

Report on	Rural Needs Annual Progress Return to DAERA (2023/24)
Date of Meeting	9 May 2024
Reporting Officer	Joe McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement
Contact Officer	Ann McAleer, Policy Engagement and Equality Officer

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The purpose of this report is to set out Mid Ulster District Council's Annual Progress Report to DAERA in relation to the Rural Needs Act NI (2016) for the period 2023-24.
2.0	Background
2.1	Mid Ulster District Council is bound by the Rural Needs Act NI (2016) to 'have due regard to rural needs when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and; • designing and delivering public services.
2.2	Section 3 of the Rural Needs Act NI requires DAERA to publish an annual monitoring report containing the information sent to it by public authorities on how they have paid due regard to rural needs and relevant information relating to the policies/strategies/plans. This exercise is required by DAERA under its functions under the Act.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The Annual Progress Report for the reporting period 2023-24 is required to be submitted to DAERA no later than 21 st June 2024.
3.2	Mid Ulster District Council's Annual Progress Report (2023-2024) sets out to what extent the Council has demonstrated regard to rural needs. It is included as Appendix A of this report and details that 18 Rural Needs Impact Assessments were completed for various policies/programmes/projects during this reporting period.
3.3	Feedback was sought and received from DEARA Rural Needs Unit in relation to this draft submission. All advice and guidance has been incorporated.

3.4	Two Rural Needs Act Information Sessions were scheduled for elected members on 29 April and 1 st May 2024. These sessions aimed to provide capacity building to elected members in relation to decision making role i.e. considering/approving council decisions that have an impact on rural needs.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: N/A
	Human: N/A
	Risk Management: N/A
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: Equality screening is not required for this progress report.
	Rural Needs Implications: As detailed
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	To note the Annual Progress Report (2023-24) on the implementation and activities surrounding its statutory Rural Needs Duties.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix A: Mid Ulster District Council Annual Rural Needs Progress Report (2023-24)