

Report on	Progress Returns: Equality Commission and Dept. of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs 2018-2019
Date of Meeting	6 June 2019
Reporting Officer	Philip Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
Contact Officer	Mary McSorley, Corporate Policy 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 Reports for the period 2018-19 on meeting the statutory equality and good relations duties as detailed within Section 75(1) and 75(2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the Rural Needs Act NI (2016).
2.0	Background
2.1	The Council is bound by Section 75 of the Northern 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 around which it fulfils its statutory duties is its Equality Scheme. The Annual Progress Report, attached, 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 have requested that a progress report be made and published on Council's website.
2.4	Mid Ulster District Council is also bound by the Rural Needs Act NI (2016) to ' <i>have due regard</i> ' to rural needs when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and; • designing and delivering public services'.
2.5	Section 3 of the Rural Needs Act NI requires DAERA to publish an annual monitoring report containing the information sent to it by public authorities on how they have paid due regard to rural needs and information of the exercise by DAERA of its functions under the Act. It must lay a copy of this report before the Northern Ireland Assembly.
2.6	Section 3 of the Act also requires the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, on or after the day on which the report is laid, to " <i>make a statement to the Assembly about the content of the report.</i> "

3.0	Main Report
3.1	The Annual Progress Report for the Equality Commission for the period 2018-19 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 2018-19 must be submitted to the Equality Commission by 31st August each year.
3.3	The Council's Annual Rural Needs Progress Report (2018-19) sets out to what extent the Council has demonstrated regard to rural needs. It is included as Appendix B of this report.
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: N/A
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	That Council considers approval of the Annual Progress Reports (2018-19) on the implementation and activities surrounding its Equality and Good Relations and Rural Needs statutory duties.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Appendix A: Mid Ulster District Council Annual Equality Progress Report (2018-19) Appendix B: Mid Ulster District Council Annual Rural Needs Progress Report (2018-19)