

<b>Report on</b>	Sustainable NI Support
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	8 March 2022
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Mark McAdoo, Assistant Director, Environmental Services
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Mark McAdoo, Assistant Director, Environmental 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	To seek approval to provide continued financial support to Sustainable NI (SNI).
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	Sustainable NI (SNI) is a non-profit organisation which works with local authorities and others to advance sustainable development in Northern Ireland since 1998. To date, Sustainable NI has been financially supported by local authorities with additional funding from other government organisations such as the NI Housing Executive, NI Assembly and DAERA. MUDC have supported the work of Sustainable NI with an annual subscription fee of £5,000 for the last four years.
2.2	Sustainable NI has developed longstanding experience of the sustainable development agenda in Northern Ireland and has continuously worked over the years to provide professional advice on all aspects of sustainable development with expertise on a wide variety of issues including climate change/low carbon economy, green procurement, renewable energy/energy efficiency, waste minimisation/tackling plastics, sustainable transport and sustainable food projects.
2.3	SNI has published a range of associated support materials and tool kits for officers'/members' guidance and reference. In recent years Sustainable NI has been instrumental in providing expert advice to local authorities on the legislative requirements needed to comply with the NI Sustainable Development Duty and to keep abreast on new environmental/sustainability developments and policies within NI, UK/Ireland and the wider global contexts. Details of these activities are included within the SNI Annual Report for 2020/21 (copy included at appendix 1).
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	Correspondence has been received from Nichola Hughes, Executive Director of Sustainable NI requesting that Council continues supporting their work through a renewed subscription of £6,000 for the 2022/23 year (see appendix 2).

3.2	<p>The correspondence from SNI notes that their fees have remained at £5,000 per year since 2014 despite inflation and they are offering additional services next financial year to reflect the uplift in cost. In return for the subscription SNI will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist Council to comply with the Sustainable Development Statutory Duty (Section 25) through dissemination of ideas, advice, support, research, policy guidance and best practice</li> <li>• Promote greater understanding and awareness of sustainability and climate issues within Council through attendance at forums and meetings as and when required</li> <li>• Facilitate the Sustainable Development Forum which promotes and shares good practice among councils and public sector organisations in the region</li> <li>• Facilitate the All Party Group on Climate Action which helps develop a shared understanding of key climate issues across political parties to inform decision making</li> <li>• Help Council assess sustainability performance within your organisation through a sustainability audit <b>(new for 2022/23)</b></li> <li>• Provide one internal training session on 'Understanding Section 25 – The Statutory Duty on Sustainable Development' <b>(new for 2022/23)</b></li> </ul>
3.3	<p>In the draft NI Climate Change (No.2) Bill there is provision for the DAERA to impose specified climate change reporting duties on public bodies. This will require Council to prepare reports including a statement of the authority's proposals and policies for adapting to, or mitigating the effects of, climate change in the exercise of its functions and an assessment of the progress of the authority towards implementing these proposals and policies. In effect this will require Mid Ulster District Council to undertake a Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan and associated performance reporting framework. As the proposed services to be provided by SNI under the annual subscription fee do not extend to preparing such a Strategy further discussion will be held with the body to explore how they may be able to assist the Council in meetings this requirement.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: Annual contribution of £6,000 to Sustainable NI for 2022/23 which is available in the 2022/23 revenue budgets.
	Human: As the post of Sustainability Officer within the Council is currently vacant the advice/assistance of Sustainable NI on sustainability issues is vital at this time.
	Risk Management: Failure to participate could adversely affect the Councils ability to properly comply with the Sustainable Development Statutory Duty (Section 25).
<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	Members are asked to approve the annual subscription of £6,000 to Sustainable NI
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Appendix 1 - Sustainable NI Annual Report 2021/22
6.2	Appendix 2 - Correspondence from Sustainable NI