



09 May 2024

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee to be held in The Chamber, Cookstown at Mid Ulster District Council, Council Offices, Burn Road, COOKSTOWN, BT80 8DT on Thursday, 09 May 2024 at 19:00 to transact the business noted below.

Yours faithfully

Adrian McCreesh  
Chief Executive

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## AGENDA

### OPEN BUSINESS

1. Notice of Recording  
This meeting will be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast on the Council's You Tube site [Live Broadcast Link](#)
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest  
Members should declare any financial and non-financial interests they have in the items of business for consideration, identifying the relevant agenda item and the nature of their interest.
4. Chair's Business
5. Deputation - NIPSA re Pay & Grading

### Matters for Decision

6. Requests to Illuminate Council Properties 3 - 6
7. Member Services

### Matters for Information

8. Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 11 April 2024 7 - 22
9. Update on the Outcome of the Consultation Undertaken on Council's Proposed Performance Improvement Objectives 2024 – 2025 23 - 46
10. Rural Needs Annual Progress Return to DAERA (2023-24) 47 - 54

- |     |  |          |
|-----|--|----------|
| 11. | Annual Subscriptions   | 55 - 62  |
| 12. | Organisational Development, Strategy & Performance<br>Directorate Service Plan 2024-25 | 63 - 86  |
| 13. | Chief Executive - Marketing & Communications Service<br>Plan 2024-25                   | 87 - 108 |

**Items restricted in accordance with Section 42, Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014. The public will be asked to withdraw from the meeting at this point.**

Matters for Decision

14. Land and Property Matters
15. Staffing Matters for Decision
16. Revised Policies: (1) Safeguarding of Children & Young People Policy (2) Adult Safeguarding Policy
17. Draft ICT Strategy for Review & Feedback
18. Ann Street Development – Update
19. Verbal Update: Mid South West Growth Deal: Desertcreat Project

Matters for Information

20. Confidential Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 11 April 2024
21. Microsoft Enterprise Licensing Agreement Tender Award Update
22. Staffing Matters for Information
23. Managing Employee Attendance Report 23/24
24. Pension Discretions Policy
25. Treasury Management - Update
26. Financial report for 12 months ended 31 March 2024
27. Contracts and DAC Registers - Update

<b>Report on</b>	Request(s) to Illuminate Council Property
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	9 May 2024
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Joseph McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Eileen Forde, Member Support Officer

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>  If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	<p>To consider requests received to illuminate and light up the Council's three designated properties to raise awareness for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mesothelioma UK: Action Mesothelioma Day: 5th July 2024: Colour: Pink</li> <li>• Deafblind Awareness UK: Deaf Blind Awareness Week – 27 June 2024 Colour Purple</li> <li>• Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS): World PCOS Day: 1 September 2024: Colour: Teal</li> <li>• North West Migrants Forum: Black History Awareness &amp; Show Racism the Red Card: 1 October 2024: Colour: Red;</li> </ul>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	The Council has a policy and procedural arrangements in place to facilitate the illuminating/lighting-up of its designated properties from requests made by charitable organisations for charitable causes. The designated properties are the Burnavon, Bridewell and Ranfurly House.
2.2	The policy confirms that requests are considered by the Council's Policy and Resources Committee. Should the scheduling of the committee not permit requests being considered within the timeframes for determination, they can be presented to monthly Council.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p>The Council has received correspondence from organisations requesting that consideration be given to lighting up our three designated council properties.</p> <p>Requests for consideration and recommendation by Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mesothelioma UK: Action Mesothelioma Day: 5th July 2024: Colour: Pink</li> </ul>

3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS): World PCOS Day: 1 September 2024: Colour: Teal</li> <li>• Deafblind Awareness UK: Deaf Blind Awareness Week – 27 June 2024 Colour Purple</li> <li>• North West Migrants Forum: Black History Awareness &amp; Show Racism the Red Card: 1 October 2024: Colour: Red;</li> </ul> <p><b>Scope of the Council Arrangements</b></p> <p>The policy scope extends to requests made by charitable organisations for the promotion of its charitable cause on a given date or set of dates.</p>
4.0	<b>Other Considerations</b>
4.1	<p><b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b></p> <p>Financial: Not applicable</p> <p>Human: Not applicable</p> <p>Risk Management: Not applicable</p>
4.2	<p><b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b></p> <p>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications:</p> <p>Council policy and procedural arrangements have been referred to.</p> <p>Rural Needs Implications:</p> <p>Not applicable</p>
5.0	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	<p>That the Committee considers making recommendation to light up the designated properties on the dates specified to mark:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mesothelioma UK: Action Mesothelioma Day: 5th July 2024: Colour: Pink</li> <li>• Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS): World PCOS Day: 1 September 2024: Colour: Teal</li> <li>• Deafblind Awareness UK: Deaf Blind Awareness Week – 27 June 2024 Colour Purple</li> <li>• North West Migrants Forum: Black History Awareness &amp; Show Racism the Red Card: 1 October 2024: Colour: Red;</li> </ul>
6.0	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>

	None



**Minutes of Meeting of Policy and Resources Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 11 April 2024 in the Council Offices, Burn Road, Cookstown**

<b>Members Present</b>	Councillor F Burton, Chair  Councillors Bell, Brown, J Burton, Cahoon, Johnston, McAleer, McFlynn, McLernon, Molloy, Wilson
<b>Officers in Attendance</b>	Ms Dyson, Head of Human Resources (HoHR) Mr McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement (HoSS&E) Mrs McNally, Assistant Director of Corporate Services and Finance (AD: CS&F) Mr Moffett, Assistant Director of Organisation Development, Strategy & Performance (AD: ODSP) Mr O'Hagan, Head of IT (HoIT) Mr Tohill, Strategic Director of Corporate Services and Finance (SD: CS&F) Miss Thompson, Committee and Member Services Officer
<b>Others in Attendance</b>	Councillor Kerr  <b>Deputation - Childcare Provision: Children with Additional Needs</b> Ms Hanna and Ms Toner

The meeting commenced at 7.02 pm.

*The Chair, Councillor F Burton welcomed everyone to the meeting and those watching the meeting through the Live Broadcast. Councillor F Burton in introducing the meeting detailed the operational arrangements for transacting the business of the committee by referring to Annex A to this minute.*

**PR074/24 Notice of Recording**

Members noted that the meeting would be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast on the Council's You Tube site.

**PR075/24 Apologies**

Councillors Corry, Gildernew, McLean, S McPeake and Totten.

Mrs Canavan, Strategic Director of Organisation Development, Strategy and Performance (SD: ODSP)

**PR076/24 Declarations of Interest**

The Chair, Councillor F Burton reminded Members of their responsibility with regard to declarations of interest.

## **PR077/24 Chairs Business**

None.

## **PR078/24 Deputation – Childcare Provision: Children with Additional Needs**

The Chair, Councillor F Burton welcomed Ms Hanna and Ms Toner to the meeting and invited them to make their presentation.

Ms Hanna and Ms Toner thanked Members for the opportunity to present to Committee and made presentation (Appendix 1) which focused on the lack of childcare provision for children with additional needs/disabilities and their own experiences of this. The presentation also outlined their suggestions for the future in seeking equal childcare rights for all.

The Chair, Councillor F Burton stated it was sad to hear the struggles being experienced on a day to day basis and the impact this is having on family life. Councillor F Burton asked what Council could do to lobby on their behalf.

Ms Toner felt that there should be a system that ensures that there are places available in creches and childcare settings for children with additional needs. Ms Toner stated that a child going into school can get one to one or can go to a special education needs schools or specialist provision classes so they felt childcare should be the same.

The Chair, Councillor F Burton referred to the Childcare Act 2006 in England mentioned in the presentation which requires all local authorities there to ensure that there is enough registered childcare places for children aged 0-14 and that there is no similar legislation in NI and that this is something Council could write to the Minister about.

Ms Hanna stated that in England they are obliged to provide childcare for all children including those with disabilities to ensure there are enough childcare places. Ms Hanna advised that she had spoken to numerous creches and when she had informed them of her child's needs they said they would need extra funding and that no one knew where to get this extra funding in order to provide the additional support. Ms Hanna advised that she had been told that if her child went to a creche then the creche bill would be increased.

The Chair, Councillor F Burton stated that the situation is discriminating against a child who has additional needs.

Councillor McLernon stated she could completely understand and relate to everything that had been said in the presentation as she had a nephew who came through children services into adult services and knew the obstacles Ms Hanna and Ms Toner were facing. Councillor McLernon stated that Sinn Féin see children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) as a priority and have consistently called for an overhaul of the SEN system to ensure it meets the needs of children and families. The Councillor stated that Sinn Féin have asked the Education Authority and Department of Education to work with the Health Minister to transform SEN services to ensure the needs of children and young people are properly met and that if Ms Hanna and Ms Toner felt there is anything can be done to lobby on their behalf to get in touch.



Councillor Kerr stated that the presentation highlighted the discrimination in childcare for children with additional needs. The Councillor also referred to previous discussions he had had with Ms Toner and how she has had to sacrifice her career which she is passionate about due to childcare not being available for her child. Councillor Kerr stated he did not sit on this committee and could not make a proposal but would recommend as a follow up that officers meet with Ms Hanna and Ms Toner to discuss how as a local authority it could lobby the trust.

Councillor Bell asked if Ms Hanna and Ms Toner had met with the Education or Health Ministers.

Ms Toner advised that they had both met with local MLAs and that there were to be follow up meetings with Ministers but that since the meetings with the MLAs they had heard nothing.

Councillor Bell proposed that Council write to both the Education Minister and Health Minister highlighting the issues regarding childcare for children with additional needs.

Councillor McLernon seconded Councillor Bell's proposal.

Councillor Molloy stated that all Councillors are aware of the cost of childcare alone nevermind the cost of childcare for children with special needs and suggested that contact is also made with the Chair and members of the Education and Health Committees at the Assembly.

Ms Hanna stated that herself and Ms Toner really wanted to drive this issue forward to see some change in childcare availability for children with additional needs.

The Chair, Councillor F Burton asked Councillor Bell if he wanted to add what Councillor Molloy had suggested to his proposal.

Councillor Bell stated he would be happy to include the additional comments.

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to write to the Education and Health Minister and also the Chair and members of the Education and Health Committees highlighting the issues raised regarding childcare for children with additional needs.

Councillor Wilson stated that no child or family should be discriminated against and that as the Health Minister was a member of his party he asked that the presentation made tonight be forwarded to him so that he could send it to the Health Minister to make him aware.

Councillor Johnston asked if the introduction of the Childcare Act in England had been a success in terms of making sure every child is provided for.

Ms Hanna stated that it was her understanding that there have been issues with getting staff for creches.

Councillor Johnston asked if there is an expectation within creches that there is one specially trained member.

Ms Toner stated that there is funding available that creches can apply for in order to provide one to one support but that staff are unknowledgeable about this and from her experience she felt that staff find seeking the funding more hassle than it is worth. Ms Toner felt that there should be a pool of staff within a childcare setting that can provide the additional support when required similar to education so that if a child needs one to one support it can be accessed as her child has been constantly declined childcare places and that she has had to significantly reduce her working hours as a result.

Councillor Johnston stated that lessons could be learned from mistakes made in England when seeking similar legislation for Northern Ireland and she did not envisage any party not being supportive of such legislation.

The Chair, Councillor F Burton thanked Ms Hanna and Ms Toner for the presentation following which they left the meeting at 7.23 pm.

## **Matters for Decision**

### **PR079/24 Request(s) to Illuminate Council Property**

Members considered previously circulated report which sought approval to illuminate and light up the Council's three designated properties to raise awareness for the following:

- Hope4mefibro: ME & Fibromyalgia – International Awareness Day: 12 May 2024: Colour: Blue
- Alzheimer's Society: Dementia Action Week: 13 May 2024: Colour: Blue
- British Porphyria Association: Porphyria Awareness Week: 18 May 2024: Colour: Purple
- HSC NI Foster Care: Foster Care Fortnight - Fostering Moments: 20 May 2024: Colour: Turquoise & Yellow (or Turquoise)
- Tourettes Action: Awareness Day: 7 June 2024: Colour: Green
- Hope4mefibro: Severe ME Awareness Day: 8 August 2024: Colour Blue
- 1<sup>st</sup> Tyrone Scout Group Dungannon: 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: 18 October 2024: Colour: Purple & Blue (or Blue)

Proposed by Councillor McFlynn  
Seconded by Councillor J Burton and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to illuminate the three designated Council properties as follows –

- Hope4mefibro: ME & Fibromyalgia –International Awareness Day: 12 May 2024: Colour: Blue
- Alzheimer's Society: Dementia Action Week: 13 May 2024: Colour: Blue
- British Porphyria Association: Porphyria Awareness Week: 18 May 2024: Colour: Purple
- HSC NI Foster Care: Foster Care Fortnight - Fostering Moments: 20 May 2024: Colour: Turquoise & Yellow (or Turquoise)
- Tourettes Action: Awareness Day: 7 June 2024: Colour: Green

- Hope4mefibro: Severe ME Awareness Day: 8 August 2024: Colour Blue
- 1<sup>st</sup> Tyrone Scout Group Dungannon: 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: 18 October 2024: Colour: Purple & Blue (or Blue)

#### **PR080/24 Committee and Council Meetings 2024-2025**

The Head of Strategic Services and Engagement (HoSS&E) presented previously circulated report which considered the 2024-2025 Committee and Council Meeting Schedule for approval.

Councillor McFlynn referred to discussion at Planning Committee earlier in the week and that it had been agreed that a review of the start time would be undertaken.

Proposed by Councillor Bell  
Seconded by Councillor McFlynn and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to approve the Council & Committee Meeting Schedule for the period June 2024 to May 2025 as set out at appendix A of report.

#### **PR081/24 Member Services**

No issues.

#### **Matters for Information**

#### **PR082/24 Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 7 March 2024**

Members noted Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee held on 7 March 2024.

*Live broadcast ended at 7.26 pm.*

#### **Local Government (NI) Act 2014 - Confidential Business**

Proposed by Councillor Brown  
Seconded by Councillor Bell and

**Resolved** In accordance with Section 42, Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 that Members of the public be asked to withdraw from the meeting whilst Members consider items PR083/24 to PR087/24.

#### **Matters for Decision**

PR083/24 Staffing Matters for Decision

#### **Matters for Information**

PR084/24 Confidential Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee held on 7 March 2024

PR085/24 Staff Matters for Information

PR086/24 Financial report for 11 months ended 29 February 2024  
PR087/24 Contracts and DAC

**P088/24 Duration of Meeting**

The meeting was called for 7.00 pm and ended at 7.30 pm.

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Annex A – Introductory Remarks from the Chairperson**

Good evening and welcome to the Council's [Policy & Resources/Environment/Development] Committee in the Chamber, [Cookstown/Dungannon/Magherafelt].

I specifically welcome the public watching us through the Live Broadcast. The Live Broadcast as aforesaid, will run for the period of our Open Business but will end just before we move into Confidential Business. I will let you know before this happens.

I would remind the public and press that taking photographs of proceedings or using any means to enable anyone not present to see or hear proceedings, or making a simultaneous oral report of the proceedings are not permitted.


Thank you and we will now move to the agenda.



# Equal childcare rights for all

# Background

- ▶ NHS nurses for over 10 years. Both have children who have additional needs/disabilities.
- ▶ Struggled to get appropriate childcare in order to be able to go out to work. Experiences include a creche contract for a 3 year old, being terminated with no notice given.
- ▶ Told by a creche they couldn't accommodate the child who was disabled.
- ▶ Career breaks/ reduced hours taken as no other options available.

- 
- ▶ In England the childcare Act 2006 requires all local authorities to ensure there is enough registered childcare places for children aged 0-14, and reduce inequalities.
  - ▶ There is no childcare sufficiency duty in NI requiring the government to ensure there are sufficient childcare places to appropriately meets the needs of all families, including those who have a child with a disability. Families in Northern Ireland can face a range of barriers to accessing quality early learning and childcare (Employers for childcare).

# Creches

- ▶ Untrained staff for children with additional needs.
- ▶ Poor ratios e.g. 1 staff member for 8 children in the 3-5 room. This is unsafe for a child with additional needs.
- ▶ Creches unwilling to change ratios /accommodate 1:1's/ make reasonable adjustments.
- ▶ Appears to be extreme lack of or no funding available for children in creches that require extra support.
- ▶ Refused creche place due to disability.
- ▶ Contract terminated as unable to facilitate needs of the child.
- ▶ Told prices would be increased for all children if additional funding was not provided by us as parents.



# Registered childminders

- ▶ Previous experience of registered childminders stating they would have to reduce overall numbers of children to ensure a safe ratio, so therefore refused a place.

# Private Childcare

- ▶ No Government supplement assistance, therefore more expensive.
- ▶ No obligation to give notice and can terminate at any given time.

# Social Work support

- ▶ Spent weeks contacting social workers to seek assistance with help for childcare. No social worker able to provide support.
- ▶ Health visitor had submitted a unocini (Professional report to highlight an issue) but again this was declined.
- ▶ Social worker in creche setting providing inappropriate and unprofessional advice.
- ▶ No response from complaints lodged to early years team within southern trust.

# Parents

- ▶ Unable to access safe and appropriate childcare due to child having a disability.
- ▶ Relying heavily on family support which isn't always available.
- ▶ No advice/support given
- ▶ Having to stop work/reduce hours despite increased cost of living therefore causing financial strain.

# Discrimination

- ▶ Able to access childcare for siblings but Child with additional needs left out and unable to be provided for.
- ▶ Children with disabilities are being isolated and left behind.
- ▶ Entitled to same opportunities as any other child.

# Suggestions for the future

- ▶ Despite disability legislation there appears to be no legal obligation for creches to accommodate a child with additional needs.
- ▶ Safe childcare facilities to include children with disabilities.
- ▶ Local government funding for creches to facilitate children with disabilities.
- ▶ Childcare costs currently highlighted on a daily basis in the media. What about children with additional needs?
- ▶ Highlight awareness of these issues
- ▶ Policies/procedures implemented in childcare facilities.
- ▶ Social work support
- ▶ Stop discrimination against children with additional needs.

<b>Report on</b>	To update the committee on the outcome of the consultation undertaken on the Council's proposed performance improvement objectives 2024 – 2025
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> of May 2024
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	J Mc Guckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement
<b>Contact Officer</b>	L Jenkins, Corporate Performance & Quality Officer

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b> If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To update the committee on the outcome of the public consultation undertaken on the Council's proposed improvement objectives 2024 – 2025.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	<p><b><u>General Duty to Improve and Departmental Guidance</u></b></p> <p>The 2014 Local Government Act, section 84, places a general duty on the Council to “....<i>make arrangements to secure continuous improvement....</i>” in the exercise of its functions. Section 85 of the Act requires a council, for each financial year, to set itself improvement objectives for improving the exercise of its functions and to have in place arrangements to achieve those objectives. Section 87 of the Act also outlines that a Council; in deciding how to discharge its duty under sections 84 and 85 of the Act, <u>must consult</u> with persons appearing to the Council, “<i>to be representative of:</i></p> <p><i>a); persons liable to pay rates in respect of hereditaments in the district;</i>  <i>b) persons who use or are likely to use services provided by the council; and</i>  <i>c) persons appearing to the council to have an interest in the district.</i></p>
2.2	Statutory Guidance was issued by the Department for Communities to Councils on taking forward the general duty on to improve. In deciding how to discharge its duty under section 84 and 85, the guidance requires that the council consult on a yearly basis on their improvement objectives – (as outlined in section 87 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014).
2.3	Post a review exercise undertaken by Council officers and forwarded to SMT, four improvement objectives were proposed for 2024-2025. Each improvement objective has an assigned Senior Responsible Officer (SRO), who develops

2.4	<p>improvement projects aligned to the Improvement Objectives. The improvement project plans form part of Council's Performance Improvement Plan (PIP plan), which outlines how the improvement objectives will be achieved. The improvement objectives would follow on from the previous year's PIP plan as the objectives were still relevant and had SMART activity to complete and outcomes to attain.</p> <p>The Committee at its March 2024 meeting considered and approved the proposed four Corporate Improvement Objectives for 2024 to 2025, their rationale and associated links to the community and corporate plan, as well as a timeline for a public consultation exercise. The committee agreed the council's Improvement Objectives as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mid Ulster District Council will seek to reduce the environmental impacts of our own activities and will contribute to the improvement of the wider environment through local action.</li> <li>2. We will ensure a more connected Mid Ulster where new technologies and ways of working, empower citizens to get the best services that matter to them.</li> <li>3. To create cleaner neighbourhoods, where everyone takes responsibility for their waste and the environment.</li> <li>4. We will contribute to the ongoing regeneration of our district by delivering a capital investment programme, enhancing facilities and opportunities for local people</li> </ol>
3.0	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b><u>Results from the Improvement Objectives Public Consultation Outworking's Report April 2024</u></b></p> <p>This year the consultation exercise ran from Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February to Friday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 12 noon. Under each improvement objective, the Council asked whether respondents agreed with the objective or disagreed with the objective. Respondents were also asked to provide any related commentary they had regarding the proposed improvement objectives. The consultation survey also asked respondents to outline any improvements the council should consider in the future. The final question asked respondents to provide any further comments relating to the draft Improvement objectives.</p>
3.2	<p>The consultation involved a survey made available for completion and submission online and or by post to the council. The engagement process was promoted through a variety of communication channels including: social media outlets,</p>



3.3	<p>video message from the Chair of P &amp; R committee, the council’s main website (listing in the main on the website front page), press releases, mailing lists, e-mails, staff intranet and internal staff meetings.</p> <p>In summary the percentage (%) of respondents who agreed with the Council’s proposed improvement objectives are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>89.29% of respondents agreed with objective one:</b> - <i>Mid Ulster District Council will seek to reduce the environmental impacts of our own activities and will contribute to the improvement of the wider environment through local action.</i></li> <li>• <b>92.59% of respondents agreed with objective two:</b> - <i>We will ensure a more connected Mid Ulster where new technologies and ways of working, empower citizens to get the best services that matter to them.</i></li> <li>• <b>100% of respondents agreed with objective three:</b> - <i>To create cleaner neighbourhoods, where everyone takes responsibility for their waste and the environment.</i></li> <li>• <b>92.31% of respondents agreed with objective four:</b> - <i>We will contribute to the ongoing regeneration of our district by delivering a capital investment programme, enhancing facilities and opportunities for local people</i></li> </ul>
3.4	<p>With such significant endorsement of the four proposed improvement objectives, together with additional commentary provided, the council will be able to develop its Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) around them. When reviewed, the respondent’s commentary did not warrant the removal, amendment to or addition to the objectives proposed. The outworking’s of the public consultation of Mid Ulster District Council’s improvement objectives for 2024 to 2025 is contained in Appendix One - (Outworking of public consultation on MUDC Improvement Objectives 2024.25).</p>
3.5	<p>The additional valuable commentary and views provided from the consultees will be forwarded to management teams for consideration. This will assist, and inform our wider improvement activity across the services; thereby reflecting the needs and priorities of our community moving forward. The Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) will be will be published by 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2024.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<p><b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b></p> <p>Financial: NA</p>

	Human: NA
	Risk Management: N/A.
<b>4.2</b>	<b><u>Screening &amp; Impact Statements</u></b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	That the Committee note and consider the outcome of the Council's Corporate Performance Improvement Objectives Public Consultation 2024 to 2025.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	Appendix One - Outworking's from the Public Consultation on Mid Ulster District Council's Performance Improvement Objectives 2024 – 2025.

# Outworking's from the Public Consultation on

## Mid Ulster District Council's Performance Improvement Objectives 2024-2025

April 2024

## **Background**

As required under Section 84 of the Local Government (NI) Act 2014 (hereafter referred to as 'The Act'), the Council is placed under a general duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions.

Part 12 of the Act sets out a series of provisions which the Council should be mindful of in "making arrangements to secure continuous improvement", under section 85, the Council is to identify and set itself corporate level performance Improvement Objective(s) for improving the exercise of its functions and to have arrangements in place to achieve these objectives. Under section 87 of the Act, the Council is also required to consult on our improvement objectives.

This year the consultation exercise ran from Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February to Friday 19<sup>th</sup> April at 12 noon and focused on our proposed objectives for 2024/2025.

Under each improvement objective the Council asked whether respondents agreed with the objective or disagreed with the objective. Respondents were also asked to provide any related commentary they had regarding the proposed improvement objectives.

The consultation survey also asked respondents to outline any improvements the council should consider in the future. The final question asked respondents to provide any further comments relating to the draft Improvement objectives.

The consultation involved a survey made available for completion and submission online and or by post to the council. The engagement process was promoted through a variety of communication channels including: social media outlets, video message from the Chair of P & R committee, the council's main website (listing in the main on the website front page), press releases, mailing lists, e-mails, staff intranet and internal staff meetings. In total, there were 28 respondents to the Mid Ulster District's Performance Improvement Objectives 2024-2025 consultation.

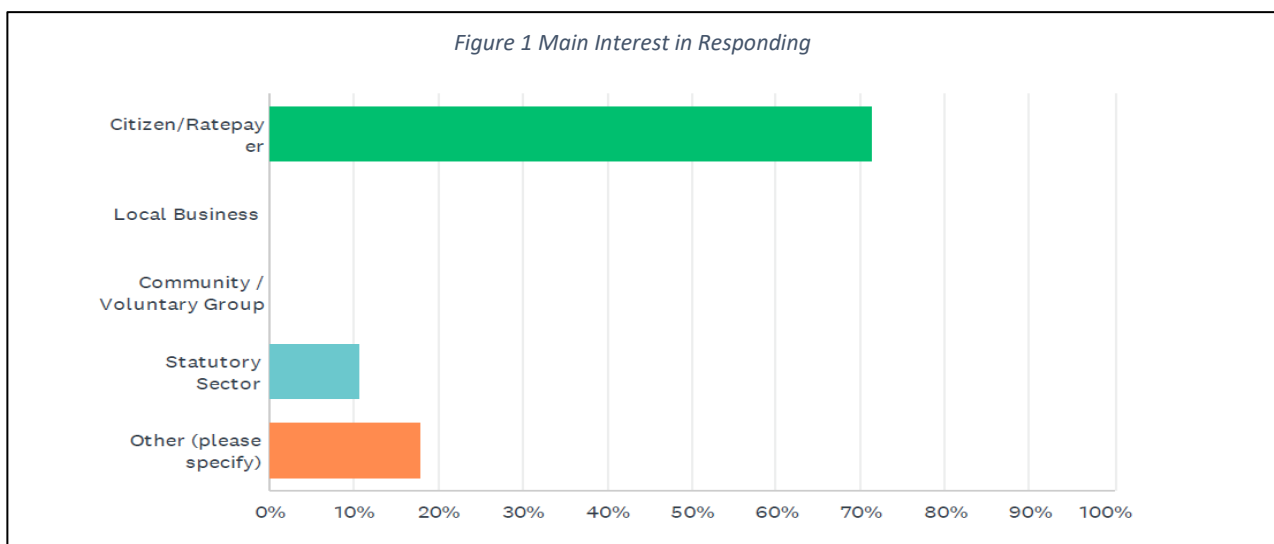
# Responses to Improvement Objectives Consultation Questionnaire 2024-2025

## QUESTION 1

Consultees were asked what was their main interest in responding to this consultation.

**Table 1.0- What is your main interest in responding to the consultation?**

Capacity in which responding to survey	Percentage Responses
Citizen/Ratepayer	71.43%
Local Business	0.00%
Community /Voluntary Group	0.00%
Statutory Sector	10.71%
Other	17.86% (employees)



## QUESTION 2 –

Percentage of consultees who provided contact details 46.42%

### QUESTION 3 -

**Do you agree that the proposed Performance Improvement Objectives are appropriate for our district?**

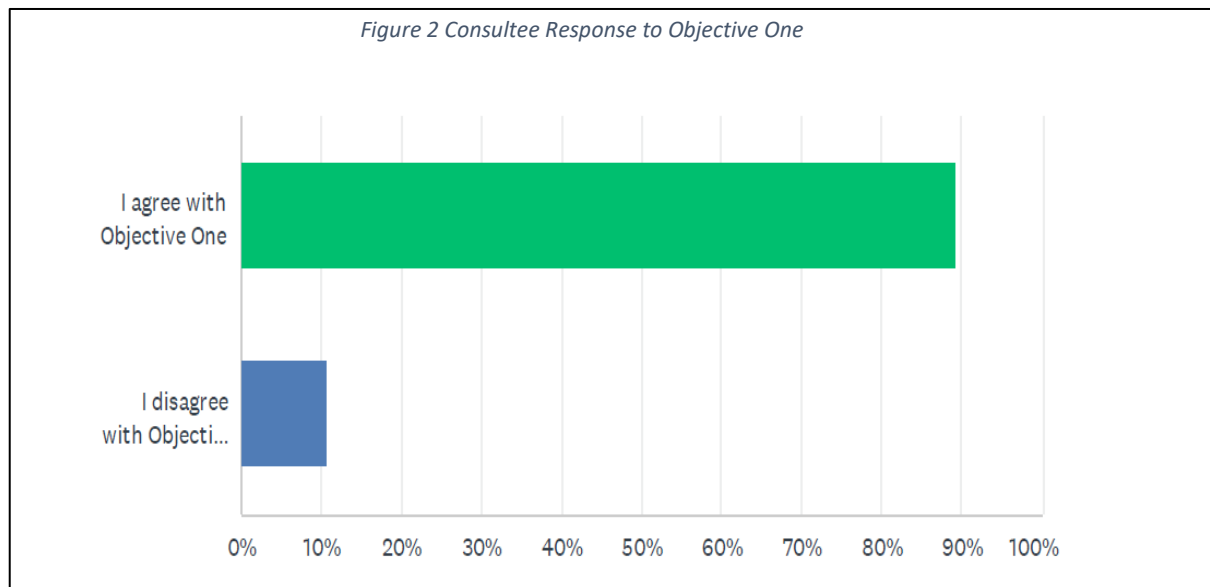
Consultees were asked to indicate if they agreed or disagreed with objective one, and to add comments where applicable

#### **Improvement Objective One**

- 1. Mid Ulster District Council will seek to reduce the environmental impacts of our own activities and will contribute to the improvement of the wider environment through local action.**

Table 1.1 Percentage of Consultees who agreed or disagreed with objective one.

	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Number of Consultees agreed with objective one</b>	<b>89.29%</b>
<b>Number of Consultees disagreed with objective one</b>	<b>10.71%</b>



Outlined below are the consultees' commentary in relation to objective one. There were 10 comments received in total.

#03	Broadly agree with this objective. However, caution must be sought around the amount of public money spent implementing climate measures. MUDC officers must prioritise key areas affecting citizens before throwing thousands of pounds at certain PR stunts. There is also an argument that via Objective 3, MUDC should really focus on getting the basics right when it comes to the environment, i.e. litter, which is a severe issue across the District.
#04	I think we can achieve this through reducing the vehicles on the roads and providing bicycles for hire would be a great idea too.
#07	Yes leading by example and complements Climate Action Plan
#16	This should certainly be a performance Improvement objective. Targets should be set for each department to ensure all departments take action.
#19	<p>The council should be congratulated on the objective to seek to reduce their environmental impacts and contribute to improving the wider environment. In addition to obligations under international, national and regional legislation, there is a moral obligation for local authorities to protect and enhance the wider environment for both nature and the wellbeing of residents. This has been recognised through this objective. However, in the explanation on this objective - "Why we are doing it?" reference is only made to climate change (with links to The Climate Change Act, and supporting links, all relating to climate change). There does not appear to have been any consideration given to other relevant aspects (and legislation) that should be included if the council are committed to "...the improvement of the wider environment..." For example, The Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (NI) 2011, places a Biodiversity Duty on all Public Bodies to "...further the conservation of biodiversity...". Fulfilling obligations under this duty would certainly contribute to the improvement of the wider environment. However, this legal obligation appears to have been omitted from this Objective. Would it not be appropriate to reference this relevant legislation in addition to the Climate Change Act? While climate change is certainly one of the main factors influencing our environment, it cannot be taken in isolation. For any objective to protect and enhance the environment to be effective, a joined-up approach across a range of different areas is required. The main aspects (and the interrelationships between them) that need to be considered are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate change</li> <li>• Biodiversity Loss</li> <li>• Habitat destruction and fragmentation</li> <li>• Non-native Invasive Species</li> </ul> <p>Climate change is undoubtedly having an impact on our natural environment and society. A worldwide issue, it requires a worldwide approach. However, even individuals can undertake actions to make a contribution to reducing climate change. Reducing carbon emissions is a 'must', and the</p>

combination with protecting and developing 'carbon sinks' are positive actions. Biodiversity Loss: As throughout the rest of the world, Northern Ireland is undergoing biodiversity loss. In an assessment of the Biodiversity Intactness Index (BII) published in 2020 by the Natural History Museum and the RSPB, Northern Ireland sits 12th worst in the world for biodiversity loss out of the 240 countries surveyed. The evidence of this is clear to see, with many once familiar species and habitats becoming increasingly rare, and a few now even extinct from Northern Ireland. Worldwide, some scientists are terming the current loss of biodiversity as the services 'gifted' to us by the natural environment include; purification of air and water, mitigation of floods and droughts, pollination of crops, generation and renewal of soil, as well as the sense of wellbeing provided by nature. Most significant threats to our biodiversity are often caused by human activity. Fortunately, this means we are in a position to adapt our behaviour to manage and enhance our natural environment to safeguard our biodiversity for future generations. Any actions undertaken by the council to improve the natural environment will help fulfil legal obligations to "...further the conservation of biodiversity..."(Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (NI) 2011).

Habitat Destruction and Fragmentation: Habitat loss is the greatest threat to biodiversity worldwide. All habitats are under threat from loss, damage or fragmentation. The effects of the complete loss of habitats are obvious, but the effects of damage and fragmentation which can sometimes be overlooked, must also be considered. As natural habitats become degraded, their ability to function and provide eco-system services (clean air and water, flood mitigation, etc.) becomes degraded, as well as their ability to maintain viable species populations. For example, wetlands are subject to damaging activities such as drainage, conversion or abandonment. Upland areas are under threat from overgrazing and unsustainable recreation, leading to peat erosion and disturbance to ground nesting birds. Housing and commercial development can lead to habitat destruction and fragmentation. Fragmentation restricts the movement of species across our landscape, leaving them isolated and more vulnerable to extinction in the area.

Non-native Invasive Species: Non-native invasive species can have a detrimental impact on our local environment through competition for resources, predation, alteration of habitats and food webs, disease, etc. They also have a negative economic impact on agriculture, forestry, development, ecosystem services, etc. This has been recognized, with legislation introduced through The Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019. The control of non-native invasive species in Northern Ireland is a huge undertaking and will require cooperation between a range of statutory and non-statutory organisations and individual landowners. In summary: While Climate Change is certainly having an impact on our environment, if the council are committed to "...the improvement of the wider environment..." as stated in this objective, the council must look beyond just climate change and incorporate actions against biodiversity loss, habitat "sixth mass extinction in Earth's history", with the rate of species extinction as high as



	<p>it has been since the dinosaurs died out 65 million years ago. This loss of biodiversity impacts the way we live. The ecosystem services 'gifted' to us by the natural environment include; purification of air and water, mitigation of floods and droughts, pollination of crops, generation and renewal of soil, as well as the sense of wellbeing provided by nature. Most significant threats to our biodiversity are often caused by human activity. Fortunately, this means we are in a position to adapt our behaviour to manage and enhance our natural environment to safeguard our biodiversity for future generations. Any actions undertaken by the council to improve the natural environment will help fulfil legal obligations to "...further the conservation of biodiversity..."(Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (NI) 2011).</p> <p><b>Habitat Destruction and Fragmentation:</b> Habitat loss is the greatest threat to biodiversity worldwide. All habitats are under threat from loss, damage or fragmentation. The effects of the complete loss of habitats are obvious, but the effects of damage and fragmentation which can sometimes be overlooked, must also be considered. As natural habitats become degraded, their ability to function and provide eco-system services (clean air and water, flood mitigation, etc.) becomes degraded, as well as their ability to maintain viable species populations. For example, wetlands are subject to damaging activities such as drainage, conversion or abandonment. Upland areas are under threat from overgrazing and unsustainable recreation, leading to peat erosion and disturbance to ground nesting birds. Housing and commercial development can lead to habitat destruction and fragmentation. Fragmentation restricts the movement of species across our landscape, leaving them isolated and more vulnerable to extinction in the area.</p> <p><b>Non-native Invasive Species:</b> Non-native invasive species can have a detrimental impact on our local environment through competition for resources, predation, alteration of habitats and food webs, disease, etc. They also have a negative economic impact on agriculture, forestry, development, ecosystem services, etc. This has been recognized, with legislation introduced through The Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019. The control of non-native invasive species in Northern Ireland is a huge and will require cooperation between a range of statutory and non-statutory organisations and individual landowners. In summary: While Climate Change is certainly having an impact on our environment, if the council are committed to "...the improvement of the wider environment..." as stated in this objective, the council must look beyond just climate change and incorporate actions against biodiversity loss, habitat ecosystem</p>
#22	<p>Has the Council published a Climate Change Action Plan, if so, where is it? What period does it cover? What outcomes are being measured? How is the action plan to be managed? Who will monitor it? How and who will provide annual or quarterly updates on progress? How will it be implemented and delivered in practice? Are the Council going to adopt renewable energy sources such as solar panels for main offices or other operational buildings? Clarify the second point - how will the Council</p>

	<p>improve the 'wider environment' - what does this term mean to the Council and what is 'local action'?</p> <p>The Council has several corporate documents published online; when will these documents be updated to take into account NI Climate Change Act and emerging Regulations? Has the Council had regard to the many NI Executive Departmental Climate Change Action Plans already published? Is there a legal requirement for the Council to consider existing Departmental Climate Change Plans? And any other local district council plan i.e. cross-district / cross-boarder.</p> <p>In terms of staff resources, have the Council engaged / employed the appropriately qualified and accredited professionals to enable the proactive management, monitoring and review of the Councils Climate Change Action Plan? E.g. Ecologist, "Arboriculturalist"?</p>
#23	<p>This objective has been in place since 2020/21 and many actions have been delivered under it since. However the Council now has a Sustainability Strategy and Climate Change Action Plan for 2024 to 2028 which captures these and other actions. Therefore the retention of this objective would be a duplication of work/effort for Council staff.</p>
#25	<p>Having lived overseas was used to local councils developing Green and Blue ways which included respecting the landscape, encouraging local biodiversity and sustainability, which would like to see council doing. We have really distinct local landscapes of forests, uplands, bogs, waterways and urban and rural areas all elements that contribute to our sense of place of home, we need to act as communities to protect and enhance them now and for our children's legacy, we collectively need to be better custodians. Also as a family we are looking to perhaps purchase an EV car but are being put off by the lack of charging stations locally. If I want to go to the local leisure centre for example they don't have any, can the Council work with others to open up more charging points, this included neighbouring council areas as well.</p>
#27	<p>Good primary objective providing it is realistically promulgated and all impacts considered and balanced.</p>
#28	<p>I would question if this objective is required given the Council will meet the same aims through its Sustainability Strategy and Climate Action Plan.</p>

## QUESTION 4 -

**Do you agree that the proposed Performance Improvement Objectives are appropriate for our district?**

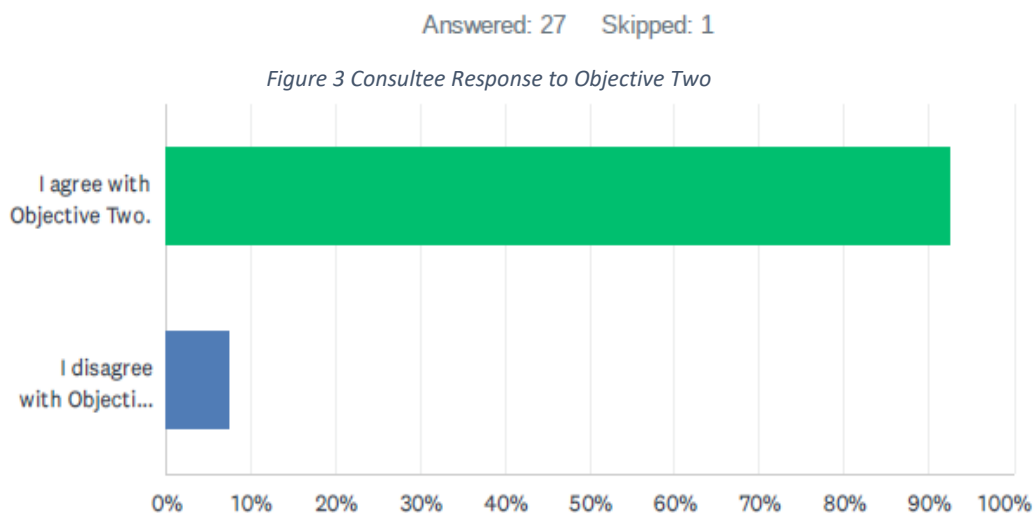
Consultees were asked to indicate if they agreed or disagreed with objective two, and to add comments where applicable.

### Improvement Objective Two

**2. We will ensure a more connected Mid Ulster where new technologies and ways of working, empower citizens to get the best services that matter to them.**

Table 1.2 – Percentage of consultees who agreed or disagreed with objective two.

	Percentage
<b>Number of Consultees agreed with objective two</b>	<b>92.59%</b>
<b>Number of Consultees disagreed with objective two</b>	<b>7.41%</b>



Outlined below are the consultees' commentary in relation to objective two. There were 9 comments received in total.

#02	This objective is too vague, what does it actually mean?
#03	Good objective in principle, however I worry that this will not be approached with the right expertise, leading to expensive technology which fails to work. A prime example is in Dungannon Leisure Centre. X amount of pounds was spent installing turnstiles at the reception area, with the accompanying software, however these have never been operational since installation due to software issues. This is embarrassing, and as a Council, there should have been better research into vendors and contractors before paying out for the turnstiles. Also, with new technologies as mentioned by this objective, I do believe MUDC must consult citizens before tendering for new tech. Such consultations must be advertised appropriately too, leveraging all possible and relevant mediums to reach citizens. Only by consulting residents, can MUDC truly understand whether or not a piece of proposed tech is actually wanted by citizens here. On a similar vein, it would be good for MUDC to tap into the knowledge, experience and skills of the citizens here by hosting tech sessions, perhaps to showcase plans, work on ideation or seek feedback on proposals. Such sessions should be open to anybody in the district and not just certain companies.
#07	Yes helps to reduce rural isolation and upskill
#10	New technologies are an excellent way for our rural citizens to access our services without the cost of travel/parking etc. They also represent opportunities for people with various types of disabilities to access council services in virtual ways, that accessing services physically could perhaps mean facing physical barriers to access and participation.
#16	A more connected Mid Ulster is to everyone's advantage but this focuses on tech and communications. I consider that transport links such as rail to be more important to focus on.
#22	How will this objective be measured? It isn't specific, what' new technologies'? What about public infrastructure for Electric Charging Points to assist in transfer to renewable energy within the District. Does the term new technologies take into account renewable energy technology and infrastructure? Or is this solely telecommunication technology? How does this sit in terms of the first Objective and need to reduce Mid Ulster's carbon footprint by investing in the existing structures and infrastructure already in situ? In terms of providing public services – the Council has recently reduced the number and locations of public toilets; access and availability has been reduced to the detriment of citizens and local communities. It would be helpful to the public and to visitors to have a list of locations that a public toilet can be accessed and

	<p>is available including opening times and type of public accessibility? An online map viewer would be useful within the Tourism section of the Council's website. It would also be helpful if the Council could confirm and clarify by the publication of advice and guidance on its legal responsibilities specific to availability and access to public toilets. The same applies to recycling centres, waste management etc. Another key public service is local capacity for water and sewerage systems - although this is not necessarily the remit of the Council it would be useful to publish / signpost citizens in terms of remaining capacity of existing sewerage system infrastructure for each existing settlement within the District and same for clean drinking water. This relates to the wider issue of Lough Neagh's 'algae bloom' that is fully expected to occur again this summer and into the future given the change in Northern Ireland's weather patterns.</p>
#24	The ways of working need to involve non-techie people being able to access services and in a way that suits how we are in Mid Ulster
#25	Family owns several local businesses it would be great more support for small businesses in moving to Omni channels for their businesses and widening purchase/shopping opportunities with short how to sessions, updates on being social media savvy. Can the council through its partners in other sectors look at how they dispose of their IT technical equipment as this has potential for reuse among community groups?
#27	All sounds good but depends on the spread. Must demonstrate that the objective is developed to visibly empower ALL citizens

## QUESTION 5 -

**Do you agree that the proposed Performance Improvement Objectives are appropriate for our district?**

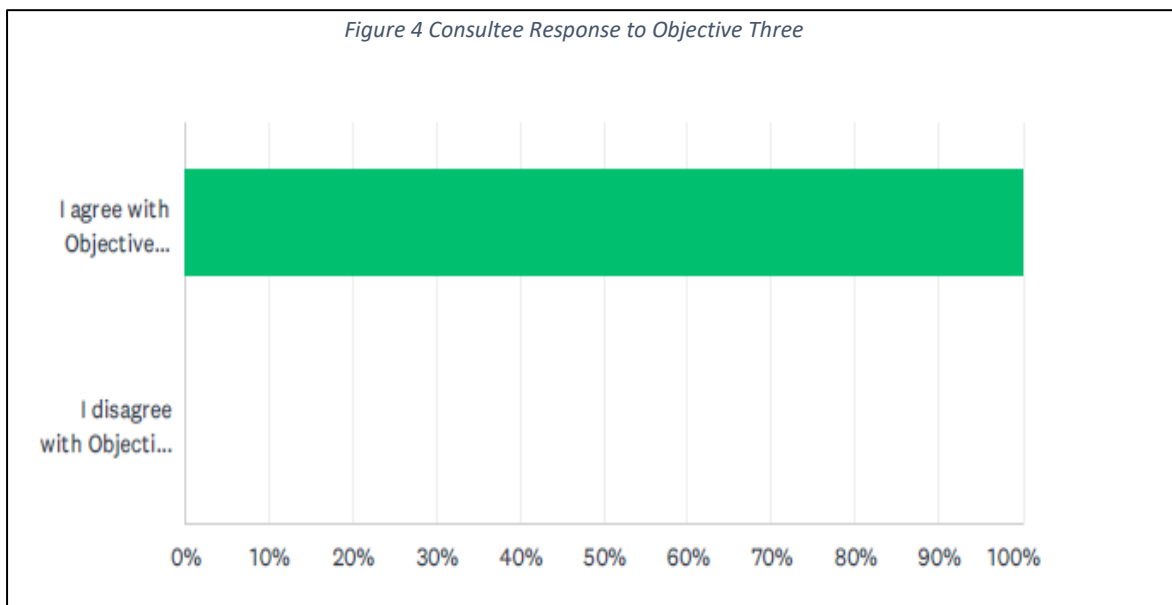
Consultees were asked to indicate if they agreed or disagreed with objective three, and to add comments where applicable.

### Improvement Objective Three.

- To create cleaner neighbourhoods, where everyone takes responsibility for their waste and the environment.**

Table 1.3 – Percentage of consultees who agreed or disagreed with objective three.

	Percentage
<b>Number of Consultees agreed with objective three</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Number of Consultees disagreed with objective three</b>	<b>0%</b>



Outlined below are the consultees' commentary in relation to objective three. There were 10 comments received in total.

#03	<p>Absolutely agree, however, I struggle to see how this will be implemented in practice, in a successful way (i.e. that delivers a reduction in littering etc.). Whilst targeting activities and programs towards children is beneficial, and should be done, there is a wider issue with adults themselves littering in residential areas and the town centres. If I think about my own area of Dungannon, there is a severe litter problem, which in-turn has attracted unwanted anti-social behaviour, and has brought down the overall standard of area in which I live. MUDC must also produce literature targeting every demographic and nationality in the town, East-Timorese, Eastern Europeans, Irish, British and everyone else in-between as people from every nationality contribute to the litter problem here. I believe there needs to be better use of advertising in town centre areas, leveraging boards, on-street campaigns, and social media, in various languages too, emphasising the need for everyone to look after the area they live and work in. Obviously this objective won't fully address the problem, as there will always be ignorant people out there, but I believe by implementing some of the aforementioned steps, we can reduce the amount of litter, and improve the image of the district. I would also suggest and encourage MUDC to consider establishing a volunteer force of litter pickers, to aid and assist the existing staff. As a young person, I'd be more than happy to contribute some voluntary hours to cleaning up the local area and I am sure there are others with a similar belief.</p>
#04	<p>This is a good idea and I am all for recycling I used to have my three bins but have been reduced to one black bin due to any social, behaviour of some people. Firstly back in July I got both my blue and brown bins burned when I put them out to be emptied. I eventually got them replaced only to have them stolen. I refuse to pay for new bins as I didn't steal or arrange to have bin bins stolen and I won't waste money to buy new bins for someone to come along and steal, them.</p>
#05	<p>The roads in the area are a disgrace with litter, something needs to be done urgently.</p>
#07	<p>Yes given the climate emergency we all need to be more involved in this and take responsibility also it will reflect well on impressions/experiences for visitors.</p>
#11	<p>Whilst I agreed with the objective I would advise that waste collection continues to be an issue in my local area. Due to the new automated bin collection service, waste from bins, especially blue bins continues to escape from refuse collection lorries and litter our local roads. Just today 26<sup>th</sup> March 24 I have had to go out and lift rubbish outside my house that has come from the collection of a blue bin. I have raised the issue</p>

	<p>previously with colleagues who work in mid ulster dc and they did advise that the problem was addressed but it appears to still be an issue. I understand that another Council area looked at a similar system for collection and found that they had to follow refuse lorries in another van to lift rubbish that came back out of the vehicles and decided that such a system was not viable.</p>
#16	<p>I agree however in connection with objective 1, MUDC need to improve on the waste handling from our own activates firstly.</p>
#22	<p>How will this be measured, managed and monitored? Why has the Council outsourced or contracted out public's services such as - Dog fouling, littering, parking etc. These are fundamentally public services and a good source of revenue in terms of fines for the Council, yet instead of upskilling existing staff to take on these roles and engage additional staff, the Council choose to outsource these public services (same goes for access and availability to public toilets).</p> <p>It would be very helpful to citizens if the Council as a corporate body could clearly and transparently set out what waste and environmental services the Council provide directly (Council Staff) and those provided via a contractor / outsourced operator (3rd Party) and provide information on how, why and through which Directorate are these outsourced contractors are managed, monitored and reviewed.</p> <p>How will the Council Enforce and fund a 'cleaner neighbourhoods imitative' for each existing settlement?</p>
#25	<p>Having caring responsibilities I am and have been somewhat put off in actually being able to access some local facilities. The amenities are important and need to be clean as I think this is a major determinant of whether I would plan a rerun visit or even recommend tourist or leisure spots to friends and family. I usually look at web pages or social media for local amenity information first before making any journey, sometimes relevant info isn't available.</p>
#27	<p>Target roadside litter throughout the Council area. Our roadsides are a disgrace and the litter must be a negative impact to selling the area for any and all purposes. Collecting litter is fine but education on 'taking it home' and ' binning it' has to be the crucial message. Pride in the area!</p>
#28	<p>This should read where everyone ensures they do not litter.</p>



## QUESTION 6 -

**Do you agree that the proposed Performance Improvement Objectives are appropriate for our district?**

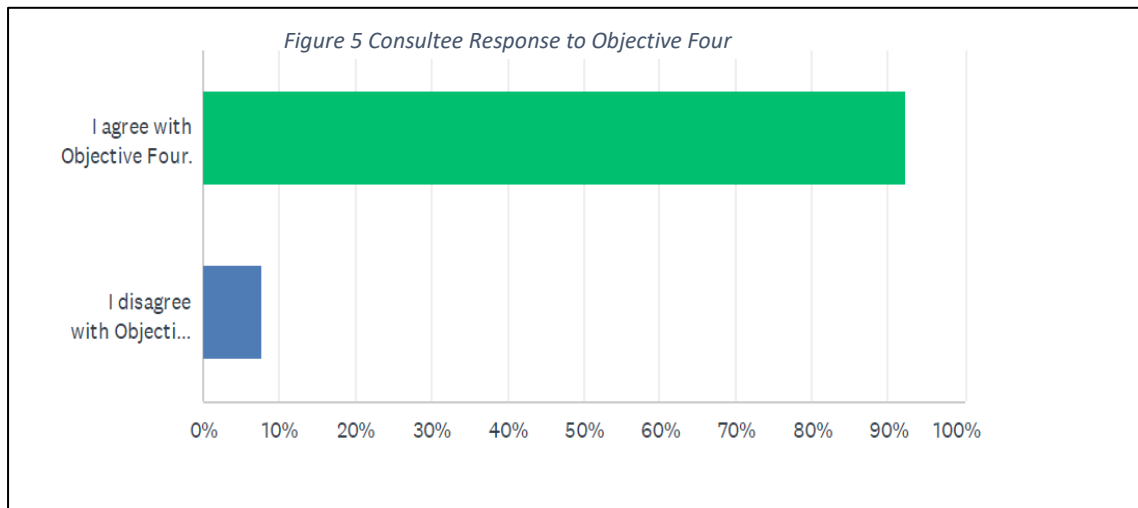
Consultees were asked to indicate if they agreed or disagreed with objective four, and to add comments where applicable.

### Improvement Objective Four

- We will contribute to the ongoing regeneration of our district by delivering a capital investment programme, enhancing facilities and opportunities for local people.**

Table 1.4 – Percentage of consultees who agreed or disagreed with objective four.

	Percentage
<b>Number of Consultees agreed with objective four.</b>	<b>92.31%</b>
<b>Number of Consultees disagreed with objective four.</b>	<b>7.69%</b>



Outlined below are the consultees' commentary in relation to objective four. There were 9 comments received in total.

#03	Agreed and welcome. However given the state of towns in the district, particularly Dungannon town, and the amount of vacant properties, aging facilities etc., I am pessimistic that this objective will be met. The quality of facilities in Dungannon is not at a good standard compared to other towns in the country, we have had a record number of vacant premises over the past year, and there is virtually nothing for younger people (teenage and young adult) to do in the town. With respect to those staff who have and do work in the existing sector, I believe MUDC have adopted the wrong focus over many years now, neglecting local young people, driving us to leave for Belfast and further afield.
#05	Perhaps consider putting the money into capital investment rather than wasting it on fireworks displays etc.
#07	Yes always good to encourage ongoing upgrades.
#10	Delivering a capital investment programme, enhancing facilities and opportunities for local people provides the opportunities for the Council to enhance the accessibility of facilities through the District, thus future proofing for an ageing population and expanding the footfall to facilities that can increase their level of appeal via implementing accessible practices within the built environment.
#12	The council need to engage and support more on a localised basis with community groups and sports clubs who have been asking for help, guidance and support with the development of facilities. There are strategies after strategies being completed i.e. Pitches Strategy for example but no allocation of substantial funding is given towards them to implement the proposals so why they do????
#22	How will this objective be measured, managed, monitored and reviewed - what is the time frame? Is this objective referring to public service facilities? Which Directorate is responsible for the implementation and delivery of a capital investment programme? What are the current capital investment programmes? What is the eligibility criteria? Has the Council published evidence of public needs that are taken into consideration? How is a settlement selected? Details of existing and proposed capital investment programmes should be published to comply with good governance, transparent and accountability requirements? Citizens should have easy access to and information on all completed capital investment programmes (since 2015), current capital investment programmes and proposed capital investment programmes alongside details on how /when public consultation took place or will take place. Is there a flowchart on procedures and processes for a capital investment programme to ensure

	good governance and accountability in terms of decision making? Where can citizens access such information?
#24	I think it's better to make sure the things that are open now are doing well before new things come along that aren't needed.
#25	Would like to see more culture led regeneration coordinated by the Council, to support better local cultural infrastructure and heritage, through repair and restoration. We are losing too many of our older buildings and facilities especially in towns/villages and brown field sites, while eating into more and more greenfield sites, The council can engage with local communities, local people and give them or their representatives a day in establishing and the development of regeneration plans.
#27	I disagree because the options are black or white. The objective at face value is fine but capital spend needs to be restricted in these economically stringent times.

## QUESTION 7.

**Consultees were asked to outline any improvements that they felt could be made by Mid Ulster Council in the future.**

**There were 16 responses received in total in relation to question 7.**

#01	More street cleaners needed
#02	With current financial constraints, giving the ratepayers value for money should be the number one priority. We constantly hear the council complaining about a lack of money, so why is there no objective around this issue? All the objectives are too vague, there is no measure of success outlined. Without this, objectives are mostly pointless as you cannot define if they have been achieved.
#03	Volunteer litter picking group to aid MUDC staff- Digital consultation forums for anyone across district- Focus on or develop a strategy for young people including young adults, looking at entertainment options/reasons to stay in Mid Ulster. - Better advertising for litter- Multi-language advertising for issues like litter- Investment in leisure facilities (fix leaking roof in Dungannon Leisure Centre, fix turnstiles software)- Better research into vendors for software.
#04	Bicycles for hire, Microchipping bins to prevent them being stolen. Providing more places that residents can go to use the internet. Providing somewhere that local homeless people can go and get a free meal esp. after six pm would save them going and stealing food from employee's

#05	stop wasting money on fireworks displays
#07	Happy with proposals
#10	It would be advantageous for Mid Ulster DC to implement condition specific action plans e.g. Autism Friendly Action Plan, Dementia Friendly Action Plan etc.
#11	See point 5 above. More needs to be done to remove discarded waste from our district
#12	More localized engagement with local community groups in each of the council's village supported by elected representatives from each of the areas.
#14	Under Objective 4 - ongoing regeneration of the district ... recommend some reference to wellbeing within the district in line with the Community Plan etc.
#16	More open forums of discussion from public and staff consultations
#21	I am aware that other Council areas have made strides in ensuring that their districts through the Council's lobbying and being actively involved with their local communities and stakeholders have looked at activities that have made their areas and raised awareness of how council areas can become more autism friendly, age friendly etc. We have a growing elderly population and it would be good to see something happening around this as well as looking at autism friendly practices. Age friendly environments foster healthy and active ageing, can't some type of strategy or action plan be developed through your community plan. I would have thought that Council could facilitate this, surely you want to be an equal and inclusive society through recognising the health and social care needs of an ageing population, disadvantage in terms of welfare and poverty etc. in both our rural and urban communities An example of autism awareness is how LIDL supermarkets have specific "autism aware" evenings across all its stores offering customers a calmer shopping environment and the security of knowing that additional assistance is available if necessary. I think it's an idea that these types of autism friendly practices could be gathered quickly by Council and placed on their web-site as a sign post etc. What do Council services do in relation to this i.e. in their own buildings and service provision - it's not really clear from the web-site or social media channels?
#22	It is vital that a Council provides regular, up-to-date information and data on its own projects and programmes. The need to be clear, transparent and open is part of good governance and accountability procedures and processes. Clarity on roles, remits and responsibility needs to be published to enable the public to know who to talk to if there is an issue or need for updates. It is not transparent from the existing content of

	MUDC website which Directorate is responsible for what and at which stage of, for example, a capital investment programme the responsible Directorate changes .In essence it would be very helpful and useful for clarity and flowcharts on the processes, procedures and accountability at each stage of a capital investment programme. From initial concept to implementation and delivery on the ground to continuous management, routine maintenance, monitoring and review.
#23	A Big Ideas project as currently in place at Belfast City Council should be considered. Also a public Q&A session as offered by Mid & East Antrim Council.
#26	Give better response to the public and when necessary give them the credit if there ideas are better than Mid Ulster District Council.
#27	A powerful and sustained anti-litter programme. Education backed up by enforcement.

## QUESTION 8

**Consultees were asked to use the space provided for any further comments relating to the draft Corporate Improvement objectives.**

**There was 1 response received in total relating to question 8.**

#01	More recycling bins around, possibly the plastic ones where u get a reward voucher for recycling so many items.
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<b>Report on</b>	Rural Needs Annual Progress Return to DAERA (2023/24)
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	9 May 2024
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Joe McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Ann McAleer, Policy Engagement and Equality Officer

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>  If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to set out Mid Ulster District Council's Annual Progress Report to DAERA in relation to the Rural Needs Act NI (2016) for the period 2023-24.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	Mid Ulster District Council is bound by the Rural Needs Act NI (2016) to 'have due regard to rural needs when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and;</li> <li>• designing and delivering public services.</li> </ul>
2.2	Section 3 of the Rural Needs Act NI requires DAERA to publish an annual monitoring report containing the information sent to it by public authorities on how they have paid due regard to rural needs and relevant information relating to the policies/strategies/plans. This exercise is required by DAERA under its functions under the Act.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	The Annual Progress Report for the reporting period 2023-24 is required to be submitted to DAERA no later than 21 <sup>st</sup> June 2024.
3.2	Mid Ulster District Council's Annual Progress Report (2023-2024) sets out to what extent the Council has demonstrated regard to rural needs. It is included as Appendix A of this report and details that 18 Rural Needs Impact Assessments were completed for various policies/programmes/projects during this reporting period.
3.3	Feedback was sought and received from DEARA Rural Needs Unit in relation to this draft submission. All advice and guidance has been incorporated.

3.4	Two Rural Needs Act Information Sessions were scheduled for elected members on 29 April and 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2024. These sessions aimed to provide capacity building to elected members in relation to decision making role i.e. considering/approving council decisions that have an impact on rural needs.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: N/A
	Human: N/A
	Risk Management: N/A
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: Equality screening is not required for this progress report.
	Rural Needs Implications: As detailed
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	To note the Annual Progress Report (2023-24) on the implementation and activities surrounding its statutory Rural Needs Duties.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Appendix A: Mid Ulster District Council Annual Rural Needs Progress Report (2023-24)





## Appendix 2 - Template for Information to be Compiled

### Information to be compiled by Public Authorities under Section 3(1)(a) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

(To be completed and included in public authorities' own annual reports and submitted to DAERA for inclusion in the Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report).

Name of Public Authority:

Reporting Period: April 20  to March 20

The following information should be compiled in respect of each policy, strategy and plan which has been developed, adopted, implemented or revised and each public service which has been designed or delivered by the public authority during the reporting period.

<i>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016<sup>1</sup>.</i>	<i>The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to<sup>2</sup>.</i>	<i>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service<sup>3</sup>.</i>
<b>Implementation of a Reviewed Learning &amp; Development Policy</b>	<i>Education or Training in Rural Areas</i>  <i>Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas</i>  <i>Transport Services or Infrastructure in</i>	Mid Ulster District Council has considered, identified and accommodated rural needs in the development of the Council's by Learning & Development policy by recognising the needs of staff particularly those living in rural areas by considering equality of opportunity considerations in relation to access to broadband, travel times/costs, the location of the Council's facilities and the overall general rural population makeup of the Mid Ulster District Council area.

	<i>Rural Areas</i>	
<b>Implementation of Mid Ulster Spruce Up Scheme</b>	<i>Rural Business</i>	Mid Ulster District Council has considered, identified and accommodated rural needs in the development of the Council's Spruce Up Scheme 2023/24 by ensuring that although the Department of Communities funding is currently restricted to urban areas, that rural dwellers who frequent the towns on a daily basis for shopping, socializing, employment (a lot of the rural residents work within the towns) are considered and facilitated. Also, the spruce up programme will not create displacement within the rural areas, it is hoped it would be a positive impact on those rural areas – if our town centres are economically viable, this will have a multiplier effect on nearby rural areas.
<b>Implementation of a Reviewed Pensions Discretions Policy</b>	<i>Internal Policy</i>	Mid Ulster District Council has considered the needs of staff living in rural areas by identifying equality of opportunity considerations in relation to the overall general rural population makeup of the Mid Ulster District Council area and is aware that the Council area has an aging population.
<b>Implementation of Leasing of Beechland Play Area (Pitch)</b>	<i>Deprivation in Rural Areas</i>	Mid Ulster District Council has considered, identified and accommodated rural needs in relation to the leasing of this pitch by ensuring that it will positively impact on people in rural areas by improving opportunities for participation in sport through the development of facilities.
<b>Leasing of Boyne Row Pitch and Pavilion, Castledawson</b>	<i>Deprivation in Rural Areas</i>	Mid Ulster District Council has considered, identified and accommodated rural needs in relation to the leasing of this pitch by ensuring that it will positively impact on people in rural areas by improving opportunities for participation in sport through the development of facilities.

<b>Implementation of Leasing of Glenone Pitch, Portglenone</b>	<i>Deprivation in Rural Areas</i>	Mid Ulster District Council has considered, identified and accommodated rural needs in relation to the leasing of this pitch by ensuring that it will positively impact on people in rural areas by improving opportunities for participation in sport through the development of facilities.
<b>Implementation of a Reviewed Procurement Policy</b>	<i>Rural Businesses Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas</i>	Mid Ulster District Council has considered rural needs in relation to this policy by identifying and recognising the varying levels of connectivity across the District and as such committing to non-digital channel options of contact, while affording the same quality of service.
<b>Implementation of Asset Management Strategy and Action Plan</b>	<i>Other- Council Asset Management</i>	Mid Ulster District Council has considered identified and accommodated rural needs in relation to the Asset Management Strategy by ensuring the best use of our resources ensuring that our focus is always on excellence; and that our land and property assets are configured through an Asset Management Plan to meet the needs of our urban and rural communities. Mid Ulster District Council seeks to safeguard the needs of rural communities, to promote a fair and inclusive rural society by considering the needs of our rural dwellers when reviewing, managing, and transacting land and property.
<b>Implementation of a Reviewed CCTV Policy</b>	<i>Rural Businesses  Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas</i>	Mid Ulster District Council has considered rural needs in relation to the CCTV Policy by identifying the issues of rural crime and connectivity and considering how this may lead to this policy being implemented in a different way in urban areas than in rural areas. The identification of these issues has led to the Council providing the potential alternative of the use of mobile CCTV equipment that be deployed in areas where there is a due to address sporadic community safety

		issues in rural areas.
<b>Development of Playfields/Pitches in Moy Village</b>		Mid Ulster District Council has considered and identified and accommodated rural needs in relation to Development of Playfields/Pitches in Moy Village by ensuring that the rural hinterland area of the village of Moy is equipped with a wider range of recreation opportunities and services will be on offer to all sections of the community.
<b>Implementation of Hill of The O'Neill &amp; Ranfurly House Access</b>	<i>Rural Tourism</i>	Mid Ulster District Council have identified and accommodated rural needs in relation to the implementation of new access arrangement to the Hill of The O'Neill/Ranfurly House by ensuring that the site is accessible for rural dwellers via multiple car parks with some free all-day provision, public transport stops are also located nearby in Market Square. The new access arrangements will connect the 7km "Earls Walking Trail" circuit around the edge of Dungannon town boundary.
<b>Implementation of a Labour Market Partnership</b>	<i>Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas</i>	Mid Ulster District Council have accommodated specific rural needs requirements in relation to the development of the Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership by ensuring that considerations have been built into the programme to ensure no disadvantage is experienced by programme participants who are rural dwellers.
<b>Development of Cookstown Saturday Market</b>	<i>Rural Tourism</i>	Mid Ulster District Council has considered rural needs in relation to the development of the Cookstown Saturday Market by reinvigorating and revitalizing the Saturday Market. This process identified that the enhancements proposed with the project will create the prospect of more visitors from the rural areas and protection of employment opportunities for rural

		<p>dwellers.</p>
<p><b>Implementation of the Coalisland Canal Project</b></p>	<p><i>Rural Tourism</i></p> <p><i>Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas</i></p>	<p>Mid Ulster District Council has considered rural needs in relation the development of Coalisland Canal Greenway by identifying the potential for a greater range of opportunities for people living in the rural area via enhanced infrastructure. Within the rural hinterland area from Coalisland to the Loughshore a wider range of recreation opportunities and services will be available.</p>
<p><b>Implementation of Maghera Public Realm</b></p>	<p><i>Rural Businesses</i></p> <p><i>Rural Tourism</i></p> <p><i>Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas</i></p> <p><i>Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas</i></p>	<p>Mid Ulster District Council has considered rural needs in relation to the implementation of Maghera Public Realm by refreshing the high street environment of this rural settlement via the replacement of existing footpaths, lighting and street furniture. This process identified that the improvements will make Maghera a more welcoming accessible rural environment that will enhance the area for its rural residents and encourage passing trade to shop and enjoy all that the rural settlement has to offer.</p>
<p><b>Implementation of Accessibility Improvements at Cahore Sports Pavilion</b></p>	<p><i>Deprivation in Rural Areas</i></p>	<p>Mid Ulster District Council has considered rural needs in relation to the implementation of Accessibility Improvements at Cahore Sports Pavilion by ensuring that social need is considered via equality of access to sports pitches as enjoyed by urban dwellers. This process identified that the project's aims will deliver accessibility improvements for everyone, including Cahore Sports Pavilion, Magherafelt who are part of the local rural demographic.</p>
<p><b>Implementation of IT Hardware Upgrade (at Open Ground and Seamus Heaney HomePlace sites)</b></p>	<p><i>Rural business</i></p> <p><i>Rural Tourism</i></p>	<p>Mid Ulster District Council has considered rural needs in relation to the implementation of this IT Upgrade of this equipment by examining issues in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.</p>

	<i>Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas</i>	This process identified that ensuring that these rural tourism sites have the appropriate connectivity will contribute to building strong, inclusive and sustainable rural communities.
<b>Rationalisation of Recycling Centres</b>	<i>Other: Amenities in Rural Areas</i>	Mid Ulster District Council has considered rural needs in relation to the rationalisation of recycling centres by identifying and documenting the possible negative impacts for rural dwellers. Suitable mitigation measures have been identified and made available, this includes bulky waste collections and additional black bin provision.

## NOTES

1. This information should normally be contained in section 1B of the RNIA Template completed in respect of the activity.
2. This information should normally be contained in section 2D of the RNIA Template completed in respect of the activity.
3. The information contained in sections 3D, 4A & 5B of the RNIA Template should be considered when completing this section.

<b>Report on</b>	Local Government Staff Commission: 2024-25 Annual Subscription National Association of Councillors: 2024-25 Annual Subscription Northern Ireland Local Government Association: 2024-25 Service Fee
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	9 May 2024
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	J McGuckin Head of Strategic Services Engagement
<b>Contact Officer</b>	J McGuckin Head of Strategic Services Engagement

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>  If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	x

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To update the committee on correspondence received from the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) and the National Association for Councillors (NAC) and Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) on annual contributions payable for 2024-2025
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	<p><b>Local Government Staff Commission</b></p> <p>The Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) is an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body established under the Local Government (NI) Act 1972. The Department for Communities has informed the Local Government Staff Commission (the Commission) that the provisional date for dissolution has been extended to 31 March 2025. You will be aware that in accordance with Schedule 3, paragraph 7 of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972, the budget for the operation of the Commission is to be apportioned between all District Councils and the NIHE.</p> <p>In accordance with the 2024/25 Management and Dissolution Plan, the Commission has estimated its total financial requirement of which Mid Ulster apportionment payment of £22,001 as detailed on Appendix A.</p>
2.2	<p><b>National Association of Councillors</b></p> <p>The Council is a member of the National Association of Councillors (NAC) to which it has elected member representation. The current representation extends to 8 members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Christine McFlynn</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Clement Cuthbertson</li> <li>• Councillor Dominic Molloy</li> <li>• Councillor Eugene McGonnell</li> <li>• Councillor Kyle Black</li> <li>• Councillor Sean Clarke</li> <li>• Councillor Trevor Wilson</li> <li>• Councillor Wilbert Buchanan</li> </ul> <p>The National Association of Councillors Northern Ireland Region was established 27 years ago, after local councillors decided they needed a strong local body as well as belonging to the UK National Association of Councillors. The NAC is the only organisation directly run by councillors and represents elected members across all Councils.</p> <p>The Council has received a request for payment for the incoming 2024-2025 membership.</p> <p>2.3 The Council is a Member of Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) to which it has representation. The current representation extends to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Frances Burton</li> <li>• Councillor Mark Robinson</li> <li>• Councillor Christine McFlynn</li> <li>• Councillor Sean McPeake</li> <li>• Councillor Eugene McConnell</li> <li>• Councillor Brian McGuigan</li> <li>• Councillor Wesley Brown</li> <li>• Councillor Meta Graham</li> </ul> <p>The Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) is the council led representative body for local authorities in Northern Ireland. The Association is supported by political parties and independent members in councils, and works in partnership with other key regional bodies and stakeholders. NILGA members are drawn from each of the 11 councils. The Association supports and represents NI Local Government's interests on regional bodies, within the Local Government Group of Associations in the UK, ROI and in Europe. The Council has received a request for payment for the incoming 2024-2025 service fee.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p>The Council has received notification for payment to the LGSC relating to period 2024-25. The Council is required by statute under the Local Government Act (NI) 1972 to make this payment.</p>
3.2	<p>The Council has received an invoice for payment to the National Association for Councillors (NAC) relating to the period 2024-25 to which it is currently a member council.</p>



3.3	The Council has received an invoice for payment to the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA)) relating to the period 2024-25 to which it is currently a member council.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: LGSC £22,001 to be met from within council existing budgetary provision. NAC £3,200. To be met from within council existing budgetary provision. NILGA £71,241.60 to be met from within council existing budgetary provision.
	Human: Not applicable
	Risk Management: Not applicable
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: Not applicable
	Rural Needs Implications: Not applicable
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	That the committee notes request for payments from the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) for the period 2024-2025,</li> <li>• the National Association of Councillors for the period 2024-25; and</li> <li>• Northern Ireland Local Government Association for the period 2024-25.</li> </ul>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Appendix A Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) Appendix B Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA)





CHAIRPERSON  
Mr Bumper Graham

20 March 2024

Mr Adrian McCreesh  
Chief Executive  
Mid Ulster District Council  
Circular Road  
Dungannon BT71 6DT

Dear Adrian

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND  
CONTINUING OPERATIONS 2024/25**

Further to my letter dated 25 January 2024 notifying you of the Department for Communities decision to extend the provisional date for dissolution of the Commission to 31 March 2027 I am writing to confirm the apportionment arrangements for your Council for 2024/25.

In accordance with the 2024/25 Management and Dissolution Plan, the Commission has estimated its total financial requirement to be £418,661 for the year ahead. Income from ongoing operations, which is offset against this figure is estimated at £40,000, leaving an amount of £378,661 to be raised from District Councils and the NIHE.

You will be aware that in accordance with Schedule 3, paragraph 7 of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972, the budget for the operation of the Commission is to be apportioned between all District Councils and the NIHE.

By virtue of the apportionment arrangements Mid Ulster District Council is required to pay 5.81% of £378,661 namely £22,001.

I would request that you issue a Purchase Order to the Commission for this amount, following receipt of which, an invoice will be submitted.

If you have any queries in relation to the work of the Commission or the services provided or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diana Stewart". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

**Diana Stewart**  
**Director of Corporate Services**

**Cc (Geraldine Dyson)**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION  
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

St Anne's House  
15 Church Street  
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*the voice of local government*

Mr Adrian McCreesh  
Chief Executive  
Mid Ulster District Council  
Council Offices  
Circular Road  
DUNGANNON  
BT71 6DT

22<sup>nd</sup> April 2024

Dear Adrian,

A lot has changed for councils in the last year, with the local government elections in May 2023 and the NI Executive and Assembly once again functioning.

Councils have remained focused on how they can deliver growth and prosperity for their areas and have been very successful in the development of city/growth deals, securing UK Levelling Up and Shared Island Funding and delivering the critical front line services our ratepayers depend on.

Having completed two years as NILGA Chief Executive, I continue to be amazed by the flexibility, agility, innovation and commitment of your councils.

Thank you for your feedback on the draft NILGA Corporate Plan 2023-2027, which is intended to give NILGA's work focus, pace and impact as we support your council. The NILGA Executive considered all of the feedback received and agreed the final corporate plan to guide NILGA's work during the current local government mandate. Please find attached the final NILGA Corporate Plan 2023-2027 for your information.

In order for NILGA to be able to demonstrate impact, value for money and added value to you, our members, we developed a supporting impact framework focusing on sectoral sustainability, policy and development.

I am pleased to attach both NILGA's impact summary as well as a more detailed breakdown of that impact for your consideration.

To enable the continued delivery of NILGA's work, the annual core subscription for your council for 24/25 is £59368.00 (plus VAT), an invoice is attached.

Please be assured any increases are due entirely to the same unavoidable inflationary and staffing costs facing councils and we have made every effort to keep your subscription as low as possible.

**Northern Ireland Local Government Association**

Bradford Court, Upper Galwally, Castlereagh, BT8 6RB

Tel: 028 9079 8972 email: [office@nilga.org](mailto:office@nilga.org) web: [www.nilga.org](http://www.nilga.org) twitter: @NI\_LGA

On behalf of NILGA, I want to thank the NILGA Members from your council Cllr Sean McPeake, Cllr Frances Burton, Cllr Wesley Brown, Cllr Christine McFlynn, Cllr Malachy Quinn, and your Officers that so willingly give of their time in supporting the work of NILGA.

I look forward to continuing the close relationship with both the political and corporate leadership in your council to shape NILGA's regional political leadership role in a way that adds value for the sector and please let me know if there is anything that I can do to assist you, your Members or your wider corporate team.

Yours sincerely



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Alison Allen  
Chief Executive

**Northern Ireland Local Government Association**

Bradford Court, Upper Galwally, Castlereagh, BT8 6RB

Tel: 028 9079 8972 email: [office@nilga.org](mailto:office@nilga.org) web: [www.nilga.org](http://www.nilga.org) twitter: @NI\_LGA



<b>Report on</b>	2024-25 Service Plan: Org Development, Strategy & Performance
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Philip Moffett, Assistant Director: Org Development Strategy & Performance
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Marissa Canavan, Strategic Director: Org Development, Strategy & Performance Geraldine Dyson, Head of HR Joseph McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services & Engagement

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b> If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To provide members with the Directorate Service Plan for Organisational Development, Strategy & Performance for period 2024-25.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	Council is structured around 4 Directorates together with the Chief Executive's area which includes Communications and our Planning function. To assist Directorates, under the direction of four Strategic Directors, to inform and structure business annually, Directorates engage with their teams in developing Service Plans for their areas of work.
2.2	Whilst directorate plans do not cover everything undertaken, they contain the focus of activity aimed at improving upon how we deliver on our services to the, which are ultimately for the people of our district. These plans are integral to our corporate improvement and planning arrangements running through what we do.
2.3	The directorate service plan for the 2024-25 period is attached as appendix A for reference and consideration.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	Our Organisation Development, Strategy and Performance Directorate cuts across a number of business areas. These areas extend to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Human Resources, Organisational Development and Corporate Learning and Development enabling the continued delivery of our services across the organisation,</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Committee and Members Services facilitating the transaction of council business,</li> <li>○ Corporate Performance Improvement, Equality, Disability and Rural Needs across our services,</li> <li>○ Strategic Planning, Community planning Customer Services and Complaints handling; and</li> <li>○ Registration Services accessible from across our 3 Civic Offices those wishing to access our births, deaths and marriages function.</li> </ul> <p><b>Our Focus 2024-25</b></p> <p>3.2 The Directorate’s focus continues to be based on the foundation of, <i>Supporting Staff and Members to Deliver to Develop-Improve-Deliver</i>. The plan doesn’t reflect everything we do but rather focuses on those things we’re continually working on to improve upon how we do things.</p> <p>3.3 Our 2024-25 activities and priority areas of focus have been set for us deliver on our directorate objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To continue to attract and retain staff, ensuring a multi-skilled and diverse workforce that is reflective of the people we serve.</li> <li>2. To continue to engage and support our citizens and excel in meeting their needs and expectations through a range of initiatives, communication channels, digital systems and processes.</li> <li>3. To expand the Council’s learning and development offering, promoting a culture of life-long learning.</li> <li>4. To enhance employee engagement and improve our staff’s health and well-being through a range of initiatives</li> <li>5. To support Directorates to make informed and timely decisions on the delivery of services.</li> </ol> <p>3.4 The service plan is attached as appendix A.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<p><b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b></p> <p>Financial: not applicable and relevant to this reporting.</p> <p>Human: none specifically identified other than a focus on delivery of the plan as part of the Directorate business.</p>



	Risk Management: Implementation and continued improvement serve as mitigation to risk of non-delivery of service.
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: not applicable and relevant to this reporting at this time. Considerations will be given to elements as and when required on implementation.
	Rural Needs Implications: A RNIA is not considered proportionate to the scope of this piece of work.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	That the committee notes, considers and provides commentary as necessary on the Org Development, Strategy & Performance Service Plan 2024-25.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Appendix A: Org Development, Strategy & Performance Service Plan 2024-25





Comhairle Ceantair  
**Lár Uladh**  
**Mid Ulster**  
District Council

# ***Organisational Development, Strategy & Performance***

**DIRECTORATE SERVICE PLAN  
2024 / 2025**

# CONTENT

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1.3	Customers & Stakeholders	
1.4	Performance Overview in 2023/24	
<b>2.0</b>	<b>IMPROVING OUR SERVICES AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE - 2024/25</b>	
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## 1.0 OVERALL PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE DIRECTORATE

### 1.1 Purpose and Scope of the Directorate

Central to Organisational Development, Strategy and Performance is the oversight and implementation of organisational change and the provision of a range of employee related services that enable the Council to continue to deliver its services to our citizens. Key responsibilities, noted below (1.2), focus on recruitment and retention, people management, governance arrangements allowing for effective decision making by council and committees, registration services, strategic and corporate direction, compliance with statutory duties and front-line customer service delivery at our three main offices.

### 1.2 Responsibilities

**Organisational Development:** Continually improves organisational effectiveness and adherence to council's culture and values. Maximizes employees' potential, supporting them to amplify their contribution towards Council's success.

**Human Resources:** Manages the efficient organisation and various employment functions including employee resourcing, employee relations, equal opportunities, and health and well-being. Provides support to the organisation to comply with relevant employment legislation, HR best practice and professional advice on employment matters. Contributes to the development, implementation and review of relevant HR policies and procedures in conjunction with Trade Unions, staff and key stakeholders.

**Corporate Learning and Development:** Supports the delivery of a range of organisational and learning and development activities for all Elected Members and staff. Supports the development of HR policies and procedures.

**Registration Services:** Provides a suite of registration services extending to births, deaths and marriages and performs marriages and civil partnerships in the District.

**Business Support and Facility Services:** Provides administrative support, ensuring the efficient operation of Council's services and offices. Manages our buildings to ensure they are clean and well maintained.

**Customer Services and Corporate Complaints:** Provides a front-line customer service at each of our Civic Offices in Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt, responds to customer enquiries and provides face-to-face advice and support. Develops arrangements to improve customer service and continues to manage and embed our Complaints Handling Procedures across the organisation.

**Community and Corporate Planning:** co-ordinates the community planning process for our district, working collaboratively with a wide range of statutory and local partners, businesses, the community and voluntary sector and residents. Oversees and co-ordinates the development and delivery of the Council’s Corporate Plan.

**Committee Services:** facilitates and manages Council and Committee meetings to include the development of agendas, compilation of meeting packs, minute taking and follow up activity on decisions resolved.

**Member Services:** provides support to Councillors in carrying out their role, including progressing towards attainment of the Elected Member Development Charter.

**Equality, Disability and Good Relations:** ensures that Council meets its Equality Scheme obligations and provides support to ensure our services are delivered in line with obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

**Rural Needs:** provides guidance and assistance on our statutory duties under the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 to consider rural needs in the development of new policies, plans or strategies and in service design/delivery decisions.

**Performance Management & Improvement:** develops and embeds arrangements to support continuous improvement in the delivery of services in accordance with the Performance Improvement obligations (Local Government Act (NI) 2014). Supports Council’s strategic planning through reporting, validation and monitoring of performance data.

**Civic Recognition:** processes Elected Members’ requests for civic recognition and makes the associated recommendations to Council.

**Corporate Policy:** provides support and advice on the formulation of corporate policies across the Council.

### 1.3 Customers & Stakeholders

Customers & Stakeholders
<b>Internal</b> – Staff, Departments, Elected Members, SMT and Local Trade Union Representatives
<b>External</b> – Job Applicants, Students, Regional Trade Union Representatives, LGSC, Training Providers, OH Providers/ Doctors, Equality Commission, Access NI, NILGA, NJCLGS, PPMA, Schools and Colleges, Labour Relations Agency, Health & Safety Executive, Central Government Departments, Media, other local authorities, recruitment agencies, customers to our Civic Offices and software suppliers

**Government Departments, Agencies & Bodies** to include the Equality Commission for NI, Community Planning Partners, NI Audit Office, Public Records Office for Northern Ireland (PRONI), General Register Office for NI (GRO), Information Commissioner's Office (ICO); a wide cross section of the public and customers of the Council, as required, outside Bodies with Councillor representation from Mid Ulster District Council, NILGOSC, NIPB

#### 1.4 Performance Overview in 2023/24 (Retrospective Review)

The following provides an overview of some of our achievements and successes over the past 12 months as a Directorate.

<b>2023/2024 Performance Overview</b> <b><i>What we achieved - Measured Activities Completed</i></b>
Implementation of the Council's Corporate Plan (2020-2024) reviewed and a new Corporate Plan (2024-2028) developed
Corporate identity and Council brand embedded by the provision of uniforms for Customer Service Teams, Facilities staff and Registration team
<p>Council's digital agenda supported through improving how we connect and engage with our customers and stakeholders for an enhanced customer experience;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of existing front-line customer processes within the scope of the Business Support area across Directorates undertaken</li> <li>• High contact customer processes requiring consideration in 2023-24 prioritised</li> <li>• Process mapping to identify customer services benefits for refining and changing existing processes undertaken. Existing 'as is' processes mapped out</li> <li>• A proposal for an electronic platform accessible to all services with the capacity to upload information to help Customers Services and Business Support Officers address customers' queries investigated and developed</li> </ul>
Model Complaints Handling Process (MCHP) implemented and a digital solution to manage and process complaints across the Council, in line with NI Public Service Organisation (NIPSO) requirements developed
Elected Member Development - Induction training programme undertaken for all new Elected Members and an Elected Member Development Training Programme developed in conjunction with the EMDWG. Members updated on Individual Personal development plans
Quarterly Learning and Development Programme delivered
Phase 1 of the Personal Contribution & Support Process (PC&SP) rolled out
Mid Ulster District Council Equality Scheme Commitments including the associated Equality and Disability Action Plans completed
Rural Needs Action Plan (Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016) delivered, Rural Needs Impact Assessments completed and Rural Consultee list consulted



Next phase of Management Dashboards for Directorates developed and rolled out to enable Management Teams to make service delivery decisions based on real time people and organisational data

Performance Improvement Plan (PIP – forward looking plan) for 2023/24 developed in conjunction with public consultation, approved and ratified by Council. Annual Performance Assessment Plan for 2023/24 developed, completed, approved and ratified by Council June 2022. Northern Ireland Audit Office liaised with regarding their annual Performance Improvement Audit – unqualified audit opinion attained for 2023/24

Current arrangements for managing and processing corporate level complaints received and functionality of the current tool reviewed

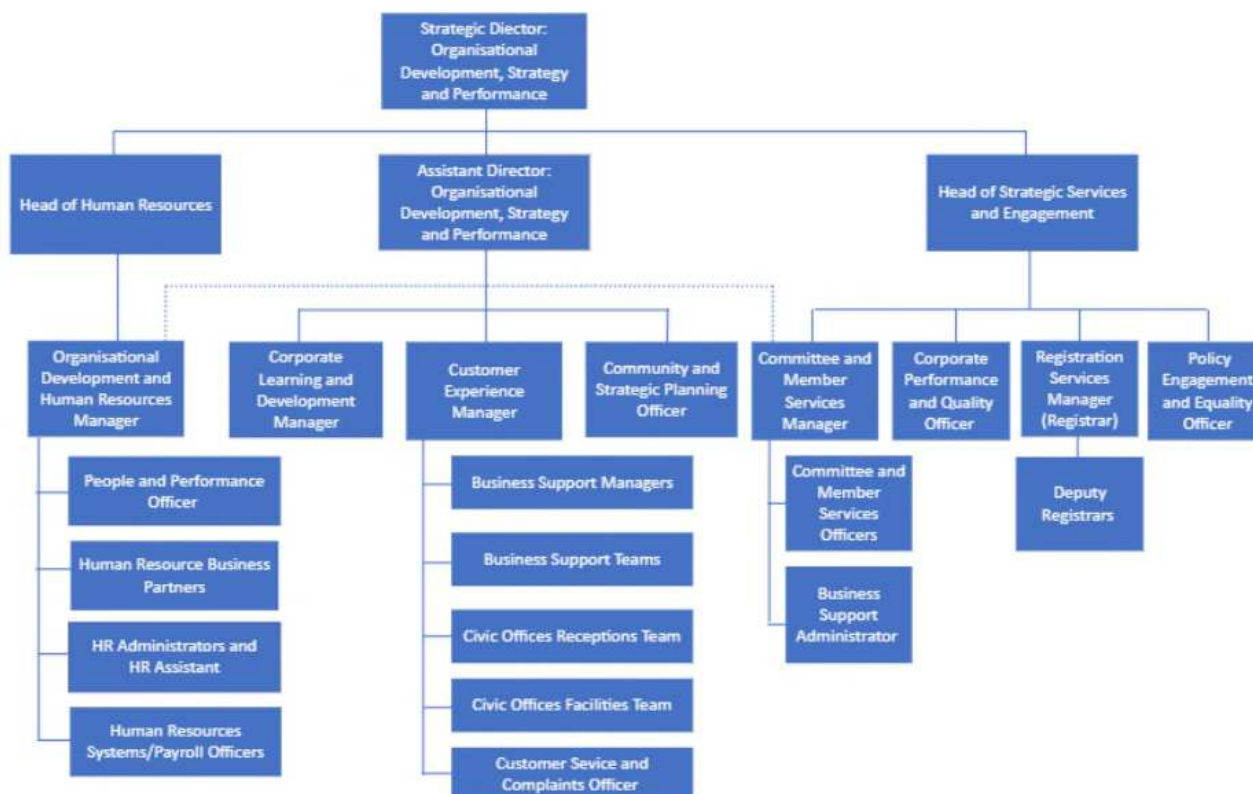
## 2.0 IMPROVING OUR SERVICES AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE - 2024/25

The following tables confirm the resources, financial and people, which the Directorate has access to throughout 2024-25 to deliver its functions, activities and core business. Budgetary arrangements and allocations are subject to final variations.

### 2.1 Budget 2024/25

Budget: Service Areas	£
Organisational Development (Customer Services & Business Support)	2,187,187
Human Resources	717,739
Strategic Services & Engagement (Registration Services)	1,409,219
Gross Budget	4,314,145
Income	182,000
Net Budget ( <i>anticipated</i> ) for 2024-25	4,132,145

### 2.2 Directorate Services and Structure – 2024-2025



<b>Staffing</b>	<b>No. of Staff</b>
<b>Strategic Director</b>	1
<b>Assistant Director – Organisational Development</b>	1
• Organisational Development (inc. Customer Services and Business Support) Staff	61
<b>Head of Service – Human Resources</b>	1
• Human Resources Staff	11
<b>Head of Service - Strategic Services and Engagement</b>	1
• Strategic Services and Engagement (inc. Registration Services) Staff	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>

**2.3 Service Work Plan - 2024/25 - Our Focus for the next 12 months**

We continue to improve how we do things, supporting the Council to deliver on its objectives and values - *to put the customer, whether internal or external, at the heart of everything we do*. The following will be our priority focus for the next 12 months. These extend to embedding service improvements within the everyday business of the Directorate.

<b><i>Supporting Staff and Members to Develop – Improve – Deliver</i></b>	
<b>Our Objectives</b>	
1	To continue to attract and retain staff, ensuring a multi-skilled and diverse workforce that is reflective of the people we serve.
2	To continue to engage and support our citizens and excel in meeting their needs and expectations through a range of initiatives, communication channels, digital systems and processes.
3	To expand the Council’s learning and development offering, promoting a culture of life-long learning.
4	To enhance employee engagement and improve our staff’s health and well-being through a range of initiatives
5	To support Directorates to make informed and timely decisions on the delivery of services.

**Service Name:** Organisation Development, Strategy & Performance

**Link to Community Plan Theme:**

**Align to Corporate Plan Theme**

*CMP 1.2 Economic Growth - We have more people working in a diverse economy*

to be aligned

<b>Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):</b>	<b>What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):</b>	<b>By When (Date?)</b>	<b>Service Name /Lead Officers(s)</b>	<b>What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)</b>	<b>How Will we Know? (Measures)</b>
<p><b>1.0</b> To continue to attract and retain staff, ensuring a multi-skilled and diverse workforce that is reflective of the people we serve.</p>	<p><b>1.1</b> Align Council's corporate and local induction programme and implement a digital Corporate Induction/Welcome Pack</p>	<p>31/12/24</p>		<p>Skillgate Learning Platform introduced Managers, employees and mentors feel supported and have the information they need from Day 1 New starts have a positive, welcoming and inclusive introduction to their employment journey</p>	<p>Digital Welcome Pack in place Induction programmes aligned Decreased number of induction related queries to HR</p>
	<p><b>1.2</b> Review the Recruitment and Selection Process to ensure a streamlined effective and efficient process from start to finish for officers and applicants</p>	<p>31/03/25</p>		<p>Increased efficiency in the recruitment and selection admin processes Videos advertising and promoting opportunities Online platforms promoting available opportunities on work/student placements and apprenticeship schemes</p>	<p>Reduced number of job related queries from the public Level of public interest in MUDC vacancies Evidence-based vacancy tracking (automated Vacancy Authorisation Forms)</p>

	<p><b>1.3</b> Deliver a programme to develop Talent Management and Staff Retention within the Council</p>	<p>31/03/2025 (ongoing)</p>		<p>A succession plan based on workforce data</p> <p>A talent management programme to include mentoring opportunities</p> <p>Promotion Policy developed</p> <p>Opportunities for staff to learn and develop within the organisation</p> <p>Reduced staff turnover, increased staff retention</p>	<p>Succession plan, promotion policy and talent management plan in place</p> <p>Staff engagement in learning and development opportunities</p> <p>Staff turnover</p>
	<p><b>1.4</b> Finalise, consult on, approve and publish the new Corporate Plan 2024-2028</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor progress at 6 month intervals</li> </ul>	<p>30/06/2024</p>		<p>A Corporate Plan that sets the strategic direction of the organisation for the next four years and is reflective of the needs of our district, citizens and customers</p>	<p>Corporate Plan 2024-2028 agreed and published</p> <p>Six monthly progress review reports completed</p>
	<p><b>1.5</b> Develop and implement an integrated Equality and Diversity Plan</p>	<p>31/03/2025</p>		<p>Plan developed and implemented over a three year phased basis</p> <p>Skilled staff are attracted and retained</p> <p>Equal opportunity and diversity practices embedded within Council meeting the requirements of employment Equality legislation</p>	<p>Annual review and reporting of HR practices, policies and procedures to support equality obligations and workforce development</p>

**Service Name:** Organisation Development, Strategy & Performance

**Link to Community Plan Theme:** **Align to Corporate Plan Theme**

*CMP 4.2 Health & Wellbeing - We have better availability to the right service, in the right place at the right time.* to be aligned

Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Service Name /Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
<p><b>2.0</b> To continue to engage and support our citizens and excel in meeting their needs and expectations through a range of initiatives, communication channels, digital systems and processes.</p>	<p><b>2.1</b> Align resources across the Business Support and Customer Services teams</p>	31/03/25		<p>More effective use of resources</p> <p>An agile workforce</p> <p>Upskilled staff with an embedded 'corporate' focus</p>	<p>Resource Plan approved and implemented</p>
	<p><b>2.2</b> Support the Council's digital agenda by developing an electronic platform that supports Customer Services and Business Support Officers to address customer queries and enhance the customer experience</p>	31/03/25 (ongoing)		<p>Greater flexibility and accessibility - 24/7 customer access to online services</p> <p>More informative and up-to-date information shared with customers at point of source</p>	<p>Customer platform implemented and embedded for three services</p>
	<p><b>2.3</b> Complete a review of the Council's Customer Service Policy</p> <p>Embed the Complaint's Handling Process and customer service standards across the organisation</p>	31/03/25		<p>Streamlined, efficient customer service practices</p> <p>Compliance with the NIPSO Complaints Handling requirements</p> <p>Improved customer understanding of Council's processes and satisfaction with the services provided</p>	<p>Customer Service Policy Review completed</p> <p>Increased use of online Complaints interface</p>

	<p><b>2.4</b> Work with our digital agenda partners to review, develop, expand and improve internal systems and processes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment &amp; Selection Modules and statutory reporting procedures within existing systems</li> <li>• PeopleXD self-service functions</li> <li>• HR Support Ticketing</li> <li>• Skillgate and the PeopleXD Learning &amp; Development Module (training updates and refresher requirements)</li> <li>• Existing People XD Operating Procedures</li> <li>• CMIS minute function to produce action sheets</li> <li>• PeopleXD Social Hub communication streams promoting the benefits of working for Council</li> <li>• Performance improvement platform for Council</li> </ul>	<p>31/03/25 (ongoing)</p>		<p>Improved existing processes creating efficiencies to free up capacity to deliver other initiatives</p> <p>New ways of doing key tasks embedded</p> <p>Minimised duplication in IT systems</p> <p>Staff informed and communicated with in a timely manner</p> <p>Maximised use of the Council's Intranet and other online platforms</p> <p>Integrated management information system with reporting data available to management on a timely basis</p>	<p>Integrated Recruitment &amp; Selection module in place</p> <p>Skillgate and L&amp;D module in place</p> <p>Self Service functions and HR Support Ticketing tool introduced and rolled out</p> <p>Increased use of staff Intranet</p> <p>Increase in L&amp;D update and upskilled employees</p> <p>Actions sheets produced through the CMIS system</p> <p>PeopleXD Social Hub implemented</p>
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Service Name: Organisation Development, Strategy & Performance					
Link to Community Plan Theme:		Align to Corporate Plan Theme			
<i>CMP 3.1 Education &amp; Skills - Our People are better qualified &amp; more skilled</i>		to be aligned			
Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Service Name /Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)	How Will we Know? (Measures)
3.0 Expand Council's learning and development offering, promoting a culture of life-long learning.	3.1 Provide induction training for new Elected Members (as required) and continue to provide developmental training	31/3/25		Members feel engaged and supported by participating in relevant training programmes More informed decision making	Elected Member Development Status retained Greater uptake and engagement in Members' training Progress towards achievement of Charter +
	3.2 Succession planning by role through implementation of an apprenticeship programme across the organisation	31/03/25 (ongoing)		Four apprenticeships agreed and progressing Staff retained and continuity in service delivery Continual access to a skilled workforce	Apprenticeships Procedures in place Number of apprenticeships progressing Number of mentors trained Staff retention levels

**Service Name: Organisation Development, Strategy & Performance**

**Link to Community Plan Theme:**

**Align to Corporate Plan Theme**

*CMP 1.2 Economic Growth - We have more people working in a diverse economy*

to be aligned

<b>Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):</b>	<b>What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):</b>	<b>By When (Date?)</b>	<b>Service Name /Lead Officers(s)</b>	<b>What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)</b>	<b>How Will we Know? (Measures)</b>
<p><b>4.0</b> To enhance employee engagement and improve our staff's health and well-being through a range of initiatives.</p>	<p><b>4.1</b> Design and develop Phase 2 of the Personal Contribution &amp; Support (PC&amp;SP) process</p>	<p>31/06/24 (ongoing)</p>		<p>Corporate learning and development programme informed by PC&amp;SP feedback  Targeted health and wellbeing initiatives informed by PC&amp;SP feedback  Staff feel supported by the organisation</p>	<p>Process embedded across directorates  No. attending learning sessions  No. of completed PC&amp;SP engagements  Staff/Manager satisfaction with the process</p>
	<p><b>4.2</b> Build on the Health &amp; Wellbeing Business Case and Strategy  Develop and embed a culture of health and wellbeing across the Council</p>	<p>30/06/2024  31/03/25 (ongoing)</p>		<p>Reinvigorated Health &amp; Wellbeing Working Group including representation from operational staff  Staff events promoting good mental health and well-being  Access to face to face counselling services  Improved staff health and wellbeing</p>	<p>Staff Engagement Survey feedback  Increased staff morale and engagement  Reduction in sickness absence  Increased presenteeism</p>

	<b>4.3</b> Upskill Managers through the Tier 4 and Tier 3 Leaders Development Programme, better equipping them to manage, engage with and lead their staff	31/03/2025 (ongoing)		Enhanced culture of fairness, openness and transparency  Reduced day-to-day support required by managers from HR	Tier 4 and 3 Leaders Development Programme in place  Reduction in the number of formal grievances  Managers feel confident in their ability to manage staff
	<b>4.4</b> Deliver Council's commitments under its Equality Scheme and associated Equality and Disability Action Plans	31/03/2025		Compliance with Equality and Disability legislative duties placed on Council  Enhanced culture of equality and respect for diversity	Annual Progress Reports submitted to the Equality Commission NI
	<b>4.5</b> Deliver the Rural Needs Action Plan under Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016	31/03/2025		Compliance with Rural Needs legislative duties placed on Council  Completion of Rural Needs Impact Assessments and engagement with rural consultees  Enhanced understanding and due regard given to the rural needs of the district	Action plan commitments achieved  Annual Progress Report submitted to DAERA

**Service Name: Organisation Development, Strategy & Performance**

<b>Link to Community Plan Theme:</b>	<b>Align to Corporate Plan Theme</b>
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<i>CMP 4.2 Health &amp; Wellbeing - We have better availability to the right service, in the right place at the right time.</i>	to be aligned
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<b>Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):</b>	<b>What are the key 'Business as Usual' activities we will deliver (actions):</b>	<b>By When (Date?)</b>	<b>Service Name /Lead Officers(s)</b>	<b>What difference will it make? (Outcomes/outputs)</b>	<b>How Will we Know? (Measures)</b>
<p><b>5.0</b> To support Directorates to make informed and timely decisions on the delivery of services.</p>	<p><b>5.1</b> Develop and Review Policies and Procedures</p> <p><b>To be developed:</b> Secondment; Leave; Drugs &amp; Alcohol; Apprenticeships; Capability; Hybrid Working procedure (part of Flexible Working)</p> <p><b>For Review:</b> Disciplinary &amp; Grievance; Management of Overtime; Management of Bereavement; Child Protection; Adult Safeguarding; Attendance management</p>	31/03/2025		<p>New and existing policies and procedures that inform and support decision making</p> <p>Staff engaged in policy development</p> <p>Management, employee and Union relations strengthened</p> <p>Risk levels offset, reduced or removed</p>	<p>Number of policies and procedures reviewed/developed and agreed by Council</p> <p>Risk mitigation measures identified and documented on the Council's risk registers</p>
	<p><b>5.2</b> Lead, co-ordinate and develop the 2024/25 PIP Plan and Annual Assessment Plan 2023 to 2024</p>	30/06/24		<p>Council compliance with Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – duty to improve</p>	<p>Draft NIAO Section 95 issued to Council with unqualified audit opinion by 27/11/24</p>
	<p>Review Council's Performance Framework &amp; Policy</p> <p>Liaise with the NI Audit Office (NIAO) regarding annual improvement audit (Section 95 Performance audit)</p>	30/09/24  01/11/24		<p>Quality of Life for citizens improved</p>	<p>Council ratification of Plans</p> <p>Performance monitoring reports</p>

## 2.4 RISK MANAGEMENT OF DEPARTMENT/SERVICES

The purpose of risk management is to manage the barriers which prevent Council from achieving its objectives. This section includes the 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 Directorate's business as outlined in service plan for 2024-25.

Risk Ref Number	Description of Risk	Risk Rating	Mitigation Activity
1.	Levels of Sickness Absence: Failure to meet lost time sickness absence target of 5%	8	Occupational Health Service and Employee Assistance Support in place. Employee Health and Well-being Programme being further developed in 2024/2025 yr.
2.	Failure to make arrangements for employee weekly and monthly pay and salaries	8	Systems and processes in place to ensure standards are met to pass information to Payroll within timeframes.

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)

### **3.0 OUR STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS**

In carrying out our responsibilities, the Service is cognisant of the statutory duties placed upon the council in the delivery of its services. Whilst the Service operates, under various obligations it is however mindful of the changing context in which it operates and endeavours to mainstream the equality and rural needs duties in the design and delivery of our functions.

#### **3.1 EQUALITY DUTY**

The council and by consequence our Service is committed to contributing towards its part in working towards fulfilling obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to ensure adequate time, staff and resources to fulfil our duties.

The Service will also work towards adherence to the council's Equality Scheme ensuring equality duties, together with promoting positive attitudes towards persons with a disability and the participation of people with a disability in public life when carrying out our functions.

#### **3.2 RURAL NEEDS DUTY**

The Service will be mindful of the rural needs of its customers when carrying out its functions and subsequent responsibilities, particularly in developing any new policies, plans or strategies throughout the year. In line with the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 we will give due regard to rurality in terms of needs in carrying out the activities within our Service.

<b>Report on</b>	Service Improvement Plan Chief Executive's Office: Marketing and Communications Service.
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Kate Keys, Marketing and Communications Development Manager
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Kate Keys, Marketing and Communications Development Manager

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b> If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To consider the draft Service Improvement Plan for the Marketing and Communications Service for the 2024 – 2025 year.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	In line with corporate performance improvement requirements and to ensure that every service contributes to performance improvement, every service produces an annual individual service plan.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	The Marketing and Communications service improvement plan for 2024 – 2025 sets out key priorities for the service in the year ahead, building on the work undertaken during the last year, and also highlights some of the services' main work and achievement of objectives across its range of responsibilities in 2023 – 2024.
3.2	Objectives in the new plan relate to the ongoing development of improved and focused internal communications, specifically the development of a new intranet, to contribute to a connected and engaged employee group who will feel informed and involved. It also has a focus on improved key cross-directorate/service communications with external audiences, across health, leisure and wellbeing, Development and Environmental Services. This will extend work started in the previous year.
3.3	In addition to this work, the plan also focuses on the key area of dog fouling and littering hotspots, building upon the campaign work carried out the previous year.
3.4	With the growth of social media as a primary communications tool for many, the plan focuses on developing more engaging social media content to explain and

	promote Council priorities and activities and increase awareness of the services Council provides.
3.5	The plan also addresses the services' core objectives of ensuring that the reputation of the Council is protected, and the profile of the District is raised in a positive way, as well as ensuring consistently applied branding throughout the organisation.
3.6	The final core objective for the service improvement plan is to ensure that our communications allow the Council and the community to prepare, respond and recover in a crisis, and to develop and improve the role and readiness of the Marketing and Communications Service to support the Council's Business Continuity Plan.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: N/A
	Human: N/A
	Risk Management: N/A
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	That the Committee accepts the 2024 – 2025 Marketing and Communications Service Improvement Plan.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	Marketing and Communications Service Improvement Plan 2024 – 2025.





Comhairle Ceantair  
**Lár Uladh**  
**Mid Ulster**  
District Council

# *Marketing and Communications Service*

## **DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE PLAN - 2024 / 2025**

Date

Consulted within staff team

12/ 04 /2024

Discussed & signed off by Director

/ /2024

## CONTENT

SECTION	TITLE	PAGE NUMBER
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1.2	Responsibilities	
1.3	Customers & Stakeholders	
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<b>2.0</b>	<b>IMPROVING OUR SERVICES AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE - 2024/25</b>	
2.1	Budget - 2024/25	
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<b>3.0</b>	<b>OUR STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS</b>	
3.1	Equality Duty	
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## 1.0 OVERALL PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE DEPARTMENT

### 1.1 Purpose and Scope of the Department

The Marketing and Communications service forms part of the Chief Executives Department and provides strategic and operational marketing and communication services to the Council.

There are 5.5 staff members within the service structure, all based at the Council's Magherafelt offices.

### 1.2 Responsibilities

**Marketing and Communications:** The service develops and delivers external and internal marketing and communications which supports the Council's vision, values and strategic direction.

This includes (but is not limited to)

- marketing and communications planning and delivery across departments and services
- brand management
- the development and content management of multiple digital platforms (web and social media)
- the proactive management of media relations
- delivery of in-house graphic design services
- communications support for the Chair, Deputy Chair and Committee Chairs.

### 1.3 Customers & Stakeholders

Customers & Stakeholders
• Elected Members
• Internal Staff
• Media
• Mid Ulster Residents
• Council Service Users
• Central Government Departments e.g., DfC, DfI, DAERA, DfE

1.4 Performance Overview in 2023/24 (Retrospective Review)

2023/2024 Performance Response/ Overview (What we achieved- Measured Activities)	End of Year Progress Status: Activity was - Completed /Commenced/ Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Develop and deliver an integrated marketing and communications plan to address dog fouling and littering hotspots.</b></li> </ul> <p>The service developed and delivered an integrated marketing and communications plan to address dog fouling and littering throughout 2023-24. Actions focused on several key areas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Big Spring Clean Campaign launched in April 2023 encouraging residents to organise Big Spring Clean events in their areas. Reminding residents that we loan the litter pickers, provide the bin bags and collect the rubbish after the event. The efforts help to keep Mid Ulster clean, tidy and free from rubbish.</li> <li>• Dog fouling campaign launched in June 2023 encouraging responsible dog ownership by cleaning up dog mess and carrying poo bags at all times for disposing of dog waste to help keep our district clean and tidy and to help protect the environment.</li> <li>• Rubbish Visitor campaign shared in June 2023 encouraging residents not to be a ‘rubbish visitor’ by leaving no trace behind of their visit to our parks and forests by disposing of any waste properly in bins to help keep Mid Ulster clean and tidy.</li> <li>• Publicity of the chewing gum task force carried out in July 2023. The Council secured a grant of £25K from the chewing gum task force to remove chewing gum from our footpaths which helped restore unsightly paths in our towns and kept paths presentable and clean.</li> <li>• Further dog fouling campaign publicity issued in July and August encouraging residents to continue to exercise responsible dog ownership by cleaning up after their dog while out and about at our parks, forests and footpaths to help keep Mid Ulster clean and tidy.</li> <li>• Publicity issued in July 2023 about Mid Ulster securing 5 green flags for Dungannon Park, Davagh Forest Park, Ballyronan Marina, Maghera Walled Garden &amp; Hill of the O'Neill emphasising the</li> </ul>	<p>Completed</p>

standards upheld at our parks and outdoor spaces, encouraging residents to help keep them that way out of civic pride.

- Paint reuse scheme was launched in July 2023. This scheme prevented the illegal dumping of paint in the district by introducing a handy and environmentally friendly way for disposing of any unwanted paint.
- Uniform reuse scheme launched in August 2023 encouraging residents to donate any used uniform items in good condition so they can be reused to avoid unnecessary dumping which will affect the environment, while at the same time helping families who may not be able to afford brand new school uniforms to purchase the items more easily at a reduced cost.
- Vape recycling campaign carried out in September 2023 encouraging residents to dispose of vapes correctly to avoid littering and to reduce contamination in our household refuse bins.
- Recycle Week 2023 publicity issued in October 2023 - Join the Big Recycling Hunt - calling on children aged 5 to 11 in Mid Ulster to take the lead in protecting our environment and looking after our planet.
- International E-Waste Day publicity was carried out in October 2023- highlighting the importance of recycling ALL vapes separately from household waste & recycling to protect the environment and prevent disposal of vapes on our roads and paths.
- A Halloween recycling campaign ran from 26 – 31 October 2023 to promote the importance of recycling properly and reducing food waste over the Halloween period.
- European Week for Waste Reduction publicity was issued in November 2023– this year’s theme was packaging, so we encouraged residents not to use unnecessary packaging to help protect the environment and reduce dumping on our roads.
- A Christmas Recycling Campaign ran from 5 December 2023 to 3 January 2024 to encourage residents to recycle properly and reduce food waste over the Christmas period.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further dog fouling campaign publicity issued in January 2024 to remind residents to exercise responsible dog ownership by ensuring to clean up after their dog to help keep the district clean and tidy.</li> <li>• A Food waste recycling campaign ran from 19 – 29 February 2024 encouraging residents to reduce food waste through reuse and recycling to help them save up to £1,000 a year while also protecting and benefiting our environment and planet.</li> <li>• Big Spring Clean promotion for 2024 commenced in February 2024 encouraging residents to keep our district tidy by taking part in Big Spring Clean events for the new season and organising them in their areas. Reminding them that we support all efforts by loaning litter pickers, providing the bin bags and collecting the rubbish afterwards.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Implement Digital Transformation Communications actions to contribute to a more connected Mid Ulster</b></li> <li>• The service has continued to manage the review and updating of content on the Council’s website, removing content that is underused and updating change items, for example, new services, initiatives, price changes across leisure, planning, environmental services and cemeteries.</li> <li>• Web accessibility, content and user experience has remained a priority for the service.</li> <li>• The website has received 424,401 visitors over the course of 2023.</li> <li>• An email marketing tool has been secured and an initial template has been designed to support delivery of corporate email messaging in the next financial year.</li> <li>• The service has provided significant support to assist with customer service, registration, missed bins and dog licencing digital transformation strategy work throughout 2023-24.</li> <li>• The service has completed a pilot exercise to research social media management tools which involved creating a long list of martech social media management tools that would streamline our publishing and response to enquiries. A resulting short list of three were trialled by the service and the results of</li> </ul>	Completed

<p>the trial used to identify the best tool in relation to effectiveness, efficiency and value for money to be implemented in 2024-25.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Develop and deliver a Sustainable Communications Plan to support the Council’s sustainability and climate change programme</b></li> <li>• Initial research for a sustainable communications plan has been completed and the service has engaged with the Waste and Sustainability Officer as well as participated in the Climate Change Action Plan workshops.</li> <li>• Further progress is dependent on the publication of the Council’s Climate Change Action Plan (still to be confirmed at the time of writing) which will inform the final Sustainable Communications Plan.</li> </ul>	Commenced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Develop and deliver an internal communications strategy and action plan that connects, engages and brings together all Council staff.</b></li> <li>• Due to resource pressures within the service structure, this objective was paused and will be carried forward to the next service improvement plan.</li> <li>• The service continues to contribute to the delivery of member and staff briefings and manages the intranet as the Council’s key internal communications channel. It developed a Staff Matters newsletter template and works with the HR team to publish to all staff within the organisation.</li> </ul>	Carried Forward
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>To continue to create and deliver an integrated communications plan for the Council’s capital investment programme</b></li> <li>• The service has contributed significantly to the communication of the outputs of the Council’s capital investment programme, through inputting into the Capital Projects Board and delivering communications activities across several key investment programmes, including those listed below.</li> <li>• Significant assistance has been given to support the Maghera Regeneration Programme, which has included creation and delivery of communications activity across all three strands of the programme, managing significant media and online social media interest in the programme.</li> </ul>	Completed

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support has been given through the marketing and communications service for community engagement events for the Coalisland Canal Active Travel and the Altmore and Cappagh projects.</li><li>• An online and print publicity campaign was delivered to mark the official opening of the Derrynoyd and Drumcairne Forests capital projects in March 2024.</li></ul>	
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## 2.0 IMPROVING OUR SERVICES AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE - 2024/25

The following tables confirm the resources, financial and people, which the Department has access to throughout 2024-25 to deliver its actions, activities and core business.

### 2.1 Budget 2024/25

<b>Budget Headings</b>	<b>£</b>
Central ICT Costs	5,200
Fees	3,000
Office Expenses	92
Marketing Costs	63,000
Staff Costs	311,630
Gross Budget	382,922

2.2 Departmental Services - Council Structure - 2024/25

**Chief Executive's**  
**Service: Marketing and Communications**



Staffing	No. of Staff
Assistant Director	
Head of Service	
Managers	1
Officers	4.5
Remaining Team	
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.5</b>

### 2.3 Service Work Plan - 2024/25

This plan outlines the core activities and actions, which will form your Department (by Services) or Departmental Service Work Plan for 2024-2025.

This is a high-level capture of the Department and the Service outcomes /activities/measures as well as some improvement undertakings which the services will focus on throughout 2024-2025.

The Plan links to hierarchy of other plans and measures such as:

1. Community Plan
2. Strategic plans e.g. Local Development Plan
3. 2024-2028 Corporate Plan priorities,
4. Annual Corporate Performance Improvement (PIP plan)
5. Corporate Improvement Project Plans (CIP's)
6. Statutory Indicators,
7. Corporate Health Indicators

Mid Ulster District Council's Improvement Objectives for 2024 to 2025 are:

1. Mid Ulster District Council will seek to reduce the environmental impacts of our own activities and will contribute to the improvement of the wider environment through local action
2. We will ensure a more connected Mid Ulster where new technologies and ways of working, empower citizens to get the best services that matter to them
3. To create cleaner neighbourhoods, where everyone takes responsibility for their waste and environment
4. We will contribute to the on-going regeneration of our district by delivering a capital investment programme, enhancing facilities and opportunities for local people

## SERVICES WORK PLAN 2024/25

Service Name: Marketing and Communications						
Link to Community Plan Theme:			Align to Corporate Plan Theme			
<i>CMP 3.3 Education &amp; Skills - We are more entrepreneurial, innovative &amp; creative</i>			<i>Theme 1 : Our Service Delivery</i>			
Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):		What are the key activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Service Name /Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes)	How Will we Know? (Measures) clear measurement e.g. %, #, £, date etc.
No.001	A connected, engaged and cohesive staff complement that feels informed and involved.	1) Lead on the research, development and delivery of a new intranet that is fit for purpose and suitable for integration within other online tools currently in place. 2) Work with key content leads from each of the directorates to establish the functionality and content needed for a new intranet.	Complete by March 2025	Marketing and Communications Development Manager / Design & Digital Officer	Improved internal communications that will contribute to a connected and engaged employee group that feels informed and involved.	SMT decision made. New intranet to be implemented (budget implications to be confirmed).
No.002	Ensure that the Council understands the needs of its staff in order to target communication effectively	1) Complete a staff survey to establish employee feedback and provide a benchmark for the development of internal communications	December 2024	Marketing and Communications Development Manager	Results of the survey will inform effective internal communications strategy.	% of employees participating in survey Survey results

## SERVICES WORK PLAN 2024/25

Service Name: Marketing and Communications						
Link to Community Plan Theme:			Align to Corporate Plan Theme			
<i>CMP 3.1 Education &amp; Skills - Our People are better qualified &amp; more skilled</i>			<i>Theme 3: Being the Best Council Possible</i>			
Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):	What are the key activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Service Name /Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes)	How Will we Know? (Measures) clear measurement e.g. %, #, £, date etc.	
<b>No.003</b>	Improve cross-directorate/service communications and increase external PR opportunities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Develop a pilot cross-service communications working group, chaired by the M&amp;C Development Manager that will improve communications.</li> <li>2) Hold four meetings of the group per year.</li> <li>3) Design and carry out campaigns plan in line with priorities raised by Working Group.</li> </ol>	<p>Group established by June 2024</p> <p>Programme of work agreed by July 2024</p>	Marketing and Communications Development Manager	<p>Communications will be improved by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing a key contact within each service area to develop positive communications initiatives.</li> <li>Developing and embedding corporate communications</li> <li>Sharing and disseminating good practice</li> <li>Using knowledge, skills, and capabilities in a more effective and co-ordinated way</li> </ul>	<p>No . Of meetings held</p> <p>Media coverage</p> <p>Social media data</p>

No.004	Develop more engaging social media content such as video to explain Council priorities and activities and to increase awareness of services Council provides.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Create corporate social media content plan to address key themes throughout the year.</li> <li>2) Procure external video production company to assist in provision of content.</li> <li>3) Publish content on corporate social media channels.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content plan drafted by June 2024</li> <li>• Company procured by August 2024</li> <li>• Completed by March 2025</li> </ul>	Marketing and Communications Development Manager	Stakeholders aware of Council's vision, priorities, and remit through effective campaigns. The awareness and understanding of the Council and the services it delivers is improved.	Social media and digital analytics to measure reach and engagement
No.005	Continue to develop and deliver an integrated marketing and communications plan to address dog fouling and littering hotspots	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Develop and deliver quarterly action plans in partnership with the Environmental Health service to include positive stories about what we're doing well.</li> </ol>	Completed by March 2025	Marketing and Communications Officer (Corporate Lead)	Residents are supported to reduce dog fouling in their neighbourhoods. Reduction in incidents. Recognition is given to the efforts of community groups.	EH monitoring figures of incidents and hot spots Media coverage Social media data
No. 006	Ensure our communications allows us to prepare, respond and recover in a crisis	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Draft a crisis communications improvement plan including the development of a toolkit to include playbook.</li> </ol>	Completed by June 2024	Marketing and Communications Development Manager	The plan will assist in clarifying roles and responsibilities during a crisis, define how the M&C service will support the delivery of the BCP, build our crisis comms expertise, and create a living structure, that can be flexed to learnings as we deal with more crisis situations.	Improvement plan in place. Crisis comms toolkit in place.

## SERVICES WORK PLAN 2024/25

Service Name: Marketing and Communications						
Link to Community Plan Theme:			Align to Corporate Plan Theme			
<i>CMP 3.3 Education &amp; Skills - We are more entrepreneurial, innovative &amp; creative</i>			<i>Theme 2: Leadership and Partnership for Local Growth</i>			
Service Objective (What do we want to achieve?):		What are the key activities we will deliver (actions):	By When (Date?)	Service Name /Lead Officers(s)	What difference will it make? (Outcomes)	How Will we Know? (Measures) clear measurement e.g. %, #, £, date etc.
No.007	Ensure the reputation of the Council is protected and raise the profile of the District in a positive way.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Continue to provide a proactive approach to Council news and supply local, regional, and national media with ready-made stories.</li> <li>2) Continue to monitor the media for reputational issues and act if necessary.</li> <li>3) Improve social media monitoring through implementation of social media management tools.</li> <li>4) Secure 2-4 positive pieces of TV coverage a year from proactive media work and selling in of stories.</li> </ol>	Completed by March 2025	Marketing and Communications Development Manager	Our residents, businesses and visitors are aware of our activities and trust us because we communicate effectively.	90% of all press releases used by at least one media outlet. 80% positive or neutral tone of coverage 2-4 TV pieces achieved
No.008	Ensure the Council's brand is applied consistently and within identity guidelines	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Review existing brand guidelines.</li> <li>2) Extend brand guidelines to include tone of voice, style guide and all instances of</li> </ol>	Completed by September 2024	Marketing and Communications Development Manager	Our corporate body communications will be clear, consistent, unified, credible and effective.	Revised brand guidelines are produced, communicated internally, and

		brand application internally and externally.				are in operation consistently.
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## **2.4 RISK MANAGEMENT OF DEPARTMENT/SERVICES**

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 Department 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 Department's/Services business as outlined in service plan for 2023-24.

Risk Ref Number	Description of Risk	Risk Rating	Mitigation Activity
MC01	Misuse or inconsistent use of the Council's branding internally and externally.	6	Brand guidelines in place, reviewed and updated. Service oversees and has oversight of brand application and manages internal graphic design service to ensure correct application.
MC02	Ineffective use of the Council's social media channels.	6	Documented protocol issued to all staff, only designated staff with access to content management of social media channels, ongoing monitoring of social media channels and regular contact meetings with service/facility-based social media editors.
MC03	Failure to adhere to Public Sector Bodies (website and mobile apps) Accessibility regulations.	2	Accessibility standards monitored on a weekly basis using the third party tool, Silktime, issues addressed either directly via the service or, where required, by engaging with the Council's web development company to address technical accessibility issues.
MC04	Failure to communicate effectively in response to emergencies or crisis situations.	8	Emergency / Business Continuity Plan in place with sections relating to Communication Plan. Ongoing review of lessons learned in response to managing communications in emergency or crisis situations & continued attendance at the EP Public Information/Media Working Group.

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)

### **3.0 OUR STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS**

In carrying out our responsibilities, the Service is cognisant of the statutory duties placed upon the council in the delivery of its services. Whilst the Service operates, under various obligations it is however mindful of the changing context in which it operates and endeavours to mainstream the equality and rural needs duties in the design and delivery of our functions.

#### **3.1 EQUALITY DUTY**

The council and by consequence our Service is committed to contributing towards its part in working towards fulfilling obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to ensure adequate time, staff and resources to fulfil our duties.

The Service will also work towards adherence to the council's Equality Scheme ensuring equality duties, together with promoting positive attitudes towards persons with a disability and the participation of people with a disability in public life when carrying out our functions.

#### **3.2 RURAL NEEDS DUTY**

The Service will be mindful of the rural needs of its customers when carrying out its functions and subsequent responsibilities, particularly in developing any new policies, plans or strategies throughout the year. In line with the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 we will give due regard to rurality in terms of needs in carrying out the activities within our Service.