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| Report on | Draft Accessible Communications Policy |
| Date of Meeting | Wednesday 9 th January 2019 |
| Reporting Officer | P Moffett, Head of Democratic Services |
| Contact Officer | A McAleer, Corporate Policy & Equality Officer |

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

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| 1.0 | Purpose of Report |
| 1.1 | To inform and seek approval from the Committee for the draft Accessible Communications Policy. |
| 2.0 | Background |
| 2.1 | The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 prohibits the discrimination of disabled people and places a duty on local authorities to make reasonable adjustments to ensure services are as accessible as possible to all service users/customers. This includes how Council communicates with people who have additional communication and/or learning needs. |
| 2.2 | The development of this policy also forms part of the previously agreed council Disability Action Plan |
| 3.0 | Main Report |
| 3.1 | This policy has been developed as an outworking an Audit of Inequalities carried out in Mid Ulster District Council area in 2014. The audit identified that within Council, <i>'there are opportunities within corporate practices to mainstream improve and equalities'</i> . The audit also identified that <i>'older people feel they cannot access Council facilities'</i> and that, <i>'residents from ethnic minority backgrounds feel a perceived inaccessibility to local democracy'</i> . |
| 3.2 | The Audit of Inequalities informed the Equality Action Plan, which includes Action 2c- <i>the development of a policy in relation to communicating with disabled people, older people, younger people and different racial groups</i> . This draft policy, as presented at appendix A is the subsequent implementation of this action. |

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| 4.0 | Other Considerations |
| 4.1 | Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications |
| | <p>Financial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No direct immediate costs associated with policy implementation. However, should requests for alternative formats be requested costs are sought on a quotation basis (language interpreters typically charge £40 per hour, whilst translation into braille/audio format depends on word count averaging £45 per letter/correspondence. Council is already subject to such costs regardless of a formal policy being in place. Many format requirements are free or negligible, by for example, altering font size, colour contrast and text alignment. |
| | <p>Human:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> no additional resource required and identified |
| | <p>Risk Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk to the reputation of the council in not having services accessible to all users, where practicable |
| 4.2 | Screening & Impact Assessments |
| | <p>Equality & Good Relations Implications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screened out for an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA). Progress on implementation of this policy will be included in the annual report to the Equality Commission for NI. |
| | <p>Rural Needs Implications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None identified in the operational outworking of the policy |
| 5.0 | Recommendation(s) |
| 5.1 | It is recommended that Members consider and approve the draft Accessible Communications Policy. |
| 6.0 | Documents Attached & References |
| | <p>Appendix A: Draft Accessible Communications Policy</p> <p>Appendix B: Equality Screening Document</p> |