

Policy on Room Hire

Document Control			
Policy Owner	Head of Democratic Services		
Policy Author	Head of Democratic Services		
Version	Draft (revision)		
Consultation	Senior Management Team	Yes / No	
	Trade Unions	Yes / No	
Equality Screened by	Yes/ No	Date	
Equality Impact Assessment	N/A	Date	
Good Relations	N/A		
Approved By	Policy & Resources	Date	
Adopted By	Council	Date	
Review Date		By Whom	
Circulation	Councillors, Staff		
Document Linkages	Mid Ulster DC Scheme of Delegation		

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The provision of meeting and function rooms for hire permits Mid Ulster District Council to provide areas designated for a range of council service related meetings, activities and events.
- 1.2 The Council has agreed that arrangements be implemented to facilitate the provision of room hire within its buildings and facilities to organisations or individuals external to the Council and those requiring access to same for the delivery of Council services, as outlined in this policy.

2.0 POLICY AIM & OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 **Policy Aim:** To set out the permission, circumstances and criteria in which rooms may be hired for use.

- 2.2 **Policy Objectives:**

- To provide a mechanism that enables Council to designate facilities for hire and availability for meeting reservation;
- To outline the process on how to access the facilities available and the general conditions under which they are made available by Council;
- To set the criteria for room hire and availability of Council facilities for use by internal and external users;
- To support and facilitate meetings, activities or events through the provision of facilities for hire and use; and
- To manage financial resources in terms of the cost to hire council facilities within departmental budgets and the recoupment of income from the hire of facilities.

3.0 POLICY SCOPE

- 3.1 This policy relates specifically to room hire and availability of Council Civic buildings and facilities, as those outlined in Appendices A and B. Council Civic buildings extend to Council buildings at Burn Road, Cookstown; Circular Road, Dungannon; and Ballyronan Road, Magherafelt as detailed in Appendix A. Council facilities refers to all other buildings under the Council's management.

- 3.2 This policy does not deal with the specific terms and conditions of hire for rooms within Council Civic buildings and other buildings under the Council management. Terms and conditions will be subject to each venue and must be adhered to by internal and external users. A consistent approach will be developed around which civic buildings and facilities will be hired. The process will require a completed booking form being provided to the relevant member of staff within either of the Council's Civic Buildings for external hirers and Facilities for all hirers.

4.0 LINKAGE TO CORPORATE PLAN

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

5.0 PROCEDURE & IMPLEMENTATION

- 5.1 This section confirms the framework for considering requests received for room hire and subsequent reservation of council facilities with adherence to general principles and criteria, which must be met to be considered eligible.

5.2 Hire & Availability

- 5.2.1 In the application of this policy the Council will apply the following:

(i) Council Civic Buildings

	Internal (Council) Hirers	Elected Members	External Hirers
Eligibility to Hire	Yes	Yes ¹	No ²
Hire Charge Levied	No	No	Yes ³

¹ Elected members shall be permitted to book a room during normal opening hours for the purposes of council business and must be in attendance at those meetings

² Except where the organisation requesting the hire has a direct linkage with the delivery of council business or local government sector

³ No charge shall apply where the council has Elected Member representation from the council on the body hiring

(ii) Council Facilities

	Internal (Council) Hirers	Elected Members	External Hirers
Eligibility to Hire	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hire Charge Levied	Yes ⁴	Yes ⁵	Yes ⁶

(iii) Catering

Catering for meetings and events within either of the Council's Civic buildings and Facilities shall be provided by those organisations, as advised by the relevant facility and Civic Building. Those making bookings shall not be permitted to bring catering from providers other than those advised.

(iv) Booking Procedure and Requirements

Bookings must be in writing and observe the principles detailed in Appendix C.

5.3 Exclusions to Hire

5.3.1. Council facilities and Civic Buildings shall not be hired for the purposes of;

- Events and activities which could be viewed as promoting the profile and interests of political parties over other political parties. This refers to all political parties and independent representatives irrespective if they have representation on Mid Ulster Council or not. This does not extend to hiring rooms to undertake and progress business in the course of their representative role as a group of elected representatives of the Council.
- Activities deemed to be outside the ethos of the Council business

5.3.2. Decisions on the use of all premises, except for the 3 Council Civic buildings, shall be delegated to any Director of Council as referenced within Council's *Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officers*. The Chief Executive has ultimate responsibility for the 3 Council Civic buildings.

5.3.3 When it is felt that requests for the use of rooms within either of the Council's Civic Buildings or Facilities requires Council consideration, for events deemed

⁴ Council services shall be levied the relevant hire charge. Internal (council) hirers should give priority to booking council facilities before consideration is given to the hire of non-council facilities

⁵ Elected members will be levied the facility hire charge, except when a room in one of the Civic Buildings was sought but not available. This exception does not apply if the civic building is sought when it is closed/outside of normal office hours

⁶ Shall be levied the relevant hire charge except in instances where the council has Elected Member representation on the outside body hiring

as controversial these will be reported to Council. Where there is not sufficient time for Council to be consulted approval shall only be given following consultation with the Chair of the relevant Committee and Council.

5.4 Charging for Hire

- 5.4.1 Charges for the use of Council facilities and civic buildings, where applicable, shall be set and regularly reviewed by Council.
- 5.4.2 Charges, where set, for the use of Council facilities and civic buildings shall apply in all circumstances except when used for the provision of civic hospitality hosted by the Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson of Council. In such circumstances the hire charge will be capped at £100, or less where the charge levied is of a lesser amount.

6.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.1 **Chief Executive:** has authority with regard to the hire of facilities in line with the Council's Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officers on approving holding of non-controversial events, conferences or promotions and applying any necessary hire charges
- 6.2 **Departments:** are responsible for; day to day managerial accountability for hire within Council Civic Offices and facilities; adherence to this policy and the associated terms and conditions within facilities; and adequate provision of training for members of staff involved in the delivery and associated administration of room hire and reservations to provide a high quality service.
- 6.3 **Elected Members:** consider requests for room hire brought to Council, where it is deemed necessary that Council consider whether or not to permit hire on the basis that they are deemed as controversial events.

7.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

7.1 Equality Screening & Impact

- 7.1.1 This policy has been equality screened with no adverse impacts identified requiring mitigating action.

7.2 Staff & Financial Resources

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

8.0 SUPPORT AND ADVICE

- 8.1 Advice and guidance on the implementation of this should be sought from the Corporate Policy & Equality Officer, Democratic Services.

9.0 COMMUNICATION

- 9.1 This policy shall be communicated to all elected members and relevant staff.
- 9.2 All Elected Members and Directors shall be provided with a copy of this policy. This policy will be communicated internally using a range of appropriate internal communication methods.

10.0 MONITORING & REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

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

Appendix A

• Mid Ulster District Council Civic Offices

Location	Room	Indicative Seating Capacity
Council Offices, Dungannon	Glass Pod	10
	Committee Room	20 boardroom style
Council Offices, Cookstown	Committee Room	20
	Room 4	8
Council Offices, Magherafelt	Committee 1	10-12 boardroom style
	Committee 2	10-12 boardroom style
	Committee 3	24 Boardroom style

• Mid Ulster District Council Meeting Rooms & Facilities

Location	Room	Indicative Seating Capacity
Ranfurly House Arts and Visitor Centre, Dungannon	Tower Room	60
	Square Box	98
	Art Studio	40
	Gardner's Hall (book via Ranfurly)	Large Rm: 60 Small Rm: 30
	Ranfurly Events Space	Indoor: 200 Outdoor: 500
Leisure Centre, Dungannon	Meeting Room	40
	Minor Hall	100
Burnavon, Cookstown	Exhibition Area	60
	Studio	50
	Auditorium	350
Leisure Centre, Cookstown	Dance studio	60
	Committee Room	30
	Conference Room	50
Mid Ulster Sports Arena, Cookstown	Committee Room (changing Block)	15
	Mobile Unit	20
Bridewell, Magherafelt	Small meeting room	7
	Main Hall	150
Meadowbank Complex, Magherafelt	Meeting Room	30
	Pavilion	60
	Cafeteria Area	120
Recreation Centre, Maghera	Conference Room	70
Northland Row, Dungannon	Interview Room	8
Seamus Heaney HomePlace, Bellaghy	The Helicon	180

Appendix C

Booking Procedures & Requirements

The following principles shall form the basis for the booking process.

- Bookings must be made in writing on the prescribed form
- Receipt of a booking request does not constitute acceptance of the booking
- Confirmation must be received from the Council to constitute a booking
- The Council reserves the right to cancel or amend any room hire or hire of council facility provided that adequate notice has been given to the hirer
- Notice of cancellation by the hirer and any charges levied will be as agreed
- Booking periods must be stated on the application and must include any time needed to install or remove equipment
- Booking procedures will require prospective hirers to confirm the nature and reason of the event