

Report of Corporate Good Relations Working of Mid Ulster District Council- 9 March 2022

Report of Corporate Good Relations Working Group of Mid Ulster Council held on 9 March 2022 at 5.30 pm in the Council Chamber, in Dungannon (and accessed remotely via Zoon)

Attendees **Members:** Councillors J McNamee, S McPeake, C Corry, N Doris, M Kearney, I Milne
Officers: P Moffett, A. McAleer
Facilitator: J Kremer (Good Relations Facilitator)

Agenda Item 1: Welcome: Cllr McNamee (WG Chair) provided a welcome to the meeting.

Agenda Item 2: Apologies: None received.

Agenda Item 3: Policy Referrals a. Motion carried by Council May 2021 (Constitutional Change)-Update on Workshop Delivery.

The Corporate Policy and Equality Officer (CPEO) provided an update on the organisation of the workshops required by the Motion. She detailed that a specification had been developed and sent out for quotations and it was expected that 5 online events and a close event would be held in June.

In response to member questions she detailed that the specification included a Member Reference Group which would be used to facilitate recommendations and feedback from Members. She also confirmed that a registration mechanism would be put in place to gauge the level of participation from Mid Ulster District Council area residents.

Agreed: It was agreed that once a Delivery Agent was appointed members would be contacted in relation to the establishment of the Member Reference Group specific to this piece of work. Thereafter a meeting(s) will be convened in line with the Quotation specification and discussed at the meeting.

Agenda Item 4: Equality Commission advice on Good Relations in Local Councils

John Kremer provided members with an overview of the Equality Commission advice on Good Relations in Local Councils. He advised that in some Councils place an emphasis on Political Opinion and Religious Beliefs with Ethnic Origin being side-

lined with regard to Good Relations Duties. He suggested that in some instances this leads to the 'regard' requirements for Ethnic Origin requiring elevation. He continued to emphasise that Council's GR duties should inform decision making in a proactive way and from an early stage.

In response to questions from members, John Kremer advised that Council could improve by having access to a wider set of views and opinions for the Good Relations Working Group. He commented that in his opinion Council was currently broadly meeting its Good Relations duties and commitments.

Agenda Item 5: Update on Duty to Remove Hate Expression

CPEO provided an update on the progression of the review of the legislation by DoJ. She advised that because of staff absences the process had been delayed but that it was anticipated that further engagement would be carried out with Council in May or June 2022.

Agreed: It was agreed that an information paper provided to P&R committee in relation to the review of the legislation and the potential impact on Council would be circulated to members of the Working Group.

Agenda Item 6: Date of the Next Meeting

Meetings of the Good Relations WG can be convened 'on demand' should there be a policy or practice within Council that requires discussion/agreement of the group.

Agreed: It was agreed for the next scheduled meeting to be held in September 2022.

The meeting end at 6.10pm.