Report on	Planning Department Service Improvement Plan 2019-2020
Date of Meeting	1st September 2020
Reporting Officer	Chris Boomer
Contact Officer	Chris Boomer

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide members with a copy of the Planning Departments Service Improvement Plan (SIP) for the period 2020-2021.
2.0	Background
2.1	The attached SIP shows how the service provided by the Planning Department will contribute to the Council's corporate objectives.
2.2	A SIP was in place for the period 2019-2020 and a section of the attached SIP sets out the performance overview and end of year progress status for that period. Also included in the SIP is a Service Work Plan for the same period, outlining the various actions to be taken by us over the reporting period.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	There are a number of actions and outcomes within the SIP which the Planning Department will report on over the course of the period 2020 -21.
3.2	Also included are a number of risks for the Planning Department and details of mitigation in place to control these in the most effective way. A key risk continues to relate to staff retention and the ability to maintain a full complement of staff needed to deliver an effective service.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: Finances are identified in the report. The costs of a new Planning Portal is being dealt with separately.

Human: Working practice will need to adapt as a result of the pandemic. Home working is now a common feature of that working practice
Risk Management: Covid 19 and evolving financial situation.
Screening & Impact Assessments
Equality & Good Relations Implications: None identified
Rural Needs Implications: None identified
Recommendation(s)
Members are requested to note the contents of this report and agree the attached Planning Department Service Improvement Plan 2020-2021.
Documents Attached & References
- Planning Department Service Improvement Plan 2020-2021.



Planning Department

SERVICE PLAN - 2020 / 21

Date

Consulted within staff team

/ 2020

Discussed & signed off by Director

/ / 2020

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1.0 OVERALL PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE SERVICE

1.1. Purpose and Scope of the Service

The Planning Department is led by the Planning Manager and it is responsible for the delivery of a number of functions including the following:

- receiving and making decisions on planning applications:
- enforcing breaches of planning control;
- making tree preservation orders and providing advice on conservation area development; and
- producing a local development plan which will outline how land in Mid Ulster should be used and developed in the future.

1.2 Responsibilities

In order to deliver these services the Planning Department has been divided into 3 separate functions:

1. The Planning Manager

The Planning Manager takes overall responsibility for decision making (as delegated to him), reporting to Committees, and the daily running of the Planning Department. The Head of Development Management and Head of Development Plan report to him: -

- Major Applications team handling with large proposals for retail, industry, civic and housing developments, both at pre application discussions and following submission of an application.
- Enforcement team investigating alleged breaches in planning control, serving notices and providing witness for prosecutions.
- Business support team dealing with finances, correspondence and administration of planning applications. .

2. Local Development Management

This function is led by the Head of Development Management and isprimarily concerned with dealing with local applications. These make up 99% of all planning applications. It comprises, two area based teams. One is located at the Magherafelt Councils offices on the Ballyronan Road, Magherafelt, and the other at the Dungannnon Council Offices at Circular Road Dungannon. The respective teams deal with applications in the following Electoral Areas:-

- 1. Cookstown, Magherafelt, Carntogher and Mayola
- 2. Dungannon, Clogher and Torrent_

In addition to researching and reporting on applications to the Committee on local planning applications, the teams also handle submissions fr listed building and conservation area consents, Non material changes, Certificates of lawful development and

other consents under the Planning Act. They are also the front line for providing planning advice on a range of planning matters to all of our customers.

3. <u>Development Plan</u>

The Head of Development Plan takes responsibility for the Development Plan Section and the primary responsibility is the preparation of the Local Development Plan for Mid Ulster District. The section is also responsible for preparing supplementary planning advice, working and liaising with stakeholders on Planning Policy matters. The section also undertakes the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment and deals with other environmental matters such as tree preservation and conservation.

1.3 Customers & Stakeholders

Customers & Stakeholders applicants agent / architects objectors complainants in relation to breaches of planning control Planning Committee Council officers and elected representatives Statutory Consultees Local Development Plan Consultation Bodies Mid Ulster residents, businesses and interested parties

1.4 Performance Overview in 2020/21

The following table provides a progress summary and the impact made by last years' Service Plan (2019-2020). It also details key successes, a summary of the end of year progress, remaining challenges for the Service and how it made a difference.

2020/21 Performance Overview	End of Year Progress Status: Completed/Commenced/Other
 To determine 50% of all local applications within 15 weeks Comment & Analysis: What does this mean: This provides an indication of efficiency. Mid ulster is achieving higher than the regional average of 54.1% of applications decided in 8 weeks and it is the 4th fastest of all the Councils. Comparison with last year same reporting period: Last year only 42.9% of applications were decided within 15 weeks, representing a major improvement. 	Ongoing: The statutory target has been met with 59.3% of applications dealt within 15 week.
To determine 50% of all Major applications within 30 weeks Comment & Analysis: Finalised Q2 figures show am improvement over Q1. Q3 figures not yet available. What does this mean: With only 12 najr applications decided (the third highest no in NI), this target is not really statistically relevant or a good indicator. It really shows major applications are the ost complex and take the longest time Comparison with last year same reporting period: a slight dip in performance in that 12.5 % of majors were determined in the timeframe.	Ongoing: No cases were decided within 30 weeks and the average time was 64.7 weeks.

 To process 70% of all enforcement cases to target conclusion within 39 weeks of receipt of complaint

Comment an Analysis This is an indicator of efficiency and shows the efficiency of the Enforcement Section.

he statutory target of

Comparison with last year – Last years performance of 77.4% has been surpassed.

Ongoing: This target has been surpassed with 91% of cases concluded within 39.

To speed up consultation responses on applications

Comment an Analysis The improvement is implicit in the achievement of the local performance targets. This target will not be needed next year.

Complete: Liaison has taken place with the Environmental Health and Road serve to provide a guide on when to consult with

 To provide submissions on Appeals, Judicial Reviews, Consultations and Calls for evidence – 100% within response timeframe

Comment an Annalysis It is business critical this this is met.

Ongoing – Over this period all such targets have been within the timeframe set by the external bodies.

Comparison with last year - No change

To complete the next phase in the preparation of a new local development plan for Mid Ulster – undertake public consultation on the Draft Plan Strategy, consider representations and seek agreement to submit the DPS to the Department for Independent Examination in the Winter 2019/20

Comment and Analysis This needs to be carried over for the coming year

Ongoing: The Local Development Plan 2030 - Draft Plan Strategy (and related supporting documents) was pulblished and a consultation tood place with the results assessed. However due to an error in the advertising period the exercise needs to be repeated to ensure legal compliance.

To respond to correspondence within 15 working days (20 days under EIR) Comment and Analysis - This provides a good indication of customer care showing that the number of complaints is relatively low in relation to the work load and that officers are managing to deal with inquiries Comparison with last year This represents a minor improvement					
To provide internal consultation advice on conservation matters on 90% of cases within 10 working days. Comment and Analysis This indicator only assists in showing the performance of one officer and is not helpful in terms of reviewing the performance of the Department as a whole.	Ongoing: Figures for this year are currently unavailable				
To speed up consultation responses on applications Work on this is ongoing and discussions have taken place with both Environmental Health and DFI Roads on how best to address this.	Ongoing: Work on this is ongoing and discussions are continuing.				
To continue to work with other councils on a new planning portal to promote easier access on-line submission of applications. A decision will be made in 2020 whether t continue with the regional system or whether Mid Uster will provide its independent system	Ongoing: Work on this was ongoing through the year.				

2.0 **SERVICE WORKPLAN 2020/2021**

The coming business year is going to prove particularly challenging as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic, which will inevitably lay to delay in work and financial challenges over the year. The key improvement in the service will be the installment of the new computer system, a project that will take longer than the business year. This said, it is prudent to limit any objectives to; timely decision-making represented by statutory targets; customer care represented by responses to correspondence and progress on the development plan represented by progressing it to submission of the strategy to the Department.

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

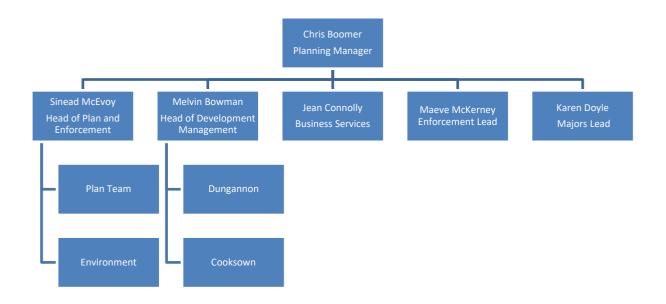
2.1 Budget 2020/21

The initial budget for the year is as shown in the table below. However whether the income will stand up in light of pandemic is yet to be seen and as a consequences opportunities for savings will be sort. Savings of £11080 were identified at July Council meetings.

Service Budget Headings	£
Planning Manager and Administration	462536
Development Management	683061
Development Plan	688754
Enforcement	194236
Gross Budget	
Property Certificate and other Income	97000
Planning Fees Income	156000
Net Budget for 2019-20	371,587

2.2 Staffing Complement - 2019/20

The Management structure at the start of the year is shown in the below diagram and the number of full time equivalents is shown in the table. Over the year it is envisaged that change will be needed to introduce the new computer system. Therefore the enforcement function will be dealt with by the area teams and the team leader will become the change team lead, with responsibility for introducing the new computer system, reviewing standard procedures and correspondence, liaising with stakeholders, and preparing operational guidance on the system. There will be a deed for fluidity between the teams to ensure efficient use of staff resources in response to changing circumstances and the pandemic.



Current Staffing	No. of Staff (FTE)
Planning Manager	1
Head of Service	2
Team Leads/ Managers	6.6
P & T Officers	19.6
Admin Officers	8.4
Total	37.6

2.3 Service Work Plan - 2020/21

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

SERVICE WORK PLAN

Link to Community	Corporate Plan Theme								
Plan Theme:									
CMP 2.2 Infrastructure - We increasingly value our environment & enhance it	CRP 1.5 Delivering f	CRP 1.5 Delivering for Our People - Delivery of quality and timely planning decisions implement and organisational strategy for a modern workplace							
Service Objective	How Will we measure the	Where are we now?	What do we want to achieve?	How Will we get there?					
	impact of our work (PI's)	(Baseline data)	a) to achieve? (Targets)	Key Actions	Dates	Owners	Outcome		
To determine 50% of local planning applications within 15 weeks	Monitoring of quarterly figures provided in regional statistics	Performance over 2019/20 was strong and well within targets.	To achieve the target	 Continued to implement revised monthly group meeting arrangements To update out IT hardware to allow for homeworking. To keep staffing under continuous review to ensure the right people are assigned to the right function at the right time. 	Ongoing	Chris Boomer Melvin Bowman	We contribute to the delivery of quality and timely planning decisions.		

Link to Community Plan Theme:	Corporate Plan Theme								
CMP 2.2 Infrastructure - We increasingly value our environment & enhance it	CRP 1.5 Delivering f	CRP 1.5 Delivering for Our People - Delivery of quality and timely planning decisions implement and organisational strategy for a modern workplace							
Service Objective			What do we want to achieve?	How Will we get there?					
measure the impact of our work (PI's) (Baseline data) to achieve? (Targets)		Key Actions	Dates	Owners	Outcome				
To determine 50% of Major applications within 30 weeks	Monitoring of quarterly figures provided in regional statistics	In the 2019/20 this objective was not achieved.	Over the period it is aimed to keep pace with the no of applications submitted.	 Planning Manager continues to have direct oversight of Major applications team Monthly monitoring of performance Greater use of Pre application discussions 	Ongoing	Chris Boomer	We contribute to the delivery of quality and timely planning decisions.		

Link to Community Plan Theme:	Corporate Plan Theme CRP 2.1 Creating Growth - Preparation of a local development plan							
CMP 1.1 Economic Growth - We prosper in a stronger & more competitive economy								
Service Objective	How Will we measure the	Where are we now? (Baseline data)	What do we want to	How Will we get there?				
	impact of our work (PI's)	(Baseline data)	achieve? (Targets)	Key Actions	Dates	Owners	Outcome	
To re-consult on the Local Development Plan Draft Plan Strategy, consider all representations received and submit the Draft Plan to the Department to order a public examination	Progress against key actions/milestones	Draft Plan has been prepared and an initial but flawed consultation carried out	1 Carry out consultation 2 Provide for counter 3 Consider objections and submit Plan	 Agree a revised statement of community involvement Agree a new timetables. Close consultation on Draft Plan Strategy and Counter representations Consider representations and Members to submit Draft Plan Strategy to Department before close of 2021. 	July 2020 Sept 2020 December2020 March 2021	Chris Boomer Sinead McEvoy	Provide public certainty on the development of Mid Ulster District for the period up to 2030.	

Link to Community	Corporate Plan	n Theme								
Plan Theme:										
CMP 2.2 Infrastructure - We increasingly value our environment & enhance it for our children	CRP 3.5 Sustaining	RP 3.5 Sustaining our Environment - Efficiencies in processing Planning Enforcement Cases								
Service Objective	Service Objective How Will we measure the impact of our work (PI's) Where are we now? (Baseline data) to achieve? (Targets)		What do we want	How Will we get there?						
				Key Actions	Dates	Owners	Outcome			
To process 70% of all enforcement cases to target conclusion within 39 weeks of receipt of the complaint.	By monitoring monthly and quarterly figures provided by Dfl.	Achieving the targets	To continue to meet the target of processing 70% of all enforcement cases to target conclusion within 39 weeks of receipt of complaint	 Continue to hold monthly group meetings Monitor staff resources Provide guidance when transferring function to area teams 	Monthly Ongoing	Chris Boomer Melvin Bowman	Continued efficiencies in processing of enforcement cases.			

Link to Community	Corporate Plai	n Theme								
Plan Theme:										
CMP 1.1 Economic Growth - We prosper in a stronger & more competitive economy	CRP 5.3 Deliverin	RP 5.3 Delivering for our People: Improving access to services and customer experience								
Service Objective	How Will we measure the	Where are we now?	What do we want to achieve?	Нс	ow Will we get there?					
	impact of our work (PI's)	(Baseline data)	(Targets)	Ke	y Actions	Dates	Owners	Outcome		
To start on the implementation of a new computer system and planning portal for mid Ulster.	By Progress against project timescales	We had spent the last year working with Dfl on provision of a	An improved planning system	•	To decide whether to proceed with the regional proposal or our own If independent to set up a team to work with IT sections on procurement of system. To appoint system providers To commence work on implementing new system –	June 2020 August 2020 Autumn 2020 Into 2021/22	Chris Boomer	New PP that represents best value for the users in Mid Ulster.		

3.0 IMPROVING OUR SERVICE AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE

3.1 Annual Improvement Objectives and Associated Programs

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

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

The Council will focus on the following improvement objectives for 2020 to 2021:

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

The objectives in this service plan reflect these objectives:

- to improve the economy through the development plan,
- continue achieve good planning application processing times
- Improve access to services through the new planning portal.

Due to Covid 19 pandemic the improvement objectives for 2019-20 and are to be agreed for 2020/21.

4.0 Equality

The council is committed to fulfilling its obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. This commitment is demonstrated by allocating the appropriate time, people and resources to fulfil our equality duties. The Equality Scheme commits us to implementing our duties effectively and in a timely way alongside implementing this Service Plan. Without impacting upon our obligations, when carrying out our equality duties we will also take into account the desirability of promoting good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. We are also required to take into account the need to promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability and encourage the participation of

people with a disability in public life. Mid Ulster District Council are committed to fulfilling our disability duties and we set out how we intend to do this in our disability action plan.

3.2 Service Contribution to the Corporate Improvement Objectives/Projects

Link to Community Plan Theme:		Corporate Plan Theme									
CMP 1.1 Economic Growth - We prosper in a stronger & more competitive economy		CRP 1.5	CRP 1.5 Delivering for Our People - Delivery of quality and timely planning decisions implement and organisational strategy for a modern workplace								
Improvement Plan Objective	·		What do we want to	How Will we get there?							
Objective		the impact of our work (PI's)	now? (Baseline data)	Achieve (Targets)	Key Actions	Dates	Owners	Outcome			
2.0 To improve the average processing time of local planning applications	To determine 50% of local planning applications within 15 Weeks	Monitoring of quarterly figures provided in regional statistics	In the 2019/20 based on the target was achieved	To continue to deliver timely decisions	 Continue to implement the revised group meeting arrangements, particularly Team Lead role in delegated applications Ensure full staff complement where possible. Monitor performance on a monthly basis. 	Ongoing	Team Leads Head of Dev Management Planning Manager	efficient and timely decisions Statutory target met teams			

Link to Community	Corporate Plan	n Theme							
Plan Theme:									
CMP 2.2 Infrastructure - We increasingly value our environment & enhance it	CRP 1.5 Delivering f	RP 1.5 Delivering for Our People - Delivery of quality and timely planning decisions implement and organisational strategy for a modern workplace							
Service Objective			What do we want to achieve?	How Will we get there?					
	impact of our work (PI's)	(baseline data)	(Targets)	Key Actions	Dates	Owners	Outcome		
To determine 50% of Major applications within 30 weeks	Monitoring of quarterly figures provided in regional statistics	In the 2019/20 year based on available figures we missed the target	To keep pace with the Major applications and ensure decisions issued • Planning Manager continues to have direct oversight of Major applications team • Monthly monitoring of performance • Greater use of PAD discussions		Ongoing	Chris Boomer	We contribute to the delivery of quality and timely planning decisions.		

Link to Community	Corporate Plan	n Theme							
Plan Theme:									
CMP 2.2 Infrastructure - We increasingly value our environment & enhance it for our children	CRP 3.5 Sustaining (CRP 3.5 Sustaining our Environment - Efficiencies in processing Planning Enforcement Cases							
Service Objective	How Will we Where are we now? What do w			How Will we get there?					
	measure the impact of our work (PI's) (Baseline data) to achieve? (Targets)		Key Actions	Dates	Owners	Outcome			
To process 70% of all enforcement cases to target conclusion within 39 weeks of receipt of complaint.	By monitoring monthly and quarterly figures provided by Dfl.	Targets were met for 2019/2020	To continue to meet the target	 Continue to hold monthly group meetings Train area teams to take on role Monitor staff resources 	Monthly Ongoing	Chris Boomer Melvin Bowman	Continued efficiencies in processing of enforcement cases.		

Link to Community Plan Theme:	Corporate Plan	n Theme						
CMP 2.2 Infrastructure - We increasingly value our environment & enhance it	CRP 1.5 Delivering f	P 1.5 Delivering for Our People - Delivery of quality and timely planning decisions implement and organisational strategy for a modern workplace						
Service Objective	How Will we measure the impact of our work (PI's) Where are we remark (Baseline data)	Where are we now?	What do we want to achieve? (Targets)	How Will we get there?				
		(baselille data)		Key Actions	Dates	Owners	Outcome	
To respond to correspondence within 15 working days and FOI/EIR request in 20 working days	By monitoring and our quarterly internal figures.	In the 2019/20 year we achieved a figure of 70%.	Achieve target of 90% responses within 15working days.	 To ensure staff remain customer focused through team briefings. To monitor performance and provide reminders of due dates 	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing	Chris Boomer	We provide a customer friendly service.	

Link to	Corporate Plan The	eme					
Community							
CMP 2.2 Infrastructure - We increasingly value our environment & enhance it	CRP 1.5 Delivering for Ou	r People – Providing bette	r access to services				
Service Objective	How Will we measure the	Where are we now?	What do we want to achieve?	How Will we get there?			
	impact of our work (Pl's)	(Baseline data)	(Targets)	Key Actions	Dates	Owners	Outcome
To improve the accessibility of our services by increasing the number available online by delivering a new planning portal for mid ulster by end of 2021.	By progress in accordance with a business plan.	DfI presented a proposal to the Council. It was declined and a decision taken to provide our own I T system.	To have commenced on the installation of the new system commenced before the end of 2020.	 Set up a project team Issue a tender document for suppliers to provide bid. Appoint supplier Review and update standard practice and documentation Liaise with stakeholders 	Aug 2020 Sept 2020 Winter 2020	Dr. Chris Boomer	Progress made on new portal.

3.3 RISK MANAGEMENT OF SERVICE

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

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

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

Risk Ref Number	Description of Risk	Risk Rating	Mitigation Activity
1.	Failure to meet major application target	12	Planning Manager continues to have direct oversight of Major applications team. Monthly monitoring of performance. Greater use of PAD discussions. However, it remains that the statutory bench mark to a large degree is unrealistic.
2.	Failure to meet local applications target	10	Whilst good performance was obtained last year, Covid 19 means there is a great deal of uncertainty. Bu accommodating home working and equipping staff with new equipment to facilitate that the planning service can continue reduce that risk to 7. Absence of planning committees, also causes delay so the introduction of web based solutions should assist. The situation should normalize as the year goes on. Monitor, through group meeting (live or virtual), lists weekly lists, etc. will be essential
3.	Failure to progress Local Development Plan 2030 – Draft Plan Strategy to submission to Department for Independent Examination in Winter 2020/2021	9	Covid 19 has the ability to disrupt the re-consultation. By revising the statement of community involvement requirements and utilizing on line communicates should assist on getting the plan back on track. Although building closures are possible and this would lead to delay.

4.	Failure to progress 70% of all enforcement cases to target conclusion within 39 weeks of receipt of complaint in year 2018/2019.	9	Both Covid 19 and the transfer of the function to the area teams poses risks. The situation will need monitored through monthly group meetings and case management.
5	Failure to make adequate progress procuring and installing a new planning portal	9	A project team shall be set up to work on both procurement and setting up the planning portal. The team will also liaise with stakeholders on the new system.

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