



06 July 2023

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee to be held in The Chamber, Dungannon and by virtual means Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon, BT71 6DT on Thursday, 06 July 2023 at 19:00 to transact the business noted below.

A link to join the meeting through the Council's remote meeting platform will follow.

Yours faithfully

Adrian McCreesh
Chief Executive

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

Matters for Decision

5. Draft Response to The Department for the Economy's Spending Plans for 2023/2024 3 - 10
6. Corporate Performance Improvement Plan (PIP plan) 2023 to 2024 11 - 60
7. Member Services

Matters for Information

8. Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 13 June 2023 61 - 68

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

10. Cookstown Chamber Upgrade
11. Leisure Services VAT claim update
12. Review of Staff Enhancements/Coaching Supplements
13. Land and Property Matters: Easement, Lease & Disposal
14. Mid South West (MSW) Region Update – Programme Management and Innovate UK funding

Matters for Information

15. Confidential Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 13 June 2023
16. Managing Attendance
17. Staff Matters for Information
18. Council Organisational Redesign – Update on Structural Changes
19. Restructure for Planning Department for Information
20. Contracts and DAC
21. Mid South West (MSW) Region Growth Deal Update

Report on	Draft Response to The Department for the Economy's Spending Plans for 2023/2024
Date of Meeting	6 th July 2023
Reporting Officer	Joe McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement
Contact Officer	Ann McAleer, Policy Engagement and Equality Officer

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek approval from elected members of the draft consultation response developed on behalf of Mid Ulster District Council in response to the consultation on The Department for the Economy's Spending Plans for 2023/2024.
2.0	Background
2.1	The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland announced the 2023/24 Budget on 27 April 2023. Since then, various government departments have commenced public consultations on their own specific 2023/24 Budgets.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	This draft consultation response states recognises that although the Council accepts the difficult financial situation that DFE faces, we as a Council are not in support of the nature and level of the cuts proposed.
3.2	The consultation primarily seeks views in relation to the Equality Impact upon S75 groups in relation to the budget. The response indicates that a negative impact can be identified across the majority of S75 groupings.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: None
	Human: None
	Risk Management:

4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: External response. Screening not required.
	Rural Needs Implications: External response. Completing an Impact Assessment on a consultation would be disproportionate. However, Rural Needs has been raised as part of the consultation response.
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	It is recommended that Council approve the draft response and provide any additional commentary that would add to the content of the response.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Appendix A: Draft Consultation Response to The Department for the Economy's Spending Plans for 2023/2024

6 July 2023



DfE Financial Management Branch

Reference: 2023/2024 DfE Draft Budget Consultation Responses

Adelaide House

39/49 Adelaide Street

Belfast

BT2 8FD

Email: dfefinancialmanagement@economy-ni.gov.uk

Reference: DfE Resource Budget 2023-24 Equality Impact Assessment Consultation

To whom it may concern

Mid Ulster District Council would like to take this opportunity to provide comments on DfE Resource Budget 2023-24 Equality Impact Assessment. It's Mid Ulster Council's understanding that the outcome of the implementation of these proposed budget cuts would lead to:

- the suspension/curtailment of the delivery of key skills programmes, including All Age Apprenticeships
- slowing down committing to any new Invest NI business
- reduction in programme spend for both Invest NI & Further Education Colleges
- robust vacancy control so as not to increase the Department's overall headcount, despite resource pressures and critical vacancies
- maximising remaining EU Funding for eligible programmes
- not increasing Maintenance Grants for eligible Higher Education Students
- a 33% reduction in Funding to Tourism NI
- closure of the management of all projects to ensure no future year spending pressures would be incurred
- review of Resource DEL expenditure to reclassify as Capital DEL, where appropriate, thereby releasing Resource DEL savings to be redirected to higher priority areas.

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From examination of the proposed cuts and their anticipated impacts it is clear that the cuts will significantly negatively impact on S75 groups in a cross sectoral way. This is particularly evident in relation to students entering further or higher education, as well as people who are undertaking apprenticeships. It is highly likely that these proposals will hit students from disadvantaged backgrounds hardest, leading to students from disadvantaged backgrounds being obstructed from reaching their full potential. In addition, implementing cuts of this nature during a time of skills shortages seems to go against the overall long term strategic priorities of the Department.

Furthermore, in relation to maximising remaining EU Funding for eligible programmes; there are potentially some monies remaining as a result of underspends across some EU initiatives, many of which completed in March 2023, but some programmes have still scope to deliver over the next few months, which could avail of additional monies. However there seems to be some emerging constraints in reallocating this and re-deploying funds across different budget headings. Council understands that EU funds are committed to specific initiatives with their own respective targets and outputs. However, Council urges government departments and agencies to adopt a joined up and flexible approach to working closely with EU Funders to exhaust all opportunities whereby all available underspends are fully utilised and deadlines extended to achieve this, rather than being returned to the EU. In most cases, this will also require government departments to commit a level of match funding from the national budget, which, in the case of ERDF, would be in the region of 20%, which delivers a high value of leverage.

With regard to slowing down committing to any new Invest NI business; in recent years, Councils have delivered a comprehensive package of mentoring support to drive the growth of thousands of micro/small businesses with monies from the ERDF Investment for Growth and Jobs Fund (Northern Ireland) 2014-22. In addition to the Fund's 60% ERDF grant, Councils and Invest NI each contributed 20%, and the Programmes provided a 'pipeline' of high growth business referrals to Invest NI, primed to avail of further support. For these businesses, this offered a key opportunity to engage with Invest NI for the first time. In the current climate where economic growth is a priority, Invest NI must have the capacity to respond effectively and provide investment to meet the growth needs of these and other potential clients. Significant resources were committed during this Programme to helping businesses achieve their growth ambitions. Reducing spend and slowing commitment will result in the loss of this investment with businesses disengaging from support, ultimately, stifling the region's economic growth.

Mitigations

While the Council appreciate that it is difficult to make funding cuts across any area removal of which will have a significantly negative impact across Section 75 groupings. Any level of mitigation required will be, but the EQIA outcomes would need to be swift and substantial in order to be able to even mildly address the potential impact on the Section 75 groups negatively impacted upon.

Consultation Timeline

The Council would like to seek clarity in relation to the consultation period which states that any views received after the initial four week period will only be used to consider mitigations. This timeline is at odds with what is stated in DfE's Equality Scheme. If 'exceptional circumstances' are the Department's rationale for this approach it would be useful if that was stated within the consultation documentation.

The consultation timeline does not seem to offer an across the board option of face-to-face consultations or any public meetings. It is the opinion of the Council that the extremely short time frame during which this consultation is being carried out would have benefited immensely from opportunities to fully discuss the budget proposals and their implications. These additional consultation opportunities would have also allowed impacted groupings to ask questions and seek clarifications. Finally, while the Council understands the constrained timeframes in relation to decisions in relation to the 23/23 budgets, the Department will be aware that holding consultations during popular holiday periods is also not conducive to encouraging significant levels of feedback.

Cumulative Negative Impact

It cannot be ignored that this consultation is not being held in isolation. A plethora of NI Assembly Departments are currently consulting across short timeframes on drastically reduced budgets. It is clear that each of these budget focused EQIAs identify negative impacts across Section 75 groups. The overall result is a devastating cumulative impact on some of the most vulnerable people in society.

Overall, there is a lack of joined up thinking in relation to the proposals made across four Departments. Each Department seems to be viewing only their budgets in isolation without documenting the issues created by multi-sectoral cuts that will directly negatively impact upon some of the most vulnerable and most marginalised in society.

Therefore, as a Council we would object in the strongest terms to the removal of support services that are currently provided to some of most vulnerable and to the vast majority of Section 75 groups.

General Comments

While this EQIA fulfils the necessary requirements of Department's Equality Scheme it could be more detailed and thorough and robust to reflect the catastrophic nature of the spending recommendations that it is linked to be implementing. If further budget becomes available or not, DfE are advised that the Section 75 duties are continuing duties, and the Department is required to equality assess any changes to circumstances. It is important that the Department demonstrates that it has paid the appropriate level of regard to its promotion of equality and good relations in its budget decisions, as required by the duties.

Rural Needs

In relation to this consultation Mid Ulster District Council believe that the Department has failed to demonstrate that due regard has been paid to the Rural Needs Act 2016. The cuts clearly have a significant impact on rural areas, however the relevant Rural Needs Impact Assessment information has not accompanied this consultation and as such the influence of rural needs requirements are not reflected in the significantly reduced budgetary provisions. In addition, in the absence of a documented assessment, no rural needs mitigations have been made available in relation to these proposals. DAERA, who oversee the implementation of the Act are clear that Rural Needs Impact Assessment should not be completed retrospectively. Therefore, any assessment that follows this consultation period is not useful because the time for its influence on decision making will have already passed.

Conclusion

Mid Ulster District Council strongly opposes DfE's outlined budget for 23/24. The cross-sectional nature of the proposals will negatively impact across Section 75 groups. Whether these outcomes are unintentional or not, the negative impacts need to be strongly considered in relation to mitigations and where resources should be allocated if any additional funding is made available in the future.

Yours sincerely

Dominic Molloy
Council Chair

Report on	Corporate Performance Improvement Plan (PIP plan) 2023 to 2024
Date of Meeting	Thursday 6 th July 2023
Reporting Officer	J Mc Guckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement
Contact Officer	L Jenkins, Corporate Performance & Quality Officer

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To consider Council's Corporate Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) for period 2023-2024.
2.0	Background
2.1	The 2014 Local Government Act places a general duty on the Council to "...make arrangements to secure continuous improvement..." in the exercise of its functions.
2.2.	Section 92(4) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 (hereby referred to as "the Act") requires council to publish an 'improvement plan' setting out its plans for discharging its duties under sections 84(1), 85(2) and 89(5) of the 2014 Act for a financial year. Paragraph 45 of the statutory guidance on Local Government Performance Improvement (Local Government Circular 21/2016) indicates that the publication of an improvement plan should take place by the end of June each year. Council refers to the 'improvement plan' as set out in the legislation and guidance as Mid Ulster District Council's Corporate Performance Improvement Plan (PIP plan).
2.3	Statutory Guidance issued by the Department for Communities to Councils on taking forward the general duty on improvement, requires that the council consult on a yearly basis on their improvement objectives. This requirement on consultation falls from section 87 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 i.e. (requires a council to consult on how it intends to discharge its duties under section 84 and 85 before the improvement plan is published).
2.4	In order to comply with section 92(4) of the Act, each year the Council develops an annual Performance Improvement Plan (PIP), containing improvement objectives, associated activity and outcomes for citizens and local communities. The plan also includes the statutory performance indicators and standards as outlined in the Local Government (Performance Indicators

	and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015, as well as Council's Corporate health indicators (measures).
3.0	Main Report
3.1	A letter regarding a new PIP publication date was issued on the 11 th of May 2023 to all Council Chief Executives by Anthony Carleton; Director of Local Government Housing Regulation, Department for Communities, (the letter and associated paper was presented to June Policy and Resources Committee 2023). DfC stated that given the need to consult and taking account of the upcoming local government elections on 18th May 2023, some concerns have been raised as to whether there would be sufficient time to have PIP plans approved by councils by 30 th June. The Department had decided to move the suggested publication date for all Councils' Performance Improvement Plans as set out in paragraph 45 of the guidance, that is, for 2023, councils will be required to have their performance improvement plans published by 30 th September 2023 at the latest.
3.2	There is no statutory duty to consult on the improvement plan, but rather the improvement objectives. The four new improvement objectives proposed for 2023 to 2024 went out for public consultation from Monday 27 th February to Friday 21st of April 2023. The consultation told us that each objective received significant support. When reviewed, respondent commentary did not warrant the removal, amendment to or addition to the objectives proposed. An "Outworking's Report", relating to the public consultation, was presented to June Policy and Resources committee meeting.
3.3	<p>The process of developing the Council's improvement objectives involved engagement between Senior Management, Assistant Directors, Heads of Service and the Strategy and Engagement Team. A self-analysis exercise was undertaken by Council to review the previous year's draft improvement objectives to establish their continued relevancy for the period 2023/24. The exercise was undertaken in order to ensure that the improvement objectives were based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A thorough, evidence-based understanding of the communities Council serves, • Local needs and Council's capacity to address those needs. • Improvement objectives correspond directly with the council's priorities for improvement in the hierarchy of plans, and • The context of the current economy • Short, medium and long term needs of the Council • Many drivers and enablers both external and internal relating to improvement
3.4	Senior management, were content with the review of the proposed improvement objectives. The rationale for each improvement objective, associated links to the Community and Corporate Plan were considered and approved by elected

members as a focus for continuous improvement at their Policy and Resources committee meeting 9th of February 2023 and thereafter were ratified at the February Council meeting. The proposed improvement objectives will form the basis of Council's performance improvement plan (PIP) for 2023/24 – (refer to table 1 below).

Table One - Proposed Improvement Objectives 2023-2024

Proposed Improvement Objectives 2023/2024	
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

3.5

Together with additional commentary provided from the public consultation, the Council has developed its 2023-2024 Corporate Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) around the four objectives (refer to Appendix One Performance Improvement Plan 2023 to 2024). This is the third year that the four improvement objectives appear in Council's performance Improvement Plan, having been reviewed in December 2022 into January 2023, and having been refreshed and updated from April 2023 onwards. A variety of services across the Council are involved in ensuring the delivery of aligned, activities and measures, which are contained within the PIP plan to meet the four improvement objectives, as well as statutory and corporate performance indicators.

4.0

Other Considerations

4.1

Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications

Financial: N/A

Human: N/A

	Risk Management: N/A.
4.2	<u>Screening & Impact Statements</u>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	That members consider and approve the Council's Corporate Performance Improvement (PIP plan) Plan 2023-2024 to 2024-2025.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Appendix One: Corporate Performance Improvement Plan (PIP plan) 2023-2024 to 2024-2025 .

Mid Ulster District Council
Corporate Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)
2023-2024 to 2024-2025

June 2023

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Foreword

We are required to develop a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP plan) annually, to show our commitment to continuously improving service delivery. This Plan sets out why we have chosen to prioritise these Improvement Objectives, how we will deliver them and how the improvements will benefit our communities.

Without a doubt, this plan has been developed within an incredibly challenging climate. We are being squeezed from many directions with some of the repercussions of Covid-19 persisting, as well as the increase in living and energy costs that affect our residents, communities and local businesses from day-to-day.

We are fighting against the tide, and this would not be possible without our committed workforce that continues to offer a service to the people of Mid Ulster. We also know that it would be foolish to try and achieve these ambitions on our own. In order to succeed we must work together and continue to foster a healthy relationship with a wide range of partners – the third sector, the private sector, other public services and of course our enthusiastic communities. Everyone in Mid Ulster has a role to play in making Mid Ulster a great place to live, learn, work and enjoy life. The PIP Plan builds on the work that the Council and its partners undertook in 2021 to 2023.

Following consultation with the people of Mid Ulster, a series of priorities and projects have been formed that will allow us to further develop and improve the services provided to the people of Mid Ulster.

Naturally, only a proportion of the Council's activities are seen here, and the day-to-day work of providing services continues throughout the District. Through our Performance Improvement Plan, we will work hard in four key areas.

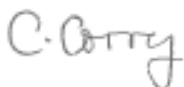
We will strive to modernise and change, so that our services are sustainable by continuing to design and drive digital transformation at pace, whilst ensuring that the digital technologies and advances we make are accessible and positively transform service delivery and the customer journey. We are currently undertaking work to redesign our structure and reconfigure services in ways that are truly transformative, sustainable, innovative, accessible and digital, at the same time, we need to guard against an increased risk of exclusion within our most vulnerable communities.

Climate change is affecting more people's lives every year and we all need to act now on the climate change and biodiversity emergencies, in order to slow and reverse the damage being done. We have a leading role to play in Mid Ulster, by reducing carbon dioxide (CO2e) emissions from our operations, as well as working with industry and other organisations to help lower their emissions and make our District more resilient to climate change. Encouraging and enhancing the natural environment, biodiversity and habitats on our estate and throughout the District, will assist in promoting healthy ecosystems.

Council will also invest in projects to further improve infrastructure through capital projects, which will improve, retail, leisure and culture, as well as attracting investors and visitors to the District. Wherever possible, we will spend our money locally to support local businesses and organisations, and seek to maximise social value.

As Mid Ulster competes with others to attract growth, tourism and inward investment a clean, green and pleasant environment that promotes mental and physical wellbeing plays an important role in marketing the District as a place to live in, move to and visit. Supporting the numerous community/voluntary groups, sports and leisure clubs in Mid Ulster, all play an important role in all our work as both provider and enabler. Our role is also to enable volunteering and community groups to come together for the greater good, especially in tackling local issues such as anti-social behaviour, graffiti, fly-tipping, littering, and dog-fouling, all of which require local responses.

As everyone now knows, it is a difficult time financially, and there is no doubt that it will be a challenge for the Council to deliver all the projects on time. However, we will be aiming high over the next two years and will work hard to achieve every ambition that has been set for the priorities in the plan. In order to do that we will continuously review the plan and set milestones for each project in order to allow us to measure and report on our progress annually.



Councillor Córa Corry

Chair Mid Ulster District Council

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Each year we are required to develop a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) to show our commitment to continuously improving service delivery in accordance with the priorities set out by the Council. In the PIP, we set out Council's intentions for our services, and include details, of how we will do the work. This plan spans a two year period from 2023/24 to 2024/25.

Council published a new Corporate Plan 2020-24 and this plan contributes to the continuing delivery of Council priorities. The Corporate plan has a range of activities, some short-term that can be delivered relatively quickly, and others that are longer term, i.e. will take time to develop and implement. Council's current Corporate Plan is under review with an aim to have a new plan in place in 2024.

2.0 DEVELOPING OUR IMPROVEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVES

2.1 Setting Our Improvement Objectives

The process of developing the Council's improvement objectives involved engagement between Senior Management, Assistant Directors, Heads of Service and the Strategy and Engagement Team. A self-analysis exercise was undertaken by Council to review the previous year's draft improvement objectives to establish their continued relevancy for the period 2023/24 to 2024/25. The exercise was undertaken in order to ensure that the improvement objectives were based on:

- A thorough, evidence-based understanding of the communities Council serves,
- Local needs and Council's capacity to address those needs.
- Improvement objectives correspond directly with the council's priorities for improvement in the hierarchy of plans, and
- The context of the current economy

- Short, medium and long term needs of the Council
- Many drivers and enablers both external and internal relating to improvement

Senior management, were content with the review of the proposed improvement objectives. The rationale for each improvement objective, associated links to the Community and Corporate Plan were considered and approved by elected members as a focus for continuous improvement at their Policy and Resources committee meeting 9th of February 2023 and thereafter were ratified at the February Council meeting. The proposed improvement objectives will form the basis of Council’s two-year performance improvement plan (PIP) for 2023/24 to 2024/25, refer to table 2.1 below – Council’s Improvement Objectives 2023-2024 and 2024-2025.

Table 2.1 – Council’s Improvement Objectives 2023-2024 to 2024-2025:

Number	Objective
One	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.
Two	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.
Three	To create cleaner neighbourhoods, where everyone takes responsibility for their waste and the environment.
Four	We will contribute to the ongoing regeneration of our district by delivering a capital investment programme, enhancing facilities and opportunities for local people.

To lead the delivery of our improvement objectives council has established project teams to drive the objectives forward; under the direction of a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO); i.e. either an Assistant Director or Head of Service, appointed by the Chief Executive.

Each year we consult on our proposed improvement objectives. The outcome of the consultation; which was undertaken throughout February to April 2023, produced a report on the final improvement objectives, which were considered by Senior Management, and subsequently considered by elected members for approval at their June 2023 Policy & Resources Committee before being considered by Council.

The review of the improvement projects for 2023 to 2024, along with other statutory and corporate indicators (i.e. the PIP plan) will be reported by the 30th of September 2024 in Council's Annual Assessment Report, where we will look at the performance over the previous financial year (retrospective report).

2.2 Consultation

A consultation was undertaken on our proposed improvement objectives, as well as a rationale/associated activities (for their inclusion), from Monday 27th February to Friday 21st of April 2023. Our consultation involved a survey made available for completion and submission online and by post to the council.

To ensure maximum engagement, the consultation process was promoted through a variety of communication channels including; press releases, council social media outlets, internal staff meetings, and the council's website.

2.3 What the Consultation told us

- **91.18% of respondents agreed with objective one:** - *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.*
- **91.18% of respondents agreed with objective two:** - *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.*

- **93.94% of respondents agreed with objective three:** - *To create cleaner neighbourhoods, where everyone takes responsibility for their waste and the environment.*
- **87.88% of respondents agreed with 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*

With such significant support for the four proposed improvement objectives, together with additional commentary provided, the council has developed its 2023-2024 to 2024-2025 Performance Improvement Plan around them. When reviewed, respondent commentary did not warrant the removal, amendment to or addition to the objectives proposed. Additional commentary and views provided are also informing our wider improvement activity across services.

3.0 DUTY TO IMPROVE & COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

3.1 Duty to Improve

Part 12 of the Local Government (Act) 2014 requires Councils to “*make arrangements to secure continuous improvement*” in the exercise of our functions (section 84). Council is also required to set improvement objectives for services and secure arrangements for achieving them each year (section 85). We are also required to publish an annual improvement plan

Statutory guidance defines improvement as “... *more than just quantifiable gains in service output or efficiency, or the internal effectiveness of the organisation. Improvement for Council's should mean activities that enhances the sustainable quality of life and environment for ratepayers and communities*”.

Each corporate improvement objective has been developed to focus improvement on at least one of the seven improvement aspects detailed in S84(2) of Local Government (NI) Act 2014:

- Strategic Effectiveness
- Service Availability
- Sustainability
- Service Quality
- Fairness
- Efficiency
- Innovation

In addition, guidance determines that improvement objectives should be:

- Legitimate – making a contribution to at least one (or probably more than one) of the seven aspects of improvement
- Clear – setting out the visible improvement that citizens can expect
- Robust – with defined terms of success (whether qualitative or quantitative)
- Deliverable – with established links to individual service programmes and budgets
- Demonstrable - capable of being supported by objective (but not necessarily measured or quantitative) evidence.

3.2 Community Plan, Corporate Plan and Council's Performance Management Framework

The Local Government (Act) 2014 has changed the way we plan, and encouraged us to look much more to the future. Reducing budgets, increasing demands and higher public expectations means that we must change our approach to delivering and improving public services. Public services need to think more about the long-term, work better with people and communities, look to prevent problems before they arise, and take a more joined up approach.

We need to look at balancing short to medium-term needs (which are reflected in the improvement objectives contained in this current plan), with our responsibilities to think about some of the big challenges facing our district in the future (as outlined on the Mid Ulster District's Ten Year Community Plan). We are working with other public services; the

private and voluntary sector on the delivery of the ten year community plan, as well as our local communities. This includes well-being outcomes that provide a focus for the public sector as part of the Community planning for the area; these are related, but separate from the objectives detailed in this report that focuses specifically on the Council.

The “peak” plan is the District’s Ten Year Community Plan, which encapsulates the communities’ vision and long-term aspirations. Sitting beneath the Community Plan is the Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan is a key component of the Council’s Integrated Performance Management Framework. The performance framework consists of a hierarchical set of inter-related plans, which deal with the organisation’s delivery of services.

The Corporate Plan is the point where the Council responds to the Community Plan’s objectives that are within its area of responsibility; therefore, if the Community Plan is seen as the Community’s aspirational document, the Corporate Plan is the Council’s policy response to what residents and ratepayers desire to see happen in their community.

The Corporate Plan (currently a four-year plan 2020 - 2024) is designed as a fixed term plan to align with the council’s electoral cycle. Each newly elected Council is responsible for preparing a new corporate Plan setting out what they want to achieve during the electoral term.

3.3 Improvement, Corporate Values, Service and Individual Planning

Whilst this plan focuses specifically on Corporate Improvement Objectives, we are still seeking to bring about improvement in other areas. Planned improvements in our day-to-day work are set in our service plans. Departmental service delivery plans translate corporate objectives into service targets and operational activity, aligning with finance, workforce and risk issues.

Individual plans (staff appraisals) translate service or group delivery plan objectives into practical measures and targets for all members of staff within the Council. This ensures that

all our employees understand their contribution and accountability towards meeting the Council's values, priorities and vision.

We are committed to delivering our improvement objectives within the context of our adopted Corporate Values; this is at the core of what we do and guides how we deliver our service by being:

- **Citizen and Customer-focused:** designing and delivering our services in response to and around the needs of our customers and within our resources.
- **Innovative:** New and better ways of doing what we do.
- **Excellence:** Striving to excel in every aspect of our work, being accountable for and delivering the best value for money services.
- **Trustworthy:** Working for our communities in a spirit of friendliness and openness by delivering fair, transparent, equitable and ethical service to all customers.
- **Respect:** Treating each other, our customers and our stakeholders in the same considerate way that we wish to be treated ourselves.
- **Inclusive:** Creating a culture that values, supports and celebrates diversity to the benefit of the organisation and the people we serve.

3.4 Statutory Indicators

In addition to the Council's improvement objectives and associated actions used to measure our performance, the Northern Ireland Assembly has set a series of performance measures (indicators and standards) which the council will report on annually. Where relevant, the council's improvement objectives incorporate statutory performance standards and indicators for Economic Development, Planning and Waste Management. The statutory performance indicators and standards are set out as Appendix One.

For the last seven years, the arrangements for managing, improving and tracking Council's performance in relation to set statutory indicators has been progressed through our service plans, which are developed on an annual basis and endorsed by Council. Quarterly reviews and update reports relating to Council's statutory indicator performance are collated and

forwarded to our Senior Management Team, respective committees and Council. Unless otherwise highlighted in this plan, statutory performance indicators are managed at a directorate performance management level.

3.5 Corporate Indicators

During 2017 to 2018, the Council developed a suite of Corporate Indicators, which are now being measured across the Council. This suite of corporate level indicators are set out in Appendix Two to our plan and performance status and performance updates are reported to Senior Management and Council on a regular basis. Progress made against the corporate performance indicators are reported in Council's Annual Assessment report (a retrospective assessment report of performance in the previous financial year, published in September).

The council is engaged with the Department for Communities, along with other local authorities to inform the development of a benchmarking framework for local government. This will focus on areas where the greatest overall benefit; in terms of delivering outcomes, can be achieved.

4.0 DELIVERY & SCRUTINY OF OUR IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES

The council in order to inform how it delivers effective services to its communities uses a series of processes and policies. This helps the council to plan, govern and drive service delivery. The following section provides information on the key processes and activities, which we utilise to strengthen improvement.

4.1 Managing and Reporting Improvement.

The Council's service improvement planning process establishes clear links between the District Community Plan, Corporate Plan priorities, other Council Strategic Plans (such as the Local Development Plan), the corporate level Improvement Objectives, Project Plans

and Service Plans. It ensures everyone working for the Council is able to see how their work contributes to the work of the organisation.

Each Improvement Objective has a project delivery plan, overseen by an Assistant Director or Head of Service, documenting clear milestones, activities, resources and associated risk mitigation. Each plan also identifies with whom the council will work in partnership with for each objective, thus ensuring the successful delivery of outcomes for citizens (visible improvements). The improvement project delivery plans are regularly reported to Senior Management and Council, along with statutory performance indicators and the suite of corporate performance indicators.

Departmental service plans are in place across Council, setting out key programmes of work being progressed throughout the year along with resources required to deliver on the identified actions. Services regularly monitor their plans and where they are involved in one or other of the improvement objectives, within this improvement plan, the Service will report this through to the senior management team and council's Policy & Resources Committee on progress to date.

Elected members have an important role in monitoring how well the Council is achieving its improvement objectives. They are prepared to challenge officers on service improvement performance to ensure that the priorities are delivered and that the needs of the local community are met.

A mid-year report (April to September 2023) on progress against this year's Improvement Plan objectives and how we have performed against the statutory performance indicators and standards for Economic Development, Planning and Waste, as well as progress against corporate measures will be presented to Council's Policy & Resources committee.

By 30th September 2024, the council will publish a self-assessment report setting out how we have performed against the Improvement Plan for 2023- 2024 and where possible, the Council will benchmark indicators against the performance other Councils.

4.2 Audit, Inspection and Regulation

The council is inspected by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) to challenge and examine its performance and effectiveness, through an annual audit and assessment.

Post an audit and assessment of Council, the Local Government Auditor (LGA) certifies the improvement and assessment for the Council with an audit opinion. To date Mid Ulster has received annual standard, unqualified opinions. As a result of the NIAO audits, the LGA believes that the Council to date has discharged its duties in connection with (1) improvement planning and (2) publication of improvement information in accordance with section 92 of the Local Government (NI) Act 2014 and has acted in accordance with the Department of Communities' guidance sufficiently. LGA to date have made no recommendations under section 95(2) of the Act and were not minded to carry out a special inspection under section 95 (2) of the Act.

5.0 IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES

Improvement Objective One

5.1 Objective One: 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.

“The Council needs to lead by example which should help with the wider environment following suit.” –

(Mid Ulster Councils Corporate Improvement Objectives Survey Consultee Excerpt; May 2023)

Lead Officer: Assistant Director Environmental Services.

Why have we chosen this Improvement Objective?

On a local level, Northern Ireland has passed its first Climate Bill, after it was voted through at the Stormont Assembly on 9th March 2022. The Bill commits Northern Ireland to a net zero greenhouse gas emissions target by 2050. The bill establishes a legal framework including five year plans for emission cuts. The Bill would also create the role of a Climate Commissioner to oversee progress against targets¹.

On a global scale, climate change has been recognised internationally as the most important environmental challenge that we currently face. It is a large scale, long-term shift in the Earth's weather patterns and average temperatures. The IPCC's 2021 Climate Change Report regarding the physical science basis, states that, "Climate change is already affecting every inhabited region across the globe with human influence contributing to many observed changes in weather and climate extremes"². Scientific consensus recognises human activity³ as a major cause of recent unprecedented warming and climate projections show that past, current and future gas emissions will influence the climate for decades. The intergovernmental panel on climate change (IPCC) predicts increases in extreme weather events over the twenty first century and attributes this to a result of greenhouse emissions and rising surface temperatures.

The latest U.K Climate Change projections (UKC P18)⁴ predict that Northern Ireland will experience warmer, wetter winters and hotter drier summers by the 2050's, with extreme weather events becoming more frequent⁵. We recognise the key role and contribution that the Council has in supporting and promoting local actions and local people, businesses and partners in the move to a low carbon future.

Taking action to protect the environment for future generations is a priority for Mid Ulster and is recognised in the Districts Community Plan and Corporate Plan. We care about the environment and understand our legal duty to protect it. We seek to minimize the environmental impacts of our own Council activities and work with other partners and stakeholders to protect and enhance our local environment. Subject to procurement regulations, we can also choose to buy local produce which not only supports our local economy, it also reduces carbon emissions from freight transport and travel. Climate change is a collective issue and we can all make changes to our lifestyles to reduce the impact on the environment.

1. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2022/31/contents/enacted>

2. <https://climate.nasa.gov/scientific-consensus/>
3. <https://www.worldclimatesummit.org/>
4. <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/approach/collaboration/ukcp/download-data>
5. <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/UK-CCRA-2017-Northern-Ireland-National-Summary.pdf>
6. <https://public.wmo.int/en/media/news/cop27-outcomes-emphasize-early-warnings-observations>

Actions - What are we going to do?

What are we going to do? (Activities)	What difference will it make? - (Outcomes)
1. Increase the Council recycling rate to further boost the carbon reductions associated with recycling.	Increase tonnage of recyclables collected by approx. 1,700 tonnes per annum. Offsetting an additional 1,100 tonnes per year of Carbon per annum as a result of the improved recycling performance.
2. Manage Landfill Gas emissions at the Tullyvar, Magheraglass and Ballymacombs Landfill Sites and seek opportunities for further renewable energy projects	Reduction of 8,500 tonnes per year of Carbon equivalent per annum. £55,000 of income from the sale of electricity. Feasibility of solar panels at Tullyvar & Magheraglass assessed.
3. Increase participation in the Eco-Schools programme, which encourages and directs young people to think about climate action including litter, recycling,	All schools in Mid Ulster engaged in programme and pupils well informed on the environmental impacts of their activities.

What are we going to do? (Activities)	What difference will it make? - (Outcomes)
energy saving, and water conservation etc.	
4. Monitor and review air quality across the District to determine whether national air quality objectives are being met.	Air Quality statistics 2022 - to be compiled and produced as a Report.
5. Local Air Pollution Prevention and Control (LAPPC) - Conduct scheduled inspections of premises to ensure that premises are complying with air emission targets as outlined in their Environmental Permits.	Inspect permitted premises to ensure compliance with Environmental permits (currently 74 premises have permits) and maintain records.
6. Energy efficiency in households - number of homes helped by providing Energy Efficiency Advice and the number of homes helped to improve the energy efficiency of their homes.	Approx. 500 homes annually (pro rata) across Mid Ulster helped to improve the energy efficiency of their homes.
7. Seek to bring recycling and biodiversity themes into creative art project targeting schools, disability groups and older people programmes.	Continuation of the creative arts programme while promoting greater awareness among participants of the benefits of recycling and how the arts can contribute to the recycling agenda.

What are we going to do? (Activities)	What difference will it make? - (Outcomes)
<p>8. Pilot Council's habitat assessment tool to utilise as an exemplar for 6 Council managed assets/land – Polepatrick Park & Cemetery, Ranfurly and Hill of the O'Neill, Ballyronan Marina, Carricknakielt, Dungannon Park and Cookstown Council Office</p>	<p>Creating healthy council managed habitats</p>
<p>9. Introduce and pilot the Sustainable NI Sustainability Assessment Tool for capital projects</p>	<p>The Council considers the environmental and climate change impact of their capital projects and seeks to reduce any negative impact found. Also, the Council can increasingly demonstrate that sustainable development and climate change considerations are being integrated in their decision making process around capital projects.</p>
<p>10. Submit the Draft Plan Strategy for Independent Examination (IE), which will include policy to protect our environment e.g. including the Sperrins, Lough Neagh and Clogher Valley and; policy, which encourages more sustainable forms of transport, and reduces the need to travel by private vehicles.</p>	<p>Submission of Plan Strategy** for IE, which includes policy that will guide, enhance and protect the local environment while encouraging sustainability.</p>

What are we going to do? (Activities)	What difference will it make? - (Outcomes)
11. Research the application and introduction of alternative fuelled Vehicles/Diverse Plant into Council's Fleet	An increase in the Councils low/zero carbon alternative fuel vehicles and greater understanding of the Councils fuel usage over time.
12. Research and develop a Carbon Management Plan	An increase in the energy efficiency of the Councils buildings and greater understanding of the Councils heating / electricity usage over time
13. Promote Flexible Working Opportunities to Council Staff	Promote Flexible Working opportunities to Staff and potential job applicants. Reduced carbon emissions related to staff commuting.
14. Progress to Stage 4 of the NI Climate Adaptation Planning Cycle	Production of a Mid Ulster Council Adaptation plan (including Risk Register, Vision/Aims/Themes, Action Plan) approved by Council.
15. Prepare a Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan	Strategic and operational approach to sustainable development and addressing the challenges of climate change.
16. We will research Environmental, Social and Governance ("ESG") principles in the context of the review of the Council's Procurement Policy. Consider whether and how same could be incorporated as to how the Council thinks ESG and buys/procures ESG	Initial awareness throughout the organisation of ESG values, how they might work in practice, what the opportunities and challenges are with ESG and Council having a direction of travel re whether the Council could think and procure ESG. Collaborating with Communities and Place Directorate on Community Wealth Building as

What are we going to do? (Activities)	What difference will it make? - (Outcomes)
	procurement is one pillar within that strategy - DTNI support.
17. Prepare a report by researching & benchmarking Mid Ulster District Council against other NI and ROI Councils with regards to resources devoted to Sustainability and Climate Change	Gain a greater understanding of the resources other similar organisations are devoting to sustainability & climate change.
18. Appoint a Net Zero Delivery Officer who will co-ordinate the regional development of both industry-led, sector-specific Net Zero opportunity assessments and action plans that will support the Mid-South West (MSW) region in the transition to Net Zero and Council Net Zero action plans.	Increased business awareness of the practical steps and opportunities available to realise carbon, energy and cost savings in order to future proof their business.
19. Investigate unused Council land with the potential to be transformed into Urban Green Spaces / Allotments or used for other biodiversity actions like tree planting, wetlands etc.	Gain a greater understanding of the Council Estate, identify unused land and assess their potential to be used for environmental improvement projects and climate action.
20. Develop a procurement specification to seek a competent supplier to scope out Mid Ulster for potential blue / green links (infrastructure), investigate potential landowner issues, etc. to aid the development of Active	The potential for Active Travel projects within the district will have been scoped out and a strategic document prepared which will aid in the application for external funding.

What are we going to do? (Activities)	What difference will it make? - (Outcomes)
Travel (making journeys by physically active means, like walking or cycling) projects and potentially source external funding.	
21. Co-ordinate the development of an indoor leisure energy user group to identify energy saving opportunities (i.e. low an no-cost measures) across 5 indoor leisure centres: Greenvale Leisure Centre (LC), Cookstown LC, Dungannon LC, Maghera LC and Moneymore Recreation Centre.	Leisure Centres save money and energy as well as reduce their environmental impact through better low and no cost energy management.

****No. 10** - There have been unforeseen delays caused by the Department who have yet to forward the Draft Plan Strategy to PAC for Independent Examination. Department for Infrastructure (DfI) have sought clarification on a number of points and we intend to respond summer 2023.

How will we know?

- Carbon reduction/offsetting (tonnage) per anum.
- Amount of income (£) generated from the sale of electricity.
- Numbers of Mid Ulster Schools participating in Eco Schools Programme.
- Air Quality within District determined within annual Air Quality Report.
- % of scheduled inspections of premises to ensure that premises are complying with air emission targets as outlined in their Environmental Permits.
- Number of homes helped to improve their energy efficiency.
- Number of participants/groups in Council led environmental/sustainability conservation activities/programmes.

- Number of Council owned assets/land assessed using habitat tool.
- Number sustainability assessment guidelines, tools developed.
- Department forwards MUDC Draft Plan Strategy to PAC.
- Numbers of vehicles replaced in Replacement Fossil Fuel Capital Fleet Programme.
- Electric charging capacity scoping exercise report produced
- Number of annual fuel usage reports produced.
- Annual building heating / electricity usage reports produced
- Carbon Management Plan in place
- Number of Display Energy Certificate (DEC's) assessments completed.
- Flexible Working Arrangements Policy in place and baseline figures established for Miles travelled by staff commuting to work
- Stage 4 of the "NI Adapts" Planning Toolkit completed
- Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan developed
- Environmental, Social Governance principles awareness training/workshops undertaken in year
- Benchmarking report completed regarding resources devoted to Sustainability and Climate Change in Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland.
- Net Zero Delivery Officer appointed
- Study of council estate to identify under/unused parcels/land completed
- Procurement specification completed to seek supplier to scope out Mid Ulster for potential blue / green links (infrastructure), investigate potential landowner issues, to aid the development of Active Travel for District.
- Establish indoor leisure energy user group

Visible improvement residents, businesses or visitors expect to see

As a local authority, we recognise that we have a responsibility to take positive action and provide strong leadership on averting the dangerous effects of climate change. We will reduce carbon emissions from our buildings, vehicles, operations, activities through strategic planning, policy development and the management of projects.

We will promote a culture of environmental responsibility amongst staff and customers, with the aim of reducing energy, water use and raising awareness of the effects of climate change, and the circular economy within the District and beyond.

Partnerships: Who do we need to work with?

Citizens, visitors, community and voluntary groups, schools, colleges, youth groups, businesses, staff, Executive Departments, Conservationists.

Link to District Community Plan Theme and Outcomes: Infrastructure - We increasingly value our environment and enhance it for our children

Link to Corporate Plan Themes:

Environment - We will work to mitigate against the impacts of climate change by taking steps to reduce carbon emissions as an organisation.

Environment - We will continue to promote & protect our environment through our environment & anti-littering programmes of education, awareness raising & enforcement.

Leadership - We will continue to progress towards the adoption of our Local Development Plan 2030 & delivery against plan objectives

Performance Improvement Aspects which this improvement objective aims to deliver against

Strategic Effectiveness, Service Quality, Sustainability, Service Availability, Fairness, Efficiency, Innovation

Improvement Objective Two

5.2 Objective Two: - 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.

“Services need to be available online so we can access them when free - I suppose though digital doesn't suit everyone and it's important not to forget those people who don't have access to or are unable to use digital means of interacting with the Council”.

(Mid Ulster Councils Corporate Improvement Objectives Survey Consultee Excerpt, May 2023)

Lead Officer: Assistant Director Corporate Services and Finance.

Why have we chosen this Improvement Objective?

Tech' change had accelerated during the pandemic, the rate of digital transformation has increased exponentially in part due to the speed of adapting to unexpected challenges. Organisations, their customers and stakeholders expect digital experiences to be more immersive, inclusive, secure, and simple to use than ever before. Technology change has always been about people, and in 2023, that will be truer than ever in the era of hybrid work. The Council is aware that technology will be about the new ways in which we work, connect, create, and support one another—and how technology enables this. There is now an enhanced need to transform how organisations engage with customers through digital platforms. This increasing use of digital channels is here to stay. Citizens now have higher expectations of online council services and want a digital customer experience similar to that provided by retailers, banks and utility providers.

We want to harness the potential of digital design, data and technology to work efficiently, transform the relationship between residents and the Council, and make Mid Ulster a leading destination for sustainable growth, opportunity and quality of life. To embrace such opportunities we are developing a roadmap to define how our future use of technology and human resources will be optimised to enable the efficient delivery of our business and community priorities to the businesses and citizens of Mid Ulster.

Technology is only an enabler, transformation involves changing how we work, how we organise ourselves and how we serve our citizens. We will have real opportunities to radically rethink, and redesign our services, as we are move towards being a more agile and flexible organisation, with staff able to work from any location as we make more efficient use of physical space and mobile technology. We can and will learn lessons from innovative digital practice utilised as a response to the Pandemic. More of our high volume, low contacts that we deal with, should be completed at our customer's convenience, enabling Council staff to focus on more complex and sensitive enquiries that benefit from the human touch. All of this can help us manage the rising cost and demand pressures the Council is facing.

Whist we want everyone to become digital citizens, we recognise that not all residents have the means or skills to take up digital. The council aims to grow and develop its digital

inclusion work to provide skills and confidence in this area for staff, and our customers will always be able to speak to a person when they need to, and the person they speak to will be able to provide improved customer service. We will not leave anyone behind, however, we must continue to maximise technology to drive better services and lower delivery costs. As a Council, we already offer online access in a number of areas; however we need to push further, faster with our digital approaches, data and technology, to ensure the district thrives through the fourth industrial revolution. The Council in order to make the right choices post-pandemic will need to think differently and crucially put citizens, data, insight, and technology at the heart of change.

Actions - What are we going to do?

What are we going to do? (Activities)	What difference will it make?- (Outcomes)
1. Development of digital systems to support the delivery of Financial Services (PHASE - 2)	Phase 2 pilot will introduce functionality not previously available to the Council. It will greatly improve; financial controls at remote facilities (e.g. leisure centres). Council will have more efficient and effective financial management information system, providing timely easy access, self-service to financial ledgers, financial information and reporting for all services, with improved controls and governance leading to overall improved and informed financial decision making.

What are we going to do? (Activities)	What difference will it make?- (Outcomes)
2. Appointment of Implementation Partner for Council's Digital Transformation Strategy.	Implementation of the Council's Digital Transformation Strategy can commence at pace in order to achieve more outcomes within the Strategy and deliver on our Vision of improving services.
3. Implement Communication Actions from Digital Transformation Strategy to contribute to a more connected Mid Ulster (e.g. web-site content review and introduce e-mail marketing tool).	Users can understand our website so that they do not need to contact us if we put the information online and our residents, businesses, and visitors are aware of our activities; trust us because we communicate effectively - via email and social media.
4. Implement Customer Services Actions from Digital Transformation Strategy.(e.g. collate, review and analyse call handling/journeys to inform utilisation of interactive voice recognition and development of on-line registration)	Better understand how our residents, businesses, partners and visitors interact and engage with our services so we can improve outcomes for them and reduce staff process administration process.
5. Implement Digital Infrastructure Actions from Digital Transformation Strategy (e.g. Implement fibre class network connectivity to each of our staff workspaces).	Staff have the connectivity and equipment to work from wherever they need and where their communication is seamless and simplified

What are we going to do? (Activities)	What difference will it make?- (Outcomes)
6. Delivery of the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF: NI programme led by Newry, Mourne & Down District Council). A 3-year grant scheme aimed at supporting micro/small businesses to adopt advanced digital technologies to achieve business transformation.	Sixty Mid Ulster micro/small businesses supported to adopt new digital technologies to transform their business operations by March 2026
7. Develop digital accessibility and digital inclusion (by design) guidance and training materials for Council's Digital Transformation team.	Accessible design principles included in digital improvements

How will we know?

- New digital transformation action plan agreed - (to align with Council's Digital Transformation Strategy)
- Implementation partner appointed.
- Increase in visitor numbers to Council website
- Web-site content review completed
- E-mail marketing tool introduced
- Number of new digital services developed and in place.
- Number of connections live on managed SD-Wan service
- Provision three times the bandwidth to each site.
- Number of Mid Ulster micro/small businesses supported to adopt new digital technologies to transform their business operations by March 2026.
- Digitally accessible/inclusion guidance and training materials in place

Visible improvement residents, businesses or visitors expect to see

The Council's role will be focused on helping to identify the priorities that will lead to the biggest impacts on economic growth and public service reform, thus ensuring key policies and strategies are integrated. This will include the infrastructure to support digital innovation in the District, providing insight and delivering public service reform directly, including working in a more digital way as a Council and promoting work that will support every resident in the District, as well as supporting businesses to benefit from digital change.

Partnerships: Who do we need to work with?

Northern Ireland Executive and Departments, Members of Council, Staff from various service areas across Council, Digital Designers/Consultants, Citizens, Visitors, Statutory, Voluntary, Community groups, Businesses, Councils, Regulatory/Statutory bodies.

Link to Community Plan Theme and Outcomes: *Economic Growth – We prosper in a stronger and more competitive economy*

Links to Corporate Plan Themes:

Service Delivery - We will improve services for our citizens through the development and delivery of an innovation agenda.

Economy - We will continue to build on our work to generate business diversification, innovation and expansion and increase employment opportunities.

Communities - We will support and promote respect for diversity the integration of our minority communities

Performance Improvement Aspects, which this improvement objective aims to deliver against:

Strategic Effectiveness, Service Quality, Service Availability, Fairness, Sustainability, Efficiency, Innovation.

5.3 Objective Three: To create cleaner neighbourhoods, where everyone takes responsibility for their waste and the environment

“This is top of the list for me, as I believe a clean environment is so so important on all levels; from hygiene, safety and reputation”

(Mid Ulster Councils Corporate Improvement Objectives Survey Consultee Excerpt, May 2023)

Lead Officer: Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing

Why have we chosen this Improvement Objective?

The World Health Organisation, (WHO), outlines, the various ways the natural environment can positively affect human health and well-being, as natural areas offer opportunities for physical activity, social contacts and stress reduction ¹. We all use public spaces every time we leave home. These include the footpaths and streets we walk or drive along each day, the parks our children play in and the outdoor areas we go to exercise or relax in. Many of our daily decisions and activities are influenced by our perceptions of the quality and cleanliness of the public areas we encounter. The importance of clean, green and blue (our rivers, canals, loughs etc.) spaces, parks, cannot be underestimated. Many benefits derive from a pleasant environment. Post pandemic we now realise how important it is for us to have easy access to open space for recreation and exercise. The importance of safe, accessible and well-connected green and blue spaces for improving quality of life has never been more pertinent, and for those without gardens the value of these spaces is amplified.

Good quality parks and attractive open space contribute economic benefits to towns and villages. As Mid Ulster competes with others to attract growth, tourism and inward investment a clean, green and pleasant environment plays an important role in marketing the District as a place to live in, move to and visit. Businesses are drawn to places with good quality environment as this in turn attracts customers, employees and services into the local area. In addition well maintained towns and villages has a positive impact on commercial and domestic property values.

Regionally and locally increases in obesity, are linked to more sedentary lifestyles including lower levels of outdoor activity. Patterns of exercise in adults are set early in life, so obesity

and inactivity in childhood can led to poor health in later years. Good quality public open space is required to encourage healthier lifestyles by providing opportunities for walking, cycling and other outdoor pursuits, as well as being beneficial to mental well-being. Clean and well maintained play areas, parks and open space provide important beneficial opportunities for children to learn and develop (their social and emotional development) and stay healthy. Apart from access, the quality of green space is crucial too. Quality of facilities – including toilets and cafes; regular maintenance; organised activities can help ensure a green space supports the wellbeing of its citizens equally

Clean neighbourhoods engender social pride, add vibrancy, and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, all of which are essential to the development of strong prosperous neighbourhoods. Anti-social behaviour can be seen through dog fouling, littering, abandoning vehicles, graffiti, and fly tipping etc. We are very much aware that many of our clean and green services are demand led, whilst much of this demand is inevitable, it is also clear some of it is avoidable. We want to be clear about our service promises, standards, and the response times we aim to achieve to ensure our communities understand what levels of service they can expect. On its own the Council cannot deliver a cleaner and greener environment for residents. We want to work collaboratively, with residents, communities, visitors and businesses and through active citizenship we hope to see reduced demands on our services and more residents taking greater pride in and ownership of their local environment. This is more necessary then ever as overall public sector expenditure reduces at an unprecedented rate, combined with the economic fallout from the pandemic and current inflation in the economy.

1. <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/green-spaces-invaluable-resources-deliveringsustainable-urban-health>

Actions - What are we going to do?

What are we going to do? (Activities)	What difference will it make? - (Outcomes)
1. Continuation of an enhanced anti-littering enforcement approach – Phase 2. (extension	Effective and visible way of responding to anti-social behaviour, resulting in raising

What are we going to do? (Activities)	What difference will it make? - (Outcomes)
of “Walk this Way” scheme in dog fouling ‘hot spots’)	awareness of adverse impacts of littering on the environment.
2. Support and promote local community clean-ups and events e.g. Big Spring Clean organised by schools, community groups and sports clubs.	Fifty-five supported “Clean-ups” carried out across Mid Ulster district electoral areas (DEA) involving a range of stakeholders involved including schools, community groups, sports clubs, businesses etc.
3. Co-ordinated litter/ recycling educational programme in place for participating schools.	Educational programme made available to all primary schools and delivery schedule in place. Increased community involvement and civic pride in participation of Live Here Love Here Small Grants Programme
4. .Develop, manage and deliver a marketing and communication activity plan 2023/24 (high profile campaigns) aimed at reducing littering and awareness of dog fouling across the district.	Increased public awareness of effects of littering and dog fouling across the District.
5. Develop extended coverage of Forest Schools programme across all seven District Electoral Area's (DEA's) - DEA's are Carntogher, Clogher Valley, Cookstown, Dungannon, Magherafelt, Moyola, Torrent in Mid Ulster District.	Work in partnership to broaden the invitation to schools, youth groups to take part in the Forest Schools Programme across the Districts green and blue spaces.

What are we going to do? (Activities)	What difference will it make? - (Outcomes)
6. Continue to raise Parks and Open Green Spaces management standards across Council Properties by attaining one additional Green Flag/Blue Standard award by 2024/25.	Enhancing horticultural, cleanliness, biodiversity, community involvement, and environmental management standards across the Districts recreational spaces.
7. Deliver a dereliction and long term vacancy scheme across Mid Ulster Towns and villages subject to securing funding from DAERA and Department for Communities (DfC)	Injecting new life into vacant / derelict properties. Creating new jobs across the district. Encouraging shoppers to physically come into towns and villages.

How will we know?

- Number of Council dog fouling ‘hotspots’ where “Walk this Way” scheme introduced
- Number of community clean ups supported throughout District
- Number of Educational Visits made to primary/ secondary schools promoting littering & recycling message and number of pupils/students attending.
- Amount of funding secured from Live Here Love Here fund
- Number of media campaigns launched.
- Number of Forest Schools Projects identified and delivered by end of March 2024
- Number of attendees each Forest school project
- Number of blue and green flag management standards attained
- Securing funding from DAERA and Department for Communities for dereliction/vacancy scheme.

Visible improvement residents, businesses or visitors expect to see

Increase in the number of “Clean and Green” schools and educational programmes delivered and supported throughout the District. Greater support of “active citizenship” through local action and engagement opportunities. Enhanced enforcement opportunities and awareness, which reduces anti-social behaviour such as littering dog-fouling etc. Improved quality and cleanliness of the public areas citizens, tourists, and businesses encounter across the District.

Partnerships: Who do we need to work with?

Members of Council, staff, citizens, visitors, community/ voluntary groups, schools, colleges, youth groups, businesses, regulatory and statutory bodies, businesses.

Link to Community Plan Theme: Infrastructure- We increasingly value our environment and enhance it for our children.

Links to Corporate Plan Themes:

Environment - We will continue to promote and protect our environment through our environmental and anti-littering programmes of education, awareness raising and enforcement.

Communities - We will continue to support the sustainable development of our parks/forests/green-spaces, together with outdoor assets, including walking and cycling trails & water recreation.

Communities - We will open up & sustain accessible pathways to participation in leisure/outdoor rec. activities, which enhance health & well-being by providing hi quality, accessible facilities in local communities and through programmes tailored to community need.

Economy - We will continue to build on our work to generate business diversification, innovation and expansion and increase employment opportunities.

Performance Improvement Aspects, which this improvement objective aims to deliver against

Strategic Effectiveness, Service Quality, Service Availability, Fairness, Sustainability, Efficiency, Innovation

Improvement Objective Four

5.4 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.

“I absolutely agree with this objective. Capital investment is urgently needed in the right areas”

(Mid Ulster Councils Corporate Improvement Objectives Survey Consultee Excerpt, May 2023).

Lead Officer: Head of Technical Services

Why have we chosen this Improvement Objective?

The additional challenges facing Mid Ulster’s most vulnerable communities due to the longer term impacts, arising from the Pandemic and the current economic instability caused by inflation, means there has never been a more important time to strengthen the economic, social, and physical wellbeing of our places, lasting effects will be felt for many years to come. We must look to a period of recovery post pandemic and to the economic recovery out of inflation. The Council’s capital programme of local projects will maintain our ongoing support for vibrant, accessible village/ town centres, open spaces and communities.

Regeneration is a long-term process and is delivered through a wide range of projects, programmes, partnerships, infrastructure initiatives. Since the late 1990s, policymakers have recognised the wider social factors that affect the success of regeneration schemes, but this is even more vital in the current economic climate. Infrastructure is a valuable and efficient economic stimulus. Every £1 of investment in infrastructure generates a potential further £2.70¹ due to economic multiplier effects. Making the most of existing social capital and providing opportunities for local people to be involved in regeneration is a vital part of making the best use of limited resources.

As a Council we support locally developed place based regeneration projects, we continue to invest in Mid Ulster, as well as providing essential services paid by your rates. Our Capital investment programme is our commitment to addressing the economic downturn and making the District a better place to live, work and invest. The programme includes major schemes to boost the economy, create jobs and improve the quality of life for our citizens.

Quality of place matters in economic, social, cultural and emotional terms. A sense of place helps establish strong social infrastructure which supports people to improve their prospects and maximize their potential. We are taking a “Whole District” approach creating places that are attractive, well-designed and well managed. Our approach focuses on tailored solutions for settlements within the District and also business locations. We recognise our major assets as those that have the potential to deliver the greatest impact. Building on and investing in these assets alongside complementary interventions will release the District’s potential for growth and connect areas of growth with deprived places in need of generation. By following a planned phased approach across the District we will be able to deliver greater impact for each locality, using the resources available to best effect.

1. Further detail can be found here:

[Infrastructure as a stimulus – laying the foundations for the new normal | Institution of Civil Engineers \(ICE\)](#)

Actions - What are we going to do?

What are we going to do? (Activities)	What difference will it make?- (Outcomes)
1. Undertake the Project management of Council's current committed live Capital Works Programme 2023 - 2027 with an indicative spend < £26m.	Contribute to the ongoing regeneration of our district.

What are we going to do? (Activities)	What difference will it make?- (Outcomes)
2. Develop a skills/competency matrix/ tool to map required and desired skills for capital projects team/client services teams and conduct training/development programmes to optimise efficiencies and workflows by April 2024.	Streamline processes for efficiency compromises within the capital projects team through staff development.
3. Research, develop and promote clear precise communication plan containing information on Council's Rolling programme of Capital projects that is their progression and delivery to members of the public across Council's communication channels.	Members of Public better informed regarding up-to-date information reference Council's Capital Programmes Projects across District
4. Create Standardised Accessibility and Inclusivity guidance materials for Council's Capital Projects	Standardised Accessibility and Inclusivity principles for Capital Projects

How will we know?

- The number of current live Capital Works projects within 2023 to 2027 programme, to include:
 - **2 Waste Infrastructure Projects;** - final closure works at Ballymacombs Landfill and potential development of a Dry Recyclables Facility (MRF).
 - **2 Public Realm** - Design out & Development of Maghera, Pomeroy Public Realm completed

- **13 Major Projects - (over £250K):** Thomas Clarkes GAC, Connecting Pomeroy , Gortgonis Health & Well Being Hub enabling Works, Dungannon Railway Park (completed RIBA stage 4), MUSA Sports 3G & Running Track to be on site , Maghera Wetland Park, Active Travel Projects (Clogher), Small Settlement Programme(Moneymore, Bellaghy, Castledawson, Clady, Coalisland to be finished) and works to Castlecaulfield and Moy to be commenced) , Civic Offices remedial works, Forest Improvements at Drumcairn and Derrynoyd, Design works for Cookstown, Dungannon depot replacements.
- **6 Minor Projects - (under £250k):** Ballsaggart Lough, Dungannon Park Lake Reservoirs, Murley Road Footpath, Greenvale LC Repairs, Burnavon Theatre Upgrades, Aughnacloy Changing Room repairs. .
 - Capital Programme Delivery training/development/awareness programme in place.
 - Communication plan containing information on Council's Rolling programme of Capital projects in place across Council communication channels
 - Standardised Accessibility and Inclusivity for Capital Programmes guidance in place and associated training programme delivered.

Visible improvement residents, businesses or visitors expect to see

Council will work with a wide range of partners from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. Wherever possible the Council will seek to work in partnership with others to deliver its capital investment programme in order to provide facilities that meet the needs of the District. Council strategically manages its operational properties through the establishment of a rolling programme of investment which either improves existing council facilities or provides new facilities (e.g. office accommodation, depots, yards and venues such as open space facilities). Council will provide a clear context within which proposals for new capital expenditure are evaluated, to ensure that all capital investment is targeted at meeting the Council's Priorities and/or legislative requirements. Council will ensure that specific capital programme project stages updates are provided to members of the public.

Partnerships: Who do we need to work with?

Council members, council staff, ratepayers, citizens, tourists, businesses, statutory and regulatory bodies, digital geospatial suppliers, community and voluntary groups.

Link to Community Plan Theme: Economic Growth - We prosper in a stronger and more competitive economy.

Links to Corporate Plan Themes:

Economy - We will continue to identify opportunity sites for development proposals and to deliver against existing plans for other key strategic sites.

Service Delivery - We will invest in in our people to create a customer-focused, purposeful, skilled, high-performing, engaged, healthy & safe workforce.

Service Delivery - We will improve services for our citizens through the development and delivery of an innovation agenda.

Communities - We will support and promote respect for diversity the integration of our minority communities. .

Performance Improvement Aspects this improvement objective aims to deliver against?

Strategic Effectiveness, Service Quality, Sustainability, Service Availability, Fairness, Efficiency, Innovation.

Contacting Us

As always, your feedback is important to us and as such, Council is committed to improving its services and welcomes your comments or suggestions at any time of the year. If you, have any comments, feedback, would like any further information or would like a copy of this plan in an alternative format please contact:

Strategic Services and Engagement Team

Council Offices

Circular Road

Dungannon BT71 6DT

Telephone: 03000 132132

Email: info@midulstercouncil.org

Appendix One – Statutory Performance Indicators and Standards

Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (NI) 2015 has specified performance indicators and standards for Mid Ulster District Council on Economic Development, Planning and Waste Management. Improvement in relation to the statutory measure as and indicators is managed through our service plans and reported to Council on a regular basis.

Reference	Statutory Indicator	Standard to be Met (annually)
ED1	<p>The number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity.</p> <p>[Business start –up activity means the delivery of completed client led business plans under the Department of the Economy’s Regional Start initiative or its successor programmes]</p> <p>“Go For It” Programme target</p>	<p>*210</p> <p>*153</p>
P1	<p>The average processing time of major planning applications.</p> <p>[An application in the category of major development within the meaning of the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (NI) 2015 (a)]</p>	<p>Major applications processed from date valid to decision or withdrawn within an average of 30 weeks</p>
P2		

Reference	Statutory Indicator	Standard to be Met (annually)
	<p>The average processing time of local planning applications.</p> <p>[An application in the category of local development within the meaning of the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (NI) 2015, and other applications for approval or consent under the Planning act (NI) 2011 or any Regulations made under the Act]</p>	<p>Local applications processed from date valid to decision or withdrawn within an average of 15 weeks.</p>
P3	<p>The percentage of planning enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks.</p> <p>[Enforcement cases are investigations into alleged breaches of planning control under Part 5 of the Planning act (NI) 2011 or any regulations made under the Act].</p>	<p>70% of all enforcement cases are progressed to target conclusion within 39 weeks of receipt of complaint.</p>
W1	<p>The percentage of household waste collected by district councils that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for reuse)</p> <p>[Household waste is as defined in Article 2 of the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997(a) and the Controlled Waste and Duty of Care Regulations (NI) 2013(b)]</p>	<p>Set Annually by the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)</p>
W2		<p>Set annually by DAERA</p>

Reference	Statutory Indicator	Standard to be Met (annually)
	<p>The amount (tonnage) of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled.</p> <p>[Local Authority collected municipal waste is as defined in section 21 of the Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003(c)]</p>	
W3	<p>The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings</p> <p>(Local Authority collected municipal waste arisings is the total amount of the local authority collected municipal waste which has been collected by a district council]</p>	Set annually by DAERA

* The Department for the Economy (DfE) requested that the Department for Communities (DfC) amend the standards set out in the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (NI) 2015 to align with the programme targets in operation for the “Go for It” business start-up programme for 2021 to 2023. DfC consulted on the amendment to the 2015 Order from 21 December 2021 – 28 February 2022. It was not possible to make this amendment before the dissolution of the current Assembly due to competing legislative pressures and the volume of legislation needing to be progressed before the mandate ended and, as such, the current economic development standards cited in the 2015 Order remain in operation. Council has been advised to reference both the statutory targets and the “Go for It” programme targets in the performance improvement plan

Appendix Two - Mid Ulster Council's Corporate Health Indicators

Measure	Target/Standard 2022 - 2023	Responsible Lead Service
1.0 Economy		
1.1 Number of jobs promoted	*210 *153	Economic Development
1.2 Average processing time for local planning applications	15 weeks	Planning: Development Management
1.3 Average processing time for major planning applications	30 weeks	Planning: Development Management
1.4 % Building Regulations Applications determined to target	90%	Building Control
2.0 Waste Management		
2.1 Percentage (%) of waste going to landfill	Awaiting DAERA	Environmental Services
2.2 Percentage (%) of waste recycled	Awaiting DAERA	Environmental Services
3.0 Council Facilities		
3.1 Visitors to Arts/Cultural venues	<92,147	Arts & Culture
3.2 Users of Leisure and recreation facilities	<1,979,413	Leisure
3.3 Visitors to Council Offices	NA	Human Resources
3.4 Number of RIDDOR incidents	NA	Health & Safety

Measure	Target/Standard 2022 - 2023	Responsible Lead Service
4.0 Better Responses		
4.1 Freedom of Information (Fol) requests responded to within target	90%	Democratic Services
4.2 Complaints dealt with within target	90%	Chief Executive's Office
4.3 Correspondence responded to within target	90%	Chief Executive's Offices
4.4 Number of online transactions	<51,017	ICT
5.0 Resident Satisfaction		
5.1 Percentage (%) of Residents content with our services	80%	Marketing & Communications
5.2 Percentage (%) of residents agree that Council keeps them informed	80%	Marketing & Communications
5.3 Percentage of Residents agree that Council listens and acts on concerns	80%	Marketing & Communications
5.4 Number of organisations receiving Grant Aid	NA	Community Development
6.0 Staffing		
6.1 Number of Staff (FTE's) on payroll	NA	Human Resources
6.2 Number of Casual Staff employed in the past 12 months	NA	Human Resources

Measure	Target/Standard 2022 - 2023	Responsible Lead Service
6.3 Percentage (%) Attendance	95%	Human Resources
6.4 Percentage (%) Overtime	2.5%	Finance
7.0 Engaged Workforce		
7.1 Percentage of staff satisfied with their current job	80%	Marketing and Communications
7.2 Percentage (%) of workforce who take pride in working for Mid Ulster District Council	80%	Marketing and Communications
7.3 Percentage of workforce who understand Council's priorities and how they contribute to them	80%	Marketing and Communications
8.0 Finances		
8.1 Loans Outstanding	NA	Finance
8.2 Cash Reserves	£10 m	Finance
8.3 Invoices paid within 30 days	90%	Finance

Minutes of Meeting of Policy and Resources Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Tuesday 13 June 2023 in the Council Offices, Ballyronan Road, Magherafelt and by Virtual Means

Members Present

Councillor Corry, Chair

Councillors Bell, Brown, J Burton, Cahoon, Gildernew, Johnston, McAleer, McFlynn, McLean, McLernon, S McPeake, Molloy, Totten, Wilson

Officers in Attendance

Mr McCreesh, Chief Executive**
Mrs Canavan, Strategic Director of Organisation Development, Strategy and Performance (SD: ODSP)
Mrs Dyson, Head of Human Resources (HoHR)**
Mr McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement (HoSS&E)
Ms McNally, Assistant Director of Corporate Service and Finance (AD: CS&F)**
Mr Moffett, Assistant Director of Organisation Development, Strategy and Performance (AD: ODSP)**
Mr O'Hagan, Head of ICT (HoICT)
Mr Tohill, Strategic Director of Corporate Service and Finance (SD: CS&F)
Miss Thompson, Committee and Member Services Officer

* Denotes members present in remote attendance

** Denotes Officers present by remote means

*** Denotes others present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm

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

PR089/23 Notice of Recording

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

PR090/23 Apologies

Councillor Burton.

PR091/23 Declarations of Interest

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

PR092/23 Chairs Business

The Chair, Councillor Corry requested that agenda item 21 – 2023-24 Rate Support Grant Update be moved into open business.

Proposed by Councillor S McPeake
Seconded by Councillor Bell and

Resolved That agenda item 21 – 2023-24 Rate Support Grant Update be moved into open business.

Matters for Decision

PR093/23 Requests to Illuminate Council Properties

The Head of Strategic Services and Engagement (HoSS&E) presented previously circulated report which sought approval to illuminate and light up the Council's three designated properties to raise awareness for the following:

- Global Motor Neurone Disease Awareness Day
- CDH UK: Awareness Day
- DoH: National Health 75th Anniversary
- ASCERT NI: 25th Anniversary

Proposed by Councillor McLean
Seconded by Councillor Brown and

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

- Global Motor Neurone Awareness Day, 22 June 2023 – Colour Blue
- CDH UK: Awareness Day, 28 June 2023 – Colour Pink and Blue
- DoH: National Health 75th Anniversary, 5 July 2023 – Colour Blue
- ASCERT NI 25th Anniversary, 20 November 2023 – Colour Blue

PR094/23 Member Services

None.

Matters for Information

PR095/23 Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee held on 6 April 2023

Members noted Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee held on 6 April 2023.

PR096/23 Somme Association: 2023-2024 Membership Subscription

Members noted previously circulated report which outlined correspondence received from the Somme Association on annual membership contributions payable for period 2023-2024.

PR097/23 Updated Policy on Consultation

Members noted previously circulated report which advised on the updated policy on Consultation.

PR098/23 Working Groups of Committees: Update

Members noted previously circulated report which outlined the Working Groups established by committees of Council.

PR099/23 Performance Improvement Plan and Consultation Update

Members noted previously circulated report which provided update on the revised timeframe for publication of Council's Performance Improvement Plan (PIP plan) 2023/24 to 2024/25 as per Department for Communities (DfC) guidance, and the outcome of the consultation undertaken on the Council's proposed improvement objectives 2023 – 2024.

PR100/23 2023-24 Rate Support Grant Update

The Strategic Director of Corporate Services and Finance (SD: CS&F) presented previously circulated report which provided update in relation to the amount of Rate Support Grant that may be received for the financial year 2023/24.

Councillor McLernon stated she had some concerns which she felt Council should reflect in the consultation response regarding the serious implications of the proposed budget. The Councillor raised the following issues –

- The cuts to Discretionary Support Fund, will impact on people with the lowest incomes and those most impacted by the cost-of-living crisis.
- The missed opportunity to lift many individuals and families out of poverty and to address a number of inequalities within society.
- The ending of the European Social Funding as a result of Brexit, and without a replacement.
- That the cuts to arm's length bodies budgets, given the breadth of work under the remit of DfC. Many have already streamlined their services due to austerity measures - this proposal could therefore result in cuts to services, loss of employment, and potentially a loss of expertise and knowledge that could take many years to regain.
- The impact that the cuts to the Rates Support Grant, which was established to support more financially constrained councils, protecting rate payers from unfair rates hikes;

- The reduction in funding to the Supporting People Fund which provides essential supports and services to some of the most vulnerable in the community.
- Concerns at the reduction in social housing units from 2000 to 1400 at a time when more, not less, social housing is needed;
- The potential pausing of the Affordable Warmth Scheme, which is the Executive's main intervention to support people on a low income who rent their home from a private landlord and who are most at risk of fuel poverty;
- The reduction in the number of Disabled Facilities Grants available which could see many families having to wait years before they can get the physical adaptations needed to care for their loved ones at home.

Councillor McLernon stated she believed that, if implemented, this budget would adversely impact individuals and families across all the Section 75 groups. The Councillor stated that the people who are in need of the most support are to be the collateral damage as a result of an unadulterated Tory budget facilitated by the absence of an Executive. In addition, Councillor McLernon stated that the Rural Needs Act 2016 places a responsibility on all public authorities to give due regard to the social and economic needs of rural people and that it is essential that all budgetary proposals are developed within the statutory obligations placed upon public authorities through this Rural Needs Act. Councillor McLernon felt it is imperative that Council reflects the issues raised above in their consultation response.

The SD: CS&F stated he was more than happy to submit a supplementary response. The SD: CS&F stated that some of the points raised were included in the response already submitted but had not been made in as much depth and that he was comfortable with adding a supplementary response.

Councillor Bell proposed that a supplementary response be submitted.

Councillor Molloy seconded Councillor Bell's proposal.

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to submit a supplementary response to the Department for Communities consultation on 2023-24 budget allocation addressing the points outlined.

Councillor Wilson asked if the proposed cuts go ahead as outlined how much would be added to the rates before taking into consideration any other budget pressures. The Councillor stated that the majority of Council voted through the highest rates rise of any Council so there was a need to be careful.

The SD: CS&F stated that officers are still hopeful that prior to the end of this financial year additional funding will be made available so that Council won't feel the impact as extremely as it might based on where we are now. The SD: CS&F stated that if the Grant is cut, every £400k (approx.) of a cut is approximately 1% on the rate. The SD: CS&F stated that Council has budgeted to receive £2.5 million Rate Support Grant and if this is reduced to the proposed £800k then there is the potential for a 4% pressure on the rates. The SD: CS&F advised that if this should be the case then officers would bring forward proposals for consideration which may include

looking at reserves to allow time to address the situation. The SD: CS&F stated that having had informal discussions with DfC officials there is still some hope that additional funding may become available and whilst not the way to run an organisation was the best he could offer at the moment.

Councillor Molloy stated he welcomed the item being taken out of confidential business tonight as the conversations around rates setting and the potential impacts needs to be in the open.

Councillor McLean stated that the potential cuts needed to be kept in context and that there were some issues raised tonight that he had difficulty with. The Councillor referred to comments regarding Tory austerity and cuts and stated that whilst Sinn Féin does not support Britishness they are happy to take the money and then criticise the cuts. Councillor McLean stated that it was also wrong to say that the cuts were due to the Assembly not running. The Councillor stated that he felt the consultation response is accurate and that cuts will affect rate payers however he did not feel that some of the comments made tonight were beneficial. Councillor McLean stated that he would like the response to the consultation to be made as forcibly as possible in order to retain funding.

Councillor McFlynn stated that Members were aware that cuts were coming but did not know the extent which if made, will have an obvious effect on ratepayers and the most vulnerable. The Councillor stated that any cuts will affect the rates going forward but she knew that officers will work hard in trying to reduce cuts as much as possible.

The Chair, Councillor Corry stated that it will be the most vulnerable who will be impacted by cuts and reiterated that the comments raised tonight should be submitted as a supplementary response.

Live broadcast ended at 7.20 pm.

Local Government (NI) Act 2014 - Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor Molloy
Seconded by Councillor S McPeake 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 PR101/23 to PR109/23

Matters for Decision

PR101/23 Staffing Matters for Decision
PR102/23 Scheme of Allowances Update
PR103/23 Closure of dormant bank accounts with AIB
PR104/23 Financial Update – Year Ended 31 March 2023

Matters for Information

- PR105/23 Confidential Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 6 April 2023
- PR106/23 Staff Matters for Information
- PR107/23 Equality
- PR108/23 Contracts and DAC Registers – Update
- PR109/23 Treasury Management - Update

PR110/23 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7.00 pm and ended at 7.42 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, [Dungannon/Magherafelt] and virtually.

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

Just some housekeeping before we commence. Can I remind you:-

- If you have joined the meeting remotely, please keep your audio on mute unless invited to speak and then turn it off when finished speaking
- Keep your video on at all times, unless you have bandwidth or internet connection issues, where you are advised to try turning your video off
- If you wish to speak please raise your hand in the meeting or on screen and keep raised until observed by an Officer or myself
- Should we need to take a vote this evening I will ask each member to confirm whether they are for or against the proposal or abstaining
- When invited to speak please introduce yourself by name to the meeting
- For any member attending remotely, if you declare an interest in an item, please turn off your video and keep your audio on mute for the duration of the item
- If referring to a specific report please reference the report, page or slide being referred to
- Lastly, I 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 first item on the agenda - apologies and then roll call of all other Members in attendance.

Report on	2023-24 Service Plan: Org Development, Strategy & Performance
Date of Meeting	Thursday 6 th July 2023
Reporting Officer	Marissa Canavan, Strategic Director, Organisational Development Strategy & Performance
Contact Officer	Philip Moffett, Assistant Director Geraldine Dyson, Head of HR Joseph McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services & Engagement

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To provide members with the Directorate Service Plan for Organisational Development, Strategy & Performance for period 2023-24.
2.0	Background
2.1	Council is structured around 4 Directorates together with the Chief Executive's area which includes Communications and the 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.
2.2	Whilst directorate plans do not cover everything undertaken, they contain the focus of activity aimed at improving upon how we deliver of our services to the people of our district. These plans are integral to our corporate improvement and planning arrangements.
2.3	The directorate service plan for the 2023-24 period is attached as appendix A to this paper.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The Directorate straddles a number of business areas, extending to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources, Organisational Development and Corporate Learning and Development enabling the continued delivery of our services across the organisation, • Committee and Members Services facilitating the transaction of council business,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Performance Improvement, Equality, Disability and Rural Needs across our services, and • Registration Services accessible from across our 3 Civic Offices those wishing to access our births, deaths and marriages function. <p>Our Focus 2023-24</p> <p>3.2 The directorate's focus in doing what it does is based on the foundation of, <i>Supporting Staff and Members to Deliver</i> to Develop-Improve-Deliver.</p> <p>3.3 Our 2023-24 activities across the directorate contribute to our objectives.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To continue to attract and retain staff to ensure a multi-skilled and diverse workforce that's reflective of the people we serve. 2. To continue to engage and support our citizens through a range of initiatives and communication channels to excel in meeting customer needs and expectations. 3. To expand the Council's learning and development offering in promoting a culture of life-long learning. 4. To enhance employee engagement whilst improving 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. 6. To maximise and continue to develop existing systems and processes in line with the Council's digital agenda. <p>3.4 The service plan is attached as appendix A.</p>
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p> <p>Financial: not applicable and relevant to this reporting.</p> <p>Human: Officer involvement in the development and subsequent filling of the structure.</p> <p>Risk Management: The service improvement plan provided a mitigation.</p>

4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: not applicable and relevant to this reporting.
	Rural Needs Implications: A RNIA is not considered proportionate to the scope of this paper/piece of work.
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	That the committee notes, considers and provides commentary as necessary on the Organisational Development, Strategy & Performance Service Plan 2023-24.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Not applicable



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

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

**DIRECTORATE SERVICE PLAN
2023 / 2024**

CONTENT

SECTION	TITLE	PAGE NUMBER
1.0	OVERALL PURPOSE & SCOPE OF THE DIRECTORATE	
1.1	Purpose and scope of the department	
1.2	Responsibilities	
1.3	Customers & Stakeholders	
1.4	Performance Overview in 2022/23	
2.0	IMPROVING OUR SERVICES AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE - 2023/24	
2.1	Budget - 2023/24	
2.2	Staffing Complement Directorate– 2023/24	
2.3	Service Plan – 2023/24	
2.4	Risk Management of Directorate	
3.0	OUR STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS	
3.1	Equality Duty	
3.2	Rural Needs Duty	

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 provision of a range of employee related services enabling the Council to continue to deliver on its suite of services to the people it serves from across the district. The key responsibilities are noted below (1.2) and focus on recruitment and retention, people management, governance arrangements allowing effective decisions to be taken by council and committees, registration services (births, deaths and marriages), strategic and corporate direction together with a range of statutory duties and front-line customer services at each of our Civic Offices, whilst overseeing and implementing organisational change.

1.2 Responsibilities

- **Organisational Development:** Continue to improve the organisational effectiveness while adhering to the council's culture and values. Maximize employees' potential and help them amplify their contributions in furtherance of the Council's success.
- **Human Resources:** Management of the efficient organisation and running of various employment functions including employee resourcing, employee relations, equal opportunities, employee health and well-being. HR supports the organisation to comply with relevant employment legislation, HR best practice, provides professional advice on employment matters to staff and managers, and contributes to the development, implementation and review of relevant human resources policies, procedures in conjunction with Trade Union representatives, 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, Directors, Assistant Directors, Heads of Service, Managers and Staff. Supports a schedule of HR policy and procedure development to ensure policies and procedures are fit for purpose.
- **Registration Services:** Provision of a suite of registration services extending to births, deaths and marriages, and performing marriages and civil partnerships in the Mid Ulster District
- **Business Support and Facility Services:** The provision of administrative support to ensure the efficient operation of Council services and offices. Facility Services, managed through our Business Support Function, are responsible for ensuring that buildings are clean and maintained for customers and staff use.
- **Customer Services and Corporate Complaints:** Provision of a front-line customer service at each of our Civic Offices in Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt, providing face to face advice and support and developing our arrangements to improve

the customer service offering to anyone accessing our services, irrespective of which service they're accessing. Provision of customer service advice at our Civic offices/centres throughout the District, together with responding to customer enquiries. The management of corporate complaints to councils to be initiated within the Directorate throughout 2023-24 as Council continues to implement its new organisational structure.

- **Community and Corporate Planning:** Co-ordination of the community planning process for our district, working collaboratively with a wide range of partners and residents including representatives from statutory, *business, education, health, community and voluntary sectors*, and oversight and co-ordination of the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan.
- **Committee Services:** facilitation and management of council and committee meetings of Council to include the development of agendas, compilation of meeting packs, providing the summons to councillors and minute taking and follow up activity on decisions resolved.
- **Equality, Disability and Good Relations:** in ensuring that the Council meets its Equality Scheme and providing support in ensuring services are delivered in line with obligations under Section 75 (1) and (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998
- **Rural Needs:** providing assistance across Council on the rural needs statutory duty under the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 to consider rural needs in the development of new policies, plans or strategies and in any service design/delivery decisions.
- **Performance Management & Improvement:** developing and embedding arrangements to support continuous improvement in the delivery of services, by embedding a culture which encourages and champions improvement in everything the Council does to meet its Performance Improvement obligations under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014. Introduction of an improvement framework, which supports council's strategic planning through reporting, validating performance data and on-going monitoring. Developing performance and improvement frameworks/tools, challenging and championing improvement, supporting the production of strategic planning documents, monitoring and reporting,
- **Processing Civic Recognition Requests from Elected Representatives:** receiving, processing and making recommendation to council on requests made for civic recognition.
- **Member Services:** providing support to councillors as required, progression and attainment of the Elected Member Development Charter together support to Members in carrying out their role.
- **Corporate Policy:** providing support and advice on the formulation of policies and corporate policy development across the Council.

1.3 Customers & Stakeholders

Customers & Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internal – Staff, Departments, Elected Members, SMT and Local Trade Union Representatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• External – Job Applicants, 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior Management and Heads of Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Members of public requesting information held by Council, committee recommendations and council decisions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Government Departments, agencies and bodies to include.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Equality Commission for NI○ NI Audit Office○ Public Records Office for Northern Ireland (PRONI)○ Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO)○ A wide cross section of the public and customers of the Council, as required.○ Outside Bodies with Councillor representation from Mid Ulster District Council○ Government Departments, specifically the Department for Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs on the Rural Needs duty under the 2017 Act.○ NILGOSC○ NIPB

1.4 Performance Overview in 2022/23 (Retrospective Review)

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

<p align="center">2022/2023 Performance Overview <i>What we achieved- Measured Activities</i></p>	<p align="center">End of Year Progress Status: Completed /Commenced/ Other</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Improvement- Corporate Performance Management and Improvement regularly reported through SMT and Council. • Performance Improvement Plan (PIP – forward looking plan) for 2022/23 developed in conjunction with public consultation, approved and ratified by Council. • Annual Performance Assessment Plan for 2021/22 developed, completed, approved and ratified by Council June 2022. Liaised with Northern Ireland Audit Office regarding their annual Performance Improvement Audit – Council attained unqualified audit opinion for 2022/23. 	<p align="center">Completed</p> <p align="center">Completed</p> <p align="center">Completed</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-aligned performance framework to reflect phase 1 of Council re-structure – Departmental Service plans 	<p align="center">Completed</p>
<p>Embedding and Getting the most from CoreHR: throughout the year Council has been engaged in the further development and roll out of CoreHR. Activity in this area has extended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the development and use of Makodata Reports and dashboards at a glance for management • the introduction of organisational and directorate level dashboards • greater engagement as a directorate in developing CoreHR • Calculations now enabled within Core for areas such as term time and annual leave being taken by employees • Cyclical targeted training for managers on the use of CoreHR and end users • Introduction of bi-monthly management reports from Core Time • Employees more informed through Employee CoreHR information 	<p align="center">Completed</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commencement of the roll out of the Learning & Development Module within CoreHR • Elected Members now using CoreHR to submit monthly travel and expense claims all within the system, eliminating manual processing • Personal information sections of employee profiles updated to now include the necessary information, including emergency contact details 	
<p>Engagement on Industrial Action: throughout the period and in particular Quarter two of the financial year engagement with trade union representatives has been ongoing. Activity extended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade union negotiations culminating with an agreement between Unions and Management involving a pay agreement over a two-year period being implemented by the Directorate • Fulfilment of the agreement between unions and management including backpay and initiation of in-year pay agreement • Engagement with Trade Union representatives on the new organisational structure and subsequent implementation of same. 	Completed
<p>Development and Implementation of Human Resources and Organisation Development Initiatives: throughout the period a number of initiatives have commenced and undertaken. Activity extended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of the HR Business Partner Model to specifically target and support Directorates and their management teams on the HR and employee related matters within their areas. • Development of the Council’s 2023-24 Student Placement Programme, commencing September 2023 • Coaching arrangements with external professional support to develop directorate structures, extending to team meetings, new ideas and self-reflection. • Introduction of the Personal Contribution & Support Process (PC&SP) to open engagement between staff and managers across the organisation • Continual development of Human Resources staff engaging in and attaining CIPD qualifications 	Completed

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The holding of Awards Ceremonies to recognise achievements of participating staff from right across the organisation in attaining ILM Level 3 and 5 • Policy development to support services deliver their programmes of work and support staff, extending to flexible working, term-time, carers leave and menopause policies. 	
<p>Our Customer Service Reach: throughout the period the Directorate has continued to make strides in embedding the Council’s corporate value on customer service and excellence. This has extended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging in the digitalisation of front-line services, extending to making available the option for customers to schedule appointments with our Registration Services Team online, making the service available 24/7 without the need to call the offices and speak with the reception team or Registration Services • The completion of the realignment of the Customer Services Team across the three Civic Offices • Improvements in Call Handling agreements with the introduction of an IVR (Interactive Voice Response) to handle and process calls to our Civic Offices to improve the customer experience and create capacity for the reception teams to engage with customers face-to-face at either of the reception desks. • Introduction of Corporate Uniform for the Customer Services Team located across our Civic Offices 	Completed
<p>Strategic Planning for the Future: throughout the period the period the Directorate has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commenced and completed a review of the operation of the Mid Ulster Community Planning Partnership giving the Partnership a clear structure and focus. • Developed and agreed a new terms of reference for the operation of the Mid Ulster Community Planning Partnership • Reviewed, refined and realigned the themes, objectives and priorities within the Mid Ulster Community Plan making them more meaningful and outcome based. 	Completed

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Based Delivery Groups have been initiated and started to meet and progress matters as part of the governance arrangements of Mid Ulster Community Planning • Commenced the process of reviewing the delivery of our current Corporate Plan and subsequent development of a new Corporate Plan for the period 2024-2028. 	
<p>Enabling Council Services to Deliver: throughout the year our HR Service has continued to develop and embed arrangements to support services to deliver their programmes of work. Activity has extended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development and roll-out of absence meeting pro-forma to assist/empower managers to Chair and take the lead at absence review meetings – enabling managers to fulfil their role. • Introduction of arrangements to ensure absences are recorded in a more timely and accurate manner to inform management decision-making. • Up-skilling managers to fulfil their role through the HR Business Partner support model • Completion of the Equality and Diversity Article 55 Review in 2023 and submitted with the Equality Commission for NI, with activity now commencing on the development and implementation of the required action plan in 2023/24 year. • Getting the most out of the systems we use with commencing work on generating letters to be sent directly to candidates from the Get-Got system. 	Completed
<p>Committee & Members Services: throughout the year our Committee and Member Services team have been engaged in a series of activities which have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Servicing of all committee and council meetings ensuring to deliver an effective and efficient service on behalf of Council. • Completion of NILGA Training on Effective Democratic Services for all Committee & Member Services Team • Develop the CMIS System to include. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roll out of the Strategic Community Planning Board - Develop Attendance reports for each of committees. 	Completed

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keeping System live and up to date. • Majority of Members Elected Member Development Training completed. • PDP plans issued to all Members. • Input to Elected Member Regional Working Group • Development of an Elected Member Induction Pack for new Council Term 											
<p>Equality, Disability, Good Relations & Rural Needs: throughout the year the team have been involved in a series of activities which have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion and submission of the Council’s Annual Monitoring Return. • Equality Screening completed as required at correct time. • CACHE Level 2 Autism Awareness training organised and delivered in line with Equality Scheme • Increased number and quality of Rural Needs Impact Assessments completed within Council. • Policy Directory updated to reflect new Council Structure. • Introduction of a Cubbie in Cookstown Leisure Centre. 	Completed										
<p>Registration of Births, Deaths, Marriages & Civil Ceremonies: throughout the year the team have been involved in a series of activities which have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of an Online Booking System for Births, Deaths, Marriages & Civil Ceremonies which has transformed the service. • To deliver an efficient and effective Registration Service to the people of Mid Ulster. See approximate figures for 2022 year: <table border="1" data-bbox="304 1182 947 1382"> <tr> <td>Births registered</td> <td>1936</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Deaths registered</td> <td>1200</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Still Births registered</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Marriages Registered</td> <td>698</td> </tr> </table>	Births registered	1936	Deaths registered	1200	Still Births registered	6			Marriages Registered	698	Completed
Births registered	1936										
Deaths registered	1200										
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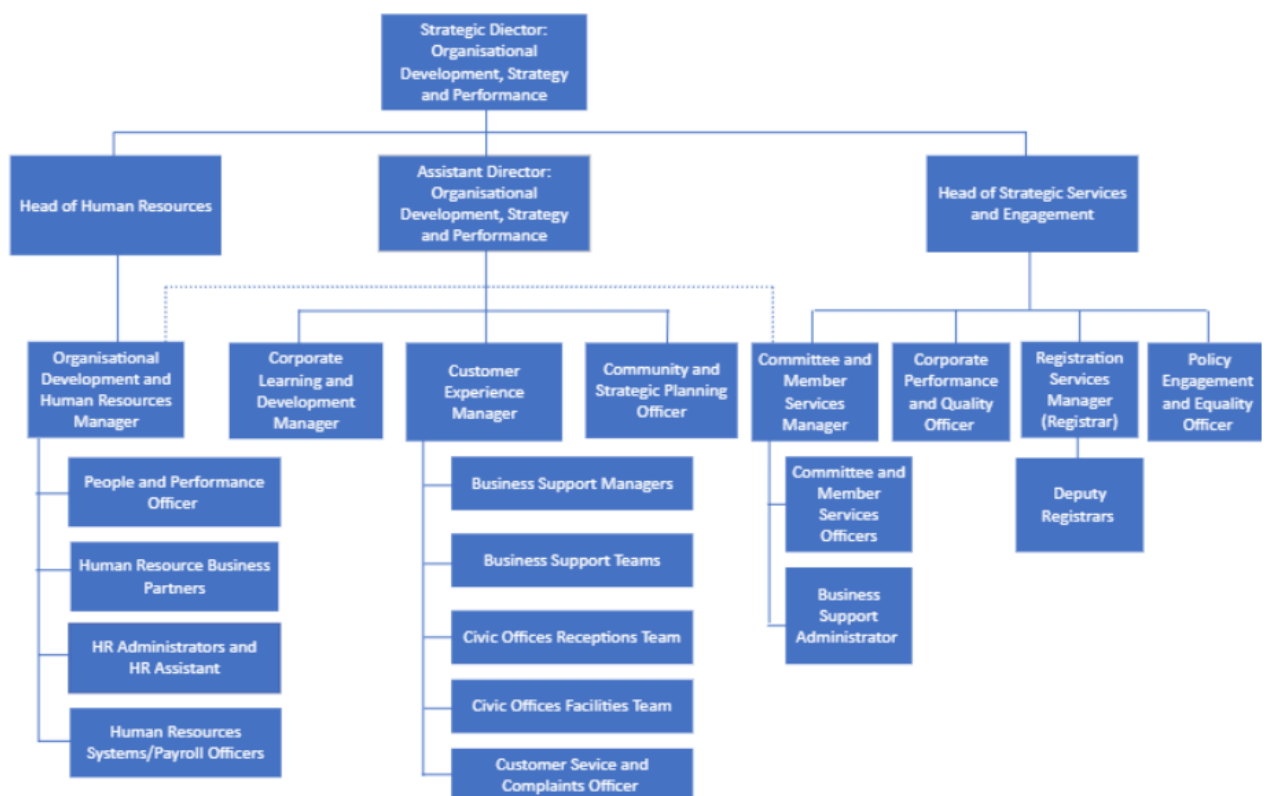
2.0 IMPROVING OUR SERVICES AND MANAGING PERFORMANCE - 2023/24

The following tables confirm the resources, financial and people, which the Directorate has access to it throughout 2023-24 to deliver its actions, activities and core business. Budgetary arrangements and allocations are subject to final variations.

2.1 Budget 2023/24

Budget: Service Areas	£
Organisational Development & Human Resources	1,022,009
Registration Services	124,403
Customer Services & Business Support	1,645,145
Strategic Services & Engagement	1,343,449
Gross Budget	4,135,006
Income	105,000
Net Budget (<i>anticipated</i>) for 2023-24	4,030,006

2.2 Directorate Services and Structure – 2023-2024



Staffing	No. of Staff
Strategic Director	1
Assistant Director	1
Head of Service	2
Managers	4
Officers	11
Business Support Managers	3
Registration Services Manager (Registrar)	1
Deputy Registrar	2
Business Support and Customer Services Administrative/Assistants	35
Human Resources Assistants	3
Facilities Staff	7
Other Staff	2
Casual Customer Service/Administrative Assistant	4
Total	76

2.3 Service Work Plan - 2023/24 - *Our Focus for the next 12 months*

In continuing to improve on how we do things to support the Council to deliver on its objectives and values of putting the customer at the heart of everything we do, whether they be internal or external, the following have been identified as our priority focus for the next 12 to 24 months. These extend to service improvements becoming embedded within our everyday business of the Directorate.

<i>Supporting Staff and Members to Deliver</i>	
Develop – Improve – Deliver	
Our Objectives	
1	To continue to attract and retain staff to ensure a multi-skilled and diverse workforce that’s reflective of the people we serve.
2	To continue to engage and support our citizens through a range of initiatives and communication channels to excel in meeting customer needs and expectations.
3	To expand the Council’s learning and development offering in promoting a culture of life-long learning.
4	To enhance employee engagement whilst improving 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.
6	To maximise and continue to develop existing systems and processes in line with the Council’s digital agenda.

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		Service Delivery: 2.2 We will invest in our people to create a customer-focused, purposeful, skilled, high performing, engaged, healthy and safe work space.			
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>1.0 To continue to attract and retain staff to ensure a multi-skilled and diverse workforce that's reflective of the people we serve.</p>	<p>1.1 Develop an integrated electronic Corporate Induction/Welcome Pack. To extend to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an applicant and Staff Welcome Pack. • Promotional Video to communicate the financial and non-financial benefits of working for the council. 	31/12/23	<p>G Dyson L Carson</p> <p>Supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR Business Partners • HR Assistants • ICT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding a positive and welcoming/inclusive feel for new starts. • Managers and employees provided with all the necessary information at day 1. • Less dependence on HR Business Partners to answer queries. • Support employee and manager and mentor with the employee engagement on-boarding arrangements including Localised Induction, Corporate Induction, Staff Learning & Development Opportunities, Probationary Reviews. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Induction/Welcome Pack in place • Reduction in number queries from new employees and managers

	<p>1.2 Review the Recruitment and Selection Process to ensure a streamlined effective and efficient process from start to finish for officers and applicants.</p>	<p>31/03/24</p>	<p>G Dyson L Carson</p> <p>Supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR Business Partners • HR Assistants • Learning & Development Manager • People & Performance Officer • ICT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automated electronic Vacancy Authorisation Forms will promote a measured and evidence-based approach to tracking vacancies. • Promotional videos to advertise and promote jobs (including student placements), to include the benefits and “perks” of a placement or a job within MUDC • Review online platforms to promote available opportunities on work placements, student placements, apprenticeship schemes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased efficiency of the recruitment and selection administration processes. • Reduction in number of queries from members of the public seeking, for example, work placement opportunities, apprenticeships. • Compare and contrast public interest in vacancies in MUDC
	<p>1.3 Review current Local Induction Programme for new starts to ensure a consistent approach that links in with the Corporate Induction process.</p>	<p>31/03/2024</p>	<p>G Dyson L Carson</p> <p>Supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR Business Partners • HR Assistants • Learning & Development Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New staff will receive the appropriate induction for their job role, and be fully informed of the Councils policies, procedures, Council perks, benefits. • Structure the approach to probation meetings, recording same. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase new staff awareness of Council policies, procedures, perks and benefits • Enable managers to develop a structured

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People & Performance Officer • ICT 		<p>approach to the local induction and probation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the level of day-to-day support required by managers and staff by HR team.
1.4	Develop Communication Streams that is available for all staff to promote the benefits of working for MUDC	31/12/2023	<p>G Dyson L Carson</p> <p>Supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR Business Partners • HR Assistants • Learning & Development Manager • People & Performance Officer • Communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate a “Total Rewards Statement”, to include the perks and benefits of working for Mid Ulster District Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continually Increase staff morale. • To continually Increase staff retention within Council.
1.5	Delivery of a programme to develop Talent Management and Staff-Retention within the Council	31/03/2024 (ongoing and to next reporting period)	<p>G Dyson L Carson</p> <p>Supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning & Development Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide opportunity for staff to learn and develop within the organisation to reduce staff turnover, increase staff retention, and enable the Council to succession plan, considering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure of staff turnover • Measure of staff engagement in learning and development opportunities

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People & Performance Officer 	<p>age profiles, experience based on workforce data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To compliment a talent management programme with consideration of a mentoring programme. 	
	<p>1.6 Lead a review on the implementation of the Council's Corporate Plan (2020-2024) and develop a new Corporate Plan commencing 1st April 2024</p>	31/03/2024	<p>P Moffett</p> <p>Supported by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community & Strategic Planning Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have identified delivery status of priorities within the current Corporate Plan • Staff and Members involved and informed on the future strategic direction of the Council. • A Corporate Plan reflective of the needs of our district, citizens and customers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Plan (2020-2024) Review undertaken. • Corporate Plan (2024-2028) developed and agreed by Council.
	<p>1.7 Develop and implement an integrated equality and diversity plan over a 3 yr. period</p>	31/03/2024	<p>Head of HR</p> <p>Supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OD & HR Manager • HR Business Partners • HR Assistants • Corporate Learning and Development Mgr. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the Council meets its legal requirements across all groups protected by current employment equality legislation. • Attract & retain skilled staff. • Promote good equal opportunities practices in development and implementation of relevant integrated policies on a phased 3 yr basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Review and reporting of various HR practices, policies and procedures to support equality obligations, workforce development

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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.

Service Delivery: 2.1 We will improve services for our citizens through the development and delivery of an innovation agenda

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>2.0 To continue to engage and support our citizens through a range of initiatives and communication channels to excel in meeting customer needs and expectations.</p>	<p>2.1 To embed the corporate identity and Council brand by providing Uniforms for Customer Services Teams, Facilities staff and Registration team.</p>	<p>31/12/23 (ongoing and to next reporting period)</p>	<p>A McIlwrath</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates a good first impression for the corporate body and consistent approach across service areas. Assists in creating a 'brand' identity ensuring staff are easily identifiable to the Customer. Demonstrates the Council's commitment to investing in staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quotation completed. Phase 1 implemented (Customer Services and Facilities). Phase 2 to have commenced Second phase (Registration Services) Approved by Committees and Council
	<p>2.2 To align resources across the Business Support team and Customer Services functions</p>	<p>30/06/23</p>	<p>A McIlwrath</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More effective use of resources. Allows staff to be agile and interchangeable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved by Committee and Council

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upskills staff to become more 'corporate' focused. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource sharing ongoing.
	<p>2.3 To support the Council's digital agenda in improving how we connect and engage with our customers and stakeholders for an enhanced customer experience. To:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • undertake an assessment of existing front-line customer processes within scope of the Business Support Business area across Directorates. • Prioritise the high contact customer processes requiring consideration in 2023-24 • Undertake process mapping to identify customer services benefits for refining and changing existing processes. Process map out existing 'as is' processes • Investigate and develop proposal for an electronic platform accessible to all services with capacity to be used for uploading information to inform Customers Services and Business Support Officers to help address customers queries. 	<p>31/03/24 (ongoing and to next reporting period)</p>	<p>A McIlwrath</p> <p>Supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comms • ICT • Ext. Digital Support Partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps to establish areas for improvement and create internal efficiencies in the system for the benefit of the customer. • Promotes a cross Council review of service area working arrangements. • Gives greater flexibility and accessibility of services for the customer – 24/7 access to online services. • Leads to more informative and up-to-date information being shared with customers at point of source. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged with external digital support partners to map systems and processes to establish baseline of requirements across Directorates. • Review undertaken of technologies/ systems with the ability to help improve service delivery from the initial mapping identified.

	<p>2.4 Implement arrangements to embed the Model Complaints Handling Process (MCHP) and develop a digital solution to manage and process complaints across the Council, in line with NI Public Service Organisation (NIPSO) requirements.</p>	<p>31/12/23 (ongoing and to next reporting period)</p>	<p>A McIlwrath</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides effective management, monitoring and control of complaints. • Adopts a corporate led, consistent and centralised approach to administering complaints handling. • To meet the statutory requirements of the NI Public Service Organisation (NIPSO) • Ensures Council has arrangements in place to responds in a timely manner and in line with NIPSO requirements and standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements have been developed and embedded within the Council. • Electronic Solution has been agreed and set to capture complaints data. • Requirements of NIPSO and its compliance framework being met.
	<p>2.5 To complete a review of the Council's Customer Service Policy, in line with the Model Complaints Handling Process (MCHP) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect changes to our complaints handling arrangements within the current Customer Services Policy • Develop and embed Customer Service Standards across the Council 	<p>31/12/23</p>	<p>A McIlwrath</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reminds staff and customers of the standards of service and values upheld by the corporate body. • Sets benchmark and holds staff and customer accountable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review policy to develop service standards. • Embed across organisation on training and communication. • No. of employees participating in customer service training

					<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No. of World Host accredited programmes held.

Service Name: Organisation Development, Strategy & Performance

Link to Community Plan Theme:

Align to Corporate Plan Theme

CMP 3.1 Education & Skills - Our People are better qualified & more skilled

Service Delivery: 2.2 We will invest in our people to create a customer-focused, purposeful, skilled, high performing, engaged, healthy and safe work space.

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>3.0 To expand the Council's learning and development offering in promoting a culture of life-long learning.</p>	<p>3.1 Elected Member Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake Induction training programme for all new Elected Members. • Develop an Elected Member Development Training Programme in conjunction with the EMDWG to continue to equip Members to deliver their roles. • Update Members on Individual Personal development plans. 	<p>31/3/23</p> <p>(ongoing and to next reporting period)</p>	<p>E Forde</p> <p>Committee & Member Services Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members will be engaged in developing and participating in relevant and effective training programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain Elected Member Development Status and move towards Charter +
	<p>3.2 Development of Learning and Development System.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and generate reports to be extracted from CoreHR and other relevant systems. 	<p>30/09/23</p>	<p>S McAleer</p> <p>Supported by</p> <p>People & Performance Officer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That line managers have facility to draw down information on required training per employee. • That line managers and employees have facility to receive alerts on statutory training due for renewal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No of requests from Managers for learning and development reports by • Reports developed and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop functionality within CoreHR to inform employees and managers on training updates and refresher requirements. 				<p>embedded with L&D Module</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> % no. of staff keeping training within date
	<p>3.3 Succession planning by Role across the organisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apprenticeship levels 2 & 3. Work based Horticulture. Business Admin level 3, Logistics Operations Level 3 and Painting and Decorating Level 3. 	<p>31/03/24 (ongoing and to next reporting period)</p>	<p>S McAleer</p> <p>Supported by HR Business Partners People & Performance Officer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of continuity of services within council to manage staff retention and adequate workforce. New business practice being brought forward and developed in how we do things. Continual access to a skilled workforce Development of Apprenticeship Policy with necessary budgetary resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of staff with appropriate skills in right place at right time.
	<p>3.4 Quarterly Learning and Development Programme.</p>	<p>31/03/2024</p>	<p>S McAleer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support implementation of Skills Strategy NI - Strategic Goal 2 – increase the proportion of the working age population with qualifications at level 2 and above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. skilled staff retained for a minimum of 2 yrs. post-qualification.

Service Name: Organisation Development, Strategy & Performance					
Link to Community Plan Theme:		Align to Corporate Plan Theme			
<i>CMP 1.2 Economic Growth - We have more people working in a diverse economy</i>		<i>Service Delivery: 2.2 We will invest in our people to create a customer-focused, purposeful, skilled, high performing, engaged, healthy and safe work space.</i>			
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)
4.0 To enhance employee engagement whilst improving our staff's health and well-being through a range of initiatives.	4.1 Roll out of Phase 1 of the Personal Contribution & Support Process (PC&SP)	31/07/23 (ongoing and to next reporting period)	P Moffett Supported by: T Gwynne S McAleer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback received to inform corporate learning and development programme. Feedback received to inform targeted health and wellbeing initiatives. Process starts to become embedded across directorates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. persons attended learning sessions No. of completed PC&SP engagements between managers and staff
	4.2 Develop and embed a culture of health and wellbeing in the Council	31/03/2024 (ongoing and to next reporting period)	L Carson HR Business Partner (x1) Supported by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health & Wellbeing Champion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on a Health & Wellbeing Business Case and Strategy, based on feedback from a Staff Engagement Survey Engage a new Health & Wellbeing Working Group to reflect the recent organisational restructure to promote to reinvigorate engagement across the Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased staff morale and engagement Reduced sickness absence Increased presenteeism

			(St. Director: Environment) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR Bus Partner Team • People & Performance Officer 		
4.3 Upskill Managers with the skill set to enable and better equip them to manage and engage with their staffing reports, by streamlining processes	31/03/2024 (ongoing and to next reporting period)	L Carson T Gwynne Supported by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR Business Partners • HR Assistants • Learning & Development Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will enhance a culture of fairness and openness and transparency. • Will enable a manager to be confident in their ability to manage staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the level of day-to-day support required from HR Dept to managers. • Number formal grievances reduced. • Up-skill programme in place. 	
4.4 Delivery of Equality Scheme Commitments of the Mid Ulster District Council Equality Scheme including Delivery of the associated Equality and Disability Action Plans	31/3/2022	A McAleer Policy Engagement & Equality Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory requirements met and action plan commitments are achieved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Progress Report submitted to Equality Commission NI 	
4.5 Delivery of Rural Needs Action Plan under Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completions of Rural Needs Impact Assessments and 	31/3/2023	A McAleer Policy Engagement & Equality Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory requirements met and action plan commitments are achieved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Progress Report submitted to Department for Agriculture, Environment and 	

	communication with Rural Consultee list.				Rural Affairs (DAERA)
	<p>4.6 Health and Well-being Events for staff arranged Development of Programme of Events to support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical activity, • positive mental health & Well-being • Access to Face-Face Counselling Services for staff 	31/03/2024	<p>G Dyson</p> <p>Supported by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR & OD Manager • HR Business Partners • HR Assistant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement of staff in health and well-being events. • Support available to staff when required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. persons attending events • Provision included in Employee Support and Assistance Programme

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.

Service Delivery: 2.1 We will improve services for our citizens through the development and delivery of an innovation agenda

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>5.0 To support Directorates to make informed and timely decisions on the delivery of services.</p>	<p>5.1 Development and Review of Policies and Procedures. Focus for the period extending to:</p> <p>Policies to be developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondment • Leave • Apprenticeship • Capability • Drugs & Alcohol • Hybrid Working procedure, as part of Flexible Working <p>Policies identified for Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disciplinary & Grievance • Management of Overtime • Mangt of Bereavement • Adult safeguarding • Attendance management 	<p>31/03/2024</p>	<p>G Dyson</p> <p>Supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning & Development Manager • People & Performance Officer • HR & OD Manager • HR Bus Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and procedures in place that inform and support decision making. • Staff are more engaged and involved in the policy development formulation. • Management, employee and Union relations strengthened. • Development and review of Existing Policies and Procedures in response to legislation, identified risk mitigation measures documented on Council's risk registers and best practice to support service delivery by trained staff and managers. • Management Briefings to implement new or revised policies and procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies developed and agreed by Council. • Policies reviewed and agreed by Council, as required. • No. of new policies developed and implemented in year. • No. of existing policies and procedures reviewed in year.

	<p>5.2 Develop and roll out next phase of Management Dashboards for Directorates to enable Management Teams to make service delivery decisions based real time people and organisational data</p>	30/09/2023	<p>L Carson</p> <p>Supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People & Performance Officer • HR Bus Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of data available to and collected by HR and OD to inform decision making. • Enabling services to be more proactive in planning for areas such as succession planning; measuring sickness absence costs; age profiling and having evidential based recommendations to SMT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management taking decisions based on real-time data • HR and OD becoming more an enabler for services reducing dependence for support.
	<p>5.3 Lead and develop Councils Corporate Performance Management Responsibilities to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) 2023-24 • Annual Performance Assessment Plan 2022-2023 • Liaise with SMT to identify Corporate Improvement Objectives for 23/24 and 24/25. • Liaise with NIAO regarding performance audit 23/24 • Develop, collate and report quarterly performance to P&R Committee 	31/3/2024	<p>L Jenkins</p> <p>Corporate Performance & Quality Officer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate Councils Duty to Improve through utilisation of Councils Performance Management and Improvement Framework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans Developed and P&R Committee updated regularly.

Service Name: Organisation Development, Strategy & Performance

Link to Community Plan Theme:

Align to Corporate Plan Theme

CMP 3.3 Education & Skills - We are more entrepreneurial, innovative & creative

Service Delivery: 2.1 We will improve services for our citizens through the development and delivery of an innovation agenda

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>6.0 To maximise and continue to develop existing systems and processes in line with the Council's digital agenda.</p>	<p>6.1 Work in partnership with our digital agenda partners to undertake a review of internal systems and processes for improvement to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment & Selection Modules within existing systems • Expanding the use of the self-service functions within CoreHR, to include password resets. • HR Support Ticketing • Integration of HR Support Ticketing tool to build on current customer service on HR/OD • Developing Learning & Development Module within existing systems • Digital enabled Organisational Charts linked to Council Email Active Directory for real-time charts. 	<p>31/03/23</p> <p>(ongoing and to next reporting period)</p>	<p>P Moffett</p> <p>Supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of HR • Customer Experience Manager • HR & OD Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving existing processes to create efficiencies to free capacity to deliver other initiatives. • Supporting and embedding opportunities for new ways of doing key tasks • Minimises the operation of duplicate IT systems. • Staff informed and communicated with in a timely manner. • Maximising the use of the Council's Intranet and other online platforms • Integrated management information system with reporting data available to management on a timely basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated recruitment & selection module considered. • Reviewed the roll out and introduction of an HR Support Ticketing tool • Uptake of employee use of information on staff Intranet, upskilling employees

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing Core HR Operating Procedures Develop Recruitment & Selection Operating Procedures and Statutory Reporting Procedures 				
	<p>6.2 Review the current arrangements for management and processing of corporate level complaints received, and functionality of the current tool.</p>	<p>31/12/2023 (ongoing and to next reporting period)</p>	<p>P Moffett</p> <p>Supported by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer Experience Manager ICT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That arrangements are in place to meet the management organisational needs together with reporting requirements of the NI Public Service Organisation (NIPSO) Reduction in time spent by officers on collecting and reporting on data and statistics to management and NI Public Service Organisation (NIPSO) Maximising the reliability and validity of management data collected and electronically reported on. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of current arrangements undertaken Decision taken on arrangements to be used for the logging, tracking and responding to complaints across the Council. Process embedded for use.
	<p>6.3 To expand the use of the Committee Management Information System (CMIS) in line with Council digital approach, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue to use and further deploy CMIS across Council. 	<p>31/03/24</p>	<p>J McGuckin</p> <p>Supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee Services Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To digitally transform our service and get the most out of the system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evident signs of development within system. Minutes/action sheets/declaration of interest register produced on CMIS

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initiate comprehensive use of minute function to produce action sheets.				

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 Directorate/Services business as outlined in service plan for 2023-24.

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 2023/2024 yr.
2.	Failure to make arrangements for employee weekly and monthly pays 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.