# Terms of Reference for
# Mid Ulster District Council's Broadband Working Group

## 1.0    BACKGROUND

### 1.1    Purpose of Steering Group

Mid Ulster District Council (The Council) is aware of the significant broadband deficiencies throughout its district.  Through the concerted lobbying and awareness raising with all relevant stakeholders, the area has benefited from a number of improvements but there remains further work to be done in terms of access to quality, reliable broadband provision in many parts of the district.

This position is evidenced in Ofcom's Connected Nations report, which details the particular difficulties in the Mid Ulster District Council area.

In this context, the Council has resolved to establish an elected member Working Group whose specific remit will be to consider broadband related matters including mobile connectivity. The initial Terms of Reference was prepared in September 2018 (Version 1).   A further revision of the Terms of Reference took place in December 2023 (Version 2).

### 1.2    Working Group Membership

1.2.1   The Council has nominated 10 Members to serve on the Broadband Working Group. The current membership (2023/24) is as follows:

SF *(6 Elected Members)*
Councillors Gavin Bell, Sean Clarke, Cora Corry, Brian McGuigan, John McNamee and Sean McPeake

DUP  *(3 Elected Members)*
Councillors Wilbert Buchanan, Clement Cuthbertson and Mark Robinson

SDLP *(1 Elected Member)*
Councillor Karol McQuade

1.2.2   The Chair of the Broadband Working Group will be elected using the D'Hondt method.  Chairperson to rotate on an annual basis.

1.2.3 Council Officers to participate on the Broadband Working Group are as follows;  Assistant Director of Economic Development, Tourism & Strategic Programmes, Head of ICT, Economic Regeneration Service Manager and Economic Development Project/Admin Officers.

## 2.0    MEETINGS

2.1    The Broadband Working Group will meet on a quarterly basis and this will be kept under review.  The Working Group has indicated that where possible, it would prefer to hold meetings in the evening.

2.2     Meetings to be convened either virtually or in person. The extent of business to be transacted will dictate whether meetings should be held in person or virtually.

2.3    Meetings will be quorate when there is an attendance of **3 Members**.  Should the meeting be inquorate 15 minutes after the appointed meeting commencement time, the meeting will not proceed.  Should the meeting become inquorate at any point, the meeting will terminate.

2.4    The Economic Development team will provide secretariat services for the Broadband Working Group meetings.  Minutes of the meetings will take the form of key discussion points and agreed actions.

2.5    Minutes of the meetings are intended for use by and circulation to the Council and Working Group Members.

2.6    Any matters, which are deemed as Confidential will be clearly described as such.

2.7    A schedule of meetings will be agreed and at least 3 working days' formal notice will be given of meetings, together with an Agenda and associated papers.  All communications regarding Working Group Meetings will be provided electronically to Members.

## 3.0    WIDER GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

3.1    The Broadband Working Group does not have any delegated authority from the Council and accordingly, regular reports will be provided to the Council's Development Committee.

3.2    To avoid a delay in progressing Working Group recommendations, where necessary, verbal updates of recommended actions will be provided to the Development Committee with formal written reports to be considered at the next available Committee.

3.3   The Senior Officer with responsibility for the Broadband Working Group is Council's Assistant Director of Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes.  The Deputy Senior Officer is Council's Economic Regeneration Manager.


**4.0   KEY OBJECTIVES**

4.1   The key objectives of the Broadband Working Group is to be a meaningful strategic grouping, which will:

4.1.1   Continue to lobby strategically for investment in the Council area to redress the broadband and mobile deficiencies so that all those in the district who wish to have access to fibre (or equivalent) or better mobile services have the ability to do so;

4.1.2   Meet with relevant stakeholders (Government Departments, statutory, commercial and community representatives) to seek their views and clarify their future investment proposals;

4.1.3   Inform itself as much as possible regarding existing and potential Council initiatives/projects and undertake a gap analysis to identify potential new initiatives;

4.1.4   Assess the "future readiness" of the District to attract new business investment through improved telecoms connectivity;

4.1.5   Consider and input to draft responses to relevant policy consultations for consideration by the Council;


**5.0   REVIEW**

5.1   The Broadband Working Group Terms of Reference will be kept under review.