



# ***Legal Services Chief Executive's Department***

## **SERVICE PLAN - 2018 / 19**

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## **1.0 OVERALL PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE SERVICE**

### **1.1 Purpose and Scope of the Service**

The service is responsible for the management and the provision of a comprehensive legal advice and support service to the Council across the Council's wide range of functions and responsibilities. The aim of the service is to provide high quality and timely advice to the Council in order to assist it operating within the wider legal landscape.

### **1.2 Responsibilities**

The service is specifically responsible for the following:

- The provision of proactive, accurate and timely professional legal advice on matters relating to the functions and the exercise of the powers and duties of the Council;
- The drafting and settling of legal documentation;
- The provision of training and information on legal and quasi legal matters to officers and Elected Members as required;
- The instigation and defence of claims, actions, applications and other legal proceedings, including representation, as required on behalf of the Council;
- To liaise with other legal professionals, the courts, government departments, statutory bodies and other organisations in relation to legal matters pertaining to the Council.

### **1.3 Customers & Stakeholders**

<b>Customers &amp; Stakeholders</b>
• The Council; officers and Elected Members
• Other members of the legal profession, including solicitors and barristers
• The judiciary and court officials
• Individuals residing in and businesses and organisations operating within the district
• Other government departments and agencies
• Other councils, statutory bodies

### **1.4 Performance Overview**

The following table provides a progress summary and the impact made by the latest available Service Plan (2016-2017). It also details key successes, remaining challenges for the Service and how it made a difference.

Performance Overview
A Service Improvement Plan for the Service was not implemented for 2017/18. Therefore, the progress summary is benchmarked against 2016/17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A bespoke legal services case management system has been implemented, which has led to a more harmonised and efficient way of providing legal services;</li> <li>An internal review on the engagement of legal services is underway in order to ascertain how legal services can better serve the Council;</li> </ul>

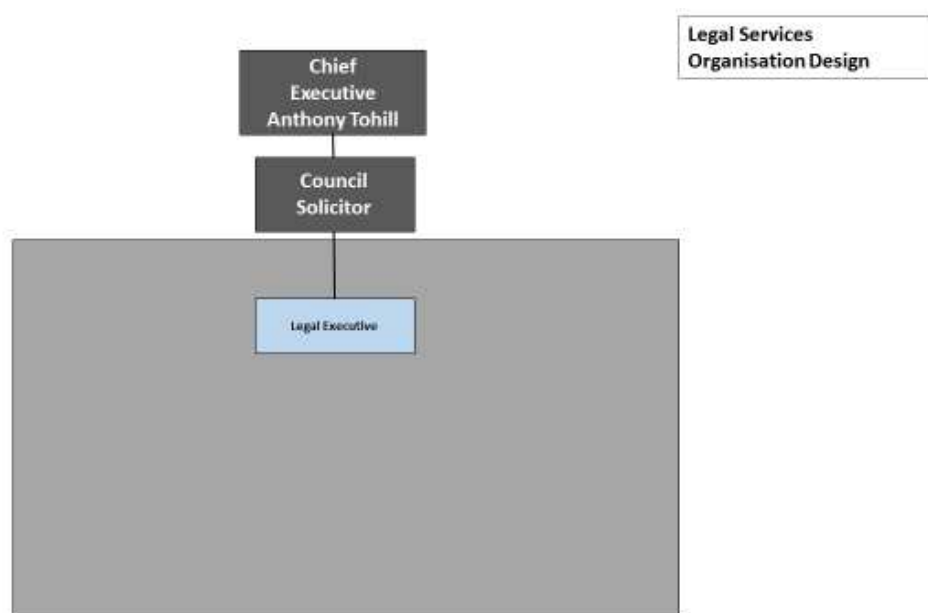
## 2.0 SERVICE WORKPLAN 2018/19

The following tables confirm the resources, financial and people, which the Service has access to throughout 2018-19 to deliver its actions, activities and core business.

### 2.1 Budget 2018/19

Service Budget Headings	£
Legal Fees	129,497
Payroll and mileage	103,550
Gross Budget	233,047
Income	
Net Budget for 2018-19	233,047

### 2.2 Staffing Complement - 2018/19



Staffing	No. of Staff
Head of Service	1

Managers	
Officers	1
Remaining Team	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>

### **2.3 Service Work Plan - 2018/19**

This plan confirms the core activities and actions which will form your Service Work Plan for 2018-19. This should be a high level capture of the Service activities and work which it will focus on throughout 2018-19. The Plan links to the Council's 2015-2019 Corporate Plan priorities, Annual Corporate Improvement Plan Objectives, Corporate Indicators and Mid Ulster Sustainable Community Plan themes & outcomes:

## SERVICE WORK PLAN

Link to Community Plan Theme:	Corporate Plan Theme						
<i>CMP 3.3 Education &amp; Skills - We are more entrepreneurial,</i>	<i>CRP 1.6 Delivering for Our People - Integration of a culture of service improvement as the key to service delivery.</i>						
Service Objective	How Will we measure the impact of our work (PI's)	Where are we now? (Baseline data)	What do we want to achieve? (Targets)	How Will we get there?			
				Key Actions	Dates	Owners	Outcome
Improve access to and the provision of high quality legal advice throughout all departments within the Council.	Review progress within Legal Services on a monthly basis. Seek feedback from departments on a quarterly basis.	Currently no target timescales to reply to internal correspondence/requests. No formal method of evaluation or feedback from service users.	Average of 90% of all Instructions Sheets replied to within agreed time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a Proforma for seeking legal advice;</li> <li>Develop a programme of engagement with each department/directorate;</li> <li>Develop a means for evaluation.</li> </ul>	30 <sup>th</sup> June 2018 – all initial Engagement sessions completed and Evaluation agreed; 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2018 – begin department feedback/evaluation	Claire McNally	That legal services better delivers for its users in order to assist with more innovative and competitive outcomes for the Council.





### **3.0 IMPROVING OUR SERVICE AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE**

#### **3.1 Annual Improvement Objectives and Associated Programs**

The Council has set a number of annual improvement objectives and associated programs (projects and activities) for 2018/19 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 (Corporate Plan 2015 - 2019), which contains the council's strategic direction and main priorities.

The Council will focus on the following improvement objectives for 2018 to 2019:

- (i) To assist in the growth of the local economy by increasing the number of visitors to our district.
- (ii) To help manage our waste and environment by reducing the amount of waste going to landfill.
- (iii) To improve the accessibility of our services by increasing the number available online.
- (iv) To support people to adopt healthier lifestyles by increasing usage of Council Recreational facilities

We utilise outcome based accountability methodology to manage our performance. This tells us the impact our services are having on communities. Further detailed information relating to Council's improvement objectives, associated activities, outcome indicators, projects and targets is available at [www.midulstercouncil.org/Council/Performance](http://www.midulstercouncil.org/Council/Performance) (*Mid Ulster Council's Improvement Plan 2017/18 – 2018/19*) or by contacting the Democratic Services Team on 03000 132132.

### **3.2 Service Contribution to the Corporate Improvement Objectives/Projects**



### **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 2018-19.

Risk Ref Number	Description of Risk	Risk Rating	Mitigation Activity
1.	<i>Potential increase in legal challenges especially in light of new legislation and responsibilities of the Council</i>	6	<i>Ensure legal advice is being sought in a timely fashion and at the correct stage of the process; Identify and address training needs; Ensure lessons are learned, where appropriate, during and after any legal cases; Continuously improve services by aiming to provide proactive legal advice and assistance.</i>
2.	<i>Brexit</i>	9	<i>Ensure knowledge base is maintained and keep abreast of various stages of Brexit and its potential consequences for local government. Identify any further training needs to increase knowledge.</i>

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)