

Mid Ulster District Council

Rural Needs Impact Assessments 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

No.	Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 20161.	The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to (2).	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service (3).
1	Implementation of the Jobs Retention Scheme	Internal	The decision to implement this Scheme will impact on Mid Ulster District Council staff only. Staff who are placed on the Scheme are workers who cannot complete their work from home. Therefore, any impact on staff who are rural dwellers cannot be avoided and this action is deemed by Mid Ulster District Council as an appropriate and reasonable response to the pandemic.
2	Seamus Heaney Homeplace Trails Experience	Rural Development	The trails experience is located in and around the village of Bellaghy. The concept has been designed in order to enhance the tourism offer in this rural area of the District.
3	Rural Business Development Grant	Rural Development	This Rural Business Development Grant formed part of DEARA's Tackling Rural Poverty and Isolation and social isolation framework and was therefore designed specifically with the needs of rural businesses and communities in mind.
4	Delivery of Essential Services Only (Covid-19 Response)	Internal	Mid Ulster District Council has assessed the potential impact of the delivery of essential services only, on rural dwellers and has determined it does not unlawfully directly discriminate in any way with respect of rural dwellers. Where provision might potentially indirectly impact on rural needs, Mid Ulster District Council considers the impacts are justified and a proportionate means of achieving the legitimate aim of protecting the general public from a Coronavirus pandemic by increasing the capacity of public service systems and mitigating the spread of infection.

5	Active Travel Capital Project	Rural Development	This project will have a positive impact on rural areas. Five of the six projects are taking place in rural areas with only one being implemented in an urban area - Coalisland. The projects will have a positive impact for people in rural areas as they will increase safety when walking by either putting in place lighting (Maghera & Coalisland) or creating new connections in existing footpath infrastructure (Clogher, Clonoe & Eglis) or putting in place new infrastructure to allow safe walking routes (Bellaghy).
6	Dignity at Work	Internal	Mid Ulster District Council has considered the needs of staff particularly those living in rural areas. If staff had an issue they do not necessarily have to travel to Council offices to speak with someone but rather contact one of the Confidential Advisors (listed in Appendix 2) of the Policy by phone or e mail and if a meeting is required, this could be arranged at mutually agreed Council location so that the staff member does not have too far to travel.
7	Allocation of Hanging Baskets	Tourism	Whilst Mid Ulster District Council will be providing Hanging Baskets in the 5 Primary Towns, including the rural town of Maghera. Council are conscious of the need to support our local villages and work in partnership with local groups/communities to create vibrant villages.
8	Managing Bereavement Policy	Internal	Mid Ulster District Council has considered the needs of staff particularly those living in rural areas.

9	OM Dark Skies	Rural Tourism	<p>Consultations are continually taking place with the local community groups/residents about the Davagh development. This provides an opportunity to allow the local residents and groups to have their say and be brought up to speed on the development of the site. The 2 main community groups in the area is the Broughderg Community Association and the Dunnamore Residents Association, Council have been working closely with the associations for several years and their opinions have helped to shape Davagh. The most recent community meetings took place on 27 February 2019 and 22 October 2019. The purpose of these consultations was to continually engage with the local community and provide an update on the progress of the Davagh Dark Sky Project, deliver a presentation on light pollution, and distribute copies of the light management plan and IDA compliant lighting guidelines. Additionally these meetings allow the community to get involved in the project and have their say on the way forward for the forest. In addition to the wider public consultations, Mid Ulster District Council Officers liaise directly with individual land owners, providing information and advice on light pollution.</p> <p>An on-line survey was published in December regarding the further development of the mountain bike trail within the Dark Sky Park, this survey had over 800 responses. Members of the local community were invited to view the site in February 2020 to view the developments taking place and to hear of future plans for the site. Council Officers have delivered a Davagh Dark Sky presentation, explaining the background to the project, educating on dark skies and the issues of light pollution, and explaining the preliminary sky quality measurements. To date this presentation has been delivered to various groups and stakeholders.</p>
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10	Rural Business Development Grant	Rural Businesses	<p>This Scheme is funded under the DAERA Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework. In preparing this new Framework, DARD consulted with a range of key rural stakeholders. A public consultation exercise on the proposals for the new Framework was also undertaken including a stakeholder event at which rural stakeholders had an opportunity to discuss the proposals and put forward their views. A total of 83 written responses to the public consultation were received the overwhelming majority of which supported the proposals for a new TRPSI Framework with many stressing the important role TRPSI plays in tackling rural poverty and social isolation and the positive difference it has made to the lives of vulnerable rural dwellers through the wide range of measures funded under it.</p>
11	Management of Overtime Policy	Internal	<p>Mid Ulster District Council has considered the needs of staff including those living in rural areas. The needs of staff are met by the policy aims and objectives in that the Council is committed to ensuring that all working arrangements are appropriately and effectively managed. Although it recognises that overtime working will occasionally be required, Council wishes to, where possible, reduce overtime working to a minimum.</p> <p>Where unplanned overtime or call outs are required, staff who live in closest proximity to Council site (or location where staff member needs to attend) may be called upon as opposed to those living further away in more remote rural setting. This makes more business sense particularly where time is of the essence e.g. dealing with an emergency. However, by monitoring and properly managing overtime as part of this Council wide policy, the Council intends to reduce the overall need for overtime and therefore staff will not be disadvantaged with same staff being called upon all the time to work overtime/assist with call outs.</p>

12	Mid Ulster Town Centre Recovery	Rural Development	The Mid Ulster Towns Covid 19 Business Grant will impact on people in rural areas in a positive manner. The aim of Mid Ulster Towns Covid 19 Business Grant is to assist businesses to adapt to and implement social distancing measures to protect staff and customers in line with government guidance. The businesses located in the town centres in the Mid Ulster region (Cookstown, Coalisland, Dungannon, Maghera and Magherafelt) are owned and utilised by people living within the rural areas of Mid Ulster.
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