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| Report on | Update on Age Friendly and Mid Ulster Loneliness Network |
| Date of Meeting | 5 th April 2023 |
| Reporting Officer | Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing |
| Contact Officer | Raisa Donnelly, Age Friendly Coordinator |

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

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| 1.0 | Purpose of Report |
| 1.1 | To update members of the ongoing work around Age Friendly Communities and advise on a request for funding towards Mid Ulster Loneliness Network. |
| 2.0 | Background |
| 2.1 | Previously in January 2023, Members were provided with an update on the work on an Age Friendly initiative that has been progressing through the existing Community Planning partnerships structures, with Mid Ulster Council being the lead partner. The Ageing Well Initiative seeks to ensure that the Mid Ulster District Council area is an area that supports older people. Mid Ulster District Council has received funding from the Public Health Agency for the development of an Age Friendly Alliance, an Age Friendly charter, an Age Friendly Strategy and an Action Plan. This work is being developed by the Age Friendly co-ordinator and the draft Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan is currently out for public consultation. (minute reference: D014/23). |
| 2.2 | The Council's Age Friendly Coordinator is involved with a number of partners and networks that helps Council drive the Age Friendly agenda including Mid Ulster Loneliness Network. As Members would be aware from previous reports, the Mid Ulster Loneliness Network has been formed through collaboration between Northern and Southern Trusts, Mid Ulster District Council and the Agewell Partnership. |
| 2.3 | Loneliness and Isolation have been major issues in society and can lead to poor mental health. Traditional perceptions view loneliness and isolation affecting those in later life, however loneliness can also affect anyone from teenagers, new parents, carers, recently bereaved, to students and those with disabilities. During the Covid 19 pandemic, the restrictions have exacerbated this issue for many and the issue of loneliness has been again highlighted in the Age Friendly Survey 2022. |
| 3.0 | Main Report |
| 3.1 | Mid Ulster Loneliness Network works with statutory, voluntary, and community sectors to raise awareness of loneliness, share best practice and learning on ways to address and prevent loneliness and so promote positive mental wellbeing throughout our Council area. By working in partnership with local communities, the aim is to reach into communities to identify, support, and help those who may be suffering from isolation and loneliness. |
| 3.3 | |

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| <p>3.4</p> <p>3.5</p> | <p>As part of this work there have been numerous activities, small grants programmes and initiatives including the chatty benches and chatty cafes developed and delivered to date which Council have contributed to. In September 2021, Members at the Environment Committee approved in principle the potential for recurring funding towards the Loneliness Network to allow for future planning and preparations (minute reference: E196/21).</p> <p>The Mid Ulster Loneliness Network is aiming to secure funding to develop the network. The Northern Health and Social care Trust and the Southern Health and Social care Trust each have advised of a funding contribution in the region of £3,000. Mid Ulster Council have been asked if they wish to again contribute £3,000 for the forthcoming year. It is anticipated that the funding would be used to fund communications/PR of the network including the development of a website and a show case event to mark the networks 2nd birthday and at the same event launch the 1st Mid ulster Age friendly strategy and action plan.</p> <p>The website and the show case event will continue to help Council drive the Age Friendly agenda forward and progress towards a society for ALL generations to age well within Mid ulster aswel as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness about loneliness and social isolation. • Keep connected. • Help reduce the stigma and risk of loneliness by talking and discussing loneliness openly. • Share information about relevant opportunities for people to engage. • Provide key information, advice, support, and encouragement to colleagues within the voluntary, community and statutory sectors. • Promote key initiatives within Mid Ulster including Chatty Benches, Chatty Cafes. |
| <p>4.0</p> | <p>Other Considerations</p> |
| <p>4.1</p> | <p><u>Financial & Human Resources Implications</u></p> <p>Financial: A request of £3,000 has been made for Mid Ulster Loneliness Network to further develop and promote the work of the network. This can be accomdated as part of current allowances within existing revenue budgets.</p> <p>Human: Existing staff resources sufficient to coordinate support. No additional staffing resource required.</p> <p>Risk Management: Considered in line with relevant Council policies and procedures.</p> |
| <p>4.2</p> | <p>Screening & Impact Assessments</p> |
| | <p>Equality & Good Relations Implications: None anticipated at this juncture.</p> <p>Rural Needs Implications: None anticipated at this juncture.</p> |
| <p>5.0</p> | <p>Recommendation(s)</p> |
| <p>5.1</p> | <p>To note the contents of this report and consider giving approval to the request for a contribution of £3,000 towards the Loneliness Network in order to further promote and develop the network as supported by the other key partners of the Mid Ulster Loneliness Network including NHSCT and SHSCT.</p> |

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| 6.0 | Documents Attached & References |
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