



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

Democratic Services *Chief Executive's Section*

SERVICE PLAN - 2019 / 20

Date

Consulted within staff team

20/ 06 / 2019

Discussed & signed off by Director

/ / 2019

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1.0 OVERALL PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE SERVICE

1.1 Purpose and Scope of the Service

Reporting to the Chief Executive, Democratic Services delivers a range of services which have a reach and impact across all Council services, and form an integral part of the Council's governance framework. The Service provides back office support to the wider Council, and facilitates the delivery of its committee system and provision of support to its elected representatives (councillors) across its 7 District Electoral Areas.

1.2 Responsibilities

The Service is specifically responsible for and charged with delivering the following functions with an organisational reach across the Council:

Committee Services – facilitation and management of council and committee meetings of Council to include the development of agendas, compilation of meeting packs, providing the summons to councillors and minute taking and follow up activity on decisions resolved

Equality, Disability and Good Relations - in ensuring that the Council meets its Equality Scheme and providing support in ensuring services are delivered in line with obligations under Section 75 (1) and (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

Rural Needs - providing assistance across Council on the rural needs statutory duty under the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 to consider rural needs in the development of new policies, plans or strategies and in any service design/delivery decisions.

Performance Management & Improvement – developing and embedding arrangements to support continuous improvement in the delivery of services, by embedding a culture which encourages and champions improvement in everything the Council does to meets its Performance Improvement obligations under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014. Introduction of an improvement framework, which supports council's strategic planning through reporting, validating performance data and on-going monitoring.

Processing Civic Recognition Requests from Elected Representatives – receiving, processing and making recommendation to council on requests made for civic recognition.

Member Services – in providing support to councillors as required and progression of the Elected Member Development Charter

Corporate Policy – providing support and advice on the formulation of policies and corporate policy development across the Council

Information Requests – coordinating the receipt and response to Freedom of Information (Fol) made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

1.3 Customers & Stakeholders

| Customers & Stakeholders |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillors and elected representatives • Senior Management and Heads of Service • Members of public requesting information held by Council, committee recommendations and council decisions • Government Departments, agencies and bodies which include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Equality Commission for NI ○ NI Audit Office ○ Public Records Office for Northern Ireland (PRONI) ○ Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) ○ A wide cross section of the public and customers of the Council, as required. ○ Outside Bodies with Councillor representation from Mid Ulster District Council ○ Government Departments, specifically the Department for Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs on the Rural Needs duty under the 2017 Act. |

1.4 Performance Overview in 2018/19

The following provides a summary overview of progress and the impact made from last years' Service Plan (2018-2019). It also details key successes, a summary of year-end progress, remaining challenges for the Service and how it made a difference. It does not reflect the entire activity of the Service but rather the core areas, which were identified as being a focus throughout 2018-19.

| 2018/19 Performance Overview | End of Year Progress Status: Completed/Commenced/Other |
|---|---|
| Corporate Policy Development: To improve awareness and accessibility of council policies to council by throughout 2018 to 2019 | Completed: A departmental directory of council policies has been developed and made accessible to all staff. In summary: (i) policies have been identified; (ii) uploaded to the intranet; (iii) an advisory directory has been compiled; (iv) directory uploaded to the intranet and hyperlinked; and (v) staff have been advised of same |
| Information Requests (FOI): increase the number of information requests responded | Completed: The Service continued to use the Customer Relationship Management |

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| <p>to within 20 days from that which was attained at financial year end 2018-19</p> | <p>(CRM) system to process FOI requests. In summary, at year-end the number of requests received by Council increased by 23% when compared to 2017-18. This was up by 121 to 536. There has been an improvement on last year's attainment even though council has processed an additional 121 FOI requests this year. The number of FOI requests has continued to rise year on year from Council's establishment. Whilst the 90% standard was not attained at 86% (falling short by 4%) it has been improved upon from 2017-18 even with an increase of 121 on the previous year (a rise of 23%). To ensure attainment; (i) quarterly reports were been generated and presented to senior management to provide greater scrutiny; and (ii) enhanced reporting on non-compliant services has taken place throughout the year.</p> |
| <p>Performance Improvement: Improve Council's performance management data and information reporting to ensure legislative compliance by developing an option appraisal for introduction of an interactive performance management system</p> | <p>Commenced and Ongoing: The Service has scoped out and developed a paper on the requirements of an electronic system tailored to meet the business and reporting requirements of Part 12 of the Local Government Act 2014. The Service is now working with an existing council software provider to utilise functionality of software being introduced by the council to maximise return for the council within an existing reporting framework.</p> |
| <p>Member Development & Services: To attain the Elected Member development Charter</p> | <p>Completed: This was commenced under 2017-2018 Service Plan period and was attained in October 2018 following a period of assessment and interviews process. The service is currently working to attain the Charter.</p> |
| <p>Member Development & Services: To increase councillor knowledge of their role within the council decision making (committee) process structures by developing/delivering an induction</p> | <p>Completed: The Service compiled and delivered a bespoke induction programme following the 2019 local election for new and existing members to Council. This included the continued delivery of the Member Development Working Group; a</p> |

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| programme for members following the 2019 local election. | directory for members of council departments and services, together with key contacts (currently subject graphic design); one to one inductions for the new councillors; identification of ICT requirements; a plenary induction session with senior management input and training on Council Standing Orders. |
|--|--|

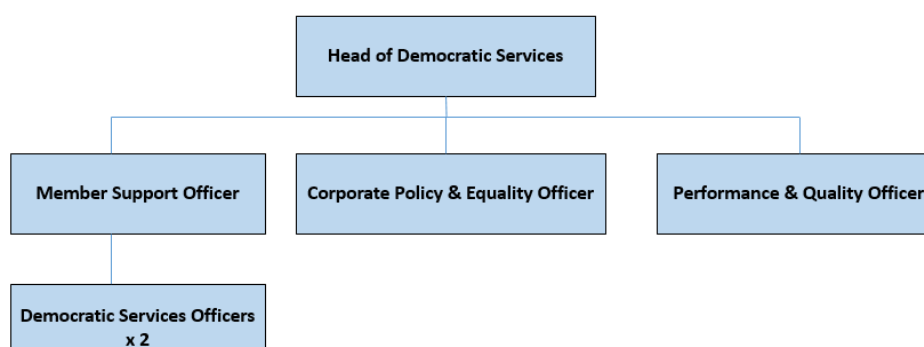
2.0 SERVICE WORKPLAN 2019/20

The following tables confirm the resources, financial and people, which the Service has access to throughout 2019-20 to deliver its actions, activities and core business.

2.1 Budget 2019/20

| Service Budget Headings | £ |
|---|-----------|
| Contributions to Member Bodies & Performance Audit Fees | 133,000 |
| Members Allowances | 911,000 |
| Corporate & Democratic Support | 261,000 |
| Town Twinning | 10,000 |
| | |
| Gross Budget | 1,315,000 |
| Income | 0 |
| Net Budget for 2019-20 | 1,315,000 |

2.2 Staffing Complement - 2019/20



| Staffing | No. of Staff |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Head of Service | 1 |
| Managers | |
| Officers | 5 |
| Remaining Team | |
| Total | 6 |

2.3 Service Work Plan - 2019/20

This plan confirms the core activities and actions forming the Service Work Plan for 2019-20. The following is a high-level capture of the Service activities and work which it will focus on throughout the period of the plan. The Plan links to the Council's 2015-2020 Corporate Plan priorities (the Corporate Plan 2015/19 priorities were extended for another year to include 2019 to 2020), Annual Corporate Improvement Plan Objectives, Corporate Indicators and the Mid Ulster Community Plan

| Link to Community Plan Theme: | Corporate Plan Theme | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| <i>CMP 3.3 Education & Skills - We are more entrepreneurial,</i> | <i>CRP 1.3 Delivering for Our People - High quality, responsive indoor and outdoor recreational services with increased customer numbers and satisfaction</i> | | | | | | |
| Service Objective | How Will we measure the impact of our work (PI's) | Where are we now? (Baseline data) | What do we want to achieve? (Targets) | How Will we get there? | | | |
| | | | | Key Actions | Dates | Owners | Outcome |
| To create efficiencies within Committee Services activities by expanding the use of the council's Committee Management Information System (CMIS) across three modules by 31 st March 2020 | The number of additional modules being used across the CMIS system | The CMIS is currently being used to transact council/committee business; retain details on Councillors and Outside Bodies | To be using an additional 3 modules within the CMIS to transact Committee Services activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the existing elements of the CMIS system being used and as to what extent they're being used Consider the additional modules/elements of the system to be advanced to create efficiencies within Committee Services activities, to include consideration of use of Declarations of Interest, Expenses and minutes module Develop a schedule of when each module, and to what extent, is being deployed by who and by when Deploy modules on a phased basis to capture information currently being stored in hard copy and off the system | July 2019 July 2019 Aug 2019 Aug 2019 – Mar 2020 | Member Support Officer (MSO) MSO MSO MSO | That Council Officers within Committee Section will have greater time to focus on other service activities and information is more readily accessible by Council Officers, subject to their permission levels, irrespective of where they are located (on site or off-site) |

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|--|--|--|--|---|---------------------|--|--|
| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compilation of Committee Services: Step Manual/Guide to setting up and transacting committees through CMIS in line with Mid Ulster DC practice and requirements | Aug 2019 – Mar 2020 | | |
|--|--|--|--|---|---------------------|--|--|

| Link to Community Plan Theme: | Corporate Plan Theme | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|----------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| <i>CMP 3.3 Education & Skills - We are more entrepreneurial,</i> | <i>CRP 1.2 Delivering for Our People - Increase Access to services and customer experiences across the district</i> | | | | | | |
| Service Objective | How Will we measure the impact of our work (PI's) | Where are we now? (Baseline data) | What do we want to achieve? (Targets) | How Will we get there? | | | |
| | | | | Key Actions | Dates | Owners | Outcome |
| To increase the number of Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 days by 31 st March 2020 | % of Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 days of receipt | At March 2019, 86% (461) of 536 information requests received were responded to within 20 days | 90% of all Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 days | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To continue to use and further deploy elements of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to process requests | 2019-20 throughout | Head of Democratic Services (H.DS) | % of FOI request responded to within 20 days increases from 86% |
| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise the CRM system to process Internal Reviews to their conclusion | July 2019 | H.DS | Increased satisfaction with responses issued determined from the number of Internal Reviews sought over the period |
| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the reporting to senior management to display achievement by Service, to identify areas for improvement and early action | July 2019 | H.DS | |
| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule and facilitate bi-monthly 1hr briefings/conversations with Business Support staff to embed a culture of continued learning around the system, in association with ICT Service | Sept 2019 - Mar 2020 | H.DS | |
| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heads of Services agenda item and continual discussion | 2019-202 throughout | H.DS | |

| Link to Community Plan Theme: | Corporate Plan Theme | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|--|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| <i>CMP 3.3 Education & Skills - We are more entrepreneurial, innovative & creative</i> | <i>CRP 4.3 Building Unity - Implement an organisational strategy for a modern workplace</i> | | | | | | |
| Service Objective | How Will we measure the impact of our work (PI's) | Where are we now? (Baseline data) | What do we want to achieve? (Targets) | How Will we get there? | | | |
| | | | | Key Actions | Dates | Owners | Outcome |
| Develop draft action plan for the introduction of an automated/electronic performance management module as part of Council's enterprise management System by March 2020. | 1. meeting, realise potential interdependencies of project | Previous piece of work utilised which looked at good practice models and performance management systems on market | 1. Feb 2019 | 1. HoS & PQO meet with Director of Finance to discuss Technology One Enterprise Management System (TOEMS) - Performance Mgt. Module and interdependencies with introduction of TOEMS finance module | Feb 2019 | Performance & Quality Officer (PQO) | SMART action plan developed for introduction of performance management module from Technology One Enterprise system, which will speed, collate, manage and report performance in real time while providing up-to-date audit logs |
| | 2. PQO attend Tech One Financial Management system Overview Module workshop | | 2 Knowledge /awareness of Tech One's workshop methodology by March 2019 | 2. PQO Attend one of Finance Team's workshops regarding Finance module system requirements. | Mar | PQO | |
| | 3. PQO attend bi monthly | | 3. Bi annual advice meetings regarding quality/L & D & gain insight of project implementation | 3. PQO attend Finance TOEMS project management bi-monthly board meetings to add quality perspective and gain knowledge & understanding of Council/Technology One's Solution Implementation Methodology | Bi Monthly - March 2019 | PQO | |
| | 4. Attend Tech One Skype presentation | | 4. April 2019 | 4. Set up Performance Module overview presentation with Tech One for HoS PQO | April 2019 | PQO | |

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|--|---|--|-------------|--|----------|-----|--|
| | 5. Performance management draft scoping paper developed | | 5. May 2019 | 5. Develop Scope of requirement paper: - context, Officer User Access, Reports, Other IT requirements for Tech One. | May 2019 | PQO | |
| | 6. Resource bid paper developed by | | 6. Jan 2020 | 6. Liaise with Tech One regarding approximation of build days for inclusion as non-recurring resource bid for 2020/22 budget cycle. | Jan 2019 | PQO | |
| | 7. Performance Management Module Initial project plans developed by | | 7. Mar 2020 | 7. Dependent on resource bid and interdependency of advancement of Tech One finance module implementation - develop initial "project plans" in conjunction with technology One team/senior mgt. for timeframe/resources of Performance management module project | Mar 2020 | PQO | |

| <i>CMP 3.3 Education & Skills - We are more entrepreneurial, innovative & creative</i> | <i>CRP 4.3 Building Unity - Implement an organisational strategy for a modern workplace</i> | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|--|---------------------|--------|---|
| Service Objective | How Will we measure the impact of our work (PI's) | Where are we now? (Baseline data) | What do we want to achieve? (Targets) | How Will we get there? | | | |
| | | | | Key Actions | Dates | Owners | Outcome |
| Corporate Performance and Improvement Policy agreed by Council | 1 - 2. Performance and Improvement Policy agreed by Council | Performance Management Framework developed, will be reviewed and linked to a policy | 1-2. Policy in place by October 2019 - outlining Council's commitment under the duty to improve - Local Govt. (NI) Act 2014 | 1. Draft Corporate Performance & Improvement Policy and associated framework forwarded to SMT | Aug 2019 | PQO | Performance Management Framework reviewed |
| | 3-5. Staff updated on Perf Man framework/ policy | | 3-5. Staff cognisant of policy by March 2020 | 2. Draft Corporate Policy and associated Performance management framework presented to P & R committee | Sept 2019 | PQO | |
| | | | | 3. Roll out policy and framework through staff briefing sessions | Oct 2019 – Mar 2020 | PQO | |
| | | | | 4. include awareness of framework as part of service improvement planning | | | |
| | | | | 5. Develop abridged Minute Manager/FAQ guide around performance management policy/framework | | | |

| Link to Community Plan Theme: | Corporate Plan Theme | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---------------------------------------|--|-------|--------|--|
| <i>CMP 3.3 Education & Skills - We are more entrepreneurial,</i> | <i>CRP 4.3 Building Unity - Implement an organisational strategy for a modern workplace</i> | | | | | | |
| Service Objective | How Will we measure the impact of our work (PI's) | Where are we now? (Baseline data) | What do we want to achieve? (Targets) | How Will we get there? | | | |
| | | | | Key Actions | Dates | Owners | Outcome |
| (i) Corporate Improvement Plan compiled and approved by council by 30 th June 2019 | 1. Draft improvement objectives paper to P & R committee | Fifth year of developing and publishing annual improvement plan (forward looking) and annual assessment plan (retrospective) | 1. Feb 2019 | 1. Analyse documentation regarding potential improvement areas, liaise with SMT and members on potential improvement objectives, develop paper of draft objectives for committee, approval by Council, | Feb | PQO | Demonstrate Council's compliance with Duty to Improve Part 12 of the Local Government (NI) act |
| | 2. Consultation exercise and outworking's paper to P & R | | 2. April 2019 | 2. Undertake public consultation exercise of draft improvement objectives. | April | PQO | |
| | 3. Draft Corporate Improvement plan for 2019/20 developed by | | 3. May 2019 | 3. Liaise with colleagues/stakeholders who have undertaken improvement projects, HoS service plans, and lead officers accountable for corporate indicators, review current corporate improvement performance status and commentary, revise & develop corporate improvement plan for 2019/20 in line with outworking of consultation, forward to SMT, P&R and thereafter Council approval | May | PQO | |
| | 4. 2019/20 Corporate Improvement Plan published | | 4. 30 th June 19 | 4. Publish approved Corporate improvement Plan for 2019/20 by 30 th of June 2019. | June | PQO | |
| | 5. Draft Corporate Improvement Plan developed | | 5. May 2019 | 5. Undertake an assessment of Corporate performance and improvement objectives/outcomes/status for 2018/19 and conduct benchmarking - time series/other as reasonably practicable | May | PQO | |

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| Annual Corporate Assessment Plan compiled and approved by Council by 30 th of September 2019 | 6. Approved Annual Improvement Assessment report published | | 6. 30 th Sept 19 | 6. Develop draft annual performance assessment report for SMT, P & R committee, and thereafter Council approval | Sept | | |
| | | | 7. 30 th Sept 19 | 7. Develop and forward for approval committee and council. Liaise with Local government auditor | Sept | | |

| Link to Community Plan Theme: | Corporate Plan Theme | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|--|------------------|--|---|
| <i>CMP 3.3 Education & Skills - We are more entrepreneurial,</i> | <i>CRP 1.2 Delivering for Our People - Increase Access to services and customer experiences across the district</i> | | | | | | |
| Service Objective | How Will we measure the impact of our work (PI's) | Where are we now? (Baseline data) | What do we want to achieve? (Targets) | How Will we get there? | | | |
| | | | | Key Actions | Dates | Owners | Outcome |
| To further embed further a culture of equality and good relations within decision-making processes across Council by March 2020 | <p>No. of Equality Screening Reports undertaken over the period</p> <p>The number of meetings held with Services and Departments</p> <p>Increase in staff seeking advice at an early stage in policy dev.</p> | <p>22 statutory Equality Screening reports carried undertaken in 2018-19</p> <p>3 policy consultations undertaken with screening assessments</p> <p>Monitoring Report to Equality Commission for NI submitted</p> | <p>To be progressed and completed by end January 2020</p> <p>Attend a meeting of each Service at least once by end of January 2020</p> <p>Increase the number of Equality Screening, commensurate</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a programme of activities to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> targeted training for staff at different levels attend department/service team meetings to profile equality issues and CPEO support organise focus group on equality screening and review screening template and guidance, if necessary produce background resources on different equality groups & issues | June 19 - Mar 20 | Corporate Policy & Equality Officer (CPEO) | Enhanced quality of screening reports which reflect understanding of needs of different equality groups or issues |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--|----------------------------|---|--|--|-------------------------|--|
| | <p>and screening process</p> <p>Information gathered for the 19-20 Equality Monitoring Report</p> <p>Placement of equality on agenda for team meetings</p> <p>User-friendly system for collating information for progress report developed</p> | within statutory timeframe | <p>with policies/key decisions taken</p> <p>Equality is a standing item of Service Team Meeting</p> <p>Method in place for collating information of the Equality return 2019-2020</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule to attend Team Meetings of Council Services through Council Heads of service A method for collating information to inform the 2019-2020 Equality Monitoring Return | <p>July 19 – Mar 20</p> <p>Sept 2019</p> | <p>CPEO</p> <p>CPEO</p> | |
|--|--|----------------------------|---|--|--|-------------------------|--|

3.0 IMPROVING OUR SERVICE AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE

3.1 Annual Improvement Objectives and Associated Programs

The Council has set a number of annual improvement objectives and associated programs (projects and activities) for 2019/20, which aim to bring about improvement. The improvement objectives and key improvement programs, set out Council's contribution to the sustainable Community Plan for the District; against which we can monitor and report progress.

Each Council department provides resources to assist with the improvement activities contained within each improvement project (individual service improvement contribution activity linked to corporate improvement programs can be found in 3.2 of the service plan). The annual improvement objectives also align to the Council's main corporate planning document, which contains the council's strategic direction and main priorities.

The Council will focus on the following improvement objectives for 2019 to 2020:

- 1. To assist the growth of the local economy by increasing the number of visitors to our district.*
- 2. To improve the average processing time of Local Planning Applications (New).*
- 3. To improve the accessibility of our services by increasing the number available online.*
- 4. To support people to adopt healthier lifestyles by increasing usage of Council Recreational Facilities.*

We utilise outcome based accountability methodology to manage our performance. This tells us the impact our services are having on communities. Further detailed information relating to Council's improvement objectives, associated activities, outcome indicators, projects and targets is available at www.midulstercouncil.org/Council/Performance (*Mid Ulster Council's Improvement Plan 2019- 2020*) or by contacting the Democratic Services Team on 03000 132132.

3.2 Services Contribution to the Corporate Improvement Objectives/Projects

None identified for Democratic Services in 2019-2020, however, contribution will be made, as and when required. Democratic Services contribution is through its responsibility for the management of the Performance Improvement regime.

4.0 Equality

The council is committed to fulfilling its obligations under Section 75 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 way alongside implementing this Service Plan. Without impacting upon our obligations, when carrying out our equality duties we will also take into account the desirability of promoting good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. We are also required to take into account the need to promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability and encourage the participation of people with a disability in public life. Mid Ulster District Council are committed to fulfilling our disability duties and we set out how we intend to do this in our disability action plan.

3.3 RISK MANAGEMENT OF SERVICE

The purpose of risk management is to manage the barriers which prevents the Council from achieving its objectives. This section of the service plan includes space for the Service to input their key risks (in summary form), which have been identified during the business planning process. The Council uses risk management to maximize opportunities and minimize risks. This improves its ability to deliver priorities and improve outcomes. This is why the Council deems it important to link business planning and risk management. Risk Management aims to:

- Help the Council achieve its overall aims and objectives
- Manage the significant risks the Council faces to an acceptable level
- Assist with the decision making process
- Implement the most effective measures to avoid, reduce and control those risks
- Balance risk with opportunity
- Manage risk and internal controls in the most effective way.

This table illustrates the risks identified to deliver the Services business in 2019-20.

| Risk Ref Number | Description of Risk | Risk Rating | Mitigation Activity |
|-----------------|--|--------------------|--|
| 1. | Failure to meet a range of Statutory Obligation on Equality, disability and Freedom of Information Extends to failure to comply with (i) Sec. 75(1) and 75(2) of NI Act 1998, (ii) Freedom of Information Act 2000 and (iii) disability duties under DDA 1995 and Disability Discrimination Order 2006. | 4 (Low) | Mitigation extends but not limited to; Equality Scheme in place and being implemented through various action plans and activities; electronic system not being used to process and manage Freedom of Information requests; and Equality Scheme review will commence and the end of 2019-2020 in time for the required 5 year review. |
| 2. | Failure to comply with the Local Government Act 2014 Part 12, to meet a General Duty on performance improvement, which could be caused by having inadequate arrangements in place and this identified during a NI Audit office inspection which could result in statutory recommendations issued by the Local Government | 4 (Low) | Audit undertaken annually by the Northern Ireland Audit Office on the Councils improvement arrangements. No statutory recommendations have been issued to date. Improvement Objectives are being delivered by an |

| | | | |
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| | Auditor (NIAO) leading to reputational risk. (General Duty on performance improvement requires Council to (i) make arrangements to improve; and (ii) ensure that improvement objectives continually remain relevant to meet the general duty (i.e. continuous improvement) | | appointed Senior Responsible Owners (a member of senior management team). |
|--|--|--|---|

| Rating | Descriptor |
|---------|--|
| 16 - 25 | Extreme Risk (immediate action required) |
| 10 - 15 | High Risk (urgent action required) |
| 7 - 9 | Moderate Risk (action required) |
| 1 – 6 | Low Risk (keep under review) |