</sup> notes that technology now enables us to engage with and empower citizens at every stage of their health experience - maintaining health, receiving care and managing long-term conditions. For the individual patient, this can make treatment and care more personalised, and mean they can move out of hospital and be closer to home. For the population as a whole, it can equip us to predict and manage health problems better. Ultimately, using technology creatively can help us towards a health and care system that will be safer, more efficient and more sustainable for current and future generations.
- 3.4** The OECD report on Government digital strategies<sup>13</sup> argues that setting up more open approaches to policymaking and public service delivery requires governments to re-organise themselves around user expectations, needs and associated requirements, rather than their own internal logic and needs. We therefore need to rethink how we organise and deliver public services. We need to increase the pace of transformation, making the best use of technology and innovative thinking to engage with and serve our customers, in ways, places and at times that meet their needs. Increasing the availability of services through online digital channels will increase the effectiveness of service delivery, reduce costs and enables resources to be redirected from back-office functions to frontline services.

9 [https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/IFGJ4942\\_Digital\\_Government\\_Report\\_10\\_16%20WEB%20%28a%29.pdf](https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/IFGJ4942_Digital_Government_Report_10_16%20WEB%20%28a%29.pdf)

10 [https://www.ofcom.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0030/69555/CMR\\_Northern\\_Ireland\\_2016.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0030/69555/CMR_Northern_Ireland_2016.pdf)

11 <https://www.soprasteria.co.uk/newsroom/publication/citizen-view-digital-transformation-government>

12 <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/interactive-ehealth-strategy.pdf>

13 <http://www.oecd.org/gov/digital-government/Recommendation-digital-government-strategies.pdf>

## Delivery of Programme for Government (PfG) Outcomes

- 3.5** The Digital Transformation Programme specifically contributes to the delivery of PfG commitments in respect of 'increased use of online channels to access public services'. It also contributes to a number of OECD recommendations, particularly:
- Recommendation 16: Increase NI People's access to online services.
  - Recommendation 18: Foster a culture change to strengthen citizens' engagement and improve dialogue with key stakeholders, notably from the community and voluntary sectors.
  - Sub Recommendation 18.5: Leverage new forms of citizens' engagement, such as social media or the Open Government data.
- 3.6** Delivery of an outcome focussed PfG will require Departments to work collectively to deliver services in collaboration with the public, private and voluntary sectors. There are real opportunities to join up service delivery through the use of digital zones, citizen hubs and data sharing agreements. Integration of new technologies such as social media and mobile technology can also help to open up how Government engages with people, communities and stakeholders and provides a channel to allow key stakeholders to actively shape political priorities, collaborate in the design of public services and participate in their delivery.
- 3.7** To deliver we must work in different ways. We must invest in developing digital skills, digital leadership capability and capacity to deliver in innovative new ways. There is a need to consider how the next generation of shared services can contribute to and support the delivery of outcomes for citizens. The Public Sector Shared Services Programme (PSSSP), Reform of Property Management and creation of a centralised NICS HR organisation provide opportunities for accelerating digital transformation to drive further changes in culture and behaviours.

## Technology trends

- 3.8** The NICS ICT Strategy 2017-2021<sup>14</sup> notes that digital transformation affords an opportunity to re-think how services might be better delivered in future. Further development of the Cloud, working mobility and an increasing use of social media are significant areas. Newer technologies such as Internet of things (IoT), along with Robotic Process Automation (RPA), 3D printing, artificial intelligence and Blockchain can be expected to have a major impact on our work. A summary of key technology trends is included in Appendix B.

## State of the public finances

- 3.9** Some eight years after the global financial crisis, the UK continues to deal with the financial consequences. While economic recovery is underway, public sector austerity is expected to remain throughout the mandate of this UK Parliament. This has created unprecedented levels of cost pressures on the delivery of public services within NI and digital transformation is essential to bring efficiencies to the way we deliver services.

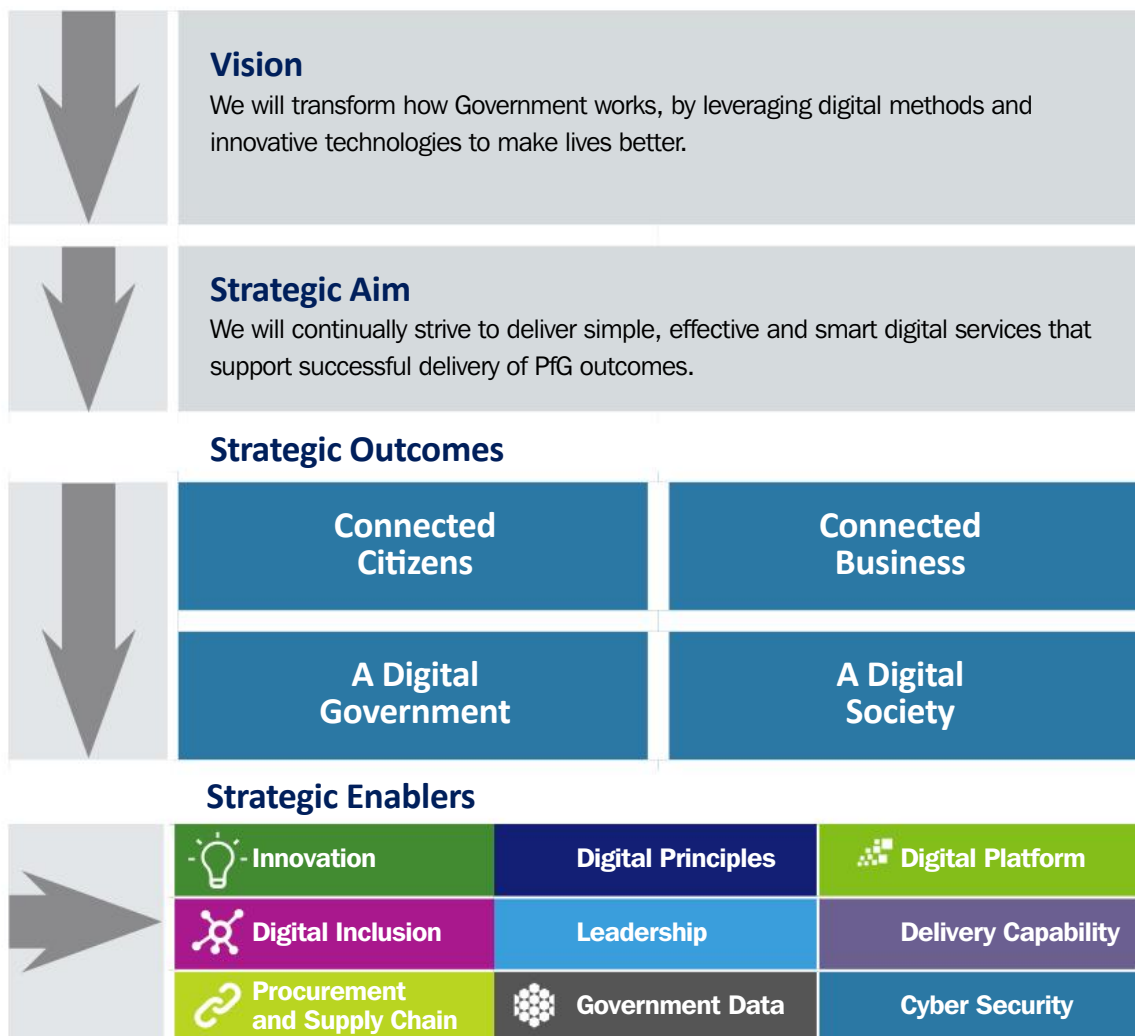
14 'Delivering Better Public Services through Technology' The Northern Ireland Government ICT Strategy 2017-2021



# 4 The Vision, Strategic Aim and Outcomes

- 4.1** The Strategy Map shown in Figure 4 sets out a Vision for Digital Transformation, the Strategic Aim and Outcomes we seek to achieve and the Strategic Enablers that will support delivery of this ambitious Programme of reform. Government will maximise use of digital methods and innovative technologies to deliver PfG outcomes and will increase usage of online channels for people to access public services. The Digital Transformation Programme will aim to deliver 70% of all citizen transactions with Government online by 2019.

**Figure 4: Digital Transformation Strategy Map 2017-2021**



## 4.2 VISION

We will transform how Government works, by leveraging digital methods and innovative technologies to make lives better.

This means that:

- People and businesses will be **enabled** to digitally engage with Government at a time and place that suits them.
- Government operations are digitally **transformed** to deliver effective and efficient public services; and
- Government **aspires** to embrace digital in everyday public services to deliver better outcomes.

### STRATEGIC AIM:

We will continually strive to deliver simple, effective and smart digital services that support successful delivery of PfG outcomes.

We aim to achieve this by:

- Enhancing and evolving the role of the Digital Transformation Service to work with the public sector as a trusted partner and supplier to support the transformation and delivery of digital shared services.
- Providing quality compliant services in a way that meets the needs and expectations of our customers;
- Innovating and investing in technology aligned to public sector needs;
- Demonstrating the value of investing in digital to support transformation within organisations and across traditional boundaries;
- Developing our people to lead the transformation and delivery of digital shared services.

This Strategy will be underpinned by 4 Digital Transformation Outcomes: to improve access to, and quality of, public service. These are outlined in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Digital Transformation Outcomes



## Digital Outcomes

### 1. CONNECTED CITIZENS

This Outcome is focused on improving the citizen's experience of contacting Government through personalisation and automation by providing a single and personalised user experience for access to all public services. Through the Digital Transformation Programme, we will improve citizen interactions and engagement with Government through a range of Strategic interventions, including:

- Providing access to a greater and more comprehensive range of information on Public Services, through the nidirect website, in a convenient and user friendly format;
- Involving users in development of services as they have first-hand experience of the complexity of dealing with Government and they are well-placed to identify how it can be improved;
- Providing a single and personalised user experience - mydirect - for citizen access to services across the entire public sector;
- Simplifying and streamlining citizen interaction with Government, for example by providing improved ability for citizens to 'Tell us once' about changes in their personal details;
- Piloting the use of Citizen Hubs and Digital Zones to support delivery of customer focussed services across a range of organisational boundaries; and
- Driving further channel shift in respect of inbound and outbound call handling; use of paper, printing and postage; and cash handling.

By doing this we will:

- Be able to tailor the experience for each citizen to provide their most relevant services to them in a convenient way; and
- Reduce the burden of citizen touch points and duplication within Public Services making it easier for the citizen to make best use of Public Services.



## 2. CONNECTED BUSINESS

This Outcome is focused on transforming the business's experience of interacting and transacting with Government through personalisation and automation by providing a personalised experience for business access to relevant Public Services.

Through the Digital Transformation Programme, we will improve business interactions with Government through a range of Strategic interventions, including:

- Providing access to a greater and more comprehensive range of relevant information on Public Services for businesses in a user friendly format;
- Providing access for businesses to Public Services through a single and personalised portal experience such as nidirect; and
- Reducing the administrative burden on businesses through digital enabled process simplification and streamlining.

By doing this we will:

- Tailor the business experience, providing the most relevant services to them in a convenient way;
- Reduce business touch points and duplication, lowering administrative burden and costs; and
- Enable more effective communication; and
- Support economic growth within the region.



### 3. A DIGITAL GOVERNMENT

This Outcome is focused on enabling a deep and radical digital transformation agenda with the “digital by design” principle at its heart. This will mean that transformation programmes completely re-think services to optimise for digital delivery.

All parts of Government have an important role to play in the delivery of digital government. Through the Digital Transformation Programme, we will improve service delivery by Government through a range of Strategic interventions, including:

- Designing, building and running services in new and exciting ways, and in a manner that puts citizen needs at the centre;
- Investing in our people to enable them to use digital capabilities and technologies to achieve better results from transformation programmes;
- Targeting resources on digital transformation initiatives that will make significant difference to the organisation(s) delivering the service; and
- Promoting and instilling a culture of innovation and collaboration throughout organisations.

By doing this we will:

- Significantly contribute to meeting government efficiency targets;
- Eliminate waste and make services more responsive to rapid change; and
- Re-invigorate our workforce through investing in new training and skills.





#### 4. A DIGITAL SOCIETY

This Outcome is focused on placing leading-edge digital services at the heart of progress towards the Programme for Government outcomes. This means we will promote digital thinking within policy development and planning to deliver creative, digital and innovative public services.

Through the Digital Transformation Programme, we will achieve better outcomes for society through a range of Strategic interventions, including:

- Promoting digital thinking and collaboration within policy development and planning to place digital services at the forefront of supporting PfG outcome-based delivery;
- Supporting the digital inclusion initiatives for all our citizens allowing them to use Government services online;
- Adopting incentives to encourage citizens in our society to take advantage of leading edge digital services and technology; and
- Identifying opportunities to radically alter the citizen's experience of Public Services through digital technology.

By doing this we will:

- Use digital to provide world class Public Services that markedly improve how we address society's core challenges;
- Support digitally averse citizens in accessing Public Services, and to have access to all the economic, social, health and wellbeing benefits of being online.



# 5 Strategic Enablers

- 5.1** Digital transformation of Public Services in Northern Ireland will require an ambitious change delivery programme across Government. To be able to deliver effectively collaboratively and innovatively, we will need to build upon and evolve the digital environment in the Public Sector. This will require changes to approach, leadership, mandate, and capabilities.
- 5.2** This Strategy accepts Deloitte's Report proposal that the ability to create a truly digital environment will be dependent upon the ability of the Public Sector to successfully address a number of inter-linked strategic enablers<sup>15</sup> as shown in Figure 6. Addressing these enablers will provide the foundation for ongoing digital transformation in the Public Sector.

**Figure 6: Strategic Enablers**



<sup>15</sup> [Deloitte – Making Lives Better - a future direction digital transformation of public services July 2016](#)



# 1. Leadership

## Creating a digital change environment throughout organisations

- (i) Digital transformation cannot be delivered by one area of Government alone. Every area of Government has a role to play in delivering this Strategy, in particular central and local Government need to work together. Strong leadership embedded throughout all organisations, underpinned with a clear mandate, will be central to the successful delivery of sustainable transformational change, by both seeing the opportunity to improve service delivery and continually improving and adapting the way we work to meet customer needs.
- (ii) In the digital era, the use of agile methods will continue to have a significant impact on the governance of change within the public sector. EY propose the leaders will need to develop new competencies and personal attributes to deliver effectively in a digital world<sup>16</sup> (see Appendix C for further details).
- (iii) To achieve digital transformation, digital leaders need to manage competing priorities and buy into user-centred design, for example:
  - For business cases, leaders will need to be mindful of agile methods, allowing the business to pursue ideas, 'fail fast', and iterate to deliver the change required; and
  - Change programmes require strong leadership support to enable policy makers and operational resources to make decisions quickly and with authority.

The Digital Transformation Programme will address the need to exhibit leadership for change initiatives by:

- Establishing a Digital Transformation Board to provide leadership in respect of delivery of the Strategy;
- Reinvigorating the Digital Leaders Forum to drive transformation across the public sector;
- Working with senior management across the Public Sector to secure a mandate for ongoing digital transformation initiatives;
- Delivering an education programme across the key stakeholders within Public Sector to bring about an understanding of the core concepts in our approach and effect a change in traditional culture and approach;
- Promoting an agile 'mind-set' for the delivery of change to public services; and
- Supporting Digital Leaders in defining and developing the leadership skills required to achieve transformation.

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.ey.com/Publication/wwLUAssets/EY-Sustaining-digital-leadership/\\$FILE/EY-Sustaining-digital-leadership.pdf](http://www.ey.com/Publication/wwLUAssets/EY-Sustaining-digital-leadership/$FILE/EY-Sustaining-digital-leadership.pdf)



## 2. Digital Principles

Establishing a common understanding for digital transformation delivery

- (i) Digital Principles allow organisations to define a shared understanding of ideas that provide a clear direction for the delivery of digital transformation initiatives.
- (ii) A common theme among Governments who are driving digital transformation, such as United Kingdom<sup>17</sup> and Australia<sup>18</sup>, is that they have a clear set of Digital Principles which help to provide a framework for what they each wish to achieve.
- (iii) The eHealth and Care Strategy is underpinned by five key principles which will drive the development of citizen centred and technology enabled services:
  - Citizen centred: supporting the health and wellbeing of the population of Northern Ireland
  - Connectivity: across Northern Ireland, making information available in the right place, at the right time to support the best care, with the right safeguards in place.
  - Consistency: proven technologies, the way they are used and their roll-out should happen in one way across Northern Ireland.
  - Creativity: driving innovation and promoting best practice.
  - Cost effectiveness: investment must add value and support efficiency.
- (iv) To set a clear direction and help guide the delivery of the individual transformation programmes and projects within departments, we will define a set of Digital Principles, including:
  - Transformation should focus on the needs of our citizens, not on the needs of Government;
  - We will create new service models which make best use of digital technology and are 'digital by design';
  - We will understand our customers and build services in collaboration with them;
  - We will use iterative approaches to refine and improve our services;
  - We will make use of open-source technology components, including reusing government IP where possible; and
  - We will contribute to a common platform across Government.
- (v) The purpose of the principles, and associated delivery framework and guidance, will be to provide a common understanding between Public Sector organisations so that they can become self-sufficient in the delivery of transformation programmes.
- (vi) This will help to provide clear guidance for both Public Sector employees and potential suppliers in addition to promoting the utilisation of Government as a Platform services such as nidirect, Pay It and Book It, while reducing overheads and inefficiencies.

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/design-principles>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.dta.gov.au/standard/>



### 3. Digital Platform

Providing a digital infrastructure to support and accelerate service improvement

- (i) The NICS ICT Strategy 2017-2021 sets out how Government will deliver the infrastructure to support digital transformation in the Public Sector. This can be enabled and accelerated by the continuing development of a common digital platform and digital infrastructure for public sector bodies to take advantage of.
- (ii) The digital platform for the Public Sector will consist of components, complementary to and interfacing with each other to deliver an enterprise layer supporting services for citizen and Government.

**(a) Broadband infrastructure** - the physical layer will be provided by ongoing improvements to broadband infrastructure, which will increase capacity, speed and access. From a digital inclusion perspective, internet access at public facilities, such as libraries, will increase accessibility'

**(b) Interoperability** - provides a federated, common infrastructure delivering components to support online public services, including:

- a. Secure messaging
- b. Document sharing
- c. Data sharing across organisations
- d. Notifications and reminders
- e. Identity assurance
- f. Standard APIs
- g. Electronic forms

**(c) Common digital services** - reusable digital tools such as Book It, Pay It and Report It as well as social media channels can be used to accelerate digital service delivery across the Public Sector. The Digital Transformation approach will be based on the utilisation of shared capabilities and services, such as nidirect, NIDA, IT Assist, Pay It and Book It, enabled by utility technology and web based infrastructure. We will work with public sector partners to maximise the utilisation of these platforms and will promote the benefits of this approach both to Government and to Citizens.

To support development of the digital platform, the Digital Transformation Programme will continue to:

- Identify target initiatives and objectives for digital transformation from across the Public Sector, assessing each against the digital outcomes defined in the Strategy;
- Support the improvement of ICT infrastructure and data management processes to allow data to be held and accessed more efficiently, facilitating initiatives such as 'Tell us once'; and
- Develop capability to accept digital and electronic signatures as standard, removing barriers to digital delivery of services and making it the channel of choice for citizens and businesses.



## 4. Delivery Capability

Developing the optimum blend of digital skills to support delivery

- (i) Achieving true digital transformation requires different skills: user research and analysis, technology, agile and iterative project management, user experience skills, financial modelling for digital business models and commercial acumen for a digital supply chain.
- (ii) Changing an organisation's workforce and skills is challenging, but changing culture is particularly hard. The critical barriers to digital adoption are about people not technology. We will work with stakeholders to help prepare for digital transformation by addressing digital skills gaps, and investing in resources and technologies that build a culture and capabilities to support the digital transition.
- (iii) Through the collaborative utilisation of Digital Principles and tailored delivery frameworks, as described within the Digital Principles theme, we will support organisations in being self-sufficient within their project and programme delivery while ensuring that these programmes and projects are aligned to achieving our vision and the outcomes defined within the PfG. This includes ensuring that the realisation of benefits and efficiencies are at the heart of our delivery approach.

We will:

- Strengthen centralised capacity for digital delivery;
- Supplement skills gaps in the short term by partnering;
- Promote the appropriate digital transformation roles, such as Programme and Project Management (agile and waterfall techniques), Business Analysts, and Product Owners, as key digital specialisms;
- Provide support to delivery partners and stakeholders in ensuring that a Service Owner and Service Management functions are in place to provide post-implementation support;
- Develop and promote both e-learning and classroom based learning activities for Digital skills and awareness within the Public Sector, to include basic digital skills, digital engagement / marketing and digital leadership; and
- Provide guidance and support on the application of the Digital Principles and Framework.





## 5. Digital Inclusion

Giving citizens access, skills, motivation and trust to use digital services

- (i) The case for digital transformation of Public Services is well understood. However, we must make sure that the pace of change does not leave people behind. We must always be mindful of how citizens interact with services, ensuring all citizens can access services regardless of what technology they have access to, and what digital skills and capabilities they have.
- (ii) If people are connected, capable and online, they can do it all easier and faster. If they are not, there is a real risk of isolating them from critical online Government and creating a digital disadvantage for people with no internet at home or no access to a computer. Appendix D sets out the challenge of getting online.

- (iv) The UK Government Digital Inclusion Strategy<sup>19</sup> identified four main kinds of challenge that people face to going online:

- **access** - the ability to actually go online and connect to the internet;
- **skills** - the basic skills<sup>20</sup> needed to be able to use the internet;
- **motivation** - knowing the reasons why using the internet is a good thing; and
- **trust** - a fear of crime, or not knowing where to start to go online.

To make sure the internet is accessible to everyone we need to provide the skills, motivation and trust to go online, be digitally capable and to make the most of the internet.

- (v) Through Go ON NI <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/go-on-ni> and the Digital Inclusion Team, the Digital Transformation Programme will continue to build upon current initiatives to make digital services more inclusive, to make sure that everyone has opportunities to take full advantage of being online.
- (vi) We will establish a Digital Resilience Foundation Programme to:
  - Develop indicators to measure success;
  - Formalise strategic partnerships to enable the delivery of priority targeted interventions to support specific difficult to reach groups such as rural communities and the economically disadvantaged;
  - Encourage Departments to embed digital inclusion in the policies and work programmes of all transformation programmes across Government;
  - Provide support and assistance to innovative projects which have the potential to make a positive difference to priority groups by addressing issues in respect of access, skills, motivation and trust; and,
  - Increase the number of publicly available and free internet access points via access 'hotspots' at facilities such as local libraries and public sector offices. We will put in place work programme to address the challenges that people face.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-inclusion-strategy/government-digital-inclusion-strategy>

<sup>20</sup> Basic Skills framework - addressing the 5 areas of digital capability <https://www.thetechpartnership.com/basic-digital-skills/basic-digital-skills-framework/>



## 6. Innovation

Creating the environment to enable services to be designed differently

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- (i) Innovation is crucial to the ongoing success of organisations, including those responsible for the delivery of Public Services, and therefore must be a key component of transformation programmes to enable them to deliver against target outcomes.
- (ii) This is noted in the NI Innovation Strategy 2014-2025<sup>21</sup>.
- (ii) We will apply Digital Innovation within the Digital Transformation Programme by:
  - Encouraging Government and its partners to embrace technologies which disrupt traditional ways of doing things and alternative platforms (e.g. social media) to provide potential opportunities to truly transform public service delivery.
  - Making use of collaborative 'Digital Transformation Labs' that bring together the service delivery, policy, and technology functions within departments with the knowledge and expertise from DTS, Government partners and private sector organisations to think about service delivery;
  - Funding innovative initiatives that are focused on doing and have the potential to demonstrate how Public Service challenges can be overcome and delivered in a new manner and can provide early learning that can be used to shape the future transformation of services; and
  - Piloting the use of Citizen Hubs and Digital Zones to support delivery of customer focussed services across boundaries in Government.

21 <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-innovation-strategy>



## 7. Procurement and Supply Chain

Evolving procurement and sourcing practices to optimise delivery of digital initiatives

**Procurement:** There is widespread recognition across the Public Sector that procurement and commercial strategies need to accelerate to keep pace with the delivery of digital transformation. There is a need to consider how value for money over both the short and longer term is best demonstrated within a fast moving Agile development environment.

- (i) To support the culture change and Agile 'mind-set', the Digital Transformation Programme will work with Central Procurement Directorate and other relevant Centres of Procurement Expertise (COPEs) to continue to adapt the procurement process to support digital transformation projects while ensuring value for money.
- (ii) The Digital Transformation Programme will:
  - Support our stakeholders in ensuring that the procurement process being utilised is optimised for digital transformation initiatives;
  - Provide guidance and education to the wider Public Sector budget holders on the transformation process to facilitate better understanding; and
  - Promote the better utilisation of procurement frameworks to achieve improved digital outcomes and wider procurement benefits.

**Supply Chain:** To deliver digital transformation, Public Sector organisations need to access a diverse and innovative technology marketplace.

- (i) Given the current economic climate and need for austerity measures across the Public Sector it may not be viable nor desirable to recruit to develop and provide these capabilities in-house on a large scale. However, there is still a need for the Public Sector to identify and obtain sufficient resources and capabilities in order to deliver the required digital transformation.
- (ii) The Digital Transformation Programme will:
  - Blend in-house capabilities with external specialist skillsets and contractors to deliver this digital transformation and provide digital services. This approach can leverage the wider marketplace and promote competitiveness, ensuring value for money while also harnessing the innovation and leading skillsets available within the private sector; and
  - Utilise the various procurement frameworks available to leverage the wider supply chain to balance the economy and facilitate better knowledge transfer and skill development through use of wider digital specialists. This approach will be underpinned by having procurement specialists and Service Owners who can more effectively monitor work done by vendors.



## 8. Government Data

Using, sharing and analysing data to design and deliver better public services

The Open Data Strategy for Northern Ireland<sup>22</sup> commitment to an 'open by default' culture has been endorsed by both the NI Executive & PSG. The intention is to embed the publishing of open data as part of normal internal data management processes, for open data to become established as 'business as usual'.

- (i) Data has been referred to as the new raw material of the twenty-first century, and like any other raw material, it needs investment to locate, extract and refine it before it yields value. Through the power of analytics, data creates opportunities for Government to make more robust decisions, uncover cost savings, improve service delivery and get to know our citizens better.
- (ii) To enable digital transformation of Public Services, open data has the potential to be exploited further, including increased sharing of data across Government and the greater use of data to support policy making.
- (iii) To achieve the vision for digital transformation in the Public Sector, and support the outcomes that will be defined in the PfG, robust and defined open data processes are required. These should build upon the Open Data Strategy for Northern Ireland 2015-18, adding in the concept of managing the handling, sharing and use of data within Government and ensuring external/citizen access to the data is the key driver for open data release.
- (iv) Management of the handling, sharing and use of data within and across government needs to be enhanced and streamlined while adhering to Data Protection Regulations.

The Digital Transformation Programme will:

- Improve our ICT infrastructure and data management and sharing processes;
- Simplify arrangements for data storage and sharing by aiming to hold and store data only once and to access and share data more efficiently;
- Support Departments and Agencies to build authoritative lists of information (registers) that are held once across Government, and ensure that they are kept up to date and secured appropriately;
- Make better use of data and analytics in internal decision-making;
- Use data analytics to help to identify where Government could better deliver services to citizens;
- Work in partnership with CPD to ensure that new systems and services have provision for the release of open data;
- Encourage reuse of data across multiple Government agencies and business areas;

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/open-data-strategy-northern-ireland-2015-2018>

- Contribute towards leveraging new forms of citizen engagement using Government Data;
- Use data to support citizen processes, including 'Tell-Us Once';
- Support business areas in maintaining currency and relevance of service information; and
- Design and implement a 'hub' which links technical services and data repositories which departments can subscribe to in support of their own applications<sup>23</sup>.

This will all contribute to use of alternative delivery platforms, including social media, to provide more targetted public services and the efficient use of common digital services, such as 'Tell us'.

<sup>23</sup> The DTS Datashare Hub will be designed as technical environment which supports online and other line of business services on a subscription basis



## 9. Cyber Security/ Data Management

Building citizen trust in digital public services

Cyber security and effective data management are central to achieving trust with citizens in meeting their demand for digital services.

- (i) Cyber security is focused on privacy and the ability to protect information from unauthorised access. The exponential growth of connected devices and networks has meant that the focus on cyber security has become a necessity, and is no longer considered to be an “add on”.
- (ii) Recent research reveals that cyber attacks on the Government sector doubled in 2016, increasing to 14% from 7% of all cyber security attacks in 2015<sup>24</sup>. The report cites a number of worldwide geo-political events which could have contributed to the global government sector being a cyber security attack target including the new political stances across the globe.
- (iii) Whilst the rapid change in technology has provided opportunities for Government, it has fundamentally changed the way privacy is viewed and has created complex security issues, including:
  - Cyber crime culture is growing more rapidly than cyber security, therefore we must find new ways of addressing cyber security that are scalable, efficient and most importantly, resilient.
  - Having an appropriate privacy strategy enables Government to transform; if our end-users trust us they will reward us with service adoption / uptake; and
  - EU Data Legislation impacts all organisations, so understanding the privacy landscape is more crucial than ever. With the increasing amount of data an organisation needs to process, managed by expertise that is hard to find and retain, knowing and responding to business critical threats calls for a different approach.

Within the Digital Transformation Programme, we will:

- Ensure that our policy and implementation adopts and reflects the best practice that the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) has and continues to provide.
- Develop a regional Cyber Security Strategy that is effective and efficient, scalable and resilient and which will allow us to capture the trust and confidence of our consumers; and
- Promote Cyber Security Awareness across public sector bodies to ensure that it is considered as part of digital transformation initiatives.

24 [2017 Global Threat Intelligence Report - Dimension Data's Executive's Guide to the NTT Security \(TRIM LINK\)](#)



# 6 Delivery of the Strategy

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- 6.1** Delivery of this Strategy directly supports PfG outcomes and the NICS Board will provide strategic leadership to ensure that resources and efforts are targeted at transformation programmes which make the greatest impact across Government.

## THE EVOLVING ROLE OF DTS IN DRIVING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

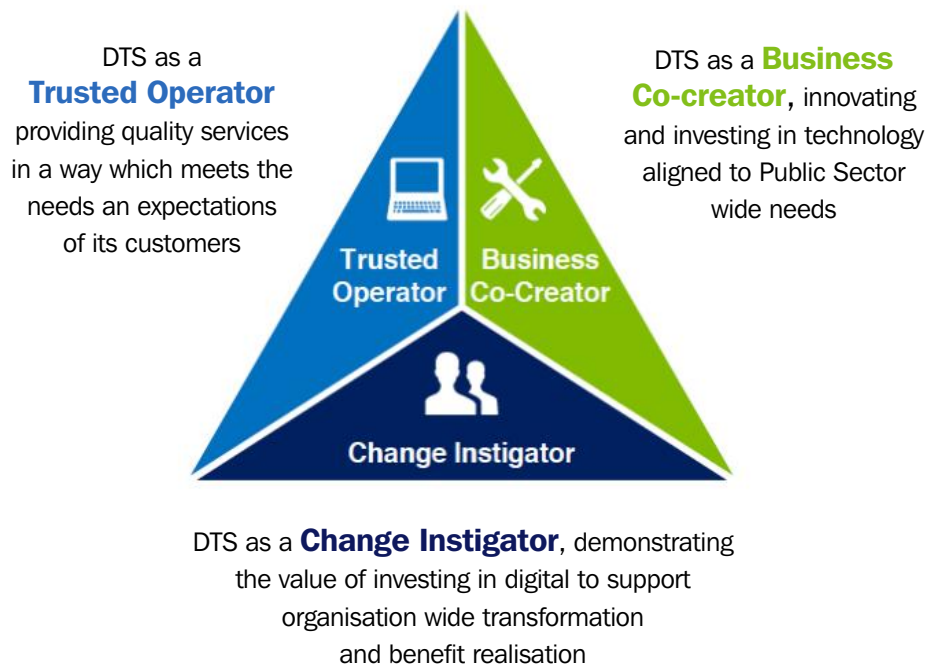
- 6.2** DTS are the digital transformation advocates within the Public Sector, helping to deliver the digital vision on behalf of Government. The role of DTS in delivering the Strategy will be to:

- Work with Departments and Agencies to design and deliver services to meet user needs;
- Provide centralised support, expertise, assurance, and a cross cutting perspective to help them to collectively deliver digital transformation of public services to achieve better outcomes for people and businesses in Northern Ireland; and
- Add value through insight and best practice gleaned from strategic partners and countries (including Estonia and Canada) and collaborate to deliver joint solutions via membership of networks such as the British-Irish Council; and
- Liaise with other sectors to ensure that the Digital Transformation Strategy continues to align with, and support delivery of key Government strategies.

- 6.3** DTS has considerable experience (including valuable insights and lessons learned) of working with Departments and organisations to improve a focus on citizens by mapping the customer journey, using 'Personas' (fictional characters to describe customer behaviour, attitude, motivation and goal) and user testing. This retains the focus on the customer perspective, it ensures that the service meets the majority of customer needs, including visitors to the nidirect website, contact centre, and customers who require assisted digital support to use the service.

DTS will play three key roles at the heart of digital transformation initiatives, as set out in Figure 7:

**Figure 7: The role of DTS**



- As a **Trusted Operator** DTS provide reusable cross cutting services and initiatives to Government such as Pay It, Book It and Tell us Once. DTS are also a single and reliable point of contact with citizens via the nirect service which will become more personalised and simple to use.
- As a **Business Co-creator** DTS work with our Public Sector partners to bring a digital perspective in helping to address their most important challenges. DTS facilitate this through digital transformation discovery exercises and by ensuring that they are at the forefront of Digital thinking within the Public Sector.
- As a **Change Instigator** DTS work with Public Sector partners and wider stakeholders to identify areas where efficiencies can be made through digital transformation. DTS work in collaboration with partners and stakeholders to ensure that all parties are aware of, and focused on, the potential benefits and value that can be achieved within each project.
- DTS will play all three roles to deliver outcomes, adapting to the situation at hand, delivering reliable reusable services alongside innovative and responsive change. They will support the NICS Board to deliver on the digital agenda in Government by advising, and challenging where necessary to ensure consistency, quality and value for money in the delivery of digital solutions across the Public Sector. As part of this role DTS will monitor and communicate changes in digital service behaviours and capabilities across programme stakeholders. This will include monitoring technology changes, political and social changes (e.g. regulations on data privacy) and user behaviour to identify issues and opportunities which need to be taken into account as the programme of work develops. Further details on the roles and responsibilities of DTS are set out in Appendix E.

## Digital Transformation Programme Governance Arrangements

- 6.4** All Departments will be required to review their Strategies and Action Plans to reflect the commitments made in this Strategy. The following governance arrangements will be put in place to support implementation and further details are included at Appendix F.
- A **Digital Transformation Programme Board** will be established to support the Programme Director to deliver the Programme Outcomes. The Board will ensure that the implementation of the Strategy is focused and consistent, with clear links to the planning and implementation of Programme for Government priorities. The Board will be chaired at Permanent Secretary level and membership will be drawn from the SCS in Departments and relevant business areas including Central Procurement Directorate, NICS HR and DoF Supply. The local government and Health and Social Care sectors will be represented within the governance structure of the Digital Transformation Programme to support both central and local government ownership of the delivery of the vision and commitments of the Digital Transformation Strategy and to ensure appropriate linkages with other key Strategies which support delivery of PfG outcomes.
  - The **Digital Leaders Forum** will be reinvigorated, with a stronger remit to drive a culture of digital transformation both within their Department and across traditional boundaries.
  - The **DTS** remit will be enhanced to directly support implementation of PfG outcomes by delivering an annual work programme agreed by the Digital Transformation Programme Board
  - The role and membership of the **nidirect User Forum** will be reviewed to ensure that it represents both service developers / owners and users interests.

## Benefits and Outcomes

- 6.5** The Strategy seeks to put in place a framework to allow Government to demonstrate how the transformation of these services is making a real difference to how people transact with Government. Because technology is advancing at an ever increasing pace, this Strategy and associated Roadmap and Service Delivery Plan cannot remain fixed. They will need to be constantly under review to ensure that the Strategy is delivering the overall aim and outcomes.
- 6.6** Digital Transformation is a major change programme and needs to be owned by, and driven across, all parts of Government. Delivery of this Strategy will require investment of financial and staff resources to deliver sustainable outcomes. While financial resources provided through the Budget may at times significantly influence the pace at which we are able to deliver, the strategic direction set by the PfG remains unchanged. The challenge will be to manage the allocation of resources across competing priorities, ensuring that progress on delivery of the Digital Transformation Strategy is maintained. The Digital Transformation Project Board will play a key role in prioritising strategic projects in line with PfG commitments and securing funding for those which have the potential to create real and lasting change across Government. Individual departments will be expected to consider transformation opportunities at an early stage of policy development and to consider how they may work collaboratively to deliver.

Funding will be made available to enable DTS to deliver priority cross-cutting transformation projects and to pilot the use of innovative new technologies which have the potential to transform how Government does business. DTS will also continue to deliver digital inclusion programmes such as the Go ON NI programme and will provide consultancy advice and support to Departments and Agencies to assist them in developing Business Cases to secure funding for individual transformation programmes.

Because of its evolving nature, benefits will be measured across short, medium and long term taking account of direct cost savings, service improvements and achievement of outcomes.

- 6.7** Successful delivery of this strategy will provide a range of other opportunities and benefits including increased customer and staff satisfaction in terms of accessibility of services and ease of use; increased use of and more online services and comprehensive and improved information for evidence based decision making to inform policy and service delivery. In addition there will be shorter response times and reduced waiting times, improved arrangements for community engagement, reduced staff time spent on administration of services and increased digital literacy.

The Strategy will be implemented through a Strategic Delivery Plan, and annual reports will set out progress on the implementation of the Strategy and Service Delivery Plan. Regular updates will be reported to the Digital Transformation Programme Board and NICS Board.

- 6.8** By 2021 the Strategy aims to deliver:

- A culture of innovation across the public sector;
- A skilled workforce and Digital Leaders who work across boundaries to deliver citizen focused solutions;
- Services are available everywhere to everyone who needs to use them;
- Dedicated Citizen Hubs and Digital Zones providing a wide range of Government services within the community and access to digital services for those without internet at home;
- Enhanced use of social media platforms to communicate and engage with service users and to encourage participation in society;
- Maximised use of common technologies and shared services; and
- Interaction both within and with the Public Sector will largely be made paperless (certificates, permits etc will be digital).

## Conclusion

- 6.9** It is very clear that there are some things we do at the moment to deliver our services, which we could and should do very differently in the future. We know that there are a number of key challenges facing Government over the next three years, including increasing citizens' expectations and continuing financial pressures. However this presents a huge opportunity to work collaboratively to deliver in new ways and digital technology is a key enabler in this regard. It creates a renewed sense of urgency and offers us the opportunity to transform and revolutionise how we do business right across Government so we can deliver a better and more trusted and connected service for our customers both citizens and businesses, and in a more modern and efficient way for our taxpayers. This Strategy provides a roadmap for our digital journey and this is summarised in Appendix G.
- 6.10** This journey sets a clear direction in respect of the leadership and programme of work to drive the organisational and cultural change required to truly transform our business, which we must do if we are to deliver on PfG's ambitious vision for the future as well as driving towards a truly digital society.
- 6.11** Mid-term evaluation of the Strategy and its outcomes will be carried out in 2019 and the Strategy and Delivery Plan updated to take account of any changes to the landscape and outcomes achieved thus far.

# A

## APPENDIX A: Glossary

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<b>16 by 16</b>	a programme to deliver 16 prioritised high volume or high impact services for transformation by 2016
<b>Accessni</b>	online criminal records check for Northern Ireland citizens
<b>Agile</b>	a method of project management especially for IT development characterised by short phases of work and frequent reassessment / adaptation
<b>API</b>	Application Programming Interface - set of functions and procedures that allow the creation of applications which access the features or data of an operating system, application, or other service
<b>CPD</b>	Central Procurement Directorate
<b>Blockchain</b>	a digital ledger in which transactions are recorded chronologically and publicly
<b>BIC</b>	British-Irish Council - its purpose is to further promote positive, practical relationships among the people of the islands; and provide a forum for consultation and co-operation
<b>BT</b>	British Telecom - the strategic delivery partner for the Digital Transformation Programme
<b>CCS</b>	Citizen Contact Strategy
<b>Citizen Hub</b>	a central location where citizens can transact and engage with Government on a range of front line digital and non digital services incorporating traditional counter services
<b>Citizen Space</b>	online portal for all Government digital consultations
<b>Cloud</b>	a network of remote servers hosted on the internet to store, manage, and process data, rather than a local server or a personal computer
<b>COPE</b>	Centres of Procurement Expertise
<b>Digital Toolkit</b>	sometimes referred to as a 'Multi Tenant Platform' this is suite of reusable tools which allows business areas to quickly introduce and manage a range of self service on line features such as find it, tell us, report it, etc



<b>Digital Zones</b>	A Digital Zone is a designated area in a Government or non Government site, such as a bank or retail store, that people can visit to improve their basic digital skills. They would be staffed by volunteer digital champions from the local area who help people with their specific digital questions or issues
<b>DoF</b>	Department of Finance
<b>DoF Supply</b>	Department of Finance - Supply Division is responsible for recommending the allocation of, and controlling and reporting on, the resources made available to Northern Ireland Departments to optimise the distribution of public expenditure towards achieving the administration's strategic objectives and priorities for Northern Ireland
<b>DTS</b>	Digital Transformation Service
<b>DVA</b>	Driver and Vehicle Agency
<b>Enterprise Shared Services</b>	Enterprise Shared Services (ESS) brings together responsibility for Human Resource (HR), Information Technology (IT), Finance and Digital Services along with the management of Properties into a single directorate within the Department of Finance (DOF)
<b>EY</b>	Ernst and Young are a global professional services firm
<b>Go ON NI</b>	an indirect support initiative and brand which highlights the benefits of being online as well as brings together initiatives, places and tools to help and encourage off-liners to become internet beginners
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>IGIB</b>	Information Governance and Innovation Board
<b>Interoperability</b>	the ability of computer systems or software to communicate, exchange data, and use the information that has been exchanged
<b>IoT</b>	Internet of things (interconnection via the internet of computing devices embedded in everyday objects)
<b>IP</b>	Intellectual property
<b>IT Assist</b>	provider of a common IT infrastructure service to NICS Departments, Agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies
<b>LSA</b>	Legal Services Agency
<b>mydirect</b>	a citizen self-service and personalised portal currently being developed by the Digital Transformation Service for rapid deployment across Government
<b>NCSC</b>	National Cyber Security Centre

<b>NICS</b>	Northern Ireland Civil Service
<b>NICS Board</b>	An Executive Board made up of Permanent Secretaries of the NICS chaired by the Head of the NICS
<b>NICS HR</b>	The centralised human resource function for the Northern Ireland Civil Service
<b>NIDA</b>	NICS Identity Assurance
<b>nidirect (web portal)</b>	nidirect is the official government web portal for Northern Ireland citizens and brings together information from Government departments and agencies
<b>nidirect (programme)</b>	programme of work in relation to digitisation and transformation of Government services and delivered by a Strategic Partnership consisting of Government working with a private sector partner (BT)
<b>nidirect User Forum</b>	a forum of service users which are engaged with the Digital Transformation Programme on both live and services in development
<b>Digital Notifications</b>	Texts, notifications or email alerts sent by an online service to a user - they can take the place of paper based communications and reminders
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>Ofcom</b>	communications regulator in the UK for regulation of TV, radio and video-on-demand sectors, fixed-line telecoms, mobiles and postal services, plus the airwaves over which wireless devices operate
<b>ONS</b>	Office of National Statistics
<b>Open by default</b>	All government data be published openly by default, as outlined in the Open data strategy for Northern Ireland 2015-2018 , while recognising that there are legitimate reasons why some data cannot be released (see open data entry above)
<b>Open Data</b>	Open data is data that anyone can access, use or share. Governments release non-personal data to enables small businesses, citizens and researchers to develop resources which make crucial improvements to communities.
<b>PfG</b>	Programme for Government
<b>PLR</b>	the Personal Learning Record is an online, whole life statement of achievement in learning, training, work experience, etc.
<b>Product Owner</b>	provide support to delivery partners and stakeholders in ensuring that a Service Owner and Service Management functions are in place to provide post-implementation support
<b>PSSSP</b>	Public Sector Shared Services Programme

<b>Ransomware</b>	malicious software designed to block access to a computer system until a sum of money is paid
<b>Reform of Property Management</b>	Centralising of the management of NICS office accommodation by transferring the office properties and management responsibility from Departments and their arm's-length bodies into a shared service
<b>Reporting As A Service</b>	A common reporting feature provided as an enterprise service across Government
<b>RPA</b>	Robotic Process Automation
<b>Secure Messaging</b>	a means to conduct secure communications between individuals and Government in line with industry regulations/standards
<b>Single Farm Payment</b>	(SFP) The main agricultural subsidy scheme in the European Union and replaced most of the individual Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) subsidy payments previously made to farmers
<b>Single Application Form</b>	(SAF) The Single Application Form is the claim form for area based schemes and to receive the single farm payment a single application form must be completed (see entry immediately above)
<b>SMS</b>	Short Message Service text messaging component of internet and mobile telephony systems
<b>Social Web</b>	a platform combined with digital content marketing to personalise an online experience that through a 'social' dimension, allowing Government to reach and engage with existing communities of enthusiasts or interested citizens
<b>Service owner</b>	Senior responsible officer for a Government to citizen transaction
<b>Service management</b>	Management of an IT operational service including planning, design, control, maintenance and support
<b>Tell Us Once</b>	digital method allowing citizen to self serve change of personal details - this would automatically distribute to all relevant Government services

# B APPENDIX B:

## Technology Trends

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### Deloitte<sup>25</sup> Tech Trends 2017

#### **IT unbounded**

The boundaries surrounding IT are fading as technology becomes integral to almost every business function and relationship.

#### **Dark analytics**

Advances in computer vision and pattern recognition allow companies to unlock insights from unstructured data that until now, have been lost in the dark.

#### **Machine intelligence**

Machine intelligence is helping companies make better decisions, embed complex analytics into customer and employee interactions, and - with adoption of bots and robotic process automation - automate increasingly difficult tasks.

#### **Mixed reality**

Companies are exploring more immersive and engaging ways to combine the physical world and digital systems, creating a new, mixed reality that's more natural, intuitive and intelligent.

#### **Inevitable architecture**

Open standards, cloud-first designs and loosely coupled architectures are the norm in start-ups. Now, large enterprises have similar ambitions.

#### **Everything-as-a-service**

Traditional business products are being reimagined as services as organisations modernise core systems and the technology stack.

#### **Blockchain: Trust economy**

Blockchain is emerging as the mainstay for digital identities in the emerging trust economy.

#### **Exponentials watch list**

Advances in disruption forces like synthetic biology, energy storage, quantum computing, and nanotech could exponentially transform the way we do business.

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<sup>25</sup> [https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/technology/articles/tech-trends.html?icid=nav2\\_tech-trends](https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/technology/articles/tech-trends.html?icid=nav2_tech-trends)

## Gartner's perspective on emerging technology trends for Government<sup>26</sup>

### **Digital Workplace**

CIOs and IT leaders are building more social, mobile accessible and information-driven work environment.

### **Scalable Interoperability**

Provides government agencies with the ability to seamlessly exchange and use information, regardless of the architectures and technologies the systems have been built on, in a manner that is invisible to the user.

### **Open any Data**

Agencies are determining which open datasets to make public in order to increase data exchange within government, improve agency performance and programme outcomes, and justify the cost of open data programmes.

### **Citizen e-ID**

Provides a trusted domain for how public services can be accessed by citizens on any advice or through any online channel.

### **Edge Analytics**

Allows Government agencies to move beyond traditional reaction dashboards and tools to process models where analytics take place at the point of service to inform context-based decisions.

### **Multichannel Citizen Engagement**

Government IT organisations are adopting agile procurement, agile infrastructure and agile development processes to mirror citizen behaviour in a multichannel environment.

### **Hybrid Cloud (and IT)**

Offers government CIOs a new operating model that supports their IT department's ability to combine and manage on-premises infrastructure or internal private cloud with external cloud based environments simultaneously.

### **Digital Government Platforms**

Governments are becoming more open and horizontally aware across adjacent domains in order to integrate and coordinate services to improve outcomes and citizen experiences.

### **Internet of Things**

IoT is enabling new levels of flexibility, reliability and collaboration for supporting the digital transformation of service strategies, regardless of data ownership, to create, collect, analyse and make decisions based on different data types and sources.

### **Web scale IT**

Enables the rapid and scalable development and delivery of web-based IT services that leverage agile, lean and continuous delivery principles could exponentially transform the way we do business.

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<sup>26</sup> Source: Gartner emerging trends for Government, 3 June 2015

## PWC White Paper - Building a Digital Government<sup>27</sup>

### Technology

- 1 **Think digital first:** Adopting a digital-first mindset lies at the heart of faster and better service delivery.
- 2 **Mobile now:** Citizens want to use their mobile devices to access services on the go.
- 3 **Omni channel:** Governments can provide services seamlessly across channels.
- 4 **Leveraging citizen data:** Governments can use data to give citizens the right services as they need them.

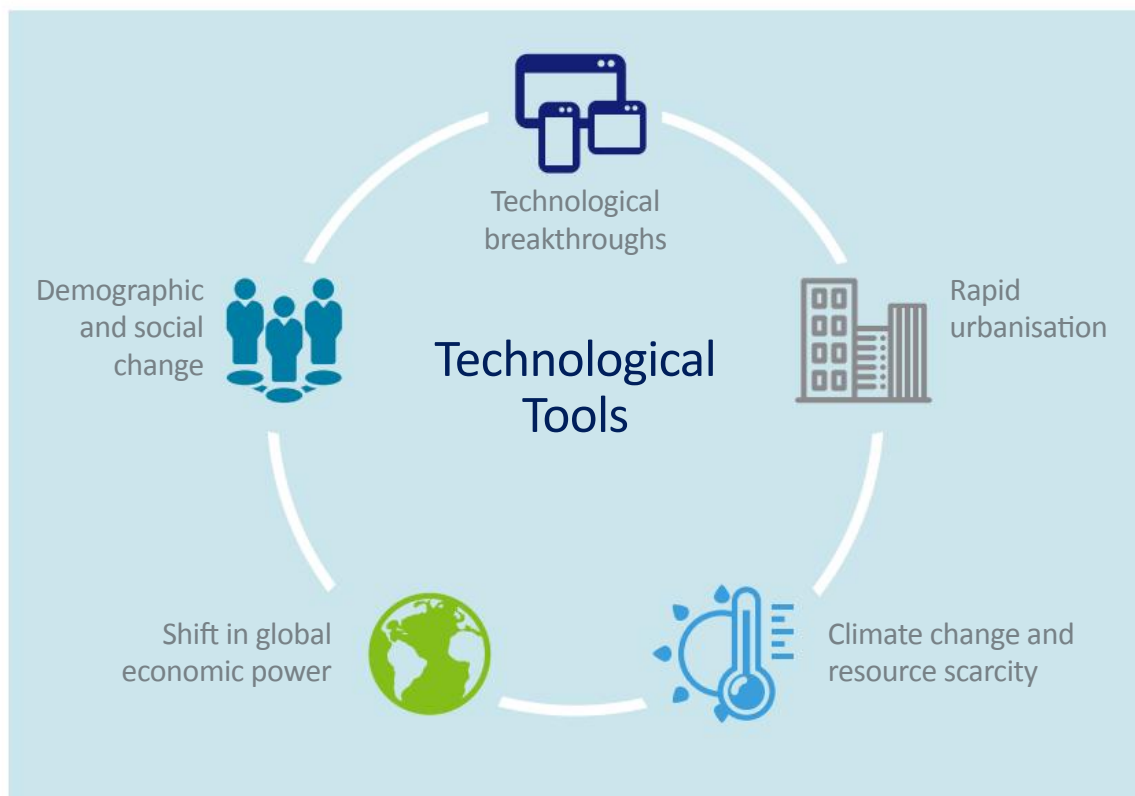
### Trust

- 5 **Tracking and transparency:** Access to information and application status will increase transparency and improve service delivery.
- 6 **Cyber security:** Protecting critical data and reassuring citizens that information is secure are critical.

### Transformation

- 7 **Efficiency is key:** Operational excellence and efficiency are important, supported by the right technological tools.

### PWC Megatrends: 5 Global shifts changing the way we live and do business



<sup>27</sup> <http://www.pwc.com/ca/en/public-sector-government/publications/pwc-2016-digital-government-trends.pdf>



## The Autonomous Customer 2015: On-hold for Intelligent Customer Service<sup>28</sup>

### **'Making it easy' is the top priority**

Busy Autonomous customers put a lot of effort into dealing with organisations and prefer easy interactions

### **Fragvergence extends (fragmentation / convergence)**

More devices used in more ways, new options for customer engagement

### **Omni-channel spiralling**

Adding functionality will drive customer journey ease, reduce high buyer drop-out and improve engagement

### **Video culture continues to grow**

As video is more part of our daily lives, there is growing interest in video-chat for customer service and engagement

### **Supported self-service is a necessity**

Consumers like self-service, but when it goes wrong they want live help there and then

### **Social media service used by 1 in 4 consumers**

Consumers want more customer service by social media and less marketing

### **Security concerns over the phone**

Publicity around ID &V and card payment security means new solutions are needed to drive engagement

### **On-hold for Intelligent Customer Service**

Autonomous Customers want organisations to improve service delivery going forward

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<sup>28</sup> The Autonomous Customer 2015: On-hold for Intelligent Customer Service - Global, British Telecommunications plc & Avaya Inc, 2015

# C APPENDIX C:

## Leadership Competencies for the Digital Age

Leadership Competencies for the Digital Age		Personal Attributes for the Digital Age	
High	Ease of Development		Low
<p><b>Digital Acumen</b> Demonstrating a sophisticated understanding of technology-centred opportunities, challenges and consequences</p> <p><b>Leading Virtual Teams</b> Using appropriate technologies and interpersonal styles to form, develop, guide and motivate remote, dispersed or physically separated teams to attain successful outcomes and business objectives</p> <p><b>Empathy</b> Establishing and sustaining relationships by identifying, understanding, appreciating, valuing and sharing the feelings of others</p>	<p><b>Hyper-collaboration</b> Working collaboratively with a diverse community of others in person, or virtually, to build a consensus and take collective action to achieve common goals</p> <p><b>Inspiration</b> Motivating increased employee energy and effort by communicating a compelling view of the organisation's or team's purpose</p> <p><b>Cultural Curiosity</b> Gathering information and seeking out experiences to learn more about people from other cultures and backgrounds</p>	<p><b>Intellectual Curiosity</b> Voracious desire to invest time and energy in constant learning</p> <p><b>Determination</b> Assuming responsibility for difficult tasks/ assignments that contain a high degree of complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty</p> <p><b>Connectivity</b> Understanding the connections to form a more holistic view of opportunities, challenges, and/or problems and the best ways to leverage people and ideas</p> <p><b>Integration</b> Assembling and combining information from local sources to form a well-rounded understanding of complex problems or situations that includes both a short-term and long-term perspective</p>	<p><b>360° Thinking</b> Identifying and understanding problems and opportunities by gathering, analysing and interpreting quantitative and qualitative information from multiple sources</p> <p><b>Adaptability</b> Maintaining effectiveness when experiencing major changes in work responsibilities or the environment</p> <p><b>Alignment</b> Using effective communication, involvement, and persuasion behaviours to help teams, groups and organisations synchronise their purpose</p>
Capability can be readily developed through training, coaching and skill practice		Capability reflects a deeply ingrained habit, or style, and is not easily developed	

## D APPENDIX D: The Challenge of Getting Online

<b>32.2%</b> NI population	<b>378,000</b> people	aged 16-65 have <b>low or no digital skills</b> (to send & receive email, use a search engine, browse the internet and complete online forms)
<b>38%</b> Small businesses	<b>49%</b> Charities	lack basic digital skills
<b>66%</b> Small businesses	<b>78%</b> Sole traders	don't invest any money in digital skills
<b>11%</b> Rural premises		will still receive <b>less than 2Mb/s</b> download speeds <b>after December 2017</b>
<b>140,000</b> NI households		of 700,000 households in NI about 140,000 <b>do not have internet at home</b>
<b>18.8%</b> NI population		<b>have never used the internet*</b> compared to 14.4% in Wales, 12.8% in Scotland, and 11.4% in the UK.

\* Those who do not use the internet include: **53% of people over 65; 40% of disabled people; 39% of those who are not economically active.** Those living in rural communities - **about 11% of rural premises will still struggle with low connection speeds** (under 2mb/s) after the current superfast rollout programme.

**Sources:** Internet users in the UK: 2016, ONS, Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey, 2016, NISRA, Basic Digital Skills: UK Report 2015, doteveryone, Experian Mosaic.

## **E** APPENDIX E: Digital Transformation Service Role

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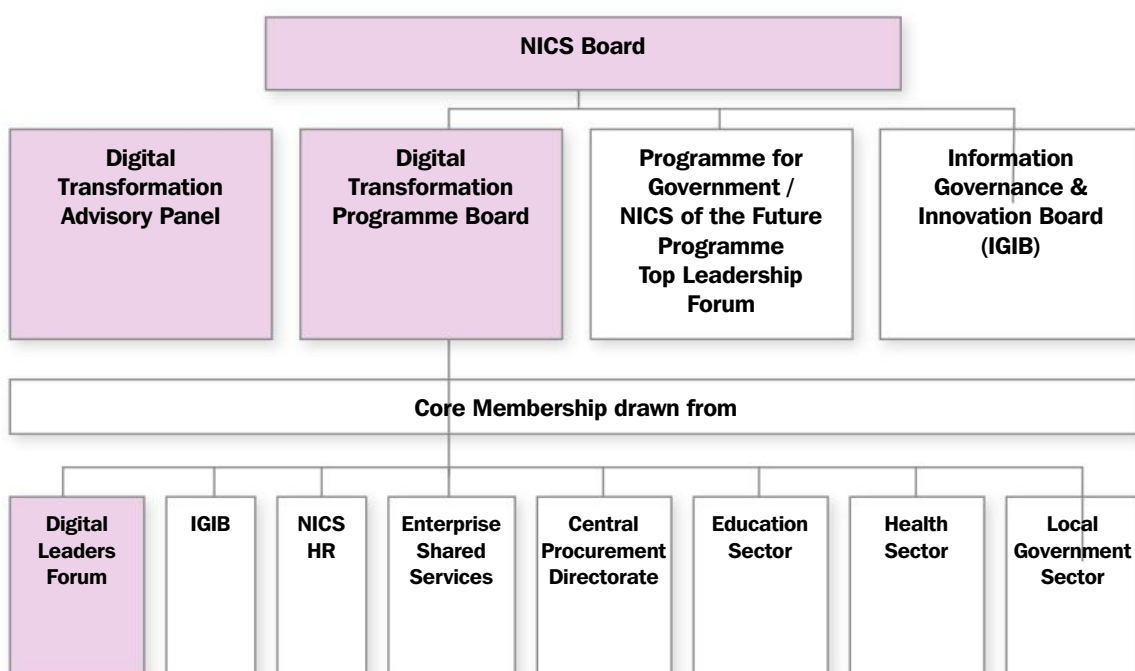
DTS's role will be to support the implementation of the PfG outcomes by:

- Helping public sector stakeholders in developing a clear view of how digital can transform end-to-end business operations;
- Developing digital principles to support the development of good digital services;
- Promoting the ability to work across silos to design citizen centred experiences,
- Working with departments to maximise opportunities for benefit realisation and provide a cross cutting perspective to ensure value for money and address issues of consistency and potential duplication;
- Providing support for business case production including indicative costs and the identification of potential benefits arising from channel shift and service uptake;
- Creating and embedding use of shared platforms, open standards and reusable components to increase the pace of transformation across Government;
- Creating consistent and easy to navigate user experiences that are inclusive and encourage channel shift.
- Acting as a centre of digital expertise to enable innovative new approaches to be tested and prototyped;
- Supporting the development of increased digital capability within government by identifying, developing, and sharing best practice as well as addressing issues of consistency and preventing potential duplication;
- Enabling the workforce with the skills and tools necessary for digital development;
- Adopting an approach to IT expenditure and development based on agile principles; and
- Helping business understand what is possible through digital transformation;
- Liaising with DSS colleagues and ensuring smooth transition to support and maintenance of live services to ensure that transformation takes account of wider ICT policy and strategy considerations; and
- Representing Northern Ireland's interests on the UK Digital Leaders Network, chaired by Government Digital Service.

# F APPENDIX F:

## Digital Transformation Programme Governance

### Digital Strategy - Programme Governance



### Digital Transformation Programme Board

A Digital Transformation Programme Board will be established to provide strategic leadership to drive digital transformation and delivery of a 'Digital First' culture by NICS Departments and Agencies. It will comprise of Grade 3 Digital Champions from across the NICS and a number of external experts / independent members. The Board will be led by a Permanent Secretary and it will report to the NICS Board. It will be responsible for:

- Ownership, promotion and sponsoring the delivery of the vision and commitments of the Digital Transformation Strategy to support achievement of PfG outcomes and OECD recommendations;
- Providing strategic leadership of the digital transformation agenda including identification, scoping and promoting key opportunities for collaborative transformation across Government;

- Ensuring delivery of projects and programmes that together make the greatest contribution to delivering the vision and to support departments and agencies to work collaboratively to deliver benefits;
- Providing active leadership, individually and collectively, in order to promote business led transformational change at all levels to deliver at pace;
- Reviewing progress and ability to deliver against the commitments made in the Digital Transformation Strategy;
- Providing guidance to the SRO to support delivery of the PfG Indicator to 'improve online access to Government Services';
- Supporting and challenging DTS, government departments and agencies to ensure that user needs remain at the forefront of strategy and delivery;
- Acting as advocates for the NI Direct brand, and providing opportunities to drive NI Direct brand into wider parts of the NI Public Sector;
- Ensuring clear ownership and commitment at the appropriate senior level occurs within all departments;
- Ensuring all potential opportunities for digital transformation are made visible;
- Championing the delivery of the Digital Resilience Foundation Programme to improve digital literacy in Northern Ireland;
- Sharing experiences and knowledge to demonstrate how the NICS and wider public sector can continue to improve public services and understand the benefits that can be achieved;
- Ensuring that best practice and lessons from the Cabinet Office, and other relevant Government digital initiatives in both UK and other jurisdictions are considered for NICS; and
- Developing knowledge, skills and capacity for digital transformation across Government.



## Digital Transformation Advisory Panel

The Digital Transformation Advisory Panel will be responsible for:

- Supporting and advising DTS to ensure that user needs remain at the forefront of strategy and delivery;
- Providing external advice to ensure that the latest thinking is being applied to transformation opportunities; and;
- Providing links and liaison to areas of best practice.

## Departmental Digital Leaders

Departmental Digital Leaders for each Department will be nominated by the NICS Board. They will be SCS and will be expected to:

- Provide strong and visionary leadership in line with their organisation's Digital Strategy and Transformation Plans;
- Drive progress within their department and promote and encourage take-up of digital first with stakeholders and customers;
- Create innovative, highly effective and efficient Digital Teams to lead and deliver digital transformation and culture change across their organisation;
- Champion a strong culture of continuous learning and knowledge sharing between specialists and generalists within their Department;
- Ensure that their Departmental Digital Strategy and associated Delivery Plans are embedded in the department's business planning process;
- Work with Digital Transformation Service to develop appropriate benchmarks and indicators to demonstrate the changing outcomes 'on the ground' through delivery of their Departmental Digital Strategy and Delivery Plans;
- Work with Communications Directors and senior policy makers, to enable the collaboration needed to deliver digital strategies;
- Act as the single point of contact for their department's strategic interactions with the Digital Transformation Board and Digital Transformation Service. This also includes co-ordinating digital activity for departmental agencies, arms length bodies and non-departmental public bodies; and
- Actively participate in Digital Leaders Forum meetings, sharing good practice and learning.

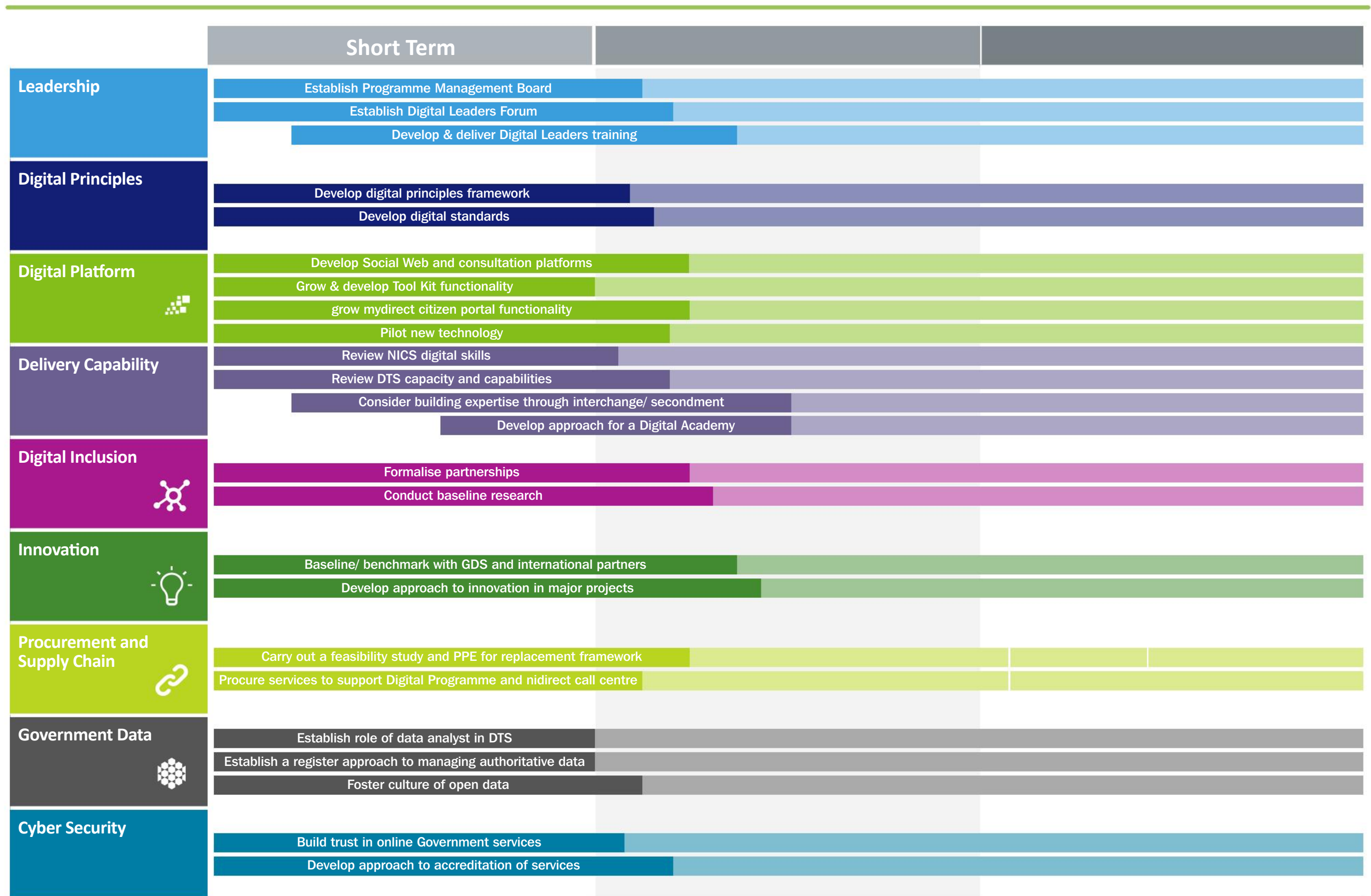
## Digital Leaders Forum

The NI Digital Leaders Forum will oversee sustainable and innovative digital transformation across public services provided by each of the NICS Departments, agencies and other associated bodies in line with the Executive's PfG commitments. The Forum will be chaired by a Grade 3 member of the Programme Board. Digital Leaders will be SCS and should sit on the Management Board of their organisation. The Forum will:

- Support the Digital Transformation Programme Board in its role of providing strategic leadership on the development and delivery of a Digital First approach across the NICS;
- Ensure the online user experience of Government is consistent and high quality;
- Support opportunities for joint working across Government on the digital agenda;
- Oversee implementation of the Digital Strategy and Action Plan and ensure that Departmental Strategies and Plans compliment delivery of the overall Strategy and support achievement of PfG indicators;
- Promote new ways of working across government;
- Oversee the development of cross departmental ssisted Digital Strategies and policies;
- Review technological and service developments offering the potential to improve service delivery;
- Contribute to the strategic development of online services, including new transactions and editorial content;
- Review developments and best practice within the Government Digital Service (GDS) in GB and other jurisdictions and align these with the position in Northern Ireland;
- Share learning and good practice in the delivery of the digital agenda across Government;
- Champion improvements to digital literacy across Government, drawing on external expertise where appropriate;
- Drive a culture which supports transformation by ensuring that staff receive appropriate training and development to help them undertake new roles.
- Digital Leaders will be senior level and should sit on the Management Board of their respective organisation.



# G APPENDIX G: Digital Transformation Roadmap









**Minutes of Meeting of Policy and Resources Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 3 September 2020 in the Council Offices, Ballyronan Road, Magherafelt and by Virtual Means**

**Members Present**

Councillor Quinn, Chair

Councillors Ashton (7.05 pm), Buchanan, Cuddy, Doris, Elattar, Forde, Gildernew\*, McFlynn, S McGuigan, McKinney, S McPeake, Molloy

**Officers in Attendance**

Mr A Tohill, Chief Executive  
Mrs Canavan, Director of Organisational Development  
Mr Cassells, Director of Environment and Property  
Mr Kelso, Director of Public Health and Infrastructure  
Mr McCreesh, Director of Business and Communities  
Ms Mezza\*\*, Head of Marketing and Communications  
Mr Moffett, Head of Democratic Services  
Mr McKeown, ICT Support  
Mr O'Hagan, Head of ICT  
Mr JJ Tohill, Director of Finance  
Mrs Grogan, Democratic Services Officer

\* Denotes members present in remote attendance

\*\* Denotes Officers present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm.

*The Chair, Councillor Quinn welcomed everyone to the meeting and those watching the meeting through the Live Broadcast. Councillor Quinn in introducing the meeting detailed the operational arrangements for transacting the business of the committee in the chamber and by virtual means, by referring to Annex A to this minute.*

**PR0126/20 Apologies**

Councillors Hughes, McLean and Totten.

**PR127/20 Declarations of Interest**

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

**PR128/20 Chair's Business**

The Chair, Councillor Quinn stated this was his first meeting Chairing the Policy and Resources Committee and that he looked forward to working with Members and Officers over the next year.

Councillor S McPeake referred to the General Power of Competence workshops organised last winter but had been put on hold due to the Covid pandemic. He stated that he was aware of a paper but not aware of any projects and asked that an update be brought on how to advance this in the future.

The Director of Environment & Property advised that several workshops had been organised last year and agreed that these had been put on hold due to Covid but agreed to bring a report to the next committee meeting.

## **Matters for Decision**

### **PR129 Request to illuminate Council Property for Recycle Week 2020**

The Head of Democratic Services presented previously circulated report which sought permission from Recycle Now to highlight Recycle Week 2020 by lighting up/illuminating the Burnavon, Cookstown; Ranfurly House, Dungannon and the Bridewell, Magherafelt on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> September – Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2020 (inclusive).

He also referred to the following requests received to illuminate buildings:

- Marie Curie “Light up the Night” to encourage people by taking part in a Twilight Walk in memory and celebration of a loved one and asked that Council buildings be lit up yellow on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2020 to show support for families through their toughest time.
- Children with Cancer “Children Childhood Cancer Awareness Month” in September – specific date not known
- Dyslexia Awareness Week – commencing 5 October 2020. This request to illuminate will be before the October Policy & Resources Committee

*Councillor Ashton entered the meeting at 7.05 pm.*

The Head of Democratic Services in referring to Marie Curie “light up the night” said that it would be anticipated to light up Council facilities on Friday 25 September.

The Chair in referring to Children Childhood Cancer Awareness month stated that it would be important to support this worthy cause and asked that a date be worked on.

Councillor Doris agreed with previous comment and said that she would be happy to propose this as she is aware of a family in Coalisland who’s child was battling cancer. She suggested that Childhood Cancer Awareness be investigated by Communications Department and articles included on social media be shared on early signs of detection of cancer so people are able to have the best chance of survival.

Councillor Molloy concurred with comments and said that dates be worked upon for the worthy causes.

Councillor Cuddy said that it was important that these worthy causes are supported and was easy to change the light colour of buildings.

He referred to buildings being illuminated in blue last weekend to remember Noah Donohoe and said that it would be beneficial going forward if reasonably sized posters be developed to indicate to people what the coloured lighting represented and what the worthy cause was.

Councillor Forde concurred with all the previous comments and said that she was aware of an individual and his family receiving cancer treatment and felt that this would be a great support to his family and families in a similar position. She also concurred with member's comments about banners being erected to indicate what the coloured lighting represents.

The Head of Democratic Services advised that a meeting of the Working Group on Lighting Up Buildings Policy was due to take place on Wednesday 16 September at 6 pm in Dungannon offices.

Proposed by Councillor Doris  
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to agree to request from:

- i) WRAP to light up/illuminate the designated properties (Ranfurly House & Visitor Centre, Dungannon; the Burnavon Arts & Cultural Centre, Cookstown and the Bridewell, Magherafelt) green on the evenings of Monday 21<sup>st</sup> – Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2020 (inclusive) to mark Recycle Week 2020.
- ii) Marie Curie "Light up the Night" to encourage people by taking part in a Twilight Walk in memory and celebration of a loved one and asked that Council buildings be lit up yellow from Friday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2020
- iii) Children with Cancer "Children Childhood Cancer Awareness Month" to be supported when a specific date is known in September
- iv) Dyslexia Awareness Week – first week in October 2020 – to be supported when specific date is known

#### **PR130/20 Annual Report (2019-2020): Performance Improvement Plan Self-Assessment**

The Head of Democratic Services presented previously circulated report to inform members on the progress made towards the delivery of the 2019 to 2020 Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) by way of a self-assessment report. Section 3.1 – four improvements objections drew attention to.

Councillor Cuddy thanked officers for such a comprehensive document and enquired if this document had to be completed by the end of this month and who makes the decision to do so.

The Head of Democratic Services advised that Local Government (NI) Act requires that this is completed by 30 September and subsequent statutory guidance.

Councillor McFlynn said that it was a very comprehensive report and thanked officers for their time and effort and in referring to Planning said that although it wasn't up to scratch where it currently was, it was very close considering the impact of Covid.

Proposed by Councillor S McGuigan  
Seconded by Councillor S McPeake and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to note, review and comment as necessary on the Improvement Plan 2019-2020 Annual Report and Self-Assessment.

**PR131/20 Member Services**

No issues.

**Matters for Information**

**PR132/20 Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee held on Thursday 2 July 2020**

Members noted Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee held on Thursday 2 July 2020.

**PR133/20 Service Improvement Plan – Finance**

Members noted previously circulated report in relation to the Finance Department's Service Improvement Plan 2020/21.

*Live broadcast ended at 7.14 pm*

**Local Government (NI) Act 2014 – Confidential Business**

Proposed by Councillor Buchanan  
Seconded by Councillor Forde and

**Resolved** In accordance with Section 42, Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 that Members of the public be asked to withdraw from the meeting whilst Members consider items PR134/20 to PR147/20.

**Matters for Decision**

- PR134/20 Leisure Management Review
- PR135/20 Staffing Matters for Decision
- PR136/20 Contract for Works at Fivemiletown Recycling Centre
- PR137/20 Increased ICT Costs for Seamus Heaney Open Ground Project
- PR138/20 Financial Update in Relation to Covid19 and Associated Works
- PR139/20 Network Service Contract Extension (MPLS Services)

**Matters for Information**

- PR140/20 Confidential Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee held on 2 July 2020
- PR141/20 Staff Furlough Scheme Update
- PR142/20 Staff Matters for Information
- PR143/20 Dungannon Leisure Centre – ICT Costs
- PR144/20 Contracts and DAC
- PR145/20 Financial Report for 3 Months ended 30 June 2020
- PR146/20 Planning System Replacement May 2020
- PR147/20 Full Fibre NI (FFNI) Project

**PR148/20 Duration of Meeting**

The meeting commenced at 7 pm and concluded at 8.30 pm.

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_





<b>Report on</b>	Corporate Plan 2020-2024
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 8 October 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Ursula Mezza
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Ursula Mezza

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	x

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	The report provides an update on the publication of the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2024.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	The Council's began the development of a new Corporate Plan for the period 2020-2024 in the autumn of 2019.
2.2	Internal and external consultation was completed and a final draft of the plan agreed by the Council in March 2020.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	The new Corporate Plan was formally agreed by the Council in March 2020, at a time when the coronavirus pandemic had begun in earnest.
3.2	Given the Council's focus on managing its response to the crisis, followed by a focus on the on-going recovery of services and facilities, as well as wider support for community and economic recovery, formal publication of the plan was paused.
3.3	This pause allowed the Council also to ensure that the new Corporate Plan referenced the pandemic and its potential future impacts.
3.4	The final document is now complete and will be formally launched in due course.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: N/A
	Human: N/A

	Risk Management: N/A
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	That the Policy and Resources Committee notes the final published plan.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024

# Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024

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At the heart of our community



Comhairle Ceantair  
**Lár Uladh**  
**Mid Ulster**  
District Council

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## Chair's Foreword

**In the autumn of 2019, we began to review Mid Ulster District Council's existing Corporate Plan, assessing our progress since the Council came into being in 2015, considering our strategic direction and developing priorities for the new term of a freshly elected Council.**

By February 2020 we had consulted internally and externally on proposals, considered responses and a final Corporate Plan was agreed.

At that time, it's fair to say that one of the critical external issues we faced as an organisation, as a district and as a region, was the impending exit from the EU.

However, in a few short weeks, the world's attention, and ours with it, turned to a much graver matter and one of even larger, and previously unimaginable, proportions: a global pandemic.

By necessity, our focus switched from strategic planning to responding to a crisis and prioritising the health and safety of our residents and our staff. In time, we moved from the delivery of our essential services, which to the organisation's credit were uninterrupted throughout, towards the resumption and recovery of a broader range of facilities and services, as restrictions eased.

The pandemic is, of course, not over. We have no certainty about the length of time coronavirus will be with us, nor just how extensive its longer-term impact will be on our lives individually or collectively. However, we do know that we cannot stand still, put plans on hold and simply wait. Instead, we will take cognisance of the effects of COVID-19 as we understand them currently. We will anticipate future impacts. We will adapt, flex and respond as required.



And so, it is against this background and with this approach that we in Mid Ulster District Council are presenting our Corporate Plan 2020-2024 and demonstrating our continued commitment to the growth and development of this district for the betterment and benefit of our citizens.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Mallaghan', written over a thin horizontal line.

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**Councillor Cathal Mallaghan, Chair  
Mid Ulster District Council  
2020-2021**



## Introduction

**No plan is developed in a vacuum and the new Mid Ulster District Council Corporate Plan (2020-2024) has evolved from the first such plan which was created by the newly formed Council in 2015.**

It has also been influenced by the broader, collaborative Mid Ulster Community Plan (2017-2020) and a myriad of other sectoral strategic documents, from an Economic Development Strategy (2015-2019) to a Tourism Development Strategy (2017-2021) for Mid Ulster.

In its lifetime, the Community Plan and the new draft Local Development Plan which sets out the Council's vision for planning land use up to 2030 and spans housing, infrastructure, transport, tourism, community and recreational facilities, will be key documents.

Equally the broader external context in which we operate, from the political, social and environmental to the economic and financial, has informed this plan's development and these factors are woven into the plan's themes and reflected in the associated priorities.

As the coronavirus pandemic has brought into stark relief, we must also be agile in terms of our ability to respond to the unknowns and to fast-changing circumstances.

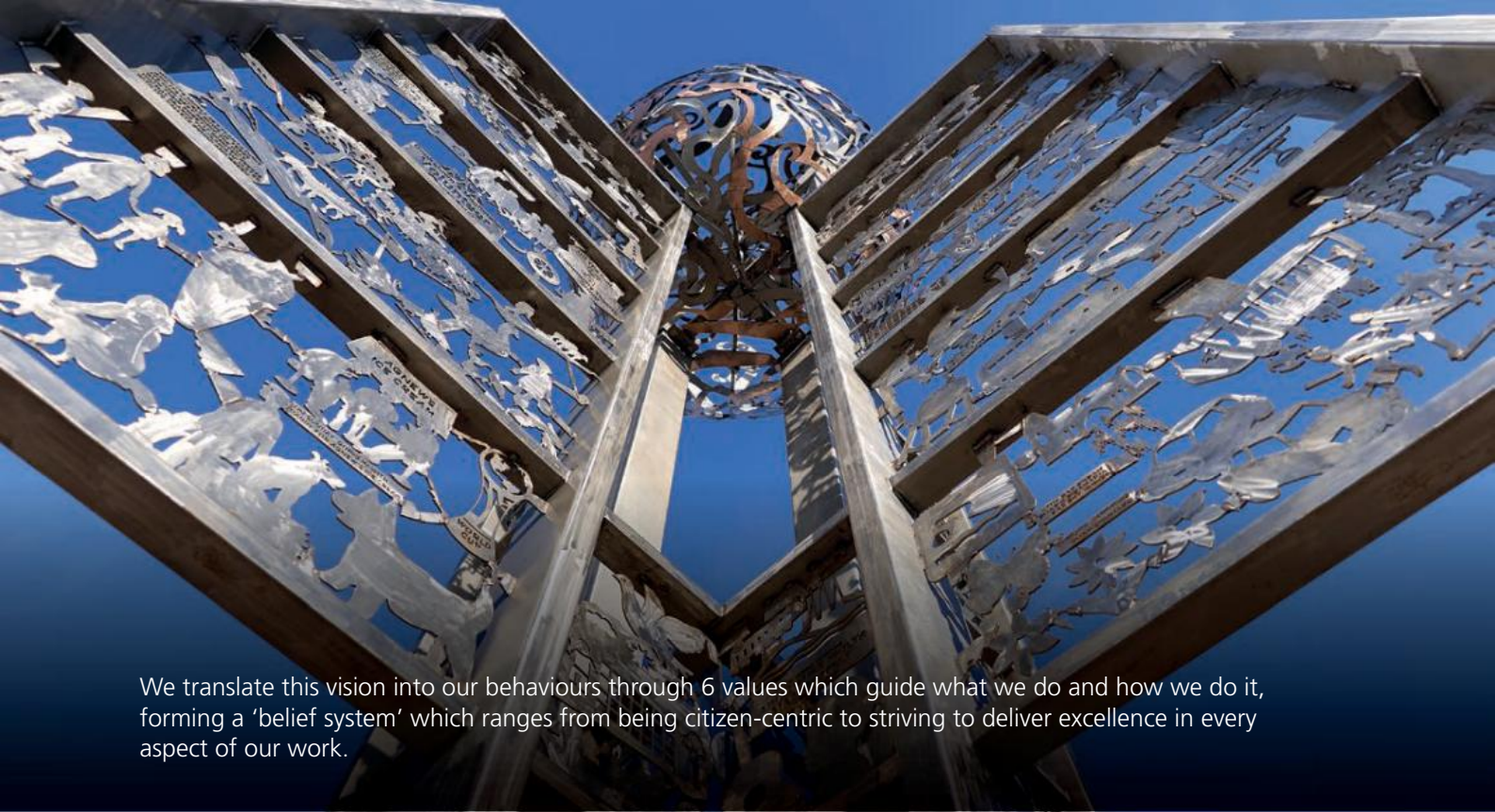
Above all, however, tailoring what we do to meet the needs of this district and its people should continue to be at the core of all our work, as expressed through our vision:



To be at the **heart**  
of our community.







We translate this vision into our behaviours through 6 values which guide what we do and how we do it, forming a 'belief system' which ranges from being citizen-centric to striving to deliver excellence in every aspect of our work.

## Values

### Citizen and customer-focussed



Designing and delivering our services in response to and around the needs of our customers and within our resources.

### Trustworthy



Working for our communities in a spirit of friendliness and openness by delivering fair, transparent, equitable and ethical services to all customers.

### Respect



Treating each other, our customers and our stakeholders in the same considerate way that we wish to be treated ourselves.

### Innovative



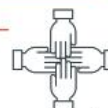
New and better ways of doing what we do.

### Excellence



Striving to excel in every aspect of our work, being accountable for and delivering the best, value for money services.

### Inclusive



Creating a culture which values, supports and celebrates diversity to the benefit of the organisation and the people we serve.





Our new corporate plan groups our work around 5 strategic themes, aligning very much with those identified in the wider, collaborative Mid Ulster Community Plan (2017-2027), while also reflecting our internal business requirements, processes and systems.

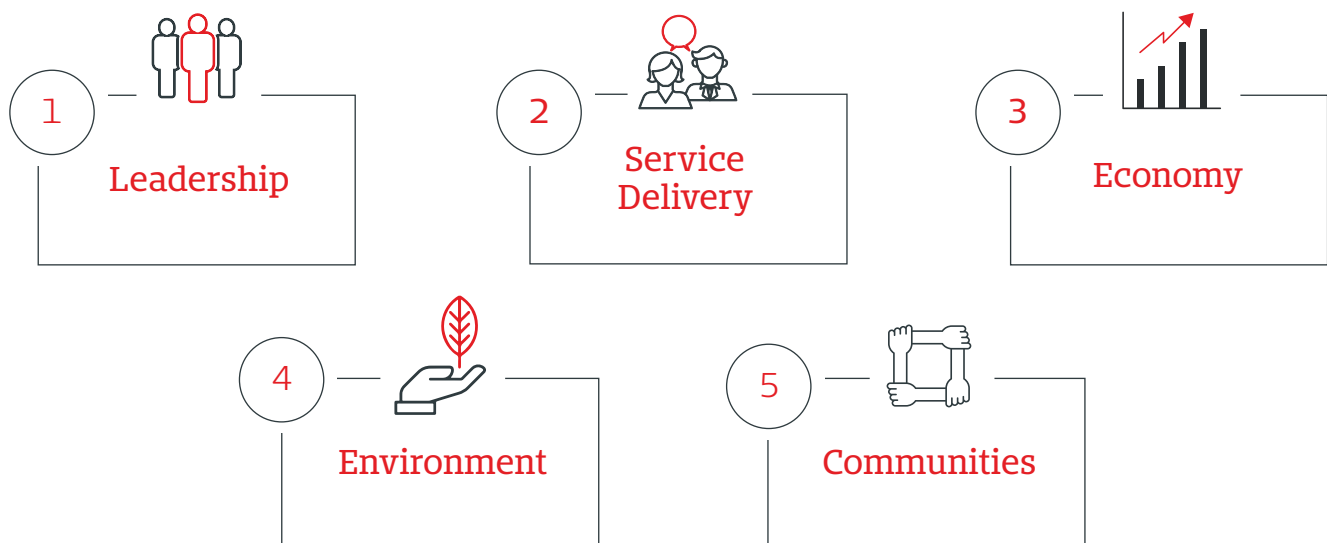
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Our new **corporate plan** groups our work around 5 strategic themes.

”

The five themes are:

## Themes



## Our Corporate Commitments

**While each of our strategic themes has a clear focus and purpose, there are also a number of corporate commitments which are not tethered to one area of work, but are common to all.**

### Addressing rurality

Close to 70% of Mid Ulster's population live in a rural setting, a fact which has strongly influenced the Council's approach to service delivery, investment and long-term planning. The importance of addressing the needs of a rural region, whether socially or economically, is undiminished and remains one of the Council's corporate commitments.

### Promoting Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations

Beyond a duty of compliance with our equality scheme, we aim to mainstream the promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations throughout the organisation, actively seeking out ways in which to enhance those opportunities and to build positive relations between and among the diverse communities across Mid Ulster.

### Continuously improving our services

Whether through our formal Corporate Improvement Objectives and service-specific Performance Improvement Plans or the small, regular, routine changes which we make to services through feedback, we are committed to continuously improving what we do and how we do it.

### Designing and delivering our services sustainably

From large-scale investment projects to new or changing service models, we place a value on ensuring that what we do not only meets current needs, but is designed and delivered to be sustainable in the longer-term, ensuring the needs of future generations are uncompromised.

### Working collaboratively across the public, private, community and voluntary sector to achieve shared objectives

Collaborative working is key to delivering successful outcomes for local people. The Council is committed to embracing the opportunities to work with a range of other organisations on issues, projects and plans as they relate to every theme, priority and aspect of our work.

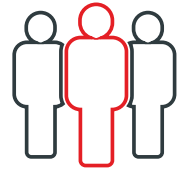
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Each of our strategic themes has a clear focus and purpose.

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## Theme 1

# Leadership



**As an organisation, the Council's role extends far beyond the delivery of services, functions and facilities for which it has direct responsibility.**

The Council is also a lobbyist, an influencer and a shaper of external policy.

This theme encapsulates the significance of the Council's political and civic leadership, through which it seeks to address the long-term deficits which adversely impact Mid Ulster, as well as to drive forward decisions which will enhance the region and benefit its people.

Connectivity, in its broadest sense, has long been identified as a primary issue for Mid Ulster.

Physical access to and from any region is critical to the growth of existing, indigenous businesses, as well as its attractiveness as an investment location. It is also a factor in the ability of a region's people to move freely and easily to access services, from health care and education to shops, leisure and recreation. As a result, physical connectivity cannot be divided from social cohesion, particularly in more isolated communities.

The history of underinvestment in road and transport infrastructure in Mid Ulster is well-documented and while there has been some progress in recent years (Magherafelt Bypass, the A6), there are substantial schemes which must be delivered if this infrastructure deficit, and associated issues, are to be addressed.



The **Council's role** extends far beyond the delivery of services for which it has direct responsibility.



Moving from the physical to the virtual, investment in digital connectivity is no less important. Mid Ulster is one of the poorest served areas in terms of the availability of high speed broadband. The Council's commitment to addressing this aspect of connectivity was unflinching during the previous corporate plan period and continues to be a priority.

Once again, the positive impact of improved broadband touches on all aspects of people's lives, from the ability of businesses to be at the forefront of the next 'industrial revolution' (Industry 4.0) which centres on innovation via digital technologies, to the homes where a lack of connection restricts online, social, business and educational engagement and activity.

Our leadership priorities are focussed, therefore, on progressing the Council's role as an influencer locally, regionally and nationally, delivering positive outcomes relating to a myriad of touchpoints in people's lives.



Our leadership priorities are **focussed**, therefore, on progressing the Council's role as an influencer locally, regionally and nationally.







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## Priorities

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- **We will use our influence to shape and facilitate:**
  - the delivery of strategic infrastructure schemes including the road transportation network (including bypasses for both Cookstown and Dungannon)
  - the drainage and sewerage network
  - our energy and broadband connectivity
  - the future development of health provision, and in particular, mental health
  - the future development of education
  - the provision of adequate and affordable housing
  - the direction of wider policy impacting on economic growth.
- **We will continue to progress towards the adoption of our Local Development Plan 2030 and delivery against the plan objectives.**
- **We will work collectively to meet the identified needs and priorities of our citizens and to connect the people of Mid Ulster.**

## Theme 2:

# Service Delivery



**This theme and its priorities are as wide-ranging as our portfolio of services.**

As an organisation, we are responsible for some of the most visible of public services, from bin collections, recycling centres and street cleaning to leisure centres, sports pitches, parks and play areas.

Sometimes less visible, but no less significant, are our statutory functions where the work of services like environmental health and building control are fundamental to areas such as food safety, work place health and safety, animal welfare, pollution control and building safety standards.

☞ As an organisation, we are **responsible** for some of the most **visible** of public services.

Growing the economy, developing the area's potential as a visitor and literary destination and supporting the creation of vibrant, safe and connected communities are also significant elements of the Council's work.

Behind the scenes, support services from finance to human resources, from capital projects to property services, are integral to ensuring that as an organisation which relies on its people, we can deliver for our customers.

☞ Ensuring that as an organisation which relies on its people, we can **deliver** for our customers.

The outcomes associated with this theme are, therefore, centred around our internal agenda for making the best use of our resources: ensuring our people are performing and supported to perform to the best of their abilities; that our culture encourages idea-generation to find new and better ways of working; that our focus is always on excellence; that our property assets are configured through an Asset Management Plan to meet our organisational needs.

While never in doubt, but thrown into even starker relief by the Coronavirus pandemic, of critical importance is how we manage our finances and make plans to address ever-increasing financial pressures, particularly around the loss of core central government and EU funding and against increased public expectations and demands.





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## Priorities

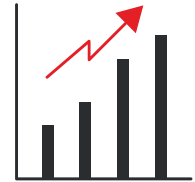
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- We will improve services for our citizens through the development and delivery of an innovation agenda.
- We will invest in our people to create a customer-focussed, purposeful, skilled, high performing, engaged, healthy and safe work-force.
- We will enhance our financial performance and strength, identifying opportunities to increase income and reduce deficits, as well as to leverage external funding.
- We will develop and implement an Asset Management Plan for the Council and, with our partners, work to develop a public sector-wide Asset Management Plan for Mid Ulster.



## Theme 3

# Economy



## Economic growth has been a pillar of the Council's strategic direction since its inception.

While the long-term economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic are as yet unknown, analysis of the shorter-term and potentially devastating effects on Mid Ulster's economy are already clear, principally as a result of the area's concentration of manufacturing, engineering and construction businesses.

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£1M suite of business support programmes tailored to the micro and small business sector.

22

Even without the need to contend with a pandemic, the Brexit imperative had focussed minds on the challenges which Mid Ulster may face, particularly given its geographic position as a border region.

In this broader strategic context, ensuring that the economic strengths of the Mid Ulster region are supported and that opportunities to extend, expand and enhance the district's economic capacity are identified and capitalised upon, has taken on even greater significance.

Undoubtedly the confirmation of £252M in 'growth deal' funding for the Mid South West Region, of which Mid Ulster is part, will be a major factor in strategic planning and investment for economic growth during the lifetime of this Corporate Plan.

While this important regional partnership is ambitious in its aspirations, so too is the Council's economic development activity at a more local level.

From pandemic-related town centre recovery plans, ultimately aimed at town centre transformation, to a £1M suite of business support programmes tailored to the micro and small business sector which makes up 98% of Mid Ulster's business base, the economic development activity in this plan period will be wide-ranging and far-reaching.

Partnership working remains a priority, notably to address employability and skills issues through the Mid Ulster Skills Forum, while ever-closer relationships with the tourism sector which support and promote product development will continue unabated. Indeed, the Council's direct involvement in the tourism industry, through enhanced offerings at Seamus Heaney HomePlace and the unique OM Dark Sky Park and Observatory in the Sperrins, are central planks of the delivery of our tourism strategy.

33

Economic growth has been a pillar of the Council's **strategic direction** since its inception.

22



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## Priorities

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- We will develop and deliver the Mid South West Regional Economic Strategy in collaboration with our partner Councils (Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council).
- We will continue to build on our work to generate business diversification, innovation and expansion and increase employment opportunities.
- We will continue to support the work of our partners, including the Mid Ulster Skills Forum, to address employability and skills to ensure the existing and future needs of our region's business base are met.
- We will continue to identify opportunity sites for development proposals and to deliver against existing plans for other key strategic sites (including Ann Street, Dungannon and the former Maghera High School site).
- We will have a prioritised, sustainably resourced programme of capital investment supporting the enhancement of facilities for local people and contributing to the regeneration of our district.
- We will work to deliver tourism investment and employment concentrating on Mid Ulster's 3 identified tourism strands.

## Theme 4

# Environment



Protecting, preserving and enhancing the environment was articulated in the first Corporate Plan and continues into the new plan, reflecting not only the significance of our natural landscapes and heritage but also the importance of waste management as a direct council function.

A very clear emphasis on waste and the reduction of our dependency on landfill has meant Mid Ulster has not only been at the top of the recycling table every year since 2015, but was also the first Council here to meet the statutory 50% target for household waste recycling - 3 years ahead of the target date of 2020. Continuing to maintain these standards of performance and to meet statutory targets remains a priority in the 4 years ahead.

**The first Council in Northern Ireland to meet the statutory 50% target for household waste recycling.**

Enhancing the environment is, of course, about much more than waste, particularly for a region like Mid Ulster, which encompasses Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Special Scientific Interest and which has international archaeological significance, is home to rare bog lands and bog plants, uncommon woodland, and priority and threatened species.

“

**Enhancing the environment is, of course, about much more than waste, particularly for a region like Mid Ulster.**

”

There is a balance to be achieved between the preservation of these unique natural landscapes and sustainable development to support the rural economy and rural life, a balance which the Council has always sought to achieve.

Indeed, issues of sustainability have grown in importance and are now articulated as one of our ‘corporate commitments’. Allied to those issues is the global movement to tackle climate change, a movement of which the Council is now part and which is expressed in a completely new priority in this Corporate Plan.





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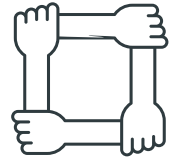
## Priorities

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- We will continue to reduce our dependency on landfill through waste reduction and increased recycling and recovery.
- We will continue to promote and protect our environment through our environmental and anti-littering programmes of education, awareness-raising and enforcement.
- We will increase the protection of, access to and development of our heritage assets, both natural and man-made, including our strategic visitor sites.
- We will work to mitigate against the impacts of climate change by taking steps to reduce our carbon emissions as an organisation.

## Theme 5

# Communities



While everything the Council does will ultimately have an impact on our communities at some level, this theme encompasses priorities which, when combined, can make a tangible difference to the health and well-being of local people, and contribute to the creation of viable and vibrant, safe and prosperous communities.

There is a deliberate focus on accessibility in this theme, recognising that the more and differing opportunities there are for people to adopt a more active lifestyle in a greater range of settings, the better the outcome will be.



Everything the Council does will ultimately have an **impact** on our communities at some level.



The enormous benefits of the outdoors for physical and mental health, whether a walkway or a mountain trail, are prioritised in this theme also, and the positive socio-economic impact of engaging with culture and the arts also remains to the fore.



Only a varied and committed **partnership** approach will make a difference.



This theme also tackles the hard social issues, from affordable housing to employment, which are so inextricably tied to addressing poverty and deprivation in a meaningful way, and makes clear that only a varied and committed partnership approach will make a difference.

Enhancing the strength of our voluntary and community sector, with direct interventions, funding and capacity building programmes remains an integral element of our Communities theme.





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## Priorities

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- We will open up and sustain accessible pathways to participation in leisure and outdoor recreation activities which enhance health and well-being by providing high quality, accessible facilities in local communities and through programmes tailored to community need.
- We will continue to support the sustainable development of our parks, forests and green spaces, together with access to outdoor assets, including walking and cycling trails, and water recreation.
- We will, along with our community planning partners, work to address poverty and deprivation across the Mid Ulster region.
- We will support and promote respect for diversity and the integration of our minority communities.
- We will develop, promote and sustain the arts in Mid Ulster.
- We will continue, through our community development programmes, grant aid schemes and our partnership-working, to support local communities and to build capacity in the community and voluntary sector.

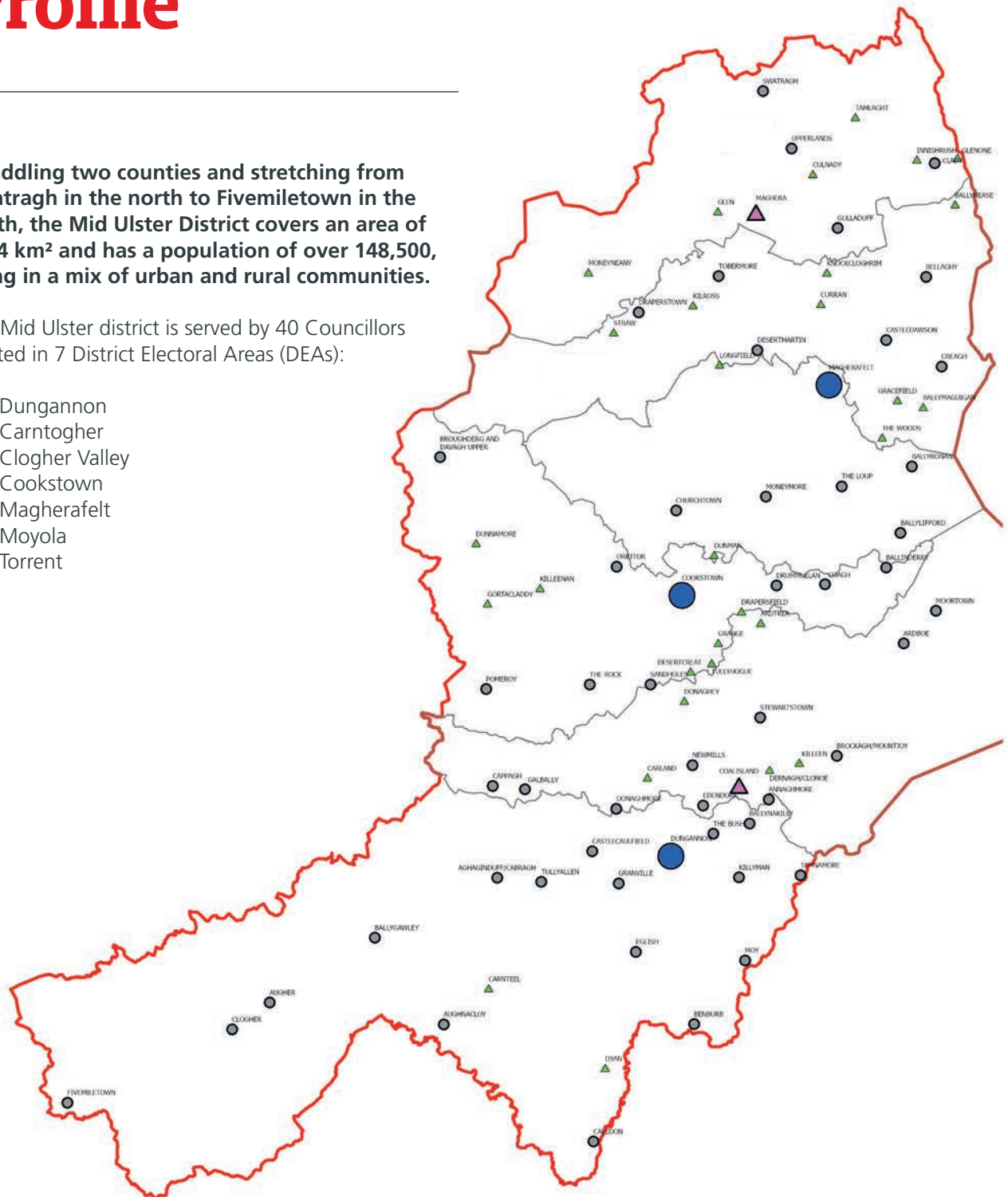


# Mid Ulster Profile

Straddling two counties and stretching from Swatragh in the north to Fivemiletown in the south, the Mid Ulster District covers an area of 1714 km<sup>2</sup> and has a population of over 148,500, living in a mix of urban and rural communities.

The Mid Ulster district is served by 40 Councillors elected in 7 District Electoral Areas (DEAs):

- Dungannon
- Carntogher
- Clogher Valley
- Cookstown
- Magherafelt
- Moyola
- Torrent





## At a glance

- We serve a population of 148,500.
- We cover an area of some 1714km.<sup>2</sup>
- By population, Mid Ulster is the 6th largest of the 11 councils.
- Mid Ulster's population grew by 9.7% between 2009 and 2019, making the district the 3rd fastest growing of the 11 councils.
- Around 70% of our people live in rural areas, with the remaining residents in urban settings.
- We have the highest proportion of children (0 – 15 years) at 23.3% of our population.
- Of all 11 councils areas, Mid Ulster has the lowest proportion of population aged 65+ at 14.5%.
- Our working age population (16 – 64) is 62.1%.
- We are the centre of manufacturing and engineering here.
- Manufacturing, construction, retail and agri-food are among our most significant economic sectors, accounting for 25% of our employment.
- Mid Ulster has the highest concentration of VAT-registered businesses outside of Belfast.

## Contact Us

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