Report on	Customer Service Policy (draft)
Date of Meeting	3rd April 2015
Reporting Officer	P Moffett, Assistant Director Org. Development, Strategy & Performance
Contact Officer	Arlene McIlwrath, Customer Experience Manager

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 give consideration to the draft Customer Service Policy following a period of review across business teams to reflect legislative and other changes required.
2.0	**Background**
2.1	Conideration has been given to reviewing the Council's Customer Service Policy to reflect changes introduced by the Northern Ireland Public Service Organisation (NIPSO) through the introduction of new complaints handling arrangements for local government.
2.2	The Customer Service Policy (appendix A) has been reviewed and is a coming together of our existing customer service arrangements, establishment of a set of principles to which all employees should work towards in the delivery of our services, customer service standards and standards we expect to receive from our customers when engaging with us.
2.3	The Policy has been in place since the establishment of Council in 2015 and subject to a number of reviews across this period. The policy was inclusive of our compliant handling arrangements. With the introduction of the new complaints regime by NIPSO (the Ombudsman) the complaints handling element has been decanted from the policy, now sitting separate as our Complaints Handling Procedures. It places a statutory duty on Councils to receive, record and monitor complaints in line with guidance, reporting and publication of the data. Further information on the complaints handling procedures in place since January 2024 is accessible from out website at: Mid Ulster DC - Complaints Mid Ulster Complaints Handling Procedures
2.4	As part of the statutory review process, NIPSO Complaint Standards Team has conducted a compliance check on the documentation and measures put in place by Council to meet their complaints handling requirements. NIPSO has reported that our arrangements comply with the requirements of the Public Services Ombudsman Act (NI) 2026.
3.0	**Main Report**
3.1	The policy formalises and places a standard for consistency in how we engage and interact with our customers, irrespective of where and from what area/department they receive the service from. The policy sets in place and reaffirms the customer service principles we expect and will work to continually embed across the organisation within

	public reception areas when greeting the public by telephone; and through written communication, whether this be by electronic means or letter.
3.2	The success of this policy will be its adoption across council and how all staff engage in the principles and standards we set ourselves when serving the public from their area of work/department.
3.3	The Customer Experience Manager supported by the Customer Services & Complaints Officer will be leading on implementation to support departments to embed our principles and standards across Services, to be applied when going about their daily work in serving the people of our District.
3.4	Responsibility for customer service generally across our customer service points and front of house desks in the civic offices rests with Organisational Development, Strategy & Performance Directorate. We provide a supporting role to other directorate to encourage them to embed our customer service principles and standards within their practices and works.
4.0	**Other Considerations**
4.1	**Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications**
	Human: Officer time to manage and monitor ongoing complaints.
4.2	Financial: none specifically identified
4.3	Risk Management: To maintain and grow the reputation of the Council in how it serves the people of Mid Ulster district
5.0	**Screening & Impact Assessments**
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: An Equality Screening has been undertaken as part of the policy review and development, and considerations reflected upon within the final policy draft.
	Rural Needs Implications: Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) has been undertaken and reflected upon.
6.0	**Recommendation(s)**
6.1	That Members give consideration to approving the Customer Service Policy and provide any commentary, as necessary.
7.0	**Documents Attached & References**
7.1	Appendix: Customer Service Policy (draft)