



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

Democratic Services Chief Executive Section

SERVICE PLAN - 2018 / 19

	Date
Consulted within staff team	/ / 2018
Discussed & signed off by Director	/ / 2018

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1.0 OVERALL PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE SERVICE

1.1 Purpose and Scope of the Service

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

1.2 Responsibilities

The Service is specifically responsible for and charged with delivering the following functions:

- **Committee Services** – facilitation and management of council and committee meetings of Council to include the development of agendas, compilation of meeting packs, providing the summons to councillors and minute taking and follow up activity on decisions resolved
- **Equality, Disability and Good Relations** - in ensuring that the Council meets its Equality Scheme and providing support in ensuring services are delivered in line with obligations under Section 75 (1) and (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998
- **Performance Management & Improvement** – developing and embedding arrangements to support continuous improvement in the delivery of services, by embedding a culture which encourages and champions improvement in everything the Council does to meets its Performance Improvement obligations under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014. Introduction of an improvement framework which supports council's strategic planning through reporting, validating performance data and on-going monitoring.
- **Processing Civic Recognition Requests from Elected Representatives** – receiving, processing and making recommendation to council on requests made for civic recognition.
- **Member Services** – in providing support to councillors as required and progression of the Elected Member Development Charter
- **Corporate Policy** – providing support and advice on the formulation of policies and corporate policy development across the Council
- **Information Requests** – coordinating the receipt and response to Freedom of Information (Fol) made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

1.3 Customers & Stakeholders

Customers & Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillors and elected representatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Management and Heads of Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of public requesting information held by Council, committee recommendations and council decisions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Departments, agencies and bodies which include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Equality Commission for NI ○ NI Audit Office ○ Public Records Office for Northern Ireland (PRONI) ○ Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) ○ Outside Bodies with Councillor representation from Mid Ulster District Council

1.4 Performance Overview in 2017/18

The following table provides a progress summary and the impact made by last years' Service Plan (2017-2018). It also details key successes, remaining challenges for the Service and how it made a difference.

2017-18 Work Plan Actions	Progress Status end of 2017-18
Introduction and roll out Information Requests module on the Customer Relationship Management system to manage Information Requests	Completed: The service initiated the use of the Customer Relationship Management System to manage and process Freedom of Information (FOI) requests in September 2017. 83% of all FOI requests received in 2017-18 responded to within 20 days (415 requests were received)
Implementation of Committee Management Information System (CMIS) to administer council and committee meetings and act as a repository of information on councillors and corporate documents	Completed: The Service undertook developmental and set up activity between May and August 2017 and commenced using CMIS in September 2017
Corporate Improvement Plan compiled and approved by council	Completed: The Improvement Plan for period 2017-18 and 2018-19 was approved and published by 30 th June 2017
Introduction of Rural Proofing under the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016	Completed: Provided learning/training opportunities for relevant staff and councillors throughout January 2018. Reporting template presented to council/committee meetings now incorporates Rural Needs

Development of Consultation Response guidance	Completed: Process for considering and processing consultation documents finalised and issued to staff in October 2017
Development and Implementation of a Policy Development Framework along with associated 'tool box talk' training for relevant staff	Completed Policy Development Framework corporate guidance compiled and issued to relevant staff, accessible on our intranet from November 2017
Development a Performance Improvement Policy	Commenced: Draft policy has been developed in line with NI Audit Office recommendation and scheduled to be finalised in 2018-19
Development of Equality Action Plan	Completed: An Equality Action Plan was developed, consulted on and finalised in December 2017
Review of Disability Action Plan	Completed: Plan was reviewed, revised, consulted on and finalised in December 2017
Targeted Good Relations and Equality training programme provided for staff and Elected Members	Completed: Training was organised and offered to all Councillors in May 2017. An equality focused tiered learning programme will be rolled out across Council from Autumn 2018
To attain the Elected Member Development Charter	Commenced: A training needs survey undertaken and assessed leading to the delivery of 3 quarterly learning programmes for members throughout 2017-18. Assessment for Elected Member Development Charter status is scheduled to take place in September 2018

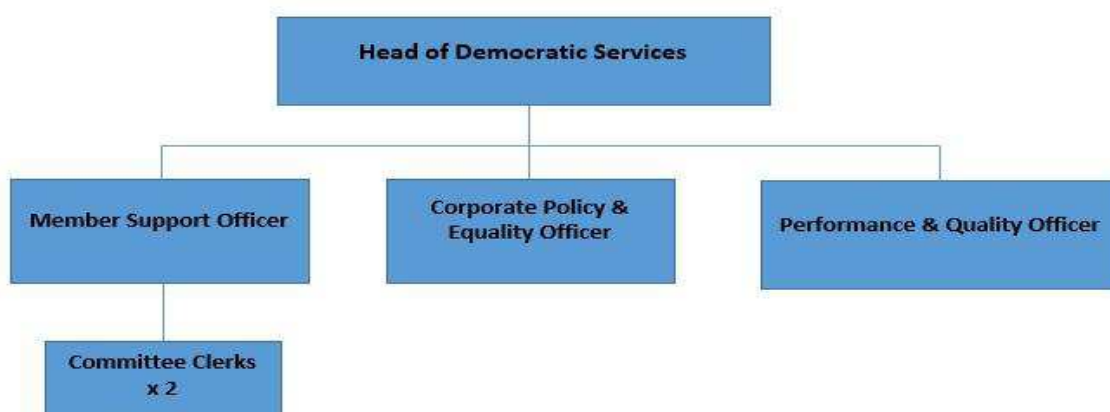
2.0 SERVICE WORKPLAN 2018/19

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	£
Contributions to Member Bodies & Performance Audit Fees	133,200
Members Allowances	911,750
Corporate & Democratic Support	261,828
Town Twinning	10,000
Gross Budget	1,316,778
Income	0
Net Budget for 2018-19	1,316,778

2.2 Staffing Complement - 2018/19



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

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 Community Plan themes & outcomes:

Link to Community Plan Theme:	Corporate Plan Theme						
<i>CMP 3.3 Education & Skills - We are more entrepreneurial,</i>	<i>CRP 1.1 Delivering for Our People - High performing services focused on customer and value for money</i>						
Service Objective	How Will we measure the impact of our work (PI's)	Where are we now? (Baseline data)	What do we want to achieve? (Targets)	How Will we get there?			
				Key Actions	Dates	Owners	Outcome
To improve awareness and accessibility of council policies to council staff by implementing activities by Sept 2018	A departmental directory/handbook of council policies is developed and made accessible to all staff	Policies currently being maintained centrally and across departments/services. Whilst policies are being uploaded to council intranet easier accessibility is still required to search for and retrieve and identify the relevant policy.	Compiled and in place by Sept 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify existing council policies, their review dates, their owners and make record of same 	June 2018	CPEO	Council officers have greater accessibility to council policies, being able to retrieve the correct policy and on who to contact for further details on their application and implementation
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upload each to council intranet by thematic area 	July 2018	CPEO	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an advisory directory/handbook of all council policies containing a summary (purpose) of each policy, the policy owner, when it is due for review and a hyper-link to its location on the intranet (with input from Policy Authors/Owners) 	July 2018	CPEO	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upload directory/handbook to the intranet 	Aug 2018	CPEO	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an advise note and communicate to relevant staff 	Sept 2018	CPEO	

Link to Community Plan Theme:	Corporate Plan Theme						
<i>CMP 3.3 Education & Skills - We are more entrepreneurial, innovative & creative</i>	<i>CRP 1.1 Delivering for Our People - High performing services focused on customer and value for money</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
Increase the number of Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 days by 31 st March 2019 from that of 2017-18 attainment	% of Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 days	83% of 415 Freedom of Information requests were responded to within 20 days in 2016-17	90% of all Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to use and further employ the functionality of the Council's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system Development and generation of quarterly reports from CRM by Service on requests nearing non-compliance and not succeeded within timeframes Deployment of email alerts from CRM for requests requiring a response/nearing 20 day threshold Development of concise briefing document on processing Freedom of Information requests from corporate to department to service level and escalating back to corporate. Briefings to Business Support Managers/Officers 	throughout 2018-19 throughout 2018-19 Throughout 2018-19 Oct 2018	H.DS	% of Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 days has increased from 83%

Link to Community Plan Theme:		Corporate Plan Theme					
CMP 4.2 Health & Wellbeing - We have better availability to the right service, in the right place at the right time.		CRP 4.3 Building Unity - Implement an organisational strategy for a modern workplace					
Service Objective	How Will we measure the impact of our work (PI's)	Where are we now? (Baseline data)	What do we want to achieve? (Targets)	How Will we get there?			
				Key Actions	Dates	Owners	Outcome
To improve Council's performance management data and information management/reporting and ensure compliance with legislation by developing an option appraisal paper for the introduction of an interactive performance management software system by Nov 2018	Interactive performance management software options appraisal paper developed	Performance not centrally collected or stored and not easily retrievable. As a result, staff are required to draft excel updates, which then require further development by the Performance Team to produce a combined analytical/narrative based report. This is resource intensive and in its current form, does not meet business needs.	Developed by November 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake scoping exercise to include performance data mgt. requirements across Council (review processes utilised and legislative requirements in relation to: 	July	PQO	The Performance Management Software System would allow Council to performance manage all of its key strategic and operational level plans from one source and thereby inform key decision making. It would replace the current paper based system ensuring greater accountability and compliance
				1. The Local Government Act (NI) 2014. In addition to its performance management responsibilities, Part 12 of the Act places a general duty on local govt. a general duty for performance improvement. This includes a duty to collect information relating to performance, referring specifically, but not exclusively, to performance objectives and indicators	July	PQO	
				2. In respect of community planning the Council will wish to facilitate central collection and storage of performance information to demonstrate progress in relation to actions, measures and indicators. This will necessitate the provision of secure access to identified external partners so that they can input data directly to the software system.	Aug	PQO	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake benchmarking exercise with other statutory/private organisations performance managements systems 	Sep	PQO	
					Oct	PQO	
					Nov	PQO	

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare gap analysis for paper (scope/function/performance requirements identified) 			
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Link to Community Plan Theme:	Corporate Plan Theme						
<i>CMP 5.2 Vibrant & Safe Communities - We have a greater value and respect for diversity</i>	<i>CRP 4.1 Building Unity - Councillors and staff fully engaged on council business throughout the district</i>						
Service Objective	How Will we measure the impact of our work (PI's)	Where are we now? (Baseline data)	What do we want to achieve? (Targets)	How Will we get there?			
				Key Actions	Dates	Owners	Outcome
To increase Councillors knowledge of their role within the council decision making (committee) process structures by developing a comprehensive Induction Programme for all members by March 2019	The induction programme developed and in place for implementation after the 2019 Local Election	Training and learning opportunities have been provided to Members but there is no 'formal induction' Programme in place	Completed by March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify key elements that members need to be informed of to include; (i) procedural issues; and (ii) knowledge based issues about the council Develop a member directory of Council Departments and Services complete with key contacts (Directors and Heads of Services) and other key services Develop an induction programme to be rolled out from mid to late May 2019, complete with itinerary for each session 	Aug 18 Oct 18 Feb 18	MSO MSO	Councillors fully; informed of council procedural matters allowing them to facilitate them in their role; equipped with knowledge on the workings of the council, its departments and services.

Key to officer abbreviations	
H.DS	Head of Democratic Services
CPEO	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer
PQO	Performance & Quality Officer
MSO	Member Support Officer

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 (*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

None identified by Democratic Services in 2018-19, however, contribution will be made as and when required.

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.	Failing to meet statutory obligations, extending to failure to comply with (i) Sec. 75(1) and 75(2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998; (ii) Freedom of Information Act 2000; (iii) Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Discrimination Order 2006; (iv) Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 on performance improvement	4 (Low)	Equality Scheme approved by Equality Commission in November 2016 and being applied; Customer Relationship Management system being utilised to ensure compliance under Freedom of Information Act 2000; Equality and Disability Action Plans in place; Annual Progress Returns being made to Equality Commission; business planning and Improvement Plans in place
2.	Failure to meet performance improvement obligations and general duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvements from Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014	7 (moderate)	External Audits undertaken by NI Audit Office and no statutory formal recommendations made to date with unqualified audit reports provided on all occasions; Improvement objectives assigned to Senior Responsible

			Officers (Directors) with programmes of work ongoing and continuing into 2018-19; improvement arrangements incorporating NI Audit Office areas for improvement as identified.
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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)