02 July 2020

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee to be held in
The Chamber, Magherafelt and by virtual means Council Offices, Ballyronan Road, Magherafelt, BT45 6EN on Thursday, 02 July 2020 at 19:00 to transact the business noted below.

A link to join the meeting through the Council's remote meeting platform will follow.

Yours faithfully

Anthony Tohill
Chief Executive

AGENDA

OPEN BUSINESS

1.   Apologies

2.   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.

3.   Chair's Business

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

17. NI Business Start Up Programme 2 /GoForIt2 (11 Council model) 2021 – 2023 Collaborative Agreement with Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (L&CCC)
18. Financial Update in relation to Covid19 and Associated Matters
19. Financial Report for 12 Months Ended 31 March 2020
20. Environment & Property Organisational Structures
21. ICT Staff Restructuring
22. Staff Matters for Decision
23. Dungannon Leisure Centre / Maghera HS   - Capital Projects
24. Seamus Heaney HomePlace
25. Full Fibre Project Procurement Update

Matters for Information

26. Confidential Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 4 June 2020
27. Managing Attendance
28. Staff Furlough Scheme - Update
29. Contracts and DAC

Report on	Capital Discretionary Grant Fund
Date of Meeting	2nd July 2020
Reporting Officer	Adrian McCreesh, Director of Business & Communities

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 agree the funding allocation to the Council Capital Discretionary Grant awards.
2.0	Background
2.1	Council has agreed as part of its annual grants programme to allocate a capital discretionary award grant over the last 3 year period; based on an annual agreed budget from Policy and Resources Committee.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The annual Council Capital Discretionary Award budget for the previous 2 year period was £150,000.

A total of three capital projects have been assessed and agreed this year for funding through the Development Committee, on Thursday 11th June, to a value of £150,000. Each project to be awarded a total of £50,000 contribution as part of their overall capital investment. The awards agreed were based on approval through Policy and Resources Committee for the allocated budget.

It is proposed that the funding of £150,000 for the Capital Discretionary Award for 2020 – 2021 would be agreed to allow the projects to move forward. |
| **4.0** | **Other Considerations** |
| **4.1** | **Financial & Human Resources Implications**

Council Discretionary Capital Fund – £150,000 for 2020 – 2021

Professional Support
None |
| **4.2** | **Equality and Good Relations Implications**
None |

4.3	**<u>Risk Management Implications</u>** None
5.0	**Recommendation(s)**
5.1	Council Capital Discretionary Budget – to agree the funding of £150,000 for the 3 capital discretionary projects as agreed by the Development Committee.
6.0	**Documents Attached & References**
6.1	None.

Report on	Revision of Email and Instant Messaging Policy
Date of Meeting	July 2020
Reporting Officer	Barry O'Hagan – Head of ICT
Contact Officer	Barry O'Hagan – Head of ICT

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 seek approval of the adoption policy of a revised Email and Instant Messaging Policy
2.0	**Background**
2.1	The introduction of The Data Protection Act 2018 (as a result of GDPR EU regulations) has necessitated the review and adoption of policies that reflects the new legislative requirements placed on the Council to protect personal data and the impact that has on our IT policies. Council has revised the email and instant messaging policy as part of that review in order to reflect the new legislative considerations required.
3.0	**Main Report**
3.1	The new Email and instant messaging policy legislation and policy supersedes the previous policy adopted in October 2015. This policy covers all email, collaboration and messaging systems and facilities that are provided by Mid Ulster District Council for the purpose of conducting and supporting official business activity through the Councils network infrastructure, mobiles and all stand alone and portable computer devices. It is intended for all Mid Ulster District Councillors, Employees of the Council, contractual third parties and agents of the Council who have been designated as authorised users of messaging facilities. System examples include Microsoft Office, Outlook, Skype for business, Teams, Cisco Jabber, Cisco WebEx, Skype, Portal administration tools. The full policy is detailed in Appendix 1.
4.0	**Other Considerations**
4.1	**Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications**
	Financial: There will be no significant additional financial pressures caused by the revision of the policy.

	Human: Council, has undertaken a program of training staff on personal Data Protection. The revised email policy will be circulated to all staff with email and published on the intranet. Unions have been consulted with in relation to the revisions earlier this year with no significant points raised.	
	Risk Management: The potential for a breach of personal data has been identified as a corporate risk that requires regular monitoring, controls and mechanisms to treat the evolving risks presented. The revised policies helps to mitigate same.	
4.2	**Screening & Impact Assessments**	
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: An equality and good relations impact assessment has been completed and approved by the Director of Finance. The outcome of the screening has screened this policy out.	
	Rural Needs Implications: The policy has been subjected to a rural needs impact assessment and this policy has considered the assessment during the policy revision . No significant impacts have been identified.	
5.0	**Recommendation(s)**	
5.1	Council approve the adoption of the Email and Instant Messaging Policy.	
6.0	**Documents Attached & References**	
	Appendix 1:Email and Instant Messaging Policy	

Email and Instant Messaging Policy

Document Control			
Policy Owner	Head of IT, Barry O'Hagan		
Policy Author	Head of IT, Barry O'Hagan		
Version	2.0		
Consultation	Senior Management Team Yes Trade Unions Yes		
Equality Screened by	Yes	**Date**	June 2020
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes	**Date**	June 2020
Good Relations	N/A	**Date**	N/A
Approved By	(Policy & Resources)	**Date**	TBC July 2020
Adopted By	Council	**Date**	TBC July 2020
Review Date	July 2022	**By Whom**	Head of IT
Circulation	Councillors, Staff, Intranet		
Document & legislation Linkages and	Internet Use policy Mobile Phone Policy The Privacy and Electronic Communications Regs (PECR) Dignity at Work Policy Social Media Policy Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 Lawful Business Practice Regulations Code of Conduct for Councillors Data Protection Policy & Legislation Information retention & disposal Policy Code of Conduct for Council Employees Communication Strategy Communication Policy Freedom of Information Policy &Legislation Language Policy Disciplinary Policy		

P a g e **2 |**

Contents

1.0 Introduction

Email and Instant messaging are critical communications and collaboration services for Mid Ulster District Council (MUDC) for transferring and sharing information if both sender and recipient are aware of the classification of the information and the safest way to send it. These systems are managed by Information Technology (IT).

2.0 Policy Aims & Objectives

The objective of this Policy is to direct all users of Council email and instant messaging facilities by:

> • Providing guidance on how to use instant messaging and email in a safe and appropriate manner that protects personal data and the organisation information systems.
> • Informing users about the acceptable use of the systems.
> • Stating the actions that may be taken to monitor the effectiveness of this policy.

The Policy establishes a framework within which users of Council email and instant messaging facilities can apply self-regulation to their use of email and instant messaging as a productive communication and collaboration tool.

3.0 Policy Scope

This policy covers all email, collaboration and messaging systems and facilities that are provided by Mid Ulster District Council for the purpose of conducting and supporting official business activity through the Councils network infrastructure, mobiles and all stand alone and portable computer devices.

This policy is intended for all Mid Ulster District Councillors, Employees of the Council, contractual third parties and agents of the Council who have been designated as authorised users of messaging facilities.
System examples include Microsoft Office, Outlook, Skype for business, Teams, Cisco Jabber, Cisco WebEx, Skype, Portal administration tools.

4.0 Linkage to Corporate Plan (2020-2024)

The policy is aligned with the corporate themes

Theme 1: Leadership
This theme is intended to reflect the Council's position as an organisation which has a key role to play not only in the direct delivery of services which will impact positively on people's lives, but also as a key shaper and influencer externally.

Theme 2: Service Delivery
In this theme, we focus on our internal agenda in terms of our resources (people and finances) and the priorities which will ensure we are a high-performing Council, where excellence is standard.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

All Staff have a responsibility to adhere to the guidelines contained within this policy and abide by the Code of Practice for Email and Instant messaging (" Acceptable Use") in appendix 2.

Managers at all levels are responsible for ensuring that their relevent staff have read and understand their obligations in relation to this policy.

It is the responsibility of each individual user to ensure that they use Council's IT services in an acceptable manner in accordance with all policies and current legislation.

The ICT service will be responsible for the implementation of technical controls and review of this policy including .

- Managing/reviewing/analysing fault calls/issues
- Administering access to Council information systems
- Managing/reviewing/analysing security breaches

6.0 Procedure and Implementation

General Policy statement

Purpose: Email and Instant Messaging as a form of Communication

Email and instant messaging is designed to be an open and transparent method of communicating. However, it cannot be guaranteed that the message will be received or read, nor that the content will be understood in the way that the sender of the email or instant messaging intended. It is therefore the responsibility of the person sending an email to decide whether it is the most appropriate method for conveying information.

Instant Messaging and Collaboration tools are a handy tool for quickly checking information or arranging a short notice meeting and team work but should not be used for communicating financial information, authorisations, decisions, historic or other information that must be retained for statutory or Council purposes e.g. it may be needed in a response to an FOI request or be part of an audit trail.

Instant messaging should only be used for informal communications with colleagues - any discussions pertinent to the Council's business should be conducted via email so that a formal record exists.

IT facilities provided by the Council for email and instant messaging should not be used:

- for any unlawful endeavours including hacking.
- to request or provide any copyrighted material in a way which would infringe the rights of the copyright holder.
- for advocacy of any religious or political cause.
- In any way that breaches council policies and procedures relating to dignity at work or that could cause offence on any grounds covered by equality and anti-discrimination law (age, religious belief, political

P a g e **5** |

opinion, gender/gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, disability, race, sexual orientation, marital status or dependency).

- Access inappropraite or offensive material e.g Pornographic material etc.
- Remarks which are derogatory or defamatory towards any person
- The sending of bulk email/IM, including excessive use of mailing lists, which is unrelated to the legitimate activities of the Council and is likely to cause offence or inconvenience to those receiving it.
- The sending of sensitive messages using email/IM, for example employment decisions. If in doubt, alternative methods of communication should be employed, or advice sought.
- Subscribing to external web sites and mailing lists using your Council email address for personal use not related to your Council work. For example: Amazon, EBay, etc.

Whilst it can sometimes be helpful to maintain a chain of e-mails on a particular subject, long chains of e-mails are best avoided. Information from e-mails may be required to answer Data Protection/FOI requests and difficulties can arise if a chain of e-mails refers to data which should not be disclosed. Users should consider this when responding to or creating an e-mail chain and, where appropriate, create a fresh message.

The Council's Social Media Policy provides further guidance relating to unacceptable use of email & Internet with respect to the use of Social Networking (for more information please see the Social Media Policy on the intranet).

Security and Risk

Mid Ulster District Council recognises that there are risks associated with users accessing and handling information in order to conduct official Council business.

These include;

Loss of Council Information
Financial penalties for failing to meet legal obligations
Risk to the safety and privacy of service users
Impact on the ability to share information with other bodies
Damage to the Council's reputation
Non-compliance with this policy could have a significant effect on the efficient operation of the Council and may result in financial loss and an inability to provide necessary services to our customers.

All emails arriving at the Council are subject to technical controls and scans for computer virus and (unsolicited bulk email/spam) content before delivery, manual intervention or rejection. These control systems can never be 100% accurate.

Some guidelines are listed below to minimise risk but the full code of practice is detailed in appendix 2. Contact the ICT Service Desk if you require advice:

i Do not open attachments received from unsolicited or untrusted sources;

ii Be wary of unsolicited attachments. If in doubt, contact the sender or IT services to check before opening the attachment;

iii Do not email/IM attachments known to be infected with a virus;

iv Check that suitable anti-virus software is installed on the computer you're using and that it's up-to-date;

Although the Council uses (where available) secure methods for email transmission and user access, email confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Unless special measures are undertaken by the user, all emails should be regarded as insecure. Personal, confidential or sensitive information should not be sent in the body of an email. Where there is a business need to send personal, confidential or sensitive information via email then the information must be encrypted before it is attached to the email.

For guidance on how to encrypt and protect documents please contact the ICT Service Desk or consult the intranet learning section.

Credit card information

Credit Card Information must never be sent via email/IM or asked to be sent via email/IM. Any credit card information received via email/IM must be immediately deleted by the recipient and must not be printed, copied, replied to, forwarded on or processed for payment. The sender must be informed that no payment was taken, their credit card details were deleted and that they must use an approved method of payment. The incident must also be reported to the IT Service Desk as there are further processes needed to remove the data from our systems.

Email as Records

Emails and Messages are a form of record keeping as well as a means to communicate. Accordingly, they should be treated and managed as an informational asset. Information held on Council equipment is considered to be part of the corporate record and provides a record of staff activities.

Non-work email accounts **must not** be used to conduct or support official MUDC business. Councillors and users must ensure that any messages containing sensitive information are sent from an official council email.

Ownership & Monitoring

The associated user accounts and their stored data within the Councils Email and IM systems are the property of the Council which allows the Council the right, where necessary, to monitor/access emails and IMs.

Data Protection and Freedom of Information

As well as the guidelines outlined in the ICT Security Policy and the Data Protection Policy, the following guidelines are specific to email and logged IM chats:

1. The use of email, as a means of internal as well as external communication, falls within the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018;

2. Under the Data Protection Act, all email transmissions and logged IM chats which contain personal data may be disclosed in response to a request for

P a g e **7** |

disclosure, brought forward (through normal procedure), via the Councils Data Protection Officer.

3. The Councils internal and external use of email systems, for bona fide purposes connecting with its operations, is registered with the Data Protection Registrar;

4. Under the terms of the Data Protection Act 2018, email users who have access to email addresses have a responsibility not to disclose email addresses or email distribution lists (Personal Data) to an unauthorised third party without permission of the owner of the email address.

Emails and logged IM chats are also potentially subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.

Classification:A Requirement to maintain Integrity and confidentiality

Asset classification and control is an essential requirement, which will ensure the Confidentiality, Integrity and Availability of information used by the Council. An information classification system is used to define appropriate protection levels and to communicate the need for special handling measures. Each information asset is classified to indicate its sensitivity and to identify the controls required to protect it.

The Council's Classification Scheme

The Council will only be using the OFFICIAL classification. However, the OFFICIAL classification also includes a handling caveat of OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE in order to identify information that should only be available on a strictly need to know basis and may need additional measures of protection. These classifications should be applied to all information including emails, paper documents, electronic documents, systems etc.

All Council information will be classified as OFFICIAL unless there are specific handling requirements.

Any information that is not marked will be assumed to be OFFICIAL
All staff are under a general requirement to maintain the confidentiality of information.

There are also particular responsibilities under Data Protection legislation to maintain the confidentiality of personal data. If any member of staff is unsure of whether they should pass on information, they should consult their line manager or the Head of IT for further advice.

Care should be taken when addressing all emails, but particularly where they include SENSITIVE or RESTRICTED information, to prevent accidental transmission to unintended recipients.

Sensitive Information and Email

When creating an email, the information contained within it must be assessed and classified by the owner according to the content, when appropriate. The classification will determine how the email, and the information contained within it, should be protected and who should be allowed access to it.

There are several ways to mark emails – it is down to the discretion of staff to decide which the best way for them to do this is. It is possible to use Outlook to mark emails as 'Private' or 'Confidential' – guidance on how to do this can be found on the intranet. Alternatively, staff can include the classification of the information in the subject line of the email, this would be seen before the recipient sees the body of the email. It is imperative the recipient of any SENSITIVE or RESTRICTED information is aware that this is the classification of the information.

Instant messaging should never be used to communicate PROTECTED or RESTRICTED information.

The OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE caveat should be used at the discretion of staff depending on the subject area, context and any statutory or regulatory requirements where it is particularly important to enforce the need to know rules.

However, the caveat should be used by exception in limited circumstances where there is a clear and justifiable requirement to reinforce the 'need to know' as compromise or loss could have severe and damaging consequences for an individual (or group of individuals), another organisation or the Council more generally. This might include, but is not limited to the following types of information:

- The most sensitive corporate or operational information, e.g. relating to organisational change planning, contentious negotiations, or major security or business continuity issues;

- policy development and advice to members on contentious and very sensitive issues;

- commercial or market sensitive information, including that subject to statutory or regulatory obligations, that may be damaging to the Council or to a commercial partner if improperly accessed;

- Information about investigations and civil or criminal proceedings that could compromise public protection or enforcement activities, or prejudice court cases;

- more sensitive information about security assets or equipment that could damage capabilities or effectiveness;

- very sensitive personal data that would be extremely damaging to an individual if lost or compromised, e.g. child protection cases, HR compromise agreements,

- Government data where they have defined it as OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE and insist on strict sharing protocols

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE data cannot be shared externally except through an approved secure email system/secure network or appropriate data encryption and password protection and should be accompanied by a defined distribution list. Data sharing with external organisations must be in line with corporate data sharing agreements or contract terms.

Where large volumes of OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE information about particular topics are regularly shared between organisations, the respective information asset owners will need to agree specific handling arrangements and transfer protocols in line with the policy.

Retention

The council will retain a copy of emails within an email archive in line with the Council's information retention and disposal policy/schedule. Individual access to the archive is provided through the intranet (my apps).

Mail on Mobile devices

MUDC Mail allows for the synchronisation of emails, calendar, tasks, contacts and other mailbox features to a mobile device such as a smart phone.

It must be recognised that these devices are more susceptible to theft and/or loss and therefore staff must adhere to the following:

Only approved mobile phones devices must be used to synchronise MUDC Mail Accounts to. Approved devices have been selected to ensure that safeguards are in place to protect any data downloaded to the device e.g. the use encryption and PIN numbers.

Staff wishing to synchronise their MUDC Mail accounts to their personal mobile phone must comply with the criteria set out in this policy and acceptable use policy.

Staff must only request the functionality required to undertake their job role e.g. if only calendar access is required then staff should not request all mailbox functionality to be synchronised to the device.
Due to their relatively small size staff must take extra care when responding to emails or sending an email message from a mobile device, especially with regard to ensuring that the correct email recipient has been selected. These devices usually have very small key pads or on screen keyboards which make it easy to input an incorrect character which may result in the misdirection of an email.

Any loss of a mobile device being used to synchronise a MUDC Mail account must be reported to the ICT Service Desk at the earliest opportunity so as to minimise the risk of loss of data.

Monitoring of Email and IM Usage

All users should be aware that messaging and email usage is monitored and recorded centrally. The monitoring of (outgoing and incoming) traffic will be undertaken so that Council:

  • Can plan and manage its resources effectively.
  • Ensures that users act only in accordance with policies and procedures.
  • Ensures that standards are maintained.
  • Can prevent and detect any crime.
  • Can investigate any unauthorised use.
  • Complies with informational security and legislation requirements.

Whilst respecting the privacy of authorised users, under the Data Protection Code of Practice, Council maintains its legal right to monitor and audit the use of email by authorised users under the Lawful Business Practice Regulations 2000. Users should be aware that deletion of e-mail from individual accounts does not necessarily result in permanent deletion from the Council's ICT systems.

Note: IM conversations are not routinely retained or archived, but may be forensically recovered if required for criminal or disciplinary investigation purposes in accordance with the above authorisations.

Access to another employee's email is **strictly forbidden** unless: - (a) the employee has given their consent, (b) their email needs to be accessed by their line manager for specific work purposes whilst they are absent or (c) an appropriately authorised investigation is being undertaken.

In the case of (b) and (c) authorisations must be obtained from the corresponding Director or Chief Executive.

Access granted to email and network accounts must be for a specific purpose and **proportionate to the need** having regard to the rights and freedoms of the employee and the expectations of a reasonable level of privacy with regard to personal communications. Managers must only open emails which are relevant to the business need and/or purpose stated.

Shared Mailboxes

Where several users are responsible for the same area of work and require access to the same emails then a member of the Head of service may ask/request for a shared mailbox with an associated, generic, email address that represents the shared area of work to the ICT Service Desk. The request must include the names of at least 2 staff who will be in overall management of the shared mailbox and any other names of users who require access before it is considered and approved.

An email address allocated to a shared mailbox must be generic enough so that it encompasses the area of work shared by the users accessing that mailbox but it must not be so generic that there would be an overlap with users performing a similar role in another part of the Council who would not have access to that shared mailbox.

A shared mailbox does not have an associated username and password as users must log on with their personally-allocated username and password. This will give them access to their own mailbox and to the shared mailbox.

Out-of-Office Message, Disclaimer and Signatures

Staff users must set the Out-of-Office option when they are away stating an alternative email contact for work-related matters.

Each email leaving the organisation should include a compliant signature as prescribed in Appendix 3.

Emails sent by staff to recipients outside the Council will automatically include an approved disclaimer (as per appendix 1)':
Account Activation and Termination

Account changes for staff to receive email services must be made in writing through the ICT Help Desk by a head of service or human resources.

Staff mailboxes and messaging accounts will be deleted at the termination of the staff member's employment.

Where explicitly requested in writing by a head of service, a mailbox of a staff member who has left may be kept open for a period of not more than two months, with an Out of Office reply directing enquiries to a different email address.

Any email addressed to a named staff member who has left may NOT be redirected to another email address. Such emails may contain personal, confidential or inappropriate content that may place the Council or Staff at risk if it is opened.

Staff mobile devices which are used to connect to MUDC provided mailboxes or which contain data owned by or held by the Council will be wiped at the termination of a staff member's employment.

Web based Email

Mid Ulster District council's email can be accessed from any computer or device with internet capabilities and the required security measures. The web based version of MUDC email can be accessed by navigating to https://login.microsoftonline.com/

Policy Compliance

If any user is found to have breached this policy, they may be subject to Mid Ulster District Council's disciplinary procedure.

If a criminal offence is considered to have been committed further action may be taken to assist in the prosecution of the offender(s).
If you do not understand the implications of this policy or how it may apply to you, seek advice from ICT services.

In the event of an accidental breach of this policy staff members must advise their line manager immediately so that appropriate steps can be taken to mitigate or remove any possible risk(s) e.g. the exposure and/ or loss of sensitive data.

7.0 Impact Assessment & Screening.

The policy has been rescreened using Mid Ulster District Council's Equality Scheme and Rural needs Assessment templates.

Staff and financial resources
The systems to implement and provide email, messaging and monitoring are provided and resourced through the IT services budget and resources.

The primary systems are Office 365 and Teams & Cisco Jabber requiring internet access and network connectivity to back office telephony.

8.0 Support and Advice

For further information and advice about the policy, please ICT ,
Service Desk Internal extension 22222
Or alternatively Head of IT: Barry O'Hagan: Ext 23312.

User Training and Support

New start will receive training as part of on-going inductions for new staff affected.

Implementation of the policy may require the release of staff across the organisation to be briefed via team meeting and updates.

Users will be provided with the following support, guidance and training materials on the intranet:

> Policy
> Policy Summary
> Code of Practice for Email & Instant Messaging
> O365 Microsoft learning Paths Online

9.0 Communication

The policy will be communicated internally using a range of appropriate internal communication methods, team meetings and on the council intranet.
The policy will also from part of the induction process for all new staff.

10.0 Monitoring and Review Arrangements

The effectiveness of the policy will be monitored using feedback from those staff involved in its implementation and data collated on performance against standards.

Formal review, with any appropriate recommendations for change, will take place 2 year after implementation unless changes in legislation prompt an earlier review.

Appendix 1

Email Disclaimer on all email leaving the organisation;

'This email is solely intended for the recipient identified above ('intended recipient'). The contents of this email are confidential and may be subject to legal professional privilege. Only the intended recipient may rely on the contents of this email. The contents of this email do not express the views of Mid Ulster District Council ("the Council") unless otherwise clearly stated. The sender (including the Council) cannot guarantee that this message or any attachment is virus free. Any person who opens or otherwise accesses an email from the sender in the future does so at their own risk and acknowledges and agrees that the sender (and the Council) is not responsible for any loss or damage suffered by any person.

Privacy Information

As a public body, the Council may be required to disclose this email (or any response to it) under Data Protection and/or Freedom of Information legislation, unless the information contained is covered by an exemption. The Council treats your personal data in compliance with the legislation. To learn more about how your data is processed please go to www.midulstercouncil.org/privacy. If you receive this email in error, please immediately report the error to the sender and permanently delete this email from all storage devices.'.

Appendix 2

Code of Practice for Email and Instant messaging ("Acceptable Use")

All users should adhere to the following guidelines for appropriate use:

Check your email regularly - once a day is an absolute minimum. For staff users, depending on the nature of the post, email may need checking on a more regular basis. Staff must recognise that certain communications may be time critical.

Do not expect a recipient to be constantly checking their email/IM or be available to respond immediately. If you require an immediate response, then email/IM is not the correct method of communication and you should use a phone call instead.

If you use the 'Urgent' feature in email then it lets the recipient know that you consider the matter to be urgent. However, the recipient has their own workload to manage and, as such, the email may not be deemed urgent by them.

The use of 'Delivery Receipt' or 'Read Receipt' on an email can be deemed to imply a lack of trust in the recipient and so should not be used unless absolutely necessary. It should be noted that a 'Delivery Receipt' or 'Read Receipt' response is not guaranteed and may be blocked by the recipient's email system or the recipient's email client.

Be polite. Messages sent by email/IM can often seem abrupt, even when this is not the intention. Use professional courtesy and discretion. The use of all upper-case text in either the subject or the body of an email/IM should also be avoided as this is deemed to be the equivalent of shouting;

Before you send an email/IM, read it through to make sure it really does say what you want it to say;

Do not say anything in an email/IM that you would not be prepared to say to someone face to face;

The 'Subject' line must be clear and concise.
The body of the email should be as brief as possible and clear and unambiguous.

All emails that are used to conduct or support official Mid Ulster council business must be sent using a "@midulstercouncil.org" address.

Do not reply "With History" if it is not necessary especially if it incorporates a large attachment. Use 'reply all' and distribution lists with caution in order to keep the number of messages to a minimum and reduce the risk of sending messages to the wrong people;

Messages should be addressed to those from whom an action or response is expected, 'Cc' or 'Bcc' should be used for other recipients for whom the message is for information only;

Respect peoples' privacy and consider this aspect before forwarding messages;

Do not try to carry out confidential or sensitive tasks or express controversial views via email/IM;

Enter a meaningful title in the 'Subject' field at the top of an email to help the reader anticipate the content correctly. Try to keep to one subject per message to help avoiding unnecessary confusion;

Don't use all or part of someone else's message without acknowledgement.

Don't edit someone else's message without making it clear what the changes are that you have made. Don't distribute other people's messages without permission;

Avoid subscribing to unnecessary mailing lists. Unsubscribe from mailing lists when they are no longer required;

Do not forward email/IM "chain letters". These are emails/IMs which either ask you to forward them on to all your friends (or to everyone you know) or which state that something bad will happen if you do not forward them. Emails/IMs of this type, which are warning about something (e.g. computer viruses), are almost certainly hoaxes. If you are unsure about any email/IM that you've received then contact the ICT Service Desk for information and help.

Staff are required to use the approved Council email signature for all email communications as set out in appendix 3.

No other information should be added to email signatures.

Staff users should ensure that their calendar in the Councils email system is kept up-to-date so that colleagues can easily confirm their availability when booking appointments and arranging meetings.

Mail Box Housekeeping

Delete unwanted or unnecessary email. It is the user's responsibility to manage their email folders and keep within the set quota limits.

It is good practice to manage email accounts like any other filing system. - On receiving an email users should try to either respond and delete, save or delete it.

In order to ensure that the systems enabling email are available and perform to their optimum, users should endeavour to avoid sending unnecessary messages. In particular, the use of the "global list" of e-mail addresses is discouraged and should only be sent following direction from the Head of Communications and Marketing.

Email messages can be used to carry other files or messages either embedded in the message or attached to the message. If it is necessary to provide a file to another person and network access permissions allow, then a reference to where the file exists should be sent rather than a copy of the file.

Junk Mail

There may be instances where a user will receive unsolicited mass junk email or spam. It is advised that users delete such messages *without reading them*. Do not reply to the email. Even to attempt to remove the email address from the distribution list can confirm the existence of an address following a speculative e-mail.

Be wary of how you use your midulstercouncil.org email address – it should only be used for recognised professional bodies and official communications.

Chain letter e-mails (those that request you forward the message to one or more additional recipients who are unknown to the original sender) **must not** be forwarded using council facilities or messaging systems.

If the event with issues of repetitive Junk email or spam please contact the ICT service desk for assistance.
The use of COUNCIL-provided email is subject to all relevant laws, policies, and codes
Of practice and guidelines. All users must comply with the COUNCIL's *Information*

Security Policy, the *Data Security Policy* and the '*code of practice here.*

Personal use
COUNCIL email services are provided to staff, and approved third parties to conduct official Council-related business. Personal emails may be sent using the COUNCIL system so long as they do not breach any policy, Code of Practice and or other terms and conditions of employment.

Employees must regard this facility as a privilege that should normally be exercised in their own time without detriment to the job and not abused. Inappropriate or excessive personal use may result in disciplinary action and/or removal of email facilities. Staff should be aware that email will be subject to monitoring. There is no absolute right for staff to use the email facilities for personal use.

Staff are **not** permitted to access non-council email on Council Systems as they present a security risk.

Council Business

Official COUNCIL business should not normally be conducted from email accounts other than those provided by the COUNCIL. Although it is recognised that this might be necessary in some exceptional circumstances, users should be also be aware that the use of third-party email providers for COUNCIL work may breach contractual, legislative, ethical and policy requirements.

Simple "DO NOTS"

Users must not send messages or message content that may harass or offend , e.g., harass or offend on any ground covered by equality and anti-discrimination law (religious belief, political opinion, gender/gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status or dependency) or which may be defamatory or obscene.

Users must not send messages from someone else's account except under proper "delegate" and "send on behalf of" arrangements which retain individual accountability.

Users should not normally "auto forward" mail to a non-COUNCIL email system (this includes internet email systems such as Hotmail or Gmail)

Users should not normally enter into contractual agreements by email.
Users must not use COUNCIL email for personal gain or profit.
Users must not use COUNCIL email to represent themselves as someone else.
Users are encouraged not to use COUNCIL email as a means of storing information. All important information should be stored within the network drive
Attachments should be detached from messages and saved appropriately.
Users must not attempt to access personal email accounts (e.g. Gmail or Hotmail) on the Councils network.

COUNCIL email should not be accessed by any end user device that has been deliberately or knowingly cracked or jailbroken, or that may otherwise prove a threat to the Confidentiality, Integrity and Accessibility of COUNCIL user accounts, networks and data.

Under the terms of this policy no person shall monitor another user's email account unless written authorisation has been granted to do so. The monitoring and or inspection of email accounts may only occur in accordance the *Information Security Policy* and the *Monitoring and Logging Policy*.

P a g e **17 |**

The COUNCIL, in accordance with its legal and audit obligations, and for legitimate operational purposes, reserves the right to access and disclose the contents users' email messages.

Email Distribution Lists and Mass Emails

Email distribution (group) lists provided by the Council must only be used for matters of Council business. To send to such a distribution list the sender must be either an administrator/moderator of the distribution list. Any multiple use of email distribution lists provided should be avoided unless absolutely necessary;

A valid 'Reply-To' address must be used on any mass email with additional contact details given in the body of the email.

Do not put the name of the distribution list or a large list of names in the 'To' or 'Cc' fields but use the 'Bcc' field instead. This ensures the list of recipients will not be displayed when the email is sent out and prevents recipients from accidentally sending their reply to the whole list.

Do not send mass emails with attachments but try to contain the information within the body of the email or, as a last resort, in a web link. Where a web link is used then it must also provide information as to how the linked content can be accessed manually without clicking on the link. This is to help the recipient distinguish the email from a malicious 'phishing' email.

The email distribution lists are maintained by ICT. Any request for change must be made through the helpdesk.

Web based Email

Mid Ulster District council's email can be accessed from any computer or device with internet capabilities and the required security measures. The web based version of MUDC email can be accessed by navigating to https://login.microsoftonline.com/

Appendix 3

MUDC Email Signature

Email signatures should contain the following information.

Name
Job Title
Telephone Number
Mobile Telephone Number
Provide | Location Address |
Email Address

The font must be Arial 12.

Directorate/department specific additions/amendments to this format must be approved by the Head of Communications and marketing.
The Council Logo with Full text is optional as this requires email to go out as HTML format and should be no wider than pixels and maintain in the correct aspect ratio as per the Council Branding Guidelines available on the intranet.

Maximum Actual Size

Report on	Revision of Mobile Policy
Date of Meeting	July 2020
Reporting Officer	Barry O'Hagan – Head of ICT
Contact Officer	Barry O'Hagan – Head of ICT

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 seek approval a revised Mobile Device Policy
2.0	**Background**
2.1	The introduction of The Data Protection Act 2018 (as a result of GDPR EU regulations) has necessitated the review and adoption of policies that reflects the new legislative requirements placed on the Council to protect personal data and the impact that has on our IT policies. Council has revised the Mobile Device policy as part of that review in order to reflect the new legislative considerations required.
3.0	**Main Report**
3.1	The revised policy Objectives are to • To ensure that there is a clear internal arrangement for the effective management of mobile device. • To establish the responsibilities of employees of the Council regarding the issue and use of Council mobile devices in respect of data security. • To ensure that Health & Safety issues are identified in relation to the use of mobile devices and ensure compliance with legislation on mobile devices and driving. An employee will be eligible to have a mobile device if it is deemed necessary to their position and they meet one of the following criteria: • If the employee's duties require them to spend a substantial amount of time out of the office on work related duties (substantial is defined as an average of more than 50% of their working day) • Staff for whom it is necessary to make essential work-related calls off site as part of their normal course of work • Staff who are required to be contactable in an emergency, when working off-site

	- Staff who are on call after normal business hours - Staff identified through the risk assessment procedure or business case Revisions have incorporated the consideration imposed by the new Data protection and the safeguarding of personal data on mobile devices. Council has consulted with SMT and unions before presenting the revisions to Council for adoption
4.0	**Other Considerations**
4.1	**Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications**
	Financial: There will be no significant additional financial pressures caused by the revision of the policy.
	Human: Council, has undertaken a program of training staff on personal Data Protection. The revised Mobile policy will be circulated to all staff and published on the intranet. Unions have been consulted with in relation to the revisions earlier this year with no significant points raised.
	Risk Management: The potential for a breach of personal data has been identified as a corporate risk that requires regular monitoring, controls and mechanisms to treat the evolving risks presented. The revised policies helps to mitigate same.
4.2	**Screening & Impact Assessments**
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: An equality and good relations impact assessment has been completed and approved by the Director of Finance. The outcome of the screening has screened this policy out.
	Rural Needs Implications: The policy has been subjected to a rural needs impact assessment and this policy has considered the assessment during the policy revision . No significant impacts have been identified.
5.0	**Recommendation(s)**
5.1	Council approve the adoption of the Mobile Device Policy.
6.0	**Documents Attached & References**
	Appendix 1:Mobile device Policy v2.1

Mobile Phone Policy

Document Control			
Policy Owner	Barry O'Hagan, Head of IT		
Policy Author	Barry O'Hagan, Head of IT		
Version	V2.1		
Consultation	Senior Management Team Yes Trade Unions Yes		
Equality Screened by	Yes	**Date**	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes	**Date**	
Approved By	Policy & Resources Committee	**Date**	TBC
Adopted By	Council	**Date**	TBC
Review Date	July 2022	**By Whom**	Head of IT
Circulation	Councillors, Staff, Intranet		
Document Linkages	The Privacy and Electronic Communications Regs (PECR) IT Related Policies Dignity at Work Policy Social Media Policy Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 Lawful Business Practice Regulations Code of Conduct for Councillors Data Protection Policy & Legislation Information retention & disposal Policy Code of Conduct for Council Employees Communication Strategy Communication Policy Freedom of Information Policy &Legislation Language Policy Disciplinary Policy		

Page **1** of **10**

CONTENTS PAGE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Mobile devices have been issued by Council to the following persons

Elected Members

Council Employees

Under the terms of the current contact, handsets are provided by Council, with all employees covering the costs of any personal calls made.

Members will receive a phone only and access to council mobile contracts but will automatically be deducted all charges in relation to the full contract cost.

1.2 The Council need to ensure effective management of the Council's mobile device usage, in order to protect Council assets, and to ensure compliance with appropriate legislation and security standards such as ISO 27001 as so far as possible.

2.0 POLICY AIM & OBJECTIVES

2.1 **Policy Aim**: This policy seeks to establish a standard set of conditions, and a framework for the use of mobile phones and devices within the Council.

2.2 **Policy Objectives:**

- To ensure that there is a clear internal arrangement for the effective management of mobile device.

- To establish the responsibilities of employees of the Council regarding the issue and use of Council mobile devices in respect of data security.

- To ensure that Health & Safety issues are identified in relation to the use of mobile devices and ensure compliance with legislation on mobile devices and driving.

- To support any operational procedures connected with the Council's framework for lone worker safety.

3.0 POLICY SCOPE

3.1 This Policy will apply to all Council employees who are provided with a mobile device to assist them in the performance of their duties. For the purpose of this policy 'Mobile devices' includes all mobile devices and portable (handheld) smart devices that may or may not contain a data sim card.

3.2 This policy does not deal with the specific negotiations regarding terms and conditions, rates or other mobile usage with the mobile companies in the management of the Councils Corporate contract.

4.0 LINKAGE TO CORPORATE PLAN (2020-2024)

4.1 **The policy is aligned with the corporate themes**

Theme 1: Leadership
This theme is intended to reflect the Council's position as an organisation which has a key role to play not only in the direct delivery of services which will impact positively on people's lives, but also as a key shaper and influencer externally.

Theme 2: Service Delivery
In this theme, we focus on our internal agenda in terms of our resources (people and finances) and the priorities which will ensure we are a high-performing Council, where excellence is standard.

5.0 PROCEDURE & IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 This section confirms the framework for the criteria for use of a Council mobile device and the conditions of use.

5.2 **Criteria for use of a Council Mobile Device**

5.2.1 In the application of this policy, mobile devices will only be available to staff who have the approval of their Director and/or Head of Service. An employee will be eligible to have a mobile device if it is deemed necessary to their position and they meet one of the following criteria:

- If the employee's duties require them to spend a substantial amount of time out of the office on work related duties (substantial is defined as an average of more than 50% of their working day)

- Staff for whom it is necessary to make essential work-related calls off site as part of their normal course of work

- Staff who are required to be contactable in an emergency, when working off-site

- Staff who are on call after normal business hours

- Staff identified through the risk assessment procedure or business case

5.2.2 Mobile devices may be issued on an individual or on a shared basis. It is the responsibility of the Director/Head of Service of the department to determine which staff will be part of a shared resource pool and the operational procedures.

5.3 **Procedures and General Principles on conditions of use**

5.3.1 In the application of this policy, Council shall refer to and apply the following principles:

Purchase of Equipment

5.3.2 The purchase of mobile devices and services must comply with the Council's purchasing policy through the IT service.

5.3.3 All costs for the purchase and use of mobile devices will be provided by IT services.

5.4 Replacement Devices

5.4.1 Council expects all recipients of a mobile device to take the utmost care and responsibility for them. If a device is lost or stolen, it should be reported immediately to the employee's line Manager and IT services.

5.4.2 If a device is broken or faulty, then the handset should be returned. A temporary device may be issued until repair can be effected. If the device cannot be repaired, a replacement device will be provided.

5.4.3 Depending on the circumstances in which the device was lost or broken, the Council will be responsible for replacing the device.

5.5 Termination of employment

5.5.1 On termination of employment, the employee must return the device to IT Services. The transfer of personal data will be transferred to the staff member if applicable. Any accessories supplied by the organisation for use with the mobile device must also be returned.

5.5.2 Mobile devices issued to an individual must not be passed to any other employee without the authorisation of the Manager, and completion of mobile change form (Appendix 1).

5.5.3 Employees who transfer to other departments within the Council and are authorised to have continued use of a Council mobile device must inform the ICT helpdesk using the Mobile Device Change Form (Appendix 1).

5.5.4 At Council's discretion a mobile device number may be transferred to the employee on leaving the Council.

5.6 Conditions of use

5.6.1 Mobiles devices must be kept switched on at all reasonable times. Missed calls, text messages and voice mails must be responded to within a reasonable period as per customer service policy. This is particularly relevant to Directors, Crisis Management team, Emergency Planning Team, Heads of Service and

facility managers. Mobile devices can only be switched off for extended periods with the express permission of the user's manager. An extended period' would include that period between finishing normal working hours until commencing the next scheduled working hours. During annual leave it is not envisaged that staff will be routinely contacted but staff with mobile devices and particularly those listed within the emergency plan must respond to a call when contacted if possible.

5.6.2 Mobile devices should be switched off during meetings, lectures, seminars, training courses etc. other than in very exceptional circumstances where it is necessary to take an urgent call. In these circumstances it is courteous to alert colleagues to the fact that an urgent call is expected and where possible, the device should be kept on 'silent'.

5.6.3 Confidential information must not be discussed in open areas or inappropriate locations. Many departments / buildings e.g. Hospitals have local rules regarding the use of mobile devices and these must always be respected. Discretion should always be used.

5.6.4 Mobile devices are internet and email capable. Council mobile devices must be used in accordance with all council policies and acceptable use.

5.7   Health & Safety

5.7.1 The Health & Safety at work Order (NI) 1978, require that the Council provides and maintains a working environment for Council staff that is, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe, without risks to health.

5.7.2 As part of the Council's overall health & safety policy, Mid Ulster District Council is committed to reducing risks which employees face when driving or using machinery at work. All staff should play their part by never making or receiving a mobile call on a handheld mobile device when driving or operating machinery. The Council advises that a hands-free mobile device should only be used when **absolutely essential** as research clearly shows that their use is a significant distraction and substantially increases the risk of accidents.

- **The Law:** It is an offence for drivers to use hand-held mobile devices while driving. It is also an offence for employers to require or permit their staff who drive for work, to use a handheld device while driving. It is, however, legal to use 2-way 'press to talk' radios such as those fitted in some Council vehicles.

- **Policy:** Mid Ulster District Council Policy is that **all** mobile devices should not be used in vehicles except when the vehicle is parked and switched off. If a mobile device in the vehicle rings, ignore it and do not pick up the handset (you will be in breach of the legislation). The call should be returned when the vehicle is parked in a safe place.

5.7.3 Guidance may be issued to mobile device users from time to time regarding health & safety in relation to their use, (i.e. Legislation on mobile devices and driving guidance notes and must always be observed).

5.7.4 Staff must ensure that, when they carry a Council mobile device, they have included in the contacts the number of their Line Manager, Departmental Manager, PSNI and Emergency Services.

5.8 Security

5.8.1 Where smart mobile device devices are enabled to access corporate ICT systems such as email the device must be protected from others accessing information in the event it is lost or stolen via a security pin or password.

5.8.2 Web browsing through any smart mobile device is subject to the Acceptable Internet Usages policy. When technology allows the policy will be applied remotely by technical controls via IT services.

5.9 Use

5.9.1 The mobile device is provided primarily to allow contact with the staff member by other staff or customers.

5.9.2 Mobile devices within Council's group have been typically set up to allow free calls/texts on a standard tariff between Council mobiles.

5.9.3 The council will not provide any personal 'Hands-free Car Kit'. Most new Council passenger vehicles are factory equipped with blue tooth hands-free kits and can be used for critical business use.

5.10 Diverting fixed telephone when out of office

5.10.1 If an employee is out of the office and has his or her mobile switched on, then it may be appropriate for the employee to divert calls coming in via their fixed telephone to their mobile device for a limited time.(This will incur a cost and this functionality must be authorised by your line manager before it's enabled through council telephone system by IT).

5.11 Roaming and Data Access Use

5.11.1 The cost of roaming on certain foreign networks some can be expensive and where possible should be avoided when travelling outside of the UK.

5.11.2 Data roaming charges are normally charged daily and should be turned off when not critical when travelling outside the UK to prevent unnecessary expense. You may wish to consider temporary adjustments to your tariff through IT services.

5.11.3 Users are reminded that the mobile device may roam to a non-UK network when in border areas of Northern Ireland, Aughnacloy, Portrush, Portstewart and Castlerock areas. Users should therefore be alert to ensure that expensive roaming charges are not incurred.

5.12 Private Use

5.12.1 Council issued devices are intended primarily for Council business use.

5.12.2 Employees can use the Council mobile device for private calls and texts. This option will enable staff who are issued with a Council mobile device, to make private calls and texts, and to reimburse the Council if there is any additional cost.

5.12.3 It is the user's responsibility to identify any additional personal usage and reimburse the Council accordingly. Mobile devices with itemised usage will be circulated each month and must be settled promptly.

5.12.2 Reimbursement is not required where the total monthly personal usage is less than £1.00 in the month. This is due to administrative costs outweighing the financial benefit to the Council. However, all mobile bills must be signed off and returned whether reimbursement is made or not.

5.12.4 Managers and supervisors will monitor usage of Council mobile devices for both private and business use.

6.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 **Council and Chief Executive:** will assume executive authority with regard to the implementation of the Mobile Device Policy and delegation through the Lead Finance Officer and the management team.

6.2 **IT Services:** is responsible for the following:
   o Distribution and servicing of mobile devices.
   o Distribution of billing information
   o Review the number of mobile devices in use within each department, and whether their issue complies with the criteria set out in section 5.2 when undertaking procurement of mobile device contracts.
   o Management & Maintenance of the Council's Mobile Contract.
   o

6.4 SMT &**Heads of Service:** must ensure:

   o The implementation of this policy and procedures.

   o Ensure that all staff receive information about this Policy, and be part of any local induction where appropriate.

   o Review the number of mobile devices in use within their department, and whether their requirement complies with the criteria set out in section 5.2 when undertaking procurement of mobile device contracts.

6.5 **Elected Members and staff:** All elected members and staff who use a Council mobile device are obliged to adhere to this policy and procedures.

7.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

7.1   **Equality Screening & Impact**

7.1.1   The policy is currently in draft form and yet to be Equality Screened.

7.2   **Staff & Financial Resources**

7.2.1   No issues have been identified which will impact on the delivery of Council business as a result of this policy being implemented.

8.0   SUPPORT AND ADVICE

8.1   Advice and guidance on the implementation of this policy should be sought from the IT service.

9.0   COMMUNICATION

9.1   This policy will be communicated internally using a range of appropriate internal communication methods including intranet, inductions and team meetings.

9.2   All Elected Members and Directors shall be provided with a copy of this policy. Directors must ensure it is communicated with their relevant staff.

9.3   This policy will also form part of the induction process for all new staff (where applicable).

10.0   MONITORING & REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

10.1   Implementation of this policy will be routinely monitored, and a formal review undertaken 24 months from its effective date.

Appendix1

REQUEST FOR Mobile Service or Change

Details of staff member to receive a mobile device:	
Name of Officer	
Job Title of Officer	
Department	

Please identify the need for the mobile device/service request as per Policy		

Tariff Type Requirement (Voice /Data or Voice & Data):		
Cost Centre to procure the mobile device and recurring Costs		
One-Off costs £ e.g. Phone Purchase	Additional revenue costs per Annum £	Have these items been budgeted for? Yes /No
Budget Virement Completed	Yes / No	Please Attach

I authorize the above service request /Change the above member of staff to be allocated a Council mobile device and I have discussed the mobile device policy with this person

Director (Name in block capitals)	
Director (Signature)	

I understand that I have read and understood the conditions of the Mobile Phone Policy

Staff Member (Name in block capitals)	
Staff Member (Signature)	

This form must be signed and returned to the ICT Service at ICT@midulstercouncil.org together with Budget virement completed if additional costs are imposed on IT budgets.

Report on	Committee and Council Meetings: 2020-2021 Update
Date of Meeting	Thurs 2nd July 2020
Reporting Officer	P Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
Contact Officer	E 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	The committee had previously considered the Council & Committee Meeting Schedule for 2020-21 and recommendation on same was subsequently agreed by the Council at its March meeting.
1.2	In the context of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) out-break it was requested at the Council AGM that consideration be given to holding a Council meeting in August 2020, which is out-with the current schedule.
2.0	**Background**
2.1	Business of the council is conducted through its committee structure, a schedule for which was considered by Policy and Resources Committee in March 2020 and subsequently agreed by the Council.
2.2	It was noted, at the AGM, held on 1st June that consideration should be given to holding a Council meeting in August 2020 in light of the relatively recent return to committee/council business.
2.3	It was further noted that the Audit Committee scheduled for November 2020 was due to take place 2 days before the November Council meeting and consideration should be given to bringing the date forward to allow minutes of this meeting to be compiled and approved in the same month.
2.4	Consideration has been given to points at 2.2 and 2.3 below.
3.0	**Main Report**
	August Council Meeting
3.1	Should Members consider a meeting necessary, particularly in the context of considering/deciding upon issues as part of the Council's service recovery as it moves from the COVID-19 pandemic the meeting can be held on: • Thurs 27th August at 7pm in the Burnavon Arts & Cultural Centre and by virtual means The agenda and papers for this meeting will be issued on Fri 21st August

3.2	As it has been in previous years, Planning is currently the only committee meeting scheduled for August, with an agenda and papers scheduled to be issued on Fri 31st July
	Audit Committee, November 2020
3.3	Consideration has been given to the scheduling of the Audit Committee and whilst it will take place 2 days before the November Council it is nonetheless the audit meeting which ordinarily takes place in December each year but has been brought forward to November to accommodate the December holiday period.
3.4	The minutes of this audit committee will be brought to December Council, within 16 business days of the meeting. On speaking with Director of Finance it would be more advantageous to have the Audit meeting closer to December Council rather than bring it forward to be held earlier in November. This is due to the timetabling for publishing financial statements in light of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.
4.0	**Other Considerations**
4.1	**Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications**
	Financial: none
	Human: none
	Risk Management: none
4.2	**Screening & Impact Assessments**
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: none
	Rural Needs Implications: none
5.0	**Recommendation(s)**
5.1	That the Committee considers holding a council meeting in August and other meetings as deemed appropriate to be responsive in taking decisions on Council's service/business recovery from the Coronavirus outbreak.
6.0	**Documents Attached & References**
	None

Report on	Annual Progress Returns 2019-2020: Equality Commission and Dept. of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs
Date of Meeting	Thursday 2nd July 2020
Reporting Officer	Philip Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
Contact Officer	Ann McAleer, 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 Progress Reports for the period 2019-20 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 Northern Ireland (2016).
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 (2019-2020) 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	The Equality Commission also require Council to undertake a 5-year review of Council's Equality Scheme. This includes developing a new audit of inequalities in order to update of the Equality and Disability Action Plans. As such, Council in is required to adapt a revised Equality Scheme and associated plans by March 2021. This review is being undertaken by the Corporate Policy & Equality Officer and relevant officers as appropriate.
2.5	Mid Ulster District Council is also bound by the Rural Needs Act NI (2016) to 'have due regard to rural needs when:

• developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and;
• designing and delivering public services'.

Section 3 of the Rural Needs Act 2016 also requires that the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) 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.
3.0	**Main Report**
3.1	The statutory progress report for the Equality Commission and DAERA for the period 2019-20 are attached as Appendix A and Appendix B.
	Equality Annual Progress Report
3.2	This reports on aspects of the council's Equality Scheme and how it has been implemented the over the period. This Progress Report is required to be submitted annually, by 31st August each year but this has been extended for public authorities to no later than 30th December 2020, in light of the Coronavirus outbreak. Officers have however prepared the annual return ready for submission subject to Committee and Council approval. The draft return is included as Appendix A to this report.
	Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report
3.3	Mid Ulster District Council's Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report (2019-2020) sets out to the extent to which the Council has demonstrated and delivered upon the Rural Needs statutory duty. Returns are required annually by end of June each year but the Department has extended this to 11th September due to the Coronavirus outbreak. The draft return is included as Appendix B to 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: As detailed
	Rural Needs Implications: As detailed
5.0	**Recommendation(s)**
5.1	That Council considers approval of the Annual Progress Reports (2019-20) on the implementation and activities surrounding its Equality and Good Relations Duties and Rural Needs Duties. Both sets of duties are statutory requirements of Council.

6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Appendix A: Mid Ulster District Council Annual Equality Progress Report (2019-20) Appendix B: Mid Ulster District Council Annual Rural Needs Progress Report (2019-20)

Appendix A

Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties

Annual Progress Report 2019-20

Contact:

• Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme	Name: Telephone: Email:	Ann McAleer 03000 132 132 ann.mcaleer@midulstercouncil.org
• Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan	As above Name: Telephone: Email:	⊠ (double click to open)

Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:

www.midulstercouncil.org/equality

Signature:

Ann Mc Aleer

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 2019 and March 2020

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 2019-20, 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.

- Council continues to implement its Equality Scheme which directly influences policies, practices and service delivery. Policy screening completed during the reporting period are available on www.midulstercouncil.org/equality

- Mid Ulster District Council's Equality Action (adapted by Council in September 2017) continues to be delivered via 4 themes (Accessibility, Corporate Practices, Participation Level and Partnership Working). Each theme has a number of outcomes for delivery. During the reporting period a number of action measures within the Equality Action Plan were completed. Detailed information is available in the response to Question 2.

- Council's Disability Action Plan also continued to be delivered during the reporting period.

- Mid Ulster Disability Forum continues to act as Council's primary consultee in relation to the implementation of Council's Disability Action Plan. The Corporate Policy and Equality Officer attended monthly meetings of the Mid Ulster Disability Forum. Secretariat support is also provided by Council. The Forum continues to provide an opportunity to liaise directly with people with disabilities and with people who represent groups of people with specific disabilities. This includes Shop mobility, RNIB, Sure start, Education Authority, Social Services, Age NI, Mid Ulster Volunteer Centre, Barnardo's, Action on Hearing Loss, and Health Trust representatives.

- Council's Equality Consultee List was updated during the reporting period in line with our Equality Scheme.

 Policy & Service Delivery:

- During the reporting period Organisational Development have introduced and amended a number of policies. These policies include amending the Flexible Working Policy to allow carers to take a period of paid leave should they encounter an unforeseen situation during which they are unable to identify an alternative option for care giving/provision.

- In relation to the delivery of Council events such as festivals, quiet spaces have been included to increase the accessibility of events for people with sensory needs.

2

This provision has been incorporated into a number of events during this reporting period. This is something that will be rolled out further during future events.

- Running exercise sessions were targeted towards 'Mothers and Others' sessions, targeting carers.

- The Winter 2019 addition of Council's corporate magazine, which is distributed Council wide, featured an article promoting accessibility and adjustments to service provision for disabled service users.

- Mid Ulster District Council also appointed an Age Friendly Officer during this reporting period.

- In November 2019 Mid Ulster District Council's Senior Management Team approved commitment to adopt Every Customer Counts initiative.

- At Halloween and Christmas 2019 a Quiet room was provided at the Coalisland celebrations while ASD friendly shopping hours were provided in Dungannon. An Autism Friendly Santa Visit was also provided by Seamus Heaney Homeplace.

- In November 2019 BSL & ISL signers available 12-2pm at Mid Ulster Job Fair (organised in partnership with DfC, Mid Ulster Skills Forum & Network Personnel).

- Language Line telephone interpretation service for customers who do not speak English continues to be operational at the three civic receptions and the leisure centre receptions. To date it has been used for various languages.

- The Mid Ulster Disability Forum's Access Mid Ulster website continues to be hosted on the equality section of Council's website.

- Council has continued to support the Oil Stamp Scheme.

- Council's Everybody Active Programme targets women and girls, people with a disability and people living in areas of high social need. The programme has a dedicated officer and Disability Sports Coach. The Programme offers and courses and programmes of activity in different areas, from Boccia Club, Wheelie Active Club (for children aged 4-12 years with a physical disability), multi-sport holiday camps, dodgeball and buggy fit. The programme recognises that, 'for some of us, it's more difficult to find opportunities to be active and activities that we can participate in'. During the 19/20 period the following groups were supported:
    o Marvels Special Olympics Club (Magherafelt) 2x a year (15-20 participants)
    o Carefully Yours Project (Magherafelt) 2x a year (12-30 participants)
    o Inspire Health and Wellbeing programme (Dungannon and Magherafelt) (Mental Health) 2x a year (15-20 participants)
    o Corkhill Care Home (Dungannon) 2x a year (8-12 participants
    o Base Group (Magherafelt) 2x a year (8-12 participants)
    o Mid Ulster Boccia Club (Cookstown) 2x a year (6-8 participants)
    o Fit 4 U Programme (Dungannon) (Learning and Physical Disability) 2x a year (20-30participants)
    o DCD Multi- Skills Clubs (Magherafelt) 1 x a year (8-10 participants

3

- o Primary Schools/ Special School Programmes (for schools with autism/units) 2x a year (15-40 participants) 4-8 schools across Mid Ulster
- o Adult Centre Programmes (Cookstown and Magherafelt) 2x a year (12-30participants)
- o Gateway Club (Dungannon) 1x a year (12-25 participants)
- o Summer Programmes-
- o Adults Disability Friday Club (18+)- (MUSA) 1x a year (20-30 participants)
- o Kids Disability Friday Club (5-11yrs)- (MUSA) 1x a year (8-12 participants)
- o Inclusive Cycling Summer Camp (MUSA) x 2 (5-12yrs) and (13+yrs) 1x a year (6-10participants)
- o Willowbank (Dungannon) 2x a year (8-12 participants)
- o Superstars Club (Cookstown) 1x a year (15-30 participants)
- o Insight Cookstown Outdoor Bowling 1x a year (5-10participants)
- o Insight Cookstown New Age Kurling and Boccia Competitions 1x a year (8-15 participants)
- o Mindwise Gym Programme (Magherafelt) (mental health) 2 x year (5-12participants)
- o Church Lane Mews (Magherafelt) (mental health) 2x a year (5-12 participants)
- o Northern Trust Health Programme (Magherafelt and Cookstown) (Learning Disability) 2x a year (12-18 participants)
- o Parkinson's Uk (Magherafelt) 2x a year (15-20 participants)
- o Chest Heart and Stroke (Dungannon) 1 x a year (6-12participants)
- o Parkanaur College (Dungannon) (learning disability) (15 participants)
- o Oakridge Social Education Centre (Dungannon) 2x a year (10-20 participants)
- o Kilcronaghan Community Group (Magherafelt) 2x a year (5-10 participants)
- o Knocknagin Community Group (Magherafelt) 1x a year (12-25 participants)
- o South West College (Cookstown) (learning disability group) 1x a year (10-18 participants)
- o Ballyronan Community Group (Cookstown) 1x a year (5-10 participants)
- o Lissan Community Group (Cookstown) 1x a year (5-10 participants)
- o Open Doors Group (Swatragh) (learning disability) (10-20 participants)
- o Youth Included (Cookstown) (learning disability) (8-10 participants)

Disability Hub
- o Junior Paralympic Club (MUSA) all year (5-8 participants)
- o Inclusive Cycling Club (MUSA) Monthly (5-10 participants)

4

2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2019-20 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Examples of the outcomes/impact of measures included in the Equality Action Plan are set out below:

Theme 1: Accessibility

Action 1a- Increased Accessibility: The Burnavon Theatre & Arts Centre is working towards achieving the Autism Impact Award in order to make the venue more accessible for children and adults who have autism. Mid Ulster District Council also continues to be a JAM (Just A Minute) Card Friendly Organisation. Also, a Poolpod was installed in Cookstown Leisure Centre swimming pool a poolpod also available in Greenvale LC). This project as funded by DfC and Sport NI and delivered by Council in partnership with Disability Sport NI.

Action 1b-Staff Training: Action on Hearing Loss provided training for frontline members of staff who are likely to come into contact with service users who have varying levels of hearing loss.

Action 1c- Awareness Sessions: The Corporate Policy & Equality Officer delivered 6 equality training sessions between September 19 and February 19. The sessions were attended by 52 members of staff in total. John Kremer delivered an equality training sessions in November 2018 and March 2019. These sessions were delivered to staff at managerial level. The sessions were attended by 37 members of staff in total. Also, an Awareness training session was provided for Elected Members on Refugees & Arabic culture in June 2019.

Theme 2: Corporate Practices

Action 2b- Develop a Policy in relation to communicating with disabled people, older people, younger people, and different racial groups: Council's Accessible Communications Policy was adapted by Council in January 18. The policy has been implemented throughout the organisation and has received positive feedback from service users.

Action 2c- Develop procedural arrangements for translation and interpretation: A Draft Policy has been developed and amended and is awaiting approval.

Theme 3: Participation Levels

Action 3d-Increased Employment Opportunities: A six-week work placement opportunity was provided for Admin student from Parkanaur College, a college for students with additional learning support requirements.

Theme 4: Partnership Working

Action 4a Explore partnership working opportunities: A Women Entrepreneur Programme; The 'Imagine It' motivational boot camp was held in June 19 and was delivered by Women in Business. The project was a collaboration between Council, Women in Business and Invest NI.

3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2019-20 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 the 2019/20 period there have been a number of capital build projects commissioned by Mid Ulster District Council. These projects include the redevelopment of Dungannon Leisure Centre, Davagh Dark Skies Project, Knockmany Forest and Coalisland and Maghera Public Realms. Each of these projects have been equality screened and now include the following provisions:

Dungannon Leisure Centre- Accessible fitness equipment, improved accessible changing facilities and increased accessible parking provision.

Davagh Dark Skies- This new building visitor centre has included a Changing Places.

Knockmany Forest Park- The building located at the forest now includes a Changes Places and a section of path within the Knockmany Forest is now accessible for wheelchair users.

Public Realm projects: these projects have consulted closely and frequently with the Mid Ulster Disability Forum since their inception. During the reporting period this has included consultation on product selection and traffic flow.

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:

In relation to both the Knockmany Forest Project and Davagh Dark Skies, the increased accessibly standards at these venues ensure that once they become operational (both projects are currently delayed because of the Covid-19 outbreak) that people who required the use of a Changing Places facility will be able to visit these sites which are both in scenic areas. In addition, both these facilities are near main travel routes Cookstown to Omagh/the West (Davagh Dark Skies) and Dungannon/Ballygawley/Aughnacloy to Enniskillen (Knockmany Forest). Therefore, our sites provide an opportunity to people from or travelling through our District to use the Changing Places at our visitor sites. This makes not just these sites more accessible, but wider parts of our District more accessible for people who cannot be away from home for a long period without being able to access an accessible toilet/changing facility.

The Dungannon Leisure Centre refurbishment is linked to a review of leisure services across the District which will in turn lead to increased accessibility for S75 groups. This includes increased opening hours, a pool pod now being available at two of the three leisure centres and a development of the current facilities at Gortgonis, Coalisland.

6

This increased service provision has involved direct consultation with Mid Ulster Disability Forum as well as a full consultation so that all Section 75 groups have been given the opportunity to respond in relation to how they believe any changes to service provision would impact upon them.

The changes and enhancements made to these capital development projects have the ability to impact positively on all Section 75 groups within the District particularly people who are disabled.

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)*:

Equality Screening involved consultation with relevant groups and identified mitigating measures for each of the projects.

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

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

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

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

Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme commitments <u>and</u> 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 2018-19 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐   Yes, organisation wide

☒   Yes, some departments/jobs

7

☐ 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:

Section 75 duties are currently outlined in all job descriptions.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2019-20 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:

All Service Plans include the following statement:

The council is committed to fulfilling its obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. This commitment is demonstrated by allocating the appropriate time, people and resources to fulfil our equality duties. The Equality Scheme commits us to implementing our duties effectively and in a timely way alongside implementing this Service Plan. Without impacting upon our obligations, when carrying out our equality duties we will also take into account the desirability of promoting good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. We are also required to take into account the need to promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability and encourage the participation of people with a disability in public life. Mid Ulster District Council are committed to fulfilling our disability duties and we set out how we intend to do this in our disability action plan.

6 In the 2019-20 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

8

☐ Yes, in some departments/jobs

☒ No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's ongoing corporate plan

☐ No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2018-19 report

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

N/A

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2018-20 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:	7	Actions ongoing:	9	Actions to commence:	0

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

Theme 2: Corporate Practices

Action 2d: Mainstreaming Equality

During this reporting period a number of capital build projects were equality screened and mitigating measures documented and changes made to projects where required.

Theme 3: Participation Levels

Action 3b: Location of Activities & 3c Provision of Child Inclusive Activities

During 2019/20 Mid Ulster District Council Events team ensured that the locations of seasonal events were featured across the District. In relation to maximising participation the following mechanisms were also put in place:

- Council events had car park provision for Blue Badge holders
- Accessible toilets where hired where required
- In our town centre across the District viewing areas close to the stage, away from crowds and free from viewing obstruction was available for anyone who wanted to avail of this space had it provided for them
- Autism friendly activities were available as pre booked activities where available at some of our events.
- Whilst planning; all event site maps considered the access to the areas for the whole community and lowered curbs where left free from obstruction.
- One event also had a community transport (accessible) bus hired to help transport people to and from the site.

- Council's Age Friendly Officer was involved in an Intergenerational Café project (in partnership with NWRC) which provided transportation for care home residents to enable them to take part in the project.
- Council's Age Friendly Officer has provided exercise activities for traditionally non leisure users, aged 50 years or over. This can include virtual cycling and Pilates classes.

Theme 4: Partnership Working

Action 4b: Provide Opportunities for Residents, Customers and Visitors to Engage Directly with Elected Members

In March 2020 Council Chair hosted a number of secondary schools in the District who had collaborated to create a group of 16 teenage girls who are currently studying STEM subjects. They presented their 'Miss Enterprise' presentation to elected members in a bid to lobby elected members to support and encourage female entrepreneurship in the District and beyond.

8   Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2019-20 reporting period *(points not identified in an appended plan)*:

The Equality Action Plan was not subject to change during this reporting period.

9   In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2018-19 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 2019-20 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:

10

During the reporting period the public consultation events on Maghera and Coalisland Public Realms continued. These events include focus groups with people who will be impacted upon by the changes to both settlements following the implementation of the schemes and while the work is being carried out.

In addition to the public realm consultations, a 12-week public consultation was held in relation to the Draft Corporate Plan (2020-2024) as well as a public consultation on the Mid Ulster Local Development Plan (LDP). In relation to the LDP displays of the documentation were housed in buildings throughout the District. The screening process identified that during this period it was important to ensure that the venues used were physically accessible as well as in shared spaces such as libraries and public/community venues.

12   In the 2018-19 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently <u>used</u> by consultees**: *(tick all that apply)*

☒   Face to face meetings

☒   Focus groups

☒   Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing

☒   Questionnaires

☐   Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation

☐   Internet discussions

☐   Telephone consultations

☐   Other *(please specify)*:

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:

Following on from the 'walk through' exercises carried out in relation to the Coalisland and Maghera Public Realm schemes, as the projects have progressed so too have the types of Section 75 consultation carried out. This has most recently been reflected when Mid Ulster Disability Forum were consulted with directly regarding the purchase of materials for Coalisland and a proposed change to traffic flow proposals for Maghera Public Realm was also referred to the Forum for discussion/feedback.

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2019-20 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes   ☒ No   ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

N/A

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2019-20 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)

www.midulstercouncil.org/council/equality

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

12

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2019-20:

3	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 the reporting period included the following:

- Mid Ulster Local Development Plan Strategy
- Draft Corporate Improvement Objectives (commenced March 20)
- Draft Corporate Plan 2020-2024
- Revised Waste Collection Policy (commenced March 20)

12

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

☐ Yes   ☒ 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 2019-20 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☒ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

N/A

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 2019-20 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:

N/A

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:

Organisational Development has revised the Flexible Working policy to now include emergency carers leave. This was as a result of work with the relevant Unions as well as feedback from staff and an analysis of what circumstances/challenges carers can face. Additional measure has been included for staff caring for a person/child with a disability.

13

22 Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2019-20 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

A draft Carers Admission Policy has been developed in relation to Theme 3 of the Equality Action Plan (Participation Levels). The policy aims to mainstream the admittance of carers free of charge to Council owned arts venues in the District. The policy aims to create a corporate approach to the implementation of people who require an essential companion in order to access our services. Monitoring from previous years had identified that legacy practices were still in place in some of Council's Arts venues. This policy aims to mitigate against differential/adverse impacts previously identified for carers attending our venues and people who require an essential carer to accompany them.

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:

Limited monitoring has been carried out during this period. Additional monitoring will be put in place during the 2020/21 reporting period.

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 2019-20, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

During the reporting period the following training was completed:

- A Refugee and Arabic culture awareness session was attended by 6 members of staff and 1 elected member. This training was also open to the public sector. 20 public sector workers attended from various organisations including; community nursing, Further Education and the community sector including First Steps Women's Group
- The Corporate Policy and Equality Officer delivered Equality Awareness training sessions for 52 members of staff
- John Kremer delivered a training session for senior members of staff with 13 attendees from a range of departments
- John Kremer also delivered Equality and Diversity training for 8 Elected Members
- In October and November 2019 Hearing Health Awareness training provided by Action on Hearing Loss. In total 10 staff were trained.

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:

Evaluations of the training sessions show that for the training delivered by the Corporate Policy and Equality Officer was well received and provided staff with useful tools to complete their work. Comments also suggested that too much information was put forward in a short space of time, therefore this training will be extended.

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

26   Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2019-20, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

A Council motion was passed in October 2019 in relation to making Council events more accessible for people with Autism. While this was not as a result of a formal monitoring process, formal and informal monitoring and evaluations of Council events suggested that events could benefit from working towards increased accessibility and inclusivity for people with autism. The motion was as follows:

'that Council consider all Council organised events and where possible allocate 'quiet hours' to facilitate visits/attendance by children with disabilities/special needs. Council to consult with local disability groups & centres and National Autistic Society to facilitate visits to events on both individual and group basis'.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

27   How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2019-20?

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:

2020. This review will commence as soon as Council returns to the deliver of normal service post the Coronavirus Pandemic.

15

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)*

Learning will be taken from the implementation of the 2015-2020 Equality Scheme to inform the development of an updated Equality Scheme during the 2020-21 reporting period.

30   In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2020-21) reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

⊠   Employment

⊠   Goods, facilities and services

⊠   Legislative changes

⊠   Organisational changes/ new functions

☐   Nothing specific, more of the same

☐   Other (please state):

16

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	4	1
Fully achieved	Partially achieved	Not achieved

2. Please outline below details on <u>all</u> **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]			
Regional[iv]	The Chair of Mid Ulster Disability Forum is a wheel chair user, she also continues as a member of the Policing and Community Safety Partnership.	Challenges for people with a disability are highlighted and championed. Flexibility and reasonable adjustments have been put in place.	Both groups are advised directly by someone who has first-hand experience of disability.
Local[v]	The following motion was passed by Council in October 2019, 'that Council consider all Council organised events and where possible allocate 'quiet hours' to facilitate visits/attendance by children with disabilities/special	Autism Awareness Training has been provided for staff in order to provide a better understanding of how to make	Council services will be more inclusive and accessible for people with Autism. The Burnavaon Arts and Conference Centre is now also working towards achieving the Autism Impact Award. This has

17

	needs. Council to consult with local disability groups & centres and Nat Autistic Society to facilitate visits to events on both individual and group basis'	Council services inclusive for people with Autism.	included Autism Friendly performances and workshops and has included partnership working with Team Aspie, a local group who support 11-24-year-old who have Asperger's syndrome.

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Disability and Equality Awareness Training was provided for staff at Council locations throughout the District.	52 members of staff receiving the training. It provided increased knowledge and awareness for staff.	Increased awareness of disability and equality legislation. Case studies and practical examples of legislation implementation in Council settings provided officers with how to deal with common queries.
2	Hearing Health Awareness training provided by Action on Hearing Loss.	10 members of staff were trained in Hearing Health Awareness.	Improved service provision for people with hearing loss.

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	Press Release for International Day of People with Disabilities	In December 19 International Day of People with Disabilities was used to	Council buildings closed to the public in March 2020, therefore it has been difficult to quantify

18

		raise awareness of accessible park at Council facilities and highlighted how they shouldn't be used by people who do not need them.	the exact outcome. However, this article did serve as an awareness raising exercise and can be followed up with further articles in the future.
2	Implementation of the Accessible Communications Policy	This policy was introduced in January 2019 and during this reporting period it has been implemented.	Implementation of the Policy has ensured that communication with people with additional needs has improved and Council Officers are now aware of the benefits of providing accessible/alternative types of communication.
3	Promotion of Accessibility in Resident's Magazine	The November issue of Council's Resident's Magazine contained an article promoting accessibility and adjustments to service provision for disabled service users drafted by	This article has provided an increased awareness amongst residents of the types of reasonable adjustments that are available to people with a disability when accessing Council's goods and services.

2 (d) What action measures were achieved to '**encourage others**' to promote the two duties:

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Civic Honours have been provided in recognition of achievement of people with disabilities.	A wheelchair-based sports team were recognised by a civic reception for their sporting achievement. While a person with autism was also recognised by via a civic award for receiving national learning disabilities and autism awards.	Civic receptions and civic awards celebrate the achievements of people within the District while helping to raise awareness of disability. The civic recognition process also highlights the achievements of people who reside in the District and who have a disability.
2			

19

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

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1			
2			

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 this highest possible standards of accessibility	Improved opportunities to use accessible play areas. An audit was undertaken by the Age Friendly Officer in order to improve the sites from an Age Friendly perspectives.	Improved services for children and young people with a disability.	This is an ongoing activity. The Public Parks and Play Strategy is being delivered on an ongoing basis up until 2020. The accessibility level for 2019/20 was 15.5%.

20

2	Working towards the BS:8300:2009 1:2010	Principles of disability access is adhered to.	Council buildings and facilities are equitable.	This is an ongoing activity and was implemented when possible in capital build projects during 2019/20.
3	Integrate our Disability Duties into new Policies	All new and revised policies screened for impact on disability duties.	Improved service provision via inclusive policy development and decision making.	This is an ongoing activity. New policies are equality screened to ensure the inclusion of disability duties.
4	Provide up to 6 work placements per year for individuals with disability. These placements should last approximately 10 weeks.	Number of placements provided.	Opportunity provided for people with a disability.	Work placements have been provided of varying durations

4. Please outline what action measures have not been achieved and the reasons why.

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	Training provided on accessibility on universal accessibility	Training was scheduled for March 2020 but it was postponed because of the Coronavirus outbreak.

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

A quarterly return continues to be submitted to Senior Management Team in order to inform members of progress in relation to the Disability Action Plan and Equality Action Plan.

21

PART B

(b) Quantitative

The number of equality screenings carried out are recorded and circulated three times per year.

---

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?

If yes please outline below: N/A

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

---

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?

The current plan was amended in 2017. Any further revisions to the plan will be brought forward in the revised Actions Plans as part of a review of the 2015-2020 Equality Scheme.

22

PART B

23

Appendix 2 - Template for Information to be Compiled

Information to be compiled by Public Authorities under Section 3(1)(a) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

(To be completed and included in public authorities' own annual reports and submitted to DAERA for inclusion in the Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report).

Name of Public Authority: *Mid Ulster District Council*

Reporting Period: April 20 19 to March 20 20

The following information should be compiled in respect of each policy, strategy and plan which has been developed, adopted, implemented or revised and each public service which has been designed or delivered by the public authority during the reporting period.

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016[1].	*The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to[2].*	*Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service[3].*
Travel & Subsistence Policy	Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	Mid Ulster District Council has considered the needs of staff particularly those living in rural areas via the consideration of travel distances. Staff in very rural areas will have further to travel but as there are main Council buildings in the 3 largest centres of population no one should have an unreasonable distance to travel. Technology e.g. conference calling etc should be encouraged by managers to keep travel to a minimum.
Recognition of Staff Leaving/Retiring Policy	Jobs or Employment in	The policy does not impact differently on staff living in rural areas.

	Rural Areas	
Managing Bereavement in the Workplace Policy	Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	The policy does not impact differently on staff living in rural areas.
Dignity at Work Policy	Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	This policy aims to prevent harassment and bullying in the workplace, provide guidance to resolve any problems should it occur and prevent recurrence. This policy does not impact differently on staff living in rural areas.
Management of Overtime Policy	Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	This policy provides guidance to all managers & staff regardless of whether they live in a rural area or not, the policy provides a standard approach across Council in relation to the management of overtime.
Health and Safety Policy	Other	This policy will impact on all staff, service users and members of the public across the district, regardless of whether they reside in a rural or urban area. There is no differential impact anticipated.
Draft Waste Collection Policy	Other	This policy ensures that residents who live in rural areas will receive the same service as urban dwellers i.e. a collection every two weeks of residual waste, recyclable waste and organic waste (on alternating weeks). However, households which are located on/up private laneways i.e. which are not adopted (and are primarily located in rural areas) are required to bring their wheeled bins to the end of the laneway for collection. This may disproportionately affect rural householders who may be more likely not to have neighbors to assist with bringing their bins to the point of collection. Households in some rural areas may also be more likely to consist of larger families and therefore generate additional waste. Households in rural areas are also more likely to be inconvenienced

		by missed collections as a result of adverse weather conditions. Also, some households in rural areas have their refuse collected by One Armed Vehicles (OAVs) which requires the householder to present the bin with the handles facing away from the road (which is the opposite position to householders in urban areas). The outcome of a Northern Ireland wide Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) Review completed by the Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP) in 2018 included a high-level spatial analysis of the distribution/provision of all sites across the country using a methodology based on drive times for residents to their nearest site. An "optimised" model was subsequently produced which suggested that the residents of Mid Ulster would still be adequately served with three less sites (identified as Ballymacombs, Coalisland and Clogher) operating across the district i.e. nine instead of twelve Recycling Centres.
Social Enterprise Programme	Rural Development	A key issue for many rural dwellers is that of access to services, health and wellbeing and their associated need for appropriate infrastructure in both urban and rural settings, those living in rural areas often experience these more acutely due to their geographical isolation, lower population density and the dispersed nature of many rural settlements across Mid Ulster. This is further compounded by the limited availability of public transport infrastructure and the blackspots of poor broadband provision in Mid Ulster's rural areas. As such the Contractor will be required to promote the Programme via a range of channels and media. The Programme also takes

		cognisance of the issue of social isolation within the District and how this can be manifested in vulnerable groups particularly those living in rural areas. It has put in place measures to mitigate these issues to ensure that anyone requesting support from the Programme has the opportunity to access it, regardless of location, ability to travel or access to good broadband connectivity. The Contractor will be required to provide support to all requesting it, by meeting them at the group's base or an alternative suitable location, in addition, application forms will be provided in both hard and soft copy, to ensure that those who do not have good broadband or IT capacity can access Programme information and submit Applications without issues.
Performance Improvement Policy	Other	This policy ensures that rural needs consideration becomes mainstreamed in performance improvement processes across all aspects of service delivery.
Fleet Safety Policy	Other	This policy is an internal council policy; however, it does however take into consideration the geographical makeup of the areas covered by some fleet staff and the associated implications

NOTES

1. This information should normally be contained in section 1B of the RNIA Template completed in respect of the activity.

2. This information should normally be contained in section 2D of the RNIA Template completed in respect of the activity.

3. The information contained in sections 3D, 4A & 5B of the RNIA Template should be considered when completing this section.

Report on	Implementation of Review on Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016
Date of Meeting	Thursday 2nd July 2020
Reporting Officer	Philip Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
Contact Officer	Ann McAleer, Corporate Policy & 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	This report provide Members with an update in relation to the Review of the Rural Needs Act legislation. The review of the implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016, undertaken by the Rural Needs Working Group, was done so between October and December 2019.
1.2	The purpose of the review was to look at how the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 was being implemented by public authorities and to consider what further support measures might be introduced to help public authorities comply with the legislation.
2.0	**Background**
2.1	The Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 requires councils to carry out rural impact assessments on council policies, strategies and plans from 1 June 2017. The Act places a duty for the following aspects of Councils work to be assessed for rural impact to include new policies or strategies, reviewed policies and the consequent service delivery of new and revised policies Key information points in relation to the legislation include: • Rural settlements are considered by the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) to be settlements of less than 5,000 residents. Within that context the majority of Mid Ulster District Council, excluding the larger settlements of Cookstown (11,599), Dungannon (14,340), Magherafelt (8,805) and Coalisland (5,682), will be considered as a rural area • Returns on rural impact assessments must be made to DEARA on an annually • Rural Impact Assessments should take place at the outset of the development of Council policy/strategy, development or review • Policy/Strategy Authors will be primarily responsible for ensuring that the rural impact assessments are undertaken.

3.0	Main Report
3.1	The Departmental Review concluded with 25 recommendations for both DAERA and Local Authorities of which 6 are specific to public authorities/local government are that. These are summarised as: • Public authorities host regular workshops for decision makers within their organisation (subject to need) for the purposes of increasing awareness • Public authorities review the resources allocated to supporting the implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 with a view to ensuring that rural needs co-ordinators have access to the resources necessary to undertake their role effectively. • Public authorities take steps to seek to embed the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 further within their organisation including, for example, by incorporating compliance with the Act in their Assurance Statements, Submission Templates and Audit and Risk Procedures • Public authorities seek to develop effective relationships with rural community organisations and, where appropriate, to seek to engage with the rural community sector in a meaningful and timely manner as part of the Rural Needs Impact Assessment process being undertaken in respect of Section 1 activities • Public authorities be open to adopting new and innovative approaches to engaging with the rural community sector when seeking to gather information on rural needs including taking measures to engage with people in rural areas who may not normally participate in public consultations or stakeholder engagement • Public authorities publish their RNIA Rural Needs Impact Assessments) Templates on their website on a single webpage and that the annual monitoring report includes a link to each public authority website
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	**Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications**
	Financial: The recommendations as detailed at 3.0 require consideration for cost impact
	Human: Existing staffing complement will be required to prioritise existing resource
	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	It is recommended; • That Mid Ulster Council review the additional actions detailed in Appendix A which will be implemented by Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs; and • That Mid Ulster Council implement the six recommendations emanating from the Review of the Implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 by approving the associated Action Plan, detailed in Appendix B.
6.0	**Documents Attached & References**
	Appendix A: Report on Review of Implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 Appendix B: Action Plan (draft) by Mid Ulster DC on DAERA Recommendations

Report on the Review of the Implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

January 2020

1

Contents

Foreword by the Chairperson

I am pleased to present this report on the review of the implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 which was undertaken by the Rural Needs Working Group during the period October to December 2019.

The Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 is a key rural policy tool for DAERA in seeking to ensure that the needs of people in rural areas are routinely considered by public authorities when carrying out their functions and is one of a suite of rural policy initiatives led by DAERA designed to help deliver better outcomes for rural dwellers.

DAERA recognises that the needs of people in rural areas can be different to those in urban areas and that the impact of a policy can have a different impact on people in rural areas due to the different circumstances pertaining to rural areas. It also recognises that rural areas are not homogeneous and that a one size fits all approach by government is not always appropriate. It is important therefore that public authorities are open to considering different approaches and tailored solutions in respect of rural areas in order to deliver more equitable outcomes for rural dwellers.

The purpose of the review was to look at how the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 was being implemented by public authorities and to consider what further support measures might be introduced to help public authorities comply with the legislation. It is recognised that the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 has only been in place a short time and therefore the focus of the review was on the implementation of the legislation by public authorities and the support provided by DAERA rather than on the policy outcomes and the impacts on public services resulting from the legislation.

The review carried out by the working group is an important step in the implementation of the Act and I believe that the acceptance of the recommendations made by the working group will help ensure that the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 is implemented more consistently and effectively by public authorities going forward.

The review was an intensive piece of work which required considerable dedication in order to deliver the objectives set out in the Terms of Reference and I am pleased that this report has been delivered within the required deadline.

I would like to thank all those who participated in the working group for the creativity and experience which they brought to the project. I am also grateful for the commitment and enthusiasm which they demonstrated in taking forward the work and for the constructive and convivial atmosphere in which the meetings were conducted. There was a clear willingness on the part of the public authority

3

representatives on the working group to seek to ensure that the legislation was implemented effectively within their organisation and a clear commitment from all members of the working group for DAERA, other public authorities and rural stakeholders to work together to help deliver better outcomes for rural dwellers.

The report contains a total of 25 recommendations covering all sections of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 and while the majority relate specifically to DAERA there are a number which relate to other public authorities. I believe that the recommendations can make a positive difference to how the legislation is implemented and I hope that they will be accepted.

CHAIR OF THE RURAL NEEDS WORKING GROUP

Executive Summary

The Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 places a statutory duty on Northern Ireland departments, district councils and certain other public authorities in Northern Ireland to have due regard to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas in the development, implementation, revision and adoption of policies, strategies and plans and in the design and delivery of public services. The Act came into operation for departments and councils in June 2017 and for the other public authorities listed in the Schedule to the Act in June 2018.

In September 2019 DAERA established a working group to undertake a review of the implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 for the purposes of assessing how the legislation was being implemented by public authorities to date and identifying what further support measures might be introduced to help public authorities comply with the legislation. The Terms of Reference for the review set seven specific objectives for the working group to address as part of the review. In undertaking the review the working group collected evidence from a wide range of public authorities and rural stakeholders in order to ensure that the recommendations resulting from the review were evidence based.

The review found that there continues to be a lack of awareness among some decision makers of the need to comply with the due regard duty and a lack of understanding of among some decision makers as to what a public authority is required to do specifically in order to fulfil the due regard duty. It also found that lack of access to the information necessary to inform decision makers of the needs of people in rural areas was a key barrier to implementing the due regard duty. The review also found that not all decision makers were complying with the guidance on the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 in relation to the carrying out of Rural Needs Impact Assessments and that there was evidence that the completion of a Rural Needs Impact Assessment Template was sometimes being viewed as a 'tick box' exercise;

In seeking to address the findings from the review the working group has made 25 recommendations covering all aspects of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016. These include recommendations on increasing awareness of the legislation, new measures to help public authorities comply with the legislation, improving the monitoring and reporting procedures, improving access to statistical information and new measures to facilitate better co-operation between public authorities. A full list of the recommendations is provided at Appendix 1 of the report.

5

Section 1

Introduction and Background

6

Introduction

1.1. The Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 (the Act) places a statutory duty on departments, district councils and certain other public authorities in Northern Ireland to have due regard to rural needs in the development, implementation, revision and adoption of policies, strategies and plans and in the design and delivery of public services (section 1 activities).

1.2. The Act came into operation for departments and district councils in June 2017 and for the other public authorities listed in the Schedule to the Act in June 2018. While departments in Northern Ireland had previously been signed up to the Northern Ireland Executive's policy on rural proofing, the introduction of the Act meant that for the first time in Northern Ireland the consideration of the needs of people in rural areas had been placed on a statutory footing.

1.3. In July 2019 DAERA took a decision to undertake a review of the implementation of the Act with a view to determining how the legislation was being implemented by public authorities and to identifying any further measures that might to be taken to help public authorities comply with the requirements of the legislation. By this stage the Act had been in operation for 2 years for departments and district councils and for 1 year for the other public authorities. As the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 had only been in place for a short time, the review focussed on how the legislation was being implemented by public authorities and on the support measures provided by DAERA rather than on the policy and delivery outcomes resulting from the legislation.

1.4. The Department subsequently established a Rural Needs Working group to undertake the review which was made up of representatives from DAERA, other departments, local councils, other public authorities, academia and rural stakeholder organisations. This report sets out the findings from the review and the recommendations made by the working group.

Background to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

Rural Proofing

1.5. The Northern Ireland Executive first made a commitment to rural proofing in 2002 with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) being the department with responsibility for rural proofing in Northern Ireland. The NI Executive's policy on rural proofing only applied to government departments in

Northern Ireland and did not extend to other public authorities although some public authorities did adopt rural proofing voluntarily during this period.

1.6. In 2009 DARD brought forward proposals to the NI Executive to reinvigorate rural proofing which resulted in the introduction of rural proofing training and the publishing of revised guidance 'Thinking Rural: The Essential Guide to Rural Proofing' in 2011. However despite this reinvigoration of rural proofing concerns continued to be raised around the implementation of rural proofing by Departments, particularly around how effectively rural proofing was being implemented by Departments and what was perceived as a lack of transparency on how rural proofing was being implemented across Departments.

Rural Needs Bill

1.7. In 2015 proposals were brought forward for a Rural Needs Bill which aimed to ensure that public authorities consider the needs of people in rural areas when undertaking certain activities and to provide greater transparency on how public authorities consider rural needs in respect of these activities. The Rural Needs Bill received Royal Assent in May 2016 and became the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

Rural Needs Act

1.8. The aim of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 is to improve outcomes for rural dwellers by ensuring that the social and economic needs of people in rural areas are given due regard to by public authorities in their decision making processes and to increase transparency on how public authorities consider rural needs when undertaking their functions.

Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

CHAPTER 19

CONTENTS

1. Duty of public authorities to have due regard to rural needs
2. Guidance, advice and information, etc.
3. Monitoring and reporting
4. Co-operation with other bodies
5. Commencement
6. Interpretation
7. Short title

Schedule   Public authorities

1.9. The Act places a duty on departments, local councils and the other public authorities listed in the Schedule to the Act to have due regard to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas in the development, implementation, revision and adoption of policies, strategies and plans and in the design and delivery of public services. The Act came into operation for departments and district councils in June 2017 and for the other public authorities in June 2018.
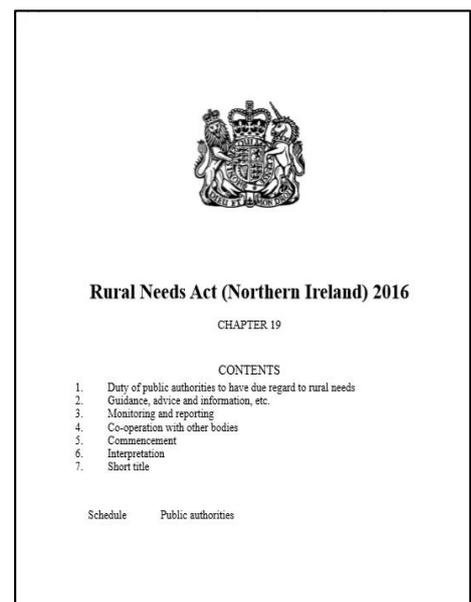
1.10. The Act also requires public authorities to compile information on how they have exercised the due regard duty and to send that information to DAERA and for DAERA to publish the information sent to it in an annual report and to lay the report before the Assembly. DAERA published the 2nd Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report on its website in December 2019.

1.11. The policy implemented by the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 differs from the Executive's previous policy on rural proofing in that the Act imposes a *statutory* obligation on public authorities to have due regard to rural needs rather than the *non-statutory* commitment to rural proof which departments were previously signed up to. The scope of the Act is also wider than the scope of the previous policy on rural proofing in that it applies to *policies*, *strategies*, *plans* and *public services* rather than just polices and strategies; it also applies to *district councils* and *certain other public authorities* rather than just government departments. The Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 effectively superseded the Executive's previous policy on rural proofing and therefore DAERA no longer uses the term 'rural proofing'.

Rural Needs Act - Timeline of Events
March 2016 – Rural Needs Bill receives Royal Assent
April 2017 – Roll out of Awareness Training to Public Authorities commences
June 2017 – RNA comes into operation for Departments and Councils (Phase 1)
June 2017 – Guidance on RNA published
January 2018 – Review of Phase 1 Implementation
April 2018 – Revised Guidance on RNA published
June 2018 – RNA comes into operation for other Public Authorities (Phase 2)
December 2018 – 1st Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report Published
September 2019 – Working Group established to undertake review of the implementation of the RNA
December 2019 – 2nd Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report Published
February 2020 – Report on Review of the Implementation of the RNA submitted

Background to the Review

1.12. DAERA took a decision to undertake a review of the implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 in June 2019, two years after the Act first came into operation for departments and district councils and one year after it came into operation for the other public authorities listed in the Schedule to the Act. The main purpose of the review was look at how the legislation was being implemented by public authorities and to identify any further measures that might be taken to help public authorities comply with the requirements of the legislation.

1.13. The review also provided an opportunity to evaluate the support measures which DAERA had put in place to assist public authorities implement the Act and to evaluate the effectiveness of the monitoring and reporting arrangements which DAERA had put in place with a view to identify any improvements that could be made. It also provided the first formal opportunity for public authorities to provide feedback to DAERA on their experiences of implementing the legislation and to highlight any issues of concern and for rural stakeholders to provide their perspective on the implementation of the legislation particularly in relation to the issues such as stakeholder engagement and transparency.

Terms of Reference for the Review

1.14. Terms of Reference for the review were drawn up by DAERA which incorporated seven specific objectives. These objectives included undertaking reviews of the implementation of section 1(1) of the Act and of the monitoring and reporting arrangements and making recommendations. Details of these objectives are set out at Appendix 2 of this report.

1.15. The Terms of Reference required the working group to provide a written report to DAERA's Director of Rural Affairs by 14th February 2020 setting out the findings arising from the review, the barriers and potential barriers to the effective implementation of section 1(1) of the Act and the recommendations put forward by the working group.

1.16. The Terms of Reference also committed the working group to adopting an evidence based approach to the review and to engaging widely with interested parties.

Roles and Responsibilities of DAERA

1.17. DAERA is the department in Northern Ireland with responsibility for rural affairs. As part of its rural affairs the department leads on a range of rural policy initiatives aimed at delivering better outcomes for rural communities including the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016, the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2014-20, the Rural White Paper Action Plan and the Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework.

1.18. As the Department with responsibility for the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016, DAERA provides support to other public authorities to help them comply with the requirements of the legislation including the provision of advice, guidance and information, the delivery of training and the hosting of co-operation events. Full details of the support measures provided by DAERA are set out in Section 3 of this report.

1.19. While DAERA provides support to public authorities, responsibility for complying with their statutory duties under the Act lies with individual public authorities and DAERA has no role in enforcing the legislation.

1.20. DAERA also has responsibility under the legislation for publishing an annual report containing information compiled by public authorities on how they have exercised the due regard duty and to lay this report before the Assembly. DAERA published its 2nd Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report on its website in December 2019.

1.21. In addition DAERA also has a duty to make arrangements with public authorities with a view to securing co-operation and the exchange of information and to review the list of public authorities to which the Act applies at least every 3 years. DAERA also has powers to provide advice, guidance and information on rural needs and to undertake, commission or support (by financial means or otherwise) research into any matter relating to rural needs.

Section 2

Methodology

Introduction

2.1. The review of the implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 was undertaken by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs during the period September 2019 - January 2020. The key stages in the review are set out below.

Establishment of Working Group

2.2. In September 2019 DAERA established a Rural Needs Working Group to undertake the review. The working group consisted of representatives of DAERA, other departments, district councils, academia, rural stakeholder organisations and the other public authorities listed in the Schedule to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016. The membership of the working group was as follows:

Rural Needs Working Group Membership		
Newry Mourne & Down District Council	Northern Ireland Housing Executive	Department of Finance
Education Authority	Department for Infrastructure	Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute
Rural Action	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council	Rural Community Network
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs		South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust

2.3. Terms of Reference for the working group were drawn up by DAERA which set the working group seven specific objectives including undertaking a review of the implementation of section 1(1) of the Act and undertaking a review of the monitoring and reporting arrangements. Details of the objectives for the review are set out in Appendix 2 of this report.

2.4. The working group met four times as part of the formal review process while a number of informal meetings between DAERA and individual working group members also took place. The working group also operated as a pilot group for the piloting of a new training course on the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 which has

13

been developed by DAERA and aims to support rural needs co-ordinators in public authorities.

Gathering of Information

2.5. The working group gathered information to inform the review from a range of sources including the following.

- A questionnaire for public authorities (Appendix 3) which was issued to all departments, councils and other public authorities listed in the schedule to the Act. A total of 16 responses were received equating to a return rate of approximately 42%.

- A questionnaire for rural stakeholders (Appendix 3) which was issued to over 200 rural stakeholder organisations represented by the Rural Community Network with a total of 47 responses received.

- A sample of 11 Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) templates that had been published on line. The sample of RNIA templates included templates completed by departments, district councils and other public authorities.

Timeline for the Review
September 2019 – Working Group established to undertake the Review
September 2019 – Questionnaire issued to Public Authorities
October 2019 – 1st Meeting of Working Group
October 2019 – Questionnaire issued to Rural Stakeholders
October 2019 – Draft Findings Paper issued
November 2019 – 2nd Meeting of Working Group
November 2019 – Draft Recommendations Paper 1 issued (Objectives 2, 3 & 5)
November 2019 – 3rd Meeting of Working Group
November 2019 – Rural Needs Act - Training for Rural Needs Co-ordinators Pilot
November 2019 – Draft Recommendations Paper 2 issued (Objectives 4, 6 & 7)
December 2019 – 4th Meeting of Working Group
January 2020 – Draft Report on Review issued to Working Group Members
January 2020 – Draft Report on Review formally agreed by Working Group Members

- The 1st Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report published in December 2018 and the returns submitted by public authorities in respect of the 2nd Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report which was subsequently published in December 2019.

14

- Oral evidence taken from members at the first meeting of the Working Group on 3rd October 2019.

Analysis of Information

2.6. The information gathered was collated and presented to the working group in the form of a paper titled "*Evidence used to inform the Review of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016*". This paper incorporated:

- The results of the questionnaire Issued to Public Authorities
- The results of the questionnaire Issued to Rural Stakeholders
- Links to the sample of 11 Rural Needs Impact Assessment Templates
- A link to the 1st Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report
- A copy of the questionnaire issued to Public Authorities
- A copy of the questionnaire issued to Rural Stakeholders
- A summary of the evidence provided by working group members at the 1st meeting of the working group.

2.7. An analysis of the evidence was undertaken by a sub group of the working group and included assessments of the sample of RNIA Templates and of the monitoring information submitted in respect of the 1st and 2nd Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Reports and reviews of the implementation of the due regard duty and of the monitoring and reporting arrangements.

2.8. The outcome of the work of the sub-group was presented to members of the working group in the form of a paper titled "*Draft Findings from the Review of the Implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016*". This paper incorporated the findings from both the review of the implementation of section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 and the review of the monitoring and reporting arrangements as required under the Terms of Reference.

2.9. The draft findings paper was discussed and agreed by the working group at its 2nd meeting and provided the evidence to inform the development of the working group's subsequent recommendations.

2.10. The findings from the review are set out in Section 4 of this report.

Section 3

Measures to support the implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

Introduction

3.1. As the department with responsibility for the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016, DAERA put in place a range of measures to help public authorities prepare for the commencement of the legislation and to support public authorities in implementing the legislation after it came into operation. A summary of these measures is set out below.

Guidance on the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

3.2. DAERA published revised guidance on the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 in April 2018 - *A Guide to the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) for Public Authorities (Revised).* The guidance is designed to help public authorities understand their duties under the Act and to help ensure they fulfil their obligations under the legislation.

3.3. The guidance recommends the undertaking of a Rural Needs Impact Assessment in respect of those activities which fall within the scope of section 1(1) of the Act.

3.4. This revised guidance replaced previous guidance issued by DAERA in May 2017.
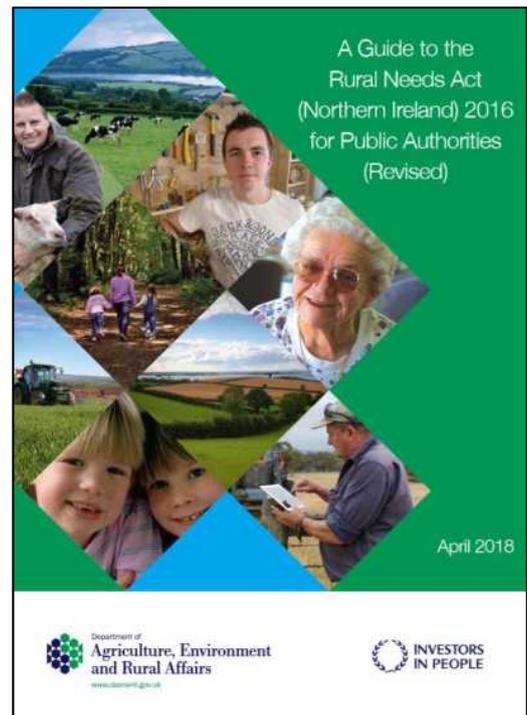
Guidance on completing the 'Appendix 2 Template'

3.5. DAERA issued guidance in April 2019 to assist public authorities with completing the 'Template for Compiling Information' provided at Appendix 2 of the guidance. The purpose of this guidance is to help improve the quality and consistency of the information submitted by public authorities for inclusion in the annual monitoring report and to help ensure that the information submitted is meaningful and relevant.

Awareness Training for Public Authorities

3.6. DAERA arranged for awareness training to be provided for all public authorities prior to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 coming into operation which provided a broad overview of the legislation and of the implications that it would have for public authorities.

Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) Template

3.7. DAERA included a new RNIA Template as part of its revised guidance document published in April 2018. This new RNIA Template is designed to record the steps taken by public authorities in carrying out a Rural Needs Impact Assessment and provides evidence to help demonstrate that the due regard duty has been complied with.

Information on the DAERA Website

3.8. DAERA provides information on the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 on the Rural Needs section of the DAERA website. This includes copies of the guidance, templates, annual monitoring reports and other useful information relating to rural needs.

https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/rural-development/rural-needs

E-learning Package

3.9. As part of its preparations for the legislation coming into operation DAERA developed an on line training package for public authorities which provided a broad overview of the implications of the legislation for public authorities.

General Advice and Support

3.10. DAERA's Sustainable Rural Communities Branch provides advice and guidance to public authorities on issues relating to rural needs. This includes advice on undertaking Rural Needs Impact Assessments and completing RNIA Templates. DAERA also provides support to rural needs co-ordinators in public authorities in relation to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

Co-operation Events

3.11. DAERA hosts an annual co-operation event for all public authorities listed in the Schedule to the Act. The purpose of these events is to facilitate co-operation and the exchange of information between public authorities.

Rural Needs Database

3.12. DAERA has developed a Rural Needs Database to assist public authorities in compiling the information required for the annual monitoring report and to help ensure more accurate reporting. DAERA is currently piloting the database within

DAERA with a view to making the model available to other public authorities in 2020/21.

Internal Measures

3.13.   DAERA has implemented a range of internal measures aimed at embedding the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 within the department. These include incorporating the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 within its audit and risk procedures and its submission templates.

Rural Needs Training

3.14.   DAERA has developed a new intensive training course on the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 aimed at providing Rural Needs Co-Ordinators with the knowledge and expertise necessary to enable them to provide effective support to their organisation. This training will be made available to Rural Needs Co-Ordinators from April 2020.

Section 4

Findings from the Review of the Implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

Introduction

4.1 This section sets out the findings from the review of the implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 and incorporates the review of the implementation of section1(1) of the Act and the review of the monitoring and reporting arrangements as required to be undertaken by the working group under its Terms of Reference. The review also looked at the support provided by DAERA to assist public authorities with implementing the legislation and at the steps taken by DAERA to secure co-operation and the exchange of information between public authorities.

4.2 The findings have been informed by the evidence available including input from working group members, the responses to a questionnaire issued to all public authorities listed in the Schedule to the Act, the responses to a questionnaire issued to rural stakeholders, an assessment of a sample of published Rural Needs Impact Assessment Templates and a review of the returns made by public authorities in respect of the 1st Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report published by DAERA in December 2018 and the 2nd Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report which was subsequently published by DAERA in December 2019.

4.3 These findings were used to inform the working group in its consideration of the issues set out in its Terms of Reference and provided the evidence for the recommendations made.

Review of the Implementation of Section 1(1)

Awareness of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

4.4 Most public authorities who responded to the questionnaire indicated that the level of awareness of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 (the Act) within their organisation is medium or high, however a number indicated that awareness is still low.

4.5 There is therefore a need for DAERA to continue to work with public authorities in raising awareness of the Act and to recognise that awareness raising is not a one off event but rather requires an ongoing approach to take account of staff turnover etc. It is noted that the equality legislation has been in place in Northern Ireland for many years and that the Equality Commission continues to hold awareness raising sessions for public authorities. It is also recognised that levels

of awareness may vary within individual public authorities and therefore there is a need to ensure that awareness raising is appropriately targeted within organisations.

4.6 While DAERA has developed a range of measures aimed at raising awareness of the Act including the roll out of awareness training for all public authorities, the provision of guidance, access to e-learning and the hosting of co-operation events, there is an opportunity to do more in the way of 'on the ground' promotion activities such as workshops, poster campaigns etc.

4.7 The results of the rural stakeholder survey showed that awareness of the Act among rural stakeholders is not particularly high and therefore there is also scope for more to be done by rural stakeholder organisations to help raise awareness among rural stakeholders.

Rural Needs Impact Assessments

4.8 The guidance produced by DAERA recommends that public authorities undertake a Rural Needs Impact Assessment in respect of those activities which fall within the scope of section 1(1) of the Act (section 1 activities), namely the development, implementation, adoption and revisions of policies, strategies and plans and the design and delivery of public services. A Rural Needs Impact Assessment is a six step process designed to help ensure that public authorities fulfil the due regard duty.

4.9 Information submitted by public authorities for inclusion in the 2nd Annual Monitoring Report indicates that public authorities are routinely completing (RNIA) Templates in respect of section 1 activities. However it is recognised that while the RNIA Template is designed to capture information relevant to each stage of the Rural Needs Impact Assessment process, completion of an RNIA Template does not in itself equate to having undertaken a Rural Needs Impact Assessment nor does it equate to having fulfilled the due regard duty.

4.10 There is evidence from the review of RNIA Templates that in some cases the completion of the RNIA Template has taken place after the section 1 activity has been completed and that no Rural Needs Impact Assessment has been carried out. There is also evidence that some public authorities have not followed the guidance in some instances (it was reported that one official had enquired if they needed to read the guidance) and that in some cases the completion of the RNIA Template appeared to be treated as a form filling exercise rather than a means of documenting information relevant to the Rural Needs Impact Assessment (it was

reported that one official had enquired as to how quickly the template could be filled in).

4.11 Where public authorities do not follow the guidance and do not undertake a Rural Needs Impact Assessment, there is a risk that the due regard duty will not be fulfilled. There is therefore a need to remind public authorities of the importance of following the guidance and to encourage public authorities to ensure that an appropriate Rural Needs Impact Assessment is undertaken in respect of section 1 activities. There is also merit in raising awareness of the need to commence the Rural Needs Impact Assessment process as early as possible and to work through the process step by step.

Difficulties experienced in undertaking a Rural Needs Impact Assessment

4.12 Some public authorities reported having experienced no difficulties in undertaking Rural Needs Impact Assessments with one reporting that it was a "straight forward process". However some public authorities have reported experiencing difficulties with the most common difficulty identified as being inability to access the appropriate statistical and other information necessary to inform decision making, including accessing data at local level and obtaining urban-rural statistical breakdowns.

4.13 Other difficulties identified by public authorities include not understanding the social and economic needs relevant to the section 1 activity, not knowing whether a Rural Needs Impact Assessment is required in respect of a particular activity (or at what point it was required) and what needs to be done differently to ensure that the due regard duty is fulfilled.

4.14 There is merit in looking at what more can be done to improve access to statistical and other information for public authorities and in making available good examples of Rural Needs Impact Assessments through the provision of case studies. There is also a need for public authorities to ensure that they are familiar with the guidance and to seek legal advice where appropriate.

Action taken by public authorities to help ensure compliance with the due regard duty

4.15 Public authorities have undertaken a range of internal measures to help ensure that the due regard duty is complied with including awareness raising, the provision of in-house training and the incorporation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 into their communications plans and briefing templates and as an agenda

item at senior management and board meetings. Some organisations have appointed rural needs co-ordinators or have dedicated internal rural units/representatives in place who provide direct support and advice on issues relating to rural needs.

4.16 In some public authorities rural need awareness has been integrated into their equality awareness sessions and into their equality documentation thereby ensuring that the two statutory duties are promoted jointly. Some public authorities have also established a database for compiling information on RNIA Templates to assist with the monitoring process and to help ensure more accurate reporting.

Main barriers to implementing the due regard duty

4.17 Public authorities have identified two main barriers to implementing the due regard duty, namely a lack of understanding/awareness in relation to what public authorities are required to do in order to fulfil the due regard duty and a lack of availability of statistical and other information/evidence to inform their decisions.

4.18 Other barriers identified include treating the Rural Needs Impact Assessment process as a tick box exercise and not considering the due regard duty until the section 1 activity is already well under way. Risk of adopting an inconsistent approach towards completing Rural Needs Impact Assessments was also highlighted as a particular issue. Some public authorities also reported that the absence of a 'screening out' process risked 'rural needs fatigue' due to decision makers having to invest significant time and resources completing RNIA Templates in respect of a considerable number of internal or technical policies which had no potential to impact on people in rural areas.

4.19 Lack of appropriate training and resource pressures were also highlighted as potential barriers to effectively implementing the due regard duty.

Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) Templates

4.20 The RNIA Template is designed to capture information relevant to each stage of the Rural Needs Impact Assessment process and helps to provide evidence that a public authority has fulfilled the due regard duty.

4.21 The new RNIA Template provided in the revised guidance was found to be much more user friendly than the previous RNIA Template provided in the previous

version of the guidance and has led to a reduction in requests to DAERA for help with completing the RNIA Template. One public authority stated that the revised RNIA Template "provided a useful step by step guide to aid public authorities through the [Rural Needs Impact Assessment] process"

4.22 The review of a sample of RNIA Templates found that completed RNIA Templates were of variable quality with some showing evidence of a detailed Rural Needs Impact Assessment having been carried out while others provided little evidence of a Rural Needs Impact Assessment having been undertaken.

4.23 Some Public Authorities have designed their own RNIA Template based on the DAERA RNIA Template while others have combined the DAERA RNIA Template with their Equality Screening Template. In some cases public authorities who combined the EQIA Template with the DAERA RNIA Template were found to be adopting a 'screening out' approach to the due regard duty although the rural needs legislation does not provide for the screening out of an activity. It is important that public authorities recognise that the duties under the equality legislation and the rural needs legislation are distinct and separate.

4.24 The review also found that some public authorities continued to use the old RNIA Template based on the previous guidance raising questions of how aware some public authorities are of the revised guidance published by DAERA in April 2018 which incorporated a revised RNIA Template.

4.25 There was evidence that some public authorities were not following the Rural Needs Impact Assessment process as recommended in the guidance and some concerns that rural needs was being treated merely as a 'tick box' or 'form filling' exercise. It is important that public authorities are aware that the completion of an RNIA Template does not in itself equate to fulfilling the due regard duty.

4.26 There were some good examples of completed RNIA Templates which demonstrated that a detailed Rural Needs Impact Assessment had been undertaken and which provided evidence of how the public authority had sought to identify the needs of people in rural areas, how those needs were considered and how the section 1 activity had been influenced by the rural needs identified. In one case a public authority had set out both the direct and indirect impacts of the public service on people in rural areas.

4.27 The evidence from RNIA Templates showed that some public authorities have taken significant steps to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural

25

areas through a range of methods all of which have been detailed on the RNIA Template. However there are other examples where it was not clear what steps have been taken to identify the needs of people in rural areas as no details had been recorded.

4.28 The RNIA Template is designed to record information relating to the Rural Needs Impact Assessment and should contain sufficient evidence to help demonstrate that the due regard duty has been fulfilled. There is a concern that not following the Rural Needs Impact Assessment process set out in the revised guidance or using an amended RNIA Template that does not include all the steps set out in the process, may result in a public authority not providing sufficient evidence that the due regard duty has been complied with.

4.29 A majority of those RNIA Templates in the sample which had been properly completed indicated that the policy, strategy, plan or public service had been influenced by the rural needs identified. This indicates that the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 is having a positive impact on how public authorities undertake their functions. This is also supported by the survey of rural stakeholders which showed that some rural stakeholders recognise that the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 has made a positive difference in some areas.

4.30 While it is recognised that not every activity will have a particular rural dimension and that there will not always be scope to influence a particular activity there is potential for more to be done to encourage public authorities to take the necessary steps to identify the needs of people in rural areas and to seek to deliver better outcomes for people in rural areas which take account of rural circumstances.

4.31 The review of the sample of RNIA Templates raised some concerns about the contents of some templates and the terminology used. It also appeared that in some cases the focus may have been on "filling the box" rather than giving due consideration to answering the particular question set out in the RNIA Template. It is important for public authorities to be aware of their audience and to use appropriate terminology. It is also important to adopt a proportionate approach to the amount of information contained in an RNIA Template, with the amount of detail proportionate to the potential impact and relevance of the activity, and to ensure that the information provided is easily understood.

4.32 While all of the RNIA Templates sampled were published on line, mostly in relation to a public consultation exercise, it was noted that published RNIA

Templates using the DAERA RNIA Template tended to be better presented than those published using a public authority's own model of the RNIA Template.

4.33 It is recognised that the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 only came into operation for departments and district councils in 2017 and other public authorities in 2018 and therefore public authorities are still in a learning process. It is also recognised that the absence of a NI Assembly may have resulted in less scrutiny of RNIA Templates than might otherwise be the case. There is therefore merit in DAERA continuing to work closely with public authorities in seeking to ensure that the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 becomes firmly embedded within organisations and that Rural Needs Impact Assessments are carried out and RNIA Templates completed to a satisfactory standard.

Rural Stakeholder Engagement

4.34 While there is evidence that some public authorities have engaged directly with rural stakeholders in seeking to identify the needs of people in rural areas the results of the rural stakeholder survey show that very few rural stakeholder organisations have engaged directly with a public authority in relation to the undertaking of a Rural Needs Impact Assessment.

4.35 While there continues to be a lack of awareness among rural stakeholders that public authorities routinely undertake Rural Needs Impact Assessments and complete RNIA Templates in respect of their policies, strategies, plans and public services, it is recognised that rural stakeholders are an important source of information both in relation to the challenges facing rural communities and the unique circumstances in rural areas. There is therefore scope for public authorities to engage more effectively with rural stakeholders in seeking to identify the needs of people in rural areas.

4.36 There is also merit in DAERA working with public authorities and rural stakeholders to explore how engagement between public authorities and rural stakeholders can be more effective and help to deliver better outcomes for rural dwellers.

Review of the support provided by DAERA

Guidance on the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

4.37 DAERA published revised guidance (*A Guide to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 for Public Authorities (Revised)*) in April 2018. Public authorities have found the revised guidance to be very useful in assisting them with implementing the Act and a definite improvement on the previous version of the guidance.

4.38 However from the review of the sample of RNIA Templates it is clear that some public authorities are still using the old RNIA Template based on the previous guidance and therefore may not be aware of the *revised* guidance. Some public authorities also reported that the level of awareness of the guidance within their organisation was low and therefore more needs to be done to increase awareness including wider circulation of hard copies of the guidance where available.

4.39 The review showed that public authorities found the *Guidance on completing the Appendix 2 Template* to be useful and helped with the completion of the annual monitoring return. DAERA has noted a marked improvement between the returns submitted by Departments and Councils in respect of the 1st Annual Monitoring Report in 2018 and those submitted in respect of the 2nd Annual Monitoring Report in 2019 and has acknowledged that some of this improvement is due to the issue of the *Guidance on completing the Appendix 2 Template*.

4.40 There may be scope to review the *Guidance on completing the Appendix 2 Template* in light of the 2nd Annual Monitoring Report with a view to identifying any changes that might be made to help further improve the quality of the returns provided.

General Advice and Support provided by DAERA

4.41 DAERA has provided one to one support to public authorities on a range of issues including the implementation of the due regard duty, the completion of RNIA Templates, engagement with rural stakeholders and monitoring and reporting. The review showed that public authorities have found the general advice and support provided by DAERA to be very useful.

Information provided on rural needs on the DAERA Website

28

4.42 DAERA provides a range of information on rural needs on the 'Rural Needs' section of its website which public authorities have found useful. However there is merit in reviewing the design and content of the website with a view to presenting the information in a more user friendly manner. There is also merit in considering what further information could be provided to assist public authorities in fulfilling their duties under the Act.

Awareness Training

4.43 DAERA arranged for awareness training to be provided to all public authorities in preparation for the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 coming into operation. There were a variety of views on the usefulness of the awareness training with the majority of public authorities finding the awareness sessions useful or very useful. One public authority expressed the view that the awareness training wasn't comprehensive enough however it is recognised that the awareness training was designed to provide public authorities with an overview of their responsibilities under the Act and was not designed to be comprehensive.

4.44 While there is clearly a need for further awareness raising it is recognised that there is a distinction to be made between awareness raising and comprehensive training. It is recognised that for DAERA to make provision for comprehensive training to officials across all public authorities would be very resource intensive. However there is scope for DAERA to provide more comprehensive training for individuals within public authorities whose have specific or dedicated roles or responsibilities in relation to the implementation of the legislation (e.g. Rural Needs Co-ordinators) as part of DAERA's policy of 'supporting public authorities to support themselves'. There are also other options for raising awareness which, together with the provision of guidance and dedicated support for Rural Needs Co-ordinators, can ensure a more effective approach to awareness raising across public authorities.

E-learning

4.45 The rural needs e-learning programme which was made available to departments and local councils in 2016 only provided an 'overview of rural' rather than providing detailed information on the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 or on the carrying out of a Rural Needs Impact Assessment. The e-learning programme was based on DAERA's previous guidance and was not updated to reflect the revised guidance published in 2018.

4.46 Feedback showed that 117 people completed the e-learning programme during the period up to 2019 while feedback from public authorities indicates that it wasn't considered particularly useful nor particularly relevant.

4.47 E-learning does provide an effective tool for providing learning to large numbers of people and some public authorities have recognised its potential as a means of delivering training on the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016. However it is recognised that if a new e-learning package is to be developed it should be based on the revised guidance and provide additional value rather than repeating what is already in the guidance. The revised guidance provides detailed information on the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 and has proven to be an effective tool for helping public authorities to understand what the Act requires them to do.

Review of the Monitoring and Reporting Arrangements

Monitoring and Reporting Arrangements

4.48 Public authorities indicated that they are satisfied with the monitoring and reporting arrangements put in place by DAERA. The revised guidance provided by DAERA was generally thought to be very helpful while DAERA's early commissioning of annual monitoring returns and the deadline of September for submitting returns have both been welcomed by public authorities.

4.49 However a small number of public authorities reported some difficulties in relation to the monitoring and reporting arrangements. One public authority commented that monitoring and reporting can be complex and difficult to implement and is only as good as the governance systems in place in the organisation while another highlighted the risk that not all RNIA Templates may be included in the annual monitoring return.

4.50 One public authority indicted that the sheer volume of policies that it had to deal with meant that it was impractical to complete a RNIA template in respect of all its policies and therefore it had taken a decision not to complete RNIA Templates in respect of many of its policies that had no rural impact.

4.51 There is still some uncertainty among public authorities around the submission of narrative reports to DAERA as part of the monitoring and reporting arrangements

including what to include in the narrative and whether the narrative is actually published in the annual monitoring report.

4.52 The requirement to publish the same extensive information in a public authority's Annual Report and Accounts as in the annual monitoring report produced by DAERA is viewed by some public authorities as unwelcome bureaucracy. The view was expressed that a public authority's Annual Report and Accounts is generally perceived to be an overview document and may not therefore be particularly suitable for publishing details of every RNIA Template that had been completed by the public authority during the period.

4.53 In terms of how the monitoring and reporting arrangements might be improved it was suggested that the development of an on-line system would assist public authorities with compiling their information. DAERA has developed a 'Rural Needs Database' which aims to assist with the compiling and reporting of information contained in RNIA Templates and is currently piloting this within DAERA. There is therefore merit in making this database available to all public authorities following the successful completion of the pilot to assist them with compiling the information required under the Act and to help ensure more effective reporting.

4.54 Some public authorities suggested that it would also be useful for DAERA to provide feedback to public authorities on the returns they submit for inclusion in the annual monitoring report to help them understand better what information is required and to help ensure that the information submitted is relevant and meaningful to rural stakeholders and other interested parties.

Annual Monitoring Report

4.55 Section 3(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 requires public authorities to compile information on the exercise of their functions under section 1 of the Act and to send this information to DAERA. The 'Template for Information to be Compiled' provided at Appendix 2 of the guidance requires public authorities to include information on their annual monitoring return in respect of each section 1 activity on (a) the rural needs identified (b) the issues they have considered in relation to these rural needs and (c) how the activity had been influenced by these rural needs. This information is then published by DAERA in its annual monitoring report.

4.56 The review found a significant increase in the number of section 1 activities reported on by Departments and Councils in respect of the 2nd Annual Monitoring Report over the 1st Annual Monitoring Report and a definitive improvement in the quality of information provided. The evidence shows that all public authorities are now well aware of the need to complete RNIA Templates and to compile information on these and send this information to DAERA.

4.57 However there were some issues regarding proportionality in terms of the information submitted in the annual monitoring returns with cases where a large amount of information was provided in relation to a section 1 activity which wasn't particularly relevant. In other cases the information submitted, while factually correct, was not particularly meaningful. There is therefore a need to make public authorities more aware of their audience and to ensure that the information provided is meaningful to rural stakeholders and that it is information which is relevant.

4.58 While the rural stakeholder survey showed that the majority of rural stakeholders are not aware of the annual monitoring report, of those that responded regarding the usefulness of the information less than two thirds found the information published in the 1st Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report useful.

4.59 There were also a small number of cases where annual monitoring returns were submitted late due to a lack of clarity on who in the public authority was responsible for compiling the information. One public authority suggested that all requests for monitoring information should be sent to a generic email address to help ensure it was acted upon. There is therefore merit in reviewing communication between DAERA and Rural Needs Co-ordinators to ensure that returns are submitted on time.

4.60 DAERA has issued *Guidance on completing the Appendix 2 Template* which aims to assist public authorities with completing their annual monitoring returns and help ensure more consistency in the information provided. While public authorities have found this guidance useful there is still some ambiguity around the specifying of the 'policy area'. It is recognised that the *Guidance on completing the Appendix 2 Template* updates the list of policy areas provided in Section 2D of the RNIA Template set out in the guidance and therefore public authorities should adhere to the *Guidance on the completing the Appendix 2 Template* when completing their annual monitoring returns.

4.61 There were also some concerns raised about the risk of the amount of information contained in the annual monitoring report becoming too unwieldy in the event of a significant increase in the number of public authorities being added to the schedule as a result of the review of the list of bodies and persons set out in the Schedule which DAERA is required to undertake at least every 3 years. It was also noted that in the event of a restoration of the NI Assembly and Executive there was likely to an increase in the number of activities being reported on by Departments.

4.62 There were also some concerns raised about the value that DAERA adds to the process of compiling the annual monitoring report and the timeliness of the information published in the report given that the information published relates to activities which were undertaken up to 21 months prior to the report being published.

4.63 It is also recognised that the absence of the NI Assembly and the lack of awareness among rural stakeholders has resulted in less scrutiny of the annual monitoring report than might otherwise be the case and that the level of scrutiny is likely to increase in the future.

Review of Co-operation

Co-operation Events

4.64 The review found that the co-operation events hosted by DAERA have been useful to public authorities as they provide an opportunity for rural needs representatives to engage directly with DAERA and to share information and experiences. There is merit in reviewing both the frequency and structure of the events with a view to maximising their benefit to public authorities. There is also an opportunity for DAERA to use these events to promote best practice, to provide feedback on the monitoring and reporting process and to facilitate discussion on the Rural Needs Impact Assessment process and the completion of RNIA Templates.

Section 5

Recommendations in relation to overcoming the barriers to the effective implementation of the due regard duty

Introduction

5.1. This Section sets out the barriers and potential barriers identified together with the recommendations made by the Working Group in respect of Objective 2 of its Terms of Reference.

To identify any barriers (or potential barriers) to the effective implementation of Section 1(1) of the Act and to make recommendations on how such barriers (or potential barriers) might be overcome.

Identification of Barriers and Potential Barriers

5.2. The Working Group has identified the main barriers to the effective implementation of section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 as follows:

a. A lack of awareness among some decision makers of the need to comply with the due regard duty in respect of policies, strategies, plans and public services;

b. A lack of understanding among some decision makers of what a public authority is required to do specifically in order to fulfil the due regard duty in relation to a particular activity;

c. A lack of access to and/or availability of the statistical and other information necessary to inform decision makers of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas;

d. Decision makers not undertaking a Rural Needs Impact Assessment or not giving sufficient or timely consideration to the needs of people in rural areas when undertaking a Rural Needs Impact Assessment;

e. Decision makers treating the Rural Needs Impact Assessment process and the completion of RNIA Templates as a 'tick box' exercise;

f. 'Rural needs fatigue' due to the absence of a 'screening out' process with the result that decision makers are investing time and resources in completing RNIA Templates in respect of activities which have no impact, no likely impact and no potential to impact on people in rural areas or their social and economic needs.

35

g. Insufficient resources made available by some public authorities to support rural needs co-ordinators.

Recommendations

5.3. The review found that there was still a lack of awareness among decision makers of the need to comply with the due regard duty and of what was required to be done to fulfil the due regard duty. The working group recognised that awareness levels varied within public authorities and that more work needs to be done to increase awareness. It was also recognised that both DAERA and public authorities had a role to play in raising awareness and that there was a need to ensure that awareness raising was appropriately targeted within organisations.

Recommendation 1

- **It is recommended that DAERA works in partnership with other public authorities to deliver a programme of 'on the ground' and corporate level promotion activities aimed at raising awareness of the due regard duty and of the support and guidance available to decision makers to help them ensure they comply with the due regard duty.**

5.4. The review found that in some cases decision makers did not fully understand the Rural Needs Impact Assessment process and that the completion of the RNIA Template was being treated as a 'tick box' exercise. It also found that in some cases the Rural Needs Impact Assessment process set out in the guidance wasn't being followed and that while some RNIA Templates had been completed to a high standard others were of variable quality.

5.5. The working group recognised the importance of carrying out a proportionate Rural Needs Impact Assessment and recording this in a properly completed RNIA Template to help demonstrate to rural stakeholders the steps which a public authority has taken to comply with the due regard duty. It was agreed that there would be merit in providing further information on the Rural Needs Impact Assessment process and the completion of RNIA Templates on the DAERA website.

Recommendation 2

- **It is recommended that DAERA develops a suite of new online material specifically on the Rural Need Impact Assessment process and the completion of the RNIA Template and makes this available to all public authorities.**

5.6. The working group acknowledged the barriers to the effective implementation of the due regard duty which had been identified in the review and recognised that that further training could help address some of the barriers.

5.7. It was recognised that it would not be practical or efficient for DAERA to provide classroom based training to all officials involved in section 1 activities but that there would be merit in targeting training at those officials within public authorities who had a promotion, supporting or monitoring role in relation to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 within their organisation. This is consistent with DAERA's policy of "supporting public authorities to support themselves".

5.8. It was agreed that the provision of more intensive training than that which was provided in the awareness training sessions provided to public authorities prior to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 coming into operation should be provided to Rural Needs Co-ordinators (and other officials with a supporting role) to enable them to provide effective support to officials within their organisation.

Recommendation 3

- **It is recommended that DAERA develops comprehensive training on the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 and makes this available to those officials within public authorities with responsibility for promoting, supporting and monitoring the implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 based on need.**

5.9. The review found that there was a risk of 'rural needs fatigue' resulting from the completion of RNIA Templates in cases where a public authority had a considerable number of internal or technical policies which had no potential to impact on people in rural areas and for which no rural needs could be identified. In such cases the completion of an RNIA Template in respect of all section 1 activities was seen as overly bureaucratic. The working group recognised that the objective of the Rural Needs Impact Assessment process was not to create unnecessary bureaucracy but to help public authorities ensure that the needs of people in rural areas were given due regard to. The working group agreed that DAERA should review the guidance to try to address this.

Recommendation 4

- **It is recommended that DAERA reviews the guidance on the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 with a view to clarifying that where a public authority is satisfied that a Section 1 activity in which it is engaged has no impact, no likely impact and no potential to impact on people in rural areas or their social and economic needs, that public authority may complete its own condensed version of the RNIA Template to document that information and to confirm that it is satisfied that the due regard duty has been fully considered.**

5.10. The review found that that there was some lack of understanding among decision makers on what a public authority is required to do specifically in order to fulfil the due regard duty in relation to a particular activity. There was also some uncertainty around whether a Rural Needs Impact Assessment was required to be undertaken in certain circumstances.

5.11. The working group recognised that there may therefore be merit in individual public authorities taking steps to increase awareness and understanding of what decision makers are required to do in order to comply with the legislation and to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experiences between decision makers. It was agreed that the workshop model may be the most effective way of doing this.

Recommendation 5

- **It is recommended that public authorities host regular workshops for decision makers within their organisation (subject to need) for the purposes of increasing awareness and understanding of the duties on public authorities under the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.**

5.12. The review found that a lack of access to and/or availability of the statistical and other information necessary to inform decision makers of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas was one of the main barriers to the effective implementation of the due regard duty. The working group agreed that there would be merit in more being done to promote awareness of available statistical information and the resources available to obtain information.

5.13. DAERA's rural statistician attended the 3rd meeting of the working group and delivered a presentation on the availability of rural statistics and the Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service (NINIS) and on sources which public authorities could use to obtain statistical information. The working group agreed

that there was merit in making rural statistics more accessible to public authorities and in proving available statistical, research and other relevant information on the 'Rural Needs' section of the DAERA website.

Recommendation 6

- **It is recommended that DAERA creates a dedicated 'Rural Statistics and Information' page on the 'Rural Needs' section of the DAERA website incorporating appropriate links to statistics, research and other useful information (including links to the Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service) and contacts for the DAERA rural statistician and other Departmental statisticians groups.**

5.14. The review found that some Rural Needs Co-ordinators were of the opinion that the resources required to undertake their role effectively were not fully recognised by their own public authority and that there could often be competing pressures particularly as their responsibilities in relation to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 were often added on to their existing role. The working group acknowledged that each public authority operated differently and that it was important that sufficient resources were made available to ensure that the legislation was effectively implemented.

Recommendation 7

- **It is recommended that public authorities review the resources allocated to supporting the implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 with a view to ensuring that rural needs co-ordinators have access to the resources necessary to undertake their role effectively.**

Section 6

Recommendations in relation to the measures put in place to support public authorities

Introduction

6.1 This Section sets out the recommendations made by the Working Group in respect of Objective 3 of its Terms of Reference.

To consider the measures put in place by DAERA to support public authorities in fulfilling the duty under Section 1(1) of the Act (including advice, guidance, information provided on the DAERA website, awareness training, e-learning etc.) and to make recommendations on:

    a. any changes which should be made to current support measures to help public authorities implement the Section 1(1) duty effectively;

    b. any further support or other measures which should be considered to help public authorities implement the Section 1(1) duty effectively; and

    c. any further action that public authorities should take themselves to help ensure that the Section 1(1) duty is implemented effectively.

Recommendations

6.2 The review found that while the information on rural needs provided on the DAERA website was useful to public authorities, there would be merit in reviewing the design and content of the website with a view to presenting the information in a more user-friendly manner. The working group agreed that the 'Rural Needs' section of the DAERA website was an important resource and it would also be useful for DAERA to consider adding further information to assist public authorities in complying with the legislation.

Recommendation 8

- **It is recommended that DAERA reviews the structure and content of the 'Rural Needs' section of the DAERA website with a view to making the information more user-friendly and including more information on the Rural Needs Impact Assessment process including, for example, rural statistics, research information, case studies, further guidance and examples of good practice.**

41

6.3 The working group agreed that there was merit in individual public authorities holding regular workshops to increase awareness and understanding of what decision makers are required to do in order to comply with the legislation and to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experiences between decision makers. It also agreed that there would be merit in DAERA offering to attend these workshops to provide advice and expertise on aspects of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 if requested while recognising the potential resource implications for DAERA.

Recommendation 9

- **It is recommended that DAERA offers to support one half day workshop on the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 for each public authority annually on request.**

6.4 The working group acknowledged that some public authorities had taken steps to embed the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 within their organisation including at corporate and management level. It agreed that there would be merit in similar good practice being implemented across all public authorities.

Recommendation 10

- **It is recommended that public authorities take steps to seek to embed the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 further within their organisation including, for example, by incorporating compliance with the Act in their Assurance Statements, Submission Templates and Audit and Risk Procedures.**

6.5 DAERA's rural statistician gave a presentation to the working group on the availability of rural statistics and on sources which public authorities could use to obtain statistical information. The working group recognised the valuable knowledge and expertise which the rural statistician can contribute to the process of identifying the needs of people in rural areas and agreed that there would be merit in the rural statistician participating in the proposed new Rural Needs Network (*see recommendation 22*).

Recommendation 11

- **It is recommended that the DAERA rural statistician participates in the Rural Needs Network.**

Section 7

Recommendations in relation to research and information gathering

Introduction

7.1 This Section sets out the recommendations made by the Working Group in respect of Objective 4 of its Terms of Reference.

To consider DAERA's powers in respect of research on matters relating to rural needs under Section 2(b) of the Act and to make recommendations on:

   a. *anything regarding future research on matters relating to rural needs which the Working Group considers appropriate;*
   b. *how public authorities might gather better information on rural needs; and*
   c. *how public authorities might engage more effectively with rural stakeholders in gathering information on rural needs.*

Recommendations

7.2 The working group recognised the value of learning from the experiences of others and agreed that there would be merit in undertaking research to identify examples of where the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 or rural proofing had made a positive difference to rural communities. It was also suggested that public authorities could benefit from examples of rural success stories in other jurisdictions where rural communities may have faced similar challenges to those in Northern Ireland. The working group recognised the importance of being open to adopting new approaches and developing new solutions to address the challenges facing rural communities and that examples of what worked and what hadn't worked in other jurisdictions could benefit public authorities here.

Recommendation 12

- **It is recommended that research is undertaken to identify examples of rural success stories, positive impacts and lessons learned as a result of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 or rural proofing and that DAERA makes these available on the 'Rural Needs' section of its website.**

7.3 The review found that while some public authorities engaged directly with rural stakeholders in seeking to identify the needs of people in rural areas, the results

45

of the stakeholder survey showed that very few rural stakeholder organisations had been engaged with public authorities in relation to the undertaking of a Rural Needs Impact Assessment. The review also found that obtaining the information on the needs of people in rural areas necessary to inform decision making was a key barrier to implementing the due regard duty effectively.

7.4 The working group recognised the value of public authorities engaging directly with the rural community sector in seeking to understand the needs of people in rural areas. It also recognised that positive relationships between public authorities and rural community organisations would help assist public authorities in gathering information on rural needs and help lead to better outcomes for rural dwellers

Recommendation 13

- **It is recommended that public authorities seek to develop effective relationships with rural community organisations and, where appropriate, to seek to engage with the rural community sector in a meaningful and timely manner as part of the Rural Needs Impact Assessment process being undertaken in respect of Section 1 activities.**

7.5 The working group acknowledged that the needs of people in rural areas were often different to those in urban areas and that different approaches or solutions were often required in rural areas to help ensure equitable outcomes for rural dwellers. The working group recognised that there was a need for greater innovation in seeking to address the needs of people in rural areas and that public authorities should be open to adopting new and innovative approaches to help deliver more equitable outcomes for rural dwellers. The working group also recognised the value in engaging widely with rural stakeholders and seeking to ensure that a broad range of views are heard.

Recommendation 14

- **It is recommended that public authorities be open to adopting new and innovative approaches to engaging with the rural community sector when seeking to gather information on rural needs including taking measures to engage with people in rural areas who may not normally participate in public consultations or stakeholder engagement.**

7.6 The review found that a lack of access to and/or availability of statistical and other information necessary to inform decision makers was a barrier to the effective implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016. It was acknowledged that there was a significant amount of rural research available through academic and other research organisations but that it was not always easily accessible by public authorities, It was agreed that DAERA could play a role in identifying available rural research and in making it more accessible to public authorities.

Recommendation 15

- **It is recommended that DAERA incorporates a rural research hub webpage on the 'Rural Needs' section of its website providing a dedicated space for links to relevant research relating to the needs of people in rural areas to be shared.**

7.7 It was recognised that AFBI undertakes rural research on behalf of DAERA covering a wide range of rural policy issues and this could be of use to public authorities in seeking to understand the needs of people in rural areas relevant to their activities. The working group agreed that there would be merit in making this research more available to public authorities in a format that was suitable for policy makers.

Recommendation 16

- **It is recommended that the Agri-food and Bio-Sciences Institute (AFBI) produces a short research briefing document (which provides an overview and summary of the research) as an output of all current and future rural research undertaken by it on behalf of DAERA.**

Section 8

Recommendations in relation to the monitoring and reporting arrangements

Introduction

8.1 This Section sets out the recommendations made by the Working Group in respect of Objective 5 of its Terms of Reference.

To review the monitoring and reporting arrangements established by DAERA in relation to Section 3 of the Act and to make recommendations on:

    a. any changes which should be made to improve the effectiveness of the current monitoring and reporting arrangements;

    b. any further support which should be provided by DAERA to assist public authorities in fulfilling their monitoring and reporting obligations; and

    c. how the information provided in the Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report might be improved in terms of presentation and/or content.

Recommendations

8.2 The review found that some public authorities continued to face challenges compiling the information required for the annual monitoring report. The working group acknowledged that monitoring and reporting is only as effective as the governance systems in place within an organisation and that without an effective monitoring system there is a risk that not all RNIA Templates may be included in a public authority's annual monitoring return.

8.3 DAERA provided the working group with a demonstration of a model which it had developed for the purposes of improving the monitoring of information and ensuring greater accuracy in the information provided on the annual monitoring returns. The model provides for details of all RNIA Templates to be recorded on a 'live' database and therefore provides Rural Needs co-ordinators with an up to date record of all RNIA Templates produced by the public authority at any point in time. DAERA was currently piloting the database within its department with the pilot scheduled to finish in December 2019.

Recommendation 17

- **It is recommended that DAERA shares its 'Rural Needs Database' model with other public authorities following the successful completion of the pilot.**

8.4 The review found that some public authorities had concerns about whether the information they submitted to DAERA for inclusion in the annual monitoring report was appropriate for the purpose and saw merit in DAERA providing feedback on the monitoring returns which they submitted.

8.5 The working group agreed that there was merit in DAERA providing feedback on the annual monitoring returns as this would help public authorities understand better what type of information is appropriate and help ensure that the information submitted in respect of the annual monitoring report is suitable in terms of quality and content and that the information contained in the annual monitoring report is meaningful.

Recommendation 18

- **It is recommended that DAERA offers to provide feedback on the content of annual monitoring returns submitted by public authorities on request.**

8.6 The review found that there was a risk of the amount of information contained in the annual monitoring report becoming too unwieldy and that the presentation of the annual monitoring report could be improved. The working group acknowledged that there was also scope to do more to improve the presentation of the annual monitoring report and to make it more meaningful and relevant to rural stakeholders.

Recommendation 19

- **It is recommended that DAERA reviews the structure and content of the annual monitoring report with a view to improving its presentation and making the information more meaningful and relevant to stakeholders including through the use of indexing, the use of narrative rather than tabular format, the use of infographics (where appropriate) and the provision of linkages to RNIA Templates on public authorities' own websites (where available).**

8.7 The working group recognised the value in publishing completed RNIA Templates as a means of informing stakeholders of the steps they had taken to comply with the due regard duty and as a means of ensuring greater transparency on how

50

rural needs were being given regard to in policy making and public service delivery. It also recognised that stakeholders can face challenges in accessing published RNIA Templates on public authorities' own websites particularly if they were unfamiliar with the layout of the website. The working group agreed that it would be helpful to rural stakeholders if all RNIA Templates published by a public authority were made available on their website in a single place.

Recommendation 20

- **It is recommended that public authorities publish their RNIA Templates on their website on a single webpage and that the Annual Monitoring Report includes a link to each public authority's webpage.**

8.8   The review found that the requirement to publish the same extensive information in a public authority's Annual Report and Accounts <u>and</u> in the annual monitoring report produced by DAERA is viewed as unwelcome bureaucracy. The working group acknowledged a public authority's Annual Report and Accounts was generally perceived to be an overview document and may not therefore be particularly suitable for publishing details of every RNIA Template that had been completed by the public authority during the period. It also acknowledged that it may be more appropriate for the Annual Report and Accounts to contain a summary of the information published in the annual monitoring report but that the current legislation did not provide for that.

Recommendation 21

- **It is recommended that, if a suitable opportunity arises, DAERA should seek to amend Section 3 of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 to remove the requirement to publish the same comprehensive information in both a public authority's Annual Report and Accounts <u>and</u> in the annual monitoring report which is required to be published by DAERA.**

Section 9

Recommendations in relation to the co-operation arrangements

Introduction

9.1 This Section sets out the recommendations made by the Working Group in respect of Objective 6 of its Terms of Reference.

To consider the co-operation arrangements put in place by DAERA under Section 4 of the Act and to make recommendations on how co-operation and the exchange of information between public authorities might be improved.

Recommendations

9.2 The working group recognised the value of the co-operation that had taken place between public authorities to date and the merit in Rural Needs Co-ordinators having a network where they could continue to develop relationships and share information and experiences. It was agreed that the annual co-operation events previously hosted by DAERA had been useful but that there was merit in meeting more frequently and for Rural Needs Co-ordinators to have input into the agenda. It was also agreed that there would also be merit in making provision for Rural Needs Co-ordinators to engage informally outside of the formal network meetings on an ongoing basis. The working group agreed that there would be merit in establishing a Rural Needs Network made up of representatives of all public authorities and that this should replace the co-operation events.

Recommendation 22

- **It is recommended that DAERA establishes a Rural Needs Network open to all public authorities listed in the Schedule to the Act for the purposes of facilitating co-operation and the exchange of information between public authorities (including DAERA), promoting best practice across public authorities and providing a forum for Rural Needs Co-ordinators to raise and discuss issues relating to rural needs, including engagement with the rural community sector.**

Recommendation 23

- **It is recommended that the Rural Needs Network meets formally on a biannual basis and that following its establishment, the network would explore options for networking on an ongoing basis outside of the formal process, including options using technology.**

53

Section 10

Recommendations in relation to the review of the list of bodies and persons set out in the Schedule to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

Introduction

10.1. This Section sets out the recommendations made by the Working Group in respect of Objective 7 of its Terms of Reference.

To consider the list of bodies and persons currently listed in the Schedule to the Act and to make recommendations in relation to any bodies or persons which the Working Group thinks should be added to, removed from or modified in the Schedule to the Act (giving reasons for the recommendations) for the purposes of informing the review of the Schedule which is required to be undertaken by DAERA under Section 3(1) of the Act.

Recommendations

10.2. The working group considered the bodies and persons currently listed in the Schedule to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 and agreed that there were no public authorities that should be removed from, or modified in, the Schedule.

10.3. The working group also considered a number of bodes that were not currently listed in the Schedule and agreed only to recommend for consideration bodies where a case had been made for inclusion.

10.4. The working group also agreed that there was a need for DAERA to engage widely when undertaking its review of the list of bodies and persons in the Schedule including with the current members of the Rural Needs Working Group.

Recommendation 24

- **It is recommended that DAERA should consider adding the following organisations to the Schedule to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 when undertaking its review of the list of bodies and persons set out in the Schedule as required under Section 1(3) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016:**

Northern Ireland Water

Northern Ireland Water is a government owned company which provides the water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland. The working group has recommended that NI Water be considered for inclusion in the Schedule to the

Act on the basis that people who live in isolated rural areas can often face difficulties in accessing the public water mains network.

Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company

The Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company is responsible for the operation of its subsidiary companies, including Ulsterbus, Metro and Northern Ireland Railways, trading jointly as Translink. The working group has recommended that the NITHC be considered for inclusion in the Schedule to the Act on the basis that rural dwellers are less likely to have access to a regular public transport service and that people without access to private transport (e.g. young people, older people, people with disabilities) in rural areas are likely to be disadvantaged in terms of access to services and employment opportunities.

Waterways Ireland*

Waterways Ireland is a North/South implementation body with responsibility for the management, maintenance, development, and restoration of inland navigable waterways primarily for recreational purposes. The working group has recommended that Waterways Ireland be considered for inclusion in the Schedule to the Act on the basis that its remit within Northern Ireland relates primarily to rural areas and the potential impact it has on rural communities and people visiting rural areas for recreational purposes.

to the extent that it exercises functions in or as regards Northern Ireland

Recommendation 25

- **It is recommended that DAERA engages with members of the Rural Needs Working Group when undertaking the review of the list of bodies and persons in the Schedule under Section 1(3) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.**

57

Appendix 1 – List of Recommendations

No.	Recommendation	Public Authority Recommended to Implement
1	It is recommended that DAERA works in partnership with other public authorities to deliver a programme of 'on the ground' and corporate level promotion activities aimed at raising awareness of the due regard duty and of the support and guidance available to decision makers to help them ensure they comply with the due regard duty.	DAERA
2	It is recommended that DAERA develops a suite of new online material specifically on the Rural Need Impact Assessment process and the completion of the RNIA Template and makes this available to all public authorities.	DAERA
3	It is recommended that DAERA develops comprehensive training on the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 and makes this available to those officials within public authorities with responsibility for promoting, supporting and monitoring the implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 based on need.	DAERA
4	It is recommended that DAERA reviews the guidance on the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 with a view to clarifying that where a public authority is satisfied that a Section 1 activity in which it is engaged has no impact, no likely impact and no potential to impact on people in rural areas or their social and economic needs, that public authority may complete its own condensed version of the RNIA Template to document that information and to confirm that it is satisfied that the due regard duty has been fully considered.	DAERA
5	It is recommended that public authorities host regular workshops for decision makers within their organisation (subject to need) for the purposes of increasing awareness	All Public Authorities

	and understanding of the duties on public authorities under the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	
6	It is recommended that DAERA creates a dedicated 'Rural Statistics and Information' page on the 'Rural Needs' section of the DAERA website incorporating appropriate links to statistics, research and other useful information (including links to the Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service) and contacts for the DAERA rural statistician and other Departmental statisticians groups.	DAERA
7	It is recommended that public authorities review the resources allocated to supporting the implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 with a view to ensuring that rural needs co-ordinators have access to the resources necessary to undertake their role effectively.	All Public Authorities
8	It is recommended that DAERA reviews the structure and content of the 'Rural Needs' section of the DAERA website with a view to making the information more user-friendly and including more information on the Rural Needs Impact Assessment process including, for example, rural statistics, research information, case studies, further guidance and examples of good practice.	DAERA
9	It is recommended that DAERA offers to support one half day workshop on the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 for each public authority annually on request.	DAERA
10	It is recommended that public authorities take steps to seek to embed the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 further within their organisation including, for example, by incorporating compliance with the Act in their Assurance Statements, Submission Templates and Audit and Risk Procedures.	All Public Authorities
11	It is recommended that the DAERA rural statistician participates in the Rural Needs Network.	DAERA

60

12	It is recommended that research is undertaken to identify examples of rural success stories, positive impacts and lessons learned as a result of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 or rural proofing and that DAERA makes these available on the 'Rural Needs' section of its website.	DAERA
13	It is recommended that public authorities seek to develop effective relationships with rural community organisations and, where appropriate, to seek to engage with the rural community sector in a meaningful and timely manner as part of the Rural Needs Impact Assessment process being undertaken in respect of Section 1 activities.	All Public Authorities
14	It is recommended that public authorities be open to adopting new and innovative approaches to engaging with the rural community sector when seeking to gather information on rural needs including taking measures to engage with people in rural areas who may not normally participate in public consultations or stakeholder engagement.	All Public Authorities
15	It is recommended that DAERA incorporates a rural research hub webpage on the 'Rural Needs' section of its website providing a dedicated space for links to relevant research relating to the needs of people in rural areas to be shared.	DAERA
16	It is recommended that the Agri-food and Bio-Sciences Institute (AFBI) produces a short research briefing document (which provides an overview and summary of the research) as an output of all current and future rural research undertaken by it on behalf of DAERA.	AFBI
17	It is recommended that DAERA shares its 'Rural Needs Database' model with other public authorities following the successful completion of the pilot.	DAERA

18	It is recommended that DAERA offers to provide feedback on the content of annual monitoring returns submitted by public authorities on request.	DAERA
19	It is recommended that DAERA reviews the structure and content of the annual monitoring report with a view to improving its presentation and making the information more meaningful and relevant to stakeholders including through the use of indexing, the use of narrative rather than tabular format, the use of infographics (where appropriate) and the provision of linkages to RNIA Templates on public authorities' own websites (where available).	DAERA
20	It is recommended that public authorities publish their RNIA Templates on their website on a single webpage and that the annual monitoring report includes a link to each public authority's webpage.	All Public Authorities
21	It is recommended that, if a suitable opportunity arises, DAERA should seek to amend Section 3 of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 to remove the requirement to publish the same comprehensive information in both a public authority's Annual Report and Accounts and in the annual monitoring report which is required to be published by DAERA.	DAERA
22	It is recommended that DAERA establishes a Rural Needs Network open to all public authorities listed in the Schedule to the Act for the purposes of facilitating co-operation and the exchange of information between public authorities (including DAERA), promoting best practice across public authorities and providing a forum for Rural Needs Co-ordinators to raise and discuss issues relating to rural needs, including engagement with the rural community sector.	DAERA
23	It is recommended that the Rural Needs Network meets formally on a biannual basis and that following its establishment, the network would explore options for networking on an ongoing basis outside of the formal process, including options using technology.	DAERA

24	It is recommended that DAERA should consider adding the following organisations to the Schedule to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 when undertaking its review of the list of bodies and persons set out in the Schedule as required under Section 1(3) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016: - Northern Ireland Water - The Northern Ireland Transport Company - Waterways Ireland	DAERA
25	It is recommended that DAERA engages with members of the Rural Needs Working Group when undertaking the review of the list of bodies and persons in the Schedule under Section 1(3) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	DAERA

Appendix 2 – Terms of Reference (Objectives)

64

I. To review the implementation of Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 by departments, local councils and other public authorities to date.

II. To identify any barriers (or potential barriers) to the effective implementation of Section 1(1) of the Act and to make recommendations on how such barriers (or potential barriers) might be overcome.

III. To consider the measures put in place by DAERA to support public authorities in fulfilling the duty under Section 1(1) of the Act (including advice, guidance, information provided on the DAERA website, awareness training, e-learning etc.) and to make recommendations on:

   a. any changes which should be made to current support measures to help public authorities implement the Section 1(1) duty effectively.
   b. any further support or other measures which should be considered to help public authorities implement the Section1(1) duty effectively.
   c. any further action that public authorities should take themselves to help ensure that the Section 1(1) duty is implemented effectively.

IV. To consider DAERA's powers in respect of research on matters relating to rural needs under Section 2(b) of the Act and to make recommendations on:

   a. anything regarding future research on matters relating to rural needs which the Working Group considers appropriate;
   b. how public authorities might gather better information on rural needs;
   c. how public authorities might engage more effectively with rural stakeholders in gathering information on rural needs.

V. To review the monitoring and reporting arrangements established by DAERA in relation to Section 3 of the Act and to make recommendations on:

   a. any changes which should be made to improve the effectiveness of the current monitoring and reporting arrangements;
   b. any further support which should be provided by DAERA to assist public authorities in fulfilling their monitoring and reporting obligations
   c. how the information provided in the Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report might be improved in terms of presentation and/or content.

VI. To consider the co-operation arrangements put in place by DAERA under Section 4 of the Act and to make recommendations on how co-operation and the exchange of information between public authorities might be improved.

VII. To consider the list of bodies and persons currently listed in the Schedule to the Act and to make recommendations in relation to any bodies or persons which the Working Group thinks should be added to, removed from or modified in the Schedule to the Act (giving reasons for the recommendations) for the purposes of informing the review of the Schedule which is required to be undertaken by DAERA under Section 3(1) of the Act.

Appendix 3 – Questionnaires

66

REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF

THE RURAL NEEDS ACT (NI) 2016

Questionnaire for Public Authorities

TYPE OF PUBLIC AUTHORITY

1. Please indicate the category of your organisation under the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016?

Northern Ireland Department		District Council		Other Public Authority listed in the Schedule to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016	

AWARENESS

2. What is your assessment of the level of awareness of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 within your organisation?

High		Medium		Low		Don't Know	

3. Do you think that more needs to be done to increase awareness of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016?

Yes ☐   No ☐

4. What is your assessment of the level of awareness of the Guidance - '*A Guide to the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 for Public Authorities (Revised)*' - within your organisation?

High		Medium		Low		Don't Know	

5. Please provide any suggestions you may have for increasing awareness of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 within public authorities.

COMPLIANCE

6. Please provide details of any additional action taken by your organisation to help ensure that the due regard duty under section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 is fully compiled with (e.g. training, awareness raising, provision of support etc.).

```
```

7. What do you see as the main barriers to public authorities complying fully with the due regard duty under Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016?

```
```

RURAL NEEDS IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8. Please provide details of any difficulties which officials in your organisation have encountered in undertaking a Rural Needs Impact Assessment as recommended in Chapter 5 of the Guidance - *A Guide to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 for Public Authorities (Revised)*.

```
```

9. Please provide details of any difficulties which officials in your organisation have encountered in completing the Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) Template (*Appendix 1 of the Guidance*).

```
```

MONITORING AND REPORTING

10. How satisfied are you with the monitoring and reporting arrangements in relation to the compiling of information, the sending of that information to DAERA and the publication of that information in the Annual Monitoring Report as required under Section 3 of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016?

Very Satisfied [   ]   Satisfied [   ]   Not very satisfied [   ]   Not at all satisfied [   ]

11. Please provide details of any issues you have encountered in relation to the monitoring and reporting arrangements that have caused difficulty for you or your organisation.

```
```

12. Please provide details of any changes you would like to see made to the monitoring and reporting arrangements to help improve the effectiveness of them.

```
```

CO-OPERATION

13. Which of the following DAERA co-operation events have you attended?

February 2018 [   ]   March 2019 [   ]   Neither [   ]

14. How useful did you find the co-operation event(s)?

Very Useful [   ]   Useful [   ]   Not very useful [   ]

15. Please provide any suggestions on how you think the co-operation events could be made more beneficial to you or your organisation.

```
```

69

SUPPORT

16. What is you assessment of the support provided by DAERA to date in relation to the implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 in respect of the following?

The Official Guidance (*A Guide to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 for Public Authorities (Revised)*)

Very Useful ☐   Useful ☐   Not very useful ☐   Don't know ☐

The Guidance on Completing the Appendix 2 Template

Very Useful ☐   Useful ☐   Not very useful ☐   Don't know ☐

The Awareness Training provided to your organisation by the Rural Development Council in 2017/18

Very Useful ☐   Useful ☐   Not very useful ☐   Don't know ☐

General Advice and Support provided by DAERA in response to requests from your organisation

Very Useful ☐   Useful ☐   Not very useful ☐   Don't know ☐

Information provided on the Rural Needs section of the DAERA website

Very Useful ☐   Useful ☐   Not very useful ☐   Don't know ☐

The e-learning package on rural needs that was available via CAL and the Rural Development Council

Very Useful ☐   Useful ☐   Not very useful ☐   Don't know ☐

17. Please provide any comments which you think would be helpful in relation to any of the above.

18. Please provide details of any further support which you think is necessary to help public authorities fully comply with the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF

THE RURAL NEEDS ACT (NI) 2016

Questionnaire for Rural Stakeholders

1. How aware are you of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

   Very Aware

   Aware

   Not Aware

2. What difference do you think the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 has made in relation to how public authorities have regard to the needs of people in rural areas in respect of any policies, strategies, plans or public services that you are aware of?

   A positive difference

   No difference

   Don't Know

3. How familiar are you with the Rural Needs Impact Assessment Template which public authorities are recommended to complete in respect of their policies, strategies, plans and public services

   Very Familiar

   Familiar

   Not Familiar

4. How would you rate the level of information provided in completed Rural Needs Impact Assessment Templates that you have had sight of?

Very Good

Good

Satisfactory

Unsatisfactory

Variable

Don't Know / Not Applicable

5. Have you been directly engaged with any public authority in relation to the undertaking of a Rural Needs Impact Assessment in respect of any policy, strategy, plan or public service?

Yes

No

Don't Know

6. Are you aware of the 1st Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report which DAERA published on its website in December 2018?

Yes

No

7. How useful is the information provided in the 1st Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report which DAERA published on its website in December 2018?

Very Useful

Useful

Not Very Useful

Don't Know

72

73

Appendix 4 – Glossary of Terms

74

The Act	The Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016
Annual Monitoring Report	The annual report required to be published by DAERA under section 3(2) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016
AFBI	The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute
DAERA	The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
The Guidance / The Revised Guidance	A Guide to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 for Public Authorities (Revised)
NI	Northern Ireland
NINIS	The Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service
NITHC	The Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company
Other Public Authority	Any body or person listed in the Schedule to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 other than a Northern Ireland Department or District Council
Public Authority	Any body or person listed in the Schedule to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016
Rural Needs Co-ordinator	A person or persons in a public authority with responsibility for liaising with DAERA on the implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016
RNIA Template	Rural Needs Impact Assessment Template
Section 1 Activity	The development, adoption, implementation or revision of a policy, strategy or plan or the design or delivery of a public service
The Schedule	The schedule to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

Appendix B

(DRAFT) Action Plan of Mid Ulster DC on Implementing the Rural Needs Review Recommendations

	Recommendation: DAERA Review	Current Position: Mid Ulster Council	Proposed Action: Mid Ulster Council
1	Public authorities host regular workshops for decision makers within their organisation (subject to need) for the purposes of increasing awareness All Public Authorities and understanding of the duties on public authorities under the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Representatives from Mid Ulster District Council currently attend all workshops provided by DAERA that relate to the implementation of Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Mid Ulster District Council will host and attend workshops as required with a view to increasing awareness of the requirements of the legislation.
2	Public authorities review the resources allocated to supporting the implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 with a view to ensuring that rural needs coordinators have access to the resources necessary to undertake their role effectively.	Resource currently in place to provide advice and guidance in relation to the implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016. Member and officer training in addition to what was offered by DAERA has also been provided since 2016.	Current allocated resources to be reviewed to identify any gaps and/or additional requirements.
3	Public authorities take steps to seek to embed the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 further within their organisation including, for example, by incorporating compliance with the Act in their Assurance Statements, Submission	Rural Needs Impact Assessments (RNIAs) compliance currently embedded in committee report templates.	Review and work towards ensuring compliance by embedding within Council Assurance Statement processes, to include Audit and Risk Procedures.

	Templates and Audit and Risk Procedures.		
4	Public authorities seek to develop effective relationships with rural community organisations and, where appropriate, to seek to engage with the rural community sector in a meaningful and timely manner as part of the Rural Needs Impact Assessment process being undertaken in respect of Section 1 activities.	Council currently liaises with Rural Community Network and the Rural Development Council (until it ceased operations).	Council will seek inclusion in any already formed constituted group/s which represents rural communities in the Mid Ulster District. If this is not possible/practical, Council can explore the establishment of a Rural Needs Reference Group with a membership base of constituted groups, representative of rural needs in the Mid Ulster District.
5	Public authorities be open to adopting new and innovative approaches to engaging with the rural community sector when seeking to gather information on rural needs including taking measures to engage with people in rural areas who may not normally participate in public consultations or stakeholder engagement.	Council currently liaises with Rural Community Network and the Rural Development Council (until it ceased operations).	Council will seek inclusion in any already formed constituted group/s which represents rural communities in the Mid Ulster District. If this is not possible/practical, Council will explore the establishment of a Rural Needs Reference Group with a membership base of constituted groups representative of rural needs in the Mid Ulster District.
6	Public authorities publish their RNIA Templates on their website on a single webpage and that the annual monitoring report includes a link to each public authority's webpage.	There currently is a Rural Needs section on Council's website which explains the legislation and provides contact detail for the relevant Council Officer.	The relevant section of the Council website will be updated to include the Rural Needs Impact Assessments (RNIA) template and annual monitoring reports at https://www.midulstercouncil.org/your-council/rural-needs

Report on	Policy on Illuminating Council Properties - for Discussion
Date of Meeting	Thursday 2nd July 2020
Reporting Officer	P Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
Contact Officer	A McAleer, Corporate Policy & 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 discuss and consider the council's existing policy and associated arrangements for the lighting up/illumination of council properties.
2.0	**Background**
2.1	The council has a policy and associated arrangements in place which allow it to consider and facilitate requests, where approved by Council on recommendation from Policy and Resources Committee for the illumination of its properties. The policy aims:
2.2	• *To ensure opportunities are available for charitable organisations to promote their particular cause through illuminating Council properties across Mid Ulster district, and that requests are processed in a fair and consistent manner* The scope of the policy extends only and specifically to those bodies which are charitable organisations to promote their cause on a particular date or set of dates of significance to the charity making the request. It does not extend to requests to mark and commemorate occasions and calendared anniversary dates.
2.3	In summary, the policy is in place to facilitate requests received from charitable organisations wishing to promote their charitable causes across the Mid Ulster district. Please refer to appendix A.
3.0	**Main Report**
3.1	The Council meeting of 25th June 2020 considered a request from the floor of the meeting to light up the councils designated properties for Black Lives Matter. It was deemed that that the council' current policy on the Illuminating Council Properties did not extend to cover this request and movements/organisations sited outside our district. The meeting agreed that the request would require further review and consideration by members and officers.

3.2	The Council meeting resolved that the Council's existing policy be brought to a Policy and Resources Committee with a view to discussion taking place on its current scope in promoting requests other than from charitable organisations.
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: Any amendment and review of the existing policy will be subject to an Equality Screening for adverse impact on Section 75 categories and Good Relations
	Rural Needs Implications: Any updated policy will be subject to a Rural Needs Assessment
5.0	**Recommendation(s)**
5.1	That the committee consider the current scope if the Council's Policy on Illuminating Council Properties.
6.0	**Documents Attached & References**
	Appendix A: Policy on Illuminating Council Properties

Policy on Illuminating Council Properties

Document Control			
Policy Owner	Head of Democratic Services		
Policy Author	Head of Democratic Services		
Version	Final		
Consultation	Senior Management Team Yes		
	Trade Unions Yes / No		
Equality Screened by	Yes/ No	**Date**	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes or No or N/A	**Date**	
Good Relations	Yes or No or N/A		
Approved By	Policy & Resources Committee	**Date**	04-02-16
Adopted By	Council	**Date**	25-02-16
Review Date	February 2017	**By Whom**	
Circulation	Councillors, Staff		
Document Linkages			

Page **1** of **5**

CONTENTS PAGE

1.0   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Mid Ulster District Council wishes to maximise the use of and access to its properties across the district. The council estate extends to it civic offices, arts, cultural and recreational facilities and other properties from which a plethora of services are provided and accessible from.

1.2   The council in wishing to act as an advocate for charitable causes will illuminate the exterior of some of its properties in its chosen colour(s), where such requests are made, considered and approved by the council.

2.0   POLICY AIM & OBJECTIVES

2.1   **Policy Aim**: To ensure opportunities are available for charitable organisations to promote their particular cause through illuminating Council properties across Mid Ulster district, and that requests are processed in a fair and consistent manner.

2.2   **Policy Objectives:**

- To encourage the promotion of charitable causes across the district

- To maximise the use of council properties by charitable organisations to promote their cause

- To increase awareness of the charity, its work and messages

- To ensure charitable organisations have access to a documented process for making requests to have properties illuminated to promote their given cause

- To ensure the council is ably equipped to respond to requests made to illuminate council properties and initiate arrangements in a timely fashion

3.0   POLICY SCOPE

3.1   This policy relates specifically to requests made by charitable organisations to illuminate one or more of its properties for the promotion of its cause on a given date or set of dates of significance to the respective charities. The policy does not extend to considering requests to mark and commemorate occasions and calendared anniversary dates. It relates to requests from charitable organisations only.

3.2   It extends only to properties in the ownership of the council and not those used by the council through the rental agreements. The council shall make available a single property within each of the principal towns Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt which are deemed to be in a location drawing significant footfall and traffic for maximum viewing to promote charitable causes through the illumination. The Policy extends to the illumination of:

- Burnavon Arts & Cultural Centre, Burn Road, Cookstown;
- Bridewell Church Street, Magherafelt; and
- Ranfurly House Arts & Visitor Centre, Market Square, Dungannon.

4.0   LINKAGE TO CORPORATE PLAN

4.1   Referring to Mid Ulster District Council's Corporate Plan 2015-2019, this policy contributes toward the delivery of Corporate Theme 4, *Building Unity.*

5.0   CONSIDERING REQUESTS TO ILLUMINATE COUNCIL PROPERTIES

5.1   The Council shall consider all requests from charitable organisations to illuminate one or all of the designated council properties as referenced in 3.2 above.

5.2   Requests shall be reported to and considered by the Policy and Resources Committee and subsequent recommendation brought to the monthly Council meeting. Should the scheduling of the Policy and Resource Committee not permit requests being made within required timeframes to reach a decision the request shall be presented to the monthly Council meeting.

5.3   Council shall not permit the illumination of council properties, other than those referenced in 3.3 above, namely:

- Burnavon Arts & Cultural Centre, Burn Road, Cookstown;
- Bridewell Church Street, Magherafelt; and
- Ranfurly House Arts & Visitor Centre, Market Square, Dungannon

5.4   The Council shall only approve requests where there is no or a nominal cost to arrange for the undertaking and maintenance of the requested illumination to the exterior of the above listed properties.

5.5   Approved requests shall be permitted to have the properties illuminated for their respective charitable causes for a period no longer than one calendar week, where required

6.0   ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1   All requests shall be presented to the Policy and Resources Committee by the appropriate council officer for consideration and recommendation to the next available council meeting to make a decision on requests to illuminate council properties.

7.0   IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

7.1   Equality Screening & Impact

7.1.1   The policy shall be subjected to equality screening in accordance with the council's screening process.

7.2   Staff & Financial Resources

7.2.1   No issues have been identified which would significantly impact on the councils resources and delivery of its business as a result of this policy being implemented.

8.0   SUPPORT AND ADVICE

8.1   Advice and guidance on the implementation of this should be sought from the Chief Executive's Office and Democratic Services.

9.0   COMMUNICATION

9.1   Democratic Services is responsible for the communication and delivery of this policy.

10.0   MONITORING & REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

10.1   Implementation of this policy will be monitored and a formal review undertaken 24 months from its effective date.

Minutes of Meeting of Policy and Resources Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 4 June 2020 in the Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon and by Virtual Means

Members Present	Councillor McKinney (In the Chair)
	Councillors Ashton, Buchanan, Cuddy, Doris, Elattar, Gildernew* Hughes, Molloy, McFlynn, S McGuigan, McLean* S McPeake, Totten
Officers in Attendance	Mr A Tohill, Chief Executive
	Mrs Canavan, Director of Organisational Development
	Mrs Campbell**, Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation
	Mr Cassells**, Director of Environment and Property
	Mr Kelso**, Director of Public Health and Infrastructure
	Mr McAdoo**, Head of Environmental Services
	Ms Mezza**, Head of Marketing and Communications
	Mr Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
	Mr JJ Tohill, Director of Finance
	Mrs Grogan, Democratic Services Officer

* Denotes members, staff and members of the public present in remote attendance
** Denotes Officers present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm.

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor Quinn, the Deputy Chair, Councillor McKinney took the Chair.

The Chair, Councillor McKinney welcomed everyone to the meeting and those watching the meeting through the Live Broadcast. Cllr McKinney in introducing the meeting detailed the operational arrangements for transacting the business of the committee in the chamber and by virtual means, by referring to Annex A to this minute.

The Chair, Councillor McKinney welcomed members to the Policy and Resources Committee and also those who were virtually watching the proceedings.

PR077/20   Apologies

Councillors Forde, Quinn.

PR078/20   Declarations of Interest

Councillor Elattar declared an interest in Agenda Item 4 – Tullywiggan Play Park Lease Proposal as she is Board Member of Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

PR079/20   Chair's Business

The Chair, Councillor McKinney sent the good wishes of the Policy and Resources Committee to Councillor Quinn (Chair) and his wife on the anticipated arrival of their first child.

Matters for Decision

PR080/20   Tullywiggan Play Park Lease

The Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation presented previously circulated report and sought approval to transfer through lease or acquisition of a parcel of land adjacent to private dwellings 34 – 40 Tullywiggan Cottages, Cookstown from Northern Ireland Housing Executive relating to creation of a new play park by legacy Cookstown Council in 2002.

> Proposed by Councillor Buchanan
> Seconded by Councillor S McGuigan and

Resolved   That it be recommended to Council to approve the transfer of land through either lease or acquisition, subject to agreement on Terms and Conditions as provided from Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

PR081/20   Elected Member Development Working Group

The Head of Democratic Services presented previously circulated report and sought approval for the report of a meeting of the Elected Member Development Working Group held on Thursday 5 March 2020.

> Proposed by Councillor Buchanan
> Seconded by Councillor Doris and

Resolved   That it be recommended to Council to approve the report of the Elected Member Development Steering Group meeting, and actions contained, held on Thursday 5 March 2020.

PR082/20   Outcome of Consultation Undertaken on the Council's Proposed Improvement Objectives 2020-21 and 2021-22

The Head of Democratic Services presented previously circulated report to update on the findings and outcome of the consultation undertaken on the Council's proposed improvement objections 2020 – 2021 and 2021 – 2022.

He advised that it was a routine requirement of the Local Government Act 2014 to publish the improvement plan by June, but the Department of Communities has advised that this would now be extended to possibly December.

Councillor Cuddy referred to the 50 or so responses being returned and felt that this could potentially be staff and said that it looked like that this could be a mandatory requirement which would be difficult to monitor especially within these last three months. He stated that it was important to be mindful of not getting to involved with this.

The Chief Executive advised that considerable time and effort was put into Performance Improvement as it was a legal requirement by the Auditor. He said over that last four years it has been demonstrated how our services have improved and would agree that although a lot of work has been put in, it shouldn't be seen as burdensome, but more of something that should be embraced. These objectives are for a two-year period, but due to the recent situation efforts over this last two months have focused on the corona virus recovery and achieving objectives.

Councillor Cuddy said that he welcomed the clarification from the Chief Executive and content that this was beneficial to the Council.

Councillor Ashton referred to Improvement Objective Two regarding technology and stated that there was a strong response around issues relating to rural broadband and felt there was an onus on the Council to take action.

Councillor Molloy agreed with Councillor Ashton's comments and said that there was good engagement with the community regarding concerns and many people raised issues around rural broadband. These concerns relate to people trying to work from home and children trying to complete school work and stated that broadband was failing the population of Mid Ulster and that this Council needed to step up to the mark.

> Proposed by Councillor S McGuigan
> Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

Resolved   That it be recommended to Council to approve the outcome of the Corporate Improvement Objectives Consultation 2020 and 2021 and the adoption of the objectives.

PR083/20   Member Services

Councillor Molloy referred to the response to designated training needs for members and enquired if it reached the 60% mark.

The Head of Democratic Services said that he would investigate and advise members on the exact figure but was certain that it was sitting around the high 50% mark.

The Chair suggested that when new members join the Council they should get the full required training so that they can actively proceed forward onto Committees such as the planning committee.

Matters for Information

PR084/20   Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on Thursday March 2020

Members noted Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee held on Thursday 5 March 2020.

PR085/20   National Association of Councillors: Annual Subscription

Members noted previously circulated report which provided update on correspondence received from the National Association of Councillors (NAC) on annual membership/contribution payable for 2020-21.

PR086/20   Marketing & Communications Update

Members noted previously circulated report which provided update on key areas of recent marketing and communications activity.

PR087/20   Registration of Births, Deaths, Marriages & Civil Partnerships

Members noted previously circulated report which provided update on provision of Registration services within Mid Ulster District Council.

Local Government (NI) Act 2014 – Confidential Business

> Proposed by Councillor Molloy
> Seconded by Councillor S McGuigan 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 Member consider items PR088/20 to

Matters for Decision
PR088/20   Staff Matters for Decision
PR089/20   Contract for the Collection and Processing of Mixed Dry Recyclates (Blue Bin Contract)
PR090/20   Recognition for Essential Staff during COVID-19

Matters for Information
PR091/20   Confidential Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 5 March 2020
PR092/20   Staffing Matters for Information
PR093/20   Contracts and DAC
PR094/20   Miscellaneous Matters

PR095/20   Duration of Meeting

The meeting commenced at 7 pm and concluded at 8.08 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, [Dungannon/Magherafelt] and virtually.

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

Just some housekeeping before we commence. Can I remind you:-

o If you have joined the meeting remotely please keep your audio on mute unless invited to speak and then turn it off when finished speaking

o Keep your video on at all times, unless you have bandwidth or internet connection issues, where you are advised to try turning your video off

o If you wish to speak please raise your hand in the meeting or on screen and keep raised until observed by an Officer or myself

o Should we need to take a vote this evening please raise your hand in the normal way and keep raised until advised to lower it

o When invited to speak please introduce yourself by name to the meeting

o For any member attending remotely, if you declare an interest in an item, please turn off your video and keep your audio on mute for the duration of the item

o If referring to a specific report please reference the report, page or slide being referred to

o Lastly, I 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 first item on the agenda.

Report on	Performance Improvement: 2019-2020 (Q1-Q4) Progress Update on Statutory and Corporate Health Indicators
Date of Meeting	2nd of July 2020
Reporting Officer	P Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
Contact Officer	L Jenkins, Performance & Quality 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	The report provides members with monitoring information on the review of performance against our seven statutory and four corporate performance improvement indicators and standards, along with an overview of the Corporate Health Indicators for the first twelve months of 2019 to 2020. The indicators and standards, are contained within our Performance Improvement Plan for 2019 to 2020 and forms part of Council's overarching performance management and improvement framework.

2.0	Background
2.1	**Council Discharging Duties under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014** Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 sets out a General Duty of Improvement in that, "a Council must make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions". The legislation sets out that a Council must consult upon and publish an annual forward looking Performance Improvement Plan by 30th of June each year, setting out how it aims to make arrangements to secure improvements in the "exercise of its functions".
2.2.	**Statutory & Corporate Performance Improvement Indicators/Standards** Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (NI) 2015 has specified performance indicators and standards for Mid Ulster District Council on Economic Development, Planning and Waste Management (there are currently seven statutory indicators/standards). Statutory indicators and standards/targets have been set by the former Department of the Environment (now Department for Communities), on which to report annually, as part of the performance improvement arrangements for district councils, (hereafter referred to as statutory "set for us" performance measures). The aim of the performance measures is to promote the improvement of service delivery for the functions specified.
2.3	Council had identified four self-imposed performance improvement indicators and standards (continued from 2018/19) and hereafter referred to as "self–imposed" performance measures. These form an integral part of our Performance Improvement Plan for 2019/20. Taken together all eleven measures (statutory and self-imposed indicators) feed into the Corporate Performance "Health" Indicators/Measures (of which there are 28 in total). All of the performance indicators, statutory, self-imposed and organisational health indicators, are considered as forming part of our day-to-day

business and act as a barometer of how the Council is improving Corporately. The performance progress of the statutory and set by us indicators /standards are outlined in Appendix One, (refer to Statutory & Corporate Performance Improvement Indicators - Twelve Month Progress Report 2019/20).

| 2.4 | **Reporting on the Councils Corporate Health Indicators**

The committee at its meeting of October 2017 considered a suite of *Corporate Health Indicators* for reporting to Council. Reporting on the Corporate health indicators provides a barometer of how the council is doing across its services. Indicators provide a 'performance dashboard', summary of how the Council is doing across 8 key areas:

- Economy
- Waste management
- Council facilities
- Better responses
- Resident satisfaction
- Staffing
- Engaged workforce
- Finance

Refer to Appendix Two – Corporate Health Indicators (2019- 2020). |

| **3.0** | **Main Report** |

| 3.1 | **Monitoring & Reporting on Statutory & Self-Imposed Performance Indicators and Standards**

The Performance Improvement Plan 2019 to 2020 - Statutory and Corporate Improvement Indicator Report for the first twelve months of 2019/20, gives an overview of progress in relation to managing and monitoring Mid Ulster Council's Corporate Improvement Performance Indicators (Appendix One). Some of the data which forms the statutory "set for us" indicators are reliant on third party information being supplied to Council services and are classed as management data as opposed to 'audited' data.

The management of Mid Ulster's District Council's 11 Statutory and Self-Imposed Indicators is a key mechanism within the Council's Performance & Improvement Framework. Information relating to the 11 indicators will be updated and provide:

- Performance against target, assessment, action plan, & comparative trend analysis (over time)

- Reporting & management accountabilities

- Target Direction; more is better, less is better etc. - (refer to measures i.e. numbers/percentages)

- Performance trend, which utilises symbols to show whether there is improvement, no change or a fail /or change in a performance indicator compared to the last period

- Results against targets are assessed using a red, amber, green (RAG reporting) status; this shows whether performance is on or exceeds target (green), whether it is |

close to target (amber), or failing (red), blue signifies the action is completed, and the colour purple indicates that information is not yet available.

- Links to the corporate plan

- Activity of all 11 Performance Improvement PI's, at Senior management Team, will be closely monitored, as part of the overall information to ensure Council reacts appropriately to changing levels of demand/performance

An overview of 11 Corporate Performance Improvement Indicators at end of Q1 to Q4 2019/20 are outlined:

Quarter One
a) 8 indicators are reported as Green – on target
b) 2 indicators are close to target - Amber
c) 1 indicator is red in that they are falling short of the pre-defined standard

Quarter Two
a) 8 indicators are reported as Green – on target
b) 1 indicator is close to target – Amber
c) 2 indicators are red in that they are falling short of the pre-defined standard

Quarter Three
a) 8 indicators are reported as Green – on target
b) 0 indicators are close to target – Amber
c) 3 indicator is red in that they are falling short of the pre-defined standard

Quarter Four
a) 5 indicators are reported as Green – on target
b) 0 indicators are close to target – Amber
c) 2 indicators are red in that they are falling short of the pre-defined standard
d) 4 indicators are currently awaiting data to be supplied (in the main supplied by government departments) - purple

3.2

Monitoring and Reporting the Corporate Improvement Plan Projects

The activities/measures relating to Council's Corporate Improvement Plan 'Projects', will be included in the Council's Annual Performance Improvement Assessment Report, (which looks at improvement outcomes/performance from the previous financial year and is a retrospective report). This is normally developed and presented to Council, with a publication date of the 30th of September each year.

In response to Covid-19, Councils are awaiting further guidance in relation to timeframes for reports associated with Council fulfilling its duty to improve, as outlined in part 12 of the Local Government (NI) Act and departmental guidance.

At the time of writing the report, Councils have sought clarification and have only been made aware, from the Department for Communities (DfC), that they do not have to publish their annual performance improvement plans (known as a PIP, which is a forward looking plan) by the 30th of June.

Further guidance is due to be issued by the DfC. This will inform Council in relation to publishing its Annual Performance Improvement Assessment Report, and will also then inform the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO), in respect of its annual audit, conducted

	in relation to Council's performance improvement and assessment. Council hopes clarity on this can be provided soon, from both the DfC and the NIAO.
4.0	**Other Considerations**
4.1	**Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications**
	Financial: N/A
	Human: N/A
	Risk Management: Data quality contained in the Council's Twelve Month Performance Improvement Progress Report is provisional, as unaudited "data" and is characterised as management information. In-year results may be subject to later revision. Government departments issue validated data on some indicators. In response to COVID 19, timeframes for providing validated data has been delayed.
4.2	**Screening & Impact Statements**
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
5.0	**Recommendation(s)**
5.1	Members scrutinise the performance achieved, and assess progress and performance against the standards/targets and provide commentary as necessary. Members identify and explore any areas of concerns identified from the Performance Progress update
6.0	**Documents Attached & References**
	Appendix One: Mid Ulster District Council's Statutory & Corporate Performance Improvement Indicators (Twelve Month Progress Report 2019 to 2020) Appendix Two: Mid Ulster District Council's Corporate Health Indicators 2019 to 2020

Mid Ulster District Council

Performance Improvement Plan 2019 to 2020

Statutory & Corporate Performance Improvement Indicators

Q1 to Q4 - Twelve Month Progress Report

2019 – 2020

Performance Improvement Plan 2019 to 2020 - Statutory & Corporate Performance Indicators

Statutory Indicators – Set for Us

Statutory indicators and standards/targets have been set by the former Department of the Environment (now Department for Communities) as part of the performance improvement arrangements for district councils, there are currently seven in total. Performance measures have been specified for the functions of economic development, planning and waste management. The aim of the performance measures is to promote the improvement of service delivery for the functions specified.

Corporate Performance Indicators – Set by Us

During 2016/17, Council, in the absence of an agreed region wide performance management framework, decided to concentrate on ensuring the data quality of three of its proposed "set by us" or "self-imposed" performance indicators, standards/targets, with the aim of improving service delivery, across the three indicators; namely:

1. *Prompt Payments* - (Prompt payments speed up cash flow from the public sector to its suppliers, particularly SME's),
2. *Freedom of Information Requests (FOI) Responded to within 20 days*, (Council meets its statutory obligations, customer requests are met within specified timeframes and citizens can get information in a timely manner through a transparent process), and
3. *Percentage lost time rate of sickness absence* – (shows the percentage of total time available that has been lost due to any type of absence during a certain time period. The indicator is based on full time equivalent (FTE) employees - useful as a general measure of the significance of sickness absence levels for an organisation).

Data quality is a central part of the Council's operational business and performance management. Performance measures including Absence information, Freedom of Information Requests, and Prompt Payments information is used every day across the Council to help inform management decisions, plan services, benchmark performance and cost, and inform target setting.

Table 1.0 – Status Symbols and Interpretation Descriptors for Statutory and Corporate Performance Improvement Indicators

Progress Status for Measures		
Colour	**Symbol**	**Interpretation Descriptor**
Green		Signifies everything is on track in terms of activity, deliverables, scope, budget and timeframe. Performance is moving in the right direction or target/outcome achieved.
Amber		Action: - Signifies Performance is trending away from target, that some particular items may need to be referred for advice /or assistance with the view to taking corrective action. Measure: - Trending away from target within % tolerance.
Red		Signifies there is a problem/shift in the wrong direction, which may require a response from senior management.
Blue		Signifies PI, Target, Outcome Achieved / Completed.
Purple		Information not available, or in development

Table 2.0 – Performance Trend

Performance Compared to Another Time Period - Trend previous quarter	
✔	Performance has improved
⬇	Performance has worsened
⬅➡	Performance has remained the same

Table 3.0 – Target Direction

Target Direction	
More is better	A bigger value for this measure is best
Less is better	A smaller value for this measure is best

ED1: The number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2020.	Jan-Mar 2020 Actual (Quarter Four)	Standard to be Met	Trend on Previous Quarter	Status
	47	210 jobs p.a	✓	**RED**
	Oct-Dec 2019 Actual (Quarter Three)	**Standard to be Met**	**Trend on Previous Quarter**	**Status**
	41	210 jobs p.a	↓	**RED**
	July-Sept 2019 Actual (Quarter Two)	**Standard to be Met**	**Trend on Previous Quarter**	**Status**
	45	210 jobs p.a.	↓	**AMBER**
	Apr-June 2019 Actual (Quarter One)	**Standard to be Met**	**Trend on Previous Quarter**	**Status**
	52	210 jobs p.a	↓	**AMBER**

ED1- The No. of Jobs Promoted Through Business Start Up 2016 - 2020

Standard 210 jobs p.a.

Analysis: MORE IS BETTER
This performance is much lower than Q4 of 2018/19 and previous Qs 1, 2 &3 of 2019/20 resulting in Mid Ulster's Statutory target not being achieved (185 jobs vs 210). Mid Ulster is 1 of 4 Council areas where there is a 'gap' between the NIBSUP 'Programme Target' and 'Statutory target'. Council officers have met with delivery partners to monitor delivery and explore options for driving enquiries. However this lower start up rate is indicative of Mid Ulster's economy - very low unemployment and migrant workers moving home due to Brexit.

Action Plan: MUDC accepted the recommendations from the Capaxo Report in June 2019 which proposed a proportional formula to calculate Mid Ulster's target should be 153 instead of 210 jobs promoted. The Council agreed that this figure was a more accurate reflection of Mid Ulster's economic realities. The NIBSUP team have been communicating with the Dept. for the Economy and Dept. for Communities who have accepted the Report's proposals but the Standing Order has not yet been enacted through Legislation; this means that the current Statutory Target may still apply. The Team will continue to engage with both Departments to try to progress this issue as these new revised targets have been used in the ERDF Application to Invest NI for NIBSUP2 (delivery: April 2021 - Dec 2022). Council will continue to work with the marketing team and delivery agent to maximise promotion of the Programme and support start-ups across Mid Ulster.

Lead Officer: Adrian Mc Creesh - Director Business & Communities - Purpose of PI: The number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity (Business start-up means the delivery of completed client led business plans under the Department of the Economy Regional Start Initiative or its successor Programmes).

P1: Major applications processed from date valid to decision or withdrawn within an average of 30 weeks - from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2020	Jan-March 2020 Actual (Quarter Four)	Standard to be Met	Trend on Previous Quarter	Status
	73.1 weeks	30 weeks	↓	RED
	Oct - Dec 2019 Actual (Quarter Three)	Standard to be Met	Trend on Previous Quarter	Status
	66.8 weeks	30 weeks	↓	RED
	July-Sept 2019 Actual (Quarter Two)	Standard to be Met	Trend on Previous Quarter	Status
	64.4 weeks	30 weeks	↓	RED
	Apr-June 2019 Actual (Quarter One)	Standard to be Met	Trend on Previous Quarter	Status
	62.1 weeks	30 weeks	↓	RED

P1 Average Processing Time of Major Planning Applications from Date Valid to Decision or Withdrawal within an Average of 30 Weeks 2016 - 2020

Analysis: **LESS IS BETTER**

Based on Unvalidated figures 73.1 weeks has been the performance on Major applications for Q4. What does this mean: Again a figure of 73.1 weeks reflects a performance which has slowly crept downwards since Q3. We issued 5 decisions this quarter and received 3 new Major cases. Performance remains fairly static and the downward trend is most likely as a result of recent approvals which are difficult to determine in time given the nature and complexity of Major applications .Comparison with last year same reporting period: performance has slowly crept downwards by 12 weeks since Q4 last week Recent decided cases referred to above will have affected the average processing times.

Action Plan:
1. Continued focus on Major applications group meeting Chaired by the Planning Manager.
2. Use of PAD process in accordance with published Council guidance.

Lead Officer: Dr. Chris Boomer - Planning - Purpose of PI: Planning Department deals with MAJOR Planning applications faster - [An application in the category of major development within the meaning of Planning (Development Management Regulations (NI) 2015(a)].

P2: Average processing time of Local Planning Applications from date valid to decision or withdrawn within an average of 15 weeks from 01/04/16 - 31/03/20	Jan-March 2020 Actual (Quarter Four)	Standard to be Met	Trend on Previous Quarter	Status
	12.5 weeks	15 weeks	✓	**GREEN**
	Oct - Dec 2019 Actual (Quarter Three)	Standard to be Met	Trend on Previous Quarter	Status
	12.6 weeks	15 weeks	✓	**GREEN**
	July-Sept 2019 Actual (Quarter Two)	Standard to be Met	Trend on Previous Quarter	Status
	12.8 weeks	15 weeks	↓	**GREEN**
	Apr-June 2019 Actual (Quarter One)	Standard to be Met	Trend on Previous Quarter	Status
	12.6 weeks	15 weeks	✓	GREEN

P2 Average Processing Time of Local Planning Applications from Date Valid to Decision or Withdrawal within an Average of 15 Weeks 2016 - 2020

Analysis: LESS IS BETTER

At 12.5 weeks Performance on local applications improves again from Q3 to well within 15 week target. What does this mean? - That our Improvement Plan is working for this reporting period so far. Comparison with last year same reporting period: Q4 for last year showed 14 weeks. We have improved this by some 1.5 weeks.

Action Plan:
Maintain management.

Lead Officer: Dr. Chris Boomer - Planning - Purpose of PI. Planning Department deal with LOCAL Planning applications faster - Local applications means an application in the category of local development within the meaning of the (Development Management) Regulations (NI) 2015, and any other applications for approval or consent under the Planning Act (NI) 2011 (or any orders or regulations made under the Act).

STATUTORY INDICATOR & STANDARD Ref. No. : P3 - MORE IS BETTER

P3: The percentage of planning enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2020.	Jan-Mar 2020 Actual (Quarter Four)	Standard to be Met	Trend on Previous Quarter	Status
	Awaiting validated data	70%	NA	PURPLE
	Oct-Dec 2019 Actual (Quarter Three)	Standard to be Met	Trend on Previous Quarter	Status
	94.20%	70%	✓	GREEN
	July-Sept 2019 Actual (Quarter Two)	Standard to be Met	Trend on Previous Quarter	Status
	86.8%	70%	✓	GREEN
	Apr-June 2019 Actual (Quarter One)	Standard to be Met	Trend on Previous Quarter	Status
	80.60 %	70%	↓	GREEN
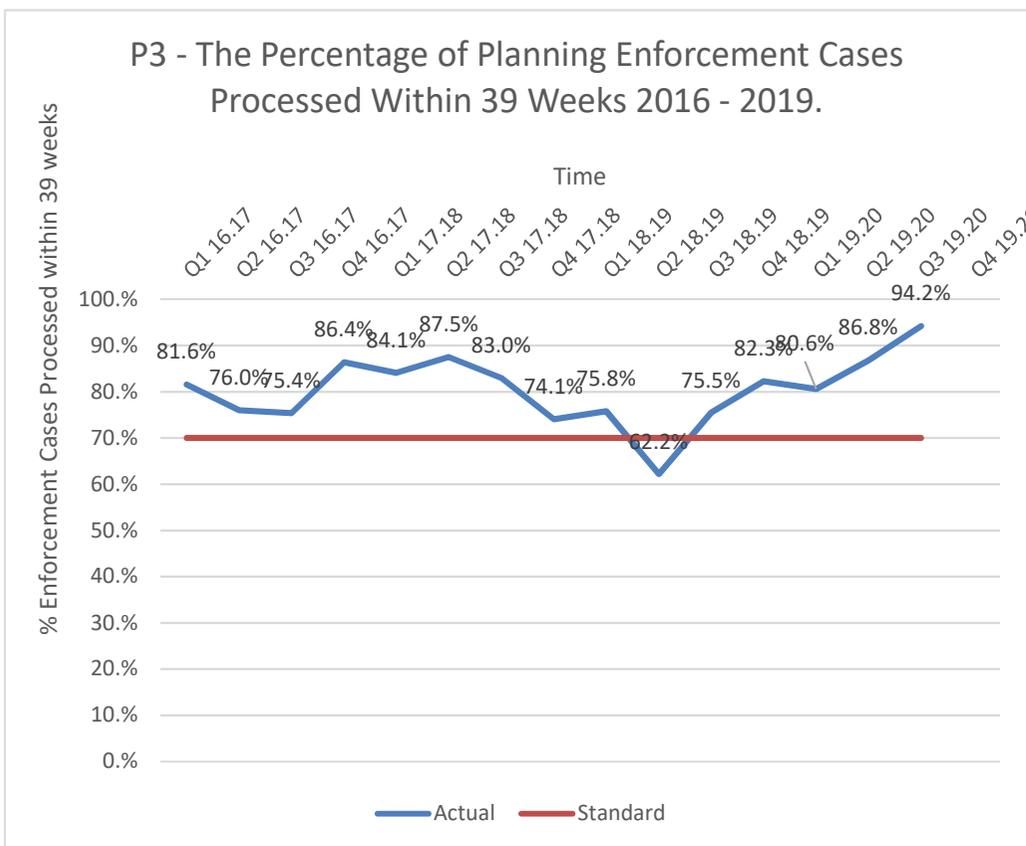
P3 - The Percentage of Planning Enforcement Cases Processed Within 39 Weeks 2016 - 2019.

Analysis: **MORE IS BETTER** The validated figure for Q3 is 94.2% which is well above the 70% target and is up on Q2. The Q3 figure is also well up on the same quarter last year. This is a positive trend which will hopefully continue over the course of the year. This means that the cases being brought to target conclusion are being done so in a reduced period of time. This trend continues to improve the level and efficiency of service provided. The 70% target continues to be met. Comparison with last year same reporting period? The figure is up on the same quarter for the 2018-19 period.

Action Plan:
Maintain management

Lead Officer: Dr. Chris Boomer - Planning -Purpose of PI: Planning Department bring more enforcement cases to target conclusion within 39 weeks. Enforcement cases are investigations into alleged breaches of planning control under Part 5 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 (or under any orders or regulations made under the Act.

STATUTORY INDICATOR & STANDARD Ref. No.: W1 - MORE IS BETTER

W1: The Percentage of household waste collected by District Councils that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for reuse) from 1ˢᵗ April 2016 to 31ˢᵗ March 2020	Jan- Mar 2020 Actual (Quarter Four)	Standard to be Met	Trend on Previous Quarter	Status
	Awaiting information	NILAS Scheme 50% by 2020	NA	**PURPLE**
	Oct - Dec 2019 Actual (Quarter Three)	**Standard to be Met**	**Trend on Previous Quarter**	**Status**
	9,525 tonnes	NILAS Scheme 50% by 2020	✓	**GREEN**
	July-Sept 2019 Actual (Quarter Two)	**Standard to be Met**	**Trend on Previous Quarter**	**Status**
	12,189 tonnes	NILAS Scheme 50% by 2020	↓	**GREEN**
	Apr-June 2019 Actual (Quarter One)	**Standard to be Met**	**Trend on Previous Quarter**	**Status**
	11, 803 tonnes	NILAS Scheme 50% by 2020	✓	GREEN

W1 - The Percentage of Household Waste Collected by District Councils That is Sent for Recycling

Analysis: **MORE IS BETTER**

First time quarter three household rate over 60%. MUDC has highest recycling rate in Northern Ireland for the quarter.

Comparison with last year, same reporting period: Rate has increased by 2.26% percentage points compared to the same quarter in 2018/19

Action Plan:
Maintain management

Lead Officer : Andrew Cassells Director - Environment & Property - Purpose of PI. : Meet Statutory Targets – Households Waste is as defined in Article 2 of the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997 (a) and the Controlled Waste and Duty of Care Regulations (NI) 2013 (b)
 - Household Waste is as defined in Article 2 of the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997 (a) and the Controlled Waste and Duty of Care Regulations (NI) 2013 (b)

STATUTORY INDICATOR & STANDARD Ref. No. : W2 - LESS IS BETTER

W2: The amount (tonnage) of Biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2020	Jan-Mar 2020 Actual (Quarter Four)	Allowance 2019/20	Trend on Previous Quarter	Status
	Awaiting data	**16, 932 tonnes**	NA	**PURPLE**
	Oct - Dec 2019 Actual (Quarter Three)	**Allowance 2019/20**	**Trend on Previous Quarter**	**Status**
	369 tonnes	**16, 932 tonnes**	✓	**GREEN**
	July-Sept 2019 Actual (Quarter Two)	**Allowance 2019/20**	**Trend on Previous Quarter**	**Status**
	341 tonnes	**16, 932 tonnes**	✓	**GREEN**
	Apr - June- 2019 Actual (Quarter One)	**Allowance 2018/19**	**Trend on Previous Quarter**	**Status**
	331 tonnes	**16, 932 tonnes**	✓	GREEN

W2 - The Amount (Tonnage) of Biodegradabe Local Authority Collected Municpal Waste that is landfilled

2016/17 21,330 tonnes allowance
2017/18 19,131 tonnes allowance
2019/20 16,932 tonnes allowance

Tonnage of Biodegradabke Local Authority Collected Municapl Waste that is Landfilled

Time

Q1 16.17: 3,265
Q2 16.17: 3,283
Q3 16.17: 3,799
Q4 16.17: 4,498
Yr. Total: 14,846
Q1 17.18: 2,501
Q2 17.18: 2,339
Q3 17.18: 2,248
Q4 17.18: 2,989
Yr. Total: 10,077
Q1 18.19: 1,865
Q2 18.19: 2,026
Q3 18.19: 1,288
Q4 18.19: 508
Yr. Total: 5,687
Q1 19.20: 331
Q2 19.20: 341
Q3 19.20: 369

Analysis: **LESS IS BETTER**

Lowest ever quarter three utiliisation of NILAS allowance: Looking at benchmark is the lowest utilisation of all eleven Councils during quarter three.   .
Comparison with last year, same reporting period: Amount landfilled has decreased by 919 tonnes or 4.96 percentage points compared to same quarter in 2018/19

Action Plan:
Maintain Management.

Lead Officer : Andrew Cassells - Director Environment & Property -

Purpose of PI: Meet Statutory Targets -Local Authority collected Municipal Waste as defined in section 21 of the Waste Emissions Trading Act 2003 (c)

STATUTORY INDICATOR & STANDARD Ref. No.: W3 - LESS IS BETTER

W3: The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Arisings from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2020.	Jan-Mar 2020 Actual (Quarter Four)	Standard to be Met	Trend on Previous Quarter	Status
	Awaiting data	In line with NILAS targets	NA	PURPLE
	Oct - Dec 2019 Actual (Quarter Three)	**Standard to be Met**	**Trend on Previous Quarter**	**Status**
	18,489 tonnes	In line with NILAS targets	↓	GREEN
	July-Sept 2019 Actual (Quarter Two)	**Standard to be Met**	**Trend on Previous Quarter**	**Status**
	22,023 tonnes	In line with NILAS targets	✓	GREEN
	Apr-June 2019 Actual (Quarter One)	**Standard to be Met**	**Trend on Previous Quarter**	**Status**
	21,024 tonnes	In line with NILAS targets	↓	GREEN

W3 - The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Arisings

Q1 16.17: 21,749; Q2 16.17: 22,555; Q3 16.17: 19,002; Q4 16.17: 19,527; Q1 17.18: 21,370; Q2 17.18: 22,179; Q3 17.18: 18,678; Q4 17.18: 17,765; Q1 18.19: 21,781; Q2 18.19: 20,876; Q3 18.19: 17,982; Q4 18.19: 18,019; Q1 19.20: 21,024; Q2 19.20: 22,023; Q3 19.20: 18,489; Q4 19.20

Analysis: LESS IS BETTER
Quarterly decrease in municipal waste arisings. Decrease due to seasonality i.e. less garden waste collected during winter months. Comparison with last year, same reporting period: 507 tonnes more than in same quarter in 2018/19

Action Plan:
Maintain Management.

Lead Officer : Andrew Cassells Director Environment & Property -Purpose of PI :.Meet Statutory Targets - Local Authority collected Municipal waste arisings is the total amount of local authority collected municipal waste which has been collected by a district Council

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT INDICATOR & STANDARD Ref. No.: CORP 1a - MORE IS BETTER

CORP1 (a): Prompt Payment- 90% of invoices paid within 30 day target from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2020.	Jan-Mar 2020 Actual (Quarter Four)	Standard to be Met	Trend on Previous Quarter	Status
	96%	90%	✓	GREEN
	Oct-Dec 2019 Actual (Quarter Three)	Standard to be Met	Trend on Previous Quarter	Status
	*95%	90%	✓	GREEN
	July-Sept 2019 Actual (Quarter Two)	Standard to be Met	Trend on Previous Quarter	Status
	93%	90%	⬌	GREEN
	Apr-June 2019 Actual (Quarter One)	Standard to be Met	Trend on Previous Quarter	Status
	93%	90%	⬇	GREEN
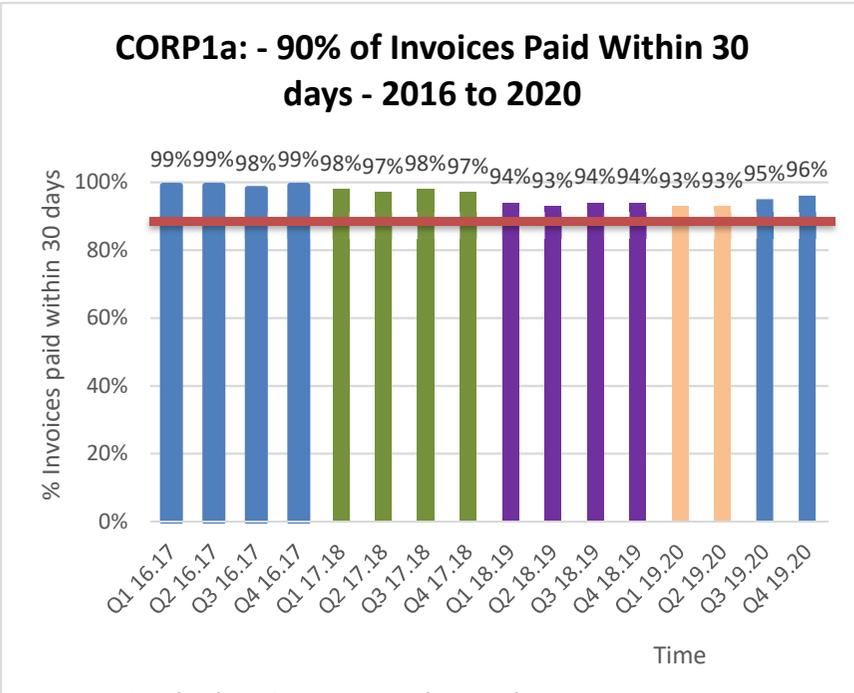
CORP1a: - 90% of Invoices Paid Within 30 days - 2016 to 2020

99% 99% 98% 99% 98% 97% 98% 97% 94% 93% 94% 94% 93% 93% 95% 96%

Y-axis: % Invoices paid within 30 days (0%, 20%, 40%, 60%, 80%, 100%)
X-axis: Time — Q1 16.17, Q2 16.17, Q3 16.17, Q4 16.17, Q1 17.18, Q2 17.18, Q3 17.18, Q4 17.18, Q1 18.19, Q2 18.19, Q3 18.19, Q4 18.19, Q1 19.20, Q2 19.20, Q3 19.20, Q4 19.20

— Standard 90% invoices within 30 dys.

Analysis: **MORE IS BETTER**

Performance is in excess of the 90% target and has increased by 1% on the Q3 level and by 2% on the same quarter last year

Action Plan:

Maintain management

*This figure for Q3 was amended in this quarter to 95% by Finance Team, as opposed to 96% as reported in Q3 (Nine month report)

Lead Officer: JJ Tohill Director of Finance

Purpose of PI: Prompt payments speed up cash flow from the public sector to its suppliers, particularly SME's. Council recognises that late payments are a key issue for business, especially for smaller businesses as it can adversely affect their cash flow & jeopardises their ability to trade & we recognise that as a Public body we should set a strong example by paying promptly. Indicator that allows Council to have a "signal" that it has an effective prompt payment system delivery, has in place a clear framework for managing prompt payments, in order to support an environment in which ambitious businesses flourish. The Department for Communities requests information from councils at the end of each Quarter on the processing of invoices as detailed in the following circular https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-lg-192016-guidance-prompt-payments

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT INDICATOR & STANDARD Ref. No. : CORP 1b - MORE IS BETTER

CORP1 (b): Prompt Payment - 80% of invoices paid within 10 day target from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2020	Jan-Mar 2020 Actual (Quarter Four)	Standard to be Met	Trend on Previous Quarter	Status
	86%	80%	✓	GREEN
	Oct - Dec 2019 Actual (Quarter Three)	Standard to be Met	Trend on Previous Quarter	Status
	*85%	80%	✓	GREEN
	July-Sept 2019 Actual (Quarter Two)	Standard to be Met	Trend on Previous Quarter	Status
	81%	80%	↓	GREEN
	Apr-June 2019 Actual (Quarter One)	Standard to be Met	Trend on Previous Quarter	Status
	82%	80%	↔	GREEN

CORP1b: 80% Invoices Paid Within 10 Days - 2016 -2020

Standard 80% invoices paid within 10 dys

Analysis: MORE IS BETTER

Performance is in excess of the 80% target and has remained at the Q3 level but in an increase of 3% on the same quarter last year

Action Plan:

Maintain management

*This figure for Q3 was amended in this quarter to 85% by Finance Team, as opposed to 86% as reported in Q3 (Nine month report)

Lead Officer: JJ Tohill Director of Finance

Purpose of PI: Prompt payments speed up cash flow from the public sector to its suppliers, particularly SME's. Council recognises that late payments are a key issue for business, especially for smaller businesses as it can adversely affect their cash flow & jeopardises their ability to trade & we recognise that as a Public body we should set a strong example by paying promptly. Indicator that allows Council to have a "signal" that it has an effective prompt payment system delivery, has in place a clear framework for managing prompt payments, in order to support an environment in which ambitious businesses flourish. The Department for Communities requests information from councils at the end of each Quarter on the processing of invoices as detailed in the following circular https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-lg-192016-guidance-prompt-payments

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT INDICATOR & STANDARD Ref. No. : CORP 2 - MORE IS BETTER

CORP2: 90% Freedom Of Information requests responded to within 20 days from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2020.	Jan-Mar 2020 Actual (Quarter Four)	Standard to be Met	Trend on Previous Quarter	Status
	90%	**90%**	✓	GREEN
	Oct - Dec 2019 Actual (Quarter Three)	**Standard to be Met**	**Trend on Previous Quarter**	**Status**
	88%	**90%**	✓	RED
	July-Sept 2019 Actual (Quarter Two)	**Standard to be Met**	**Trend on Previous Quarter**	**Status**
	85%	**90%**	↓	RED
	Apr-June 2019 Actual (Quarter One)	**Standard to be Met**	**Trend on Previous Quarter**	**Status**
	89%	**90%**	✓	AMBER

90% of FOI Requests Responded to Within 20 Days 2016 to 2020

Analysis: **MORE IS BETTER**. Overall the number of requests received is considerably high for an authority the size of Mid Ulster District Council, although the no. received is down by approximately 40 requests compared to the 2018/19 period. The council has increased its % attainment by 2% points up from 86% last year to an overall attainment of 88% in 2019-20. Attainment of those responded to within 20 days continues to remain high but still falling short of the 90% set standard: The Council has improved its percentage achievement by 2% points on 2018-19. This could in part be interpreted as being achieved due the reduction in the no. received throughout 2019-20. Achievement of having 88% of all requests responded to within 20 days should not however be underestimated when you consider the resource in place for the delivery of this function and the approach employed which decentralises responsibility across all Services and Depts. to input/contribute to the process before final responses are issued. Comparison with last year same reporting period: In summary, the Council has improved upon its attainment on last year (2018-2019) by 2% moving from 86% up to 88% - just 2% within the 90% standard.

Action Plan: I) .Continuing to use the CRM System with Dynamics 365. (ii) Continued reports to Chief Executive and senior management on the status by Council Service area. (iii) Now generating reports illustrating the service status/achievement by service area. This is identifying those services which require a focus/attention corporately.

Lead Officer: Philip Moffett Head of Democratic Services Purpose of PI: The measure is needed to ensure that Council meets its statutory obligations and that customer requests are met within a specified timeframes. Citizens can get information in a timely manner through a transparent process.

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT INDICATOR & STANDARD Ref. No. : CORP 3 - LESS IS BETTER

CORP3: Lost time Rate Absence of 5% or less from 01/04/16-31/03/20	Jan-Mar 2020 Actual (Quarter Four)	Standard to be Met	Trend on Previous Quarter	Status
	4.60%	**= >5% p.a.**	✓	GREEN
	Oct-Dec 2019 Actual (Quarter Three)	**Standard to be Met**	**Trend on Previous Quarter**	**Status**
	4.72%	**= >5% p.a.**	↓	GREEN
	July-Sept 2019 Actual (Quarter Two)	**Standard to be Met**	**Trend on Previous Quarter**	**Status**
	3.92%	**= >5% p.a.**	✓	GREEN
	Apr-June 2019 Actual (Quarter One)	**Standard to be Met**	**Trend on Previous Quarter**	**Status**
	4.03%	**= >5% p.a.**	✓	GREEN

% Lost Time Rate Sickness Absence => 5% p.a.

(LTR Actual; Standard =>5%)

Values: 7.90%, 5.64%, 5.74%, 5.09%, 6.18%, 4.96%, 4.05%, 4.60%, 3.82%, 3.75%, 4.84%, 5.19%, 4.03%, 3.92%, 4.72%

X-axis (Time): Q2 16.17, Q3 16.17, Q4 16.17, Q1 17.18, Q2 17.18, Q3 17.18, Q4 17.18, Q1 18.19, Q2 18.19, Q3 18.19, Q4 18.19, Q1 19.20, Q2 19.20, Q3 19.20, Q4 19.20

Analysis: **LESS IS BETTER:-**. The cumulative figure for 19/20 at end of Q4 was 4.31% & is the lowest recorded Year End Figure recorded since MUDC formed. The total days lost for Q4 19/20 was 2257.5 which was a slight increase from 1949 recorded in Q4 18/19. Stress & Mental Health related absence again were the number one reason at Y/E accounting for 26% which was a slight reduction from 28% at end of Q3. This slight reduction could be attributed to a number of employees availing of carers leave in Q4 however this remains approx. 4% higher than 18/19. Figures for short term absences remain similar to Q3 with "Stomach, Liver, Kidney" and "Infections" accounting for 10%. This was considerably lower than the same period for last year with 733.11 less day's absence recorded, but this variance can be difficult to ascertain due of nature of these absences. Short-term absences however have been proactively managed through 19/20, with the issue of improvement plans & other sanctions in accordance with the managing attendance policies. The Covid-19 pandemic began to have a significant impact toward the end of Q4, with further severe implications foreseen as we move into Q1 20/21.

Action Plan:
Maintain management

Lead Officer: M Canavan Director Org. Development - Purpose of PI: Lost Time Rate (LTR) shows the % of total time available that has been lost due to sickness absence during a certain time period. The indicator is based on full time equivalent (FTE) employees, useful as a general measure of the significance of sickness absence levels for an organisation.

Mid Ulster District Council: Corporate Health Indicators **2019-2020 (Q1-Q4)**

	Measures	Target/Standard 2018-2019	Annual Outturn 2018-19	Reporting (Calculating) Officer	Responsible Lead Service	QUARTER ONE 2019/20 (Total Q1)	QUARTER TWO 2019/20 (total Q1 and Q2)	QUARTER THREE 2019/20 (total Q1 + Q2 & Q3)	QUARTER FOUR 2019/20 (total Q1+ Q2+ Q3 & Q4)
	1.0 Economy								
1	1.1 No. of jobs promoted	210	204	Director, Business & Communities	Economic Development	52	97	138	185
2	1.2 Average processing time for local planning applications (weeks)	15 weeks	16.9	Planning Manager	Planning: Development Management	12.6	12.8	12.6	12.5
3	1.3 Average processing time for major planning applications (weeks)	30 weeks	64.7	Planning Manager	Planning: Development Management	62.1	64.4	69.7	73.1
4	1.4 % building regulations applications determined to target	90%	90%	Director, Public Health & Infrastructure	Building Control	90%	89%	91%	91%
	2.0 Waste Management								
5	2.1 % of household waste going to landfill	35%	16.31%	Director, Environment & Property	Environmental Services	3.44%	3.64%	3.80%	Not Available
6	2.2 % of household waste recycled	50%	55.98%	Director, Environment & Property	Environmental Services	63.25%	62.46%	58.50%	Not Available
	3.0 Council Facilities								
7	3.1 Visitors to arts/cultural venues	120,247	120,247	Director, Business & Communities	Arts & Culture	31,189	52,945	109,017	135,939
8	3.2 Users of leisure and recreation facilities	2,230,312	2,230,312	Director, Leisure & Outdoor Recreation	Leisure	578,140	1,147,554	1,559,346	2,071,748
9	3.3 Visitors to council offices	Not Available	Not Available	Director, Organisational Development	Human Resources	10,692	21,557	32,259	40,294
10	3.4 No. of RIDDOR incidents		11	Director, Public Health & Infrastructure	Health & Safety	2	5	7	14
	4.0 Better Responses								
11	4.1 FoI requests responded to within target	90%	86%	Head, Democratic Services	Democratic Services	89%	88%	88%	88%
12	4.2 Complaints dealt with within target	90%		Head, Democratic Services	Chief Executive's Office	100%	81.82%	85.71%	89.47%
13	4.3 Correspondence responded to within target	90%		Head, Democratic Services	Chief Executive's Office	90.09%	87.44%	86.42%	85.75%
14	4.4 No. of online transactions	<16,655	16,655	Director, Finance	ICT	4,287	9,208	13,675	17,022
	5.0 Resident Satisfaction								
15	5.1 % of residents content with our services	80%		Head, Marketing & Communications	Marketing & Communications	Not yet resourced	Not yet resourced	Not yet resourced	Not yet resourced
16	5.2 % of residents agree that council keeps them informed	80%		Head, Marketing & Communications	Marketing & Communications	Not yet resourced	Not yet resourced	Not yet resourced	Not yet resourced
17	5.3 % of residents agree that council listens and acts on concerns	80%		Head, Marketing & Communications	Marketing & Communications	Not yet resourced	Not yet resourced	Not yet resourced	Not yet resourced
18	5.4 No. of organisations receiving Grant Aid		800	Director, Business & Communities	Community Development	521	597	631	860
	6.0 Staffing								
19	6.1 Number of Staff (FTEs) on payroll		713.3	Director, Organisational Development	Human Resources	717.19	715.76	706.59	706.82
20	6.2 Number of Casual Staff employed in past 12 months		70	Director, Organisational Development	Human Resources	2	26	30	31
21	6.3 % Attendance	95%	95%	Director, Organisational Development	Human Resources	95.97%	96.08%	95.78%	95.69%
22	6.4 % Overtime	2.5%	1.66.%	Director, Finance	Finance	1.79%	1.65%	1.50%	1.32%
	7.0 Engaged Workforce:								
23	7.1 % of workforce satisfied with current job	80%	**60.95.%	Head, Marketing & Communications	Marketing & Communications	*65.34%	*65.34%	*65.34%	*65.34%
24	7.2 % of workforce who take pride in working for Mid Ulster District Council	80%	**79.48.%	Head, Marketing & Communications	Marketing & Communications	*84.07%	*84.07%	*84.07%	*84.07%
25	7.3 % of workforce who understand council's priorities and how they contribute to them	80%	**69.91.%	Head, Marketing & Communications	Marketing & Communications	*78.13%	*78.13%	*78.13%	*78.13%
	8.0 Finances								
26	8.1 Loans Outstanding		6,746,933	Director, Finance	Finance	6,746,933	6,433,600	6,433,600	6,114,748
27	8.2 Cash Reserves	£10m	13,029,169	Director, Finance	Finance	14,110,947	14,085,376	12,708,969	11,791,888
28	8.3 Invoices paid within 30 Days	90%	94%	Director, Finance	Finance	93%	93%	94%	94%

** relates to 2017/18 employee survey

Report on	Service Improvement Plans 2020-21: Chief Executive's Office
Date of Meeting	Thursday 2 July 2020
Reporting Officer	P Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
Contact Officer	P Moffett, Head of Democratic Services U Mezza, Head of Marketing & Communications C McNally, Council Solicitor

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 the draft Service Improvement Plan for three Chief Executive Office services for the 2020-2021 year.
2.0	**Background**
2.1	In line with corporate performance improvement requirements and to ensure that every service contributes to performance improvement, each service produces an annual individual improvement plan.
3.0	**Main Report**
3.1	The Service Improvement Plans for 2020-2021 set out key priorities for the services in the year ahead and build on the work undertaken during the 2019-2020 year. The Following provides a high level summary of the areas of focus for the 2020-21 period: **<u>Democratic Services</u>**
3.2	• To increase the number of Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 days by 31st March 2021 number of Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 days by 31st March 2021 • Corporate Performance Improvement Plan 2020 to 2022 and (ii) complete the annual assessment of Council's 2019-2020 Performance Improvement Plan • Review of and provide recommendations on provision of civic recognition for achievement by our citizens • Develop the case for the purchase of an integrated performance improvement and business platform in line with audit and business requirement • Review of Council Equality Scheme and associated arrangements

3.3	**Legal Services** Objectives the year for Legal Services relate to; the continued provision of strategic legal advice and assistance across all corporate priorities including; the Local Development Plan process; Development of key strategic sites; MSW Region Growth Deal; Delivery on programme of Capital Delivery; COVID19 issues; and in the development of an Estates Strategy and Asset Management Plan for the Council.
3.4	**Marketing & Communications** In Marketing and Communications, objectives relate to the development of specific marketing and communications plans to support key service areas, including leisure and economic development, during the recovery stages associated with the pandemic, the continued delivery of a recycling campaign to contribute to the achievement of landfill diversion targets, and a revised approach to the campaign to support the opening of OM Dark Sky Park and Observatory.
4.0	**Other Considerations**
4.1	**Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications**
	Financial: N/A
	Human: N/A
	Risk Management: The impact and implications of COVID19 on the delivery of council services and corporate priorities are not yet fully understood. This area will be kept under continuous review and the various service areas within the Chief Executive's Office will respond accordingly and in the most proactive manner in order to mitigate such risks and maximise opportunities.
4.2	**Screening & Impact Assessments**
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
5.0	**Recommendation(s)**
5.1	That the Committee considers the 2020-2021 Service Improvement Plans for Democratic Services, Legal Services and Marketing & Communications.
6.0	**Documents Attached & References**
6.1	Appendices A-C • Democratic Services Improvement Plan 2020-2021 • Legal Services Improvement Plan 2020-2021 • Marketing & Communications Improvement Plan 2020-2021

Democratic Services Chief Executive's Office

SERVICE PLAN - 2021 / 22

	Date
Consulted within staff team	24/06/2020
Discussed & signed off by Director	/ /2020

CONTENT

SECTION	TITLE	PAGE NUMBER
1.0	**OVERALL PURPOSE & SCOPE OF THE SERVICE**	
1.1	Purpose and scope of the service	**2**
1.2	Responsibilities	**2**
1.3	Customers & Stakeholders	**3**
1.4	Performance Overview in 2019/20	**3**
2.0	**IMPROVING OUR SERVICE AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE - 2020/21**	
2.1	Budget - 2020/21	**5**
2.2	Staffing Complement – 2020/21	**5**
2.3	Service Work Plan – 2020/ 21	**5**
3.0	**OUR STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS: RURAL NEEDS AND RISK**	
3.1	Equality Duty	
3.2	Rural Needs Duty	
3.3	Managing Risk	

1.0   OVERALL PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE SERVICE

1.1.   Purpose and Scope of the Service

Reporting to the Chief Executive, Democratic Services delivers a range of services which have a reach and impact across all Council services, and form an integral part of the Council's governance framework. The Service provides back office support to the wider Council, and facilitates the delivery of its committee system and provision of support to its elected representatives (councillors) across its 7 District Electoral Areas.

1.2   Responsibilities

The Service is specifically responsible for and charged with delivering the following functions with an organisational reach across the Council:

Committee Services – facilitation and management of council and committee meetings of Council to include the development of agendas, compilation of meeting packs, providing the summons to councillors and minute taking and follow up activity on decisions resolved

Equality, Disability and Good Relations - in ensuring that the Council meets its Equality Scheme and providing support in ensuring services are delivered in line with obligations under Section 75 (1) and (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

Rural Needs - providing assistance across Council on the rural needs statutory duty under the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 to consider rural needs in the development of new policies, plans or strategies and in any service design/delivery decisions.

Performance Management & Improvement – developing and embedding arrangements to support continuous improvement in the delivery of services, by embedding a culture which encourages and champions improvement in everything the Council does to meets its Performance Improvement obligations under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014. Introduction of an improvement framework, which supports council's strategic planning through reporting, validating performance data and on-going monitoring

Processing Civic Recognition Requests from Elected Representatives – receiving, processing and making recommendation to council on requests made for civic recognition.

Member Services – in providing support to councillors as required, progression and attainment of the Elected Member Development Charter

Corporate Policy – providing support and advice on the formulation of policies and corporate policy development across the Council.

Information Requests – coordinating the receipt and response to Freedom of

Information (FoI) made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

1.3   Customers & Stakeholders

Customers & Stakeholders
• Councillors and elected representatives
• Senior Management and Heads of Service
• Members of public requesting information held by Council, committee recommendations and council decisions

• Government Departments, agencies and bodies which include;
  o Equality Commission for NI
  o NI Audit Office
  o Public Records Office for Northern Ireland (PRONI)
  o Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)
  o A wide cross section of the public and customers of the Council, as required.
  o Outside Bodies with Councillor representation from Mid Ulster District Council
  o Government Departments, specifically the Department for Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs on the Rural Needs duty under the 2017 Act.

1.4   Performance Overview in 2019/20

The following table provides a progress summary and the impact made by last years' Service Plan (2019-2020). It also details key successes, a summary of the end of year progress, remaining challenges for the Service and how it made a difference. It does not reflect the entire activity of the Service but rather the core areas, which were identified as being a focus throughout 2018-19

2019/20 Performance Overview	End of Year Progress Status: Completed/Commenced/Other
Member Development & Services: To create efficiencies within Committee Services activities by expanding the use of the council's Committee Management Information System (CMIS) across three modules by 31st March 2020	**Completed:** throughout the period of the plan Committee S;rvices have; commenced the use of the minutes module of the CMIS system to build and generate minutes within the platform; publishing the Annual Registration of Interests of Councillors online through CMIS; and now member attendance figures online annually.
Information Requests: To increase the number of Freedom of Information requests	**Completed:** Overall, the number of requests received is considerably high

3

responded to within 20 days by 31st March 2020	for an authority the size of Mid Ulster District Council, although the number received is down by approximately 40 requests compared to the 2018-19 period. The council has increased its % attainment by 2 percentage points up from 86% last year to an overall attainment of 88% in 2019-20. Attainment of those responded to within 20 days continues to remain high though falling marginally short of the 90% set standard. The Council has improved its percentage achievement by 2 percentage points on 2018-19. This could in part be interpreted as being achieved due to reduction in the number received throughout 2019-20. Achievement of having 88% of all requests responded to within 20 days should not however be underestimated when you consider the resource in place for the delivery of this function and the approach employed which decentralises responsibility across all Services and Depts. to input/contribute to the process before final responses are issued. In summary, the Council has improved upon its attainment on last year (2018-2019) by 2% moving from 86% up to 88% - just 2% within the 90% standard
Performance Improvement: Develop draft action plan for the introduction of an automated/electronic performance management module as part of Council's enterprise management System by March 2020.	**Commenced and Ongoing:** The Service has conducted a benchmarking exercise with other regional and UK wide Councils to determine market providers who would provide "best fit" Council requirements of an electronic system tailored to meet the business and reporting requirements of Part 12 of the Local Government Act 2014. Other associated activities delayed somewhat to the introduction of Technology One modules, being put

4

	back due to HR Core module requiring to take place first. Non-recurring resource bid paper in process of being developed.
Performance Improvement: Corporate Performance and Improvement Policy agreed by Council	**Completed:** The Corporate Performance and Improvement Policy was adopted by Council in December 2019 and the officer attended a Policy Briefing session for Heads of Services and relevant Managers to outline the new Policy
Performance Improvement: Corporate Improvement Plan compiled and approved by council by 30th June 2019	**Completed:** Annual Corporate Improvement Plan developed and agreed by Council, and Annual Assessment Report compiled reviewing Performance in 2018/19, received unqualified audit opinion regarding Council's duty to comply with Part 12 of Local Govt. Act.
Equality, Disability & Good Relations: To further embed further a culture of equality and good relations within decision-making processes across Council by March 2020	**Commenced and Ongoing:** the embedding of such arrangements is continual with works continually ongoing. Activities throughout the period included provision of support with equality screenings of which there were 12, delivering training/capacity building sessions to 52 staff from across the organisation, engagement of senior management with an equality and good relations professionals on a range of issues and engagement with Action on Hearing Loss on undertaking accessible checks of our building and facilities across the district.

5

2.0   IMPROVING OUR SERVICE AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE - 2020/21

The following tables confirm the resources, financial and people, which the Service has access to throughout 2020-21 to deliver its actions, activities and core business.

2.1   Budget 2020/21

Service Budget Headings	£
Contributions to Associations & Membership Fees	157,200
Corporate & Democratic Support	268,289
Members Allowances	929,750
Town Twinning	10,000
Gross Budget	1,365,239
Income	0
Net Budget for 2020-21	1,365,239

2.2   Staffing Complement - 2020/21
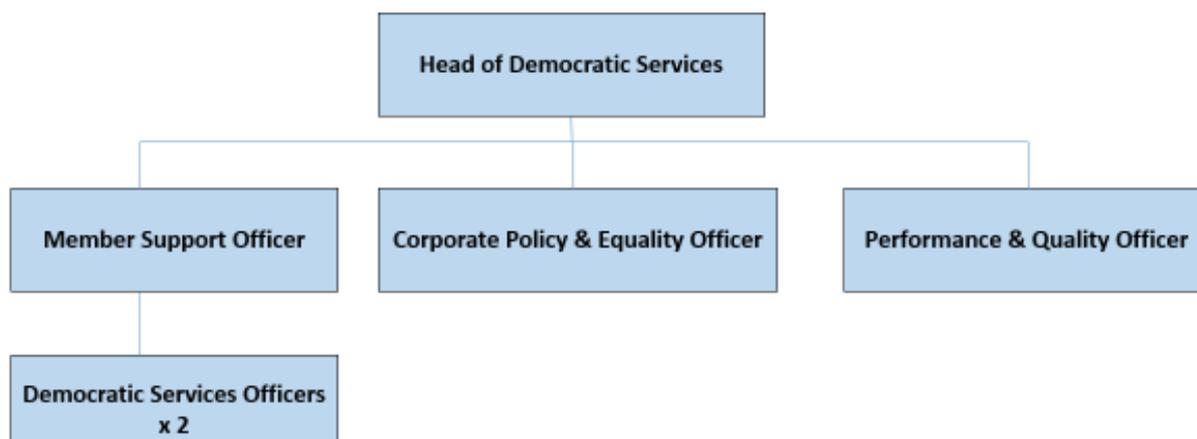
Staffing	No. of Staff
Head of Service	1
Managers	
Officers	5
Remaining Team	
Total	6

6

2.3   Service Work Plan - 2020/21

This plan confirms the core activities and actions, forming Democratic Services Work Plan for 2020-21. This is a high-level capture of the Service activities along with some improvement undertakings, which the service will focus on throughout 2020-21. The Plan links to the Councils new 2020-2024 Corporate Plan priorities, Annual Corporate Improvement Plan Objectives, Corporate Indicators and Mid Ulster Community Plan:

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	To increase the number of Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 days by 31st March 2021			
Link to Community Plan Theme:	**Align to Corporate Plan Theme**			
CMP 3.3 Education & Skills - We are more entrepreneurial, innovative & creative	*Service Delivery: 2.1 We will improve services for our citizens through the development and delivery of an innovation agenda*			
What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):	**By When (Date?)**	**Lead Officers(s)**	**What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)**	**How Will we Know? (Measures)**
To continue to use and further deploy elements of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to process requests	2020-21 throughout	Head of Democratic Services	• Increased satisfaction with responses issued determined from the number of Internal Reviews sought over the period • Contribution towards meeting the corporate indicator target set by Council	90% of all Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 days
Utilise the Customer Relationship Management System to process Internal Reviews to their conclusion	2020-21 throughout	Head of Democratic Services		

What Service Development/Improvement will we undertake in 2020/21? (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
Enhance the reporting to senior management to display achievement by Service, to identify areas for improvement and early action.	July 2020	Head of Democratic Services	• Increased satisfaction with responses issued determined from the number of Internal Reviews sought over the period	• 90% of Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 days
Schedule and facilitate 1hr briefings/conversations with Business Support staff to embed a culture of continued learning around the system, in association with ICT Service.	Sept 2020 - Mar 2021	Head of Democratic Services		• To attain an improvement from 2019-2010 cumulative response rate of 86%
Heads of Services meeting agenda item and continual discussion across the organisation to build capacity	2020-2021 throughout	Head of Democratic Services		

8

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	Develop (i) a Corporate Performance Improvement Plan 2020 to 2022 and (ii) complete the annual assessment of Council's 2019-2020 Performance Improvement Plan			
Link to Community Plan Theme:	Align to Corporate Plan Theme			
CMP 4.2 Health & Wellbeing - We have better availability to the right service, in the right place at the right time.	*Leadership: 1.3 We will work collectively to meet the identified needs and priorities of our citizens & connect the people of Mid Ulster*			
What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
1. Analyse documentation regarding potential improvement areas, develop framework for senior management/head of service workshop to identify potential improvement areas/themes/activities. Liaise with senior management and members on potential improvement objectives, develop paper of draft objectives for committee, approval by Council	February 2020	Performance & Quality Officer (PQO)	A performance improvement plan based on prioritised areas	1. Improvement objectives paper to Policy & Resources committee and approved by Council
2. Undertake public consultation exercise of draft improvement objectives	March-May 2020	Performance & Quality Officer	A citizen and stakeholder informed performance improvement plan	2. Public consultation exercise undertaken on Council's new improvement objectives.
3. Following the consultation, analyse and draft consultation outworking's paper on new council improvement objectives and forward report(s) to senior management, Policy & Resources and then Council for approval and communicate with consultees, where requested follow-up was sought	May 2020	Performance & Quality Officer	Engaged citizens and approve improvement objectives	3. Consultation outworking's paper on Council's improvement objectives approved

9

4. Research and draw up key performance questions paper and potential challenges, activities and measures for new improvement objectives and associated projects	April to June 2020	Performance & Quality Officer	Provide a challenge and focus for Senior Responsible Project leads	4. Challenge and focus paper produced for Chief Executive and appointed Senior Responsible Officers
5. Develop corporate performance improvement plan for 2020-2022 in line with outworking's of consultation, and in conjunction with Senior Responsible Officers for 4 new improvement projects, as assigned by the Chief Executive, presented to senior management, P&R Committee and thereafter Council approval	July Aug 2020	Performance & Quality Officer	Mainstreaming performance improvement in Council	5. Draft Corporate Improvement plan for 2020-2022 developed by end of Aug 2020*
6. Publish approved Corporate Performance Improvement Plan for 2020-2022 by 30th of September 2019* (proposed)	30th Sept 2020	Performance & Quality Officer	Council transparency and compliance with legislation	6. 2020/2022 Corporate Performance Improvement Plan published on Council web-site by 30th September 2020*
7. Complete quarterly performance progress reports to Policy & Resources Committee, to include performance improvement plan, corporate performance indicators and statutory performance indicators for 2020 to 2021 performance	Oct 2020	Performance & Quality Officer	Informing citizens of Council performance	7. Quarterly performance reports approved by Council
8. Research and liaise with colleagues to develop draft annual performance assessment report for senior management, Policy and Resources Committee and thereafter Council approval	Nov 2020	Performance & Quality Officer	Compliance with legislation (Part 12 of the Local Government Act) & Departmental (DfC) Guidance	8. Annual Assessment Report Papers P & R committee and approval by Council
9. Publish Annual Assessment Report for 2019-20 publish by 31st December 2020.	31st Dec 2020	Performance & Quality Officer	Compliance with legislation (Part 12 of the Local Government Act) &	9. Assessment Report published on Council web-site by 31st of December 2020**

10

			Departmental (DfC) Guidance	
10. Prepare folders/files and liaise with Local government auditor in relation to annual inspection of Council's duty to improve***	August 2020	Performance & Quality Officer	Compliance with legislation (Part 12 of Local Government Act) & Departmental (DfC) Guidance	10. Unqualified audit opinion

In context COVID-19, the Dept. for Communities (DfC) corresponded with Councils that new Corporate Improvement plans do not have to be published by June 30th (as in required by guidance/legislation) and new timeframe is to be set

** In context of COVID-19 guidance is outstanding from DfC on a date of publication for the annual assessment plan, (guidance usually requires that it be published by 30th of September each year). In the absence of definitive DfC guidance a revised date of 31st December 2020 is being worked to by officers*

*** Awaiting direction from DfC and Northern Ireland Audit Office on timeframes around the Performance Improvement Audit timetable*

What **Service Development/Improvement** will we undertake in **2020/21?** (actions):	**By When (Date?)**	**Lead Officers(s)**	**What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)**	**How Will we Know? (Measures)**
Develop process for verifying and validating performance data through Departmental Business Managers	Sept 2020	Performance & Quality Officer	Comply with Audit Recommendations	Validation checker list in place for quarterly reporting
Review, revise and refresh templates for collating, tracking and monitoring PIP projects and PI's	July 2020	Performance & Quality Officer	Simplified SMART Performance Improvement project plans	Revised templates in operation

11

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	Develop the case for the purchase of an integrated performance improvement and business platform
Link to Community Plan Theme:	**Align to Corporate Plan Theme**
CMP 2.1 Infrastructure - We are better connected through appropriate infrastructure	*Service Delivery: 2.1 We will improve services for our citizens through the development and delivery of an innovation agenda*

What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
1. Move towards developing the case for the purchase of an integrated performance improvement and business platform (phase 2) and system, in line with audit and business requirements: • Analysis and research was undertaken during 2019 to 2020 regarding a business performance enterprise electronic platform • During the period, develop the case for and make a bid in 2021 to 2022 budget for an integrated performance improvement and business platform that will allow access, exploration and analysis of performance data using self-service in real time	Dec 2020	Head of Democratic Services	Single integrated toolkit (enterprise platform) that stores and provides real time and predictive analysis of Council performance data	Budget request successful for use in 2021-2022

What **Service Development/Improvement** will we undertake in 2020/21? (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
Not applicable, this activity is new and out-with routine service delivery				

12

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	To review and provide recommendations on provision of civic recognition for achievement by our citizens			
Link to Community Plan Theme:	**Align to Corporate Plan Theme**			
CMP 5.2 Vibrant & Safe Communities - We have a greater value and respect for diversity	*Leadership: 1.3 We will work collectively to meet the identified needs and priorities of our citizens & connect the people of Mid Ulster*			
What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):	**By When (Date?)**	**Lead Officers(s)**	**What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)**	**How Will we Know? (Measures)**
• Identify representatives for the Working Group on Civic Recognition representative of and in line with the arrangements on the establishment of Councillor Working Groups	June 2020	Head of Democratic Services Member Support Officer	Members will be engaged in reviewing existing arrangements to identify areas for improvements on providing civic recognition	Meetings have taken place and reports being produced for Policy & Resources Committee
• Commence and complete an analysis of the provision of civic recognition to date, with a focus on a term of Council 2015-2019	July 2020	Head of Democratic Services	Members and council officers involved will be informed of arrangements in place and gaps in provision identified	Informed decision making throughout the review process
• Commence and complete a summary paper on existing council practice (provision) and research on existing practice across local government	July 2020	Head of Democratic Services	Members and council officers involved will be informed of arrangements in place and gaps in provision identified	Informed decision making throughout the review process
• Convene the Working Group of elected members and meet to consider existing practice, existing provision, good practice research and establish a series of	Aug-Oct 2020	Head of Democratic Services	Meetings of the Working Group held and decisions documented	Meeting Reports will be taken to subsequent and next

13

recommendations on civic recognition of achievement for citizens of the district				available meetings of Policy & Resources Committees
• Presentation of Recommendations Report on Provision of Civic Recognition to Policy & Resources Committee by November 2020	Oct-Nov 2020	Head of Democratic Services	New arrangements in place for receiving, considering and providing Civic Recognition, valued by all elected members, citizens and recipients	Recommendations Report will have been considered and at the stage of implementation by relevant officers

What **Service Development/Improvement** will we undertake in **2020/21? (actions):**	**By When (Date?)**	**Lead Officers(s)**	**What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)**	**How Will we Know? (Measures)**
Not applicable, this activity is new and out-with routine service delivery				

14

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	Implement Council's Statutory Equality and Disability Duties, to include development of an updated Equality Scheme for 2021-26 and associated Action Plans				
Link to Community Plan Theme:	**Align to Corporate Plan Theme**				
CMP 5.2 Vibrant & Safe Communities - We have a greater value and respect for diversity	*Communities: 5.4 We will support & promote respect for diversity & the integraton of our minority communities.*				
What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):	**By When (Date?)**	**Lead Officers(s)**	**What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)**	**How Will we Know? (Measures)**	
1. Produce an Annual Report on the delivery and implementation of the Equality Scheme during 2019/20	August 2020	Corporate policy & Equality Officer	Report will identify the progress made in 2020-21 and will provide a focus for the development of a new Equality Scheme.	Report submitted to the Equality Commission	
2. Carry out public consultation to seek public and equality consultee approval for the revised Equality Scheme and associated Action Plans	November 2020 - January 2021	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Statutory requirements met and public feedback received to aid service improvement.	Consultation completed and feedback received	
3. Develop an updated Equality Scheme, to include a revised Audit of Inequalities, Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan	March 2021	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Statutory requirements met.	Updated Scheme approved by Council and the Equality Commission (if deemed necessary)	
4. Complete and circulate Equality Screening Outcome reports	3 times (April, August & December)	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Equality Consultees will be able to provide comment on screening outcomes.	Reports will be available on the Equality section of the website	

15

What **Service Development/Improvement** will we undertake in 2020/21? (actions):	**By When (Date?)**	**Lead Officers(s)**	**What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)**	**How Will we Know? (Measures)**
1. Revise/update Equality Screening form	December 2020	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	An improved screening system	Revised form in place

16

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	To implement the Rural Needs Act. This includes implementing the Actions identified for Local Authorities in the, 'Review of the Implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016'
Link to Community Plan Theme:	Align to Corporate Plan Theme
CMP 4.2 Health & Wellbeing - We have better availability to the right service, in the right place at the right time.	*Leadership: 1.3 We will work collectively to meet the identified needs and priorities of our citizens & connect the people of Mid Ulster*

What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
1. Provide support to Officers undertaking Rural Needs Impact Assessments (RNIAs)	Ongoing	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Improved Assessment	The number and quality of RNIAs completed
2. Provide training for Officers and Members	March 2021	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Improved understanding of the role of Council (in Rural Needs) and the legislation	Training evaluations
3. Complete Annual Monitoring Return of Assessments to DAERA	December 2021	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	It will provide a baseline tool for the year ahead	Return completed

What **Service Development/Improvement** will we undertake in 2020/21? (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
1. Host regular workshops for decision makers within their organisation (subject to need) for the purposes of increasing awareness	March 2021	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Increased awareness of Rural Needs legislation	The number of workshops held
2. Review the resources allocated to supporting the implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016	March 2021	Corporate Policy &	Improved access to resource	Necessary resources in place

17

		Equality Officer		
3. Take steps to seek to embed the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 further within their organisation	March 2021	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Increased awareness of Rural Needs legislation	Inclusion in corporate templates, assurance statements and risk registers
4. Develop effective relationships with rural community organisations and, where appropriate, to seek to engage with the rural community sector in a meaningful and timely manner	March 2021	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Improved communication and evidence sources to complete assessments	Stakeholder engagements
5. Be open to adopting new and innovative approaches to engaging with the rural community sector	March 2021	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Improved communication and evidence sources to complete assessments	Stakeholder engagements
6. Publish RNIA Templates on Council's website and that the annual monitoring report includes a link to each public authority's webpage	March 2021	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Increased transparency for the public and rural dwellers	Templates published on Council's website

Performance Measures • *Democratic Services*	Is the Measure, Statutory, Corporate, Existing, or New?	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21 Standard
90% of Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 days **Responsible Service**: Democratic Services	Corporate (Existing)	83%	83%	86%	88%	90%
90% of complaints dealt with within target **Responsible Service:** Chief Executive's Office	Corporate (Existing)	_	_	Baseline	86%	90%
90% of correspondence responded to within target **Responsible Service:** Chief Executive's Office	Corporate (Existing)	_	_	Baseline	86%	90%

18

3.0   OUR STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

In carrying out our responsibilities, the Service is cognisant of the statutory duties placed upon the council in the delivery of its services. Whilst the Service operates, under various obligations it is however mindful of the changing context in which it operates and endeavours to mainstream the equality and rural needs duties in the design and delivery of our functions.

3.1   EQUALITY DUTY

The council and by consequence our Service is committed to contributing towards its part in working towards fulfilling obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to ensure adequate time, staff and resources to fulfil our duties.

The Service will also work towards adherence to the council's Equality Scheme ensuring equality duties, together with promoting positive attitudes towards persons with a disability and the participation of people with a disability in public life when carrying out our functions.

3.2   RURAL NEEDS DUTY

The Service will be mindful of the rural needs of its customers when carrying out its functions and subsequent responsibilities, particularly in developing any new policies, plans or strategies throughout the year. In line with the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 we will give due regard to rurality in terms of needs in carrying out the activities within our Service.

3.3   RISK MANAGEMENT OF SERVICE

The purpose of risk management is to manage the barriers which prevents the Council from achieving its objectives. This section of the service plan includes space for the Service to input their key risks (in summary form), which have been identified during the business planning process. The Council uses risk management to maximize opportunities and minimize risks. This improves its ability to deliver priorities and improve outcomes. This is why the Council deems it important to link business planning and risk management. Risk Management aims to:

- Help the Council achieve its overall aims and objectives
- Manage the significant risks the Council faces to an acceptable level
- Assist with the decision making process
- Implement the most effective measures to avoid, reduce and control those risks
- Balance risk with opportunity
- Manage risk and internal controls in the most effective way.

This table illustrates risks identified to deliver the Services business.

Risk Ref Number	Description of Risk	Risk Rating	Mitigation Activity
1.	Failure to meet a range of Statutory Obligation on Equality, disability and Freedom of Information Extends to failure to comply with (i) Sec. 75(1) and 75(2) of NI Act 1998, (ii) Freedom of Information Act 2000 and (iii) disability duties under DDA 1995 and Disability Discrimination Order 2006.	4 (Low)	Mitigation extends but not limited to; Equality Scheme in place and being implemented through various action plans and activities; electronic system not being used to process and manage Freedom of Information requests; and Equality Scheme review will commence and the end of 2019-2020 in time for the required 5 year review.
2.	Failure to comply with the Local Government Act 2014 Part 12, to meet a General Duty on performance improvement, which could be caused by having inadequate arrangements in place and this identified during a NI Audit office inspection which could result in statutory recommendations issued by the Local Government Auditor (NIAO) leading to reputational risk. (General Duty on performance improvement requires Council to (i) make arrangements to improve; and (ii) ensure that improvement objectives continually remain relevant to meet the general duty (i.e. continuous improvement)	4 (Low)	Audit undertaken annually by the Northern Ireland Audit Office on the Councils improvement arrangements. No statutory recommendations have been issued to date. Improvement Objectives are being delivered by an appointed Senior Responsible Owners (a member of senior management team)

Rating	Descriptor
16 - 25	Extreme Risk (immediate action required)
10 - 15	High Risk (urgent action required)
7 - 9	Moderate Risk (action required)
1 – 6	Low Risk (keep under review)

Legal Services Chief Executive's Department

SERVICE PLAN - 2021 / 22

	Date
Consulted within staff team	01/05/2020
Discussed & signed off by Director	23/06/2020

CONTENT

1

1.0 OVERALL PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE SERVICE

1.1. Purpose and Scope of the Service

The service is responsible for the management and the provision of a comprehensive legal advice and support service to the Council across the Council's wide range of functions and responsibilities. The aim of the service is to provide high quality, proactive and timely advice and innovative solutions to the Council in order to assist it operating within the wider legal landscape.

1.2 Responsibilities

The service is specifically responsible for the following:

- The provision of proactive, accurate, innovative and timely professional legal advice on matters relating to the functions and the exercise of the powers and duties of the Council;

- The drafting and settling of legal documentation;

- The provision of training and information on legal and quasi legal matters to officers and Elected Members as required;

- The instigation and defence of claims, actions, applications and other legal proceedings, including representation, as required on behalf of the Council;

To liaise with other legal professionals, the courts, government departments, statutory bodies and other organisations in relation to legal matters pertaining to the Council.

1.3 Customers & Stakeholders

Customers & Stakeholders
• The Council; officers; and Elected Members
• Other members of the legal profession, including solicitors and barristers
• The judiciary and court officials
• Individuals residing in and businesses and organisations operating within the district
• Other government departments and agencies
• Other councils; including statutory bodies

1.4 Performance Overview in 2019/20

2

The following table provides a progress summary and the impact made by last years' Service Plan (2019-2020). It also details key successes, a summary of the end of year progress, remaining challenges for the Service and how it made a difference.

2019/20 Performance Overview	End of Year Progress Status: Completed/Commenced/Other
• **Excellent Training delivered for Planning Officers by way of a Workshop on Planning Case Law and Material Considerations. Resulted in tangible improvements for the planning decision making process.**	**Completed.** **To be rolled out and tailored for members.**
• **Involved in a cross corporate Collaboration Project regarding Capital Projects with a view to streamlining processes, embedding best practice and ensuring compliance.**	**Ongoing.**
• **External legal services contract is working well for the most part. Some challenges with particular aspects of work, which we are considering how best to address.**	**Completed**
• **Implications and outworkings of COVID19 for the service area remain a challenge (and there are potentially opportunities also).**	**Extent unknown and ongoing monitoring.**
• **An ongoing challenge for the service stems from the very nature of the work involved, i.e., the unpredictability of workflow, work type and caseload, making it difficult to accurately budget and allocate resources.**	**Kept under review**

2.0   IMPROVING OUR SERVICE AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE - 2020/21

The following tables confirm the resources, financial and people, which the Service has access to throughout 2020-21 to deliver its actions, activities and core business.

2.1   Budget 2020/21

Service Budget Headings	£
Legal Fees & Subscriptions	124,497
Salaries and mileage	118,356
Gross Budget	
Income	
Net Budget for 2019-20	242,853

2.2   Staffing Complement - 2020/21
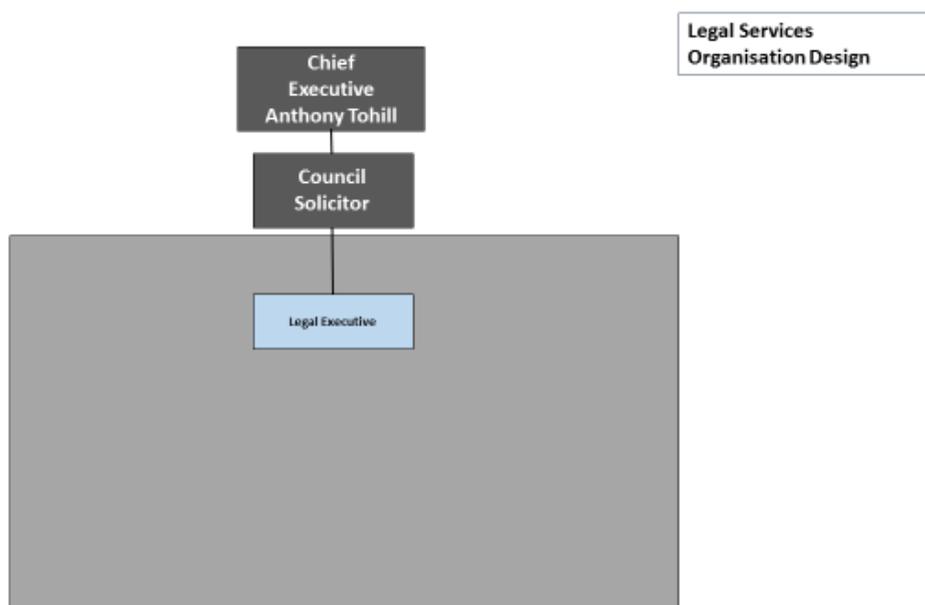
Staffing	No. of Staff
Head of Service	1
Managers	
Officers	1
Remaining Team	
Total	**2**

2.3   Service Work Plan - 2020/21

This plan confirms the core activities and actions, which will form your Service Work Plan for 2020-21. This is a high-level capture of the Service activities as well as some improvement undertakings which the service will focus on throughout 2020-21. The Plan links to the Council's new 2020-2024 Corporate Plan priorities, Annual Corporate Improvement Plan Objectives, Corporate Indicators and Mid Ulster Sustainable Community Plan themes & outcomes:

SERVICE WORK PLAN 2020/21

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	Improvement in performance, recognising diverse service areas, some further ahead than others, particularly in light of the Council's imminent directorate reform/integration.			
Link to Community Plan Theme:	**Align to Corporate Plan Theme**			
CMP 3.1 Education & Skills - Our People are better qualified & more skilled	*Service Delivery: 2.2 We will invest in our people to create a customer-focused, purposeful, skilled, high performing, engaged, healthy and safe work space.*			

What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
(i) Ongoing and regular Engagement with key stakeholders;	Ongoing	CMN & NON	Better understanding of key issues and service needs to ensure timely and tailored advice.	Increased satisfaction levels of internal clients.
(ii) Increased collaboration with all stakeholders regarding Capital Projects delivery;	Ongoing	CMN & NON	Ensure proactive legal advice is sought and provided.	Improvement in compliance rates and quicker turnaround times of advices provided.
(iii) The provision of strategic legal advice and assistance across all corporate functions and priorities (including; Local Development Plan, development of key strategic sites, MSW Region Growth Deal, delivery on programme of Capital Delivery etc, COVID19 issues.).	Ongoing	CMN	Solutions will be able to be identified at an earlier stage to ensure more robust and legally sound decision making in line with the Council's Corporate Plan.	Reduction in delays usually associated with legal matters; less successful challenges against the Council; and delivery on our Corporate aims and objectives.

6

What **Service Development/Improvement** will we undertake in 2020/21? (actions):	**By When (Date?)**	**Lead Officers(s)**	**What difference will it make?** (Outcomes/outputs)	**How Will we Know? (Measures)**
Assist in the development of an Estates Strategy and Asset Management Plan to provide strategic direction on the management, maintenance, acquisition and disposal of Council property and assets.	March 2021	CMN TS (Property Services)	Central and easily accessible database of Council's assets; Documented plan and procedure of dealing with Council's assets ensuring increased consistency, transparency and efficiencies.	Strategy and Action Plan will be in place with a view to rolling out implementation of same.
Increase staff awareness and knowledge in two key areas of challenge for legal services and the Council; (i) Planning (Councillors); and (ii) Prosecutions (Officers)	March 2021	CMN	Reduce risk of (successful) challenges against the Council; Improve and increase knowledge base of Council; Increased transparency and accountability in decision making; Increased public confidence in Council's decisions.	Number of successful challenges will remain low, or potentially reduce; Improvement in successful prosecutions, stemming from enforcement action, leading to more robust statistics in this regard.

7

Performance Measures: *Should include any measures as outlined in work above and relevant measures from Community, Corporate, Performance Improvement Plan, Statutory, Corporate Health Indicators etc.*	Is the Measure, Statutory, Corporate, Existing, or New?	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21 Target/Standard
Assisting in the development of an Asset Management Plan	**Corporate Plan**				**Plan developed.**

8

3.0 OUR STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

In carrying out our responsibilities, the Service is cognisant of the statutory duties placed upon the council in the delivery of its services. Whilst the Service operates, under various obligations it is however mindful of the changing context in which it operates and endeavours to mainstream the equality and rural needs duties in the design and delivery of our functions.

3.1 EQUALITY DUTY

The council and by consequence our Service is committed to contributing towards its part in working towards fulfilling obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to ensure adequate time, staff and resources to fulfil our duties.

The Service will also work towards adherence to the council's Equality Scheme ensuring equality duties, together with promoting positive attitudes towards persons with a disability and the participation of people with a disability in public life when carrying out our functions.

3.2 RURAL NEEDS DUTY

The Service will be mindful of the rural needs of its customers when carrying out its functions and subsequent responsibilities, particularly in developing any new policies, plans or strategies throughout the year. In line with the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 we will give due regard to rurality in terms of needs in carrying out the activities within our Service.

3.3 RISK MANAGEMENT OF SERVICE

The purpose of risk management is to manage the barriers which prevents the Council from achieving its objectives. This section of the service plan includes space for the Service to input their key risks (in summary form), which have been identified during the business planning process. The Council uses risk management to maximize opportunities and minimize risks. This improves its ability to deliver priorities and improve outcomes. This is why the Council deems it important to link business planning and risk management. Risk Management aims to:

- Help the Council achieve its overall aims and objectives
- Manage the significant risks the Council faces to an acceptable level
- Assist with the decision making process
- Implement the most effective measures to avoid, reduce and control those risks
- Balance risk with opportunity
- Manage risk and internal controls in the most effective way.

This table illustrates the risks identified to deliver the Services business in 2020-21.

Risk Ref Number	Description of Risk	Risk Rating	Mitigation Activity
1.	*Failure to maintain effective corporate governance arrangements*	*8*	*Engagement with stakeholders to review current arrangements;* *Design a process to understand the various types of arrangements that exist; what arrangements should be in place; what harmonisation/standardisation can be achieved across arrangements;* *Develop a suite of documentation according to corporate needs;* *Provide training to various stakeholders on new process and documentation*
2.	*Implications of COVID19*	*6*	*Monitor the situation and respond accordingly;* *Proactively seek information and guidance;* *Proactively assist and advice across corporate services regarding legal issues and obligations during recovery and post recovery.*

Rating	Descriptor
16 - 25	Extreme Risk (immediate action required)
10 - 15	High Risk (urgent action required)
7 - 9	Moderate Risk (action required)
1 – 6	Low Risk (keep under review)

10

Marketing & Communications Service

Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster District Council

SERVICE PLAN - 2020 / 21

	Date
Consulted within staff team	/ /2020
Discussed & signed off by Director	/ /2020

CONTENT

1

1.0 OVERALL PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE SERVICE

1.1. Purpose and Scope of the Service

Working strategically, as well as across departments and services, the service develops and delivers effective external and internal marketing and communications activity which supports the Council's vision, values and strategic direction.

1.2 Responsibilities

The Marketing and Communications service is responsible for:

- The development, coordination and delivery of external marketing and communications activity, working with different council services and functions to contribute to the achievement of their objectives through positioning, messaging and planned, targeted promotional activity across a range of platforms.
- The development of systems and activities to support effective internal communications, in conjunction with the Organisational Development Department.
- The management of proactive and reactive media relations, including acting as the first point of contact for all media enquiries, advising on appropriate responses, identifying potential issues and monitoring impact.
- The provision of an internal graphic design service which ensures the Council's branding is properly applied.
- The development and content management of digital platforms (web and social media).
- The provision of communications support to elected members, specifically the Chair, Deputy Chair and Committee Chairs.

1.3 Customers & Stakeholders

Customers & Stakeholders
• Elected Members
• SMT & Heads of Service
• Council staff
• Mid Ulster District Residents
• Media
• Local community groups, traders groups, businesses and visitors.

1.4 Performance Overview in 2019/20

The following table provides a progress summary and the impact made by last years' Service Plan (2019-2020). It also details key successes, a summary of the end of year progress, remaining challenges for the Service and how it made a difference.

2019/20 Performance Overview: Summary
Digital First The service continued to drive a digital approach to marketing and communications throughout 2019-2020, reducing print requirements, encouraging internal clients to consider digital before traditional methods and actively demonstrating how the use of digital tactics can make significant impacts on reach, engagement and reputation. There was significant progress in the development of digital channels, including: • The design, technical build and content review, edit and curation for a new Council website. This was a substantial body of work for the service, with more than 800 pages of content, including hundreds of downloadable documents, reviewed for accuracy and relevance, before being edited to suit the new site in terms of both style and mobile responsiveness. • The new site also allowed the service to build an e-marketing database which has almost 2,000 subscribers and to begin issuing direct e-newsletters. • The service successfully introduced a number of new social channels during 2019-2020 including a new Mid Ulster District Council Facebook page and Instagram channel, while new social channels were also created for OM Dark Sky Park and Observatory (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram). The service continues to manage and curate for these channels. • A comprehensive evaluation of the Council's existing Facebook and Twitter social media accounts (5 corporate, 11 leisure and parks, and 7 arts and culture), in line with service's focus on the adoption and use of an evidence-based, customer focussed approach to marketing and communications which demonstrates excellence and value for money. The resulting report provides an overall picture of the efficiency and effectiveness of the channels and based on an analysis of relevant customer engagement and online customer service metrics data, makes a series of 8 recommendations for areas of improvement.
Facilities Marketing There was a renewed focus on facilities marketing across 2019-20, with significant support for leisure following the completion of the Leisure Marketing and

3

Communications Strategy in the previous year, and with the scheduled opening of OM Dark Sky Park and Observatory. This included:

- Brand development for the dark skies project, the management of the design and build of a new facility website, creating and planning the marketing campaign for the facility opening and coordinating the opening event planning. Only weeks before the facility was to have its official opening, all work was paused and the opening postponed as a result of the pandemic.

- Significant work was undertaken to develop an overall leisure plan that considered deficit reduction priorities and included planned activities with timescales. Among other activity, a key output of this plan included a comprehensive marketing and communications campaign to launch the new Household Membership (delayed until 2020-21). The delivery of the plan was impacted by the on-going workings of the change process resulting from the Leisure Review and in the final quarter of the year, the closures of the centres as a result of COVID-19.

- The service also continued to contribute to the on-going leisure review process, providing high-level support for internal and external communications throughout.

Service Communications And Support
The service continued to provide wide-ranging communications' support across departments and services. Some of the most notable work in 2019-2020 included:

- The development and delivery of a further integrated recycling campaign 'Plastic Fantastic' to support the on-going reduction in waste which is landfilled. The campaign was omni-channel, combining press, outdoor and cinema advertising, with owned and earned channels. Statistics continue to show that the campaign had a positive impact on recycling figures. In the 6 months from July – December 2019, plastic recycling increased by almost 71 tonnes when compared to the same 6-month period the previous year, with an increase of over 348 tonnes in overall blue bin tonnages recycled in the same period.

- The implementation of activity to support capital investment projects, including a myriad of village renewal projects, the reopening of Dungannon Leisure Centre and the refurbishment of Cookstown Leisure Centre's Fitness suite, with innovative digital content at the core of delivery.

- The launch of the £5M Connecting Pomeroy project in October which included the creation of key messaging, the design of a visual identity for the project, associated artwork, development of a video in-house to support the launch and as the first of a 'before and after' library of footage, PR and social media content planning and delivery.

4

- Support for 15 strategic events across the summer, Halloween and Christmas periods, managing pre-event promotional activity on and off line, together with on the ground delivery of social media content plans live at each event.

- The development of a comprehensive campaign for Enterprise Week, from delivery of scripts and production of radio ads, creation of web site content, securing of outdoor media, PR activity, speech-writing and messaging and, most notably, the development of substantial content for social media channels. The Enterprise Week web page was the 2nd most visited page on the Council's web site during the campaign.

- The creation and implementation of an initial phase of a litter campaign, 'Don't Mess Up Mid Ulster', which began in August and was supported by press and social media work.

Corporate Communications
Corporate communications remain a key element of service delivery.

- In 2019-2020, the service managed the development of the Council's new Corporate Plan 2020-2024, including both internal and external consultation, drafting and editing plan themes and priorities and presenting final drafts to the Council.

- Media relations continued to be an extremely busy element of the service's core work and in 2019-2020 the service responded to 361 media enquiries, on a par with the volume received in the previous 12 month period. This aspect of the service is also highly rated by journalists for speed and quality of responses. Progress continues to be made in terms of identifying and greater anticipation and planning for potentially negative issues has aided the control of stories from the outset.

- The service was also responsible for the planning and delivery of admissions, information and media management at the election count in May 2019.

2019/20 Performance Overview Of Specific Objectives	End of Year Progress Status: Completed/Commenced/Other
• To develop and deliver annual marketing action plans for key services.	Completed (plans developed and delivered for Leisure, Parks, Environmental Services, Strategic Events, Economic Development, Community Development).
• To implement Leisure Marketing Strategy and Parks and Outdoor	Completed for leisure with ongoing implementation in Parks and Outdoor Recreation (overall 5

Recreation Strategy and associated actions for each.	year strategies still going through Council approval in Q4).
• To support Environmental Services to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill through the development and delivery of an integrated communications campaign for 2019-2020.	Completed.
• To develop a medium-term 'digital by design' strategy.	Commenced (with completion due in 2020-21).
• To develop and deliver a marketing and communication strategy and action plan for the new Davagh Dark Sky Observatory & Visitor Centre.	Completed.

2.0   IMPROVING OUR SERVICE AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE - 2020/21

The following tables confirm the resources, financial and people, which the Service has access to throughout 2020-21 to deliver its actions, activities and core business.

2.1   Budget 2020/21

Service Budget Headings	£
Salaries	234,739
Printing	35,000
Advertising	21,000
Promotional Materials	22,000
Licences	3,200
Fees	5,000
Miscellaneous (postage, mileage, training)	5,949
Gross Budget	326,888
Income	0
Net Budget for 2019-20	326,888

2.2   Staffing Complement - 2020/21

```
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │  Head of Marketing &    │
                    │    Communications       │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
```

```
┌──────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────┐
│   Marketing &        │  │   Marketing &        │  │ Design & Digital Media│
│ Communications Officer│  │ Communications Officer│  │      Officer          │
│ (Communications Lead)│  │  (Facilities Lead)   │  │                       │
└──────────────────────┘  └──────────────────────┘  └──────────────────────┘
```

```
        ┌──────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────┐
        │                      │  │  Promotions Officer  │
        │ Communications Officer│  │      (0.5 FTE)       │
        │                      │  │                      │
        └──────────────────────┘  └──────────────────────┘
```
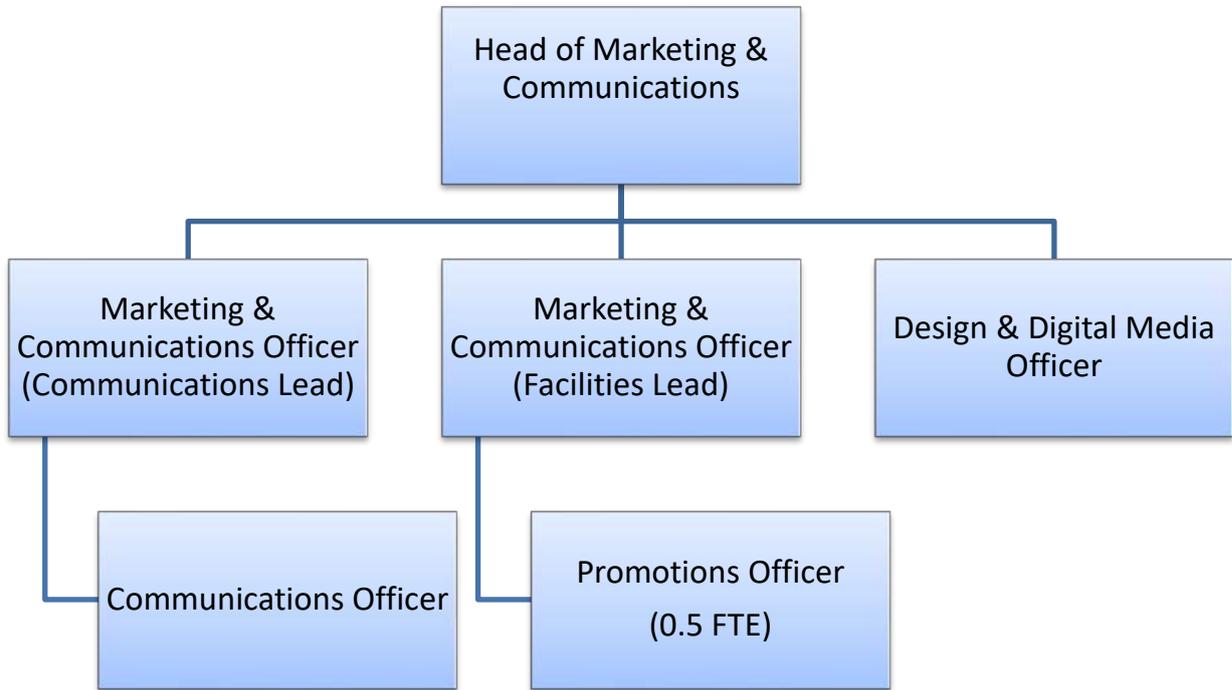
Staffing	No. of Staff
Head of Service	1
Managers	2
Officers	2.5
Remaining Team	0
Total	**5.5**

7

2.3   Service Work Plan - 2020/2

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	To develop and deliver annual Marketing and Communications post-COVID-19 action plans for key service areas.			
Link to Community Plan Theme:	**Align to Corporate Plan Theme**			
CMP 3.3 Education & Skills - We are more entrepreneurial, innovative & creative	*Service Delivery: 2.3 We will enhance our financial performance & strength, identifying opportunities to increase income & reduce deficits, as well as to leverage external funding*			
What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):	**By When (Date?)**	**Lead Officers(s)**	**What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)**	**How will we know? (Measures)**
Planned, timely meetings with relevant service areas: Leisure, Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Capital Projects, Economic Development, specifically town centres.	On-going	UM & KK	We will have cohesive, integrated marketing and communications recovery plans which are aligned to corporate narratives and which contribute to addressing post Covid-19 needs to reduce deficits and make a demonstrable contribution to the achievement of corporate and other service priorities.	No of meetings held.
Recovery marketing and communications developed and agreed.	In line with recovery dates	UM & KK		No of plans developed and agreed.
Plans implemented.	Aa per agreed plan timelines.	UM & KK		Adherence to implementation timescales.
Plan monitoring, evaluation and review.	Plan end implementation dates	UM & KK		Evaluation reports completed.

What **Service Development/Improvement** will we undertake in **2020/21?** (actions):	**By When (Date?)**	**Lead Officers(s)**	**What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)**	**How will we Know? (Measures)**
Increasing planned, evidence-based, customer-focussed activity has been a focus in the last 2 years for the service. Substantial support for economic	End March 2021.	UM & KK	Cohesive, integrated and longer-term marketing campaigns will position	Real time review of plan implementation.

development, specifically around town centre recovery, is to be an additional area of substantial work in this regard in 2020-2021.			town centres according to their unique, authentic place stories, reinforcing identities and offerings.	Monitoring and evaluation reporting.

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	To support Environmental Services to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill through the development and delivery of a recycling campaign for 2020-2021			
Link to Community Plan Theme:	**Align to Corporate Plan Theme**			
CMP 2.2 Infrastructure - We increasingly value our environment & enhance it for our children	*Environment: 4.1 We will continue to reduce our dependency on landfill through waste reduction and increased recyling and recovery.*			

What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How will we know? (Measures)
2020-2021 campaign concept and plans developed and agreed.	End July 2020	MMcN & LMcC	We will have contributed to a reduction in waste going to landfill and to a more sustainable environment.	Plan developed and agreed.
Plan delivery.	Ongoing from September 2020	MMcN & LMcC		Achievement of plan targets.
Plan monitoring, evaluation and review.	Plan end implementation date.	MMcN & LMcC		Evaluation report completed.

What **Service Development/Improvement** will we undertake in **2020/21?** (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How will we know? (Measures)
The service would like to explore how evidence can be gathered to demonstrate more effectively the direct impact of the campaign on waste targets.	Plan end implementation date.	MMcN & LMcC	Contribution to the adoption of an evidence-based, customer focussed	Metrics agreed and evaluation report completed.

9

		approach to marketing and communications which demonstrates excellence and value for money.	

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	To support the opening of the new OM Dark Sky Park and Observatory by re-vising and re-developing the associated marketing and communication plans.
Link to Community Plan Theme:	Align to Corporate Plan Theme
CMP 1.1 Economic Growth - We prosper in a stronger & more competitive economy	Economy: 3.6 We will work to deliver tourism investment and employment concentrating on Mid Ulster's three identified tourism strands

What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How will we know? (Measures)
Revision of existing plans to reflect the opening of a new visitor attraction in the recovery phase of Covid-19 pandemic.	End August 2020	UM	We will have successfully positioned the new facility and associated outdoor recreation and tourism offerings as a flagship visitor attractions in the Sperrins.	Revised plan complete and agreed.
Plan implementation and delivery of official opening marketing & communications plan.	End October 2020 (if October re-opening date confirmed)	UM		Plan implemented and evaluation of associated plan targets.

What Service Development/Improvement will we undertake in 2020/21? (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How will we know? (Measures)

10

N/A				

Performance Measures: *Should include any measures as outlined in work above and relevant measures from Community, Corporate, Performance Improvement Plan, Statutory, Corporate Health Indicators etc.*	Is the Measure, Statutory, Corporate, Existing, or New?	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21 Target/Standard
% of workforce satisfied with current job	Corporate	60.95%	60.95%	65.34%	80%
% of workforce who take pride in working for Mid Ulster District Council	Corporate	79.48%	79.48%	84.07%	80%
% of workforce who understand council's priorities and how they contribute to them	Corporate	69.91%	69.91%	78.13%	80%

11

3.0 OUR STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

In carrying out our responsibilities, the Service is cognisant of the statutory duties placed upon the council in the delivery of its services. Whilst the Service operates, under various obligations it is however mindful of the changing context in which it operates and endeavours to mainstream the equality and rural needs duties in the design and delivery of our functions.

3.1 EQUALITY DUTY

The council and by consequence our Service is committed to contributing towards its part in working towards fulfilling obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to ensure adequate time, staff and resources to fulfil our duties.

The Service will also work towards adherence to the council's Equality Scheme ensuring equality duties, together with promoting positive attitudes towards persons with a disability and the participation of people with a disability in public life when carrying out our functions.

3.2 RURAL NEEDS DUTY

The Service will be mindful of the rural needs of its customers when carrying out its functions and subsequent responsibilities, particularly in developing any new policies, plans or strategies throughout the year. In line with the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 we will give due regard to rurality in terms of needs in carrying out the activities within our Service.

3.3 RISK MANAGEMENT OF SERVICE

The purpose of risk management is to manage the barriers which prevents the Council from achieving its objectives. This section of the service plan includes space for the Service to input their key risks (in summary form), which have been identified during the business planning process. The Council uses risk management to maximize opportunities and minimize risks. This improves its ability to deliver priorities and improve outcomes. This is why the Council deems it important to link business planning and risk management. Risk Management aims to:

- Help the Council achieve its overall aims and objectives
- Manage the significant risks the Council faces to an acceptable level
- Assist with the decision making process
- Implement the most effective measures to avoid, reduce and control those risks
- Balance risk with opportunity
- Manage risk and internal controls in the most effective way.

This table illustrates the risks identified to deliver the Services business in 2020-21.

Risk Ref Number	Description of Risk	Risk Rating	Mitigation Activity
MC01	Misuse or inconsistent use of the Council's branding	6	Use of brand identity as per guidelines is now embedded. Branding continues to be consistently applied and the service remains vigilant with regard to maintenance of standards.
MC02	Impact on output of small team through members of staff leaving the service or as a result of sickness absence.	9	Monitoring of sickness absence and application of attendance policy continues. Staff team remains stable and there are no anticipated staffing issues.
MC03	Inadequate management and planning of media relations issues.	8	Media relations service continues to be delivered and media monitored. The service continues to work pro-actively with departments on a project by project or issue by issue basis to pre-empt and/or manage potentially difficult media issues.
MC04	Budget pressure leading to reduced communications activity.	9	Monitoring of existing marketing & communications budget is on-going.
MC05	Ineffective internal communications leading to misinformed, demotivated staff.	12	Work is ongoing to improve internal communications. The service is installing new branded staff notice boards and the use of new animated videos for key policy areas is under development.
MC06	Delay or difficulty in converging legacy web and social media sites.	12	Monitoring and review work is continuous.

		A new web site is under development and web workshops have now been held with leisure, economic development, tourism, parks and the Burnavon.

Rating	Descriptor
16 - 25	Extreme Risk (immediate action required)
10 - 15	High Risk (urgent action required)
7 - 9	Moderate Risk (action required)
1 – 6	Low Risk (keep under review)

14

Report on	Organisational Development Service Plan 2020/21
Date of Meeting	2 July 2020
Reporting Officer	Marissa Canavan, Director of Organisational Development
Contact Officer	Marissa Canavan, Director of Organisational Development

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 inform members of the Service Plan for Organisational Development Department for 2020/2021
2.0	**Background**
2.1	The Service Plan identifies the Purpose and Scope of the Organisational Development Department, provides an overview of the performance of the Department during 2019/20, and confirms the service work plan for year 2020/2021
3.0	**Main Report**
3.1	The Service Plan helps ensure our services are accountable, planned and clear, and that our performance is measured. The key priorities for Organisational Development Department for Year 20/21 are focussed around the implementation of the new fully integrated HR/Payroll, Time & Attendance & Expense IT system, and to provide the required support across Council regarding Recovery planning for COVID 19.
4.0	**Other Considerations**
4.1	**Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications**
	Financial:
4.2	Human:

	The Service Work Plan will be delivered by the Organisational Team, supported by the working groups for the various projects.	
4.3	Risk Management:	
5.0	**Screening & Impact Assessments**	
	Equality & Good Relations Implications:	
	Rural Needs Implications:	
6.0	**Recommendation(s)**	
7.0	**Documents Attached & References**	
	Organisational Development Service Plan 2020/21.	

Organisational Development Department

SERVICE PLAN - 2020 / 21

	Date
Consulted within staff team	18/06/2020
Discussed & signed off by Director	18/06/2020

CONTENT

1.0 OVERALL PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE SERVICE

1.1. Purpose and Scope of the Service

This is the Service Improvement Plan for 2020/21 for the Organisational Development department.

The Organisational Development Department supports managers across all Council Directorates. The services contribution to cross-cutting activities assists the Council to deliver on its strategic priorities. The key priorities for Organisational Development in 2020/2021 are focussed around the Councils response to COVID 19 and providing support and guidance to both Staff and Managers around health and well-being at this difficult time, The implementation of a new HR/Payroll Integrated IT system, HR Policy Developments & Implementation, Learning & Development for staff/Managers/Supervisors, delivery of business support services across council and continued delivery of Registration Services, a statutory service delivered by the Council. The Organisational Development department have taken Facilities management responsibility for the main Council Office Facilities.

The Organisational Development work plan will improve the service provision through leadership capacity and capability development, ensuring that employees within the Council are supported and equipped with relevant skills for their role and ensuring the people have the right information and are engaged in order to ensure effectiveness.

Workforce planning and review will continue to ensure the efficiencies are met by the Council without compromise on the services delivered. A schedule of new policy development is in place to ensure that the Council's HR policies and procedures remain fit for purpose within the changing local government climate.

Our approach is one where we seek to collaborate effectively with all of our stakeholders and ensure that the views and the interests of the workforce are heard and taken into account.

Organisational Development will help deliver a culture with employee engagement at its heart. This will improve productivity, responsiveness to change and enable the Council to facilitate the best possible outcomes for the people of Mid-Ulster.

This plan helps ensure that our services are accountable, planned and clear, and that our performance is measured. It also helps us deliver the Council's mission and strategic outcomes set out in Mid-Ulster District Council's Corporate Plan.

1.2 Responsibilities

Organisational Development is not a statutory service but as an employer the Council has significant obligations under employment legislation and equality legislation.

2

The section is specifically responsible for the following functions:

Human Resources
- Providing a professional service to the Council to meet its obligations as an employer and progress towards the objective of being an exemplar employer and employer of choice.
- Specific areas of delivery are: Advising on Recruitment and Selection, Employee Relations, Terms & Conditions of Service, Job Evaluation & Grading, Employee Benefits, workforce planning, Health & Well-being, Organisational Structures and staffing numbers.
- Responsible for putting in place an Occupational Health Service which includes medical examinations, health surveillance etc.

Learning & Development/ Policy Development

- Supports the delivery of a range of organisational and learning and development activities for all Elected Members, Directors, Heads of Service, managers and employees.
- Responsible for developing and managing the Councils approach to organisational and employee development in the workplace and to meet the corporate, service and individual development needs of Council employees to enable them to deliver the Council's objectives and to fulfil their current or future role within their organisation to their full potential.
- Supports a schedule of new policy development for the new Mid-Ulster Council to ensure policies are fit for purpose.

Organisational Development
- Influence and advise on Organisational Design matters within departmental structures and recommend different delivery models to support the integration of services and sharing of resources.
- Responsible for the delivery of HR projects/ Initiatives across the Council which look at reducing expenditure within departments or ways to generate income.
- Responsible for Business Support Teams across the Council to create and devise an improved service delivery model to standardise processes.

Business Support Services
- Support the delivery of Business Support Services across Council Directorates transforming the service to align and improve processes.
- Provision of Customer Service at all of the main Council Office locations.
- Provision of Facilities Services at all of the main Council Office locations.

Registration Services
- Responsible for the provision of Statutory Registration Services across the Council.

Facilities Management (Main Council Offices)
- Responsible for the facilities management of the 3 Main Council Office sites in Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt.

3

1.3 Customers & Stakeholders

Customers & Stakeholders
<u>Internal</u> • Staff • Departments • Elected Members • SMT & HOS • Local Trade Union Representatives **<u>External</u>** • Public • Job Applicants • Regional Trade Union Side • Politicians (MLA's) • LGSC • Training Providers • Other Local Authorities • Education Sector • OH Provider • Business Sector • Equality Commission • Central Government Departments e.g Department of Finance • Department for the Economy • Education Authority • Schools & Colleges • Media • 3rd Party Service Providers/Training Providers • GRO • Undertakers • Doctors • Religious officiants • Approved Venues • Doctors/ Occupational Health • Health & Safety Executive

4

1.4   Performance Overview in 2019/20

The following table provides a progress summary and the impact made by last years' Service Plan (2019-2020). It also details key successes, a summary of the end of year progress, remaining challenges for the Service and how it made a difference.

2019/20 Performance Overview	End of Year Progress Status: Completed/Commenced/Other
To manage the roll out of the Transforming Leisure Services in MUDC Review Project	• The Transforming Leisure Services Project has been completed in March 2020. This involved a substantial amount of work resulting in 83 matching exercises and 12 recruitment exercises as part of this project.
To appoint and manage the implementation of a new integrated HR/ Payroll IT Solution for MUDC.	• Project had progressed well throughout the year but due to COVID 19 had been halted in March 2020. Project will recommence in July 2020 with a view to completion within this financial year.
To improve staff health and well-being and reduce the number of days lost through sickness absence, to reduce the impact of lost time, which affects organisation performance, productivity and workforce output.	• Health & Well-being of staff has been a priority for MUDC in 19/20 with the following being achieved by HR and the Health & Wellbeing Committee: • Corporate events for staff included Team building in Dungannon Park, Stepping Challenge and Christmas Breakfasts. • We undertook Health Cooking Demonstrations across the 3 main Council Offices of Cookstown, Magherafelt, Dungannon. • 80 employees have received health surveillance checks. • 60 staff received the Flu Vaccine in October 2019 • There were 953 health benefit claims made by staff within MUDC registered on the Westfield Health scheme with Dental & Optical accounting for approximately 70% of claims. • The Cycle to work scheme was re-introduced to council staff • Staff have access to coaching services to support our ongoing counselling already in place and have received encouraging positive feedback from staff

5

To meet the Percentage Loss rate set by Council of <5%.	• Attendance Management - The Percentage Loss Rate for the period 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020 is 4.31 and 0.69% below the target rate of 5% set by Council. For the same period in 18/19 the accumulative Percentage Loss Rate was 4.76%, overall the figures remain constant for both years. This is the lowest the sickness levels have been since MUDC was formed in 2015.
Develop and implement a needs based Learning & Development/ Policy Development Programme for Council	• **70** Recruitment exercises were completed throughout the year with the appointment of 170 posts.
	• **57** courses were held internally in the past year.
	• Further Code of Conduct training delivered to staff at various locations across Council
	• Statutory training delivered & included:- Fire Awareness & Warden, First Aid, Child Protection/Adult Safeguarding, IOSH Managing Safely & IOSH Refresher course for managers. Managers successfully gained accreditation in IOSH.
	• Managers & staff trained in 'Dignity at Work' within Environmental Services department. Newly Appointed Confidential Advisors attended 1 day's training.
	• **130** courses/conferences have been attended by staff externally in the past year
	• Approximately **2161** staff having taken up in-house training & **168** staff having taken up external learning and development opportunities in past year:- achievements included:- 4 staff having achieved OCN NI Level 3 in Leadership in Forest Schools & 3 staff having gained Level 4 WAMITAB (Waste Management Industry Training Board) Operator Competence Certificates. 3 staff completed & achieved World Host 'Principles of Customer Service' Train The Trainer qualification & as a result Customer Service training has been delivered to Leisure staff.
	• 6 'E' Learning courses have been developed with aim to roll out to staff in 20/21 year – 4 of the courses are mandatory within the Health & Safety & Technology & ICT Security categories & 2 optional under the 'Health & Wellbeing' category.

6

	- Council acknowledged importance of 'Mental Health' & as part of 'World Mental Health Day' on 10th October 19, a number of courses were organised including 'Introduction to Mindfulness' & 'Personal Resilience' for staff & managers. - Supervisory Management Programme (LEAP) was delivered in 19/20 year & units aligned to I.L.M Level 5 Award qualification with 8 out of 12 staff achieving their qualification. Work based projects were completed and presented to representatives from the Senior Management team. Staff are now implementing the findings from these projects. A further programme to be delivered next year. - Training programme developed & delivered for Councillors re: maintaining Charter Status for Council re: Elected Member Development - Full suite of 11 new policies approved with unions for Mid Ulster District Council employees, to take effect from 1st April 2020, this includes new policies such as Carer's Leave & Management of Bereavement Policy. - Innovation Day held on 22nd May & as a result the need for greater Staff Recognition acknowledged & Awards ceremony organised in December for staff having achieved qualifications since 2015; (e.g. degrees, post graduate diplomas, certificates etc). Approximately 40 staff attended & were presented with certificates. Staff who had achieved 100% attendance were also recognised & were presented with gift cards (approximately 10 receiving from across Council departments). Feedback on the event was very positive & it is hoped to continue & develop this recognition.
Delivery of Registration Services	**Figures for 1 January 2019 – 31 December 2019** Total no of births - 2083 Total no of deaths - 982 Total no of still births - 2 Total no of marriages religious and civil - 628 Total no of civil partnerships – 3

7

	Due to COVID 19 Registration has had to alter the way it works. This has been a challenging time dealing with restrictions, government guidelines, and constant changes to procedures but I feel that this is an area where we have excelled in terms of • Adapting quickly to new ways of working within government guidelines • Use technology such as payments via virtual terminal and fillable online forms so it is easier and more convenient for public and staff • Re-arrange staff working hours to get over some difficulties with backlog of work • Update Communication with public via facebook, website, emails and reach out to some foreign national communities by translating information

2.0   SERVICE WORKPLAN 2020/21

The following tables confirm the resources, financial and people, which the Service has access to throughout 2020-21 to deliver its actions, activities and core business.

2.1   Budget 2020/21

Service Budget Headings	£
Human Resources	508,624
Northland Row Building	20,336
Registration	(13,641)
OD Support	1,581,406
Gross Budget	2,096,725
Income	189,000
Net Budget for 2019-20	2,285,725

8

2.2   Staffing Complement – 2020/21
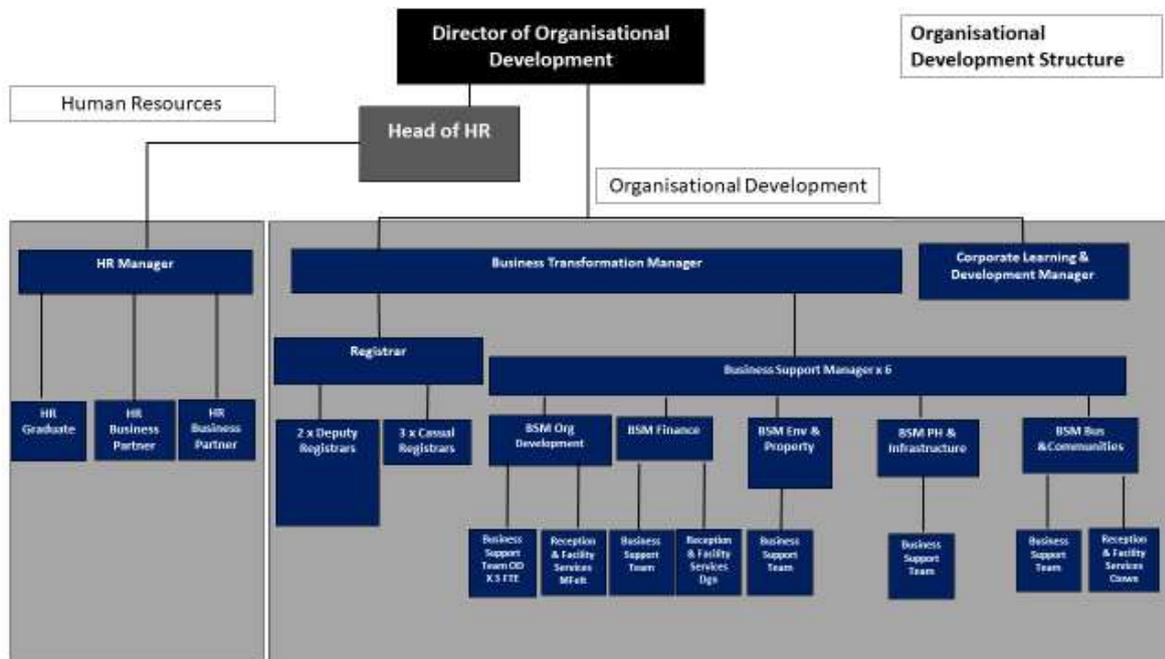
Staffing	No. of Staff
Head of Service	1
Managers	8
Officers	5
Remaining Team	45
Total	**59**

2.3   Service Work Plan - 2020/21

This plan confirms the core activities and actions, which will form your Service Work Plan for 2020-21. This is a high-level capture of the Service activities as well as some improvement undertakings which the service will focus on throughout 2020-21. The Plan links to the Council's new 2020-2024 Corporate Plan priorities, Annual Corporate Improvement Plan Objectives, Corporate Indicators and Mid Ulster Sustainable Community Plan themes & outcomes:

SERVICE WORK PLAN 2020/21

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	To manage the implementation of a new integrated HR/ Payroll/ Time & Attendance & Expenses IT Solution for MUDC			
Link to Community Plan Theme:	**Align to Corporate Plan Theme**			
CMP 3.3 Education & Skills - We are more entrepreneurial, innovative & creative	*Service Delivery: 2.2 We will invest in our people to create a customer-focused, purposeful, skilled, high performing, engaged, healthy and safe work space.*			
What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
Acceptance testing postponed from March 20 due to Covid 19 pandemic. To resume project in July 20.	July 20 – November 20	MC	This testing will ensure that the system is operating to its full potential and capable of doing what it is required to do.	Testing plan completed and signed off.
Installation of new Clocking Technology throughout the Council facilities as agreed at Council. Plan to be developed and rolled out.	Sept 20	MC	The clocking technology will be replaced to ensure that it is capable of dealing with multiple contract employees and is capable of doing clock to pay.	Clocking Technology Replacement plan completed and replaced accordingly.
Data Migration to Live Environment	Nov 20	MC	This will ensure that all data will be up to date and be uploaded to new IT System	All information is uploaded correctly to new system.
Parallel Run to be completed by	April 21	MC	This will ensure that we are confident that the system is operating correctly and aligns with other legacy systems.	Our legacy systems aligns with new system particularly with payroll.

11

What **Service Development/Improvement** will we undertake in 2020/21? (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
Implementation of new HR/Payroll/ Time & Attendance and Expenses system	April 21	MC	One system will replace 5 current legacy systems to deliver an end to end system	When system is operational and up and working efficiently and effectively by April 2021.

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	To work across Council with various directorates to assist with Recovery Plans Post Covid 19			
Link to Community Plan Theme:	**Align to Corporate Plan Theme**			
CMP 3.1 Education & Skills - Our People are better qualified & more skilled	*Service Delivery: 2.2 We will invest in our people to create a customer-focused, purposeful, skilled, high performing, engaged, healthy and safe work space.*			
What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
Collecting daily statistics re: at risk, at work, self-isolating and those showing symptoms forwarded for testing.	June 20	MC	This will give us a daily overview regarding staff available to work. Is there a need to redeploy staff from other non-essential services to continue to deliver the key essential services.	This will be very clearly quantifiable by the data captured as part of this process.
Ensure our main Council office facilities are Covid ready for the return of staff to the main office faciliities with office plans developed and the appropriate cleaning and sanitisation measures in place.	June 20	MC	This will make the office environments safe for the return to work of staff and when they are opened to members of public.	If all measures have been implemented and put in place.
Assist Council with furloughing staff for Facilities which closed as a result of COVID 19.	April 20	MC	Staff will be furloughed and the Council will make full use of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme which will financially benefit the organisation.	Written Furlough agreement in place for staff placed on temporary Furlough.

12

To assist with Short/Medium term recovery plans by our response to COVID 19 as outlined in various stages by Government. e.g. Stage 3 reopening of tourist attractions and cafes and Stage 4 with reopening of leisure facilities and subsequent return of staff to workplace.	June 20 →	MC	This will assist Directorates with the recovery of their facilities and services.	If all facilities have reopened in line with Government Guidance and are adequately staffed and resourced with any additional training required carried out prior to opening.
To ensure to support staff throughout COVID 19 in MUDC by provision of health and well-being support.	April 20-March 21	MC	This will provide the staff with additional resources and tools in both E-Learning and provision of westfield health and counselling services for dealing with mindfulness.	Number of referrals through westfield for counselling advice and support. Monitoring and measuring Staff attendance rates.

What **Service Development/Improvement** will we undertake in 2020/21? (actions):	**By When (Date?)**	**Lead Officers(s)**	**What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)**	**How Will we Know? (Measures)**
An increase in the number of people who are engaging in E-Learning across Mid Ulster District Council	September 20	MC	Bring more courses online giving staff more opportunities for training particularly in light of current changing environment.	Carrying out quarterly measurements in relation to the number of staff undertaking the training and analysing the data.

Performance Measures: *Should include any measures as outlined in work above and relevant measures from Community, Corporate, Performance Improvement Plan, Statutory, Corporate Health Indicators etc.*	Is the Measure, Statutory, Corporate, Existing, or New?	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21 Target/Standard
% Lost Time Rate sickness absence	Corporate	4.71%	4.77%	4.31%	5%

13

3.0 OUR STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

In carrying out our responsibilities, the Service is cognisant of the statutory duties placed upon the council in the delivery of its services. Whilst the Service operates, under various obligations it is however mindful of the changing context in which it operates and endeavours to mainstream the equality and rural needs duties in the design and delivery of our functions.

3.1 EQUALITY DUTY

The council and by consequence our Service is committed to contributing towards its part in working towards fulfilling obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to ensure adequate time, staff and resources to fulfil our duties.

The Service will also work towards adherence to the council's Equality Scheme ensuring equality duties, together with promoting positive attitudes towards persons with a disability and the participation of people with a disability in public life when carrying out our functions.

3.2 RURAL NEEDS DUTY

The Service will be mindful of the rural needs of its customers when carrying out its functions and subsequent responsibilities, particularly in developing any new policies, plans or strategies throughout the year. In line with the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 we will give due regard to rurality in terms of needs in carrying out the activities within our Service.

3.3 RISK MANAGEMENT OF SERVICE

The purpose of risk management is to manage the barriers which prevents the Council from achieving its objectives. This section of the service plan includes space for the Service to input their key risks (in summary form), which have been identified during the business planning process. The Council uses risk management to maximize opportunities and minimize risks. This improves its ability to deliver priorities and improve outcomes. This is why the Council deems it important to link business planning and risk management. Risk Management aims to:

- Help the Council achieve its overall aims and objectives
- Manage the significant risks the Council faces to an acceptable level
- Assist with the decision making process
- Implement the most effective measures to avoid, reduce and control those risks
- Balance risk with opportunity
- Manage risk and internal controls in the most effective way.

This table illustrates the risks identified to deliver the Services business in 2020-21.

Risk Ref Number	Description of Risk	Risk Rating	Mitigation Activity
1.	*Failure to meet sickness absence target of 5% as set by MUDC*	6	• *Regular auditing on monthly basis to ensure management compliance to be carried out.* • *Training of Managers in dealing with sickness absence.*
2	Failure to deliver on the Fully Integrated HR, Payroll, Time & Attendance and Expenses System	9	• *Regular weekly reporting to ensure project is on time and as per project plan* • *Monthly Steering Group Meetings* • *Regular Reporting to Director/SMT on progress of the project.*
4.	*Failure to operate within 2020/21 budget*	6	• *Robust Budget management* • *Identify options to generate income*
5.	There is a risk of Employment claims impacting service delivery.	6	• Ensure Council policies and procedures are followed and comply with legislation. • Ensure managers have been trained on the implementation of policies and procedures. • Professional legal advice is sought at an early stage in respect of complex HR Matters.

Rating	Descriptor
16 - 25	Extreme Risk (immediate action required)
10 - 15	High Risk (urgent action required)
7 - 9	Moderate Risk (action required)
1 – 6	Low Risk (keep under review)

16

Report on	IT Service Plan for 2020-21
Date of Meeting	July 2020
Reporting Officer	Barry O'Hagan
Contact Officer	Barry O'Hagan

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 approve the draft Service Plan for ICT Service for the 2020-21year
2.0	**Background**
2.1	In line with corporate performance improvement requirements and to ensure that every service contributes to performance improvement and corporate objectives, every service produces an annual individual improvement plan.
	The IT plans sets out the resources available for the year and key actions to which the service is held to account
3.0	**Main Report**
3.1	The Service Plan for 2020-21 is designed to support outcomes associated with the new corporate objectives, as well as the impact from COVID and project pressures within the service.
	The planned as itemised a total budget for all ICT and GIS services at **£1,132,097.**
	Key service objective focus on • Information Security and the Confidentiality, availability and Integrity of systems • Replacement system and project Support • Replacement if Infrastructure, Firewall and Full Fibre WAN project • Print and IT Asset Management • Property Asset Data Management
4.0	**Other Considerations**
4.1	**Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications**
	Financial: The financial budget for the service is summarised in the plan. The increase in represent additional provision for staff changes, inflation, and new sites and some equipment, new systems support costs for Finance and Organisational Development systems.

	Human: The seven (7) staff compliment for ICT service remains the same for the period 2019-20
	Risk Management: Risk register summary is contained within the service plan taking account of the increase risk as a result of COVID 19. The pandemic has been regarded by the National Cyber Security Centre as increasing the attack vector and prevalence generally as individuals seek to take advantage of the incident
4.2	**Screening & Impact Assessments**
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: Considered but screened out
	Rural Needs Implications: Screened out
5.0	**Recommendation(s)**
5.1	That the Committee notes the report and attached Service Plan for ICT
6.0	**Documents Attached & References**
	Service plan

Information
Technology

Finance Department

	Date
Consulted within staff team	22/5 /2020
Discussed & signed off by Director	/ /2020

SERVICE PLAN - 2021 / 22

CONTENT

1

1.0   OVERALL PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE SERVICE

1.1.   Purpose and Scope of the Service

The IT department is responsible for the strategic management, provision, support and maintenance of all ICT related systems.
The service maintains the budget for all computing hardware and support, mobile phone, telephony print service and the informational security systems protecting data.

1.2   Responsibilities

The department is responsible for the development and management of a secure, resilient and high-performance Council network infrastructure for data and voice (including provision for remote and wireless access).

It provides a set of core ICT services which are secure, up-to-date, easy to use and meet the needs of service users.

The section is specifically responsible for the following functions:

- Authentication and authorisation (user account provisioning)
- Email
- Management information and administrative systems
- Web (institutional websites, intranets and web content management system)
- General purpose application software for line of business
- Data storage and backup
- Network Services & general Multi-function device support & printing
- Anti-spam and virus protection
- Workstation support
- Support virtual learning environment
- Communications hardware support

1.3   Customers & Stakeholders

Our main customers /stakeholders within the service are.

Customers & Stakeholders
• Councillors
• Internal Staff
• External Service ICT solution providers
• DOE
• LPS
• External Public facing customers

2

1.4   Performance Overview in 2019/20

The following table provides a progress summary and the impact made by last years' Service Plan (2019-2020). It also details key successes, a summary of the end of year progress, remaining challenges for the Service and how it made a difference.

Also detail here how your plan from last year contributed towards the Council's 2019/20

2019/20 Performance Overview	End of Year Progress Status: Completed/Commenced/Other
• Carry out online survey of all staff with email or IT services	**Partial**
• Review and seek competitive renewals and replacement mobile services	**Complete**
• Review and seek competitive renewals and replacement Landline provision	**Complete**
• Review and seek competitive renewals and replacement for public health and infrastructure applications	**Complete**
• Review email Policy	**Complete**
• Maintain system resilience and recoverability	**Complete**
• Maintain up to date secure systems	**Complete**
• Promote and collect at least 2 data set	**Complete**
• Assist Services deploy more online services	**Ongoing**
• Covid Remote working preparations	**Ongoing unplanned**
• Maintained IT service with Budget	**Complete**

3

2.0   IMPROVING OUR SERVICE AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE - 2020/21

The following tables confirm the resources, financial and people, which the Service has access to throughout 2020-21 to deliver its actions, activities and core business.

2.1   Budget 2020/21

Service Budget Headings	£
Description	2020-21
GIS Salaries	£43,650.00
ICT Salaries	£201,604.00
Bus Train Transport	£100.00
Mileage Allowance	£3,400.00
Mileage Lump Sum	£2,500.00
Hospitality	£100.00
Photocopying Expend	£50,000.00
Printing - Cartridge	£12,000.00
Stationery Supplies	£73.00
Subscriptions	£250.00
Software Licences	£82,000.00
ICT Fees	£500.00
GIS Fees	£40,000.00
Telephone	£96,000.00
Mobile Communication	£28,600.00
Internet & Data Conn	£116,000.00
Computer - Supplies	£5,800.00
Computer Maintenance Software System Support	£449,320.00
Computer - Equipment	£3,000.00
Subsistence	£200.00
Gross Budget	£1,135,097.00
Income	(£3000.00)
Net Budget for 2020-21	**£1,132,097.00**

2.2   Staffing Complement - 2020/21

Staffing	No. of Staff
Head of Service	1
Officers	3
Technical Team	3
Total	**7**

Staff Structure
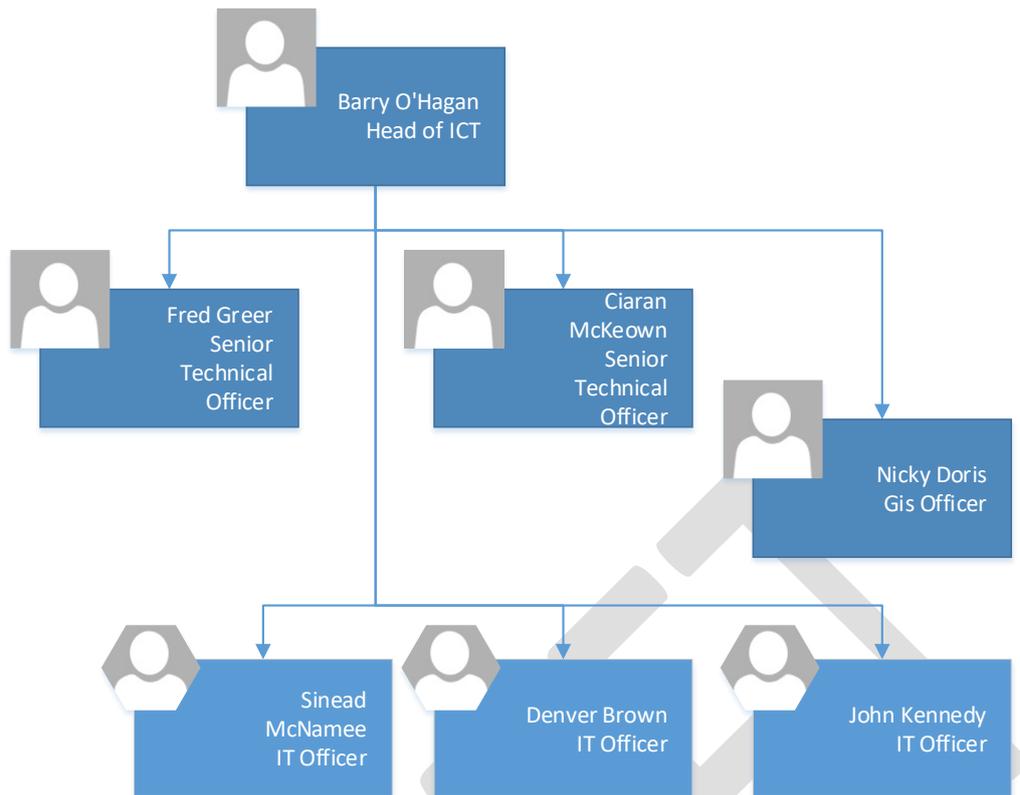
Contact details

Who	Title	Details
Barry O'Hagan	Head of IT	Barry.ohagan@midulstercouncil.org Ext.: 23312 Mobile: 07968740007
Fred Greer	Senior Technical Officer	Fred.greer@midulstercouncil.org Ext.:22010 Mobile: 07875566098
Ciaran Mckeown	Senior Technical Officer	Ciaran.mckeown@midulstercouncil.org Ext.:24322 Mobile: 07920186642
Nicky Doris	GIS Officer	Nicky.Doris@midulstercouncil.org Ext.: 22049 Mobile: 07587773620
Sinead McNamee	IT technical Support	Sinead.mcnamee@midulstercouncil.org Ext.: 23303 Mobile: 07714133676
John Kennedy	IT technical Support	John.kennedy@midulstercouncil.org Ext.: 24330 Mobile 07795045021
Denver brown	IT Technical Support	Denver.brown@midulstercouncil.org Ext.: 22004 Mobile 07795044844

The current staffing structure is currently under review given the increased project workload from the introduction of new software systems.

5

2.3   Service Work Plan - 2020/21

This plan confirms the core activities and actions, which will form your Service Work Plan for 2020-21. This is a high-level capture of the Service activities as well as some improvement undertakings which the service will focus on throughout 2020-21. The Plan links to the Council's new 2020-2024 Corporate Plan priorities, Annual Corporate Improvement Plan Objectives, Corporate Indicators and Mid Ulster Sustainable Community Plan themes &

SERVICE WORK PLAN 2020/21

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	To improve the accessibility of our services by increasing the number available online			
Link to Community Plan Theme:	**Align to Corporate Plan Theme**			
CMP 4.2 Health & Wellbeing - We have better availability to the right service, in the right place at the right time.	*Service Delivery: 2.1 We will improve services for our citizens through the development and delivery of an innovation agenda*			
What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):	**By When (Date?)**	**Lead Officers(s)**	**What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)**	**How Will we Know? (Measures)**
Encourage and assist services to deploy more online services. IT services will continue to assist in the implementation and development of online services	Ongoing	Service Heads	This will increase the number of accessible services, transaction and use of online services (information and transaction) providing a more current service	• The number of online services online • transactions online

What **Service Development/Improvement** will we undertake in 2020/21? (actions):	**By When (Date?)**	**Lead Officers(s)**	**What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)**	**How Will we Know? (Measures)**
We will seek to secure high quality, reliable high-speed connectivity in partnership with Full Fibre Northern Ireland Consortium. Ensuring the future proofing of our network connectivity requirements for a 20-30 year period through the installation of gigabit capable network services		**BOH,**	Increased network speeds allowing for increased productivity of all officers. Will offer a more reliable service, greater bandwidth, increase resilience and cost saving within IT cost centres. Site speeds.	• Development of a project working group IT/Capital Team/Finance/Legal /Communications/ Economic Development • Future cost savings • Increased reliability and speeds increased sites deployed and connected

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	To provide systems and support to maintain the confidentiality, integrity, availability of IT systems and information			
Link to Community Plan Theme:	**Align to Corporate Plan Theme**			
CMP 2.1 Infrastructure - We are better connected through appropriate infrastructure	*Service Delivery: 2.3 We will enhance our financial performance & strength, identifying opportunities to increase income & reduce deficits, as well as to leverage external funding*			

What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
To provide systems and support to maintain the confidentiality, availability of IT systems and information including: • Maintaining system resilience and recoverability as part of business continuity. • Security of our network	31/03/2021	CMK	Ensure that there is still a strong resilience of all our IT systems within the organisation and maintain backups as part of business continuity	• Complete and document 12 DR tests including tier 2 systems • Review tier 1 & 2 recover procedures • Test and document new infrastructure resilience and recovery
	31/03/2021	FG	Maintaining, updating and progressing the resilience our network security	• Develop Multi Factor Authentication • Increased security on hardware accessing corporate network • Increased port control • Review of physical environment and access controls • Increase in single sign on for new applications • Continuation of Vulnerability scanning and resolution of findings
	31/12/2020	FG, BOH	The introduction of newest generation technology offering greater throughput for higher connections as well as being better equipped for any threats on our network	• Physical replacement of the current firewall technology • Improved end user reports
To provide value for money for IT owned systems. We will review and seek competitive replacement of internal IT Infrastructure and relative support to meet the service needs of Mid Ulster District Council	31/03/2020 ongoing	BOH, FG	Better specified newer technology will ensure a better service to the organisation in relation to speed, resilience and business continuity	• New physical server and storage hardware • Virtual environments • Improved business continuity • Increased network reporting and analysis
To Provide critical project support during the replacement of ICT system including • HR System • Technology One	30/09/2020 30/09/2020	BOH, P&TO	Review of project roles with current resources Procure and replace planning Portal	• Review structure ref Project & Technical Officer requirements • Procurement of Planning System

	By When (Date?)		What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
• Planning System	June 2021		Assist In implementation of HR and Finance projects	• New system Implementation • HR and Finance projects progressed • Appointment of Officer
To improve the accessibility of our services by increasing the number external site integrated on to our internal Telephony system	31/03/2021 as resources allow	BOH	More external site will be added to internal telephony system with officers and staff searchable for direct line calling, an increased capability for the sites. offer increased business continuity with failover handled by nearby sites i.e. less down time.	• Additional sites and officers being added to internal phonebook • Installation of Voice gateway at new sites • Installation on new phones

What **Service Development/Improvement** will we undertake in 2020/21? (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
To provide value for money for IT owned support services and systems by reduceing the % of Black and White and Colour printing within the organisation by 10%	31/03/2021	CMK	A decrease in budgetary requirement for printing supplies within the organisation	• Development of a print policy • Introduction of further technological controls • Reduction of Printer Stock • Replacement of older expensive equipment (Budget required) • 10% Reduction of colour and mon print expenditure
Introduce, develop and deploy automatic software, updates and system deployments using system centre configuration manager (SCCM) and remote desktop tools for deployment and remote home working with laptops and other devices.	30/12/2020	SMN, JK, DB	Provide the remote management of our IT estate and application deployment. Reducing time required to build pc/laptops as well as reducing the physical time IT officers will attend any machine. Efficiency of updates and software deployment across IT estate	• New dedicated SCCM Server • Use of SCCM to deploy software and updates more efficiently • Quarterly report updates to HOS of estate health with satisfactory level of update compliance across IT asset estate • Remote control software procured & deployed

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	To assess property and asset management currently and investigate ways to centralise all information
Link to Community Plan Theme:	Align to Corporate Plan Theme

8

CMP 2.1 Infrastructure - We are better connected through appropriate infrastructure	Service Delivery: 2.4 We will develop & implement an Asset Management Plan for the Council and, with our partners, work to develop a public sector-wide Asset Management Plan for Mid Ulster.

What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
Continue to promote and develop the Collection of Business-related Asset data sets with the GIS platforms	30/12/2020	ND	Up to date asset data within the organisation offering greater accuracy for decisions	• Collection systems development • Construction of new data sets • Development of web mapping applications
Update and confederate GIS server and portal to create a self-service map and application centre	30/12/2020	ND	Self service centre will create a more efficient GIS service, allowing staff to self-generate map and applications	• Self-service of map creation via browser • Maps will be generated in council template • Self-generation of applications

What **Service Development/Improvement** will we undertake in 2020/21? (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
Report and document the current state of assets and property information within the GIS environment and work with stakeholders to research issues, resolve business process including spatial solution related to centralisation and upkeep of all property data.	31/03/2021	ND Property Legal Other Property Stakeholders	An up to date/current picture of the council's land and property data exposing potential gaps and outlining a way forward to improve current state Council will have an up to date Property portfolio, with system to manage and maintain it	• Report on the current state of data, issues relating to property asset management. • Agreement for stakeholder on a way forward • Formulate plan to manage and update the Council property portfolio processes going forward.

9

3.0   OUR STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

In carrying out our responsibilities, the Service is cognisant of the statutory duties placed upon the council in the delivery of its services. Whilst the Service operates, under various obligations it is however mindful of the changing context in which it operates and endeavours to mainstream the equality and rural needs duties in the design and delivery of our functions.

3.1   EQUALITY DUTY

The council and by consequence our Service is committed to contributing towards its part in working towards fulfilling obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to ensure adequate time, staff and resources to fulfil our duties.

The Service will also work towards adherence to the council's Equality Scheme ensuring equality duties, together with promoting positive attitudes towards persons with a disability and the participation of people with a disability in public life when carrying out our functions.

3.2   RURAL NEEDS DUTY

The Service will be mindful of the rural needs of its customers when carrying out its functions and subsequent responsibilities, particularly in developing any new policies, plans or strategies throughout the year. In line with the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 we will give due regard to rurality in terms of needs in carrying out the activities within our Service.

3.3   RISK MANAGEMENT OF SERVICE

The purpose of risk management is to manage the barriers which prevents the Council from achieving its objectives. This section of the service plan includes space for the Service to input their key risks (in summary form), which have been identified during the business planning process. The Council uses risk management to maximize opportunities and minimize risks. This improves its ability to deliver priorities and improve outcomes. This is why the Council deems it important to link business planning and risk management. Risk Management aims to:

- Help the Council achieve its overall aims and objectives
- Manage the significant risks the Council faces to an acceptable level
- Assist with the decision making process
- Implement the most effective measures to avoid, reduce and control those risks
- Balance risk with opportunity
- Manage risk and internal controls in the most effective way.

This table illustrates the risks identified to deliver the Services business in 2019-20.

Risk Ref Number	Description of Risk	Risk Rating	Mitigation Activity
1.	*Information security Incident affecting the availability or integrity or systems and Data*	*10*	*Suite of existing security internal controls, systems, firewall and antimalware applications to protect data and systems, regular system updates and hardware refresh*
2.	*Loss of Data*	9	*Policies and technical controls, Infrastructure with backup plans, testing, off site recovery and backup storage, recovery procedures tested regularly*
3.	*Loss of Staff*	8	*Diverse training and familiarisation of system, documentation*

Rating	Descriptor
16 - 25	Extreme Risk (immediate action required)
10 - 15	High Risk (urgent action required)
7 - 9	Moderate Risk (action required)
1 – 6	Low Risk (keep under review)