



10 June 2021

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee to be held in The Chamber, Dungannon and by virtual means Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon, BT71 6DT on Thursday, 10 June 2021 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

Adrian McCreesh
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

Matters for Decision

- | | | |
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| 4. | Response (draft) to Consultation on DAERA Disability Action Plan 2019-2024 | 3 - 10 |
| 5. | Council Policy on Accessible Communications (Reviewed) | 11 - 32 |
| 6. | NILGA Consultation on Local Government's Vision & Development 2021-2023 - Response (draft) | 33 - 48 |
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Matters for Information

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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

14. Staffing Matters for Decision
15. ICT Update Report June 2021
16. Members Allowances Update
17. Rate Support Grant Update
18. Economic Development Update - NIBSUP2 / 'Go For It' Programme
19. Estate and Asset Management

Matters for Information

20. Confidential Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 6 May 2021
21. Staff Matters for Information
22. Contracts and DAC

Report on	Response (draft) to Consultation on DAERA Disability Action Plan 2019-2024
Date of Meeting	10 June 2021
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	The purpose of this report is to provide and inform members of the draft response developed on behalf of Mid Ulster District Council in response to the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Disability Action Plan 2019-24.
2.0	Background
2.1	Members were given notification of this consultation at April 2021 Council meeting. It was subsequently agreed that a response be prepared on behalf of Council.
2.2	Details on the consultations and relevant documentation is accessible from the following: https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/daera/consultation-on-the-daera-disability-action-plan-2/consult_view/
2.3	The consultation will close on 4 th July 2021
3.0	Main Report
3.1	This consultation response provides broad support for the Department for Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs draft Disability Action Plan. The response has focused on encouraging accessibility and encouraged the development of Mid Ulster based projects.
3.2	The draft response is attached as appendix A.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: None

	Human: None
	Risk Management:
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: External response. Screening not required.
	Rural Needs Implications: External response. Impact Assessment not required.
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	It is recommended that Members consider and approve the draft response for submission to the Department for Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA)
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Appendix A: Draft Consultation Response Questionnaire: Consultation on DAERA Disability Action Plan 2019-24



**Department of Agriculture, Environment and
Rural Affairs (DAERA)
Disability Action Plan
(2019-2024)**

Consultation Response Questionnaire

**Responses must be received no later than midnight on
04 July 2021**

March 2021

BACKGROUND

Disability Action Plan

Under Section 49 (A) of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) is required when carrying out its functions to have due regard to the need to:

- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

Under Section 49(B) of the DDA 1995, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) is also required to submit to the Equality Commission a disability action plan showing how it proposes to fulfil these duties in relation to its functions.

The disability duties, like the duties under Section 75, adopt the mainstreaming approach and through equality screening tools the Department considers the effect of their policies, or likely impacts, and if there is an opportunity to better promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability or encourage their participation in public life.

Purpose

The attached questionnaire seeks your views on the draft DAERA Disability Action Plan.

Freedom of Information and GDPR

If you have indicated that you would be interested in contributing to this consultation then we might process your contact details to get in touch with you about your response.

We will process any other personal data provided in the responses for the purpose of informing the development of our policy, guidance or other regulatory work in the subject area of the request for views. In the case of consultations, we will publish a

summary of the consultation responses and, in some cases, the responses themselves but these will not contain any personal data.

The lawful basis we are relying on to process your personal data is article 6(1)(e) of the GDPR, which allows us to process personal data when this is necessary for the performance of our public tasks in our capacity as a regulator.

Before you submit your response, please read Appendix 1 about the effect of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 on the confidentiality of responses to public consultation exercises.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS

DRAFT DISABILITY ACTION PLAN

CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire can be completed by individual stakeholders, members of the public, or on behalf of a group or organisation.

Your Details

Name:	Ann McAleer
Job Title:	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer
Organisation:	Mid Ulster District Council
Address:	Circular Road, Dungannon,
	Co. Tyrone, BT71 6DT
Tel:	03000 132 132
E-mail:	ann.mcaleer@midulstercouncil.org

May we contact you should clarification be required on your response?

Yes

(delete as appropriate)

This Consultation Response Questionnaire has been provided to assist in the process or you may submit a response in any format. Responses should be returned by email to equality@daera-ni.gov.uk or by posting to:

EqualityUnit,
Staff Engagement, Equality & Diversity Branch
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
Ballykelly House
111 Ballykelly Road
Limavady
BT49 9HP

Responses must be received no later than midnight on
04 July 2021

Responses received after this date will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and with prior agreement from the Department.

Questions

1. **Do you broadly agree that the action measures in the Draft DAERA Disability Action Plan will have a positive impact?** Yes, but please also consider the comments set out below:

If not, please explain why not, and add any further comments.

Mid Ulster District Council welcome the opportunity to provide feedback in relation to the Department's Disability Action Plan. The Council agree that the actions contained within the Disability Action Plan are compliant with the Disability Duties and have the ability to have a positive impact of people with a disability.

However Mid Ulster District Council Elected Members have been made aware of significant challenges of people living in rural areas who use motorised scooters. They have referred to the nightmare of water, debris and large vehicles that both they and wheel chair users experience in the absence of appropriate pavements and walkways in rural areas. The inaccessibility of rural areas for people with a disability can also play a significant role in isolation and loneliness, which have been shown to have significant negative health impacts.

As such Mid Ulster District Council welcomes the action measure to create a DAERA Disability Forum and would encourage DAERA to seek members from the Mid Ulster District Council area and other largely rural based council areas. This will ensure that the groups benefits from the contribution of people with a disability with a lived experience of accessing services in a rural area.

The Council also welcomes that the Participation and Engagement section of the Disability Action Plan includes partnership working including with Councils and hopes that these plans are supported with the necessary time and resources to bring them to fruition. It is also encouraging that there will be a focus on increasing the number of students at CAFRE who have a disability. Council would be encouraged to see this increase reflected in the Loughry Campus in the upcoming academic years.

2. Do you have any other general comments on the draft DAERA Disability Action Plan?

Note: it would be helpful if commenting on specific items within the draft plan to refer to the particular Measure in question.

Mid Ulster District Council notes that the common theme, throughout the measures within the Department's Disability Action Plan, is enabling participation and contribution to public life from people who have a disability. However if people with disabilities are not supported practically in terms of access and inclusive services then participation becomes unlikely. As such Mid Ulster District Council would encourage the Department to ensure that physical and practical accessibility measures are considered as a mechanism to underpin this Disability Action Plan.

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING OUR QUESTIONNAIRE.

Report on	Council Policy on Accessible Communications (Reviewed)
Date of Meeting	Thursday 10 June 2021
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	The purpose of this report is to seek comment and approval for the Council's Policy on Accessible Communications. This policy was first considered and subsequently adopted by Council in January 2019 as an outworking of Council's Equality Action Plan 2015-2020.
1.2.	This policy has been revised as part of Council's policy review cycle.
2.0	Background
2.1	The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 prohibits the discrimination of disabled people and requires local authorities to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that services are accessible to everyone. This includes how Council communicates with people with a disability and all those wishing to access its services.
2.2	This policy has been reviewed and updated and as a result, now includes formalised direction and guidance in relation to translation and interpretation as well as updated guidance on PDFs on the Council's website.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	This policy was initially compiled following an Audit of Inequalities undertaken in 2014 as part of the development of the Council's Equality Action Plan. The audit identified that within the Council organisationally, <i>'there are opportunities within corporate practices to mainstream improve and equalities'</i> . The audit also identified that <i>'older people feel they cannot access Council facilities'</i> and that, <i>'residents from ethnic minority backgrounds feel a perceived inaccessibility to local democracy'</i> .
3.2	The development of the policy has allowed staff to more informed on the Council's legal obligation in relation to accessible communications. Feedback suggested that this is relevant for various Services, including those carrying out home visits and reception staff at various Council sites.

3.3	The updated policy further strengthens this position with the inclusion of guidance on new mechanisms such as Sign Video. Details on how to access are available on Council's website https://www.midulstercouncil.org/your-council/equality/sign-video
3.4	It allows people who are deaf to call our facilities and speak with members of staff via a remote sign language interpreter.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: There are no direct immediate costs associated with this policy. Under the legislation Council is already subject to financially incurring various types of alternative communication methods regardless of whether a formal policy is in place or not. Many requirements within the policy are free or cost very little e.g. altering size, colour contrast or text alignment.
	Human: Officer time.
	Risk Management:
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: An Equality Screening has been completed and identified a Minor Positive
	Rural Needs Implications: This policy was not influenced by rural needs therefore it was not deemed as proportionate to complete a RNIA.
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	It is recommended that the members consider, provide commentary as appropriate and approve the revised Policy on Accessible Communications.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix A - Accessible Communications Policy (revised draft)



Draft Accessible Communications Policy

Document Control			
Policy Owner	Ann McAleer		
Policy Author	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer		
Version	Draft 1 of Reviewed Policy		
Consultation	<div>Senior Management Team Yes</div> <div>Trade Unions Yes</div>		
Equality Screened by	CP&EO	Date	Jan 21
Equality Impact Assessment	N/A	Date	
Good Relations	N/A		
Approved By	P&R Committee	Date	Pending 10/6/2021
Adopted By	Council	Date	
Review Date	June 2025	By Whom	CPEO
Circulation	Councillors, Staff		
Document Linkages	Customer Service Policy		

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy has been developed to help to ensure that the Council has a clear and consistent approach to the provision of accessible information and communication support, including interpretation and translation.

2.0 Policy Aims & Objectives

- 2.1 **Policy Aim:** To ensure that Council information is presented in an accessible way, and where appropriate in a range of formats and languages which are tailored to the needs of the intended audience.

2.2 Policy Objectives:

- To promote inclusive communication to enable people with communication support needs to access information more effectively
- To ensure that the translation and interpretation needs for all of our people are met
- To increase awareness among Council staff or service users who have increased communication needs
- To mainstream the accessibility of information to help ensure that all service users have their communication needs met
- To establish good practice in order to benefit Council services in the future as well as now

3.0 Underpinning Legislation

- 3.1 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 prohibits discrimination and requires local authorities to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that services are accessible. This includes Council communications.
- 3.2 Sections 6.1 and 7.3 of this policy contains examples of alternatives formats and translations which are considered as examples of reasonable adjustments.

- 3.3 Since 2006, public authorities must also pay due regard to the need:
- To promote positive attitudes towards disabled people, and
 - To encourage participation by disabled people in public life.
- 3.4 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998) requires public authorities to have due regard to promote equality of opportunity across a number of grounds, including disability.
- 3.5 The Human Rights Act (1998) also makes human rights a part of local legislation and means that public authorities must respect, protect and uphold the rights of all service users.
- 3.6 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) provides specific human rights protections for persons with disabilities, including accessibility of information and communication. The Convention states that Persons with disabilities have the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health without discrimination on the basis of disability.
- 3.7 The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 builds on existing obligations to people who have a disability under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in Northern Ireland. Subject to regulation 7, public sector bodies must comply with the accessibility requirements included in these regulations.

4.0 Policy Scope

- 4.1 It is important that documents and information published by Mid Ulster District Council are accessible and inclusive. This includes documents and information authored and produced in-house and commissioned from external agencies. This ensures that information can be read or received and understood by as many people as possible. It reduces – but does not remove – the need for alternative formats to be produced. Therefore, this policy relates to all of the Council’s communications specifically:

- Written/printed communications
- Face-to-face communications
- Digital communications

4.2 Each of these areas are examined in turn to consider the varying communication needs of our service users:

Written/Printed Communications

4.3 If a document is initially designed using the core accessibility principles (see Appendix A for guidance), the information will already be accessible to a greater number of people and may reduce demand for alternative formats. Structured planning will also make best use of resources available and will reduce duplication of work across Council departments

4.4 Structured planning can be carried out by:

- Carrying out research and identifying the target audience at the commissioning stage
- Considering how to reach audience members by using a mix of channels and appropriate formats, considering any costs.

4.5 This information can be made available in alternative formats, such as easy read or large print, and in alternative languages on request. Please contact the Council's Corporate Policy & Equality Officer with your request. The Council's Accessible Communication Statement is included as Appendix D.

Face-to-Face Communications

4.6 This policy is compatible with processes in place across Mid Ulster District Council, such as the 'Just A Minute' Initiative. The Council's Equality Scheme also requires preparation work to take place in relation to all projects/plans and strategies. Within that context, the scope of this policy extends to considering the communication requirements of the audience at the planning stage of

projects/plans and strategies. This is necessary in order to ensure that everyone's communication needs are considered proactively and within the timeframe that is required by the Council's Equality Scheme. Appendix A sets out specific guidance for face to face communication.

Digital Communications

- 4.7 All electronic documents, including all documents published on Mid Ulster District Council's website or intranet should adhere to the accessibility guidance set out in Council's protocols for accessible communication (Appendix A).
- 4.8 The Council's websites must, by default, achieve a high level of accessibility and any specifications which commission web-based services, including those provided by 3rd party suppliers, must incorporate accessibility requirements at the planning stage.
- 4.9 Appendix C sets out specific guidance for accessible digital communications.
- 4.10 It is anticipated that the following groups are most likely to be directly impacted upon by the policy:
- People who are blind or have visual loss
 - People who are deaf or have hearing loss
 - People who are deafblind
 - People who have a learning disability
 - People who have limited or no English
- 4.11 The following groups may also be affected by the policy:
- People with aphasia
 - People with a mental health condition which affects their ability to communicate
 - People with dyslexia
 - People with autism
- 4.12 Please note that these categories may not represent all of the groups who may be affected by additional communication needs and requirements.

5.0 Linkage to Our Corporate Plan

- 5.1 Referring to Mid Ulster District Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2024, this policy contributes toward the delivery of Corporate Theme 2 (Service Delivery).

6.0 Submitting Requests for Alternative Formats

- 6.1 The Council shall consider all requests to provide communications in a range of alternative formats. Alternative formats can include documents being made available in large-print, on disk, on audiocassette and in Braille and in other languages upon request. Requests should be made to the Corporate Policy & Equality Officer.
- 6.2 Council Officers who receive the request should make the person submitting the request aware that there are waiting times in place for request for some types of translation services.
- 6.3 All Council staff must take responsibility for their own actions and how their communication methods may affect others. Staff should be flexible in the way they communicate and deliver services. Staff should always be mindful that different people will require different types of support to access Council services effectively.

7. Types of Translations and Interpretations

- 7.1 The Council shall consider all requests from individuals and/or their carer to provide the translation or interpretation services that they require. The customers preferred method of communication should be noted and where possible/appropriate their translation or interpretation services will be met.
- 7.2 The Council will provide the following types of translations and interpretation:
- Telephone Interpreting
 - Face to Face Language Interpreting
 - Written Language Translations for correspondence and corporate documentation
 - Sign Language

- 7.3 Details on each of the types of translations and interpretation are set out below:

Telephone Interpreting

Telephone interpreting gives staff and customers instant access to an interpreter. Mid Ulster Council has a telephone interpretation service available across all civic and leisure facilities. It can also be accessed from a mobile phone if necessary. A guide to using the Telephone Interpretation Service can be found at the reception area of the civic and leisure facilities.

Face to Face Interpreting

There will be occasions where it is more practical and helpful to use face to face interpretation. For example face to face interpretation can be more practical when dealing with complex issues or form filling and would be more appropriate than using Language Line.

It is important to note that a bilingual child should never be used as an interpreter. However, it is acceptable to use an adult friend or family member as an interpreter, where the client has requested this. However, the client must be made aware that an interpreting service is available. Ask approval from your Line Manager to use a face to face interpreter. Then contact the Corporate Policy & Equality who will book the interpreter. It is recommended to request an interpreter at least twelve working days prior to the appointment date. Please provide the information set out in Appendix X.

Translations

Council will provide translations for operational use e.g. letters to customers. Copies of all documents translated should be retained so that they are readily available for general use, and to avoid the same documents being repeatedly translated and paid for. Council's website functionality also allows the website to be translated into various languages (see Appendix F).

Sign Language

Northern Ireland recognises both British Sign Language (BSL) and Irish Sign Language (ISL). They are two very different and distinct languages and it is therefore very important to find out which type of interpreter is needed. It is estimated that there are around 4,300 BSL users and approximately 1,500 ISL users in Northern Ireland.

As demand for BSL/English and ISL/English interpreters often exceeds availability you should consider interpreters availability. Quite often interpreters are booked weeks in advance. Therefore before you set a date and time set for an appointment, you should contact the Corporate Policy and Equality Officer to book an interpreter. When requesting a Sign Language interpreter the information should be provided as per the request form in Appendix 19.

8.0 Roles and Responsibilities

- 8.1 **Chief Executive:** has ultimate authority with regard to the implementation of the Equality Scheme. This policy is an outworking of the Equality Scheme to ensure equality of opportunity in relation to how the Council provides accessible communication.
- 8.2 **Departments:** are responsible for; the day to day implementation of this policy and ensuring a high quality service is provided to all customers including people with additional communication requirements.
- 8.3 **Staff:** All Council staff must take responsibility for ensuring that how they are communicating with customers takes into account that different people will have different communication needs. Staff should also ensure that accessibility is considered at the beginning of the process.

9.0 Impact Assessment

9.1 Equality Screening & Impact

The policy has equality screened in accordance with the council's screening process. No impact was identified.

9.2 Staff & Financial Resources

No issues have been identified which would significantly impact on the council's resources and delivery of its business as a result of this policy being implemented. Many adjustments to make communications accessible can be completed with little or no cost attached.

Rural Needs Implications

- 9.3 This is an internal policy. A Rural Needs Impact Assessment is currently considered relevant to the policy's development or implementation .

10.0 Support and Advice

- 10.1 Advice and guidance on the implementation of this should be sought from the Corporate Policy & Equality Officer.

11.0 Communication

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

12.0 Monitoring and Review

- 12.1 Implementation of this policy will be monitored and a formal review undertaken 48 months from its effective date.

Appendix A- Protocols for Accessible Written/Printed Communications

Fonts

- Document text size should be a minimum of 12 point, preferably 14 point.
- Use Arial font. This is Council's agreed font for internally produced documents.
- Avoid italics, underlining, simulated handwriting, blocks of capitalised letters or anything styled.

Design and Layout

- Use a simple, clear and uncluttered design and layout.
- All body text should be left aligned. Avoid aligning text or to the right or justifying text.
- All text should be the same orientation on the page.
- Use bold sparingly, only highlight a few words rather than a paragraph.
- Leading (space between lines) should not be too cramped, preferably 1.5-line spacing.
- Text should never be placed over an image or fitted around an image.
- The contrast between the text and background should be as high as possible.
- Space between columns of text should be large enough to be distinct.
- Colour text/fonts should not be used.
- Do not use abbreviation or acronyms.
- Keep your words, sentences and paragraphs short and simple.
- Use page numbers and headings consistently.

Images:

- Images can help communicate messages and support understanding.
- Make sure images are as big and as clear as possible.
- Text should never be placed over an image or fitted around an image.
- Images in colour are preferable.
- Authentic photographs of real people or places are preferable.
- Put a clear picture next to accompanying text.

Appendix B- Guidance for Face to Face Communication

- Make sure you have the person's attention before trying to communicate with them.
- Identify yourself clearly. Say who you are and what you do – it may be more relevant to explain your reason for seeing the person rather than your job title.
- Check that you are in the best position to communicate, usually this will be facing the person, but consider whether seated or standing is more appropriate. Communication at eye level is usually easiest so if you are speaking to a wheelchair user consider sitting down if possible.
- Find a suitable place to talk, with good lighting and away from noise and distractions.
- Speak clearly but do not shout.
- Keep your face and lips visible – do not cover your mouth with clothing, a hand or your hair. If a member of staff is concerned about religious expression they should discuss this with their manager in advance.
- Use gestures and facial expressions to support what you are saying.
- If necessary, repeat phrases, re-phrase the sentence or use simpler words or phrases.
- Use plain, direct language and avoid using figures of speech
- Check if the person has understood what you are saying. Look for visual clues as well as asking if they have understood.
- Encourage people to ask questions or request further information. Ask if they would like anything in writing as a reminder or reference.
- Try different ways of getting your point across. For example, writing things down, drawing or using symbols or objects to support your point.
- Keep messages short, clear and to the point.
- Provide a pen and paper to enable the person to write or draw key points themselves.
- Try to keep communication and documents consistent, as repetition will support effective communication.
- Recap the key points at the end of the conversation.

Appendix C- Guidance for Digital Communication

- Writing for digital channels should, where applicable, meet the same standards as writing for print.
- Photographs and video content should, where possible, be captioned.
- Appropriate measures should be taken to assist accessibility and screen reading technology, including the use of alt text tags for images, meaningful hyperlinks (avoid hyperlinking phrases such as 'click here') and camel case (capitalisation) in hashtags where more than 1 word is used.
- **Documents for Download**
 - Traditionally documents for download have been made available as PDFs. However, information published in a PDF is harder to find, use and maintain and do not work well with assistive technologies like screen readers. This means that unless they are created with sufficient care, PDFs often fail to meet accessibility standards.
 - The Council's approach to managing this aspect of accessibility is to minimise the use of PDFs and to publish them only where:
 - there is a requirement to do so (for example, to meet a statutory obligation)
 - and*
 - where the PDF has been checked and meets accessibility standards.
 - As we cannot stand over PDFs produced by external organisations, rather than hosting them directly on our websites, we will instead, where appropriate, link out to the external organisation's website.
 - If there is a requirement for the Council to host directly a PDF produced by an external organisation, we will ask the organisation to provide the PDF in an accessible format.
 - Often information contained in a PDF can simply be presented on a webpage, negating the need for a download.
 - Where a document will be required to download as a PDF, the rule is to keep your original document (most often produced in word or excel) as simple as possible:

- Avoid all-caps text, italics and underlining.
- Make sure text is left-aligned and not justified.
- Keep the layout simple. Continuous text is best.
- Only use tables for data (not for headings or to distinguish one block of text from another) and keep the number of rows and columns equal (that is, avoid splitting or merging cells).
- Don't use graphics, images or charts unless necessary
- Never use an image which contains text.
- If you need to use an image or a chart, you must describe it using 'alternative text (alt text) which is essentially a text alternative to non-text content.
- Do not use bold to mark up subheadings. Use styles to create a hierarchy of headings: 'heading 1', 'heading 2' and so on.

You can find comprehensive advice via [gov.uk – publishing accessible documents](#).

Appendix D- Accessible Communication Statement

All Mid Ulster District Council publications should include the 'accessible communication statement' in a prominent position, as follows:

'This information can be made available in alternative formats, such as audio, braille, easy read or large print and may be provided in alternative languages, upon request. Please contact Mid Ulster District Council's Corporate Policy & Equality Officer on 03000 132 132 Ex 24612 or via ann.mcaleer@midulstercouncil.org'

The statement should be in no less than 12 point, in an obvious place, such as on the front cover page. For longer documents, it would be appropriate to duplicate the statement on the back cover as well as at the beginning.

Appendix E: Face to Face Interpreter

Name and contact number of the member of staff requesting the service:

Language required:

Is the preference for the interpreter be male or female:

Date/time/location of the booking:

Approx length of booking:

Brief details about the purpose of the interview:

Appendix F: Requesting a Translation

Name and contact number of the member of staff requesting the service:

Language required:

Should the interpreter be male or female:

Date/time/location of the booking:

Approx length of interview:

Brief details about the purpose of the translation:

Appendix G: Sign Language Interpreters

Name and contact number of the member of staff requesting the service:

Sign Language required (BSL* or ISL):

Should the interpreter be male or female:

Date/time/location of interview (remember the recommended minimum notice for booking an interpreter is 2 – 4 weeks)

Approx length of interview:

Brief details about the purpose of the interview:

(*British Sign Language or Irish Signage Language)

Appendix H: Telephone Translation

The process to receive telephone interpretation is set out below for staff member:

1. Dial Language Line using the usual number. Use your usual Access Code (the Access Code is available from reception staff).
2. Request the language required and wait to be connected to an interpreter as usual.
3. Once the interpreter is connected, let them know that you would like to make a dial-out.
4. Give the interpreter the persons phone number and brief the interpreter on what you would like them to say once the patient answers their phone.
5. The interpreter will make the call and ensure that all parties are connected.
6. The interpreter will carry-out the introduction and you can conduct your conversation using translation interpretation.

Report on	NILGA Consultation on Local Government's Vision & Development 2021-2023 - Response (draft)
Date of Meeting	Thursday 10 th June, 2021
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	The purpose of this report is to provide members with correspondence from the Northern Ireland Local Government Association on its consultation on Local Government's Vision & Development. A draft response on same has been developed and contained for member consideration.
2.0	Background
2.1	The Northern Ireland Local Government Association has developed a draft <i>Vision & Development of Local Government (2021-2023)</i> , details on which have been sent to the Council Chief Executive for formal feedback.
2.2	Correspondence received is attached as Appendix A to this report and confirms that the consultation will prioritise a series of actions on evidence based lobbying, co-ordination across councils and communications in the lead up to the Northern Ireland Assembly and Council elections in 2022 and 2023. All Councils have received the documentation for consideration.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	This consultation response provides broad support to the Draft Vision and Development Framework. The response has focused on cross council collaboration, providing comment on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The suitability of the Vision Statement as presented 2. The suitability of the 5 main themes identified as presented 3. The suitability of each of the 11 actions listed
3.2	A draft response on each of the above is accessible from appendix B to this report.

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: External response. Screening not required.
	Rural Needs Implications: External response. Impact Assessment not required.
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	It is recommended that Council approve the draft response for submission to NILGA on its policy document - Vision & Development of Local Government 2021-2023
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Appendix A Correspondence from Mr D McCallan, Chief Executive, NILGA Appendix B: Response (draft) to NILGA Consultation on Local Government's Vision & Development

Mr Adrian McCreesh
Chief Executive
Mid Ulster District Council
Council Offices
Circular Road
DUNGANNON
BT71 6DT

18th May 2021

Dear Adrian,

**11 Council policy consultation - Vision & Development of Local Government (Phase One)
2021 - 2023**

I attach for Council formal feedback a copy of NILGA's consultation paper regarding a Vision and Development framework for local government in N. Ireland. The outcome of this policy consultation will prioritise a series of integrated, evidence-based lobbying, co-ordinating and communication actions, in the run up to Stormont and Council elections scheduled in 2022 and 2023, respectively.

It flows from existing, all council, policy work by members and officers, on reform, devolution, and improvement of local government and reflects learning from our local response to the global pandemic and other major national / international strategic changes affecting local councils and citizens.

I look forward very much to Council's written response, on or before 9th July 2021.

Many thanks in anticipation.

Kind regards,



Derek McCallan
Chief Executive

Developing Local Government 2021-2023



**Councils
Make It
Happen**



#councilsmakeithappen



A. Local Government's Vision & Development – A Framework to the 2023 Election – Council Consultation.

Emerging from the pandemic is a time for **reflection, action and new vision**.

Strong local government, investing in local people and places, with 11 councils empowered, skilled and resourced, delivering high-quality leadership, services and representation for the whole community, working in innovative, accountable partnership.

NILGA sees this vision for local government as key to a better democracy and improved public services across NI.

Reflecting on the role of councils, at the height of a world pandemic, local government delivered everything required of it, and more besides. All councils did so efficiently and effectively, tailoring their decisions and **actions** to local need. Over £130 million in service and other Covid related income deficits placed already fragile finances on red alert. Dynamic partnership, within councils and between councils, in the latter instance co-ordinated by NILGA and SOLACE on an emergency footing throughout 2020/21, through to today, has led to the recovery of much of this deficit from the NI Executive and Treasury, new investment for 2021/22 to keep councils sustainable, and a new impetus to re-model how councils are funded, to mitigate against red alerts of any type ever again.

Prudent rates struck by all councils for 2021/22 reflect the deficit recovery funding and the efficiencies deployed to minimise ratepayer impact and maximise essential service delivery. Understanding the roles and responsibilities, together with the potential within local government, was stepped up as part of evidence lobbying and negotiation. “Councils Make it Happen” visually illustrates the community and collective value of local government in Northern Ireland and this NILGA campaign continues well into recovery and 2021.

However, as council members and officers know, there is no time to waste. Councils, NILGA and SOLACE will continue the strategic push for more resources, locally designed and applied by local government, on matters like the Shared Prosperity and Levelling Up Funds – multi-million, multi-annual investment designed to replace EU funds which councils spent wisely in their communities. Similarly, regeneration powers and resources must come equally and fully to all councils. The Councillor Code of Conduct has outlived its original design back in 2015. Experience has taught everyone – particularly today’s councillors - that we cannot offer this Code to new elected members without major revisions. New ways of working with central government must be ramped up, with councils protected legislatively for any new burdens coming to them, and with members and officers alike gaining new skills, learning and development to keep pace with technological change and a **modern Programme for Government** (PfG) that has locality-based budgets at its policy centre, and which recognises Community and Local Development Planning as being key to its delivery – fuelling engines of local economic development, environmental custody and social

cohesion. We have neither the budget nor the wish to outsource the future of local government to consultants. We want to tap into the excellence and commitment that is within.

This **two-year framework** takes us to the Council Elections of 2023. NILGA seeks high level feedback and input from each Council in regard to finalising and fulfilling this Vision, the actions and their development. Feedback from the 11 councils will lead to the development of a series of regional actions, applied and agreed locally, by each sovereign council. As part of it, NILGA's governance, resources and products will be aligned to ensure that all member councils and strategic partners, working within and alongside the Association, do so in an explicitly joined up manner on matters which strengthen local government.

Collaboration works. Other regional bodies (like SOLACE and the Local Government Training Group) and council services (like waste management, local development, community and emergency planning) will benefit from innovation and improvements. **Local government is changing. This framework and consultation seeks to ensure that councils are the change makers rather than having changes imposed on them by other institutions and /or events.**

The framework has been drawn from substantial engagement and work across councils pre and during pandemic, by NILGA and others, including the corporate responses to formal consultation on devolution and the future roles and resources of local government in the Programme for Government. It provides a platform for the necessary evolution of councils as we enter a totally new economic, health and public service landscape here and around the world. It offers self-determination and enables the sector's development, and whilst focussing on councils themselves it will materially assist in making the case for stronger local government to the devolved Assembly and nationally, together with other key strategic partners across business and the community.

The framework will underpin and influence NILGA's Corporate (Electoral Term) Plan to June 2023 and its annual work plan for & with councils but also looks ahead, beyond the two-year core period, in terms of forecast activity, to assist the Association and the wider sector to *better plan and to be more sustainable*. It provides explanatory context and suggested delivery detail, abridged into five themes and three main emphases.

5 Key Themes Identified:

1. Council sustainability & improvement (e.g., devolution, training, capacity, ethics)
2. Climate Action (e.g., waste/ circular economy, LGCAN, clean air, COP26 outcomes)
3. Community & Economic Development (e.g., anti-poverty, new economy, recovery, skills, digital connectivity & regeneration)
4. Wellbeing and Community Planning (e.g., changing demographics, mental health, biodiversity, Comm Planning review)
5. Planning and infrastructure (e.g., legislation review, LDPs, Planning Training & Conduct, Roads, NI water, green infrastructure)

Councils, NILGA and SOLACE, including through the NI Partnership Panel and the Association's Policy & Learning Networks, are pinpointed as being the primary means to achieve both the vision and the actions associated with it.

It must be stressed that this framework is by necessity dynamic, complementary and propositional, not analytical, duplicative nor rigid. It offers local government the chance to look ahead, self-direct and improve, with a strong vision to be developed locally by each council and regionally through NILGA & SOLACE.

Noting the five themes above, delivering actions across them will be important. Three categories for action are offered for discussion below:

A. Corporate Relations, Performance & Sustainability

Corporate relations are of course owned by the 11 sovereign councils, NILGA and SOLACE. The sector has many corporate partners locally, regionally, nationally and internationally who, in the new landscape post pandemic, should materially assist local government whether in terms of skills development, new investment opportunities, legislative / policy guidance, best practice in service delivery, and more. NILGA has appointed eleven Strategic Partners that work closely and accountably with the Association to help develop and inform practical and policy ideas for strengthening local government in Northern Ireland.

Actions for consideration:

- (i) Accountable strategic partnerships outside of political and government centres enable community, business, social, environmental and improvement experience to be brought to bear when making decisions, defining policy and advocating positive change. These partners will be scoped out and assessed to ensure they add real value & impact to the Association and to councils. In turn, the assessment will result in new partners and post pandemic policy, investment, capacity and sustainability opportunities for local government – from July 2021. List of existing strategic partners attached per Appendix I
- (ii) A new constitution for NILGA considering Membership, Executive and Networks for AGM 2021 and developed thereafter with councils
- (iii) NILGA Policy & Learning Networks work plus other regional, and sub regional member – officer groupings should be fully scoped to hone added value / impact – from Aug 2021
- (iv) NILGA – SOLACE Protocol & Workplan contemporised & refined by end November 2021.

B. Strategic Policy & Governance

NILGA is constituted to drive in partnership the development of strategic policy and forward planning for the sector and suggests a focus on a small number of key actions, working collaboratively, resulting in more effective policy, legislation and resources for the 11 local councils.

Actions for consideration:

- (i)** An effective Partnership Panel materially linked to the Programme for Government, other strategic member – officer groupings, formally reviewed by end November 2021 (with the Department for Communities) and lobbying central government in respect of performance led evidence-based devolution and sustainable council finances with practical benefits to services, citizens and governance, from July 2021
- (ii)** Research to consider merits of a new Public Affairs Service, to include an evaluation of alternatively available services – designed to provide scanning & reporting of Assembly & Parliamentary committees & questions alongside liaison with MLAs and MPs individually and on a party basis to improve policy & legislation input by / affecting local government & local areas – by end October 2021
- (iii)** Research to consider merits of a strengthened Shared Policy Unit to inform and be informed by our sector: development of capacity and capability – existing (NILGA – Councils) service, cost benefit analysis to strengthen, structure, strategic partners involved, research and application of best international practice, better gathering and use of local data and evidence options by end October 2021 and establish thereafter if appropriate.

C. Improvement & Investment

NILGA will develop and refine its own partnerships ensuring clear, added value, to strengthen links across the public, private & voluntary sector and to offer opportunities for local government to innovate, improve performance and enhance its services, knowledge, skills & expertise. Apart from within NI, we will partner with UK, Irish and other local government associations to (evidence-based) lobby on policy & financial matters which have the potential to affect the local government sector positively or negatively.

As we move through a precarious period for public sector finances, alongside the ending of EU funding and the construct of replacement investments, we will ensure the local government sector is adequately resourced and new models of resourcing including rates re-modelling, are developed, so that councils can continue to deliver for communities.

Actions for consideration:

- (i) Progress to be made on sector improvement and data/evidence provision – owning our own information. Research required – including a comparative exercise with other jurisdictions, by end December 2021, to consider merits of a Service Improvement Hub (if all council desired / owned) and Data Centre (inc. virtual library) by June 2022
- (ii) Progress of shared services & embedding innovation at the heart of local government. This has the potential to generate substantial efficiency savings and revenue generation if the sector takes risks and challenges itself. To do this NILGA – in partnership with all councils - will scope the following actions:
 - The delivery of action research – in partnership with SOLACE & councils - on shared services, transformation & improvement to identify what local government requires and can develop, from September 2021 and to align with and adapt *existing* models of improvement.
 - Research to be completed during 2021 on an Innovation by Councils Programme, to scope the potential for innovation and technology to propel local government, identify & learn from best practice and aligned to outcomes of LGTG review and to NILGA's Regional Learning & Development Programme, so as to identify and apply innovative practice in local government, reporting in January 2022.
 - Consider partnership with an organisation(s) to promote & deliver an incentivised “Innovation Challenge” for local government senior practitioners from October 2021
- (iii) Sustainable Funding for Local Government: as councils are place shapers, additional investment in local government brings direct benefit for local communities. We will work to ensure that services and funds that can be best delivered by local government are entrusted to local government and that councils' values are better understood by the rest of government, utilising the Task and Finish Group on Sustainable Councils Finances and reporting in October 2021
- (iv) Digital Technology for members, officers and service improvement: Investigate opportunities for NILGA / SOLACE and other regional bodies to drive and / or promote new offerings for the sector. This could include (research in 2021):
 - Increased digital delivery of regional representation, co-ordination and services, to include webinars, policy led training / learning within the Regional Elected Member Development Group and courses
 - Retention of non-digital regional representation, co-ordination and services if it is best to do so, including Conferences and interactive policy development across councils
 - Consideration of the merits of a subscription-based statistics service via the Data Centre for local government and other interested parties to provide dynamic up to date data and evidence required for decision making.

B. Getting It Done in Good Time & Measuring Success

Consultation with Councils will subsequently be collated, referred to all councils and a timeline and measurement tool developed.

Measuring success post-finalisation will very much depend on this being clearly communicated, largely kept to time and outcomes being positively recognised by member councils / partners.

To this end, NILGA & SOLACE will establish a regional and all council inclusive means to assess feedback, and design & manage the framework, with formal results against targets reports provided to the NILGA Executive / SOLACE and onward to councils on a twice-yearly basis in April and September, from 2022.

All work will be completed within existing budgets unless a Business Case for any additional service or personnel is provided within the NILGA – SOLACE protocol.

Good communication in relation to this development framework and its roll out will be vital – across NILGA, SOLACE & councils. Existing communications e.g., for the “Councils Make it Happen” campaign will be utilised and NILGA & SOLACE networks & Council Standing Committees will be formally communicated with to ensure scrutiny.

C. Practical Next Steps

Approval of the Consultation Framework by both NILGA & SOLACE by 20th May 2021, dissemination to councils, as an emerging regional programme, for comment by 9th July 2021.



D. Appendix I – Strategic Policy Partners

See <https://www.nilga.org/about/nilga-strategic-partners> for more detail, but these are:

Association of Public Services Excellence, Centre for Effective Services, Centre for Local Economic Strategies, Development Trusts NI, Enterprise NI, Federation of Small Businesses, Inner City Trust, Strategic Investment Board, Stratagem, Sustainable NI and Social Enterprise NI.

E. Appendix II – Glossary of Terms

Service Improvement Hub – supporting, promoting and improving local government

- Wholly local-government owned and driven.
- Using peer support - experienced councillors and senior officers from across the UK, who support and challenge councils to improve themselves
- Enabling councils to share good practice, with good ideas shared on the NILGA website.
- Elected member development programmes helping councillors become better leaders.
- Promoting the development of local government's management and workforce?
- Advising councils on improving customer service and value for money.
- Helping councils to tackle difficult challenges.

Public Affairs Service

- Supporting councils as they manage an ever-growing number and variety of responsibilities.
- Informing the NILGA membership of parliamentary and Assembly activity, and political monitoring.
- Developing relationships with MLAs, MPs and parties to influence Assembly & Parliamentary policy & legislation
- Providing support for campaigns

Data and Evidence Centre

Councils possess large amounts of data covering every aspect of their daily activities. This resource is valuable and provides an opportunity for transformative change through effective use in decision making. Transforming data to knowledge with the help of analytics can provide councils with additional information which can help to design better policies and improve business operations.

- A trusted source of information on local government, working closely with NISRA and F&H Education Institutions.
- Aiming to be the NI local government's centre of choice for data and research.
- Acting as a 'hub' of knowledge about and for NI councils, reaching beyond into a wider network of experts, organisations and innovators.
- Developing high impact good practice models and concepts.
- Providing a 'virtual library' of information about and for local government in Northern Ireland

Shared Policy Unit
<p>A wholly local government owned and driven shared unit that would</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deal with long-term, cross-cutting issues; • develop and co-ordinate regional policy for the sector; • create a flexible pool of ‘experts’ who can be deployed quickly on developing issues – utilising the knowledge and experience of the officer groups; • enable council officers to co-locate and work with NILGA staff on an ad-hoc basis • be supported by SOLACE and the NILGA Executive Committee – working at a senior level to scrutinise policy centrally, and link to government.
Innovation Working Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harnessing the power of innovation to accelerate progress towards achieving the vision, aims and objectives of local government • Initiating, catalysing and enabling the scaling of innovations across the 11 councils – in technological, social, financial, policy and service delivery areas. • Showing leadership in supporting collaborative efforts among councils and their partners. • Membership drawn from council officers, with strategic advisors. Reporting to NILGA Executive & SOLACE.
Research and Advisory Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligned to the Service Improvement Hub, Data centre and Shared Policy Unit; • Providing an agile proactive and responsive policy research and advisory service on key regional issues, to ensure the policy positions taken by the sector are contemporary, evidence-based and credible.

F. Response by Council

A corporate response by Council is strongly sought, ideally by Friday, 9th July 2021, with high level consideration of

(i) The suitability or otherwise of the Vision Statement

(ii) The suitability or otherwise of the 5 main themes identified

(iii) The suitability or otherwise of each of the 11 actions listed

(iv) Comment by the Council in regard to its own ideas and suggested actions on how the local government sector can be strengthened in a post pandemic environment in the run up to the Local Council elections scheduled for May 2023.

Please send Council’s submission to s.little@nilga.org for the attention of NILGA’s Chief Executive. Thank you for your comments and your committed partnership within the local government sector.

Appendix B – Response (draft)

xx June 2021

Mr Derek McCallan
Chief Executive
NILGA
Bradford Court
Upper Galwally
CASTLEREAGH BT8 6RB

Dear Mr McCallan

Re: Local Government's Vision & Development – A Framework to the 2023 Election-Council Consultation

Mid Ulster District Council would like to take this opportunity to put forward its views and opinions on NILGA's consultation paper on; Local Government's Vision & Development a Development framework for local government in Northern Ireland.

The Council has reviewed the following areas and provides commentary, with specific reference to;

1. The suitability or otherwise of the Vision Statement;
2. The suitability or otherwise of the 5 main themes identified
3. The suitability or otherwise of each of the 11 actions listed

1. The Suitability or Otherwise of the Vision Statement

The Council supports the suitability of the Vision Statement of this framework. Leadership, representation and innovation are key roles for local Councils and this vision statement reflects this.

2. The Suitability or Otherwise of the 5 Main Themes Identified

Council broadly agrees with the five main themes as identified below:

- Council sustainability & improvement

- Climate Action
- Community & Economic Development
- Wellbeing and Community Planning
- Planning and infrastructure

The Council also endorses themes as set out in the document and recognises that within these themes there is the potential for bringing about improved public services across NI. Mid Ulster District Council welcomes that these improvements are suggested within the context of improved and sustainable funding for local Councils. The Council also supports the rolling out of integrated, evidence-based lobbying. Primarily as a result of the proposed legislative protection and financial security, the proposed vision provides the potential for Councils to put long term and effective planning in place. This type of security is something that has been badly lacking for Councils in the recent past, including pre-pandemic and thus has impeded Councils work.

A number of these themes are areas of service delivery which are still becoming embedded into Councils, since their introduction in 2015. Therefore, these are areas of Council service delivery that would benefit from shared policy ideas and policy implementation initiatives. Also, the Planning and infrastructure theme would also build upon the work of the Local Development Plans. However, the related actions and outcomes for these themes should be realistic and deliverable in the short to medium term.

3. The Suitability or Otherwise of Each of the 11 Actions Listed

A. Corporate Relations, Performance & Sustainability

1. Accountable strategic partnerships
2. A new constitution for NILGA
3. NILGA Policy & Learning Networks
4. NILGA – SOLACE Protocol & Work-plan contemporised

Mid Ulster District Council comments: The Council is content with the four actions listed in relation to Corporate Relations, Performance & Sustainability. These actions will enable elected members and officers to gain new skills and work collaboratively.

B. Strategic Policy & Governance

1. An effective Partnership Panel
2. Research to consider merits of a new Public Affairs Service
3. Research to consider merits of a strengthened Shared Policy Unit

Mid Ulster District Council comments: The Council is content with the actions listed in relation to Strategic Policy and Governance. This type of effective and cohesive joined up working in relation to policy development could produce effective and streamlined policy making and service delivery which could also be enhanced by the Partnership Panel, as referenced. The proposed creation of a Shared Policy Unit could also ensure that the commonalities amongst Councils can be explored where common themes and issues can be considered from a broader scope.

C. Improvement & Investment

1. Progress to be made on sector improvement and data/evidence provision
2. Progress of shared services & embedding innovation at the heart of local government
3. Sustainable Funding for Local Government
4. Digital Technology for members, officers and service improvement

Mid Ulster District Council comments: The Council is broadly supportive of the actions listed in relation to Improvement & Investment. Council is represented along with the other 10 Councils on the Regional Performance Improvement Working Group (LGPIWG). The group consists of Council Officers with performance improvement and performance management responsibilities and is chaired by a representative of SOLACE. The group are currently working collegiately with representatives of Executive Departments and the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO), with regard to current compliance with part 12 of the Local Government Act 2014 (the Act) and with a view to, in the medium term, engaging in the Executives review of the Act and thereby the Departments associated Guidance (currently

Department for Communities - Circular LG 21/2016 Guidance for performance improvement 2016 onwards).

Prior to the coronavirus pandemic (February 2020) a sub group of the LGPIWG had met and developed a draft plan regarding performance mapping with a view to providing SMART activity, or a way forward regarding the development of a Regional Performance/Benchmarking framework for local government, considered by SOLACE. Therefore it would be of benefit for representatives from NILGA and the LGPIWG to work collegiately regarding NILGA's Section B (1) – i.e. moving forward. Consideration should be given to develop a co-authored approach regarding potential SMART activity around a service improvement hub/data centre.

Mid Ulster District Council believes the action detailed in this framework are suitable, however the Council would recommend that the following elements are in place in order to underpin the actions included in this visionary framework. These include:

- Identifying that a consensus exists between all Councils in order to take the suggested plans forward and ensure that there is a complete willingness to share relevant information
- Ensure full collaboration between Councils is identified via actions that deliver a practical way in order to deliver progress in a tangible way that is clear for ratepayers to see
- Demonstrate clear linkages with Community Planning initiatives and Local Development Plan

Mid Ulster District Council agrees that local government has significant potential for enhancement, however the circumstances for this to happen successfully would need to be examined closely and be part of an agreed long-term process in order to yield effective and tangible results.

Yours sincerely

Report on	Elected Member Development Working Group
Date of Meeting	10 June 2021
Reporting Officer	Philip Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
Contact Officer	Eileen 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	To receive and consider the report of a meeting of the Elected Member Development Working Group held on 17 May 2021
2.0	Background
2.1	The Council through the Elected Member Development Steering Group has now attained Level 1 Charter Status for Elected Member Development and completed a successful Review process.
2.2	The steering group Terms of Reference confirms that the business of the Working Group be reported through Policy & Resources Committee.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>The Report of the most recent meeting of the Elected Member Development Steering Group is attached, as Appendix A to this report for consideration and approval. The following issues have resulted from discussion at the March meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The training programme in line with needs reflected in Member Personal Development Plans (PDPs) be amended and progressed as outlined in the report of the Working Group detailed at appendix A; • A Team Building day for Elected Members be explored in line with Covid Restrictions easing.
3.2	NILGA's Regional Development Manager conducted a review of the Member Development Charter Award on Wednesday 26 May 2021. Council was represented by the Chair of the Elected Member Development Working Group, Cllr McKinney, Head of Democratic Services and the Member Support Officer. The outcome of the review was that Council is successfully reaching the standard required and will continue now to the full review process. A copy of the letter received from NILGA is detailed at Appendix B.

3.3	It was noted at the Working Group meeting that over the past months that Councillors Burton, Doris, Glasgow, Graham had completed NILGA Leadership Development Accredited Course and Councillor Brown had completed the NILGA Local Planning Programme Accredited Course.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: not applicable at this point
	Human: Not applicable
	Risk Management: Not applicable
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: Not applicable
	Rural Needs Implications: Not applicable
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	The committee consider and approves the report of the Elected Member Development Steering Group meeting, and actions contained, held on Monday 17 May 2021
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix A: Report of Elected Member Development Steering Group Appendix B Letter received from Chief Executive of NILGA Charter Status Review

Report of Elected Member Development Steering Group of Mid Ulster District Council held on 17 May 2021 via Zoom

Attendees **Members:** Councillors Doris, Elattar, Forde, Mallaghan, McKinney

Officers: P Moffett Head of Democratic Services, E Forde, Member Support Officer, S McAleer Corporate L&D Manager

Apologies Cllrs Ashton, Buchannon

AGENDA	MATTERS AGREED	ACTIONS & RESPONSIBILITY				
1.0	Chair’s Business					
	The Chair, Councillor McKinney commended Councillors Burton, Doris, Glasgow, Graham who had completed NILGA Leadership Development Accredited Course and Councillor Brown who completed the NILGA Local Planning Programme Accredited Course					
2.0	Training Update					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Member Support Officer provided update on training highlighting forthcoming opportunities on MS Teams/Zoom and Core HR;Noted that Evaluation Sheets need to be completed and Members encouraged to complete and forward at time of training.	EMDWG Members Member Support Officer				
3.0	Future Training Agreed					
	<table><tr><td>TRAINING</td><td>Time Frame</td></tr><tr><td>Suicide Awareness</td><td></td></tr></table>	TRAINING	Time Frame	Suicide Awareness		Member Support Officer Corporate L&D Manager
TRAINING	Time Frame					
Suicide Awareness						

		Counselling and dealing with tragedies PIPS to offer one hour session Focus Agreed: dealing with constituents – listening to them, signposting them & also being aware of your own mental health – increased people contacting you, dealing with issues, your own lock down, different way of working	To be planned June 2021	
		Register of Interest – Prepare Sample Form – In house	June 2021	
		Chairing & Facilitation - Opt for training which combines Chairing & Facilitation in line with Standing Orders	June 2021	
		Self Defence	Defer until restrictions list	
		Developing Professional Relationships	To be completed by September 2021	
		Cognitive Behaviour Therapy – issue questionnaire to members to assist development of course	Progress across six month time frame if possible not virtual	
		Scrutiny & Challenge – continue as per MUDC Member Development programme and timeframes previously agreed		
		Regulating and Monitoring – continue as per MUDC Member Development		

	programme and timeframes previously agreed		
	Sign Language Course – Explore possibility of information for Sign language course for Members		
4.0	Verbal Update on Charter Review		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Member Support Officer reminded Members that Charter Review had to be postponed due to impact of COVID 19 but was now rescheduled for 26 May 2021. As previous the Chair of the Working Group Cllr McKinney, Member Support Officer and Head of Democratic Services would be interviewed for the review		Chair, Member Support Officer & Head of Democratic Services
5.0	Consideration of Training Methods		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Elearning Demonstration to be planned early summer to increase awareness of Elearning opportunitiesMembers noted the timesaved in participating in on line training but stated that for example CBT training would be better in person, hybrid to be offered as COVID restrictions lift.		C L&D Manager Member Support Officer
6	Any other business		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">High Visibility vests to be issued to MembersTeam Building Day for Elected Members to be explored in line with COVID restrictions lifting		Member Support Officer & Head of Democratic Services
Meeting concluded at 5.45 pm			

Adrian McCreesh
Chief Executive
Mid Ulster District Council
Council Offices
Circular Road
Dungannon
BT71 6DT

27th May 2021

Dear Adrian

Re: Councillor Development Charter Review

NILGA wishes to advise Council that, following the recent review of Mid Ulster District's Councillor Development Charter, it has demonstrated the corporate retention of this prestigious standard. Congratulations on this strong endorsement of your Council's approach to learning and development.

As you will be aware, NILGA is the sole accreditation body for Councillor Development Charter delivery in N. Ireland. In follow up to Mid Ulster District Council achievement of the initial Charter standard in December 2018, this formal review applied a rigorous national and local assessment framework, but also recognised the impact of the global pandemic, the disruption of council business and the fragile financial landscape, which is why it has been carried out later than typically envisaged (usually 18-20 months after the initial Award).

NILGA's Fiona Douglas, Regional Development Manager, led a thorough discussion with the Chair of the Elected Member Development Steering Group, Cllr Derek McKinney and Officers, Philip Moffett and Eileen Forde. The discussion covered Council's comprehensive

written submission provided in advance. It was clear and evident from the submission and the discussion that Council continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to councillor development and support, offers this to every member, reinforces this to its senior managers, and has in place a strategic plan with appropriate resource for learning and development that builds contemporary knowledge and skills.

Mid Ulster District Council is therefore continuing to meet the requirements of the Charter standard which has a life span of three years. After this period and factoring in delay brought about by local and national framework reviews and the pandemic, a full reassessment will be undertaken at a mutually acceptable juncture.

On the basis that Council as a corporate body is content with this update & progress path, we will make appropriate arrangements to continue the charter assessment work with your sub-committee Chair, fellow elected members and your officer team.

With thanks for your continued co-operation.

Yours sincerely,



Derek McCallan
Chief Executive

Report on	Request(s) to Illuminate Council Property – June 2021
Date of Meeting	Thursday 10 th June 2021
Reporting Officer	P Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
Contact Officer	P Moffett, Head of Democratic Services

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	<p>To consider request received to illuminate/light up the Council's three designated properties to raise awareness of and mark;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Chest Heart & Stroke - 14th June 2021 Motor Neurone Disease Association (NI Branch) - 21st June 2021 Disability Action (NI) - 3rd December 2021
1.2	Details on request received are set out below.
2.0	Background
2.1	The Council has a policy and procedural arrangements in place to facilitate the illuminating/lighting-up of its designated properties from requests made by charitable organisations for charitable causes. The designated properties are the Bridewell, the Burnavon and Ranfurly.
2.2	The policy confirms that requests are considered by the Council's Policy & Resources Committee. Should the scheduling of the committee not permit requests being considered within the timeframes to make a determination they can be presented to monthly Council. The policy is to be reviewed though existing arrangements remain until completed.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Requests for consideration and recommendation by Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To illuminate the designated properties from Monday 14th June 2021 to mark 75th Anniversary of NI Chest Heart & Stroke - the colour be Red To illuminate the designated properties on Sunday 21st June 2021 - to mark Motor Neurone Disease Global Awareness Day - the colour blue To illuminate the designated properties on Thursday 3rd December 2021 – to mark International Day of Disabled Person – the colour purple <p>The policy scope extends to requests made by charitable organisations for the promotion of its charitable cause on a given date or set of dates.</p>

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: Not applicable
	Rural Needs Implications: Not applicable
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	That the Committee considers making recommendation to light up the designated properties to mark and for NI Chest Heart & Stroke Association in June 2021; NI Branch of the Motor Neurone Disease Association in June 2021 and; Disability Action (NI) in December 2021
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Not applicable

Minutes of Meeting of Policy and Resources Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 6 May 2021 in the Council Offices, Ballyronan Road, Magherafelt and by Virtual Means

Members Present

Councillor Quinn, Chair

Councillors, Ashton*, Buchanan*, Cuddy*, Doris*, Elattar*, Forde*, Gildernew*, Hughes*, McFlynn*, S McGuigan*, McKinney, McLean*, S McPeake*, Molloy*, Totten*

Officers in Attendance

Mr McCreesh, Chief Executive
Ms Campbell**, Director of Leisure & Outdoor Recreation
Mrs Canavan, Director of Organisational Development
Ms Dyson**, Head of Human Resources
Mr Kelso, Director of Public Health & Infrastructure
Ms Mezza**, Head of Marketing and Communications
Mr Moffett**, Head of Democratic Services
Mr O'Hagan, Head of ICT
Mr Tohill, Director of Finance
Mrs Grogan, Democratic Services Officer

* Denotes members present in remote attendance

** Denotes Officers present by remote means

*** Denotes others present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7 pm

The Chair, Councillor Quinn welcomed everyone to the meeting and those watching the meeting through the Live Broadcast. Councillor Quinn 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.

PR089/21 Apologies

None.

PR090/21 Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of their responsibility with regard to declarations of interest.

PR091/21 Chair's Business

The Chair advised that this would be his last meeting as Chair of the Policy and Resources committee and thanked members and officers for their support throughout the year.

Matters for Decision

PR092/21 Requests to Illuminate Council Property: May 2021

The Head of Democratic Services presented previously circulated report which considered requests received to illuminate/light up the Council's three designated properties to raise awareness of and mark;

- Foster Care Fortnight – May 2021 (Orange)
- International Nurses Day – May 2021 (Blue)

The Head of Democratic Services drew members attention to action already agreed for Brain Injury Week which coincides with the Foster Care Fortnight. He stated if Foster Care Fortnight was agreed tonight, then the Council would accommodate them a shorter number of days to what the group had requested.

Proposed by Councillor McKinney
Seconded by Councillor Buchanan and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to light up designated Council properties to mark –

- Foster Care Fortnight on a set of days between Monday 10th - 23rd May 2021 (Orange), avoiding any clash with the previously agreed illumination to mark Brain Injury Week
- International Nurses Day – Wednesday 12th May 2021 (Blue)

PR093/21 Member Services

No issues.

Matters for Information

PR094/21 Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 8 April 2021

Members noted Policy and Resources Committee Minutes of Meeting held on 8 April 2021.

PR094/21 Elected Member Development Working Group

Members noted update of Elected Member Development Working Group meeting held on 10 February 2021.

PR095/21 Consultation on Draft Improvement Objectives 2021-23: Findings

Members noted update on the findings and outcome of the consultation undertaken on the proposed improvement objectives 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Councillor S McGuigan referred to third objective relating to Cleaner Neighbourhoods and felt that this was very timely considering that a meeting had taken place this evening. He said that the general feeling of the meeting was that some decisive action was needed on dealing with issues around littering, fly-tipping and dog fouling which reflected back on comments made by residents, with 94% in agreement. He stated that comments made enforced the opinion that we as a Council needed to take more proactive action rather than solely an educational one.

PR096/21 Council Statutory and Corporate Performance Improvement Standards: 2020-21 Update (Q1-Q4)

Members noted report which provided members with monitoring information on the review of performance against the seven statutory and three corporate performance improvement indicators and standards, along with an overview of the Corporate Health Indicators for the first twelve months of 2020/21.

PR097/21 Organisational Development Service Improvement Plan 2021/22

Members noted Service Improvement Plan for Organisational Development Directorate for 2021/2022.

Proposed by Councillor Molloy
Seconded by Councillor Elattar and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve the Organisational Development Service Improvement Plan 2021/22.

PR098/21 Finance Service Improvement Plan 2021/22

Members noted Service Improvement Plan for Finance Department for 2021/22.

Proposed by Councillor Molloy
Seconded by Councillor Elattar and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve the Finance Service Improvement Plan 2021/22.

PR099/21 IT Service Improvement Plan 2021/22

Proposed by Councillor Molloy
Seconded by Councillor Elattar and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve the IT Service Improvement Plan 2021/22.

Live broadcast ended at 7.08 pm.

Local Government (NI) Act 2014 – Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor Doris
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 PR100/21 to PR108/21.

Matters for Decision

PR100/21 Staff Matters for Decision
PR101/21 Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
PR102/21 Treasury Management Strategy
PR103/21 Capital Framework 2020-2024
PR104/21 Proposed Capital Project – Dungannon
PR105/21 Full Fibre Project Update

Matters for Information

PR106/21 Confidential Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee
Meeting held on 8 April 2021
PR107/21 Staff Matters for Information
PR108/21 Contracts and DAC

PR109/21 Duration of Meeting

The meeting commenced at 7 pm and concluded at 9.10 pm.

Chair _____

Date _____

Report on	Annual Progress Return on Rural Needs 2020/2021
Date of Meeting	10 June 2021
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	The purpose of this report is to set out and provide Mid Ulster District Council's Annual Progress Report to Department for Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA) for the period 2020-21. This is statutory requirement now placed upon specified Public Authorities under the Rural Needs (Northern Ireland) Act 2016.
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>Mid Ulster District Council is bound by the Rural Needs (NI) Act 2016 to 'have due regard to rural needs when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and; • designing and delivering public services'
2.2	Section 3 of the Rural Needs (NI) Act requires DAERA to publish an annual monitoring report containing the information sent to it by public authorities on how they have paid Due Regard to rural needs and information on the exercise by Department of its functions under the Act.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The Annual Progress Report for the reporting period 2020-21 is required to be submitted to DAERA no later than 30 th June 2021.
3.2	Mid Ulster District Council's Annual Progress Report (2020-2021) sets out to what extent the Council has demonstrated Due Regard to rural needs. It is included as Appendix A 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: Equality screening is not required for this progress report.
	Rural Needs Implications: As detailed
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	That Council considers and provides commentary as appropriate on the Annual Progress Report (2020-21) on the implementation and activities surrounding its statutory duty under the Rural Needs (NI) Act 2016.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix A: Mid Ulster District Council Annual Rural Needs Progress Report (2020-21)



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:

Reporting Period: April 20 to March 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.

<i>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016¹.</i>	<i>The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to².</i>	<i>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 service³.</i>
Implementation of the Jobs Retention Scheme	Internal	The decision to implement this Scheme will impact on Mid Ulster District Council staff only. Staff who are placed on the Scheme are workers who cannot complete their work from home. Therefore, any impact on staff who are rural dwellers cannot be avoided and this action is deemed by Mid Ulster District Council as an appropriate and reasonable response to the pandemic.
Seamus Heaney Homeplace Trails Experience	Rural Development	The trails experience is located in and around the village of Bellaghy. The concept has been designed in order to enhance the tourism offer in this rural area of the District.

Rural Business Development Grant	Rural Development	This Rural Business Development Grant formed part of DEARA's Tackling Rural Poverty and Isolation and social isolation framework and was therefore designed specifically with the needs of rural businesses and communities in mind.
Delivery of Essential Services Only (Covid-19 Response)	Internal	Mid Ulster District Council has assessed the potential impact of the delivery of essential services only, on rural dwellers and has determined it does not unlawfully directly discriminate in any way with respect of rural dwellers. Where provision might potentially indirectly impact on rural needs, Mid Ulster District Council considers the impacts are justified and a proportionate means of achieving the legitimate aim of protecting the general public from a Coronavirus pandemic by increasing the capacity of public service systems and mitigating the spread of infection.
Active Travel Capital Project	Rural Development	This project will have a positive impact on rural areas. Five of the six projects are taking place in rural areas with only one being implemented in an urban area - Coalisland. The projects will have a positive impact for people in rural areas as they will increase safety when walking by either putting in place lighting (Maghera & Coalisland) or creating new connections in existing footpath infrastructure (Clogher, Clonoe & Eglish) or putting in place new infrastructure to allow safe walking routes (Bellaghy).
Dignity at Work	Internal	Mid Ulster District Council has considered the needs of staff particularly those living in rural areas. If staff had an issue they do not necessarily have to travel to Council offices to speak with someone but rather contact one of the Confidential Advisors of the Policy by phone or e mail and if a meeting is required, this

		could be arranged at mutually agreed Council location so that the staff member does not have too far to travel.
Allocation of Hanging Baskets	Tourism	Whilst Mid Ulster District Council will be providing Hanging Baskets in the 5 Primary Towns, including the rural town of Maghera. Council are conscious of the need to support our local villages and work in partnership with local groups/communities to create vibrant villages.
Managing Bereavement Policy	Internal	Mid Ulster District Council has considered the needs of staff including those living in rural areas.
OM Dark Skies Facility	Rural Tourism	<p>Consultations are continually taking place with the local community groups/residents about the Davagh development. This provides an opportunity to allow the local residents and groups to have their say and be brought up to speed on the development of the site. The 2 main community groups in the area is the Broughderg Community Association and the Dunnamore Residents Association, Council have been working closely with the associations for several years and their opinions have helped to shape Davagh. The most recent community meetings took place on 27 February 2019 and 22 October 2019. The purpose of these consultations was to continually engage with the local community and provide an update on the progress of the Davagh Dark Sky Project, deliver a presentation on light pollution, and distribute copies of the light management plan and IDA compliant lighting guidelines. Additionally these meetings allow the community to get involved in the project and have their say on the way forward for the forest.</p> <p>In addition to the wider public consultations, Mid Ulster</p>

		<p>District Council Officers liaise directly with individual land owners, providing information and advice on light pollution. An on-line survey was published in December regarding the further development of the mountain bike trail within the Dark Sky Park, this survey had over 800 responses. Members of the local community were invited to view the site in February 2020 to view the developments taking place and to hear of future plans for the site. Council Officers have delivered a Davagh Dark Sky presentation, explaining the background to the project, educating on dark skies and the issues of light pollution, and explaining the preliminary sky quality measurements. To date this presentation has been delivered to various groups and stakeholders.</p>
Management of Overtime Policy	<p>Internal</p> <p>Page 68 of 94</p>	<p>Mid Ulster District Council has considered the needs of staff including those living in rural areas. The needs of staff are met by the policy aims and objectives in that the Council is committed to ensuring that all working arrangements are appropriately and effectively managed. Although it recognises that overtime working will occasionally be required, Council wishes to, where possible, reduce overtime working to a minimum.</p> <p>Where unplanned overtime or call outs are required, staff who live in closest proximity to Council site (or location where staff member needs to attend) may be called upon as opposed to those living further away in more remote rural setting. This makes more business sense particularly where time is of the essence e.g. dealing with an emergency. However, by monitoring and properly managing overtime as part of this</p>

		Council wide policy, the Council intends to reduce the overall need for overtime and therefore staff will not be disadvantaged with same staff being called upon all the time to work overtime/assist with call outs.
Mid Ulster Town Centre Recovery	Rural Development	The Mid Ulster Towns Covid 19 Business Grant will impact on people in rural areas in a positive manner. The aim of Mid Ulster Towns Covid 19 Business Grant is to assist businesses to adapt to and implement social distancing measures to protect staff and customers in line with government guidance. The businesses located in the town centres in the Mid Ulster region (Cookstown, Coalisland, Dungannon, Maghera and Magherafelt) are owned and utilised by people living within the rural areas of Mid Ulster.
Review of Online Business Directory	Internal Policy	Mid Ulster Council's Online Directory was developed in 2016 to align services to Council's corporate objective to move more services online, thereby increasing the Directory's accessibility, and the online registration process was also intended to simplify the process for businesses (regardless of location) to sign up. For those who may have poor broadband or difficulty completing an Online Form, staff post out the Registration Form and will then upload details on behalf of the business.
Mid Ulster Pilot Covid Recovery Start Up	Rural Business Rural Tourism Jobs or Employment/Education or Training in Rural Areas Poverty in Rural Areas Rural Development Page 69 of 94	<p>The objective of this pilot Scheme is to stimulate entrepreneurship in Mid Ulster by maximizing engagement and uptake of the startup support available through the provision of a small payment to all who have completed the GoForIt Programme.</p> <p>The Scheme takes account of the identified rural needs, primarily the access to services issue. Access to the support for all, regardless of location has been taken into consideration in its development – the Contractor is required to deliver the one-to-one support either at the individual or group's own premises or another suitably convenient location. This is to maximize opportunities for</p>

		participation and engagement with rural communities and also those who may be located at a distance from the Contractor's base.
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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	Somme Association: 2021-2022 Membership Subscription
Date of Meeting	Thursday 10 th June 2021
Reporting Officer	Philip Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
Contact Officer	Philip Moffett, Head of Democratic Services

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 update the committee on correspondence received from the Somme Association on annual membership contributions payable for period 2021-2022
2.0	Background
2.1	The Council is currently a member of the Somme Association to which it has elected member representation. The current representatives are Cllr Derek McKinney and Cllr Wesley Brown, details of which are confirmed on the council website under Outside Bodies at https://mid-ulster.cmis-ni.org/midulster/OutsideBodies.aspx
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The council has received an invoice for payment to the Somme Association for the period 2021-22. Provision for the subscription has been made within 2021-2022 budgetary provision (Democratic Services).
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: Somme Association - £1,200 (£1,000 + VAT).
	Human: not applicable
	Risk Management: not applicable
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: not applicable
	Rural Needs Implications: not applicable

5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	That the committee notes request for payment from the Somme Association for the 2021-2022 annual subscription, arising from its membership.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Appendix A - Correspondence from Director, The Somme Association

THE SOMME ASSOCIATION



Vice-Presidents

The Viscount Brookeborough, DL

Chairman

Mr Alan McFarland

Director

Mrs Carol Walker, MBE

233 Bangor Road

Newtownards

BT23 7PH

Telephone 028 91823202

Facsimile 028 91823214

Website: www.sommeassociation.com

Email: sommeassociation@btconnect.com

Face Book: The Somme Association

Honorary President:

H.R.H The Duke of Gloucester, KG, GCVO

26th May 2021

Mr Anthony Tohill

Chief Executive

Mid Ulster District Council

Circular Road

Dungannon

BT71 6DT

Dear Mr Tohill

Re: 'Friends of the Somme' yearly subscription 2021/22

I am writing to inform you that your council's yearly subscription to the Somme Association is now due. This year's fee, in line with the previous year, is as follows: £1,000.00 plus VAT of £200.00 making a total of £1,200.00. The subscription relates to the financial year ending 31st March 2022. Please find invoice enclosed which contains our bank details for BACS payments.

Due to the times we all find ourselves in, this year's annual subscription is extremely important to the Association and its' work going forward as we recover after COVID restrictions.

At a recent meeting of the Somme Advisory Council representatives from each Council were updated on our work over the past year and our future plans.

The Officers of the Somme Association wish me to thank your Council for its continued support over this very difficult time and sincerely hope that it will continue to support our work at the Somme Museum and the Ulster Memorial Tower, France. May I take this opportunity to send best wishes and continuing good health.

If you have any questions, you would like answered, please do not hesitate to contact me by email – sommeassociation@btconnect.com

Yours faithfully

Carol Walker MBE

Director

Enc.

RECEIVED

- 1 JUN 2021

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Report on	Service Improvement Plans: Chief Executive's Office
Date of Meeting	Thursday 3 June 2021
Reporting Officer	Ursula Mezza
Contact Officer	Ursula Mezza

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 the Marketing and Communications Service for the 2021-2022 year.
2.0	Background
2.1	In line with corporate performance improvement requirements and to ensure that every service contributes to performance improvement, every service produces an annual individual improvement plan.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The Improvement Plan for 2021-2022 sets out key priorities for the service in the year ahead, building on the work undertaken during the last year, and also highlights the service's work and achievements across its range of responsibilities in 2020-2021.
3.2	Objectives in the new plan relate to the ongoing development of specific marketing and communications plans to support key service areas, including leisure, economic development, recycling and in a new focus, on the Council's capital investment programme. This will extend work started in the previous year.
3.3	Allied to planning is the need to evaluate the service's work and in this year, a formal evaluation framework will be introduced which starts to move the service beyond the measurement of outputs to the assessment of outcomes.
3.4	The service's final core area of work is the support for the opening of OM Dark Sky Park and Observatory and the development and delivery of a marketing campaign in the new facility's first year.

4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: N/A
	Human: N/A
	Risk Management: N/A
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	That the Committee accepts the 2021-2022 Marketing and Communications Service Improvement Plans.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Marketing & Communications Service Improvement Plan 2021-2022.



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

Marketing & Communications Service

SERVICE PLAN - 2021 / 22

Date

Consulted within staff team

26/04/2021

Discussed & signed off by Director

/ /2021

CONTENT

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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 2020/21

The following table provides a progress summary and the impact made by last year's Service Plan (2020-2021). It also details key successes, a summary of the end of year progress, remaining challenges for the Service and how it made a difference.

2020/21 Performance Overview: Summary

A Year Of Communicating Through COVID

From the beginning of the 2020-21 year through to the early summer of 2020, the marketing and communications service's focus was almost exclusively on managing communications associated with the Coronavirus pandemic, whether relating to its role as a direct service provider or the organisation's position as a civic leader.

Demand on the service was consistently high, with time-pressured response times presenting a challenge in the early crisis weeks and months of the pandemic.

However, when the immediate crisis had passed, the service was able to move to more planned and proactive communications, shining a spotlight on both the essential work being undertaken by the Council and the innovation being demonstrated by the organisation, particularly from those services which were closed.

Leisure's virtual swimming academy and fitness videos, the online programme of performances and educational/creative activities from Culture and Arts, as well as the webinars, online forums and business resilience from Business and Communities were all among the work promoted in the media and via social media during this stage of the pandemic.

Essential services were also showcased, beginning with bin collection crews and the many thank you notes and pictures they received, to encompass all those employees, visible and behind the scenes, who continued to deliver during the lockdown.

Stability also allowed the Council's community support measures, from emergency funding to the distribution of food boxes, to be increasingly profiled.

At the same time, the service continued to identify other appropriate opportunities to demonstrate the Council's civic leadership role, from the Chair's support and endorsement of specific issues to positioning the issues of strategic importance, from the broad impact of the pandemic on the Mid Ulster economy to the specific financial issues faced by the Council.

Recovery from the early summer through to early Autumn saw an omni-channel 'reconnect' campaign developed and delivered, focusing on reconnecting people

and places by telling local stories using local voices both internally and across key sectors externally (notably, retail and tourism).

However, the recovery period was short-lived and by October 2020, the service's focus shifted from support for re-opening to once again managing COVID-19 communications and the impact of further restrictions.

The service has had a strong role in promoting public health messages since the beginning of the pandemic, as well as communicating the impact of the pandemic on the Council's services. From October 2020, there was an increasing shift towards the promotion of a 'culture of compliance' and closer cooperation and sharing of approaches between the local government sector and central government.

One distinct area of work serves to illustrate the positive impact, when a bespoke 'culture of compliance' video campaign on social media with the hashtags #BackToBasics #BackToBusiness was created by the service, using Mid Ulster statistics on infection rates where possible and using authentic Mid Ulster voices.

The 2-week campaign directly reached 83,521 people (representing approximately 57% of the local population) and engaged 12,730 unique users of Facebook. The participation of a local GP, Dr Grainne Shaw, was particularly effective, accounting for almost 30% of the campaign reach. Dr Shaw was viewed as a trusted messenger and qualitative feedback from the practice also indicated that the positive reaction to the post on social media gave practice staff a real boost at an especially difficult time.

Internal Communications

A concentration of effort on enhancing internal communications also took place during the year, as this area of work became even more critical - and just as important as externally-focused communication - in the period under review.

The personalisation approach which had been adopted in the previous year remained to the fore, as did celebrating success, even if viewed and presented through a Covid-19 lens.

Indeed, for the first time, marking internal achievements was also done externally, with social media channels highlighting continuity of service, not through a faceless organisation but through the people who were out day and daily delivering. User-generated content followed on social media and engagement levels reflected the positive impact of this approach to 'humanise' the organisation.

When appropriate, the same approach continued through to the recovery phase, where staff were front and centre, for example, presenting new arrangements for the re-opening of leisure facilities on video via social media. Again, engagement levels soared and other organisations quickly replicated what was appearing on the Mid Ulster channels.

Staff briefs – short and factual information notes – became an integral means of communicating accurate, pertinent news in tight timeframes. 10 such briefs were issued in the first 4 weeks of the pandemic alone, before monthly staff newsletters (In Focus) were re-introduced in May 2020, and they continued to characterise how internal communications were undertaken across the rest of the year.

The service developed and implemented a specific internal campaign ‘Our Covid Comeback’, where a specific staff newsletter was produced, together with a ‘welcome back’ presentation with key corporate messages for those returning to their normal locations for work and a bespoke explainer video to ensure those messages were simply and effectively conveyed.

A Monthly News Roundup video was also introduced towards the end of the year, which highlights the Council’s good news stories at the end of each month and is emailed to all Councillors and staff, keeping everyone up to date, as well as being posted on the Council’s social media channels.

Internal communications with Elected Members was also critical during the pandemic and the fast dissemination of information, both about council services and wider civic issues, was also undertaken via a system of email briefings for councillors.

Digital Platforms

In a fast-moving environment, the Council’s digital platforms were of paramount importance for reflecting changes and updates to services and engaging with customers both with speed and accuracy, particularly in the early stages of the pandemic.

However, as the previous section illustrates, the significance of digital platforms and the Council’s digital-first approach came into its own as the service continued to support more ‘normal’ corporate and service priorities, principally via its social media channels.

The Council’s Facebook page in particular proved to be a most effective engagement method. The page now has more than 11,000 followers and, as intended, has out-performed and now replaced the legacy town Facebook pages (Visit Cookstown, Visit Magherafelt and Discover Dungannon) which were unpublished in November 2020. Indeed, in November and December 2020, for example, Facebook posts reached over 700,000 people and engaged almost 67,000 users.

However, the channel has also increasingly begun to function as a customer service desk, where the service’s staff are coordinating responses and signposting via in-post comments and private messages.

Our website has been a key source of online coronavirus-related content, which has adapted and changed in line with the restriction-recovery-restriction cycle, highlighting the range of support schemes available for people individually impacted by the pandemic and businesses directly affected. Substantial resources were required to fulfil this function.

However, the service also contended with a significant change in accessibility standards from September 2020 and considerable resources were allocated to ensuring that the Council's website was exceeding compliance standards.

The concentration of effort showed a remarkable result. Based on the Sitemorse index (Q4 2020) which compares the performance of Councils across the UK, Mid Ulster's score rose to 8.1/10, resulting in an upward movement of 146 places to be ranked 27th in the UK and 2nd of the 11 councils here.

In addition, the service has continued to lead the development of service-specific digital platforms, including the OM website and 3 social channels, a new tourism website and content for new town-centre based information kiosks.

Facilities Marketing

Undertaken in a very different landscape, facilities marketing continued nevertheless during the year.

- While the initial opening of OM Dark Sky Park and Observatory in April 2020 had to be postponed, significant work ensued to prepare for a new opening date in October 2020, with the facility's opening campaign plan re-booked and partly delivered until restrictions once again meant OM was unable to open. While disappointing, the service has nonetheless continued to research, develop and deliver content on the OM social media channels to ensure that an interest in astronomy and awareness of the facility is maintained in the period until OM opens.
- Leisure services were one of the most affected services throughout the pandemic with closures in the early and later parts of the year which required intensive communications support. A phased plan was developed and hands on support given to roll out a communications plan that maintained customer engagement across periods of closure which has included a work out at home video series recorded by leisure staff, sourcing relevant articles and content, as well as providing reassurance to customers on the organisation's approach to safe re-opening first time round. The service sourced, scripted and produced a series of Covid secure videos that were implemented to encourage return to facilities. The service has also had a key role in training and supporting new leisure social media editors as they come to grips with a new element of their roles and has implemented evaluation as a key monitoring and learning tool that is now embedded within the service.
- Much of the support given to Parks and Outdoor Recreation has focused on the communication of improvements to the estate including profiling upgrades in Knockmany and Moydamlaght Forests. The service has also worked to develop and deliver the initial stages of a campaign to improve public perception of Railway Park. The lockdown has also resulted in an increase in ASB at Council owned outdoor facilities and support work has been carried out to address these issues as sites such as Windmill Wood and Play areas across the district.

Service Communications And Support

Like all activity during 2020-21, work by the service to provide communications' support across departments and services was undertaken within the limitations of the pandemic.

However, while different to the norm, virtual approaches to delivery were successful, notably in the examples below.

Enterprise Week 2020

The delivery of Enterprise Week during a pandemic radically altered both the traditional method of staging the events and the focus of activity. Events moved from face-to-face delivery and interaction in a physical location to a virtual environment and the marketing and communications service delivered a supporting plan.

The plan continued the Council's 'digital first' approach, with a greater emphasis on video, while also using traditional media (press and radio) to support core messaging.

- Social media support for the week via Facebook achieved a reach of 98,795 with engagement of 4,802 and video views of over 22,000. Impressions on Twitter reached more than 47,000 with engagement of just over 1,200.
- The designated www.midulstercouncil.org/enterpriseweek webpage received 1,834 page views and ranked in the top 20 of our webpage views during this time, with business grants and business recovery webpages taking the top spots during this period.
- 11 pieces of editorial were carried in local press, with a Mean Advertising Value Equivalent of £36.5K.

Christmas 2020

Christmas 2020 was always going to look radically different, particularly in relation to Christmas Light Switch On events, which took place in 2020 with no public gatherings in place. This change needed to be communicated to residents, while managing expectations and discouraging any non-organised gathering of people in contravention of the regulations in place.

Particular highlights were the switch-on video which premiered on Facebook and was warmly received by online audiences, the 12 Gifts of Christmas competition which showcased local retail and achieved substantial reach and engagement over a sustained 12-day period in December.

The service also developed the #WeLoveLocal concept to support shop local and shop safe messages, delivering a comprehensive and strategic communications plan for a radically different looking Christmas.

Recycling

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdowns that came as a result, the service continued to support the waste and recycling service. This included the

effective communication, both in the press and across the Council's social media channels, of recycling centre closures, the subsequent re opening and conditions that were in place- including commissioning and promoting a bespoke video to illustrate these conditions on social media to ensure residents felt safe, reassured and comfortable returning to the centres. During the recycling centre closures, various campaigns were run across the Council's social media channels to help residents better cope, and make the adequate changes to help deal, with the closures, including Reduce Your Waste and Grow From Home campaigns.

The service continued to communicate the excellent work of bin collection crews who continued to deliver this key service uninterrupted throughout the pandemic. The service also continued to highlight the Council consistently achieving the highest household recycling rate for every quarter and year-end, praising and thanking residents for being Recycling Heroes even during an incredibly difficult time.

In September 2020 the service launched the Together We Recycle campaign which involved commissioning three bespoke videos- a Thank You video where the Chair and staff from Environmental Services, including bin collections crews and staff at recycling centres, thanked residents for their efforts throughout lockdown. The video was brilliantly received by residents with 23,000 views and a reach of 32,554. Bespoke blue and brown bin recycling videos were also recorded which illustrated the items which can be recycled in both bins. The campaign was rolled out in the local press and across the Council's social media channels. The campaign was versatile and adapted to fit various themes, including: Together We Recycle, Together We Recycle at Halloween, Together We Recycle at Christmas, Together We Recycle in the Blue Bin and Together We Recycle in the Brown bin.

In January 2021 the service launched the next strand in the Together We Recycle campaign, the Bin smART recycling competition. The Bin smART campaign ran both in the press and across the Council's social media channels. The aim of the campaign was to get primary school aged children and their parents to take part in the competition by being Bin smART and creating something new in the form of a sculpture from the recyclable waste in their blue bins. The campaign was a roaring success, in part because school closures at the time meant parents were looking for a more creative home-schooling task and because 10 Fire HD tablets could be won.

The original target for the campaign was to receive 50 competition entries and we ended up receiving over 10 times that amount with over 500 entries recorded. We received incredibly positive feedback and interaction on our social media channels.

The 12 campaign posts added to the Council's Facebook page resulted in a total Reach of 101,802- reaching almost 10 times the number of followers of the page (11,099).

The campaign received positive local press coverage both pre and post the competition with a MAVE (Mean Advertising Value Equivalent) of almost £40,000 (£39,530.13)

In March 2021, the service also supported the Big Spring Clean initiative, and the role the Council plays, to encourage local communities to get involved in, or organise, a Big Spring Clean in their areas to help keep our district clean and litter-free. A dedicated social media campaign ran (and continues to run) across the Council's social media channels profiling and thanking all the communities taking part in Big Spring Cleans.

Corporate Communications

Corporate communications remain a key element of service delivery and the first section of this overview 'communicating through Covid' serves to illustrate this role.

Two other issues are worthy of note:

- The service allocated significant resources to creating comprehensive and integrated plans to strategically position and profile the Council's capital investment programme, with the development in particular of an overarching communications plan to support the £5.2M leisure and outdoor recreation projects. This has helped to ensure that the 'big picture' is to the fore and that while, for example, there may be 3 separate projects at Davagh Forest, they are all contributing the creation of a critical mass of tourism product in the Sperrins. Work continued also to support other capital investment schemes, notably the village renewal programme.
- Media relations continued to be an extremely busy element of the service's core work and in 2020-2021 the service responded to 367 media enquiries, on a par with the volume received in the previous 2 years. This aspect of the service is also highly rated by journalists for speed and quality of responses.

2020/21 Performance Overview Of Specific Objectives	End of Year Progress Status: Completed/Commenced/Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop and deliver annual Marketing and Communications post-COVID action plans for key service areas. 	Completed where possible during the short recovery period with plans developed and delivered for Leisure, Parks, Economic Development, Tourism and Events.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support Environmental Services to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill through the development and delivery of recycling campaign for 2020-2021. 	Various campaigns, most notably the Together We Recycle and Bin SmART campaigns delivered successfully
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support the opening of the new OM Dark Sky Park and Observatory by revising and re-developing the associated marketing and communications plans. 	Completed (despite the official opening once again being postponed at a very late stage, the service has continued to ensure the profile of OM has been

	maintained despite the facility's not being able yet to open).
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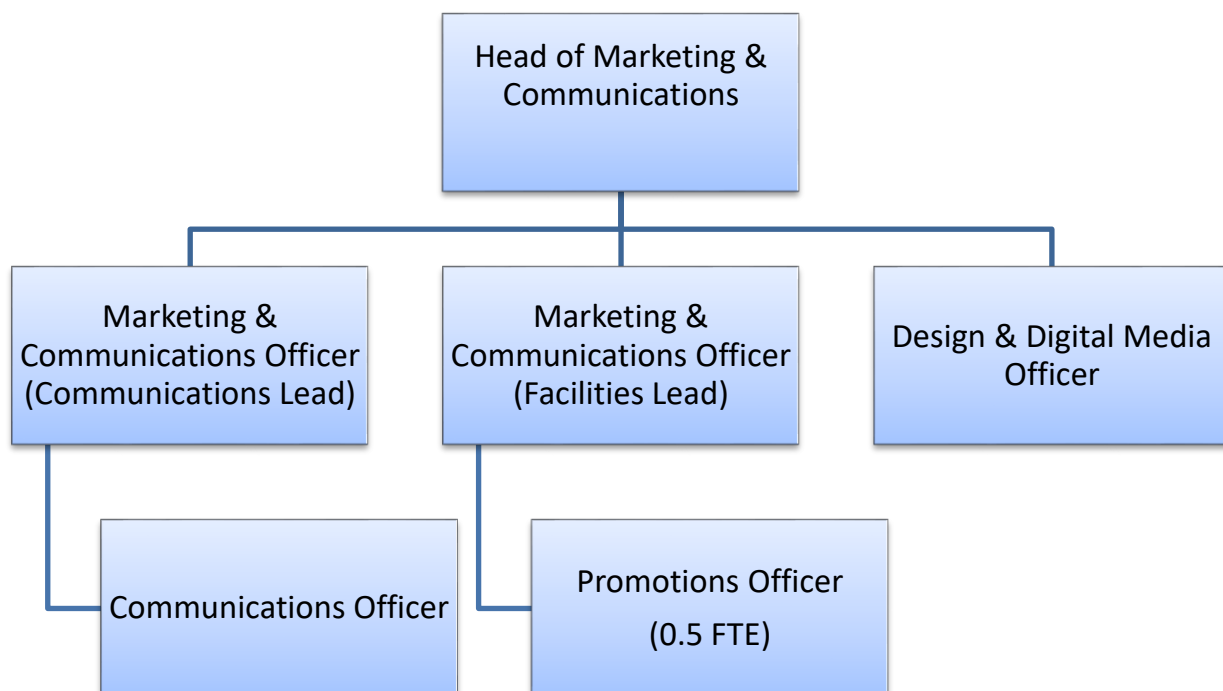
2.0 IMPROVING OUR SERVICE AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE - 2021/22

The following tables confirm the resources, financial and people, which the Service has access to throughout 2021-22 to deliver its actions, activities and core business.

2.1 Budget 2021/22

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 2021-22	326,888

2.2 Staffing Complement - 2021/22



Staffing	No. of Staff
Head of Service	1
Managers	2
Officers	2.5
Remaining Team	0
Total	5.5

2.3 Service Work Plan - 2021/22

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):		To develop and deliver annual Marketing and Communications plans for key service areas.		
Link to Community Plan Theme:		Align to Corporate Plan Theme		
<i>CMP 3.3 Education & Skills - We are more entrepreneurial, innovative & creative</i>		<i>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</i>		
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, Recycling and Economic Development (specifically town centres).	On-going	UM, KK & MMcN	We will have cohesive, integrated marketing and communications recovery plans, including as required those supporting pandemic recovery, which are aligned to corporate narratives and which make a demonstrable contribution to the achievement of corporate and other service objectives and priorities.	No of meetings held.
Marketing and communications plans developed and agreed.	In line with recovery dates	UM, KK & MMcN		No of plans developed and agreed.
Plans implemented.	Aa per agreed plan timelines.	UM, KK & MMcN		Adherence to implementation timescales.
Plan monitoring, evaluation and review.	Plan end implementation dates	UM, KK & MMcN		Evaluation reports completed.

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			
<i>CMP 1.1 Economic Growth - We prosper in a stronger & more competitive economy</i>	<i>Economy: 3.6 We will work to deliver tourism investment and employment concentrating on Mid Ulster's three identified tourism strands</i>			
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 deliver the official opening of OM Dark Sky Park and Observatory as pandemic restrictions allow.	June 2021	UM	We will have successfully positioned the new facility and associated outdoor recreation and tourism offerings as a flagship visitor attractions in the Sperrins.	Opening plan drafted, agreed and delivered.
Development and implementation and delivery of a marketing & communications plan to support OM in year 1 of its operation.	End Dec 2021	UM		Plan developed, implemented and evaluated.

What Service Development/Improvement will we undertake in 2021/22? (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How will we Know? (Measures)
The service has now mainstreamed evaluation of activity as part of its overall approach to the delivery of planned, evidence-based marketing and communications. In 2021-22 the service will build on this foundation by introducing a formal evaluation framework which moves beyond measuring outputs to assessing outcomes. This framework will assess performance of campaign work for client services while a dashboard of core corporate metrics will be used to report the effectiveness of the service itself.	End March 2022.	KK & KR	The service will have introduced a meaningful evaluative framework based on industry best practice and which demonstrates impact in terms of outcomes.	Evaluation framework, including corporate metrics dashboard, developed and in use.

What Service Development/Improvement will we undertake in 2021/22? (actions):	By When (Date?)	Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How will we know? (Measures)
In 2020-21 the service developed an integrated communications plan which for the first time focused exclusively on positioning the Council's complete capital investment programme in leisure and outdoor recreation strategically. In 2021-22, the service will build on this strategic profiling and develop an overarching corporate communications plan to support the delivery of the capital programme for the year ahead.	Plan end implementation date.	UM	The Council's ambitious and significant capital investment programme will be strategically positioned and profiled accordingly to build awareness of the level and impact of the programme among internal and external audiences.	Plan for 2021-22 developed. Delivery against plan objectives.

Performance Measures: <i>Should include any measures as outlined in work above and relevant measures from Community, Corporate, Performance Improvement Plan, Statutory, Corporate Health Indicators etc.</i>	Is the Measure, Statutory, Corporate, Existing, or New?	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2020/21 Target/Standard
% of workforce satisfied with current job	Corporate	60.95%	65.34%	65.34%	80%
% of workforce who take pride in working for Mid Ulster District Council	Corporate	79.48%	84.07%	84.07%	80%
% of workforce who understand council's priorities and how they contribute to them	Corporate	69.91%	78.13%	78.13%	80%

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 2021-22.

Risk Ref Number	Description of Risk	Risk Rating	Mitigation Activity
MC01	Misuse or inconsistent use of the Council's branding	6	Existing brand guidelines have been reviewed and refreshed. 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.	6	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.	4	Monitoring of existing marketing & communications budget is on-going.
MC05	Ineffective internal communications leading to misinformed, demotivated staff.	6	Internal communications have been prioritised in the last year and continue to benefit from enhanced activity.
MC06	Delay or difficulty in converging legacy web and social media sites.	4	Recommendations from a comprehensive social media evaluation continue to be implemented, with 4 further legacy Facebook accounts unpublished.

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)