

A

Minutes of Meeting of Policy & Resources Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Tuesday 3 February 2015 in Cookstown District Council Offices

Members Present:	In the Chair, Councillor McPeake (Chair) Councillors Ashton, Bateson, Buchanan, Elattar, Glasgow, Mallaghan, McFlynn, McGinley, McLean, S McGuigan, Molloy, M Quinn, Reid and Totten
Members in Attendance:	Councillors Clarke, Gildernew, Kearney, B McGuigan, McNamee, Mulligan and Wilson
Officers in Attendance:	Mr A Tohill, Chief Executive Mrs Campbell, Director of Policy and Development (MDC) Mrs Canavan, Lead HR Officer Mr Cassells, Director of Operations (MDC) Mr Deaglán Ó Doibhlin (MDC) Ms Sarah Jayne Goldring (MDC) Mr Hall, Head of Audit, Risk and Governance (CDC) Mr Séamus Kilpatrick, Irish Language Officer (D&STBC& CDC) Mrs Mezza, Marketing Communications Manager Mr Moffett, Change Management Officer Mr McCreesh, Acting Chief Executive (CDC) Mr O'Hagan, ICT Manager Mr JJ Tohill, Lead Finance Officer Mrs Smith, Council Business Manager (D&STBC)
In Attendance:	Mid Ulster Forum for the Irish Language Mr Seán-Anton Ó Conalláin Ms Máire Coyle Mr Níall Devlin Mr Pól Ó Gallchóir Mr Niall O'Kane

The meeting commenced at 7.05 pm

PR18/15 Apologies

None.

PR19/15 Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded members of their responsibility with regard to declarations of interest.

Councillor Ashton declared an interest in the Advertising Policy being an employee of one of the companies. She did not leave the room for the item of business.

Councillors McGuigan and Mallaghan declared an interest in the Mid Ulster Forum for the Irish Language as they attended the Forum. They did not leave the room for the item of business.

PR20/15 Deputation – Mid Ulster Forum for the Irish Language

The Chair welcomed the deputation from the Mid Ulster Forum for the Irish Language and invited them to make their presentation.

Mr Devlin with the use of a power point presentation gave the profile of the Irish language in Mid Ulster, explained Irish as an economic driver, listed the benefits to Mid Ulster and recommended that Council:

1. Establish an inter-agency Irish language partnership supported by Council;
2. Continue to support existing development posts to link Council directly to communities;
3. Develop a strategic development plan;
4. Undertake a full Social Return on Investment audit;
5. Continue to enhance Council's service to become a model of best practice for Irish language promotion.

The Chair, Councillor McPeake thanked Mr Devlin for the presentation and spoke of the richness, value and promotion of the Irish language throughout the district.

Councillor Mallaghan stated that the figures show a strong Irish language in Mid Ulster and asked what growth is expected with respect to those speaking the Irish language.

Mr Devlin stated that it is difficult to quantify, currently 17% which equates to approximately 25,000 who live in the Mid Ulster Council area having knowledge of Irish. Numbers are on the rise in formal education and also with adult learners.

The Chair, Councillor McPeake, asked if the Forum had formally contributed to the recent Mid Ulster District Council community planning process.

Mr Devlin stated that representatives had attended consultation events across the region and fed in thoughts on what should be taken into account for support and development in the coming years.

Councillor McGuigan asked who the Forum thought should take recommendation 4 forward on Social Return on Investment Audit.

Mr Devlin stated that there were a lot of benefits and quite a few measureable in relation to development of social cohesion within communities and developing social enterprises. He stated that An Carn in Maghera, and the range of services that flowed from that, was a good example.

The Chair, Councillor McPeake stated that An Carn was a very good model for moving forward with and felt it would be useful sometime for the Council if the Forum was to share the details of the programmes and services at the centre.

Mr Gallchóir who represented An Chraobh Rua, Dungannon stated that their request to Council was very minimal. The Group had a lot of social activities taking place, had limited income and to have space within Ranfurly House free of charge for a couple of evenings a month would be helpful.

The Chair stated that the group should put the request in writing to the Council for further consideration.

Councillor Mulligan asked that aside from protecting and preserving the language for future generations, do you see a day when the language in any way would be accepted as a major contributor in commerce and be advantageous.

Mr O’Kane stated that languages in their diversity all have a part to play, English is the international language in commerce and Irish language would not replace that. The focus of the benefits of the Irish language is in terms of social, arts and cultural heritage activity and programmes.

Councillor M Quinn asked how much effort is put into a schools outreach programme and if there were any plans for the development of an Irish Officer to go into schools.

Ms Coyle stated that currently ‘A’ level students go to local primary schools and provide sessions on the language. This is something that is of valuable experience and more appealing to young people to learn, given that they’re being delivered by young people.

Mr Kilpatrick advised that currently Cookstown District Council runs an outreach programme within primary schools.

Mr O’Kane stated that the Forum is representative of the area and is happy to take on board suggestions.

Councillor Molloy enquired on the future development within education.

Mr O’Kane stated that the primary sector has experienced growth and were now feeding into language units. The post primary sector is being considered as there is not enough spaces for children and there is debate in relation to whether the development should be units within existing schools or separate streams.

Councillor McPeake thanked the team for the detailed presentation following which they left the meeting at 7.33pm.

**PR21/15 Receive and confirm minutes of the Policy & Resources
Committee held on Tuesday 13 January 2015**

Item PR3/15 - Deputation – Land & Property Services on Revaluation of Non-Domestic Properties

The Chief Executive referred to the penultimate paragraph on page 2 and stated that what he actually said was that “in doing some quick sums 850 properties will face

increased rateable values of 50 per cent or greater". Amend minutes, Page 2 penultimate paragraph, remove the words "rates bills" and insert "rateable values".

Resolved That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on Tuesday 13 January 2015 (PR1/15 – PR14/15 & PR17/15) were considered and, subject to the foregoing, were signed as accurate and correct.

Matters for Decision

PR22/15 Advertising Policy

The Marketing Communications Manager presented a report with regard to the introduction of an advertising policy for the placement of public notices, tender and recruitment advertisements.

The Officer stated that public notices are used by a range of services to meet statutory obligations, including finance, environmental health and licensing. Tender and recruitment advertising are also required on a cross-service basis.

Mid Ulster District Council has a large geographic area, with a diverse population and a total of 11 local newspapers which circulate in, or in parts of, the new district.

The circulation of newspapers varies from those of a few thousand to the Tyrone Courier which is arguably the largest local weekly newspaper in Northern Ireland. However, in considering the issue of public notice advertising, the geographic reach of the newspapers and the readership preferences of different communities are also important.

List of newspapers circulating in the Mid Ulster District Council Area

Newspaper	Circulation	Source
County Derry Post	4,478	ABC 2013
Dungannon Observer	Requested	Observer Newspaper Group
Impartial Reporter	12,802	ABC 2013
Mid Ulster Mail	6,534	ABC 2013
Mid Ulster Observer	Requested	Observer Newspaper Group
Northern Constitution	13,725	Alpha Newspaper Group 2012
The Democrat	Requested	Observer Newspaper Group
Tyrone Constitution	7,996	Alpha Newspaper Group 2012
Tyrone Courier	15,083	Alpha Newspaper Group 2012
Tyrone Herald	6,010	ABC 2013
Tyrone Times	3,564	ABC 2012

ABC: Audit Bureau of Circulation

The policy, therefore, proposes that 7 of the 11 local newspapers are used for the purposes of public notice advertising, excluding the Tyrone Constitution (Omagh is at the centre of its circulation) and the Northern Constitution (Limavady is at the centre of its circulation), both of which are sister newspapers to the Tyrone Courier. The

Tyrone Herald which also circulates predominantly in Omagh district and The Democrat, the circulation of which overlaps to a degree with its sister newspaper, the Dungannon Observer are also excluded.

In recognition of the correlation between salary scale and travel to work distance, recruitment advertising is recommended in local papers for those posts from Scale 1 to Scale 6, with the Belfast Telegraph stipulated for those posts of SO1 and above.

The policy recommends that tender advertisements should be placed in the Belfast Telegraph, except in circumstances where a tender is within EU thresholds. This reflects the current policy across existing councils.

The Council's web site, and other digital media as appropriate, will also be used to publish relevant advertisements.

The financial impact of the policy is difficult to assess given a lack of historical data and the anticipated advertising requirements of the new Council.

Public notice advertising for the Planning Service (2013-2014) totalled over £71,000, spread across 6 local papers. The draft policy omits 2 of these titles, the Tyrone Constitution and The Democrat, the advertising costs of which in the last financial year amounted to over £26,000.

While more local papers are proposed for public notice advertising than those used by any of the existing councils, the necessary duplicate advertising which would have taken place by three separate organisations, will no longer be required.

The savings secured on the omission of the 2 titles currently used by the Planning Service should compensate for the additional advertising requirements.

While expenditure on tender advertising is dependent on future procurement needs, tender advertising limits will be higher under the new Council's procurement policy, which is likely to result in fewer advertisements being placed and reduced cost.

Recruitment advertising at SO1 and above has been limited to the Belfast Telegraph, omitting the Irish News and News Letter, which are currently used by 2 of the existing 3 councils. In addition, should the shared advertising model for recruitment, which is currently used by some of the existing 26 councils, be continued post April 2015, there is also scope to reduce expenditure on recruitment advertising yet further.

The co-ordination of the editing, design and placement of all advertisements by a central service will ensure ads from different parts of the organisation can be combined, where appropriate, and that text can be edited to ensure ads make the most efficient use of space, reducing advert sizes and, therefore, cost.

Opportunities to negotiate for discounted rates directly or to take advantage of media rebates available via an agency will also be explored to obtain the most economically advantageous approach to media buying.

The officer recommended that the policy for advertising public notices, tenders and recruitment is considered for adoption for a period of 6 months at which point the policy will be reviewed and amended if required.

Councillor Ashton referred to a section in the policy with regard to Directors and Heads of Service setting budget and then relying on the Marketing Communications service to spend the budget and asked how this would be managed.

The Marketing Communications Manager stated that budget would be set and held by Directors with communications role to monitor where budget is being spent and to co-ordinate and monitor advertising so that two departments not putting in separate adverts in the same week etc.

Councillor Mallaghan asked how the ABC works. The member also stated that the Belfast Telegraph is not the only regional paper and what going to do from 1 April would be very difficult to change and need to be sure that reaching most people by using a limited number of papers.

Councillor McFlynn asked how much would be saved by only going with one regional paper and if all communities would be reached.

Councillor Molloy asked how often it is anticipated would need to advertise in regional papers.

The Marketing Communications Manager stated that ABC is the accepted industry standard. It is accepted that the Belfast Telegraph is read across communities and is a way of controlling expenditure. The Belfast Telegraph is probably the most expensive and would estimate that by only using the Belfast Telegraph would reduce overall costs by about a half. It is not anticipated, given existing restrictions linked to local government reform, that there would be a lot of need for recruitment advertising.

Councillor Reid, in the interest of savings, asked if quotations could be sought or advertising placed in local papers on a rotational basis.

The Chief Executive stated that with a number of the public notices there is a legal obligation to advertise in 2 newspapers circulating in the area. He added that some Councils have taken the decision not to use local papers and to advertise in regional papers only.

The Chair, Councillor McPeake stated that maybe situation should be parked until get comparison figures for Newsletter and Irish News.

The Chief Executive stated that some services, such as street trading, need a steer on the policy approach and recommended that the committee could approve the policy with regard to local papers with further details in relation to regional papers being brought back to committee.

Proposed by Councillor McFlynn
Seconded by Councillor S McGuigan and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council to approve policy, with regard to use of local papers, as outlined and that the situation with regard to tenders and higher level recruitment in regional papers be further investigated and brought back to committee.

Councillors Clarke and McNamee and Mallaghan left at 7.45 pm.

PR23/15 Health and Safety Policy

Mr Hall presented a report on the draft Health & Safety Policy for consideration and approval by committee.

The Officer stated that the Health and Safety at Work Order (NI) 1978 requires that all employees must prepare and keep under review a safety policy to bring to the attention of employees. The bringing forward of a health and safety policy and its subsequent implementation across Mid Ulster Council will assist in meeting this statutory requirement as set out under the aforementioned Health and Safety at Work Order.

The policy will:

- Demonstrate that Council is committed to addressing its health and safety obligations.
- Provide and maintain a safe working environment for employees and the wider community in which they interact.
- Provide a framework for health and safety management at all levels which adopts and supports best practice.
- Comply with, and where practicable exceed, the requirements and targets set by existing health and safety legislation.

The policy allows for and facilitates the establishment of a Health & Safety Committee the purpose of which will be to assist in discharging responsibilities placed upon the office of Chief Executive and the Council. The committee will be consultative in nature and be made up of senior officers and safety representatives from recognised Trade Unions.

The undertaking of Risk Assessments and effective management of risk is integral in providing a safe and healthy work place.

Councillor Wilson left at 7.52 pm

Councillor Ashton referred to reference to the appointment of a Director with strategic responsibility for health and safety and also appointment of a corporate health and safety officer and asked for an explanation.

Mr Hall stated that the Director role is to act as health and safety champion, to ensure full compliance with statutory requirements and advise on health and safety issues. The Corporate Health and Safety Officer will provide professional advice and

support. The Chief Executive advised that one of the Directors within the adopted management structure will have strategic responsibility for health and safety.

In response to a question from Councillor Bateson the Chief Executive stated that reports on health and safety performance will come to the Policy and Resources Committee and that will give members the opportunity of monitoring this area of work.

Proposed by Councillor McLean
Seconded by Councillor Buchanan and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council to approve the draft health and safety policy as presented.

PR24/15 Committee Governance Arrangements

The Chief Executive presented a report on future committee governance structures bringing attention to the four committees set up with 16 members on each, for Planning, Policy & Resources, Environment and Development for the transitional period. He added that the structure has served the Council well in making preparations for the full adoption of its responsibilities on 1 April 2015, however some refinement is required.

Section 19 of the Local Government Act 2014 states that Councils must operate a committee system unless the council decides otherwise by a qualified majority. A traditional committee system can be summarised as follows:

- Chair and Deputy selected using Schedule 1 (d'Hondt)
- Membership will be selected using Schedule 2 (quota greatest remainder)
- No restriction on number of committees
- No restriction on number of elected members
- Not subject to overview and scrutiny arrangements
- May delegate to sub-committees and officers

A committee based system is proposed to help ensure good governance in decision making of the Council from 1 April 2015. The proposed committee structure with core aligned functions presented were:

Planning Committee

- Development Management
- Planning Enforcement
- Area Plan Development

Policy & Resources Committee

- Democratic Services
- Finance
- Governance
- Human Resources
- Registration

- ICT
- Marketing & Communications
- Policy
- Performance
- All other matters which do not fall within the remit of any other committee.

Environment Committee

- Building Control
- Environmental Health
- Capital Projects
- Licensing
- Waste Management
- Cleansing
- Property Management
- Grounds Maintenance
- Off Street Car Parks

Development Committee

- Cultural Venues
- Arts Development
- Languages
- Leisure
- Sports Development
- DCAL Functions
- Parks & Open Spaces
- Play Areas
- Access
- Community Services
- PCSP
- Rural Development
- Economic Development
- Physical Regeneration
- DSD & DETI Functions
- Tourism
- Events

Audit Committee

- Internal controls
- Audit
- Risk

The Chief Executive stated that the Chair and Vice Chairs of the above committees will be Positions of Responsibility. As was the case during the transitional period it was proposed that there be 16 Members on all committees with the exception of the Audit Committee where it was proposed that there are 8 Members and one independent member.

In line with normal practice it was proposed that the quorum for all committees be one third of the total number of committee members, so 6 for Planning, Policy & Resources, Environment and Development and 3 for Audit Committee.

Members holding positions of responsibility may be paid a special responsibility allowance. The external representative on the Audit Committee will receive remuneration commensurate with the role.

Committee meetings can be accommodated within the existing council chambers in any of the existing councils.

It was proposed to split the committee meetings over the first two weeks of each month and hold the meetings on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at 7pm alternating between Cookstown and Magherafelt and that Council meetings are held in Dungannon at 7pm on the fourth Thursday of each month. The Chief Executive presented a draft schedule of meetings was presented for Members approval.

The Chief Executive added that a further paper would be brought forward on the terms of reference for each committee and delegated authority, where relevant.

The Chief Executive asked members to consider and approve:

- Five committees as detailed
- Confirm if the Chair and/or Deputy Chair should be ex-officio members of all committees except Audit
- Permit any Member to be present and heard at any committee meeting but only committee members to have voting rights
- Use the default method as outlined in Schedule 2 of the Local Government Act 2014 for the appointment of councillors to committees ie the quota of greatest remainder
- The draft schedule of meetings.

Councillor Mallaghan proposed that it be recommended to the Council that the above items are accepted and in considering the civic responsibilities that will be placed on the Council Chair the position will be very busy and therefore it and deputy chair should not be ex-officio members of each committee but the spaces this would leave on committees be filled by nominating officers in the normal way.

Councillor Wilson stated that he welcomed Councillor Mallaghan proposal and was happy to support.

Councillor Reid seconded the proposal which was agreed.

Councillors Mallaghan and Wilson left at 8.02 pm.

PR25/15 Filling Positions of Responsibility – Annual Meeting Arrangements

The Chief Executive presented a report informing members of arrangements for the annual meeting of Mid Ulster District Council and the requirements on filling positions of responsibility.

The Chief Executive stated that Mid Ulster District Council held its first annual meeting, as required under The Local Government (Transitional, Supplementary, Incidental Provisions and Modifications) Regulations (NI) 2014, within 21 days of the 2014 local election at which business was transacted which included filling positions of responsibility for the term ending 31 March 2015, the transitional period. The same regulations require that the Council hold a further Annual Meeting during the transitional period, which the council is currently operating, to fill positions of responsibility for the new term beginning 2015. The Annual Meeting for this purpose and to transact other relevant business will take place on Thursday 12 March 2015 at 7pm in Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council offices. Under existing Council Standing Orders in every year that is not an election year annual meetings will be held in June. Next year's annual meeting will be in June.

The Chief Executive added that the purpose of Council's annual meeting would be to fill Positions of Responsibility as specified within the Local Government (NI) Act 2014 as the;

- Chair of the Council;
- Deputy Chair of the Council;
- Chair of any committee of the council;
- Deputy Chair of any committee of the council;
- Member of a cabinet style executive of the council (not applicable) and
- External representative of the council.

In reference to those bodies identified as receiving an 'external representative' of council the following were identified:

- Housing Council for NI
- Partnership Panel for NI
- Reserve Forces and Cadets Association for NI
- Policing & Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs)

The Chief Executive stated that for clarity purposes and in reference to the Local Government Act the DoE has confirmed that an external representative means a person nominated by the council to serve as a member of any public body, where a public body is specifically established under a statutory provision, such as the Justice Act 2011.

Reflecting on the committee structure previously considered by this committee and positions to be filled on public bodies, detailed above, 67 positions of responsibility are available and will be considered at the annual meeting on Thursday 12 March.

The Chief Executive added that Party Nominating Officers will be requested to select positions for the terms. Where nominating officers select positions which begin with the date of the annual meeting they must also nominate the person to hold the position. Nominating officers at future annual meetings for 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 will then provide the names of members for each position selected at the annual meeting on 12 March 2015.

On the method for filling Positions of Responsibility the Chief Executive added that the Local Government Act provides for the prescribed methods of appointing positions of responsibility; d'Hondt, Sainte-Lague and by single transferable vote. The Council must use one of these methods when allocating members to positions of responsibility. However, unless agreed otherwise by a qualified majority vote of council the default method shall be d'Hondt.

Councillor B McGuigan left at 8.05 pm

Making reference to Policing and Community Safety Partnerships as attracting Positions of Responsibility the Chief Executive stated that the Justice Act 2011 permits that a PCSP may have a membership of 15, 17 or 19 with there always being one more elected member than independent members. On the basis of the size of the new Council area a 19 member partnership would provide maximum representation across the district thus creating 10 positions of responsibility on the PCSP.

In referring to the Housing Council he stated the Housing (NI) Order 1981 confirms that Housing Council representation from each local authority should be the chairman of each district. However, the district council may appoint any member to become a member of the Housing Council in place of the chairman, if it so wishes. He added that Members should consider if this position be held by the Chair of Council as the default position within the Housing (NI) Order 1981 or be delegated to another member of the council.

The Chief Executive therefore asked the committee to reflect and consider:

- Note the number of positions of responsibility as 67
- Determine method for Filling Positions of Responsibility, the default being d'Hondt
- Determine if the representative on the Housing Council is the Chair of Council or be delegated to another member
- Agree the size of the PCSP to determine elected member representation

Councillor McLean stated that, in order to have a better understanding and provide good service, maybe there should be continuity of Housing Council representative.

The Chief Executive stated that because legislation states that the Chair of the Council holds the position the natural logic would be that the representative changes each year which would be 4 positions of responsibility, requiring a party to pick that position four times.

Councillor Elattar, a serving member on the Housing Council, stated that it was not a bad thing to have a change in representation on a regular basis.

In response to Councillor Reid's question in relation to commitment required by from a Housing Council representative Councillor Elattar stated that there are two meetings a month and it meets at various locations across the province.

Proposed by Councillor Bateson
Seconded by Councillor McFlynn and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council that:

- the number of positions of responsibility noted; 67
- use d'Hondt for filling positions of responsibility
- representative on the Housing Council be delegated to member other than the Chair
- the size of the PCSP should be a 19 member Partnership, with elected membership of 10 positions of responsibility

Councillor Gildernew left at 8.12 pm.

PR26/15 Consultation Arrangements – Irish Language Policy

Mrs Campbell presented for information a report setting out timeframes in respect of the Irish Language Policy public consultation and assessment of equality impacts.

She added that the Council agreed at its meeting of the 22 January 2015 that the draft Irish Language Policy be subject to an equality assessment and the timescales required were:

Activity	Timescale
• Equality Screen draft policy	26 Jan – 6 Feb 2015
If the policy is screened in:	
• Preparation of consultation documents • Translation of policy and consultation documents into Irish • Creation of consultee lists and documentation	9 Feb – 28 Feb 2015
12 week consultation period	2 March – 22 May 2015
• Consideration of consultation responses • Assess equality impacts • Amend policy as required	25 May – 13 June 2015*
Amendments agreed by Council	Recommendations presented to June 2015 Council meeting for policy approval.

Mrs Campbell further advised that professional support of £9,000 was previously agreed by Council should an EQIA be required and translations undertaken by existing Irish Language Officers.

Councillor Kearney left at 8.15 pm.

Matters for Information

PR27/15 Draft Procurement Policy

The Lead Finance Officer submitted a report on the proposed Procurement Policy drafted in accordance with report to Policy and Resources Committee on Tuesday 3 September 2014 which was adopted at Council's meeting on Thursday, 25 September 2014. Members were asked to give consideration to the draft policy.

The Officer stated that Mid Ulster District Council has a duty to protect the public funds with which it is entrusted and to apply them in a transparent and effective manner having regard to all relevant legislation and in the context of an appropriate governance environment. The adoption of the proposed procurement policy should provide officers with the necessary framework, procedures and documentation to deliver upon this duty and evidence compliance therewith.

In accordance with the recommendation of the Proposed Procurement Approach previously adopted by Council, the fundamental principle is that all relevant staff will conduct each procurement exercise in a consistent manner, having regard to common financial limits which will dictate the method of procurement and how the recommended course of action will be approved. Significantly the process will, for lower value purchases, be decentralised with each process being under the overall control of the relevant Director. The Procurement Department will lead higher value and more complex procurement exercises and be available for advice and support in relation to decentralised exercises.

Professional support such as architects will continue to be required in relation to very complex procurements, usually significant capital projects, and such services will be procured having regard to the procurement policy.

The officers have identified a range of goods and services, which are still being tabularised, which are routinely excluded from the need to comply with the procurement policy on for example the placement of public advertisements and consumables, which are already the subject of a previously awarded contract.

The Lead Finance Officer added that officers were continuing to develop the associated forms and templates which will support decentralised procurement and appropriate evidencing of decisions throughout each procurement exercise on a consistent basis.

Councillor Molloy referred to a conversation with an officer from DSD with regards to tenders for services which are above EU thresholds and the fact that tender has to be assessed solely on what was presented and cannot take into consideration past

works that a particular contractor may have been involved. Councillor Molloy asked if the Council would be tied on a similar basis.

The Chief Executive stated that if a Council contract is above the EU threshold the Council will be in a similar position and will be required to follow EU procurement rules.

Councillor Reid stated that there was a need for everyone dealing with writing specifications and costing jobs to be trained as proper estimates would be required going forward.

Councillor S McGuigan stated that when setting tenders it would be important that contracts contain clauses that are relevant and which are a useful tool for the council to draw on if they overrun.

The Lead Finance Officer stated that one of the items in the policy is to look at the competence of staff writing specifications and there are standard terms and conditions but it is difficult to get specifics included.

Councillor Glasgow and Reid left at 8.30 pm.

PR28/15 Capacity Building

A report was circulated informing and updating members on the arrangements put in place to build capacity for both elected members and staff, via the development of a planned programme of capacity building for staff across the 3 councils.

The Council Capacity Building Plan has been developed to ensure elected members, senior staff and all other staff are ready to meet the challenges of change and of a new organisation. The Capacity Building Plan is being delivered in two blocks: September to December 2014, which is now completed, and January to March 2015, which is currently on-going.

The Capacity Building plan has been structured and developed through a series of programmes focusing on the following themes:

- Induction
- Building Knowledge
- Supporting Transition and Change

The programmes and support measures focus on systems development and new business thinking rather than direct service delivery.

The training is being alternated where possible between Councils within the Mid-Ulster Cluster, is funded from within the DOE Capacity Building Budget, Local Government Staff Commission and Local Government Training Group.

PR29/15 Criminal Justice Inspection of PCSPs

A report was circulated updating members on the outcome of the inspection undertaken by the Criminal Justice Inspection (NI) into the review of the operation of Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs).

PCSP's were established following the amalgamation of functions previously set under statute for District Policing Partnerships and Community Safety Partnerships. Now in operation a number of years Criminal Justice Inspection (NI) has undertaken an inspection with a focus on Governance Arrangements, Monitoring Police Performance, Delivering Community Safety and Improving Effectiveness.

Following the inspectorate's review of governance, delivery and outcomes of Policing and Community Safety Partnerships two strategic recommendations were made;

1. From 2015 the Locals Councils should provide the compliance and assurance framework for PCSPs. The Community Plan should be a focal point for delivery of the long term aims of the PCSP. The action plans of the PCSPs should feed into the Community and alignment with the aims of the statutory partners and other central government strategies should be explicit. The Joint Committee should retain oversight through the Policing Committee reports and regular review of the effectiveness of the PCSPs; and
2. Following implementation of LGR (local government reform), the cost of administration should not exceed 20% of the budget allocated to PCSPs.

Council and relevant officers should consider the contents of the report and the strategic recommendations above in the development and delivery of the Mid Ulster Council PCSP function.

PR30/15 ICT Procurement Update

A report was circulated updating and informing members on the telephony contracts for Mid Ulster Council, the convergence into a single bill and the savings from the application of a universal rate as a temporary measure.

As part of the unified communications deployment across the Council the ICT manager has examined the current contracts providing telephony across the existing three councils. BT is the principle current provider for telephony lines and call services for all three councils. As part of the current analysis of bills it was found that Cookstown was on the most competitive deal after a tender exercise less than 2 years ago. Extrapolation of existing line rentals within the other 2 councils with the lower Cookstown rates would mean £15,000 worth of saving in line rental charges. Call rates based on the existing Cookstown tariffs would also capture in the region of £15k of saving on one year. A total of approx. £30k in reduced spending is anticipated.

Officers are engaging with BT to implement the most competitive contract rate from Cookstown for a period of one year for all lines and calls. Subsequently the contract will be subject to a tender competition as the unified and telephony requirements

across the new infrastructure and structures will be more readily determined and established.

Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor S McGuigan
Seconded by Councillor McGinley and

Resolved That items PR31/15 and PR32/15 be taken as confidential business.

In response to a point of information by Councillor Mulligan, who was not a member of the committee, the Chief Executive confirmed that the Member could remain in the meeting.

PR33/15 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7 pm and ended at 9.25 pm.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____

B

Subject	Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy
Reporting Officer	Anne-Marie Campbell

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	To seek approval for the Mid Ulster District Council Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

2	Background
2.1	<p>Everybody has a responsibility for the safety of children in accordance with relevant legislation. Everybody also has a responsibility for the safeguarding of vulnerable adults. Mid Ulster District Council as an organisation which has significant contacts with children and vulnerable adults across its services. It has both a moral and legal obligation to ensure abuse and exploitation does not occur and that its duty of care is fully exercised.</p> <p>The purpose of the Child Protection Policy is to help protect the children who use our services and to ensure that Mid Ulster District Council staff, elected members and volunteers are aware of issues that can cause children harm.</p> <p>The purpose of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy is to help safeguard vulnerable adults and to ensure that Mid Ulster District Council staff, elected members and volunteers are aware of issues that can cause vulnerable adults harm.</p>

3	Key Issues
3.1	Child Protection Policy
3.1.1	Children have the right to live their lives to the fullest potential, to be protected, to be able to participate in and enjoy activities and to be treated with dignity and respect. There is a considerable body of legislation, government guidance and standards designed to ensure that children are protected from harm.
3.1.2	A Code of Conduct has been developed that all Councillors, employees and groups or individuals acting on behalf of the Council, must adhere to. In order to comply with our legal responsibilities, procedural and reporting arrangements have been put in place to deal with reports of abuse.
3.1.3	The Council will apply safe recruitment and selection practices to comply with the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003 and the guidelines issued by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. Once appointed those individuals with access to children, will undertake extensive child protection training, supervision standards and health and safety training specific to the needs of children.

3.1.4	The Council has a duty of care to children in order to protect them from harm. This policy also outlines the Council's expectations of groups who use or hire council premises.
3.1.5	We will work with our employees and our partners from the voluntary and statutory sectors so that we take all reasonable steps to safeguard and promote the well-being of children.
3.2	Vulnerable Adults Policy
3.2.1	<p>Vulnerable adults have the right to live their lives to the fullest potential, to be safeguarded, to be able to participate in and enjoy activities and to be treated with dignity and respect. While there is no specific legislation relating to the abuse of vulnerable adults, the following range of legislation is directly applicable to the protection of vulnerable adults</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 (2007 Order) • Human Rights Act 1998 • Health and Personal Social Services (N.I.) Order 1972 • Sexual Offences (N.I.) Order 2008 • Mental Health (N.I.) Order 1986 • Police and Criminal Evidence (N.I.) Order 1989
3.2.2	The Council will protect vulnerable adults by implementing a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers.
3.2.3	The Council will have in place clear reporting procedures and will report concerns to the relevant statutory agencies while involving vulnerable adults and carers appropriately. It will also have in place clear procedures for dealing with complaints and grievances.
3.2.4	The Council will raise the awareness of the need to safeguard vulnerable adults throughout the Council and will actively encourage good practice amongst all staff, elected members and volunteers by promoting wider awareness wherever possible, i.e. partnership organisations and user groups.
3.2.5	The Council will create a safe and healthy environment within all our services, avoiding situations where abuse or allegations of abuse may occur.

4	Resources
4.1	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>None</p>
4.2	<p><u>Human</u></p> <p>None</p>
4.3	<u>Basis for Professional/ Consultancy Support</u>

4.4	None
	<u>Other</u>
	None

5	Other Considerations
5.1	None

6	Recommendations
6.1	Members are asked to consider the Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy and recommend them to Council for approval.

7	List of Documents Attached
7.1	Appendix 1 – Child Protection Policy
7.2	Appendix 2 – Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

Document Control			
Policy / Procedure Owner (name, role & section)	Anne Marie Campbell – Director of Culture and Leisure		
Policy/ Procedure Author (name, role & section)	Ray Hall – Head of ARG		
Version	v1.0		
Consultation	Transition Management Team	Yes	
	Trade Unions	Yes / No	
Equality Screened by	Ray Hall	Date	11.2.15
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes / No	Date	13.2.15
Approved By	Policy & Resources Committee	Date	
Adopted By	Council	Date	
Review Date		By Whom	
Circulation	Mid Ulster DC staff		
Document Linkages	<i>MUDC Social Media Policy</i> <i>MUDC Vulnerable Adult Policy</i> <i>MUDC Disciplinary Policy</i>		

CONTENTS PAGE

Paragraph	Description	Page Numbers
1.0	Introduction	2
2.0	Policy Aims & Objectives	2
3.0	Policy Scope	3
4.0	Definitions	3
5.0	Policy Statement	4
6.0	Linkages to Corporate Plan	5
7.0	Roles & Responsibilities	5-6
8.0	Training	6
9.0	Responding to Concerns & Allegations	7-10
10.0	Recruitment & Selection of Staff	10
11.0	Photography	12
12.0	Adult / Child Ratios – Council Run Children’s Activities	13
13.0	Child Protection at Council Events	14
14.0	Social Media	14 - 15
15.0	External Organisations using Facilities or Undertaking Work for the Council	15

Appendices	Description	Page Number
1	Code of Behaviour on Child Protection for Council Staff	16-17
2	Child Protection Incident Reporting Form	18-19
3	Photography Consent Form	20-21
4	Useful Contacts	22-23
5	Procedure for Referrals to DHSS Disqualification List	24
6	How Council will process information provided by POC(NI) & POVA (NI)	25

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Children have the right to live their lives to the fullest potential, to be protected, to be able to participate in and enjoy activities and to be treated with dignity and respect. There is a considerable body of legislation, government guidance and standards designed to ensure that children are protected from harm.
- 1.2 Everybody has a responsibility for the safety of children and in accordance with relevant legislation, Mid Ulster District Council as an organisation which has significant contacts with children across its services; has both a moral and legal obligation to ensure abuse and exploitation does not occur and that its duty of care is fully exercised.
- 1.3 The purpose of this policy is to help protect the children who use our services and to ensure that Mid Ulster District Council staff, elected members and volunteers are aware of issues that can cause children harm.

2.0 POLICY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

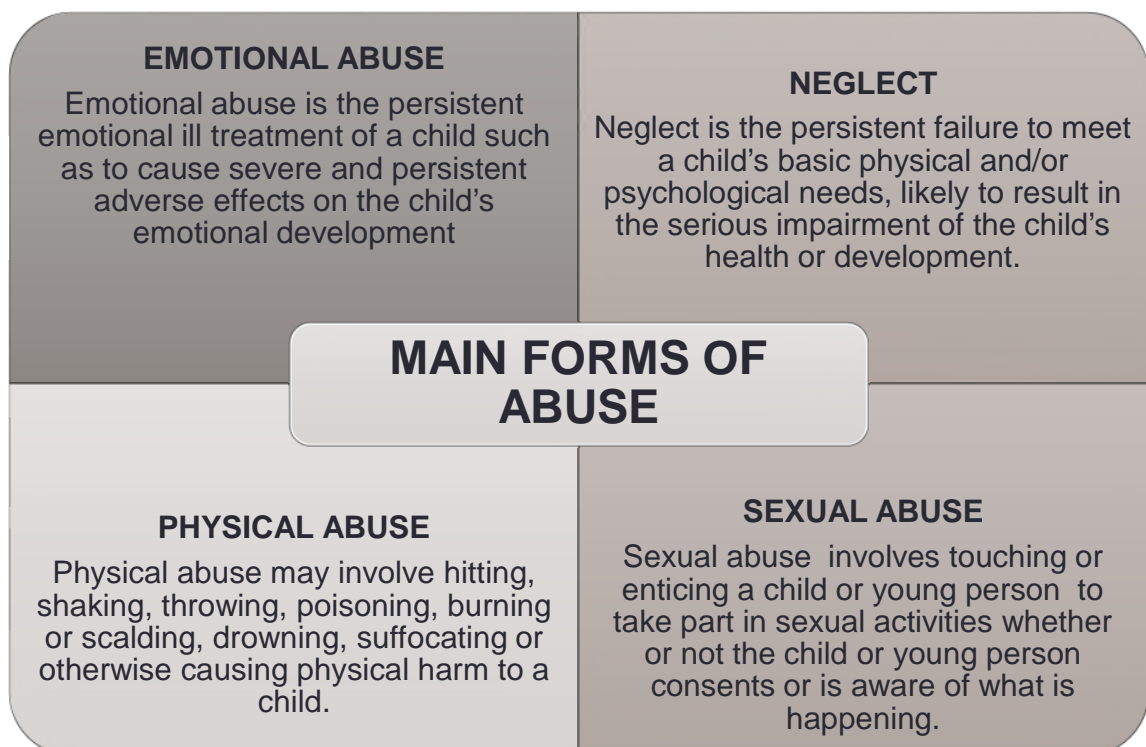
- 2.1 The aims of this policy are to:
 - Demonstrate that Mid Ulster Council is committed to child protection:
 - Ensure staff, elected members and volunteers, are aware of issues that could cause children harm;
 - To comply with, and where practicable exceed, the requirements and targets set by existing legislation;
 - Put in place robust recruitment procedures to ensure that those individuals whose behaviour could be a threat to the safety and wellbeing of children are not offered employment;
 - Raise the awareness of the duty of care responsibilities throughout the Council.
 - Actively encourage good practice amongst all staff, elected members and volunteers throughout the Council and promoting wider awareness wherever possible, i.e. partnership organisations and user groups;
 - Create a safe and healthy environment within all our services, avoiding situations where abuse or allegations of abuse may occur;
 - Listen to, respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children;
 - Recruit, train, supervise and support staff and volunteers who work with children to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children from abuse;
 - To put in place appropriate level employment checks for staff and volunteers who work with children;
 - Respond to any allegations appropriately, implementing the appropriate disciplinary and appeals procedures.

3.0 POLICY SCOPE

- 3.1 All children and young people irrespective of their age, class, religion, culture, disability, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, nationality, family, dependency, or marital status have the right to protection from abuse.
- 3.2 The scope of the policy extends to elected members, all those employed by Mid Ulster Council, and to those volunteers, contractors and public under our management or control.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 The term children or young person is used to refer to anyone under the age of 18 years.
- 4.2 The term parent is used as a generic term to represent parents, carers and guardians.
- 4.3 The term staff, elected members and volunteers is used to refer to employees, District Councillors, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of and/or representing Mid Ulster District Council.
- 4.4 A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. It is generally accepted that there are four main forms of abuse which are outlined as follows. These definitions are based on those from Co- operating to Safeguard Children (2003) (Northern Ireland) (Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety).



Physical Abuse: Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

Physical abuse, as well as being a result of a deliberate act, can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

Emotional Abuse: Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. It may involve making a child feel or believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may also involve causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact and non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect: Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, leaving a young child home alone or the failure to ensure that a child gets appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

5.0 POLICY STATEMENT

- 5.1 The protection of children is a matter of priority for Mid Ulster District Council. Children are major users of the Council's facilities and services. We warmly welcome them all and trust that they always have enjoyable and enriching experiences in using our facilities and services.
- 5.2 The Council though is aware that in today's society, it has both a moral and legal obligation to ensure that we provide the highest professional standard of care at all times. We are therefore committed to ensuring that this policy actively promotes and enhances the protection of children at all times. We are committed to the principles outlined by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child and adherence to the Area Child Protection Committee regional procedures.
- 5.3 A Code of Conduct has been developed that all Councillors, employees and groups or individuals acting on behalf of the Council, must adhere to. In order to comply with our legal responsibilities, procedural and reporting arrangements have been put in place to deal with reports of abuse.

- 5.4 The Council will apply safe recruitment and selection practices to comply with the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003 and the guidelines issued by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. Once appointed those individuals with access to children, will undertake extensive child protection training, supervision standards and health and safety training specific to the needs of children.
- 5.5 The Council has a duty of care to children in order to protect them from harm. This policy also outlines the Council's expectations of groups who use or hire council premises.
- 5.6 We will work with our employees and our partners from the voluntary and statutory sectors so that we take all reasonable steps to safeguard and promote the well-being of children.

6.0 LINKAGE TO CORPORATE PLAN

- 6.1 This Policy is consistent with the Mid Ulster Councils corporate priorities. It contributes to the performance theme of service delivery and provides the framework and system to facilitate the safe delivery of services.

7.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Chief Executive:

The Chief Executive is at the top of the organisational structure and has overall executive responsibility for the implementation of this policy at Mid Ulster District Council.

7.2 Director of Culture and Leisure

The Director of Culture and Leisure will ensure that this Child Protection Policy is widely available to all elected members and staff

The Director has the responsibility to ensure that there are the necessary procedures for the supervision and support of Elected Members, Directors, Heads of Service, Designated Officers, Managers and Supervisors in their discharge of this policy

7.2 Director of Organisational Development:

The Director will ensure that where identified through job descriptions and representations from individual managers that employment vetting checks are carried out through AccessNI.

The Director will ensure that any records in relation to child protection are stored appropriately.

The Director will have responsibility for ensuring that all staff are made aware of the importance of this policy. At their induction training new employees will be made aware of their role in the area of child protection.

7.3 Directors, Heads of Service, Managers and Supervisors:

Directors, Heads of Service Managers and Supervisors are expected to ensure employees are aware of this policy; and to notify the Designated Officer(s) in confidence of any matters of protecting children which are brought to their attention.

They will be expected to ensure that their staff members attend the relevant training and comply with the requirements of this policy.

7.4 All Staff, Volunteers and Elected Members:

All staff, volunteers and elected members of the Council have a duty to adhere to this Policy and procedures and to notify the Designated Officer/s on any matters of protection of children. They will also be responsible for participating fully in the relevant training.

7.5 Designated Safeguarding Officers:

The Council will formally appoint the Corporate Health and Safety Officer and Head of Human Resources as the designated lead Safeguarding Officer/s (LDO's) who will be responsible for acting as a central point and source of advice on child protection matters; for coordinating any action necessary within the Council and for liaising with the PSNI, Health and Social Services Trusts and other agencies about suspected or actual cases of concern or abuse.

Additional designated officers in appropriate numbers will be appointed from Culture and Leisure Department in Magherafelt, Cookstown and Dungannon geographical areas. They will be the first point of contact for staff and public with concerns regarding any child protection issues within their facility, act as a local source of advice and guidance and will onward report to the LDO's any suspected or actual cases of concern or abuse for them to liaise with the appropriate statutory bodies. The LDO's will promote the implementation of the Policy and Procedures among staff and advise the Council of the child protection training needs for staff members

The Designated Officers will undertake comprehensive training on safeguarding vulnerable adults and continue to update their skills on an ongoing basis.

The LDO's will keep only the relevant people within the organization informed about any action taken and action required and will ensure the appropriate information is made available to relevant agencies at the time of referral.

The LDO's will ensure the safe keeping of any case material/reports in a confidential and secure manner.

8.0 TRAINING

- 8.1 The Council will provide suitable training in child protection to staff or volunteers working or coming into substantial contact with children. This training will have three levels:

Level 1	General awareness training for all Councillors and Staff
Level 2	For those with substantial contact with children
Level 3	Comprehensive training for Designated Officers, Managers and Duty Managers of Facilities

9.0 RESPONDING TO CONCERNS AND ALLEGATIONS

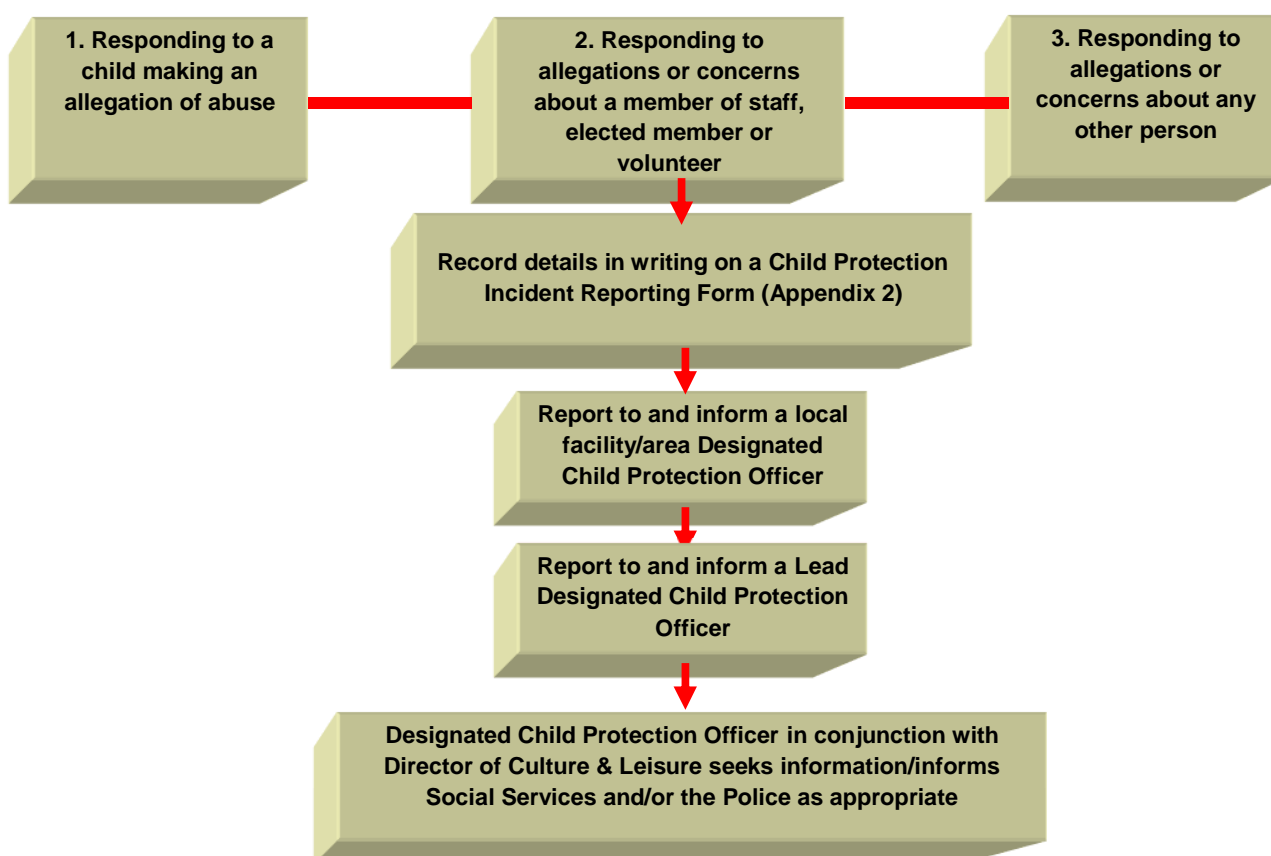
- 9.1 It is important that all staff, elected members and volunteers be aware that the first person that has concerns or encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. However, staff, elected members and volunteers do have a duty of care to the child or young person to report any suspicions you may have.
- 9.2 All clubs, organizations or individual tutors that use Council facilities or services must also report any concerns if they encounter a case of alleged or suspected abuse, to a member of the Council's staff.

REMEMBER

It is not your job to judge or investigate BUT to inform

- 9.3 In general there are 3 situations that staff, elected members and volunteers may need to respond to a concern or case of alleged or suspected abuse:
1. Responding to a child disclosing abuse, i.e. they make an allegation of abuse.
 2. Responding to allegations or concerns about a member of staff, elected member or volunteer.
 3. Responding to allegations or concerns about any other person, i.e. parent, carer, other service user.

9.4 BASIC RESPONSE PROCEDURE / ACTIONS



9.5 SPECIFIC RESPONSE PROCEDURES

The following procedures should be followed in each situation.

9.5.1 Responding to a child making an allegation of abuse

Abused children will only tell people they trust and with whom they feel safe. The following points are a guide to help you respond appropriately.

- Listen carefully to what is said;
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is very likely that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets;
- Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times do not ask questions that suggest a particular answer;
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you;
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared;
- Record in writing on a Child Protection Incident Reporting Form (see Appendix 2) all the details that you are aware of and what was said using the child's own words, as soon as possible;
- Report to and inform the local area/facility or Lead Designated Child Protection Officer as soon as possible;
- Lead Designated Child Protection Officer in conjunction with Director of Culture and Leisure informs relevant persons, i.e. Social Services and/or the Police if appropriate.

9.5.2 Responding to allegations or concerns against a member of staff, elected member or volunteer

- Take the allegation or concern seriously;
- Record in writing on a Child Protection Incident Reporting Form (see Appendix 2) all the details that you are aware of as soon as possible;
- Report to and inform the local area/facility or Lead Designated Child Protection Officer as soon as possible;
- Lead Designated Child Protection Officer in conjunction with Director of Culture and Leisure informs relevant persons, e.g. Director of Organisational Development (internal investigation) Social Services and/or the Police if appropriate.

9.5.3 Responding to allegations or concerns against any other person.

- Take the allegation or concern seriously;
- Record in writing on a Child Protection Incident Reporting Form (see Appendix 2) all the details that you are aware of as soon as possible;
- Report to and inform the local area/facility or Lead Designated Child Protection Officer as soon as possible;;
- Designated Child Protection Officer informs relevant persons, i.e. Social Services and/or the Police if appropriate.
- Lead Designated Child Protection Officer in conjunction with Director of Culture and Leisure informs relevant persons, e.g. Social Services and/or the Police

9.6 PROCEDURES FOR REFERRALS TO DHSSPS DISQUALIFICATION LIST

9.6.1 Under the **Disqualification for Working with Children (DWC (NI)) List** and the **Disqualification from Working with Vulnerable Adults (DWVA (NI)) List** which are lists of individuals who are considered unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults as follows: *(The Council will refer employees for inclusion as follows, (see appendix 5))*

- That the Council has, on such grounds, suspended the individual or provisionally transferred them to a non child care position, but has not yet decided whether to dismiss them or to confirm the transfer;
- That the Council has dismissed the individual on the grounds of misconduct (whether or not in the course of their employment) which harmed a child or placed a child at risk of harm;
- That the individual has resigned, retired or been made redundant in circumstances such that the Council would have dismissed them, or would have considered dismissing them, on such grounds if they had not resigned, retired or been made redundant;
- That the Council has, on such grounds, transferred the individual to a position within the Council which is not a child care position.

9.6.2 Additionally the Council may refer names to the DHSSPS in other circumstances. This would be where they have dismissed an individual, the individual has resigned, retired or has been transferred to a position with the organisation which is not a child care

position and where information not available to the Council at the time has since become available.

9.7 CONFIDENTIALITY AND SHARING INFORMATION

- 9.7.1 Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only, e.g. Designated Child Protection Officers, Social Services, Police, child, parents and staff/volunteers.
- 9.7.2 It is extremely important that allegations or concerns are not discussed, as any breach of confidentiality could be damaging to the child, their family and any child protection investigations that may follow.
- 9.7.3 Informing the parents of a child or young person you may have concerns about needs to be dealt with in a sensitive way and should be done in consultation with Social Services. This will be done in an open and transparent manner.
- 9.7.4 Any individual under supervision has the right to be notified about the cause for concern. This should be done in joint consultation with Social Services and the Police. It is important that the timing of this does not prejudice the investigation.
- 9.7.5 Recorded information should be stored in a secure place in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).
- 9.7.6 If enquiries arise from the public (including parents) or any branch of the media, it is vital that all staff, elected members and volunteers are briefed so that they do not make any comments regarding the situation. Staff, elected members and volunteers should reply 'no comment' to all questions / enquiries.
- 9.7.8 A complaints procedure is available for children, parents, staff/volunteers. Verbal, written or other accessible format complaints can be made to the Chief Executive and the Council's complaints procedure will be activated. A grievance procedure is also available for staff.

10.0 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF STAFF

- 10.1 Children are the least able to protect themselves from abuse or exploitation, and the least able to seek help if they are ill-treated. It is important therefore that all staff working in a 'Regulated' position with children and young people, whether they are full time, part time, paid or unpaid, have the same recruitment and selection procedures applied to them and that as much information as possible is ascertained as to their suitability for the position.

This means choosing people with the necessary skills, knowledge and experience, and ensuring those, whose behaviour could be a threat to the safety and wellbeing of children are screened out. To ensure this the Council adheres to the following professional standards.

- 10.2 Under the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy, an open recruitment process is applied for both external and 'internal trawl' positions. The process involves the advertisement of a vacancy, completion of an application form, a requirement to attend for test and/or interview, a requirement for written references from two referees and a declaration of accuracy of the information supplied.
- 10.3 All job positions will be assessed to ascertain whether the position is a regulated one or not. This will be the responsibility of the relevant manager and personnel officer and where necessary, in consultation with designated child protection officers. Where the post is deemed to care for, train, supervise or be in sole charge of children then the recruitment team will insert a reference to the fact that the post is a 'Regulated' position governed by The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. It will also be stated that before appointing anyone to such a post, it is the Council's policy to request the relevant POC (NI) or POVA (NI) check to be carried out. An identification check will also be requested from the individual, these checks will include photographic identification and one check of a utility bill, bank/building society statement or credit/debit card.
- 10.4 In defining a 'Regulated' position, the following criteria will be used
- A position whose normal duties include caring for, training, advising, counselling, supervising or being in sole charge of children;
 - A position whose normal duties involve unsupervised contact with children under arrangements made by a responsible person;
 - A position whose normal duties include supervising or managing an individual in his work in a regulated position;
 - Where any doubt exists in assessing a job, Council will seek a POCVA request as part of the recruitment process.
- 10.5 The Council will only request a check on the preferred applicant for a post, that is, an individual to whom a conditional offer of appointment has been made – not short listed applicants. The Council will seek a POC (NI) and POVA (NI) check in all cases. Checks will not normally be requested on existing staff however, a check may be requested if:
- An individual takes up new duties in a regulated position with children, where this had not previously been the case;
 - Serious allegations are made about an individual already working with children or new information comes to light.
- 10.6 Where an applicant lives or has lived in another part of the United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey or the Isle of Man, the Police Service of Northern Ireland will check for criminal records with the relevant police force. Where we cannot obtain a POCVA check due to the individual living outside these jurisdictions the applicant will be required to present a Certificate of Good Conduct or extracts from their criminal records or similar document of their suitability to work with children by the relevant national authority prior to appointment. However, the level of information disclosed in this way varies from country to country; some provide complete criminal records, others only extracts. We will treat such certificates with caution, as it is difficult to confirm that the information is genuine or complete. In these instances we

will personally discuss with the referees the individual's suitability to work with children.

- 10.7 Information provided under POCVA arrangements will be treated as highly sensitive and will at all times be treated as strictly confidential. Such information will be stored in a locked cupboard or cabinet which will only be accessible by the Council's nominated officers. After making a final decision about the applicant, the original information and all copies will be destroyed immediately by shredding. The Council will however include a note on any personnel file stating that a check was carried out and that the person's conditional offer of appointment was confirmed / withdrawn as a result. See appendix 6 in how the Council will process information provided by POC (NI)
- 10.8 If the Council become aware that an individual who is employed is subject to a Disqualification Order or is included in the DWC (NI) List or DWVA (NI) List, then the individual will be moved to a non child care position or the employment terminated.
- 10.9 No matter how good the recruitment and selection procedures may be, they are not 'foolproof'. Best practice professional standards in management and supervision of staff and volunteers after appointment is as important.

11.0 PHOTOGRAPHY

- 11.1 There is evidence that some people have used children and young people's activities and events, as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or video footage of children and young people. Staff, elected members and volunteers should be vigilant at all times and any person using cameras, mobile phones, film, equipment or videos at Council events or activities which involve children and young people should be approached and asked to complete a Consent Form for the use of Cameras and other Image Recorders (see Appendix 3).
- 11.2 When Council commissions professional photographers or invites the press to cover Council run events and activities you must ensure that the following is adhered to in relation to child protection.
- Check credentials of any photographers and organisations used;
 - Ensure identification is worn at all times, if they do not have their own – provide it;
 - Do not allow unsupervised access to children or young people or one to one photographic sessions;
 - Do not allow photographic sessions outside of the activities or services, or at a child or young persons home;
 - Parents must be informed that photographs of their child or young person may be taken during Council services, activities or events, and parental consent forms need to be signed agreeing to this. This must include information about how and where these photographs will be used. **A separate form is required for these instances to include permission from both parent and child;**

- It is recommended that the names of children or young people should not be used in photographs or video footage, unless with the express permission of the child or young person's parent.

11.3 NO PHOTOGRAPHY of any nature will be permitted in swimming pools, health suites or changing areas

12.0 ADULT/ CHILD RATIOS – COUNCIL RUN CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

12.1 The Council comes into contact with children across a very diverse range of activities and contexts ranging across leisure and sports development, theatre, arts development, play area maintenance etc. It is unrealistic to determine a prescriptive adult to child ratio for each differing activity and therefore it is a requirement that a risk assessment to determine the appropriate adult to child ratios in respect of child protection be carried out, notwithstanding the particular health and safety requirement.

12.2 Levels of supervision must be adequate whether at the Council's facilities or on an external journey/visit. Therefore, when deciding how many adults are required to supervise, assessors must take into account any practical considerations that may be relevant and the number of participants in the group. When deciding on appropriate adult to child ratios the following guidelines are considered as minimum requirements for any activity, the risk assessment¹ may well indicate the need for an enhanced level of supervision and staffing for a particular activity. In completing the assessment the following should be taken into consideration.

- It is recommended that no journey/ visit should be undertaken without a minimum of two adults in attendance, one of whom must be an employee. Bus drivers are not to be taken into consideration when considering levels of supervision;
- We should aim to ensure that **no adult is in a one to one situation with a child.** Where an adult is on their own with a group another adult must be readily available e.g. caretaker;
- Appropriate training of the group leader has been provided;
- The ease of observation of the area e.g. large hall, pitch etc. and the nature of the activity;
- Where an activity involves swimming – the level of adult supervision must be in compliance with the supervisory rules stated by the swimming pool facility provider. If there are none stated, the level of supervision for under 8's should be one adult to one child;
- The ratio of staff and volunteers to children with disabilities should be assessed on an individual 'case-by case' basis after discussion with the child's carers in relation to their abilities and individual needs;
- It is recommended that where there is a mix of females and males in a group that there is a gender mix of supervisors or a gender mix is readily available.

¹ A Health and Safety Risk assessment should be carried out for all activities.

13.0 CHILD PROTECTION AT COUNCIL EVENTS

- 13.1 The Event Organiser will ensure they obtain and retain copies of all third party child protection policies.
- 13.2 Child Protection will be included in the event risk assessment and an assessment of non-compliance with council policy and procedures will be made.
- 13.3 All third party agencies interaction and on site procedures will be monitored by Council staff.
- 13.4 Specific child protection procedures will be listed for each specific event which will detail the control point, the action to be taken in event of a lost child, communication methods, photography, lone working, etc.
- 13.5 A specific steward briefing will be given before each event that will include steward instructions relating to child protection.
- 13.6 All complaints relating to third party agencies and their staff or volunteers will be followed up. Any complaints made to stewards or Council representatives at events must be reported to the Event Organiser who will refer the matter to Head of Human Resources.

14.0 SOCIAL MEDIA

- 14.1 The use of social media for Council business purposes is restricted, and employees should refer to Mid- Ulster District Councils Social Media Policy for further information.
- 14.2 Council recognises the important role that social networking websites play in the ways in which children communicate and the effectiveness of these groups, however we also recognize the potential safeguarding issues social networking brings therefore recommends that it is good practice for Council staff to:
 - Not use Facebook, Twitter, Blogs such as Tumblr, Wordpress and Blogger unless authorised by Council.
 - Sites can attract a small minority of people with extreme views so it is important to take precautions. Never post comments, photos or videos that may cause embarrassment and never post comments that are abusive or may cause offence;
 - Accept that social media pages can be publicly visible. Do not bring the Council into disrepute in any way and users should refrain from openly discussing their colleagues or incidents at work online in order to maintain a safe boundary between work and personal life;
 - Council recognize that friendships can be built outside work with persons under the age of 18. As an employee of the Council, it is recommended that all social media contact with young people should be kept appropriate and not use abbreviations/language that could be misunderstood by a parent or guardian (e.g. LOL and smilies);
 - Messages should be saved and kept (both incoming and outgoing) and instant chat must not be used at any time to communicate with children
 - Any complaint of cyber bullying, stalking, trolling or creeping made against staff will be investigated with a view to disciplinary action. The Council disciplinary policy will be utilized.

- 14.2 Cyber bullying can occur online only or as part of more general bullying. Cyber stalking (persistent unwanted contact from another person) can also be confined to the internet or can be a part of “real-life stalking”.
- 14.3 Trolling can mean deliberately upsetting, shocking or winding-up certain individuals or specific groups of people, or a more general audience. Offence is generally caused by the extreme views or seemingly just for the sake of it. This may include religious, racist or homophobic abuse.
- 14.4 Creeping means following what is going on in someone’s life online for the wrong reasons. This can be viewed similarly to cyber stalking.

15.0 EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS USING FACILITIES OR UNDERTAKING WORK FOR THE COUNCIL

- 15.1 Mid Ulster District Council would strongly encourage all clubs, organisations, individual tutors or their Governing Bodies that use Council facilities or services, to have an acceptable Child Protection Policy in place.
- 15.2 As a minimum requirement, all such clubs and organisations must accept and apply the standard of care as outlined within this Policy. A copy of the Policy will be made available on request to hirers with Terms and Conditions of Hire information.
- 15.3 All external organisations must ensure that they have an adequate number of suitably vetted and qualified persons in attendance throughout the entire period children are in their care whilst on Council premises.

APPENDIX 1 - CODE OF BEHAVIOUR ON CHILD PROTECTION FOR COUNCIL STAFF

- 1 We recognise that it is not practical to provide definitive instructions that would apply to every situation when staff members come into contact with children which would guarantee the protection of children and staff.
- 2 The following points cover the standards we expect from our staff, so that they can fulfil their roles in the Council. This Code of Behaviour should help to protect children, including children with special needs and members of staff.
- 3 **STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS MUST NEVER:**
 - Engage in rough, inappropriate games including horseplay with children.
 - Allow, or engage in, inappropriate touching of any kind.

If required to assist a child:

- it should always be in response to the child's needs
- it should always be appropriate to the child's age and stage of development
- it should always be with the child's permission.
- Physically restrain a child or young person, unless it is to:
 - prevent physical injury to the child, to other children, to visitors or staff, or to yourself
 - prevent damage to any property
 - prevent or stop the child or young person committing a criminal offence.

In all circumstances, physical restraint must be appropriate and reasonable. If not, your action can be defined as assault.

- Make sexually suggestive actions or comments to, or within earshot of, a child even if in fun.
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves, or that their parent or the group leader can do for them.
- Do anything which could be construed as bullying. The Council's anti-bullying and harassment policy provides clear anti-bullying guidelines for staff.

4 STAFF MUST NOT, EXCEPT IN EMERGENCIES:

- Have children or young people on their own in a vehicle, unless parents have been notified and extreme caution is taken.
- Take a child to the toilet unless another adult is present, or is told about it (this may include a parent or group leader)
- Spend time alone with a child on his or her own – if you find yourself in this situation; make sure that you can be clearly seen by others.

5 IMPLICATIONS FOR STAFF

Staff members and volunteers who breach any of the above Codes of Behaviour may face disciplinary procedure. If an allegation is made against a member of our staff, we will investigate the matter in line with our procedure for dealing with allegations against staff. The investigating officer will take advice from Police or other relevant bodies concerned with Child Protection.

6 REPORTING PROCEDURES

If one of our staff members or volunteers is concerned about a child or the child's behaviour, it is essential to report that concern. In the first instance that concern should be reported to the Area or Lead Designated Child Protection Officer.

APPENDIX 2 - CHILD PROTECTION INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

All information will be treated in strict confidence

Name of Child:		Venue:		Date:	
Date of Birth:		Age:		Time:	
Address					
Postcode					
Telephone Number:		Name of Parent/Guardian:			
Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on those of someone else? Give details:					
Brief description of what has prompted the concerns: include dates, times etc. of any specific incidents:					
Are there any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?					
Have you spoken to the child, young person, vulnerable adult? If so, what was said?					

Have you spoken to the parent(s) guardians? If so, what was said?			
Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, give details?			
Have you consulted anybody? Give details:			
Your name:		Position:	
To whom reported:		Date of reporting:	
Signature:		Date:	
Designated Officer Name			
Signature:		Date:	

This form should now be given to a Designated Child Protection Officer by hand in a sealed envelope marked confidential.

APPENDIX 3 - PHOTOGRAPHY CONSENT FORM

(for the taking of Photographs, Film or Video Recordings of Children, Young People or Vulnerable Adults in Council run events or premises)

Reference No: _____

Premises: _____

PERMISSION TO TAKE PHOTOGRAPHS OR RECORD IMAGES

There is evidence that some people have used children and young people's activities and events, as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or video footage. In order to protect children from such abuses the Council's policy is that:

“Photography and the recording of images of any kind are allowed only with the permission of the management of the premises”.

The procedure for obtaining permission is to complete the form below and forward to the Duty Manager prior to taking photographs or recording any images.

Details of Person Requesting Permission

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone No _____

Name of the Subject _____

Relationship of Photographer and Subject _____

Reason for Photography _____

How do you intend to use the images? _____

Declaration

I _____ hereby declare that the information provided is valid and that the images will only be used for the reasons given.

I also understand and agree that if anyone has any complaints or expresses concern about my use of photographic or recording equipment I will respect the rights of other people and stop when requested.

I also agree that I will not take any photographs or record any images in swimming pools, health suites, toilets, changing areas or any other area designated by management.

Signed _____ Date _____

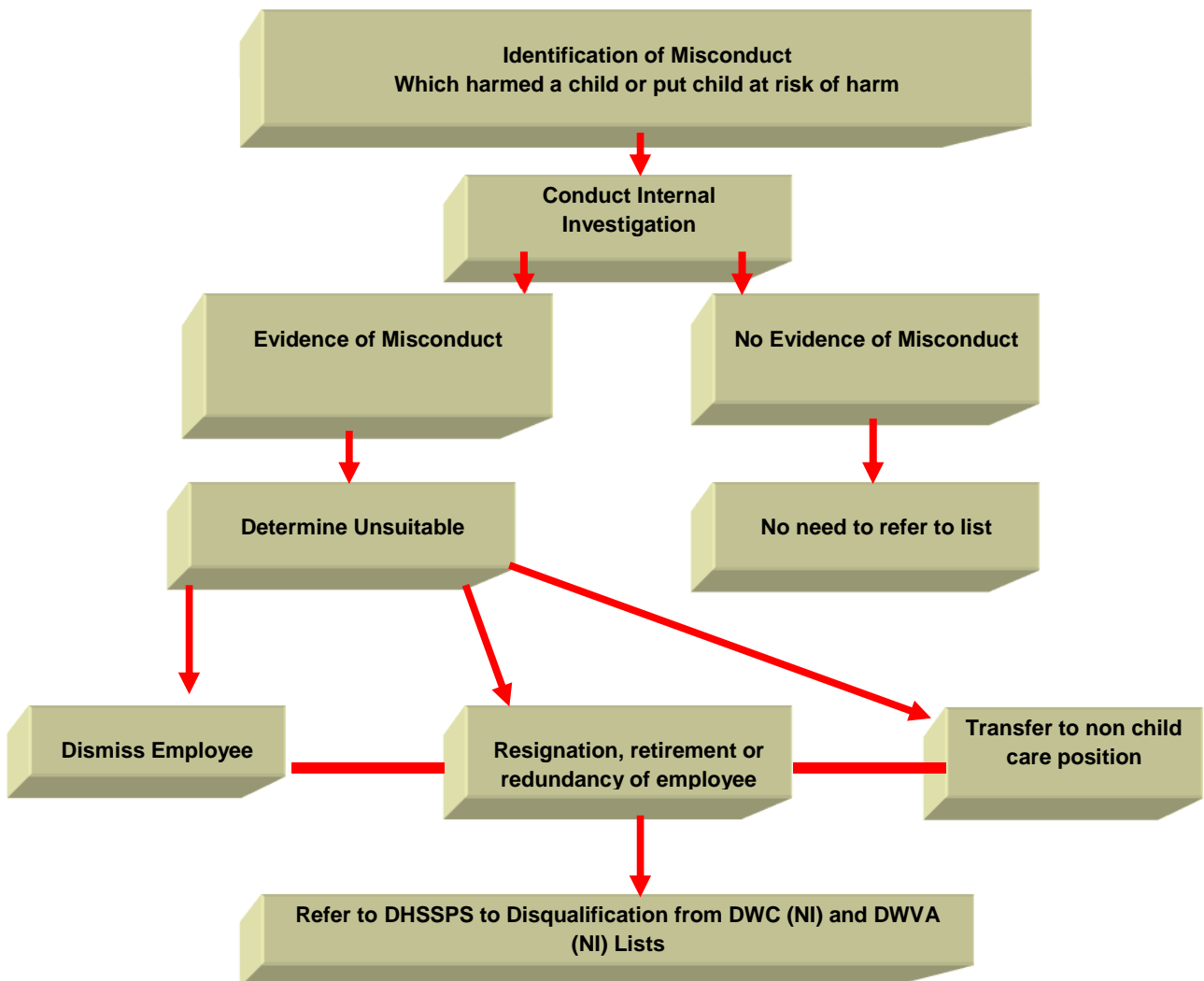
APPENDIX 4 - USEFUL CONTACTS

Social Services	Cookstown Child Care Team Unit T2 Derryloran Industrial estate Sandholes Road Cookstown BT80 9LU	Tel: 028 8675 8877
Social Services	Northern Health & Social Care Trust Gateway to Childrens Social Work Service Local Office (Toome)	Tel: 078 7965 1020
PSNI CARE Units	Mahon Road C.A.R.E Unit 50 Mahon Road Portadown BT62 3SF	Tel: 028 3831 5274
NSPCC	NSPCC Child Protection Helpline	Tel: 0808 800 5000
NSPCC Child Protection	NSPCC Divisional Office Jennymount Business Park North Derby Street Belfast BT15 3HN	Tel: 028 9035 1135 Helpline: 0800 8005000
Childline (N.I.)	P.O.Box 111, Belfast BT1 7DZ	Tel: 028 9032 7773 Freephone: 0800 1111
Northern Area Child Protection Committee	ACPC Office Holywell Hospital Site 60 Steeple Road Antrim BT41 2RJ	Tel: 028 9441 3159

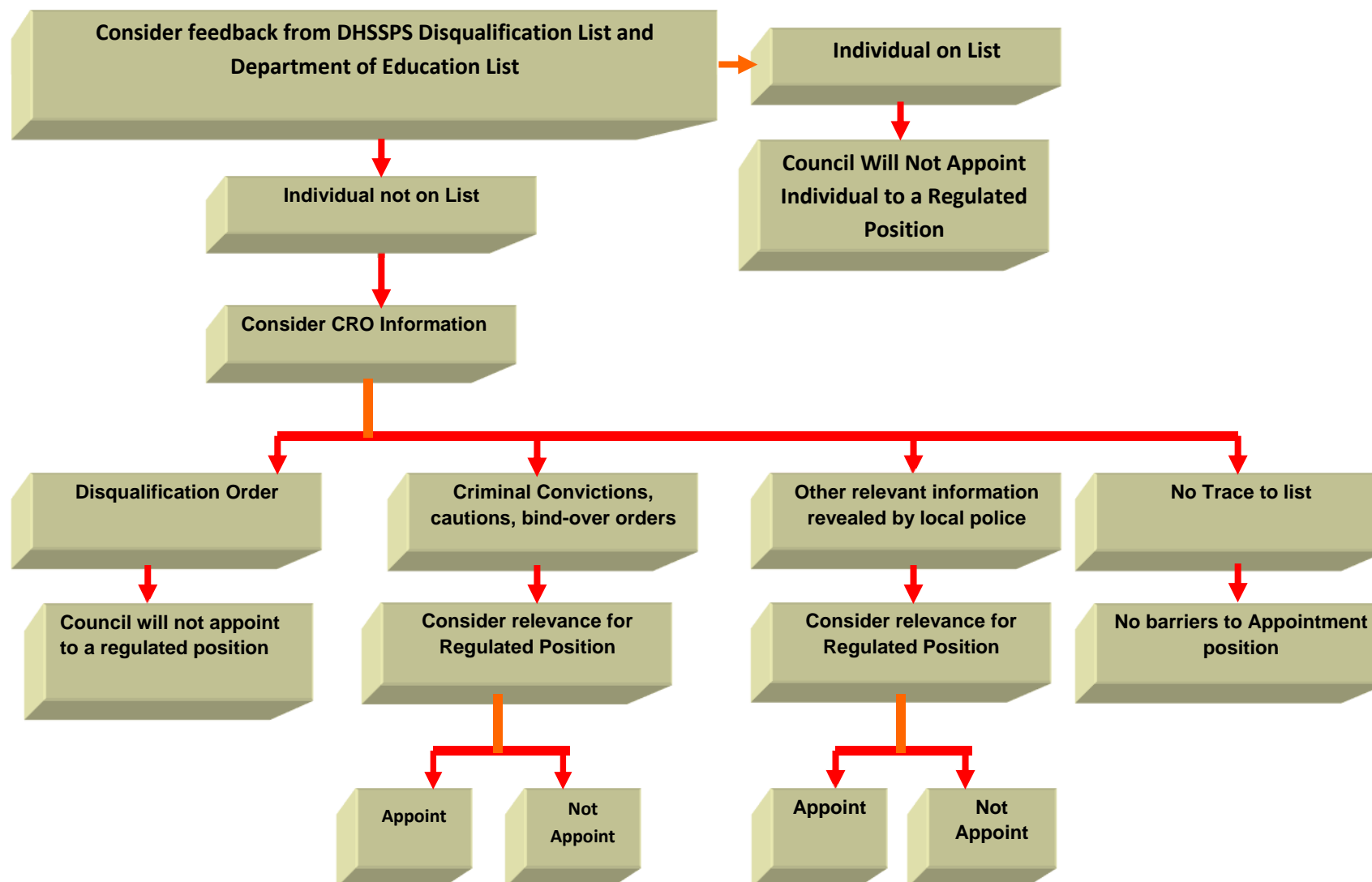
Education	SELB 3 Charlemont Olace The Mall Armagh BT61 6AX	Tel: 028 3751 2200
DHSS Pre-employment Consultancy Services(PECS)	Dundonald House, Upper N'ArdsRoad, Belfast. BT4 3SF	Tel: 028 9052 2644
Child Protection in Sport Unit	3, Gilmour Close Beaumont Leys Leicester L4 1EZ	Tel: 0116 2347273
Probation Board for Northern Ireland	Headquarters 80-90 North Street Belfast BT1 1LD	Tel:028 9026 2400

APPENDIX 5 - PROCEDURE FOR REFERRALS TO DHSS DISQUALIFICATION LIST

In the event that the Council has identified misconduct and suspended the individual or provisionally transferred them to a non child care position, but has not yet decided whether to dismiss them or to confirm the transfer to a non-child care position. In such circumstances the Council will provisionally advise the DHSSPS.



Appendix 6 - HOW COUNCIL WILL PROCESS INFORMATION PROVIDED BY POC (NI) AND POVA (NI)



Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

Document Control			
Policy / Procedure Owner (name, role & section)	Anne Marie Campbell – Director of Culture and Leisure		
Policy/ Procedure Author (name, role & section)	Ray Hall		
Version	v1.0		
Consultation	Transition Management Team	Yes / No	
	Trade Unions	Yes / No	
Equality Screened by	Ray Hall	Date	11.2.15
Equality Assessment	Impact Yes / No	Date	12.2.15
Approved By	Policy & Resources Committee	Date	
Adopted By	Council	Date	
Review Date		By Whom	
Circulation	Mid Ulster DC staff		
Document Linkages			

CONTENTS PAGE

Paragraph	Description	Page Numbers
1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	Policy Aims & Objectives	3
3.0	Policy Scope	3
4.0	Definitions	4
5.0	Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy Statement	4
6.0	Linkage to Corporate Plan	5
7.0	Roles & Responsibilities	5-6
8.0	Training	7
9.0	Reporting Procedures	7-8
10.0	Main Forms of Vulnerable Adult Abuse	9
11.0	Principles & Values	10
12.0	External Organisations using Facilities or Undertaking Work for the Council	10 -11
13.0	Impact Assessment	11
14.0	Support & Advice	11
15.0	Communication	11
16.0	Monitoring & Review Arrangements	11

Appendices	Description	Page Number
1	Code of Behaviour	12
2	Reporting Form	13-14
3	Useful Contacts	15

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Vulnerable adults have the right to live their lives to the fullest potential, to be safeguarded, to be able to participate in and enjoy activities and to be treated with dignity and respect. While there is no specific legislation relating to the abuse of vulnerable adults, the following range of legislation is directly applicable to the protection of vulnerable adults.
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 (2007 Order)
 - Human Rights Act 1998
 - Health and Personal Social Services (N.I.) Order 1972
 - Sexual Offences (N.I.) Order 2008
 - Mental Health (N.I.) Order 1986
 - Police and Criminal Evidence (N.I.) Order 1989
- 1.2 Everybody has a responsibility for the safeguarding of vulnerable adults. Mid Ulster District Council as an organisation which has significant contacts with vulnerable adults across its services has both a moral and legal obligation to ensure abuse and exploitation does not occur.
- 1.3 The purpose of this policy is to help safeguard vulnerable adults and to ensure that Mid Ulster District Council staff, elected members and volunteers are aware of issues that can cause vulnerable adults harm.

2.0 POLICY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The aims of this policy are to:
- Demonstrate that Mid Ulster Council is committed to safeguarding adults
 - Ensure staff, elected members and volunteers, are aware of issues that could cause vulnerable adults harm.
 - To provide a framework for safeguarding vulnerable adults which adopts and supports best practice.
 - To comply with, and where practicable exceed, the requirements and targets set by existing legislation.

3.0 POLICY SCOPE

- 3.1 The scope of the policy extends to elected members, all those employed by Mid Ulster Council, and to those volunteers, contractors and public under our management or control.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 For the purpose of this policy the definition of a vulnerable adult is derived from that set out by the Law Commission for England and Wales (1995) definition of a “vulnerable adult” which is:

‘a person aged 18 years or over who is, or may be, in need of community care services or is resident in a continuing care facility by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness or who is, or may be, unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.’

- 4.2 The definition of abuse is derived from regional guidance issued by the Management Executive, Department of Health and Social Services, in 1996, which states that abuse is:

‘The physical, psychological, emotional, financial or sexual maltreatment or neglect of a vulnerable adult by another person. The abuse may be a single act or repeated over a period of time. It may take one form or a multiple of forms. The lack of appropriate action can also be a form of abuse. Abuse can occur in a relationship where there is an expectation of trust and can be perpetrated by a person/persons, in breach of that trust, who have influence over the life of a dependant, whether they be formal or informal carers, staff or family members or others. It can also occur outside such a relationship’:

5.0 SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY STATEMENT

- 5.1 Mid Ulster District Council accepts its moral and legal responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues that cause vulnerable adults harm, and to safeguard the well-being of vulnerable adults and protect them from all forms of abuse or harm when they are using services or facilities organised or provided by the Council. Council staff will not accept any forms of abuse wherever it occurs. The Council aims to do this by:

- Requiring staff, elected members and volunteers to follow the Council’s Vulnerable Adult Policy. Protecting vulnerable adults by implementing a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers
- Having in place clear reporting procedures within the council and reporting concerns to the relevant statutory agencies while involving vulnerable adults and carers appropriately.
- Having in place clear procedures for dealing with complaints and grievances.
- Managing personal information appropriately, e.g. confidentiality – in normal circumstances observing the principles of confidentiality will mean that information is only passed on with consent. To protect vulnerable adults, it may be necessary, in some circumstances, to share information

that might normally be regarded as confidential, where there is a risk of harm either to the individuals or others.

- Raising the awareness of the need to safeguard vulnerable adults throughout the Council.
- Actively encouraging good practice amongst all staff, elected members and volunteers throughout the Council and promoting wider awareness wherever possible, i.e. partnership organisations and user groups.
- Creating a safe and healthy environment within all our services, avoiding situations where abuse or allegations of abuse may occur.

6.0 LINKAGE TO CORPORATE PLAN

- 6.1 This Policy is consistent with the Mid Ulster Councils corporate priorities. It contributes to the performance theme of service delivery and provides the framework and system to facilitate the safe delivery of services.

7.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Chief Executive:

The Chief Executive is at the top of the organisational structure and has overall executive responsibility for the implementation of this policy at Mid Ulster District Council.

7.2 Director of Culture and Leisure

The Director of Culture and Leisure will ensure that this Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy is widely available to all Councillors and staff.

The Director has the responsibility to ensure that there are the necessary procedures for the supervision and support of Elected Members, Directors, Heads of Service, Designated Officers, Managers and Supervisors in their discharge of this policy

7.3 Director of Organisational Development:

The Director will ensure that where identified through job descriptions and representations from individual managers that employment checks are carried out.

The Director will also ensure that any records are stored appropriately.

The Director will have responsibility for ensuring that all staff are made aware of the importance of this policy. At their induction training new employees will be made aware of their role in the area of safeguarding vulnerable adults.

7.4 Directors, Heads of Service, Managers and Supervisors:

Directors, Heads of Service Managers and Supervisors are expected to ensure employees are aware of this policy; and to notify the Designated Safeguarding Officer(s) in confidence of any matters of safeguarding vulnerable adults which are brought to their attention. They will also be expected to ensure that their staff members attend the relevant training and comply with the requirements of this policy.

7.5 All Staff, Volunteers and Elected Members:

All staff, volunteers and elected members of the Council have a duty to adhere to this Policy and procedures and to notify the Designated Officer/s on any matters of safeguarding vulnerable adults. They will also be responsible for participating fully in the relevant training.

7.6 Designated Safeguarding Officers:

The Council will formally appoint the Corporate Health and Safety Officer and Head of Human Resources as the designated lead Safeguarding Officer/s (LDO's) who will be responsible for acting as a central point and source of advice on vulnerable adult matters; for coordinating any action necessary within the Council and for liaising with the PSNI, Health and Social Services Trusts and other agencies about suspected or actual cases of concern or abuse.

Additional designated officers in appropriate numbers will be appointed from Culture and Leisure Department in Magherafelt, Cookstown and Dungannon geographical areas. They will be the first point of contact for staff and public with concerns regarding any adult safeguarding issue within their facility, act as a local source of advice and guidance and will onward report to the lead LDO's any suspected or actual cases of concern or abuse for them to liaise with the appropriate statutory bodies.

The Designated Officers will undertake comprehensive training on safeguarding vulnerable adults and continue to update their skills on an ongoing basis.

One of the lead Designated Officers will represent Mid Ulster District Council on the Southern Local Adult Safeguarding Partnership

8.0 TRAINING

The Council will provide suitable training in safeguarding vulnerable adults. This training will have two levels.

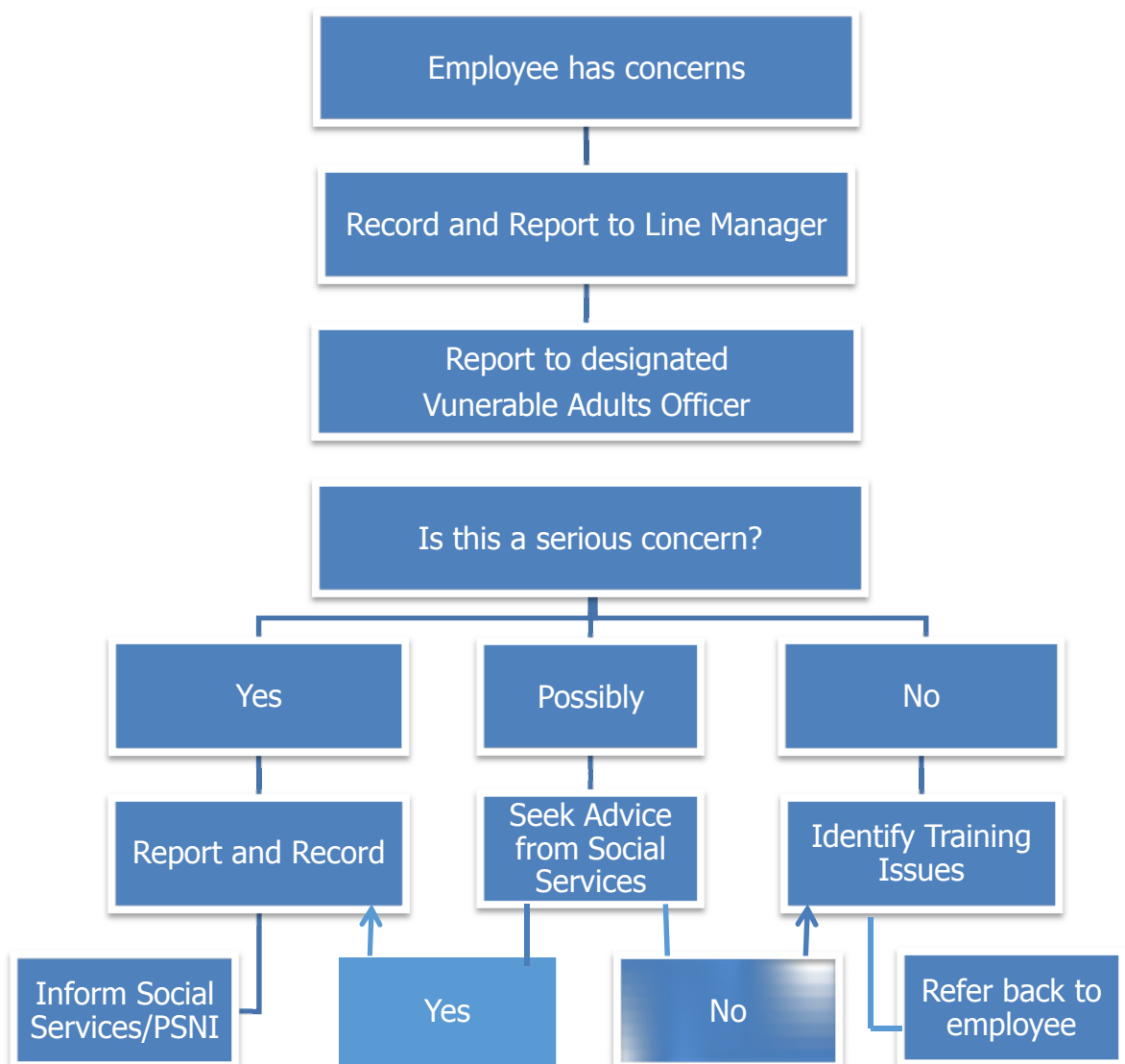
Level 1	General awareness training for all Councillors and Staff
Level 2	Comprehensive training for Designated Officers, Managers and Duty Managers of Facilities

9.0 REPORTING PROCEDURES

- 9.1 All staff, elected members and volunteers have a duty to report suspected, alleged or confirmed incidents of abuse. If you have been made aware of a suspected or alleged incident you should assure the vulnerable adult that you are taking their concerns seriously, establish the basic facts but do not ask leading questions and advise them of your obligation to pass the information on to your manager and/or designated safeguarding officer. You should also make an immediate assessment of the risks and take steps to ensure that the vulnerable adult is in no immediate danger.

If there is a complaint about a member of staff the incident may be investigated under the Councils Disciplinary procedures.

The flow chart over page sets out the reporting procedure:



9.2.1 Responding to a vulnerable adult making an allegation of abuse.

- Listen carefully to what is said.
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is very likely that the information will need to be shared with Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times do not ask questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared.
- Record in writing on an Incident Reporting Form (see Appendix 2) all the details that you are aware of and what was said using the vulnerable adult's own words, as soon as possible.
- Report to and inform the local area/facility or Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.
- Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer in conjunction with Director of Culture and Leisure informs relevant persons, e.g. Director Of Organisational Development (internal investigation), Social Services and/or the Police if appropriate

9.2.2 Responding to allegations or concerns against a member of staff, elected member or volunteer.

- Take the allegation or concern seriously.
- Record in writing on a Incident Reporting Form (see Appendix 2) all the details that you are aware of as soon as possible.
- Report to and inform the local area/facility or Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible
- Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer in conjunction with Director of Culture and Leisure informs relevant persons, i.e. Social Services and/or the Police if appropriate

9.2.3 Confidentiality and Sharing Information.

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only, e.g. Designated Safeguarding Officers, Director of Culture and Leisure, Social Services, and Police.

10.0 MAIN FORMS OF VULNERABLE ADULT ABUSE



11.0 PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

11.1 Key principles flow from the respect for the rights of vulnerable adults to:

- Privacy.
- To be treated with respect and dignity.
- To lead an independent life and be enabled to do so.
- To be able to choose how to lead their lives.
- The protection of the law.
- To have their rights upheld regardless of religious belief, political opinion, racial group, marital status, sexual inclination, persons with a disability and persons without and persons with dependents and persons without.
- To have the opportunity to fulfil personal aspirations and realise potential in all aspects of daily life.

This includes Human Rights considerations, particularly in relation to Article 2 “the Right to Life”, Article 3 “Freedom from Torture” (including humiliating and degrading treatment), and Article 8 “Right to Family Life”(one that sustains the individual), Article 9 “Right to Freedom of thought,” Article 10 “ Right to Freedom of Expression.”

11.2 Individual Rights

- To be accorded the same respect and dignity as any other adult, by recognising their uniqueness and personal needs.

- To be given access to knowledge and information which they can understand to help them make informed choices.
- To have information about, and practical help in, keeping themselves safe and protecting themselves from abuse.
- To live safely, without fear of violence or abuse in any form.
- To have their money, goods and possessions treated with respect, and to receive equal protection for themselves and their property through the law.
- To access guidance and assistance in seeking help as a consequence of abuse.
- To be supported in making their own decisions about how they wish to proceed in the event of abuse and to know that their wishes will only be over-ridden if it is considered necessary for their own safety or the safety of others.
- To be supported in bringing a complaint under any existing complaints procedure.
- To be supported in reporting the circumstances of any abuse to independent bodies.
- To have alleged, suspected or confirmed cases of abuse investigated urgently.
- To receive appropriate support, education, counselling, therapy and treatment following abuse.
- To seek legal advice or representation on their own behalf;
- To seek redress through appropriate agencies.
- To have their rights respected and to have their family, informal carers or advocates act on their behalf as appropriate.

12.0 EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS USING FACILITIES OR UNDERTAKING WORK FOR THE COUNCIL

- 12.1 Mid Ulster District Council would strongly encourage all clubs, organisations, individual tutors or their Governing Bodies that use Council facilities or services, to have an acceptable Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy in place.
- 12.2 As a minimum requirement, all such clubs and organisations must accept and apply the standard of care as outlined within this Policy. A copy of the Policy will be made available on request to hirers with Terms and Conditions of Hire information.
- 12.3 All external organisations must ensure that they have an adequate number of qualified persons in attendance throughout the entire period vulnerable adults are in their care whilst on Council premises.

13.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 13.1 This policy has been “screened out” for equality impact assessment.

- 13.2 Mid Ulster Council have a statutory duty to comply with safeguarding legislation and is required to do as much as is reasonably practicable to protect and safeguard vulnerable adults.

14.0 SUPPORT AND ADVICE

- 14.1 Support and advice on this policy can be obtained from the Corporate Health and Safety Officer.

15.0 COMMUNICATION

- 14.1 A master electronic controlled copy of this policy will be kept up-to-date on the website.

16.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

- 16.1 The Safeguarding Vulnerable Adult policy will be reviewed every two years from date of adoption at Council and thereafter.

APPENDIX 1: CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

1.0 STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS MUST NEVER:

- Abuse, neglect, harm or place at risk of harm vulnerable adults whether by omission or commission;
- Engage in rough physical games with vulnerable adults, including horseplay;
- Engage in sexually provocative games with vulnerable adults e.g. spin the bottle;
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a vulnerable adult;
- Form inappropriate relationships with vulnerable adults;
- Gossip about personal details of vulnerable adults and their families; or
- Make/accept loans or gifts of money from vulnerable adults;
- Photograph/video a vulnerable adult without the vulnerable adult's valid consent;
- Physically restrain a vulnerable adult, unless it is to prevent physical injury or to prevent or stop the committal of a criminal offence.

2.0 STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS MUST:

- Treat everyone equally and with respect;
- Engage and interact appropriately with vulnerable adults;
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow – an environment which allows bullying, inappropriate shouting or any form of discrimination is unacceptable;
- Respect the dignity of each individual and their right to personal privacy;
- Recognise that particular care is required in moments when you are discussing sensitive issues with vulnerable adults e.g. maintain appropriate boundaries;
- Avoid situations that compromise your relationship with vulnerable adults, and are unacceptable within a relationship of trust.

3.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR STAFF:

Staff members and volunteers should understand that: If they are unsure of their actions and feel they may have breached the Code, they should;

- Consult with their Manager;
- Know that breaching the Code is a serious issue that will be investigated;
- Breaching the Code may result in disciplinary action and ultimately dismissal and if it constitutes harm/risk of harm, referral to Social Service, PSNI, ISA as appropriate

4.0 REPORTING:

If one of our staff members or volunteers is concerned about a vulnerable adult, it is essential to report that concern. In the first instance to the immediate line manager who should then inform the Designated Safeguarding Officer/s.

APPENDIX 2 Incident Reporting Form
All information will be treated in strict confidence

Name of Vulnerable Adult:		Venue		Date	
Date of Birth		Age:		Time	
Address					
Postcode					
Telephone Number:		Name of Parent/Guardian			
Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on those of someone else? Give details:					
Brief description of what has prompted the concerns: include dates, times etc. of any specific incidents:					
Are there any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?					
Have you spoken vulnerable adult? If so, what was said?					

Have you spoken to the parent(s) guardians? If so, what was said?

Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, give details?

Have you consulted anybody? Give details:

Your name:		Position:	
Signature		Date	
To whom reported:		Date of reporting:	
Signature:		Date:	

This form should now be given to a Designated Safeguarding Officer by hand in a sealed envelope marked confidential.

APPENDIX 3**USEFUL CONTACTS**

Social Services	Southern Trust Area Specialist Safeguarding Manager Mr Eamon Sherry	Tel 02837412334 E Mail: Eamonn.Sherry@southerntrust.hscni.net
	Northern Trust Area Specialist Safeguarding Manager Mr Randall McHugh Out of Hours	Tel: 02894413125 E Mail: randal.mchugh@northerntrust.hscni.net 028 94468833.
PSNI (PPU)	F District Sergeant L Nicholson (Outside of Normal Working Hours referral to Duty Inspector)	Tel: 0845 600 8000
Education	SELB 3 Charlemont Olace The Mall Armagh BT61 6AX	Tel: 028 3751 2200

C

Subject	Policy For Recruitment Advertising
Reporting Officer	Ursula Mezza, Marketing Communications Manager

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	To consider the element of the advertising policy relating to the placement of recruitment advertisements.

2	Background
2.1	In February, the Policy & Resources Committee considered the introduction of a policy to guide the placement of public notices in newspapers circulating in its district, as well as the placement of tender and recruitment advertisements.
2.2	The policy proposed the use of the Belfast Telegraph for recruitment advertising for posts at SO1 and above, and specialist publications where appropriate, and the Committee wished to understand the cost implications of broadening the policy to include both the Irish News and the News Letter.

3	Key Issues
3.1	The proposed approach to recruitment advertising reflects the policy of one of the three existing councils, and acknowledges that the Belfast Telegraph is considered to have a balanced readership.
3.2	Using the example of the most recently advertised external post, which would be representative of a typical recruitment advertisement for a single post in terms of size, the costs were: Belfast Telegraph: £1,366.62 News Letter: £677.57 Irish News: £573.70

4	Resources
4.1	<u>Financial</u> While cost will always depend on the size of an advertisement, based on the example above, advertising in all 3 regional newspapers would increase the cost per ad by approximately 90%.

4.2	<u>Human</u> N/A
4.3	<u>Basis for Professional/ Consultancy Support</u> N/A
4.4	<u>Other</u> N/A

5	Other Considerations
	None

6	Recommendations
6.1	That the Council agrees its preferred approach to regional advertising of posts at SO1 and above.

7	List of Documents Attached
	None

D

Subject	Social Media Policy
Reporting Officer	Ursula Mezza, Marketing Communications Manager

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	To consider the introduction of a policy to establish procedures and guidance on the use of social media by Council employees.

2	Background
2.1	The Council recognises the extensive use of social media by council employees personally and the opportunities provided by social media for the Council to communicate and engage with a variety of stakeholders at a range of levels.
2.2	The use of social media does, however, have risks and a policy is required to assist in the management of those risks and provide clear information, guidance and support to ensure all employees are aware of their responsibilities in their use of social media personally and professionally.

3	Key Issues
3.1	The policy outlines key areas of risk, including to the Council's reputation, to the retention of confidential and proprietary information and to compliance with legal obligations, as well as highlighting the implications for lost productivity and the appropriate use of the Council's ICT resources and systems.
3.2	Guidelines for the use of social media as part of a job role emphasise the need for any employee in this position to be aware of the responsibilities associated with representing the Council.
3.3	Further guidelines centre on the need for employees who use social media in a private capacity to make clear distinctions between the personal and professional; to avoid any social media communications which could damage or potentially damage the Council's reputation; and to ensure that no confidential or proprietary information or intellectual property is communicated using social media channels.

4	Resources
4.1	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>Training in the social media policy will be required as part of the Council's training and development programme.</p>

4.2	<u>Human</u> Staff across the organisation will be released to attend appropriate training.
4.3	<u>Basis for Professional/ Consultancy Support</u> N/A
4.4	<u>Other</u> N/A

5	Other Considerations
	None

6	Recommendations
6.1	That the social media policy is considered for adoption.

7	List of Documents Attached
7.1	Appendix 1 - Social Media Policy

Social Media Policy

Document Control			
Policy / Procedure Owner (name, role & section)	Ursula Mezza, Marketing Communications Manager		
Policy/ Procedure Author (name, role & section)	Ursula Mezza, Marketing Communications Manager		
Version	v1.0		
Consultation	<div>Transition Management Team Yes</div> <div>Trade Unions No</div>		
Equality Screened by		Date	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes / No	Date	
Approved By	Policy & Resources Committee	Date	
Adopted By	Council	Date	
Review Date	April 2016	By Whom	MCM
Circulation	Mid Ulster District Council staff		
Document Linkages	Code of Conduct for Councillors Code of Conduct for Council Employees Communication Strategy Communication Policy Freedom of Information Policy Data Protection Policy Human Resources Policies Information Security Policies		

Contents

Paragraph	Description	Page Number
1.0	Intoduction	4
2.0	Policy Aims & Objectives	4
3.0	Policy Scope	4
4.0	Linkage to Corporate Plan	4
5.0	Roles and Responsibilities	5
6.0	Procedure and Implementation	5
7.0	Impact Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Equality Screening and Impact Assessmento Staff and Financial Resources	5
8.0	Support and Advice	5
9.0	Communication	6
10.0	Monitoring and Review Arrangements	6
	Appendix 1	7

1.0 Introduction

Mid Ulster District Council recognises the widespread personal use of social media by Council employees and the opportunities for the Council to use social media to communicate and engage with a variety of stakeholders at a range of levels.

However, the use of social media by council employees does have associated risks, including, to the Council's reputation, to the retention of confidential and proprietary information or to compliance with legal obligations. It also has implications for levels of productivity and how ICT systems are used.

The Council has a duty of care for the safety and privacy of those employees who are designated to use social media as part of their job role.

2.0 Policy Aims & Objectives

The Social Media Policy aims to minimise the risks associated with the use of social media by Council employees and ensure all employees are aware of their responsibilities.

The policy objectives are to:

- provide clear information and guidance to all council employees concerning their personal use of social media.
- provide clear information, guidance and support to those council employees who use social media as part of their work.
- avoid a potential loss of productivity as a result of social media use.
- ensure the Council's ICT resources and systems are used for appropriate business and service delivery purposes.

3.0 Policy Scope

The Social Media Policy applies to all employees, including casual and agency staff, and their use of social media for both working and personal purposes, whether during or outside of office hours, and regardless of whether social media sites are accessed using Council facilities and equipment or equipment belonging to employees.

The policy is also applicable to third parties who have access to the Council's ICT systems and equipment.

Social media is defined as a type of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum and the policy is applicable to any social media site. Social media includes, but is not limited to, online social forums such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, as well as blogs and video and image sharing sites such as YouTube, Instagram and Flickr.

4.0 Linkage to Corporate Plan

In its Corporate Plan for the transitional period, the Council has prioritised the development and implementation of 'systems to underpin and deliver services' and

the Social Media Policy is designed to support this stated objective and to contribute to the smooth transfer and harmonisation of services.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

- Elected members will endorse the policy, its implementation and procedures.
- The Senior Management Team will demonstrate its commitment to the policy and have overall responsibility for its implementation and effective operation.
- Heads of Service and line managers will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the policy.
- The Organisational Development Department, Marketing Communications Service and ICT Service will monitor and review the operation of the policy.
- Employees designated to use social media as part of their job roles must attend training on protection and privacy of social media channels to ensure they are aware of the privacy safeguards they should take to protect their own personal safety. Thereafter, they must take the appropriate steps to protect their personal privacy.
- All employees will be responsible for ensuring they understand the policy, operate within it, and report any misuse of social media to the appropriate line manager.

6.0 Procedure and Implementation

The policy is subject to a set of guidelines which are at Appendix 1.

7.0 Impact Assessment

- Equality screening and impact assessment

The policy will be equality screened using Mid Ulster District Council's Equality Scheme.

- Staff and financial resources

Implementation of the policy requires the release of staff across the organisation to attend training in the Social Media Policy and related policies.

8.0 Support and Advice

For further information about the policy, please contact Ursula Mezza, Marketing Communications Manager.

9.0 Communication

The policy will be communicated internally using a range of appropriate internal communication methods.

The policy will also form part of the induction process for all new staff.

10.0 Monitoring and Review Arrangements

The effectiveness of the policy will be monitored using feedback from those staff involved in its implementation and formal review, with any appropriate recommendations for change, will take place 1 year after implementation.

Appendix 1

Guidelines for the use of social media by employees

Use of social media as part of a job role

Employees will not establish social media sites on behalf of the Council or any of its services or facilities without approval by the marketing and communication service.

Employees using Council and other social media sites as part of a job role must be authorised to do so and must be aware at all times that, while contributing to social media, they are representing the Council.

All postings must, therefore:

- clearly be made in an official capacity.
- have a purpose and benefit for the Council.
- reflect the 'voice' of the Council in language and tone.
- be authorised.

Use of social media in a personal capacity

Employees will have their own social media accounts and use social media in a personal capacity and are, therefore, personally responsible for what they communicate.

Employees should only access social media sites on Council ICT systems and equipment during official rest breaks such as lunch and/or break times.

Employees may only use their own computers or devices to access social media while they are at work during official rest breaks.

1. Distinguishing between the personal and the professional

When using and posting on social media sites in a personal capacity, there must be a clear distinction between the personal and work.

- Employees must only use personal email addresses when logging onto a personal account and when communicating in a personal capacity via social media sites.
- Employees must not define or cross refer themselves in their professional capacity.
- Social media profiles and content posted must be consistent with the employee's professional image at work.
- Employees must make it clear in social media postings that they are posting in a personal capacity.
- Employees who use social media sites to portray their views on topics, even in a private or personal capacity, should exercise caution to ensure that, as a

result of the nature, level or perception of their post, they do not breach the Council's social media or other policies.

- Employees should be cautious when adding contacts made in an official capacity to personal social media sites.
- Employees should not post anything related to the Council's customers, its employees, suppliers and vendors or any other stakeholders and affiliates without their prior written permission.
- Employees should never provide references for other individuals on social media sites, including professional networking sites, that are either positive or negative, which could be attributed to the Council and create legal liability for both the author of the reference and the Council.
- Employees should never use social media in a way which breaches any other Council policy, laws or ethical standards.

2. Protecting the Council's reputation

All employees are responsible for protecting the Council's reputation and should avoid social media communications that might be misconstrued in a way that could damage, or potentially damage, the Council's reputation, even indirectly.

- Employees are prohibited from posting disparaging, offensive, obscene, discriminatory or defamatory statements about the Council, its customers, its employees, suppliers and vendors or any other stakeholders and affiliates
- If employees disclose they are an employee of the Council in a posting, they must state that any views do not represent the Council. For example, a posting could state, *"the views in this posting do not represent the views of my employer"*.
- Postings about sensitive council-related topics must be avoided. Even if employees make it clear that their views do not represent those of the Council, their comments could still damage the Council's reputation.
- If employees are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, they should refrain from making the communication, or take advice from Organisational Development or Marketing Communications staff.
- If employees see or become aware of content on social media sites that disparages or reflects poorly on the Council or any of its employees or which would potentially breach Council policies, they are encouraged to inform their line manager in the first instance.

3. Respecting intellectual property and confidential information

- Employees are prohibited from disclosing confidential or proprietary information and intellectual property.
- Employees must not misappropriate or infringe the intellectual property of other councils, organisations or individuals.
- Employees must not use the Council's corporate, service or place branding, in a personal capacity without prior written permission.

E

Subject	Uniform Policy
Reporting Officer	Ursula Mezza, Marketing Communications Manager

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	To consider the introduction of a uniform policy for Mid Ulster District Council.

2	Background
2.1	The three existing councils each have different approaches to the provision of uniforms to employees, the type of uniform worn and the employees who are designated as 'uniform wearing'.
2.2	There is also a tax implication for employees, as clothing supplied as a corporate uniform or as protective clothing (not Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)) is considered a benefit in kind and must be prominently and permanently labelled to identify the wearer as an employee of the organisation.

3	Key Issues
3.1	The draft uniform policy seeks to provide a consistent approach to the procurement, provision and wearing of uniforms throughout the organisation and to ensure branding is applied in line with the branding guidelines which are under development.
3.2	Work is on-going to identify those primarily front-facing employee posts which will be designated as 'uniform wearing', as well as to specify the nature of the uniforms to be worn. When complete, these designations will be appended to the policy and reviewed to take account of any relevant service changes.

4	Resources
4.1	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>On the establishment and agreement of full uniform requirements, a procurement process to appoint a suitable provider(s) will be undertaken which may result in economies of scale. However, uniforms will continue to be purchased via existing departmental and service budgets.</p>
4.2	<p><u>Human</u></p> <p>N/A</p>

4.3	<u>Basis for Professional/ Consultancy Support</u>
	N/A
4.4	<u>Other</u>
	N/A

5	Other Considerations
	None

6	Recommendations
6.1	That the uniform policy is considered for adoption.

7	List of Documents Attached
7.1	Appendix 1 - Draft Uniform Policy

Uniform Policy

Document Control			
Policy / Procedure Owner (name, role & section)	Ursula Mezza, Marketing Communications Manager		
Policy/ Procedure Author (name, role & section)	Ursula Mezza, Marketing Communications Manager		
Version	v1.0		
Consultation	<div>Transition Management Team Yes</div> <div>Trade Unions Under review</div>		
Equality Screened by		Date	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes / No	Date	
Approved By	Policy & Resources Committee	Date	
Adopted By	Council	Date	
Review Date	April 2016	By Whom	MCM & Lead HR
Circulation	Mid Ulster District Council staff		
Document Linkages	Customer Service Policy Communication Policy Health & Safety Policy Branding Guidelines		

Contents

Paragraph	Description	Page Number
1.0	Intoduction	4
2.0	Policy Aims & Objectives	4
3.0	Policy Scope	4
4.0	Linkage to Corporate Plan	4
5.0	Roles and Responsibilities	5
6.0	Procedure and Implementation	5
7.0	Impact Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Equality Screening and Impact Assessmento Staff and Financial Resources	5
8.0	Support and Advice	5
9.0	Communication	5
10.0	Monitoring and Review Arrangements	6
	Appendix 1: Designated Posts	7

1.0 Introduction

Mid Ulster District Council is seeking to create a unique brand which is recognised and understood both externally and internally. The application of the Council's brand requires consistency across all platforms, including the uniforms which Council staff wear.

The provision of clothing supplied as a corporate uniform or as protective clothing (non PPE) is considered by HMRC as a 'benefit in kind' unless it is prominently and permanently labelled to identify the wearer as an employee of the organisation and is not suitable for everyday wear outside the working environment. The Council's policy has been developed in line with these requirements.

2.0 Policy Aims & Objectives

The Uniform Policy aims to contribute to the development of a customer-focussed, 'one council' culture where there is a sense of commonality and belonging among staff and where customers will recognise that they are interacting with Mid Ulster District Council at every customer-facing facility.

The policy objectives are to:

- ensure a consistent approach to the procurement, provision and wearing of staff uniforms across the Council and its facilities.
- provide clear direction on which staff should wear a uniform and of what that uniform should consist.
- ensure uniforms are branded in accordance with the Council's branding guidelines.

3.0 Policy Scope

The policy applies to all staff in posts which are designated as primarily customer facing with a requirement to wear a uniform.

Designated casual and seasonal employees will also be provided with uniform items.

Designated posts and associated items of uniform to be worn (including by casual and seasonal employees) will be established, agreed and appended to this policy.

The wearing of the staff uniform will provide a reasonable accommodation for females during pregnancy, people with disabilities and for people with religious beliefs or practices.

The provision of, and requirement to wear or use, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is managed via the Council's Health and Safety Policies, but subject to the uniform branding guidelines.

4.0 Linkage to Corporate Plan

In its Corporate Plan for the transitional period, the Council has prioritised the communication of the change process, highlighting the need to raise awareness internally and externally of the new Council and its new branding. The Uniform Policy is designed to support this stated objective, as well as to contribute to the smooth transfer and harmonisation of services.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

- Elected members will endorse the policy, its implementation and procedures.
- The Senior Management Team will demonstrate its commitment to the policy by ensuring their Heads of Service implement the policy appropriately.
- Heads of Service will ensure that their designated staff are issued with and wear the appropriate uniform and make adequate budgetary provision for the purchase of new and replacement uniforms.
- Heads of Service and/or Line Managers will ensure that uniforms are provided in line with agreed service requirements, and outside of those arrangements are replaced only when they are not fit for purpose (for example, as a result of demonstrable wear and tear). Heads of Service and/or Line Managers must also ensure uniforms are returned when an employee leaves the Council's employment.
- All designated staff will wear their allocated uniforms when at work (including training) and be responsible for keeping their uniforms clean and in good condition.

6.0 Procedure and Implementation

The policy will be implemented by appropriate managers using the list of designated posts and following the procedures for the provision and replacement of uniforms.

7.0 Impact Assessment

- Equality screening and impact assessment

The policy is still subject to equality screening and to consultation with Unions.

- Staff and financial resources

Heads of Service will make budgetary provision for uniforms on an annual basis.

8.0 Support and Advice

For further information about the policy, please contact Ursula Mezza, Marketing Communications Manager or Marissa Canavan, Lead HR Officer.

9.0 Communication

The policy will be communicated internally using a range of appropriate internal communication methods.

The policy will also form part of the induction process, where appropriate, for all new staff.

10.0 Monitoring and Review Arrangements

The effectiveness of the policy will be monitored using feedback from managers and staff required to wear uniforms.

Posts included in the designated list will be reviewed as and when required to add or remove posts.

Formal review, with any appropriate recommendations for change, will take place 1 year following implementation and biannually thereafter.

F

Subject: Good Relations Working Group

Reporting Officer: Chief Executive

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	To seek Members agreement to the establishment of a Good Relations Working Group.

2	Background
2.1	Members will be aware that Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires Council to comply with two statutory duties regarding equality of opportunity and good relations.
2.2	In carrying out its functions, Council is required to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:- <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;b. Between men and women generally;c. Between persons with a disability and those without; andd. Between persons with dependents and persons without.
2.3	Without prejudice to the above Council is also required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.
2.4	While the Act contains detail on the equality duty it is essentially silent in relation to defining and creating a framework around the good relations duty.
2.5	Council resolved to decouple Good Relations from its Equality Scheme and submitted its scheme to the Equality Commission for approval undertaking to revert in respect of the good relations duty.

3	Key Issues
3.1	Council is required to come up with an alternative methodology for Good Relations.
3.2	Councils Equality Scheme will not be approved until a suitable methodology for addressing Good Relations issues is developed.
3.3	It is proposed to establish a Good Relations Working Group to agree a definition for Good Relations, to assist policy development and monitor the implementation of Councils arrangements for Good Relations.
3.4	A draft Terms of Reference for the Group are attached at Appendix A for Members consideration.

4	Resource Implications
4.1	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>The only costs associated with the establishment of the Good Relations Working Group will be the cost of Members mileage to attend meetings.</p>
4.2	<u>Human resources</u> - N/A
4.3	<u>Assets and other implications</u> - N/A

5	Other Considerations
5.1	Subject to Members approval the Terms of Reference of the Good Relations Working Group will be submitted to the Equality Commission for consideration.

6	Recommendations
6.1	Members are requested to approve the establishment of a Good Relations Working Group and to comment on the draft Terms of Reference.

7	Documents Attached
7.1	Appendix A – Draft Terms of Reference – Good Relations Working Group

Terms of Reference – Good Relations Working Group

Rationale

The issue of Good Relations was considered as part of the Council's Equality Scheme on 18 December 2014 with a vote passed to 'decouple' it from the Equality Scheme. As outlined at this meeting there is an 'interdependency' between having 'due regard' for the Equality of Opportunity requirements (S75 - 1) and 'regard' for promoting Good Relations (S75 – 2). Therefore, by establishing this Group, it will highlight for the Equality Commission how Council is addressing its S72-2 requirements.

Most of the 'difficult' Good Relations aspects are well known, e.g. Flags and Emblems, Language, etc. It is proposed that the 'Good Relations Working Group' will meet regularly and develop a way forward by facilitating discussions amongst Elected Members.

The Group will also provide advice on and support the implementation of Councils Good Relations Strategy and associated work.

Aim of the Group

The aim of the group will be to agree a definition for Good Relations, to assist policy development and monitor the implementation of Councils arrangements in the following areas:

- Flags
- Emblems
- Language
- Bonfires
- Street Naming
- Internal and External Corporate aspects of Good Relations

Where policy development suggests that Councils desirability to promote Good Relations may be impacted, the policy will be referred to the Good Relations Working Group for consideration and mitigation.

Proposed Membership

Up to 10 Elected Members will be asked to join the Group on a cross party basis. The group will elect its own Chair and the meetings will be facilitated by senior Council officers.

Period of Operation

The Group will be established for the term of the council and will meet every two months. These arrangements will be reviewed annually.

Reporting Arrangements

The business of the Good Relations Working Group will be reported to Councils through its Development Committee.

G

Subject	Prudential Code for Capital Finance Indicators and Operational Borrowing Limits
Reporting Officer	Lead Officer for Finance

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	To provide Members with sufficient information to enable them to discharge their duties under Regulation 7 of the Local Government (Capital and Accounting) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011, which requires councils to have regard to the “Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities” published by CIPFA when complying with their duty under Section 13(1) of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (duty to determine affordable borrowing).

2	Background
2.1	The Prudential Code sets out a clear governance procedure for the setting and revising of Prudential Indicators, the key objective of which are to ensure, within a clear framework, that the capital investment plans of councils are affordable, prudent and sustainable and that treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with good practice.
2.2	Councils are required to set and monitor indicators under the following headings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital expenditure • Affordability • Prudence • External debt • Treasury management
2.3	The Prudential indicator in respect of treasury management is that the council has adopted the CIPFA “Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes”. Mid Ulster District Council is required to adopt this Code.

3	Key Issues
3.1	Although Council must determine affordable and operational borrowing limits to enable it to draw down loan finance, the calculation of these limits will be kept under review throughout 2015/16 to ensure that they continue to be appropriate and are not breached.
3.2	The calculation of the Prudential Indicators is based on the best available information at this time. However, officers would draw Members’ attention to the fact that the proposed Indicators in the first year of calculation may be subject to

	slightly more uncertainty than they might normally be, given the degree of uncertainty there is in relation to certain figures, e.g. the extent to which the Department will make funds available to honour the Minister's commitment in relation to ICT systems convergence.
--	---

4	Resources
4.1	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>None – these are Performance Indicators which will not of themselves impact on the financial outturn. The Indicators have been proposed on the basis that they will allow Council the maximum flexibility in reacting to changes in the funding market.</p>
4.2	<p><u>Human</u></p> <p>N/A</p>
4.3	<p><u>Basis for Professional/ Consultancy Support</u></p> <p>N/A</p>
4.4	<p><u>Other</u></p> <p>N/A</p>

5	Other Considerations
5.1	N/A

6	Recommendations
6.1	<p>That Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accepts the officers' recommendations in relation to the Prudential Indicators and adopts the proposed Prudential Indicators and the associated Treasury Management Policy and Annual Strategy (2015/16)

7	List of Documents Attached
7.1	Appendix 1 - Paper re Prudential Indicators
7.2	Appendix 2 - Proposed Treasury Management Policy and Annual Strategy (2015/16)

MID ULSTER DISTRICT COUNCIL
PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS FOR 2015/16 TO 2017/18

Considered by Policy & Resource Committee on Tuesday, 4 March 2015

1 Background

Regulation 7 of the Local Government (Capital and Accounting) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011 requires councils to have regard to the “Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities” published by CIPFA when complying with their duty under Section 13(1) of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (duty to determine affordable borrowing).

The Prudential Code sets out a clear governance procedure for the setting and revising of Prudential Indicators, the key objective of which are to ensure, within a clear framework, that the capital investment plans of councils are affordable, prudent and sustainable and that treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with good practice.

Councils are required to set and monitor indicators under the following headings:

- Capital expenditure
- Affordability
- Prudence
- External debt
- Treasury management

The Prudential indicator in respect of treasury management is that the council has adopted the CIPFA “Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes”. Magherafelt District Council has adopted this Code.

2 Capital expenditure indicators

2.1 Capital expenditure

The Council is required to make reasonable estimates of the total capital expenditure that it plans to incur during the forthcoming financial year and the following two financial years. The estimates of capital spend will include any estimated spend (depending on option appraisals) or spend dealt with as other long term liabilities.

The estimates of gross capital expenditure to be incurred for the current and future years are summarised below:

	2013/14 Actual £	2014/15 Estimate £	2015/16 Estimate £	2016/17 Estimate £	2017/18 Estimate £
Capital expenditure	N/A	1,200,000	18,833,746	3,696,156	* 0

2.2 Capital financing requirement

The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) reflects the Council's need to borrow for capital purposes and measures the extent to which capital expenditure has not been financed from revenue funds, capital receipts or capital grants.

The CFR may be reduced over time by future applications of capital receipts, grants or by future charges to revenue (minimum revenue provision).

The Council is required to make reasonable estimates of the total CFR at the end of the forthcoming financial year and the following two financial years.

The Council's estimates of its CFR are shown below:

	2013/14 Actual £	2014/15 Estimate £	2015/16 Estimate £	2016/17 Estimate £	2017/18 Estimate £
Capital Financing Requirement	N/A	1,200,000	14,700,000	14,200,000	14,000,000

3 Affordability indicators

3.1 Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream

This indicator measures the proportion of the revenue budget which is allocated to finance capital expenditure.

The Council is required to make reasonable estimates of the ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream for forthcoming financial year and the following two financial years.

The Council's estimates of the ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream are shown below:

	2013/14 Actual %	2014/15 Estimate %	2015/16 Estimate %	2016/17 Estimate %	2017/18 Estimate %
Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream	N/A	N/A	1.30	1.60	1.58

3.2 Estimates of incremental impact of new capital investment decisions on the Rates

The Council is required to forecast the total budgetary requirements arising from the proposed changes in the capital programme and calculate the addition or reduction to Rates that would result.

The indicator demonstrates the incremental impact of planned capital spend and associated borrowing on the Rates.

The Council is required to make reasonable estimates of the incremental impact of new capital investment decisions on the Rates in the forthcoming financial year and the following two financial years.

The Council's estimates are shown below:

	2013/14 Actual %	2014/15 Estimate %	2015/16 Estimate %	2016/17 Estimate %	2017/18 Estimate %
Incremental impact of changes in capital programme on Rates	N/A	N/A	3.52	1.79	*0.00

4 Prudence indicator

4.1 Net debt and the Capital Financing Requirement

This indicator measures the extent that net debt (gross external borrowings less investments) is less than the Capital Financing Requirement. This is a key indicator of prudence, which seeks to ensure that net debt will not, except in the short term, exceed the Capital Financing Requirement. This will ensure that, over the medium term, external borrowing will only be for a capital purpose.

The Council is required to make reasonable estimates of the net debt position relative to the Capital Financing Requirement for the forthcoming financial year and the following two financial years.

The Council's estimates are shown below:

	2013/14 Actual £	2014/15 Estimate £	2015/16 Estimate £	2016/17 Estimate £	2017/18 Estimate £
Capital Financing Requirement	N/A	1,200,000	14,700,000	14,200,000	14,000,000
Net borrowing	N/A	800,000	10,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000
Under limit?	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

5 External debt indicators

5.1 Authorised borrowing limit

Section 13(1) of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 requires the Council to determine and keep under review the amount of money that it can afford to borrow. The Prudential Code refers to this limit as the "Authorised Limit" and represents the maximum amount that a council could borrow at any time during a financial year. The authorised limit should be consistent with capital investment plans and the Council's treasury management policy and practices. It should include sufficient "headroom" over and above the "operational boundary" (see below) to accommodate unanticipated cash movements.

The authorised limit should not be breached during any financial year. If in year monitoring suggests that the authorised limit is likely to be breached action must be taken to ensure that the limit is not breached, either by reducing the need to borrow or by the Council increasing the authorised limit.

The Council is required to make reasonable estimates of its authorised limit for the forthcoming financial year and the following two financial years.

The Council's estimates are summarised below:

	2013/14 Actual £	2014/15 Estimate £	2015/16 Estimate £	2016/17 Estimate £	2017/18 Estimate £
Authorised limit	N/A	1,200,000	14,700,000	14,200,000	14,000,000

5.2 Operational boundary

The Prudential Code requires the Council to set an operational boundary for its net debt separately identifying borrowing from other long-term liabilities. The operational boundary should be consistent with capital investment plans and the Council's treasury management policy and practices.

The Council is required to make reasonable estimates of its operational boundary for the forthcoming financial year and the following two financial years.

The Council's estimates are shown below:

	2013/14 Actual £	2014/15 Estimate £	2015/16 Estimate £	2016/17 Estimate £	2017/18 Estimate £
Operational boundary	N/A	1,000,000	14,200,000	13,800,000	13,500,000

5.3 Actual external debt

The Prudential Code requires the Council to calculate its actual gross borrowings plus (separately) other long term liabilities after the year end. The figures will be extracted from the Council's balance sheet.

The figures presently available are shown below:

	2013/14 Actual £	2014/15 Actual £	2015/16 Actual £	2016/17 Actual £	2017/18 Actual £
Actual external debt	N/A	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable

6 Treasury management indicators

6.1 Adoption of CIPFA "Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes"

The Prudential indicator in respect of treasury management is that the council has adopted the CIPFA "Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes" (the "Code"). Magherafelt District Council has adopted the Code.

Additional Prudential indicators relating to treasury management are as follows:

6.2 Upper limit of fixed and variable rate borrowing

This indicator identifies a maximum limit for fixed and variable interest rates based on the debt position net of investments. The limits set by the Council are shown below:

	2013/14 Actual %	2014/15 Estimate %	2015/16 Estimate %	2016/17 Estimate %	2017/18 Estimate %
Limits on fixed interest rates based on net debt	100	100	100	100	100
Limits on variable interest rates based on net debt	100	100	100	100	100

6.3 Maturity structure of fixed and variable rate borrowing

This indicator seeks to set gross limits to reduce councils' exposure to large fixed rate sums falling due to refinancing within the same financial year. The limits set by the Council are shown below:

	<u>2014/15</u>		<u>2015/16</u>	
	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower
Under 12 months	100%	0%	100%	0%
12 months – 24 months	100%	0%	100%	0%
24 months – 5 years	100%	0%	100%	0%
5 years – 10 years	100%	0%	100%	0%
10 years and above	100%	0%	100%	0%

6.4 Total principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days

The Council, although free to invest for periods longer than 364, would generally not invest for periods in excess of 364 days. However, it has set a limit of £500,000 for investing over 364 days to provide it with the freedom to do, should it decide during the year that it would be appropriate to do so.

MID ULSTER DISTRICT COUNCIL

TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY

**Considered by Policy and Resources Committee
on Tuesday, 4 March 2015**

1 Background

The Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (the “Act”) introduces mechanisms to modernise the legislative framework for local government finance and councillors’ remuneration. In particular, it:

- Introduces a new prudential regime capital finance system and sets out the legislative framework within which a district council may manage its finances and central government may regulate that activity
- Allows district councils greater freedom to manage their own affairs without having to obtain consent from the Department. Control by central government will be exercised, where necessary, through subordinate legislation and guidance

In carrying out its functions under Part 1 (Financial Administration) of the Act, Section 25(1) of the Act requires a Council to have regard to guidance issued by the Department of the Environment and other guidance such as regulations may specify.

Regulation 19 of the Local Government (Capital Finance and Accounting) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011 requires the Council, in carrying out its capital finance functions, to have regard to the CIPFA Code of Practice in ‘Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes’ (the “Code”).

This Policy and associated Treasury Management Practices have been prepared having regard to the aforementioned guidance and regulations.

2 Key Principles and clauses

Mid Ulster District Council adopts the Key Principles of the Code as described in Section 4 of the Code and, in accordance with Section 5 of the Code, the Council:

1. Will create and maintain, as the cornerstones for effective treasury management:
 - A Treasury Management Policy Statement, stating the policies, objectives and approach to risk management of its treasury management;
 - Suitable treasury management practices (TMPs), setting out

the manner in which the organisation will seek to achieve those policies and objectives, and prescribing how it will manage and control those activities.

2. Will receive reports on its treasury management policies, practices and activities, including as a minimum, an annual strategy and plan in advance of the year, a mid-year review and an annual report after its close, in the form prescribed in the TMPs
3. Delegates responsibility for the implementation and regular monitoring of its treasury management policies and practices to its Policy and Resources Committee, and for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions to its Director of Finance and Personnel, who will act in accordance with the organisation's policy statement and TMPs
4. Nominates its Audit Committee to be responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of the treasury management strategy and policies.

2 Treasury management activities

The Council defines its treasury management activities as:

“The management of its investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks”.

This Council regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Accordingly, the analysis and reporting of treasury management activities will focus on their risk implications for the Council, and any financial instruments entered into to manage these risks.

The Council acknowledges that effective treasury management will provide support towards the achievement of its business and service objectives. It is therefore committed to the principles of achieving value for money in treasury management.

The policy statement should include the organisation's high level policies for borrowing and investments.

3. Treasury Management Practices

The Code recommends that an organisation's treasury management practices (TMPs) include those, from the following list, that are relevant to its treasury management powers and activities:

TMP1	Risk management
TMP2	Performance measurement
TMP3	Decision-making and analysis
TMP	Approved instruments, methods and techniques
TMP5	Organisation, clarity and segregation of responsibilities, and dealing arrangements
TMP6	Reporting requirements and management information arrangements
TMP7	Budgeting, accounting and audit arrangements
TMP8	Cash and cash flow management
TMP9	Money laundering
TMP10	Training and qualifications
TMP11	Use of external service providers
TMP12	Corporate governance

The Council considers the following TMPs relevant to its treasury management powers and activities:

TMP1 Risk Management

The Lead Finance Officer will:

- Design, implement and monitor all arrangements for the identification, management and control of treasury management risk;
- Report annually on the adequacy/suitability of these arrangements; and
- Report, as a matter of urgency, the circumstances of any actual or likely difficulty in achieving the Council's objectives in this respect in accordance with the procedures set out in TM6 "Reporting arrangements and management information arrangements"

In respect of each of the following risks, the arrangements which seek to ensure compliance with those objectives are set out in the Council's annual Treasury Management Strategy.

Credit and counterparty risk management

This Council regards a key objective of its treasury management activities to be the security of the principal sums it invests. Accordingly, it will ensure that its counterparty lists and limits reflect a prudent attitude towards organisations with which funds may be deposited. The Council will limit its investment activities to the instruments, methods and techniques listed in

TMP4 “Approved instruments, methods and techniques” and will restrict its potential counterparties from which it may borrow , or with which it may enter into other financing or derivative arrangements, to those listed in its annual Treasury Management Strategy.

Liquidity risk management

The Council will ensure it has adequate, though not excessive, cash resources, borrowing arrangements, overdraft or standby facilities to enable it at all times to have the level of funds available to it which are necessary for the achievement of its service objective.

The Council will only borrow in advance of need where there is a clear business case for doing so and where it is for the purposes of the prudent management of its financial affairs. It will not borrow purely to invest at a profit.

Interest rate risk management

The Council will manage its exposure to fluctuations in interest rates with a view to containing its interest costs, or securing its interest revenues. It will seek to minimise borrowing costs by taking advantage of historically low interest rates while retaining sufficient flexibility to respond to significant movements in those rates.

Exchange rate risk management

Although this is not identified as a significant risk, the Council will manage its exposure to exchange rate fluctuations in order to minimise any detrimental material impact of its financial position.

Refinancing risk management

The Council will ensure that its borrowing, private financing and partnership arrangements are negotiated, structured and documented, and the maturity profile of the monies so are managed, with a view to obtaining offer terms for renewal or refinancing, if required, which are competitive and as favourable to the Council as can reasonably be achieved in the light of market conditions prevailing at the time.

Legal and regulatory risk management

The Council will ensure that all of its treasury management activities comply with its statutory powers and regulatory requirements. It will demonstrate such compliance, if required to do so, to all parties with whom it deals in such activities. The Council recognises that future legislative or regulatory changes may impact on its treasury management activities and, so far as it is reasonably able to do so, will seek to minimise the risk of these impacting adversely on the organisation.

Fraud, error and corruption and contingency management

The Council will take all reasonable steps given the scale of the organisation to identify the circumstances which may expose it to the risk of loss through fraud, error, corruption or other eventualities in its treasury management dealings. It will, therefore, employ appropriate systems and procedures, and seek to maintain effective contingency management arrangements.

Market risk management

The Council will seek to ensure that its stated treasury management policies and objectives will not be compromised by adverse market fluctuations in the value of the principal sums it invests, and will accordingly seek to protect itself from the effects of such fluctuations

TMP2 Performance measurement

The Council is committed to the pursuit of value for money in its treasury management activities, within the framework set out in its treasury management policy statement.

The Council will keep its treasury management function under review with a view to ensuring that it continues to offer value for money.

TMP3 Decision making and analysis

The Council will maintain full records of its treasury management decisions, and of the processes and practices applied in reaching those decisions.

TMP4 Approved instruments, methods and techniques

The Council will undertake its treasury management activities by employing only those instruments, methods and techniques detailed in its annual Treasury Management Strategy.

TMP5 Organisation, clarity and segregation of responsibilities, and dealing arrangements

The Council considers it essential, for the purposes of the effective control and monitoring of its treasury management activities, for the reduction of the risk of fraud or error, and for the pursuit of optimum performance, that these activities are structured and managed in a fully integrated manner, and that there is at all times a clarity of treasury management responsibilities.

The principle on which this is based is a clear distinction between those charges with setting treasury management policies and those charged with implementing and executing these policies in so far as is practicable given the size of the Council. However, the precise segregation of responsibilities within the treasury management function will be defined once the organisational structure is finalised. The Council is satisfied that, although it

may be impractical to achieve perfect segregation of duties, the structure of the treasury management function will be appropriate to the size of the Council and the nature of transactions being undertaken.

TMP6 Reporting requirements and management information arrangements

The Council will ensure that regular reports are prepared and considered on the implementation of its treasury management policies; on the effects of decisions taken and transactions executed in pursuit of those policies; on the implications of changes, particularly budgetary, resulting from regulatory, economic, market or other factors affecting its treasury management activities.

As a minimum the Council will receive an annual report on the strategy to be pursued in the coming year, a mid-year review, and an annual report after the close of the financial year.

Regular monitoring reports on treasury management activities and risks will be presented to the Policy and Resources Committee and the Council will report the treasury management indicators in accordance with the requirements of the Code.

TMP7 Budgeting, accounting and audit arrangements

The scale of the Council's treasury management function is such that the Council does not plan to separately approve an annual budget for it. However, the Council will account for its treasury management activities, for decisions made and transactions executed, in accordance with appropriate accounting practices and standards, and with statutory and regulatory requirements in force for the time being.

The Audit Committee will have responsibility for the scrutiny of treasury management practices.

TMP8 Cash and cash flow management

Unless statutory or regulatory requirements demand otherwise, all monies in the hands of the Council will be under the control of the Lead Finance Officer and will be aggregated for cash flow and investment management purposes. Cash flow projections will be prepared on a regular and timely basis and the Lead Officer for Finance will ensure that these are adequate for liquidity purposes.

TMP9 Money laundering

The Council is alert to the possibility that it may become the subject of an attempt to involve it in a transaction involving the laundering of money. Accordingly, although the Council is not legally required to apply the

provisions of the Money Laundering Regulations 2007, it will maintain procedures for verifying and recording the identity of counterparties and, if necessary, reporting suspicions. It will also ensure that staff involved in treasury management are provided with sufficient training to enable them to discharge their duties effectively.

TMP10 Training and qualifications

The Council recognises the importance of ensuring that staff involved in treasury management are fully equipped to undertake the duties and responsibilities allocated to them. It will therefore seek to provide training to enable the relevant staff as necessary to enable them to acquire and maintain an appropriate level of expertise, knowledge and skills.

The Lead Finance Officer will, on request from elected Members, ensure that they have access to training relevant to their needs and responsibilities.

TMP11 Use of external service providers

The Council does not presently use any external provider in respect of treasury management services. If the Council decides in future to employ such service providers, it will ensure it does so for reasons which have been submitted to a full costs benefit analysis.

TMP12 Corporate governance

The Council is committed to the pursuit of proper corporate governance throughout its businesses and services, and to establishing the principles and practices by which this can be achieved. Accordingly, the treasury management function and its activities will be undertaken with openness and transparency, honesty, integrity and accountability.

The Council has adopted and has implemented the key principles of the Code. This is considered vital to the achievement of proper corporate governance in treasury management and the Audit Committee will monitor the effectiveness of these arrangements.

MID ULSTER DISTRICT COUNCIL
ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY
2015/16

1 Introduction

The CIPFA Code of Practice in 'Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes' (the "Code") requires the Council to have an annual treasury management strategy and plan.

This strategy details the Council's planned treasury management operations for 2015/16 and contains the following key requirements:

- (a) The treasury management strategy.
- (b) The reporting of the prudential indicators.
- (c) The investment strategy.

This strategy provides an approved framework within which the officers undertake the day to day capital and treasury activities.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The strategy for 2015/16 in respect of treasury management covers:

- (a) prospects for interest rates;
- (b) capital borrowing;
- (c) debt re-scheduling;
- (d) annual investment strategy;
- (d) treasury management advisers;
- (f) prudential indicators.

Prospects for Interest Rates

Economists now forecast interest rates will remain unchanged from 0.5% for the next few months and it may be as late as autumn 2015 before it rises.

Capital Borrowing

The borrowing requirement comprises the expected movement in the Capital Financing Requirement. The Council's net capital borrowing requirement for 2015/16 is presently estimated at £14.5m but this can vary if the capital programme is amended during the year.

In terms of meeting the external borrowing requirement identified above, one of

the most important considerations is the timing, in terms of the potential to save significant interest costs. It is essential therefore that the considerations of timing of borrowing form a key element of the borrowing strategy.

One of the key borrowing objectives is to achieve certainty around interest costs, and there is therefore little appetite to undertake variable rate borrowing. It is unlikely that long term interest rates will fall over the medium term and therefore to reduce the risk of rising interest rates, officers will seek to carry out the external borrowing in the financial year to which the expenditure relates.

It is expected that requirements for long term borrowing will be met from either the Government Loans Fund or the commercial market.

Debt Rescheduling

Debt restructuring opportunities will be kept under review. Recent experience has shown that penalties in respect of early redemption of loans outweigh the benefits of re-financing the loans at lower interest rates.

Annual Investment Strategy

The primary purpose of the Annual Investment Strategy is to set out the policies for managing investments giving priority to the security and liquidity of the Council's investments. It also contains the policy on the use of credit ratings and credit ratings agencies, procedures for determining and limiting the use of higher risk investments and the use of external advisors.

The Council's investment priorities are (a) the security of capital and (b) liquidity of its investments. The Council will aim to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with the proper levels of security and liquidity.

A counterparty list of institutions with which the Council will invest shall be maintained by reference to the criteria set out below for the different categories of institution and their credit rating. Under the guidance, investments fall into two separate categories, either specified or non-specified investments.

Specified Investments

Specified investments offer high security and high liquidity and satisfy the conditions set out below:

- The investment is denominated in sterling and any payments or repayments in respect of the investment are payable in sterling only.
- The investment is not a long-term investment (has a maturity of less than one year).
- The investment does not involve the acquisition of share capital or loan capital in any body corporate.
- The investment is made with a body or in an investment scheme which has a high credit quality, e.g. (but not necessarily), a high credit score by a

credit rating agency, or with the UK Government or a local authority in England or Wales (as defined in section 23 of the 2003 Act) or a similar body in Scotland.

The following categories of investments may be used under the definition of specified investments:

- Short term cash deposits
- Call accounts
- Certificates of Deposit (with maturity dates < 1 year)
- UK Government Gilts
- Treasury Bills

Credit Rating Criteria

The Council will invest with institutions that have a high credit quality. In determining an organisation's credit quality the Council will have regard to factors such as rating assigned by any of the three credit ratings agencies (Fitch, Moodys and Standard & Poors). The Council's precise criteria in relation to the definition of 'high credit quality' will be defined in the coming months.

Regardless of the credit rating assigned to an institution or whether it is covered by a guarantee, if any doubt over its financial standing exists then that institution will be removed immediately from the counterparty lending list.

Investment Limits

The Council will invest surplus cash balances to a maximum of 25% of the overall investment, allocated on the basis of highest interest yield.

Non-Specified Investments

Non-specified investments are those investments which do not, by definition, meet the requirements of a specified investment as set out above. They present a higher risk and therefore this Council does not intend to make any Non-Specified investments in 2015/16

Risk Management of Investment Counterparties

Credit ratings are only the starting point when considering credit risk. Officers will also consider external reliable evidence, such as information in the financial press, to inform decisions on investments.

Liquidity of Investments

Each investment decision is made with regard to cash flow requirements resulting in a range of maturity periods within the investment portfolio. All investments will be short term having a maturity of less than one year.

Reporting Arrangements

As set out in TMP6, the Council will receive an annual report on the strategy to be pursued in the coming year, a mid-year review, and an annual report after the close of the financial year.

External Advisers

There are currently no plans to use External Advisers during 2015/16. If this should change then Officers will follow the practice set out under TMP11, i.e. they will ensure the reasons have been submitted to a full evaluation of the costs and benefits, and Council approval will be sought before any appointment is made. The Council recognise that responsibility for the decision to invest with a counterparty, rests with the Council as the principal undertaking the transaction.

Training

The Council recognises that investments, as well as wider treasury management issues require a high level of specialist knowledge. The Council will review staff training needs in respect of Treasury Management skills as part of its Employee Development Scheme. In addition training will be provided for elected members to enable them to provide effective scrutiny of the strategy and to have the knowledge to make informed decisions.

H

Subject	Members' Allowances
Reporting Officer	Lead Officer for Finance

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	To provide Members with an update in relation to correspondence recently received from the Department in relation to Members' Allowances

2	Background
2.1	The Council previously adopted a Scheme of Allowances which has been published on the Council's website in accordance with the legislative requirements.
2.2	Periodically the Department will issue an update in relation to Members' Allowances, the most recent having been issued on Tuesday, 24 February 2015. The relevant correspondence has been attached as an appendix to this report.
2.3	The Council's Scheme of Allowance already makes provision for the amounts paid to Members to be uplifted to the maximum permitted by the Department (where appropriate), e.g. increased travel and subsistence or Basic Allowance rates.

3	Key Issues
3.1	The attached correspondence indicates that legislation to be consulted upon later this year may remove the restriction on Members being paid for attending site meetings. However, the Scheme of Allowance will not be adjusted in this regard until the legislation is operative and Council has decided to change its practice in this regard.
3.2	Apart from the proposed increases actually notified in the correspondence it is not proposed to vary the Scheme of Allowances in relation to amounts paid.
3.3	However, although the correspondence refers to some discretion on the part of Councils in relation to what it considers to be consumables (as relevant to the purpose of the Basic Allowance), it is still unclear what local government audit will deem as acceptable to treat as consumables.
3.4	The correspondence is clear, however, that the cost of mobile telephone calls is to be covered by the Basic Allowance. This means that Members must continue to pay for their telephone calls. However, it is significant that the correspondence does appear to permit Councils to provide Members with mobile devices. The officers would like to hear Members' views in relation to this development.
3.5	The officers also understand that some Members have queried whether it is

	possible for broadband connections to be paid for or reimbursed by the Council. Initial discussions with the local government auditor suggests not, but the officers will further investigate the matter and report back to Council when additional information is received.
3.6	As a final point the officers would draw Members' attention to point (vii) on page 10 of the attached correspondence (Circular LG 04/2015), which states that a Chair in receipt of a Chairman's Allowance (as would be the case in Mid Ulster District Council) is not (except in exceptional circumstances) entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance. The officers are in discussion with the Department on this matter and believe that, when the Department realise that the Chairman's Allowance is a receipt based allowance for the purpose of defraying the costs of office and not a form of remuneration, it will confirm that the Mid Ulster situation qualifies as an 'exceptional circumstance'.

4	Resources
4.1	<u>Financial</u> Negligible – any increase in allowances are likely to be immaterial.
4.2	<u>Human</u> - N/A
4.3	<u>Basis for Professional/ Consultancy Support</u> - N/A
4.4	<u>Other</u> - N/A

5	Other Considerations
5.1	N/A

6	Recommendations
6.1	That Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Notes the correspondence and authorises the officers to update the Scheme of Allowances as appropriate; (2) Authorises the officers to continue discussions with the local government auditor in relation to the definition of 'consumables' (3) Gives consideration to what it considers to be 'consumables' and whether it considers it appropriate to provide Members with mobile devices

7	List of Documents Attached
7.1	Appendix 1 - Correspondence issued by the Department on Tuesday, 24 February 2015

Local Government Policy Division 1

Chief Executive of each New District Council
Finance Officer of each New District Council

Finance Branch
Level 4
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Town Parks
BELFAST
BT2 7EG

Telephone: 028 9082 3375

Email: Jeff.glass@doeni.gov.uk

Your reference:

Our reference: DO1-14-3894

Date: 24 February 2015

Circular LG 04/2015

Dear Sir/Madam

GUIDANCE ON COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES

Please find attached circular LG 04/2015 which provides guidance on councillor allowances applicable from 1 April 2015. This supersedes circular LG 05/2012.

I would in particular draw your attention to the new arrangements for the Chairperson/Vice Chairperson Allowance. From 1 April the link between this allowance and the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) will be removed. Any Chairperson/Vice Chairperson Allowance paid will be recorded separately to SRAs and councils will no longer be encouraged to pay this allowance from within the SRA limit.

Other amendments that you may wish to note are:

- The Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 are currently being revised in line with the attached guidance. It is intended that the new regulations will be consulted on in March 2015.
- Regulation 2, in particular, will be amended to remove the restrictions on site visits.
- In light of the recent Local Government (Northern Ireland) 2014 Act it is expected that only in exceptional circumstances would a councillor receiving a Chairperson/Vice Chairperson Allowance also be in receipt of a SRA. However, the allocation of SRAs, within the restrictions set by the Department of the Environment, is at the discretion of the council.

- Each council must have a scheme of councillor allowances approved prior to any payments being made to councillors.
- The basic allowance is intended to cover office consumables/incidental costs.
- The maximum amount of SRA a councillor can receive is $\frac{1}{5}$ th of the council SRA limit.
- Unless otherwise agreed by the Minister of the Environment, a maximum of 50% of councillors in each council can receive a SRA.
- A councillor should only be paid one SRA.

You may also wish to note that a circular incorporating all councillor allowances from 1 April 2015 has recently been issued; Local Government Circular LG 05/2015 refers. If you have any queries on the content of this letter or attached circular please contact me on the above number or Lizanne Kennedy on 028 90823378 or by e-mail Jeff.Glass@doeni.gov.uk or Lizanne.Kennedy@doeni.gov.uk.

Yours faithfully



JEFF GLASS

Local Government Policy Division 1

Chief Executive of each New District Council
Finance Officer of each New District Council

Finance Branch
Level 4
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Town Parks
BELFAST
BT2 7EG

Telephone: 028 9082 3321

Email: linda.machugh@doeni.gov.uk

Your reference:

Our reference: DO1-14-3894

Date: 24 February 2015

Circular LG 05/2015

Dear Sir/Madam

COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES APPLICABLE FROM 1 APRIL 2015

The purpose of this circular is to consolidate all previous councillor allowances circulars. The following determinations are applicable from 1 April 2015 and are made by the Department under section 31 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012. With regards to travel and subsistence the rates set follow consultation with the Northern Ireland Joint Council for Local Government Services. Further details on each allowance can be found in the Local Government Circular 04/2015 Councillors' Allowance Guidance.

1. Basic Allowance (as stated in Local Government Circular 09/2014, which will be superseded by this circular from 1 April 2015)

Basic Allowance	Maximum £14,200 per annum
------------------------	---------------------------

2. Dependants' Carers' Allowances (as stated in Local Government Circular 40/2014, which will be superseded by this circular from 1 April 2015)

The following table states the maximum rates for dependants' carers' allowance.

Dependants' Carers' Allowance	Hourly Rate	Maximum monthly amount
Standard	£6.50 [^]	£338
Specialist	£13	£676

[^](Based on national minimum wage for age 21+)

3. Travel Allowances (as stated in Local Government Circular 02/10, which will be superseded by this circular from 1 April 2015)

The following table states the maximum rates for travel allowances.

Type of Vehicle	Rate per Mile
A pedal cycle	20.0p
A solo motor cycle of cylinder capacity not exceeding 149cc	11.4p
A solo motor cycle of cylinder capacity exceeding 149cc but not exceeding 499cc	16.5p
A solo motor cycle of cylinder capacity exceeding 499cc or a motor cycle with side car	22.0p
A motor car of cylinder capacity not exceeding 450cc	22.0p
A motor car of cylinder capacity exceeding 450cc but not exceeding 999cc	46.9p *13.7p
A motor car of cylinder capacity exceeding 999cc but not exceeding 1,199cc	52.2p *14.4p
A motor car of cylinder capacity exceeding 1,199cc	65.0p *16.4p
Passenger rate (per passenger)	5.0p

*For mileage above 8,500 miles

4. Special Responsibility Allowance (as stated in Local Government Circular 09/2014, which will be superseded by this circular from 1 April 2015)

The following table states the maximum rate of Special Responsibility Allowance that a council may pay. The maximum rate is based on the size of the council population. Each council's population figures are updated each year by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and it is the duty of each council to operate within the total maximum rate appropriate to its population band. For ease the maximum any councillor can receive, within each band, is also provided.

Population of council	Maximum Special Responsibility Allowance £	Maximum (1/5 th) for individual councillor £
Less than 120,000	50,000	10,000
120,000 to 199,000	70,000	14,000
200,000 +	108,000	21,600

5. Subsistence Allowances (copied from Local Government Circulars 16/2006 & 13/2010, which this circular supersedes)

The following table states the maximum rates for subsistence; however where councils believe it is necessary there is flexibility for councils to increase these rates by applying a suitable measure of price inflation.

PERIOD/MEAL	RATES	
	British Isles £	London £
Overnight allowance - An absence involving an overnight stay, away from the normal place of residence. This rate does not include any meal allowance.	100.70	122.45
Breakfast allowance - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period before 11 am)	11.50	
Lunch allowance - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period including the period between 12 noon and 2pm)	13.50	
Tea allowance - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period including the period between 3pm and 6pm)	4.70	
Evening meal allowance - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period ending after 7pm)	20.95	

If you have any queries on the content of this letter or attached circular please contact Jeff Glass on 028 90823375 or Lizanne Kennedy on 028 90823378 or by e-mail Jeff.Glass@doeni.gov.uk or Lizanne.Kennedy@doeni.gov.uk.

Yours faithfully



LINDA MACHUGH



Local Government Circular 04/2015

Councillors' Allowances Guidance for District Councils in Northern Ireland

**Department of the Environment
February 2015**

Contents

1. Introduction	Page 3
2. Details of Allowances Payable to Councillors	Page 3
3. Scheme of Allowances	Page 4
4. Basic Allowance	Page 5
5. Special Responsibility Allowance	Page 6
6. Chairperson's/Vice Chairperson Allowance	Page 9
7. Dependants' Carers' Allowance	Page 11
8. Travel And Subsistence Allowances; Expenses for Official and Courtesy Visits etc; Expenses Incurred in Attending Conferences and Meetings	Page 14
9. Councillors' Support Services	Page 16
10. Renunciations	Page 16
11. Councillors' Pensions And Tax Implications	Page 16
12. Publication of Allowances Paid to Councillors	Page 17
13. Increase to Allowance Rates	Page 18
14. Amendments to Regulations	Page 18
Annex A: Suggested Template for Scheme of Allowances Payable to Councillors	Page 19
Annex B: Suggested Template for Councillor Dependant Carer's Claims	Page 25
Annex C: Template to Record Allowances Paid to Councillors [to be appended in due course]	Page 26

1. Introduction

This guidance relates to allowances applicable from 1 April 2015. This follows the review of allowances carried out by an independent Councillors' Allowances Remuneration Panel which was appointed in May 2013. The panel reviewed allowances for councillors serving on the 11 new councils from 1 April 2015 and during the shadow period in 2014/2015. The Panel submitted their recommendations to the Minister of the Environment on the 1 November 2013. Subsequently, the Minister advised the Assembly in a written statement of the new levels of allowances on 19 March 2014.

2. Details of Allowances Payable to Councillors

Allowances are payable by councils to councillors and committee members under Part 3 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, 'the Finance Act'; and The Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012, 'the 2012 Regulations', which came into operation on 1 April 2012. 'Approved duty' and 'committee member' are as that defined in those Regulations and 'Department' means the Department of the Environment.

The main allowances which may be payable to a councillor are:

- Basic Allowance;
- Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA);
- Dependants' Carers' Allowance (standard/specialised care rates);
- Travel and Subsistence Allowance (also payable to committee members); and
- Chairperson/Vice Chairperson Allowance.

3. Scheme of Allowances

At a glance - Key information
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legislation – Regulation 3 & 11 of the 2012 Regulations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each council must have a scheme for the payment of all allowances it makes to councillors each year; travel & subsistence rates also apply to committee members
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scheme must be agreed and commenced prior to payment of any allowances
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Scheme must be published as soon as practicable on the council's website

- i. The 2012 Regulations provide that each council must have in place a scheme for the payment of any allowance it intends to make to its councillors or committee members in respect of each year.
- ii. Before a scheme becomes effective, a council must approve the contents and the commencement date. Payments to councillors should not be made in advance of the scheme approval and commencement date. A scheme can be amended or revoked at any time but there must be no intervening period of time between one scheme ending and a further scheme commencing.
- iii. The council should as soon as practicable publish the approved scheme on the council's website, and make any other arrangements for publishing the scheme it considers appropriate.
- iv. For councils ease a generic scheme template is attached at Annex A, although it is not compulsory to use this layout.

4. Basic Allowance

At a glance - Key information
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legislation – Regulation 4 of the 2012 Regulations• Basic allowance should be the same for each councillor and is intended to also cover incidental costs incurred by councillors

- i. The 2012 Regulations provide that a council must make provision in its scheme of allowances for a basic allowance, with the same rate applicable to each councillor, on a pro-rata basis.
- ii. Each council must determine the amount of basic allowance it will pay, which must be within the maximum rate set by the Department.
- iii. No council may pay more than one basic allowance to a councillor.
- iv. Basic allowance is intended to recognise the full time commitment of councillors, including such inevitable calls on their time as meetings with officers and constituents.
- v. The basic allowance is intended to cover incidental costs incurred by councillors in their official capacity, such as the use of their homes, office consumables and cost of mobile phone calls. See Point 9 for details on Councillor Support Services.
- vi. It is for the council to decide at what intervals payment of basic allowance should be made. The Department suggests payment on a monthly or quarterly basis, but under no circumstances should payment be made in advance.

5. Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA)

At a glance - Key information
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legislation – Regulation 5 of the 2012 Regulations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subject to a total maximum rate determined by size of council population
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subject to maximum individual SRA councillor payment of $\frac{1}{5}^{\text{th}}$ of council maximum SRA amount
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restricted to 50% of councillors in council
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restricted to one SRA per councillor

- i. A council may make provision in its scheme for the payments of SRAs. A SRA is in addition to the basic allowance.
- ii. A councillor can only receive one SRA.
- iii. As elected representatives, councillors are expected to undertake responsibilities in the course of their duties which may include representation on a number of external bodies. SRA should only be paid to those councillors who have significant additional responsibilities, over and above the generally accepted duties of a councillor.
- iv. Payment of SRA is limited to 50% of a council's councillors; based on the total number of seats on a council. Where this results in a fraction the figure may be rounded up to the next whole number.
- v. In exceptional circumstances a council can apply to the Department for flexibility in this 50% restriction. This will not affect the maximum amount of SRA available to a council, only its distribution among the councillors of that council. In order for the Department to make a decision the council would need to submit all relevant information which should include:

- reasons for wishing to distribute SRA allocation to more than half the council;
 - the period involved;
 - details of the additional number of councillors to receive SRA; and
 - the resulting percentage of councillors to receive SRA.
- vi. Payment of SRA to an individual councillor is limited to $\frac{1}{5}$ th of the SRA maximum rate applicable for that council.
- vii. It is a matter for each council to decide which significant additional responsibilities attract SRA. The special responsibility and associated SRA rate payable must be clearly stated in the scheme.
- viii. Councils should consider, very carefully, the additional roles of councillors and the significance of those roles, both in terms of responsibility and time commitment, before deciding which will warrant the payment of an SRA.
- ix. To achieve consistency in SRA levels, where councillors from different councils will be part of a body for which a SRA is considered applicable, the councils involved may wish to discuss the appropriate remuneration level, e.g. involvement with individual local government organisations or joint committees. In certain circumstances the body concerned may wish to provide a steer.
- x. The amount a council may spend on SRA is subject to a maximum rate as determined by the Department, banded by the size of the council population. Each council's population figures are updated

each year by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and it is the duty of each council to operate within the total maximum rate appropriate to its population band. The population bands and applicable maximum rates, operational from 1 April 2015, are contained in Local Government Circular 05/2015.

- xi. It is for each council to decide the SRA payment intervals. The Department would suggest payment on a monthly or quarterly basis, but under no circumstances should payment be made in advance.
- xii. A council may wish to retain a portion of its SRA allocation to allocate later in the year; as unpredicted responsibilities may arise during the year.
- xiii. Where applicable a SRA should be paid on a pro-rata basis.

6. Chairperson/Vice Chairperson Allowances

At a glance - Key information
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legislation – Section 32 of the Finance Act<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Chairperson/Vice Chairperson Allowances are completely separate from Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) arrangements

- i. Section 32 of the Finance Act provides that a council may pay to the chairperson and vice chairperson of the council such allowances as it considers reasonable to meet the expenses of those offices.
- ii. Where the district of a council has been designated as a borough, the chairperson and the vice chairperson are known as the mayor and deputy mayor of the borough.
- iii. The Department advises that any Chairperson/Vice Chairperson Allowance should be considered totally separate from SRA arrangements. Further, these allowances should not be taken into account when considering SRA limits. This follows the policy intent of the primary legislation in Section 32.
- iv. The Department advises that any Travel & Subsistence expenses for these offices/roles should be viewed and treated as normal Section 31 expenses.
- v. Streamlining of this allows for transparency of the allowances being paid by each council to councillors in these positions.
- vi. The councillor allowances statistical return will be revised to record and show the Chairperson/Vice Chairperson Allowance separate from SRA.

- vii. Section 6 and Part 3 of Schedule 1 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) 2014 Act means that it is only in exceptional circumstances that a councillor receiving a Chairperson/Vice Chairperson Allowance would also be in receipt of a SRA.

7. Dependants' Carers' Allowance

At a glance - Key information
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legislation – Regulation 6 of the 2012 Regulations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open to all councillors who are the main carer of a dependant
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subject to a maximum rate per hour of care
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subject to a maximum amount payable per month
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Claims must be made within 3 months

- i. Each council may make provision in its scheme of allowances for the payment of a Dependants' Carers' Allowance ("DCA"). This is an allowance open to all councillors who are the main carers of a dependant where care is required to enable the councillor to perform an approved duty.
- ii. The allowance may be paid for a dependant who requires full-time care and who resides with the councillor as part of that household.
- iii. A dependant is defined as:
 - a child under 16 years old;
 - a child 16 years old or more, where there is medical or social work evidence that full-time care is required;
 - an adult with a recognised physical or mental disability where there is medical or social work evidence that full-time care is required; or
 - an elderly relative requiring full-time care.
- iv. For the purposes of this allowance, a carer is defined as a responsible person over 16 years old who does not normally live with the councillor as part of that household and is not a member of the immediate family.

- v. A specialist carer is defined as a qualified person who is needed where it is essential to have professional assistance. In these circumstances a receipt must be attached to the claim.
- vi. The Department determines maximum hourly rates of DCA for both standard care and specialised care. The rate for standard care is based on the hourly national minimum wage for age 21 or over, and the rate for specialised care is double the rate for standard care. In addition the Department sets maximum monthly amounts for standard care and specialised care, capped at the equivalent of 52 hours per month.
- vii. It is not intended that DCA will reflect the actual costs that may be incurred by a councillor, but will provide a reasonable amount towards the care of dependants.
- viii. Councillors may claim only one DCA in respect of each occurrence of approved duty. Only one DCA rate is payable even if there are 2 or more children/ dependants being cared for.
- ix. Councils should ensure that they have a robust system in place for councillors to claim the relevant DCA applicable to their circumstances. Councillors wishing to claim DCA should be asked to complete a claim form and sign a declaration. Annex B provides suggested template forms for claiming DCA standard / specialised care.
- x. The process should include flexibility to allow for care for the period of essential travel time, councillors may claim for a period starting

up to a maximum of one hour before the approved duty starts and ending up to one hour after it finishes. In exceptional cases, with the prior approval of the council, a greater travel time may be considered.

- xi. Councillors must disclose any financial support provided under DCA when applying for other care services offered by another public body.
- xii. Councils are encouraged to provide councillors with information as to where they might access advice on caring facilities and services. Councils should also review whether their family-friendly policies and practices cater for the needs of councillors, as well as staff.
- xiii. Councils must ensure they have a robust system in place for DCA claims which must be submitted within three months. In exceptional circumstances a council has discretion to consider claims outside this period.

8. Travel And Subsistence Allowances; Expenses for Official and Courtesy Visits etc; Expenses Incurred in Attending Conferences and Meetings

At a glance - Key information
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legislation – Regulation 7 the 2012 Regulations; Sections 33 & 34 of the Finance Act
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Travel and subsistence rates are determined by the council
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Claims must be made within 3 months

- i. Each council may make provision in its scheme of allowances for the payment of travel allowance and subsistence allowance; within the maximum rate determined by the Department. These are open to all councillors and committee members who incur expenditure for travel and subsistence in relation to any approved duties.
- ii. The maximum rates of travel and subsistence are determined by the Department following consultation with the Northern Ireland Joint Council for Local Government Services.
- iii. Councils must ensure they have a robust system in place for any travel allowance or subsistence allowance claims, including appropriate receipts for travel, such as tolls/car parking, other than mileage-based claims, all of which must be submitted within three months. In exceptional circumstances a council has discretion to consider claims outside this period.
- iv. The amount claimed must not exceed the actual amount paid.
- v. The rates paid for travel by car must not exceed the amount that would result from using an alternative mode of transport; e.g. public transport or air fare, unless previously agreed by the council.

- vi. In submitting the claim the person is declaring that no other body will be covering, part or all, of the costs claimed.
- vii. The consolidated circular 05/2015 states the maximum rates of subsistence, which are those set in 2006. However, there is flexibility for councils to increase these rates where necessary by applying a suitable price inflation measure.
- viii. Where the mode of transport limits availability of meal options, such as via airplane or train, the reasonable cost of a meal taken, including VAT, may be reimbursed in full. This is in place of the relevant meal allowance.
- ix. It is at the discretion of the council to cover expenditure incurred by councillors in making or receiving official/ courtesy visits or attending conferences, on behalf of the council, which are outside of the standard travel and subsistence arrangements. This type of expenditure may arise due to hosting guests to the council, or representing the council at an event or attending a conference. Where applicable the rates and rules for general travel and subsistence should be followed.
- x. For travel and subsistence outside the British Isles, it is recommended that councils adopt the Overseas Subsistence Rates produced by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

9. Councillors' Support Services

- i. The Basic Allowance has been increased, in part, to cover office consumables or incidental costs incurred by councillors in their official capacity including the cost of mobile telephone calls.
- ii. It is for each council to decide if it needs to provide councillors with any IT or mobile hardware, such as laptops or printers.
- iii. It is for each council to decide on the level of support services that it provides such as general secretarial services.

10. Renunciations

Councillors may, if they wish, renounce their entitlement to basic, chairperson, vice chairperson or special responsibility allowances. They can do this by writing to the Chief Executive. A councillor can subsequently withdraw the renunciation. They can also amend a renunciation (for example, to limit it to one kind of allowance only). The withdrawal or amendment cannot have retrospective effect.

11. Councillors' Pensions And Tax Implications

It is for councils and councillors to satisfy themselves that their tax and insurance arrangements are in order; where necessary consulting with advisers as required. As at February 2015, the HM Revenue and Customs website contains useful information. The hyperlink below refers.

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/manuals/eimanual/eim65900.htm>

12. Publication of Allowances Paid to Councillors

At a glance - Key information
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legislation – Regulation 11 the 2012 Regulations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Generic scheme template for scheme
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Generic template for allowances paid

- i. As soon as possible after the end of a financial year, and before 30 June, a council must arrange for the amounts of basic allowance, special responsibility allowance, Chairperson/Vice Chairperson allowance, Official/Courtesy Visits expenses and dependants' carers' allowance it has paid to each councillor, and the amounts of travel and subsistence allowances paid to each councillor and committee member, to be published on its website.
- ii. A template for recording allowances, which must be adhered to, will be provided to councils shortly. This will then be appended to this guidance document at Annex C. This generic approach will aid transparency and allow for comparisons to be made between councils.
- iii. In the template Section 31 (Travel & Subsistence) and Section 34 (Attendance at Conferences/Meetings) of the Finance Act expenses/allowances will be grouped together.
- iv. Section 32 allowances (Chairperson/Vice Chairperson) will be recorded separately.
- v. Section 33 of the Finance Act expenses (Official/Courtesy Visits) will be recorded separately.

13. Increases to Allowance Rates

- i. The amount of the maximum basic allowance, SRAs and Chairperson/Vice Chairperson allowances will be updated in line with pay increases for council officers.
- ii. The amount of Dependents' Carer's Allowance will be updated in line with the national minimum wage for 21+.

14. Amendments to Regulations

A new version of the 2012 regulations is being drafted and will be issued for consultation shortly. Once made all references in this guidance to the 2012 regulations will be to the 2015 regulations.

[NAME OF COUNCIL]

[Council to complete/consider this colour font]

SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES PAYABLE TO COUNCILLORS

This Scheme is made under the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012.

1. Definitions

In this scheme 'approved duty' and committee member are as defined in the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012.

2. Commencement Date

This scheme of allowances shall be operational from 1 April 2015.

3. Basic Allowance

An annual basic allowance of (amount) shall be paid to each councillor. Where applicable this will be paid pro-rata.

4. Special Responsibility Allowance

4.1. A special responsibility allowance shall be paid to those councillors who hold the special responsibilities specified in Schedule 1.

4.2. The amount of allowance shall be the amount specified against that special responsibility in the Schedule. The allowance is only payable whilst the councillor is carrying out that duty.

- 4.3. At any time, only one special responsibility allowance will be paid to a councillor.

5. Chairperson/Vice Chairperson Allowance

- 5.1. An allowance of (amount) will be payable to the Chairperson/Mayor of the council.
- 5.2. An allowance of (amount) will be payable to the Vice Chairperson/Mayor of the council.

6. Dependants' Carers' Allowance

- 6.1. Councillors are entitled to claim a dependants' carers' allowance towards reimbursement of actual reasonable costs necessarily incurred in providing care for an eligible dependant, while carrying out an approved duty.
- 6.2. A dependants' carers' allowance shall be payable based upon actual receipted costs or at the appropriate hourly rate, whichever is the lower; up to the monthly maximum.
- 6.3. The hourly rate of dependants' carers' allowance for standard care shall be (amount), and for specialised care (amount). The monthly maximum for standard care payable is (amount), and the monthly maximum for specialised care is (amount). Councillors may claim only one DCA in respect of each occurrence of approved duty. Only one DCA rate is payable even if there are 2 or more children/ dependants being cared for.

7. Travel and Subsistence Allowances

7.1. A councillor or committee member shall be entitled to claim travel and subsistence allowances where expenditure on travelling or subsistence has been necessarily incurred. The amount claimed should not exceed expense incurred.

7.2. The rates of travel allowance for travel by private vehicle shall be as shown in the table below. [Where council rates are set below maximum, or maximum increased, these figures should be amended.]

Type of Vehicle	Rate per Mile
A pedal cycle	20.0p
A solo motor cycle of cylinder capacity not exceeding 149cc	11.4p
A solo motor cycle of cylinder capacity exceeding 149cc but not exceeding 499cc	16.5p
A solo motor cycle of cylinder capacity exceeding 499cc or a motor cycle with side car	22.0p
A motor car of cylinder capacity not exceeding 450cc	22.0p
A motor car of cylinder capacity exceeding 450cc but not exceeding 999cc	46.0p *13.7p
A motor car of cylinder capacity exceeding 999cc but not exceeding 1,199cc	52.2p *14.4p
A motor car of cylinder capacity exceeding 1,199cc	65.0p *16.4p
Passenger rate	5.0p

*For mileage above 8,500 miles

7.3. The rates of subsistence shall be as shown in the table below.

[Where councils have increased the set rates due to insufficiency, or where the default set rates have increased, the council rates should be input]

PERIOD/MEAL	RATES	
	British Isles £	London £
Overnight allowance - An absence involving an overnight stay, away from the normal place of residence. This rate does not include any meal allowance.	100.70	122.45
Breakfast allowance - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period before 11 am)	11.50	
Lunch allowance - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period including the period between 12 noon and 2pm)	13.50	
Tea allowance - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period including the period between 3pm and 6pm)	4.70	
Evening meal allowance - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period ending after 7pm)	20.95	

8. General

- 8.1. This scheme may be revoked or amended at any time.
- 8.2. The amounts stated in paragraphs 3-5 will be subject to any indexing increase during the year. [Where councils do not wish this to automatically be the case this wording should be amended/removed].
- 8.3. The amounts stated in paragraph 6 will be subject to any increase to the minimum wage for 21+. [Where councils do not wish this to automatically be the case this wording should be removed].

9. Claims and Payment

- 9.1. Payments regarding basic allowance and special responsibility allowance shall be made (insert frequency, for example monthly).
- 9.2. Claims for dependants' carers' allowance, travelling allowance or subsistence allowance should be made in writing within three months, and should be accompanied by receipts, where appropriate.

SCHEDULE 1 to the Scheme of Allowances

The following table provides details of the council's duties which attract a Special Responsibility Allowance and the associated allowance amount.

Special Responsibility	Special Responsibility Allowance Rate (£)
Insert the role and details of the significant additional responsibility that is over and above the generally accepted duties of a councillor	Insert amount attached to this special responsibility

DEPENDANTS' CARERS' ALLOWANCE
(SAMPLE) CLAIM FORM – STANDARD CARE

Date care provided:

Approved duty covered:

(expand as necessary)

.....

Time from Time to

Total travel time within above hours

Total hours:

Cost per hour: £..... Total amount paid: £.....

Total amount claimed £.....

(Claim amount is subject to agreed travel time, hourly and monthly rate limits)

Name of dependant(s):

Relationship(s) to councillor:

Name of carer:

National Insurance Number of Carer

Declaration:

I declare that the above named provided a childcare/carers service to me as detailed above, in order that I could perform the approved duty stated.

Name of claimant:

Signature of claimant:

Date of claim:

NB – A claim form should be completed and submitted for each relevant occurrence of approved duty -

DEPENDANTS' CARERS' ALLOWANCE
(SAMPLE) CLAIM FORM – SPECIALISED CARE

Date care provided:

Approved duty covered:

(expand as necessary)

.....

Time from Time to

Total travel time within above hours

Total hours:

Cost per hour: £..... Total amount paid: £.....

Total amount claimed £.....

(Claim amount is subject to agreed travel time, hourly and monthly rate limits)

Name of dependant(s):

Relationship(s) to councillor:

Name of carer:

National Insurance Number of carer:

Declaration:

I declare that the above named provided a childcare/carers service to me as detailed above, in order that I could perform the approved duty stated.

Name of claimant:

Signature of claimant:

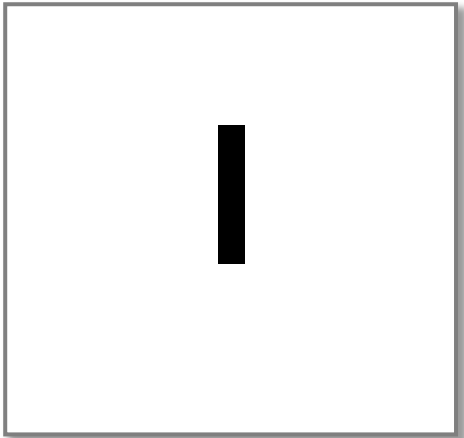
Date of claim:

NB – A claim form should be completed and submitted for each relevant occurrence of approved duty. – an original invoice from the carer must be presented with this claim form

RECORD OF COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES PAID

[ADD YEAR *2015/16*]

[To be appended once available]



Subject Mid Ulster District Council Corporate Plan (2015-2019)

Reporting Officer Change Manager

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	This report provides an update for members on the development and completion of a corporate plan specific to Mid Ulster District Council, for the period 2015-2019.

2	Background
2.1	To inform and act as a framework within which Mid Ulster Council's services and functions will be delivered a corporate plan has been developed to take effect from 1 April 2015. The duration of the plan will coincide with the term of the council with a formal mid-term reviews built in to be undertaken in 2017.
2.2	A corporate plan is not an all-embracing document detailing everything the council does within and across the district. It is rather, a means of communication with our ratepayers and customers on what the Council does and confirmation of key commitments around which service plans are developed and implemented, ensuring a culture of performance and continuous improvement is embedded within the organisation.
2.3	It helps council to target resources towards the delivery of services within and across the district, and importantly in communicating the council's vision and priorities for its first term.
2.4	A corporate plan is deemed a requirement by the DoE Programme Office to be in place for 1 April 2015.

3	Key Issues
3.1	Drawing upon various strands of work and forms of engagement undertaken throughout the transitional period, the Corporate Plan as contained within Appendix 1 has been devised as a high level plan around which all councils and services/ functions will be delivered.
3.2	The plan does not detail everything the Council will be do throughout its first term, 2015-2019, but provides a blue print around which all services/ functions will be delivered.

3.3	<p>The corporate plan is written to be a concise document written to provide our ratepayers and customers information on who the council is, what it does and how it's going to do it. It's structured around;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) an overview of the district (ii) Council's New Focus (iii) vision for Mid Ulster Council (iv) values at the core of council's business for employees and members (v) Our Themes (vi) Corporate Objectives (vii) Delivering our Services (viii) A focus on performance (ix) Representation
-----	--

4	Resources
4.1	<u>Financial</u>
4.1.1	The design of the final document will be undertaken by in-house graphic design expertise and published via means of electronic communication.
4.2	<u>Human</u> – N/A
4.3	<u>Basis for Professional/ Consultancy Support</u> - N/A
4.4	<u>Other</u> – N/A

5	Other Considerations
5.1	Graphic design of the document and text as detailed within Appendix 1 will be undertaken following initial consideration by committee and Council. The graphically designed document will be published.
5.2	Council is bound by the Local Government (NI) Act 2014 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the undertaking of its functions. 2015-16 will be the first year within which the Council must set Performance Improvement Objectives within the context of the corporate plan and a performance improvement framework designed into the structure and business of the new council. This activity will commence following consideration of the corporate plan.

6	Recommendations
6.1	That members consider the approval the draft Mid Ulster Corporate Plan as presented and contained within Appendix 1.

7	List of Documents Attached
7.1	Appendix 1: Draft Corporate Plan 2015-2019



**Mid Ulster District Council
Corporate Plan**

2015-2019

March 2015

Contents

Page

1. New district: *at a glance*
2. Building on Strengths, Maximising Opportunities
3. Our Direction: *Vision & Values*
4. Our Corporate Priorities: Themes
 - 4.1 Delivering for our People
 - 4.2 Creating Growth
 - 4.3 Sustaining our Environment
 - 4.4 Building Unity
5. Focusing on Success
6. Reviewing the Plan
7. Representing You: *Your Councillors*
8. Contact Us

To be inserted and attributed to Chair of the Council assuming the position on 1 April 2015 and preside over the first year for term council term. This will include:

- *brief scene setting on reform and transferred functions*
- *reference to Cookstown, Dungannon & South Tyrone and Magherafelt Councils*
- *reach and responsibility of new council*
- *remarks on the legacy of 40 years' work of previous councils*
- *the wider context in which it will not operate*
- *new powers*
- *challenges but opportunities too*
- *commitment to deliver*
- *reference to some of the councils key priorities and objectives*
- *commitments on statutory obligations equality and access to information*
- *an exemplar for good governance*
- *community planning*
- *challenges and engaging with an expanded district*

Insert electronic signature

New district: at a glance

Strategically positioned at the heart of Northern Ireland the new Mid Ulster District Council straddles two counties, running from Swatragh in the north to Fivemiletown in the south and from the Sperrin Mountains in the west to the shores of Lough Neagh in the east.

As an expanded local authority with responsibility for the delivery of an enhanced package of services and powers Mid Ulster District Council will seek to avail of every opportunity to positively contribute towards everyone's quality of life.

Some Key Facts: About Us

- Offices located in Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt
- Seventh largest new council district at of the eleven new districts
- Covers an area of some 1714 km²
- Serves a population of over 141,000
- Principal towns are Cookstown, Coalisland, Dungannon, Magherafelt and Maghera
- 40 councillors across 7 District Electoral Areas
- Councillors provide representation within District Electoral Areas of Carntogher, Clogher Valley, Cookstown, Magherafelt, Moyola and Torrent
- An employer of some 950 people
- One third of its people live in urban areas whilst two thirds inhabit rural areas
- Manages a range of facilities including Dungannon Park; Mid Ulster Sports Arena; Leisure Centres in Dungannon, Cookstown and Maghera; Arts & Cultural Venues in Dungannon and Cookstown; Davagh Mountain Biking Trail; Ballyronan Marina and Tourist Information Centres
- Will annually spend in the region of £45m in the new Mid Ulster District

Some Key Facts: About Our District

- Fastest population growth increasing by 18.7% from 2001 to 2013 compared with all other new Council areas and the N Ireland average of 8.3%
- 67% aged between 16 and 74 are economically active

- 65% aged between 16 and 64
- Higher % of persons aged 0-15 than the N Ireland average
- 10% of households are lone pensioners
- 15% of households do not have access to a car or van
- 7% of households are lone parents with dependent children
- Employment concentration on and linkages between manufacturing, engineering, construction and agrifood industries
- 7,195 of VAT registered businesses in the district
- Tourism contributed to a spend of £32m within the district by visitors in 2014
- Employment is expected to increase by just over 3,000 by 2020

Building on Strengths, Maximising Opportunities

Building on the strengths of our district and the achievements of the councils which have gone before us Mid Ulster Council will maximise every opportunity available to enhance the vibrancy of its district and its residents, as a place to live, do business and visit.

Our District Strengths

- Relatively youthful population base
- Manufacturing strands have real export potential
- Unemployment levels low relative to N. Ireland average
- Vocational educational attainment is high
- There is a strong entrepreneurial culture
- Strong tourism spend per visit within the district

Our District Opportunities

- Growth is expected in the high value added sectors for employment
- Tourism visits show signs of expansion
- Specialist manufacturing has potential for further export growth
- Planning and widened economic development responsibilities, placing power in hands of local decision makers
- Power to respond to and shape communities by involving them in local decision through a process of community planning and

Our Direction Vision & Values

Creating a new organisation means creating a new sense of identity, one which reflects the achievements, shared history and heritage of the councils which previously delivered local government services in the new Mid Ulster district, whilst taking the opportunity to apply fresh and innovative thinking towards the delivery of our services.

In a larger, more diverse geographical area Mid Ulster Council will remain focused on the local, working for and with people to meet their needs, and make services available at the point of their delivery

Vision

Mid Ulster District Council aspires to be
At the heart of our community

Values

Everyone expects great value quality services and facilities maintained to the highest standard. At the core of what we do to guide how we deliver our services are our values.

At all times, staff will be encouraged to live the values to deliver our business and underpin all that we do and say.

Professional: *Consistently striving to exceed the expectations of our customers' by knowing what to do, how to do it, when to do it and why we do it*

Trustworthy: *Working for our communities in a spirit of friendliness and openness by delivering fair, transparent, equitable and ethical services to all customers*

Quality Driven: *Delivering the best services we can, making the best use of the resources we have*

Team-focussed: Working together to deliver the best results possible for Mid Ulster

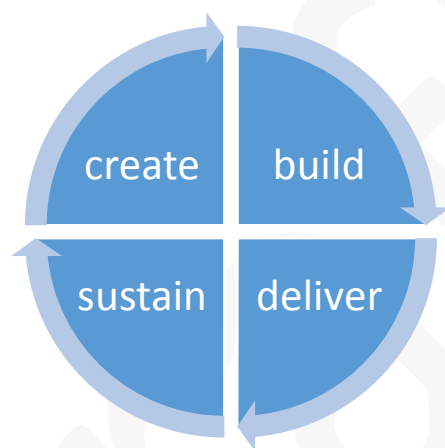
Innovative: always improving how we do and deliver our services

Customer-focussed: *Designing and delivering our services in response to and around the needs of our customers'*

Our Corporate Priorities Themes

We've surveyed, met and talked to people across Mid Ulster to identify the issues of importance to them, what their priorities are and what will make a difference in their community. Education, the economy, the environment, safety, a sense of belonging, partnership-working, improved infrastructure, accessible amenities and attractive, vibrant, towns, villages and open spaces, are among those issues.

Council will work with its partners to create, build, deliver and sustain activities that matter to the district within the framework of its themes and corporate priorities, setting our direction to 2019.



Creating – building – delivering – sustaining

Delivering for Our People

To be at the heart of our community, people will be at the centre of what we do. Council is committed to designing and delivering its services around those accessing them by working for and with local people, and representing their interests within and outside the district. Our employees are also our people. We are committed to creating a Council which is staffed by a forward thinking, professional and productive workforce which will deliver for Mid Ulster.

Priorities

- High performing services focused on customer need and value for money
- Increase access to services and customer experiences across the district
- High quality, responsive, indoor and outdoor recreational services with increased customer numbers and satisfaction
- Maximise the cultural and heritage offering with increased visitor numbers and satisfaction at our cultural venues
- Delivery of quality and timely planning decisions
- Integration of a culture of service improvement as the key to service delivery
- Management of talent supported by continued skills building learning opportunities
- Implementation of a proactive health and wellbeing approach for all employees

Creating Growth

To create the conditions for growth in Mid Ulster we will work to ensure business and employment opportunities, support for rural communities, the regeneration of our towns and villages and investment in the district's tourism potential is maximised, with the aid of its expanded powers and responsibilities. Council will also structure and target its activities to 'grow' our communities by helping to address the educational, skills, health and well-being gaps within the district.

Priorities

- Preparation of a Local Development Plan for Mid Ulster

- Delivery of a rolling capital investment and improvement programme
- Maximise opportunities to create and grow district wide business and investment
- Promote enhancement and strategic development of the physical infrastructure and connectivity of Mid Ulster
- Completion of Seamus Heaney Centre, Bellaghy and associated programmes to help address educational, well-being and economic gaps
- Promotion of employment through Business Start-Up activity

Sustaining our Environment

Mid Ulster has an environment which deserves to be protected, preserved and enhanced for the enjoyment of everyone. Council will play its part as a custodian for the district whether it's delivering on its responsibilities for the management of waste, encouraging recycling, controlling litter, creating and maintaining clean and attractive public spaces or through its work to support biodiversity with the support of a responsive planning system. Council will wish to have a district which has a pride in its place.

Priorities

- Maximise potential of our natural and built attractions and facilities, building collaborative partnerships and strategic alliances
- Realise tourism potential of Mid Ulster, being clear upon the opportunities and targeting resources
- Create and build a sense of Civic Pride in towns and villages across Mid Ulster
- Develop and enhance parks, play areas and open spaces to encourage physical activity and open the countryside in a sustainable manner to our community
- Efficiencies in processing Planning Enforcement Cases
- Reducing the waste being collected by Council for landfill

Building Unity

Creating a new Council from three, whilst integrating employees from other parts of government will be a focus in the first term of the new Council. The success of Mid Ulster Council will only be possible with the support of everyone and the cementing of a unified staffing compliment to deliver its business within the values of the organisation. Mid Ulster Council also recognises local identities and the need to build and strengthen communities across the new district, particularly with the use of its new power on community planning as a way of uniting our district and its residents.

Priorities

- Councillors and staff fully engaged on council business throughout the district
- A cultural strategy and programme that celebrates and maximises the benefits of the diverse cultures in the district
- Implement an organisational strategy for a modern workplace
- Integrate a culture of openness and transparency where employees feel appreciated and have a sense of belonging
- Generate a culture and the conditions where innovation is encouraged and excellence is expected
- Promotion of minority languages within the district
- Connecting the district through community planning

Focusing on Success

We recognise that everything we do will contribute to the achievement of our vision and so our departments, services and teams will have their own plans to guide and measure their success in delivering upon this corporate plan. These plans will provide a greater level of detail on how each part of the Council is contributing towards; *Delivery for Our People*; *Creating Growth*; *Sustaining our Environment*; and *Building Unity* action being taken to place Mid Ulster Council at the 'at the heart of our community'.

Taken together, these plans will be set and reviewed annually to drive continued improvement on how council does its business in everything it does for all those who receive and access its services. This corporate plan and resulting department, service and team plans will form the Council's performance management framework with service improvement plans at its heart.

Reviewing the Plan

While our Corporate Plan sets our direction to 2019, we know that things will change. As a Council 'at the heart of our community' we recognise the need to be able to be respond and so, as well as the flexibility to adjust and revise our direction and priorities over the lifetime of the plan, we will formally review the Corporate Plan in the first part of the 2017-18 financial

Representing You

Your Councillors

CARNTOGHER	Councillor	Martin	Kearney	SDLP	07740 863744
	Councillor	Kate	McEldowney	Sinn Féin	07841 101948
	Councillor	Brian	McGuigan	Sinn Féin	07753292976
	Councillor	Seán	McPeake	Sinn Féin	07799 888805
	Councillor	James	Shiels	DUP	07845402259
COOKSTOWN	Councillor	Gavin	Bell	Sinn Féin	07833975262
	Councillor	Wilbert	Buchanan	DUP	07917211558
	Councillor	Mark	Glasgow	UUP	07796660665
	Councillor	John	McNamee	Sinn Féin	07974 179498
	Councillor	Cáthal	Mallaghan	Sinn Féin	07919 332566
	Councillor	Tony	Quinn	SDLP	07841 103004
	Councillor	Trevor	Wilson	UUP	07974 179497
CLOGHER VALLEY	Councillor	Frances	Burton	DUP	07958713866
	Councillor	Phelim	Gildernew	Sinn Féin	07731865478
	Councillor	Sharon	McAlear	SDLP	07712471212
	Councillor	Sean	McGuigan	Sinn Féin	028 87 767189
	Councillor	Robert	Mulligan	UUP	07552439270
	Councillor	Willis	Robinson	DUP	07934607236
DUNGANNON	Councillor	Kim	Ashton	DUP	0782 8637236
	Councillor	Walter	Cuddy	UUP	07834543633
	Councillor	Clement	Cuthbertson	DUP	028 87 752799
	Councillor	Dominic	Molloy	Sinn Féin	07718521195
	Councillor	Barry	Monteith	Independent	07810283867
	Councillor	Denise	Mullen	SDLP	07845236880

MAGHERAFELT	Councillor	Sean	Clarke	Sinn Féin	07798924846
	Councillor	Christine	McFlynn	SDLP	07889 362968
	Councillor	Paul	McLean	DUP	07971793737
	Councillor	George	Shiels	UUP	07879436235
	Councillor	Darren	Totten	Sinn Féin	07917 440094
MOYOLA	Councillor	Peter	Bateson	Sinn Féin	07841101947
	Councillor	Catherine	Elattar	Sinn Féin	07714136288
	Councillor	Anne	Forde	DUP	07841102016
	Councillor	Derek	McKinney	UUP	07762263202
	Councillor	Caoimhe	O'Neill	Sinn Féin	07708731014
TORRENT	Councillor	Linda	Dillon	Sinn Féin	07917375079
	Councillor	Mickey	Gillespie	Sinn Féin	07753807090
	Councillor	Ronan	McGinley	Sinn Féin	07850555211
	Councillor	Joe	O'Neill	Sinn Féin	07704515586
	Councillor	Malachy	Quinn	SDLP	07999427449
	Councillor	Kenneth	Reid	UUP	07900334406

Contact Us

Mid Ulster District Council

- **Cookstown Office:** Council Offices, Burn Road, Cookstown, BT80 8DT
- **Dungannon Office:** Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon, BT71 6DT
- **Magherafelt Office:** Council Offices, Ballyronan Road, Magherafelt, BT45

Tel: 03000 132 132

E: info@midulstercouncil.org

W: www.midulstercouncil.org

Facebook:

Twitter:

J

Subject **Occupational Health Provision**

Reporting Officer **Marissa Canavan, Lead HR Officer**

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	Provide Mid Ulster District Council with a rationale to consider temporarily extending the existing occupational healthcare utilised by Dungannon and Cookstown to include Magherafelt and planning employees.
2	Background
2.1	<p>Legal Requirement- Health Surveillance is the regular review of the health of employees exposed to various forms of health risk as a result of working on specific work processes, eg hazardous substances including dust and fumes, noise and vibration.</p> <p>Health Surveillance must be carried out by suitably qualified people with a specialist qualification in occupational health.</p> <p>Occupational Health also has a pivotal role in assisting council's in managing sickness absence.</p>
3	Key Issues
3.1	<p>Current Services Provided</p> <p>The current occupational health provision within Dungannon and Cookstown Councils is provided on a shared arrangement utilising the same clinics to ensure best use of clinics provided and filling of slots allocated and paid for.</p> <p>Magherafelt make use of GP practice to fulfil any requirement for Occupational Health provision.</p> <p>The joint services utilised by Dungannon and Cookstown are pre-employment screening, occupational health consultant clinic and nurse-led clinic, absence management, health surveillance, rehabilitation, fitness for work and ill health retirement assessment. They have also been used for Flu vaccinations and training. Additional services are available but not currently utilised by either Council.</p>
3.2	<p>Useage</p> <p>In 2014 Cookstown made 45 referrals and Dungannon made 120 to be seen by an occupational health professional. These were made up of a mixture of nurse-led clinics, consultant appointments, pre-employment screening and occupational health surveillance.</p>

3.3	Facilities To keep costs at a minimum the shared nurse-led clinic is operated from Council premises and the Consultant appointments are held at South Tyrone Hospital.
3.4	Existing Costs In 2014 Dungannon costs were £4223.97 and Cookstown's were £3,300.98.
3.5	Strategic Context This scheme for Mid Ulster aligns with two of the corporate priorities: Resources in place to deliver services, and systems to underpin and deliver services.

4	Resources
4.1	<u>Financial</u> - Extend existing occupational healthcare services for a temporary period to accommodate Magherafelt-based staff, continuing to use council buildings and local hospital facilities to accommodate service delivery. As Magherafelt absence is currently sitting at 3.69%, with 4 employees on long-term absence, it is anticipated that there will be a minimum additional cost. This service would be costed on a use-only basis. Costs for services are currently capped, and any clinics will accommodate all 3 areas. A one-day nurse led clinic can accommodate 12 employees. A consultant clinic is per employee but accommodates other employers in the area.
4.2	<u>Human</u> – n/a
4.3	<u>Basis for Professional/ Consultancy Support</u> – No occupational health provision can currently be provided internally. This expertise is currently sought by medical professionals on an external basis.
4.4	<u>Other</u> – n/a

5	Other Considerations
5.1	n/a

6	Recommendations
6.1	The existing occupational healthcare provision currently shared between Dungannon and Cookstown is temporarily extended to include Magherafelt-based employees.

7	List of Documents Attached
7.1	n/a

K

Subject RPA Staff Severance Scheme LGRJF/11

Reporting Officer M Canavan, Lead HR Officer

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	To consider and approve RPA Severance Scheme for Local Government LGRJF/11.

2	Background
2.1	The RPA Severance Scheme for Local Government had been agreed between the Employers' and Trade Union side of the LGRJF in April 2013 (LGRJF/05). This scheme was adopted at Council on 25 September 2014.
2.2	A revised RPA Severance Scheme for Local Government has been agreed between the Employers' and Trade Union Side of the Local Government Reform Joint Forum (Joint Forum) and is recommended for adoption by councils (LGRJF/11). This revised Circular replaces Circular LGRJF/05 issued in April 2013.

3	Key Issues
3.1	<p>The revisions take account of:</p> <p>The provisions contained within Section 123 of the Local Government (NI) Act 2014</p> <p>The provisions of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations (NI) 2015 which will take effect from April 2015</p> <p>Other general revisions include:</p> <p>Deletion of the tapering provision and related reference to a 'Default Retirement Age'</p> <p>Deletion of reference to Transition Committees/Statutory Transition Committees</p> <p>Deletion of the requirement to use a Standard Approval Form</p> <p>Clarification that the calculation for the Statutory Redundancy Payment is based on a contractual week's pay</p>

4	Resource Implications
4.1	<u>Financial</u> - A robust business case compiled before approval of each application identifying the costs associated with the severance package which must not exceed the individuals annual salary multiplied by 3.25.
4.2	<u>Human resources</u> – Administered within current resources
4.3	<u>Assets and other implications – n/a</u>

5	Other Considerations
5.1	N/A

6	Recommendations
6.1	Members are requested to approve the RPA Severance Scheme for Local Government LGRJF/11.

7	List of Documents Attached
7.1	Appendix 1 -LGRJF/11

COVER LETTER TO: CIRCULAR LGRJF/11 – FEBRUARY 2015

To: Chief Executives of District Councils, ARC21, SWaMP 2008, North West Region Waste Management Group, Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the Local Government Staff Commission for NI

Cc: DoE Local Government Division, Public Service Commission

Dear Colleague

1. The attached revised Circular 'RPA Staff Severance Scheme for Local Government' (the RPA Scheme) has been agreed between the Employers' and Trade Union Side of the Local Government Reform Joint Forum (Joint Forum) and is recommended for adoption by councils
2. This revised Circular replaces Circular LGRJF/05 issued in April 2013.
3. This RPA Scheme is based on the provisions of the Northern Ireland Executive's 5th Guiding Principle, as recommended by the Public Service Commission and is underpinned by the Local Government Reorganisation (Compensation for Loss of Employment) Regulations (NI) 2015 currently being progressed by the Department of the Environment.
4. The revisions take account of:
 - The provisions contained within Section 123 of the Local Government (NI) Act 2014
 - The provisions of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations (NI) 2015 which will take effect from April 2015

Other general revisions include:

- Deletion of the tapering provision and related reference to a 'Default Retirement Age'
- Deletion of reference to Transition Committees/Statutory Transition Committees
- Deletion of the requirement to use a Standard Approval Form
- Clarification that the calculation for the Statutory Redundancy Payment is based on a contractual week's pay

5. Guidance has been developed to assist employers with the interpretation and application of this Circular. The Guidance is available to download from the dedicated Local Government Reform Joint Forum webpage at [http://www.lgsc.org.uk/new-initiatives/local-government-reform-joint-forum-](http://www.lgsc.org.uk/new-initiatives/local-government-reform-joint-forum/)
[/](http://www.lgsc.org.uk/new-initiatives/local-government-reform-joint-forum/)
6. In the event that interpretation matters arise or clarification is necessary contact should in the first instance be made with the Independent Secretariat at Commission House on 028 9031 3200



A KERR
LGSC



B GRAHAM
LGRJF TUS Lead



R WILSON
LGRJF Employers' Lead

04 FEBRUARY 2015



facilitating local government reorganisation

CIRCULAR LGRJF/11 – FEBRUARY 2015

**RPA STAFF SEVERANCE SCHEME
FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF**

CONTENTS

	<u>Page No.</u>
1.0 SCOPE AND PURPOSE	1
2.0 TERMS OF THE SCHEME	2
3.0 MONITORING THE POLICY	7
APPENDIX 1:	
READY RECKONER TABLE FOR STATUTORY REDUNDANCY PAY	8

RPA STAFF SEVERANCE SCHEME FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1.0 SCOPE AND PURPOSE

- 1.1** This RPA Staff Severance Scheme for Local Government (the RPA Scheme) has been agreed between the Employers' and Trade Union Side of the Local Government Reform Joint Forum (the Joint Forum) and will apply to all local government staff under the scope of the Joint Forum, ie:
- 26 district councils (including Environmental Health and Building Control Group Committees)
 - arc21 and SWaMP 2008 and the North West Region Waste Management Group
 - staff in the 11 new councils
 - Northern Ireland Housing Executive
 - Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland
 - Other appropriate bodies as the Joint Forum may determine.
- 1.2** The RPA Scheme is based on the provisions of the Northern Ireland Executive's 5th Guiding Principle as recommended by the Public Service Commission's '*Voluntary Severance Arrangements*' and represents the operationalisation of this Principle for the reform of the local government strand of RPA implementation.
- 1.3** The RPA Scheme will apply specifically in cases of both voluntary and compulsory redundancy (avoidance of compulsory redundancy is a necessary requirement to ensure the smooth transfer of staff to new organisations) which is linked exclusively to the reform of the local government strand of the RPA programme including Improvement Collaboration and Efficiency (ICE) implementation and will only apply to staff who are surplus under the new structures and who cannot be offered suitable alternative employment.
- 1.4** The RPA Scheme will only apply to situations where the termination meets the criteria of being in the financial and managerial interests of the service and organisational need, and it is anticipated that the RPA Scheme will have only minimal application.
- 1.5** New councils will be responsible for identifying and notifying those members of staff who have been approved to leave under the terms of the RPA Scheme. Decisions made in relation to non-RPA Severance after vesting day will be a matter for the new council.
- 1.6** No staff will be released before 01 April 2015 (vesting day) and payment will be made by the new councils.
- 1.7** The RPA Scheme will operate up to 31st December 2019, subject to monitoring by the Joint Forum.

1.8 This RPA Scheme also takes account of the provisions of:

1. Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006
2. The Pensions (2008 No. 2 Act) (Commencement No. 9) Order (NI) 2012
3. Local Government Pension Scheme (NI) Regulations 2015
4. Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment and Transitional Provisions) Regulations (NI) 2014
5. Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) Regulations (NI) 2007 as amended
6. Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996
7. Redundancy Payments (Continuity of Employment in Local Government, etc.) (Modification) Order (Northern Ireland) 1999
8. NI Executive's Principles and Associated Recommendations as recommended by the Public Service Commission
9. The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
10. Circular LGRJF/07 June 2014 Scheme of Transfer for Local Government Staff

The Local Government Act (NI) 2014, Section 123 requires the Department of the Environment to make regulations for the purpose of the payment of compensation for loss of office or diminution of emoluments.

The Department has indicated that this RPA Scheme will provide the basis for the Statutory Regulations, which are required under Section 123.

2.0 TERMS OF THE SCHEME

2.1 Entitlements

If, at the date of redundancy, you are:

- **aged under 55**
- **or aged over 55 but not a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme (NI) (LGPS (NI))**

You will be entitled to:

Option 1. An Enhanced Redundancy Payment

If you are under age 55 at the date of the redundancy and a member of the LGPS (NI), your benefits will be deferred to your normal retirement date.

If, at the date of redundancy, you are:

- **aged 55 or over and**
- **a member of the LGPS (NI)**

You will be entitled to:

Immediate Payment of Unreduced Pension Benefits, ie:

Members of the LGPS (NI) who are aged 55 or over at the date of redundancy are entitled to the immediate unreduced payment of their main LGPS (NI) benefits if made redundant or retired on the grounds of efficiency. The employer pays for this immediate release of unreduced benefits.

Plus the following options for enhancement of redundancy benefits by way of compensation:

Option 1. An Enhanced Redundancy Payment;

OR

Option 2. A Statutory Redundancy Payment plus Additional Pension.

(see 2.5 below for details of these Options)

2.2 Payback Period

All the costs associated with the severance package must not exceed the individual's annual salary cost multiplied by **3.25**. This is the period during which the costs are recouped or paid back, ie:

– *Severance Package ÷ Individual's Total Annual Salary Cost = **3.25 or less***

Severance Package Costs are:

- Redundancy Payment, ie, Statutory and Enhanced if applicable
- Capital Cost, ie, cost paid to pension provider for Early Payment of Unreduced Pension
- Additional Pension, ie, cost paid to pension provider if Additional Pension is awarded

Individual's Total Annual Salary Cost, at the point of offer, are:

- Gross Annual Salary
- Employer's National Insurance Contributions
- Employer's Pension Contributions

Where an individual's costs do not fall within the 3.25 year payback period, a reduced Enhanced Redundancy Payment or reduced award of Additional Pension may be negotiated.

2.3 Other Conditions

It is intended that all payments made under the terms of this RPA Scheme will be based on the maximum possible (based on their entitlements) for the individual subject to the 3.25 payback period.

Selection decisions will be made on the basis of the information available at the time, any subsequent recalculation of benefits etc. resulting from, for example, the implementation of the outcomes of a Single Status Pay and Grading Review will not alter the original decision.

2.4 Qualification for Redundancy Payments

To qualify for a redundancy payment an individual must be entitled to a redundancy payment under the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996, ie, be employed by one of the bodies at 1.1 above and have two years' continuous service with that body or continuous previous service with an Employer to which the Redundancy Payments (Continuity of Employment in Local Government, etc.) (Modification) Order (Northern Ireland) 1999 applies.

For clarification, those who transfer and subsequently compete and are successful in obtaining a local government post which at a later point becomes surplus as a consequence of RPA will have an entitlement for the purposes of this RPA Scheme to have all of their service counted as reckonable service.

Any payment will be based upon the employee's contractual weekly rate of pay, as at the "calculation date" for the purpose of calculating a redundancy payment.

Any benefit in kind, eg, the value of a leased car; will not be taken into account when determining the amount of a week's pay.

2.5 Details of Options 1. & 2.

OPTION 1. ENHANCED REDUNDANCY PAYMENT

An **Enhanced Redundancy Payment** is made up of two elements:

- i. Statutory Redundancy Payment as detailed in the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996

Plus

- ii. A Compensation Payment.

The Enhanced Redundancy Payment will be calculated as follows:

- i. The Statutory Redundancy Payment (based on a contractual week's pay) is calculated in accordance with the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996. A copy of a **Ready Reckoner** for calculating the number of weeks' pay due is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- ii. The Compensation Payment is calculated by applying a multiplier of **3.46** to the calculated Statutory Redundancy Payment (based on a contractual weeks' pay) to give the overall Enhanced Redundancy Payment, ie:
 - *Statutory Redundancy entitlement (comprising the number of weeks' pay due x contractual weekly rate of pay) = Statutory Redundancy Payment*
 - *Statutory Redundancy Payment (based on a contractual week's pay) x 3.46 = Overall Enhanced Redundancy Payment*
 - *Overall Enhanced Redundancy Payment - Statutory Redundancy Payment = Compensation Payment*

Note: The Enhanced Redundancy Payment is **inclusive** of the Statutory Redundancy Payment (i.e. an employee **will not receive both** an Enhanced Redundancy and a Statutory Redundancy Payment).

The Enhanced Redundancy Payment is subject to an overall **maximum of 104 weeks' pay** in total.

Converting the Compensation Payment into Additional Pension

Employees who receive an Enhanced Redundancy Payment on being made redundant and who are members of the LGPS (NI) will be given the option, before their termination date, of advising their employer that they wish to be awarded an additional amount of annual pension that is actuarially equivalent to the Compensation Payment that the employer would otherwise have made. The choice to be awarded annual pension must be exercised before the termination date.

An employer cannot split the Compensation Payment and award part as Additional Pension (up to the limit provided for under the LGPS (NI) 2015) and the balance as a lump sum Compensation Payment. An employer can only convert all (other than the statutory redundancy payment) or nothing.

The Additional Pension is for the member alone, ie, it does not enhance any dependants' benefits and may be actuarially reduced if drawn before normal pension age (the date at which the member would be entitled to receive their state pension).

Payback Period

All the costs associated with the Enhanced Redundancy Payment must not exceed the individual's annual salary cost multiplied by **3.25**. (see 2.2 above)

Where an individual's costs do not fall within the 3.25 year payback period, a reduced Enhanced Redundancy Payment may be negotiated.

OPTION 2. STATUTORY REDUNDANCY PAYMENT + ADDITIONAL PENSION

This Option is only available to those who are members of the LGPS (NI) who are aged 55 or over at the date of redundancy and includes **Immediate Payment of Unreduced Pension Benefits, ie:**

Members of the LGPS (NI) who are aged 55 or over at the date of redundancy are entitled to the immediate unreduced payment of their LGPS (NI) benefits if made redundant or retired on the grounds of efficiency.

Statutory Redundancy Payment

Members choosing this Option will also receive a Statutory Redundancy Payment (based on a contractual week's pay) calculated in accordance with the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 as detailed in Option 1 above.

Additional Pension

In addition to Immediate Payment of Unreduced Pension Benefits and a Statutory Redundancy Payment, an award of Additional Pension as allowed for under the LGPS (NI) Scheme, will be made at the leaving date, as an alternative to receiving the Enhanced Redundancy Payment as outlined at Option 1 above.

Employers will request an illustration of an individual's potential benefits relating to Additional Pension from the pension administrator NILGOSC and will discuss this with individuals. It is intended that all payments made under the terms of this RPA Scheme will be based on the maximum possible for the individual (based on their entitlements) subject to the 3.25 payback period.

An employer may award Additional Pension up to a maximum provided for in the LGPS (NI) 2015, per year. The Additional Pension is for the member alone, ie, it does not enhance dependants' benefits.

Payback Period

All the costs associated with the Severance Package must not exceed the individual's annual salary cost multiplied by **3.25**. (see 2.2 above)

Where an individual's costs do not fall within the 3.25 year payback period, a reduced amount of Additional Pension, may be negotiated.

2.6 Calculation of Pension Benefits

Employers will request an illustration of an individual's benefits from the pension administrator NILGOSC.

2.7 Making a Choice

Any offer of a redundancy payment made to individuals must meet the conditions and criteria within this RPA Scheme. Where these are satisfied the individual will normally be given the choice of Option where applicable.

Whilst information will be made available to individuals to enable them to make decisions, it will be a decision for the employee, as to what they choose and it will be their responsibility to take appropriate independent advice as to the merits of their choice.

Whichever Option is chosen once a payment has been made the decision cannot be reversed.

2.8 Consideration of Applications for a Severance Payment

In **all** circumstances, a financial case for the payment of severance must be made by the appropriate employing council.

2.9 Criteria for Consideration of Applications

Consideration will be given in cases where there is a surplus of staff under the new structures who cannot all be offered suitable alternative employment and where a voluntary redundancy will avoid the need for compulsory redundancy in the particular group of surplus staff.

In these circumstances the following criteria will be applied:

- Least cost first whilst ensuring that essential skills and expertise are maintained.
- Prioritisation of requests will be based on available finance and the level of savings which will be delivered.
- All other relevant options have been considered including the potential for redeployment/retraining.

3.0 MONITORING THE POLICY

The impact of this policy will be monitored by the Joint Forum and any subsequent changes required will be consulted upon in the normal way.

Any disputes about the interpretation of the provisions of this RPA Scheme will be considered by the Joint Forum who will be the final arbiters.

APPENDIX 1

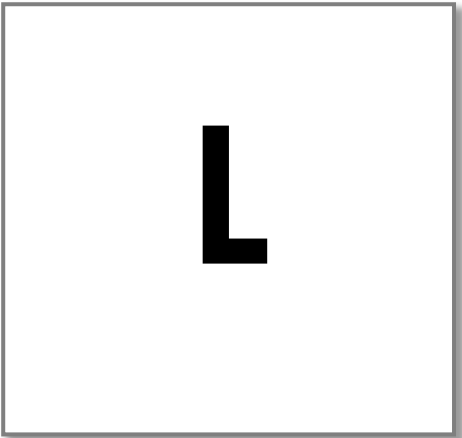
READY RECKONER TABLE FOR STATUTORY REDUNDANCY PAY

Service (Years)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Age (Years)																			
18*[1]	1	1½																	
19	1	1½	2																
20	1	1½	2	2½															
21	1	1½	2	2½	3														
22	1	1½	2	2½	3	3½													
23	1½	2	2½	3	3½	4	4½												
24	2	2½	3	3½	4	4½	5	5½											
25	2	3	3½	4	4½	5	5½	6	6½										
26	2	3	4	4½	5	5½	6	6½	7	7½									
27	2	3	4	5	5½	6	6½	7	7½	8	8½								
28	2	3	4	5	6	6½	7	7½	8	8½	9	9½							
29	2	3	4	5	6	7	7½	8	8½	9	9½	10	10½						
30	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	8½	9	9½	10	10½	11	11½					
31	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	9½	10	10½	11	11½	12	12½				
32	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	10½	11	11½	12	12½	13	13½			
33	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	11½	12	12½	13	13½	14	14½		
34	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	12½	13	13½	14	14½	15	15½	
35	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	13½	14	14½	15	15½	16	16½
36	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	14½	15	15½	16	16½	17
37	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	15½	16	16½	17	17½
38	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	16½	17	17½	18
39	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	17½	18	18½
40	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	18½	19
41	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	19½
42	2½	3½	4½	5½	6½	7½	8½	9½	10½	11½	12½	13½	14½	15½	16½	17½	18½	19½	20½
43	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
44	3	4½	5½	6½	7½	8½	9½	10½	11½	12½	13½	14½	15½	16½	17½	18½	19½	20½	21½
45	3	4½	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
46	3	4½	6	7½	8½	9½	10½	11½	12½	13½	14½	15½	16½	17½	18½	19½	20½	21½	22½
47	3	4½	6	7½	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
48	3	4½	6	7½	9	10½	11½	12½	13½	14½	15½	16½	17½	18½	19½	20½	21½	22½	23½
49	3	4½	6	7½	9	10½	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
50	3	4½	6	7½	9	10½	12	13½	14½	15½	16½	17½	18½	19½	20½	21½	22½	23½	24½
51	3	4½	6	7½	9	10½	12	13½	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
52	3	4½	6	7½	9	10½	12	13½	15	16½	17½	18½	19½	20½	21½	22½	23½	24½	25½
53	3	4½	6	7½	9	10½	12	13½	15	16½	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
54	3	4½	6	7½	9	10½	12	13½	15	16½	18	19½	20½	21½	22½	23½	24½	25½	26½
55	3	4½	6	7½	9	10½	12	13½	15	16½	18	19½	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
56	3	4½	6	7½	9	10½	12	13½	15	16½	18	19½	21	22½	23½	24½	25½	26½	27½
57	3	4½	6	7½	9	10½	12	13½	15	16½	18	19½	21	22½	24	25	26	27	28
58	3	4½	6	7½	9	10½	12	13½	15	16½	18	19½	21	22½	24	25½	26½	27½	28½
59	3	4½	6	7½	9	10½	12	13½	15	16½	18	19½	21	22½	24	25½	27	28	29
60	3	4½	6	7½	9	10½	12	13½	15	16½	18	19½	21	22½	24	25½	27	28½	29½
61*[2]	3	4½	6	7½	9	10½	12	13½	15	16½	18	19½	21	22½	24	25½	27	28½	30

18*[1] - It is possible that an individual could start to build up continuous service before age 16, but this is likely to be rare, and therefore we have started the table at age 18.

61*[2] - The same figures should be used when calculating the redundancy payment for a person aged 61 and above.

This table is an extract from booklet *ER3 Redundancy Entitlement Statutory Rights* published by the Department for Employment and Learning - www.delni.gov.uk/erpublications



Subject	Response to Domain Names Regulation consultation
Reporting Officer	Barry O'Hagan

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	To consider and recommend to Council that it adopts the response to Draft Local Government (Domain Names) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 (closing date 30th March 2015) which is attached below.

2	Background
2.1	The Department of the Environment is seeking comments on its proposal to make the Local Government (Domain Names) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 (the 2015 Regulations). The proposed Regulations specify the range of domain names that councils may use. The Draft Regulations are appended below.
2.2	Domain names are used to establish an organisation's unique identity, in terms of websites and email etc. (e.g. midulstercouncil.org). Organisations usually choose a domain name which corresponds with their business name, helping internet users to easily find their website.
2.3	A domain name consists of one or more parts, technically called labels that are conventionally joined up and separated by dots, such as example.com. The top level domains listed for suggested format for local government are .gov.uk; .org; .com; and .net.

3	Key Issues
3.1	The regulations allow the decisions taken by Mid Ulster Statutory Transition Committee in December 2013 and taken on by Mid Ulster Council to be maintained.

4	Resource Implications
4.1	<u>Financial:</u> None
4.2	<u>Human resources:</u> None

4.3	<u>Assets and other implications: None</u> N/A
-----	--

5	Other Considerations
5.1	None

6	Recommendations
6.1	Members are asked to recommend that the Council adopts the officers' draft response to the consultation exercise (closing date 30 th March 2013) appended below.

7	List of Documents Attached
7.1	Appendix A: Consultation Document
7.2	Appendix B: Consultation Response



Department of the
Environment

www.doeni.gov.uk

The Draft Local Government (Domain Names) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

Consultation Document

February 2015

DRAFT LOCAL GOVERNMENT (DOMAIN NAMES) REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2015

This Consultation Document seeks views on the draft Local Government
Domain Names Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

Comments should be sent by 30th March 2015 to:

Local Government Policy Division 2

Department of the Environment

Level 4, Causeway Exchange

1-7 Bedford Street

Town Parks

Belfast, BT2 7EG.

E-mail: LGPDConsultations@doeni.gov.uk

Textphone 028 9054 0642

The following people will be able to answer queries in relation to the draft
regulations:

Name	E-mail	Telephone
Damien Dean	damien.dean@doeni.gov.uk	028 9082 3366
Mark Mulholland	mark.mulholland@doeni.gov.uk	028 9082 3364

Crown Copyright 2014

This material may be freely reproduced except for sale or advertising purposes.

CONTENTS

	Page
Purpose of the Consultation Document	1
Background	1
The Draft Regulations	3
Consultation Questions and Comments	4
Human Rights	6
Equality	6
Regulatory Impact Assessment	6
Rural Proofing	6
Freedom of Information Act 2000 – confidentiality of consultations	6
Alternative format	7
Annex A –The Draft Local Government (Domain Names) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015	8
Annex B – The Freedom of Information Act 2000 – confidentiality of consultations	10
Annex C – List of Consultees	12
Annex D – Domain Naming Convention Guidance	14

DRAFT LOCAL GOVERNMENT (DOMAIN NAMES) REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2015

PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

1. The Department of the Environment is seeking comments on its proposal to make the Local Government (Domain Names) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 (the 2015 Regulations). The proposed Regulations specify the range of domain names that councils may use. The Draft Regulations are attached at **Annex A**.

BACKGROUND

2. Domain names are used to establish an organisation's unique identity, in terms of websites. Organisations usually choose a domain name which corresponds with their business name, helping internet users to easily find their website. For example, the Times newspaper's website is www.thetimes.co.uk and the Belfast Telegraph's is www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk.
3. A domain name consists of one or more parts, technically called labels that are conventionally joined up and separated by dots, such as example.com.
 - The right-most label conveys the top-level domain (TLD); for example, in the web address for the Department of the Environment, www.doeni.gov.uk, gov.uk is the top-level domain.
 - Numerous top-level domains have been registered for use, and the most commonly used are com, org, net, edu, int, and gov.

The gov top-level domain is normally linked to a country code TLD such as uk (United Kingdom) or es (Spain).

4. At Consideration Stage of the Local Government Bill, the Assembly agreed that provision should be added to allow the Department to specify a standard format for the domain names of the 11 new councils.
5. Section 125 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 (the 2014 Act) states that, *“The Department must, by regulations, specify a standard format for the domain names of council websites”*. **This amendment requires the Department to make regulations specifying the format of councils’ website addresses; it does not require the Department to prescribe a single domain name format which must be used by all 11 councils.**
6. As councils are bodies corporate in their own right and are independent organisations, the Department’s preferred option is to prescribe multiple formats which councils may choose from when deciding upon a domain name.
7. All of the 11 new councils have already registered domain names. Seven councils have registered domain names ending in ‘.gov.uk’ whilst the remaining four have registered names ending in ‘.com’ or ‘.org’.
8. **The UK Cabinet Office Naming and Approvals Committee, which controls all domain names ending in .gov.uk, states that all public sector bodies *should* use the ‘.gov.uk’ naming convention, but this**

is not mandatory. However, where an organisation uses the '.gov.uk' convention, it must abide by the Committee's guidance. This guidance can be viewed at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/naming-and-registering-government-websites/local-and-regional-government-naming-and-registering-websites>.

9. The Department has developed guidance, **in liaison with the Department of Finance and Personnel, for councils that have decided not to use the '.gov.uk' naming convention, and this is attached at Annex D. This guidance can be summarised as follows. Councils registering a domain name that does not include '.gov.uk' should ensure that they:-**

- use short and easily understood names and no acronyms;
- use real words;
- describe the primary purpose e.g. www.councilname.org;
- use consistent and commonly known names; and
- strip out unnecessary words.

THE DRAFT REGULATIONS

10. Section 125 of the 2014 Act requires the Department to make regulations which specify a standard format, meaning that the Department can prescribe a range of domain name format that councils may use.
11. The Department considers that it would not be appropriate to limit local government to using a single format for domain names. Given the fact that all elected members have been given a mandate by the

electorate, and councils may have different views on what their domain name format might be, the Department intends to specify a range of domain name formats which councils may use.

12. The 2015 Regulations, therefore, provide councils with a choice of formats and the decision about which one to use rests with the elected members of each council.

13. The Department proposes to specify in regulation 2 (3) that councils must have regard to guidance produced by the Department of the Environment, in liaison with the Department of Finance and Personnel. This guidance will also indicate that councils should:-

- use easily understood names and not acronyms;
- use real words;
- describe the primary purpose e.g. www.councilname.gov.uk;
and
- use consistent and commonly known names.

<p>Q1. Do you agree that a council's domain name must include the actual name of the council?</p>
--

14. The Department proposes to specify in regulation 2 (1) that councils may choose to use one of 4 top-level domain names. The proposed top-level domain names are:-

- .gov.uk;
- .org;
- .com; and
- .net.

Q2. Do you agree that the councils should be able to use domain naming format containing a top-level domain from the list above?

Q3. Do you consider that other top-level domain names should be included? If yes, what top-level domain names would you suggest?

15. The Department would welcome any other views that you have on the issues outlined above.

Human Rights

16. The Department believes that the proposals are compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.

Equality

17. Under the terms of section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Department carried out screening for equality impact and is satisfied that the proposed legislation will not lead to discriminatory or negative differential impact on any of the section 75 groups. A copy of the screening form can be viewed on the Department's website: http://www.doeni.gov.uk/index/information/equality_unit/policies_screened_out_-_january_to_march_2015.htm

Regulatory Impact Assessment

18. The Department has not conducted a regulatory impact assessment as the proposed legislation does not give rise to any associated costs or savings on business, charities, social economy enterprises or the voluntary sector.

Rural Proofing

19. The Department has assessed the proposed measures and considers that there would be no differential impact in rural areas or on rural communities.

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – confidentiality of consultations

20. The Department may publish a summary of responses following completion of the consultation process. Your response, and all

other responses to the consultation, may be disclosed on request. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. Before you submit your response, please read **Annex B** on the confidentiality of consultations. It gives guidance on the legal position about any information given by you in response to this consultation.

Alternative format

21. This document is available in alternative formats. Please contact us to discuss your requirements.
22. This Consultation Document is being circulated to persons and bodies listed in **Annex C** and is also available to view at:
http://www.doeni.gov.uk/index/local_government/local_government_consultations.htm
23. Responses and comments on the draft Local Government (Domain Names) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 should be sent by 30th March 2015 to the address below or by e-mail to LGPDConsultations@doeni.gov.uk.

Local Government Policy Division 2
Causeway Exchange
4th Floor
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG

Textphone: 028 9054 064

DRAFT STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

2015 No.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Draft Local Government (Domain Names) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

Made - - - - *xx xxx xxxx*
Coming into operation - *xx xxx xxxx*

The Department of the Environment, makes these Regulations in exercise of the powers conferred on it by sections 125 and 127(6) of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014^(a).

In accordance with section 127 of that Act, the Department has consulted councils, such associations or bodies representative of councils, such associations or bodies representative of officers of councils and such other persons and bodies as appear to the Department to be appropriate.

Citation, commencement and interpretation

1.—(1) These Regulations may be cited as The Local Government (Domain Names) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and shall come into operation on 1st April 2015.

(2) In these Regulations, “2014 Act” means the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Domain names

2.—(1) For the purposes of section 125 of the 2014 Act, the specified format for the domain names of council websites is the council name followed by—

- (a) .org;
- (b) .gov.uk;
- (c) .com; or
- (d) .net.

(2) Where paragraph (1)(b) applies, councils must have regard to the Naming and Approvals Committee’s guidance^(b).

(3) In all other cases, councils must have regard to guidance produced by the Department of the Environment, in liaison with the Department of Finance and Personnel^(c).

^(a) 2014 c. 8 (N.I.).

^(b) See <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/naming-and-approvals-committee-nac>

^(c) See <https://www.doeni.gov.uk>

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department of the Environment on XX XX XX.

Elizabeth Loughran

A senior officer of the Department of the Environment

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations)

These Regulations specify the format for the domain names of council websites.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 – confidentiality of consultations

1. The Department may publish a summary of responses following completion of the consultation process. Your response, and all other responses to the consultation, may be disclosed on request. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. Before you submit your response, please read the paragraphs below on the confidentiality of consultations and they will give you guidance on the legal position about any information given by you in response to this consultation.
2. The Freedom of Information Act gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, namely, the Department in this case. This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation. The Department cannot automatically consider as confidential, information supplied to it in response to a consultation. However, it does have the responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to this consultation, including information about your identity should be made public or be treated as confidential.
3. This means that information provided by you in response to the consultation is unlikely to be treated as confidential, except in very particular circumstances. The Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Freedom of Information Act provides that:

- the Department should only accept information from third parties in confidence if it is necessary to obtain that information in connection with the exercise of any of the Department's functions and it would not otherwise be provided;
 - the Department should not agree to hold information received from third parties "in confidence" which is not confidential in nature; and
 - acceptance by the Department of confidentiality provisions must be for good reasons, capable of being justified to the Information Commissioner.
4. For further information about confidentiality of responses please contact the Information Commissioner's Office (or see website at: <http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk>).

List of Consultees

All Northern Ireland District Councils

Association of Local Government Finance Officers

Association for Public Service Excellence

Belfast Solicitors Association

Local Government Auditor

Civil Law Reform Division

Community Relations Council

District Judges - Magistrates Court

Equality Commission for NI

HM Revenue & Customs

Human Rights Commission

Law Centre (NI)

Law Society of Northern Ireland

Local Government Staff Commission

MEPs

MLAs

MPs

National Association of Councillors

NI Assembly / Committee for the Environment

NI Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux

NI Chamber of Commerce and Industry

NI Chamber of Trade

NI Council for Voluntary Action

NI Political Parties

Northern Ireland Court Service

Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission

Northern Ireland Law Commission

Northern Ireland Local Government Association

QUB – School of Law

Society of Local Authority Chief Executives

The Executive Council of the Inn of Court Northern Ireland

The Law Society of Northern Ireland

UU – School of Law

The section 75 bodies and persons listed in the Department's Equality Scheme

DOMAIN NAMING CONVENTION GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. Background

This guide sets out the principles for registering and managing local government Domain Names.

The global system of Internet Domain Names exists to make Internet services more accessible for ordinary users.

Domain Names serve as more easily memorable names for Internet resources such as computers, networks, and services. A domain name represents an Internet Protocol (IP) resource. Individual Internet host computers use Domain Names as host identifiers, or host names. Host names are the leaf labels in the domain name system usually without further subordinate domain name space. Host names appear as a component in Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) for Internet resources such as web sites (e.g., en.wikipedia.org).

Domain Names are also used as simple identification labels to indicate ownership or control of a resource. Such examples are the realm identifiers used in the Session Initiation Protocol (SIP), the Domain Keys used to verify DNS domains in e-mail systems, and in many other Uniform Resource Identifiers (URIs).

An important function of Domain Names is to provide easily recognizable and memorable names to numerically addressed Internet resources. This abstraction allows any resource to be moved to a different physical location in the address topology of the network, globally or locally in an

intranet. Such a move usually requires changing the IP address of a resource and the corresponding translation of this IP address to and from its domain name.

Domain Names are used to establish a unique identity. Organizations can choose a domain name that corresponds to their name, helping Internet users to reach them easily. For instance IBM's web site is at ibm.com, and GNU's is at gnu.org.

Generic Domain Names increase popularity. A generic domain name may sometimes define an entire category of business that a company is involved in, rather than being the name of the company. Some examples of generic names include books.com, music.com, travel.com and art.com. Companies have created successful brands based on a generic name, and such generic Domain Names tend to be very valuable.

Domain Names are often referred to simply as domains and domain name registrants are frequently referred to as domain owners, although domain name registration with a registrar does not confer any legal ownership of the domain name, only an exclusive right of use for a particular duration of time. The use of Domain Names in commerce may subject them to trademark law.

2.Naming strategy for local government

Councils with, or planning to have, an Internet presence should adopt and exercise a centralised approach to planning the acquisition, management and use of appropriate domain names. A domain name is intellectual property and has both financial and strategic value.

Local government should consider using **.gov.uk** naming convention as their primary domain. The UK Cabinet Office Naming & Approvals committee guidelines **must** therefore be adhered to if a **.gov.uk** format is used.

Local government **may** use **.org**, **.com**, **.gov.uk** or **.net** as their primary domain sites, and should follow the guidance below in this case.

Domain Names should not point to anything other than an organisation's home page.

3. Use real words

To improve readability, URLs should use real words rather than abbreviations or acronyms. Hyphens and underscored spaces should not be used. Existing examples include www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk and www.justice.gov.uk. (Note that the guidance for local government permits the use of hyphens to describe the type of organisation e.g. '-bc' for borough councils.)

4. Describe the primary purpose

URLs should describe the primary purpose of the website or its primary focus so that users know what to expect from the website. Examples include www.communities.gov.uk and www.culture.gov.uk.

5. Be consistent with existing naming conventions

Where there are several acceptable alternatives, preference should be given to a URL consistent with existing ones so that it is easier to remember. For example www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk is consistent with www.homeoffice.gov.uk and www.ofsted.gov.uk is consistent with

www.ofgem.gov.uk.

6. Use commonly known or brand names

Where an organisation is commonly known by a particular acronym or brand name, use that as the primary URL because it will be easier to remember. Brand names should be used particularly where the real word URL is long or unwieldy. Examples include www.gchq.gov.uk and www.ofsted.gov.uk.

7. Strip out unnecessary words

Where an organisation name contains frequently used words such as prepositions or conjunctions, these may be stripped out for simplicity. Examples include www.nationalschool.gov.uk and www.commonleader.gov.uk.

8. Use short URLs

URLs should be short so that they are easy to type and therefore reduce human error. Shortened forms such as acronyms and abbreviations are preferred where the alternative real word form is unwieldy. Examples include www.ecgd.gov.uk and www.dfid.gov.uk.

9. Use easily understood URLs

URLs should be easy to say so that they are easily understood when communicated verbally and to reduce human error. In particular, avoid the use of hyphens or underscores in URLs. (Note that the guidance for local government permits the use of hyphens to describe the type of organisation e.g. ‘-bc’ for borough council.)

10. Defensive registration

As part of a defensive strategy, councils should consider registering other, closely related Domain Names, for example, generic top-level domains (gTLDs) – .com, .org, .info and in the .uk second level domains (SLDs) – .co.uk, .org.uk.

The objective of defensive registration is risk management – to avoid or reduce occurrences of:

- **typosquatting** (common misspellings of your domain name);
- **cybersquatting** (registration of Domain Names reflecting or similar to the names of existing organisations with the intention of selling the names back to you or for using them for bad faith purposes); or
- **cybersmearing** (where anonymous authors set up web sites that spread alternative, false or disparaging information).

11. Naming conventions

Names must not imply a national (UK-wide) activity when in reality it is focused on or limited to a regional/geographic responsibility or activity.

Names must reflect the legal name or registered ‘trading name’ of your organisation.

Names should minimise risk of confusion with similar organisations, geographic areas or similar registered names and avoid the risk of inadvertent masquerading.

Generic names should be avoided for local, regional or intradepartmental initiatives, and used only for genuinely pan-

governmental activities sponsored by the Prime Minister's Office or the Cabinet Office.

Domain Names must:

- contain only standard ASCII alpha numeric characters A to Z; numerals 0 to 9 and/or hyphens;
- not begin or end with a hyphen (-);
- not coincide with Internet protocols, such as, www, ftp, dns, whois;
- not include postal codes, or pseudo abbreviations, such as, ltd, plc, gov;
- not contain more than 64 characters.

One and two letter Domain Names will not normally be used. Exceptionally they may be permitted for generic online services which are intended to apply to all of government or the .gov.uk community *and* for which a very short domain name is essential for end-user convenience. Exceptions will require the personal approval of the Director for Digital Engagement on behalf of the Permanent Secretary, Government Communications and the Government CIO.

Internationalised Domain Names are currently not supported. Where names contain letters that cannot be reproduced in standard ASCII, the conventionally accepted spelling should be used.

When registering any name you should be aware of the need to avoid infringing existing trademarks, trade names and third party business names. These can sometimes mistakenly be used as generic terms. Apart from giving unnecessary publicity there is a risk of it being illegal. Where a trade name, trademark or business name is to be used then written proof of your authority to use the name or mark must be submitted. It may be useful to check the [UK Intellectual Property Office](#)

and the searchable [Company Names Index](#) from Companies House.

12.Using abbreviations or acronyms

A small number of three and four letter acronyms may be considered as 'household names', for example, BBC, HSE, ITV, OFCOM, No10, However, to the broad majority of users, acronyms are meaningless. Web managers should favour a user-centred approach and register accordingly. For example, host names like education.gov.uk, environment.gov.uk and defence.gov.uk may be considered intuitive and unambiguous to a general user.

Three and four letter abbreviations or acronyms should only be used if:

- the domain name owner is a central Department of State (for example FCO); or
- the domain name owner is a central government body that is generally known by that abbreviation within the public sector, and to the wider public (for example MOD, NHS); or
- it can be shown that there is no reasonable and meaningful alternative.

Local government bodies should avoid using initials, wherever possible, as these are generally reserved for central government.

13.Local authorities

Local authorities should generally use the format **councilname.gov.uk, councilname.org, councilname.com** etc, unless there is the possibility of confusion with another authority or service (for example, national, devolved, regional, county or city) then geographic clarification will be necessary.

Where the full title is not used the following **suffixes** may be used (with the hyphen):

- '-bc' Borough Council
- **'-dc' District Council**

14.How to apply for a domain name

Your application for a domain name must be submitted through an approved Internet Service Provider (ISP).

Accuracy is important. You need to give your ISP sufficient information as a number of applications are being initially rejected with advice because the applicant has not read the rules, used the wrong template, or supplied misleading or inadequate information.

What does the name represent? Please provide name of the project, initiative or organisation for which the domain name is being used. This is not necessarily the same as the domain owner, which must also be provided.

Entries for **Organisational Contact** must be the name/address of the person or contact point designated to receive communications from the Registrar/ Committee related to the administration of the domain name. This person must be an employee of the proposed domain name owner.

Entries for **ISP Contact** must be name/address of the person or contact point designated to handle hosting issues associated with the domain name. This person must be an employee of the proposed ISP.

15.Your application should describe your organisation

You **should** clearly describe the status of your organisation (as domain

owner) and the purpose of the domain name for which you are applying. Include:

- the status of your organisation (for example, borough council, district council);
- the role and objective of your organisation;
- the status of your staff (for example, local government officials or employees);
- the source of your funding (for example, household / business rates);
- to whom your organisation is accountable (for example, ratepayers).

16.Purpose of the domain name

You should outline the primary purpose and planned content of your proposed domain name, for example:

- an information website
- a transactional website
- a campaign website
- an educational website, eg, aimed at children/schools
- a redirect page

Who is the **audience** for your website? You should identify your primary audience (eg, general public, rate payers etc). **Using abbreviations within your application.** Spell it out when you first use them within your application – do not use abbreviations.

The End

Draft Response to the
Consultation on the Draft Local Government (Domain
Names) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015
Consultation Document

February 2015

This response is submitted on behalf of the Mid-Ulster Council to:

Local Government Policy Division 2
Department of the Environment
Level 4, Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Town Parks
Belfast,
BT2 7EG.

Introduction

The Mid-Ulster Council welcomes this opportunity to respond to DOE consultative document on domain names. Mid Ulster District Council recognises the importance of establishing domains for local Government under the reform for local government and the creation of new local authorities and a neutral cyber space in which to operate in. Council has detailed its response below to the questions and the consultative information below.

Question 1

Do you agree that's a Councils domain name must include the actual name of the council?

The council is of the opinion that each councils domain name should reflect the identity of it name and need not include the entire official Council name within it domain as per the guidance under section 11 in appendix D. Furthermore that councils should retain the right to choose a top-level domain name and is not mandated to follow the guidance from the UK Cabinet Office Naming and Approvals Committee.

Question 2

The Department proposes to specify in regulation 2 (1) that councils may choose to use one of 4 top-level domain names. The proposed top-level domain names are:-

.gov.uk;

.org;

.com; and

.net.

Do you agree that the councils should be able to use domain naming format containing a top level domain from the list above?

The council agrees with the regulation. The department should note that Mid Ulster District Council has already registered and uses a domain that complies with this regulation (Midulstercouncil.org).

Question 3

Do you consider that other top-level domain names should be included? If yes what top-level domain names would you suggest?

The council does not has any additional suggestions to include within the top-level domain name space at this time.

Other Comments

Mid Ulster has considered the existing Cabinet Office guidance in respect of it new domain and has made a determination to use Midulstercouncil.org following the decision taken by council in December 2013. The council has noted the draft regulations and guidance in appendix D of the consultation document are consistent and accommodate the decisions already taken by Mid Ulster District Council.

The Council has noted under section 13. Local Authorities

“...should generally use the format councilname.gov.uk, councilname.org, councilname.com etc”

Council are of the opinion that this allows councils to establish a brand and internet based identity consistent with Council decisions and governance.

M

Subject	Draft Information security And ICT Governance Policy
Reporting Officer	Barry O'Hagan; ICT Manager

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	To present the draft Information security and ICT Governance policy for Mid Ulster District Council as part of new policy development and adoption.

2	Background
2.1	The council in line with HMG Information Security Framework guidelines 2014, industry standards and good practice will establish policies that govern and set the standards for the protection of the information it handles and processes, in particular how over 90% of that information is protected through its ICT systems.
2.2	<p>The policy aims to;</p> <p>Protect information from these threats and aims to preserve the confidentiality, integrity and availability of that information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidentiality: ensure that information is accessible only to those authorised to have access; • Integrity: safeguard the accuracy and completeness of information and processing methods; • Availability: ensure that authorised users have access to information and associated assets when required.
2.3	Mid Ulster District Council is committed to protecting the confidentiality, integrity and availability of its information assets. The potential impact or damage to that information asset is managed through the implementation of controls that balance risk against the cost of reduction or prevention.

3	Key Issues
3.1	As part of developing an Information Security Management system (ISMS) the policy presented is based on ISO 27001 Information Security Policy and COBIT (The COBIT 5 framework for the governance and management of enterprise IT is a leading business optimisation and growth roadmap that leverages proven practices)

4	Resource Implications
4.1	<u>Financial:</u> None
4.2	<u>Human resources:</u> None
4.3	<u>Assets and other implications:</u> None

5	Other Considerations
5.1	None

6	Recommendations
6.1	Members are requested to note for information and comment to the ICT manager where appropriate.

7	List of Documents Attached
7.1	Appendix 1 – Draft Information Security and ICT Governance Policy

Mid Ulster District Council

INFORMATION SECURITY AND ICT GOVERNANCE POLICY

Document Control			
Policy / Procedure Owner (name, role & section)	Barry O Hagan, ICT Manager Mid Ulster District Council		
Policy/ Procedure Author (name, role & section)	Barry O Hagan, ICT Manager Mid Ulster District Council		
Version	v1.0 (Draft)		
Consultation	Transition Management Team		Yes / No
	Trade Unions		Yes / No
Equality Screened by		Date	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes / No	Date	
Approved By	Policy & Resources Committee	Date	
Adopted By	Council	Date	
Review Date	February 2015	By Whom	
Circulation	Mid Ulster DC staff		
Document Linkages			

CONTENTS

Introduction

Aims

Information Security Controls

Organisational Information Security (roles and responsibilities)

Asset Management

Physical and Environmental Security

Human Resources Security

Communications & Operations Management

Access Control

Information Systems Acquisition, Development & Maintenance

Information Security Incident Management

Business Continuity Management

Compliance

Breach of Information Security

Training and Related Guidance

Review

Information Security and ICT Governance Policy

Introduction

Information is an integral part of Mid Ulster District Council's activities and is becoming a major strategic asset to any organisation.

Mid Ulster District Council holds structured and unstructured information electronically and physically and it must all be suitably protected. Information is at risk from a wide range of physical and electronic sources: espionage, sabotage, vandalism, fire, flood, computer viruses, computer hacking and denial of service attacks.

Aims

Information security protects information from these threats and aims to preserve confidentiality, integrity and availability of that information.

- **Confidentiality:** ensure that information is accessible only to those authorised to have access;
- **Integrity:** safeguard the accuracy and completeness of information and processing methods;
- **Availability:** ensure that authorised users have access to information and associated assets when required.;

Mid Ulster District Council is committed to protecting the confidentiality, integrity and availability of its information assets. The potential impact or damage to that information asset is managed through the implementation of controls that balance risk against the cost of reduction or prevention.

Policy Scope

What does this Policy apply to?

This Policy applies to all areas of information management, including:

- Personal computers
- PC's and associated equipment, Laptops, Personal Digital Assistant (PDA), Blackberry's, Smart Phones, memory sticks, CD's, DVD's, digital cameras, digital pens and mobile equipment
- Servers
- Printers and faxes
- Telephone & data networks
- Software
- Relevant filing systems and all hard copy information
- All telecommunications

- **This Policy also applies to all information held by the Council irrespective of medium e.g. includes both electronic and hard copy and by extension, business related conversations and knowledge of staff members.**

LINKAGES TO CORPORATE PLAN

In its Corporate Plan for the transitional period, the Council has prioritised the Systems to underpin and deliver services which include the policies, procedures, ict, contracts, management and organisational structures to facilitate delivery. The Information and IT governance policy is designed to support this stated objective, as well as to contribute to the smooth transfer and harmonisation of services.

Information Security Controls

The security policy confirms our commitment to continuous improvement of Information Security and highlights the key areas and controls in place to effectively secure our information.

The Council will specifically focus on the following areas and controls:

Organisational Information Security Roles and Responsibilities

Mid Ulster District Council will establish and maintain a management framework based on the COBIT(Control Objectives for Information and related Technology) IT Governance framework and in compliance with ISO 27001 to support the implementation of the Information Security Policy.

- Elected members will endorse the policy, its implementation and procedures.
- The Senior Management Team will demonstrate its commitment to the policy by supporting the implementation and control and ensuring their Heads of Service adhere to the policy appropriately.
- The Head of ICT will be responsible for the implementation, acquisition and monitoring of systems and the controls within the IT governance framework (appendix 1) that supports this policy. The Head of ICT is accountable to the **Audit, Risk & Governance Sub Committee** for Information security incident, risk and IT Governance monitoring, auditing and evaluation.
- Heads of Service will ensure that their designated staff are informed and operate within the policy.
- Everyone is responsible for ensuring they protect our information and systems and adhere to this policy, the procedures and guidance arising from it.
-

Procedure and Implementation

Information security is based on key principles around aspects and structures with the council. They are premised on that information and systems within the council are asset with value. The principles define areas of control for information security applicable to Mid Ulster District Council . They are;

Asset Management

Information has varying degrees of sensitivity and criticality. Mid Ulster District Council will ensure appropriate levels of protection are applied by identifying the owners of information and maintaining a comprehensive register and system of information assets that is classified based on business impact of disclosure, modification or loss. Special handling measures will be implemented based on classification where appropriate.

Human Resources Security

Mid Ulster District Council will ensure employees are trained and clear about their responsibilities and understand the implications of breaching the Information Security Policy. Awareness of the importance of security and how to report security incidents (breaches, threats and weaknesses) is also provided to all employees.

Physical and Environmental Security

Mid Ulster District Council will prevent unauthorised access and damage to both business premises and information through the implementation of appropriate physical and system controls to ensure access to Mid Ulster District Council premises and assets are restricted to authorised personnel only. Controls are also in place to ensure that both buildings and equipment are appropriately protected from environmental threats and that redundant equipment, media and papers are disposed of securely.

Communications & Operations Management

Mid Ulster District Council will safeguard the integrity and availability of all computer systems, networks and supporting infrastructure through the implementation of a range of controls and design such as computer backups and virus protection software to prevent damage to assets and interruptions to business activities.

Access Control

Mid Ulster District Council will control access to information and systems in accordance with business requirements through the implementation of controls such as user names, passwords and system privileges to ensure access to such resources is granted to authorised individuals.

Information Systems Acquisition, Development & Maintenance

Mid Ulster District Council will prevent loss, unauthorised amendment or misuse of systems and information by ensuring that security is an integral part of information systems including segregation of duties, change control procedures and agreed testing and approval processes.

Information Security Incident Management

Mid Ulster District Council will have clear incident reporting mechanism in place which details the procedures for the identifying, reporting and recording of security incidents. By continually updating and informing Council employees, elected members, and contractors of the importance of the identification, reporting and action required to address incidents. Council will be pro-active in addressing these incidents as and when they occur ensuring that information security events and weaknesses associated with information systems are formally communicated to allow timely corrective action to be taken. The aim is to reduce the risk of a security incident occurring due to human error, theft, fraud or abuse of information processing facilities.

Business Continuity Management

Mid Ulster District Council will protect critical business processes from the effects of major failures or disasters by deploying Information Technology (IT) infrastructure with inbuilt resilience. A business continuity plan will be developed with controls that identify and reduce risk, limit the consequences of damaging incidents and ensure the timely resumption of essential operations.

Compliance

Mid Ulster District Council will comply with all relevant Information Security legislation, regulations and standards. Mid Ulster District Council will keep abreast of developments in legislation and disseminate it throughout the organisation in addition to performing regular assessments to ensure compliance.

Breach of the Information Security Policy

Anyone suspecting that there has been, or is likely to be a breach of information security, is asked to inform their line manager immediately.

Breaches of this policy and/or security incidents are incidents which could have, or have resulted in, loss or damage to Council reputation and assets, including information and IT equipment and, or conduct which is in breach of the Council's security procedures and policies.

All Council employees, elected members, partner agencies and contractors, volunteers have a responsibility to report security incidents and breaches of this policy as quickly as possible through the Council's Incident Reporting Procedures to their line manager and Head of ICT. This obligation also extends to any external organisation contracted to support or access the Information Systems of the Council.

If damage or compromise of the Council's ICT systems or network results from the non-compliance, the Council will consider legal action against the third party. The Council will monitor systems as deemed appropriate and take appropriate measures to remedy any breach of the policy through the relevant frameworks in place. In the case of an employee, infringements will be investigated under the disciplinary procedure and progressed as appropriate.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Equality Screening & Impact Assessment

This policy has been screened for equality implications as required by Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Under those considerations no significant equality implications have been identified. The policy will therefore not be subject to an equality impact assessment.

Staff & Financial Resources

This policy requires all staff to be regularly trained and updated appropriately

SUPPORT & ADVICE

Related Guidance and Training materials can be accessed on the Intranet.

For further information about the policy please contact the Head of ICT.

This Policy is referenced by other Council policies and guidelines. Copies of these policy statements are obtainable via the Council's Intranet or by request to the helpdesk.

9. COMMUNICATION

The policy information will be communicated internally using a range of appropriate internal communication methods, with external communication via traditional print and digital channels.

The policy will also form part of the induction process for all new staff.

10. MONITORING & REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

The effectiveness of the policy will be monitored using feedback from those staff involved in its implementation and data collated on performance against standards.

Formal review, with any appropriate recommendations for change, will take place 1 year following implementation.

Appendix 1

IT Governance Controls

COBIT stands for Control Objectives for Information and related Technology. It is an IT governance framework and supporting toolset published as an open standard by the IT Governance Institute and the Information Systems Audit and Control Association (ISACA).

COBIT is designed to allow managers to bridge the gap between control requirements, technical issues and business risks. It includes materials that address the specific needs of

- Executive management and Boards
- Business and IT management
- Governance, assurance, control and security professionals

The COBIT framework classifies IT activities and risks into four domains:

- Plan and Organize (PO)-Provides direction to solution delivery (AI) and service delivery (DS)
- Acquire and Implement (AI)-Provides the solutions and passes them to be turned into services
- Deliver and Support (DS)-Receives the solutions and makes them usable for end users
- Monitor and Evaluate (ME)- Monitors all processes to ensure that the direction provided is followed

COBIT identifies 34 processes within these four domains. It defines activities and control objectives for all 34 processes, as well as overarching process and application controls. Controls are designed to support seven information criteria not just the three based within the ISO standard (confidentiality, availability and integrity).

Effectiveness

- Efficiency
- Confidentiality
- Integrity
- Availability
- Compliance
- Reliability

There are five COBIT 5 principles:

Meeting Stakeholder Needs
Covering the Enterprise End-to-End
Applying a Single Integrated Framework
Enabling a Holistic Approach
Separating Governance from Management

The processes are diagrammatically represented with in COBIT as follows;

Processes for Governance of Enterprise IT

Evaluate, Direct and Monitor

EDM01 Ensure Governance Framework Setting and Maintenance

EDM02 Ensure Benefits Delivery

EDM03 Ensure Risk Optimisation

EDM04 Ensure Resource Optimisation

EDM05 Ensure Stakeholder Transparency

Align, Plan and Organise

AP001 Manage the IT Management Framework

AP002 Manage Strategy

AP003 Manage Enterprise Architecture

AP004 Manage Innovation

AP005 Manage Portfolio

AP006 Manage Budget and Costs

AP007 Manage Human Resources

AP008 Manage Relationships

AP009 Manage Service Agreements

AP010 Manage Suppliers

AP011 Manage Quality

AP012 Manage Risk

AP013 Manage Security

Build, Acquire and Implement

BAI01 Manage Programmes and Projects

BAI02 Manage Requirements Definition

BAI03 Manage Solutions Identification and Build

BAI04 Manage Availability and Capacity

BAI05 Manage Organisational Change Enablement

BAI06 Manage Changes

BAI07 Manage Changes Acceptance and Transitioning

BAI08 Manage Knowledge

BAI09 Manage Assets

BAI10 Manage Configuration

Deliver, Service and Support

DSS01 Manage Operations

DSS02 Manage Service Requests and Incidents

DSS03 Manage Problems

DSS04 Manage Continuity

DSS05 Manage Security Services

DSS06 Manage Business Process Controls

Monitor, Evaluate and Assess

MEA01 Monitor, Evaluate and Assess Performance and Conformance

MEA02 Monitor, Evaluate and Assess the System of Internal Control

MEA03 Monitor, Evaluate and Assess Compliance With External Requirements

Processes for Management of Enterprise IT

N

Subject	Business Continuity Plan for Mid Ulster Council
Reporting Officer	Change Manager

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update committee members on the development of a Business Continuity Plan for Mid Ulster Council with it being operational from 1 April 2015. A business continuity plan is a functional plan of action to facilitate the continuation of critical services or allow them to be recovered in a timely manner following an unexpected disruption to their delivery.

2	Background
2.1	The existing councils currently have Business Continuity Plans in place the tenure of which will come to an end on 31 March 2015 following their winding up to make way for Mid Ulster Council on 1 April.
2.2	<p>It is accepted that an unavoidable disruption to the delivery of council services could occur which council will have little, if any, control over. It is therefore important that Council has a Business Continuity Plan (disaster recovery plan) in place to ensure critical services can continue, or be recovered in a timely manner following a disruption. Such a plan will promote council resilience to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of council staff at all times • Statutory obligations continue to be met in line with Council's responsibilities • Customer expectations and quality of services continue to be met, or managed, in a way that they are not adversely affected and relationships are maintained with our external agencies • Reputation and image of the council is maintained and not affected as of result of, or following the disruption
2.3	The plan in itself is a powerful business tool to permit the Council to respond to any significant incident which may threaten to interrupt normal operations.
2.4	It is a comprehensive document which provides sufficient detail on practical steps to take in responding to incidents, no matter their severity. In this sense the plan is presented and works at the 'worst loss' level, with only relevant sections of the plan being followed for less severe incidents.

3	Key Issues
3.1	Due to the level of detail and sensitive nature of the information, which includes telephone number and points of contact for staff, contained within the plan it is held as a 'controlled document' in the possession of the Chief Executive, his senior management and others as deemed appropriate on his approval. Those designated as members of the Crisis Management Team have direct access to the plan.
3.2	The plan is however summarised as having (i) an Emergency Response Phase; (ii) a Crisis Management Phase; and (iii) a Business Recovery Phase. The three time phased categories are focused on helping the management team to deal with issues that may arise after an incident has occurred resulting in denial of access to any of its facilities within the district, irrespective of the nature of the incident.
3.3	<p>The plan covers the entire response from the initial emergency through to the resumption of normal or near normal services. The following provides a high level overview of the plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Emergency Response Phase:</i> covers the minutes and hours immediately following an incident and immediate actions which are likely to be required, dependent on the situation • <i>The Crisis management Phase:</i> is only activated where the situation requires it, to make sure action is taken to minimise as much as possible the effects of a major incident • <i>Plan activation:</i> The Chief Exec or his designated deputy on business continuity will only invoke the plan if there is potential for a loss of life or serious injury; dependent on the scale of the incident; or the need to protect the council reputation and meet its statutory obligations. In this case the crisis management team is convened and be chaired by the Chief Executive. • Business Recovery: Plans have been developed to recover and deliver essential and statutory services by utilising the facilities at the disposal of Mid Ulster Council on a targeted recovery basis on a scale of 24 hours; within 1 week; within 2 weeks and within more than one week • The coming together of the 3 councils to form Mid Ulster Council will increase the building estate and hence its organisational resilience to respond to a potential disruption, with a choice of buildings from which to deliver affected essential services • The plan is underpinned with an ICT Business Recovery Plan

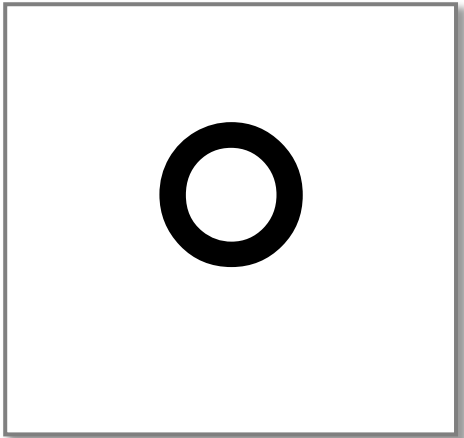
4	Resources
4.1	<u>Financial</u> –N/A
4.2	<u>Human</u> – N/A

4.3	<u>Basis for Professional/ Consultancy Support</u> – N/A
4.4	<u>Other</u> – N/A

5	Other Considerations
5.1	A business continuity plan is separate to the requirement of council to have an Emergency Plan. An Emergency Plan is one which deals with external incidents within or across districts which Council may or may not become involved in a response to same. Involvement will be dependent of the nature of the incident and its role in responding to the incident. The council's business continuity approach will however complement and inform/ integrate with its emergency plan.
5.2	The plan will be tested for its robustness by the senior management team (crisis management team, in the case of Mid Ulster Council) for its deployment, if required. A copy will be held by each member of the senior management team.

6	Recommendations
6.1	That members note the completion of a Business Continuity Plan for Mid Ulster Council, which will be effective from 1 April 2015.

7	List of Documents Attached
7.1	Not Applicable



Subject Draft Guidance Local Government Performance Improvement

Reporting Officer Change Manager

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	To inform members of the Department of the Environment's consultation on draft Guidance for Local Government Performance Improvement. To provide members with a draft response on the guidance as being consulted on by the Department.

2	Background
2.1	The Department for the Environment (DoE) has issued draft guidance for councils to refer to during the first year of its operation throughout 2015-16. The aim of the guidance is to provide statutory guidance to assist councils in complying with performance improvement duties under the Local Government Act 2014.
2.2	Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 puts in place a new duty on Mid Ulster Council to develop and implement a performance improvement framework which supports continuous improvement in the delivery of council services.

3	Key Issues
3.1	The Act specifies that the Council must make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the delivery of its functions and in so doing have regard to (a) strategic effectiveness; (b) service quality; (c) service availability; (d) fairness; (e) sustainability; (f) efficiency; and (g) innovation.
3.2	Council must now annually set improvement objectives to continually improve the exercise of its functions throughout the year, and consequently make arrangements to work towards and secure their achievement.
3.3	The Act also provides for the Local Government Auditor to: (i) carry out an annual audit to identify if the council meets its requirements on continuous improvement as part of its performance improvement regime in line with Section 92 of the Act - make available

	<p>an assessment report on how the requirements have been met and published by 30 September each year;</p> <p>(ii) carry out forward looking and retrospective assessments of councils performance and its arrangements; and</p> <p>(iii) initiate special inspections, if felt required</p>
3.4	<p>The DoE's draft guidance on the applicability of the Act is specific to 2015-16 only. A draft response has been prepared focusing on; (i) usefulness of aspects of the guidance around continuous improvement; (ii) the role of the auditor; and (iii) the timetable as proposed for 2015-16.</p>

4	Resources
4.1	<u>Financial – N/A</u>
4.2	<u>Human – N/A</u>
4.3	<u>Basis for Professional/ Consultancy Support –N/A</u>
4.4	<u>Other –N/A</u>

5	Other Considerations
5.1	<p>The DoE has issued draft performance indicators and accompanying standards for Economic Development, Planning and Waste Management. The Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order 2015 will specify these indicators and standards which council will be measured on for each of these functions.</p>

6	Recommendations
6.1	<p>That members review the consultation document, note and provide commentary on the draft response as presented and attached.</p>

7	List of Documents Attached
7.1	Appendix 1: Consultation Document
7.2	Appendix 2: Response



Draft Guidance for Local Government Performance Improvement 2015

Consultation Document

February 2015

DRAFT GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT 2015

This Consultation Document seeks views on the draft guidance attached to the paper.

Comments should be received by 20 March, 2015 at the address below:

**Local Government Policy Division 1
Department of the Environment
4th Floor, Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Town Parks
Belfast, BT2 7EG**

or by email to:

johanne.mullan@doeni.gov.uk

The following person will be able to answer queries in relation to the draft
Order:

Name	E-mail	Telephone
Johanne Mullan	Johanne.mullan@doeni.gov.uk	028 9051 2629

Crown Copyright 2014

This material may be freely reproduced except for sale or advertising purposes.

CONTENTS

	Page
Purpose of the Consultation Document	1
Background	1
Details of the Proposals	2
Human Rights	3
Equality	3
Regulatory Impact Assessment	3
Rural Proofing	3
Freedom of Information Act 2000 – confidentiality of consultations	3
Alternative format	4
Consultation	4
Annex A – The Draft Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015	
Annex B – Guidance notes	
Annex C – The Freedom of Information Act 2000 – confidentiality of consultations	
Annex D – List of Consultees	

DRAFT GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT 2015

PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

1. The Department of the Environment is seeking views from consultees on draft guidance for councils performance improvement during the first year of its operation – 2015-16. The aim is to provide statutory guidance to assist councils to comply with performance improvement duties under the Act.

BACKGROUND

2. On 31 March 2008, the then Minister of the Environment, Arlene Foster, announced the Executive's decisions on the future shape of local government. Along with rationalising the current 26 councils to create 11 new councils, these decisions included developing appropriate performance management systems for district councils.
3. Consequently, Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 (the Act) puts in place a new framework to support continuous improvement in the delivery of council services, in the context of strategic objectives and issues that are important to those who receive the services. Councils will be required to gather information to assess improvements in their services and to issue a report annually on their performance against indicators which they have either set themselves or that have been set by departments.

DETAILS OF THE CONSULTATION PROPOSALS

4. The statutory guidance for local government performance improvement is issued under powers contained in Section 111 of the Act, which provides that following consultation with councils, bodies representative of councils and others as appear appropriate, the Department may issue guidance to councils and that councils must have regard to guidance issued.
5. The statutory guidance for local government performance improvement aims to support councils during the first year of operation of statutory performance arrangements, such as improvement planning, setting improvement objectives, reporting on progress and describing the relevant dates and arrangements for auditing and assessment by the Local Government Auditor.
6. The Department would welcome responses to the following questions:

Question 1.

Do you think that the proposed guidance will enable councils to comply with the duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions?

Question 2.

Do you agree with the proposed arrangements for assessment and auditing by the Local Government Auditor?

Question 3.

Do you agree with the proposed dates specified for implementing performance improvement in 2015-16 are appropriate?

Human Rights

7. The Department believes that the proposals are compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.

Equality

8. Under the terms of section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Department carried out screening for equality impact and is satisfied that the proposed legislation will not lead to discriminatory or negative differential impact on any of the section 75 groups. A copy of the screening form can be viewed on the Department's website: http://www.doeni.gov.uk/index/local_government/local_government_consultations.htm

Regulatory Impact Assessment

9. The Department has not conducted a regulatory impact assessment as the proposed guidance does not give rise to any associated costs or savings on business, charities, social economy enterprises or the voluntary sector.

Rural Proofing

10. The Department has assessed the proposed guidance and considers that there would be no differential impact in rural areas or on rural communities.

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – confidentiality of consultations

11. The Department may publish a summary of responses following completion of the consultation process. Your response, and all other responses to the consultation, may be disclosed on request. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. Before you submit your response, please read Annex B on the confidentiality of consultations. It gives guidance on the legal position about any information given by you in response to this consultation.

Alternative format

12. This document is available in alternative formats. Please contact us to discuss your requirements.

Consultation

13. Comments should be received by 20 March 2015 at the address below or by e-mail to: johanne.mullan@doeni.gov.uk

If you have any queries in relation to the guidance, you should contact:

Johanne Mullan

johanne.mullan@doeni.gov.uk

Tel: 028 9051 2629

This consultation document is being circulated to persons and bodies listed in Annex C and is also available to view at:

http://www.doeni.gov.uk/index/local_government/local_government_consultations.htm

Local Government Policy Division
Causeway Exchange

GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

Performance Improvement under the Local Government Act 2014

1. Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 (hereafter “the Act”) puts in place a new framework to support the continuous improvement in the delivery of council services, in the context of strategic objectives and issues that are important to those who receive the services. Councils will be required to gather information to assess improvements in their services and to issue a report annually on their performance against indicators which they have either set themselves or that have been set by departments.
2. This guidance is intended to assist councils with arrangements for the performance improvement framework during the 2015-16, the first year of its operation.

Performance Improvement link with Community Planning

3. There is a clear link between the community planning process and the council's performance improvement regime. Community planning focuses on achieving better outcomes for citizens, through the collaborative working of organisations to improve service delivery and the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of citizens. A successful community plan will consist of a long term vision for the area, underpinned by a set of outcomes identified for key themes, with clear accountability and interim performance measures. The community planning process should achieve better integration of public sector services and investment resulting in performance improvements for organisations involved.
4. Each council is required to prepare an improvement plan containing improvement objectives, which includes the strategic objectives for 10 to 15 years ahead set out in the community plan. The community plan identifies long term outcomes using a solid, reliable evidence base as a baseline upon which decisions can be made and against which progress can be monitored. The council must annually monitor its performance against the objectives identified in its improvement plan and publicise the information. In order to measure performance against its strategic objectives, the council can consider setting

short to medium term objectives through action plans or their existing corporate and business plans.

5. Community planning partners should also build into their corporate and business planning regimes their commitments contained in community plans.
6. Performance improvement and community planning should inform, and be informed by, each other. It is expected that:
 - improvement should take full and proper account of the strategic vision as set out in the community plan. This provides the frame within which many short-term improvement priorities should sit. Although there will be other such priorities which do not, either because they are too short-term or too confined to one organisation, they should at least not conflict with the community plan;
 - community planning should be based both on an understanding of what appears reasonably deliverable by a district council and/or its partners, and on continual monitoring of how effective that delivery is. If and when it becomes clear, from shorter-term information, that community planning objectives are not deliverable or no longer relevant, those objectives should change;
 - the use of the new flexibilities and freedoms offered by the general power of competence should be influenced significantly by issues identified through the community planning process. Similarly, performance improvement considerations should influence a council's choices in using the general power of competence and how it engages with its community planning partners.

NOTE: depending on the final community planning guidance currently being consulted upon (consultation closes 9 March 2015), community planning partnerships may not have Community Plans in place until after 2016. In the absence of a Community Plan, councils should therefore ensure that its Improvement Plan is compatible with and takes full account of its corporate plan.

The general duty of Improvement

7. Under section 84 of the Act, councils are under a general duty to “make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of [their] functions.”

What is Improvement?

8. ‘Improvement’ in the context of the Act means more than just quantifiable gains in service output or efficiency, or the internal effectiveness of an organisation. Improvement for councils should mean activity that enhances the sustainable quality of life and environment for ratepayers and communities.
9. Firstly, the duty involves ‘making arrangements’ to improve: there is no absolute duty to improve, nor could there be. Delivering high-quality services and addressing multiple community needs is a complex and often difficult business, and no organisation, however competent or well-intentioned, can guarantee that its efforts will be successful. Councils should put in place arrangements which allow them to understand effectively local needs and priorities, and to make best use of their resources and capacity to meet them and to evaluate the impact of their actions.
10. Secondly, the duty refers to ‘continuous improvement’. As the exact local meaning of ‘improvement’ will vary between councils and over time, this does not mean that everything needs to carry on improving in measurable terms. Rather, councils should seek continuously to ensure that their improvement objectives remain relevant, that the best arrangements for delivering them are in place, and that they are able to understand and demonstrate the impact on the outcomes for citizens

Improvement objectives

11. Section 85 requires a council, for each financial year, to set itself improvement objectives for improving the exercise of particular functions of the council and to have in place arrangements to achieve those objectives.

12.A council must frame each improvement objective so as to bring about improvement in at least one of the specified aspects of improvement as defined in Section 86:

- strategic effectiveness
- service quality
- service availability
- fairness
- sustainability
- efficiency
- innovation.

13.The first of these, strategic effectiveness, is key to linking the community plan (or corporate plan, in the absence of a community plan), and the ongoing processes that underpin it, with a council's improvement processes. The Department would expect that a council's community planning outcomes and objectives should be central to that council's improvement activity. In doing this, councils should be able to develop a clear narrative around their plans for improvement that will resonate with the citizens and communities that they serve.

14.Strategic effectiveness is likely to be a key focus for a council's performance improvement activity, and the Department acknowledges that councils will require time to build the required consensus to establish their community plans. Therefore, during 2015-16, a council may select strategic objectives as performance objectives even if its community plan has not been agreed – the objectives will be part of the council's corporate plan, as noted above.

15.The next three, service quality, availability and fairness all relate to: service provision, by aiming to meet the needs of citizens, and ensuring fair ease of access to the most suitable services that meet their needs. Clearly, all of these objectives can be demonstrated individually, or collectively. Fairness can also be demonstrated by exercising non-service functions in ways which reduce disadvantage and improve social well-being, for instance by improving citizens' access to information.

16. When carrying out its functions or providing services, a council may demonstrate improvement when it operates in a way that contributes towards the sustainability of its area. Equally, on-going efficiency may also be shown if fewer resources are utilised while maintaining provision of substantially similar, or better, services. Should a council choose to alter the manner by which a service is provided, and in so doing it uses fewer resources or more integrated services, it will not only be demonstrating efficiency, but may demonstrate improved sustainability as well.
17. The innovation aspect is slightly different. It covers any changes to service design and delivery methods that are intended to yield improvement under any other aspect, and are reasonably likely to do so. This allows councils to make changes which may not have tangible effects within the same reporting year, but are likely to in subsequent years, and still count them as improvements.
18. Thus, it follows that for a council to successfully discharge its general improvement duty, it should incorporate the seven aspects of improvement into its decision-making processes and its assessments of functions and services. This would also extend to a council's scrutiny functions.

Identifying Improvement objectives

19. Councils should determine their own priorities for improvement based on a thorough evidence-based understanding of the communities they serve, local needs and their capacity to address them. Improvement objectives should correspond directly with the council's priorities for improvement. Councils will, therefore, select their improvement objectives on the basis of critical self-analysis taking account of a wide range of evidence such as:
- The outcomes and priorities identified for an area in its community plan (in the absence of a community plan, the council's corporate plan) and as up-dated through the on-going community planning process for an area.
 - the council's corporate and service priorities;
 - the outcome of councils' assessment exercises of both corporate functions and services provided using the most appropriate performance data and

information from other sources such as citizen and user needs and satisfaction information and wider knowledge of community needs;

- audit, regulatory and inspection reports,
- the results of peer reviews and the outcomes of, and recommendations from, a council's scrutiny processes;
- priorities identified through an analysis of performance data on previous year's performance and in comparison with other organisations;
- evidence gained from consulting on improvement objectives in the previous year;
- Programme for Government priorities as expressed by the NI Executive;

20.Improvement objectives that have been chosen as a result of the above processes should have credibility with citizens, stakeholders and the council's staff. This should translate into a better sense of ownership of the ambitions for the communities and the area.

Setting Council Improvement objectives

21.Completing the above processes should allow councils to draw up their improvement objectives for consultation. These can be in any form a council chooses, but all improvement objectives should be:

- legitimate - making a demonstrable contribution to at least one (or, probably, more than one) of the aspects of improvement listed in the Act;
- clear - setting out the visible improvement that citizens can expect;
- robust - with defined terms of success (whether quantitative or qualitative);
- deliverable - with established links to individual service programmes and budgets;
- demonstrable - capable of being supported by objective (but not necessarily measured or quantitative) evidence.

22.The first of these points is worth further consideration. The aspects of improvement in the Act set out in broad terms the sorts of purposes which councils will wish to achieve. Many, if not most, objectives will contribute to more than one aspect of improvement - for instance, action to improve access to services might simultaneously address the 'fairness' and 'service availability'

aspects, while reducing a council's carbon footprint might address 'sustainability' and 'efficiency'.

23. How many improvement objectives to set is again a matter for the council to decide. This is largely a question of an appropriate level of detail. Objectives that are too broad and aspirational may lack the ability to inform effective action and accountability (e.g. "we will support healthier communities") and too narrow or operational may lack an overall sense of purpose (e.g. "we will refurbish our leisure centres"). Objectives should ideally both describe the overall purpose and the scope of action to deliver it (e.g. "we will provide more and better opportunities for citizens to engage in physical activity").
24. Each council must agree its improvement objectives formally. The processes for doing so will be set out in each council's governance arrangements and standing orders, but the importance of improvement objectives would normally dictate endorsement by the full Council. See also the section on "Role of Scrutiny" below.
25. Councils should have regard to the general definition of improvement (see paragraph 7, above) when considering objectives. Councils must ensure that the objectives set relate to improving functions and services to their communities and citizens. Council improvement needs to be more than simply setting corporate improvement objectives. Internal improvement activity can obviously contribute to the achievement of higher level objectives, but these should not be the only improvement objectives of the council.
26. Overall, it is probably better in the interests of clarity and accountability to err on the side of having fewer objectives, with detailed links to service programmes, than to have a greater number of more detailed objectives. Either way, if the objectives taken together adequately address the main local priorities and needs, the exact number of them is less important.
27. The Act requires that councils set improvement objectives every year. However, that does not mean that all improvement objectives should change every year, or that they should all be deliverable within one year. Councils can set objectives

which span more than one year, perhaps with intermediate milestones, provided that these are reviewed annually to ensure their continued relevance.

For the first year of the operation of the new performance arrangements (2015-16), the objectives which have been identified in the council's corporate or business plan will be sufficient to discharge the council's duties under sections 84(1), 85(2) and 89(5) of the Local Government (NI) Act 2014. (see page 11 below, **Publication and audit of improvement objectives in 2015-16**)

Consulting on Improvement

28. Consulting on the general duty to improve and a council's improvement objectives can happen at any time during each year, although it would make sense to align it with established or planned community engagement processes and events. The council should aim to make the process of choosing improvement objectives as open and transparent as possible. The council should also ensure that this process is in keeping with its constitution and/or standing orders. In so doing a council should aim to develop an on-going dialogue with the communities and areas that it serves so that the setting of improvement objectives is a jointly owned process centred on a balanced assessment of the needs of the community as a whole, rather than any particular organisation or interest group within it.

29. It is recommended that a council should consult the following before setting its improvement objectives:

- citizens and stakeholders;
- local businesses and, where appropriate, potential businesses;
- its statutory and other community planning partners;
- other bodies with which collaborative working is taking place or is being planned.

30. The council should retain evidence of their consultations, or broader engagement activity, to enable it to demonstrate that improvement objectives, and the plans for meeting them, have been properly set. In the interests of scrutiny and accountability, this evidence should be retained in an easily accessible form.

Recording and reporting progress

31. Section 90 of the Act requires a council during each financial year to collect information which will allow it to assess its performance in achieving its improvement objectives and to measure its performance against performance indicators or standards set by the Department or any other indicators or standards which the council chooses to use.

32. Councils will need to collect evidence of their progress in achieving their improvement objectives during the year. Except for those indicators or standards set by the Department, it is for councils themselves to determine what constitutes the best evidence for the progress that they are seeking to make, and that is best done when improvement objectives are set. Evidence will need to meet the requirements of the Local Government Auditor . Evidence may include one or more of the following:

- performance indicators; both those set locally and by NI Departments;
- qualitative information such as citizen satisfaction surveys conducted by the council or by other bodies;
- progress in introducing or completing programmes, facilities or ways of working which contribute to the attainment of improvement objectives;
- the outcome of scrutiny enquiries and other evidence from Members;
- any other sources of evidence that appear to be relevant.

33. Most sound improvement objectives will probably need a range of evidence to demonstrate their accomplishment. Councils should avoid using performance indicators, targets and standards as objectives in themselves. In almost all cases they will be too narrow and too far removed from public understanding and need. Consequently they should be seen as only one of the tools to help demonstrate improvement.

34. In collecting evidence, such as outlined above, councils should seek to collect together the body of evidence that will allow it to provide a narrative description of how successful it has been in pursuing its improvement objectives in order for it to give account for its performance to its citizens, stakeholders and the Local

Government Auditor.

35. This improvement evidence should be collated together and communicated in a report or reports, which Section 92 of the Act requires councils to publish before 30 September in the following financial year. During the first year of operation of the new performance framework, councils will be unable to fully comply with the comparison requirements of this section until two financial years have elapsed.

36. Therefore, during the financial years 2015-16 and 2016-17, the publication of a council's performance assessment, need not refer to comparison with their own performance or that of other councils, in previous financial years.

Role of scrutiny

37. There is a clear role for a council's scrutiny function in its improvement processes: as part of its role in holding local decision makers and policy makers to account, and in its policy development role. This should extend to:

- scrutiny of the processes that a council has gone through in the discharge of the general duty to improve;
- scrutiny of the fitness of the council to discharge the general duty to improve;
- scrutiny of the processes that the council has gone through in the selection of its improvement objectives, including a review of the level of engagement with stakeholders;
- scrutiny of the monitoring of the progress of the delivery of the council's improvement objectives;
- promoting innovation by challenging the status quo and encourage different ways of thinking and options for delivery.

38. If a council's scrutiny processes are sufficiently developed to discharge the above, and there is clear evidence that this is the case, then this scrutiny activity can be drawn upon by the Local Government Auditor in the course of her dealings with the council. It will be for the Local Government Auditor to decide whether scrutiny processes are sufficiently robust to be relied upon in the exercise of their functions.

Improvement planning and information – use and publication

39. Section 91 of the Act requires a council to use this information to measure its performance against a previous year's performance and compare its performance, so far as is practicable, with the performance of other councils and other public bodies.
40. In addition, a council must use the information it collects to assess whether it could improve its performance and, based on that, must decide on steps to take to improve its performance in exercising its functions.
41. For the first year of the operation of the new performance arrangements (2015-16), councils will not have collected performance information to make the required comparison, and so that duty will only be applicable from 1 April 2016.
42. Section 92 of the Act places a requirement on a council to make arrangements to publish specified information relating to its performance before 30 September immediately following the financial year to which it relates. A council must ensure it publishes a summary of any report relating to a special inspection by the Local Government Auditor. This will not be a requirement in 2015/16, as there will be no previous year on which to report.
43. A council is also required to publish an 'improvement plan' which sets out its plans for discharging its duties under Sections 84, 85 and 89 for a financial year and, if appropriate, subsequent years. This must be published as soon as practicable after the start of the financial year to which it relates.

Publication and audit of Improvement objectives in 2015-16

44. For the first year of the operation of the new performance arrangements (2015-16), the objectives which have been identified as meeting the requirements of performance improvement and which have been published in the council's corporate or business plan, including those performance indicators and standards specified by the Department, will be sufficient to discharge the council's duties under sections 84(1), 85(2) and 89(5) of the Local Government (NI) Act 2014.

45. The improvement objectives as set out in the council's corporate plan for 2015-16 should be in place and published by May 2015 .
46. The Department will also direct the local government auditor to ascertain from each council a timetable and the steps being taken to develop and progress the specified 'improvement objectives'. This should also be in place by May 2015.
47. The local government auditor will assess whether or not the council's corporate plan contains valid performance improvement objectives and whether the measures proposed to meet those objectives are likely to comply with the council's duty under the Act.

Role of the Local Government Auditor - inspection and assessment

48. The following section provides an overview of the statutory functions of the Local Government Auditor, as set out in the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014 and how these will operate during a financial year under full commencement of the Act.
49. The main piece of work for the Local Government Auditor under the performance framework programme is an annual improvement assessment (conducted under section 94 of the Act) for each council to determine whether a council is likely to comply with the requirements of Part 12 of the Act. The Local Government Auditor will also undertake an improvement information and planning audit, (as required under section 93 of the Act), in order to ascertain whether the council has discharged its duties under section 92 and the extent to which it has acted in accordance with any Departmental guidance relevant to the section.
50. In order to fulfil these statutory requirements, the Local Government Auditor will undertake the following:
- a forward looking assessment of a council's likelihood to comply with its duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement;

- a retrospective assessment of whether a council has achieved its planned improvements in order to inform a view as to the council's track record of improvement.

51. The Local Government Auditor may also, in some circumstances, carry out Special Inspections (under section 98), in respect of which she will provide a report to the Department and the relevant council, and which she may publish (under section 99).

52. These items of work are described in more detail below. In addition, the Local Government Auditor will prepare and publish a voluntary statement of practice in 2016 which will be aligned to her Code of Audit Practice. The information set out in this guidance will not replace or form part of that statement. The statement of practice will describe the way in which the Local Government Auditor intends to exercise key functions in relation to the Act in accordance with the principles that:

- the Local Government Auditor's functions are exercised consistently between councils;
- functions are discharged independently (except where directed by the Department in accordance with the Act);
- functions are discharged proportionately and do not impose an unreasonable burden upon councils;
- functions are exercised with a view to assisting councils to comply with Part 12 of the Act.

53. It should be remembered that the Local Government Auditor also has functions under other legislation that lie outside the Act. In particular, the Local Government Auditor has duties and powers under the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 to undertake studies for improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness, if required by the Department and to ascertain whether councils have made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Similarly, the Local Government Auditor has duties to undertake the audit of the accounts of councils and report on any matters of public interest.

54. The work performed by the Local Government Auditor in discharging these other duties, whilst independent of the Act and the performance improvement framework, will be co-ordinated and used to inform work under the Act and vice versa.

Improvement Assessment

55. The improvement assessment (section 94) will include a forward looking assessment and a retrospective assessment in order to inform the Local Government Auditor's view of the council's track record of improvement. Both assessments will be informed by the improvement information and planning audit (section 93). While section 93 and section 94 each amount to distinct legal functions and are described here as distinct elements, they are linked and will be used together to inform the Local Government Auditor's assessment of each council.
56. The section 93 audit of improvement information and planning will be undertaken in two parts to align with the council's publication of its improvement plan (section 92 (4)) and its retrospective assessment of its performance (section 92(2)).
57. The Local Government Auditor will be carrying out work throughout the year to inform both assessments and will be feeding back findings to the council. She will undertake council wide reviews of relevant governance and management arrangements, supplemented where necessary by reviews of specific functions and activities. Where appropriate, the assessment will involve gathering and reviewing information from members of the public and other stakeholders, as well as information from within the council. It will also be informed by audit work done in relation to the authorities' accounts and proper arrangements.

Forward looking Assessment

58. For each financial year, the Local Government Auditor will assess each council in terms of whether it is likely to comply with the requirements of the Act. The Local Government Auditor will consider, among other things, the council's published improvement plan (section 92(4)) which will contain its improvement objectives and plans for meeting them as well as the general duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement.

59. The Local Government Auditor will consider the council's track record of improvement and whether its governance and management arrangements effectively support improvement.
60. The first part of the section 93 audit will be an audit of the council's discharge of its duties under section 92(4) and (5), the publication of an improvement plan and (6) the extent to which the council has acted in accordance with guidance issued by the Department. This will take place during the early part of the financial year and will inform the assessment. The exact timing of audit will depend on when the council finalises and publishes its improvement plan (section 15 (6)). Councils are required to publish their plans 'as soon as is reasonably practicable after the start of the financial year'.
61. For each financial year, the Local Government Auditor will issue an Audit and Assessment Report (section 94) to each council and the Department by 30th November, unless otherwise directed by the Department. The Local Government Auditor's report will state whether she believes that the council is likely to comply with the statutory duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement during the current financial year, she may also comment on whether the authority is likely to comply in subsequent years.

Retrospective Assessment

62. From 2017-18, and thereafter for each financial year, the Local Government Auditor will undertake a retrospective assessment of performance with the main purpose of tracking improvement over time. When making an assessment of performance, the Local Government Auditor will consider, among other things, the council's own published assessment of performance (section 92(2)), as part of the section 93 audit, and the findings from any work undertaken by the Local Government Auditor to assess service performance. As with the forward looking assessment, this work will, where appropriate, involve gathering and reviewing information from members of the public and other stakeholders. It will also be informed by the audit work done in relation to the council's accounts and proper arrangements.

63. The second part of the section 93 audit will be an audit of the authority's discharge of its duties under section 92 (1) to (5), the council's assessment of performance. This will inform the Local Government Auditor's performance assessment which will review:

- the overall level of improvement attained;
- progress made on meeting improvement objectives;
- inclusion of performance indicators;
- achievement of both the Department's specified and the council's self imposed performance standards;
- performance over time and against other councils (where reasonably practical); and
- arrangements for data collection and use, and the overall adequacy of performance information.

The performance assessment will be reported in the Local Government Auditor's Annual Improvement Report.

Special inspections

64. If the Local Government Auditor is of the opinion that a council may fail to comply with the requirements of the Act, or if the Department directs the Local Government Auditor to carry out an inspection, then the Local Government Auditor may carry out a special inspection of the council. Such inspections may relate to some or all of a council's functions. Before deciding whether to inspect, the Local Government Auditor must consult the Department. Where the Local Government Auditor has stated in an assessment report that she is minded to inspect, she must consider any response made by the council.

65. Where the Local Government Auditor undertakes a special inspection, she will issue a report to the council and the Department. This will set out any matters in which the authority is failing or may fail to comply with the Act.

Published annual Improvement reports

66. From 2016-17, and thereafter for each financial year, the Local Government Auditor will publish an annual improvement report on each council which:

- summarises the reports relating to section 95; and
- summarises or reproduces any special inspection reports that may have been undertaken.

67. Based on the work done during the year, the Local Government Auditor will consider, in light of the annual improvement report, whether to make a recommendation to the Department to give a direction to the council under section 100, or exercise any other Local Government Auditor functions in relation to the council.

68. The annual improvement reports will be available on the Northern Ireland Audit Office website and will be written in such a way as to make them accessible and meaningful to members of the public.

Co-ordination of audit and assessment work

69. The Local Government Auditor will produce a timetable for each authority setting out the dates and times during which her staff will undertake their work in relation to the council. The Local Government Auditor will consult with the council before setting the timetable. In producing the timetable, the Local Government Auditor will follow the principles of her statement of practice. For example, she will ensure that the work of her other functions are co-ordinated so that they are taken together and exercised proportionately.

70. The timetable will take all audit and inspection activities into account and attempt to establish a programme of activity that meets the needs of the council, the Local Government Auditor and the Department to provide public assurance and drive forward service improvements and fulfil the requirements of the Local Government Auditor's relevant functions. Once set, the Local Government Auditor and the council must take all reasonable steps to adhere to the timetable. Clearly it is in the council's interests that the Local Government Auditor is able to adhere to this timetable. It is, therefore, important that councils provide any requested support to the process.

Set out below is a overview of the requirements for year one 2015/16

Timetable for Performance Improvement activity 2015/16

1	Council to identify (at least one) performance improvement objective(s). These can form part of the council corporate plan, but must be in accordance with the criteria specified in the Act and easily identifiable as performance improvement objectives.	By 30 April 2015
2	Council to consult upon its performance improvement objective(s). This consultation can be achieved as part of the corporate planning process.	By 30 April 2015
3	Council to publish its performance improvement objective(s). This can be part of the publication of the council's corporate plan.	By 31 May 2015
4	Council must put in place a timetable and plan to develop and progress the specified performance improvement objective(s).	By 31 May 2015
5	Local Government Auditor to ensure that performance improvement objective(s) are in place.	By 30 June 2015
6	Local Government Auditor to issue a report (to council and the Department) confirming that performance improvement objective(s) are in place and a satisfactory timetable and plan to develop and progress the specified performance improvement objective(s)	By 31 July 2015
7	Local Government Auditor to carry out an audit to : a) assess if performance improvement objective(s) have been met. b) confirm that the associated timetable and plan to develop and progress performance improvement objective(s) has been implemented c) confirm that council has acted in accordance with guidance issued by the Department. d) assess whether council will comply with performance	By 30 Nov 2016

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 – confidentiality of consultations

1. The Department may publish a summary of responses following completion of the consultation process. Your response, and all other responses to the consultation, may be disclosed on request. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. Before you submit your response, please read the paragraphs below on the confidentiality of consultations and they will give you guidance on the legal position about any information given by you in response to this consultation.
2. The Freedom of Information Act gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, namely, the Department in this case. This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation. The Department cannot automatically consider as confidential information supplied to it in response to a consultation. However, it does have the responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to this consultation, including information about your identity, should be made public or be treated as confidential.
3. This means that information provided by you in response to the consultation is unlikely to be treated as confidential, except in very particular circumstances. The Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Freedom of Information Act provides that:
 - the Department should only accept information from third parties in confidence if it is necessary to obtain that information

in connection with the exercise of any of the Department's functions and it would not otherwise be provided;

- the Department should not agree to hold information received from third parties "in confidence" which is not confidential in nature; and
- acceptance by the Department of confidentiality provisions must be for good reasons, capable of being justified to the Information Commissioner.

4. For further information about confidentiality of responses please contact the Information Commissioner's Office (or see website at: <http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk>)

List of Consultees

All Northern Ireland Departments
All Northern Ireland District Councils (26 plus 11 new)
Association of Local Government Finance Officers
Association of Public Service Excellence
Chief Local Government Auditor
GMB
Invest NI
Irish Congress of Trade Unions NI Committee (ICTUNI)
Local Government Reform Joint Forum
Local Government Staff Commission
Local Government Management Services Board
National Association of Councillors
NI Local Government Association
Northern Ireland Assembly/Committee for the Environment
Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions
NIPSA
Public Service Commission
Society of Local Authority Chief Executives
UNISON Northern Ireland
Unite

Response to: Draft Guidance for Local Government Performance Improvement

Local Government Policy Division 1
Department for the Environment
4th Floor, Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Town Parks
Belfast
BT2 7EG

The following provides commentary from Mid Ulster District Council on the Department's draft Guidance for Local Government Performance Improvement 2015. For ease of reference response is made under each question as posed as part of the consultation.

Question 1: Do you think that the proposed guidance will enable councils to comply with the duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions?

Council requests that the following be taken account of within the final guidance for clarity purposes

- **Para 4:** Reference is made to the inclusion of strategic objectives in the council's improvement plan as set out in the districts community plan. From this it is unclear if it should be them all, some or even permit the inclusion of strategic objectives which do not feature in the community plan. The inclusion of 'organisational corporate improvement objectives' would be essential to drive continuous improvement to support delivery of community planning focused strategic objectives. This should be explicitly referenced to permit compliance.
- **Para 6:** Reference is made throughout the document to relying upon the corporate plan in 2015/16 to ensure improvement plan compatibility in the absence of a community plan in the first year. This gives the indication the corporate plan will not be used in future years. Adherence to the community plan alone in future years will not aid continuous improvement compliance as the corporate plan, complemented with annual improvement plans, is integral in driving continuous improvement in how council does its business.
- **Para 12:** Definitions on the specified aspects of improvement as set out in the Local Government (NI) Act 2014 are required, rather than what they 'might mean'. Particularly if councils are to be systematically audited on how their improvement objectives are contributing towards same.

- **Para 19, bullet point 1:** These priorities are not for the council to deliver upon on its own but rather all the agencies forming the district's community planning partnership. This gives the impression that council will have full responsibility and control for being able to deliver on everything within the community plan.
- **Para 24:** Reference is made to improvement objectives being formally agreed by full Council, as set out in the council's standing orders. Further clarification should be provided on this, should this not be included within final standing orders being finalised by the Department i.e. what needs to then be written into local standing orders if this becomes a requirement.
- **Para 27:** Reference is made to the adequacy of the corporate plan as a reference point in discharging the duty on continuous improvement in 2015-16. The corporate plan should be no less important in future and this suggests differently.
- **Para 29:** It needs to be more explicit on whether we have to consult the groupings as identified before setting improvement objectives.
- **Para 32:** Needs to be more prescriptive on the information that will need to be maintained as evidence to meet the requirements of the Local Government Auditor. It is not sufficient to suggest possible information when this may not be sufficient or required, and hence not meeting our duties.
- **Para 33:** Indicates that there should be an avoidance of using PI's, targets and standards in themselves as they will be too narrow. This is contrary to the making of same for Waste Management, Economic Development and Planning which will be provisioned for in legislation by the Department from April 2015.

In summary, it is the belief of council that whilst the guidance will assist it to meet the duty on continuous improvement there is an over reliance on external documents to council against which it should be benchmarked, rather than its own organisational specific corporate plan which the performance improvement will be embedded and stem from. There also needs to be greater clarity and certainty on the information which needs to be maintained to illustrate continuous improvement.

<p>Question 2: Do you agree with the proposed arrangements for assessment and auditing by the Local Government Auditor?</p>
--

Council requests that the following be taken account of within the final guidance for clarity purposes.

- **Para 37-38:** Reference is made to council's scrutiny function as if this is a 'function' currently embedded within Council structures. However, whilst council

understands scrutiny, should this be a more structured process greater clarity is required particularly if this is an aspect which the Local Government Auditor will be assessing as is suggested.

- **Para 39:** It will be impossible to draw comparisons on performance between councils and other bodies unless improvement regimes are broadly identical. The guidance does not appear to be written in a way which would allow objective comparisons to be made.
- **Para 43:** The deadline for publishing an improvement plan for following year should not be before 30 April (or after 1 June) of each year to allow sufficient time to review performance and achievement in the previous year.
- **Para 44:** Again reference is made to the corporate plan being sufficient in 2015-16 to meet the requirements of performance management. It is difficult to see how the corporate plan and its associated performance improvement framework along with annual improvement plans would be less important in future years.
- **Para 52:** The 'statement of practice' setting out how the Local Government Auditor intends to exercise key functions in relation to the Local Government Act will not be published until 2016. It is the belief that this should be done well in advance of 2016 to permit councils to develop and embed its performance improvement framework to meet the requirements of the auditor.
- **Para 53-54:** Indicates whilst the Local Government Auditor's existing role to 'audit' council will be independent of its new role to review its performance improvement framework it does state that all work will be co-ordinated and inform new required activities under the Local Government Act. Council believes that this degree of co-ordination, apparent level of interdependence and use of already assessed information should be reflected in its annual fee to Council for undertaking annual performance improvement framework reviews. Para 57 also makes reference to the Auditor being informed by audit work undertaken in relation to accounts. Para 69 also makes reference to the Auditor functions being taken together and co-ordinated.
- **Para 60:** Annual audits on performance improvement should not take place before the 30 April each year
- **Para 66:** It would be important that council is given the 'right of reply' on the annual improvement report prepared annually by the auditor. It should also be given seven days sight of the report before being published.

Question 3: Do you agree with the proposed dates specified for implementing performance improvement in 2015-2016 are appropriate?
--

Council requests that the following be taken account of within final guidance for clarity purposes.

- Dates at activities 1 and 2 are the same (by 30 April). It is difficult to see how you can have until 30 April to set performance objectives and also to consult on them as part of the corporate planning process, yet Councils are required to have a Corporate Plan in place effective from 1 April 2015, as required by DoE.
- The first date on which the Local Government Auditor is due to undertake the performance improvement regime audit (November 2016) will not inform the setting of the performance improvement plan for 2016-17. This could create a situation where the Auditor identifies a series of issues requiring addressed as a result of 2015-16 performance improvement activity but this will be too late to inform the setting of the council's 2016-17 performance improvement plan. Retrospective auditing and the timetabling will not be able to inform the framework in the initial years of the council.

Mid Ulster District Council

February 2015

P

Subject **The Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland – People and Organisation Development Strategic Framework**

Reporting Officer **M Canavan, Lead HR Officer**

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	To inform members that the Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland (LGSC) have revised the initial framework which was launched in December 2011, and have re-launched a revised framework in November 2014.

2	Background
2.1	<p>The People and Organisation Development Strategic Framework (the Strategic Framework) was developed as a partnership arrangement by a range of stakeholders in local government, with the aim to providing a common platform for workforce development across the local government sector and supporting individual councils in achieving the objectives as detailed in their Corporate Plans. It is a comprehensive approach to integrating all organisation development activity in supporting delivery of council objectives.</p> <p>It has now been revised and relaunched to support the 11 new councils established from the Reform of local government.</p>

3	Key Issues
3.1	The objective of the revised framework is <i>“to provide a route map to enable local government to develop it’s most valuable resource in a changing environment and ensure the ongoing provision of excellent services which are responsive to the needs of local communities”</i>
3.2	<p>Since the initial launch, the six strategic pillars are now paired as follows;</p> <p>Pillar 1: Leadership and Talent Management</p> <p>Pillar 2: Performance culture and Learning Organisation</p> <p>Pillar 3: Employee Relations and Pay & Reward.</p>

4	Resource Implications
4.1	<u>Financial</u> - n/a
4.2	<u>Human resources</u> – n/a
4.3	<u>Assets and other implications</u> – n/a

5	Other Considerations
5.1	N/A

6	Recommendations
6.1	N/A

7	List of Documents Attached
7.1	Appendix 1 - LGSC People and Organisation Development Strategic Framework and Integrated Implementation Plan

The Local Government Staff Commission
for Northern Ireland



Local Government in Northern Ireland

**People and Organisation Development
Strategic Framework and
Integrated Implementation Plan**

NOVEMBER 2014



CONTENTS

	<u>Page No.</u>
SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background to the Strategic Framework	1
1.2 Overview of the Strategic Framework	1
1.3 Objective of the Strategic Framework	1
1.4 Strategic Pillars	1
1.5 How the Strategic Framework supports Local Government – Linkages and Performance Outcomes	2
1.6 The Operational Model – 2011	3
1.7 Pillar Working Groups	4
1.8 Progress to Date	4
1.9 The Revised Operational Model – 2012/2014	5
 SECTION 2 – STRATEGIC PILLARS – WORKING GROUPS’ PRIORITIES AND PROGRESS	 6
Pillar 1 – Leadership and Talent Management	6
Pillar 2 – Performance Culture and Learning Organisation	6
Pillar 3 – Employee Relations and Pay & Reward	7
 SECTION 3 – MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE OF THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK	 8
3.1 Governance Arrangements	8
 SECTION 4 – THE STRATEGIC PILLARS IN DETAIL	 9
Pillar 1 – Leadership and Talent Management	9
Pillar 2 – Performance Culture and Learning Organisation	11
Pillar 3 – Employee Relations and Pay & Reward	13

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Strategic Framework

This People and Organisation Development Strategic Framework (the Strategic Framework) was developed as a partnership arrangement by a range of stakeholders in local government. The partner organisations were the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC), the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), the Public Sector People Managers' Association (PPMA), in consultation with local councils, the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA), the Department of the Environment (DOE) and the Trade Unions.

The Strategic Framework was first launched in December 2011. It has now been revised and relaunched to support the 11 new councils established from the Reform of local government.

1.2 Overview of the Strategic Framework

The Strategic Framework provides a common platform for workforce development across the local government sector and supports individual councils in achieving the objectives as detailed in their Corporate Plans. It is a comprehensive approach to integrating all organisation development activity in supporting delivery of council objectives.

1.3 Objective of the Strategic Framework

“To provide a route map to enable local government to develop its most valuable resource in a changing environment and ensure the ongoing provision of excellent services which are responsive to the needs of local communities.”

1.4 Strategic Pillars

Six interlinked **Strategic Pillars** were developed to support this objective, as follows:

Leadership	Talent Management
Performance Culture	Learning Organisation
Employee Relations	Pay and Reward

Within this Pillar framework the Leadership, Performance Culture and Employee Relations Pillars were identified as the initial priorities, with Talent Management, Learning Organisation and Pay & Reward Pillars seen as facilitating longer term cultural change.

1.5 How the Strategic Framework supports Local Government – Linkages and Performance Outcomes

There are three specific dimensions to ensuring co-ordination of the linkages between the Strategic Pillars and performance outcomes.

1.5.1 Strategic Direction and Control Linkages

Strategic Direction and control linkages are achieved by:

- Robust Governance Arrangements (as detailed in Section 3, page 8).
- Ensuring that the Strategic Framework aligns with the vision and objectives of the new local government organisations through the involvement of the Local Government Chief Executives Group (LGCEG).
- The involvement of senior HR practitioners nominated by the Chief Executives in the design and outworkings of the Strategic Pillar Goals.
- The involvement and support of PPMA both regionally and nationally.

1.5.2 Co-ordination Linkages

Co-ordination of agreed Action Points under each Strategic Pillar, ensuring effective resourcing and avoiding duplication is achieved by:

- Centralised administration, facilitation and support for research provided by the Local Government Staff Commission.
- Working Groups which are representative of the sector, each chaired by a Chief Executive and supported by a named HR Lead, facilitated by a Director from the Staff Commission.
- Progress reports in relation to the Strategic Pillars at the annual People and Organisation Development Conference.

1.5.3 Pillar Linkages to Deliver Performance Outcomes

Research undertaken by the Working Groups into best practice in organisation development shows that the greatest return in performance outcomes for organisations is achieved when all aspects or strands of activity link and build into a mutually supportive and sustaining OD model.

This can be illustrated in the local government context, by reference to the Strategic Pillars, as follows (see Figure 1):

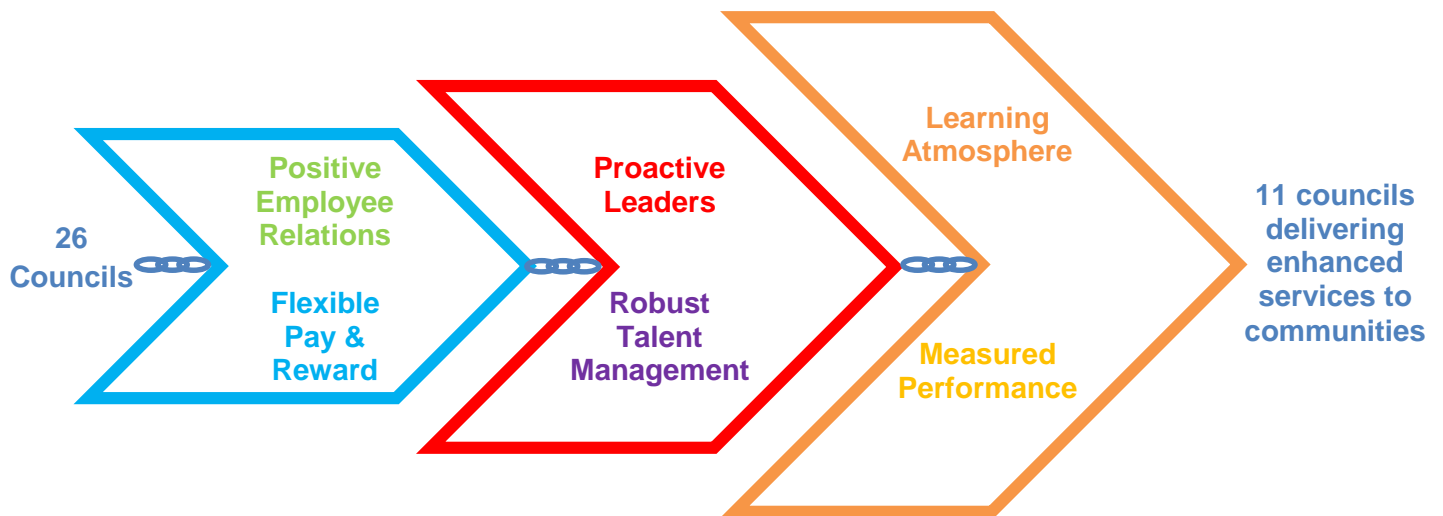
a positive **employee relations** environment delivering **pay and reward** systems which help to motivate workforces to provide increased flexibility underpins:

robust and transparent recruitment and **talent management** processes which produce proactive **leaders** who are engaged with teams to allow:

staff to operate in a **learning and development** atmosphere where potential is maximised and **performance** is measured thereby ensuring:

improved performance delivering enhanced council services to communities

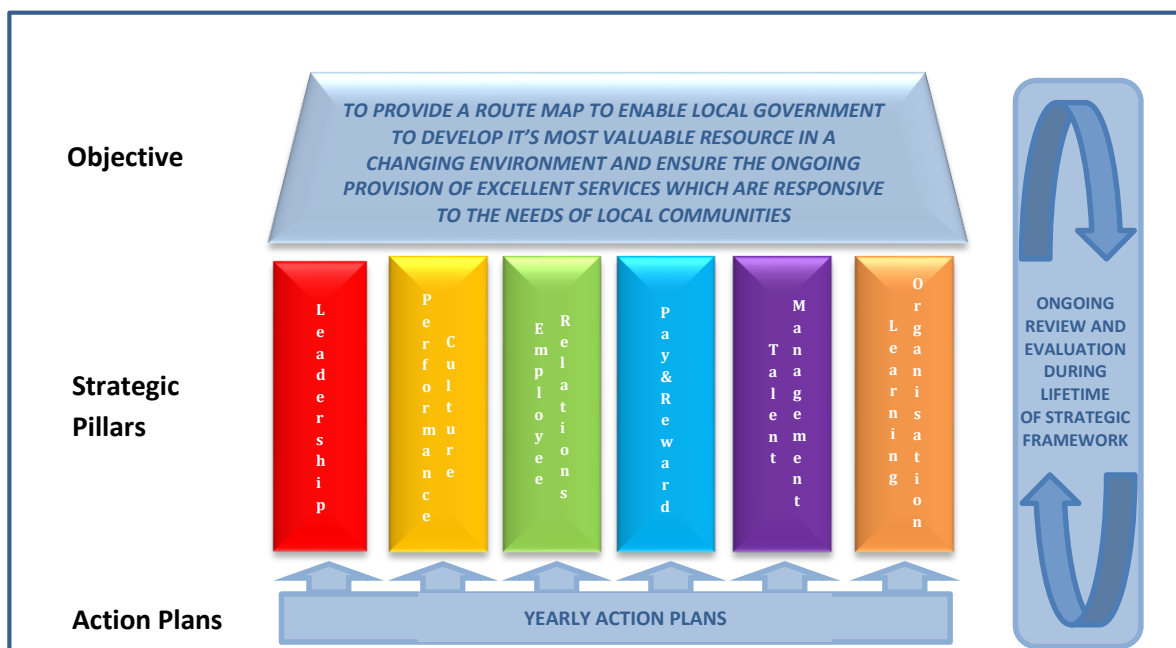
Figure 1 - Pillar Linkages to Deliver Performance Outcomes



1.6 The Operational Model – 2011

The original Operational Model for the Strategic Framework as developed in 2011 is set out in Figure 2. This Operational Model has evolved and the revised version is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 2 - The Operational Model for the People and Organisation Development Strategic Framework - 2011



1.7 Pillar Working Groups

Actions to deliver the Goals for each Pillar have been supported by dedicated Working Groups, representing all councils and trade unions. Each Strategic Pillar is set out in detail in Section 4 in the following terms:

- **The Strategic Goal each Pillar is designed to achieve**
- **Why work under the Pillar is important**
- **The Benefits for:**
 - **The Sector**
 - **Councils**
 - **Staff**
 - **Customers**
- **Year Goals**
- **Agreed Action Points**
- **Pillar Working Group Compositions**

1.8 Progress to Date

Since the Strategic Framework was launched in December 2011 the Working Groups have been developing key aspects of the Framework.

Progress has been reported at the following events:

- **The People and Organisation Development Strategic Framework Progress Conference June 2012**
- **The People and Organisation Development Strategic Framework Conference December 2012**
- **The People and Organisation Development Strategic Framework Conference June 2014**

The Conference in June 2014 helped refocus the Strategic Framework to prepare for the relaunch in November 2014.

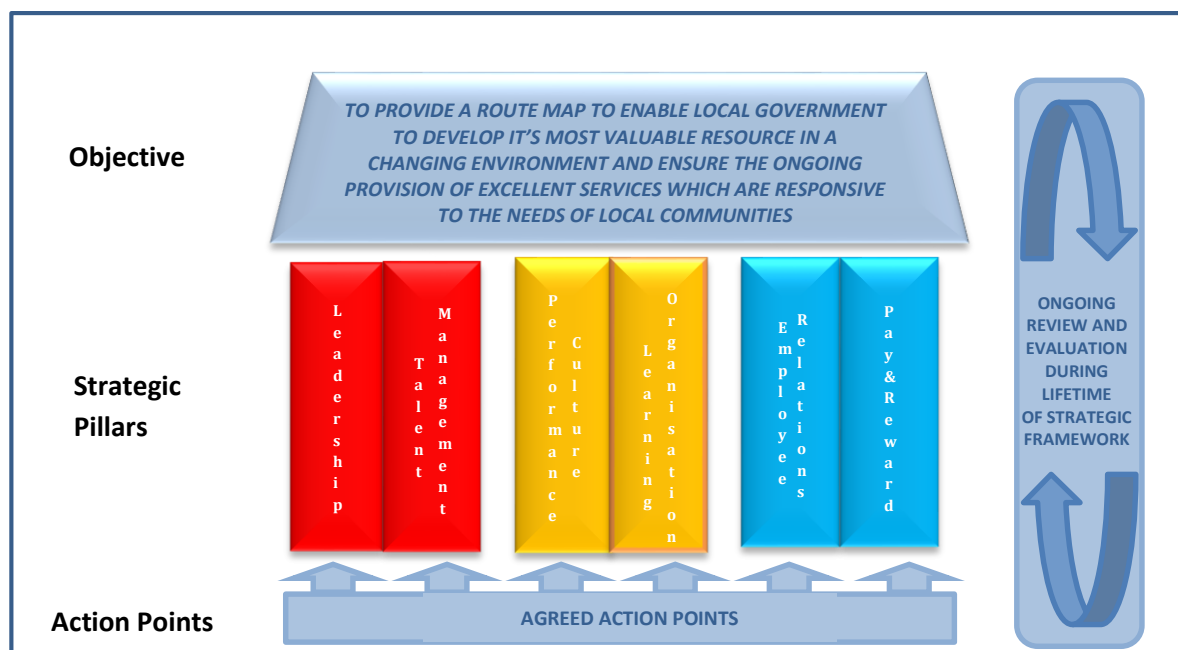
1.9 The Revised Operational Model – 2012/2014

Since the initial launch of the Strategic Framework, administration of the working groups has been combined and they are now paired as follows:

- **Leadership and Talent Management Pillar**
- **Performance Culture and the Learning Organisation Pillar**
- **Employee Relations and Pay & Reward Pillar**

The Revised Operational Model for the Strategic Framework evolved as the Working Groups identified linkages and administration was combined as illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3 – The Revised Operational Model for the People and Organisation Development Strategic Framework – 2012/2014



SECTION 2 STRATEGIC PILLARS – WORKING GROUPS’ PRIORITIES AND PROGRESS

This Section provides an explanation of the ‘Priority’ for each Strategic Pillar Working Group and a summary of ‘Progress’ since the Strategic Framework was launched in 2011. Full details of the Strategic Pillars and the Agreed Action Points which will support the implementation of the Strategic Framework are set out in Section 4.

PILLAR 1 - Leadership and Talent Management

Priority:

The development of a common leadership framework for local government and the development of a “Leadership Academy”.

Progress:

Since 2011 the Working Group has:

- Researched various leadership models and their application to local government.
- Agreed a definition of what it means to be a leader in local government.
- Drafted a Leadership Capability Framework, tested it against the competency framework and consulted with key stakeholders.
- Created a common language of local government leadership at 3 levels.
- Agreed a Talent Identification Toolkit which can be utilised within local government.

PILLAR 2 - Performance Culture and Learning Organisation

Priority:

The promotion of a sustainable performance culture within a self-directed, supportive learning environment and the implementation of a Performance Culture Toolkit.

Progress:

Since 2011 the Working Group has:

- Researched best practice performance culture and learning organisation models and approaches in local government and the business sector.
- Developed and consulted on a Performance Culture Model for the sector.
- Drafted a Performance Culture Toolkit to assist councils to deliver on their performance improvement obligations as detailed in Part 12 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014.
- In partnership with the Local Government Training Group (LGTG) contributed to a participative model for the identification of learning and development needs and the delivery of training provision.

PILLAR 3 - Employee Relations and Pay & Reward

Priority:

A comprehensive approach to all aspects of employee relations and the establishment of a new Industrial Relations Framework.

Progress:

Since 2011 the Working Group has:

- Researched current practice in Industrial Relations elsewhere.
- Developed a good practice model for a new industrial relations framework for local government.
- Canvassed views on the new industrial relations delivery model across the sector.
- Carried out sample research on a workforce profile in selected councils.
- Developed an overall vision for a unified pay and reward framework for local government.

SECTION 3 MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE OF THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

3.1 Governance Arrangements

3.1.1 Local Government Chief Executives Group (LGCEG)

The Local Government Chief Executives Group is responsible for agreeing the overall direction of the Strategic Framework and for nominating representatives to the Pillar Working Groups.

3.1.2 Oversight and Support

Management and governance of the Strategic Framework is provided by the Local Government Staff Commission. The Commission will provide regular reports to LGCEG.

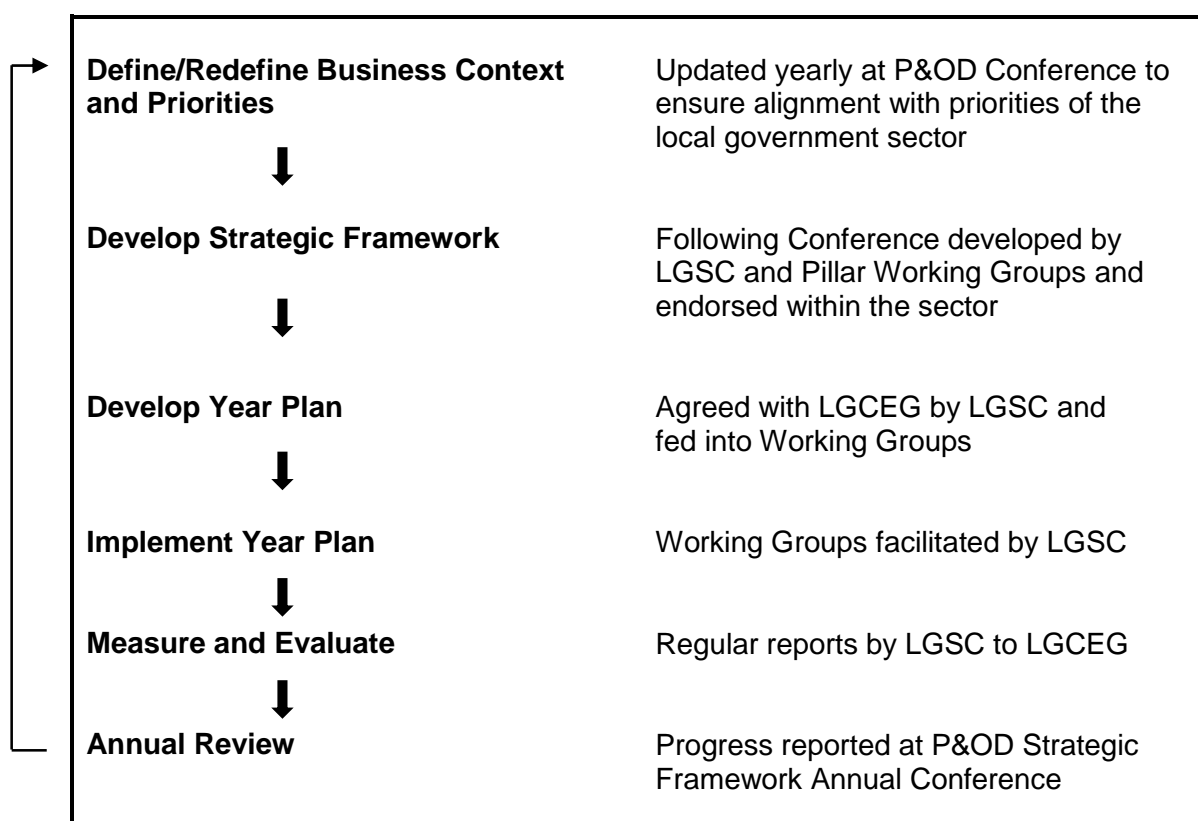
3.1.3 Working Groups

The Working Groups are chaired by a representative from the Local Government Chief Executives Group supported by a professional HR Lead, with facilitation from an LGSC Director. Membership reflects the range of appropriate stakeholders.

3.1.4 Monitoring Progress

Figure 4 below sets out the Monitoring Cycle for the Strategic Framework.

Figure 4 – Monitoring Cycle



SECTION 4 THE STRATEGIC PILLARS IN DETAIL

1. Leadership and Talent Management

2. Performance Culture and Learning Organisation

3. Employee Relations and Pay & Reward

LEADERSHIP

Strategic Goal:

Local government will be led by courageous, innovative, ambitious and proactive leaders at all levels who inspire others to maximise their potential in a strong and dynamic local government sector.

Why work under this pillar is important:

Effective leadership is the foundation for progress and should be demonstrated at all levels. Local government must therefore invest in developing current and future leaders.

Benefits for:

- **The Sector** and councils will have competent motivated leaders who will build high performance teams.
- **Councils** - Individual leaders will have clear guidance on what is required, together with support and advice on developing their skills, and leaders will be recognised for displaying leadership competence.
- **Staff** will be supported by motivated leaders who care about their teams.
- **Customers** will have the assurance that leaders at all levels are focussed on developing, motivating and directing staff to deliver high quality services.

TALENT MANAGEMENT

Strategic Goal:

Local government will create the culture, systems and processes which ensure the right people with the right capabilities are in the right place at the right time to develop and support a strong and dynamic sector.

Why work under this pillar is important:

A sectoral approach to talent management will facilitate the promotion and deployment of staff throughout local government. This has clear benefits for developing both the individual and the organisation they work in.

Benefits for:

- **The Sector** will have the ability to plan for and support the movement and management of skilled staff within and across councils.
- **Councils** will be able to draw on a pool of staff with up to date competencies, capable of responding flexibly to business needs.
- **Staff** will have a clear framework, which allows development throughout their working life cycle.
- **Customers** will have the assurance that staff resources are effectively managed to support service delivery.

**1. Leadership and
Talent Management**

YEAR GOALS (January 2015 – January 2016)	AGREED ACTION POINTS	GROUP COMPOSITION
<p>Gain endorsement and support from stakeholder groupings in the 11 new councils for the Leadership Framework and the Leadership Academy</p> <p>Identify 5 councils to pilot the Leadership Academy</p> <p>Key stakeholders in local government understand and accept the principles and processes of talent management.</p>	<p>Engage with the LGCEG and HR Leads to gain endorsement of the Leadership Academy for the new 11 councils</p> <p>Seek nominations for the working group from the LGCEG and HR Leads</p> <p>Produce a map to demonstrate the linkages between the working groups and projects and ensure they are fully understood</p> <p>Meet with providers of leadership training at the 3 levels to outline the specification and seek a suite of programmes/courses for the Academy</p> <p>Update the LGTG and Elected Members' Steering Group on progress to date</p> <p>Identify councils to pilot the Leadership Academy</p> <p>Adapt the Talent Identification Toolkit for use in local government</p> <p>Establish and test the Toolkit with key stakeholders</p> <p>Develop a succession management policy and test in pilot councils</p>	<p>Chair: Ashley Boreland, Ards BC</p> <p>HR Lead: Marissa Canavan, Mid Ulster DC</p> <p>LGSC Facilitation: Lorna Parsons/Lisa O'Neill</p> <p>Members:</p> <p>Nigel Hamilton, LGSC Member</p> <p>Samantha Rea, Ards BC</p> <p>Christine Allister, Banbridge DC</p> <p>Gail Wright, Belfast CC</p> <p>Elizabeth Beattie, Causeway Coast and Glens DC</p> <p>Liam Glavin, Cookstown DC</p> <p>Raymond Donnelly, Craigavon BC</p> <p>Debbie Rogers, Derry CC</p> <p>Michael Riddell, Lisburn CC</p> <p>Theresa Donaldson, Lisburn City and Castlereagh DC</p>

**1. Leadership and
Talent Management**

**2. Performance Culture and
Learning Organisation**

**3. Employee Relations and
Pay & Reward**

PERFORMANCE CULTURE

Strategic Goal:

Local government will create an environment where, individual, team and council goals are aligned; individuals will receive continuous development and feedback on performance and will be recognised for excellence in service delivery.

Why work under this pillar is important:

Given the pressure for efficiency, productivity and innovation; the development of a performance culture is critical. A change is required at a strategic level in local government to move the approach to performance management away from a process driven exercise, towards providing feedback on performance, coaching and developing staff, and achieving excellence in service delivery.

Benefits for:

- **The Sector** will benefit from a common understanding of managing performance.
- **Councils** will have a demonstrable link between individual performance and organisational outcomes.
- **Staff** will have a clear understanding of what is required of them and will be recognised for their input.
- **Customers** can expect that staff resources will be clearly focussed on delivering customer and community needs.

LEARNING ORGANISATION

Strategic Goal:

Local government will create a learning environment where leaders equip individuals to take ownership of their learning and development needs which supports their performance in delivering excellent service.

Why work under this pillar is important:

In previous years the focus has been on formal training interventions for staff and whilst these will continue to play an important role in the sector's learning suite, the perspective must now broaden. The overall focus needs to shift to creating a learning culture that links learning and development explicitly to performance and which supports business needs. This requires a cultural shift from a reliance on formal approaches, to a sector focussed on productivity, outcomes, capability and efficiency. Learning must now be set within this context.

Benefits for:

- **The Sector** will have the ability to plan for and support collaborative learning, to facilitate the efficient use of resources and the development of good practice.
- **Councils** will benefit from accessing opportunities for business focussed skills development.
- **Staff** will have a clear framework, within which to identify their own learning needs and opportunities.
- **Customers** will have assurance that staff are effectively skilled to deliver services.

2. Performance Culture and Learning Organisation

YEAR GOALS (January 2015 – January 2016)	AGREED ACTION POINTS	GROUP COMPOSITION
<p>Gain endorsement and support from the 11 new councils for the Performance Culture Toolkit</p> <p>Identify 3 councils to pilot the Toolkit</p> <p>Make recommendations and take actions towards achieving a shift in emphasis in the sector from Training and Development to Learning Organisations.</p>	<p>Cross reference Performance Culture Toolkit against iESE self-assessment Readiness checklist.</p> <p>Seek LGTG support for the following detailed actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arrange to have the finalised Toolkit digitised for ease of use • plan awareness/training sessions to facilitate piloting of the Toolkit • arrange for support to individual councils to implement the Toolkit <p>Collate the learning and information from OD/improvement projects supported by the Staff Commission and Training Group to use as case study examples for inclusion in the Toolkit.</p> <p>Identify other benchmarking opportunities.</p> <p>Engage with key stakeholders on the findings of the pilot implementation of the Performance Culture Toolkit and the implications for learning and development in the sector.</p> <p>Define what a learning organisation looks like in local government, what processes and practices support it and how learning links to performance.</p>	<p>Chair: Anne Donaghy, Mid and East Antrim DC</p> <p>HR Lead: Sinead McNicholl, Derry CC</p> <p>LGSC Facilitation: Linda Leahy</p> <p>Members:</p> <p>Stuart Wilson, Antrim BC</p> <p>Sharon Currans, Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon DC</p> <p>Joan Kinnaird, Ballymoney BC</p> <p>Clare McKenna, Belfast CC</p> <p>Niamh Shannon, Craigavon BC</p> <p>Paula Donnelly, Derry and Strabane DC</p> <p>Carla Melarkey, Fermanagh DC</p> <p>Sandra Kelly, Causeway Coast and Glens DC</p> <p>Joe McGuckin, Cookstown DC</p> <p>Caroline Magee, Lisburn CC</p> <p>Helen McElroy, Newry and Mourne DC</p> <p>Catrina Miskelly, Newry, Mourne and Down DC</p> <p>Rosemary McCullough, North Down and Ards DC</p> <p>Michelle Cummins, North Down BC</p> <p>Rachelle Craig, Strabane DC</p>

**1. Leadership and
Talent Management**

**2. Performance Culture and
Learning Organisation**

**3. Employee Relations and
Pay & Reward**

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

Strategic Goal:

Local government will establish an agreed Employee Relations Framework and environment that delivers results, enables change to happen smoothly at sector and council level and provides consistency.

Why work under this pillar is important:

Growing effective employee relationships is one of the cornerstones of this Strategic Framework. Updating and development of the existing machinery and infrastructure to support an effective employer and trade union relationship is a priority to enable the required workforce changes to be achieved.

Benefits for:

- **The Sector** as a whole, as well as councils and trades unions, will benefit from a professionally constituted and resourced framework, with transparent decision making, capable of delivering the efficiency and improvement agenda.
- **Councils** will benefit from a robust employee relations framework and comprehensive engagement with staff.
- **Staff** will benefit from access to representation in a fair and consistent manner and a holistic approach to employee engagement.
- **Customers** will benefit from well-motivated staff implementing council objectives.

PAY AND REWARD

Strategic Goal:

Local government will ensure the effective management of Pay and Reward across the sector to support achievement of a flexible, motivated workforce.

Why work under this pillar is important:

A new approach to pay and reward presents the opportunity to balance the motivational aspects of reward with the need to manage workforce costs.

Benefits for:

- **The Sector** will have the capacity to demonstrate efficient workforce planning supported by a unified pay and reward framework.
- **Councils** will have a consistent pay and grading process, which is accepted across local government and which will enable the sector to have effective control over workforce costs and reduce the potential for disputes in relation to individual pay related grievances.
- **Staff** will benefit from an equitable and transparent pay and grading system and related total reward package, including monetary and non-monetary factors.
- **Customers** can expect increased value for money from the management of workforce costs.

3. Employee Relations and Pay & Reward

YEAR GOALS (January 2015 – January 2016)	AGREED ACTION POINTS	GROUP COMPOSITION
<p><u>Priority Activity</u></p> <p>Negotiating machinery</p> <p>Implement the new model of negotiating machinery.</p>	<p>Engage with new Chief Executives and HR Leads to examine options for taking forward proposals.</p> <p>Update Joint Forum and Commission on progress/issues.</p> <p>Finalise proposals with stakeholders.</p> <p>Draft proposals for “Strategic Direction” Work Plan for the constituent parts of the new IR Framework.</p> <p>Seek final endorsement from Commission, Joint Forum etc.</p> <p>Issue to councils for adoption.</p> <p>Engage in winding up of existing machinery and implement new arrangements.</p> <p>The Commission to decide on the issue of a statutory recommendation to initiate the new arrangements.</p>	<p>Chairs: David McCammick, Antrim BC Roger Wilson, Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon DC</p> <p>HR Leads: Karen Hargan, Mid and East Antrim DC Catherine Sweeney, Newry and Mourne DC</p> <p>LGSC Facilitation: Dermot O’Hara</p> <p>Members: Sharon Currans, Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon DC John Adams, NILGA Bumper Graham, NIPSA Davy Edmont, Unite Gillian Arthur, Ards BC Helen Devlin, Belfast CC Marissa Canavan, Mid Ulster DC Mark McAneny, Derry CC Rosemary McCullough, North Down and Ards DC Tommy Wright, Labour Relations Agency</p>

3. Employee Relations and Pay & Reward

YEAR GOALS (January 2015 – January 2016)	AGREED ACTION POINTS	GROUP COMPOSITION
<p><u>Additional Activity</u></p> <p>Generic Pay Bands</p> <p>Gain acceptance of the overall vision of a single approach to pay and grading and a common framework of generic pay bands across the sector.</p> <p>Employee Engagement and Employee Wellbeing</p> <p>Identify best practice models for Employee Engagement and Employee Wellbeing.</p>	<p>Stage One</p> <p>The one-off gathering of <u>HR Data only</u> across all councils.</p> <p>Stage Two</p> <p>Add data in relation to the staff transferring into local government as part of the Reform process when it becomes available.</p> <p>Stage Three</p> <p>Create a dynamic system for gathering HR and payroll data at specified intervals, for example twice yearly, to provide regular updates to the Workforce Profile for the sector.</p> <p>Support formal employee relations through identifying best practice models for Employee Engagement and Employee Wellbeing and in policy areas such as Grievance, Discipline and encouraging mechanisms for alternative disputes resolution.</p>	