



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

02 August 2024

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee to be held in The Chamber, Cookstown at Mid Ulster District Council, Council Offices, Burn Road, COOKSTOWN, BT80 8DT on Wednesday, 10 July 2024 at 19:00 to transact the business noted below.

Yours faithfully

Adrian McCreesh
Chief Executive

AGENDA

OPEN BUSINESS

1. Notice of Recording
This meeting will be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast on the Council's You Tube site [Live Broadcast Link](#)
2. Apologies
3. 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.
4. Chair's Business

Matters for Decision

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| 5. | Annual Progress Return to the Equality Commission for 2023/2024 | 3 - 34 |
| 6. | Request to Illuminate Council Properties | 35 - 36 |
| 7. | Elected Member Development Working Group Report | 37 - 54 |
| 8. | Corporate Plan 2024-2028: Draft Corporate Plan Objectives and Measures | 55 - 90 |
| 9. | Member Services | |

Matters for Information

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| 10. | Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 6 June 2024 | 91 - 108 |
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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

11. Staffing Matters for Decision
12. Staff Updates – Organisational Restructure
13. Update in relation to Discussion System and associated works relating to Dungannon and Magherafelt Chamber Upgrades

Matters for Information

14. Confidential Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 6 June 2024
15. Treasury Management - Update
16. Contracts and DAC Registers - Update
17. Staff Matters for Information

Report on	Annual Progress Return to the Equality Commission for 2023/2024
Date of Meeting	10 July 2023
Reporting Officer	Joseph McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement
Contact Officer	Ann McAleer, Policy Engagement and Equality Officer

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To consider Mid Ulster District Council's Annual Progress Report for the period 2023-24 on meeting the statutory equality and good relations duties as detailed within Section 75(1) and 75(2) of the N Ireland Act 1998.
2.0	Background
2.1	Mid Ulster District Council is bound by Section 75 of the N Ireland Act 1998. Section 75(1) requires that the council gives due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between groupings/categories as detailed within the Act and Section 75(2) requires that regard be given to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.
2.2	The council's overarching document and framework around which it fulfils its statutory duties is its Equality Scheme. The Annual Progress Report (2023-2024) sets out to what extent the Council has demonstrated fulfilment of its statutory duties to promote equality and good relations through its Equality Scheme.
2.3	The Equality Commission has requested that a progress report be made available and published on Council's website.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The Annual Progress Report for the period 2023-24 is attached as Appendix A. It reports on aspects of the council's Equality Scheme and how it has been implemented over the period.
3.2	The Annual Progress Report for the reporting period 2023-24 is required to be submitted to the Equality Commission by the end of August.

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: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: An RNIA of this information would not be appropriate or proportional.
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	That Council approves the Annual Progress Report (2023-24) on the implementation and activity surrounding its Equality and Good Relations statutory duties.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix A: Mid Ulster District Council Annual Progress Report (2023-24)

Mid Ulster District Council



Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties

Annual Progress Report

Contact details:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme	Name: Ann McAleer Telephone: 03000 132 132 Email: ann.mcaleer@midulstercouncil.org
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan	As above <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Name: Telephone: Email: ann.mcaleer@midulstercouncil.org
Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:	https://www.midulstercouncil.org/your-council/equality/equality-scheme
Signature:	

This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission.

It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties, and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans.

This report reflects progress made between April 2023 and March 2024

PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme

Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice

- 1** In 2023-24, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.

Equality Scheme & Equality Action Plan:

- Council continues to implement its Equality Scheme which directly influences policies, practices, and service delivery. Details of Policy screening completed during the reporting period are available on www.midulstercouncil.org/equality
- During the reporting period the Organisational Development Department have continued to introduce new policies and review existing policies. This includes the review of the Council's Learning and Development Policy.
- A Good Relations Working Group Training session was held during this reporting period. An independent GR facilitator delivered the training with the aim of informing members elected in the 2021 Local Government elections of their Equality Scheme commitments.
- Mid Ulster Council was also represented at NILGA and the Local Government Local Government Diversity Ambassador Programme events that have been held during the reporting period. Via these events, the Council's Diversity Ambassadors are encouraged and equipped to actively promote the equality and diversity agenda across the local government attempts and to emulate best practice from across the sector and in order to integrate the priorities of the Equality and Diversity Group throughout the organisation.
- The Council is also represented on a NI Local Government Partnership on Travellers Issues Forum. This is a regional forum comprised members from every Council in Northern Ireland with support from relevant council officers. The group deals with specific issues affecting Local Government and informs strategy and practice of the work with Traveller Communities.

Policy & Service Delivery:

- The Council continues to encourage the use of JAM (Just A Minute) Cards at Council facilities.
- Council buildings were lit up on numerous occasions during 2023/24 to mark numerous events e.g. International Kawasaki Disease Awareness Day (Red), Holocaust Memorial Day (Purple), World Encephalitis (Inflammation of the Brain), British Porphyria Association: Rare Disease (Purple).
- The Council continues to deliver the Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP). It has been established as part of the Department for Communities' (DfC) Employability NI programme, which aims to design, procure and implement a fresh suite of employability initiatives to support people into meaningful employment. During this reporting period the LMP has reported the following achievements:
 - In 2022 the Mid Ulster employment rate for disabled people was 42.3%, which was a considerable improvement on the 2021 rate of 24%. This has meant that Mid Ulster has moved from having the largest disability employment rate gap in Northern Ireland of 54.9pps to one of the lowest in 2022 of 37.7pps
 - In 2022 Mid-Ulster had the largest employment rate gap for women in Northern Ireland. However, the female employment rate at 68.3% is now only just below the Northern Ireland average female employment rate of 69.2%.
- Mid Ulster District Council's Age Friendly Co-ordinator has continued the development of an Age Friendly Strategy for the District during this reporting period. Support was also provided via the following initiatives:
 - The development of Over 50's forum – first meeting held on 25th April 2023. Meetings continue on a quarterly basis to consult with over 50's in the district.
 - Chair of Mid Ulster District Council Councillor launched the Mid Ulster Age-friendly Strategy and Action Plan for the next three years at the Mid Ulster Loneliness Network first annual celebration ahead of Positive Ageing Month. The event was attended by a collaboration of over 120 key stakeholders from public, community, and voluntary sectors, the new strategy and three-year action plan will work to ensure all residents in the district can live in security, enjoy good health, continue to participate fully in society, and feel valued and respected – regardless of age. The Agewell Partnership ensured that the most vulnerable & isolated members living in rural areas were included at the event by working alongside Community Transport. Network members provided stands on the day with information on accessing services. This was the first social event that many of our guests had attended since before Covid and were so appreciative of it saying it has now given them the confidence to attend further activities.
 - The development of Mid Ulster Agewell Monday Clubs with Libraries NI. 2 clubs have been established in Dungannon, Magherafelt and Cookstown library every week with groups of older people who are meeting from 1-3pm to have a coffee

and chat. Guest speakers have also been organised to come along to the sessions.

- The Centre for Ageing Better carried out a research project around the current funding situation for Age-friendly Communities around the UK, to map how communities are currently funded and to identify opportunities for future funding. The aim with this work is to identify models of Age-friendly funding across different places to share, as well as helping direct how we might influence the funding landscape more widely. The Mid Ulster Age well model has been included within this report as a good practice case study example.
- Age friendly Co-ordinator secured funding through the Northern Healthy Lifestyle partnership and NHSCT to help implement Age friendly initiatives. The following sessions were delivered with urban and rural groups throughout the district:
 - Moneymore activity group- 4 weeks of boccia
 - Magherafelt parish centre- 3 weeks line dancing
 - Lissan Leisure club- 4 weeks Bowls
 - Loughshore community services- 4 weeks chair Yoga
 - Spring tea dance
- A performance management workshop was delivered to Age Friendly Alliance members on 14th June 2023.
- A successful Positive Ageing month took place in October where the Age friendly co-ordinator linked with stakeholders and all sectors to provide sessions for the programme of events.
- Centre for Ageing Better UK Conference London 2023. Eight representatives from N. Ireland including MUDC attended this great Age Friendly conference in London on 22nd and 23rd November with inspiring topics to ensure Northern Ireland is Making Later Lives better! A report was produced to highlight some of the key learning/shared practice from the conference.
- Presented to Northern Healthy Lifestyle partnership. Opportunity to present on the Choose to Live project to the members of the Northern Healthy Lifestyle partnership that the Age Friendly co-ordinator delivered on throughout the quarter.
- After the success and feedback from last years 1st Christmas tea dance and other events throughout positive ageing month the age friendly co-ordinator and the Chair of Mid Ulster District Council Councillor Dominic Molloy launched a Christmas tea dance event 4/12/23. The afternoon was a fun way to get people out and about, engage, connect and to keep active. There was an intergenerational element to the event, the kids from AuSome Kids came along and delivered Christmas cards that they had handmade for the older people. The event was attended by over 100 older people.

- Mid Ulster Loneliness network small grants & calendars. The steering group awarded 9 grants to members in December who delivered projects/activities throughout this quarter that aimed to prevent and address loneliness across the generations and reduce barriers to participation and to enable them to become more connected. Some of the projects included: Herbal Walks, History Of Upperlands Linen, Agewell Monday & Tuesday Group Get Active, Grow Together, Candle Making Workshop, Prepare For Spring, Winter Wellbeing Forever Young Project. The network have also worked together and involved members/service users in planning, developing and delivering the 2024 calendars. The calendar was used to promote member organisations/community groups services amongst the community.
- The Age Friendly Coordinator was invited to speak about Age Friendly at a Making Life Better (online) event, which took place on 21st February to showcase Age Friendly from a locality level perspective and what has been happening on the ground in the Mid Ulster Council area.
- A Crime Prevention Awareness & Information Event for Older People was held in The Valley Hotel, Main Street, Fivemiletown on Thursday 7th March 2024. The Programme of events included: Refreshments on arrival along with a range of Information Stands before the opening Address, Mid Ulster PCSP Scams and Crime Prevention Advice – PSNI Crime Prevention Officer, Mid Ulster Agewell Partnership- Information on Services including Good Morning Calls & Home Maintenance Update, some Chair-based and breath work activities, information on the councils Health & Wellbeing Programmes, Recycling Advice & Information and Trading Standards information services. There was also a Question & Answer Session opportunity for attendees as well as a hot lunch provided.
- To mark Age Without Limits Action Day, 20 March 2024, Mid Ulster District Council and Radius Housing delivered a ‘one stop shop’ event providing information on a range of organisations to help over 50’s get, and stay, connected within their community. The free drop-in event took place on Wednesday 20 March at the Burnavon, Cookstown from 10am-3pm. Tea/coffee and light refreshments will be provided throughout the day. Approximately 30 organisations took part in the event to help encourage older people to reach out and connect, reduce social isolation and loneliness, and to support them to live long healthy lives Some of the comments/outcomes included: Would like more events like this, I’ve learned a lot, All very informative in a relaxed environment-very well ran!, Blind/Deaf very informative, as they all were, Very good information, I really enjoyed the information- great morning meeting new people.
- Cost-of-living, benefit uptake and financial well-being workshops. Along with Step NI the first Workshop to support community and voluntary sector organisation to help older people with financial wellbeing was delivered on 14th

March. There are plans for further workshop with older people in the next quarter.

- The Age friendly co-ordinator works closely with a range of organisations and groups to meet the accessibility needs for older adults including Mid Ulster Disability Forum, Mid Ulster Loneliness network, Mid Ulster Seniors network, Council's Corporate Policy & Equality Officer, Shopmobility, Gobility, RNID, Deafblind NI, Dementia and Alzheimer's NI and STEP NI to influence and improve practice in delivering the age friendly agenda.
- The Age Friendly co-ordinator continues to work closely with other council departments including: Communication department to share Age Friendly information via a variety of communication channels including news articles and social media channels. A communication and information task group has been put in place to create an oversee the Age friendly work. Positive ageing month booklet and newsletter contains positive age friendly imagery. The Age friendly co-ordinator works alongside Equality officer and an Accessibility Guidance Principles document has been developed. Training has been provided internally to staff. Age friendly co-ordinator is planning sessions with Equality officer to link with service User on a Digital Accessibility Questionnaire. Age friendly co-ordinator is making services users aware of the Councils Corporate Improvement Objectives Consultation 2024 – 2025 and the public sessions that are taking place. Liasing with regeneration manager and senior networks to plan sessions to keep updated on the closure of the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) which may affect vulnerable with landline telecare alarms and any other issues.
- Council services provided information stalls at a 'Navigating Neurodiversity' event held in Magherafelt in November 2023. The aim of the event was to signpost neurodivergent individuals and their families to inclusive organisations and services that are available in the District. The Council used the opportunity to raise awareness of our facilities that have achieved the Autism Impact Award and inclusive practices within the Council's leisure services.
- In relation to Health and Wellbeing service delivery during this reporting period, the following programmes and activities were undertaken:
 - Summer schemes and camps were delivered to 9057 participants aged under 18years old
 - £1 summer activities were introduced for under 18s during the school summer holidays
 - Summer schemes designed to meet the needs of neurodivergent children were also delivered in Summer 2023. They were delivered in sites in Dungannon, Cookstown and Magherafelt and were attended by 60 children
 - 10 children with physical disabilities have accessed assisted swimming lessons
 - 10 individuals with learning disabilities engaged in the Fit4U programme

PART A

- 3209 individuals took part in the Active Lifestyle Programme which included activities such as:
 - Active Aging, Strength Balance, Active Aging, Autism Club, Beginners Yoga, Water Aerobics, Strength Balance, Post Natal Pilates, Mums & Tums, Ti Chi / Chi MI, Beginners Yoga, Postnatal Yoga, Autism Club, Water Aerobics, Tuesday Club and Fit 4 U
 - Swim
- Health and Wellbeing service delivery during this reporting period also included:
 - Home Accident Prevention-302 Home checks
 - Energy Efficiency- 1618 Household interactions
 - An Eat Well During Menopause Seminar was delivered
 - World Mental Health was highlighted on the Council Social Media accounts
 - A Positive Planning for Retirement session was held

- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2023-24 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Theme 1: Accessibility of Council Services, Facilities and Events

Action 1b: Increased accessibility at Council facilities for parents and carers

Accessible and user friendly spaces created for parents and carers within Council facilities

A 2023/24 Council Corporate Improvement Objective was to: 'Create Standardised Accessibility and Inclusivity guidance materials for Council's Capital Projects'. This project resulted in the development of: Mid Ulster District Council's Accessibility Principles Guidance: Making Accessible Practice, Common Practice. This guidance was developed in consultation with the Mid Ulster Disability Forum (MUDF). The guidance ensures measures that encourage the independence of people who require care but also ensure that accessibility is incorporated into capital builds and events planning so these services are also accessible to parents and carers.

Theme 1: Accessibility of Council Services, Facilities and Events

Action 1c: Staff Training

19 Members of staff attended a briefing session in relation to how to practically implement Mid Ulster District Council's Accessibility Principles Guidance: Making Accessible Practice, Common Practice guidance. This session was also attended by and contributed to by the Vice-Chair of MUDF. Evaluations for the session showed that staff found the practical guidance helpful for project and events. Staff attending from the following services: Building Control, Parks, Technical Services, Community Development and Health, Leisure and Wellbeing

Theme 2: Corporate Practices

Inclusive delivery of the Corporate Plan

Planning and internal consultation processes for the Council's new Corporate Plan for 2024-2028 took place during the 23/24 financial year. The internal consultation included consultation across the Council's functions to ensure that an inclusive plan with an adherence to the commitment to promote equality of opportunity and good relations was developed and approved.

Theme 4: Partnership Working

Explore partnership working opportunities that place a focus on Good Relations

Sperrinview School is a co-educational, inter-denominational school that caters for 145 pupils with severe learning difficulties, from 3 to 19 years. In 2023 the Council's Committee and Member Services Manager took part in a visit to the School and delivered presentation on; What Council does? Who Councillors are? The school Election. The Children running for School Election shared their manifesto statements. In order to facilitate their election, the school borrowed voting booth for the elections. The Council Chairperson and Dungannon DEA Councillors were invited to Sperrinview to announce the results of the elections. To follow up on their election, Sperrinview School pupils visited the Council Chamber and raised issues with Elected Members to raise at relevant committee meetings.

- 3** Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☒ Yes

☐ No (go to Q.4)

☐ Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

During this reporting period the Council's Chair used his term of office to engage with S75 groupings across the District via participation in the following events, initiatives and promotional activities:

- Attendance at Oakridge Social Education Centre to mark Learning Disability week Celebration Attendance at a reception for Integrated College Dungannon
- Celebration of Gold Early Years Centre Of Excellence
- Took part in a School uniform reuse scheme photocall to promote this opportunity to reuse schools uniforms
- Took part in Mid Ulster Pride Parade and provided a speech to mark the event
- Positive life meeting
- Photocall to promote and mark Good Relations week
- Attended an event to mark Chinese National Day
- Hosted a visit from the East Timorise Ambassador Visit to Dungannon
- Attended Sperrinview School Council Elections
- Provided a speech to mark Culture Day
- Attended Mid Ulster Loneliness Network celebration event and the launch of the 1st age friendly strategy
- Attended the Tourette's Support NI Conference 2023
- Attended the Disability Action Empower Roadshow Event
- Arthritis light up a Building – photocall
- Enterprise women's event 2023
- Attendance at First Steps Women's Centre - Human Library event for contribution to discussions with migrant people about their lives, cultures and traditions
- Photocall to promote Foster Caring
- Provided a speech at a Youth Resilience Celebration Event

- 3a** With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas, what **difference was made, or will be made, for individuals**, i.e. the impact on those according to Section 75 category?

Please provide any details and examples

The Council has been working towards the implementation of an Age Friendly Strategy. Part of the strategy development process involved engaging with residents over the age of 50 to find out how it feels to grow older in their communities and what their needs are for the future. The draft Strategic Plan went out for public consultation for 12 weeks (Thursday 16 February 2023- Friday 12 May 2023). The Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan outlines ways in which accessibility needs for older adults can be addressed. The plan looks at the need for more opportunities to support and promote active ageing, removing barriers to older people to ensure they are more respected, valued and included. The plan aims to increase involvement, respect and inclusion with older people feeling more valued. The plan also addresses ways in which to have an effective communication system that enhances well-being, so that as we age, we can continue to be informed and engage in our community with the confidence of support.

- 3b** What aspect of the Equality Scheme prompted or led to the change(s)? *(tick all that apply)*

☒ As a result of the organisation's screening of a policy *(please give details):*

During the reporting period, the Council adopted an Assets Management Strategy. The Strategy includes regard for current statutory and corporate priorities is a practical tool to assist Council:

- In making its investment decisions
- In maintaining and improving its assets
- In increasing the cost effectiveness and value of its portfolio
- In promoting transformation and development in asset management
- In listening and responding to customers and property users
- In promoting Environmental Sustainability in how we manage and use our assets.

Equality screening of the strategy ensured that the final adopted strategy features mechanisms for consultation with customers and property users and that accessibility or the lack of accessibility and equality of opportunity are both fully considered in relation to any assets disposal linked to the strategy.

☐ As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise
(*please give details*):

Click or tap here to enter text.

☐ As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact (*please give details*):

Click or tap here to enter text.

☐ As a result of changes to access to information and services (*please specify and give details*):

Click or tap here to enter text.

☐ Other (*please specify and give details*):

Click or tap here to enter text.

Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme commitments and action plans/measures

Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

4 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2023-24 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

☒ Yes, organisation wide

☐ Yes, some departments/jobs

☐ No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment

☐ No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- ☒ Yes, organisation wide
- ☐ Yes, some departments/jobs
- ☐ No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- ☐ No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 6 In the 2023-24 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

- ☒ Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- ☐ Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- ☐ Yes, in some departments/jobs
- ☐ No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's corporate plan
- ☐ No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2023-24 report
- ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Equality action plans/measures

- 7** Within the 2023-24 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:

4

Actions ongoing:

10

Actions to commence:

0

Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*):

Action 4a: Explore partnership working opportunities that place a focus on Health and Wellbeing of S75 groups

To celebrate International Women's Day in March 2024, the Council hosted two events to incorporating the theme of 'Inspire Inclusion'. The events took place on 6th March in Cookstown and 3rd March in Moy. Money raised from the events went to Women's Aid. The events addressed various topics including empowerment through inclusion, mindset and personal development, as well as lifestyle, fitness and nutrition.

- 8** Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2023-24 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

No amendments were made to the equality action plan/measures during this reporting period.

- 9** In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2023-24 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)

☒ Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality

☐ Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way

☐ Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities

☐ Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

- 10** Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance: *(tick one box only)*

☒ All the time

☐ Sometimes

☐ Never

- 11** Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2023-24 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

The proposed rationalisation of waste and recycling services was documented in the rates estimates for 23/24. The outcome of the screening for the rationalisation identified minor negatives. Therefore, the initial rationalisation was amended partially as a result of the equality screening documentation which documented the needs of older people, larger families and people with disabilities and caring responsibilities. A consultation for the 'Proposed Changes to Household Waste Recycling Centres' is scheduled for the 24/25 financial year.

- 12** In the 2023-24 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: *(tick all that apply)*

☒ Face to face meetings

☒ Focus groups

☒ Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing

☒ Questionnaires

PART A

- ☐ Information by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- ☐ Internet discussions
- ☐ Telephone consultations
- ☐ Other (*please specify*): Click or tap here to enter text.

Please provide any details or examples of the uptake of these methods of consultation in relation to the consultees' membership of particular Section 75 categories:

Mid Ulster District Council continues to liaise with Mid Ulster Disability Forum in relation to access and inclusion practices, particularly new capital build projects. One example of this was in January 2023 when the Design Team contracted by the Council to deliver a new pitch at Mid Ulster Sports Arena were invited to a Council facilitated Focus Group session with members of the Forum. The outcome of the meeting was that the designs were amended to increased inclusion at all stand levels, gradients were re-examined and additional seating, rest areas etc were included in the amended plans as a result of the information received at the focus group session.

- 13** Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2023-24 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No
- ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 14** Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2023-24 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

- ☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not applicable – no commitment to review

Arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

<https://www.midulstercouncil.org/your-council/equality>

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 15** Please provide the **number** of policies screened during the year (*as recorded in screening reports*):

24

- 16** Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2023-24:

Click or tap here to enter text. Policy consultations conducted with **screening** assessment presented.

0 Policy consultations conducted **with an equality impact assessment** (EQIA) presented.

0 Consultations for an **EQIA** alone.

- 17** Please provide details of the **main consultations** conducted on an assessment (as described above) or other matters relevant to the Section 75 duties:

The main consultations carried out during this period was the Coalisland Canal Improvement and Active Travel carried out in March 2024. While this consultation was not linked directly to screening assessments, focused consultation was carried out with Mid Ulster Disability Forum to ensure due regard was paid to accessibility of the plans.

- 18** Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed following concerns raised by consultees? (*tick one box only*)

☐ Yes

PART A

☐ No concerns were raised

☒ No

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

N/A

Arrangements for publishing the results of assessments (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

19 Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Arrangements for monitoring and publishing the results of monitoring (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

20 From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes

☐ No, already taken place

☒ No, scheduled to take place at a later date

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details:

Mid Ulster DC continues to implement a new Digital Transformation Strategy, the implementation of this strategy continues to explore new monitoring techniques to be implemented over the course of the delivery of the strategy.

- 21** In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Information on policies are gathered during the life-cycle of a policy. This information is used to identify amendments required during the policy review process.

- 22** Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2023-24 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

No differential/adverse impacts have been identified via monitoring arrangements in 22/23.

- 23** Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery planning or policy development:

None of the policies screened during this period identified the requirement of extensive monitoring. Service planning does take account of information gathered for policy development and reviews and service planning team meetings.

Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)

- 24** Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2023-24, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

During this period the Council online training module 'Level 1 Equality and Diversity Awareness' training was available to all staff. To date 26% of staff members have completed the learning module, this is since it's introduction in 22/23. 45 members of staff received Level 2 Equality and Diversity Awareness' training. While 11 Senior Officers were trained in Equality and Diversity Level 3 by John Kremer.

During this period 10 managers and 16 officers attended Dignity at Work Training.

The Council also hosted the Autism Bus at Cookstown Leisure Centre in April 2023. This experience provided 7 members of staff and 1 elected member with the opportunity to experience the sensory challenges experienced by some autistic individuals.

Training evaluations received from the participants after the training sessions evidenced how beneficial and practically helpful that they found the sessions to be. The majority of staff indicated that the training had provided practical and useful information.

- 25** Please provide **any examples** of relevant training shown to have worked well, in that participants have achieved the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the stated objectives:

New capital project accessibility guidance was developed during this period, it was supported by an Officer training session. The session provided 19 relevant members of staff with the skills and knowledge to ensure that projects commissioned or designed by the Council are compliant with best practice in relation to physical and general accessibility principles.

Public Access to Information and Services (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 6)

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2023-24, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

The Council monitors the use of the online language translations provision on the Council's website. In order to increase these usage figures, an additional page has been

added to the website. The aim was to create additional awareness that the services are available and to ensure that the public are given direction to access online translation.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

- 27** How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2023-24?

Insert number here: 0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

N/A

Section 3: Looking Forward

- 28** Please indicate when the Equality Scheme is due for review:

2026

- 29** Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangements (screening/consultation/training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period? *(please provide details)*

The Council is currently developing accessible guidance for communications practices, with the aim of ensuring inclusivity in relation to new and existing digital platforms. This guidance is an addition to the guidance required by the EAP in relation to translation & interpretive requirements.

- 30** In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

☒ Employment

☒ Goods, facilities and services

☒ Legislative changes

PART A

☐ Organisational changes/ new functions

☐ Nothing specific, more of the same

☐ Other (please state):

Click or tap here to enter text.

PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans

1. Number of action measures for this reporting period that have been:

8	3	0
Fully achieved	Partially achieved	Not achieved

2. Please outline below details on all actions that have been fully achieved in the reporting period.

2 (a) Please highlight what **public life measures** have been achieved to encourage disabled people to participate in public life at National, Regional and Local levels:

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs ⁱ	Outcomes / Impact ⁱⁱ
National ⁱⁱⁱ	Council responses to public consultations	The Council has responded to numerous public consultations on issues that will impact upon people with disabilities. During this reporting period, numerous consultations were held by central government in relation to budget cutting and rationalisation of services.	Lobbying for better provision of service of S75 groups including people with disabilities.
Regional ^{iv}	Navigating Neurodiversity Event	In November 2023 the Council's Arts and Leisure services were represented at a	The aim of attending the event was to make parents and carers from across Northern Ireland and autistic

PART B

		Navigating Neurodiversity Event held in the District	individuals themselves aware of the Council's services that have been adjusted in order to ensure ease of accessibility for autistic individuals
Local ^v	Neurodivergent Clubs	Neurodivergent Clubs were offered across the District to ensure Neurodivergent children and young people are encouraged to attend Council based facilities and activities.	The Clubs are multi-activity and focus on facilitating children and young people with Neurodivergent needs to do things at their own pace, and to enjoy movement and fun games.

2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Develop, deliver and implement a programme of awareness training for Council Officers	<p>The following training/awareness raising sessions we delivered for staff during 2023/24:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Equality and Diversity Level 2 sessions were delivered, training 45 members of staff • 11 Senior Officers were trained in Equality and Diversity Level 3 by John Kremer • 21 members of staff received Autism Awareness Training • 9 members of staff received Sight Loss Awareness Training 	These sessions covered various topics/types and aspects relating to disability. The overall impact from the sessions was to increase awareness of disability and the associated reasonable adjustments. Evaluations received following these sessions were extremely positive and indicated that the majority of attendees would immediately be able to apply the skills and knowledge acquired during the sessions.

PART B

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 members of staff received Deafblind Awareness Training • 22 members of staff received Equality Screening Training • 6 members of staff and 1 elected member were trained via the Autism bus 	
2	Develop, deliver and implement a programme of awareness training for Elected Members	Members attended an Equality and Good Relations training session and an Tourette's Awareness Session delivered by Tourette's Support NI.	Increased awareness of the Council's statutory Equality and GR duties as well as additional information on specific conditions.

NB- Action Measure 8- Accessibility Audit Training was fully delivered during the 2021/22 reporting period.

2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Integrate our Disability duties into policies, programmes, plans and strategies	Improved accessibility of Council's website. The Council's website continues to adhere to the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.	A number of inaccessible documents have been replaced/removed from Council's website and replaced with accessible formatting. The website also continues to provide accessibility functions e.g. via the provision of audio format, larger font, accessible colour contrasting.
2	Develop and implement effective means of	The Council continues to work towards being awarded DeafBlind UK Friendly status.	The Council has undertaken a self assessment of the civic reception space in order to address any elements of inaccessibility for people who are

PART B

	communication for people who have hearing loss		deafblind. This has resulted in practical feedback from DeafBlind UK that has allowed the Council to make this public space more accessible.
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2 (d) What action measures were achieved to ‘**encourage others**’ to promote the two duties:

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Illumination of Council buildings	Council buildings were illuminated numerous times throughout the year in order to raise awareness of various types of disabilities and the organisations who support them.	Illuminating Council facilities raises awareness in relation to various types of disabilities and encourages others to do likewise. It also recognises the impact particular disabilities have on residents of the District.
2	‘Changing Places’ facilities included in capital build projects (where a need is established).	Increased accessibility at Council facilities.	6 Changing Places to be registered by Mid Ulster District Council ahead of the 2026 deadline. This achievement has made a mix of rural and urban more accessible to visitors who require the enhancements included changing places facilities.
3	Appoint a Disability Champion at officer and elected member level to progress the disability duties	Both Officer and Elected Member roles have been filled.	The Council is working with LGSC to promote diversity in inclusion in relation to both internal and external Council matters.

PART B

2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1	Equality Proof our Community Plan	The Council's Community Plan has been equality screened again during this reporting period.	Intermittent screening of the Community Plan ensures that there is continued promotion of equality of opportunity.
2	Maintain Council's Partnership working with MUDF and with other Disability Support Services/Groups	During the period enhance the direct consultation information provided to the Council.	Focussed consultation has been achieved with MUDF amongst other organisations.
3	Provide flexible work placements/taster placements for individuals with disabilities with a view to preparing them for paid employment	The Council has provided 5 flexible work placements/taster placements for individuals with disabilities during this period.	Services including Leisure, ICT and Finance have facilitated work placements/taster placements for individuals with disabilities, thus benefitting these services and the individuals who have participated.

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3. Please outline what action measures have been **partly achieved** as follows:

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	Any new/substantially renovated play areas meet the highest possible standards of accessibility.	Improved accessible play facilities.	Improved services for children and young people who have a disability and their siblings/friends. 34% of the Council's park equipment is now accessible. This represents a 10% increase from 22/23.	This is an ongoing activity that will be delivered as part of the Public Parks and Play Five Year Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025.
2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

4. Please outline what action measures **have not been achieved** and the reasons why. N/A

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

5. What **monitoring tools** have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

(a) Qualitative

Elected members are informed annually of the progress made in relation to the implementation of the Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan. Mid Ulster Disability Forum are updated regularly on specific actions being undertaken to meet DAP commitments.

(b) Quantitative

The details of the equality screenings outcomes are recorded and are circulated three times per year (as per Equality Scheme commitments).

6. As a result of monitoring progress against actions has your organisation either:

- made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or
- taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes?

No changes have been made.

If yes please outline below: N/A

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
3	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

PART B

4	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
5	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

7. Do you intend to make any further **revisions to your plan** in light of your organisation's annual review of the plan? If so, please outline proposed changes? No

Click or tap here to enter text.

ⁱ **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.

ⁱⁱ **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.

ⁱⁱⁱ **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments

^{iv} **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

^v **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.

Report on	Request(s) to Illuminate Council Property
Date of Meeting	10 July 2024
Reporting Officer	Joseph McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement
Contact Officer	Eileen Forde, Member Support Officer

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	<p>To consider requests received to illuminate and light up the Council's three designated properties to raise awareness for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air Ambulance NI: Air Ambulance Week 9th September 2024 – Colour: Red • Versus Arthritis - Arthritis World Awareness Day - 12 October – Colour: Blue • Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS) Awareness Day 25 October 2023 – Colour: Purple
2.0	Background
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 Burnavon, Bridewell and Ranfurly House.
2.2	The policy confirms that requests are considered by the Council's Policy and Resources Committee. Should the scheduling of the committee not permit requests being considered within the timeframes for determination, they can be presented to monthly Council.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>The Council has received correspondence from organisations requesting that consideration be given to lighting up our three designated council properties.</p> <p>Requests for consideration and recommendation by Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air Ambulance NI: Air Ambulance Week 9th September 2024 – Colour: Red • Versus Arthritis - Arthritis World Awareness Day - 12 October – Colour: Blue

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS) Awareness Day 25 October 2023 – Colour: Purple
3.2	<p>Scope of the Council Arrangements</p> <p>The policy scope extends to requests made by charitable organisations for the promotion of its charitable cause on a given date or set of dates.</p>
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: Not applicable
	Human: Not applicable
	Risk Management: Not applicable
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	<p>Equality & Good Relations Implications:</p> <p>Council policy and procedural arrangements have been referred to.</p>
	<p>Rural Needs Implications:</p> <p>Not applicable</p>
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	<p>That the Committee considers making recommendation to light up the designated properties on the dates specified to mark:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Air Ambulance NI: Air Ambulance Week 9th September 2024 – Colour: Red Versus Arthritis - Arthritis World Awareness Day - 12 October – Colour: Blue Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS) Awareness Day 25 October 2023 – Colour: Purple
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	None

Report on	Elected Member Development Working Group
Date of Meeting	10 July 2024
Reporting Officer	Joseph McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services & Engagement
Contact Officer	Eileen Forde, Committee & Member Services Manager

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To receive and consider the report of a meeting of the Elected Member Development Working Group held on 30 May 2024
2.0	Background
2.1	The Council through the Elected Member Development Steering Group has Level 1 Charter Status for Elected Member Development and is working towards a review together with progressing to Charter Plus.
2.2	The steering group Terms of Reference confirms that the business of the Working Group be reported through Policy & Resources Committee.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>The Report of the most recent meeting of the Elected Member Development Steering Group is attached, as Appendix A to this report for consideration and approval. The following issues have resulted from discussion at the 30 May working group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) That events be planned to promote Local Democracy particularly throughout Local Democracy Week in the Autumn. Events suggested for inclusion contact with primary schools, secondary schools, youth voice, people with disabilities and those without, senior citizens, ethnic backgrounds and harder to reach communities. Meetings such as Council and committees be promoted on social media platforms. (ii) Personal Development Plans with recommendations for Members be progressed; (iii) Training required be programmed (within budget) throughout the term of the Council 2023-2027.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications

	Financial: not applicable at this point
	Human: Not applicable
	Risk Management: Not applicable
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: Not applicable
	Rural Needs Implications: Not applicable
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	<p>The committee consider and approves the report and recommendations of the Elected Member Development Steering Group meeting, and actions contained, held on 30 May 2024 to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Democracy Events; • Issue of Personal Development Plans to Members; • Training required be programmed within budget throughout the term of the Council 2023-2027.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix A: Report of Elected Member Development Steering Group

Report of Elected Member Development Steering Group of Mid Ulster District Council held on 30 May 2024 at 5.30pm

Attendees **Members:** Councillors Corry*(Chair), Groogan*, Johnston*, McLernon
Officers: J McGuckin, HoSSE E Forde, Committee & Member Services Manager, S McAleer Corporate L&D Manager
In Attendance: ICT Nicky Doris

AGENDA	MATTERS AGREED	ACTIONS & RESPONSIBILITY
1.0	Apologies	
	None	
2.0	Personal Development Plan Analysis	
	<p>NOTED: That</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75% participated in completing PDP framework Participation by Party SF: 16 IND: 0 SDLP: 2 DUP: 10 UUP: 2 EMDWG 100% participation <p>AGREED: That</p> <p>(i) training as recommended in the analysis (appendix 1) be programmed into an agile timetable across council term including additional suggestions from Members to include:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective questioning • Dealing with Harassment & Bullying; • Dealing with Mental Health issues <p>(ii) That Personal Development Plans be programmed to recommend training to members.</p>	
3.0	Training Update	
	<p>NOTED: That</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agile Training schedule 2023-2027; • training uptake to date in that the majority of Members had undertaken at least one training course. • EMDWG Members supported by Party Leads encourage party colleagues to both participate and share learning. 	
4.0	Local Democracy	
	<p>AGREED: That events be planned to promote Local Democracy particularly throughout Local Democracy Week in the Autumn. Events suggested for inclusion contact with primary schools, secondary schools, youth voice, people with disabilities and those without, senior citizens, ethnic backgrounds and harder to reach communities. Meetings such as Council and committees be promoted on social media platforms.</p>	HoSSE & CMSM in conjunction with Communities & Place
5.0	E Learning	

	<p>NOTED: Demonstration on new E Learning Platform Skill Gate One Member to Date had completed a course.</p> <p>AGREED: Members be encouraged to complete available E Learning courses targeting in particular the 21 Members who selected E learning as preferred method.</p>	CMSM CLDM
6.0	Report of Elected Member Development Working Group 7 December 2023	
	NOTED: Members noted the Report of Elected Member Development Working Group	
7.0	Training Needs Analysis	
8.0		
<i>Meeting concluded at 18.15 pm</i>		

Summary of Member Personal Development Plans submitted May 2024

Participation

EMDWG: 100% SF: 16 IND: 0 SDLP: 2 DUP: 10 UUP: 2 Total Participation: 75%

Training Completed - Review Training Completed to Date	v

Preferred Learning Style	I prefer	I do not prefer
Group facilitated training. Information provided by a trainer/facilitator via verbal information/hand-outs/slides	18	3
E Learning – On line Training	21	8
Mentoring by another Councillor	8	8
One to one training	12	7
Practical training. Learning by doing. Site visits and Demonstrations	21	2
External Seminars and Conferences	8	7
Training provided by In House Officers	23	2



When do you prefer development activities to be scheduled?

Training delivery	In person	9	Virtual	8	Hybrid	8
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Monday morning <input type="checkbox"/> 6	Monday afternoon <input type="checkbox"/> 5	Monday evening <input type="checkbox"/> 13
Ideal Times:	Ideal Times:	Ideal Times:
Tuesday morning <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Tuesday afternoon <input type="checkbox"/> 5	Tuesday evening <input type="checkbox"/> 12
Ideal Times:	Ideal Times:	Ideal Times:
Wednesday morning <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Wednesday afternoon <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Wednesday evening <input type="checkbox"/> 14
Ideal Times:	Ideal Times:	Ideal Times:
Thursday morning <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Thursday afternoon <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Thursday evening <input type="checkbox"/> 10
Ideal Times:	Ideal Times:	Ideal Times:
Friday morning <input type="checkbox"/> 6	Friday afternoon <input type="checkbox"/> 6	Friday evening <input type="checkbox"/> 8
Ideal Times:	Ideal Times:	Ideal Times:



Local Leadership: *The need for Councillors to engage with the members of the community to learn about issues of local concern and help to facilitate a vision for the locality. It involves encouraging trust and respect between individuals and groups by mediating fairly and constructively between different organisations and sections of the community.*

	Training Requirements		
	It is a priority that I undertake training to assist me in my role	I would like to undertake training to further enhance my skills	I am competent
I engage with the local community; I seek their views and look for ways to represent them effectively.		8	21
I keep up to date with local concerns by talking to different groups of people, including 'hard to reach' groups.		8	21
I encourage trust and respect by being approachable, empathising and finding new ways to engage with others.	1	5	23
I establish good working relationships and partnerships with different groups and people and ensure their involvement in decision making .		7	22
I mediate fairly and constructively between people and groups with conflicting needs.		9	20
I work with others to develop and champion a shared local vision .	1	6	22

Training Suggestions	
Influencing and Negotiating Skills	Deputations to Council
Developing Professional Relationships	
Dealing with Difficult Conversations	
Local Democracy Events	





Partnership Working: *The need to build on good relationships with others (i.e. colleagues, officers, community groups and other organisations) by identifying and working collaboratively to achieve shared goals. The need to recognise and value different contributions, delegate or provide support as required and to take a long term view in developing partnerships.*

	Level of Skills and Knowledge		
	It is a priority that I undertake training to assist me in my role	I would like to undertake training to further enhance my skills	I am competent
I work proactively to build good relationships with colleagues, officers, community groups and other organisations.		11	20
I focus on achieving shared goals by maintaining focus and mobilising others.		10	19
I know when to delegate, provide support or empower others to take responsibility.		12	19
I can make people from all backgrounds feel valued, trusted and included .		8	21
I understand and play a role in building and shaping key partnerships at local, regional and national Levels.		14	15
I understand how and when to assert authority to resolve conflict or stalemate effectively.		15	14

Training Suggestions	
Developing Professional Relations	Overview of Grants Procedure
Personal Effectiveness	Meeting/Engaging with Statutory Agencies
Onboard Training	



Effective Communication for Influence: *This skill recognises the need for Councillors to demonstrate excellent communication skills across many different settings, including the ability to listen sensitively and use appropriate language with different groups. Councillors must also communicate regularly and effectively with all parts of their community using different forms of media.*

	Level of Skills and Knowledge		
	It is a priority that I undertake training to assist me in my role	I would like to undertake training to further enhance my skills	I am competent
I provide regular feedback to people, making sure they are kept informed and ensuring that expectations are realistic.		6	21
I regularly inform and communicate with the community using all available media , such as internet, email, newsletters and social media.	1	13	14
I listen to others, check for understanding and adapt my own communication style if required.	1	7	20
I create opportunities to communicate with different sectors, including vulnerable and hard to reach groups.	1	14	12
I speak confidently in public settings such as in Council meetings, community meetings and the press.	5	11	11
I communicate clearly in spoken and written forms , using appropriate language and avoiding jargon.	2	10	16

Training Suggestions	
Influencing & Negotiating Skills	Transformation Familiarisation
Social Media & Code of Conduct	
Emotional Intelligence/Self Awareness	
In House Media Training	



Political Understanding: *This skill recognises the need for Councillors to develop a range of political skills in order to communicate their values, promote a political vision and encourage democratic process and public engagement. It recognises that Councillors need to work across group boundaries at times, yet still be able to maintain their own political integrity.*

	Level of Skills and Knowledge		
	It is a priority that I undertake training to assist me in my role	I would like to undertake training to further enhance my skills	I am competent
I demonstrate consistency in my views and values through my decisions and actions.		8	20
I help to develop cohesion within and between different groups and between different groups and the Council.		12	17
I clearly communicate political values through canvassing and campaigning.		5	23
I actively develop my own political intelligence through an understanding of the local and national political landscape.		9	19
I look for ways to promote democracy and increase public engagement	1	10	19
I am able to put aside party politics and work across political boundaries when required, without compromising my political values.		5	24

Training Suggestions	
Good Relations Brief	Participation in groups such as Growth Deal
Local Democracy Events	
NILGA	
Engagement eg Somme Trip or Language Events	



Scrutiny and Challenge: *Scrutiny and challenge is an important day to day aspect of the Councillor role. Councillors need to act as a critical friend by identifying opportunities for scrutiny inside and outside of the Council and by providing constructive challenge and feedback to others. To be effective in this role, Councillors need to analyse information quickly and present arguments that are concise, meaningful and easily understood.*

	Level of Skills and Knowledge		
	It is a priority that I undertake training to assist me in my role	I would like to undertake training to further enhance my skills	I am competent
I identify areas which are suitable for scrutiny and ensure that residents are involved in the process.	3	10	13
I am able to understand and analyse complex information .	1	11	15
I can speed read through large volumes of information.	1	18	8
I can present concise arguments that are meaningful and easily understood.		14	12
I understand the scrutiny process , ask for explanations and check that recommendations have been implemented.	1	10	15
I am objective and thorough when challenging processes, decisions and people.	1	13	12
I ask challenging but constructive questions .		15	11
I am knowledgeable on all the key functions, commitments, policies and responsibilities of Council.	1	16	10

Training Suggestions	
Audit Training – Fraud & Risk Governance	Speed Reading
Audit Training – Annual Accounts	
NILGA Events	
Onboard Training	



Regulating and Monitoring: *This skill relates to the more judicial aspects of the role that require Councillors to understand their legal responsibilities and follow protocol when evaluating arguments and making decisions. Not only do Councillors need to balance public needs and local policy, they must also monitor progress and seek feedback on their own learning needs.*

	Level of Skills and Knowledge		
	It is a priority that I undertake training to assist me in my role	I would like to undertake training to further enhance my skills	I am competent
I understand all the statutory requirements associated with the functions of Council.	1	19	9
I act on my judicial role in meeting legal responsibilities.	2	16	9
I use evidence to evaluate arguments and make independent, impartial judgements.	1	16	15
I chair meetings effectively , follow protocol to make sure all views are explored and keep process on track.	2	14	13
I follow legal process , balancing public needs and local policy.	2	16	12
I monitor others' performance and intervene when necessary to ensure progress.	1	12	14
I am committed to self-development , seek feedback and look for opportunities to learn.	1	15	13

Training Suggestions	
Audit Training – Fraud & Risk Governance	E Learning Modules eg GDPR
Audit Training – Annual Accounts	Standing Order Training
Rural Needs Act/Good Relations/Equality Briefing	
Conflict of Interest	



Effective use of Digital Technologies and Social Media: <i>This skill area places digital at the heart of what a councillor can do to increase the efficiency of public service delivery, making resources go further and meeting the key challenges facing your local area.</i>			
	Level of Skills and Knowledge		
	It is a priority that I undertake training to assist me in my role	I would like to undertake training to further enhance my skills	I am competent
I understand the role of digital technology in improving my local area.	1	13	13
I identify how digital technologies can bring about new sources of revenue for my area.	1	19	8
I work in partnership with the private sector to consider investment opportunities	2	19	5
I am able to use digital technologies to enhance engagement levels via multiple digital channels.	1	14	11
I effectively use social media as a tool to engage with my electorate alongside traditional ways of working.	2	11	15

Training Suggestions	
Transformation training	
NILGA	
Social Media Training	
In House Focus Session Economic Development Team	



Resilience and Wellbeing: <i>This skill relates to an individual's ability to effectively deal with the challenges, problems, pressures and set-backs.</i>			
	Level of Skills and Knowledge		
	It is a priority that I undertake training to assist me in my role	I would like to undertake training to further enhance my skills	I am competent
I am able to deal with challenges and pressures and can manage stress effectively.	1	11	16
I evaluate and learn from challenging incidents.		8	20
I am willing to seek support to build personal resilience	1	11	17
I effectively manage the volume and quantity of my constituent casework .	1	10	18

Training Suggestions	
Resilience Building	
E Learning Modules Health & Well Being	
Time Management	
Cognitive Behaviour Therapy	



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ACTION PLAN		
Learning and Development Need	Means of Delivery	Deadline To be completed throughout Council term 2023 - 2027 Learning and Development Programme. If priority please specify.

Signed: _____

(Elected Member)

Signed: _____

(Officer – If Applicable)

Date: _____

Report on	Corporate Plan 2024-2028: Draft Corporate Plan Objectives and Measures
Date of Meeting	Wednesday, 10 July 2024
Reporting Officer	P Moffett, Assistant Director: Org Development, Strategy & Performance
Contact Officer	Celene O'Neill, Community and Strategic Planning Officer

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To consider and agree the 2024-2028 draft corporate objectives and associated measures for inclusion within the Council's Corporate Plan to assist and inform the final development of the 2024-2028 plan within its new format.
2.0	Background
2.1	The Council's second Corporate Plan (2020-2024) has come to the end of its natural lifespan and work has been ongoing to prepare a new Plan for the period 2024 - 2028.
2.2	Our Corporate Plan sets the overall strategic roadmap for the council's activity and work over the next four years. It sits in context with the other broader plans and strategies for the district extending to the Community Plan, local development plan and Mid-South-West Regional Economic Strategy providing the basis for our service delivery, and mechanism for monitoring progress. The plan also sits as our core strategic source around which our operational directorate level service plans, strategies and action plans are built.
2.3	In line with our brief, we have developed a concise, yet comprehensive, set of draft Objectives with measurable targets that are challenging but achievable (Appendix 1). These do not reflect everything Council does but rather set out our strategic focus and commitment to the district over the next four years. We have developed the draft Objectives with a focus on delivering the services that our citizens need and want. While our draft Objectives are set within the context of ongoing financial and resource constraints, we remain a forward looking Council which intends to progress with positivity, continually seeking out and embracing new and innovative practices, technologies and ways of thinking.
2.4	Our Plan provides a basis for us to regularly check progress and if necessary, adjust the direction of our more detailed Directorate service plans.

3.0	Main Report
	<p><u>Development of the Plan</u></p> <p>3.1 Our Vision Council's Vision remains the same – to be '<i>at the heart of the community</i>'.</p> <p>3.2 Our Values</p> <p>While Our Values have been slightly refined, the sentiments remain largely unchanged from our last Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer first <i>we will engage and listen to our customers to better understand what they want and need and offer excellent access to good quality services</i> • Respect <i>we will celebrate diversity and treat everyone equitably and with respect</i> • Excellence <i>we will continuously improve our services and work towards the best Mid Ulster there can be</i> • Honest and Trustworthy: <i>we will be open and accountable in developing our plans and delivering services</i> • Innovative: <i>we will seek to make maximum use of technology and other opportunities to improve services in our district.</i> <p><u>Internal and External Engagement</u></p> <p>3.3 Internally, considerable engagement has been undertaken within Directorates and Members to ensure that our draft Objectives are reflective of our service and district needs.</p> <p>3.4 We commenced with a look back on our progress in delivering the priorities contained in the Corporate Plan 2020-2024. The results of this review helped shape a series of Directorate level workshops facilitated by Williamson Consulting with support from Organisational Development. Williamson Consulting developed and presented draft Objectives, which were subsequently refined by the Directorate Management Teams and agreed with SMT. There are 21 draft Objectives under three themes – Theme 1. Our Service Delivery; Theme 2. Leadership and Partnership for Growth; and Theme 3. Being the Best Council Possible.</p> <p>3.5 A series of draft measures have been developed for each objective. These are flexible and can be developed further as work progresses. The measures help us determine and quantify our success in delivering better service outcomes. Regularly monitoring progress provides us with an indication as to whether we are on track to achieve the outcome we desire. We will report progress to senior management every six months in October and April of each year and annually to Council.</p>

3.6	Externally, we held a citizen Focus Group Panel to get feedback and input on the draft Objectives and measures. The Panel included a cross-section of ratepayers, customers, business, community and voluntary sector representatives and existing Service Focus Group participants, all of whom had expressed an interest in participating. Two sessions were planned for Moy and Moneymore. We did not proceed with the Moy session due to low numbers and making alternative arrangements for engagement. The session held in Moneymore Recreation Centre on 14 May was attended by 15 representatives from the Focus Group Panel.								
3.7	<p>In general, the response to the draft corporate Objectives and measures was positive. Many helpful suggestions were made and supportive commentary of Council's activities relayed on its services and plans. Summarised as:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Assessment on Commentary: Public Engagement Event</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Theme 1 – Our Service Delivery</td><td>There was general support for Council's objectives on the environment, economic development and improving digital access to our services. The importance of still providing face-to-face contact for those citizens who require it was highlighted. While Council was given credit for effective co-design in the past, the need to meaningfully engage and involve local people in decision-making, with local needs being the main driver of our plans, was emphasised. There were wider discussions around housing and education and concern expressed around the timescales for the Local Development Plan.</td></tr> <tr> <td>Theme 2 – Leadership and Partnership for Growth</td><td>Council has an important role as a catalyst for driving forward larger projects, often involving other regional organisations, so that they progress in line with local needs and wishes. There was support for Council working in partnership to address Lough Neagh's water quality issues and maximise the tourism opportunities presented by the Lough. Other concerns raised related to car parking, particularly in town centres.</td></tr> <tr> <td>Theme 3 – Being the Best Council Possible</td><td>It was recognised that innovative approaches to recruitment and training are needed to address the human resource issues faced by Council and many other organisations. There was support for Council's desire to be financially sustainable, using public money effectively and applying good governance practices. More information on Council's website, social media and in paper form would be useful, as would more creative and better use of the Council's estate and new technologies.</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Assessment on Commentary: Public Engagement Event		Theme 1 – Our Service Delivery	There was general support for Council's objectives on the environment, economic development and improving digital access to our services. The importance of still providing face-to-face contact for those citizens who require it was highlighted. While Council was given credit for effective co-design in the past, the need to meaningfully engage and involve local people in decision-making, with local needs being the main driver of our plans, was emphasised. There were wider discussions around housing and education and concern expressed around the timescales for the Local Development Plan.	Theme 2 – Leadership and Partnership for Growth	Council has an important role as a catalyst for driving forward larger projects, often involving other regional organisations, so that they progress in line with local needs and wishes. There was support for Council working in partnership to address Lough Neagh's water quality issues and maximise the tourism opportunities presented by the Lough. Other concerns raised related to car parking, particularly in town centres.	Theme 3 – Being the Best Council Possible	It was recognised that innovative approaches to recruitment and training are needed to address the human resource issues faced by Council and many other organisations. There was support for Council's desire to be financially sustainable, using public money effectively and applying good governance practices. More information on Council's website, social media and in paper form would be useful, as would more creative and better use of the Council's estate and new technologies.
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3.8	An online survey was published on Council's website, inviting feedback from the public. This was open for responses between 21 May and 14 June 2024 and promoted through our social media channels. We received a number of responses (12). In summary, the majority agreed with the draft Objectives (10 respondents). More detail was provided on the need to concentrate on our statutory responsibilities; services being provided based on								

	<p>demographic need, targeting under-represented/diverse groups and being fully accessible; the importance of Growth Deals and support for business and tourism, especially in smaller rural towns and villages; support for protecting the environment; an emphasis on spending ratepayers money wisely and the importance of having good governance and a skilled, satisfied workforce.</p> <p><u>Corporate Plan: Format</u></p>
3.9	Our Communications Team is working with us to develop and produce our final Corporate Plan in the format of a short video. The film will include a mix of visually appealing graphics communicating the Council's vision, values and background information about the Mid Ulster district, along with video footage of various staff members, business representatives, young people, community planning partners, etc presenting the Objectives in a way that engages the audience and fosters a sense of connection to the strategic focus of the organisation over the next four years. Video recordings will take place at key locations and Council sites throughout the district.
3.10	An online web-page version will be uploaded on our website and a 'Word' version that complies with content accessibility requirements will also be available.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: Not applicable
	Human: Not applicable
	Risk Management: Not applicable
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: None identified at this time. Equality Screening attached at Appendix 2 in line with our Equality and equality statutory duty
	Rural Needs Implications: None identified at this time. Rural Needs Impact Assessment attached at Appendix 3 in line with a commitments under the Rural Needs statutory duty
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	That Members consider, review and agree the draft Corporate Plan objectives, as detailed and presented within appendix 1 to this report, for inclusion in the 2024-2028 corporate plan for production in print, online, digital and video formats.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	<p>Appendix 1: Corporate Plan Objectives and Measures: draft</p> <p>Appendix 2: Equality Screening</p> <p>Appendix 3: Rural Needs Impact Assessment</p>

Draft Mid Ulster District Council Corporate Plan Objectives: Our Focus for 2024-2028

Theme 1: Our Service Delivery	
Objective	
<p><i>The impact of climate change on water availability, food production, the environment and the livelihoods of the global population is growing. We know the risks around Climate Change will continue to increase if we do not take steps to cut our carbon emissions. We must act now as what we do today will affect the lives of our children and future generations. Our Climate Change Adaptation Plan sets out how we will assess and adapt to the risks and opportunities from climate change.</i></p>	
1.1	<p>Achieve a 20% reduction in Council's carbon emissions by March 2028 through implementation of our Sustainability Strategy and Climate Action Plan</p> <p><i>Measure: % reduction in operational emissions by March 2028</i></p>
1.2	<p>Complete a Climate Change Adaptation Plan by 2025</p> <p><i>Measure: Climate Change Adaptation Plan completed by 2025</i></p>
<p><i>Recycling waste protects the environment and saves on, or reduces, the costs of disposal. Recycling and/or reusing waste benefits the environment by lessening the need to extract resources or source new materials. It lowers the potential for contamination and saves energy.</i></p>	
1.3	<p>Achieve the Circular Economy Target to recycle 60% of municipal waste by March 2028</p> <p><i>Measures:</i> <i>% of municipal waste recycled by March 2028</i> <i>Statutory Waste Performance Standards and Indicators met</i></p>
<p><i>Our Capital Investment Programme helps us build a better future for our citizens. It includes a programme of works to extend, refurbish, upgrade, redevelop and revitalise our existing and new assets, all set within our budgetary constraints. Our programme seeks to benefit the environment and promotes opportunities for our citizens to access and enjoy our facilities and outdoor spaces.</i></p>	
1.4	<p>Build on our place-shaping capital investment programme to develop new, and enhance our existing, physical assets</p> <p><i>Measures:</i> <i># of capital investment projects committed between 2024 and March 2028</i> <i>#£ capital investment spent over the period</i> <i>% improvement in life satisfaction in Mid Ulster (NISRA Wellbeing)</i></p>

We want to put our citizens and customers first and to do so we need to understand what people want, need and value. Embedding a positive customer experience journey into our service delivery will ensure that we put our customers first and serve their needs. It is critical to the sustained growth of our Council.

1.5 Implement a Customer Experience Platform by 2026 and have it fully operational for two customer facing services by March 2028

Measures:

Customer Experience Platform implemented by 2026

Customer Experience Platform fully operational for two customer facing services by March 2028

% increase in customer satisfaction for service accessibility and response

Mid Ulster district has a strong economy, especially in the fields of agriculture, construction, engineering and manufacturing. Our economy contributes to the standard of living enjoyed by our citizens. Growth in the production of goods and services means that quality and quantity increase. Tourism generates significant income and creates training opportunities and jobs. It helps to stimulate interest in, and preserve, our local heritage, cultural history and local crafts.

1.6 Support delivery of a strong business economy by fostering start-ups; creating growth and scalability opportunities; promoting jobs; and developing Mid Ulster as a vibrant tourist destination

Measures:

of jobs promoted through business start-up activity

of businesses supported through growth orientated scaling programmes and events (including tourism)

of visitors (footfall) to Council visitor attractions

Mid Ulster has a vibrant community and voluntary sector. We want to shape new ways of working across central and local government by aligning programme delivery and funding, exploring how things could be done differently to reflect local need. The motivation to work towards achieving improved processes is driven by our desire to ensure that the people in our communities are ultimately better off.

1.7 Work collaboratively with central government to align existing community development and support programmes and implement our Community Development Strategy and Action Plan by March 2028

Measures:

Community Development Strategy and Action Plan implemented by 2028

of programmes integrated

% of CVS consultees satisfied with the co-design process

% improvement in life satisfaction in Mid Ulster (NISRA Wellbeing)

% improvement in locus of control for people in Mid Ulster (NISRA Wellbeing)

Community Wealth Building seeks to contribute to a more stable and equitable economy by capturing the power of public organisations to better address poverty, marginalisation and economic injustice. It supports collective community ownership of, and democratic control over, the local economy through community land and property trusts, community financial institutions, anchor institution procurement strategies, fair employment and just labour markets, local social enterprise, and public and community banking.

1.8	Redirect wealth and public spending into communities by promoting a Community Wealth Building approach to local economic development
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Measures:

Community Wealth Building Framework and Action Plan implemented by 2028

Amount of social value generated per £ invested

% improvement in locus of control for people in Mid Ulster (NISRA Wellbeing)

% improvement in self efficacy for people in Mid Ulster (NISRA Wellbeing)

Council has a substantial offering of leisure, outdoor recreation and arts, cultural and literary provision which includes our leisure centres, parks, green spaces, play areas, theatres and cultural sites. These services are at the core of Council's direct service delivery to our citizens. We want to hear from, listen to and act on what our citizens tell us so that our community-based leisure and outdoor recreation facilities and programmes meet their needs.

1.9	Increase customer satisfaction and participation in our leisure, outdoor recreation and arts, culture and literary facilities by March 2028
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Measures:

% increase in participation across each service area

% increase in customer satisfaction across each service area

% improvement in life satisfaction in Mid Ulster (NISRA Wellbeing)

1.10	Co-design and deliver accessible community-based leisure and outdoor recreation facilities and programmes that meet our citizens' needs
	<i>Measures:</i> <i>% increase in customer satisfaction with community-based leisure and outdoor recreation</i> <i>% increase in participation in leisure and outdoor recreation</i> <i>% of citizens satisfied with their involvement in the co-design process</i> <i>% improvement in life satisfaction in Mid Ulster (NISRA Wellbeing)</i>

<i>The Council's Local Development Plan is comprised of the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan. Its purpose is to inform the general public, statutory authorities, developers and other interested bodies of the policy framework and land use proposals that will implement the strategic objectives of the Regional Development Strategy and guide development decisions within Mid Ulster up to 2030. Our Planning system is about getting the right things built in the right places, about spaces around buildings and other issues such as job creation, regeneration and climate change. We want to exceed the statutory targets that have been set for our Planning Service and improve our service delivery by listening to and reflecting the needs of our citizens.</i>	
1.11	Advance our vision to meet the strategic planning and wellbeing needs of our citizens by progressing the Local Development Plan 2030 Draft Plan Strategy to Public Inquiry Stage by March 2028
	<i>Measure: LDP Draft Plan Strategy progressed to Public Inquiry Stage by March 2028</i>
1.12	Listen to and reflect the needs of our citizens in shaping the Planning Service
	<i>Measure: % of improvements identified by Planning Service users implemented by March 2028</i>
1.13	Exceed statutory planning targets during the life of the Corporate Plan
	<i>Measure: % Statutory planning targets met</i>

Theme 2: Leadership and Partnership for Local Growth	
Objective	
<p><i>Growth Deals are packages of investment provided by the NI Executive and UK Government, complemented by other sources of funding. They are drivers for innovation and growth helping to raise productivity and driving competitiveness across Northern Ireland. The Mid South West Growth Deal is a collaboration between the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon, Fermanagh and Omagh and Mid Ulster District Councils. Our region is fortunate to have many strengths however, there are a challenges around productivity levels, an infrastructure deficit, a need to attract new workers, migration issues and a weaker outlook for population growth. We have developed a number of Growth Deal projects designed to supercharge the growth of our economy including for example, a new A29 Cookstown Bypass which will relieve traffic congestion in the town centre, reduce journey travel times, improve road safety and enhance the town centre environment.</i></p>	
2.1	<p>Visibly progress the Mid-South West Growth Deal initiatives</p> <p><i>Measures:</i> <i># of Mid South West Growth Deal projects approved by March 2028</i> <i># of Full Growth Deal Business Cases progressed by March 2028</i></p>
<p><i>Lough Neagh is the biggest freshwater lake in Britain or Ireland. It supplies 40% of Northern Ireland's drinking water and is a haven for wildlife. It is a globally important Ramsar site, a European Special Protection Area and a NI Area of Special Scientific Interest. However, there are problems around falling fish populations, deteriorating water quality and reduced bird life. Council will actively participate with the many other partners who have an interest in, and responsibility for, the protection and conservation of this unique and vitally important natural environment.</i></p>	
2.2	<p>Actively participate with other partners to substantially progress the co-ordinated management of Lough Neagh</p> <p><i>Measure: # of engagements with other bodies responsible for the co-ordinated management of Lough Neagh</i></p>
<p><i>We are an outward looking, progressive Council. We will collaborate across local and regional governments and jurisdictions to deliver better results, seek out opportunities to identify where best practice exists and work with others on similar projects to bring about greater gains for our citizens. In our leadership capacity, we will identify and raise key issues that affect our citizens, supporting them to have their say and identifying solutions that meet their needs.</i></p>	
2.3	<p>Collaborate with local and regional governments and jurisdictions to improve the services we deliver to our citizens and advocate on their behalf</p> <p><i>Measures:</i> <i># of advocacy engagements with local and regional government ministers and officials</i> <i># of cross-cutting strategic collaborative working opportunities developed</i></p>

Community Planning happens when communities and organisations come together to improve local wellbeing and quality of life. Community Planning strives to improve partnership working, planning, processes and service delivery to achieve value for money and better outcomes for everyone. Council has a legislative duty to initiate, maintain, facilitate and participate with other partners in community planning for the district.

2.4 Continue to engage and work alongside our Community Planning partners to deliver Mid Ulster Community Plan outcomes and have a new Plan in place by 2028

Measures:

Community Planning Partnership meetings facilitated

CP actions progressed where Council has the lead role

New Community Plan in place by 2028

% improvement in life satisfaction in Mid Ulster (NISRA Wellbeing)

Theme 3: Being the Best Council Possible

Objective

Investing in our employees' wellbeing brings about many benefits including increased resilience and employee engagement, reduced sickness absence, higher performance and productivity, better work-life balance and ultimately improved service delivery for our citizens. We want to foster a workplace culture of loyalty and high morale, with staff who feel their wellbeing needs are being met. Workforce planning helps us strategically align our business goals with our people strategy. It helps us to respond to changing customer needs by developing a more skilled pool of staff. It helps reduce the cost of labour by promoting efficiency within the workforce and eliminating unproductive practices. It helps us retain our employees, develop our people and deliver best value for money through our talent.

3.1 Increase staff engagement and wellbeing by 2028

Measures:

% days lost to sickness

% staff satisfied with their job

% of staff who feel their wellbeing has improved

% staff turnover

% staff completing mandatory learning and development training

3.2	Implement a Workforce Plan to attract and retain the top talent we need to deliver our services
	<i>Measures:</i> <i>Workforce Plan implemented in 2026</i> <i>% staff progression across the organisation</i> <i># of apprenticeships successfully completed by March 2028</i> <i># external awards achieved by March 2028</i>

The services delivered by Council impact on many aspects of our lives and the communities we are part of. We face bigger pressures and challenges including cost of living increases, higher inflation, reduced income streams and heightened demand for services. The challenges which lie ahead mean that we must focus on ensuring that our financial position is resilient, responsible and sustainable.

3.3	Remain a financially sustainable and viable Council that takes a prudent approach to spending public money
	<i>Measures:</i> <i>£ cash balance maintained within the Council's pre-established cash limits</i> <i>£ loans outstanding – remain within Council's operational & authorised borrowing limits</i> <i>Medium Term Financial Plan & associated prudential indicators developed and reviewed</i>

Our corporate governance framework centres around decision-making and accountability. It is an essential support structure setting out our rules, procedures, practices and organisational roles that ensure accountability, fairness and transparency. It helps us build trust amongst our ratepayers and citizens. It includes processes for identifying, assessing and managing risks and helps us to avoid regulatory violations or litigation, thereby increasing our performance and long-term sustainability.

3.4	Ensure our Governance Framework is appropriately integrated within our service delivery models
	<i>Measures:</i>
	<i>Annual unqualified independent audit certificate</i>
	<i># of reportable data breaches</i>
	<i>80% of Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 working days</i>
	<i># of successful (above threshold) legal challenges to Council's Procurement exercises</i>

Measurement

We have built flexibility into our measurement process – some objectives require us to record baseline data early in the process, while others, particularly those that relate to new and innovative practice, may evolve as work progresses. This allows us to present a balanced overarching picture of our success as time goes on and reporting back to management, Members and the public on same through our agreed reporting arrangements.



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District 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

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 5- Approval and Authorisation

Section 1- Scoping

Details about the policy / decision to be screened

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

Mid Ulster Corporate Plan 2024-2028

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

This is a new Corporate Plan for the period 2024-2028, following on from the Corporate Plan for the period 2020-2024.

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

The Corporate Plan is a high-level document that sets the overall strategic direction of the Council for the next four years, 2024-2028. The Plan describes the objectives that the Council will progress to achieve improved service delivery outcomes for the ratepayers and customers of Mid Ulster District Council.

The draft Objectives relate to:

- Reducing waste and carbon emissions and increasing recycling
- Capital investment in our new and existing physical assets
- Improving the customer experience
- Supporting the economy through business growth, jobs promotion and tourism
- Community development and Community Wealth Building
- Satisfaction with and participation in our services – Leisure, recreation, arts, culture and literary facilities
- The Local Development Plan and our Planning Service
- Influencing outcomes for the wider district – Mid South West Growth Deal, Lough Neagh, Community Planning and collaboration with others
- Workforce planning, staff engagement and wellbeing, our governance and finance.

The Corporate Plan contains a series of measures to help Council determine and quantify its success in delivering better service outcomes. The Plan is the core strategic source from which more detailed Directorate Service Plans, Strategies and Action Plans are developed and implemented. The Corporate Plan has been developed in the context of restricted finances and budgets across central and local government, the constraints of which have been considered throughout the development of this Plan.

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

Policy Title	Policy Owners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid Ulster Community Plan 2017-2027 • Mid South West Regional Economic Strategy • Mid Ulster Draft Local Development Plan • Regional Government Departmental Strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid Ulster Community Planning Partners • Mid South West Growth Deal Partnership • Mid Ulster District Council • Regional Government Departments

Section 2- Screening Questions

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

<p>Internal engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of our progress in delivering the priorities contained in the Corporate Plan 2020-2024 • Workshops with SMT, Assistant Directors & Heads of Service – 31 August 2023 • Directorate level workshops facilitated by Williamson Consulting – Chief Executive; Communities and Place; Environment; Corporate Services and Finance; Organisation Development, Strategy and Performance; Planning) – October & November 2023 and Elected Members x 2 sessions – 27 & 30 November 2023 <p>External engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen Focus Group Panel providing an opportunity to feedback views on the draft Corporate Plan Objectives. The Panel included a cross-section of ratepayers, customers, business, community and voluntary sector representatives and existing Service Focus Group participants, all of whom had expressed an interest in participating. • Two sessions were planned for Moy and Moneymore. We did not proceed with the Moy session due to low numbers. • An online survey published on Council's website, inviting feedback. This was open for responses between 21 May and 14 June 2024 and was promoted through our social media and internal staff channels.

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

Review of Current Corporate Plan 2020-2024 – internal assessment of progress made in delivering the priorities in the current Plan, completed by Assistant Directors, June 2023

Analysis of external strategies' impact on Council's functions and gathering information on the Council's existing Strategies and action plans (purpose, objectives and outcomes to be achieved)

NISRA statistics and Census 2021 data

Pre-existing feedback from engagements/surveys with ratepayers and customers on service delivery formed the basis of discussion at the Directorate workshops

Citizen Focus Group Panel held in Moneymore Recreation Centre providing feedback and input on the draft Objectives and measures. The Panel included a cross-section of ratepayers, customers, business, community and voluntary sector representatives and existing Service Focus Group participants, all of whom had expressed an interest in participating.

An online survey, open for feedback from the public between 21 May and 14 June 2024.

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 A for definitions)

Section 75 category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities																																							
Religious belief	Mid Ulster - NISRA Census 2021 Religion																																							
	All usual residents	Catholic	Presbyterian Church in Ireland	Church of Ireland	Methodist Church in Ireland	Other Christian (incl. Christian related)	Other religions	No religion	Religion not stated																															
	150,293	93,703	15,358	17,099	1,257	8,090	922	11,904	1,960																															
	150,293	62.35%	10.22%	11.38%	0.84%	5.38%	0.61%	7.92%	1.30%																															
	62.35% of the Mid Ulster population were brought up in the Catholic religion, 27.82% belong or were brought up in a Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related) religion. Other Religions comprised 0.61% and No Religion 7.92% of the population.																																							
Political opinion	Mid Ulster District Council – Local Government Election 2023 Results (NISRA)																																							
	<table><tr><th>Party</th><th>Votes</th><th>Percentage</th><th>Council Seats</th></tr><tr><td>Sinn Fein</td><td>31,834</td><td>47.16%</td><td>19</td></tr><tr><td>DUP</td><td>14,045</td><td>20.81%</td><td>11</td></tr><tr><td>SDLP</td><td>5,660</td><td>8.38%</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>Independents</td><td>5,230</td><td>7.75%</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>UUP</td><td>4,908</td><td>7.27%</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Other</td><td>5,828</td><td>8.63%</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>67,505</td><td>100%</td><td>40</td></tr></table> <p>Political party representation can be used as an approximate barometer of political opinion within Mid Ulster. The most recent local government/council election was held in 2023. The percentage 1st preference vote share for each of the political party/independents is detailed above along with representation (seats) on Council.</p>									Party	Votes	Percentage	Council Seats	Sinn Fein	31,834	47.16%	19	DUP	14,045	20.81%	11	SDLP	5,660	8.38%	5	Independents	5,230	7.75%	3	UUP	4,908	7.27%	2	Other	5,828	8.63%	0	Total	67,505	100%
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UUP	4,908	7.27%	2																																					
Other	5,828	8.63%	0																																					
Total	67,505	100%	40																																					

Racial group

Mid Ulster NISRA Census 2021 Ethnic group

All usual residents	White	Irish Traveller	Roma	Indian	Chinese	Filipino
150,292	144,294	550	81	206	326	111
150,292	96.01%	0.37%	0.05%	0.14%	0.22%	0.07%

Arab	Pakistani	Other Asian	Black African	Black Other	Mixed	Other Ethnicities
103	30	1132	709	1155	1257	338
0.07%	0.02%	0.75%	0.47%	0.77%	0.84%	0.22%

Mid Ulster NISRA Census 2021 National Identity

All usual residents = 150,293

British Only	Irish Only	Northern Irish Only	Polish
33,258	61,407	28,146	2,775
22.13%	40.86%	18.73%	1.85%
Lithuanian	Romanian	Portuguese	Bulgarian
3,689	444	2,968	312
2.45%	0.30%	1.97%	0.21%
Latvian	Slovakian	Hungarian	African
665	486	262	138
0.44%	0.32%	0.17%	0.09%
Syrian	East Timorese		
138	743		
0.09%	0.49%		

The overwhelming majority of the population (96.01%) is classified as 'white'. Within this classification are those whose national identity is Polish (1.85%), Lithuanian (2.45%) and Portuguese (1.97%) for example and is reflective of Mid Ulster's migrant worker population.

Age

Mid Ulster – NISRA Census 2021 Age & Sex

All usual residents: All ages	0-19 years	20-59 years	65-90+ years	Female: All ages	Male: All ages
150,291	42,111	85,656	22,524	74,999	75,292
150,291	28.02%	56.98%	14.99%	49.90%	50.10%

	Most people in Mid Ulster are aged between 20-59 years (56.98%), followed by children and young people aged between 0 and 19 years (28.02%) and 14.99% in the older age bracket (between 65 and 90+ years).																											
Marital status	<p>Mid Ulster - NISRA Census 2021 Marital & Civil Partnership Status</p> <table><tr><td>All usual residents aged 16 and over</td><td>Single (never married or never registered a civil partnership)</td><td>Married</td><td>In a civil partnership</td><td>Separated (but still legally married or still legally in a civil partnership)</td><td>Divorced or formerly in a civil partnership which is now legally dissolved</td><td>Widowed or surviving partner from a civil partnership</td></tr><tr><td>115,659</td><td>42,017</td><td>57,617</td><td>188</td><td>3,750</td><td>5,260</td><td>6,827</td></tr><tr><td>115,659</td><td>36.33%</td><td>49.82%</td><td>0.16%</td><td>3.24%</td><td>4.55%</td><td>5.90%</td></tr></table> <p>The majority of the population in Mid Ulster are married 49.82% or single, 36.33%.</p>							All usual residents aged 16 and over	Single (never married or never registered a civil partnership)	Married	In a civil partnership	Separated (but still legally married or still legally in a civil partnership)	Divorced or formerly in a civil partnership which is now legally dissolved	Widowed or surviving partner from a civil partnership	115,659	42,017	57,617	188	3,750	5,260	6,827	115,659	36.33%	49.82%	0.16%	3.24%	4.55%	5.90%
All usual residents aged 16 and over	Single (never married or never registered a civil partnership)	Married	In a civil partnership	Separated (but still legally married or still legally in a civil partnership)	Divorced or formerly in a civil partnership which is now legally dissolved	Widowed or surviving partner from a civil partnership																						
115,659	42,017	57,617	188	3,750	5,260	6,827																						
115,659	36.33%	49.82%	0.16%	3.24%	4.55%	5.90%																						
Sexual orientation	<p>Mid Ulster - NISRA Census Data 2021 Sexual Orientation</p> <table><tr><td>All usual residents aged 16 and over</td><td>Straight or heterosexual</td><td>Gay or lesbian</td><td>Bisexual</td><td>Other sexual orientation</td><td>Prefer not to say</td><td>Not stated</td></tr><tr><td>115,659</td><td>104,123</td><td>669</td><td>478</td><td>166</td><td>6,697</td><td>3,526</td></tr><tr><td>115,659</td><td>90.03%</td><td>0.58%</td><td>0.41%</td><td>0.14%</td><td>5.79%</td><td>3.05%</td></tr></table> <p>The sexual orientation of the majority of the people in Mid Ulster is straight/heterosexual (90.03%) with 1.13% LGBT.</p>							All usual residents aged 16 and over	Straight or heterosexual	Gay or lesbian	Bisexual	Other sexual orientation	Prefer not to say	Not stated	115,659	104,123	669	478	166	6,697	3,526	115,659	90.03%	0.58%	0.41%	0.14%	5.79%	3.05%
All usual residents aged 16 and over	Straight or heterosexual	Gay or lesbian	Bisexual	Other sexual orientation	Prefer not to say	Not stated																						
115,659	104,123	669	478	166	6,697	3,526																						
115,659	90.03%	0.58%	0.41%	0.14%	5.79%	3.05%																						
Men and women generally	<p>Mid Ulster – NISRA Census 2021 Sex</p> <table><tr><td>All usual residents: All ages</td><td>Female: All ages</td><td>Male: All ages</td></tr><tr><td>150,291</td><td>74,999</td><td>75,292</td></tr><tr><td>150,291</td><td>49.90%</td><td>50.10%</td></tr></table> <p>There are slightly more males in Mid Ulster (50.10%) than females (49.90%).</p>							All usual residents: All ages	Female: All ages	Male: All ages	150,291	74,999	75,292	150,291	49.90%	50.10%												
All usual residents: All ages	Female: All ages	Male: All ages																										
150,291	74,999	75,292																										
150,291	49.90%	50.10%																										
Disability	<p>Mid Ulster - NISRA Census 2021 Long-term health problem or disability</p> <table><tr><td>All usual residents</td><td>Day-to-day activities limited a lot</td><td>Day-to-day activities limited a little</td><td>Day-to-day activities not limited</td></tr><tr><td>150,292</td><td>14,644</td><td>17,291</td><td>118,357</td></tr><tr><td>150,292</td><td>9.74%</td><td>11.50%</td><td>78.75%</td></tr></table>							All usual residents	Day-to-day activities limited a lot	Day-to-day activities limited a little	Day-to-day activities not limited	150,292	14,644	17,291	118,357	150,292	9.74%	11.50%	78.75%									
All usual residents	Day-to-day activities limited a lot	Day-to-day activities limited a little	Day-to-day activities not limited																									
150,292	14,644	17,291	118,357																									
150,292	9.74%	11.50%	78.75%																									

	21.24% of people have a long-term health problem or disability that limits their day-to-day activities whilst 78.75% of people do not.
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Dependants

Mid Ulster – NISRA Census 2021 Dependent Children Households

All Households	No children in household	No dependent children/All children in household non-dependent	One dependent child	Two dependent children	Three or more dependent children
54,006	24,174	10,336	6,848	7,250	5,398
54,006	44.76%	19.14%	12.68%	13.43%	10.00%

There are a higher number of households with no children, 44.76% than households with between one and three dependent children 36.11%. 19.14% have either no dependent children or non-dependent children in the household.

Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? minor/major/none
Religious belief	Although Mid Ulster District Council's ratepayers and customers may have a variety of religious beliefs or viewpoints, there is no evidence to indicate that the Corporate Plan will have a differential impact on this Section 75 grouping. All objectives are intended to achieve the desired outcomes for service delivery across the board, regardless of Religious Belief. Council service plans, policies, strategies and actions are screened individually.	None
Political opinion	Whilst ratepayers and customers may have a variety of political opinions or viewpoints, the Corporate Plan aims to ensure everyone is treated in an inclusive manner. There is no evidence to indicate that the Corporate Plan will have a differential impact on this Section 75 grouping. All objectives are intended to achieve the desired outcomes for service delivery, regardless of Political Opinion.	None
Racial group	Although ratepayers and customers may come from different racial backgrounds, there is no evidence to indicate that the Corporate Plan will have a differential impact on this Section 75 grouping. All objectives are intended to achieve the desired outcomes for service delivery for all Racial Groups.	None
Age	The Corporate Plan will have no differential impact on this Section 75 grouping. All objectives are intended to achieve the desired outcomes for service delivery regardless of ratepayers/customers' age.	None
Marital status	The Corporate Plan will have no differential impact on this Section 75 grouping. All objectives are intended to achieve the desired outcomes for service delivery, regardless of ratepayers/customers' marital status.	None

Sexual orientation	The Corporate Plan will have no differential impact on this Section 75 grouping. All objectives are intended to achieve the desired outcomes for service delivery, regardless of ratepayers and customers' sexual orientation.	None
Men and women generally	The Corporate Plan will have no differential impact on this Section 75 grouping. All objectives are intended to achieve the desired outcomes for service delivery, regardless of ratepayers and customers' gender.	None
Disability	The Corporate Plan will have no differential impact on this Section 75 grouping. All objectives are intended to achieve the desired outcomes for service delivery for all ratepayers/customers', regardless of Disability.	None
Dependants	The Corporate Plan will have no differential impact on this Section 75 grouping. All objectives are intended to achieve the desired outcomes for service delivery, regardless if ratepayers/customers' have dependents.	None

3. Good Relations

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:

Yes	
No	All objectives are intended to positively impact on good relations between Section 75 equality categories.
If yes, please detail the opportunities:	

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.

It is possible that some of the work undertaken to achieve the objectives set out the Corporate Plan may impact on people with multiple identities. The needs and experiences of people with multiple identities vary. To ensure that potential impacts are considered and mitigated, Council will screen policies and strategies individually to ensure that the potential impact of each policy or strategy are considered in that context.

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:

Section 4- 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:

The overall Corporate Plan 2024-2028 will be reviewed mid-term in 2026.

Periodic Equality Screening monitoring and review will be undertaken for individual Directorate-level strategies and plans which emanate from the Corporate Plan objectives in accordance with the timeframes set out in each Strategy/Plan's Equality Screening form.

Section 5- Approval and Authorisation

Screened by:	Position/ Job Title	Date
Celene O'Neill	Community and Strategic Planning Officer	25 June 2024
Approved by:	Position/ Job Title	Date
Philip Moffett	Assistant Director of Organisational Development, Strategy and Performance	25 June 2024

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

Appendix A

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 B

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

Appendix I - Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) Template

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.

Developing a Mid Ulster District Council Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028

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

Developing a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Adopting a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input checked="" 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.

Mid Ulster District Council Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028

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

The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's strategic focus and direction for the four year period 2024-2028, reflecting its commitment to providing high quality services to Mid Ulster's ratepayers, service users and customers.

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.

Not applicable

Rationale for using alternative definition of 'rural'.

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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.

The Corporate Plan identifies a set of high-level priorities, objectives and measures that will set the strategic focus and direction of the Council for the next four years. The Plan describes the objectives that the Council will progress to achieve improved service delivery outcomes for all ratepayers, service users and customers of Mid Ulster District Council in both urban and rural areas. The Corporate Plan has been developed in the context of restricted finances and budgets across central and local government, the constraints of which have been considered throughout the development of this Plan.

The Corporate Plan contains a series of measures to help Council determine and quantify its success in delivering better service outcomes. The Plan is the core strategic source from which more detailed Directorate Service Plans, Strategies and Action Plans are developed and implemented. When developing Directorate Service Plans and other strategies and plans, consideration will be given to any potential differential impacts on 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.

The Corporate Plan is a strategic district wide plan, which seeks to deliver better outcomes for everyone in the Mid Ulster area, including those living, working or visiting beyond the main urban areas of the district. The impact of the Plan on people in both urban and rural areas is expected to be positive. The Plan does not make specific proposals for rural areas at this level. Directorate Service Plans cascade from the Corporate Plan and provide more detail on how services are planned and delivered. These plans take any potential differential impacts on rural areas into consideration as they are developed and progressed.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rural Tourism	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rural Housing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Deprivation in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rural Crime or Community Safety	<input checked="" 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.

Not applicable

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consultation with Other Organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Research Papers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Surveys or Questionnaires	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other Publications	<input checked="" 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.

Council reviewed and assessed progress in delivering the Corporate Plan for the period 2020-2024 and commissioned a series of workshops with internal stakeholders (employees) and Elected Members representing both urban and rural District Electoral Areas within Mid Ulster to help shape and develop the new Corporate Plan. Council held a citizen Focus Group Panel to get feedback and input on the draft Objectives and measures. The Panel included a cross-section of ratepayers, customers, business, community and voluntary sector representatives and existing Service Focus Group participants, all of whom had expressed an interest in participating. Two sessions were planned for Moy and Moneymore in May 2024. However, due to low numbers, only the session in Moneymore Recreation Centre proceeded. An online survey was developed and published on Council's website, inviting feedback from the public. This was open for responses between 21 May and 14 June 2024 and was promoted through our social media and internal staff channels.

Information Sources:

- DAERA Guidance on Rural Needs Impact Assessment
- MUDC Socio Economic Profile September 2023 – Perspective Economics
- NISRA Statistics
- Mid Ulster Housing Investment Plan 2023-2026
- Education Authority draft Strategic Area Plan 2022-2027
- Census 2021 data

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

- The Mid Ulster District accounts for 7.9% of the overall Northern Ireland population in 2021. The population has increased by 8.4% from 138,590 in 2011 to 150,293 in 2021. The change in population is mainly concentrated in the 65+ age group, with the older population increasing by 29% over the period 2011 to 2021. In the same period, the working age population increased by only 4%. Source: NISRA Census 2021
- More than two thirds of the District's population live in rural areas, equivalent to 15% of Northern Ireland's entire rural population. Almost one tenth of employment in agriculture, forestry and fishing. The District is home to 17% (c. 4,162) of all farms and 14% (c. 146,400 hectares) of farmed land in Northern Ireland. Source: *Mid Ulster District Council Socio Economic Profile September 2023 – Perspective Economics*
- More rural areas of the District are poorly served by bus infrastructure and the entire District is devoid of rail infrastructure. The rural nature of MUDC means that, while good quality high speed broadband may be available to support economic growth, poor coverage in harder to serve parts of the area is likely to exacerbate social isolation as public services and community interactions increasingly move online. Source: *Mid Ulster District Council Socio Economic Profile September 2023 – Perspective Economics*
- House and land prices, land availability and rates of development may make the first steps into owner occupation more difficult for many young rural households within the Mid Ulster District Council area. The tendency for owner occupation in rural areas will also result in limited opportunity for the private rented sector to offer affordable accommodation due to a more competitive housing market. Source: *Mid Ulster Housing Investment Plan 2023-2026*
- There are 96 primary and 20 post primary schools in Mid Ulster District Council area. Of the 96 primary schools, 82 are in rural areas. 36 primary schools have enrolment numbers below the EA's threshold for sustainability. Source: *Education Authority draft Strategic Area Plan 2022-2027*
- There are no acute hospitals in the Mid Ulster District and no Community Care and Treatment Centres in any of the three hub towns. Mid Ulster has recorded consistently higher response Ambulance times than the NI average. The District's predominantly rural road network has an adverse impact on travel times to primary and secondary healthcare services and to hospitals with major injury treatment capabilities. Source: *MUDC*

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?

Not applicable

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.

Council has very clearly defined statutory responsibilities including waste collection and disposal; registration of births, deaths and marriages; planning and planning approval, building control and enforcement; provision of leisure and recreational facilities; human burial; environmental health; energy performance certificates; off street car parking; facilitating the Policing and Community Safety Partnership; administering funding on behalf of central government; and economic development including tourism.

The issues referenced in Section 3D predominantly fall under the remit of other government departments and statutory bodies for example, infrastructure, education, housing and health. In its leadership capacity, Council will continue to lobby, lead and work closely with a range of partners to address issues which can only be tackled in conjunction with other statutory bodies. Council has no financial resources but can provide expertise, leadership, co-ordination and local knowledge to bring about change in both urban and rural areas that might otherwise not happen.

Council has pledged to be a Council for all citizens delivering the right services in a user friendly, accessible, and efficient manner. We commit to modernising our service provision and work closely with all our citizens in an effective partnership.

The Council's Corporate Plan identifies a set of high-level strategic priorities, objectives and measures that set the strategic focus and direction of the Council for the next four years. The objectives that Council will progress are expected to achieve improved service delivery outcomes for all ratepayers, service users and customers and should not have a differential impact on rural dwellers or geographies.

The Corporate Plan has been developed in the context of restricted finances and budgets across central and local government, the constraints of which have been considered throughout the development of this Plan. The next four years require Council to be increasingly efficient in service delivery so that all residents, whether they live in urban or rural areas, get the services they need and want delivered efficiently, while maintaining rates at sensible levels.

The Corporate Plan is the core strategic source from which more detailed Directorate Service Plans, Strategies and Action Plans are developed and implemented. When developing Directorate Service Plans and other strategies and plans, consideration will be given to any potential differential impacts on rural areas.

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.

In determining how Council's policies, strategies, plans or public services should take account of rural needs, Council seeks to ensure fair and equitable treatment of people in rural areas and is aware that a 'one size fits all' approach is not always appropriate.

The Corporate Plan is a district wide strategic plan. Council's Corporate Plan objectives have been developed to benefit all ratepayers, service users and customers, delivering improved wellbeing outcomes that have a positive impact irrespective of geographical location,

The Corporate Plan does not make specific proposals for rural areas at this level. As part of Council's delivery of services, each Department operates within their own Directorate Service Plan. The Directorate Service Plans will consider any potential differential impacts on rural areas as they are progressed. Where Council faces budget reductions which may lead to a change in service provision, this will be examined thoroughly identifying efficiencies, new methods of delivery, and the impact on rural areas.

The Council's Corporate Plan is aligned to the overall Mid Ulster Community Plan with Council using its leadership role to influence regional government policy and encourage other statutory bodies to deliver services that meet the needs of the rural population.

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.

Not applicable

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.

☒

Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:	Celene O'Neill
Position/Grade:	Community and Strategic Planning Officer
Division/Branch	Organisation Development, Strategy and Performance
Signature:	
Date:	25 June 2024
Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:	Philip Moffett
Position/Grade:	Assistant Director OD, Strategy and Performance
Division/Branch:	Organisation Development, Strategy and Performance
Signature:	
Date:	25 June 2024

Minutes of Meeting of Policy and Resources Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 6 June 2024 in the Council Offices, Burn Road, Cookstown

Members Present	Councillor Quinn, Chair Councillors F Burton, Cahoon, McAleer, McLernon, S McPeake, Wilson
Officers in Attendance	Mrs Canavan, Strategic Director of Organisation Development, Strategy and Performance (SD: ODSP) Ms Dyson, Head of Human Resources (HoHR) Mr McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement (HoSS&E) Mrs McNally, Assistant Director of Corporate Services and Finance (AD: CS&F) Mr O'Hagan, Head of IT (HoIT) Mrs Grogan, Committee and Member Services Officer
Others in Attendance	Agenda Item 4 – Deputation: Armagh & Dungannon Early Years Ms Tanya Burke Ms Margaret Fitzgerald

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 by referring to Annex A to this minute.

PR117/24 Notice of Recording

Members noted that the meeting would be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast on the Council's You Tube site.

PR118/24 Apologies

Councillors Gildernew, Johnston, Molloy, Totten, Brown, McLean, J Burton.

PR119/24 Declarations of Interest

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

PR120/24 Chairs Business

The Chair, Councillor Quinn advised that he looked forward to working with the committee for the incoming year.

PR121/24 Deputation – Armagh & Dungannon Early Years

The Chair, Councillor Quinn welcomed Ms Tanya Burke and Ms Margaret Fitzgerald to the meeting and invited them to address the committee.

Ms Fitzgerald advised that she was a representative from Brocagh Playgroup in Coalisland and Ms Burke was a representative from Panda Playgroup in Killeeshil. Ms Fitzgerald advised that on 20th May 2024, Armagh & Dungannon branch held their termly meeting and invited MLA's and members of Council to attend, with Councillors Kerr, McElvogue and Cuthbertson being in attendance and also MLAs Colm Gildernew and Deborah Erskine. Through that meeting it was agreed that the group would be invited to attend the meeting tonight to provide committee with an overview of Early Years.

Ms Burke stated the purpose of the presentation tonight was to provide Members with an overview on Early Years (appendix):

- Pre-School Educational Settings from Voluntary, Community and Private Sectors:
 - Provide early years education and care; Support and guide children's learning; Encourage learning through play; Provide opportunities to develop socially, emotionally, physically, intellectually and creatively; Lay foundation skills for early mathematical learning through problem solving and critical thinking; Support Language, developing critical skills such as writing, listening, communication and concentration; Build self-esteem and confidence promoting positive wellbeing; Have a highly skilled staff team; Ensure a well-planned environment meeting all areas of the preschool curriculum; Observe all children to ensure all individual needs are met and any additional needs identified; Provide a safe and secure environment for learning
- Challenges for the Voluntary and Community Early Years Sector:
 - Sustainability; Recruitment and Retention; Increase in Children with Additional Needs; Lack of Value; Inequality with Statutory Sector
- Sustainability:
 - Cost of living; Bills: rent, heating, electric, rates; Wages; Increase in minimum wage; Need for resources; No additional funding provided by EA; Funding is not increasing in line with inflation; Settings are struggling to cover costs and meet all the needs of the settings
- Recruitment and Retention:
 - Harder to find staff; Less entering the childcare path; Staff leaving to the statutory sector due to better rates of pay and less responsibility; Having to employ undertrained staff to keep settings open to meet adult child ratio's; Vetting and medical costs for the sector followed by trust checks and length of time not equal with statutory sector
- Increase in Children with Additional Needs:
 - Lack of funding; Lack of support; Staffing; Access to health professionals; Limited resources

- Lack of Value:
 - Seen as facilitating childcare as opposed to an early learning educational setting; Lack of avenues to further develop skills and career progression; Lack of status and reward for the role staff play in the early years
- Inequality With Statutory Sector:
 - Rates of pay and no set pay scales; Inspection from both social services and ETI; SEN referrals; Displacement on allocation of places; Funding per child in setting; Vetting process; The new 22.5 hour week for pre-school children pilot only completed in Nursery school settings

The Chair, Councillor Quinn thanked Ms Burke for her informative presentation and said that it was clear to hear the emotion in her voice when delivering the presentation which he could really understand. The Chair concurred with Ms Burke's comment about the provision being seen as a babysitting service which was totally disrespectful. He referred to Brocagh Playgroup and said he could not sing their praises strongly enough along with parents he had spoken too, there was nothing but high praise about the work in which the playgroup carries out. The Chair felt that there was a total disrespect for playgroups, there is nursery schools which carry out fantastic work, but they were doing nothing different to what playgroups were doing enhancing children's learning skills and improvement from when a child enters at the start of the year until they leave at the end of the year.

Ms Fitzgerald stated that within Brocagh playgroup, staff were working 3.5 hours per day but were only being funded for 2.5 hours the same way as other playgroups and are just seen as a subsidiary of nursery schools for children who didn't get into nursery schools even though the majority were all first preference. Ms Fitzgerald advised that the Education Authority see playgroups as a backup for nursery schools.

The Chair stated that there seemed to be a total disrespect from other statutory agencies towards playgroups when approaching them about other issues like road safety matters etc and their response was that it was not a school facility and no interest in the matter.

The Chair said that he came from a teaching background himself as both his parents were teachers and it was evident the disrespect classroom assistants get, but the fact of the matter was that teachers could not do their job without them and were just as qualified when it came to teaching and educating children.

Councillor McLernon thanked the group for their presentation and said that it was clear to see the very valuable and well-deserved service being delivered especially when it came to working with children with SEN Education. The member advised that her nephew attended Brocagh Primary School but was now an adult with special complex needs and agreed that there was not enough provision out there especially for those children with SEN and for other needs that needed to be addressed. The member said that Councillors would be more than happy to help and not to be afraid to reach out.

Councillor F Burton thanked the group for their presentation tonight. The member stated that she had recently worked with a family and through their playgroup it was identified that their child had extra needs and required support. The member referred to

access to expertise from health professionals and enquired what Council could do to try and help and change what playgroups were coming up against including a list of things that Council could lobby for or write to the Minister to ensure that these were on his desk. The member said that around the room tonight, each Councillor values preschools and wants the best for our children and were always told that the early years were the most important years of a child's life and was important to get behind this to allow children to get the right support. The member said that she had recently spoken to a local lady and was shocked to learn that she had taken on the role within a playgroup on a voluntary basis going out seeking funding for the playgroup which was a thankless job but was willing to go out to try and better the lives of children in a rural area.

Ms Burke agreed that there was a need for the management committee but that vetting puts volunteers off, some years the playgroup were very fortunate enough that some parents were able to give up their free time to help out. Ms Burke stated that the person who pays the wages was also carries out other roles: treasurer, payroll and signing out money etc and not something that they envisaged when they sent their child to preschool and agreed that this was tough. In the past she had been awarded a wellbeing grant, which was something very nice as she was able to reward the committee taking them out for a meal and felt that this was something to show how much volunteers were valued within the community. In response to query regarding signposting to other professionals, felt that this would be the remit of the educational sector and advised that a playgroup was the first point of contact as they were writing the first record of concern. Ms Burke referred to a recent news report of a young girl being diagnosed with a life limiting condition and advised that she was actually the playgroup leader that the young girl mentioned about bringing it to her attention and although she was going to lose her sight, ability to walk and deteriorate rapidly, she was the person to raise the concern initially. The mother of the young girl did not accept it in the beginning but later approached the playgroup to help sign it off, which was very challenging as the playgroup was handling very delicate information. She felt that this was a very difficult situation as there was very little help out there and people having to go on their own and seek support from health visitors and other health professionals. Ms Burke advised that there was one little girl within her setting desperately needing support and she had tried every avenue and has been turned down, with a principal phoning from a local school advising that there was no support in place and cannot accommodate the child. The child has no statement as Ms Burke was unable to get it for her for September and then people wonder why children were not in placements and why a good solicitor was fighting to get these children the placement they deserve and felt that there was a year in a child's life where they could be helped. She said that schools wished that they could do more also but were only permitted to make two referrals per year and if a school was sitting with 200 pupils, then this was a very small number of pupils they can help and would be confident that schools would also be in favour of this.

Ms Fitzgerald said that there were some children who do not have a place at all, with one place in Primate Dixon with 40 children, with each parent thinking that this was being allocated to their child.

Ms Burke advised that there was a continuous knock-on effect down the ladder, if a child does not get a place, then this can cause stress and mental health issues to parents as well which can impact the health service.

The Strategic Director of Organisation Development, Strategy and Performance (SD: ODSP) advised that she was responsible for Community Planning within Council which includes Education and Health including the Southern Trust, with everyone being at the table. The SD: ODSP felt that it would be worthwhile for the group to be invited to a future meeting of Community Planning to provide a presentation to all the bodies around the table so they can hear the story and challenges being faced on a daily basis. She stated that there could be an influence present who might be able to do something as she was aware of the value of what playgroups do and certainly knew the value of what Ms Fitzgerald did in Brocagh Playgroup. The SD: ODSP advised the committee that she would liaise with the group after the meeting to tie in with a future Community Planning meeting.

Councillor Cahoon thanked the group for their presentation and said that sometimes people do not know what Early Years entails until you know someone working in that sector. The member referred to the importance it plays in the fundamental years of a child's life and the skills they learn for life. The member hoped that the announcement from the Minister a few weeks ago shows that Early Years is valued and although there was an ambitious package of announcements which was correct, there were a few concerns raised through the presentation by the group tonight and advised that these would be brought back to the Minister by herself and Councillor Burton especially around the 22.5 hours and correct provision as this would transform children's lives for decades to come.

Ms Burke referred to 22.5 hours proposal and advised that the playgroup resided in an old Council building, former Killymaddy restaurant and if implemented would be hopeful for that next year. Ms Burke said that she runs a double session and would be beneficial to avail of two rooms together and asked if this was something that Council could consider i.e. implementing a modular building on site as there would be 39 children coming back next year and if she was only able to offer one session of 22.5 hours, there would be some children who would not avail of a place for the incoming year.

Ms Fitzpatrick stated that this was a problem for a lot of the playgroups and this would allow the facilities to run extra sessions.

Ms Burke agreed that this would allow the facilities to run the extra sessions and provide support as this has come in quite rapidly and if implemented would allow the extra places to be given out. There would be challenges otherwise as places have already been allocated and children losing out on a place. Ms Burke said that any help the Council could provide would be greatly appreciated.

The Assistant Director of Corporate Services and Finance (AD: CS&F) referred to comment regarding additional space and advised that this could be something that could be brought to the Capital Planning team to see if this could be progressed.

The Chair thanked Ms Burke and Ms Fitzgerald for attending the meeting tonight and hoped that something could be done by Council to help the group going forward.

The representatives from Armagh and Dungannon Early Years withdrew from the meeting at 7.32 pm.

PR122/24 Member Services

No issues.

Matters for Decision

PR123/24 Corporate Performance Improvement Plan (PIP Plan) 2024

The Head of Strategic Services and Engagement (HoSS&E) presented previously circulated report to consider Council's Corporate Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) for period 2024-2025.

Proposed by Councillor McAleer
Seconded by Councillor McLernon and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve the Council's Corporate Performance Improvement (PIP Plan) Plan 2024-2025.

PR124/24 ICT Strategy

The Head of IT (HoIT) presented previously circulated report to seek approval for the adoption of the New ICT Strategy for Mid Ulster District Council.

Councillor F Burton referred to the cost of implementing the new ICT system for Magherafelt and possibly Dungannon at some stage and said that she had watched a programme on TV today regarding cyber security and enquired if Officers were happy that our security was robust enough due to the high level of hacking and spamming against people and businesses.

The HoIT agreed that cyber security was the biggest challenge and risk facing this organisation and one of the key aims and objectives within the strategy for Officers to enhance and reinforce cyber controls, awareness, technical issues and resources. The Council has committed to resourcing those cyber controls so far as reasonably possible but face the same challenges as the wider world given the regular high-profile compromises recently. The HoIT stated that it was one of the top priorities within Council's strategy and Council is working diligently, restructuring our services to adopt (including a new cyber lead post in position). Council has implemented a SOC and SIEM service which will monitor and look for indicators of compromise, we have reinforced our technical policies and security controls to combat ever changing cyber threats.

The Chair concurred with Councillor F Burton's comments and felt that this was very important. The member said that he receives a lot of messages from older constituents regarding unwarranted emails being received and usually he tells them to just ignore them and asked if it would be possible for Council to send a message to the general public about hacking emails. He referred to an email he had received a few weeks ago about a hacking email indicating that they had accessed his account by using a password and when he investigated the email, he realised that it was an old password that the hackers had accessed through an old website he had used years previously and personal details leaked. The Chair said that he was able to delete the message, but if this was someone elderly, they could pay out very easily as they could think it was

genuine. The Chair enquired if there was any way Council could put out a social media post warning the public against hacking.

Councillor McPeake advised that this was one of the key subjects that PCSP advise of when meeting key groups, the elderly in particular. He said that the Crime Prevention Officer does a specific workshop on the issue, for particularly the elderly and felt that it would be beneficial for Council to link in with PCSP as they have it well on their radar and do sterling work. The member advised that it was very important to make the public aware of hacking and scamming as it was in all facets and advised that he had attended a recent event with Councillor F Burton in the Valley Hotel, Fivemiletown, with the subject amongst the elderly about deadly concerns regarding cyber security.

Councillor Wilson advised that it was just not the elderly that was being targeted, it could be anyone as scamming was getting more sophisticated. He recalled receiving a text message last week *"Hi Dad, this is my new number"* and automatically thought it was from his daughter in Scotland but had the good sense to google the number and realise it was a scam. The member said that if a message was to be issued to the public by social media about email scamming, that text message scamming should also be included.

Proposed by Councillor McLernon
Seconded by Councillor S McPeake and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to note the contents of the ICT Strategy and adopt the strategy for Council.

PR125/24 July Committee Schedule

The Head of Strategic Services and Engagement (HoSS&E) presented previously circulated report to seek approval to move the date of the Committee meetings in July to accommodate the General Election scheduled for 4th July 2024.

Proposed by Councillor F Burton
Seconded by Councillor McAleer and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that approval be granted to move the date of the committee meetings in July to:

- Planning Committee: 2 July 2024 at 6.00pm, Chamber, Dungannon
- Environment Committee: 8 July 2024 at 7.00pm, Chamber, Cookstown
- Development Committee: 9 July 2024 at 7.00pm, Chamber, Cookstown
- Policy & Resources Committee: 10 July 2024 at 7.00pm, Chamber, Cookstown

PR126/24 Member Services

None.

Matters for Information

PR127/24 Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 9 May 2024

Members noted Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee held on 9 May 2024.

PR128/24 Corporate Services & Finance Directorate Service Plan 2024-25

Members noted Corporate Services & Finance Directorate Service Plan for 2024-25.

PR129/24 Somme Association: 2024-2025 Membership Subscription

Members noted correspondence received from the Somme Association on annual contributions payable for period 2023-2024.

Live broadcast ended at 7.42 pm.

Local Government (NI) Act 2014 - Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor McLernon
Seconded by Councillor McAleer 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 PR130/24 to PR135/24.

Matters for Decision

PR130/24 Magherafelt Chamber Upgrade
PR131/24 Staff Updates – Organisational Restructure and Other
PR132/24 Staffing Matters for Decision

Matters for Information

PR133/24 Confidential Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee held on 9 May 2024
PR134/24 Staff Matters for Information
PR135/24 Contracts and DAC

P136/24 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7.00 pm and ended at 7.52 pm.

Chair _____

Date _____

Annex A – Introductory Remarks from the Chairperson

Good evening and welcome to the Council's [Policy & Resources/Environment/Development] Committee in the Chamber, [Cookstown/Dungannon/Magherafelt].

I specifically welcome the public watching us through the Live Broadcast. The Live Broadcast as aforesaid, will run for the period of our Open Business but will end just before we move into Confidential Business. I will let you know before this happens.

I would remind the public and press that taking photographs of proceedings or using any means to enable anyone not present to see or hear proceedings, or making a simultaneous oral report of the proceedings are not permitted.

Thank you and we will now move to the agenda.



Armagh and Dungannon Early Years Branch

OUR EARLY YEARS CONCERNS

Pre School Educational Settings from Voluntary, Community and Private Sectors



- Provide early years education and care
- Support and guide children's learning
- Encourage learning through play
- Provide opportunities to develop socially, emotionally, physically, intellectually and creatively
- Lay foundation skills for early mathematical learning through problem solving and critical thinking
- Support Language, developing critical skills such as writing, listening, communication and concentration
- Build self-esteem and confidence promoting positive wellbeing
- Have a highly skilled staff team
- Ensure a well-planned environment meeting all areas of the preschool curriculum
- Observe all children to ensure all individual needs are met and any additional needs identified
- Provide a safe and secure environment for learning

Challenges for the voluntary and community Early Years Sector

- Sustainability
- Recruitment and retention
- Increase in children with Additional Needs
- Lack of Value
- Inequality with statutory sector



Sustainability

- Cost of living
- Bills : Rent, heating, electric, rates
- Wages
- Increase in minimum wage
- Need for resources
- No additional funding provided by EA
- Funding is not increasing in line with inflation
- Settings are struggling to cover costs and meet all the needs of the settings



Recruitment and retention

Harder to find staff

Less entering the
childcare path

Staff leaving to the statutory
sector due to better rates of
pay and less responsibility

Having to employ undertrained
staff to keep settings open to
meet adult child ratio's

Vetting and medical costs for
our sector followed by trust
checks and length of time not
equal with statutory sector

Increase in Children with Additional Needs



Lack of funding



Lack of support



Staffing



Access to health professionals



Limited resources

Lack of Value

1

Seen as facilitating childcare as opposed to an early learning educational setting

2

Lack of avenues to further develop our skills and career progression

3

Lack of status and reward for the role we play in the early years

Inequality with statutory sector

Rates of pay and no set pay scales

Inspection from both social services and ETI

SEN Referrals

Displacement on allocation of places

Funding per child in setting

Vetting process

The new 22.5 hour week for pre school children pilot was only completed in Nursery school settings

