Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

Friday, 27 June 2025

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee to be held in The Chamber, Cookstown and by virtual means at Burn Road, Cookstown BT80 8DT on Thursday, 03 July 2025 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. Notice of Recording
   This meeting will be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast on the Council's You Tube site Live Broadcast Link
2. Apologies
3. 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.
4. Chair's Business

Matters for Decision

5.	Updated draft Performance Improvement Policy	3 - 30
6.	Request to Illuminate Council Properties	31 - 32
7.	Report on Elected Member Development	33 - 36
8.	Annual Progress Return to the Equality Commission for 2024/2025	37 - 78
9.	Updated Corporate Policies	79 - 94
10.	Member Services	

Matters for Information

11.	Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 5 June 2025	95 - 100

12.	Registration Update	101 - 106
13.	Corporate Plan 2024-2028 Annual Progress Report: Year 1 (2024/2025)	107 - 114
14.	Health & Wellbeing Strategy	115 - 136

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

15. Staffing Matters for Decision
16. Procurement of Valuation Services – Update on costs to include IFRS16
17. Treasury Management – Update and Options
18. Chief Executive Appraisal
19. Staffing Matter for Decision - Pension Related

Matters for Information

20. Confidential Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 5 June 2025
21. Staff Matters for Information
22. Contracts and DAC Registers - Update

Report on	To update the committee on the updated draft Performance Improvement Policy.
Date of Meeting	Thursday 3rd of July 2025
Reporting Officer	J Mc Guckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement
Contact Officer	L Jenkins, Corporate Performance & Quality Officer

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

1.0	**Purpose of Report**
1.1	To update the committee on the updated draft Corporate Performance Improvement Policy.
2.0	**Background**
2.1	**Statutory Guidance and Audit** This policy directly addresses the Council's statutory obligation under Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, which places a fundamental "duty of improvement "on all Councils (hereafter referred to as 'The Act'). This duty requires council to make continuous improvements in how it exercises all its functions, encompassing aspects like strategic effectiveness, service quality, service availability, sustainability, efficiency, fairness, and innovation. Improvement for Mid Ulster District Council is about activity that enhances the sustainable quality of life and environment for ratepayers and communities. The vision to improve the economic, social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of Mid Ulster District is at the heart of everything the Council does. Put simply, it means, "getting better all the time."
2.2	The Northern Ireland Audit Office in 2019, in relation to 'proposals for improvement', contained within its annual Performance Audit Report (under Section 95 of The Act), suggested in addition to Council's current performance management framework that, "*Given the statutory nature of the framework, expand upon the current corporate performance management framework to develop a performance improvement policy. Whilst this is not a statutory requirement, we would regard this as good practice*." A policy was previously duly developed and agreed by Council. As the Council's arrangements for meeting its' responsibilities under the Performance duty have matured, a revised Corporate Performance Improvement Policy has been developed (refer to Appendix One), again to complement the Council's performance management framework.

3.0	**Main Report**
3.1	**Aim of Policy and Revisions.** To fulfil the legal requirement of The Act and ensure the Council operates as effectively and efficiently as possible, the Corporate Performance Improvement policy has been revised. The policy establishes the framework and processes for how the Council will plan, monitor, and measure and report on its overall performance. This includes defining our corporate improvement objectives, collecting relevant performance data, and implementing robust governance and oversight. The policy focuses on the Council's corporate performance and its strategic delivery of services, its primary purpose is to ensure our organisation consistently meets its legal duties and delivers high quality public services.
3.2	This is the second iteration of the corporate performance improvement policy, which has been amended post the last Council re-structure, review of the District's Community Plan, development of the new Corporate Plan and reflects a matured approach to performance improvement within Council. The Policy also includes examples of good practice, identified through audit findings, benchmarking with other Councils and outlines corporate performance management, and revisions/additionalities to aid clarity, are found in: • Section 3.0 - Defining Improvement within Council. This has been included as good practice and sets out Council's clear definition within the context of the Local Government (NI) 2014 legislation. • Section 10.0 - Management Reporting and Governance – Highlights performance activity, accountable service, frequency of reports and governance. • Appendix One of the policy - Annual Schedule of Performance Improvement milestones. This includes a table which "at a glance," highlights some of the key Performance Improvement related milestones, that Council is committed to delivering over each year.
3.3	This policy is linked to the Council's Corporate Plan objective 3.4 - Being the Best Council Possible: Ensure our Governance Framework is appropriately integrated within our service delivery models.
4.0	**Other Considerations**
4.1	**Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications**
	Financial: NA
	Human: NA
	Risk Management: N/A.
4.2	**Screening & Impact Statements**
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: Screened Out – No EQIA necessary (no impacts)

	Rural Needs Implications: The policy has no direct linkage to social or economic outcomes for Rural areas and as such a RNIA would be disproportionate
5.0	**Recommendation(s)**
5.1	It is recommended that Mid Ulster District Council approve the draft Corporate Performance Improvement Policy as detailed within Appendix One of this report.
6.0	**Documents Attached & References**
	Appendix One -. Corporate Performance Improvement Policy

Corporate Performance Improvement Policy (vers 1.1)

Document Control			
Policy Owner	Strategic Director of OD, Strategy & Performance		
Policy Author	Corporate Performance & Quality Officer		
Version	Vrs 1.1(draft)		
Consultation	Senior Management Team Yes / No Trade Unions Yes / No		
Equality Screened by	Yes/ No	**Date**	27/03/25
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes or No or N/A	**Date**	NA
Good Relations	Yes or No or N/A		NA
Approved By	(Awaiting P & R approval)	**Date**	
Adopted By	Council	**Date**	
Review Date	01/06/29	**By Whom**	Corporate Performance & Quality Officer
Circulation	Councillors, Staff, Intranet		
Document Linkages	Performance Management Guidance Risk Management Guidance Community, Corporate & Service Plans Personal Contribution and Support Process Guidance		

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Policy Summary

This policy provides details and summarises Mid Ulster District Council's commitment and approach to continuous improvement in its business processes and practice to drive organisational excellence and provide service users, communities, customer, and stakeholder satisfaction.

The Policy also sets out the Council`s approach to performance improvement in accordance with Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, and the requirements and good practice set out by the Department for Communities and the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO).

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Mid Ulster District Council is committed to driving continuous improvement and performance across all service areas within the organisation in pursuance of this policy. Part 12 of the Local Government (Act) 2014 requires Councils to "*make arrangements to secure continuous improvement"* in the exercise of our functions i.e. Council Services, (hereafter referred to as "The Act"). The Act requires councils to set one or more improvement objectives annually and to have appropriate arrangements in place to achieve those objectives.

Improvement is about activity that enhances the sustainable quality of life and environment for ratepayers and communities. The vision to improve the economic, social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of Mid Ulster District is at the heart of everything the Council does. Put simply, it means, "getting better all the time."

The Council has a range of plans, from strategic plans, such as the Community Plan, Corporate Plan, Local Development Plan etc., to operational plans e.g. Directorate Services Plans, down to individual work plans. In addition to the plans and strategies outlined previously, we demonstrate our commitment to continuous improvement in the delivery of our services through the development and implementation of an Annual Performance Improvement Plan (PIP plan).

Continuous improvement is an ongoing process of striving to improve outcomes for service users, communities, staff, partners and the Council through leadership, research, consultation, benchmarking, monitoring, and evaluation.

2.0 AIM/PURPOSE

The policy provides details of Mid Ulster District Council's approach to continuous improvement in its business processes and practices in order to drive organisational excellence and provide stakeholder satisfaction and describes how Council will implement its responsibilities under the Performance Duty as set out in Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014

3.0 DEFINING IMPROVEMENT WITHIN COUNCIL

"Improvement" in the context of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 means more than just quantifiable gains in service output or efficiency, or the internal effectiveness of the Council. Improvement for Mid Ulster District Council focusses on the issues that are important to our citizens and customers and means doing things that will enhance the sustainable quality of life and environment for our citizens, thereby helping us to create a better future for all.

4.0 SCOPE

This policy is applicable to everyone involved in the delivery of Mid Ulster District Council services and is set in the context of the Council's statutory duty for continuous improvement under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 (hereafter referred to as "The Act"). The Council also pays regard to statutory guidance for local government performance improvement; section III of the Act, as issued by the Department of Communities (Guidance for Local Government Performance Improvement 2016).

5.0 POLICY OBJECTIVES

- Mid Ulster District Council is committed to ensuring the achievement of continuous performance improvement is within all areas of the organisation.
- Clearly identify priority areas for performance improvement and align these with Council's hierarchy of plans such as the Community, Corporate Plan, and other strategic plans.
- Employees, members, service users and partners, will be engaged and encouraged to participate in a transparent improvement process, we will provide guidance and encourage all to be involved through consultation regarding improvement objectives and also being able to "have their say" through council communication mediums.
- Develop and publish annual performance improvement plan (PIP plan) in line with the Performance Duty and Guidance issued by the Department for Communities.
- We will establish a workplace where continuous improvement is embedded in the Council's ethos and Culture.
- We will ensure that by using measures, progress is monitored and aligned with our objectives, allowing for timely adjustments to achieve desired outcomes.
- Our approach to continuous improvement will be underpinned by the adoption of best practice such as: regular reviews of projects and services, benchmarking, undertaking regular evaluation, scrutiny, and monitoring of the organisation, thereby establishing areas for development.
- Undertake an annual assessment (annual report) of performance improvement, where we look at assessing the levels of improvement through our PIP plan, corporate improvement projects, measures and performance targets that have been "set for us" (statutory indicators and standards) and "set

by us (local performance measures). Thereafter present and publicise through an annual report.

6.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING & PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK THE GOLDEN THREAD

The strategic planning framework is an inter-linked process. Our planning framework ensures everything is linked in what is known as “Mid Ulster Council’s Golden Thread.” Council ensures all our important plans consider each other - refer to figure one below.

The performance management framework is designed to ensure that Council effectively delivers its strategic objectives and contributes to the broader well-being of the community. It operates through a multi-layered structure of plans and performance indicators, ensuring alignment with the community vision down to departmental/team activities and improvement initiatives. Regular monitoring, tracking, and reporting mechanisms are in place to provide committees, Council, and stakeholders, with a comprehensive understanding of the Council’s performance and progress.

The following diagram below, demonstrates how strategic objectives within the Community and Corporate Plan and other strategies, cascades through to annual service plans and ultimately to everyone’s work objectives. Each plan is supported by a series of Key Performance Indicators (statutory and self–imposed) so we can measure and improve our performance. Appendix One, as well as Figure 3 (page 18) highlights the roles/responsibilities and timelines for developing Council’s hierarchy of plans.

Diagram One: Mid Ulster District Council's Performance Management Framework

Performance management is defined by the Council as "the process by which it defines its objectives, sets out how it will achieve those objectives, reviews progress and revises its processes to improve future outcomes."

The Council has adopted the industry-recognised principle of "Plan–Do-Review-Revise" and this summarises the principles of performance management. We frequently monitor and evaluate our framework to support our "Duty to Improve." The Senior Executive Team, Assistant Directors, Heads of Service, Managers, Supervisors as well as elected members have a responsibility for ensuring implementation of performance management.

The Council's performance management framework is informed by a hierarchy of plans that work together to create a 'line of sight' to deliver key outcomes for Mid Ulster (refer to Diagram Two page 15 – Mid Ulster District Council's Performance

Management Framework – Step Approach to Managing Performance) and descriptors below.

Evidence linked to existing and forecasted data will inform the Council's policy framework, which in turn will inform our planning process. It is important that elements within Councils planning and reporting activities are monitored and reviewed within an annual cycle.

Community Plan

This is a long-term strategic plan developed collaboratively by the Council in partnership with a wide range of people and organisations, from citizens, Community/Voluntary sector partners, private firms, and other statutory organisations. It outlines the shared vision, priorities, and desired outcomes for the wider community over a ten-year period. The Community Plan sets out the vision for improving economic, social, and environmental well-being of the district. The progress and impact of the Community Plan are monitored through agreed upon indicators. Progress reports are provided in the Community Planning Performance Statement which is published every two years and through an annual report. Updates are also provided to the Community Planning Partnership Strategic Board as and when required. Reports are presented to the Policy and Resources committee at regular intervals as and when required, providing feeding back to Members on activity/emerging activity.

Corporate Plan

Our Corporate Plan from 2024 to 2028, provides strategic direction for the Council of the next four years. It shapes our services and sets out objectives (*SMART – refer to page 12), priorities, activities and performance targets and measures against which

Council can measure its success (achieve its strategic priorities). The plan also reflects the resource allocation decisions of the Council. The Corporate plan then provides a framework for departmental service plans, ensuring that everything we do is aimed at achieving objectives and better outcomes for our citizens and partners while achieving the vision for the district. Performance is tracked using key performance indicators (KPI's) related to the Corporate Plan objectives. Regular progress reports are presented to Council, six monthly and annually.

Other Strategic Plans

These are specific, focused plans that address particular areas of the Council's responsibilities. An example of such a plan, is the Local Development Plan, which directs future land use and development within a council area. It sets planning policies to guide decisions on applications and translates regional planning into local strategies, with community input. Other examples are Council's Sustainability Strategy and Climate action plan. These strategic plans are integrated into Council's performance management framework by providing specific objectives and measurable outcomes against which the Council's performance is tracked, monitored, and reported, ensuring alignment with the overall strategic direction.

Performance Improvement Plan

Part 12 of The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 sets out that all Councils are under a general duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions. It sets out a number of Council responsibilities under a performance framework. The Act requires councils to set one or more improvement objectives each financial year and to have in place appropriate arrangements to achieve those objectives (SMART). An Improvement Plan is designed to demonstrate

to citizens and other stakeholders how we will deliver on this duty. Performance update reports are presented quarterly, and a supplemental annual report is also reported.

Annual Directorate Service Plans

Our Strategic Directors, assisted by Assistant Directors and Heads of Service develop annual service or business plans outlining the objectives (SMART) that are linked to the Community, Corporate, PIP and other Strategic plans. They outline the annual Directorate objectives, activities and measures alongside budgets, resources, as well as identifying the roles and responsibilities of each directorate.

Personal Contribution and Support Process

Is being embedded across the organisation and ensures that all staff have a “line of sight” as to how individual or team objectives contribute to their directorate objectives and the Corporate and Community plans. The Personal Contribution & Support Process (PC&SP) continues to form part of our performance improvement and personal development arrangements across the council. Managers and officers continue to be encouraged to engage in this process as part of their conversations, management, and personal development of their reporting staff.

Managing Risk

Effective risk analysis is fundamental to strategic and operational planning, empowering the Council to proactively identify and mitigate potential threats to service delivery and objective achievement. Integrated within the performance framework rigorous risk assessments by staff enable the development of targeted mitigation strategies, ensuring service resilience and supporting the attainment of council

priorities. The establishment and integration of robust risk assessment into operational workflows falls under the purview of those responsible for ensuring service delivery and strategic alignment, while the independent evaluation and verification of these practices rests with those tasked with organisational oversight and control.

** SMART acronym when applied to objectives within a performance framework, stands for: **S**pecific: The objective is clear and well-defined. **M**easurable; Progress towards the objective can be tracked and measured. **A**chievable, the objective is realistic and attainable. **R**elevant; the objective aligns with broad goals and priorities and **T**ime bound; the objectives have a defined deadline or timeframe. Using SMART objectives helps ensure that goals are clear, trackable, and are more likely to be achieved.*

7.0 OUR VALUES

Our core organisational value is integral to achieving council's goals. They provide the foundation for our culture and directly shape our approach to performance improvement and management. By clearly defining and embedding these principles, we aim to create a consistent, ethical, and high-performing environment focused on continuous development and serving our community effectively. The following values outline the framework for this pursuit of excellence.

- **Customer first** – we will engage and listen to our customers to better understand what you want and need and offer excellent access to good quality services.
- **Respect** – we will celebrate diversity and treat everyone equitably and with respect.
- **Excellence** – we will continually improve our services and work towards the best Mid Ulster there can be.
- **Honest and Trustworthy** – we will be open and accountable in developing our plans and delivering services.
- **Innovative** – we will seek to make maximum use of technology and other opportunities to improve services in our district.

8.0 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT WILL BE ACHIEVED BY

Council will:

- Consult on improvement i.e. the Council will “consult with ratepayers, service users or anyone who appears to have an interest in the district when deciding how to discharge its duty under sections 85 and 86 of the Act and as such Council will have an 8-week minimum consultation period on Performance Improvement Objectives. Thus, ensuring meaningful involvement of service users and a willingness to listen and learn from customer experiences and use these to drive improvements.
- Concentrate on what matters most, prioritising what gets done and ensuring there are sufficient resources to do it.
- Promote an organisational culture that supports challenge, learning, innovation, empowerment, and employee engagement.
- Use best practice principles and the adoption of initiatives to ensure performance meets certain external principles/standards.
- Conduct regular assessments/evaluations of the impact all improvement initiatives are having on the services and the organisation.
- Assess whether we are successful in achieving our goals, by identifying and rectifying deficient performance at an early stage (endeavour to bring performance “back on track”), learning from the past performance and improving future performance.
- Utilise the SMART acronym (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound) in performance improvement objectives to provide clear, structures and actionable goals. This also ensures our objectives are well-defined, progress

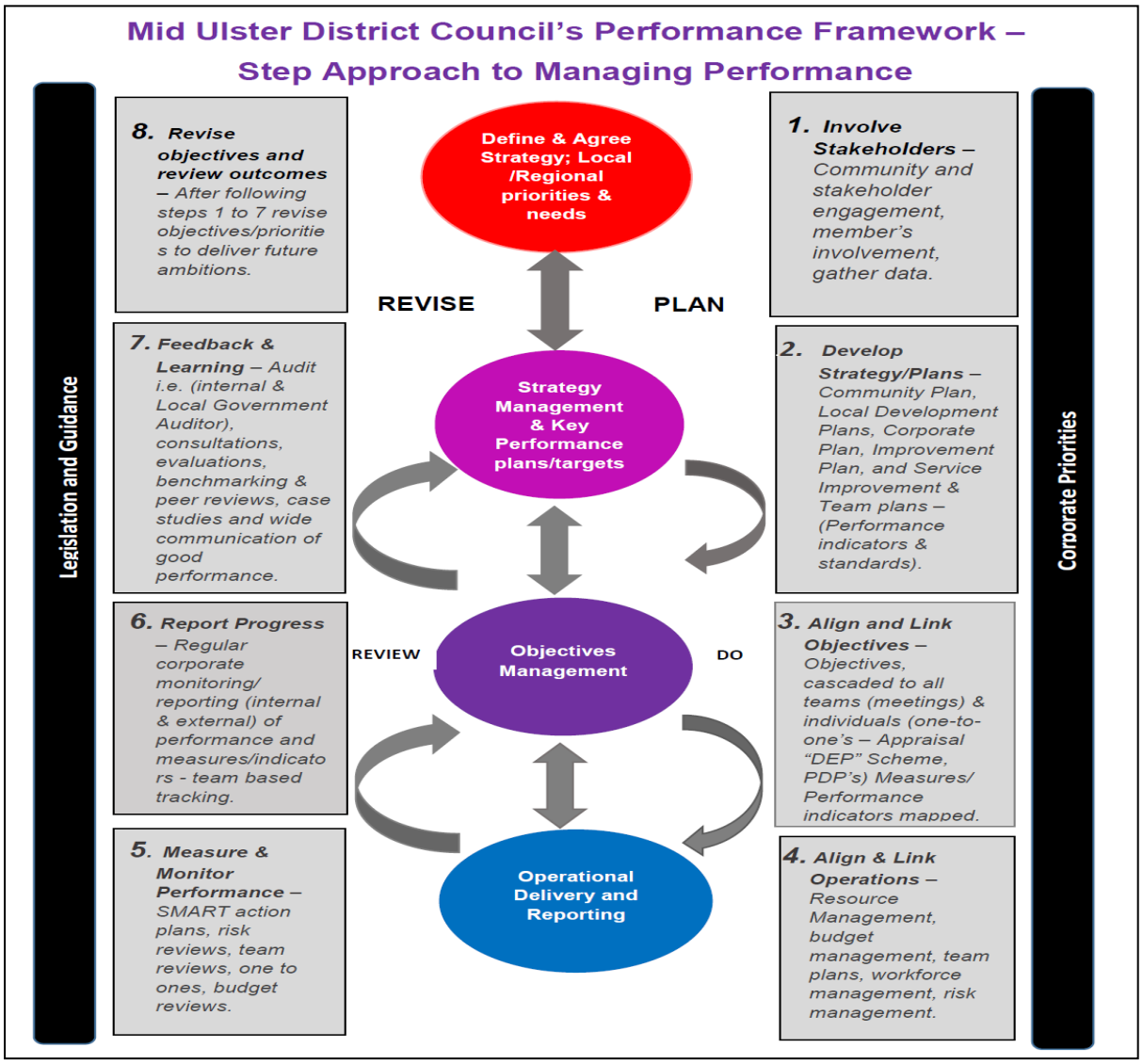
can be tracked, use of baselines, goals are realistic and aligned with broader priorities, deadlines are established for accountability with timely results.

- Focus on delivering outputs and outcomes for services users (via our service plans). The service plans will be presented to their respective oversight committees, as close to the beginning of each financial a year as possible. This is supported by active, visible, and effective management and leadership and by scrutiny, through the presenting of annual service plan performance updates to committee and Council.
- Cultivate project and performance management processes that prioritise and translate aims through to action integrating measures to evaluate success, while recognising and mitigating against risk.
- Ensure effective measurement is in place (robust, authentic, and valid performance data) to ensure that the results can be monitored and scrutinised and that change is happening in the right areas, through the provision of performance reports.
- Enable accountability through transparent reporting systems.
- Recognise and promote improvement efforts.
- Target whole Council and personal professional development (PCSP) will provide significant support in the achievement of the identified improvement goals.
- Benchmark and measure the performance of key processes.
- Utilise the use of effective organisational planning and service modernisation as a vital component in pursuing continuous improvements.
- Put in place validation guidance regarding Council's performance reporting.
- Comply with legislation outlining the General Duty to Improve.
- The Council is committed to its obligations under section 75 (i) and (ii) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. This commitment is demonstrated by allocating the

appropriate time, people, and resources to fulfil our equality duties. The Equality scheme commits us to implementing our duties effectively and in a timely manner alongside implementing performance improvement planning.

- We will also take into account the need to promote positive attitudes to people with a disability and encourage participation of people with a disability in public life. Mid Ulster Council are committed to fulfilling our disability duties and we set out how we intend to do this in our disability action plan.

Diagram Two: Mid Ulster Council's Performance Framework



9.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILIITES

The Council's improvement activities are implemented under an appropriate framework as agreed from time to time, using various methodologies and strategies available therein. Progress on the implementation, tracking and scrutiny of performance will be communicated to the members and relevant committees and Council, the Senior Management Team, and Mid Ulster District Council stakeholders.

- **Councillors:** have a role in adopting the policy, providing a scrutiny role in relation to performance reporting and ensuring that appropriate resources are allocated.
- **Senior Management**: have a role in overseeing the implementation of the policy, analysing information, planning improvements, and evaluation of change.
- **Assistant Directors /Heads of Service**: have a role in implement the continuous improvement policy relevant to their area and across the scope of functions for which they are responsible and act as Senior Responsible Officers (SRO's) for corporate improvement projects (CIPS), as and when required.
- **Services**: some services within the Council take the lead and are accountable for the development, tracking, monitoring, and reporting the various plans linked to performance improvement (golden thread; refer to Figure 3 – Performance Activity, Accountable Service and Governance)
- **Employees:** have a role in responsible for identifying and reporting necessary improvements and engaging in the planning and implementation of improvements

10.0 MANAGEMENT REPORTING & GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Council designed our reporting structures to ensure the proper oversight and accountability for all business; and to provide the Chief Executive, Strategic Executive Team, and Elected Members with assurances that our governance arrangements are robust (refer to figure 3 below Performance Activity and Governance):

- The process for monitoring, tracking, and reporting on the progress of the Performance Improvement function is managed on a day-to-day basis by the Council's Strategic Services and Engagement Team, with significant input from nominated colleagues within each of the Directorates.
- The Policy and Resources Committee assumes a scrutiny, monitoring and approval role for performance improvement and is presented with performance updates and performance information. This is usually on a quarterly/six month/annual reporting cycle.
- The Policy and Resources Committee is responsible for agreeing and recommending both the Performance Improvement Plan and the annual Council Performance Self-Assessment Report.
- The Policy and Resources Committee will be responsible for receiving and accepting all Performance Improvement related Northern Ireland Audit Office annual reports (section 95 NIAO issued report issued by end of November). The Policy and Resources Committee will also receive progress updates against the recommendations set out in such Audit Reports.
- When any concerns are raised by the Committee with regards progress against the Performance Improvement Plan, then this will be reviewed as soon as possible by the Council`s Senior Executive Team, and wider Management Team.
- Each Directorate within Council has a specific responsibility for the following:

1. To identify areas for performance improvement through their service planning framework, and to develop and pursue actions that will help address said areas for improvement.
2. When required, to assist and contribute to the development of Corporate Performance Improvement Plans, Self-Assessment Reports, Performance Improvement Audits, and council performance indicators.
3. To develop and present an Annual Service Plan to their relevant Council oversight Committee, as close to the beginning of each financial business year as possible.
4. Service Plans should always include significant SMART activities, supported by relevant performance measures, and identified areas for improvement, resources, relevant statutory targets, outcomes, and any agreed regional benchmarking measures.
5. To present annual updates to their relevant Council oversight Committee against the activities, measures, targets, and outcomes agreed in their current/previous annual Directorate Service Plans and related activities and measures in the Corporate Plan (co-ordinated in partnership with the Directorate Departmental Business Managers). This is in addition to the regular reports on Corporate/Directorate priorities already brought through respective committees.
6. The above governance structures will ensure that: Performance Management and Improvement is managed across all Council functions.
7. The performance management and improvement process are an integral part of Council operations and key drivers in the development and improvement of functions and services.

8. There will be transparency in relation to how the Council prioritises its performance improvement approach and Elected Members, Staff, Ratepayers, and those interested in the area will have the opportunity to input to and influence how Council prioritises its areas for improvement.
9. A Performance Improvement culture will become embedded in the daily operation of Council services which will assist in the delivery of managing Council performance and continuous improvement and the realisation of opportunities for the Council going forward.
10. The Council's hierarchy of plans have accountable service leads and their teams that are responsible for planning, preparation, through to monitoring, feedback, and revision.

Figure 3 – Performance Activity, Accountable Service and Governance

Plan	Report To	Accountable Service	Frequency
Community Plan	Policy & Resources Committee & Council	OD, Strategy & Performance	Annual Report, Community Planning Performance statement – every 2 years.
	Community Planning Strategic Partnership		
Corporate Plan	Senior Executive Team	OD, Strategy & Performance	Six monthly Annual
	Policy & Resources and Council		
Performance Improvement Plan	Policy and Resources Committee and Council	Strategic Services & Engagement	Quarterly/Six Monthly Annually June
	Senior Executive Team	Strategic Services & Engagement	Quarterly/Six monthly

			Annually June
Annual Retrospective Corporate Performance Improvement Self - Assessment Report	Policy & Resources and Council	Strategic Services & Engagement	Annually September
	Senior Executive Team		
Annual Service (Business) Plans by Directorate	Strategic Director	Per Directorate	Quarterly & PCSP
	Senior Executive Team	Per Directorate	Through relevant papers through committees and annually
	Relevant committee (for noting)	Per Directorate	Annually

We also publish an annual self-assessment report (published in late September). Previous self-assessment reports are available at:

https://www.midulstercouncil.org/your-council/performance/corporate-improvement-plan-objectives/annual-reports

12.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

11.1 **Equality & Rural Screening & Impact**

11.2. **Equality Screening**

The Policy has been subjected to an equality screening and no issues have been identified and not adverse impacts have identified which cannot be mitigated for

11.2 **Rural Needs Impact**

The policy has been subject to a rural needs impact assessment and issues considered, where relevant, in the development of this policy.

11.3 **Staff & Financial Resources**

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

12.0 SUPPORT AND ADVICE

1.21 Advice and guidance on the implementation of this should be sought from the Head of Strategic Services and Engagement and in their absence the Corporate Performance & Quality Officer

13.0 COMMUNICATION

13.1 The relevant service area, Strategic Services and Engagement, is responsible for the communication of this policy.

14.0 MONITORING & REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

14.1 Implementation of this policy will be monitored and a formal review undertaken 24 months from its effective date by the Policy Author in conjunction with the Head of Strategic Services and Engagement to ensure alignment with best practice, legislation, and integration with the council's performance management framework.

Appendix One - Annual Schedule of Performance Improvement milestones

The following table highlights some of the key Performance Improvement related milestones that Mid Ulster District Council is committed to delivering.

This clarity, at the beginning of the year, is planned to assist Elected Members, officers, and citizens in terms of when to expect to see the delivery of specific elements of Council's Performance Improvement Framework.

Month	Annual Milestones
January	Undertake research and review of continued relevancy of current Corporate Improvement Objectives. Six-month Corporate Plan performance measures and activity update presented to Policy and Resources committee by OD, Strategy and Performance Team.
February	Rates set. Paper to Policy and Resources on Draft Corporate Improvement Objectives (CIO's) for incoming year and CIO's public consultation timeline. Nine-month Corporate Performance Update report presented to Policy and Resources. Service plan templates issued.
March	Directorates Work on service plans. Northern Ireland Audit Office Publish Summary Report of Council's section 95 Report published by 31st March. Meeting with Corporate Improvement Projects Senior Responsible Officers by Strategic Services and Engagement Team and CIP projects commence development. Public consultation on CIO's commences.
April	Directorates continue to work on service plans. Public Consultation on CIO's closes .
May	Service plans presented to respective committees (includes review of previous year's performance). Findings from Public Consultation Survey presented to Policy and Resources committee.

Month	Annual Milestones
	CIP project plans developed.
June	Annual Performance Improvement Plan presented to Policy and Resources Committee for approval, ratified by Council and published by June 30th.
July	Twelve-month Corporate Plan Annual Report presented for approval to Policy and Resources committee by OD, Strategy & Performance Team. Begin preparation for Northern Ireland Audit Office Annual Performance Improvement Audit. Annual Performance Improvement self-assessment report collation of qualitative and quantitative data commences.
August	NIAO contacts Council regarding proposed audit timelines etc. No committees.
September	Annual Self - Assessment Report presented to Policy and Resources committee for approval, ratification by Council and published for retrospective year by 30th September (on Council website).
October	Annual Audit fieldwork/sampling etc. and meetings with management undertaken and draft NIAO audit report issued to Council, draft as amended and agreed by CEX and returned to NIAO.
November	Six-month report on Corporate Performance Updates presented to Policy and Resources committee. Local Government Auditor Office forwards final Section 95 Annual Report Directorates begin work on projected activity for new financial year in tandem with Budget discussions.
December	Section 95 Annual Report presented to Policy and Resources committee. Six-month Performance Improvement Report presented to Policy and Resources committee. Activity and performance improvement reporting cycle for year ahead agreed.

Report on	Request(s) to Illuminate Council Property
Date of Meeting	3 July 2025
Reporting Officer	Joseph McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement
Contact Officer	Eileen Forde, Committee and Member Services 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 consider requests received to illuminate and light up the Council's three designated properties to raise awareness for the following: • PVHN Support & Awareness – World PVNH Disorder Awareness Day – 7 August 2025 Colour: Pink & Yellow • Versus Arthritis – World Arthritis Day – 12 October 2025 Colour: Blue
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 Burnavon, Bridewell and Ranfurly House.
2.2	The policy confirms that requests are considered by the Council's Policy and Resources Committee. Should the scheduling of the committee not permit requests being considered within the timeframes for determination, they can be presented to monthly Council.
3.0	**Main Report**
3.1	The Council has received correspondence from organisations requesting that consideration be given to lighting up our three designated council properties. Requests for consideration and recommendation by Committee: • PVHN Support & Awareness – World PVNH Disorder Awareness Day – 7 August 2025 Colour: Pink & Yellow • Versus Arthritis – World Arthritis Day – 12 October 2025 Colour: Blue

3.2	**Scope of the Council Arrangements** 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.
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: Council policy and procedural arrangements have been referred to.
	Rural Needs Implications: Not applicable
5.0	**Recommendation(s)**
5.1	That it be recommended to Council to: • PVHN Support & Awareness – World PVNH Disorder Awareness Day – 7 August 2025 Colour: Pink & Yellow • Versus Arthritis – World Arthritis Day – 12 October 2025 Colour: Blue
6.0	**Documents Attached & References**
	None

Report on	Elected Member Development Working Group
Date of Meeting	3 July 2025
Reporting Officer	Joseph McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services & Engagement
Contact Officer	Eileen Forde, Committee & Member Services 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 receive and consider the report of a meeting of the Elected Member Development Working Group held on 28 May 2025
2.0	**Background**
2.1	The Council through the Elected Member Development Steering Group has Level 1 Charter Status for Elected Member Development and is working towards a review together with progressing to Charter Plus.
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	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 28 May 2025 • To encourage use of Skill Gate E Learning sessions,giving the opportunity to sign in and complete training modules, would be scheduled prior to committee meetings once a month commencing 2 July 2025 at 5.30pm. • That Officers deliver Chair and Standing Order Training.
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 and recommendations of the Elected Member Development Steering Group meeting, and actions contained, held on 28 May 2025
6.0	**Documents Attached & References**
6.1	Appendix A: Report of Elected Member Development Steering Group

Report of Elected Member Development Steering Group of Mid Ulster District Council held on 28 May 2025 at 5.30pm

Attendees **Members:** Councillors Corry(Chair), F Burton, Carney*, Groogan, Mullin*, McLernon*
Officers: E Forde, Committee & Member Services Manager, S McAleer Corporate L&D Manager
In Attendance: None

AGENDA	MATTERS AGREED	ACTIONS & RESPONSIBILITY
1.0	**Apologies**	
	Councillors J Buchanan, Johnston Officers: J McGuckin HoSSE	
2.0	**Training Update Progress and Plan May 2025**	
	AGREED: That (i) E Learning 1-1 sessions would take place prior to committee meetings commencing 2 July 2025 at 5.30pm (ii) Chair and Standing Order Training take place June/July 2025. **NOTED:** That (i) NILGA E Learning Opportunities (ii) Training Uptake January – May 2025 (iii) Current proposed NILGA Leadership programme postponed until autumn.	CMSM CLDM HoSSE & CMSM

3.0	**Summary of Training Evaluation**	
	NOTED: Training Evaluations Responses **AGREED:** To continue using current training evaluation form and encourage Members to provide comprehensive feedback.	**CMSM** **Members**
4.0	**Local Democracy Events Update**	
	NOTED: Members noted update on promotion and engagement events.	**HoSSE & CMSM in conjunction with Communities & Place**
5.0	**Charter Status Update**	
	NOTED: Members noted that NILGA would be providing confirmation of dates for Charter assessment September 2025.	**HoSSE & CMSM**
6	**Review of Elected Member Development Policy**	
	AGREED: To accept changes as discussed and report to September Working Group for final approval.	**HoSSE & CMSM**
6.0	**Report of Elected Member Development Working Group**	
	NOTED: Members noted the Report of Elected Member Development Working Group 19 February 2025	
8.0		
Meeting concluded at 18.00 pm		

Report on	Annual Progress Return to the Equality Commission for 2024/2025
Date of Meeting	3 July 2025
Reporting Officer	Joseph McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement
Contact Officer	Ann McAleer, Policy Engagement and Equality Officer

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

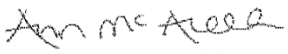
1.0	**Purpose of Report**
1.1	To consider Mid Ulster District Council's Annual Progress Report for the period 2024 -25 on meeting the statutory equality and good relations duties as detailed within Section 75(1) and 75(2) of the N Ireland Act 1998.
2.0	**Background**
2.1	Mid Ulster District Council is bound by Section 75 of the N Ireland Act 1998. Section 75(1) requires that the council gives due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between groupings/categories as detailed within the Act and Section 75(2) requires that regard be given to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.
2.2	The council's overarching document and framework around which it fulfils its statutory duties is its Equality Scheme. The Annual Progress Report (2024-2025) sets out to what extent the Council has demonstrated fulfilment of its statutory duties to promote equality and good relations through its Equality Scheme.
2.3	The Equality Commission has requested that a progress report be made available and published on Council's website.
3.0	**Main Report**
3.1	The Annual Progress Report for the period 2024-25 is attached as Appendix A. It reports on aspects of the council's Equality Scheme and how it has been implemented over the period.
3.2	The Annual Progress Report for the reporting period 2024-25 is required to be submitted to the Equality Commission by the end of August.
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: An RNIA of this information would not be appropriate or proportional.
5.0	**Recommendation(s)**
5.1	It is recommended that the Council approves the Annual Progress Report (2024-25) on the implementation and activity surrounding its Equality and Good Relations statutory duties.
6.0	**Documents Attached & References**
6.1	Appendix A: Mid Ulster District Council Annual Progress Report (2024-25) Appendix 1: MUDC Accessible Communications Guidelines

Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties

Annual Progress Report

Contact details:

• Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme	Name: Ann McAleer Telephone: 03000 132 132 Email: ann.mcaleer@midulstercouncil.org
• Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan	As above ☒ Name: Click or tap here to enter text. Telephone: Click or tap here to enter text. Email: Click or tap here to enter text.
Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:	https://www.midulstercouncil.org/your-council/equality
Signature:	

This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission.

It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties, and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans.

This report reflects progress made between April 2024 and March 2025

PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme

Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice

1 In 2024-25, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.

Equality Scheme and Equality Action Plan

- Council continues to implement its Equality Scheme which directly influences policies, practices, and service delivery. Details of Policy screening completed during the reporting period are available on www.midulstercouncil.org/equality
- One Good Relations Working Group meeting was held during this reporting period.
- Mid Ulster Council was also represented at NILGA and the Local Government Local Government Diversity Ambassador Programme events that have been held during the reporting period. Via these events, the Council's Diversity Ambassadors are encouraged and equipped to actively promote the equality and diversity agenda across local government as attempts are made to emulate best practice from across the sector and in order to integrate the priorities of the Equality and Diversity Group throughout the organisation.
- During the 24/25 financial year, the council invested over £1.2m across 800 grant applications with key elements of support for Good Relations, Social Inclusion, Tackling Social Need. These initiatives provided positive impacts across Section 75 categories.
- The Council has contracted Mid Ulster Advice Services that supports approx. 30,000 clients across a wide range of issues focusing on Welfare, Employment and Migration. This initiative has also provided positive impacts across Section 75 categories.
- The Council has provided focused programme delivery in relation to Women, Youth, Poverty, Disability, Seniors, Environment, Arts & Culture, Health & Wellbeing with each programme providing positive impacts across Section 75 categories.

Policy & Service Delivery:

- The Council continues to encourage the use of JAM (Just A Minute) Cards at Council facilities.
- Council buildings were lit up on numerous occasions during 2024/25 to mark numerous events, disabilities and conditions.
- The Council continues to deliver the Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP). It has been established as part of the Department for Communities' (DfC) Employability NI programme, which aims to design, procure and implement a fresh suite of employability initiatives to support people into meaningful employment. During this reporting period the LMP has reported the following achievements:
  - In 2022 the Mid Ulster employment rate for disabled people was 42.3%, which was a considerable improvement on the 2021 rate of 24%. This has meant that Mid Ulster has moved from having the largest disability employment rate gap in Northern Ireland of 54.9pps to one of the lowest in 2022 of 37.7pps
  - In 2022 Mid-Ulster had the largest employment rate gap for women in Northern Ireland. However, the female employment rate at 68.3% is now only just below the Northern Ireland average female employment rate of 69.2%.
- Mid Ulster District Council's Age Friendly Co-ordinator has continued to develop and implement an Age Friendly Strategy for the District. Her actions and activities during the reporting period are detailed below:
  - The vision of the age friendly strategy and action plan is that Mid Ulster is an Age-Friendly district where older people are valued, engaged and supported to live healthy, active, fulfilling lives. The strategy and action plan addresses issues with regards to digital inclusion, rural transport, loneliness and social isolation, and housing options all which impact on disadvantaged communities.
  - The Age friendly co-ordinator is involved in numerous networks and steering groups to identify the needs within the community and to support inclusive and collective working. Networks and groups include Mid Ulster Agewell, Mid Ulster Seniors Network, Mid Ulster Age Friendly Alliance, Mid Ulster Loneliness Network and Mid ulster Disability Forum. At meetings members are given the opportunity to voice matters including issues, challenges and experiences within their communities.
  - The Age friendly co-ordinator works with community groups throughout the year to provide projects and activities. Groups have the opportunity to liaise with the Age friendly co-ordinator to determine what projects/activities meet their needs. Evaluations, feedback and OBAs are used to monitor and evaluate community development activities.
  - The Age friendly co-ordinator is a member of the Mid Ulster Loneliness network steering group. The network aims to engage, raise awareness, initiates actions and opportunities to address loneliness and increase opportunities for socialisation particularly for those living in rural areas. It has been highlighted in

the network the number of residents in Mid Ulster living in a rural area and the need to provide more projects/activities in rural areas so the recent small grants programme encouraged applications from rural areas, however all members no matter where they're located should consider this when applying. As well as this two larger Take 5 Celebration events have taken place in very rural areas within the district.

- Sport NI funding this year was used to support 3 rural areas in the district to enable those who have specific needs in rural areas including transport to avail of a 5-week physical activity programme.
- The Age friendly co-ordinator works closely with a range of organisations and groups to meet the accessibility needs for older adults including Mid Ulster Disability Forum, Mid Ulster Loneliness network, Mid Ulster Seniors Network, Shopmobility, Gobility, RNID, Deafblind NI, Dementia and Alzheimer's NI and STEP NI to influence and improve practice in delivering the Age friendly agenda.
- The Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan outlines ways in which accessibility needs for older adults can be addressed. The plan looks at the need for more opportunities to support and promote active ageing, removing barriers to older people to ensure they are more respected, valued and included. The plan aims to increase involvement, respect and inclusion with older people feeling more valued. The plan also addresses ways in which to have an effective communication system that enhances well-being, so that as we age, we can continue to be informed and engage in our community with the confidence of support.
- The Age Friendly co-ordinator continues to work closely with other council departments including:
    - Communication department to share Age Friendly information via a variety of age friendly communication channels including news articles and social media channels.
    - The Age friendly co-ordinator has worked alongside the Equality officer and an Accessibility Guidance Principles document has been developed. Training has been provided internally to staff.
    - Sessions have been delivered by the Equality officer to the seniors network on the Digital Accessibility work.
    - Age friendly co-ordinator is making service users aware of the Councils Corporate Improvement Objectives Consultation 2025 – 2026 as part of the public sessions that are taking place.
- Age friendly co-ordinator liaises and attends sessions provided by the Digital transformation team within council to keep older people up to date regarding services that are going digital including dog licensing/registrations of births/deaths etc
- Other achievements/work throughout the reporting year included:

- An opportunity arose through the Centre for Ageing Better to offer up to 14 participants from rural Age-friendly Communities, to engage in an Action Learning set, to connect and problem-solve peers. The Age friendly co-ordinator took part and completed six 2.5hr online sessions, as part of a group meeting every 3–5 weeks. The sessions where action-oriented, problem-solving approach rooted in the idea that people learn best from what they are doing and that they have an unlimited capacity to learn from experience. Action learning promotes fresh thinking and new ways of looking at and dealing with situations and is, as the name suggests, action-orientated. Learning and reflection happens in a small, facilitated group or 'set' of people with the intention of moving issues forward. Individuals learn with and from each other by working on their own particular situations and reflecting on their experience.

- The Age friendly co-ordinator presented the Mid Ulster Age Friendly Action Plan Yearly Impact report to the members including the below highlights:
  - 19 members on the Age Friendly Alliance, with 4 task groups, 100 + engagement with others.
  - £18,000 additional funding brought in for activities and projects.
  - Weekly Walks and Chats – 35 members, along with chatty benches.
  - 30th September walk leader training available.
  - Deaf-positive library – books for additional needs.
  - Winter and Spring Copies of Newsletters.
- Additional PHA slippage monies identified to support older people. The monies contributed to the design, print and distribution of 1000 x MUDC quarterly Age Friendly newsletters per quarter. Support greater participation in Council-led Older People's events through provision of venue hire and catering. The Delivery of 4 x arts and crafts workshops for older people during Positive Ageing Month 2024.
- Funding secured through the Northern Health and Social Care Trust to run 3 afternoon tea dances including a Christmas event to support the over 50's forum.
- The Age-Friendly co-ordinator continues to support the Age Friendly Alliance meetings, reporting to senior management and elected members with updates on progress. The Age-Friendly co-ordinator continues to facilitate quarterly Age-Friendly Alliance meetings ensuring all relevant stakeholders and the over 50's forum remain engaged, including having internal meetings with Council strategic leads to deliver on the Age Friendly agenda.
- The Age Friendly co-ordinator has consulted and communicated with older people giving them the opportunity to link up to generate ideas and interest for programming of content for October. The programme was published in the Autumn edition of the "Live Happy" newsletter and copies distributed to older

people using a variety of communication methods including a published booklet and online/socials. Positive feedback has been received throughout the month of October on activities provided including: “very successful tea dance, good food, great dancing and just brilliant, lovely, friendly and had everything well organised”,“more events like these please” and “met new friends”

- Age friendly co-ordinator attended the Age-friendly Communities Conference on 26th-27th March 2025 at Chamber Space, Manchester. This conference aimed at practitioners within the UK Network offered an invaluable space to build collaboration and share learning in the creation of Age-Friendly Communities. Themes for the event included diversity and inclusion, measuring impact, the built environment and enabling older people's voice. The event featured a dynamic programme of panels, workshops and networking opportunities.

2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2024-25 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Theme 1: Accessibility of Council Services, Facilities and Events

Action 1b: Increased accessibility at Council facilities for parents and carers

Accessible and user friendly spaces created for parents and carers within Council facilities

During the reporting period, a screening was carried out in relation to delivery of corporate events. As a result of the mitigation requirements identified via the screening (which was also informed by the monitoring of participation at previous events) the following accessibility arrangements have been put in place:

Accessibility requirements have become a key consideration in the planning and delivery of all Council events. Where appropriate space can be made available, a designated quiet space is provided to support the needs of neurodivergent individuals, with a selection of sensory equipment available for those who wish to make use of the space.

Accessible car parking is offered at event sites, and at two events, an accessible community bus service was provided to assist with the transportation of attendees to and from the venue. Accessible toilet facilities are available at each event, with pre-event promotional media also directing attendees to the nearest Changing Places facility.

Site accessibility is carefully considered, including the location of dropped kerbs and other measures to improve ease of movement throughout the area. At one event, a wheelchair-accessible ramp was installed to enable a local choir member to access the stage.

Through our pre-event marketing, we communicate expected peak times to help attendees plan their visit. In the case of fireworks displays, the scheduled firing times are promoted in advance to support families who may wish to attend only for the display, or alternatively, to participate in the event and leave before the display begins.

During this reporting period, Mid Ulster District Council have been successful in obtaining funding from Department for Communities to develop and produce a Plan Shaping Plan for Cookstown (2025-2040). The aim of the Place Shaping Plan is to improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of Cookstown. Following extensive research and collaborative engagement with the people who live, work,

invest and visit Cookstown, the Plan will outline a vision for the town, and set out a tangible, achievable roadmap of actions up to 2040. This Plan will inform the responsibilities of key stakeholders on the delivery of initiatives over the next fifteen years, subject to funding. This project has been equality screened at an early stage to ensure that it provides positives outcomes for all S75 groups. Protected groupings will be encouraged to participate in the project design and implementation.

Theme 3: Participation Levels

Theme 3c: Provide a Digital First but not Digital Only Approach to Service Delivery

A 2024/25 Council Corporate Improvement Objective was to: 'Develop digital accessibility and digital inclusion by design guidance and training materials for Council's transformational team'. This project resulted in the development of: Mid Ulster District Council's Accessible Communications Guidance Principles: Making Accessible Practice, Common Practice. This guidance was developed in consultation with the Mid Ulster Disability Forum (MUDF). The local Age Alliance Forum was also consulted in person. The guidance inclusive practice in relation to fonts, design and layouts, images, digital communication practices, videos and appropriate language.

Theme 4: Partnership Working

Theme 4a: Explore partnerships working opportunities that place a focus on Good Relations

During the reporting period the Council's Good Relations team delivered the following programmes for children and young people; Youth Engagement Programme (223 participants), Shared Youth Resilience Development Programme (676 participants) and the Mid Ulster Youth Voice which was delivered in partnership with Education Authority Youth Service (16 participants). A Cultural Diversity Programme was also developed during this reporting period.

3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☒ Yes

☐ No (go to Q.4)

☐ Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

The Council's new Volunteering Policy which received Council approval in January 2025.

3a With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas, what **difference was made, or will be made, for individuals**, i.e. the impact on those according to Section 75 category?

During the reporting period a new Volunteering Policy was developed by the Council. An equality screening was developed at an early stage in the process. During the information gathering and equality screening of the policy, it was clear that the policy needed to be flexible and also address barriers to volunteering that are experienced by some Section 75 groupings. Amendments made to the policy included the development of a section of the policy guidance which highlights common barriers to volunteering and how to address them e.g. accommodating a lack of knowledge or experience, providing flexibility in relation to levels of time commitments and ensuring to create various type of opportunities.

3b What aspect of the Equality Scheme prompted or led to the change(s)? *(tick all that apply)*

☒ As a result of the organisation's screening of a policy *(please give details):*

The screening highlighted that to create equality of opportunity, people from all section 75 groups

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme commitments and action plans/measures

Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

4 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☒ Yes, organisation wide

☐ Yes, some departments/jobs

☐ No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment

☐ No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☒ Yes, organisation wide

☐ Yes, some departments/jobs

☐ No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment

☐ No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

6 In the 2024-25 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

☒ Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan

☐ Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning

☐ Yes, in some departments/jobs

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

☐ No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2024-25 report

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2024-25 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:

5

Actions ongoing:

9

Actions to commence:

0

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

Theme 4: Partnership Working

Theme 4a: Explore Partnership Opportunities that place a focus on health and wellbeing

The Council's Labour Market Partnership also delivered a Neurodiversity in the Workplace Training Event, on Thurs 20th March in Magherafelt. This event was delivered in conjunction with the Partnership's Disability and Health Awareness Working Group. The Labour Market Partnership also provided an Employer-led Disability Inclusion Programme during the reporting period, it resulted in 16 participants being enrolled, 16 employers being engaged and 9 programme completers successfully securing employment.

In addition the Council's Chairperson attended the following events to promote the valuable work being carried out within the Community and Voluntary sector:

- Tourette's Support NI Information in Parliament Buildings, Stormont
- The Official opening of new sensory provision at the Tobin Centre,
- Promotional events for Good Relations Week
- The Launch of the Youth Voice
- The Launch of Dyslexia and Dyspraxia Support new Transitions Project

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2024-25 reporting period *(points not identified in an appended plan)*:

No amendments were made to the equality action plan/measures during this reporting period.

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2024-25 reporting period, the following have been identified: *(tick all that apply)*

☒ Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality

☐ Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way

☐ Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities

☐ Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

10 Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance: *(tick one box only)*

☒ All the time

☐ Sometimes

☐ Never

11 Please provide any details and examples of good practice in consultation during the 2024-25 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

The Maghera Public Realm demonstrated good practice in relation to public consultation via the use of the following method using the following engagement methods to communicate with the user, residents and business community in Maghera:

1. Town Centre Forum Meetings

The Maghera Town centre forum is a strategic body that provides advice and guidance to Strategic Bodies and others regarding the growth of Maghera Town Centre. The Membership of the Town Centre Forum will be made up as follows:

- Carntogher DEA Members (5)
- Maghera Development Association Representative (1)
- Transport NI (1)
- Department for Communities (1)
- Community Development Representative (1)
- Planning Service (1)
- Translink (1)
- PSNI (1)
- Maghera Town Centre Traders (5)
- Mid Ulster Disability Forum (1)
- Maghera Community Groups Representative (2)

Throughout the planning and work of the Public Realm Scheme engagement with this group has been paramount. Scheduled meeting took place on the following dates:

- 15 April 2024
- 4 September 2024
- 23 January 2025
- 20 March 2025
- 4 June 2025

During each meeting the Contractor CivCo presented an update on the progress and were available to answer any queries from the members.

2. Shared Communication Register online –

A Maghera Public Realm Scheme email address and 24hr hotline number were developed for the public to raise any issues or concerns. Each query raised through this system was registered on a shared register between the Contractor / Council / Consultants. The

register logged information relating to the query, who dealt with the issue, how it was to be resolved and the follow up required.

From time to time this necessitated one to one meetings with various members of the public to discuss the issue to find a suitable solution.

3. Contractor Monthly Newsletter

Each month the contractor developed an update for the business and community in Maghera. This was issued to the Maghera Town Centre Forum members, businesses and residents within the town centre and profiled on the Council's Social Channels

4. Meet the Contractor Event – 29 May 2024

Significant community and stakeholder engagement was undertaken before the scheme commenced to update key groups on implementation plans including Carntogher DEA members, Maghera Town Centre Forum, and Disability groups. An all-day "Meet the Contractor" event also took place on 29th May 2024. It provided an opportunity for the public to drop in and see images of the scheme on a street-by-street basis, and provided them with an opportunity to discuss any queries or concerns with both the Contractor and Council. Most attendees were from the business community, and the next largest grouping were residents. It improved awareness around site specific issues such as deliveries to premises and access issues that will need to be managed as part of implementation arrangements.

5. One to One meeting – Landowners

Work needed to take place in relation to land matters where consents or legal agreements were required. The aim to close these out prior to construction commencement in the relevant work phases required engagement with numerous property owners prior to commencement of works. One to one meetings and conversations took place to get agreement of works that would take place in private areas and ensure that the legal agreements were drafted and signed prior to works commencing.

12 In the 2024-25 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently <u>used</u> by consultees**: *(tick all that apply)*

☒ Face to face meetings

☒ Focus groups

☒ Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing

☒ Questionnaires

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

☐ Internet discussions

☐ Telephone consultations

☐ Other *(please specify)*: Click or tap here to enter text.

Please provide any details or examples of the uptake of these methods of consultation in relation to the consultees' membership of particular Section 75 categories:

In addition to the consultative methods detailed in Question 11 An Accessibility Site Assessment was also held in relation to this project.

A site walkover of Maghera Public Realm Scheme for various Disability Groups to review the current measures in place for people using the town was planned at various stages of the project. The first site walkover took place on Wednesday 18 September at 4pm and representatives from the Mid Ulster Disability Forum, Town Centre Forum and additional Disability Groups were invited to attend.

Following on from this a further site walkover was carried out on Friday 4 April 2025 to review the current measures in place for people using the town.

Notes from each site walkover were developed and adaptations were made in areas where the surface or mechanisms in place were challenging for users.

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ Not applicable – no commitment to review

Arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

https://www.midulstercouncil.org/your-council/equality

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

33

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2024-25:

Click or tap here to enter text. Policy consultations conducted with **screening** assessment presented

0 Policy consultations conducted **with an equality impact assessment** (EQIA) presented.

0 Consultations for an **EQIA** alone.

17 Please provide details of the **main consultations** conducted on an assessment (as described above) or other matters relevant to the Section 75 duties:

Consultation on Draft Sustainability Strategy and Climate Action Plan

Consultation on the Addendum to The Waste Management Plan

Proposed Changes to Household Waste Recycling Centres

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

☐ Yes

☒ No concerns were raised

☐ No

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Arrangements for publishing the results of assessments (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

19 Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Arrangements for monitoring and publishing the results of monitoring (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

20 From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes

☐ No, already taken place

☒ No, scheduled to take place at a later date

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details:

Click or tap here to enter text.

21 In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies? *(tick one box only)*

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Digital Accessibility Guidance document development

22 Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2024-25 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

During this reporting period, no differential/adverse impacts have been identified via monitoring arrangements.

23 Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery planning or policy development:

The Council's Good Relations and Health and Wellbeing Teams have both completed detailed monitoring of their programmes. This data collected was examined and has informed their programme planning and strategy development for future initiatives.

Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)

24 Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2024-25, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

During this period the Council delivered the following training relating to the requirements of 5.4. of the Equality Scheme:

- 21 members of staff received Level 2 Equality and Diversity Awareness training.
- 6 Senior Officers were trained in Equality and Diversity Level 3 by John Kremer.
- 30 members of staff received Monitoring training.
- 8 members of staff received equality screening training.
- 14 members of the Senior Management and Senior Executive team received Race Relations training.
- 12 members of staff received Policy Development and Review training.

During this period 23 managers and 16 officers attended Dignity at Work Training.

25 Please provide **any examples** of relevant training shown to have worked well, in that participants have achieved the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the stated objectives:

14 members of the Senior Management and Senior Executive team received Race Relations training in January 2025. The session was pre-empted by fact finding questionnaires regarding how the managers perceived their department's management of race relations requirements. The face-to-face training was followed up on with a distribution of the outputs of the questionnaires and a connected relevance to each service area.

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

26 Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2024-25, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

The usage of the Council's accessibility communication tools that are available on the Council's website are monitored to ensure regular uptake by the public. These services include online translation and sign language via a virtual relay service. The website itself is monitored weekly to ensure it remains accessibility compliant. The Council has also developed accessible guidance for communications practices as detailed on page 8.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

27 How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2024-25?

Insert number here: 1

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

The Council was the subject of an unlawful discrimination case which related to accessing the Council's Registration services. The case was settled without admission of liability.

Section 3: Looking Forward

28 Please indicate when the Equality Scheme is due for review:

2026

29 Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangements (screening/consultation/training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period? *(please provide details)*

The Council will continue to focus on ensuring all relevant training is provided to Officers. The Council will also be preparing information gathering and scoping methods in preparation for

the review of its Equality Scheme, DAP and EAP which will occur during the next reporting period.

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

☐ Employment

☒ Goods, facilities and services

☐ Legislative changes

☐ Organisational changes/ new functions

☐ Nothing specific, more of the same

☐ Other (please state):

Click or tap here to enter text.

PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans

1. Number of action measures for this **reporting period** that have been:

7	4	-
Fully achieved	Partially achieved	Not achieved

2. Please outline below details on all **actions that have been fully achieved** in the reporting period.

2 (a) Please highlight what **public life measures** have been achieved to encourage disabled people to participate in public life at National, Regional and Local levels:

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs[i]	Outcomes / Impact[ii]
National[iii]	Council responses to public consultations	The Council has responded to numerous public consultations on issues that will impact upon people with disabilities.	Lobbying for better provision of service of S75 groups including people with disabilities.
Regional[iv]	Mid Ulster Sports Arena Disability Hub	Access activities provided to disability support organisations and individuals from across the region who have a disability.	Tailored inclusive activities.
Local[v]	Inclusive Leisure Service Activities	During the reporting period the following leisure activities were: 1. Neurodivergent Summer	Neurodivergent Summer Scheme Outcome: Inclusive provision of a multi-activity club focusing on

		Scheme 2. Chair Based Aerobics 3. Teen Intervention 4. All Stars 5. Move More: or now cancer free	facilitating children and young people with Neurodivergent needs to do things at their own pace, and to enjoy movement and fun games. Chair Based Aerobics Outcomes: Provision of accessible exercise for individuals with mobility or balance issues to exercise whilst seated. Teen Intervention: the delivery of a multisport activities for children with a learning disability or physical disability. The sessions promote inclusion and offering alternative social outlets to those not requiring respite or befriending services. All Stars: A multi-activity club focusing on facilitating primary school aged children with SEN to do things at their own pace and to enjoy movement and fun games. Move More: Provides a programme for all people who have had a cancer diagnosis and are at any stage of their cancer journey or now cancer free.

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Develop, deliver and implement a programme of awareness training for Council Officers	The following training/awareness raising sessions we delivered for staff during 2024/25: • 16 members of staff received Autism Impact Award training • 6 Equality and Diversity Level 2 sessions were delivered, training 48 members of staff • 17 Senior Officers were trained in Equality and Diversity Level 3 by John Kremer • 19 members of staff received Disability Awareness Training • 8 members of staff received Equality Screening Training	These sessions covered various topics/types and aspects relating to disability. The overall impact from the sessions was to increase awareness of disability and associated reasonable adjustments. Evaluations received following these sessions were extremely positive and indicated that the majority of attendees would immediately be able to apply the skills and knowledge acquired during the sessions.
2	Develop, deliver and implement a programme of awareness training for Elected Members	Relevant training that members attended an Equality and Good Relations training session and Safeguarding training.	Increased awareness of the Council's statutory Equality and GR duties.

2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Integrate our Disability duties into policies, programmes, plans and strategies	Improved accessibility of Council's website. The Council's website continues to adhere to the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.	The website also continues to provide accessibility functions e.g. via the provision of audio format, larger font, accessible colour contrasting. An officer and service delivery guidance document has also been developed to promote the highest levels of digital accessibility possible. It is attached as Appendix 1.
2	Develop and implement effective means of communication for people who have hearing loss	The Council continues to monitor and promote the provision of support systems for people who have hearing loss.	The provision of video relay system for sign language users, speak capability, hearing loop system continues to ensure increased accessibility of Council communications.
3	Ensure accessibility details for buildings and events are available on the Council's webpages	Ranfurly House in Dungannon has implemented additional accessibility measures during this reporting period. This was part working toward achieving Autism Impact Award status. As part of this work the following information pack has been developed:	Providing this information online provides customers with an increased awareness of the accessibility of various Council venues and services. Having accessibility information prior to attending an event or visiting a Council facility is likely to encourage people with a disability to use these venues.

		https://www.hilloftheoneill.com/site/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/ASD-Friendly-Information-Pack.pdf	

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Illumination of Council buildings	Council buildings were illuminated numerous times throughout the year in order to raise awareness of various types of disabilities and the organisations who support them.	Illuminating Council facilities raises awareness in relation to various types of disabilities and encourages others to do likewise. It also recognises the impact particular disabilities have on residents of the District.
2	'Changing Places' facilities included in capital build projects (where a need is established).	Increased accessibility at Council facilities.	6 Changing Places to be registered by Mid Ulster District Council ahead of the 2026 deadline. This achievement has made a mix of rural and urban areas more accessible to visitors who require the enhancements included changing places facilities.
3	Appoint a Disability Champion at officer and elected member level to progress the disability duties	Both Officer and Elected Member roles have been filled.	The Council is working with LGSC to promote diversity in inclusion in relation to both internal and external Council matters.

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

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1	Equality Proof our Community Plan	The Council's Community Plan has been equality screened again in the previous reporting period.	Intermittent screening of the Community Plan ensures that there is continued promotion of equality of opportunity.
2	Maintain Council's Partnership working with MUDF and with other Disability Support Services/Groups	During the period enhance the direct consultation information provided to the Council.	Focussed consultation has been achieved with MUDF amongst other organisations.
3	Provide flexible work placements/taster placements for individuals with disabilities with a view to preparing them for paid employment	The Council has provided 7 flexible work placements/taster placements for individuals with disabilities during this period.	Services including Leisure, ICT and Finance have facilitated work placements/taster placements for individuals with disabilities, thus benefitting these services and the individuals who have participated.

3. Please outline what action measures have been **partly achieved** as follows:

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	Any new/substantially renovated play areas meet the highest possible standards of accessibility.	Improved accessible play facilities.	Improved services for children and young people who have a disability and their	This is an ongoing activity that will be delivered as part of the Public Parks and Play Five Year Strategic Plan

			siblings/friends. 34% of the Council's Park equipment is now accessible.	2020 – 2025. The figure has also not increased to the levels expected during the reporting period because a number of sites where closed due to planned maintenance / upgrade and unfortunately vandalism at the time of these inspections.

4. Please outline what action measures **have <u>not</u> been achieved** and the reasons why. N/A

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

5. What **monitoring tools** have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

(a) Qualitative

Elected members are informed annually of the progress made in relation to the implementation of the Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan. Mid Ulster Disability Forum are updated regularly on specific actions being undertaken to meet DAP commitments.

(b) Quantitative

The details of the equality screenings outcomes are recorded and are circulated three times per year (as per Equality Scheme commitments).

6. As a result of monitoring progress against actions has your organisation either:

- made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or
- taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes?

No changes have been made.

If yes please outline below: N/A

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
3	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

4	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
5	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

7. Do you intend to make any further **revisions to your plan** in light of your organisation's annual review of the plan? If so, please outline proposed changes?

No

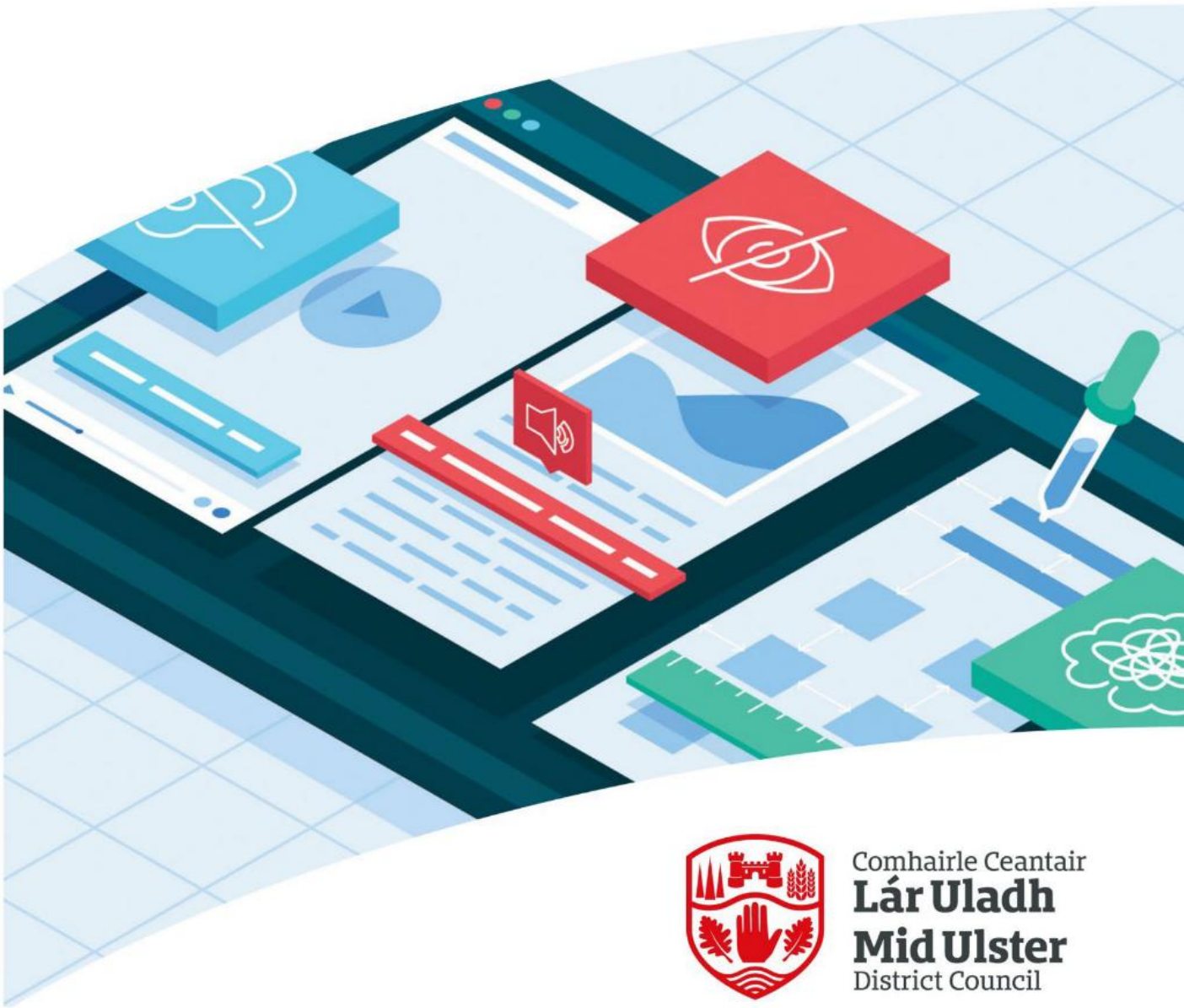
[i] **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.
[ii] **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.
[iii] **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments
[iv] **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level
[v] **Local :** Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.

Appendix 1: MUDC Accessible Communications Principles Guidance

Mid Ulster District Council

Accessible Communications Principles Guidance:

Making Accessible Practice, Common Practice



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

Introduction

This Digital Accessibility Guidance document has been developed in order to ensure that the Council's Digital Communication practices adhere to the highest possible levels of accessibility achievable within our projects.

It is estimated that at least 1 in 5 of our service users have additional accessibility requirements. As such, the Council's communication style, design and delivery should be as inclusive and accessible as possible.

The Council also have a legal duty (via the DDA/DDO 2006) to not just facilitate people with a disability when they are availing of our services to encourage participation in public life. These are anticipatory duties and cannot be delegated.

This guidance aims to, 'ensure a more connected Mid Ulster where new technologies and ways of working, empower citizens to get the best services that matter to them', and that all of the Council's Digital communication methods are clear, comprehensible and accessible for all audiences.

This can be achieved through the use of inclusive:

- Fonts
- Design and Layouts
- Images
- Digital Communication practices
- Videos
- Language

Guidance for inclusive practices in each of these areas are set out within this document.

Equality Screening

The Council has a statutory requirement to Equality Screen all projects.

In adherence with our statutory equality commitments, equality screening should be carried out prior to projects going out to tender or being delivered. This ensures that all inclusivity aspects of all projects are costed in from the beginning.

Equality Screening is not a duty that can be delegated outside of the organisation, it must not be carried out by external organisations.

Conclusion

This document sets out various pieces of accessibility information and guidance in relation to the different settings that Council projects tend to focus on. Please note that this guidance is not exhaustive.

If you require accessibility guidance or an accessibility audit for a project or advise on complete equality screening please contact:

Ann McAleer

Policy Engagement and Equality Officer

Telephone 03000 132 132

Ext: 24612

Email: ann.mcaleer@midulstercouncil.org

Appendices

Appendix A - Mencap’s Accessible Information Standard

Appendix B - RNIB Guidance

Appendix C - Web Content Accessibility Guidance

Appendix D - AbilityNet Guidance

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.
- using Easy Read versions where possible (noting the additional cost and significant turnaround times on these)

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.

- Posting key guidance messages in copy (not just using an image) and ensuring any images of printed documents have links to HTML versions or Open Document Formats.
- Providing alternative text (alt text) for images and graphics featured on digital platforms, including social media.

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.
- The following link can be used as a self-assessment accessibility tool via Mircosoft: https://support.microsoft.com/en-gb/office/improve-accessibility-with-the-accessibility-checker-a16f6de0-2f39-4a2b-8bd8-5ad801426c7f
- PDF’s can be tricky to make accessible, however it is possible and guidance is available via the following link: https://helpx.adobe.com/uk/acrobat/using/create-verify-pdf-accessibility.html

Videos

- considering users who are Deaf or hard of hearing (for example, ensuring voiceovers mirror any on-screen copy)
- considering users who are blind or partially sighted (for example, describing any significant visual-only information in the video, applying subtitles or closed captions and providing written transcripts) as well as users with photo-sensitive epilepsy or cognitive impairments (for example, by avoiding flashing images).
- using animations or step-by-step instructional videos to clarify key messages – applying the accessibility good practice described above

Colours

- avoid the use of just colour to distinguish information
- try to use a colour contrast checker to ensure that information is readable e.g. https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/

Inclusive Language: Race

In 2019 the UK Race Disparity Unit issued guidance on how to write about ethnicity. It recommends that, wherever possible, we should use the specific ethnic classifications of the census. Where it is absolutely necessary to group together people from different ethnic minority backgrounds, we should say ‘ethnic minorities’ or ‘people from ethnic minority backgrounds’.

Inclusive Language: Gender

Inclusive practices in relation to gender should also be considered. This includes:

- avoiding gender specific terms such as ‘boys and girls’ and ‘ladies and gentlemen’ when referencing groups.
- addressing letters appropriately i.e. giving the alternative option of ‘Mx’ along with Mr, Mrs, Ms, Dr etc.
- using language that does not favour a particular sex includes gender-neutral terms like person, individual, service user, family member, parent/guardian, partner, sibling, etc.
- not using stereotypical visuals.
- having an awareness of the pronouns ‘they/them’ and that this relates to people who identify as non-binary.
- avoid expressions that use the masculine form of descriptions i.e. chairperson instead of chairman, firefighter instead of fireman.

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 Policy Engagement & 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 A - Mencap's Accessible Information Standard

Mencap's Accessible Information Standard aims to make sure people with a disability or sensory loss are given information they can understand, and the communication support they need:

https://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/health/accessible-information-standard

Appendix B - RNIB Guidance (separate document)

Appendix C - Web Content Accessibility Guidance

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 covers a wide range of recommendations for making Web content more accessible. Following these guidelines will make content more accessible to a wider range of people with disabilities, including accommodations for blindness and low vision, deafness and hearing loss, limited movement, speech disabilities, photosensitivity, and combinations of these, and some accommodation for learning disabilities and cognitive limitations; but will not address every user need for people with these disabilities.

https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/

Appendix D – AbilityNet Guidance

This factsheet presents some helpful tips on improving the accessibility of your publications, for both print and reading online.

It focuses primarily on producing accessible material using Microsoft Word – but the principles involved are universal and may easily be applied using other software.

https://abilitynet.org.uk/factsheets/creating-accessible-documents-0

Report on	Updated Corporate Policies
Date of Meeting	3 July 2025
Reporting Officer	Joe McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement
Contact Officer	Ann McAleer, Policy Engagement 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 update members on two recently reviewed corporate policies; Non-Smoking Non-Vaping Policy and Managing Gifts and Hospitality Policy.
2.0	**Background**
2.1	In line with the Council's agreed policy review process, both policies have been subjected to senior officer consideration prior to being presented to Council for approval.
3.0	**Main Report**
3.1	Changes from the previous versions are set below: Updated Non-Smoking Non-Vaping Policy; non substantive changes made to the draft policy attached as Appendix A. Changes are minimal and include: • Policy owner updated on the control page • Page 4: 4.1 has been updated to reflect the updated Corporate Plan linkage • Page 5: Management bullet points have been updated to include, 'To ensure that staff members who smoke or vape, use appropriate or designated areas' • Page 5: Staff bullet points have been updated to include, 'To ensure that they use designated or appropriate smoking areas for smoking/vaping. (Line Managers can advise of where these areas are located) • Page 5: 7.1 has been updated to reflect the update website
3.2	The updated Gifts and Hospitality Policy draft policy is attached as Appendix B. The changes made are: • Policy owner updated on the control page • Page 4: 4.1 has been updated to reflect the updated Corporate Plan linkage

	• Pages 5 and 8: there is an increased amount of acceptable gift value from £20 to £50 (the larger amount has been benchmarked with the policy of similar organisations) • Page 5: 7.1 has also been updated to make clear that, 'Gifts with a value of between £21-£50 can be accepted but must be recorded on Gifts and Hospitality Register' • Page 7: The retention and disposal timeframe has been set out • Appendix A: 'Name' has been replaced with Job Title
4.0	**Other Considerations**
4.1	**Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications**
	Financial: None identified.
	Human: Officer time
	Risk Management: No practical risks identified
4.2	**Screening & Impact Assessments**
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: These policies have been screened out for an EQIA.
	Rural Needs Implications: A RNIA has been deemed as not proportionate in relation to these internal policies.
5.0	**Recommendation(s)**
5.1	It is recommended that members consider and approve the updated policies attached.
6.0	**Documents Attached & References**
	Appendix A: Updated Draft Non-Smoking Non-Vaping Policy Appendix B: Updated Draft Managing Gifts and Hospitality Policy

Non-Smoking and Non-Vaping Policy

Document Control			
Policy Owner	Joe McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services & Engagement		
Policy Author	Ann McAleer, Policy Engagement & Equality Officer		
Version	2		
Consultation	Senior Management Team Trade Unions	Complete Complete	
Equality Screened	Yes	**Date**	
Equality Impact Assessment	N/A	**Date**	
Good Relations	N/A		
Rural Needs Impact Assessment	Yes		
Approved By	Policy & Resources Committee	**Date**	TBC
Adopted By	Council	**Date**	TBC
Review Date	TBC on Approval	**By Whom**	
Circulation	Members and Staff		
Document Linkages	Room Hire Policy Health and Safety Policy and Procedures		

Contents Page

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The right to have a smoke free environment within premises is contained in the Smoking (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. Mid Ulster District Council recognises its duties to ensure this is the case in relation to its civic, leisure and cultural facilities under this Order.

2.0 Policy Aims and Objectives

2.1 **Policy Aim**: To protect customers, visitors and employees from exposure to second-hand smoke and to comply with the Smoking (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 which has been enforced by District Councils from 30th April 2007.

2.2 **Policy Objectives:**

- To establish a clear policy on providing a non-smoking and non-vaping environment inside Council facilities

- To provide guidance to all managers and premises supervisors to ensure a smoke free and vape free environment is maintained

3.0 Policy Scope

3.1 This policy relates specifically to all “enclosed” or “substantially enclosed” sections of Council buildings, including civic, leisure and cultural venues.

3.2 The use of electronic (e) cigarettes was not covered in the current UK legislation as they did not exist at the time. EU guidance provided in relation to (e) cigarettes is set out in section 5.2. This policy affords e-cigarettes the same restrictions as tobacco, for the following reasons:

- the safety of e-cigarettes has not been significantly demonstrated as the chemicals used have not been fully disclosed and there is no adequate data on their emissions;

- there is a lack of peer-reviewed evidence on their value in helping smokers cut down or stop;

- concerns that e-cigarettes might reinforce the smoking habit as they are designed to closely mimic smoking actions

- Public Health Agency Northern Ireland urges caution when using e-cigarettes, issuing the following guidance; “Don’t Smoke. Don’t Vape”

4.0 Linkage to the Corporate Plan

4.1 Referring to Mid Ulster District Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2028, this policy contributes toward the delivery of Corporate Theme 1, *Service Delivery.*

5.0 Smoking Restrictions

5.1 The Smoking (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 requires that smoking be prohibited in all "enclosed" or "substantially enclosed" premises, public areas. Premises are "enclosed" if they have a ceiling or roof and except for doors, windows and passageways they are – wholly enclosed, either permanently or temporarily. Premises are "substantially enclosed" if they have a ceiling or roof but there is an opening or an aggregated area of openings in the walls which is less than half of the area of the walls, including other structures that serve the purpose of walls and constitute the perimeter of the premises. In determining the area of opening or an aggregate area of the openings, no account is taken of openings in which there are doors, windows or other fittings that can be opened or shut.

5.2 The Tobacco Products Directive provided by the EU Parliament came into effect for member states in May 2017. The Directive states that e-cigarettes are a relatively new product for which evidence is only starting to emerge. As such the long-term impact of vaping and passive vaping is unknown. As such Mid Ulster District Council will follow the guidance issued by Public Health Agency NI until further guidance or clarity is available in relation to vaping.

5.3 Smoking will not be permitted at/in; the entrance/exits to and from buildings, locations where other statutory restrictions apply e.g. fuel storage, gas storage and areas where smoking could constitute a serious fire risk.

5.4 Mid Ulster Council is keen is to ensure that smokers and vapers realise the full impact of this policy and in particular that observance of the policy is an important health and safety rule. For visitors, single breaches which do not indicate a clear intention to ignore the policy will, in the first instance, be regarded as a minor incident which will be dealt with informally. Recurrence will be regarded as a clear breach of policy and could lead to the smoker/vaper being asked to leave the premises.

6.0 Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The management, staff, visitors and customers within each facility all have roles and responsibilities in relation to the implementation of this policy. Specific roles and responsibilities are set out below:

Management

- To display ‘No Smoking’ as required by the legislation and ‘No Vaping’ Signs
- To investigate complaints regarding employees, customers and visitors smoking
- To ensure that customer and visitors do not smoke or vape in smoke/vape free vape free places
- To ensure that staff members who smoke or vape, use appropriate or designated areas

Staff

- To ensure that they or others do not interfere with no smoking signs
- To comply with this policy
- To ensure customers and visitors do not smoke in smoke-free places
- To report and appropriately deal with incidents of smoking in Council facilities
- To ensure that they use designated or appropriate smoking areas for smoking/vaping. (Line Managers can advise of where these areas are located)

7.0 Support for Smokers

7.1 It is hoped that by having non- smoking and non-vaping facilities policy in place Council will encourage individuals to consider giving up smoking. In order to support those individuals who wish to stop smoking, advice is available through a range of information channels.

7.2 Support measures available to the public include the following:

- Public Health Agency recommended website – https://www.stopsmokingni.info/
- Support and advise from your GP or Pharmacist

8.0 Impact Assessments

8.1 Equality Screening & Rural Impact Assessment

8.1.1 The policy has been subject to equality screening in accordance with the council’s screening process. The policy has been ‘screened out’.

8.1.2. This policy has been subject to a Rural Needs Impact Assessment. The assessment has identified that there are no specific actions required in relation to considering rural needs in relation to this policy.

8.2 **Staff & Financial Resources**

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

9.0 Support and Advice

9.1 Advice and guidance on the implementation on this policy should be sought from the Director and/or Head of Service relating to whichever service area the policy is being implemented.

10.0 Communication

10.1 This policy should be communicated to staff members by their line managers is responsible for the communication of this policy.

11.0 Monitoring and Review of Arrangements

11.1 Implementation of this policy will be monitored and a formal review undertaken 4 years from its date of approval.

Managing Acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality Policy

Document Control			
Policy Owner	Head of Strategic Services and Engagement		
Policy Author	Policy Engagement and Equality Officer		
Version	Version 2 (May 2025)		
Consultation	Senior Management Team Complete Senior Executive Team Complete Trade Unions Complete		
Equality Screened by	Yes	**Date**	
Equality Impact Assessment	N/A	**Date**	-
Good Relations	N/A		-
Approved By	P&R Committee	**Date**	
Adopted By	Council	**Date**	
Review Date	TBC	**By Whom**	

Circulation	Councillors and Staff
Document Linkages	Managing Conflicts of Interest Policy Raising a Concern/Whistleblowing Policy Anti- Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy Local Government Code of Conducts for Employees NI Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors

CONTENTS PAGE

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This policy is in place to confirm Mid Ulster District Council's approach to managing matters relating to gifts and hospitality offered to councillors (elected members) and council officers.

All employees and members of council are expected to observe the highest standards of conduct and should at all times adhere to Codes set for both parties, namely the Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees and the Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors.

It is important to have clear policies and procedures in place to recognise that the acceptance of gifts and hospitality could be seen to compromise personal judgement or integrity, particularly in those persons involved in procurement, awarding of grants or enforcement of regulations. The handling of gifts and hospitality is a sensitive matter which could lead to public disapproval and become a risk to the council's reputation if dealt with inappropriately.

1.2 As a general rule elected members and officers should consider whether a particular course of action could be satisfactorily defended if scrutinised by a member of the public or organisation responsible for auditing the council. Where there is any doubt about the application of this policy consultation and advice should be taken from the Head of Strategic Services and Engagement.

2.0 Policy Aim and Objectives

2.1 **Policy Aim**: To ensure effective management of the acceptance and of gifts and hospitality offered to elected members and officers.

2.2 **Policy Objectives:**

- To provide clear guidance concerning the management of the offer of gifts and/or hospitality from individuals and organisations in the course of business.
- To maintain the reputation of Council through its employees and elected member
- To manage the risk of exposure to criticism
- To maintain integrity within Council decision and governance processes
- To avoid cases which could compromise the honesty and integrity of council
- To ensure there are clear roles, responsibilities and procedures for authorising and recording the acceptance or rejection of gifts and/or hospitality from individuals and organisations

3.0 Policy Scope

3.1 This policy relates specifically to all of Mid Ulster District Council's elected members and employees.

3.2 It also extends to all aspects of business undertaken on behalf Mid Ulster District Council.

4.0 Linkage to Our Corporate Plan

4.1 Referring to Mid Ulster District Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2028, this policy contributes toward the delivery of Corporate Theme Three: Being the Best Council Possible.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 The role of elected members in relation to this policy is observe the NI Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors with particular reference to 4.20 of the Code on Acceptance and registration of gifts and hospitality and apply the requirements of this policy.

5.2 The role of the Chief Executive to have overall executive responsibility for the implementation of this policy. The Chief Executive's Office shall maintain the Gifts and Hospitality Register for Council.

5.3 The role of line managers in relation to this policy is to ensure all employees within their service are made aware of the contents and conditions of this policy. Arrangements should be made for the policy to be communicated to all employees at set and relevant intervals.

5.4 The role of employees in relation to this policy is to observe the Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees and apply the requirements of this policy.

6.0 Definitions

6.1 Definitions for some of the terms included in this policy are set out below:

Gift is the transfer of something, without the need for compensation that is involved in trade. A gift is a voluntary act which does not require anything in return. Even though it involves possibly a social expectation of reciprocity, or a return in the form of prestige or power, a gift is meant to be free.

Hospitality refers to the relationship process between a guest and a host, and it also refers to the act or practice of being hospitable, that is, the reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers, with liberality and goodwill.

Official Hospitality refers to hospitality provided by Council in the course of Council business.

Register is the official record listing all offers of gifts and hospitality received.

7.0 Procedures and Implementation

7.1 Acceptance of Gifts

Offers of cash, cheques and lottery tickets to members and officers should be declined. Seasonal, promotional gifts, such as calendars, diaries or pens, which reference company names and branding of the provider and have an estimated value of less than £20 may be accepted without the need for reporting acceptance. Gifts with a value of between £21-£50 can be accepted but must be Gifts and Hospitality Register.

Acceptance or decline of a gift **greater** than a value of £50 must be declared within the Gifts and Hospitality Register. Appendix A should be completed and submitted in all cases within 28 days of receipt of the offer. This will form part of the council's Gifts and Hospitality Register.

The Chair of Council/Deputy Chair/Elected Members may be presented with civic gifts for Council. These civic gifts may be accepted on behalf of Council and do not need to be recorded and do not require approval. These shall remain the property of Council and will be listed in the relevant Council inventory.

7.2 Acceptance of Hospitality

Offers of hospitality require careful judgement to determine whether or not it is proper to accept hospitality offered. Each case should be considered on its individual merits.

As a general rule, significant hospitality determined as a value greater than £50 should not be accepted. When deciding whether to accept hospitality consideration should be given to:

- the reason for accepting it
- if acceptance could be satisfactorily defended if queried by a ratepayer
- the value and scale of the hospitality
- the obligation that acceptance might appear to place on an officer or the
- Council in terms of reciprocal hospitality and business dealings

- whether it provides benefits to the Council, which outweighs the risk of
- possible misrepresentation of the hospitality
- The timing of the offer, be mindful decisions which the Council may be in the process of taking, affecting the provider of the hospitality, procurement, grant award, enforcement of regulations

8.0 Legal Framework

8.1 This policy complies with the following legislation:

- **The Local Government Act (NI) 1972** – States that an Officer of the Council cannot through their Council role demand or accept any fee or reward other than their proper remuneration. If they do so they will be liable on conviction of a fine.
- **The Bribery Act 2010** - States that it is an offence for an Elected Member or a Council worker to accept or offer a bribe to improperly perform a function or activity within their Council role.
- **Freedom of Information Act 2014** – Required Council as a Public Authority to provide public access to information which it holds; unless there are valid legal reasons not to do so.
- **The Local Government (NI) Act 2014** – States that Elected Members must comply with the Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Gifts & Hospitality Policy Conduct for Councillors which requires Members to provide notification to the CE within 28 days of receiving any gift, hospitality, material benefit or service above a value specified by Council. Also requires members not to accept such if it would place them under an improper obligation and it discourages gifts and offers to any family members which may place or appear to place the Member under an improper obligation.

9.0 Impact Assessments

9.1 Equality Screening & Impact

The policy shall be subjected to equality screening in accordance with the council's screening process. This policy has been screened out for EQIA.

9.2 Rural Needs Impact

The policy shall not be subjected to a rural needs impact assessment. This is a corporate governance policy for which a rural needs impact assessment is not considered to be proportionate.

9.3 **Staff & Financial Resources**

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

Personal Data Considerations (GDPR)

9.4 This policy is compliant with Council's GDPR requirements. Appropriate controls and measures are in place in relation to the implementation of the policy. The Executive Officer to the Chief Executive maintains a register (available as Appendix A). Records will be maintained for 7 years in line with the Council's Retention and Disposal procedures.

10.0 Support and Advice

Advice and guidance on the implementation of this should be sought from the Strategic Directors and relevant Assistant Directors and Head of Services.

11.0 Communication

The Strategic Services and Engagement section is responsible for the communication and delivery of this policy.

12.0 Monitoring and Review Arrangements

Implementation of this policy will be monitored and a formal review undertaken 4 years from its date of approval.

Appendix A- Notification of Gift and Hospitality Offers

This form should be completed for:

- Declined Offers of Gifts or Hospitality; and
- Acceptance of Gifts or Hospitality greater than £50

Mid Ulster District Council	
1. Job Title - *person who received the offer*	
2. Department and Service	
3. Description of gift or hospitality offered	
4. Estimated Value	
5. Details of organisation making the offer	
6. Accept or Decline	
7. Reason to accept or decline	
Signed	
Date	
Line management acknowledgement	
Signed	
Date	
Completed forms to be returned to Chief Executive's Office	

Minutes of Meeting of Policy and Resources Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 5 June 2025 in the Council Offices, Ballyronan Road, Magherafelt and by Virtual Means

Members Present	Councillor Cahoon, Chair Councillor Brown*, F Burton, J Burton*, Gildernew*, Martin*, McAleer, McConnell*, McLean, McLernon, S McPeake, Molloy*, Quinn*, Totten*, Wilson
Officers in Attendance	Mr McCreesh**,** Chief Executive Mrs Canavan, Strategic Director of Organisational Development, Strategy & Performance (SD: ODSP) Mrs Campbell, Strategic Director Environment Mrs Dyson, Head of Human Resources (HoHR)** Mr McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement (HoSS&E) Mr Moffett, Assistant Director: Organisational Development, Strategy & Performance (AD: ODSP) Ms Keys, Marketing and Communications Development Manager (M&CDM) Mr Scullion, Assistant Director of Property Services (AD: PS)** Mr O'Hagan, Head of IT (HoIT) Mrs Forde, Committee and Member Services Manager

* Denotes members present in remote attendance
** Denotes Officers present by remote means
*** Denotes others present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm.

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

P103/25 Notice of Recording

Members noted that the meeting would be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast on the Council's You Tube site.

PR104/25 Apologies

None.

PR105/25 Declarations of Interest

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

PR106/25 Chairs Business

The Chair, Councillor Cahoon said that she was looking forward to the year ahead and asked that appropriate notice be given beforehand for any future matters for Chair's Business.

Matters for Decision

PR107/25 Corporate Performance Improvement Plan (PIP Plan) 2025 to 2026

Members considered previously circulated report which sought approval for Council's Corporate Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) for period 2025-2026.

Proposed by Councillor McAleer
Seconded by Councillor McLean and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve the Council's Corporate Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) Plan 2025-2026.

PR108/25 Request(s) to Illuminate Council Property

Members considered previously circulated report which sought approval to illuminate and light up the Council's three designated properties to raise awareness for the following:

- LGS (Lennox Gastaut Syndrome) Foundation – LGS Awareness Day – 1 November – Colour: Purple and/or Green
- Mid Ulster Loneliness Network – 13 June 2025 – Colour: Blue
- Northern Ireland Children's Hospice – Children's Hospice Week – 17 June 2025 – Colour: Purple
- NSPKU – International PKU Day – 30 June 2025 – Colour: Green

Proposed by Councillor McLernon
Seconded by Councillor F Burton and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to illuminate the three designated Council properties as follows –

- LGS (Lennox Gastaut Syndrome) Foundation – LGS Awareness Day – 1 November – Colour: Purple and/or Green
- Mid Ulster Loneliness Network – 13 June 2025 – Colour: Blue
- Northern Ireland Children's Hospice – Children's Hospice Week – 17 June 2025 – Colour: Purple

- NSPKU – International PKU Day – 30 June 2025 – Colour: Green

PR109/25 Renewal of the Supplier Agreement for Halfords Cycle 2 Work Scheme through ESPO Framework

The SD: ODSP presented previously circulated report and sought approval for Renewal of Supplier Agreement for Halfords for the provision of our Cycle 2 Work Scheme through ESPO Staff Benefits Framework.

In response to Councillor McLean's query regarding the scheme being made available to Members, SD: ODSP advised that as deductions were made through payroll there should be no problem.

Councillor Molloy advised that he had benefitted from the scheme in the past which had been open to members. He said that this was an excellent scheme and was also available through other independent retail cycle shops in Mid Ulster apart from Halfords.

Councillor J Burton said that within the main report Halfords was the only supplier mentioned and sought clarity on whether other independent suppliers were eligible.

The SD: ODSP advised that if a person has a particular interest in a certain item this can be obtained through specialist suppliers through Halfords as they can take on board the other supplier if they cannot source the cycle required.

Proposed by Councillor McLean
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that approval be granted for the Renewal of the Supplier Agreement with Halfords for the provision of Cycle 2 Work Scheme through completion of a Customer Access Agreement with ESPO.

PR110/25 Complaints Handling Arrangements Annual Report

The AD: ODSP presented previously circulated report to provide update on data capture and investigation arrangements to the Councils complaints handling procedures for the period 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025.

The AD: ODSP advised in summary that officially 69 corporate level complaints had been received and processed through complaint handling directorate, with 3.3 outlining the details. The previously attached appendices provided breakdown of the categories and how they were categorised and agreed by the NIPSO office.

Councillor S McPeake said that he was heartened to see the high percentage resolved on the outcome of the complaints received.

Councillor McLean said that he appreciated that comparisons could not be made with other Councils but asked how Council measures itself.

The AD: ODSP advised that this would be done through league tables on how Mid Ulster rates against other Councils. This was the first year that official reports were produced and in due course, there would be an opportunity for Council to do a litmus test by checking other public authorities on what they published going forward. It was his understanding that the number of complaints received was on the lower side which was positive for this Council but going forward would take on board Councillor McLean's comments.

The SD: ODSP advised Members that this has been the first year that this has been rolled out amongst the 11 Councils. She said as a matter of note that Mid Ulster Council had been invited to Stormont in July to speak on the process due to best practice as it was one of the top Councils on how the process was rolled out the last 12 months. The SD: ODSP stated that a presentation was being prepared for Stormont on how it was rolled out in Mid Ulster and the lessons learnt as the system was going to be rolled out by the Health Service.

Councillor McLean said that this was very positive and important to get this message out as sometimes Council does not sell itself, in case it tempts fate.

Proposed by Councillor S McPeake
Seconded by Councillor McAleer and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to note the contents of the Annual Report for 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025; the associated appendix and confirm its agreement to publish the data as required by legislation.

PR111/25 Member Services

No issues.

Matters for Information

PR112/25 Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 8 May 2025

Members noted Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee held on 8 May 2025.

PR113/25 Service Improvement Plan - Chief Executive Directorate: Marketing and Communications Service 2025-2026

Members noted Service Improvement Plan for Chief Executive Directorate: Marketing and Communications Service 2025-2026.

PR114/25 Retention and Disposal Schedule – Planning Addendum

Members noted update on amendments to the agreed Planning Retention and Disposal Schedule, which sets out how the Council manages physical and digital Planning records.

PR115/25 Service Improvement Plan – Corporate Services & Finance Directorate 2025-2026

Members noted Service Improvement Plan for Corporate Services & Finance Directorate 2025-2026.

Live broadcast ended at 7.15 pm.

Local Government (NI) Act 2014 - Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor McLernon 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 Members consider items PR116/25 to PR125/25.

Matters for Decision

PR116/25	Staffing Matters for Decision – Pension Related
PR117/25	Staffing Matters for Decision
PR118/25	Councillors' Scheme of Allowances 2025/26 – Update
PR119/25	Financial Report for 12 Months Ended 31 March 2025
PR120/25	Land and Property Matters
PR121/25	Desertcreat Lands Acquisition

Matters for Information

PR122/25	Confidential Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee held on 8 May 2025
PR123/25	Staff Matters for Information
PR124/25	Contracts and DAC Registers – Update
PR125/25	Treasury Management – Update March 2025

P126/25 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7.00 pm and ended at 7.59 pm.

Chair _____

Date _____

Annex A – Introductory Remarks from the Chairperson

Good evening and welcome to the Council's [Policy & Resources/Environment/ Development] Committee in the Chamber, [Cookstown/Magherafelt] and virtually.

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

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

- If you have joined the meeting remotely, please keep your audio on mute unless invited to speak and then turn it off when finished speaking
- Keep your video on at all times, unless you have bandwidth or internet connection issues, where you are advised to try turning your video off
- If you wish to speak please raise your hand in the meeting or on screen and keep raised until observed by an Officer or myself
- Should we need to take a vote this evening I will ask each member to confirm whether they are for or against the proposal or abstaining
- When invited to speak please introduce yourself by name to the meeting
- For any member attending remotely, if you declare an interest in an item, please turn off your video and keep your audio on mute for the duration of the item
- If referring to a specific report please reference the report, page or slide being referred to
- Lastly, I remind the public and press that taking photographs of proceedings or using any means to enable anyone not present to see or hear proceedings, or making a simultaneous oral report of the proceedings are not permitted

Thank you and we will now move to the first item on the agenda - apologies and then roll call of all other Members in attendance.

Report on	Update of Registration Service
Date of Meeting	3 July 2025
Reporting Officer	Joseph McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement
Contact Officer	Sandra Matchett Gabr, Registration Services 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	The purpose of the report is to update Members on the work carried out by the Registration Service in the year 2024/25
2.0	**Background**
2.1	The General Register Office (GRO) is part of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, which is an agency of the Department of Finance and is primarily responsible for the administration of the registration of births, stillbirths, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships. Under Births and Deaths Registration (NI) Order 1976 each Local Government district is a registration district and registration duties are undertaken by staff appointed by the Council and approved by the Registrar General. Costs incurred by the Council in provision of the service are recovered from the Department such as staffing, acommodation, rates, heating etc. Mid Ulster District is one of 11 district registrations offices in Northern Ireland and its Registration offices are located in Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt. Dungannon Office is open five days Monday to Friday, Magherafelt Office is open four days, closed on Wednesday and Cookstown Office is open two full days Monday and Friday and two half days Tuesday and Thursday. The main function of the Registration service is to register Life Events such as Births, Still Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships, issue certificates and to perform Civil Marriages and Partnerships at the Council Offices and at Approved Venues. As well as giving general advice on the above events, the service also gives advice and information to customers on re-registrations, changing of names, obtaining certifcates and family history. The Registration staff act as agents for the Department of Finance and are therefore under the instruction and act under the authority of the Registrar General.

	Legislation states there can only be one Registrar within each Council District. Within Mid Ulster there is one Regstrar/Registration Services Manager, one full time Deputy Registrar, one part-time Deputy Registrar and currently 2 casual Deputy Registrars. One casual deputy has recently left, and it is hoped to refill this post as soon as possible. It is important to have Casual Deputies in the three main locations as they ensure the service continues during periods of holidays, sickness etc. Registrar/Deputy Registrars imput Birth, Stillbirth, Death, Marriage & Civil Partnership registrations via the GRO web-based database. Registration staff currently submit monthly returns to GRO consisting of Marriage Schedules, Medical Certificate of Cause of Deaths, Coroner Reports and Form GRO27 completed by Funeral Undertakers.
3.0	**Main Report**
3.1	**Legislative Requirements** The Registration Service administers its functions and activities in accordance with statutory requirements, General Register Office Policies and Procedures and Council Guidelines. The values and objectives of the Registration Services closely align with the Council's Corporate Plan such as offering excellent access to good quality services.
3.2	**Deaths, Still-Births and Baby Loss Bill** The Coronavirus Act 2020 made temporary modifications to the Births & Deaths Registration (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 to allow the registration of deaths and still-births to be carried out in a more flexible manner, this Act has continually been extended to allow the modifications to continue. However, GRO are currently bringing forward legislation that will enable the electronic transfer of documents and telephone registration to become permanent in relation to the registration of deaths and still-births that are currently operating under the Coronavirus Act. It will also seek to widen the access to registration procedures to close some gaps that have been identified in birth and still birth registrations. The changes will only be in relation to attending offices jointly or separately. The Bill seeks to make a power that will allow the Department of Finance to make regulations to create a Baby Loss Certificate Scheme for early pregnancy losses. It is anticipated that such a Baby Loss Certificate Scheme will be run online by GRO, rather than through the District Registration Offices. - as this will not be a formal registration service as the certificates will be commemorative. They will not be legal documents.
3.3	**Security and Assurance Visit and Report**

	In October 2024 the Security and Assurance Manager from the General Register Office visited all 3 offices in the district. The purpose of the visit was to ensure that functions in the office are being carried out in a professional manner and that security procedures are being adhered to both in relation to premises and data. It also was to ensure that there were no security or risk management weaknesses, and that registration staff were adhering to protocols when undertaking statutory duties. The review involved the examination of local systems, process and evidence against each of the 13 criteria. Following the visit a report was issued to Head of Strategic Services & Engagement and the Registrar. The report showed that under the criteria all was in order however it highlighted two minor issues which have now been actioned. The report also highlighted 6 areas of good practice - the service provided to customers with the online appointment system, the service provided for customers with regard to certificate production, internal office systems procedures, internal office systems management, staff knowledge and working relationships with stakeholders
3.4	**Business Continuity** In order to deliver its core registration business, District Registration Offices are heavily dependent upon the IT equipment provided by GRO to support and deliver their key objectives. IT equipment such as PC's, Screen Monitors, Printers, Signature Pads, Keyboard and Mouse is provided to each office. GRO have the responsibility to ensure that robust disaster recovery / contingency arrangements are in place if there is a disruption to those core business processes as a result of failure of the IT equipment. If the disruption is short term, Registration staff can contact customers and advise them not to attend the appointment and rearrange another date or time. If the disruption is longer and only affects one office, work can be re-directed to the other offices in our district.
3.5	**Digital transformation – Online booking system** In March 2023 as an outworking of the Councils Digital Transformation Strategy, the registration service allowed customers to book appointments for births and marriages by using a simple online process. This process made efficiencies by reducing time spent on the telephone, answering emails and in doing administrative tasks, as all the information that is needed is on the web for anyone to access at any time. It has allowed our staff to offer a better service online and offline to all our customers.
3.6	**Customer Engagement Survey**

As a key customer facing service within the Council, it is therefore of utmost importance that customers attending the registration office experience the highest standard of customer care. Customers have been asked to complete a short survey after their appointment.
Through the Customer Engagement survey, it shows that most bookings are made online with customer satisfaction showing as high when booking an appointment. Ninety-seven percent answered that they received clear instructions before attending the appointment and the Registration staff were rated 10 out of 10 for being helpful and pleasant.

3.7 **Registration Data**

Life Event Registration

The following tables provide a breakdown of the main life Events dealt with by Registration Service from 2020 to 2024

Year	Births	Deaths	Marriages	Civil Partnerships	Stillbirths
2020	1949	1112	302	0	8
2021	2010	1252	701	1	10
2022	1893	1200	671	1	6
2023	1927	1118	577	1	9
2024	1684	1213	523	1	5

Civil Ceremonies

Since 2003 Legislation has permitted Registrars to conduct civil ceremonies at venues outside of the Registration Office. Venues must apply to the Council for a licence which lasts for 3 years. There are currently 14 venues approved in the district. The table below shows a breakdown of the number of civil marriage and civil partnership ceremonies conducted last year.

Marriages

Year	Registry Office	Approved Venue	Total
2024	51	48	99

Civil Partnerships

Year	Registry Office	Approved Venue	Total
2024	1	0	1

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: There is a positive impact of S75 groups as Registration Services is applicable to all persons irrespective of grouping and Registrars continue to train and ensure they provide an equitable service to all their service users.
	Rural Needs Implications: Registration Services is split across three sites which has a positive impact on accessibility for those service users from the rural areas of the Council District. Approved venues for the civil marriages and partnerships are located throughout the District.
5.0	**Recommendation(s)**
5.1	It is recommended that Council notes the contents of the Report on Registration Services for the financial Year April 2024 to March 2025.
6.0	**Documents Attached & References**
	N/A

Report on	Corporate Plan 2024-2028 Annual Progress Report: Year 1 (2024/2025)
Date of Meeting	Thursday, 3 July 2025
Reporting Officer	P Moffett, Assistant Director: Org Development, Strategy and Performance
Contact Officer	C O'Neill, Community and Strategic Planning 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 provide Members with a progress update on delivery against the Objectives in the Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2028 for the 12-month reporting period 1 April 2024 to 30 March 2025. The progress update is provided across and against the suite of measures aligned to our corporate plan.
2.0	**Background**
2.1	Following a process of internal and external engagement, including a series of Member and senior staff workshops with David Williamson Consulting, the Corporate Plan 2024 - 2028 was considered and approved at the July 2024 P&R Committee and subsequently, July Council meeting.
2.2	The Corporate Plan is embedded within and accessible from our website at: https://www.midulstercouncil.org/corporateplan
3.0	**Main Report**
3.1	Appendix A, as attached, provides our first annual progress update for the period 2024-2025 across the Objectives contained in the Corporate Plan under the three themes of focus around which are priorities have been centred and structured: • Our Service Delivery • Leadership and Partnership for Growth • Being the Best Council Possible.
3.2	The progress update provides a barometer of success in delivering on the Corporate Plan Objectives so far. This is a report for the 12-month period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 (Year 1 of the Corporate Plan) and reflects our position at the end of the year, 31 March 2025, with a six monthly update being reported to Committee the autumn of 2024.

3.3 A summary version of the Progress Report will be published on the Council website. Progress for each measure is reported in the attached document using the colour coded status below.

Progressing as expected / on target
Not progressing as expected / not on target
Baseline Setting
Not Commenced / Not Available
Complete

Theme	No. of Measures	Measure Status
Theme 1: Our Service Delivery	14	
	4	
	13	
	2	
	2	
Theme 2: Leadership and Partnership for Growth	7	
	2	
	3	
Theme 3: Being the Best Council Possible	8	
	8	

Some NI Executive's Programme for Government Wellbeing Framework statistics have been included in the progress report. This data is gathered by NISRA from a variety of sources, including other bodies and organisations external to Council. It helps build an overall picture of how Mid Ulster is progressing on other key issues that matter to our citizens.

3.4 **Associated Activity**

By way of accessibility, communication on and dissemination of our objectives, priorities and key measures, a plain version of the Corporate Plan is embedded within
our council webpages. Beam Creative Network have been commissioned to produce a
corporate plan video, videography for which has been undertaken and will be completed soon for posting and placement on our website and YouTube channel. A pocket-sized z -card has been designed detailing our values, objectives and high -level priorities. These will be provided to every member of staff, Members and new employees to Council as part of our onboarding arrangements. A summary highlight of the 12-month attainment is also being developed for sharing based on the content within appendix A.

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: None identified at this time.
	Rural Needs Implications: None identified at this time.
5.0	**Recommendation(s)**
5.1	That Members note the Corporate Plan 2024-2028 Annual Progress Report at end of March 2025.
6.0	**Documents Attached & References**
	Appendix A - Mid Ulster District Council Corporate Plan 2024-2028 2nd Progress Report: Year 1 (2024/2025)

Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh Mid Ulster District Council

Corporate Plan 2024-2028 Progress Reporting

Reporting Period: 2024/2025 (Year 1)

	Progressing as expected / on target
	Not progressing as expected / not on target
	Baseline Setting
	Not Commenced / Not Available
	Complete

Theme 1: Our Service Delivery

Objective		Status @ End of Year 1	Notes
1.1	**Achieve a 20% reduction in Council's carbon emissions by March 2028 through implementation of our Sustainability Strategy and Climate Action Plan**		
	% reduction in operational emissions by March 2028		The Sustainability Strategy & Climate Action Plan and associated performance reporting framework underwent a 12-week public consultation, receiving final Council approval in March 2025. Corporate Improvement Plan 3 incorporates many of the actions from the main Climate Action Plan and has now also been finalised with the goal of achieving a 20% reduction by 2028
1.2	**Complete a Climate Change Adaptation Plan by 2025**		
	Climate Change Adaptation Plan completed by 2025		Climate Change Adaptation Plan was given final approval by Council in March 2025 and contains 22 actions to help Mid Ulster adapt to a changing climate
1.3	**Achieve the Circular Economy Target to recycle 60% of municipal waste by March 2028**		
	% of municipal waste recycled by March 2028		Validated figures for the final quarter of 2024/25 are not available yet. However, figures for the 2024 calendar year confirm 57.83% of municipal waste has been recycled
	Statutory Waste Performance Standards and Indicators met		All statutory waste indicators have been reported / met
1.4	**Build on our place-shaping capital investment programme to develop new, and enhance our existing, physical assets**		
	# of capital investment projects committed between 2024 and March 2028		22 capital investment projects committed
	#£ capital investment spent over the period		Total capital investment expenditure for 12 month period = £9,615,745
1.5	**Implement a Customer Experience Platform by 2026 and have it fully operational for two customer facing services by March 2028**		
	Customer Experience Platform implemented by 2026		Tender process undertaken but award not made due to cost implications. Other options to be considered
	Customer Experience Platform fully operational for two customer facing services by March 2028		As above however, efficiencies and service improvements achieved through use of Gov.Notify free text mesaging service for dog licence renewals in Dungannon, with roll out to Magherafelt and Cookstown planned
	Increase in customer satisfaction for service accessibility and response		Customer satisfaction survey developed & piloted for Registration; scoring 9.9 out of 10 from respondents so far. Propose extending to other services eg Leisure, Arts. Customer Services Policy revised & aligned to Customer Care Charter; next step team briefings across the organisation.
1.6	**Support delivery of a strong business economy by fostering start-ups; creating growth and scalability opportunities; promoting jobs; and developing Mid Ulster as a vibrant tourist destination**		
	# of jobs promoted through business start-up activity		163 Business Plans verified from April 24 - Dec 24. The Lead Council (BCC) issued 12 month data in April 2025, comprising actual vouched activity to Dec 2024 and projected activity (unverified) Jan-Mar 2025, so the figures provided are not final as yet (est completed by June 2025). As of 30 May 2025, Jobs promoted is 98; 55 under target.
	# of businesses supported through growth orientated scaling programmes and events (including tourism)		1,452 business supported through the following: LMP Employer Toolkit 1-1 (22); LMP Employer Training and Support Events (114); Go Succeed Mentoring (435); Go Succeed Grants (175 funded); Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (28); MSW Net Zero Programme (10); Town Business Spruce-Up Scheme (85); Rural Business Support Programme (155); Tourism Events (428 through events/programme)
	# of visitors (footfall) to Council visitor attractions		1,127,815 visitors to 19 council attractions over the 12 month period
1.7	**Work collaboratively with central government to align existing community development and support programmes and implement our Community Development Strategy and Action Plan by March 2028**		
	Community Development Strategy and Action Plan implemented by 2028		Extensive internal & external engagement and research completed. Consultant's recommendations for 'Transforming Community Support and Investment in Mid Ulster' presented and under consideration
	# of programmes integrated		Next step to consider development of an Action Plan
	#% of CVS organisations satisfied with the Strategy outcomes		Measurable once outcomes are defined
	# of Government Departments committed to the alignment throughout the process		2 out of the 3 Government Departments approached supportive of the alignment - DfC & TEO

1.8	**Redirect wealth and public spending into communities by promoting a Community Wealth Building approach to local economic development**		
	Community Wealth Building Framework and Action Plan implemented by 2028		CWB Good Employment Charter developed, adopted by Council & included in LMP's Employer of Choice Toolkit. Draft Community Asset Transfer Guidance developed
	Amount of social value generated per £ invested		New software purchased to calculate the value of Council investments. Officers working to incorporate this into new investments

1.9	**Increase customer satisfaction and participation in our leisure, outdoor recreation and arts, culture and literary facilities by March 2028**		
	% increase in participation across each service area		Greenvale Leisure Centre, Magherafelt usage figures = 125,613
			Cookstown Leisure Centre usage figures = 99,187
			Dungannon Leisure Centre usage figures = 94,014
			SHHP footfall = 62,273; paying customers = 27,289
	% households in Mid Ulster with accessible natural space within 400metres (*PfG Cleaner Environments: Outdoor Recreation)		2024: 21.5%
	% participating in sport and physical activity in Mid Ulster (*PfG Healthier Lives: Sports and Physical Activity)		22/23: 68% 23/24: 67%
	% engaging in arts and cultural activities in Mid Ulster (*PfG Brighter Futures: Arts and Cultural Activity)		22/23: 76% 23/24: 77%
	Increase the number of Mid Ulster Council Green Flag sites		24/25: 7 sites @ Roundlake, Polepatrick, Maghera Walled Garden, Hill of the O'Neill, Dungannon Park, Davagh Forest, Ballyronan Marina
	Maintain a 5* Trip Advisor rating or improve a 1*-4.5* rating		Burnavon 4.5* (23 reviews)
			Hill of the O'Neill & Ranfurly House 4.9* (83 reviews)
			SHHP 4.9* (185 reviews)
			Dungannon Park 4.5* (115 reviews)
			Pomeroy Forest Trip Advisor account to be set up when new Manager in place. Google Review rating of 4.8* (23 reviews)

1.10	**Co-design and deliver accessible community-based leisure and outdoor recreation facilities and programmes that meet our citizens' needs**		
	% of citizens satisfied with their involvement in the co-design process		Baseline measure selected: Community involvement in the Underutilised Pitches Expression of Interest for Leasing programme (linked with CWB Community Asset Transfer process)

1.11	**Advance our vision to meet the strategic planning and wellbeing needs of our citizens by progressing the Local Development Plan 2030 Draft Plan Strategy to Public Inquiry Stage by March 2028**		
	LDP Draft Plan Strategy progressed to Public Inquiry Stage by March 2028		No decision from DfI on progressing the Draft Plan Strategy to Independent Examination however engagement continutes with DfI re progress toward a decision

1.12	**Listen to and reflect the needs of our citizens in shaping the Planning Service**		
	# of improvements identified by Planning Service users implemented by March 2028		Issues identified through the Planning Agents' survey 2023 informed the current roll out of Planning Service IT module upgrades. Uniform & Public Access upgrades complete. DMS & TLC imminent. Public Access User Guide to be drafted, finalised and published on Council's Website. Preparatory work ongoing for a MUDC specific validation checklist

1.13	**Exceed statutory planning targets during the life of the Corporate Plan**		
	Statutory planning targets met		Local applications 24/25 figures available July 25
			11.1% major applications meeting statutory target (unvalidated figures)

Theme 2: Leadership and Partnership for Growth

Objective			**Notes**
2.1	**Visibly progress the Mid-South West Growth Deal initiatives**		
	# of MSW Growth Deal Strategic Outline Business Cases (SOCs) approved by March 2028		3 SOCs completed and Heads of Terms signed in November 2024 to allow projects to move to OBC stage
	# of MSW Growth Deal Outline Business Cases (OBCs) approved by March 2028		CAFRE has commenced internal work developing OBC for RAPIC project. Following representation, Invest NI have agreed to lead OBC development for an Innovation Investment Park
	# of MSW Growth Deals - Full Growth Business Deal Cases (FBCs) progressed by March 2028		No projects at FBC stage

2.2	**Actively participate with other partners to substantially progress the co-ordinated management of Lough Neagh**		
	# of engagements with other bodies responsible for the co-ordinated management of Lough Neagh		Lough Neagh Partnership SLA 2024/25 in place and Council match funding provided to LNP for the LN Heritage Resilience Plan

2.3	**Collaborate with local and regional governments and jurisdictions to improve the services we deliver to our citizens and advocate on their behalf**		
	# of advocacy engagements with local and regional government ministers and officials		17 engagements over the year with DfI; DoF; DE; DoH; NIFRS; NIHE; NI Water; Northern & Southern HSC Trusts; Tourism NI
	# of cross-cutting strategic collaborative working opportunities developed		Total : 17 developed (includes 12 from 1st 6 months report): F&ODC Collaborative Procurement Residual Waste Treatment Contract (value £50m+); Homebawn; DS3 PeacePlus Programme – ICBAN; Maghera Regeneration Programme; Sliabh Beagh Project (Shared Island scheme); Mid South West (MSW) Growth Deal (5 projects); Digital Transformation Flexible Fund; A5 Western Transport Corridor; Sperrins Partnership (AONB); Lough Neagh Partnership (Heritage Resilience Plan / Lough Neagh Action Plan); Lough Neagh Rescue (LNR); Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP); Mid Ulster Local Economic Partnership(LEP); Coalisland Town Forum; Cookstown Town Forum; Maghera Town Forum; Magherafelt Town Forum

2.4	**Continue to engage and work alongside our Community Planning partners to deliver Mid Ulster Community Plan outcomes and have a new Plan in place by 2028**		
	# Community Planning Partnership meetings facilitated		4 meetings facilitated for the period (target: minimum of 2 per year)
	New Community Plan in place by 2028		Preparatory work to commence 2026
	% living in absolute poverty (before housing costs) (*PfG Equal Society: Income Deprivation)		19/20 - 22/23 = 14%
	Households spending 30% or more of their income on housing (*PfG Better Homes: Housing Costs as a Proportion of Income)		19/20 - 22/23 = 7%
	Loneliness often, always or some of the time (*PfG Caring Society: Loneliness)		22/23 = 16% 23/24 = 11.7%
	Life satisfaction average score in Mid Ulster (*PfG Brighter Futures: Life Satisfaction)		22/23 Average score 7.8 out of 10 23/24 Average score 8 out of 10

Theme 3: Being the Best Council Possible

Objective			**Notes**
3.1	**Increase staff engagement and wellbeing by 2028**		
	% days lost to sickness		6.5% average over the year
	% staff satisfied with their job		Staff satisfaction and wellbeing survey will form part of the evidence base for the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Strategy finalised in the next quarter
	% of staff who feel their wellbeing has improved		As per above re survey
	% staff turnover		6.7% average over the year
	% staff completing mandatory learning and development training		Mandatory training compliance @ end of year 75%

3.2	**Implement a Workforce Plan to attract and retain the top talent we need to deliver our services**		
	Workforce Plan implemented in 2026		To be drafted, finalised and approved by 31 March 26
	% staff progression across the organisation		7 employees (recorded as promotions) over the year
	# of apprenticeships successfully completed by March 2028		All mentors trainined, 6 apprenticeships commenced and progressing well
	# externally recognised awards achieved by March 2028		23/24 - 8 (baseline) 24/25 - 16

3.3	**Remain a financially sustainable and viable Council that takes a prudent approach to spending public money**		
	£ cash balance maintained within the Council's pre-established cash limits		Cash at bank balance Year End 24/25 = £46.75million
	£ loans outstanding – remain within Council's operational & authorised borrowing limits		Loans at Year End 24/25 = £3.1 million
	Medium Term Financial Plan & associated prudential indicators developed and reviewed		On track

3.4	**Ensure our Governance Framework is appropriately integrated within our service delivery models**		
	Annual unqualified independent audit certificate		2023/24 financial statements certified without qualification
	# of reportable data protection breaches		None
	>80% of Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations requests responded to within 20 working days		Average over 12 month period = 96%
	# of successful (above threshold) legal challenges to Council's Procurement exercises		None

* Programme for Government Wellbeing Framework statistics have been included in this report. This data is gathered by NISRA from a variety of sources, including other bodies and organisations external to Council. This data is useful to us as it helps build an overall picture of how Mid Ulster is progressing on a number of key issues that matter to our citizens

Report on	MUDC Health & Wellbeing Strategy
Date of Meeting	3 July 2025
Reporting Officer	Geraldine Dyson, Head of HR
Contact Officer	Tanya Gwynne, People & Performance 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**
	To inform Members of the new Health & Wellbeing Strategy which has been developed by Human Resources
2.0	**Background**
2.1	The development of a Health and Wellbeing Strategy is essential for several reasons: 1. Increased productivity – if successfully tailored to the needs of an Organisation, an effective strategy and action plan can help reduce sickness absenteeism and presenteeism as healthier employees are generally more engaged and productive. 2. Comprehensive Approach – it allows for a holistic approach to wellbeing considering support required for physical, mental, social and financial wellbeing. 3. Increased staff satisfaction and engagement – when staff health and wellbeing is made a priority, it can have a positive impact on the Organisation culture which can in turn reduce staff turnover, recruitment costs as well as help attract the best talent to ensure future growth. 4. Enhance Employee Health – services such as employee health checks and awareness campaigns can help staff both identify and prevent some health conditions. 5. Long-term sustainability – an effective strategy can help foster a resilient workforce capable of adapting to change and challenges. 6. Legal & ethical responsibility – employers have a duty to provide a safe and healthy work environment. A strategy demonstrates commitment to this responsibility and can help mitigate legal risks.

3.0	**Main Report**
3.1	This Strategy has been developed to provide a joined-up approach to support employee health and well-being, and as an initiative to deliver on the objectives and measures of Theme 3.1 of the Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2028" Increase staff engagement and wellbeing by 2028". The Strategy is based on the outcomes of a series of workshops attended by the HR team, and based on recommendations of an independent facilitator, to ultimately support the Council to deliver on the below aims and objectives. The Strategy has 8 key inter-linked aims as summarised below, • Improving Employee Health and Well-being • Supporting a culture of employee well-being • Developing a safe and health work environment for employees • Developing employee support resources and signposting employees to accessible local health initiatives. • Enhancing engagement and communication with staff on health and well-being • Promoting healthy lifestyle choices to support employee health and well-being • Enhancing employee job satisfaction and engagement • Reducing the high level of mental health related absences An action plan of events/initiatives is currently being finalised to satisfy and support the aims of the strategy; this plan will be reviewed each year to ensure it is still effectively meeting the health and wellbeing needs of our staff as well as overall needs of the organisation.
4.0	**Other Considerations**
4.1	**Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications**
	Financial: N/A
	Human: This new strategy needs to be launched and communicated to all staff, with Tanya Gwynne, People & Performance Officer, HR&OD Directorate, responsible for same. The Health & Wellbeing Working Group will be involved in the development, co-ordination and implementation of the yearly action plan, supported by the HR&OD Directorate team. Continuous monitoring and reviewing of the impact of the Strategy will be important to ensure it demonstrates positive results for the organisation.
	Risk Management:
4.2	**Screening & Impact Assessments**

	Equality & Good Relations Implications:
	Rural Needs Implications:
5.0	**Recommendation(s)**
5.1	N/A
6.0	**Documents Attached & References**
	Health & Wellbeing Strategy

Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh Mid Ulster District Council

HEALTH & WELLBEING STRATEGY

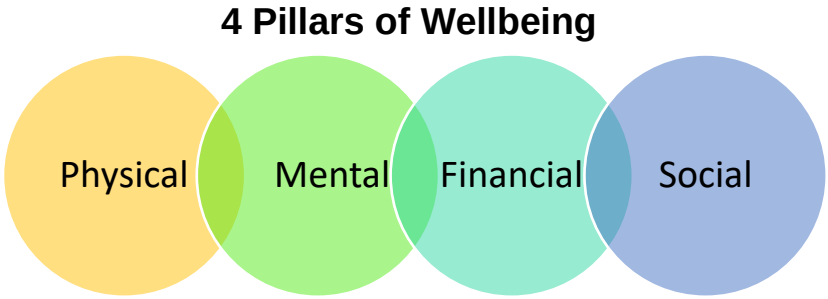
2025 - 2028

Contents

Introduction –

At MUDC the wellbeing of our employees is a priority, and the aim of this strategy is to work with our staff to integrate health and wellbeing into the day-to-day activities to enable us to create a positive and healthy working environment. Mid Ulster Council is committed to helping ensure the health and wellbeing of its employees through the formulation and implementation of polices, providing access to services and to the promotion of health improvement initiatives. MUDC aim to enable a workforce to maintain its physical, mental, financial and social wellbeing, providing a workplace which is safe, supportive and health promoting.

We recognise the need for a holistic approach to wellbeing and this strategy aims to support the 4 pillars of wellbeing:



Physical well-being refers to the state of health and fitness of the body. It involves taking care of physical health through activities that promote strength, stamina and vitality. This includes regular exercise, eating a balanced diet, getting adequate sleep, managing stress, avoiding harmful habits and maintaining proper hygiene.

Mental well-being refers to a person's emotional psychological, and social well-being. It involves feeling good about oneself, having a sense of purpose, being able to handle workplace stressors, relate to others, and make choices that enhance personal growth. It encompasses factors like emotional resilience, self-esteem, the ability to manage and express emotions, maintaining healthy relationships and feeling a sense of accomplishment or satisfaction in life.

Financial well-being refers to the state of having a stable and healthy relationship with money, where an individual feels secure, confident and in control of their financial situation. It involves having the ability to meet current and future financial needs, manage day-to-day expenses without excessive stress, and save or invest for long term goals. It involves feeling empowered and informed about one's financial choices, leading to overall financial security and peace of mind.

Social well-being refers to the quality of a person's relationships and interactions within their community and society. It involves feeling connected, supported, and engaged with others, whether through family, friends, colleagues or broader social groups. It plays a crucial role in overall happiness and mental health, helping others feel connected supported and part of something larger than themselves.

Definition of Wellbeing:

Wellbeing means different things to different people at different times. *"Health and wellbeing are about being emotionally healthy as well as physically healthy. It is feeling able to cope with normal stresses and living a fulfilled life. It can be affected by things like worries about money, work, your people around you and the environment you live in. Your wellbeing is also affected by whether you feel in control of your life, feeling involved with people and communities and feelings of anxiety and isolation".* (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NIHCE)

Afterall, a healthy, content and resilient workforce is a productive one and when we serve the people of Mid Ulster in the wide variety of life-enhancing ways that we do – our staff are essential to the achievement of our goals and vision.

Our Vision & Values

Our vision is to be at the heart of our community and our values which guide our work are:

Customer First: we will engage and listen to our customers to better understand what you want and need and offer excellent access to good quality services.

Respect: we will celebrate diversity and treat everyone equitably and with respect.

Honest & Trustworthy: we will be open and accountable in developing plans and delivering services.

Excellence: we will continually improve our services and work towards the best Mid Ulster there can be.

Innovative: we will seek to make maximum use of technology and other opportunities to improve services in our district.

To achieve our vision, we as an employer, need to be aware of what impacts staff wellbeing and be conscious of this in our policy development and in the management of our staff:

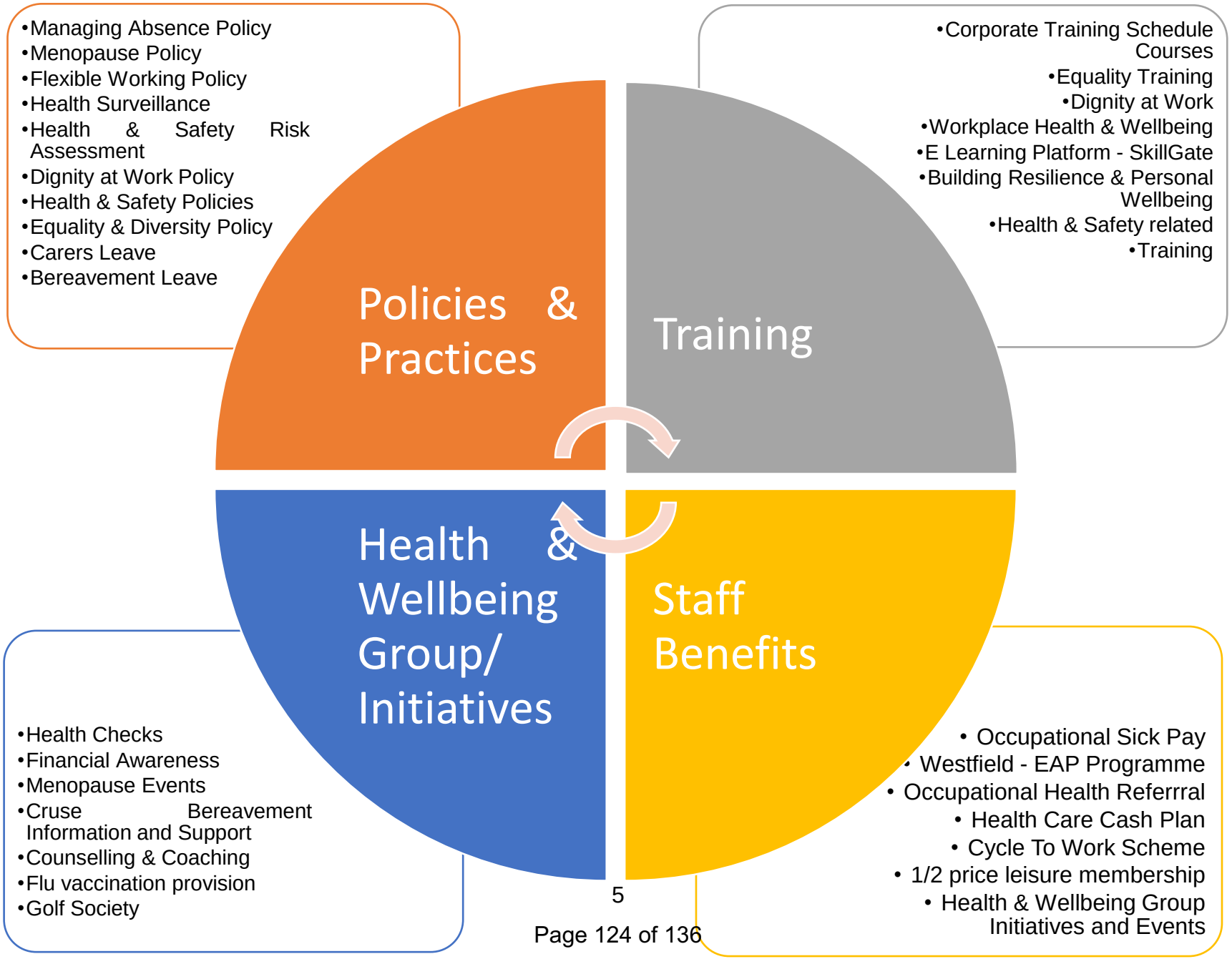
Hierarchy of Risks

Factors which can have an impact on wellbeing:

Environmental Factors – cost of living, unemployment levels in the area, Government policies.
Organisational Factors – job security, funding, departmental budget pressures, restructures.
Job Role – role suitability, physical and mental demands of the role.
Individual – personal, domestic issues, caring responsibilities, health concerns

We as an employer, must consider all of these factors which contribute to the health and wellbeing of our employees when designing policies and procedures and putting in place a framework of support (see figure 1).

Figure 1 – Policies, Services and Initiatives Currently Available To Staff



Structures and Processes that Support the Strategy

This strategy will aim to provide a joined-up approach to health and wellbeing by drawing together our Council's various polices, services and initiatives/programs that impact on employees' health and wellbeing (Figure 1).

In ensuring the implementation of the strategy the council has identified the following roles and responsibilities.

The Health and Wellbeing Group

The Council has established a health wellbeing group that is made up of representatives across various services and levels in the organisation. The Group will lead on a number of health and wellbeing initiatives to promote and enhance the health and wellbeing of employees. More information regarding the role of the Health and Wellbeing Group and its members can be found on the Staff Intranet – Health and Wellbeing and on Staywell Hub (to be developed)

Contact: – EmployeeHealthandWellbeing@midulstercouncil.org

Directors, Heads of Service and Line Mangers

Mangers at all levels will be responsible for ensuring that employees are informed on an ongoing basis of workplace health and wellbeing polices, programmes and services.

Managers will also be expected to promote and facilitate the assessment of employee views and needs in relation to factors affecting their health and wellbeing through the processes of supervision, staff Personal Contribution & Support Process and wellbeing Risk Assessments. This information will be passed onto the People & Performance Officer to inform future interventions.

Employees

Employees have a responsibility to keep themselves informed of workplace health and wellbeing polices, are encouraged to avail of programmes and services that are provided to benefit their health and wellbeing. Employees are also encouraged to offer views and opinions on health and wellbeing through the various representative mechanism e.g. employee suggestion boxes, contacting the Health & Wellbeing Group, team meetings, which will inform the ongoing development and implementation of polices, services and initiatives.

Areas of Development/Action

The health and wellbeing Group aims to produce a forum to link all activities that impact on the health and wellbeing of employees. The group will produce an action

plan in the form of an annual calendar of events which will support the roll out of health and wellbeing polices developed and/or reviewed by HR.

The group will take into consideration information provided by the People & Performance Officer around trends in sickness absence or specific areas of focus.

Monitoring, implementation and Evaluation.

Key performance indicators have been identified which will assist in monitoring the effectiveness of policy development and implementation, provision of health and wellbeing services and initiatives.

Review

The strategy will be reviewed within the first 12 months to ensure it is fit for the purpose and accurately reflects the needs of the organisation and in line with the Council's Corporate Plan.

Indicator	Measure
Absenteeism Rates	Cause/Length/Patterns- % Loss/Day lost
Mental Health Related Illness	Days Lost/ % Loss
Health & Wellbeing Event initiatives suitability	Participation rates – employee feedback and suggestions
Staff Engagement & Satisfaction	Staff Survey – Pulse Surveys, Staff retention rates, number of grievances and complaints, positive feedback
EAP Programme	Usage Numbers – claim numbers, positive feedback
Return on Investment	Financial return on wellness programs by comparing cost savings against saving from reduced absenteeism

Wellbeing Strategy (2025 – 2026)

AIMS	OBJECTIVES (How)	TIMELINE
To improve the health and wellbeing of our people which is a key element of achieving our strategic aim of "Being the Best Council Possible" by increasing staff engagement and wellbeing by 2028.	• Implementing (and reviewing) relevant policies/procedures – e.g. Health & Wellbeing Strategy, Absence Management Policy, Menopause Policy etc. • Take a holistic approach to wellbeing – physical, mental, financial and social. • Roll out health and wellbeing related training for both managers and staff. • Carry out benchmarking exercise with other Councils on their health and wellbeing benefits and initiatives to help us identify areas of improvement as well as best practice.	• 2025/2026 and when appropriate • Ongoing • 2025 – yearly • Yearly
Making employee wellbeing the culture, developing the values and behaviours that reflect the type of organisation we are proud to be part of with an open, fair and transparent culture.	• Training for Managers/staff on expected behaviour including: ➢ Dignity at Work ➢ Code of Conduct ➢ Equality/Disability Awareness ➢ Coaching/Mentoring ➢ Essential Skills for First-Time Managers ➢ Managing Stress ➢ Mental Health in the Workplace ➢ Resilience ➢ Effective Time Management • Work towards the attainment of a wellbeing accreditation i.e. Take 5 Accreditation from Northern Trust • Make new starters aware of health and wellbeing initiatives at	• Ongoing • 2025/2026 • Ongoing

	induction and throughout employee life cycle. • Encourage open conversations about mental health • Agree a set of Management Workplace Wellbeing Principles to encourage good practice • Listen to what employees need and use that feedback to evolve.	• 2025 • Ongoing
To create a safe and healthy working environment in line with statutory requirements and good practice to reduce work related ill health issues, absences and injuries.	• Health and Safety training for staff and managers. • Extend availability of Flu-Vaccine • Deliver targeted campaigns/initiatives based on information available to support wellbeing e.g. menopause support, men's and women's health initiatives, counselling etc. • Carry out DSE and workspace assessments	• Ongoing • Ongoing • Yearly events • Ongoing
To deliver and signpost to effective initiatives and support for staff that is easy to access and supports a wide range of staff needs – physical, mental, financial and social.	• Physical – promote benefits of physical activity such as: ➢ Discounted leisure membership, ➢ awareness days/campaigns – Safe in the Sun, Smoking Cessation ➢ Health Checks – Cancer Focus, Farm Families ➢ Occupational health provision ➢ exercise taster sessions, ➢ Annual Health Surveillance Programmes ➢ Menopause & OH clinic referrals. • Mental – Develop W.A.P (Wellness Action Plan) to support staff with their mental health. ➢ Promote Mental Health First Aiders within Council as well as current benefits available to staff	• 2025 - ongoing

	➢ Welfare Support - Counselling services • Financial – Promote Westfield Rewards, financial awareness, positive pension planning and retirement information sessions. • Social – Offer Seed Funds for the start-up of clubs – e.g. clubs and societies Golf Society, walking clubs, support groups etc.	
To improve on how we successfully engage and communicate with staff on health and wellbeing.	• Install Staff Suggestion boxes at each of our 3 Council sites to allow for non-digital submittal of wellbeing needs and suggestions. • Liaise with Union Representatives to help identify health and wellbeing needs of staff • Establish an Accountability Framework – to improve and encourage a consistent, structured approach to communication from Managers to their teams. • Promote the Health and Wellbeing Group – purpose, members names.	• 2025 • Ongoing • 2025/2026 • Summer 2025
To encourage and support staff to develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle	• Organise a yearly Healthy and Wellbeing Plan of events to encourage staff participation such as Walking/Activity Challenges, Health Fairs, information sessions etc. • Promote staff benefits • Provide information sessions on the E.A.P i.e. Westfield Health.	• April 2025 • Ongoing • Ongoing
To improve staff satisfaction and engagement.	• Seek the input of staff (through a whole staff survey) across the	• 2025 and review 2026

	Council to ensure strategy aligns with staff need. • Acknowledge and celebrate staff loyalty and achievement. • Carry out exit interviews to identify areas of improvement • Organise several staff engagement events and make it accessible to all staff – team building, coffee mornings etc. • Facilitate staff development opportunities: ➢ Apprenticeships ➢ Management Development Training ➢ Interview Skills for Interviewees ➢ Mentoring opportunities ➢ Secondment opportunities ➢ Career Breaks ➢ Encourage career development	• Starting 2025 • Yearly • Ongoing • Ongoing
To reduce the high level of mental health related absence.	• Increased visibility of all health and wellbeing resources. • Provide financial wellbeing awareness sessions • Providing mental health related training e.g. building resilience, stress management. • Train Managers to promote health & wellbeing. • 1-1 Counselling and Coaching sessions • Regularly review relevant policies and procedures including equality, diversity etc. • Review provision of E.A.P. to ensure still meets needs of staff • Review the current provision of Mental health First Aiders to	• 2025 - ongoing • November 2025 • Ongoing • Ongoing • 2025 • Ongoing • When required • 2025

	ensure appropriate and adequate for size of our Organisation. • Organise yearly initiatives to increase awareness	• 2025 - ongoing May - Mental health Awareness Week Oct – Menopause/Womens Health Awareness Month Nov – National Talk Money Week

Health & Wellbeing Support Directory

Physical Support

Half Price Leisure Membership – to MUDC Leisure Complexes. For more information click on the link to our Staff Intranet: Staff-Discounts-Offers

Employee Assistance Programme - WESTFIELD HEALTH MEMBERSHIP. Westfield Health Membership, help to cover the cost of:

- Chiropractic
- Chiropody/Podiatry
- Optical – glasses
- As well as
- 24/7 DoctorLine Service – free to call but you have to pay for any prescriptions – **call 0345 612 3861**
- Diagnostic Scanning Service – access to MRI, CT &PET scans – unlimited MRI scans - **call 0345 345 4556**

For more information on Westfield Health Benefits for Staff click on this link: Westfield Health Information or alternatively call the customer services number on 0114 250 2000

Mental Support

Mental Health First Aiders

Name	Directorate/Department	Contact Details
Anne Marie Campbell	Environment	annemarie.campbell@midulstercouncil.org Ext 23700

Linda Carson	Human Resources	linda.carson@midulstercouncil.org Ext 22053 or 07760 762 180
Marita McGirr	Human Resources	Marita.mcgirr@midulstercouncil.org Ext 24340 or 07827 991 910
Garry McCreesh	Environment	Garry.mccreesh@midulstercouncil.org Ext 22405
Brian Holmes	Property Services	Contact Property Services
Melanie Patterson	Environmental Health	Melanie.patterson@midulstercouncil.org Ext 24117 or 07766 740 916
Monica McDonnell	Environmental Health	Monica.mcdonnell@midulstercouncil.org Ext 24112 or 077 893 903 02
Elizabeth McLaughlin	Health, Leisure & Wellbeing	Elizabeth.mclaughlin@midulstercouncil.org Ext 25095 or 07714133674
Andrew Carson	Health, Leisure & Wellbeing	Andrew.carson@midulstercouncil.org Ext 24804
Fiona Duffin	Environment	Fiona.duffin@midulstercouncil.org Ext 23120
Keith Currie	Health, Leisure & Wellbeing	Keith.currie@midulstercouncil.org Tel:- 028 86 763853
Declan Hughes	Health, Leisure & Wellbeing	Declan.hughes@midulstercouncil.org Tel 028 79 547400
Breifne McCusker	Environment	Breifne.mccusker@midulstercouncil.org Ext 23529 or 07816339791
Nathan Hill	Health, Leisure & Wellbeing	Nathan.hill@midustercouncil.org Ext 24817 or 0788 133 00 52

Wisdom App

If you are eligible for Westfield Membership, you can access a Health and Wellbeing App called Wisdom. This App provides an enhanced set of wellbeing tools and engaging features to support your health and wellness. Download the app and enter employer code “WHCORP”.

Westfield Employee Assistance Programme - 24HR Information Line which offers:

- Counselling for emotional problems like stress anxiety and depression. -
- Bereavement Support.
- Structured counselling – 6 sessions online, over the phone or face to face

To access this support call **0800 092 0987**

HSC Directory of services to help improve mental health and emotional wellbeing

These directories list the organisations that offer services to help improve mental health and emotional wellbeing in your Trust area. It not only details sources of support for stress, depression and anxiety but also support for eating distress, bereavement, sexual health, student and child/youth support, benefit/financial advice and family/relationship support. Where possible, additional information has also been provided, such as websites or email addresses and contact details within each Health and Social Care Trust area.

Northern Area Trust

https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/2023-02/Northern%20Area%20Card%2002.23%20final.pdf

Southern Area Trust

https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/2023-02/Southern%20Area%20Card%2002.23%20final.pdf

Coaching

You can avail of face-to-face coaching/counselling with a local provider if you are struggling mentally and need support. Contact your manager or a member of your HR Team for confidential referral.

The Here 2 Help App

ABOUT THE APP

The Here2Help App provides quick access to advice and support services for anyone in crisis or needing help. It contains details of local, not-for-profit organisations who can help with many issues such as mental health, addiction, housing and domestic abuse.

The App was created through a local initiative and developed by Noel McKee from East Antrim Counselling: https://eastantrimcounselling.com/here2help/

Inspire N.I. – call 0808 189 0036

Lifeline – call 0808 808 8000

Cruse Bereavement Support – 0808 808 1677

Confidential Advisors

Confidential Advisors are trained individuals, there to support staff who have work related concerns and will assist in finding informal resolutions in the workplace.

Where informal resolutions are insufficient, Confidential Advisors, will also support employees in lodging and progressing work related complaints if they so wish. Further information regarding the role of Confidential Advisors can be found in the Dignity At Work Policy & Procedure.

Name		**Contact No**	**Location**
Lynn Shiels	Ext 22603	Business & Communities	Magherafelt
Eunan Murray	Ext 22554	Environmental & Property	Dungannon
Claire McNally	Ext 23305	Chief Executive's	Cookstown
Marita McGirr	Ext 24340	Organisational Devlpt	Dungannon
Emma McCullagh	Ext 23524	Planning	Magherafelt
Johnny McNeill	Ext 24407	Technical Services	Cookstown

Financial Support

Westfield Rewards – Get discounts and rewards from hundreds of leading retailers, restaurants and destinations. Further information can be found on our staff intranet.

Westfield Advice and Information Line – confidential help and advice on legal issues such as debt, consumer property or neighbour disputes. Call **0800 092 0987**

Inhouse Training – look out on our quarterly Learning and Development Schedule for information sessions on Positive Retirement, How To Get The Most from Your Pension etc. which is regularly updated on the Staff Intranet

MindWise – Mental health and money advice service - **08088010373 or visit https://www.mentalhealthandmoneyadvice.org/ni/**

Staywell Hub

The Stay well Hub is available through the Staff Intranet Home Page and has details on MUDC health and Wellbeing events/initiatives as well as numerous videos and articles on all areas of health and wellbeing, including financial health which is constantly updated with new topics and support.

You can access the Staywell Hub at the following link with your Intranet staff login: **https://staywell.mudc.wellhub.info/**

Social Support

Social Wellbeing refers to the quality of a individuals' relationship and interactions with others. Social wellness is about building meaningful, respectful relationships, fostering a sense of belonging, and feeling supported and connected.

The Health and Wellbeing Group develop a yearly calendar on events to help meet the social needs of our employees. These include workshops, social gatherings, coffee mornings, walking groups, promoting sporting societies such as the Golf Society etc. To see what is available go the Staff Intranet.

For further information on health and wellbeing support contact your designated HR Business Partner or Tanya.Gwynne@midulstercouncil.org